Abstract

While the humanities have become a multimodal domain in which visual culture is immanent and various new cross-disciplinary perspectives and theories are being employed to investigate the relationship between artistic and literary forms of representation, artists’ writings remain understudied and underappreciated. Art/literature studies often proceed by pairing a specific work of art with a particular literary text or an aesthetic style with a poetics or a narrative technique, but they rarely consider situations when both elements of the chosen pair come from the same source – an artist‑writer. But questions related to whether and how an  artist’s ‘natural’ visual disposition may impact on how she/he approaches and handles verbal language and vice versa need to be asked to illuminate what is still a shadow zone in word and image studies. Citing examples of major representatives of American modernism in art and literature, the essay addresses some of the problematic issues involved in studying verbal expression by visual artists and the cogency of posited correlations between the painterly and writerly intuitions and competences at play in artworks and texts produced by artist‑ ‑writers.