

Writing

Theme 8: Writing

Introduction

Images and words are symbols that both denote actual things, like people, objects, and places, and connote more abstract ideas, feelings, concepts, and theories. Given this shared function, it makes sense that the boundaries between words and images often overlap and that the two are so frequently juxtaposed. Since the dawn of civilization the relationship between written words and pictures has been manipulated to communicate ideas. It has also inspired countless artists around the globe, whose works demonstrate how text and image can enhance, supplement, complicate, or even undermine each other's meanings.

Session

Review:

1. Share your responses to the comparison questions for Domestic Life.
2. Share any other questions or ideas prompted by the previous assignment.

Watch the video Writing video (30 minutes).

Consider/discuss the following:

1. Many faiths convey ideas through sacred texts such as the Torah, the Qur'an, or the Bible. How does the experience of reading a sacred text differ from viewing a site of worship or hearing a sermon?
2. Using examples from the program, discuss the impact of incorporating text with visual imagery.
3. In ancient cultures, writing was considered a gift of the gods. Since few people could read or write, having the ability to write was associated with exclusivity and power. What do works featured in the program convey to those who can't read or understand what is written?
4. How does Xu Bing's approach to calligraphy make the old new?
5. What makes a logo effective?

Between Sessions:

Go to the Web site at www.learner.org/courses/globalart and:

1. Explore featured artworks from this program, including the descriptive text and the expert perspective commentary.
2. Read the chapter about Writing in the downloadable text.
3. On the Web, compare selected artworks by considering the questions posed. Prepare to share your responses by taking notes. Bring your notes to the next session.