

War Criminals Watch calls human rights artists for torture book



Art for betterment of humanity

[War Criminals Watch](#) calls on artists to shift focus away from the self-aggrandizing that is all but necessary to survive in today's art world to art in the service of bettering the rest of the world through creativity. The organization is holding a conference Sunday, March 21, 2010 at One Plaza in New York where nationally acclaimed artists will be on a panel leading discussions on how artists can manifest a better, constructive rather than destructive world.

"We are looking for art, not in the service of artists, agents or galleries, but art whose endgame is awareness, dialog and social betterment. As Frank Lloyd Wright said, 'Art for art's sake is a philosophy of the well-fed,'" reports Debra Sweet, World Can't Wait/War Criminals Watch Director.

Torture Book

War Criminals Watch is preparing a volume of evocative and inspiring artwork and writings. The focus is on the torture that began under the Bush administration after 9/11.

Included is the work of artists and writers that is thoughtful and thought-inspiring, depressing, shocking, heartfelt and meaningful.

War Criminals Watch lists reasons for its call for participation stating that in the months following 9/11, the government of the United States:

- Began unjust and immoral occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq leading to the deaths of countless civilians.
- Continued the warrant-less wiretapping which had started in February 2001.
- Suspended habeas corpus.
- Began openly torturing people and justifying it with questionable legalese.

"In the hyper-sensitive environment that surrounded 9/11 and the military action that followed it, we lost sight of the most important commodity to which we can lay claim:

the Truth.

And the Truth is: torture is a crime," Sweet asserts.

"In this media-saturated world, writers, artists and designers have a unique responsibility to speak the truth. We also have a long tradition of speaking our minds when others are afraid.

"When we can't trust mainstream journalism, academia or even our president to do the right thing, artists and writers may be the only ones truly capable of expressing the truth.

"Join with the coordinator and originator of **Redact This** plus participating artists to discuss both the process and content for preparing this book as well as how we, as artists, can be active in resisting the crimes of our government and paving the way for a better, creative rather than destructive, world."

Panelists:

David Schwittek, Moderator, is a designer, teacher and artist with interests in Digital Media, Politics, Film, Poetry,

Prose, Media Literacy, Teaching and Music. He is deeply committed to creating awareness with his art, with specific distaste for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, civil rights abuses in Palestine and the torture programs begun under George W. Bush's Administration. As coordinator of Redact This!, Mr. Schwitek will be assisting in the curation, editing, design and layout for the book. David teaches at Lehman College and is happily married.

Ann Messner has focused her work as a visual artist in an investigation of and a concern for what she perceives as a contemporary schism, or unresolved tension, between notions of the private and public life. Most recently this has evolved into an investigation of an embodied public voice, as it intersects between the personal and the political. This investigation has resulted in a number of temporary site-specific public works, as well as many exhibitions in the more traditional gallery / museum venue. She is a recipient of numerous fellowships including: the NEA, New York Foundation for the Arts, Henry Moore International Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, Anonymous Was a Woman Award and a Gottlieb Foundation fellowship. She was a senior fellow at Princeton University Council on the Humanities and has taught at MIT's Visual Arts Program, Hunter College, Bennington College, Maryland Institute of Art. Messner currently teaches at Pratt Institute. Messner is a member of Artists Against the War and has worked with the direct action collective A.R.T. (Activists Response Team). She was the creative director of the anti-war multi-screen 'disarming images' produced and distributed by Artists Against the War in 2005. She has produced a series of tabloid and video works that analyze from a critical perspective the current 'war on terror', always with a sharp articulated focus on the 'physicality' of and the accompanying legal contortions that rationalize US policy.

Since 1975, **Frances Jetter's** prints on political and social subject matter have illustrated articles in publications including The New York Times, The Washington Post, Time, The Village Voice, The Nation and The Progressive. She illustrated books for the Franklin Library, ads for Audubon, and book jackets for Knopf, Macmillan and others. Shows include NYU Broadway Windows, Art of the Times (x Four) at the Bernstein Gallery at Princeton University, Art of Democracy; Art and Empire at Meridian Gallery in San Francisco and solo print shows at Davidson Galleries in Seattle. Her work is in the collections of the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University, Detroit Institute of Arts and The New York Public Library Print Collection. She received a fellowship from New York Foundation for the Arts in 2003. Awards and annuals include Graphis, Print, the Society of Illustrators, American Illustration, Communication Arts and Society of Publication Designers. She is on the Illustrators Advisory Board of the Norman Rockwell Museum and has taught at the School of Visual Arts since 1979.

New York City-based artist **Stephen Fredericks** conceived of and founded the New York Society of Etchers, an artist run not-for-profit exhibiting society incorporated in 1998.

In 2008, along with fellow artist Art Hazelwood, Mr. Fredericks co-founded the Art of Democracy National Coalition of Political Art Exhibitions, a powerful series of exhibitions linked to over 50 shows across the United States through a logo and poster exchange. His work can be found in museum collections around the world, including those of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Art Museum, the Chongqing Museum of Art in China, and The National Gallery in Washington, DC.

For more information, contact **War Criminals Watch**, 866. 973.4463 or email warcriminalswatch@worldcantwait.org or nyc@worldcantwait.org.

Photo: [War Criminals Watch - Facebook](#)