

Title: *Learning to Read, Learning to Write, Learning to Learn*

Date: 2007

Artist: Margaret Plaganis

I teach art in an elementary school in Hartford, Connecticut where seventy percent of our children come from homes where English is spoken as a second language. This is only one of many daunting challenges they face daily. Many of our students come to school seeking food, health care, shelter, safety and emotional nurture. Only when their basic needs are met are they able to learn basic skills in school.

Medium: Mixed Media Collage

Title: *Our Basement and View from My School in Souk El Gharb*

Date: 2006

Artist: Linda Abadjian

War has been and continues to be a major issue intertwined with social injustice. War results in a great deal of atrocities, including irreplaceable loss of innocent lives, displacement, economic crises, sometimes even famine and genocide. War at times seems inevitable. These facts deeply concern me. Having fled my country, Lebanon, at age 13 due to civil war, I am deeply sensitive to the current global political instability. My work is a personal examination of the aftermath of war. These paintings of war-torn buildings of my home and places from my childhood are more than personal memories and references to my identity. Through them I stress that when it comes to war, no repetition is ever necessary. I wish to focus, not on the violence of war, but on the humanity's amazing ability of endurance and resilience.

Medium: Sharpie and acrylic on paper

Title: *Future Curio*

Arts Collaborative Projects: **Projects for a New Millennium**

Using encased sage and broken glass in a static growth form, I convey the perspective that without our stewardship of the environment, we may only be able to experience nature as museum curios in the future.

Medium: Sage and glass

Title: *Tattooed Lady: Resurrection*

Date: 2004

Title: *The Raising of Lazarus*

Date: 2004

Artist: Camille Eskill

Truncated Series. My work resonates with questions of social and cultural mores, coding, and expectations, and uses the damaged female body as metaphor and testimonial. Drawn from a personal history of trauma and triumph, the fragmented “tattooed” forms point to ideas of self-perception, self-value, transformation, and transcendence. The pleasing florals inscribed on the shell-like torsos and broken limbs disguise the strains of aggression and disenfranchisement suggested by disquieting found objects or reconfigurations; and they become

symbols of will, resilience, and redemption. Two and three-dimensional elements merge and become reordered, undermining the integrity of form and image to describe psychological experience, invert meaning, and undercut assumptions about appearance and reality.

Medium: Resin, graphite, colored pencil, lace, mixed media

Title: *John Doe*

Date: 2000

Artist: Stanwyck Cromwell

John Doe was a familiar human being, of Urban America. The only known classification attached to this human, was the familiar “N” word, or “Crack Head”. He departed this life during the frigid winter season that gripped most of America. John Doe died of smoke affixation, in a building

frequented by crack heads and prostitutes. No one inquired about him, except the drug dealers with whom he had an open credit line, due his disability check, and other means of hustles. Upon removing his corpse from the burnt out building, the only sign of life surrounding him, was the crows (black birds) that seem to pay their last respect. In spite of his drug addiction and affections, John Doe took the time to feed the crows with his partially stale, leftover, Dunkin Doughnut.

It is from this unfortunate situation that the assemblage *John Doe* was reborn. This resurrection arose from the debris of the demolished building that temporarily entombed Joe Doe, spiritually and mentally. *John Doe* is a spiritual, economical and moral reminder of the ongoing problems of not only Urban America, but also the Diaspora. While this problem is rampant in Urban America, it does not discriminate. Who is really John Doe? He is Black, Caucasian, Hispanic, Native American, Asian and some more. John Doe is someone that everyone “No’s” but no one “knows”.

Medium: Mixed Media Assemblage

Title: *Blackedemic*

Date: 2007

Artist: Rodney Bull

Visual Artwork is a way for my self-expression. It helps communicate ideas and thoughts, which are indescribable through words alone. In my recent works I hope to help people realize social injustice through trying to reach false goals.

Medium: Acrylic on canvas

Title: *Meet Here*

Date: 2006

Title: *Play*

Date: 2006

Title: *Connect*

Date: 2006

Artist: June Bisantz

The work shown here is from a project created for outdoor installation in downtown New Haven, Connecticut entitled *Directions for Use*. This project was designed to become part of the urban streetscape while transforming it into a more interactive environment – one that embraced rather than resisted community use. In *Directions for Use*, I use altered street signs as a tool for creative and personal connection. Familiar directional symbols are combined with unexpected words to attract people and invite them to feel safe and happy in the space. Like all my work, *Directions for Use* is based in my belief that when we are happy and cared for we are more likely to engage in the work of making the world a better place. This optimistic philosophy was crafted in the

context of the troubled world we live in, burdened with social injustice, economic imbalance, and loss of personal connection.

I believe art can change the world. I want people to know that public space belongs to them, that art belongs to them, and that the world needs and welcomes individual expression, meaningful connection and joyful interaction.

Medium: Vinyl on metal

Title: *Insulin Resistance*

Date: 2007

Title: *Little Deboo learns about electron microscope*

Date: 2007

Artist: Deborah Annette Simmons

Illustrations from children's book "Little Deboo Learns about Type 2 Diabetes"

The creation of this project is in collaboration with the Institute for Community Research and it's Founding Director and Senior Researcher, Jean J. Schensul, Ph.D. The text and creation of illustrations was based on research conducted in the following areas: definition of type 2 diabetes; increase

rate of type 2 diabetes among African American children; the use of picture based material as a tool for promoting health literacy; the impact of type 2 diabetes on the anatomy and physiology of the human body of pre-adolescent and adolescent; the impact of obesity and family history in the development of type 2 diabetes. The completed project will be made available to schools, libraries, community centers and health care providers to promote health literacy and prevention of type 2 diabetes among this population.

Medium: Acrylic on Bristol Board

Title: *Our Smallest Ally*

Date: 2006

Title: *Abduction of Assyrian Women*

Date: 2006

Title: *Patterns of Genocide*

Date: 2006

Artist: Sharokin Betgevalgiz

Artists of non-dominant cultures have an inherent responsibility to communicate a message that is genuinely personal yet able to transcend multilayered boundaries of identity. Being Assyrian, or a displaced person in the global world, I have strengthened my ability to examine, imagine, author, create, and produce art and tell stories through my visual explorations.

Graphic Design is a form of visual art that is concerned with the presentation and management of image and text as well as their relationships. Its primary function is to communicate by creating either a visceral reaction or to initiate an intellectual decoding process or both. The form of the neo-Assyrian alphabet, specifically Eastern Syriac letterforms, has a unique affect on my design sensibilities, as they are the core foundation of my semiotic coding of meaning. Assyrian is what I heard in relation to what I saw visually and what I first coded and decoded, gives meaning to the world around me. I have chosen to examine the semiotics of this letterform along side ancient Assyrian patterns, by constructing and deconstructing their form. Through this investigation, the subject matter spans 20th Century Assyrian history, depicting an autobiographical connection to the subject.

The relationship of patterns and ornamentation is juxtaposed with abstract form and documentary content. Formation of a cluster of letterforms transform into a variegated visual repetition of patterns, utilizing historic and contemporary photos and text to document a specific aspect of 20th Century Assyrian history. Assyrian letters function as a visual tool through which I can express my design sensibility. The letterform holds who we are as Assyrians. Nothing can threaten the existence of this culture so long as the language remains. Despite all of the language deterioration, it is the alphabet, as the form of the language, which gives us our identity.

Medium: Digital prints on paper and canvas

Title: *Night and Day: A Musical Mosaic*

Date: 2007

Artist: Susan E. Rosano and Dennis G. Waring

Live music has a unifying effect on communities of diverse cultures. No matter what type of music is being presented, hundreds of citizens of small towns in CT will come out to a concert on the green. Whether it is rock and roll, classical, or culturally specific, music brings harmony, unity and kinship among the spectators. When music represents different cultures in a community, it can be educational, sensational and bring about understanding of beauty and diversity in the world.

This violin shaped mosaic represents the different cultures and communities of the world that are brought together through music. I used the violin as a shape for this mosaic to represent the diversity of this instrument in our culture. The violin in our country is used regularly by musicians who play the fiddle. Fiddle music, as in bluegrass and folk music of our country, is culturally different music than the classical violin. The audiences for each are culturally diverse in our country and many different cultures of the world have their own versions of the fiddle as well.

Night music (the back of the violin, using the blues & purples of night time colors with one shining star in the night time sky) - represents all the wonderful night time concerts, restaurants/bars with live bands, outdoor night time concerts, and all the other musical community gatherings that grace the

towns of our country in the evening. Day music (the front of the violin with the brightly colored sun in the daytime warm sky) – represents all the music of the daytime that includes ceremonial music of weddings and church services, festivals and children’s concerts, live lunch time concerts on the green, parades, marching bands for daytime sports and many occasions for music during the day.

Medium: Mosaics using ceramic and glass tiles

Title: *Untitled*

Date: 2005

Artist: Diane Barceló

My work hinges on the ways we apprehend the world. On the one hand, the world of ideas and idea-related understanding expressed with images and words encourages a logical understanding of the world around us. Today we are typically trained through book learning, sequential logic and now the computer and Internet. The other more innate and instinctual understanding of the world is our haptic absorption of information, the way we have learned since conception. I have always been curious about that particular locus of information gathering and un-worded processing. Following my natural inclinations of the sensual, I work very physically, interested in the physical responses from the unconscious and subconscious realms. Woven into this is my fascination with words, their power of suggestion and pull towards a narrative.

I am interested in how words and sensations can trigger memory, false association and misunderstanding. Here I am matching words with images of nature rich in texture. In this way I am using a conceptual and abstract process by which we understand the world. Words demand a particular kind of logic. Images evoke personal and collective memory that implies a kind of nostalgia. The combination of these words and images forces associations that depend on cultural norms and connect them to sensate memories.

Medium: Digital Photography

Title: *Forget-Me-Not*

Arts Collaborative Projects: Oil Drum Art

The mission of Oil Drum Art is aesthetic and environmental. Its objective is to recycle used oil drums by having artists of all creative disciplines transform them into artworks and public art. The long-range goal is to have drum artworks come to Connecticut from artists worldwide for an International Oil Drum Art Exhibition.

Forget-Me-Not was created because I felt Americans have become desensitized about the loss of life and the maiming of thousands of our soldiers. The over-saturation of war

news by the media has made Americans almost indifferent to what the death of a soldier means. When the news announces "another three marines died in Iraq today," the viewer thinks, "Oh, that is terrible," then switches channels to local news. How many impressions of death and destruction on television does it take for an average person to become desensitized? When does the average American stop caring about another dead or wounded soldier in Iraq? Another military death has become just a statistic in an unpopular war. The sculpture, *Forget-Me-Not* intends to jar the viewer into reconnecting with those in a questionable conflict and who return home maimed or wrapped in the American flag. The symbolic metal figure of a soldier is draped with shreds of a marine's uniform and is seated amongst bullet shells inside a 55-gallon oil drum painted with the American flag. Hopefully the artwork will touch viewers and remind them not to forget those who are dying for them. If the viewer leaves disturbed and with a sense of the futility of war, then the artwork has made a difference.

Medium: Mixed media-metal sculpture

Title: *Graffiti*

Date: 1997

Title: *Rest In Peace*

Date: 1997

Artist: Deborah L. Barrett

History reveals that visual images have been a useful, if not necessary, component of any successful campaign for social change. As a photographer, I make pictures to influence people's understanding of social injustice and, hopefully, their will to act against it. In March of 1997, political forces and years of community controversy and opposition put an end to the needle exchange program in Willimantic, CT. During the two months prior to its closing, I spent time photographing the exchange and community context.

I am currently conducting an independent photo/video documentary project on activist efforts against a landfill dump in rural upstate New York. Some of my photos provide evidence of environmental changes that have taken place as a result of the landfill installation.

Medium: Black and White Photography

Title: *Beyond the Veil*

Date: 2001

Artist: Christine Breslin

This work is part of a project started at a journalism workshop in 2001 in Florida. My camera is the tool I use to examine issues of Muslim faith and culture. I wanted to explore why women and girls wear the veil in the Hartford area where I live and what it meant to them. I discovered that there was no 'one way' to wear the veil.

Medium: Digital Photography

Title: *Shane, The Lone Ethnographer*

Date: 2007

Artist: Sally Galman

As an educator and an award-winning cartoonist and humorist I combine my experience and my passions in *Shane, The Lone Ethnographer*. This work presents excerpts from my book, *Shane, The Lone Ethnographer*, published by Alta Mira Press, which is an accessible and entertaining introduction to ethnography. The book walks the reader through the process of doing ethnographic research, via a comic character Shane, the Lone Ethnographer, on the campus of an unnamed university. It is designed for the novice researcher, who is about to embark on fieldwork using qualitative ethnographic research methods.

Medium: Ink on paper

once and creating a new surface rich with color and texture to parallel to overcome old layers of meaning. Stories and lives are told through the inadvertent witnesses of inert belongings, tools and props. The inference of an invisible humane presence is a consistent theme throughout my work both in the framing of the subject and the subject itself.

Medium: **Mixed Media on paper**

Title: *Brick-a-Brack*
Artist: **Janette Maxey**

The undertone of my work describes the social issues of want, need, and abandonment. They frame the emotional simplicity and complexity of ordinary human existence. To assemble these images, multiple sources are used, from observation, photographs, and recollections of a time and place that describes the lives of the objects owners. I like to work in a series, working on several panels or drawings at

Title: *Last Meal: Cameron Todd Willingham,*
Last Meal: James Colburn
Last Meal: Stanley 'Tookie' Williams
Date: 2006
Artist: **Kate MacDonald**

A realist working in oils, I approach my artwork with the belief that art can influence social policy through awareness and education. It is my belief that greater awareness can only result in positive change.

Last Meals is a continuing series of paintings that juxtaposes the atrocity of capital punishment with our own morbid fascination in the final requests of the condemned. Found groupings of leftover meals poignantly underline the humanity of the executed, while alluding to the terrible finality of their sentences. Originally conceived to participate in the Texas Moratorium Network's exhibit Justice For All? Artists Reflect on the Death Penalty, the first painting of the series, Last Meal: Ruben Cantu, has been shown in Austin and Houston, and most recently at the Texas State Capitol. Last Meal: James Colburn has most recently been exhibited at Gallery Gachet in Vancouver, BC.

James Colburn, executed in 2003, was not only unfit to stand trial, but was heavily sedated for courtroom appearances and unable to assist in his own defense. Ten percent of US executions since 1977 have been of severely mentally ill offenders.

Cameron Todd Willingham was accused of setting the fire that killed his children. Arson experts that have reviewed the evidence believe that the fire was accidental, and that his conviction was based more on old wives tales than science. Now widely believed to be innocent, he was executed in February 2004 after serving twelve years on death row.

The chosen examples in this series inform the viewer of various injustices surrounding the issue of capital punishment, including mental health and lack of advocacy, racial discrimination, poverty, and at its basest, the innocence of the executed; while the leftover table scraps relate the humanity of the condemned to our own ordinary experience.

Medium: Oil on canvas

Title: *Toothfish*

Date: 2003

Artist: Lisa Studier

These woodcut prints are part of a series of portraits intended to celebrate the beauty and diversity of marine life in the face of increasing threats posed by over fishing, global climate change, pollution, and habitat destruction. Many marine ecosystems are in great danger, with most major fisheries severely overexploited and some species facing extinction. We have a frontier mentality toward the ocean, and decades of abuse are taking their toll.

Most of us have a very limited connection with the sea, and it's hard to inspire sympathy or concern for creatures normally only seen on dinner plates. In the tradition of portraiture, I seek to give a sense of dignity and identity to the individual, and by extension a collective face to the previously anonymous species we so easily dismiss as seafood or sport. I hope that the prints will spark an interest in the fish and a desire to learn more.

My creative process is informed by a great deal of reading, both about the individual animals as well as in the broader areas of environmental responsibility, conservation, biodiversity, and natural history. I am intrigued by how science can inform art and how art can contribute to political and scientific dialogues. The medium of the artwork is also very important to me: the printed image has a long history as a means for social or political commentary and as a democratic, accessible medium. In the reduction printing technique, a single woodblock is gradually cut away in-between each color pressing, leaving it destroyed by the end of the process with a

closed edition of prints. Working with the wood grain and watching the image emerge and become more defined as each color is printed gives me a sense of getting to know the creature, and a feeling for its fragility and sentience that is truly humbling. With our ability to affect life and death in the sea comes a tremendous responsibility to protect and conserve. Who hears the fishes when they cry? Their loss will diminish us all.

Medium: **Woodcut**

Title: *The Phantom*

Arts Collaborative Projects: **Art Saves Lives**

The Street Phantom is the voice of his generation. The spirit of the time. You have seen the anonymous Street Phantoms work before – stark silhouetted body figures with provocative text such as " Art Saves Lives" and " Looking for America." These highly politicized street spectacles address post-apocalyptic urban decay and contemporary social issues, responding with charged timely phrases that confront problems of our day such as AIDS, racism, domestic violence, censorship and media alienation. The Street Phantom uses urban walls as a canvas for commentary of political expression. The Street Phantom is the spokesperson of our time, effecting change through mobilizing individual activism. I coin political phrases that reach out to our generation in need of a voice of representation. The elusive street artist comments on our social conditions by voicing thoughts of a personal and intimate nature, which

transcends cultural prejudices. I believe in effectively raising a level of social conscious and personal inquiry through usurping the power of mass media as a vehicle for awareness. As an artist, I choose to speak to the psyche of our nations alienated youth, representing a generation in search of a sign.

Medium: **Spray paint on paper**

Title: *Scruples from Big Time Saver*

Arts Collaborative Projects: **Hartford Animation Institute**

Illustrations from a series of 90-second video shorts called "Big Time Saver," which features the "Scruples" characters. The characters were developed by the Hartford Animation Institute, a non-profit organization that mentors local youth in the art and business of high-tech digital animation. The founder, Joe Young, developed "Scruples" for other youth-related initiatives, and worked with the State Treasurer's office to develop themes, storyboards and lyrics

for the financial education video shorts. Funding for development of the financial education video series was provided by Bank of America, Connecticut. The videos are geared to kids ages 7–12, and present the financial lessons using modern music and high–tech animation.

Medium: Digital Animation

The first photo shows Ashley, standing next to her self–portrait. Ashley had not stayed past 2:00 in any previous club, and was often disruptive when she was in the clubs. However, she really began to find herself through the painting and visual arts projects that she worked on. As Nancy Mendes commented, “She really seemed to find her feet finally.” As Nancy tried to articulate what this meant, she described how she saw Ashley begin to focus and to consider who she was as an adult as she painted her self–portrait. She even worked through the breaks so that she could finish her work. It really absorbed her. Even after finishing her piece, she stayed well past the end of class at 5:00 to help Nancy clean up.

Medium: Acrylic on canvas

Title: *Ashley's Self-Portrait*

Arts/Research Projects: Arts Smarts Institute for Cultural Partnerships

Title: *Remembering St. Petersburg Oral History Project*

Arts/Research Projects: **The Remembering St. Petersburg Oral History Project**

This project provided an opportunity for youth to document the stories and lives of the thirty-five elders, who contributed to their community and the city of St. Petersburg, Florida. Through taped oral narratives, archival materials, and donated personal artifacts, the oral histories captured memories and stories of the elders for a museum exhibit. The youth gained a greater appreciation for the elders and the past, while the museum exhibit highlighted and honored the lives of the elders in the community. The project enabled the development of positive relationships between the youth and elders, and the proper recognition of the elders who contributed to the well-being and success of their neighborhood and community.

Medium: **Digital Images**

Title: *Masks from Field of Beans and Dreams*

Arts/Research Projects: **Hightower & Sparks Art University of Maine at Farmington**

The masks are used in eco-theatre, which is interactive and designed as an effective way to promote discussion about cultural identity and environmental disparities. Eco-theatre is used to promote the French-American heritage of the western mountains of Maine, an economically challenged area where approximately half of the children live in low-income families; and where two of the major industries, paper mills and shoe factories, continue to close. Through eco-theatre participants become more aware of their French-American heritage and mobilize to sustain their culture, which includes local farming.

Medium: **Papier Maché**

This piece came out of my exploration of gun violence, which included discovering the ease with which I was able to purchase 22 mm bullets at local gun shops. In creating this work I focused all my energy on transforming the symbol of the bullet into an instrument of music that made noise although no particular musical note could be played. Bullets are used to play the instrument and to decorate its mahogany body. As an artist dealing with live ammunition I feel that it is important to disarm the bullets and to portray them as beautiful objects that lose their functional purpose. They are no longer able to kill people in their current state of being. The viewer can play the instrument with a simple pluck of the strings. A closer look however reveals that this beautiful instrument resembles parts of guns.

Gun imagery and transposing it to create an instrument changes the perspective of how even something beautiful challenges the viewer to grapple with contradictions.

Medium: **Bullets, brass, Wood (*Mahogany*), steel
Music wire, tuning pins.**

Title: *10 Notes With Lugar*

Date: **2007**

Artist: **Victor Pacecho**

had special meaning, and their “recipes for life”. It is a celebration of our community elders.

Title: *Recipes for Life*

Arts/Research Projects: Institute for Community Research

Date: 2003

Artist: Picola McMillan/Jose Gaztambide

“Recipes for Life” is an exploratory arts-based project that integrated narrative interviews, food recipes and photographic images by and of older adults residing in Betty Knox Apartments in Hartford, CT. The project provided age, gender and ethnically diverse residents with opportunities that fostered creativity and self-expression, increased social interaction, and the sharing of important memories, while enabling researchers to further understand how older adults view and cope with various aspects of aging. As a project of the Institute for Community Research, in collaboration with the North Central Area Agency on Aging and the Hartford Housing Authority, it continues ICR’s long-standing commitment to aging populations, and builds upon work that focuses on issues of physical and mental health and well being of aging populations.

These photographs and text are but one example of the creativity, grace and thoughtfulness with which the participants of this project shared experiences, foods that