Jim Johnson

b. 1945, Malden, MA
Lives and works in Denver, CO
@coaster_break

Jim Johnson, a member of the Painting and Drawing faculty of the Department of Art & Art History at the University of Colorado at Boulder since 1970, developed the department's Integrated Media and Computer Imaging programs. He was instrumental in developing the Center for Arts, Media, and Performance for the ATLAS Institute and served as its first Director.

His book/installation, "A Thousand Words" is in the Denver Art Museum's permanent collection. Other books are in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the archives of the Chicago, San Francisco, and Otis Art Institutes.

Artist Statement

My visual work includes several interests; language, typography, procedural composition, and integrated media. When my principal artistic activity was painting, that practice determined the direction of my art. I currently make paintings as part of a larger concept of art which takes whatever form is most suited to its content. My discovery of the international movement called Concrete Poetry in 1968 inspired my work. I have ever since been fascinated by the unique relationship of words and images, especially in the context of language and the visual arts.

I've also made several drawings on paper in recent years, partly out of practical concerns but also to emphasize what I consider to be the ephemeral nature of art. This work, being closer to writing than painting, also highlights the conceptual nature of art. My palette has been reduced largely to black and white and one or two other colors. The scale of much of the work is also relatively small – specifically, the size of a page.

I am a graphic artist in the broadest sense of the word. As such, my work bridges the worlds of literature, poetry, and the visual arts and takes the form of the written and spoken word in several media. My hope is that it will provide the viewer with something like the experience of reading, something thoughtful and personal as well as enjoyable to look at.