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Doublespeak: "The Current Line"

200 WORD SUMMARY//

"The Current Line," is an art book published in 1996, by Johanna Drucker. The pages alternate between blank page and page with print, that have two combining statements: one sentence in a large bold text that overpower smaller red text. The large bold text make a single statement: "All is wealth in the house of the blessed and our advantage is well taken according to the law that constantly presents another wetter dream always about to slip above the simulacral horizon." Drucker uses beautiful prose underneath the singular bolded word per page, or in some cases two words such as the "in the" or "to the," to address her point. Her red-inked poetry discusses the complexities of government and the economy, posing poignant statements such as there being no "poverty worth consideration except in the soul and mind," (pg 9) and the global marketplace spoken in "the totalizing rhetoric of faith" (pg 3). Drucker poses a poetic and satirical doubling of words about the Bush sr. administration, and the contradictions that both lines give while battling for the reader's attention. The top line, the singular bold lettering is one sentence over several pages that seem like an optimistic overshadowing of the complications of the red line. The bottom line, aesthetically from a distance looking like a literal red underlining of the bold text, is occasionally interrupted by a necessary page turn causing the reader to unnaturally pause in the middle of the sentence.

OBJECTIVE DESCRIPTION//

"The Current Line" is a sarcastic protest from Johanna Drucker about the at-the-time administration (published in 1996, but project statement reassures the object is a protest of the Bush administration rather than the Clinton administration) and its effects on the people who live under the administration. The major theme is hypocrisy, shown through the doubling of text.

POTENTIAL RESEARCH CONTEXT//

The potential for research using this text is on a design end, a psychological end, and a political and or historical end. It is both art, and a protest of government. The research can be done in reference to the way artists and designers tamper with the audience or reader's focus and how there could be double meanings on one (or multiple) pages. Historians can look back at one person's protest and the way politics are viewed by a group of people. The psychological potential parallels with the design, on how having sentences being cut short and a forced, unnatural pause until the page is turned and the reader can continue, and the effects that has on the readers ability to process the prose and maintain focus.

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION//

Online as PDF (link at bottom); the original is a spiral bound book at the standard 8.5x11 in landscape print and a quarter inch thick. Twenty-five copies total in print circulation. Text is only printed on one page and leaving the other blank so that the text shows through the backside. The black text takes up most all of the page, allowing space between the black bold font and the red text, and a larger gap from the bottom of the black text and the bottom of the page. Printed

with a laser printer. The black, all caps and bold text draws the reader's attention and makes an airy statement about wealth in the house of the blessed being taken for granted, but takes up so much space that there is only one word per page and requires the reader to flip and skim to obtain the information fast enough, causing them to almost ignore the small print. The red text from afar appears as a simple line, an underlining of the black bold text, but is the criticizing prose of the piece; the red text is multiple sentences that are almost always broken up over multiple pages, forcing the reader to take an unnatural pause in the prose.

EVALUATION OF POTENTIAL RESEARCH//

This work has potential for research, but I fear that the information would be mostly theoretical unless for the "focus" end of research an actual study be conducted using this text. The design end of research I feel like this work provides a great example for minimalist design and structure while being able to provide a deeper meaning and double context with such little material and how the design plays with the reader's attention.

WORKS CITED//

Drucker, Johanna. "The Current Line." Artistbooksonline. Druckwerk, n.d. Web.
<http://www.artistsbooksonline.org/works/line/imageindex/1.1.1.1.xml>