



ARTWORK **INSTALLATION FOR THE U.S. COURTHOUSE AND FEDERAL BUILDING, SACRAMENTO**

ARTIST **JENNY HOLZER**

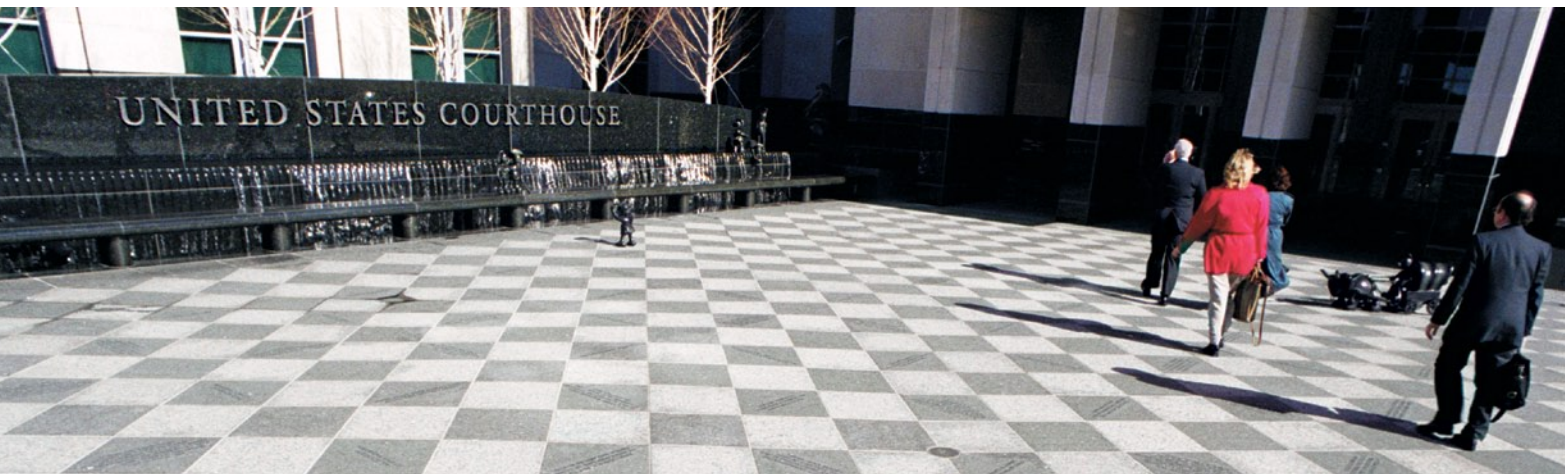
INSTALLED 1999
ROBERT T. MATSUI U.S. COURTHOUSE
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

Jenny Holzer's use of language as a visual-arts medium has greatly influenced the growth of a new genre of text-based art. To create her work, Holzer draws from social, political, and cultural commentaries, as well as her own writings. She presents these texts in diverse media, such as posters, stone benches, electronic LED signs, and—since 1996—xenon light projections in cities around the world.

Holzer first began to receive public attention in 1977 for her *Truisms*, a series of posters that she displayed around lower Manhattan. She printed the posters with her alphabetical lists of aphorisms—such as ABUSE OF POWER COMES AS NO SURPRISE or MONEY CREATES TASTE—that are simultaneously serious and satirical. Holzer soon had her *Truisms* printed on the backs of cash-register receipts, engraved onto marble benches, and even displayed on the giant electronic signboards in Times Square and in sports arenas.

Holzer has said that she uses words as an artistic medium in order to “provoke thinking, emotion, and conversation.” Her artwork for the courthouse in Sacramento presents a selection of statements about the concepts of law, truth, and justice that she has collected from various historical sources. These include traditional legal maxims, as well as the writings of U.S. Supreme Court justices, law professors, activists, and philosophers. The texts were carved into ninety-nine of the courthouse plaza's paving stones and reflect a variety of themes that Holzer has been exploring throughout her career. The engraved paving stones are oriented in multiple directions, providing visitors traveling anywhere across the plaza an easy opportunity to read a sampling of quotations. The words are intended to elicit both reflection and passion from readers, as the artist chose statements that variously complement and contradict one another. With this language-based artwork, Holzer also mimics the vast network of interlocking texts that constitute legal and judicial discourse. WC

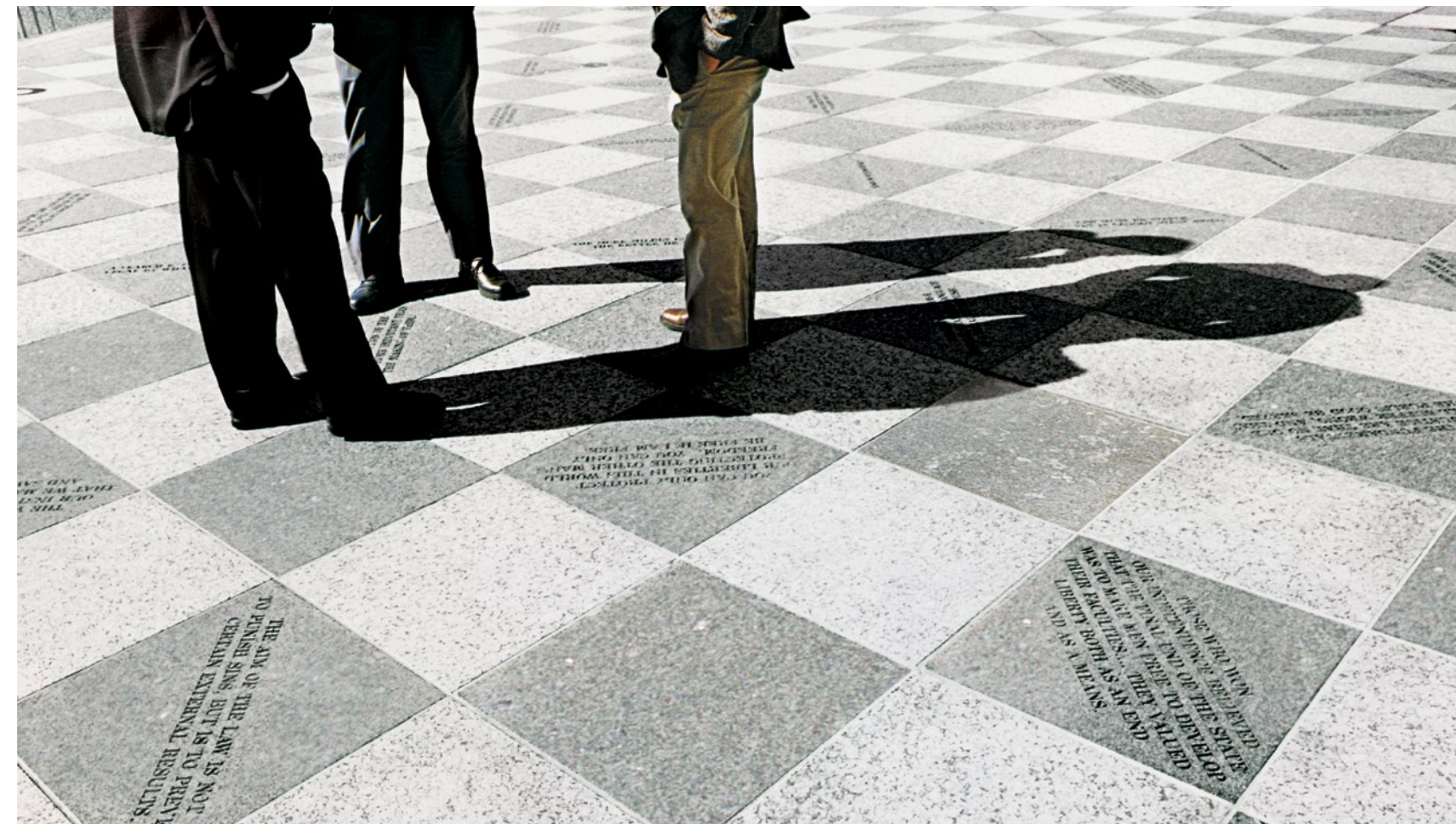
JENNY
HOLZER



Jenny Holzer was born in Gallipolis, Ohio, in 1950 and now lives in upstate New York. She earned her BFA in 1972 from Ohio University in Athens and her MFA in 1977 from the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence, followed by the Independent Study Program at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

The many individual exhibitions of her work include *Jenny Holzer: Projections* (2007-08) at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in North Adams; *Jenny Holzer: Lustmord* (1997) at the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston; and *Jenny Holzer* (1989) at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. Holzer's work also has been shown in many group exhibitions over the past thirty years, including *Meanwhile, in Baghdad* (2008) at the Renaissance Society of the University of Chicago and *High & Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture* (1990) organized by the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which also traveled to museums in Chicago and Los Angeles. In 1990, Holzer was the first woman to represent the United States at the Venice Biennale, where she was awarded the Golden Lion grand prize.

Holzer has completed dozens of permanent commissions around the world, including LED installations for the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego (2007) and, in collaboration with James Carpenter, the 7 World Trade Center Building in New York (2006). Holzer's first GSA-commissioned artwork is *Allentown Benches: Selections from the Truisms and Survival Series* (1995) for the U.S. Courthouse in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and she currently is working on a new GSA commission for the Food and Drug Administration building in Silver Spring, Maryland.



MEDIUM ENGRAVED PAVING STONE

DIMENSIONS NINETY-NINE STONES, EACH 24 IN X 24 IN