

# The Classification of De'VIA: Part II

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*Coffee Shop Notes*

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## Conceptual Identification

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Using the Featured Visual Artists book, which was made available to last summer's Deaf Way II participants and attendees, as the primary visual source for the following analysis, the genre of DeVIA seems to split neatly into two conceptually formed sub-genres: Affirmative and Audist.

Affirmative DeVIA is celebratory at heart. Sign as a liberating force is demonstrated in Chuck Baird's painting "Blooming Outward"; the photographs of Johnston Grindstaff explore visual emotion; and Dieter Fricke's sculptural work such as "Loudspeaker" is abstracted from hand movement. Such works confirm the values cherished in Deaf Culture.

Subject matter in Audist DeVIA is often experientially negative, responding to the oppression so common in Deaf people's lives; for instance, "Take my Rights Away" by Jeannette Patrice is a personal narrative of a false arrest she endured in 1994. Audist DeVIA may also focus on gloomy visions of Deafness, such as in the case of Susan Dupor's "Passenger Pigeons" and Victor Karepov's "The Deaf Man."

In addition to the main dialectical split of concepts in DeVIA, there also exist conceptual markers, or rather, approaches which are used to construct meaning in DeVIA: Linguistic (Sign or otherwise), Narrative, and Iconic. In addition to Grindstaff and Baird, MJ Seltzer, Tony McGregor, and Iris Aranda use linguistic markers as visual devices in their artwork. Narrative approaches might be better described as visual stories, which can be found in the work of Betty Miller and Mexican painter Ixchel Solis Garcia. Iconic refers to symbols and abstractions found in DeVIA, and may cause some consternation because iconic approaches don't always tell the story directly, such as in the case of Alex Wilhite's "Raindrop III" which is a colorful field of geometric lines and shapes.

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