

THE KNIFE CUT  
RUNS AS LONG  
AS IT WANTS  
IT IS THROUGH  
MY STOMACH  
I KEEP LOOKING  
AT IT.  
I HAVE MORE  
COLORS THAN  
I WOULD  
HAVE THOUGHT.  
THE HOLE IS  
LARGE ENOUGH  
FOR MY HEAD.  
THE HOLE WAS  
BIG ENOUGH  
FOR THEIR HANDS  
TO MOVE FREELY.  
THEY PUT THEIR  
FINGERS IN  
BECAUSE THEY  
SHOULD NOT AND  
BECAUSE THEY

Jenny Holzer

**Independent 20th Century**

September 25–27, 2026

VIP day: September 24

New York



**Jenny Holzer**

*Laments: The knife cut runs as long...*, 1989

Nubian Black granite sarcophagus and electronic LED sign

Sarcophagus: 208.3 × 76.2 × 61.9 cm | 82 × 30 × 24 3/8 inches

LED: 325.1 × 24.1 × 11.4 cm | 128 × 9 1/2 × 4 1/2 inches

MSPM JHO 52373

Price upon request

**Jenny Holzer**

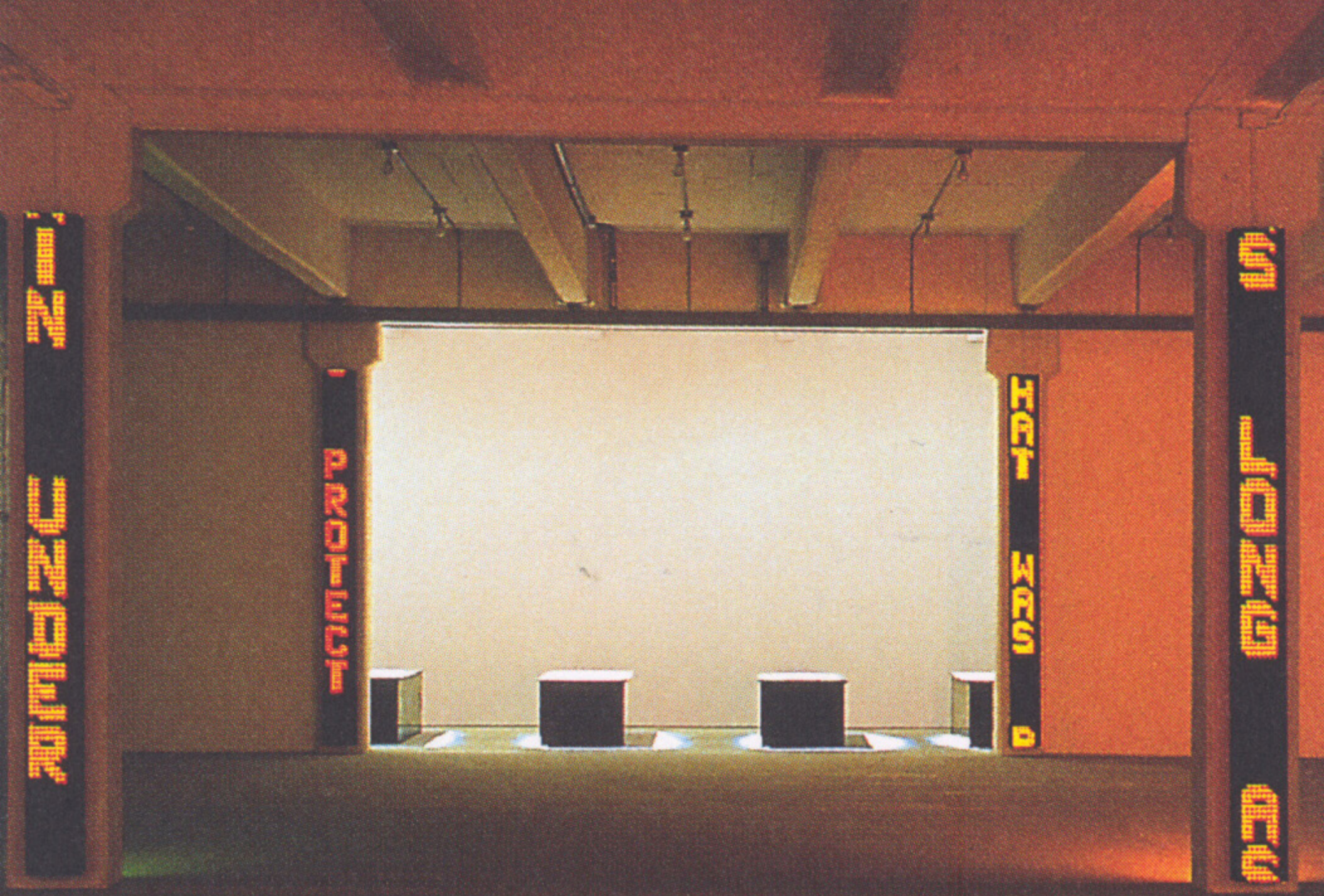
*Laments: The knife cut runs as long..., 1989*



**Jenny Holzer**  
*Laments: The knife cut runs as long...*, 1989







Jenny Holzer, *Laments*, Dia Art Foundation, New York, 1989



Jenny Holzer, *From the Laments Series*, Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, 1995

## Jenny Holzer

### Independent 20th Century

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At this year's iteration of Independent 20th Century, Sprüth Magers is proud to present a sarcophagus and LED work from the *Laments* series by the influential conceptual artist Jenny Holzer, whose text-based practice is an ongoing investigation of language and the construction of meaning. The series was conceived during the height of the 1980s AIDS epidemic, which ravaged New York. With a generation of the city's artistic community decimated, and survivors left grieving their peers, the crisis hit close to home for Holzer. Each text that appears in the *Laments* is a verse written by the artist from the perspective of the dying: a last-breath lamentation. These profoundly haunting meditations appear in two contrasting forms: flashing LED signs, urgent and technological, and carved stone sarcophagi, timeless and classical.

Holzer first presented elements of the *Laments* at Documenta 8 in 1987, where two sarcophagi and two LED signs stood as, in her words, male and female counterparts. Two years later, the expanded staging debuted at the Dia Art Foundation on thirteen synchronized LED signs and thirteen stone sarcophagi. In the LED works, Holzer's words move in columns of colored light between floor and ceiling, restless. The same phrases reappear on the sarcophagi, carved into granite and marble, where they hold still with a quiet permanence. Where the signs cycle through changes of color, typeface and pattern, the words on the stone remain fixed, carved by a technique that carries centuries of funerary tradition. The result is a mood suspended between contemplation and disruption: the signs generate a sense of speed, noise and dazzling optical activity, while the sarcophagi hold the room in silence. The artwork on view here, *Laments: The knife cut runs as long...*, distills that dialogue between light and stone to a single pairing: one sign and one sarcophagus.

The *Laments* also mark a turning point in Holzer's writing itself. Her early *Truisms* (1977–79) spoke in impersonal, aphoristic statements, adopting the voice of an anonymous collective observer. With *Laments*, the artist introduces the pronoun "I" for the first time, though this "I" is not singular, shifting across

a chorus of varied individuals. In this sense, Holzer moves away from her earlier role as narrator and objective witness, choosing instead to inhabit private, individuated perspectives. Her long-standing engagement with social and political subject matter persists, but it becomes more inward and more elegiac, the language retaining its characteristic clarity while gaining a new emotional texture. *Laments* are striking meditations on life and death. They articulate the feelings and paradoxes of grief, sorrow and fear from the first-person perspectives of those whose deaths could have been prevented, giving voice to lives tragically cut short.

Parallel works from the *Laments* series are held by the Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio; Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Broad, Los Angeles; and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Jenny Holzer (\*1950, Gallipolis, OH) lives and works in New York. The Fundação Serralves currently presents her first solo exhibition in Portugal. Major surveys of her work were recently on view at Glenstone Museum, Potomac (2025), the Guggenheim Museum, New York (2024) and Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf (2023), and in 2022 she curated an exhibition on Louise Bourgeois' work at Kunsthalle Basel. Selected solo shows include Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao (2019), and Tate Modern, London (2019), Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams (2017–present), Blenheim Art Foundation, Woodstock (2017), Lune Rouge and Art Projects Ibiza (2016), Museo Correr, Venice (2015), Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin (2011, 2001), DHC/ART Foundation for Contemporary Art, Montreal and The Baltic, Gateshead (both 2010), Foundation Beyeler, Basel and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (both 2009), The Barbican Centre, London (2006), Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (1991), Hamburger Kunsthalle (2000), ICA, London (1988), as well as Dia Art Foundation, New York and Guggenheim Museum, New York (both 1989).

**Berlin**

Oranienburger Straße 18

**Walter Dahn**

*Let's Get Married, Let's Get Lost*

September – October

**Jean-Luc Mylayne**

*Reflection*

September – October

**Salvo**

*La città*

September – October

**Anne Imhof, Arthur Jafa,**

**Jordan Wolfson**

November – December

**London**

7A Grafton Street

**Lucy Dodd**

*The good, the true and the beautiful*

September – October

**Hyun-Sook Song**

November – December

**Los Angeles**

5900 Wilshire Boulevard

**John Baldessari**

*Sculptures*

September – October

**George Condo**

November – December

**New York**

22 East 80th Street

**Thea Djordjadze**

*A well of night*

September – October

**Oliver Bak**

November – December

**Henni Alftan**

*These Days*

Fuhrwerkswaage, Cologne

August 30–September 27, 2026

**John Baldessari**

*John Baldessari. The End of the Line*

Pérez Art Museum Miami – PAMM

Through May 9, 2027

**Bernd & Hilla Becher**

*History of a Method*

Fondazione MAST, Bologna

Through September 27, 2026

**Alighiero Boetti**

SMAC, Venice

Through November 22, 2026

**Thomas Demand**

*Rooms That Dream of the Past*

MAK, Vienna

Through January 24, 2027

*The Stutter of History*

Fundación PROA, Buenos Aires

Through November 29, 2026

**Cao Fei**

*Dash*

Fondazione Prada, Milan

Through September 28, 2026

*Testimonies to the Near Future*

Kunstmuseum Basel

Through October 11, 2026

**Sylvie Fleury**

*First Spaceship on Venus*

MDBK, Leipzig

September 3, 2026 – September 5, 2027

**Cyprien Gaillard**

*When you expect flutes, it's whistles*

Kunsthau Bregenz

Through October 4, 2026

**Nancy Holt**

*MoonSunStarEarthSkyWater*

Goodwood Art Foundation

Chichester, United Kingdom

Through November 1, 2026

**Jenny Holzer**

*Wrong Answers*

Serralves Museum, Porto

Through November 1, 2026

**Anne Imhof**

*House of Swans*

Tai Kwun Contemporary

September 25, 2026–January 3, 2027

**Arthur Jafa**

*I Am Tony*

New Museum, New York

September 24 – January 31, 2027

*Helter Skelter: Arthur Jafa and*

*Richard Prince*

Fondazione Prada, Venice

Through November 23, 2026

**Joseph Kosuth**

*The-exchange-value-of-language-*

*has-fallen-to-zero*

Berggruen Arts & Culture,

Casa dei Tre Oci, Venice

Through November 22, 2026

**David Laelas**

*The Machine*

Dia Chelsea, New York

Through January 16, 2027

*Para algunas caídas no existe la*  
*gravedad*

El Museo de la Memoria y los De-

rechos Humanos, Santiago

Through September 27, 2026

**Michail Pirgelis**

*HYLE*

Kunstraum Dornbirn, Germany

Through November 8, 2026

**Gala Porras-Kim**

*A Recollection Returns with a*

*Soft Touch*

Museo delle Civiltà, Rome

Ongoing

*The Motion of an Alluvial Record*

Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín,  
Medellín

September 9, 2026–March 28, 2027

**Jon Rafman**

*Main Stream Media*

K21 – Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-

Westfalen, Düsseldorf

Through September 27, 2026

**Sterling Ruby**

Sammlung Goetz, Munich

Through October 24, 2026

**David Salle**

*Painting in the Present Tense*

Palazzo Cini Gallery, Venice

Through September 27, 2026

**Martine Syms**

*Collection in Focus: Martine Syms*

The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis

Through May 23, 2027

**Nora Turato**

*pool8*

Bechtler Stiftung, Uster, Switzerland

Through October 11, 2026

**Kaari Upson**

*Dollhouse – A Retrospective*

Museo d'arte della Svizzera italiana -

MASI, Lugano

September 6, 2026–January 10, 2027

**Marcel van Eeden**

*August 6, 1870*

Museum für Neue Kunst im Haus der

Graphischen Sammlung, Freiburg

Through October 18, 2026