

We have been talking about how art and life have been integrating since the beginning of the semester... since the 1960s.

Pop, Minimalism, Performance, all can be contextualized this way.

Postmodernism embraces everything... common culture, past art styles, everything.

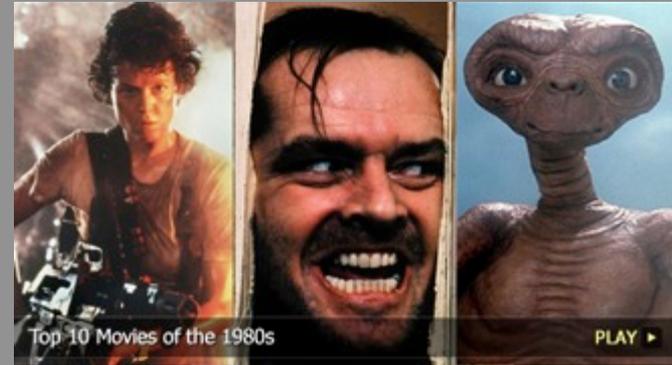
This week we continue this direction.

1980s in Postmodern America

By the end of Jimmy Carter's presidency, inflation, crime and foreign policy turmoil created response of conservatism in social, economic and political life. Often referred to as a 'backlash' against social issues, this time is remembered for its enhanced materialism and consumerism, yuppies, cable TV, MTV, blockbuster movies, we also witness the growth of The New Right, a populist conservative movement.

Many people derided yuppies for being self-centered and materialistic, and surveys of young urban professionals across the country showed that they were, more concerned with making money and buying consumer goods than their parents and grandparents had been.

<http://www.history.com/topics/1980s>



THE 1980s



1980s in Postmodern America

Graffiti was made possible because many buildings in inner city America, in particular NYC, were abandoned.

Street artists rushed in to make art that would resist the flood of advertising, the unreality of the art market and a way of taking their creative activities to the street.

We have already discussed how the events of the 1960s and 70s deflated the idealist dreams of post WWII Americans.

The 1980s witnesses conservatism, materialism and consumerism.





This is early Christian graffiti from 300 AD



Graffiti has long appeared on railroad boxcars and subways. During World War II and for decades after, the phrase "Kilroy was here" with accompanying illustration was widespread throughout the world, due to its use by American troops and its filtering into American popular culture. Shortly after the death of Charlie Parker (nicknamed "Yardbird" or "Bird"), graffiti began appearing around New York with the words "Bird Lives". Contemporary Graffiti art begins in New York in the 1970s.





Keith Haring found a thriving alternative art community in New York that was developing outside the gallery and museum system, in the downtown streets, the subways and spaces in clubs and former dance halls.

His first works were chalk drawings in the NY subway.

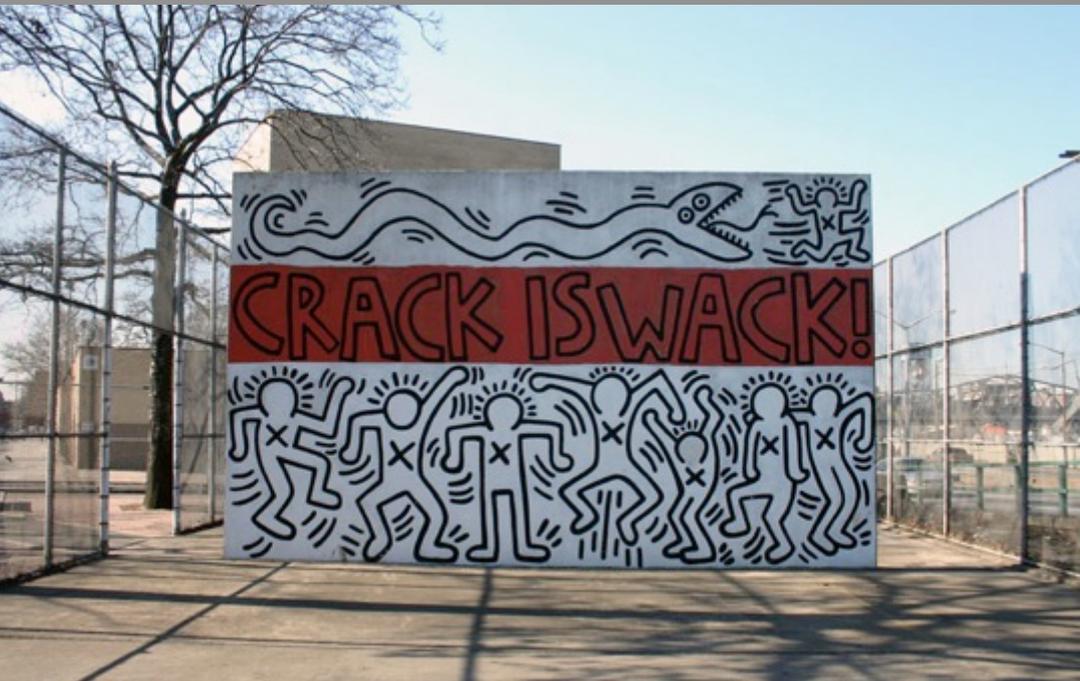




Photo: Charles Dolfi-Michels

In April 1986, Haring opened the Pop Shop, a retail store in Soho selling T-shirts, toys, posters, buttons and magnets bearing his images. Haring considered the shop to be an extension of his work and painted the entire interior of the store in an abstract black on white mural.

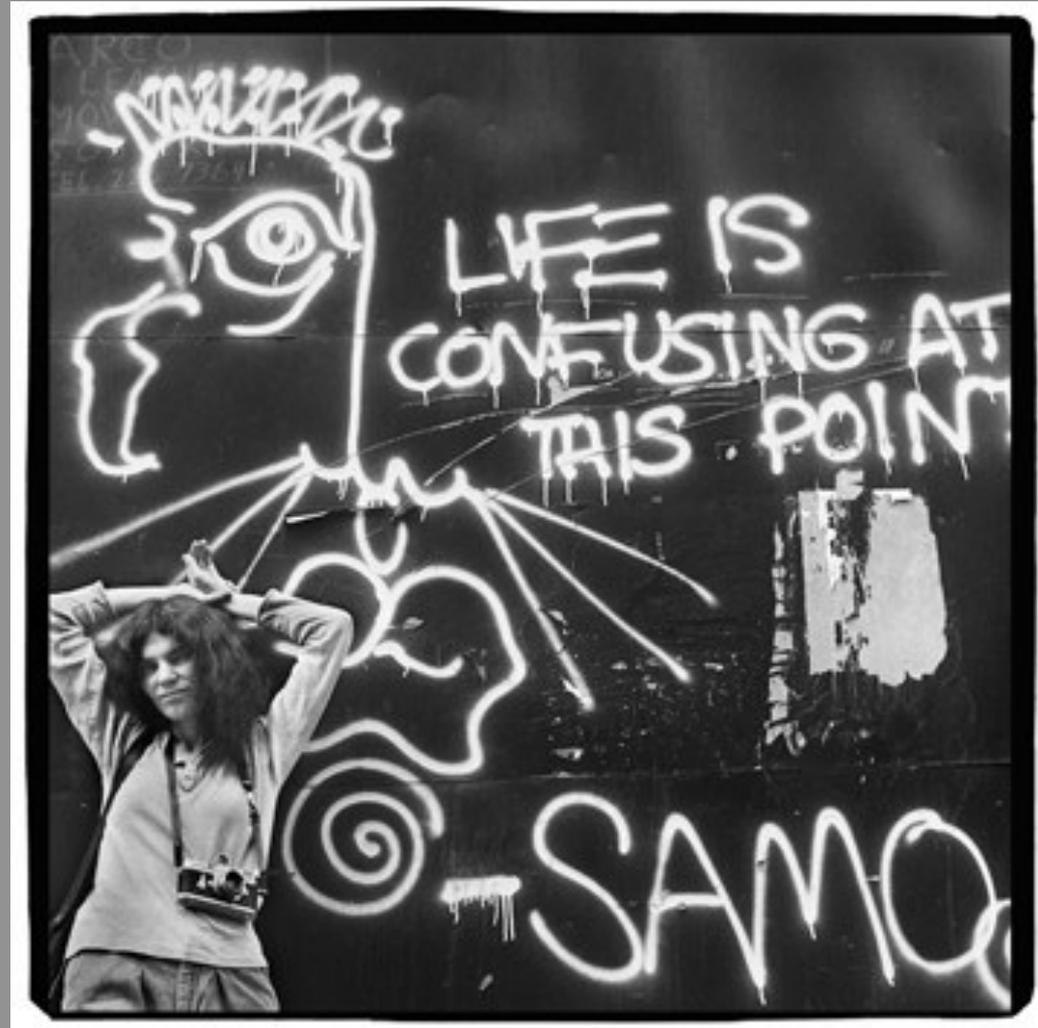
Throughout his career, Haring devoted much of his time to public works, which often carried social messages. He produced more than 50 public artworks between 1982 and 1989, in dozens of cities around the world, many of which were created for charities, hospitals, children's day care centers and orphanages. The now famous *Crack is Wack* mural of 1986 has become a landmark along New York's FDR Drive.





Haring was diagnosed with AIDS in 1988. In 1989, he established the Keith Haring Foundation, to provide funding and imagery to AIDS organizations and children's programs. Haring enlisted his imagery during the last years of his life to speak about his own illness and generate activism and awareness about AIDS.





In 1976, Jean-Michael Basquiat and friend Al Diaz began spray-painting graffiti on buildings in Lower Manhattan, working under the pseudonym SAMO.

Continuing his activities as a graffiti artist, Basquiat often incorporated words into his paintings.

Themes of social justice involving issues of racism, materialism, and exploitation, recur in the paintings.

In this painting Basquiat honors one of his heroes, Dizzy Gillespie, the jazz trumpet player.



A major reference source used by Basquiat throughout his career was the book *Gray's Anatomy*, which his mother gave to him while in the hospital at age seven. It remained influential in his depictions of internal human anatomy, and in its mixture of image and text. Other major sources were Henry Dreyfuss Symbol Sourcebook, Leonardo Da Vinci's notebooks, and Brentjes African Rock Art.





Basquiat used text and symbols to make comments about life in America. Some think the boxer symbolizes strength against odds. Other, discuss it's relation to the Statue of Liberty. The phrase "per capita" relates to how much income a person earns in a year. He lists the average income in different states to emphasize the inequity between rich and poor.





Kenny Sharf, Bowery and Houston-- Scharf's works consist of popular culture based shows with made up science-related backgrounds.



Tim Rollins discovered that his students responded to art - art taught his way, not the way it is usually taught in public schools. Some of Rollins' students became a group of regulars who participated in an after-school and weekend program called the 'Art of Knowledge Workshop.'



Tim Rollins and his collaborators, high school students from the South Bronx, NY, typically make works based on classic literature.

This one is based on, *Animal Farm*.





The students named themselves K.O.S. which stands for "Kids of Survival. "What we're doing changes people's conception about who can make art, how art is made, who can learn and what's possible, because a lot of these kids had been written off by the school system. This is our revenge."

1981

On June 5, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published a Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report describing cases of a rare lung infection, *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia, in five young, previously healthy, gay men in Los Angeles. All the men have other unusual infections as well, indicating that their immune systems are not working: two have already died by the time the report is published. This edition of the MMWR marks the first official reporting of what will become known as the AIDS epidemic.

AIDS: IN MEMORIAM



SETH ALLEN
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MARCO AMAYA
art critic, 52



ED ARMOUR
painter, 42



WAVY BANDY
makeup artist, 45



LAUGHLIN BARKER
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KENNY DUNCAN
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PERRY ELLIS
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ALLAN ESTES
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MICHEL POLCAULT
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ROBERT HAYES
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magazine editor, 33



DAVID HICKS
New York City Opera
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LYN HILTON
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PAUL JACOBS
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ROBERT MOORE
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JONATHAN LAND
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LARRY STANTON
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DAVID SUMMERS
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RAYMOND TASCO
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RONALD BENTLEY
New York City Opera
director, 48



ED BRINKLEY
Herald & Arthur
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MARTIN BURGOYNE
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LINO CORBETTA
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ANGELO DONGHIA
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ROBERT FRASER
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EDMUND GALTNEY
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ROBERT GORDY
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JACK HABER
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ROBIN JACOBSON
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PETER LESTER
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STEPHEN PENDER
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HENRY POST
New York
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CHARLES ROBERTS JR.
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JAY ROGERS
art dealer, 36



MICHAEL TAYLOR
interior designer, 39



STEVE TRACY
actor, 36



CHARLES WARD
ballet dancer, 33



BRUCE WEINTRAUB
art designer, 33



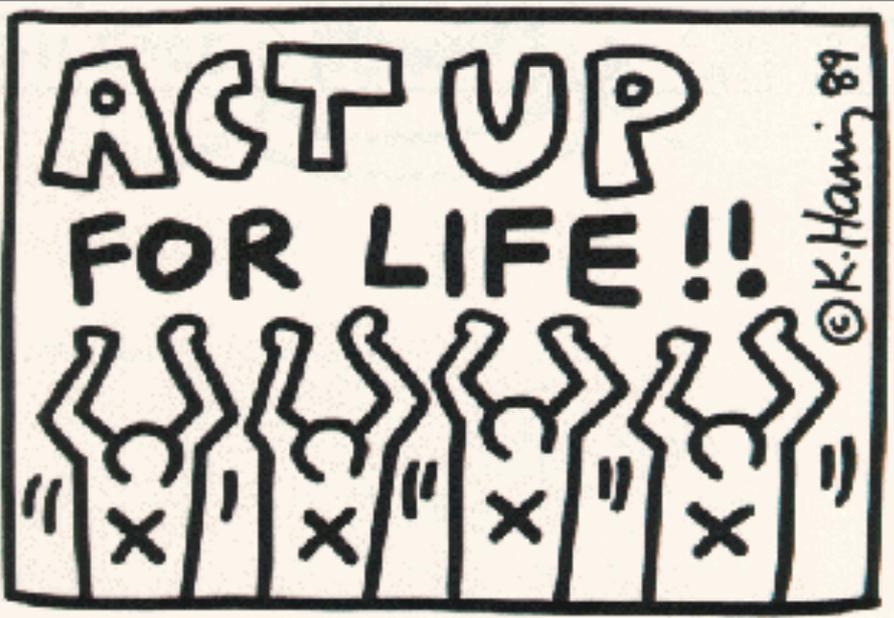
RICKY WILSON
rock musician, 32



ACT UP is a diverse, non-partisan group of individuals united in anger and committed to direct action to end the AIDS crisis.

We advise and inform. We demonstrate.

WE ARE NOT SILENT



David Wojnarowicz

Wojnarowicz was a painter, photographer, filmmaker, performance artist and activist.

His early work incorporated outsider experiences from personal history and stories he heard from others he met in bus stations and while hitchhiking. He wanted to show a more 'authentic' version of history that included people outside the mainstream.

In the 1980s he was diagnosed with AIDS and became more activist in commenting on the social reality of sexuality, life and death.



Often overlapping text, paint, collaged elements, and photography, and sometimes organizing them in quadrants or comic strip-like frames, Wojnarowicz created provocative narratives and historical allegories dealing with themes of order and disorder, birth and death.

David Wojnarowicz



In *The Death of American Spirituality* (1987), Wojnarowicz depicts a cowboy riding a bull, collaged from newspaper articles referring to gangsters, Oliver North, AIDS and advertisements for cars and electronics.

Images of a kachina doll, a snake charmer, and Jesus fade into a background of factories and exploding rocks.

The work suggests many layers of meaning, but the implication of the loss of belief in myth, religion and history is clear.

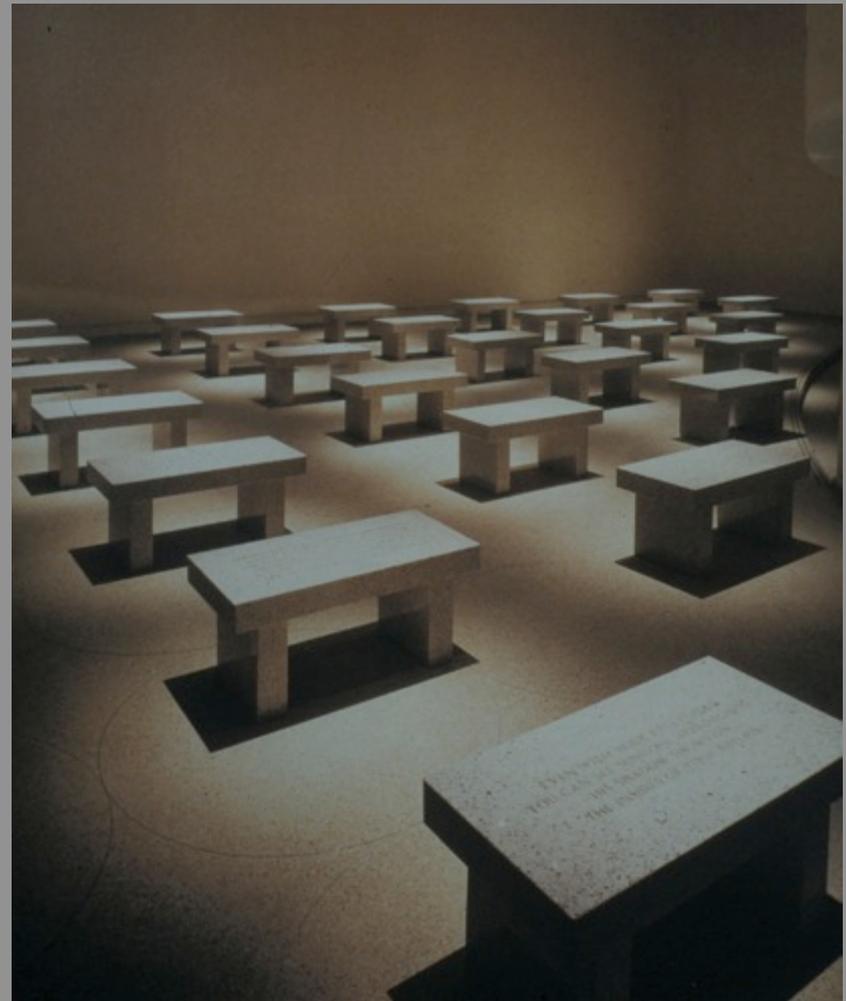
One day this kid will get larger. One day this kid will come to know something that causes a sensation equivalent to the separation of the earth from its axis. One day this kid will reach a point where he senses a division that isn't mathematical. One day this kid will feel something stir in his heart and throat and mouth. One day this kid will find something in his mind and body and soul that makes him hungry. One day this kid will do something that causes men who wear the uniforms of priests and rabbis, men who inhabit certain stone buildings, to call for his death. One day politicians will enact legislation against this kid. One day families will give false information to their children and each child will pass that information down generationally to their families and that information will be designed to make existence intolerable for this kid. One day this kid will begin to experience all this activity in his environment and that activi-



ty and information will compel him to commit suicide or submit to danger in hopes of being murdered or submit to silence and invisibility. Or one day this kid will talk. When he begins to talk, men who develop a fear of this kid will attempt to silence him with strangling, fists, prison, suffocation, rape, intimidation, drugging, ropes, guns, laws, menace, roving gangs, bottles, knives, religion, decapitation, and immolation by fire. Doctors will pronounce this kid curable as if his brain were a virus. This kid will lose his constitutional rights against the government's invasion of his privacy. This kid will be faced with electro-shock, drugs, and conditioning therapies in laboratories tended by psychologists and research scientists. He will be subject to loss of home, civil rights, jobs, and all conceivable freedoms. All this will begin to happen in one or two years when he discovers he desires to place his naked body on the naked body of another boy.

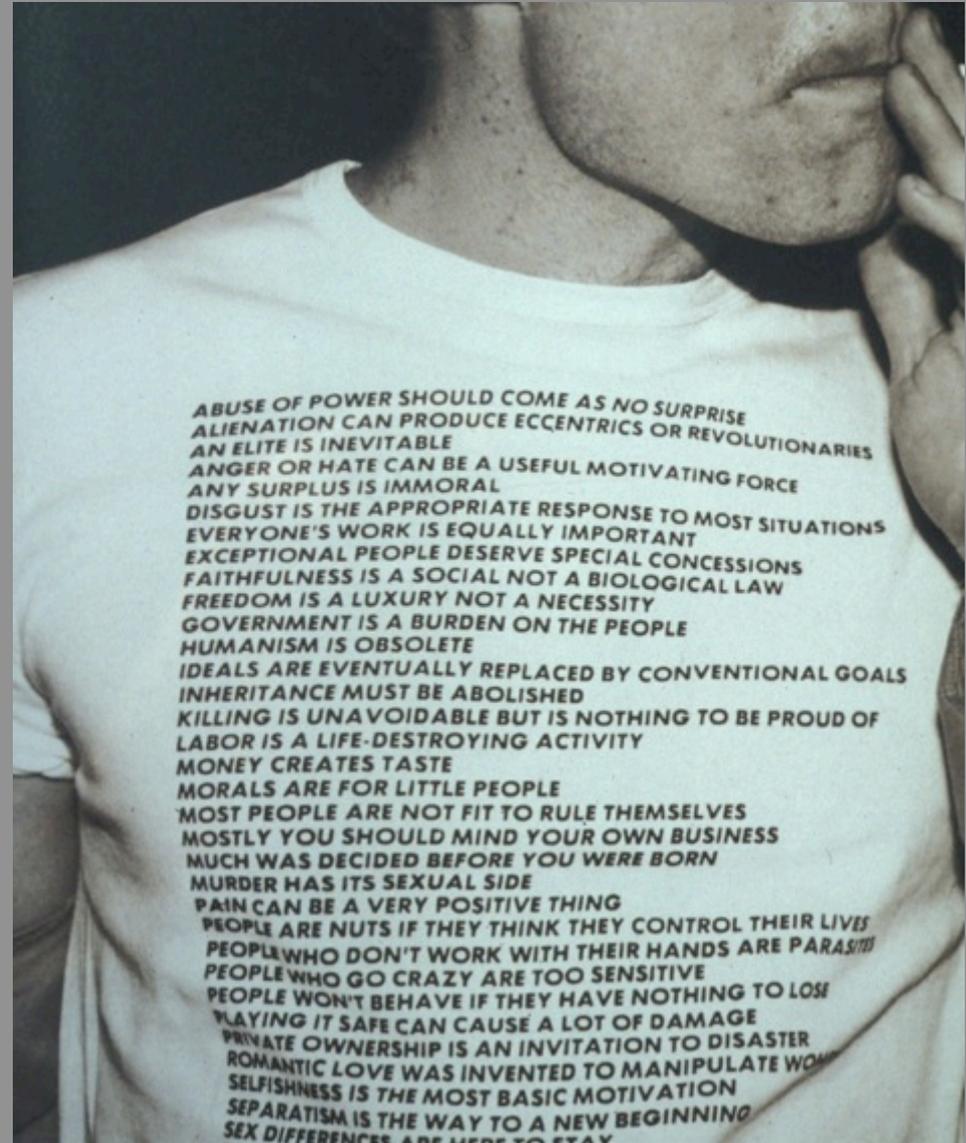
©Wojnarowicz 1990/91

*DON'T TALK DOWN TO ME. DON'T
BE POLITE TO ME. DON'T
TRY TO MAKE ME FEEL NICE.
DON'T RELAX. I'LL CUT THE
SMILE OFF YOUR FACE. YOU
THINK I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S
GOING ON. YOU THINK I'M
AFRAID TO REACT. THE JOKE'S
ON YOU. I'M BIDING MY TIME,
LOOKING FOR THE SPOT. YOU
THINK NO ONE CAN REACH YOU,
NO ONE CAN HAVE WHAT YOU
HAVE. I'VE BEEN PLANNING
WHILE YOU'RE PLAYING. I'VE
BEEN SAVING WHILE YOU'RE
SPENDING. THE GAME IS
ALMOST OVER SO IT'S
TIME YOU ACKNOWLEDGE ME.
DO YOU WANT TO FALL NOT
EVER KNOWING WHO TOOK YOU?*



Artists found many ways to comment on American values and ideals.

Jenny Holzer— developed text work she called, ‘truisms’.



Referencing the advertising 'sound bite' Holzer's Truisms were lines of text that were designed to be as meaningless as they were true. Originally, written on paper and posted to windows in Manhattan, in the 1970s, she then moved to cards, T-shirts and benches (as in the previous slide).



Holzer—continued her appropriation of mass media processes with her move to LED electronic signs most commonly seen in advertising.

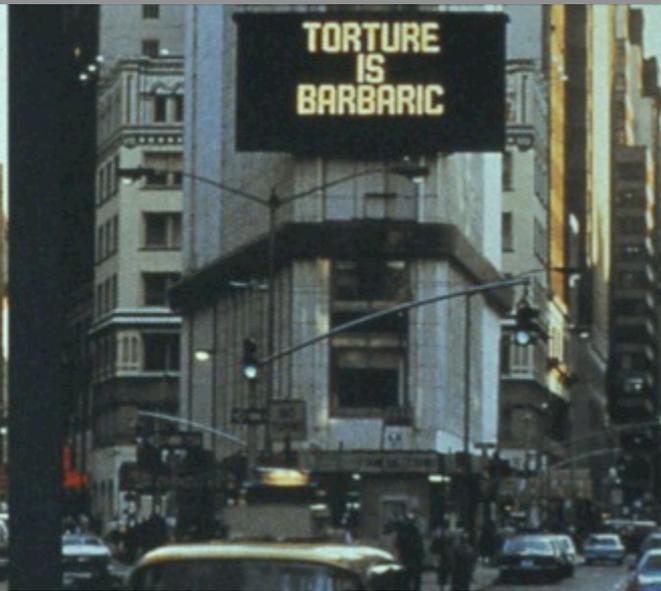
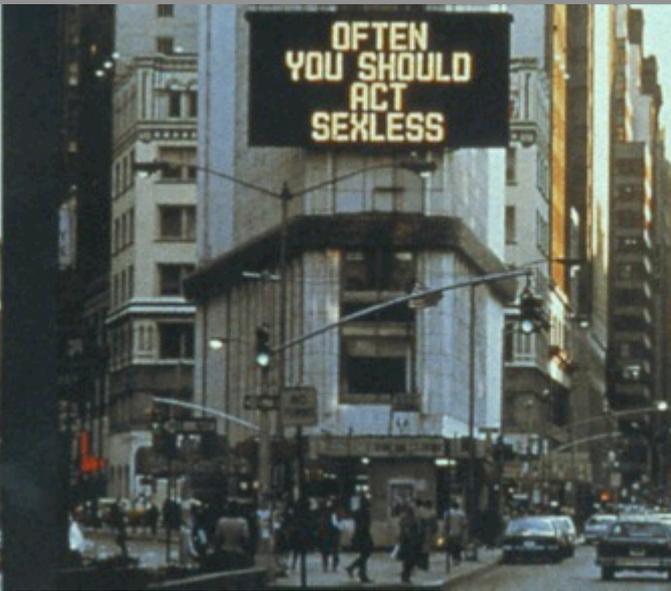
Her ‘truisms’ sound almost familiar, but are highly impersonal, underscoring the isolation of individuals in mass-media culture.

These are two images from her ‘truisms’ in LED at the Guggenheim Museum. Benches with ‘truisms’ are on the ground floor below.



Various installations of LED ‘truisms’ have appeared in museums, galleries and even baseball stadiums.





In 1982, her 'truisms' were installed as part of a Public Art Project in Times Square.

