

My work addresses the exigencies of daily realities and redresses the refined aesthetics of art. My practice is diverse in media, united by conceptual and tactical approaches that present subjects rather than objects. I strive for a cursory clarity that becomes complicated with circumspection, an initial seduction that leads into intractable situations. I seek the naked, stark and confrontational and the psychologically torpid terrain where they reside. I aspire to an execution that is unassuming and transparent. I typically rely on the iconic, the familiar twisted and all the more recognizable for it. I frequently take recourse in humor and poetry to alleviate and intensify the bleak and unbearable. I choose to cloak eternal questions in topical garb, for urgency calls forth and may assist the living, discomforts the nostalgic, and undermines resignation. Creating enduring vehicles of expression, reportage and activism posits our emotions, circumstances and actions in historic contexts that eschew the frivolous and strengthen resolve.

The objectives of my creative practice and the criteria for evaluating my artistic activities are simple, clear, haptic. My work is successful to the degree that it makes human hair bristle. This physiological manifestation of a psychological state of indignation, quantifiable by the verticality of hackles is a constant measure for any of my work, regardless of its materials, process or approach. Previously I tried to assess the efficacy of my endeavors to the extent that it made people wretch. Though also physiologically demonstrable, the variables prompting the retching, disgust, indigestion as well as indignation made this measure more cumbersome.

I do not wish to be misunderstood as supercilious. I aspire to make work that is chilling, compelling, palpable, and know that there is a lineage so accomplished. While often conflated with religious fervor, secular visual art also has, since its inception, provoked complicated intense responses that can activate its beholders. That is what I desire to do. Whether trained or predisposed to be skeptical of pageantry, I choose to develop forms of address that are personal and typically experienced individually, but also embody the potential to arouse a collective response.

I am most moved by injustices committed in my name, by those who represent me, and consequently preventable by my actions. Representation is not a hermetic mimetic pictorial tradition but an agency able to alleviate suffering and promote self-sufficiency. Representation, though often abused to the advantage of oligarchies, can be used to awaken and combat torpor. Representing is not merely a luxury of the privileged but a daring, damaging and delightful necessity. Representation is a channeling of power, a tool, a force, an abstraction and image. Its making and unmaking is desirably contested.

Tactics and disciplines vary when emphasizing the corporality of the viewer (installations, physical objects, works in the round, interactive pieces), developing an afterimage (temporal works of sound, film, video, spoken narratives) and invoking the imaginative plain (writing, drawing, painting and digital flat work). Each form of address balances realpolitik with poetics, craft and contemplation. Research contingents include technological innovations in digital imaging, printmaking, sound and animation programs, the efforts of many, technicians, assistants, contributors and collaborators, and individual studio practice.

*Examples of the body politic:*

When I learned that the US Coastguard watched as 800 Haitian refugees drowned while attempting to reach our coasts, the irony of 'supporting democracy in our hemisphere' became too great. We can read such 'stories' in the news, if it is 'fit to print,' but are we able to absorb them? I develop large-scale installations to reduce our distance from such calamities and inequities. In this case, I created makeshift bridges akin to those in Port-au-Prince slums so that each step of the now vulnerable visitor was

physically unstable. These walkways spanned a blood red pool immersing spent bullet casings, filled by eight hundred streams of water raining from perforated, burned coffee bags above. Throughout my work materials assume significance and narrative power to voice urgent and often chronic conditions created by US foreign policy that are unconscionable, undeniable, untenable and alterable.

Invoking both the physical properties and social histories of materials, I build on and transform their meaning. I have been fortunate to re-contextualize museum pieces and loaned artifacts as elements in my work, including a 2,500 year old Greek Protoma, a medieval carved pillar, and a pre-revolutionary 52" wide granite millstone built by slaves. Encountering a 2,000 pound millstone supported by glass goblets filled by wine demands and offers much to a viewer as does the cultural and historical weight of other objects I employ. The physicality, coldness, and hardness of stone, the fragility, transparency, and collective strength of the glasses are as much containers of meaning as the vessels themselves are of spirits. A literal change in posture is required to see the sea of glass uplifting the stone just as by implication the collective will can accomplish much if our political postures change.

Discrete objects can be as challenging as environments are engaging. A bugle turned in on itself, mouthpiece in bell, is silenced by its own rapacity in the sculpture *Charge: Redefining Genocide*. Nine glass gavels spinning from a child's mobile, glass baby rattles filled with stones (*Infant Justice* and *Inheritance* respectively), and a collection of glass harvesting blades with their bleached wooden handles lain on concrete in *TILL* are studies in contrast, of materials, expectations, opportunities. Found objects such as the re-contextualized fifteen cue balls inside a wooden rack in *Blameless: The Hegemonic Break*, the egg-beater adapted for *Double Delight: Device for Eating Two Ice-Cream Cones Simultaneously Without Having To Give One To A Beggar*, or a chrysanthemum fashioned with plastic petals cast from banana peels (*Whoops: Not All Slippage Is Hermeneutic*), highlight the trappings of distinguishing between aesthetic, political and moral orders.

*Examples of transient visages and voices:*

My temporal works are frequently elliptical and often expand the spaces of my three-dimensional works through accompanying soundtracks. For example *StOck OptiOns* presented multiple recreations of full-scale 19th century stockades confining scores of cast hands and feet to the sounds of fingers snapping. Inmates forbidden to speak have resorted to communication in this manner. In the context of the installation, such singular snapping multiplied to a polyphonic protest. Surprisingly, the sounds seemed to devolve from an increasing clamor to an undifferentiated drone, a fire crackling, a lull. The installation *Democracy on Ice*, commemorating the 2001 Pan-American centennial in Buffalo, New York (the year the Organization of American States could not even decide on a definition of human rights abuses, let alone democracy) consisted mainly of simulated ice floes among the sounds of a Zamboni ice rink resurfacers gliding along with the repetitious whisper of 'the only safe words are my words' (a phrase taken from the lexicon of terror under Pinochet). In *Degree of Difficulty* with its three-meter high diving board and vacant life-guard chair overseeing a desiccated mud surface, one heard underwater gurgles along with a child chanting 'You want help? I'll help you. You don't want help? I'll help you.' (a précis of US foreign policy selectively applied). *Cleave* included the labored breathing of an axe wielding man and splitting wood. In *When Pulse Becomes Pitch*, an interactive installation created with David Tinapple, visitors speak into a microphone placed at the bell of a large speaker horn, triggering phonemes in a foreign tongue. These works all ask who commands the situation, determines the parameters, maintains the apparatus, controls the meaning?

My single-channel video loops are terse, sometimes edited from a single take. *Fleece* is a real-time video with audio of a sheep bleating, trapped in a well, referring to water as a most contested resource. *Stalemate* is a close-up of two cigarettes burning tip to tip, poised between fueling and extinguishing each other. *Black AND White* presents a woman of indeterminate ethnicity donning a scarf in multiple fashions. Its elisions evoke magic tricks and cultural slights of hand that suggest modesty, allure, hajib,

Madonna, the exotic and the modern consecutively and simultaneously. *The Annunciation II: VICTORY* (sic) shows a nude knight with ostentatious ostrich plumage obscuring his vision crawling across searing sands imprinted with Islamic patterns. He proclaims “VICT(E)ORY” while carving each letter, error and all with a replica of Richard the Lionheart’s sword, obliterating his master’s narrative as he crawls. *Hacker, Hawker, Herald* is a recent three-screen work showing women hoeing the ocean, a child proffering a rock and a boy smashing stone eagle wings into gravel. Through visual mythmaking, it investigates “negative” economies, access to technology and the aspirations of those who labor.

*Examples of flat fantasies:*

My two dimensional work maintains socio-political themes typically with a humorous veneer. Drawings and paintings feature leaping cats, dogs and squirrels ‘dancing the *Post-Colonial Shift to Greater Dependency*’, fish and fowl fables with larger than life grotesques, and allegorical actors chasing, jousting, balancing, and buoying one another. They entice children even if adults are required to justify their tragic ties to the oppressed.

The literal blood, bone, mold, earth, gunpowder, shoe polish, and hair along with more conventional pigments and binders leave their marks. I combine composition, reconfiguration, realms of discrepant depiction, unexpected scale and (off) color relationships in sincere and sardonic pictures.

My digital imagery, murals, pages, books and covers for academic publications hover in uncomfortable spaces both clear and cryptic. They are rife with mythological overtones, metaphysical retreats and tempting Romanticism that churn over time. With historical allusions and caustic juxtapositions, they slow interpretation. These works are the antithesis of signs, made not to be read, but to arrest. There is an apparent ease of execution that does not extend to the feelings and thoughts conveyed. They are screams of silent destitution. They plea.

*Essentialist measures:*

Assessing success in the arts is thorny as popularity is often confused with quality and celebrity with significance. Contemporary acclaim does not necessarily lead to enduring renown though external recognition for my work continues to grow. What is at stake in my work is what sustains me; the scope of those stakes can both attract and repel attention. For my measure, the wider, the deeper, the better.

More customary or quantitative measures of my performance can be seen in the diverse nature and extent of my professional activities: the academic lectures at international and national conferences of theory, art history, and political activists; the venues and numbers of solo exhibitions that now extend beyond our borders; the collaborative public activities of PED (with Paul Vanouse and Millie Chen) that have occurred in Buffalo and Belfast, Rio de Janeiro and Chongqing; the caliber and range of artists I have shown with, from Durer to Goya and Golub to Haacke; the international group exhibitions in which I have participated on topics from the apocalypse to animal nature and disasters of war to the culture of class; the literary company in publications that feature my work, from Bertolt Brecht to Mahmoud Darwish; and the variety of contexts (great and small) in which I have placed my work, from jumbotrons and barber shops to video screenings and electronic arts festivals to university galleries and metropolitan museums. In all these ways, I will continue to share my voice and vision.