



# Wearable Barbara Kruger & Revitalizing a Neighborhood

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by Sandra Hale Schulman

LOS ANGELES—Barbara Kruger has been drawing eyes to her work for decades. As an “extract expressionist,” she uses images from the mass media and pastes big, bold snatches of text over them. Her short and visually loud bursts of words re-edit the meanings of the underlying images and force viewers to take a second look and think twice.

After studying with Diane Arbus and working at Condé Nast’s big gun magazines as an art director, Kruger immersed herself in turning the images of consumer culture into art; she has been exhibiting in museums and galleries since the 1970s.

In the Hamptons, Kruger’s work was the subject of a solo show in 1999 at Guild Hall museum where she wrapped the largest of the galleries with a site-specific installation. The show also included a video piece and other artworks. Kruger has a home in the Hamptons.

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“Plenty” by Barbara Kruger installed at Guild Hall museum. Photo by Gary Mamay.

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Kruger’s latest attention has turned to melding her art with wearability for a cause. The result is a line of limited edition sunglasses produced in collaboration with Freeway Eyewear, founded by artist and writer Alex Israel.

The Kruger sunglasses feature the text “Your gaze hits the side of my face”. The words appear in alternating black and white boxes superimposed on the arms of existing eyewear designs by Freeway Eyewear.

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Sunglasses designed by Barbara Kruger. Image courtesy ForYourArt, Barbara Kruger, and Freeway Eyewear.

Kruger's sentence first appeared in 1981 in *Your gaze hits the side of my face*. The artwork features a photograph of a classic female statue, often considered a symbol of beauty in art history. The words form a descending line running alongside the female's profile. The words are purposefully aggressive and invoke the issue of female objectification and the passive role of receiver of judgement without the possibility of discourse.

The Kruger eyeglass designs leap from the artwork concepts and twists them further. The symbolic focus will shift from conceptual and the safety of art history to the concrete and current when the "object" supporting the statement is no longer a statue but a living and breathing human being.

"Presented on sunglasses, the wearer transforms into both a voyeur and an object; a play on themes of looking, power, and the gaze," states Give Good Art about the excerpt of Kruger's art on the sunglasses.



"Your Gaze hits the side of my face" by Barbara Kruger.  
Image courtesy ForYourArt, Barbara Kruger, and Freeway Eyewear.

The new Kruger eyewear designs come in three styles: tortoise-shell and red; red and black; and a super-sleek, all-black design. A special all-red holiday edition will be released on Dec. 1. The sunglasses, which can be pre-ordered now online, retail for \$200. The Kruger line will officially debut on Nov. 1 at the new pop up store Give Good Art located in LA and presented by [ForYourArt](#) as part of the Hammer Museum's urban renewal project "Arts ReSTORE LA: Westwood".

Sales of the glasses, and other artist objects for sale in Give Good Art benefits the art organizations presenting the project. They include the non-profit art space LAXART, the Art Production Fund, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), and the Santa Monica Museum of Art. Another artist who has been tapped for the project is Kenny Scharf.

"Arts ReSTORE LA: Westwood" is a new initiative that aims to re-energize Westwood Village with the creativity of area Angeleno artisans and craftspeople, according to the Hammer Museum. In November, the Hammer plans to fill some of the empty storefronts with artisan vendors.

By gathering artists, artisans and unique products and presenting them in as a united whole in Westwood Village, "Arts reSTORE LA: Westwood" hopes to inspire property owners to continue the concept when the project ends after Nov. 24. The urban renewal initiative hopes to pave the way to encourage landlords to collaborate with LA's creative community to create a new shopping area featuring unique and locally-made items in an area that typically has high turnover and vacant stores, according to the Hammer.

A series of performances curated by UCLA's Center for the Art of Performance will also accompany the "Arts reSTORE LA: Westwood".

**BASIC FACTS:** "Give Good Art" will take place in 1027 Westwood Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90024 from Nov. 1 to 24 as part of "Arts reSTORE LA: Westwood" sponsored by the Hammer Museum. [www.GiveGoodArt.com](http://www.GiveGoodArt.com)

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