

# Beautiful losers: a critical analysis essay

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Beautiful Losers: A Critical Analysis Essay " The world looks at graffiti and sees garbage and ugliness". These were the words of Margaret Kilgallen, a talented street artist that felt that the true garbage or " mind garbage" was to be found on commercial billboards. Growing up in the small town of Kensington, Maryland, Kilgallen was introduced to folk traditions such as Amish quilting and banjo playing; she became adept at the banjo herself. After a BA in studio art and printmaking at Colorado College, she moved to San Francisco, where she found inspiration in the city's hand-painted shop signs, later telling the US broadcaster PBS that she liked " things that are handmade.

I like to see people's hand in the world, anywhere in the world; it doesn't matter to me where it is. " She sees the overlooked hand-painted signs in the big city and sees the beauty in them often stopping passer-bys to ask if they know who painted the images. Kilgallen's inspiration largely came from her love of sixteenth century typography and both American and Indian folk art. At an early age, she was impressed by examples of works by Southwest and Mexican artists, and she employed these artists' use of warm colors in her own painting. Her works in gouache and acrylic on found paper (often discarded book endpapers) reflect an interest in typographic styles and symbology that can be traced to her work as a book conservator at the San Francisco Public Library in the 90's.

Typography became a major theme, enormous letters spelling out " Cheat steal lie" on her installation entitled " To friend + foe". This piece grabs the attention of its viewer's simply stating facts of life. It's like saying, " both friend and foe alike will cheat, steal and lie and that is the way of humanity".

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So it's a slap in the face almost, just the truth. In Kilgallen's PBS interview, she talks about her sense of art and community, which spurred her on in low moments when "the fact that maybe, maybe, somebody will learn from what I'm doing" was enough to keep her going. Both her art and life were also informed by the belief that women should be more visible.

Strong female figures surf, smoke and saunter through the paintings she made on wood and walls. And though she was nervous of public speaking, she would put these fears aside, so a woman could be "visual in our everyday landscape, working hard and doing their own thing".