

# Studio Saturdays: Neon Sign

Rollins  
Museum  
of Art

## *Everything For Love* by Tracey Emin

Tracey Emin

*Everything For Love*

2005

Blue Neon

13 37/64 x 59 1/16 in.

The Alford Collection of Contemporary Art at Rollins College, Gift of Barbara '68 and Theodore '68 Alford, Image courtesy of the artist



## LIST OF MATERIALS

- 1 Sheet of White Paper
- Thin Craft Wire
- 6-8 Pipe Cleaners
- Pencil

Tracey Emin is a British artist, born in London in 1963. She became well-known in the 1990s for the way her art brought her personal thoughts and feelings into the public eye in museums and galleries. Although the statements she makes in her neon sign artworks express Emin's own emotions, almost like diary entries, when they are shown in a public space they also serve as general ideas any person viewing the work can relate to. This effect is also seen in Emin's use of neon, as neon signs are usually seen in front of restaurants or shops to draw people in.

Emin's neon sign works are an example of Word Art, a type of art that started in the 20th century. Word Art focuses on words themselves as an art form instead of on images of people or objects. Word Art comes from the larger Graphic Art category. Graphic Art is art that is focused on using line drawings instead of just color to represent images. Illustrations for magazines and posters are an example of Graphic Art. In some Word Art pieces, what the words are saying is the most important part, and in others the shape and look of the words is the focus. Tracey Emin's artworks are a mix of both; although the meaning of the short sentences is important, she also makes it more personal by bending the neon to resemble handwriting. This makes them different from street signs that use fonts created by computers.

**For today's project, we will be making neon signs featuring Word Art. Think of a personal belief you have about a topic and turn it into a slogan. You will want it to be short and to the point. For example, I will be using the phrase "Love Wins" to express that love is the most important thing there is and should be experienced by everyone. We will then turn our words into art, shaping our letters with pipe cleaners in the same way Tracey Emin does with neon light tubes.**

## THINK LIKE AN ARTIST

- 1) What idea will you be using and what does it mean to you?
- 2) Slogans are quick and catchy. How will you turn your idea into a slogan while keeping your full message complete?

# INSTRUCTIONS

1. Determine the words that will make up your sign. Think of the style you want your words to look like. Emin uses her own handwriting to give it a personal touch. How does using your own handwriting make this artwork more personal to you?
2. Use pipe cleaners to curve and bend into the shape of letters. Trim off any extra length with scissors.
3. Determine where the letter will be placed and wrap the ends of the pipe cleaners around each other to connect.
4. Once all the letters have been connected place the word onto the black construction paper and hold it down. Then use a pencil to outline.
5. Carefully use a thumbtack to poke holes into the paper following the drawn pencil line.
6. Cut small bits of wire and place it in the holes, keeping the pipe cleaner underneath it. While holding everything in place, turn the paper over and twist the wire together.
7. Cut out more wire and thread it through the holes until all parts of the pipe cleaner are attached to the paper. You may need to add more holes with the thumbtack as you work.
8. When you're done, flatten the wire against the back of the paper to let it lay flat to complete.