

STATE OF THE UNION Artist Statements

Suzanne Barnes

Sparrow vs Blue Line

Media: sepia pencil, gold leaf, colored pencil on handmade flax paper

Year completed: 2016

Size: 12H" x 22L"

A friend collects images of sparrows. He likes sparrows because they are common birds, not highly ranked on the bird beauty scale, yet on close observation, each individual has a unique patterning and a buffet of brown shades.

Last year, a colleague was roughly detained into police custody as a robbery suspect. A white woman mistakenly identified him because he was black and wearing a knitted hat. The actual suspect weighed many pounds less than my colleague and was wearing a black watch cap. My colleague was twenty years older than the actual suspect and his cap was a colorful hand-knitted pillbox style. As sparrows demonstrate, brown birds do not look alike.

When I made this drawing, I was thinking about my friend, my colleague, sparrows, people, and the fragility of life.

Natalie Bloom

Celebrate Autumn

oil on canvas

My work depicts the wonder and beauty of nature.

I see what is happening with our earth; destruction with global warming, wars and oil companies depleting and destroying the land.

I know there are many more causes like air pollution and over-building, etc.

Yetti Frenkel

Red, White, and Blue is an image about veterans. It is a portrait of a man I used to see walking around near my studio in downtown Lynn. He usually had his macaws with him, perched on each shoulder. He was a Vietnam vet, and I placed him in front of the monument to veterans of that war outside city hall in Lynn.

32" x 48" watercolor

Outbound is a scene of a drug overdose. It's something I witnessed on the railroad platform across from my studio in Lynn, but it could be a scene from anywhere in the U.S.

36" x 50" colored pencil

Ellen Hardy

"Rose-colored glasses for the 1%"

24" x 36"

Mixed media on canvas

2008-2013

\$600.

This mixed media piece is part of a "Life Tier Series" that express my frustration with the lack of socio-economic diversity and the shrinking middle class.

Ellen Hardy is a life-long artists who works in both photography and painting and sometimes mixes them together.

Hardy is a former Salem Public Art Commissioner and a former president of the Salem Arts Association and runs the communications and publishing firm Hardy House in addition to pursuing her fine art.

Garry D Harley

Image One: Digital Painting - 30" h x 36" w (Canvas) / 32" h x 38" w (Frame)

Title: **They Came for My Brother & I Turned Away - Then They Came for Me on a Sunny Day in October**

Medium: Archival Pigment Ink on Canvas

Year: 2016

Image Two: Digital Painting - 32" h x 42" w (Canvas) / 34" h x 44" w (Frame)

Title: **Meeting Under a Black Moon on the Plains of Despair**

Medium: Archival Pigment Ink on Canvas

Year: 2016

Credit: Source Photograph used by permission of Anthony S. Karen Photojournalist (NYC - anthonykaren.com)

Both of my Digital Paintings were created in 2016 stimulated by the current political climate and by specific propaganda techniques used by the 'Trump Campaign' reminiscent of those used in Germany in the 1930's (Image One - *The Came for my Brother & I Turned Away - Then They Came for Me on a Sunny Day in October*). Image Two, (*Meeting Under a Black Moon on the Plains of Despair*) is also a Digital Painting, again stimulated by the various 'fringe groups' attracted to the message of the 'Trump Campaign' and the use of violence and intimidation of immigrant and minority citizens as a central organizing principal by the candidate. These paintings have been created, at this time, since I feel artists have a special capacity and opportunity to offer social commentary to our fellow citizens as to our observations and fears or what some might call presenting the 'brutal truth'.

Emily Kwong

**YOU STOLE MY VOICE
AS YOU TOOK MY LIPS
AND YOU EXPECT ME TO BE
THANKFUL**

Watercolor

18x12

2016

This piece is a commentary on the politics involved in a women's bodily autonomy, especially rape culture. Women are torn not only physically but mentally from these terrible experiences and expected to just brush it off to save the face of the man who assaulted them. Especially, in recent events where Donald has been named as a sexual abuser and overall terrible human, who instead calls these victims of his crimes liars.

Jeannine Pelkey

Wakefield Lake, Photography, taken late winter 2015.

The Wakefield Lake was covered in fresh snowfall, deep and untouched. The sun was setting, and the sunset was breathtaking. We need to continually support organizations like the Friends of Lake Quannapowitt who spend countless time protecting this lake so many can enjoy it with families at the playground, local races and people walking and exercising around it as well as sailing and kayaking. Keeping an area like this is important to our health and well-being.

Ruth Ann Pelkey

Plum Island, Photography, 2015.

This photograph is of Plum Island, where there is a beautiful refuge as well as saltmarshes right on the Merrimack River. This has become a year round community. Because of protection of the area, it has kept its beauty and a great place to live, and visit. Our hope that this visual will help to continue with the upcoming President as it has with the current President's initiative with the Memorandum and Federal Action Plan for long term drought resilience which began in Spring 2016. The Administration is committed to helping families, communities and farmers affected by drought. If you drive by this today, it is barren, dried and brown.

Ken Reker

A Thin Veil of Privacy, spray paint / stencil on cloth, dimensions variable, 2016.

How much privacy do we have?

Ken Reker

Still Life with Meter, mixed media assemblage, 96" X 12" X 8", 2016.

This work reflects my concern for our relationship with nature and the environment.

Robert Siegelman

"Make America Great Again"

Photo Installation / Document of a Temporary Installation

78x76 Inches

2016

"Make America Great Again"

Sculpture / Discarded and Reclaimed Flags

111x60 Inches

2016

The title **Make America Great Again** is taken from Donald Trump's election campaign. It is a slogan (and campaign) that makes me very nervous. Perhaps when you read this, the election will have been decided.

This installation was made in an abandoned industrial building, a rural site that was once very active, now empty and barren. I imagine Trump's *Great America* was the time when these now empty buildings, found all across the country, were humming.

My project was to pay tribute to this time gone by, and to the beauty in the decrepit-ness of these empty sites. It is also meant to be a contemporary use for a site, which in all likelihood, is nearly unsalable. The site has a "for sale" sign, but is not actively marketed.

All the materials that I used were found at a local transfer station (AKA The Dump). There is a bin for discarded flags, and shelves of VHS tapes, for the taking. There is a "library" as well. I wanted to utilize that which was no longer in use, or outdated in this "found" site. The location and the items I collected were all owned, or formally owned, by someone else.

I use discarded flags and other found objects to talk about outdated ideas of what it means to be American, and of being a "Great" country.

The centerpiece and title piece of the installation, involved the placing of discarded (now reclaimed), faded, torn, ripped, and stretched American flags, on the debris and glass strewn floor of the space in a kind of memorial fashion, reminiscent of the pictures of flag draped coffins seen in the media.

I used previously viewed VHS tapes to mark the space, and to speak to a media now outdated, and also part of our past.

There are other elements and pieces not represented in the images contained in this application. Some of the other aspects of this work was very tiny, and set in utility boxes. There was also a piece that involved books, discarded from local libraries.

Among these books was one by Hannah Arendt, a Dr. Seuss book, and a book on Houdini, which I had read as a child.

The work in this site came to a halt when I was informed that the local police had identified my car, seen parked nearby, and wanted to question me. Interestingly enough they found me through a friend, rather than finding me directly in the phone book. The officer, who questioned me, was fascinated by all the details the he discovered in the various areas of the building.

I went back to the site one last time after being questioned, to find that the piece had been destroyed.

I was arrested for trespassing on Labor Day Weekend.

Allen M. Spivak

Case Closed-No Further Action Required, 2016, 86"H x 48"W x 18"D.

Each file box contains a label sheet describing a particular act of violence that has been largely ignored. These file boxes 'filled' with the details of each horrific event are filed away in some remote corner of some nondescript building, largely ignored and forgotten.

Quanzhou (Jack) Zhao, 10/21

Artist Statement from Quanzhou (Jack) Zhao

For me personally, I view war and peace as a critical concern and my artworks are a free extension and expression of myself. As with most humans on this Earth I dream and wish for world peace, but war exists and it relentlessly continues around this planet. With the gestural textures and the traits of my brushstrokes, I enjoy capturing and expressing my sorrow, joyfulness, thoughts and my anxieties through the images and objects I create using a variety of mediums on various substrates.

Often times the techniques I use derive from deep rooted origins of the Chinese brushworks and calligraphy in which I've been studying and practicing on rice paper since I was a young child. I have been continually experimenting with other mediums including acrylic painting, pencil, ink on canvas, and 3D designs for screen and for print with an emphasis towards heavy layers of the Chinese literati painting approach.

Artwork 1

This artwork, titled **Warplane don't come back again**, reflects a day I went for a walk in search of a good location to create a landscaping with my brushworks. Suddenly I witnessed two powerful motorcycles speeding through a small and content group of geese. One courageous goose rose up with great courage to keep the goslings safely behind her.

That image I just witnessed touched me. Geese, chickens and many other animals will do similar things, including us as human beings. Thinking about the faded Vietnam War, the ongoing war in Syria, the possibility of another Korean War or the potential of World War III, it's hard to imagine how many desperate mothers and fathers will do their best to protect their children, but in vein.

The calligraphy in Chinese on this painting says in a plain language something like this "Warplane, warplane, warplane, don't come back again. My house is ruined. Warplane do not come back again so that my kids can survive".

Artwork 2

This painting, titled ***The sky is black and the earth is yellow***, expresses my concern for the possibility of a Korean War II, which may escalated into an unprecedented global nuclear crisis and disaster. I understand that a small fraction of these 15,000 dreadful weapons can end the earth's ecosystem and will undeniably make this planet uninhabitable.

The sky is black and the earth is yellow is the beginning phrase of the ancient poem "Thousand Characters Classic". This poem is the earliest and the most widespread literacy text book in China since approximately 1500 years ago. It has also always been one of the primary choices to study and practice the art of calligraphy.

Biography of Quanzhou (Jack) Zhao

Quanzhou (Jack) Zhao is a painter and 3D artist living in Winchester, Massachusetts. His artworks encircle many mediums including brushwork on rice paper, acrylic painting, pencil, ink on canvas, and 3D designs on screen and for print.

Zhao's artworks have a noticeably Chinese literati painting approach encompassing a fresh and contemporary look using elements often consisting of calligraphy, landscapes, birds and flowers. His unique brushstrokes offer the viewers a distinctive fluid visual experience to explore the aesthetics and artistry value of the artist. Zhao views his artworks as a free extension and expression of himself, and often times the techniques he uses derive from deep rooted origins of the Chinese brushworks and calligraphy in which he has been studying and practicing on rice paper since he was a young child. While the subject matter is generally represented in metaphoric fashions and quasi-abstract forms, many of his works capture critical views of the worldwide social issues we are facing today including war, peace and nuclear crisis, etc.

Zhao graduated from the acclaimed painting program at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of Brussels in 2001 and he proudly won the Prize of the Royal Association of Professional Artists of Belgium. Later that year he relocated to the United States to further his art studies at the School of Visual Arts in New York, in which he earned his MFA degree in Computer Art with a major in 3D and multimedia arts. Zhao's artworks have been on exhibit as part of an emerging artists group showing at the Walloon Fine Art Museum in Liege, Belgium, the Culture Center of Monterrey, Mexico and an independent showing at the Puffin Room gallery Soho, New York City.