

Cambridge Elements

Elements in Corpus Linguistics

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THE IMPACT OF EVERYDAY LANGUAGE CHANGE ON THE PRACTICES OF VISUAL ARTISTS

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment

978-1-009-22573-1 — The Impact of Everyday Language Change on the Practices of Visual Artists

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Frontmatter

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009225731

DOI: 10.1017/9781108909693

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First published 2022

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-009-22573-1 Paperback

ISSN 2632-8097 (online)

ISSN 2632-8089 (print)

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DOI: 10.1017/9781108909693
First published online: April 2022

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Abstract: The practices of visual artists can never be decontextualised from language. First, artists are constantly in dialogue with their peers, dealers, critics and audiences about their creative activities and these interactions impact on the work they produce. Second, artists' conceptualisations of what artistic practice encompasses are always shaped by wider social discourses. These discourses, however, and their manifestation in the language of everyday life are subject to continual change and potentially reshape the way that artists conceptualise their practices. Using a 235,000-word diachronic corpus developed from artists' interviews and statements, this Element investigates shifts in artists' use of language to conceptualise their art practice from 1950 to 2019. It then compares these shifts to see if they align with changes in the wider English lexicon and whether there might be a relationship between everyday language change and the aesthetic and conceptual developments that take place in the art world.

Keywords: visual art, corpus analysis, diachronic corpus analysis, discourse analysis, art and language

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ISBNs: 9781009225731 (PB), 9781108909693 (OC)

ISSNs: 2632-8097 (online), 2632-8089 (print)

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