



Hello, men of Asia, meet Jenny Holzer in Singapore



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CONTEMPORARY art from the late 1970s to the present would be very different if it were not for the emergence of American women artists who howled for liberation against what they saw were the injustices of a largely patriarchal, fascist yet benevolently capitalist society. These ladies of protest include the more famous Barbara Kruger and Cindy Sherman. But making her nth debut in Asia is Jenny Holzer, word smith, conceptualist, presenter of pithy statements, now threatening to silence all with her aphorisms in Singapore.

Presented by Pearl Lam Galleries through its participation in the recent Art Stage Singapore 2014 and also as an eye-opener to the opening exhibition of Pearl Lam Galleries Singapore at the Gillman Barracks, Singapore's leading cultural center devoted to contemporary art, Holzer unleashed her first-ever light-emitting diode (LED) text series created in Chinese, which debuted at Pearl Lam Galleries Hong Kong.

Said Pearl Lam, the founder of the eponymous art establishment from Hong Kong: "Singapore is central to the momentum of Southeast Asia's burgeoning art scene. By exhibiting at Art Stage Singapore, as well as launching our fourth major exhibition space in the city [following our art hubs first in Hong Kong and the second and third in Shanghai], we are developing new platforms to showcase artist's work—always looking to support them on the international stage."



Thus the boon to Holzer, her fans, advocates and collectors.

Mostly known for her large-scale public displays that include billboard advertisements, projections on buildings and other architectural structures, as well as illuminated electronic displays, Holzer has focused her work on the use of language and ideas in public space, often producing shocking juxtapositions such as comments on sex and gender relations (“Sex Differences Are Here To Stay” on an unassuming New York movie theater marquee) to flights of fancy (“Abuse Of Power Comes As No Surprise” in gigantic LED lights over Times Square).

Though known the world over for her electronic displays that saw critical acclaim as the work of the first woman to ever represent the US in the Venice Biennial in 1990, Holzer has recently projected texts on the facades of major international structures including I.M. Pei’s Pyramid at the central courtyard of the Louvre in Paris during the former’s 20th anniversary celebration, thus sealing her renown as a globe-trotting artist of the highest caliber.

Holzer also diversifies her practice to incorporate a wide array of media including bronze plaques, painted signs, stone benches and footstools, stickers, T-shirts, paintings, photographs, sound, video, a Twitter account and a BMW which finished fifth overall at Le Mans in 2000.

Aside from these, she is the subject of the documentary film About Jenny Holzer by art-film auteur Claudia Müller.

Holzer has won the Art Institute of Chicago’s Blair Award, the Berlin Prize Fellowship, a diploma of Chevalier from the Order of Arts and Letters from the French government, the World Economic Forum’s Crystal Award, the Barnard Medal of Distinction, and numerous honorary degrees from the Rhode Island School of Design, The New School, Smith College and Williams College in the US, aside from other plums too numerous to mention.

Her renown, Holzer has only begun to enjoy commercial success. It is still coming in trickles. The demand for her work is just coming to critical mass. That said, she’s garnered a “sure buy” from my very-conservative-yet-profit-minded estimates.

Rounding off Pearl Lam Galleries’s participation in Art Stage Singapore and the launch of their fourth major space in Asia were pieces by influential artists from around the world, including Golnaz Fathi, Jim Lambie, Jason Martin, Su Xiaobai and Zhu Jinshi, as well as new works by renowned restaurateur-turned-painter Mr. Chow, aka Zhou Yinghua.

In Photo: Earlier works of Holzer include For the City (2005), a light projection of declassified US government documents on the exterior of New York University’s Bobst Library in downtown Manhattan. (Right photo) Projects such as a light projection over the Pyramid at the Louvre during its 20th anniversary have cemented Holzer’s reputation as an international artist of the highest caliber. (Annie Tritt)