

---

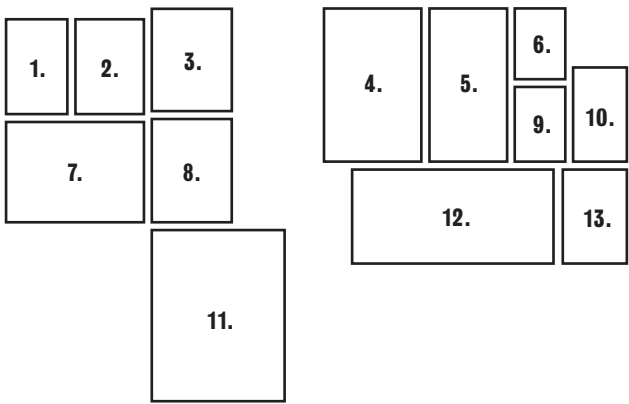
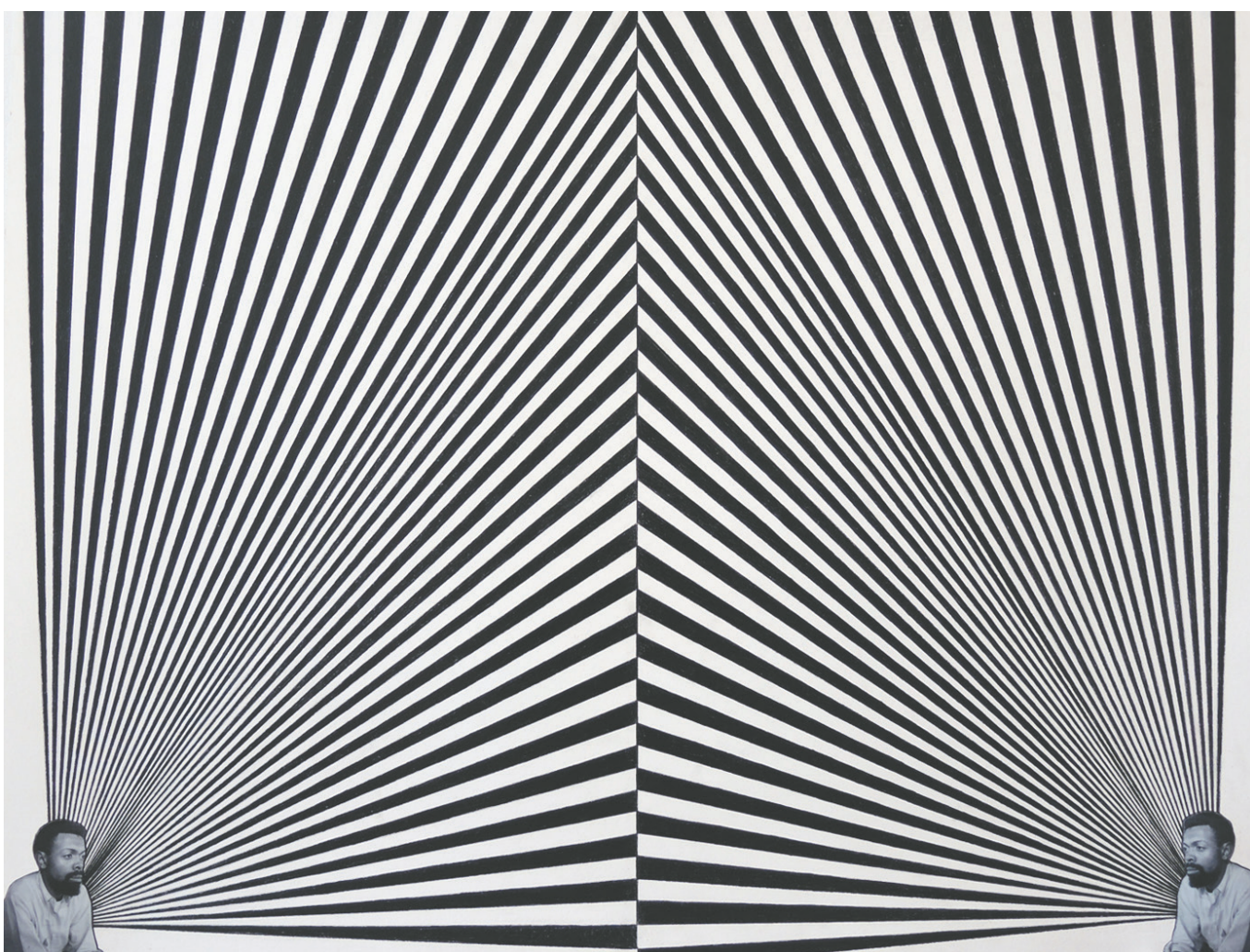
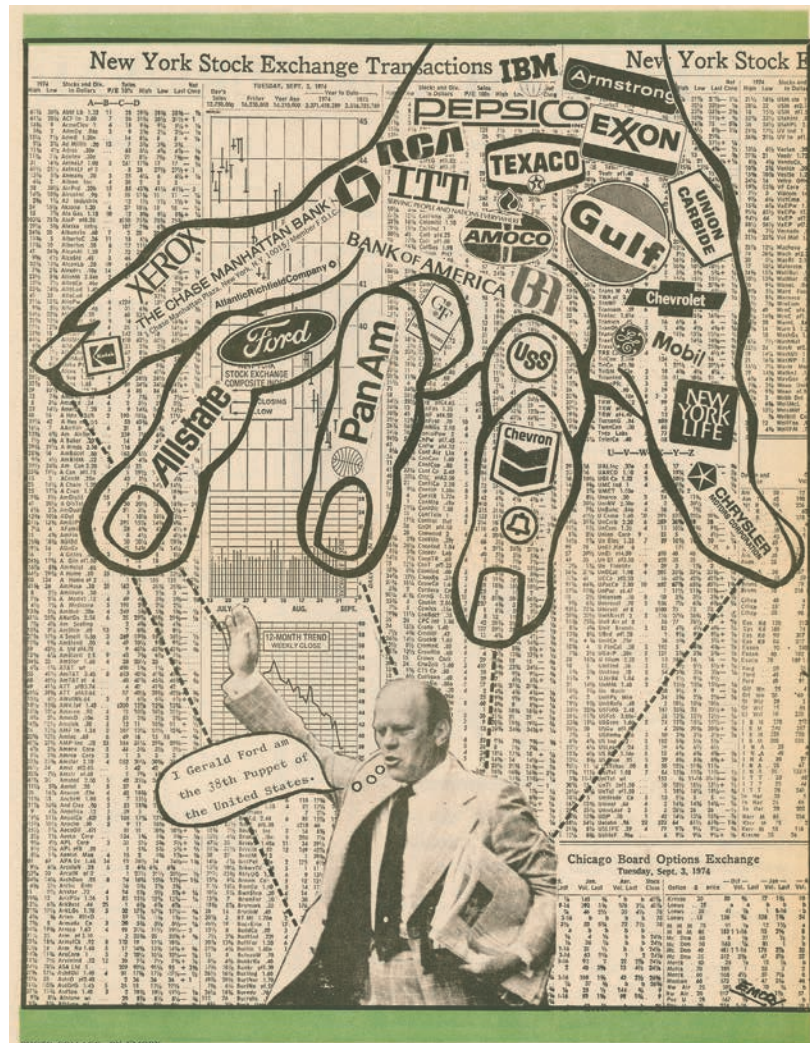
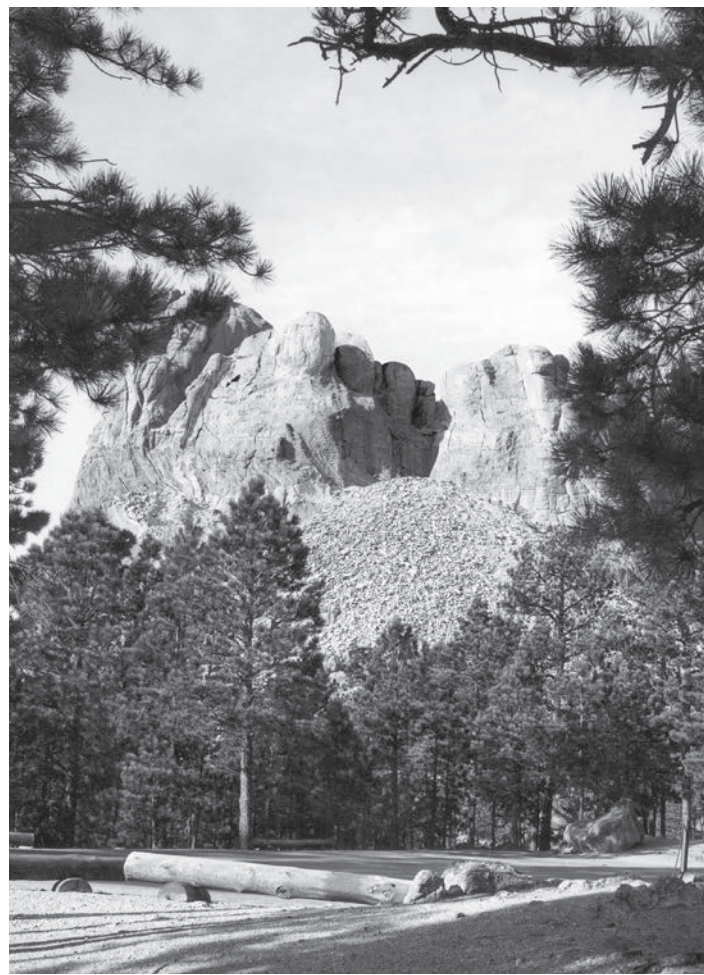
# WHEN ARTISTS SPEAK TRUTH

ACT UP / SHIMON ATTIE / MAJA BAJEVIC / LUIS BALAGUER / FÉLIX BELTRÁN / ADIGIO BENITEZ /  
ANDREA BOWERS / TANIA BRUGUERA / MATTHEW BUCKINGHAM / NANCY BURSON / YOAN CAPOTE /  
MEL CHIN / EMORY DOUGLAS / SAM DURANT / DYKE ACTION MACHINE / SHEPARD FAIREY / CHARLES  
GAINES / RICO GATSON / GUERRILLA GIRLS / EDGAR HEAP OF BIRDS / SISTER CORITA KENT / HEW LOCKE  
/ RAUL MARTÍNEZ / RENÉ MEDEROS / YOKO ONO & JOHN LENNON / ADRIAN PIPER / FAVIANNA RODRIGUEZ  
/ ALFREDO ROSTGAARD / DREAD SCOTT / ANDRES SERRANO / FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES / JARO VARGA

**THE 8TH FLOOR** NOVEMBER 12, 2015 TO MARCH 18, 2016

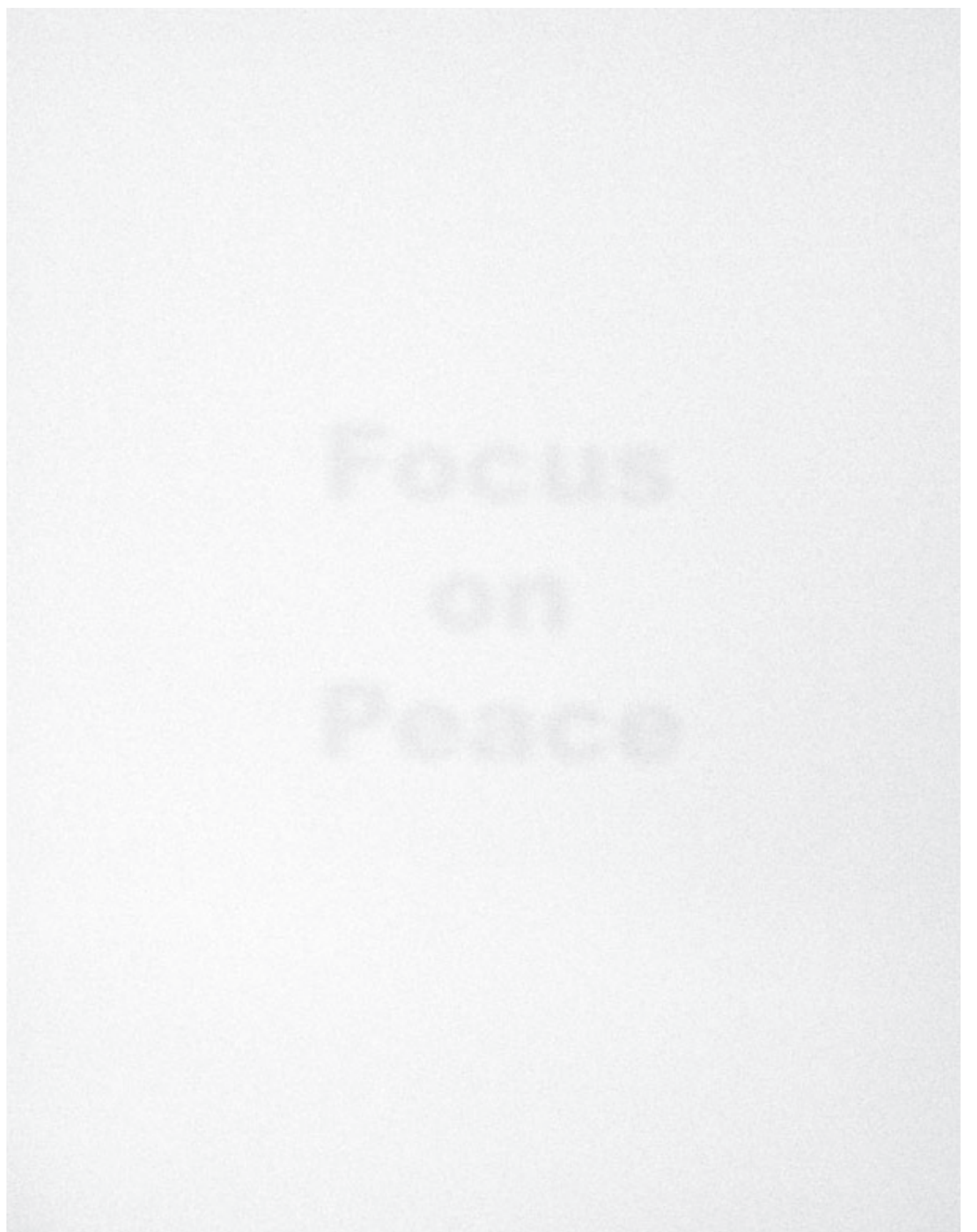
---



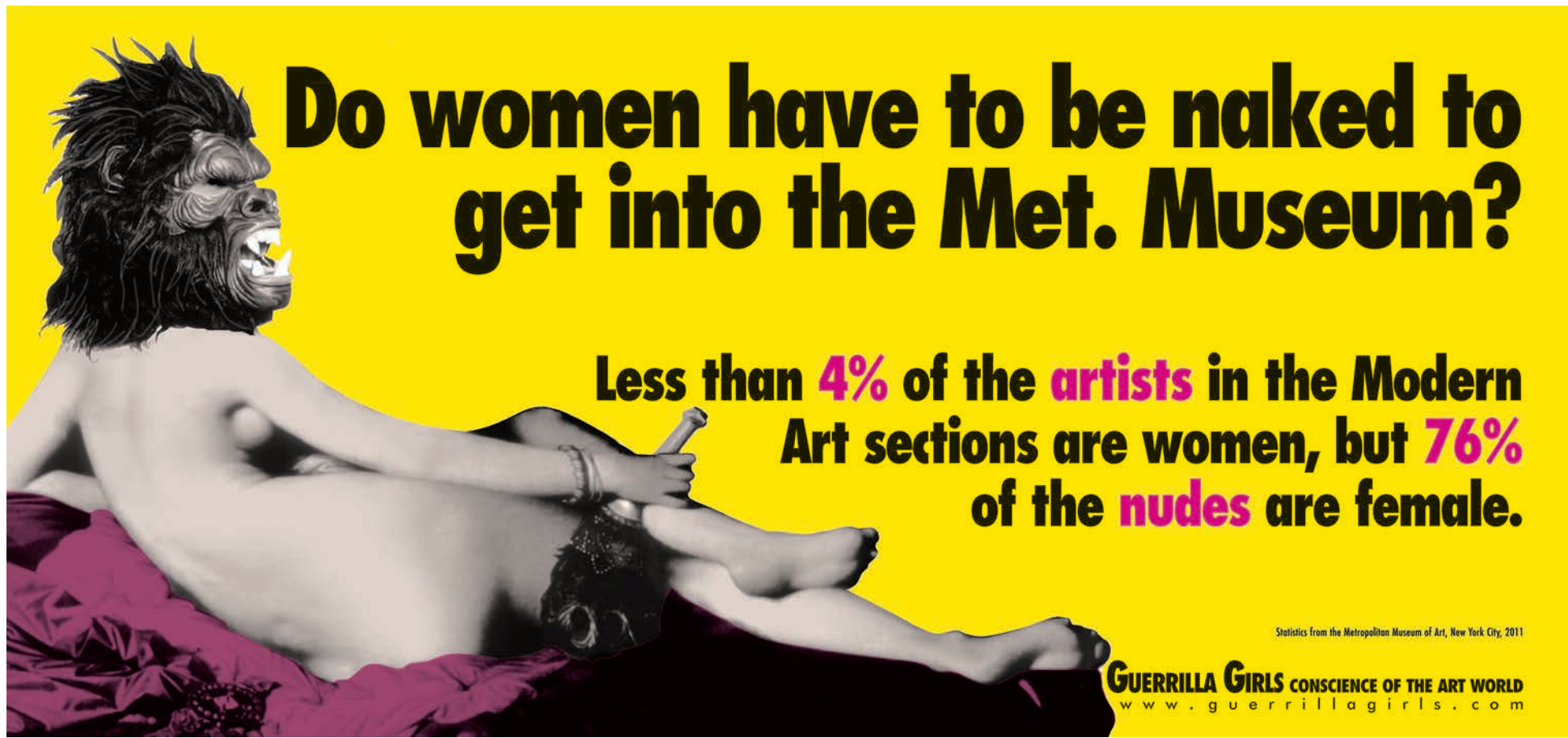
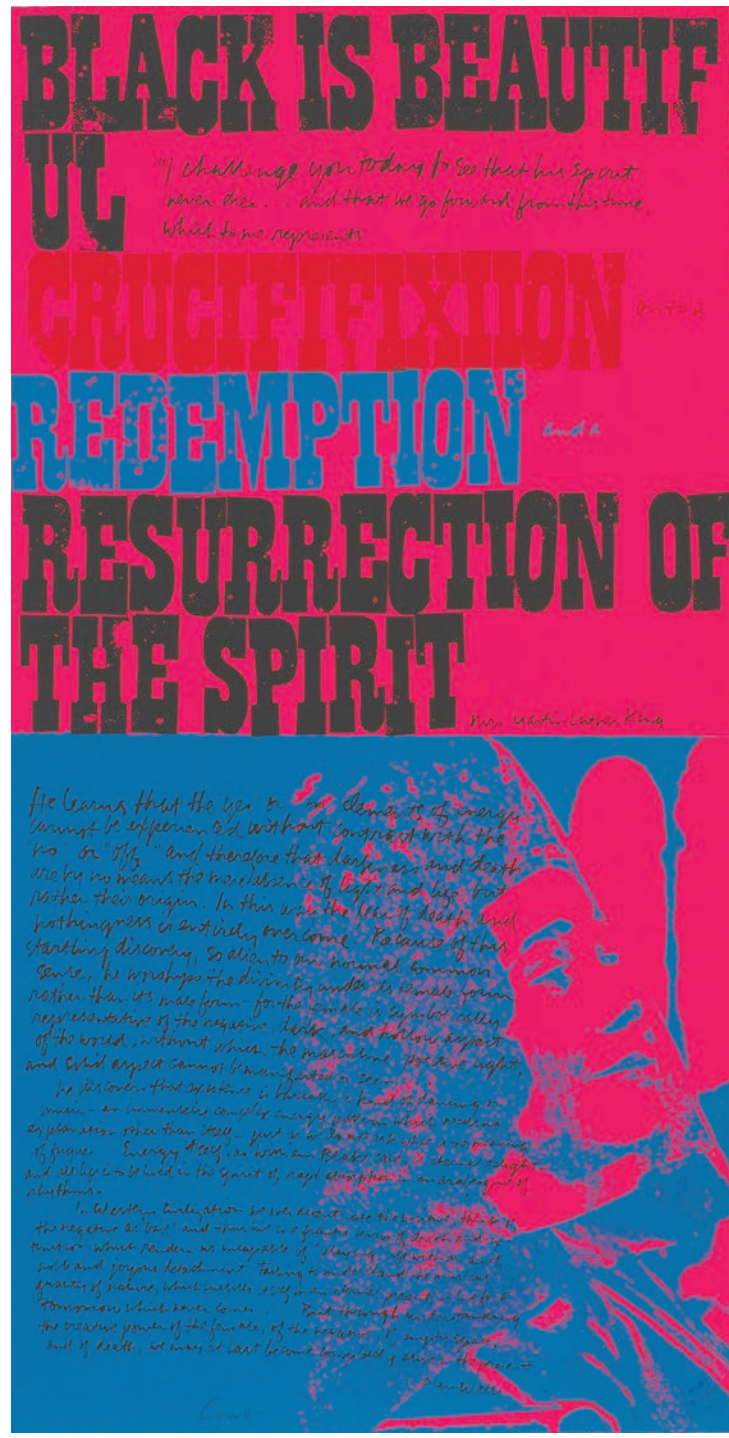


1. ACT UP (EST. 1987), *SILENCE = DEATH*, 1986. SILENCE = DEATH PROJECT. C-PRINT, 22 X 34". COURTESY OF AVRAM FINKELSTEIN
2. MATTHEW BUCKINGHAM (B. 1963, NEVADA, IA) *THE SIX GRANDFATHERS, PAHA SAPA, IN THE YEAR 502,002 C.E.*, 2002. BLACK-AND-WHITE DIGITAL C-PRINT 60 X 43" / 152.4" X 109.22" (12FT 7" X 9FT 1"). COURTESY OF MURRAY GUY, NEW YORK
3. EMORY DOUGLAS (B. 1943, GRAND RAPIDS, MI) *BLACK PANTHER, SEPTEMBER 21*, 1974. OFFSET LITHOGRAPH. 17.5 X 11.3" © 2015 EMORY DOUGLAS / ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK
4. FÉLIX BELTRÁN (B. HAVANA, 1938), *COMITE POR LA LIBERTAD DE ANGELA DAVIS, CUBA LIBERTAD PARA ANGELA DAVIS* ("FREEDOM FOR ANGELA DAVIS"), 1971. SILKSCREEN, 22 1/4 X 14". COURTESY OF THE CENTER FOR CUBAN STUDIES
5. SISTER CORITA KENT (B. 1918, FORT DODGE, IA - D. 1986, BOSTON, MA), *IF I*, 1969. SERIGRAPH, 23 X 12". TEXT BY MRS. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR., AND ALAN WATTS. PHOTOGRAPH BY ARTHUR EVANS. COURTESY OF THE CORITA ART CENTER, IMMACULATE HEART COMMUNITY, LOS ANGELES, CA
6. DYKE ACTION MACHINE (EST. 1991), *LESBIAN AMERICANS: DON'T SELL OUT*, 1998. 4/C OFFSET POSTER 24 X 36". 5,000-PIECE CAMPAIGN WHEATPASTED IN LOWER MANHATTAN, NEW YORK CITY JUNE 1998. COURTESY OF DYKE ACTION MACHINE! / CARRIE MOYER AND SUE SCHAFFNER

7. RICO GATSON (B. 1966, AUGUSTA, GA), *DOUBLE AMIRI*, 2014. COLOR PENCIL, MARKER, AND PHOTO COLLAGE ON PAPER, 24 X 32". COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND RONALD FELDMAN FINE ART
8. SAM DURANT (B. 1961, SEATTLE, WA), *EMORY DOUGLAS SUITE (YOU PIG)*, 2004. GRAPHITE ON PAPER, 50 X 38". © SAM DURANT. COURTESY PAULA COOPER GALLERY, NEW YORK
9. FAVIANNA RODRIGUEZ (B. 1978, FRUITVALE, CA) *I'M A SLUT*, 2012. DIGITAL ART PRINT, 17 X 12". COURTESY OF THE ARTIST
10. ADRIAN PIPER (B. 1948, NEW YORK, NY), *VANILLA NIGHTMARES #14*, 1986. CHARCOAL & OIL CRAYON DRAWING ON NEWSPRINT, 22 X 13 3/4". COURTESY OF FAULCONER GALLERY, GRINNELL COLLEGE
11. NANCY BURSON (B. 1948, ST. LOUIS, MO) *FOCUS ON PEACE*, 2002. OFFSET PRINT, 28" X 20". ORIGINAL RUN OF 7000 POSTERS. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST
12. GUERRILLA GIRLS, *DO WOMEN HAVE TO BE NAKED TO GET INTO THE MET. MUSEUM? UPDATE*, 2012. DIGITAL PRINT, 11 X 26". COPYRIGHT © GUERRILLA GIRLS, COURTESY GUERRILLAGIRLS.COM
13. ADIGIO BENITEZ (B. SANTIAGO DE CUBA, 1924 - D. HAVANA, 2013) *UNTITLED*, 1972. SILKSCREEN, 29 1/2 X 20". COURTESY OF THE CENTER FOR CUBAN STUDIES







When Artists Speak Truth... reveals how cultural producers, artists in particular, are uniquely positioned to voice critical messages that cannot otherwise be transmitted. The exhibition is presented at The 8th Floor, as a dialogical and discursive space where politically engaged artistic projects set the stage for reflection and interchange. When Artists Speak Truth... is posed as a series of questions: what happens when artists challenge the status quo, and advocate for change? Why are artists able to ask and respond to these questions? What makes art a space where radical ideas can be supported?

Perhaps because their status is constantly shifting, artists have the social mobility and capital to question the power structures that define so much of our society. Considering that artists are in a class of their own – one that is both economically precarious and culturally rich – it is not surprising that they are aligned with activists organizing for workers' rights, immigrants' rights, and gender and racial equality.

From 1967 until the 1980s, Emory Douglas was the Minister of Culture for the Black Panther Party and his graphic art was featured prominently in issues of the Black Panther newspaper. Included in the exhibition is his illustration for the September 21, 1974 issue, which depicts the hand of corporate power—comprised of The Chase Manhattan Bank, Pan Am, Gulf, PepsiCo, Chevron, Ford, and IBM, among others – pulling the strings of President Gerald Ford, "the 38th Puppet of the United States." Sam Durant's *Emory Douglas Suite (You pig)* is part of a larger series completed in 2004 in which he adapts Douglas' depictions of police aggression. Durant's works engage a variety of social, political, and cultural issues exploring that which connects culture to politics, and where activism is situated between the two. Durant's consideration of the cultural contributions of Emory Douglas to the Black Panther Party and his broader exploration of the aesthetics of protest is prescient in relation to dynamics that have recently emerged between police departments, activist groups, and communities of color across the country.

Drawing on the surreal collage and graphic design sensibility of Emory Douglas, Favianna Rodriguez's political posters highlight causes such as immigrants' rights, a woman's right to choose, and voters' rights with slogans like "I'm a slut. I vote. So does everyone I sleep with... Keep ur government off my pussy." Many of Rodriguez's recent posters have

centered on the poetic symbol of the butterfly, which in her work is a reminder that living beings have the right to move freely, embodying the determination of immigrants who come to the United States in search of their dreams.

As part of the exhibition, two artists have created immersive site-specific installations at The 8th Floor. Maja Bajevic and Jaro Varga, using text and archives, respectively, explore how words can accumulate anti-institutional power. *Library*, an ongoing installation series by Varga, first realized in 2008, is a participatory work in which gallery visitors are encouraged to write book titles directly onto the wall of a room-sized print depicting the stacks of a library. The project has a number of implications. It questions the relevance of physical books and their eventual obsolescence, while also offering the temporary community surrounding the exhibition a chance to define the books entered into this conceptual library, giving visibility to under-recognized literary contributions. Varga's project ultimately builds awareness of the collective input needed to demonstrate a representative institutional knowledge, creating a cognitive map of the gallery's visitors. Bajevic's *To be continued* was first staged in 2014 at the National Museum in Oslo. For her performance in conjunction with *When Artists Speak Truth...*, Bajevic will fog the southern windows of the gallery, writing political inscriptions onto the frosted glass. In its previous iteration, phrases like "If you are not with us, you are against us," "It is good to have just one child," and "We do not go home, the dead won't let us," were drawn onto the windows of the museum, resurrecting historic political statements with both universal and particular associations. Visual protest turns vocal in Yoan Capote's *Dialogusfobia (Un Nudo en la Garganta)*, 2011, the subtitle of which translates to "A Lump in the Throat," and is inspired by Edvard Munch's *The Scream* (1893). Both Munch and Capote's artworks capture the tension felt in the throat leading up to – and after – a scream. With its double megaphone structure, *Dialogusfobia* – an imagined word translating to 'fear of dialogue' – reflects how free expression has been suppressed in Cuban society, forcing some to speak from both sides of the mouth, while driving others to speak twice as loud, twice as much. The bundles of dynamite in Capote's *Miraculous static*, 2013–2015, acknowledge the pent-up frustration felt by those whose voices are stifled, 'miraculous static' alluding to the quiet before the explosion.

Instead of proffering an opinion, or subjective viewpoint,

Shimon Attie's *Double Blind (Israeli and Palestinian Declarations of Independence)*, 2012 places the Declarations of Independence of Israel and Palestine side by side in braille, embossed on black Somerset paper. *Double Blind* is a reminder that the aspirations for independence can be felt, but not seen, as propaganda on both sides of what became the Palestinian question – bound up in the state of Israel's response to the Jewish question – obscures the human rights of two historically intertwined nations. The notion of 'the Other' is intrinsic to the *Vanilla Nightmare* series, where Adrian Piper makes the racial fears and fantasies of white figures featured in ads and articles in the *New York Times* horrifically visible, by drawing charcoal caricatures of racialized stereotypes onto images of white culture. In *Vanilla Nightmare #14*, Piper overlays a ghoulish African American figure onto the political pages featuring then President Ronald Reagan, representative William H. Gray, Senator Lowell P. Weicker Jr., Senator Ted Kennedy, and impeached United States District Judge Harry E. Claiborne. *Vanilla Nightmare #17* features an ad for B. Altman's department store, Piper's intervention depicts an Amazonian female figure holding up the two white men in her fists like an offering.

Following on from Piper, *news of the week* (1969) by Sister Corita Kent, combines the plan of a slave ship with poetry, newspaper, and a *Newsweek* magazine cover as commentary on inhumanity. Her interest in pacifism and human rights are expressed through a collage of text and image that describe the conditions in which slaves were brought to America with quotes from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. These disparate elements combine to express the feeling of powerlessness in the face of suffering on a massive scale. Whitman wrote, "I do not ask the wounded person how he feels – I myself become the wounded person; My hurt turns livid upon me as I lean on a cane and observe." As a Catholic nun, Sister Corita faced unusual barriers that most artists during this period of American art did not encounter. Her vows of poverty, chastity, and most importantly, obedience, meant that being overtly political would have been highly problematic in her vocation, but may also have driven her choice and appropriation of texts by others within her political posters.

Felix Gonzalez-Torres' printed artworks enable an endlessly reproducible process of gifting. His "Untitled" (NRA – National Rifle Association), 1990 is one of many stacked pieces, which are meant to circulate beyond the gallery as

visitors may choose to take a print with them. In an interview with Gonzalez-Torres, artist Tim Rollins described the stacks of prints as "an accumulation of frames from a film."<sup>11</sup> Given the politics surrounding gun control, the frames of this symbolic film continue to repeat in a morbid cycle. The stack of red paper, printed with a black framed edge, a minimalist version of the outline of a body at a crime scene, becomes a stand-in for the loss of lives that the National Rifle Association permits through its advocacy of gun ownership.

**"Ask a few simple questions to define aesthetics: whose aesthetics? at what historical time? under what circumstances? for what purposes? and who is deciding quality, etc? Then you realize suddenly and very quickly that aesthetic choices are politics." —Felix Gonzalez-Torres in conversation with artist Tim Rollins<sup>2</sup>**

Building on Gonzalez-Torres' questions about the political nature of aesthetics, it's worth considering what happens when political gestures become aestheticized. Do they lose their meaning? Perhaps it depends on the artist and artworks in question. Mel Chin has long engaged political processes in his practice, but he is equally known for his conceptually rigorous transformation of objects. Chin's *Cross for the Unforgiven* (2002) is a Maltese cross – a symbol of the Crusades – constructed from eight AK-47s welded together into a symbol of brutal violence and redemption. With its capacity to fire six hundred rounds of ammunition per minute, the AK-47 is associated with resistance movements opposed to Western hegemonic power. *Night Rap* (1993) is also equipped with contradictory utility: a police officer's billy club retrofitted as a microphone, creating a speaker's corner within the environment of the exhibition.





ACT UP's *Silence = Death* (1986) expands on the pink triangle that emerged in the 1970s as a symbol used by gay rights activists. The pro-gay image inverted the Nazi party's upside-down pink triangle, which served as a badge for identifying homosexuals during World War II and the Holocaust, similar to the yellow Star of David that Jews were forced to wear. In the gay rights movement, the pink triangle transforms the Nazi-imposed symbol of humiliation to one of unity and resistance. In 1987, six gay activists – Avram Finklestein, Brian Howard, Oliver Johnston, Charles Kreloff, Chris Lione, and Jorge Soccaras – used the *Silence = Death* image in a poster campaign to draw parallels between the Holocaust and the AIDS crisis, asserting that “silence about the oppression and annihilation of gay people, then and now, must be broken as a matter of survival.” The activists who conceived this campaign later joined ACT UP offering the protest group the *Silence = Death* logo, which is a forerunner to ‘Action = Life’ and ‘Ignorance = Fear’.<sup>3</sup>

“I remember one of our weekly meetings where we found ourselves all looking at each other. There was a shared thought balloon over all of us at that moment... wondering who was going to be the first to go. It was tabled with a bit of a nervous laugh but we knew that it could’ve been any one of us. Oliver Johnston is the only member from our group who has not survived. It’s been nearly 15 years but Oliver is thought of and missed by those that loved him always.”  
—Brian Howard<sup>4</sup>

Bowers added to the protest from inside the fair, creating new posters such as, “Don’t Frieze out New York workers.”<sup>5</sup> Also tied to real world political movements, *Save Our Last Wild Places Tree Sitting Love Seat for Forest Defense* (2012) is a love seat made in collaboration with an Earth First! activist (who cannot be named for legal reasons) known to tree sit for up to a year at a time, relying on his knot-making skills for survival. The recycled wood sculpture is a fantastic version of actual seats used by tree sitters. Bowers’ involvement in tree-sitting activism has led to jail time and probation. With famed tree sitter and activist John Quigley, she has created non-violent civil disobedience training videos for environmental activists.

Edgar Heap of Birds’ *Nuance of Sky/Words Are Open* (2012) from his ongoing mono-print series *Dead Indian Stories* face off with past and present stories of Native American communities across the United States. Heap of Birds’ text-based public artworks *Native Hosts* have been deployed since the 1980s to question the ongoing occupation of Native American land throughout United States history. His more recent series *Dead Indian Stories* synthesize politics and poetry into a six-word poetic structure resulting in prints comprised of phrases like:

NATIVE IS PAIN DONE IN BROWNS  
FIRST LIGHT IN THIS IS BEING  
DEEDS NOT DEMANDS SPIRIT OUT SPHERE  
INDIO FACE DOWN NO HUMAN JUSTICE

Through a research-based process, Matthew Buckingham also addresses the politics of Native land ownership, as he looks to the history and projected erosion of Mount Rushmore with his 2002 project *The Six Grandfathers, Paha Sapa, in the Year 502,002 C.E.* He questions the current perception and geologic future of the monument, which hosts portraits of founding fathers George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln, carved into land stolen from Sioux Indians by an artist who was an active member of the Ku Klux Klan.

Other artists in the exhibition generate new forms of commemoration and portraiture of both political leaders and movements. Central to Hew Locke’s *Natives and Colonialists* series are questions about how history is constructed and how politicians are posthumously remembered. Locke’s painted photographs revisit a number of public monuments that depict victorious colonial figures. In *Churchill (New Look Purple)*, 2008, we see the state’s interpretation of Churchill, once the British Secretary of State for the Colonies and known for his contributions to World War II. Through an artistic intervention, or rather, a defacement of the image of this monument, Locke exposes an alternate history of the political system Churchill upheld and the negative impact it had on colonial life. Locke’s skeletal forms cover the face

and body of the politician, an open-ended reference to the vastly different perception of British political figures within the colonies. Born in the UK, Locke’s family is of African descent, originally from Guyana, a former colony of Britain.

Similar to Locke, artists Rico Gatson, Dread Scott, and Andres Serrano also create alternative political portraits. Gatson’s graphic representations of Nina Simone, Gil Scott-Heron, James Baldwin, and Amiri Baraka (2014-2015) are expressions of the spiritual power that emanates from and is attributed to radical artists and thinkers. Gatson’s bold use of lines radiate outwards from the collaged images of the four artists, conveying the reverence held for these individuals who through their work spoke truth, activating the ideals that defined their lives. Paintings from Dread Scott’s *Revolutionary Archive* (2010-2012) draw on vintage photographs from the arc of communist revolution and interconnected moments of collective political engagement like the Paris Commune, the Russian Revolution and the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Scott’s paintings incorporate several key photographs: communards from 1871 standing around a monument of Napoleon Bonaparte they had just toppled; a 1919 crowd of Soviet peasants assembled around a gramophone brought by train with the latest news from Petrograd; and images of university walls in Beijing in 1967 covered with handmade “big character posters” arguing for their respective authors’ views. They constitute an archive of contested, suppressed, and in some cases, obscured histories. The series focuses on imagery produced by artists that enabled the exchange of ideas aimed towards revolutionary transformation. In *Red Wedge Storming the Winter Palace*, Scott incorporates a film still shot by Sergei Eisenstein, which has become accepted by some, in error, as the historical image of this event. *Revolutionary Archive* re-examines the expansive history of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century revolutions, demonstrating how artists help shape history through image-making.

Cuba has a long tradition of politically engaged art, often created in the service of state-sponsored institutions. In spite of Cuba’s relative isolation following its revolution, artists such as Adigio Benitez, Félix Beltrán, Raul Martínez, René Mederos, and Alfredo Rostgaard have continued to reflect on political movements within and outside the country. The graphic elements of their work visually articulate the arts of persuasion and indoctrination. Their designs primarily promoted pro-revolutionary ideals and expressed the productive potential of collective effort, with imagery that was more satirical than explicit.

While Raul Martínez’s work is associated with Pop art and aesthetically akin to Favianna Rodriguez and Emory Douglas, his monochromatic depiction of Jose Martí, affectionately known as “the apostle” by Cubans, has immense gravitas. A poet and writer, Martí’s texts about democracy, freedom, and justice were important in galvanizing the Cuban émigré population in support of the 1895 Colonial Revolution, when he was in exile. As Cuban art historian Corina Matamoros explains, “Martí changed the point of view of Pop art to focus it on popular Cuban culture: a culture not based on consumption or mass media, but affirmed in the exuberant

14.

15.

14. ANDREA BOWERS (B. 1965, WILMINGTON, OH) *WORKERS’ RIGHTS POSTERS*, 2013. SPRAY PAINT ON GIFTWRAPPING PAPER, 32 POSTERS, 24 X 18” EACH. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND ANDREW KREPS GALLERY, NEW YORK.

15. YOKO ONO AND JOHN LENNON (B. 1933, TOKYO, JAPAN) AND (B. 1940, LIVERPOOL, UK – D. 1980, NEW YORK, NY) *WAR IS OVER! (IF YOU WANT IT)*, 1969. OFFSET ON PAPER, 20 X 30”. WORLDWIDE BILLBOARD CAMPAIGN IN 12 CITIES WAS LAUNCHED ON DECEMBER 15, 1969. COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST © YOKO ONO

Andrea Bowers highlights excluded groups in her practice, often invoking American history, contemporary political issues, and protest, taking ‘Action = Life’ to heart. In what appears to be a more directly aesthetic approach, Bowers’ *Workers’ Rights Posters* (2013) archive a wide array of political movements, from freedom of expression to workers’ rights and feminism. Posters from this series were presented at Frieze Art Fair in 2013, echoing a concurrent protest of the fair by art handlers and installers, many of them artists, who called for better labor practices, exposing the hiring of non-union, out of state labor for the fair’s production.

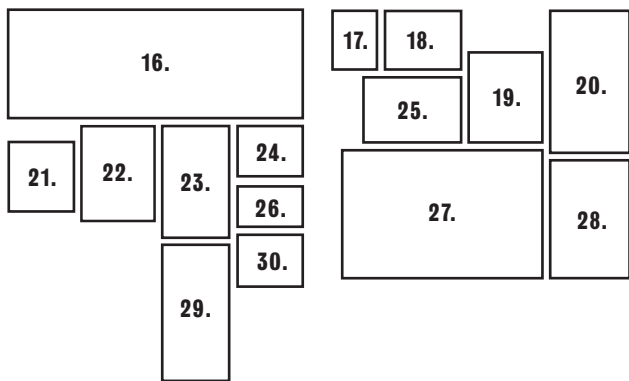
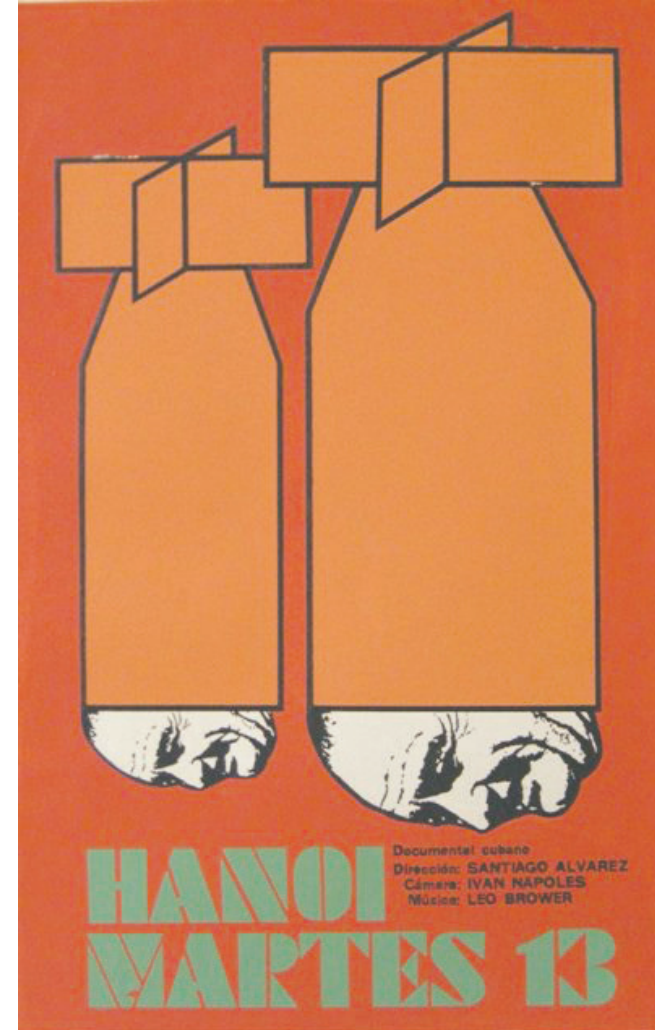
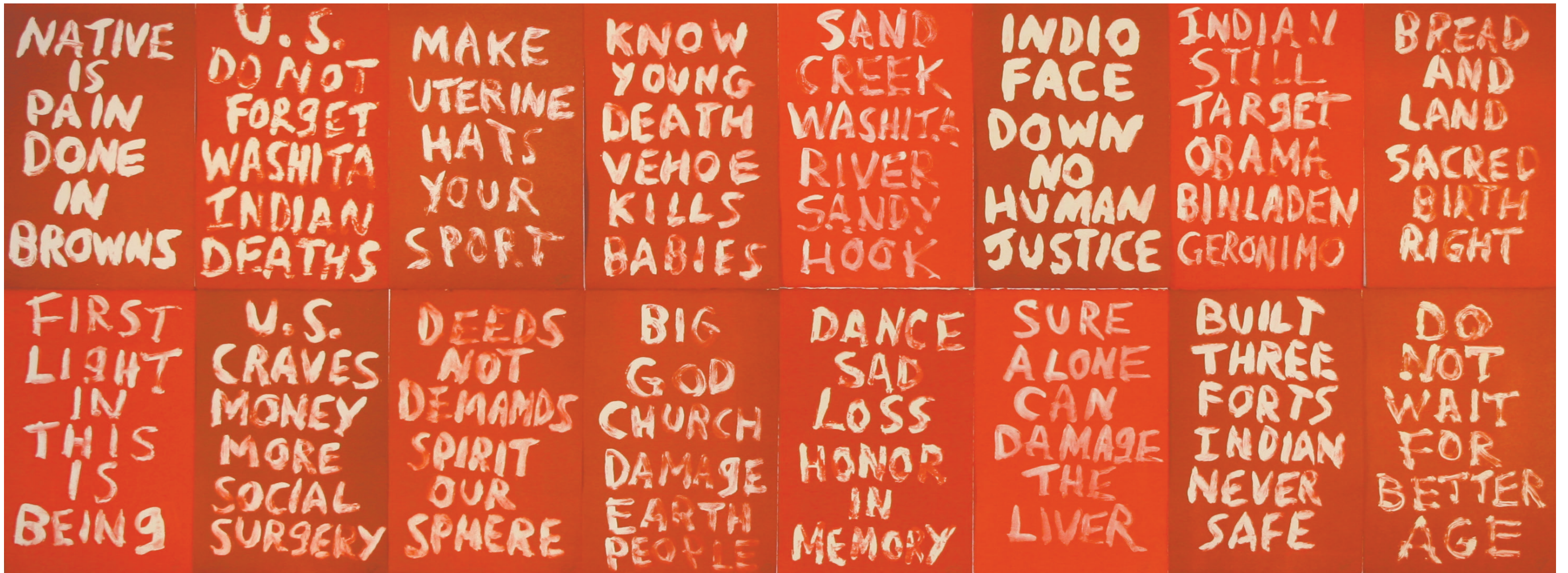


**WAR  
IS  
OVER!**

**IF YOU WANT IT**

Love and Peace from John & Yoko





16. EDGAR HEAP OF BIRDS (B. 1954, WICHITA, KS), *NUANCE OF SKY/WORDS ARE OPEN*, 2012. MONO PRINT, 16 PIECES, 15 X 22" EACH. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

17. FAVIANNA RODRIGUEZ (B. 1978, FRUITVALE, CA), *FIGHT PATRIARCHY*, 2010. HANDPRINTED LINOLEUM BLOCK, 30 X 24". COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

18. GUERRILLA GIRLS (EST. 1985), *REPUBLICANS DO BELIEVE IN A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CONTROL HER OWN BODY*, 1992. OFFSET PRINT, 17 X 22". COPYRIGHT © GUERRILLA GIRLS. COURTESY GUERRILLAGIRLS.COM

19. ANDRES SERRANO (B. 1950, NEW YORK, NY), *CUBA (PICTURE OF FIDEL)*, 2012. C-PRINT 50X60". COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND NATHALIE OBADIA GALLERY

20. CHARLES GAINES (B. 1944, CHARLESTON, SC), *NOTES ON SOCIAL JUSTICE: OUR COUNTRY RIGHT OR WRONG, (1861)*, 2014. INK ON STONEHENGE PAPER 43 X 24". © CHARLES GAINES. COURTESY PAULA COOPER GALLERY, NEW YORK. PHOTO: STEVEN PROBERT

21. MEL CHIN (B. 1951, HOUSTON, TX), *A CROSS FOR THE UNFORGIVEN*, 2002. AK-47 ASSAULT RIFLES (CUT AND WELDED) 54 X 54 X 3". COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

22. FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES, *"UNTITLED" (NRA - NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION)*, 1990. PRINT ON PAPER, ENDLESS COPIES 20 IN. AT IDEAL HEIGHT X 33 1/4 X 26 1/4 INCHES. (ORIGINAL PAPER SIZE). INSTALLATION VIEW OF: CADY NOLAND, FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES: OBJEKTE, INSTALLATIONEN, WANDARBEITEN. MUSEUM FRIDERICIANUM, KASSEL, GERMANY. 8 FEB. - 17 MAR. 1991. CUR. FRANK WAGNER. CATALOGUE. © THE FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES FOUNDATION. COURTESY OF ANDREA ROSEN GALLERY, NEW YORK

23. ALFREDO ROSTGAARD (B. 1943, GUANTÁNAMO, CUBA - D. 2004, HAVANA, CUBA), *HANOI MARTES 13 ("HANOI, MARCH 13")*, 1968. SILKSCREEN, 30 X 20". (POSTER FOR THE DOCUMENTARY FILM DIRECTED BY SANTIAGO ÁLVAREZ)

24. RICO GATSON (B. 1966, AUGUSTA, GA), *GIL*, 2015. COLOR PENCIL AND PHOTO COLLAGE ON PAPER, 24 X 32". COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND RONALD FELDMAN FINE ART

25. JARO VARGA, *LIBRARY 8.6.2011-8.7.2011* [2011]. PHOTO: MICHAL HUSTATY, COURTESY OF SLOVAK NATIONAL GALLERY

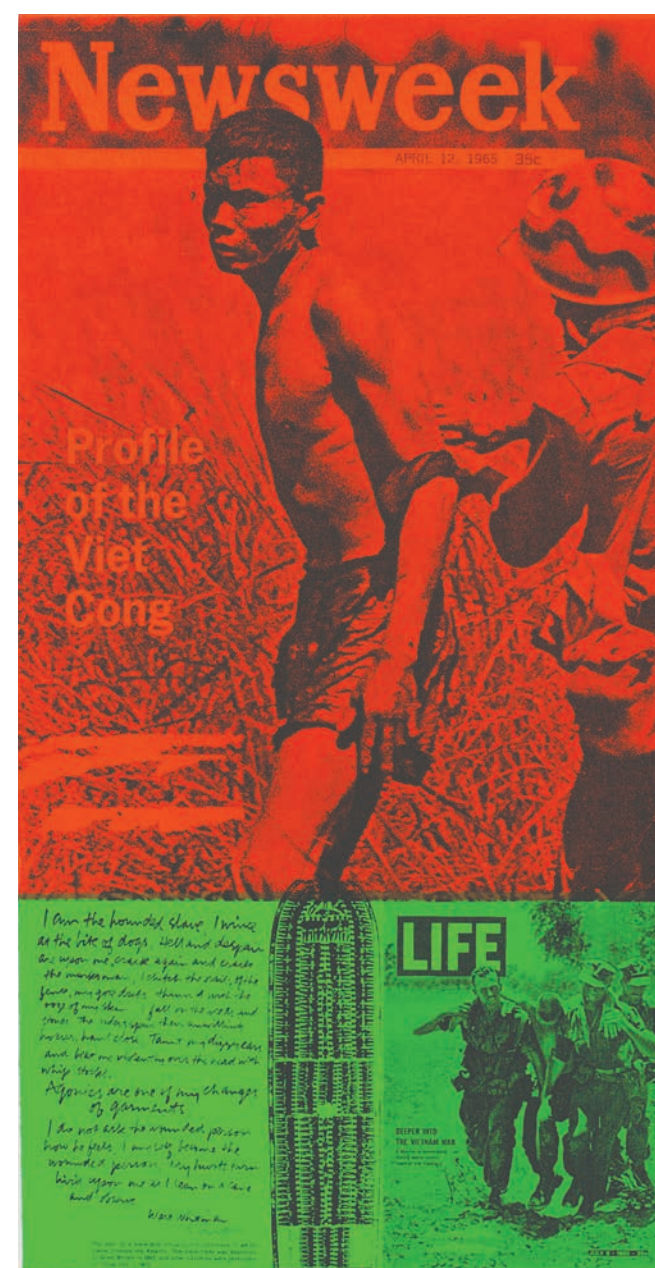
26. SISTER CORITA KENT (B. 1918, FORT DODGE, IA - D. 1986, BOSTON, MA), *SOMEDAY IS NOW*, 1964. SERIGRAPH, 24 X 36". PHOTOGRAPH BY ARTHUR EVANS. COURTESY OF THE CORITA ART CENTER, IMMACULATE HEART COMMUNITY, LOS ANGELES, CA

27. DREAD SCOTT (B. 1965, CHICAGO, IL), *RED WEDGE STORMING THE WINTER PALACE*, 2011. ACRYLIC AND XEROX TRANSFER ON CANVAS, 33 X 52". COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

28. SHIMON ATTIE (B. 1957, LOS ANGELES, CA), *DOUBLE BLIND (ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN DECLARATIONS OF INDEPENDENCE)*, 2012. BRAILLE ON SOMERSET BLACK PAPER, 38 5/8 X 28 X 1 5/8" (EACH FRAMED). ©SHIMON ATTIE. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY, NEW YORK.

29. SISTER CORITA KENT (B. 1918, FORT DODGE, IA - D. 1986, BOSTON, MA) *NEWS OF THE WEEK*, 1969. SERIGRAPH, 23 X 12". PHOTOGRAPH BY ARTHUR EVANS. COURTESY OF THE CORITA ART CENTER, IMMACULATE HEART COMMUNITY, LOS ANGELES, CA

30. RENÉ MEDEROS (B. 1933, SAGUA LA GRANDE, CUBA - D. 1996, HAVANA, CUBA), *LOS MARTIRES ("THE MARTYRS")*, 1973. SILKSCREEN 23 1/2 X 29". COMISSION DE ORIENTACION REVOLUCIONARIA DEL CC. DEL PCC. COURTESY OF THE CENTER FOR CUBAN STUDIES



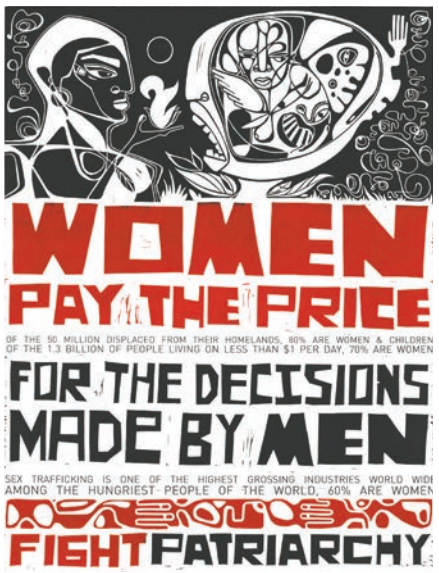
social transformation brought by the 1959 Revolution.<sup>16</sup> In other words, he was able to subvert pop culture to create a singular iconography of contemporary Cuban history.<sup>17</sup>

Adigo Benitez's *Untitled* (1972) is a portrait of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, one of the leaders of the Cuban Revolution, whose image is the most recognizable symbol of the cause. The Cuban government exported the idea of Che, a figure who represented a desire for freedom and independence, throughout Latin America. For this reason, Benitez depicts Che with a beard in the shape of the region. On behalf of the Committee for the Liberation of Angela Davis, Félix Beltrán designed *Cuba Libertad para Angela Davis* ("Freedom for Angela Davis") in 1971. Beltrán's graphic portrait was a call for Davis' release from prison after her arrest for conspiracy in the takeover of a Marin County courtroom in 1970. Her protest was an effort to free her imprisoned partner George Jackson who was a member of the Soledad Brothers, a subset of the Black Panthers. Beltrán created this poster for the propaganda department of the Communist Party of Cuba.

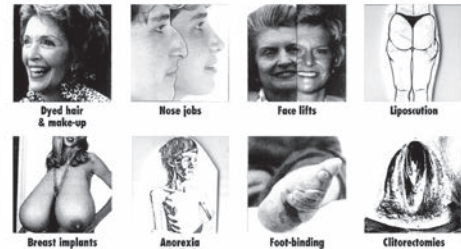
During the Vietnam War, Cuba's Communist Party was also concerned with the plight of the Vietnamese. Alfredo Rostgaard's silkscreen, *Hanoi Martes 13* ("Hanoi, March 13"), 1968 was created as the promotional poster for a Cuban film about the United States' bombing of Hanoi. The documentary attempts to implicate United States President Lyndon Johnson with the conditions imposed on the Vietnamese. Footage of the population are interspersed with clips of the bombings and casualties of the war. Rostgaard's print places Johnson's face on the warheads of two missiles. Similarly sardonic is a print created by Luis Balaguer for *Jornada continental de apoyo a Viet Nam, Cambodia y Laos, 15 a 21 de octubre* ("International Day in Support of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, October 15-21") in 1969. This anti-Nixon poster shows a grinning, red-eyed President, with an image of the 1968 My Lai Massacre emblazoned at the crown of his head.

The silkscreens of artist René Mederos are more illustrative than ironic, representing Cubans fighting for revolution. Three prints by Mederos are part of a portfolio of illustrations, produced by the Commission of Revolutionary Orientation of the Communist Party, celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of





## Republicans do believe in a woman's right to control her own body



A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM THE GUERRILLA GIRLS 532 LUGARDIA PL. #237, NY 10012



Words by G.P. Morris. Music by E. Mazis.

*Allegro marciale.*

*Andante*

*Andante*

1. We became aware of the existence of a right to have rights (and that means to live in a framework where one is judged by one's actions and opinions) and a right to belong.

2. Framework where one is judged by one's actions and opinions) and a right to belong.

in some kind of organized community, only when millions of people emerged who had lost and could not regain these rights because of the new global political situation.

Entered into Act of Congress, A.D. 1861 by F. York. Paid a © in the Clerk's Office of the U.S. Court of S.A.



the 1953 attack on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba. In *Autor Intellectual* ("Intellectual Author"), 1973 we see a different, more triumphant rendering of Jose Marti, the national hero of Cuba, while *Los Martires* ("The Martyrs"), 1973 depicts the martyrs and young revolutionaries who died during the 1953 attack.

Andres Serrano's *Cuba* (*Picture of Fidel*), 2012 was shot on the artist's first trip to the island for an investigative photography project, part of the Havana Biennial in 2013. His relationship to Cuba is both formative and illusive: his mother spent her childhood there, eventually leaving for New York City, where Serrano was raised. On this trip he planned to photograph Fidel Castro, among other leaders. Unable to meet with the former president himself, the artist photographed many members of the Castro family, including Mariela, who is an activist for gay rights and the daughter of Raul Castro. Serrano shot 700 rolls of film over six weeks, gaining access to domestic spaces, such as the bedroom pictured, where a portrait of Fidel Castro is pinned to the wall above the bed.

In the context of electoral politics, contemporary artists have often unofficially played the role of political critic. Los Angeles-based conceptual artist Charles Gaines' recent series *Notes on Social Justice* is comprised of large-scale drawings of musical scores from songs quoting artistic and political manifestos. Culling from sources as varied as Immanuel Kant, the Black Panthers, and Dada artist Hugo Ball, Gaines inserts texts into selected songs from the American Civil War to the mid-twentieth century. *Notes on Social Justice: Our Country Right or Wrong*, (1861), 2014 implicates our country's political system, just as the primaries will soon determine which candidates take the lead the upcoming presidential election. Flashback to the 1992 presidential election, the Guerrilla Girls (est. 1985) created *Republicans Do Believe In A Woman's Right To Control Her Own Body* (1992) for the Republican Convention in Houston Texas. The poster lists examples of the Republican party's understanding of women's rights (to control their own bodies): Nancy Reagan's dyed hair and make-up; plastic surgery such as nose jobs, facelifts, breast implants, and liposuction; and more violent forms of control including anorexia, foot binding, and clitorectomies. *Republicans Do Believe in a Woman's Right...* intentionally

omits the elephant in the room – abortion rights – which were hotly contested at the time.

What about a woman's right to marry a woman? Same sex marriage was an important issue in the current presidential term, yet Dyke Action Machine questions the prospect of gay marriage as the final frontier:

"Is it worth being boring for a blender?  
Gay Marriage – You might as well be straight."

Founded in 1991 by Carrie Moyer and Sue Schaffner, Dyke Action Machine expresses the lesbian community's ambivalence towards the gay movement's push for same-sex marriage and parenthood, in other words, heteronormative ideals as the end-goal. Their poster *Gay Marriage: You Might As Well Be Straight* (1997), functions as an aspirational advertisement, offering lesbians what they have been denied by the dominant culture: power, inclusion, and recognition. Taking the fantasy of the wedding industry to an extreme, Dyke Action Machine designed a poster of a lesbian couple in bridal gear.

Best known for his *HOPE* poster for Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign, Shepard Fairey designed *Sedation Pill* (2013), inspired by the title of the Public Enemy album "It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back." The print calls out the public's indifference and complacency towards political issues he sees as the result of being "hypnotized by conspicuous consumption, social media, entertainment, and self-medication." Fairey acknowledges these forms of escapism and sedation are comforting, but considers the resulting effects of disengagement leading to disempowerment to be a vicious circle that needs to be broken.

Sometimes a call for mindfulness is what is needed to break this cycle of passivity. Famous for his song *Give Peace a Chance*, John Lennon and Yoko Ono were both deeply concerned with promoting peace during the Vietnam War. Their 1969 poster, newspaper, and billboard campaign was originally envisioned with the words *Peace Declared*. As the Vietnam War raged on, the American death toll had reached 40,000. The anti-war movement was also at its

height: on November 15, 1969, 250,000 people marched in Washington D.C. in the largest anti-war demonstration in the nation's history. Ono and Lennon planned their peace campaign as a holiday greeting throughout the world. What began with the rallying cry *Peace Declared* ultimately became *WAR IS OVER!* (*if you want it*), 1969. In 2009, the message was revived in New York City by the Art Production Fund, installing the mantra on top of 160 taxis. This time, *WAR IS OVER* was aimed at the war in Afghanistan and Iraq.

More than thirty years later after Ono and Lennon's anti-war crusade, following the attacks on the World Trade Center, artist Nancy Burson produced a meditative poster project in response to 9/11, specifically for the neighborhood surrounding it. Burson's *Focus on Peace* (2002) was produced by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC) in collaboration with Creative Time. LMCC had been long associated with the WTC and became the cultural organization most identified with the 9/11 attacks, with its artist residency in the World Trade Center, and its work to help artists and arts groups find ways to continue their work in lower Manhattan. Creative Time also organized the *Towers of Light* public artwork that annually commemorates those whose lives were lost in the destruction of the Twin Towers. For the one year anniversary of 9/11, Nancy Burson sensitively responded to this loss by distributing 30,000 postcards and 7,000 posters with the words "Focus on Peace," giving a grieving community a positive focal point.

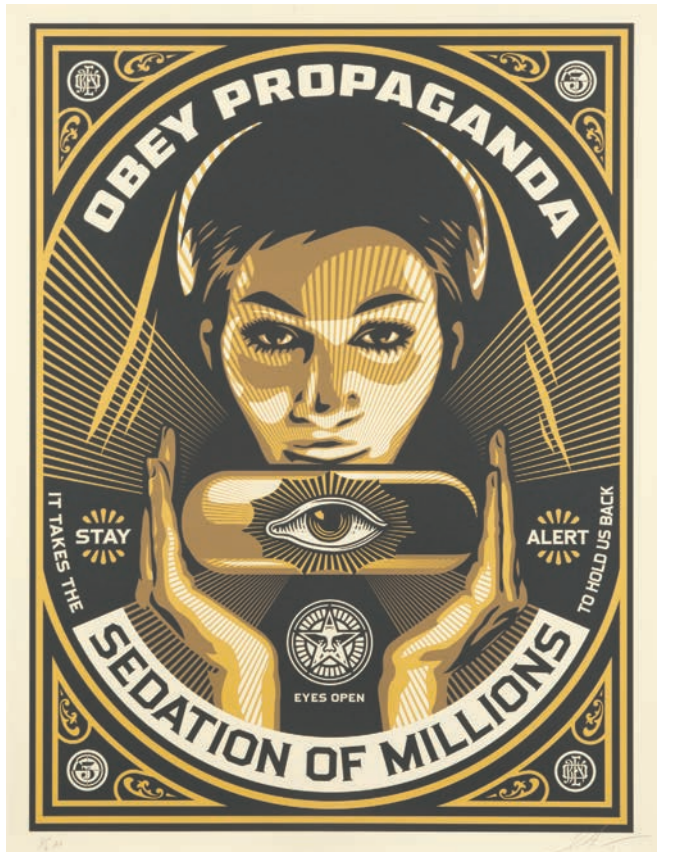
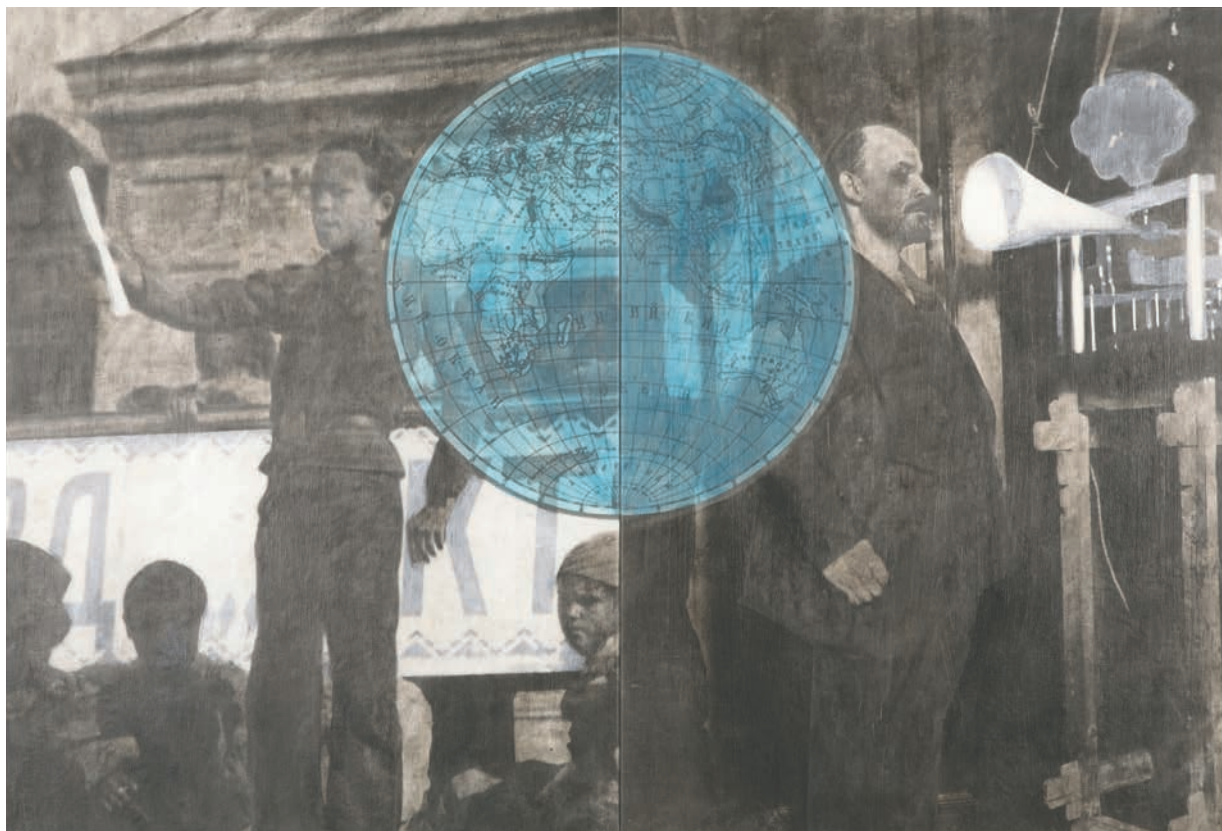
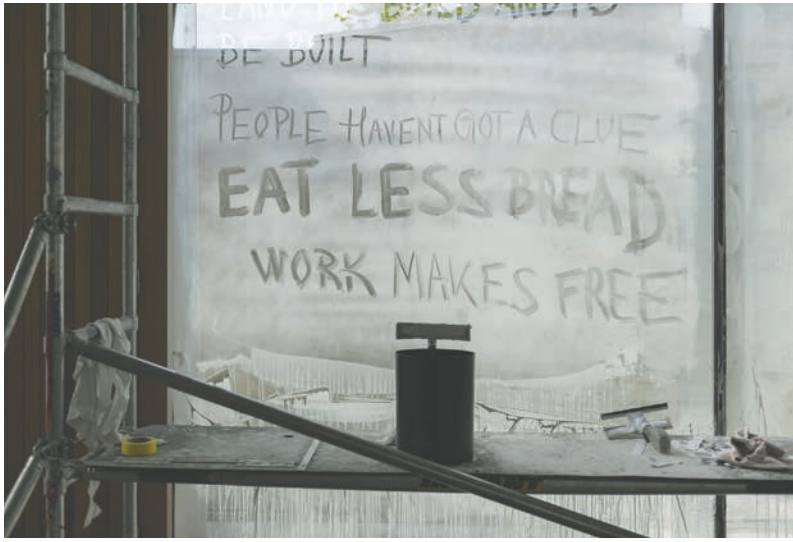
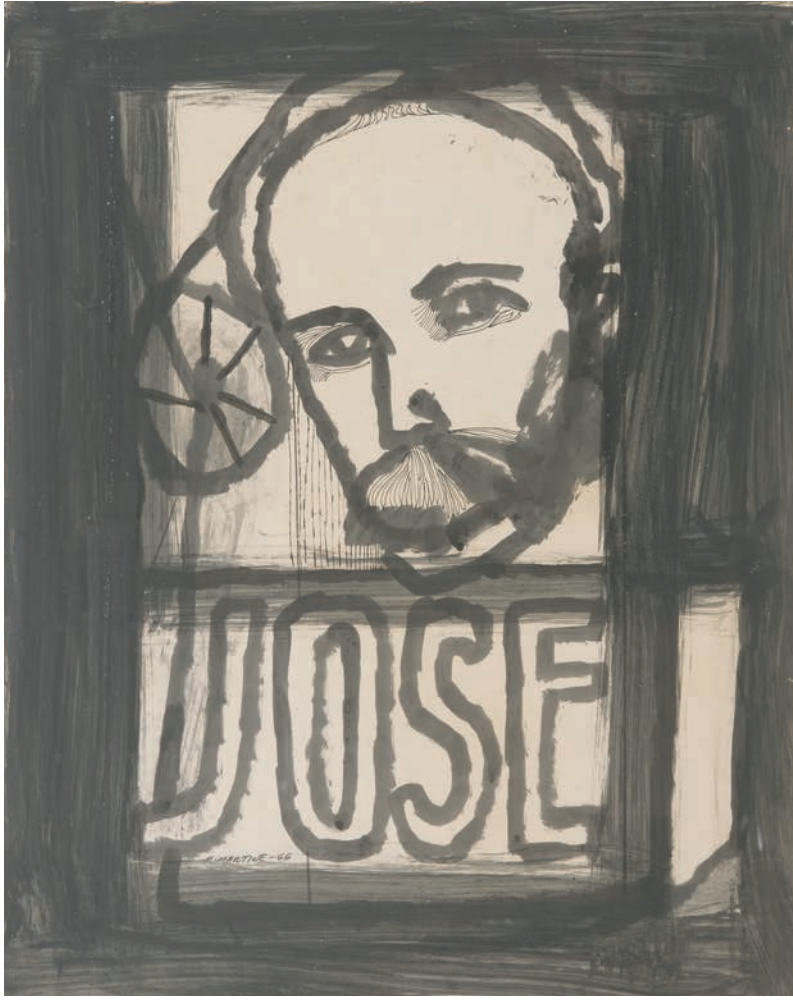
Since 9/11, the dynamics of New York City have changed considerably. From new construction and increased security bollards that surround outdoor areas of public and private buildings, to heightened security in buildings housing corporate and civic power, immigrant and lower income communities face the most difficulty accessing public services for their families. Stop-and-frisk policing has had the most significant impact on immigrants and communities of color, especially youth. In recognition of these barriers to mobility in the city, the current mayoral administration under Mayor Bill de Blasio has emphasized greater accessibility to public services and resources and more support for at-risk families and youth. To this end, the New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs has introduced the NYCID, a municipal ID card that gives all residents of the city a much needed form of government identification, which for many

new New Yorkers has been illusive, preventing their ability to establish themselves in the city. In the summer of 2015, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs announced a pilot residency program for artists within a small number of city agencies including the Mayors Office for Immigrant Affairs. Artist Tania Bruguera was selected for this first residency based on her work in Corona, Queens where she established a community space and project called Immigrant Movement International. Bruguera's contribution to the exhibition, *THE FRANCIS EFFECT* (2014) is a durational, performative campaign using the slogan "Dignity has no Nationality," which aims to challenge public perceptions of immigration. The campaign involves letter-writing and collecting signatures on postcards addressed to Pope Francis in support of his compassionate stance towards immigrants who face challenges in their search for a better life and a safer home.

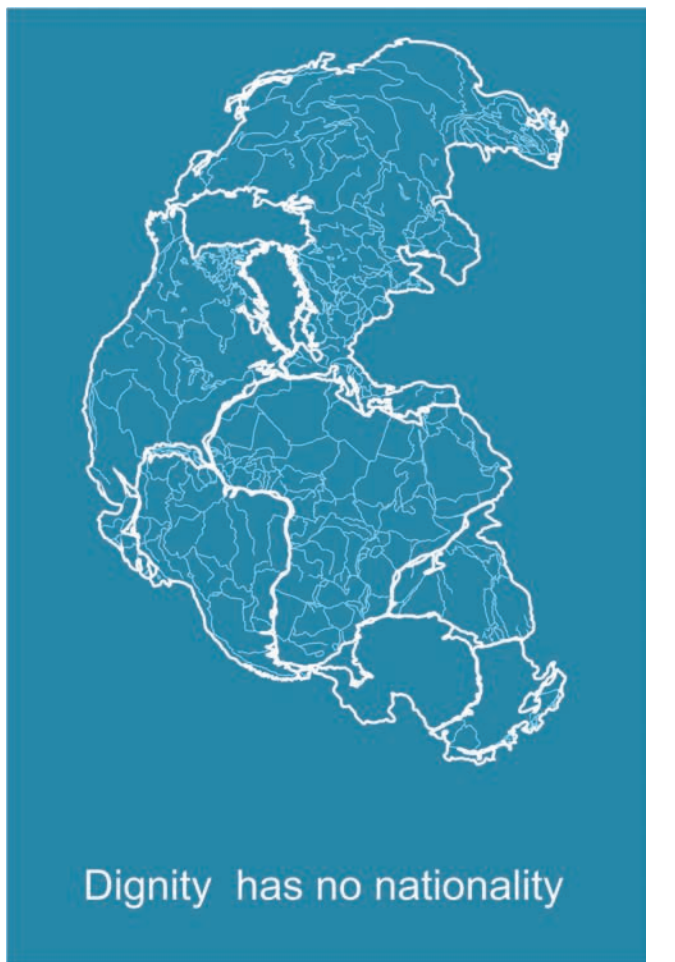
The idea of engaging an artist to help implement the NYCID was proposed by the Department of Cultural Affairs' Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl to build trust between local immigrant communities and city government. It is unclear how this experimental approach will unfold, but it gives the city an opportunity to explore how artists' specialized knowledge of social and political engagement can contribute to a sense of increased safety and richer cultural resources at a time when inequity is at an all time high. This experiment in cultural-political collaboration proposes that we trust artists for their commitment to speaking from a place of truth. When artists speak, it's time to listen.  
—Sara Reisman

1. Rollins, Tim, Susan Cahan, and Jan Avgjok. Felix Gonzalez-Torres. New York: Art Resources Transfer, Inc., 1993.
2. *ibid*
3. From the Encyclopedia of AIDS, date posted not available, via the ACT UP website, <http://www.actupny.org/reports/silencedeath.html>, accessed October 31, 2015
4. *ibid*, posted January 2005, accessed November 1, 2015
5. Lescaze, Zoe, "Union Members Protest Frieze Labor Policy," Andrea Bowers Joins the Fray," *The New York Observer*, May 9, 2013.
6. Matamoros, Corina, "Living History: Art of the People and Pop Art," Raul Martinez: la gran familia (Ediciones Vanguardia Cubana, 2012), 220
7. *ibid*





JORNADA CONTINENTAL DE APOYO A VIETNAM, CAMBODIA Y LAOS 15 AL 21 DE OCTUBRE **oclae**



31.		33.
	32.	
34.		35.
	37.	
36.		38.

31. RAUL MARTÍNEZ (B. 1927, CIEGO DE AVILA, CUBA – D. 1995, HAVANA, CUBA), *SIN TÍTULO (JOSE)*, 1966. 34 1/4 X 28 1/2 X 1 3/4". THE SHELLEY AND DONALD RUBIN PRIVATE COLLECTION

32. HEW LOCKE (B. 1959, EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND) *CHURCHILL (NEW LOOK PURPLE)*, 2008. ACRYLIC PAINT ON C-TYPE PHOTOGRAPH, 8.27 X 11.7". COURTESY OF HALES GALLERY, COPYRIGHT OF THE ARTIST. PHOTO BY FXP PHOTOGRAPHY. THIS IMAGE IS FROM THE *NATIVES AND COLONIALS LONDON* SERIES

33. SHEPARD FAIREY (B. 1970, CHARLESTON, SC), *SEDATION PILL*, 2013. SERIGRAPH ON PAPER 43 1/2 X 34". THE SHELLEY AND DONALD RUBIN PRIVATE COLLECTION

34. MAJA BAJEVIC, *TO BE CONTINUED*, 2014. EXHIBITION VIEWS, "TAKE LIBERTY!", THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ART, OSLO, NORWAY. COURTESY OF ARTIST AND PETER KILCHMANN GALLERY

35. LUIS BALAGUER, *JORNADA CONTINENTAL DE APOYO A VIETNAM, CAMBODIA Y LAOS, 15 A 21 DE OCTUBRE* ("INTERNATIONAL DAY IN SUPPORT OF VIETNAM, CAMBODIA, AND LAOS, OCTOBER 15-21"), 1969. OFFSET, 25 X 16". COURTESY OF THE CENTER FOR CUBAN STUDIES

36. YOAN CAPOTE (B. 1977, PINAR DEL RÍO, CUBA), *DIALOGUSFOBIA (UN NUDO EN LA GARGANTA)*, 2011. BRONZE 31 1/8 X 11 3/4" (DIAMETER). © YOAN CAPOTE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY, NEW YORK

37. DREAD SCOTT (B. 1965, CHICAGO, IL), *LENIN, BOY AND WORLD*, 2011. ACRYLIC AND XEROX TRANSFER ON CANVAS 44 X 66". (44 X 33" EACH). COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

38. TANIA BRUGUERA, */THE FRANCIS EFFECT*, YEAR: 2014 MEDIUM: CAMPAIGN, ARTE DE CONDUCTA MATERIALS: TABLE, POSTCARDS, T-SHIRTS, TOTE BAGS, WEBSITE, IPAD



## THE 8TH FLOOR

The 8th Floor is an exhibition and events space established in 2010 by Shelley and Donald Rubin, dedicated to promoting cultural and philanthropic initiatives, to expanding artistic and cultural accessibility in New York City. The 8th Floor is located at 17 West 17th Street and is free and open to the public. Schools groups are encouraged.

Viewing hours are Tuesday through Friday, 11:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Saturday by appointment. [The8thfloor.Org](http://The8thfloor.Org)