

Patriot Series, 2004–present

The Patriot Series was inspired by my concern over the affairs of the United States government. Since 9/11, I have witnessed many decisions that, as a citizen of the United States, I do not agree with. I have become uncomfortable with the handling of many international incidents, and I am truly disappointed in my government's reactions, relations, and results on the global and domestic stage.

I believe that visual art and design can play a significant role in creating awareness about political issues. In history, there are many examples of this: Italian frescos in churches and castles; political cartoons for and against American slavery; Mexican Murals; Lewis Hine's and Dorothea Lange's photographs of child labor and poverty, and even some of today's graffiti. Good visual art and design has a message, a concept. And if disseminated well, it can have an impact.

I have just begun this series and I feel it will continue for quite some time. The first piece, *I Pledge Allegiance*, was created in the summer of 2004 and exhibited at the *Faculty Exhibition* at the Joseloff Gallery on the campus of the University of Hartford in the Fall. The piece was, and still is, a reaction to the Iraq war, and the nature of security. It questions the concept of allegiance and the system of Homeland Security.

The piece is large, 36 x 48 inches. The shape is rectangular and hangs on the wall with screws through grommet holes. Two pieces of red string are threaded through the print and hang separately from the middle of each palm. The strings are long and lay on the floor in two separate circular puddles. The flag is displayed with the union down signifying dire distress in instances of extreme danger to life or property. I believe this is what our leaders have created.

The second piece was *Uniform of the Day*, a collaboration between writer, Robert Dennis, and myself. We designed a "uniform" (T-shirt) for each of the

seven days of the week. From some perspectives, they were all the same. Yet, they were all different. This artwork took two forms. The first was installed at the Joseloff Gallery at the University of Hartford. The exhibition was from January 10th to February 24th, 2006. The second form was a performance each day. Performers, five from around the Northeast, chose a T-shirt to wear based on their personal statement for the day. For the performers, there was no dictate as to which T-shirt to wear; choice was based on the wearer's state of mind and connection to the outside world. Each message was intended to generate comment, or initiate dialogue. Then, at the end of each day, the performers' interactions were posted on the artwork's blog at nancywynn.com.

The piece asked questions about what does a uniform communicate? Sameness? Belonging to a group? Power? Identity? In military speak, "the uniform of the day" is the dictated apparel required of all members of the group for any particular situation.

The piece suggested a different kind of uniform. Based on the quintessential American fashion of white T-shirt and blue jeans, this "uniform of the day" was no longer about conformity, but rather about expression and public communication.

Our clothes are personal. But in the very act of wearing them, we make them public. They become our expression. The piece framed personal and public expression, not in colors or styles, but in simple, direct messages that were intended to express the wearer's state of mind in relation to current events, perceived conditions, or aspirations.

The gallery installation and the blog were diametrically opposed in their essence. One was physical, the other virtual. One exhibited artifacts, the other reported activity. One required looking, the other reading. These differences, as they unfolded, were enlightening. The use of technology has always interested me and it was exciting to apply it in a new way.

To view the *Uniform of the Day*, please visit www.nancywynn.com