

# Scholarly blogs

[Art & Culture](#), [Artists](#)



Scholarly Blogs This week's readings, involving two artists, Jenny Holzer and Bill Barminski, despite significant contextual similarities with each other, exhibited differences in the messages put across. Captivating messages of their artwork, addressing a myriad of subjects, create an imaginative picture of a world only imaginable to the people; their texts no more than just arousing the thoughts. People hold diverse meaning of a single text of their work, while one could have equally conflicting ideas about the same text (Presentation on Text/Image, n. d.). However, though at times far from the reality, when incorporated in a real world, for instance on advertisements (for both artists), what appears unreal to them becomes real in its translated nature. They stress on the need for a creative mind, and the importance of bounder-less artwork that addresses all ideas. Interpretation on the contextual basis, other than the emotional mind would better address subjects they address. Addressing a number of issues, these artists, with untrammled confidence, address some of the most seemingly controversial topics, but ones they freely and comfortably describe. Nonetheless, since it is possible to express whatever we imagine, these two take the initiative of giving these ideas a voice, with their style of doing so being impressive and at the same time captivating. The creativity of their pieces, so immense to capture the attention of the media, awes any audience. However, Bill Barminski opting for a rather simple and more direct approach differs with that of Jenny, which is aggressive, commanding and unapologetic. Although Jenny appears more rough and candid, while Barminski, though being soft, calm and approachable in his work, address weighty matters. Although both create art for the society, where the immediate consumer of their art is the

general society, they show no limits they could go in expressing their ideas. The audacity and confidence in Jenny's paintings, though the content being explicit, makes sure that she sends the message. The condom issue to her, out rightly require attention just like the abuse of power by politicians. Definitely, she shows no remorse in expressing herself, opening an avenue for criticism. Every artwork however needs analysis and criticism. She perhaps knows this way too well with the nature of her content violating expectations. Daring is what her work portrays; never show any reason for apologies, and if there is any, then it is least of her concern. Not with the issues, she takes head on with her artwork. She spares none of her work from this type of expressions. Her work appears to question the viewer, asking those questions on their very own contribution to the growth of these issues. Whether describing consumerist impulses, torture, or even lamenting on the effects of death, the command in her voice demands for answers. When none of the things available could answer, she provides it, much to the delight of the audience. It is confidence that some of her messages have found their way to advertisements, such as "protect me from what I want," used in condom advertisements (art21). Bill Barminski, in his can messages rarely show offense to the audience, but has a command and authority. In his paintings, for one to settle on a single, most likely message in the engraved cans has to dissect it, synthesize and understand. Though he addresses on sensitive issues in the society, he rarely uses a rough language, rather, polite and calm. Violence to him comes from weapons ownership, as he expresses in his statement, "I haz gun 2011" Barminski (2011). Though directly indicating that he had a gun in 2011, the language

used, colloquial, grammatically incorrect and non-formal could give the first impression of childish work, or a lazy student. However, when it strikes, then one knows the corruption of the language was intentional. Successfully he has communicated with his audience, and that is what really matters in intertextuality. I chose to incorporate Jenny's picture of a church. The radicalism in her work gives the impression of her unrelenting nature and character. Her piece, having, with a church enclosed in screaming, yet oversized wordings, containing the information, " you take this sensation to the cruel places you go," shows that the sensation of the church does not solve the cruelty of the world. People by nature are cruel, and thus, the church teachings, though sensationally and passionately insisting on goodness, face the real world where few, if any people, reason with equal sensation and passion. Engrossed in a blue color, giving the picture excessive warmth shows the reality of religion. Such a message triggering more questions than it does actually answer, drawing audience even into bigger thoughts. It is only with close analysis of her work that one can make the sense of her work. Intentionally, she raises people's reasoning capacity, from normative reality to actual reality. Every religious person hoping for the sanity among the people carries along with them such sensation, disobeying the reality. She however is unapologetic in her work, as the language further reveals that she cares less if the message was to rub the audience negatively. Rigidity in analyzing their work would not only lead to a wrong conclusion, but also rubbish them as useless. By incorporating Jenny's message about the environment of a church, " you carry this sensation to the places you go" initially confuses the audience. A second look at the

message, one could trash the contents. Then a steam of questions erupts from the reader, as a struggle to understand the meaning takes over their mind. One could conclude of Jenny a pagan, anti-Christ or even an atheist. It is possible to forget the message in the picture, and ponder on the sanity of the artist. However, Bill Barminski has a different style. Although he uses creatively edged meaning in the texts, his, being rather direct, openly expresses his sentiments. One does not have to question the meaning, rather the artist or the brain behind the message. Not everybody just paints on cans, and if they do, then it is logical. To him, one believes he makes little sense, until they interpret the idea behind the message. References Arft21. (2012). Jenny Holzer. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/jenny-holzer> Barminnski, B. (2011). Barmiski-spray cans guns-masks. Retrieved from [www.barminski.com](http://www.barminski.com) Presentation on Text/Image. (n. d.). Intertextuality-Enter Text Duality [https://blackboard.uoregon.edu/bbcswebdav/pid-7684275-dt-content-rid-11832201\\_1/courses/201301.11503/text.pdf](https://blackboard.uoregon.edu/bbcswebdav/pid-7684275-dt-content-rid-11832201_1/courses/201301.11503/text.pdf)