



P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Artist Jenny Holzer To Deliver the Fulkerson Leadership in the Arts Lecture

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WILLIAMSTOWN, MA – The Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA) is pleased to announce that internationally known contemporary artist Jenny Holzer will deliver the Fulkerson Leadership in the Arts Lecture. The lecture will take place on Thursday, March 15 at 7:00 pm at the Brooks-Rogers Recital Hall on the Williams College campus. A reception from 8:30 to 9:30 pm will follow the lecture. This is a free public event and all are invited to attend.

Renowned for her compelling use of language in public space, Holzer's work has incorporated a wide array of media including bronze plaques, painted signs, stone benches, stickers, T-shirts, condoms, paintings, photographs, sound, video, light projection, the Internet and a Le Mans race car. Her first public works were created while participating in the Independent Study Program at the Whitney Museum of American Art. The program included an extensive reading list incorporating Western and Eastern literature and philosophy. Holzer felt the writings could be simplified to phrases everyone could understand. She called these summaries *Truisms* (1977–79), which she printed anonymously in black italic script on white paper and wheat-pasted to building facades, signs, and telephone booths in lower Manhattan. The numerous one-line statements such as "Abuse of power comes as no surprise" and "There is a fine line between information and propaganda" elicited both verbal and written responses from people on the street. In 1981, Holzer developed the *Living* series, which she printed on aluminum and bronze plaques, the presentation format used by medical and government buildings. The medium of modern computer systems became an important component in Holzer's work in 1982,

when nine of her *Truisms* flashed at forty-second intervals on the giant Spectacolor electronic signboard in Times Square. Sponsored by the Public Arts Fund program, the use of the LED machine allowed Holzer to reach an immense and varied audience. Holzer has incorporated the use of text and the electronics associated with commercial signage to communicate her challenging messages. Her work progressed into installations using electronic LED displays. In 1990, she became the first female artist chosen to represent the United States at the Venice Biennale. For the Biennale, Holzer designed posters, hats, and t-shirts to be sold in the streets of Venice, while her LED signboards and marble benches occupied the austere exhibition space. Her words were translated into multiple languages in order to communicate to an international audience. The topics of Holzer's messages have varied but always engage and provoke the viewer. Violence, oppression, sexuality, power, war and death are some of the subjects Holzer has addressed. In 1996, she started creating complex, large-scale xenon projections on buildings, mountains, rivers and assorted public sites.

Holzer wrote texts herself for a long time between 1977 and 2001. However since 1993, she has been mainly working with texts written by others. Some of these are literary texts by acclaimed authors such as the Polish Nobel laureate Wislawa Szymborska, Henri Cole (USA), Fadhil Al-Azawi (Iraq), Yehuda Amichai (Israel) and Mahmoud Darwish (Palestine). She also uses texts from different contexts, such as passages from de-classified US Army documents from the war in Iraq.

Williams College is honored to have a public art installation by Jenny Holzer on its campus. *715 Molecules*, a large-scale stone table and benches, covered on every surface with molecular diagrams, was dedicated in the spring of 2011. It was commissioned by alumni and friends to honor Williams alumnus, professor, and devoted member of the community J. Hodge Markgraf '52. It is located in the Science Quadrangle and serves as a place for students, faculty, and the community to sit and interact with each other. Using the scientific language of molecular structures, including representations of everything from water to gypsy moth pheromones to components of chocolate to DDT, Holzer asks us to consider how these chemicals define us, shape our behavior, and function in the ever-changing world in which we live. The molecules depicted symbolize the concepts of war, love, natural phenomena, emotion, pleasure, and pain.

The Fulkerson Fund for Leadership in the Arts, established by Allan Fulkerson, Williams College Class of 1954, provides intimate opportunities for students to interact with key art world figures; encourages mentoring of Williams students by professionals and Williams alumni in the arts field; creates opportunities that enable students to connect with

local arts leadership, institutions, and resources; and empowers students by making available space and resources for student-initiated experiential projects. The program, administered by the Williams College Museum of Art, is organized around a series of annual events featuring well-known arts leaders.

About the artist

Jenny Holzer was born in Gallipolis, Ohio. She received a B.F.A. in printmaking and painting from Ohio University, Athens, in 1972, and in 1975, she entered the M.F.A. painting program at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in Providence. Holzer moved to New York after earning her degree at RISD in 1977, and enrolled in the Independent Study Program at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Holzer has several honorary degrees including one from Williams College in 2000.

Holzer has been the recipient of several prestigious awards, including the Blair Award, presented by the Art Institute of Chicago in 1982 and the Leone d'Oro award for best pavilion at the Venice *Biennale* in 1990, the Skowhegan Medal for Installation (1994), the Berlin Prize Fellowship (2000), and a diploma of Chevalier from the Order of Arts and Letters from the French government (2002). In 2010, Holzer was given the MOCA Award to Distinguished Women in the Arts.

In addition to the numerous solo and group exhibitions in which her work has appeared, Holzer has also published several books, including *A Little Knowledge* (1979); *Black Book* (1980); *Hotel* (with Peter Nadin, 1980); *Eating Friends* (with Nadin, 1981); *Eating Through Living* (with Nadin, 1981); and *Truisms and Essays* (1983).

Williams College Museum of Art

The Williams College Museum of Art is located on Main Street in Williamstown, Massachusetts. It is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. The museum is wheelchair accessible and open to the public. Admission is FREE. For more information, contact the museum at (413) 597-2429 or visit wcma.williams.edu.

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