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The Art Academy of Cincinnati Presents

Ohio Artists for Freedoms

**A 50 State Initiative group exhibition curated by Emily Hanako Momohara
August 31—September 21, 2018**

CINCINNATI, OH – The Art Academy of Cincinnati is pleased to present the group exhibition *Ohio Artists for Freedoms*. Curated by Associate Professor of Studio Arts Emily Hanako Momohara, this exhibition is part of the *For Freedoms 50 State Initiative*—a non-partisan, nationwide campaign to use art as a means of inspiring broad civic participation. The *50 State Initiative* aims to build a network of artists, arts institutions and civic leaders, and to map and connect the cultural and artistic infrastructure in the United States.

For Freedoms was founded by Hank Willis Thomas and Eric Gottesman in 2016 as a platform for civic engagement, discourse, and direct action for artists in the United States. Inspired by Norman Rockwell's 1943 paintings of the four universal freedoms articulated by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1941—freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear—we seek to use art to deepen public discussions of civic issues and core values, and to clarify that citizenship in American society is defined by participation, not by ideology. In the *For Freedoms 50 State Initiative* in Fall 2018, concurrent decentralized art exhibitions and public events across the country will encourage broad participation in civic discourse and, through lifting up a multiplicity of voices, will spark a national dialogue about art, education, advertising and politics.

About this exhibition:

As clay in the hands of the artist, democracy, especially in America, proves malleable. Shaped by its founders, reshaped by its citizens over and over, it remains uncast, ever-evolving. Whose hands shape it now in Ohio? Whose voices rise? Whose stay silent? How does the rise and fall of certain voices play into Ohio's swing state power in our American democracy?

Artists included:

Ryan Dewey (Cleveland, OH)

Melvin Grier (Cincinnati, OH)

Scott Hagen “The Barn Artist” (Jerusalem, OH)
Terence Hammonds (Cincinnati, OH)
Anissa Lewis and Mary Clare Reitz (Cincinnati, OH)
Darice Polo (Kent, OH),
Jenny Ustick (Cincinnati, OH)
Wave Pool Contemporary Art Fulfillment Center (Cincinnati, OH)

Through objects and language, Ryan Dewey challenges ethnic norms. As a photojournalist, Melvin Grier documented the notorious 2001 Cincinnati Riots. The Barn Artist has designed and painted over 100 patriot-themed Ohio barns for individual families and corporations. Anissa Lewis and Mary Clare Reitz engaged community members in neighborhood-centered art programs. Through prints and film, Darice Polo gives voice to the history of Puerto Rico’s annexation and its impact on the arts. Jenny Ustick fills a wall with a hand painted mural of Lady Liberty shedding colonialism. Wave Pool’s execution of Carlos Reyes’ *Gun Flute* will be on display alongside a video of the flutes being played in the Cincinnati March for Our Lives Protest. All the artists deal with the nuanced juxtaposition of love of country and participation in democracy.

—Emily Hanako Momohara, curator

Please join us for a **public reception on Friday, August 31, from 5—8pm**. In addition, the AAC will hold a discussion with three artists from the exhibition (Ryan Dewey, Anissa Lewis and Darice Polo) on September 6, from 11:00am—12:30pm. The discussion will be catered to artists and students with the goal of proliferating politically minded creative citizens. Tools and strategies of art-making will be shared. Participants will be engaged through questions and activities.

Exhibition Details and Contact Information:

WHO: Nine Ohio artists/arts organizations: Ryan Dewey, Melvin Grier, Scott Hagen (“The Barn Artist”), Terence Hammonds, Anissa Lewis and Mary Clare Reitz, Darice Polo, Jenny Ustick, and Wave Pool Contemporary Art Fulfillment Center

WHAT: *Ohio Artists for Freedoms*, a group exhibition from the *For Freedoms 50 State Initiative*

WHEN: August 31—September 21, 2018
Final Friday Reception: August 31st, 2018, 5:00—8:00pm
Discussion with artists: September 6th, 2018, 11:00am—12:30pm

Gallery Hours:

Monday – Friday: 9:00 am – 9:00 pm and Saturday and Sunday: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Closed Monday, September 3rd, 2018 (Labor Day)

WHERE: Pearlman and Convergys Galleries, 1212 Jackson Street in Over-the-Rhine

COST: **Gallery admission, reception, and discussion are free and open to the public.**

WEBSITE: www.artacademy.edu

CONTACT: Matt Coors at 513-479-3639 or matt.coors@artacademy.edu.

Attached Images:

Ryan Dewey, *My Lack of Redness is Transparent* (detail), 2017. Aluminum, cedar, acrylic, blood, vials, lineage, paper. Image courtesy of Muted Horn Gallery.

Terence Hammonds, *Untitled Wallpaper (Sixties Radicals)*, 2018. Screen print on photo-tex.

Wave Pool Contemporary Art Fulfillment Center, *Flute Players at March for Our Lives Cincinnati*, 2018. Photograph by Karay Martin.

About the Art Academy of Cincinnati:

Art Academy of Cincinnati, established in 1869, is an independent college of art and design. Degrees granted are the Associate of Science in Graphic Design; the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing, Design, Illustration, Painting and Drawing, Photography, Print Media, and Sculpture; and the Master of Arts in Art Education. Accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, the Art Academy is a charter member of both NASAD and the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design. The Art Academy is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the Greater Cincinnati Collegiate Connection. The Art Academy's Community Education department offers extensive visual arts courses to children, teens, and adults, including a Portfolio Preparation program and an award-winning summer camp. The Art Academy of Cincinnati is located in historic Over-the-Rhine at 1212 Jackson Street Cincinnati, OH 45202. Please visit www.artacademy.edu.

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