

Artist Thread In Focus

Tony Cokes

Carnegie
Museum of Art

Pop Culture

Introduction

“People say you can’t (think and dance) at the same time...But I think you can.”
—Tony Cokes

Throughout his work, Tony Cokes engages with pop culture and the ways it intersects with politics, race, art, media, and power. This unit looks at how pop culture affects us on a regular basis, and how we might become aware of it in our surroundings as a force for good, evil, or something in between.



An orange billboard that says “Entertainment is an industry” by Tony Cokes,
image courtesy of MACRO: Billboard Project

“In some ways, I am critical of the devices and market forces and categorizations that underlie pop culture. At the same time, I think pop music allows for possibilities for personal development and social cohesion. Historically, pop music has allowed certain positions to become socially legible and for people to find community. If I were only critical and saw no potential, I probably wouldn’t deal with pop music as a form and as a subject matter.” —Tony Cokes

“It took me a long time to begin to understand the strange relations between white audiences and Black forms [...] I would maintain that much popular entertainment centers on the divergences and improvisations by Black subjects resisting constructed ideas about race, class, sexual, social and gender norms, even as commodification seeks to erase and resolve such conflicts.” —Tony Cokes

Terms

Culture The set of customs, traditions, and values of a society or community, such as an ethnic group or nation. Culture is the set of knowledge acquired over time. In this sense, multiculturalism values the peaceful coexistence and mutual respect between different cultures inhabiting the same planet. Sometimes “culture” is also used to describe specific practices within a subgroup of a society, a subculture, or a counterculture.

Counterculture A culture whose values and norms of behavior differ substantially from those of mainstream society, sometimes diametrically opposed to mainstream cultural trends. The Beat Poets (from 1950s San Francisco) are one example of a countercultural group.

Culture Industry Originally a term coined by philosophers Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, the “culture industry” refers to commercial and state-owned organizations in the arts and media committed to the production, sponsorship, display, and distribution of cultural goods and services (such as exhibitions, sports events, books, newspapers, and films). A related, perhaps more familiar but less critical, term is Entertainment Industry.

Digital Age Also known as the “information age,” the period of time starting in the 1970s with the introduction of the computer and, later, the internet.

Media The communication outlets or tools used to store and deliver information. Components of the mass media communications industry include print media, publishing, the news, photography, cinema, broadcasting (radio and television), digital media, and advertising.

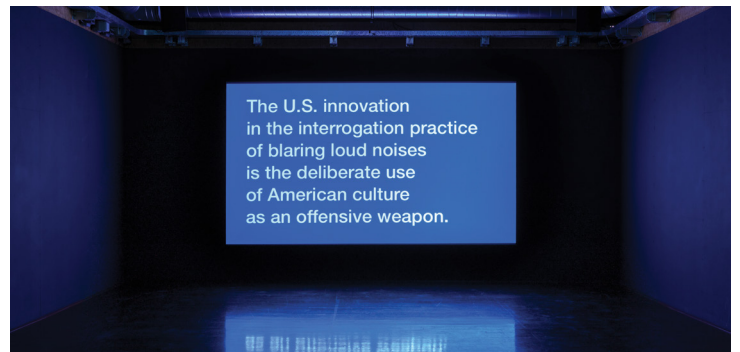
Pop Culture A term coined in the 1950s as an abbreviation of the older phrase “popular culture.” It refers to a set of practices, beliefs, and objects that are dominant or prevalent in a society at a given point in time, including music, movies, TV shows, and other media that the majority of people consume. Pop culture can be linked to the rise of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries, when social changes led to increased literacy rates and wealth, and people began to spend money on mass entertainment. Traditionally associated with the “working classes” and seen as “lowbrow,” pop culture has at times been reappropriated by artists wishing to challenge the hierarchies of “high” and “low”—starting with the “pop art” movement in 1950s and 1960s Britain and the United States.

Terms

Subculture A group of people within a culture that differentiates itself from the prevalent culture, often maintaining some of its founding principles. Subcultures develop their own norms and values regarding cultural and political matters. Examples of subculture include techno and house music, which Tony Cokes incorporates into his work as often as pop culture.

Connect

These images show installation views and still shots of Tony Cokes's video *Evil.16* (*Torture.Musik*). The work refers to torture tactics used by the US military during the so-called War on Terror in Iraq (2003–2011), when US troops blasted Britney Spears, heavy metal, and Barney the Dinosaur's "I Love You" into the ears of Iraqi prisoners at deafening volumes, sometimes for hours on end. The torture took place at Abu Ghraib—a high-security prison near Baghdad, Iraq—and Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp—a military detention camp in Cuba—both of which have been heavily scrutinized as sites of human rights violations. The rooms where the torture by music took place were reportedly called "Disco Rooms."



Billboards by Tony Cokes, images courtesy of BAK

- What do you see going on in these images? Consider the colors, scale, and text.
- What associations might this work bring up for you?
- What questions might you have about it?
- What or who do you think of when you hear the term pop culture?
- What images, sounds, colors, or experiences come to mind?
- How, where, and by whom is pop culture consumed?
- How, where, and by whom is pop culture spread?
- Who is represented in pop culture?
- How does pop culture intersect with the media, art, politics, race, economy, and power?
- In what ways might pop culture be good? In what ways might it be harmful?
- What kinds of culture exist alongside or instead of pop culture?
- What cultures do you identify with?

A Pop Culture Diary

Create #1

Create a “diary” in which you record—through writing, sound, images, or a combination of these—pop culture as it surrounds and influences us on a regular basis.

Goals for this Create

- To understand how pop culture is all around us
- To notice how pop culture affects us personally and politically
- To observe pop culture through a critical lens
- To practice writing, sound recording, photography, or collage

Materials

If writing A notebook and pen

If recording sound A device such as a phone or laptop

If making photographs or collage A camera (including cellphone camera), old magazines, scissors, glue

Connect

- How does pop culture both influence and reflect our everyday life?
- Is it possible to avoid pop culture?
- How has pop culture changed over time?
- What is the relationship between the digital age and pop culture? Think about how audiences have become more and more selective when choosing to listen to or watch what they want.

Create

- 1 Over a set period of time, take an inventory of pop culture in your environment.** For example, you might be on the bus and hear a popular song through your own headphones or playing from someone else’s phone. Or you might be walking down the street and see a poster for a movie like *Star Wars*.
- 2 Record what you hear or see using a recording device of your choosing (blank notebook, sound recording device, etc., or a combination of these).**
- 3 Take quick notes about each recording. Try to jot down anything that comes to mind.**
 - What sensations emerge as you are listening or observing? How might the piece of pop culture affect your mood?
 - How might what you are seeing or hearing relate or not relate to the environment in which you find it? What else do you see or hear around you at the same time? (For example, at the same time as you overhear a fragment of music on the bus, you might hear a baby crying, or see a bird out the window.)
 - How might this piece of pop culture have become popular? Who—including artists, entertainment companies, laborers, and consumers—made it that way?
 - Is there anything particularly interesting or problematic about the piece?
 - What questions do you have about the piece?
- 4 Keeping your notes (from step 3) separate for now, compile your recordings (whether a series of audio fragments, a written list of what you saw or heard, or a series of images) into a single document.**
- 5 Reflect**
 - What is it like to see this mass of pop culture fragments together?
 - In what ways might the grouped fragments impact your interpretation of each individual fragment?
 - How did this project impact the way you think about pop culture?
- 6 Optional Create again!**
 - If you are inspired to make a new work of art based on your compilations—including by placing them in juxtaposition to elements from a subculture or counterculture—please do!

Capitalism

Introduction

Much of Tony Cokes's work offers a critique of capitalism as he explores its relationship to the media, systemic racism, politics, the art world, and more. This section invites a closer look at the history of capitalism, its relationship to inequality, and possible alternatives to the system.



Installation view of SOLO/MULTI, Tony Cokes, *This isn't Theory. This is History*, Museum of Contemporary Art of Rome, 2021; Courtesy of the artist, Greene Naftali, New York, Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles, and Electronic Arts Intermix, New York; *Museum for Preventive Imagination*, MACRO 2021; photo: Simon d'Exéa

Terms

Capitalism An economic system based on private ownership of the means of production and their operation for profit. Its present-day origins can be traced to 16th-century England when a series of revolutions led to a shift from a feudal system—in which a small number of lords held power over large populations of serfs who labored for them—to a mercantile system—when the “Age of Exploration” ushered in a period of trade and buying and selling goods. Later, during the Industrial Revolution, the use of machines in agriculture and manufacturing made capitalism as we now know it even more pronounced. Under this system, which still dominates the US—and global—economy, employees work for employers in exchange for money.

Capitalism, Race, and Inequality Scholars have long linked capitalism to slavery, as its global rise depended on the exploitation of slave labor, particularly in the cotton industry. Its rise also corresponded with the expansion of Western colonial powers as, in their quest to increase production and wealth, they grabbed land belonging to poorer nations (for example, Europe’s colonization of Africa) and Indigenous communities (for example, white America’s genocide of native populations). Today, capitalism continues to dominate at

the expense not only of descendants of enslaved people and other people of color, but of immigrants, the working poor, women, and workers who provide “invisible” or poorly compensated labor, and the environment. Putting power and wealth in the hands of individuals and corporations, it neglects those whose labor and resources it relies on to “succeed.”

Late Capitalism A phrase—first popularized in the mid-20th century—to describe the time between World War II and the 1970s that saw the rise of multinational corporations, mass communication, and international finance. According to political theorist Frederic Jameson, it’s a time when “everything, everywhere, became commodified and consumable”—including art. Nordstrom selling jeans with fake mud on them for \$425. Prisoners’ phone calls costing \$14 a minute. Starbucks forcing baristas to write “Come Together” on cups due to the fiscal-cliff showdown...This is all late capitalism.”

Commodity A good or service produced by human labor and offered as a product for general sale on the market.

Economy A system of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

Terms

Free Market An economic system based on supply and demand with little or no government regulation. Taxes, quality controls, quotas, and other forms of interventions either do not exist or are minimal.

Socialism A political and economic theory of social organization which advocates that the means of production, distribution, and exchange should be owned or regulated by the community as a whole. While intervention by the government

may contain elements of socialism (in the United States, these elements exist—albeit weakly—in the form of welfare, social security, and public education; in places such as Scandinavia, the presence of government support is more strong, for example in free healthcare), advocates of true socialism want power to exist less in the hands of the government (as it does in countries considered socialist) or corporations (as it does under capitalism) than in the hands of workers themselves.

Connect

- What do you think of when you hear the term capitalism?
- Who benefits from capitalism?
- Who might capitalism leave out or harm?
- How might you or people you know participate in capitalism?
- How might capitalism affect you?
- Where does capitalism come from?
- What are possible alternatives to capitalism?
- How might capitalism intersect with the media and pop culture? With politics? With art? With the environment? With race?

An Alternative Billboard

Create #1

Design a “billboard” for a public space that critiques or reimagines capitalism.

Goals for this Create

- To examine capitalism through a critical lens
- To imagine alternatives to capitalism
- To understand the relationship between advertising and capitalism
- To think about language in relationship to design

Materials

Neon paper, colored sharpies, stencils for letters.

Optional Access to PowerPoint or Google Slides.

Terms

Billboard A large, outdoor panel designed to carry advertising.

Look

These images show Cokes’s project *4 Voices/4 Weeks*, an installation of four films that explore police violence and the struggle for civil rights in the United States. They were broadcast in London’s Piccadilly Circus—a center for shopping and entertainment, not unlike New York City’s Times Square.



Billboards by Tony Cokes, images courtesy of CIRCA

This image shows a billboard from an expansion of the exhibition *This Isn't Theory. This is History* at Museo Macro in Rome. Billboards designed by Cokes were spread out across the city, and considered “opportunities for introspection, ideas for an action or thought, or reflections on what’s around us.” Esso is the name of a gas company in Italy. This billboard is in front of a gas station.



A billboard that says “It’s a joke” by Tony Cokes, image courtesy of MACRO: Billboard Project

- What do you see going on in the images? Notice the setting, text, colors, and scale.
- Why might Cokes have selected these settings for these works? What do you imagine it would be like to experience the work in this setting?
- What relationship might this work have to media or advertising? To capitalism? To race?
- Look at the phrase “TMWRK MKS TH DRM WRK.”
- In thinking about capitalism, who do you think might be the “tm,” or “team” here?
- What do you think might be the “drm,” or “dream”?
- Why might Cokes have shortened the spelling of words in this way? How do the shortened words make you feel?
- Look at the phrase “EMMTT TLL WZ MY GRG FLYD.”
- In 1955, Emmett Till, a 14-year-old Black boy, was lynched by a mob of white men near Money, Mississippi. His murderers were acquitted. In 2020, George Floyd was murdered by a white policeman in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- Compare the time when Emmett Till was murdered with the time George Floyd was. What do you think was different about the media?
- What does it mean to magnify this phrase and place it in a public setting?
- Look at the billboard that says “It’s a Joke.”
- What might be the joke?

Connect

- Where might you have seen billboards before?
- What messages do billboards usually convey?
- In what ways might billboards be connected to capitalism?

Create

Imagine you have been commissioned (hired) to design a billboard for a public space, as Tony Cokes did. Where might you place your billboard?

The billboard should

- 1 **Offer a reflection of capitalism and make the audience think critically about it.**
- 2 **Contain a single color as a background, and a piece of text in another color.**
 - How might color affect the meaning of your message?

Optional if you want to veer from Cokes’s style a bit and use a single image as the background, feel free!

- 3 **Include a short text that invites the viewer to reflect on capitalism in some way.** Maybe it’s a short definition of capitalism that points out its inequities. Maybe your text broadcasts one of the many absurdities of late capitalism, as defined above. Maybe you use only one word, for example “capitalism,” with an image in the background. Or you might ask a question that inspires thinking about possible futures, for example, to compare the value of the company Amazon with that of the Amazon jungle, you might ask “Amazon or Amazon?”
 - Experiment with leaving letters out of the text, as Cokes does. How might this change the meaning of the text?
 - Think about and experiment with the shape and size of the text.
- 4 **Make a “model” for your billboard.** You may do so using paper or a digital platform like Google Slides or Microsoft Word.

If using paper

- Create the letters for your text by using the stencil provided or tracing your own letters onto a piece of colored paper and cutting them out.
- Paste the letters onto a different piece of colored paper, or (if using an image as background) over a single image.

If designing digitally

- Type text across a background that’s a single color or image.
 - Experiment with changing the size, shape, and typeface of the text until it fits your message.
- 5 **Optional** Design a series of billboards that could be placed together. Maybe there is a public place that you frequently visit where you can place your billboard.

Sampling

(Text, Sound, Video)

Introduction

Before he became a visual artist, Tony Cokes was a DJ. That practice remains traceable in his work in the way he samples—that is, remixes—text (including political speeches, art criticism, and manifestos) and sound (including techno, house, pop music, and soul). This section invites you to experiment with sampling, or remixing, as a means of creative expression and possible critique.

“I know a lot of people say it’s like stealing or robbing from people. In my opinion, it’s complicated, because it seems to me that arrangements in the music industry [...] also rob artists all the time. So, I don’t know whether there’s a clear path out. It’s kind of a thicket, a tricky relationship.” —Tony Cokes

Terms

Appropriation The act of taking something for one’s own use, typically without the owner’s permission.

Plagiarism The practice of taking someone else’s work or ideas and passing them off as one’s own.

Political Rhetoric Rhetoric is the art of persuasion, of using language—both written and oral—to convince others of one’s point of view, and political rhetoric encompasses the ways politicians try to persuade various audiences. This persuasion is potentially dangerous to democracy, which depends on the voices and opinions of individuals, as it blurs the

line between persuasion and manipulation.

Sample A term used by DJs to describe a portion of a song or recording that can be reused, or sampled from, as an element of a new recording. Samples are typically created using a machine called a sampler.

Time-Based Media Artworks that include video, film, slide, audio, or computer technologies and have a durational quality. In other words, they take place over time. Time-based media became popular in the 1960s. Early practitioners of video art include Nam June Paik and Bruce Nauman. Most of Cokes’s work comprises time-based media.

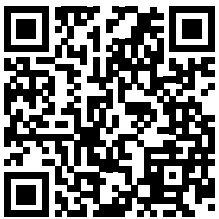
Connect

- Can you think of a song that incorporates sampling? If so, reflect:
- How might sampling affect the mood, rhythm, or overall feel of the song?
- Why might the artist have chosen to use these particular samples?
- Some argue that sampling is a form of plagiarism. What is your opinion? Why or why not?
- Consider collage. What are some similarities or differences between collage and sampling?

Watch

Watch Cokes's *Of Lies and Liars Study 01*. The video features text from journalist David Frum's article "This is Trump's Fault," about the Trump administration's mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic, set to music by artists from the Postal Service to Lali Puna.

Up Close: *Of Lies and Liars Study 01* by Tony Cokes | THE SHED on YouTube:



- What do you notice about the video? Consider the colors, the speed, the music, etc.
- What might it remind you of?
- What sensations or feelings does it bring up for you? These might range from boredom to a desire to dance!
- How does the soundtrack affect the meaning of the text and vice versa?
- What is it like to read text that is presented this way, in video form? Is it pleasurable? Difficult? Both?
- Why might Cokes have chosen this soundtrack?
- Why might Cokes have chosen these colors?
- Why might Cokes have chosen not to use images?
- What questions do you have about the piece, including about the text itself?

Make a flipbook that shows fragments of text over time.

“I pick texts that are related to ideas I’ve been thinking about or want to think about or might be interested in talking about. I’m constantly collecting material.” —Tony Cokes



Installation view of SOLO/MULTI, Tony Cokes, *This isn't Theory. This is History*, Museum of Contemporary Art of Rome, 2021; Courtesy of the artist, Greene Naftali, New York, Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles, and Electronic Arts InterMix, New York; *Museum for Preventive Imagination*, MACRO 2021; photo: Simon d'Exéa

Materials

A text of your choosing (see more below), a pen or pencil, scissors, glue stick, index cards (one per text fragment), rubber band.

Goals for this Create

- To experiment with how breaking a text into fragments might affect its meaning
- To experiment with slowing down or speeding up a text by presenting it “through time” in the form of a flipbook
- To learn how to make a flipbook!

Connect

- How might breaking a text into fragments affect the meaning of the text?
- How does changing the scale of a text impact the meaning? For example, very small words versus very large words?
- How might adding sound to text affect the meaning of the text?

Create

1 Choose a text to break into fragments.

- This could be an article printed from the internet, an article from a magazine, song lyrics, a political speech, an interview with someone, or anything else you might think of.
- The text shouldn't be too long: as short as a few sentences and as long as two paragraphs.
- If you are giving this assignment to a whole class or group, it might be interesting to give everyone the same text and then explore how the results differ.

2 Before you physically break the text, think about how and where you want to break it.

- For example, you might break the sentence: “I’m constantly collecting material” into the following fragments: “I’m constant” / “ly collecting” / “m” / “a” / “t” / “e” / “r” / “i” / “a” / “l”.
- You could also play with repetition. For example: “I’m constant” / “I’m constant” / “I’m constant” / “ly collecting” / “I’m constant” / “material”.
- The possibilities are endless! Think about how your choices affect the meaning of the text.

3 Gather your fragments of text.

- It might help to circle the fragments of text you wish to use. For example, if separating the text in step two you would circle “I’m constant”, “ly collecting”, “m”, “a”, etc.
- Using scissors, cut out the fragments of text you wish to use.

4 Paste each fragment onto a separate index card.

(Alternatively, you could write each fragment onto a separate card.)

5 Stack the cards according to the order you'd like the fragment to read, with the first fragment on top.

6 Wrap a rubber band around the left side of the stack, so that it binds the cards together and you can flip through the cards on the right.

7 You now have a flipbook! Flip through the book and experiment with the speed you flip with. It is likely that the text will move very fast but see if you can slow it down.

8 Reflect

- What is it like to experience the text in this way?
- What is the difference between experiencing text that moves in the form of a flipbook versus text that moves in the form of a video?
- Is there anything you'd do differently if you did the project again?
- Feel free to try it again, using a different text, or changing where you break the fragments!

Make a sound collage that juxtaposes pieces of music or sounds to make something new.

“I’m more interested in foregrounding sound and its production activities than I am in foregrounding the visual image. In my imaginary, montage and narrative are already present in the music, so if I empty out the picture plane, you might have a chance to experience those things.”

—Tony Cokes

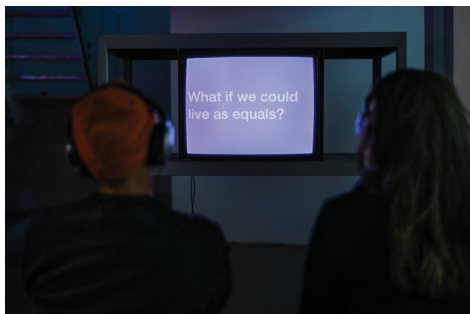


Image courtesy of BAK, Utrecht

Materials

Sound recording device, such as the Voice Memos app on a cell phone. Music playing device, such as a cell phone.

Optional sound editing application, such as GarageBand.

Goals for this Create

- To practice recording sounds
- To become more attuned to sounds in your environment
- To practice editing sounds
- To explore what happens when sounds are rearranged to create something new

Connect

- What sounds are in your daily environment?
- Listen to your surroundings right now. What do you hear? (This might include the sound of engines, nature, human voices, or music.)
- How might music affect our senses in ways other art forms cannot?
- How might music affect our emotions? Our bodies?

Create

1 Using a recording device, begin collecting fragments of sound. Be creative!

- You could record sounds from your daily environment such as a vacuum cleaner, alarm clock, chirping birds, or people talking on the street.
- You could record fragments of music that you hear on the radio or play on YouTube or Spotify.
- You could even record your own voice!

2 Think about what sounds might be interesting if played together. For example, what might happen if you played Beyonce in juxtaposition to Beethoven?! Or Tyler the Creator interspersed with the sound of flipping through pages of a book?

3 Compose a sound piece made up of two or more fragments of sound.

- Record the fragments in sequence, using a device such as a phone or laptop to play songs. (Note: If you are playing songs from a phone, you might not be able to record the song from the same phone, so keep this in mind as you work.)
- For example, you might play a fragment of techno from your laptop, press stop, play a fragment of a spoken word poem from YouTube, press stop, sing or speak into the recording device, and then play a fragment of techno again.
- If your device allows you to play with the speed of what you are recording, experiment with doing so.
- You could record with a specific idea, image, or mood in mind—such as “joy,” “loneliness,” or “the city.” Or you could just play with sound and see what happens.
- **Optional** If you have access to a sound editing application like GarageBand, feel free to use that.

4 Reflect

- Was this assignment interesting or challenging to you? If yes, how?
- How did placing fragments of sound in relationship with others change the meaning of the original sounds?

Make a video that incorporates sound and text.

Goals for this Create

- To gain a better understanding of video art
- To practice making a video
- To understand the potential relationship between text and sound

Materials

Google Slides or PowerPoint. A video recording device like a cell phone or laptop. A sound playing device.

Optional A video editing program like iMovie.

Terms

Video Art Art that involves the use of video and/or audio data and relies on moving pictures. Video art rose to prominence in the 1960s. It appealed to artists because it was cheap and easy to make, enabling them to record and document their performances, and giving them freedom outside the space of galleries.

Connect

- What do you think of when you hear the term “video art”?
- Are all videos art? Why or why not?
- How might video affect us in a way sound or text alone cannot?
- How might the setting of a video affect its meaning? For example, is there a difference between watching a video on your cell phone and watching one in a museum gallery?

Create

- 1 Starting with text or a piece of music, begin to design a short video that incorporates both.**
- 2 Choose a text to break into fragments.**
 - This could be an article printed from the internet, an article from a magazine, song lyrics, a political speech, an interview with someone, or anything else you might think of.
 - The text shouldn’t be too long: as short as a few sentences or as long as two paragraphs.
 - Think about how and where you want to break the text.
 - For example, you might break the sentence: “I’m constantly collecting material” into the following fragments: “I’m constant” / “ly collecting” / “m” / “a” / “t” / “e” / “r” / “l” / “a” / “l”.
 - You could also play with repetition. For example: “I’m constant” / “I’m constant” / “I’m constant” / “ly collecting” / “I’m constant” / “material”.
 - The possibilities are endless! Think about how your choices affect the meaning of the text.
- 3 In PowerPoint or Google Slides, create a series of slides with a single color background.** The number of slides will need to match the number of text fragments you use.
 - Think carefully about the color or colors you use. How might they affect the mood of the piece, or its meaning?
 - Add text to the slides, using the Text Box feature. Make the text a different color from the background.
- 4 Enter “Present” mode and practice moving through your slides using the arrows on your keypad.** Experiment with moving through the text at different speeds.
- 5 Now play your music as you move through the slides.** Practice moving the text in relation to the music.
- 6 Are you ready?** Using a video recording device, record your screen as you move through the slides, all while the music is playing. This recording is your video!

Optional If you have iMovie or other video editing software, you can create text images by using the “Background” feature and then the “Captions” feature to place text on top of the backgrounds. Then you can add music within the software program.

Optional Imagine you will install your video in a specific setting. Where would this be? How might the setting affect the video content?

Color Theory

Introduction

A trademark of Cokes's work, especially in recent years, is his use of bright color as the backdrop to text. This section invites you to explore color as it relates to your environment, your mood, and the broader visual landscape.



Installation view of Tony Cokes, *Testament A: MF FVA K-P X KE RIP*, Goldsmiths CCA, 2019, Commissioned by Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Art, London, UK; Courtesy of the artist, Greene Naftali, New York, and Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles; photo: Andy Stagg

Terms

Color Theory The science and art of using color, encompassing how color affects us psychologically, how we perceive colors, how colors are mixed, matched, or contrasted with one another, and more.

Color Wheel Invented by Isaac Newton in the 1600s, a chart showing the relationships among colors.

Primary Colors Red, yellow, and blue. In traditional color theory (used in paint and pigments), primary colors are the three pigment colors that cannot be mixed or formed by any combination of other colors. All other colors are derived from these three hues.

Secondary Colors Green, orange, and purple. These are the colors formed by mixing the primary colors.

Tertiary Colors The combination of one primary color with one secondary color. There are six tertiary colors on the traditional color wheel: magenta (red-purple), vermillion (red-orange), amber (yellow-orange), chartreuse (yellow-green), teal (blue-green), and violet (blue-purple).

Complementary Colors Opposite colors on a color wheel. This combination provides

a high contrast and high impact color combination—when placed next to each other, these colors will appear brighter and more prominent. When mixed together, however, these colors cancel each other out and produce a grayscale color like white or black.

Lighting Gels Colored, translucent sheets of thin plastic. Photographers, filmmakers, and stage lighting technicians use them as filters to create various moods on set, or to correct lighting issues.

Connect

- What is your favorite color these days?
- How might color affect your mood? Which colors make you feel happy, sad, angry, or calm?
- How might color be used in advertising? In pop culture? In fashion? In politics?
- How might color intersect with stereotypes of race or gender?
- Look around your environment right now.
- What colors stand out to you and why?
- Which colors seem to recede, and why?

Seeing The World Through Colored Lenses

Create #1

Materials

Light gels, a color wheel

Goals for this Create

- To understand the basics of color theory
- To begin to notice the role of color in our daily environment

Create

- 1 Using the provided lighting gels, take a moment to experiment with “mixing” color.** What happens when you place a red gel over a blue gel, for example? Or a yellow gel over a green gel?
- 2 Look at your classroom or the room you are in through one gel, or a combination of gels.** Does this change the feeling of the room, and if so, how?
- 3 Write down a list of colors that you create with the gels.** If it’s a combination of colors, you can write down the name of each color. For example, a red gel overlapped with an orange gel could be, simply, “red-orange.”
- 4 Next to each color, spend a few minutes writing down everything that “looking through” that color brings to mind.** You might list feelings, sensations, objects, places, or anything else. For example, next to “red-orange,” you might list the following: sunset, warmth, fire, dread, or pizza!
- 5 Optional** Compare your list with that of classmates. What are some commonalities or differences between them?
- 6 Reflect** Having done this exercise, do you think differently about the way color is used in advertising, fashion, politics, art, or design? If so, how?

Pop Culture

Capitalism

Sampling

Color Theory