SPEAKING VOLUMES
TRANSFORMING HATE

ARTIST STATEMENTS & BIOGRAPHIES

For the 2018 Exhibition Tour of Utah

Speaking Volumes | Transforming Hate showcases the diverse work of more than thirty artists who have transformed thousands of hateful white supremacist books into uplifting works of art. This stunning exhibition challenges and moves visitors with its thought-provoking and occasionally light-hearted collection of artwork, and provides honest opportunities to address discrimination in our communities and racism in America.

All artwork in this exhibition is on loan from the Montana Human Rights Network in partnership with Utah Humanities.

UTAHHUMANITIES
Ideas in Action

SPRINGVILLE MUSEUM OF ART

UNION STATION
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Speaking Volumes | Transforming Hate, an exhibition from the Montana Human Rights Network curated by Katie Knight, is brought to Utah by Utah Humanities and is touring in partnership with the Springville Museum of Art and the Ogden Union Station Foundation.

SPEAKING VOLUMES | TRANSFORMING HATE

Returning violence for violence multiplies violence,
adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars.
Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.

— REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., *Strength to Love*, 1963

The story behind Speaking Volumes | Transforming Hate begins with the Creativity Movement, formerly known as the World Church of the Creator. It was one of the most virulent and violent of white supremacist groups and upheld Adolph Hitler as a religious prophet. Its leader, Matt Hale, was convicted of conspiracy to murder a federal judge. One of its "reverends" went on a shooting spree in Illinois, targeting people of color and Jews. In the early 1990s, Creativity Movement activities began in Montana. The Montana Human Rights Network formed to monitor and counteract these and other expressions of bigotry and hate.

In 2003, a defector from the Montana faction of the Creativity Movement offered to sell to the Network over 4,000 World Church of the Creator books and materials. The Network purchased the books for a small sum, taking them out of circulation and depriving the group of a significant source of ideological continuity and sales income. The books had served to keep the group afloat during internal leadership conflicts following the founder's suicide.

The stockpile of books included thirteen titles by the group's founder, Ben Klassen, who promoted violence and extreme forms of racist, anti-Semitic, anti-Christian, and homophobic beliefs. The Network sought a positive use for the books and asked several artists to transform them into creative, thought-provoking works of art. The Network then invited the Holter Museum of Art to turn this concept into an exhibition.

This idea fired my imagination and sense of justice. I pitched the Network's proposal to my colleagues at the Museum, where I served for eight years as Curator of Education. They accepted the challenge and we invited other organizations to participate — including the Lewis & Clark Library and Helena Public Schools — making the project a community collaboration. We sent invitations to prominent artists renowned for their work involving social justice and their leadership in the use of art as civil dialogue. We also sent out a national call for proposals and selected a wide array of media and concepts by sixty artists and artist teams. We designed educational programs for visitors of all ages, facilitated dialogue in the galleries, and led hands-on art activities to empower people, especially youth, to contribute their artistic expressions.

This exhibition demonstrates the diverse strategies adopted by artists in response to the original books. They rewrite the words to transform their meaning, find irony and humor in human foibles, celebrate unity, and create models for teaching tolerance. They construct new contexts for the books. Some artists choose not to handle the actual books; instead they offer examples of creativity designed to make sense of chaos or affirm kindness and compassion. Some artists expose the tragic consequences of hate: racial slurs, antisocial behavior, lethal weapons, and genocide. Many of the artists ask us to reflect on how we convey values to our children, suggesting that we transmit respect and love for others instead of passing on bigotry and hate.

The urgency of this exhibition is underscored by the rising tide of hate groups as their organizers exploit people's economic insecurity, and fuel anger over non-white immigration and the election of the first African-American president. While white supremacist groups represent an extremist perspective, intolerance and prejudice surface repeatedly in mainstream society. Anti-immigrant rhetoric and gay-bashing pepper campaign speeches, schoolyard banter, and jokes passed across the internet. Hate crimes are on the rise. The mass media perpetuates negative stereotypes of ethnically Arab and Muslim people. The incarceration rate for African American men has soared. Native American students face greater odds against graduating from high school, and institutional discrimination continues to limit opportunities for women, children, and people of color, resulting in disproportionate poverty.

In January 2008, the exhibition of Speaking Volumes | Transforming Hate first opened at the Holter Museum of Art in Helena, Montana. Ten museums across the state presented the traveling exhibition over the course of the next three years. Now the Montana Human Rights Network is committed to giving other communities the opportunity explore the art, ask questions, engage in dialogue, deepen understanding, and strengthen justice.

In the words of W.E.B. Du Bois, "Begin with art, because art tries to take us outside ourselves. It is a matter of trying to create an atmosphere and context so conversation can flow back and forth and we can be influenced by each other."

— Katie Knight
Curator of Speaking Volumes | Transforming Hate

John Buck
Bozeman, Montana
Phoenix Rising, 2006
Woodcut print

This visually complex woodblock print depicts a central image of a Phoenix, which is a mythological symbol of renewal and rebirth. The Phoenix is surrounded by a graphic constellation of icons and symbols that reflect our troubled times.

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Born in Ames, Iowa in 1946, artist John Buck has a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Kansas City Art Institute, studied at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Skowhegan, Maine, and received a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of California, Davis. Over the past four decades, Buck has created a large and significant body of artwork, made up of woodblock prints, sculpture and three-dimensional wood panels. His work is in public collections all over the country. Buck and his wife, artist Deborah Butterfield divide their time between a ranch in Bozeman, Montana and studios on the island of Hawaii.

Nick Cave
Chicago, Illinois
Profiling, 2007
Mixed media

A national debate rages in the media and on the streets in response to the widespread and controversial practice of racial profiling, wherein law enforcement considers ethnic traits when predicting whether or not a person may be a criminal.

This project started in 2004 and in 2018 we are still being racially profiled.

What a PITY and a SHAME.

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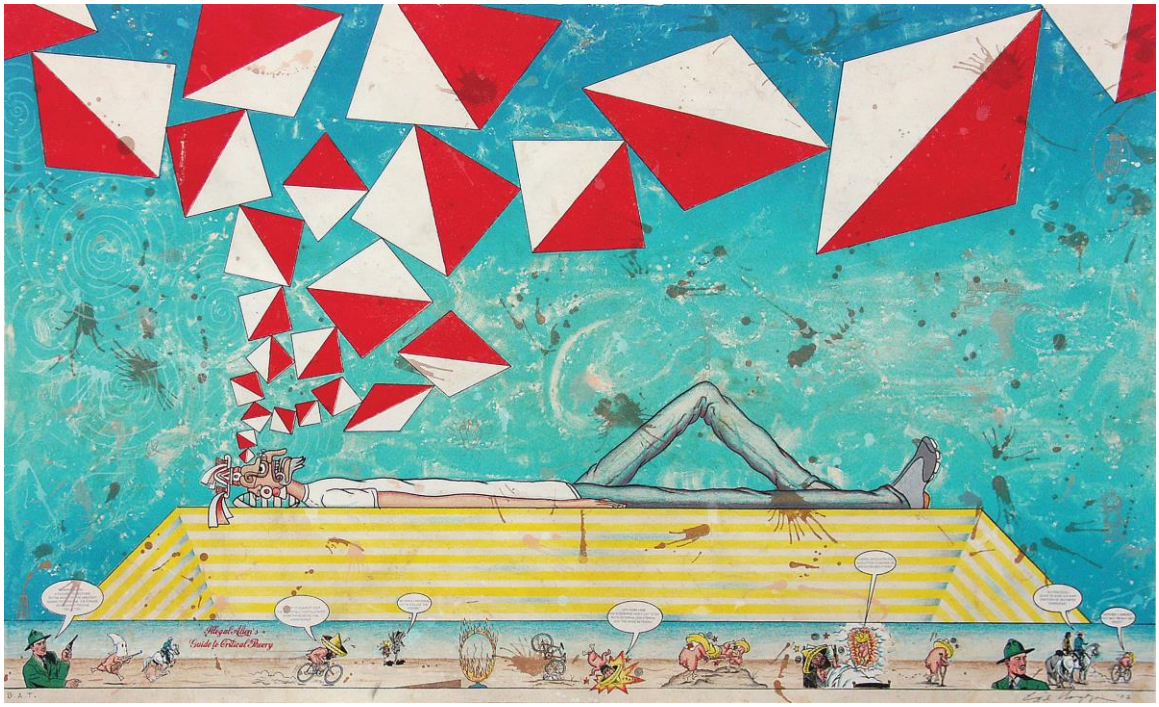
Nick Cave, an artist and educator working out of Chicago, is the creator of full body "soundsuits" which are made from layers of metal, plastic, fabric, hair, found objects, and other things that rub together to make noise. Many of Cave's soundsuits are politically and socially inspired and have deeper meanings than just looking fantastic and making rustle sounds.



Enrique Chagoya
San Francisco, California
Illegal Alien's Guide to Critical Theory, 2007
Color lithograph

Although human migration is an ancient phenomenon, current immigration patterns in the United States trigger dehumanizing rhetoric such as labeling people "illegals."

Current immigration policies fail to address underlying economic forces and instead penalize people who have often simply migrated for work in order to sustain their families.

Chagoya approaches – with irony – the meaning and history of immigration, treatment of native people, and deeply embedded stereotypes. These works engage viewers with the complexity, absurdity, and misconceptions that color national debate on immigration policy.

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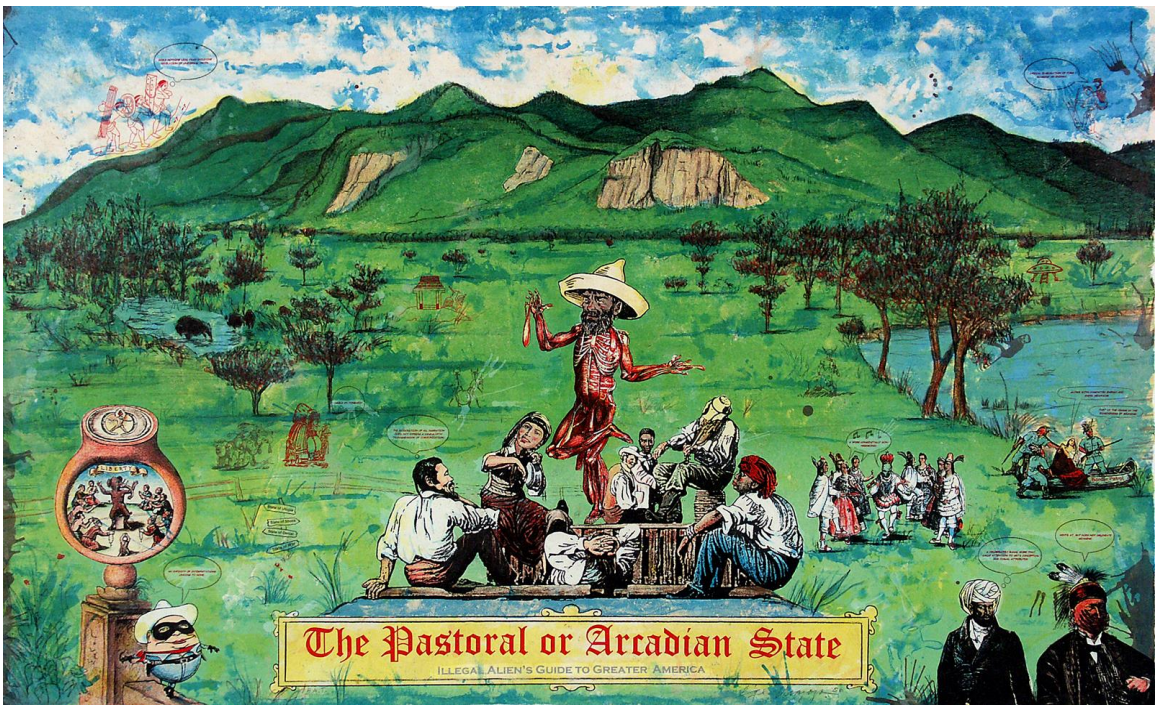
Drawing from his experiences living on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border in the late 70's, and also in Europe in the late 90's, Enrique Chagoya juxtaposes secular, popular, and religious symbols in order to address the ongoing cultural clash between the United States, Latin America and the world as well. He uses familiar pop icons to create deceptively friendly points of entry for the discussion of complex issues. Through these seemingly harmless characters Chagoya examines the recurring subject of colonialism and oppression that continues to riddle contemporary American foreign policy.



Enrique Chagoya
San Francisco, California
Pastoral or Arcadian State: An Illegal Alien's Guide to Greater America, 2006
Color lithograph

In this work, Chagoya places stereotyped characters and comic-like text balloons in a lush landscape that echoes images of the American West in the time of the cowboy. His title directly references Thomas Coles' 1834 painting, *The Pastoral or Arcadian State*, for his series *The Course of Empire*, which portrays an idealized vision of shepherds in a natural environment.

Chagoya's ironic use of wildly stereotyped figures – for example, three border patrolmen in Indian headdresses carrying off a white woman in a border patrol canoe – is humorous and absurd. The seeming contradiction of American pop culture symbols and pre-Columbian iconography conjures the hotly debated immigration struggle in the United States.

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Drawing from his experiences living on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border in the late 70's, and also in Europe in the late 90's, Enrique Chagoya juxtaposes secular, popular, and religious symbols in order to address the ongoing cultural clash between the United States, Latin America and the world as well. He uses familiar pop icons to create deceptively friendly points of entry for the discussion of complex issues. Through these seemingly harmless characters Chagoya examines the recurring subject of colonialism and oppression that continues to riddle contemporary American foreign policy.

Lei Curtis
La Grange, Illinois
Superior, 2007
Mixed media

When I came to power, I did not want the concentration camps to become old age pensioners' homes, but instruments of terror.

- Adolf Hitler

There were many ways of not burdening one's conscience, of shunning responsibility, looking away, keeping mum. When the unspeakable truth of the Holocaust became known at the end of the war, all too many of us claimed that [we] had not known anything about it or even suspected anything.

- Richard von Weizsaecker

You never forget the cruelty and hate that people bestow onto each other... but when it is bestowed onto you it leaves a mark on your heart that you will never forget, and always have to live with.

- My great-grandmother (Holocaust survivor RIP)

My family has seen firsthand how hate and intolerance affects people and the world around us. My great-grandmother and my grandmother were the only members of my mom's family to survive the Holocaust. Proud of my Jewish heritage, I felt compelled to create an artwork that would help educate and enlighten people to the effects and consequences of hate.

...

When Lei Curtis created this artwork, she was a junior 3D-studio art major with an emphasis in ceramics at Eastern Illinois University.

Jack Daws
Seattle, Washington
Strange Fruit, 2007
Tire, rope

This work references the song of the same title, first performed by Billie Holiday. While many people assume that this song was written by Billie Holiday, it actually began as a poem by Abel Meeropol, a Jewish schoolteacher and union activist from the Bronx who later set it to music. Disturbed by a photograph of a lynching, Meeropol wrote the stark verse and brooding melody under the pseudonym Lewis Allan in the late 1930s.

Strange Fruit lyrics:

Southern trees bear strange fruit,
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,
Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze,
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.

Pastoral- scene of the gallant south,
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth,
Scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh,
Then the sudden smell of burning flesh.

Here is fruit for the crows to pluck,
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck,
For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop,
Here is a strange and bitter crop.

...

Jack Daws was born 1970 in Kentucky and now works in Seattle, Washington.

Jane Waggoner Deschner
Billings, Montana
The Way Things Go, and Don't, 2007
Books, yarn, duct tape

Reading the words of the white supremacists, I could never make sense of their hatred – their beliefs so anathema and abhorrent to my own. But I can "show" tolerance and compassion for them and their followers as fellow human beings. I can comment in a different language. I can be "with" but not "like." I can't negate, counter, erase or deny, but I can work with and "transform" their books and words into something that "speaks" differently.

Why 13 white supremacist books wearing 13 hand-knitted stocking caps?

God's 13 Attributes of Mercy as written in the *Torah* are about forgiveness – how to emulate God's grace, compassion, and mercy. With fellow humans, act with patience, tolerance, assistance, empathy, insight, love, compassion, pity, integrity, kindness, truthfulness, mercy and understanding.

The word "knit" means
1. to form (a fabric or garment) from yarn or thread by using long needles;
2. to cause (things or people) to come together closely, to unite or combine;
3. to grow together (of a bone) to heal after being broken.

Knitting is a traditional craft practiced for thousands of years, a hand-to-hand connection to generations past. Making a utilitarian garment is a meaningful act that connects the knitter to the wearer in an intimate way. Using stocking caps, I allude to the innocent boys these men once were.

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Jane Waggoner Deschner is a visual artist whose usual medium is the vernacular photograph. Facilitated by increasingly sophisticated digital technology and the age-old art of needle-in-hand, she explores new ways of perceiving these ubiquitous, but often overlooked, products of mass culture. Born in Pennsylvania, she grew up in Kansas and moved to Billings, Montana, over thirty years ago.

Jean Grosser
Hartsville, South Carolina
Memorials to Raisel, Moishe, Sima, Hilda, Philip, Ida, Sidney, and David, 2007
Wood, paper, photograph, gold leaf

I have been creating sculptures inspired by political events since 1993. My artistic interests stem from a family tradition of political activism. This series of eight artworks is inspired by my Jewish heritage. I used torn, singed pages of the hate books as a backdrop for small sculptures that include photos of my aunts, uncles, and great-grandparents, four of whom immigrated to the United States before World War II and four of whom did not survive.

Philip

Raisel *Sidney*

Hilda *Moishe* *Sima*

Ida *David*

...

Jean Grosser is professor of art and chair of the art department at Coker College. Her artistic purpose is to give visual expression to issues of social and political conflict, which stem from a family tradition of political activism.

Miguel Guillen
Seattle, Washington
The Cooling Table, 2006-2007
Mixed media

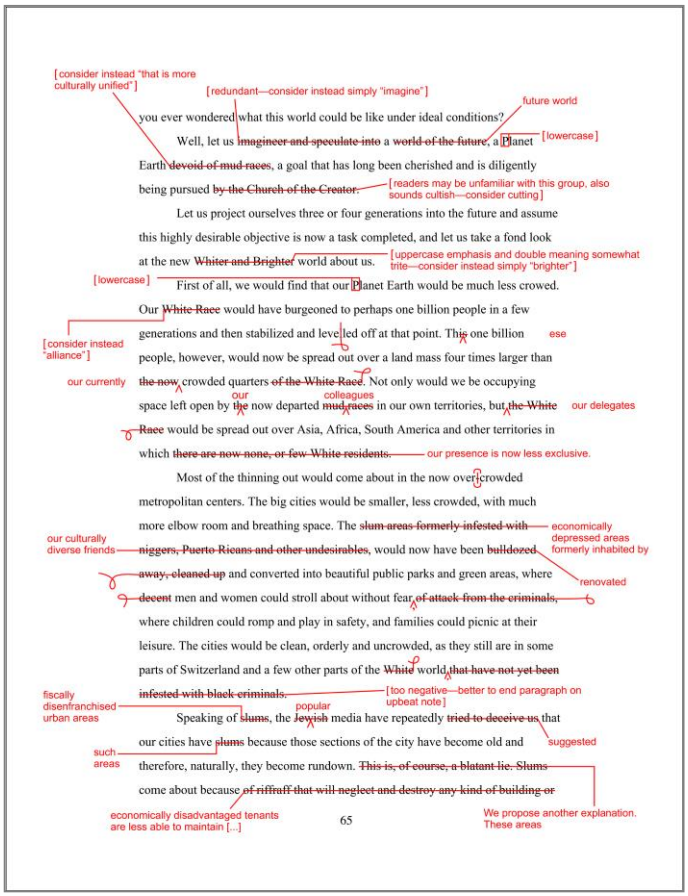
Hate is subtly passed on from generation to generation. The cookies represent how hate can be offered as a customary part of growing up. How it is implicit and made alluring as an integral part of "tradition."

This piece is meant to have an "Americana" look to it. The gingham cloth napkin and drawer lining in plaid with cherries are 1950s patterns that recollect the romantic notion of Generation in America. The cookies are made from Pillsbury Sugar Cookie dough, while the spatula and table are from a country kitchen. All these items helped me achieve a feeling of a generational narrative.

Being Latino and gay, I have experienced both the overt and subtle sides of hate. I think it is crucial for artists and arts organizations to talk of hate because – at least in my experience – many people don't know what to do about, or how to have a dialogue about, hate. Through art, we can help people make a meaningful conscious and subconscious connection about how hate permeates and exists in our lives.

…

Miguel Guillen, whose professional career includes program manager at Artist Trust and co-founder and volunteer Executive Director for La Sala, an organization that seeks to raise the profile of Latino/a artists working in Seattle and surrounding communities. Miguel was born in Mexico and raised in the Washington. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from Seattle's Cornish College of the Arts and is a practicing visual artist.



Charles Gute
Beacon, New York
Whitewash Wordswap (an excerpt), 2007
Piezo print on canvas

This copyedit of a random page from the book *RAHOWA!* (an acronym for "racial holy war") not only corrects standard grammar and usage, but makes editorial suggestions that soften the text's inflammatory tone, substituting overtly racist terms with euphemistic phrases like "our culturally diverse friends." In this way the text's malignant content is made more "palatable."

This exercise has broader implications in terms of the power of language to gloss over or promote repugnant ideas. By making rhetorical manipulations transparent, Gute's work is a cautionary reminder that there is a fine line between modern-day PR spin and George Orwell's admonition that "if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought."

...

Charles Gute is a New York-based artist and editor. He has been awarded artist fellowships from the San Francisco Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and has twice been a MacDowell Colony Fellow. His work has been in group and solo exhibitions all over the country. A hardcover monograph on Gute's work, *Revisions and Queries*, was published by The Ice Plant, Los Angeles.

Valerie Hellermann
Helena, Montana
Transmission, 2007
Porcelain, photo decal

Many thousands of Tibetan Buddhist Rinpoches (religious monks and teachers) have suffered imprisonment and torture under the Chinese occupation of Tibet. Despite their great suffering they refuse to hate their enemy. With great compassion they transform their minds and accept their situation as a teaching example. Here they offer discourse to those who will listen:

Live in joy, never hating those who hate us.

Live in freedom, without hatred, even among those who hate.

Joy consists not in returning hate for hate, but in refusing to be tainted by such a negative emotion.

This refusal gives us freedom from the burden of harmful feeling.

...

It was upon moving from Westchester County, New York to Big Sky country Montana that Valerie Hellermann took her first ceramic class. From day one, the feel of clay in her hands and the instinctive shaping of mud into form was a new-found passion. Her work reflects her world travel experiences, Buddhism, and her work on issues of peace and social justice.

Tim Holmes
Helena, Montana
Inert Projectiles, 2007
Mixed media

"Inert projectiles" is exactly what these hate books feel like to me: pieces of ammunition devoid of good ideas, but are simply blunt objects lobbed at an enemy.

The metaphor of hate as ammunition seems perfect to me. The creator of these volumes of hatred was bent on fomenting a race war, and he thought the best way to make the result more poisonous was to turn his ideology into a "religion."

It's ironic that he called this pogrom "Creativity," an idea whose openness, curiosity and hope is exactly the opposite of the violence that he endorses!

...

Tim Holmes's work primarily focuses on the human form, on the gesture as expression of greater human themes: the struggle for freedom, horror at inner and outer evils, the ferocity of hopelessness, the tenderness of love. Holmes is the first American artist ever invited to exhibit solo at the world's largest art museum, the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, Russia, where his sculptures remain on permanent exhibit. He has created sculpture for some of the world's peacemaking organizations from the United Nations to the Chinese dissident students of Tiananmen Square. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, President Jimmy Carter, President Vaclav Havel, and Coretta Scott King are among Holmes' best-known collectors.

Marilyn Humphries
Boston, Massachusetts
Recruitment Rally, 1986
Silver halide print

On August 30, 1986, leaders of the Ku Klux Klan came to the Connecticut farm of Ed Thall, a self-professed patriot who appeared that day in the costume of an American Minuteman complete with tri-cornered hat. The occasion was billed as a recruitment rally and about fifty people picnicked peacefully in a field surrounded by Klansmen in traditional robes and paramilitary garb. Klan leaders from around the country vilified various ethnic and racial groups and urged attendees to join their organization.

Ringed around this field were twice as many observers: members of the press, protesters, and hundreds of state police. Near the end of the evening, Klansmen formed their ceremonial circle and lit a towering cross with burning torches.

The evening was for me distilled into this image of a boy, whose family attended the rally, being caught in the center of the Klansmen. It is my personal visual metaphor of the generational passage of prejudice and hate and the importance of addressing bigotry in every way we can.

...

Marilyn Humphries complements her photography work in the corporate and non-profit worlds with documentation of progressive social change movements in the Boston area. Her work focuses on the LGBT community, women's issues, labor, and healthcare issues. Her photographs have appeared in Bay Windows, The Boston Phoenix, Boston Spirit Magazine, and South End News, as well as Barron's, MS Magazine, The New York Times, US News and World Report and Business Week.

Lisa Jarrett

Portland, Oregon

In Equality (Triptych), 2007

- *Anarchy in America*
- *Our Loud Unequal Society*
- *A Vast Shining Ocean*

Collaged book pages, graphite, ink, charcoal, and gouache on panel

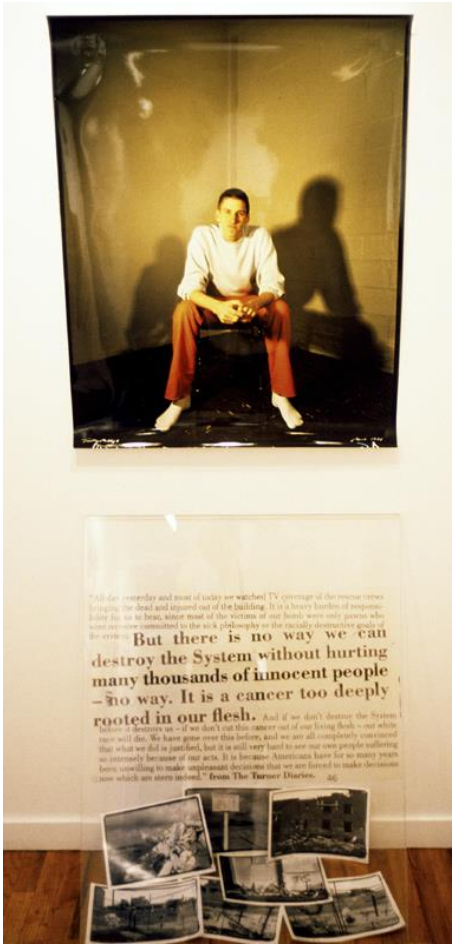
Reading Ben Klassen's publications proved to be painfully illuminating. Creating these pieces has allowed me to reflect deeply on the hollow nature of hate in contemporary society. My personal experiences as a black woman in America do not afford me the luxury of pretending that overt racism, hate, injustice, and violence are dead. To the contrary, the color of my skin continues to impact my day-to-day existence.

The impetus for this installation is the cross-out poem, created by physically crossing out unwanted words and circling desired words from an existing text and thereby developing an original poem. The intrinsic transformative nature of this style of poetry becomes a potent tool when applied to Klassen's white supremacist writings.

While reading these works, haunting images of slavery were brought to mind. Images of women and men sentenced to death by hanging from trees were vivid. It seems fitting that the very ideas that are presented in Klassen's books should meet the same abrupt end. Indeed the words themselves should be hung.

...

Lisa Jarrett was born in 1977 in Morristown, New Jersey. Growing up as a Black American who moved with her family to various, often conflicting political climates in cities in Texas, Minnesota, and New York, the influences of her upbringing in a post-Civil Rights and increasingly so-called "post-racial" America are apparent in her work, which confronts ideas of racial difference and perceptions of racial equity. Jarrett's work is typically centered upon deconstructing and reassembling her personal experiences as a Black woman in America into projects that ask viewers to consider their own roles in present-day race relations. Jarrett lives and works in Portland, Oregon, where she teaches at Portland State University. She exhibits nationally.



Robbie McClaran
Portland, Oregon
Timothy McVeigh, 1996-1997
Lambda print

April 19th, 2015

Today marks the 20th anniversary of the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City where 168 people, including 19 children, were killed. A year after the bombing, on the eve of my appointment to photograph Timothy McVeigh – who was later convicted of the crime – I visited the site and made these photographs.

The ruins of the building had been mostly removed. Memorials in the form of wooden crosses, made from splintered fragments left by the bombing, dotted the fence surrounding the site. Across the street, the ruins of another building destroyed by McVeigh's bomb still stood.

It was said McVeigh was motivated by the events that took place two years earlier, also on April 19th, in 1993, when federal troops stormed the Branch Davidian compound where followers of David Koresh had been under siege by the FBI since February of that year. On that awful day 76 people were killed.

I also visited that site, trying to make some sense of what happened. The scenes were no less appalling than what I had seen in Oklahoma City. I left with no better understanding of how something like that can happen in a supposed civil society.

The day I photographed McVeigh left me even more baffled and saddened. I found him to be intelligent and upbeat and utterly remorseless. I've long been an opponent of the death penalty, but I shed no tears for Timothy McVeigh when he was executed in 2001.

These events twenty and more years ago share striking and frightening parallels to events happening today. Heavily armed anti-government militias continue to attract more followers, while police continue to kill unarmed citizens at a terrifying rate, and quell protesters with military-grade weaponry.

And each year I hold my breath on April 19th, praying something terrible won't happen again.

...

Robbie McClaran is a freelance photographer based in Portland Oregon whose work appears in magazines all over the place.

Ryan Sarah Murphy
New York, New York
Take Heed and Tremble, 2007
Mixed media

This piece pairs the torn pages of *The White Man's Bible* with 12-inch wooden skewers. Most of the text from this racist literature is obscured as each page is tightly bound and glued in place. The skewers are painted red and white and bundled together, suggesting a dangerous cluster of bottle rockets. What's missing is any indication of a fuse. These factitious explosives are rendered mute – inert and ineffective.

...

Ryan Sarah Murphy was born in Rutland, VT and currently lives and works in New York, New York. She received her BFA from the School of Visual Arts in 2001. Her work has been shown in gallery and museum exhibitions in New York and around the US. "I make sculptural collages from found cardboard and construct objects made of discarded remnants. I am driven by process and repetition (collecting, sorting, sectioning, deconstructing). My work deals with issues of containment, identity, landscape and the boundaries between the private and the public self."

Richard Notkin
Vaugh, Washington
This is What You Were Born For (After Goya), 2006
Terracotta

We have stumbled into the 21st Century with the advanced technologies of "Star Wars" and the emotional maturity of cavemen.

If we can't find more creative solutions to solving worldwide social and political problems than sending young men and women to shred and incinerate one another's flesh with weapons of ever increasing efficiency, we will not survive to celebrate the passage into the 22nd century. We must learn that the myriad problems of human civilization and our fragile planet are far too complex to be solved by means of explosive devices.

For over forty years, my art has examined issues of militarism and war, and the evils of nuclear weaponry. Do we really sleep more soundly at night with the knowledge that we can incinerate – many times over – the families of our supposed enemies?

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Richard Notkin is a full-time studio artist who lives and works in Helena, Montana. He received a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute in 1970, and an MFA from the University of California, Davis in 1973. Mr. Notkin has worked mainly in ceramics for more than four decades, averaging over one solo exhibition per year. His work is in numerous public and private collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park, Japan. He has held visiting artist positions and conducted over 250 workshops throughout the world. Among his awards, Richard has received three fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation.

Speaking Volumes: Transforming Hate

Matt O'Connor
Helena, Montana
How Can We Heal From Hate? A Dialogue in the Exhibition, Speaking Volumes | Transforming Hate, 2010
Video (7:44 minutes)

A rare opportunity for transformation arose in Montana in 2004. A defecting leader of the "Creativity Movement" – one of the most virulent white supremacist hate groups in the nation – presented the Montana Human Rights Network with 4000 volumes of their "bibles," books promoting extreme anti-Semitic, anti-Christian, racist ideologies.

In partnership with the Network, the Holter Museum of Art in Helena, Montana invited artists across the country to respond to, integrate, or transform the books in provocative ways.

This short film by Matt O'Connor explores ideas stimulated by the artists who responded to and transformed this difficult material into art. The *Speaking Volumes | Transforming Hate* exhibition opened in 2008 at the Holter Museum of Art in Helena, Montana, then toured the state for two years.

In the film, high school students, an artist, a human rights researcher, and the exhibition curator engage in civic dialogue about how we respond to discrimination, racism, and prejudice through the power of creative expression and honest conversation.

Viewed as a conversation-starter, the film encourages people to communicate their own ideas, perhaps through dialogue or artistic creation. In the words of W.E.B. Du Bois, "Begin with art, because art tries to take us outside ourselves. It is a matter of trying to create an atmosphere and context so conversation can flow back and forth and we can be influenced by each other."

...

Matt O'Connor is a documentary film maker and producer whose films have been screened internationally. He graduated from Montana State University with majors in film and photography.

Ellen Ornitz
Manhattan, Montana
Study of Falling Hands #4, 2007
Ceramic, concrete

It is said that no transformation of consciousness can occur without perpetrator(s) feeling true empathy for the victim. Recovery and/or enlightenment are impossible without this compassion. My interest is in revealing the victim's experience. Intuitively and aesthetically, I am drawn to the historic stigmata image, which is ironic considering my Jewish origin.

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Ellen Ornitz works with a mixture of sculpture and collage, and is inspired by the human body. "I saw an exhibit on Pompeii and I was so moved by it," she says, "the idea of the last gesture of one person on earth, forever." Formerly the director of visual arts at the Emerson Center for Arts & Culture, Ornitz is now an independent curator and artist.

Faith Ringgold

Englewood, New Jersey
Hate is a Sin Flag, 2007
Hate is a Sin Fem Fable, 2007
Acrylic on paper

Can we adequately examine the impact of white supremacy without addressing institutionalized racism? Who controls the institutions that create policy, educational curriculum, and opportunities for creative expression?

In 1968, as Faith Ringgold distributed leaflets outside the Whitney Museum in Manhattan protesting the exclusion of African Americans from major museum exhibitions, she was called "nigger" for the first time in her life. For this exhibition, Ringgold designed a flag based on the Confederate "Southern Cross," upon which she wrote the story of experience in New York, and supported it with a creation fable.

Fifty years later, we might still ask, "Who decides what is exhibited, presented, broadcasted, and published?" What might we learn if we were to explore our relationships with privilege, disproportionate poverty, and responsibility for democracy? Our national values celebrate equality and respect for diversity. Are there conversations that can be cathartic for Americans who wish to achieve realization of these ideals?

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Faith Ringgold began her artistic career more than 35 years ago as a painter. Today, she is best known for her painted story quilts and has exhibited in major museums in the USA, Europe, South America, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Her work is in the permanent collection of many museums including the Studio Museum in Harlem, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Metropolitan Museum, and the Museum of Modern Art. Her first book, *Tar Beach*, was a Caldecott Honor Book and winner of the Coretta Scott King Award for Illustration, among numerous other honors. She has received more than 75 awards, fellowships, citations and honors for her artwork.

Jim Riswold
Portland, Oregon
The Hitlermobile, 2005
Color digital print on
hahnemühle photo rag 308

Every evil dictator worth his salt has a sweet ride. Adolf Hitler was no exception.

In 2009, a Russian gazillionaire bought Hitler's ride, a bulletproof Mercedes-Benz 770K sedan, for $8.3 million. $8.3 million is a lot of money for a Hitlermobile.

Have you driven a bulletproof Hitlermobile lately?

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Jim Riswold harpoons modern icons of the art world – Damien Hirst, Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, etc. – while simultaneously biting the hand that feeds, producing work that is "beautifully sleek and distinctively commercial."

Jim Riswold
Portland, Oregon
The Hitlermobile, 2005
Color digital print on hahnemühle photo rag 308

Heinrich Himmler, head of the *Schutzstaffel* (SS) paramilitary force in Nazi Germany, once said:

One basic principle must be the absolute rule for the SS men – we must be honest, decent, loyal, and comradely to members of our own blood and nobody else.

What happens to a Russian or to a Czech does not interest me in the slightest. What the nations can offer in the way of good blood of our type we will take, if necessary by kidnapping their children and raising them here with us.

Whether nations live in prosperity or starve to death interests me only so far as we need them as slaves for our culture; otherwise, it is of no interest to me. Whether 10,000 Russian females fall down from exhaustion while digging an antitank ditch interests me only so far as the antitank ditch for Germany is finished.

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Scott Schuldt
Milford, Connecticut
Unbound, 2007
Beadwork, printed canvas, linen

Her name is Laura Nelson. She was a daughter, wife, and mother. She was lynched with her 14-year-old son by a mob from a bridge in Okema, Oklahoma in 1911. She should be remembered.

The central image of this piece is a detail from a postcard that showed families (including children) from the nearby town posing on the bridge with Laura and her son hanging below.

At one time, samplers were an important educational exercise for young girls. Vintage samplers combined valuable lessons in needlecraft with art, poetry, and schoolwork. Samplers were also used to commemorate births, marriages, deaths, and other significant events in a person's life. I used a sampler as a device to touch on racial hatred as a learned trait.

Our country has made some strides against racial and social hatred, but most would agree that we fall far short of where we would like to be.

This work became a mourning sampler, an emotional reach to one's heart where lies the only lasting solution to hatred. The mourning is not only for Laura Nelson, but also for everyone, as we all suffer when we live with hate.

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Scott Schuldt works in hand-sewn beadwork, mixed media, video and whatever else is necessary to get the job done.

Clarissa Sligh, Red-crown Crane, 2007

Clarissa Sligh
Asheville, North Carolina
Red-Crown Crane, 2007
Digital photography

When asked to create an artwork that would incorporate, respond to, or transform white supremacist books, I felt that it was an invitation that I, as an African American artist, could not turn down.

Struggling to deal with seeing and handling the books, a memory came to me of having seen thousands of origami cranes while visiting the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park in Japan. Origami cranes had become symbols of peace.

I learned to turn the pages of the books into origami cranes. My fingers were stiff and clumsy. My folds were irregular, imprecise, but I continued folding.

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When Clarissa Thompson Sligh was 15 years old she became the lead plaintiff in the 1955 school desegregation case in Virginia (Clarissa Thompson et. al. vs. Arlington County School Board). From that moment forward, her work as a student and as a professional – first in math/science working for NASA, later in business, and finally, in the arts – has taken into account change, transformation, and complication: themes that related to her experiences fostering social justice. Sligh was born in Washington, D.C., raised in Arlington, Virginia, and was a faculty member at New York University and the University of Pennsylvania. She is currently lives and works in Asheville, North Carolina.

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith and Neal Ambrose-Smith
Corrales, New Mexico
Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes, 2007
Digital photography

This installation was inspired by Jane Elliott's historic "Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes" experiment, begun the day after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, to teach her third-graders what it means to experience bigotry.

Elliott told her students that people with blue eyes are inferior to those with brown eyes, thus exposing them to the experience of being a minority and suffering discrimination. By choosing blue as the inferior eye color, Elliot proved that even an attribute considered positive and beautiful – as blue eyes often are in western culture – could be used as a marker to elicit hate. Elliot's experiment demonstrated that discrimination is a learned behavior, a social construct, and that racism must be taught and reinforced in order to exist.

In this installation, subjects in blue-eyed glasses are arranged opposite portraits of people in brown-eyed glasses. The artists deliberately chose the same people to wear both blue and brown glasses to demonstrate that race is a socially constructed category, and that discrimination, also constructed, can be unlearned.

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Jaune Quick-to-See Smith is one of today's most acclaimed American Indian artists and collaborated with her son on this installation. Smith has had over 100 solo exhibits in the past 35 years and has done printmaking projects nationwide. Over that same time, she has organized and/or curated over 30 Native exhibitions, lectured at more than 185 universities, museums and conferences internationally, most recently at 5 universities in China. Smith has completed several collaborative public art works such as the floor design in the Great Hall of the new Denver Airport; an in-situ sculpture piece in Yerba Buena Park, San Francisco and a mile-long sidewalk history trail in West Seattle.

Tim Speyer
Helena, Montana
School Lessons,
2007
Mixed media

A 1992 event was the genesis this project. I was a third grade teacher in rural Montana. An incident happened in the classroom where I turned a misbehaving child around in his seat. This child, at that moment, perceived that he had been "inappropriately touched in a sexual manner." Reporting the incident to the bus driver, this allegation eventually led to an investigation by the school district into whether these charges were indeed true.

This was exasperated by the "perception" in the school and community that I was gay. As a life-long heterosexual male, I knew the charges and incident were totally fabricated and without merit. Even though all allegations were eventually dismissed, I was told that the perception (that I was gay) was just as harmful as being gay, and it was in my best interests to work diligently to change that perception.

This was my first experience encountering discrimination and bigotry in the Montana Public Schools. This project is an attempt to focus on much of the bigotry I encountered in my job as a schoolteacher over the years. I find it sad that colleagues in my school system still keep their sexual orientation secret for fear of retribution from staff, parents, and students.

Students from Helena High School who participated in this project, and whose work is a part of this book, include: Metta Hallian, Rachael Jones, Katrina Fisher, Lindsey Redmond, Sara Gonzales, and Aaron West. Teachers include myself, Angie Susag, and anonymous individuals who fear having their names publicly associated with this project.

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Tim Speyer has spent 30 of the last 40 years of his life in various aspects of childhood education. The last 12 years he has had the privilege of teaching art in the public schools at the middle school level. Most often, his own work consists of cloth mache creatures, multimedia boxes, stone carvings, and handbuilt ceramics.

Sara Steele
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
A Thousand Cranes by Students & Faculty, 2007
Paper, ink

This piece was done with the entire population of the C.W. Henry Public K-8 School in Philadelphia. I wanted to work with children on this project because we must begin teaching values of tolerance and compassion as early as possible. Intolerance is like a weed in an unattended garden: its roots will take over and choke out more nourishing and beautiful plants.

Daily we witness evidence of the early roots of violence and greed — bullying, gossip, name-calling, and exclusionary behaviors in school-yards and playgrounds, as children imitate what goes on in the media, on the streets, and in their homes.

For this project, each teacher read to their class the story of *A Thousand Cranes* by Sadako Sasaki. The hate books were unbound and cut into squares. The children decorated the trimmed the pages using Crayola markers called "Changeables." Their designs incorporated words about behaviors they were willing to change and their wishes for the world. Then we folded the squares into more than a thousand origami cranes. While the children were working, we did not shy away from their questions about text they read on the pages, and engaged them in discussions about the troubling material.

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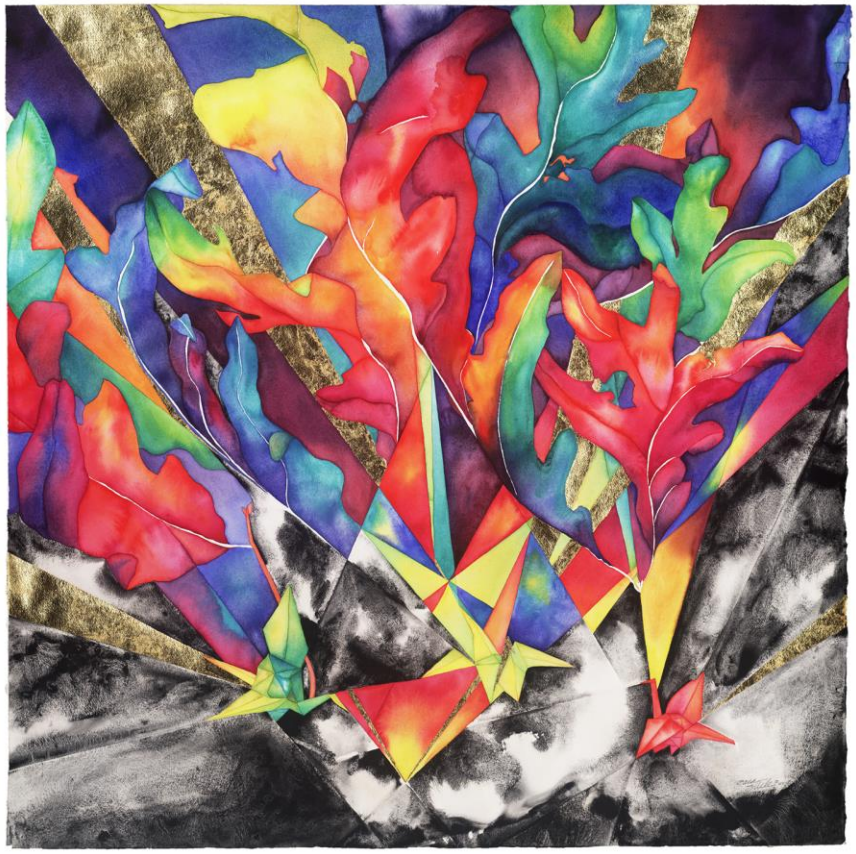
Sara Steele was born in Illinois. She travels extensively, but her home base has been in Philadelphia since 1959. Her work is in nearly 200 collections and has been exhibited throughout the United States and in Europe. An activist as well as an artist, Steele works in the areas of ecology and climate change, women's issues, peace and social justice, and domestic violence prevention. Her pieces are often used to promote and raise funds for organizations working on these causes.



Sara Steele
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Out of Ashes – A Thousand Cranes, 2007
Watercolor, gold leaf

This painting responds to the enthusiastic participation of over 500 students at the C.W. Henry K-8 School in Philadelphia in creating their gorgeous origami cranes.

It begins in the black and white thinking of hatred and the suggestion of ashes – which I associate with grief – and evolves through geometric forms into fluid shapes representing diversity and flexibility of thought.

Violence, greed, and hatred are black and white. Through education, thinking can evolve to support peace and diversity.

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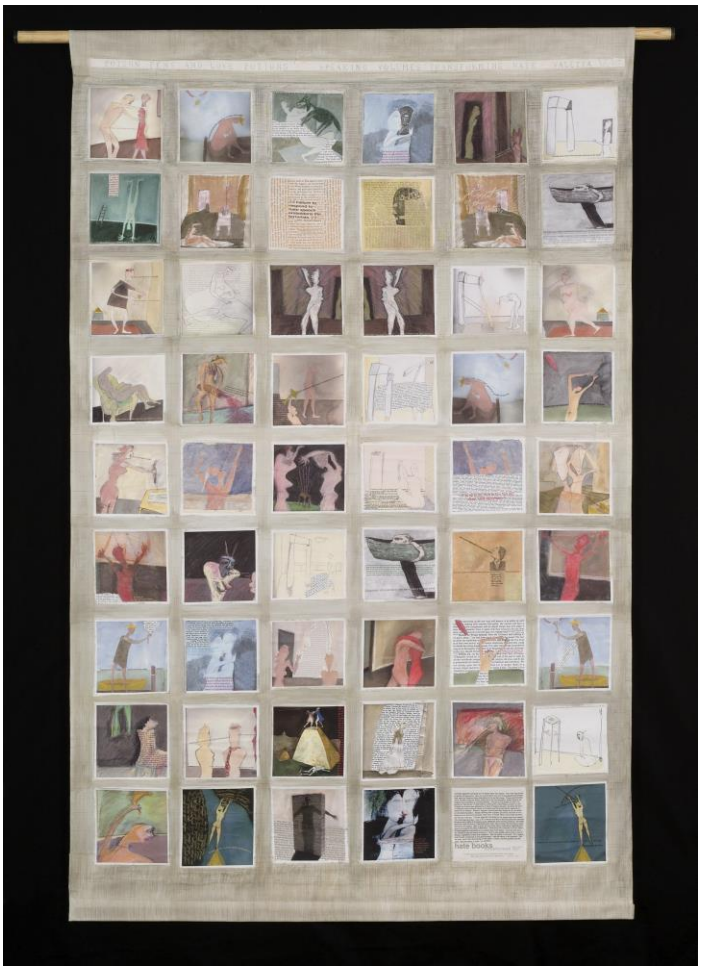

Valetta
Westtown, Pennsylvania
Poison Pens & Love Potions,
2006-2007
Fabric, wood

The orientation of this piece is the destruction of the Creativity Movement's "bible" and its reconstruction in words and images that heal and enlighten.

Words have the power to harm, to soothe, or to be neutral. Sometimes the same word can have diametrical meanings depending on the context and or pronunciation. Consider the following examples:

- your mother as opposed to your motha
- arms versus arms (come into my arms – the soldiers took up arms)
- atomic as in particle – purely scientific, or cloud – evoking a menacing aftermath or bomb – violent, destructive
- mean as in definition or mean as in contemptible and nasty

Art has the power to engage the viewer, to portray the artist's personal and unique version of the truth, to transform the ordinary or even hateful, and to leave an indelible mark on society.

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Valetta is a graduate of the Pratt Institute, New York, and has done graduate work at Tyler School of Art and the University of Pennsylvania. She has been included in numerous juried and group shows across the United States and Europe where she has won top prizes for her work. She has had solo shows throughout the Delaware Valley. Valetta maintains a working studio and is director of the Regional Center for Women in the Arts in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

Cathy Weber
Dillon, Montana
Racial Holy War, 2007
Oil on paper

This piece is the book *Racial Holy War* emptied of its contents, turned on its side, and spilling forth images of the blood and tears that are the human cost of hatred and injustice.

For me, the power of the *Speaking Volumes* project is rooted in the impact of books as both conveyers of ideas and as iconic objects. The volumes we have transformed were conceived and published in the service of the most base of human impulses: fear, violence, hatred, cultural isolation, and racial superiority.

As an artist, the opportunity to derail the evil intentions of the original authors, to remake these books in service of our better possibilities, was a thrilling and empowering experience. Much of my motivation for making art comes from a feeling of urgency to make things of beauty in response to war, injustice, greed and violence. Making images of common simple objects gives me comfort and hope for weathering the human condition.

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Cathy Weber grew up in the Midwestern U.S., studied at the Herron School of Art and Indiana University, and later completed a formal painting apprenticeship in Mexico City. In 1981 she moved to Dillon, Montana, where she maintains a studio in the historic downtown. Weber makes oil paintings, artist's books, watercolors and ceramic objects.