



## TEXT(ING)

Modern methods of communication aim to rid themselves of ambiguity. The goal is clarity and certainty between the speaker and their audience, the writer and their reader, the advertiser and their consumers. In the arts, however, there is rebellion.

Artist aspire to create a visual language of their own – a concise way of mark-making that is both individual to them, yet able to communicate with others. Artists that borrow from the world of written language can subvert its primary function of direct communication to create another more ambiguous form. Written language varies greatly –from the uniformity of the English alphabet to the more painterly and pictorial alphabets of Arabic or Asiatic languages.

The art of writing has inspired artists in many ways. From the seductive lines typical of Japanese lettering that are translated into bold, monochrome sweeps of paint, to layered and complex images that emerge from repurposed billboard posters.

Developing from Dadaist concerns, the Lettrists of the mid-1940s used letters and written symbols as their material, progressing to Nouveaux Realism that focused less on the symbolic aspects of language, instead using it to close the gap between Art and contemporary society – a “poetic recycling of urban, industrial and advertising reality.”

The concise or directed nature of language is thrown open when artists reinterpret its structure, form and meaning. Using language in this way, letters and words lose their literal meaning, yet gain a multitude of others. As elements of visual communication or contemplation, they now speak for themselves.