

MADNESS

ARTISTS' VOICES. CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS.

November 18 to December 23, 2016
CECA Cutting Edge Center for the Arts

ARTIST STATEMENTS

The works presented in this exhibit represent the opinions of the individual artists, independently of the gallery or the curator. The exhibit is intended to spark the conversations that we, as a nation, need to have in order to move forward.

Please join us in becoming part of those conversations.

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PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

Eneida Allison

Connie Born

Rand Carmichael

Alvin Christopher

Mary Christopher

Dolores Crain

Robert Dutruch

Dennis Formento

Patricia Hart

Phil Galatas

Matt Litchliter

Gwen Losh

Zac McGovern

Rose Marie Sand

Michael Reed

Carol Wolfram

Kim Bergeron, curator

Eneida Allison

Cause of Death: Homicide

Mixed media

\$200

This past year, I spent many days and nights in bed (for medical reasons) watching television. I was mesmerized by a show called *The First 48*, a reality based look at the first 48 hours of homicide investigations. It was not that the show was thrilling, exciting, or entertaining that captured my mind but the ages of the victims and suspects. I conducted a bit of research and came across a startling statistic:

The leading cause of death of males in Louisiana aged 15-24 is HOMICIDE!

The leading cause of death of males in Louisiana aged 25-34 is HOMICIDE!ⁱ

My entry for *Stop the Madness* depicts a crime scene representative of these statistics.

At a time in their lives when they should be hopeful, young men fear for their lives.

How can we be okay with this? Mitch Landrieu, mayor of New Orleans realizes this is not normal, "This is absolutely not the state of nature. It's treated like it is, but this is a lie. We've got to figure out as a nation that the current state of affairs is not acceptable: schools that are not working, people who don't have jobs, and, consequently, young men killing each other because they don't see anything better for themselves...Every time a person is killed on the streets, we lose two lives."ⁱⁱ

On TV, I watch the families of the murdered young men cry out in pain while, at the same time, the accused murderers stare off into space, numb and oblivious to their own losses.

When did life become so devalued that we do not even value our own lives?

STOP THE MADNESS!

i Life Expectancy Statistics: <http://www.worldlifeexpectancy.com/louisiana-causeof-death-by-age-and-gender>

ii **The Atlantic**, Goldberg, J (September 2015) *A Matter of Black Lives*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/09/a-matter-of-blacklives/399386/>

Kim Bergeron

The Peacemaker

Mixed media/dye infused on wooden panel

\$275

While he may have viewed the world through rose colored glasses, political activist and pacifist John Lennon believed in the power of harmony. Among his most memorable messages, as immortalized in the song of the same name, was "Give Peace a Chance." It's a hope that resonates throughout the portrait of the iconic musician.

He Had a Dream

Hand embellished giclee

NFS

I've chosen to address the madness by focusing on peacemakers, including the individual that many consider one of the greatest peacemakers and changemakers of all times, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., with messages from his "I Have a Dream" speech. He calls for responding to struggles with dignity and discipline, cautioning against allowing protests to degenerate into physical violence. It's a powerful message that needs to be revisited, the antithesis of some of the violence we are seeing taking place around the nation. Dr. King believed that such was not the answer, and his teachings and his efforts did, indeed, change the world. His was one voice that became many, one peaceful demonstration at a time.

Choose Love

Mixed Media

\$500

Atop a bed of newspaper articles documenting murder, war and criminal behavior lie messages of peace and love created by members of Slidell's Rotary Clubs. A fragmented heart is created with paper, representing frailty, and multiple colors, representing diversity. They come together in unity, with a heartfelt wish: Choose Love.

Connie Born

Mischief America's King of Rock 'n' Roll

Mixed Media

\$350

In a country that is more divided than I can ever remember in my lifetime, it is certainly time to *Stop the Madness*. Now is the time to heal and come together as one people, one nation, with justice and liberty for all. In spite of all of our unique differences, be it race, gender or religion, I believe we can take on the challenge to unite. Our first step should be to step forward and show our patriotism for America. I chose to reflect on it through my piece, *MisChief America's King of Rock & Roll*. Music certainly inspires & soothes the soul. I am a patriot, join me!

Rand Carmichael

Western Civilization: Under New Management

Collage

\$350

I am normally an abstract painter, but for this Call for Entries I have chosen to do something different. Collage. I have taken the challenge offered by *Stop the Madness: Artists' Voices. Critical Conversations.* to heart. For some time I have been concerned that average, ordinary Americans do not fully understand the existential threat posed by fundamentalist Islamic Jihad. Despite the September 11, 2001 dramatic attack on our nation's most important symbolic institutions: the World Trade Center (free market enterprise), the Pentagon (strong military), and the Capitol and/or the White House (representing democratic self-determination), most Americans remain blissfully ignorant of the reasons behind those attacks and the numerous other terrorist attacks here and in Europe and the Middle East in the last fifteen years. I pose the following question to those participating in this art exhibit:

How much do you personally know about the nature of Islam? How many books or articles have you read about this religion? How do you intend to become reasonably informed so that you can make rational decisions in the public interest?

Over the past three or four years, I have tried to learn as much as I could about this mysterious and complex religion, short of actually learning to read and write Arabic. Obviously, I cannot in this brief Artist Statement convey fourteen centuries of Islamic thought and actions, so I have chosen to focus on the hypothesis of what Western artists might experience should they find themselves suddenly subject to Sharia, the holy law of Islam, which regulates all aspects of communal and personal life. Typically, Islamic art has focused on the depiction of patterns, whether purely geometrical or floral, and Arabic calligraphy on glass, pottery and metal.

This is contrary to the Western tradition, which has been primarily humanistic at least since the Greeks and Romans. In our hypothesis, portraiture would be out, because it is feared by many Muslims that the depiction of the human form is idolatry, and thereby a sin against Allah, forbidden in the Qur'an. (Remember what happened to the Dutch cartoonists when they depicted Mohammed.) This would, of course, apply retroactively, meaning that even Old Masters like Michelangelo and Leonardo de Vinci would have to be cleaned up.

This brings me to my submittal to *Stop the Madness*. I have chosen as my subject the potential censorship of Islamic mullahs of historical works of art considered to be masterpieces of Western civilization. Considering sculpture, I selected Michelangelo's *David*, perhaps the most famous sculpture in the world. In my view, the mullahs would find this work idolatrous, with no redeeming value, and subject to demolition.

Considering painting, I selected Leonardo's famous *Mona Lisa*. I think the mullahs would be scandalized by her brazen display of skin, but could come up with an "improvement" that would save her virtue, a proper burka.

Alvin Christopher

Stop the Madness

Mixed media

NFS

The artist invites viewers to interpret the work as presented.

Mary Christopher

Trickle Down Theory

Mixed media – stained glass on canvas

\$800

This has been a very different art experience for me. In "normal circumstances" I make art as an expression of gratitude for the endless beauty we see all around us. It can be almost euphoric when all the stars are aligned and the Zen-like feeling is allowed to grow. But this "Stop the Madness" thing was different. It was disturbing. It was dark, it was unpleasant and it kept causing me to conjure up images of human blood. But I chose to go there because of my nephew. He was distraught after the mass murders in Orlando and because of him, the tragedy affected me on a bit deeper level. As I was painting each of the 49 portraits, I really wanted to capture something about their essence and I couldn't help but feel like they were looking right at me. They can no longer speak for themselves. My thoughts turned to their families and loved ones and I could only imagine how very difficult it must be for them to manage their sadness. While painting, my thoughts would also turn to Sandy Hook. And Columbine. And Aurora. And Baton Rouge....the list has gotten unbelievably long. Art is so totally ineffective. Words are too.

That being said, I do not believe it is necessary for any citizen to purchase or carry an automatic weapon. These weapons of war have created a horrible disadvantage for our police men and women, our children and each one of us. Surely there are plenty of other guns on the shelf to pick from.

Dolores Crain

A Girl Is A Gun

Mixed media

\$350

A Girl Is a Gun presents a stock character of the girl as a femme fatale, indicating she should think of “rejecting motherhood” and all the consequences represented by the boots that could follow.

Pushing Up Daisies, a Thought on Feminism

Conceptual photography

\$75

Pushing Up Daisies, a Thought on Feminism is the attitude on contemporary woman’s view on the Feminist movement and the baggage they believe it carries. Funny they would think that when changes still need to be made.

Death of a Nation

Mixed media

\$175

Death of a Nation correlates to or with the coming out of the movie *Birth of a Nation* by Nate Parker. It is an interpretation of the twisted and knotted “victim/police” issues suffered by Americans. “Problem” and “Results” are a few of the tags attached to the patriotic shovel. We should ask if America is digging its own grave.

Robert Dutruch

Eagle Street, New Orleans

Carbon Pigment on Hahnemuhle Museum Etching

\$1,200

The artist invites viewers to interpret the work as presented.

Dennis Formento and Patricia Hart

Life in Balance

Mixed media on wood by Patricia Hart

Poem by Dennis Formento and Patricia Hart

NFS

Through a series of rhetorical questions, the poets echo the words of the ancient Egyptian notion of passage through a labyrinth to enter the afterlife. To get there, the goddess Ma'at weighs the heart of the deceased against a feather. (Those who don't pass muster get devoured by Ammut, the scary dog in the foreground.)

Someone who carries his or her own weight in life and looks out for other people, who considers the effects of today's choices in the seventh generation (after Native American thinking) passes over. So a good life is defined through a series of questions. We think that if this ethic were followed, we (collectively) might *Stop the Madness*.

Life in Balance, poetry box

Poem by Dennis Formento and Patricia Hart

Poetry Box created by Peter Garcia

NFS

You may spot these boxes throughout the Northshore. Poetry boxes bring together literary and public art, featuring the works of local wordsmiths. Poems are changed out throughout the year, bringing new works to readers.

Phil Galatas

Shredding History

Painted guitar

\$600

The Confederate Flag presents an example of how two different people can look at the same symbol and interpret it differently. Some see it as a sign of southern heritage; others as a symbol of bigotry. It has become an extremely polarizing issue in the United States.

David Levi Strauss, chair of the MFA program in art criticism and writing at the School of Visual Arts, has stated that the flag's meaning has shifted throughout the years, but the causes of racial strife remain.

"In the case of the Confederate Flag, it became the symbol of the Old South for many who saluted it 'with affection, reverence, and undying remembrance,'" he writes. "Now it has become the symbol of racism. Since America cannot deal with the underlying sources of continued racism, it has chosen to deal with the symbol."ⁱ

*i What the Confederate flag's design says about its legacy, Corinne Segal, PBS Newshour
/http://www.pbs.org/newshour/art/confederate-flags-design-says-legacy/*

Matt Litchliter

Title Redacted

Mixed Media

\$800

I made this piece to illustrate, not my opinion on the subject of removing offensive relics of our past, but on the mere idea. See, I'm of two minds on the subject. I realize the need to remove these statues to help us heal and move past the dark corners of our nation's history. After all, if I was Jewish and living in Berlin and I had to walk past a statue of Goebbels every day it would indeed upset me. I see the other side too. The side of wanting to keep these reminders of our past, not to celebrate our mistakes, but to learn from them. I want my daughters to ask who they are and, as a parent, it is my responsibility to tell them some awful truths about the nation we live in. In both instances a dialogue is needed. Not angry protests with crude signs and screaming into bullhorns. Some see these displays as empowering, I simply see them as breeding grounds for resentment. My hope is that this mixed media collage piece gets us talking. We need to talk about intentions, and maybe most importantly, we need to talk about where the removal of history for the sake of our feelings stops. What other questionable events, public figures are inevitably next?

This Concludes Our Broadcast Day

Mixed media collage

\$700

Perhaps the most heavy-handed of my pieces, the thing I'm most passionate about: censorship & information suppression. In no way is it ever OK to withhold news from the nation's populous. This manipulation is especially egregious during the election season. How could we ever think that our system is, in any way, fair to all who live within it? This is not a one-sided issue, both wings are culpable. The media is out for themselves. Everything is spin and editorialized. No one get the facts of the situation. No one can feasibly make up their own minds. I have used the TV test pattern as a symbol of media silence before and in this piece as well. Constructed out of wood and a collage of news articles I went looking for to make my point, this piece is more existing to make a point rather than to look nice. Mind you, this piece, although it wouldn't seem that way when viewed, is intended to be impartial. It not looking that way will only prove the point that the media is slanted, rigged & corrupted.

Gwen Losh

Behave!

Photo, watercolor

\$300

I was excited to participate in this exhibit because of the theme. The rudeness and meanness of our country's public dialog is unbelievable, and should be unacceptable. I titled my work, "BEHAVE!"

Zac McGovern

Hope

Illustration

NFS

Caricature is perhaps the most suitable way to attempt to make sense of the current political climate. The partisan divisiveness has become almost a cartoon of authentic political debate, which is good for me because I enjoy making cartoons.

Seriously though, it isn't out of the question to wonder how America arrived at the most disliked Presidential candidates in U.S. History. It has a lot to do with manic media coverage, general unrest, and an era of unparalleled OCD information gathering. This can't be healthy for our collective psyche.

Despite my natural cynicism I would like to add that I am positive America will survive whatever it is going through right now. This isn't the end of the world. The left has descended into a PC Mania of identity politics, a hyper-correction to years of what can only be called White Cultural Dominance. The right refuses to compromise on almost any front because they feel the world is slipping into Apocalyptic sinfulness.

There are good Americans who are liberal, good Americans who are conservative. I would like to encourage bipartisanship with this illustration. We don't always have to agree, but we can all compromise a little bit more.

Information Age

Illustration

NFS

I think at the dawn of the internet, people thought that information was power. Now, it's still true that REAL information from good sources IS power, but I have learned in my time growing up during the internet age that the internet is most often a cesspool of people cherry-picking information that relates to their own pre-established mindset, meanwhile ignoring everything else.

I decided to use an emoji as the face for the little character on the island. I think we outsource a lot of our real feelings to basic symbols these days. I don't know if this is a good thing or a bad thing. What I do know is employing a thumbs up or an emoticon to describe my emotions seems very simplistic and doesn't mean at all that I am in touch with how I really feel.

I think the Information Age is a mixed bag. On one hand, most information in the known universe can be found with a keystroke. On the other hand, an overwhelming portion of the web represents the dark side of humanity. This dark side is increasingly hard to avoid, if only because a little darkness resides in everyone and the internet age represents the best and worst in us.

Michael Reed

Censored In St. Tammany

Mixed media

\$600

Censored

Mixed media

\$175

My reasoning for these pieces is that since I started entering art shows in 2003 almost every prospectus I've seen has clearly stated "no nudes".

As an artist this doesn't offend me but it limits me and my ideas.

This parish sits next to New Orleans a cultural Mecca, yet the bulk of the art produced here consists of landscapes.

As a trained artist that offends me.

Rose Marie Sand

Dylan Hockley 3/8/06 – 12/14/12

Stained glass mosaic portrait

NFS

Dylan Hockley was a six-year-old little boy who was tragically killed on December 14, 2012 in the Sandy Hook massacre. He was the child of Nicole and Ian Hockley, and the brother of Jake Hockley. His grandmother, Terry Moretti and his Aunt Grace Marshall are personal friends of the artist and their grief is our grief.

Nicole Hockley is focused on bringing people together in honest dialogue and searching for innovative solutions in the areas of mental health and wellness and gun safety through Sandy Hook Promise. An eloquent writer and speaker who has become a national voice and advocate for the need to turn Newtown's tragedy into transformation, she is focused on enabling social change, bringing people together in honest dialogue and searching for innovative solutions in the areas of mental health and wellness as well as gun safety. Nicole's journey has taken her from introducing President Obama at a major rally in Connecticut to meetings with over half of the United States Senate, media interviews on every major network, TEDx and major panel talks and speaking engagements before civic groups, religious groups, high school and college audiences.

Ian Hockley, Dylan's father, has turned his grief into a mission to raise support for autistic children to fulfill their potential through an organization called "Dylan's Wings of Change."

Please visit Sandyhookpromise.org and dylanswingsofchange.org to get involved with the effort to spread awareness of their efforts to make a change.

"Gun violence is preventable – whether the violence is based on self-harm or harm to others – and the best way to prevent tragic actions is to identify, intervene and get help for people who may be at-risk."

Change

Mixed media

NFS

This work was inspired by a painting at the New York Public Library and the origami butterfly created by the artist's friend, LaVerne Bourgeois. Both images convey a message that nature's intent is for all creatures to be peacefully united. By the simple act of coming together while letting go, we can affect change.

Rose Marie Sand

Twenty Six Angels

Mixed media including mirror, alcohol ink, fused glass, crash glass, and stained glass

\$3,100

This mixed media mosaic heart was created in honor of the six adults and twenty children killed in the Sandy Hook tragedy on December 14, 2012.

The artist asks viewers to join her in remembering the victims: Charlotte Bacon, Daniel Barden, Rachel Davino, Olivia Engel, Josephine Gay, Ana M. Marquez-Greene, Dylan Hockley, Dawn Hochsprung, Madeleine F. Hsu, Catherine V. Hubbard, Chase Kowalski, Jesse Lewis, James Mattioli, Grace McDonnell, Anne Marie Murphy, Emilie Parker, Jack Pinto, Noah Pozner, Caroline Previdi, Jessica Rekos, Avielle Richman, Lauren Rousseau, Mary Sherlach, Victoria Soto, Benjamin Wheeler, and Allison N. Wyatt.

Artist Rose Marie Sand has lived in New Orleans, Chalmette and Slidell. Her heart and soul are in each of those cities, but her mission is to use mosaic art to give voice and honor victims and responders. Much of her work has been created from glass and found objects from her home in Chalmette after Hurricane Katrina. Rebirth and resilience will fulfill the promise of the future by building on the memories of the past.

Carol Wolfram

Not Permitted

Mixed media sculpture

\$200

Slidell officials have taken steps to *Stop the Madness* of unrestricted panhandling within Slidell city limits.

Effective November 30, 2016, panhandlers must apply (at least 48 hours in advance) for a free permit from the Slidell Police Department. If approved, the permit must be displayed from a lanyard while panhandling is underway.

If you've ever had occasion to stop-and-start your way through the highly trafficked intersection of I-10 and Gause Boulevard and witnessed panhandlers (alone, with partners, with pets...) at every available plot of green space adjacent to stopped vehicles, I have to imagine you thought, "This is getting crazy!" I have.

Stop the Madness.

Additional works presented in complement with this exhibit:

Richard Fuentes

Tooth and Nail

Acrylic, transparencies, ash, canvas
\$400

Cyclops

Acrylic, transparencies, ash, canvas
\$300

Spine

Acrylic, transparencies, ash, canvas
\$200

A Hive That Drips

Acrylic, encaustic, plexiglass, light
\$400

Kaya Welsh

Untitled (four works)

Acrylic, spackle, lashes, canvas
NFS

Snacks

Wild Side

Acrylic and spray paint on vintage wooden closet door
\$1,200

Special thanks to Brian Fontenot and Richard Fuentes of CECA Cutting Edge Center for the Arts for hosting the *Stop the Madness* exhibit.

The CECA Gallery is located at 767 Robert Boulevard in Slidell.
Exhibit viewing hours are Wednesday and Thursdays 9 am - 6 pm,
Fridays 9 am - 1 pm and Saturdays 8 am to 4 pm,
plus 6 to 7 pm prior to events in Cutting Edge Theater.
Concurrent events held in the Cutting Edge Theater are ticketed, with
event schedules and tickets available at www.CuttingEdgeTheater.com.

Stop the Madness is presented by the
East St. Tammany Cultural Economy Coalition.

