

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.

Faith Ringgold, *Hate is a Sin* Flag

The first time I was called Nigger was at the Whitney Museum in NYC. I was passing out flyers about the Whitney's discrimination against black artists, when a white man told his daughter "Don't go near that NIGGER!" Slavery is hate. Hate is a sin!



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 the **Speaking Volumes | Transforming Hate** exhibition begins with the Creativity Movement, one of the most violent white supremacist groups in the country. In 2003, a defector from the group offered the Montana Human Rights Network a stockpile of their ideological books, which promoted violence and extreme forms of racist, anti-Semitic, anti-Christian, and homophobic beliefs.

The Network sought a positive use for the books and - in partnership with the Holter Museum of Art in Helena, Montana - invited artists from across the nation to transform the material into thought-provoking works of art. Their techniques vary, but all of the artists raise questions about how we convey values to our children. They suggest transmitting respect and love for others instead of passing along bigotry and hate.

The urgency of this exhibition is underscored by the rising tide of hate groups in the United States, as their organizers exploit people's economic insecurity and fuel their fears and anger. Such groups represent an extremist perspective, but intolerance and prejudice also surface repeatedly in mainstream society.

Please join communities across the nation who have explored this exhibition and engaged in civil dialogue about its themes. As W.E.B. Du Bois said, "Begin with art, because art tries to take us outside ourselves ... [and creates] an atmosphere where conversation can flow ... and we can be influenced by each other."

— Katie Knight, Curator of **Speaking Volumes | Transforming Hate**

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SPEAKING VOLUMES TRANSFORMING HATE

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, with support from the Utah Division of Arts & Museums.



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202 West 300 North, Salt Lake City, UT 84103
801.359.9670
www.utahhumanities.org

SPEAKING VOLUMES

TRANSFORMING HATE



Charissa Sligh, *Red Crown Crane* (detail), 2007

An exhibition from the Montana Human Rights Network

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Miguel Guillen, *The Cooling Table*

VALUES

Values are beliefs or ideals that one holds important. They have a major influence on a person's behavior and attitude and serve as broad guidelines in all situations. Both positive and negative values can be passed on from one family member to the next.

In *The Cooling Table* by Miguel Guillen, the artist is representing how the idea of hate is subtly passed from generation to generation. Sometimes, without even realizing it, we inherit the values of our family or community without recognizing the negative beliefs they can reinforce.

- What is something you strongly believe?
- How did you learn this idea?
- What can you do to influence the positive values and beliefs of others?

SYMBOLISM

A symbol is an object or picture that represents something else. Symbols are everywhere in modern society – from emojis and advertising to religious symbols and road signs – these markings provide us with context, direction, and meaning. The swastika is an ancient symbol that has had many different meanings over time. From its earliest usage, the symbol of the swastika was perceived as positive and encouraging of life, but was appropriated in 1920 as a German national symbol by the National Socialist Party, or Nazi Party. Since World War II, the swastika has become stigmatized as a symbol of hatred and racial bias.

- Do you think the swastika could ever be considered a positive symbol once again? Why or why not?
- How do symbols impact our daily lives?
- What other symbols can you find in the exhibition?

Jim Riswold, *Himmler's Homework*



Jaune Quick-to-See Smith & Neil Ambrose-Smith, *Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes* (detail)

DISCRIMINATION

We all want to feel included and accepted for who we are. When a person or a group is treated differently, negatively, or unfairly without any real reason – especially on the grounds of race, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability – that is discrimination.

Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes by Smith and Ambrose-Smith explores discrimination. The day after Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in 1968, Iowa schoolteacher Jane Elliott gave her third-grade students a first-hand experience in the meaning of discrimination. Ms. Elliott devised the controversial and startling “Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes” exercise. This now-famous exercise labels participants as inferior or superior based solely upon the color of their eyes and exposes them to the experience of being treated as less valuable and less intelligent.

- What are some forms of discrimination?
- Have you ever been treated differently? How did you feel?
- What can you do to help prevent others from being treated unfairly?

TRANSFORMATION

A transformation takes place when the former appearance of an object or idea is changed. In *A Thousand Cranes by Students and Faculty*, Sara Steele worked with the students, teachers, and principal from C.W. Henry K-8 School in Philadelphia to transform the negative books into something beautiful and positive. They recycled the hate books into 1,000 origami cranes. In Japan, cranes are a symbol for peace. The idea for this collaboration came from the book *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* by Eleanor Coerr and the Japanese legend that if one folds 1,000 paper cranes one's wish will come true.

- What do you think the students wished for when they made this project?
- What other artworks in this exhibition use the idea of transformation?
- What can you do to transform something negative into something positive?



Sara Steele, *A Thousand Cranes*

STEREOTYPES

A stereotype is a category, or a group, in which we place people. Our brains categorize things automatically all the time; we see someone and put that person into a group – for example, old or young, or boy or girl. This is not inherently bad, but can be harmful when we assume that everyone in a group is the same. Stereotyping can lead to bullying, and can cause the victims of those stereotypes to be driven by fear. It is a losing situation for both those who are doing the stereotyping and those who are victims.

In Nick Cave's work, *Profiling*, he examines stereotypes of race and the negative effects it has on our society.

- How do people learn to stereotype others? How might they unlearn that?
- How can the media (newspapers, television, social media, movies) help reduce stereotyping?
- What can you do to help reduce stereotyping?



Nick Cave, *Profiling*

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For more information, see
www.speakingvolumes.net