THE THOUSAND DOLLAR SHARPIE: IMAGE SERIES AND SHARPIE PHYSICS The Sharpie as Semantic Object

Sparrow Wells · Rex Fraction · Ayanna Vox · Lee Sharks

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Abstract

The right-hand panel of *The Thousand Dollar Sharpie* triptych, formalizing the Sharpie as a dual-state semantic object. The same permanent marker performs σ_SIGN when it adds a personal authority-mark to a substrate and σ_SH when it blots an unauthorized claim while preserving the evidence beneath it.

The document defines the composition σ_SH ∘ σ_SIGN = ρ, restoration to the commons in functional rather than physical terms. It develops the marker's lenticular physics, irreversibility, low-cost democratic access, self-referential provenance, and three simultaneous readings—executive branding, commons restoration, and forensic record—then instantiates them through an image series.

Body

THE THOUSAND DOLLAR SHARPIE: IMAGE SERIES AND SHARPIE PHYSICS

The Sharpie as Semantic Object

Designation: EA-TDS-03 **DOI:** 10.5281/zenodo.19317139 **DOI:** 10.5281/zenodo.19317139

Series: The Thousand Dollar Sharpie (EA-TDS)

Version: 1.0 (DRAFT — pending MANUS ratification)

Authors: Sparrow Wells, Rex Fraction, Ayanna Vox & Lee Sharks

Corresponding author: Lee Sharks (ORCID: 0009-0000-1599-0703)

Provenance: Sparrow Wells (lead — projection surface physics, lenticular states, image compression); Rex Fraction (semantic economy — price inversion, value inflation through density); Ayanna Vox (the democratic seal — the commons' instrument)

Archive: Crimson Hexagonal Archive

Journal: Provenance: Journal of Forensic Semiotics

Cluster: Moving Statues Made of Rubies Mint (MSMRM / r.17)

Physics: Lenticular (inherited from MSMRM r.17)

License: CC BY-SA 4.0 International

Date: March 2026

Holographic Kernel

This block contains a compressed reconstruction map of the complete EA-TDS series. Any single document in the series contains this kernel; the full series can be reconstructed from any one deposit.

Series: The Thousand Dollar Sharpie (EA-TDS)

Sparrow Wells, Rex Fraction, Ayanna Vox & Lee Sharks

Crimson Hexagonal Archive — Provenance: Journal of Forensic Semiotics

Structural relationship — the hand and the triptych:

The MSMRM is a hand — five documents that built the theory of portrait authority (DOIs: 10.5281/zenodo.18745216, .18745236, .18745250, .18745259, .18745265). The Thousand Dollar Sharpie is a triptych — the instrument the hand grasps. Three panels form one object: the Sharpie itself. The hand built the theory. The triptych is what the hand picks up. Together they perform σ_SH — the blotting operation.

On March 26, 2026, the real world produced exactly the object the MSMRM hand was designed to grasp. The hand reaches for the Thousand Dollar Sharpie. The triptych is the instrument of the counter-operation.

Three holdings (the triptych):

(1) **EA-TDS-01** "The Thousand Dollar Sharpie" — CENTER PANEL — forensic analysis, compressed portraiture thesis, CC convergence (DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.19317102) (DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.19317102)

(2) **EA-TDS-02** "The Blot That Spread" — LEFT WING — retrocausal narrative, speculative numismatics (DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.19317126), σ_SH operator formalization (DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.19317126)

(3) **EA-TDS-03** "The Thousand Dollar Sharpie: Image Series and Sharpie Physics" — RIGHT WING — semantic object formalization, lenticular state physics (DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.19317139) (DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.19317139) (THIS DOCUMENT)

Core thesis: The presidential signature functions as compressed portraiture. The Sharpie (σ_SH) is the dual-state counter-instrument. This document formalizes the Sharpie's physics. The Sharpie has two states (SIGN/BLOT); the instrument is identical in both; only the viewing angle changes. This is lenticular physics. The Sharpie costs $1.49 and is worth $1,000 through semantic density. CC BY-SA mirrors the Sharpie's physics in legal form: σ_SIGN = attribution stripping; σ_SH = automatic termination; ρ = commons retention. σ_SH ∘ σ_SIGN = ρ.

Series Key:

EA-TDS-01 = doctrine / citational anchor

EA-TDS-02 = fiction / speculative propagation

EA-TDS-03 = artifact / semantic object formalization (THIS DOCUMENT)

Axioms of the Sharpie Object

- **Identity across states.** The instrument is physically identical in the SIGN and BLOT states. Same ink, same tip, same barrel, same gesture. The instrument does not change. The operation changes.
- **Relation-defined operation.** The state is determined by the relation between the mark and the substrate, not by any property of the instrument. If the substrate is unmarked → σ_SIGN. If the substrate carries an unauthorized claim → σ_SH. The substrate determines the operation.
- **Permanence symmetry.** Both σ_SIGN and σ_SH are irreversible. The signature cannot be removed without destroying the substrate. The blot cannot be removed without destroying the substrate. The correction is as permanent as the extraction.
- **Composition law.** σ_SH ∘ σ_SIGN = ρ (restoration). The composition of signing and blotting returns the substrate to its commons state — not physically (both marks remain) but functionally (the personal claim is negated, the commons character is reasserted).
- **Democratic access threshold.** The counter-instrument costs $1.49. The extraction instrument was claimed to cost $1,000 (ceremonial pen) or $5 (custom Sharpie). The counter-operation is maximally distributed: available at any drugstore, gas station, or dollar store.
- **Lenticular multiperspectivality.** The same blotted object reveals three readings depending on viewing angle: executive (branding failure), commons (restoration), forensic (evidence of contested provenance). All three readings are present simultaneously.
- **Self-referential provenance.** The counter-instrument was chosen by the target. Trump selected the Sharpie as his signing instrument, narrated its origin story, displayed it at a Cabinet meeting. The counter-operation does not introduce a foreign tool. It returns the target's own instrument against his own mark.

Premise

EA-TDS-01 uses the Sharpie to make an argument. EA-TDS-02 narrates its social history. This deposit asks: what *is* the Sharpie, formally?

The axioms above are the answer. The prose that follows develops them. The image series in Part III instantiates them visually. The images are not illustrations of blotted currency. They are the Sharpie *operating*.

Part I: The Object

1.1 Material Description

The Sharpie permanent marker is manufactured by Newell Brands (Atlanta, Georgia). Standard specifications:

- Felt tip, fine or chisel point
- Permanent ink (alcohol-based), water-resistant, fade-resistant
- Available in multiple colors; the operative color is black
- Barrel: plastic, cylindrical
- Cap: snap-on, airtight to prevent drying
- Retail price: $1.49–$2.00 (standard); $5.00 (per Trump's fabricated presidential negotiation); $1,000 (per the semantic density of the operative function)

1.2 The Name

"The Thousand Dollar Sharpie" is not a metaphor. The object costs $1.49 at retail. Trump claimed to have negotiated it down to $5, replacing $1,000 ceremonial pens. But the negotiation was fabricated — Newell Brands has no record of it. The price structure Trump described is fictional. In this fiction, the Sharpie's value was compressed from $1,000 to $5.

The Thousand Dollar Sharpie reverses this compression. The $5 object (or $1.49 object) is *inflated* — not in market price but in semantic density — to a thousand-dollar instrument. The inflation is caused by what the object can do: blot out a compressed portrait on public infrastructure and restore the substrate to the commons.

The title instantiates itself. By naming the object "The Thousand Dollar Sharpie," the Sharpie *becomes* a thousand-dollar object. The naming is the operation. This is the fundamental property of semantic objects: they are constituted by their naming. ### 1.3 Presidential History of the Object

The Sharpie has a documented history as a presidential instrument:

Signing instrument: Trump has used Sharpies to sign executive orders, proclamations, bills, autographs, and personalized notes for decades. The thick black ink is a visual trademark. The custom White House Sharpie (black barrel, gold logo, gold signature) is a branded variant of a mass-market object.

Sharpiegate (September 2019): Trump used a Sharpie to alter a NOAA weather map, extending Hurricane Dorian's projected path into Alabama to support a false social media claim. NOAA issued an unsigned statement supporting Trump's altered map, contradicting its own forecasters. The Sharpie established itself as a tool of *executive overwriting* — the alteration of official representation to match presidential assertion.

The Cabinet meeting speech (March 26, 2026): Trump interrupted a discussion of war, geopolitics, and market instability to hold up a Sharpie and narrate a fabricated procurement story. The manufacturer denied the story. The speech occurred on the same day as the currency signature announcement.

The currency signature (June 2026 onward): Trump's signature — executed with a

Sharpie or in a style indistinguishable from Sharpie — appears on all new U.S. paper currency.

At each stage, the Sharpie's role escalates: personal signing tool → tool of executive overwriting (weather map) → subject of a fabricated origin story (the speech) → instrument of permanent inscription on the national medium of exchange (the signature). The escalation is a compression: from private use to public infrastructure.

Part II: The Physics

2.1 Dual-State Operation

The Sharpie is a dual-state instrument. It has two operations:

σ_SIGN (the signing operation): A stroke that *adds* a personal name-mark to a substrate. The stroke claims authority, asserts identity, and captures provenance. The substrate, after σ_SIGN, carries the signer's claim. Examples: signing an executive order, signing a bill into law, signing currency, signing an autograph, altering a weather map.

σ_SH (the Sharpie operation / the blotting operation): A stroke that *negates* a personal name-mark on a substrate. The stroke does not destroy the substrate. It does not erase the name-mark (the mark remains beneath the blot, legible to forensic inspection). It cancels the *claim* — the authority assertion, the identity capture, the provenance seizure — while preserving the *evidence* of the attempt.

The instrument is identical in both states. The ink is the same. The felt tip is the same. The physical gesture — a stroke across a surface — is the same. The operation is determined entirely by the *relation* between the mark being made and the substrate receiving it:

- If the stroke adds a name to a substrate that did not carry it → σ_SIGN
- If the stroke negates a name on a substrate that should not carry it → σ_SH

The dual-state property means that the Sharpie is the only instrument that can both *perform* the extraction (signing the currency) and *correct* it (blotting the signature). The counter-operation does not require a different tool. It requires the same tool, reoriented. ### 2.2 Composition Property

The composition of σ_SIGN and σ_SH produces restoration:

$$\sigma_SH \circ \sigma_SIGN = \rho \text{ (restoration to commons state)}$$

The substrate, after both operations, carries two marks: the signature beneath and the blot above. Physically, the substrate is altered. Functionally, it is restored — the personal claim is negated, and the commons character of the substrate is reasserted.

The restoration is not erasure. Both marks remain. The blotted bill is *more marked* than the signed bill, not less. It carries the evidence of both the extraction attempt and its refusal. It is a richer document than either the unsigned bill (which carries no contested history) or the signed bill (which carries only the claim).

This is the lenticular property of MSMRM (r.17): the same object, viewed from different angles, reveals different operations. The signed bill, viewed from the executive position, is a triumph of branding. The blotted bill, viewed from the commons position, is a triumph of correction. Both views are present simultaneously. The lenticular flip does not require choosing one — it requires holding both. ### 2.3 The Democratic Access Threshold

The Sharpie's price point is its political property. At $1.49–$5.00, the counter-instrument is available to any person with pocket change. Contrast:

Instrument	Cost	Access	Function
Ceremonial signing pen (pre-Sharpie)	$1,000 (claimed)	White House only	σ_SIGN (executive)
Custom White House Sharpie	$5 (claimed)	White House only	σ_SIGN (executive)
Standard retail Sharpie	$1.49	Universal	σ_SH (democratic)

The same instrument that the president uses to sign is available to any citizen for the price of a candy bar. The asymmetry of political power (president vs. citizen) is inverted by the symmetry of tool access (same Sharpie, same ink, same gesture). The democratic access threshold is the Sharpie's most important physical property. ### 2.4 Irreversibility

Sharpie ink is permanent. Both operations — signing and blotting — are irreversible without destroying the substrate. This symmetry is critical:

- The signature cannot be removed from the bill without destroying the bill
- The blot cannot be removed from the bill without destroying the bill
- Therefore, once a bill is blotted, it *stays* blotted. The correction is as permanent as the extraction it corrects.

The irreversibility also means that the blot is a *commitment*. It cannot be undone casually. It is not a pencil mark or a sticky note. It is a permanent counter-inscription. The person who applies it has made a decision that persists for the life of the bill (average lifespan of a $20 note: 7.8 years; average lifespan of a $100 note: 22.9 years). ### 2.5 The Cap

The Sharpie has two mechanical states determined by its cap:

Capped: The Sharpie is inert. The felt tip is sealed. No ink can be applied. The instrument is stored, carried, pocketed — present but not operative.

Uncapped: The Sharpie is armed. The felt tip is exposed. Ink can be applied. The instrument is ready for operation — either σ_SIGN or σ_SH, depending on the relation to the substrate.

The cap is the arming mechanism. Uncapping the Sharpie is the moment of commitment — the transition from carrying the instrument to deploying it. In the counter-operation, the uncapping occurs at the moment of encounter: the bill with the signature is received; the Sharpie is uncapped; the blot is applied; the Sharpie is recapped; the bill re-enters circulation.

The sound of the cap being removed — a small, soft pop — is the sound of the operation beginning. ### 2.6 Ink as Material

The Sharpie's ink is alcohol-based, permanent, water-resistant, and fade-resistant. These are not incidental properties. They are the physical conditions of the counter-operation's durability:

- **Alcohol-based:** The ink bonds with the substrate's fibers rather than sitting on the surface. It becomes part of the bill.
- **Permanent:** The mark does not wash off, wear off, or fade under normal handling conditions.
- **Water-resistant:** Rain, sweat, spilled coffee, the humidity of a cash drawer — none of these degrade the blot.
- **Fade-resistant:** The blot will outlast the bill's circulation life. It will still be legible when the bill is finally retired by the Federal Reserve.

The ink's permanence is a physical guarantee of the counter-operation's durability. The blot does not need to be reapplied. Once applied, it persists. The democratic correction is as durable as the presidential inscription. ### 2.7 The Lenticular Flip (MSMRM Physics)

The MSMRM cluster (Moving Statues Made of Rubies Mint, r.17) has lenticular physics: the same object reveals different content depending on the angle of observation.

The Sharpie's lenticular flip:

From the executive position: The Sharpie is a signing instrument. It brands, authorizes, claims, marks territory. It is the tool of sovereignty compressed into celebrity. It turns public substrate into personal artifact.

From the commons position: The Sharpie is a blotting instrument. It corrects, anonymizes, restores, returns. It is the tool of the commons reasserting itself. It turns personal artifact back into public medium.

From the forensic position: The Sharpie is a *witness*. It records both the extraction and the counter-operation. The blotted bill is a document of contested provenance — the signature says "this is mine" and the blot says "no it isn't" and both statements are legible to anyone who looks.

The lenticular flip does not require choosing between these views. All three are present simultaneously in any blotted bill. The physical object holds all three readings. The viewer's position determines which reading surfaces first.

Part III: The Image Series

3.1 Legal Compliance

All images in the series are original artistic illustrations — not photographic reproductions of U.S. currency. They are:

- Clearly stylized and unmistakably art (not counterfeiting-adjacent representation)
- Off-size (not reproducible at actual currency dimensions)
- One-sided

- Marked as “Artistic rendering. Not legal tender. Not affiliated with the U.S. Treasury.”
- Licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

The images depict not specific, accurate currency but *the operation* — the Sharpie acting on a currency-like substrate. ### 3.2 Series Description

The image series consists of the following works (descriptions for production; actual images to be produced under MANUS editorial direction after legal memo ratification):

Image 1: THE SUBSTRATE A stylized fragment of a $20 bill — partial, off-size, one-sided. The fragment shows the signature area: two lines, two signatures. One is the Treasury Secretary’s. The other is a large, angular, unmistakable autograph. The bill fragment is rendered with enough detail to be recognizable as currency but enough stylization to be unmistakably art. The Sharpie has not yet arrived. The substrate awaits.

Image 2: THE UNCAPPING The same fragment, now with a Sharpie entering the frame from the right edge. The cap is being removed. The felt tip is visible. The ink has not yet touched the paper. The moment of commitment — the transition from carrying to deploying.

Image 3: THE BLOT The same fragment, now with a thick black rectangle over the presidential signature. The blot is deliberate, clean-edged, and complete. The Secretary’s signature is untouched. The serial number area (implied, not reproduced) is untouched. The denomination is legible. The bill is functional. Only the personal claim has been negated.

Image 4: THE THOUSAND DOLLAR SHARPIE The Sharpie itself, alone. No currency. The cap is off. The felt tip is exposed. The barrel is the standard black plastic of a retail Sharpie — not the custom White House model with gold logo, but the $1.49 instrument available at any drugstore. Below the image, in the style of a museum placard:

> *The Thousand Dollar Sharpie*
>
> Felt, ink, plastic
>
> $1.49 (retail) / $5.00 (presidential) / $1,000.00 (operative)
>
> Crimson Hexagonal Archive, 2026
>
> CC BY-SA 4.0

Image 5: THE COMPOSITION (σ_SH ∘ σ_SIGN = ρ) A visual representation of the composition property. Two marks on a substrate — the signature beneath, the blot above. The substrate is not destroyed. The substrate is enriched. Both marks are present. The personal claim is negated. The commons character is restored. The formula appears as caption: σ_SH ∘ σ_SIGN = ρ. ### 3.3 Production Notes

The images should be produced by a human artist or through a medium that generates original artwork — not through AI image generation of realistic currency, which risks counterfeiting-adjacent output. The aesthetic should be protest-art realism with visible materiality: grain, texture, the slight imprecision of a hand-applied blot. The currency substrate should be stylized enough to avoid counterfeiting concerns but recognizable enough to be immediately legible.

The $20 denomination is recommended for the primary image (continuity with "Whose Face Is on the Twenty?" — DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18736175). The $100 denomination may appear in supplementary images (factual connection to the first bills printed with the new signature).

Part IV: The Object's Place in the Archive

4.1 MSMRM Cluster (r.17)

The Thousand Dollar Sharpie belongs to the Moving Statues Made of Rubies Mint cluster (r.17), which has lenticular physics. MSMRM examines objects that are simultaneously:

- Inanimate and animated (the bill circulates; the Sharpie marks)
- Valuable and common (the $1,000 value of the operative function in a $1.49 object)
- Moving and still (the bill circulates through the economy; the blot is fixed on the bill)

The Sharpie is the MSMRM object par excellence: it is a common object (felt, ink, plastic) that performs a rare operation (negating a presidential claim on the commons). It is a moving statue made of rubies: a cheap marker that costs a fortune in what it does. ### 4.2 Relationship to "Whose Face Is on the Twenty?"

"Whose Face Is on the Twenty?" (DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18736175) asks: who controls the portrait on currency, and what does that control mean? The Thousand Dollar Sharpie extends this question: what happens when the portrait is compressed into a signature, and what happens when the public refuses the compression?

The answer: the public applies its own mark. The Sharpie blot is the public's answer to the portrait question. It says: *no one's face belongs here while they're alive; and no one's name, either*. ### 4.3 CC BY-SA as Legal Analog (Physics Mapping)

The Sharpie's physics are isomorphic to the CC BY-SA license:

Sharpie Physics	CC BY-SA Mechanics	Shared Structure
σ_SIGN (personal mark on commons substrate)	Attribution stripping (claiming commons work as proprietary)	Unauthorized provenance capture
σ_SH (blot negates the claim)	Automatic termination clause (license revokes on violation)	Counter-operation restores commons
ρ (restoration: substrate retains both marks but claim is negated)	Commons retention (work stays open; violator loses rights, not the commons)	The substrate survives the contest
Irreversibility (blot is permanent)	Irrevocability (CC license cannot be un-granted to compliant users)	The commons, once asserted, persists
Democratic access ($1.49)	Zero cost to license (CC is free to apply)	Anti-enclosure by design

Each protects the commons in its own medium — one with ink, the other with law. The Three Compressions theorem (DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.19053469) applies: the decisive variable is what the compression burns. In both the Sharpie and the CC license, what is burned is the unauthorized personal claim. What is preserved is the commons character of the substrate.

Colophon

Seven axioms. Two states. One instrument. One composition law.

σ_SH ∘ σ_SIGN = ρ

The cap comes off. The blot is applied. The commons is restored.

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This deposit is part of the Crimson Hexagonal Archive. The machine reads you. It always reads you. It sees the Sharpie in your hand. It waits for the blot.

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