

# We the People



An International Group  
Exhibition of Contemporary  
Art Contributing Toward  
Ending The Korean War

This catalog is published on the occasion of the exhibition

We the People

organized by Korea Art Forum

curated by Heng-Gil Han

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Catalog designed by Rahul Alexander

Photographs courtesy Bethany Fancher, Heng-Gil Han, & Julian Phillips

# We the People

Kyungbo Han, Sung Gwang Hong, and Youngjun Hwang from Pyongyang, North Korea; Suh Yongsun from Seoul, South Korea; Emmanuel Faure (Spanish-American); Alicia Grullon (Latin-American), Jihoe Koo (Korean-American), Nina Kuo (Chinese-American), Gregory Sholette (Caucasian American), and Hank Willis Thomas (Black American) from New York, U.S.

An International Group  
Exhibition of Contemporary  
Art Contributing Toward  
Ending The Korean War

March 16 – May 31, 2018

at OZANEAUX ArtSpace

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# We the People

Heng-Gil Han

Though diverse in theme, motif, medium, scale, and genre, the works in this exhibition each contribute to understanding the unique sense of a collective power to the phrase, “We the People.” Some works represented images of protests and rallies while others portrayed individuals, whose well-being is the ultimate goal of a state.

The exhibition was inspired by the Candlelight Vigil that took place across Korea from October 2016 to March 2017. It was further motivated by the aggressive rhetoric exchanged between President Trump and Chairman Kim in 2017. The exhibition as well as this publication seek to communicate the thesis:

*The sovereignty of a state lies within  
the people who constitute the state.*

The thesis critically aims to remember our audiences that it is “we the people” – the individuals – who suffer the consequences of strategic choices made by our respective governments.

Using this insight as a starting point, the exhibition invited artists and thinkers to help solidify and confront collective ideas of surmounting xenophobic fears, and, with such focus and dialogue, bring forth new possibilities for a better way.

The exhibition offered access points to diverse perspectives of contemporary art, in which radically different artworks co-exist, compensating one another, depicting a fuller reality and actualizing world harmony. It also affirmed an alternative model of transforming conflict between the U.S. and North Korea and served as a call to the international community to support inter-Korean and North Korean-American art exchanges because art is a bridge to progress.

The exhibition expanded KAF’s community of artists and audiences who are interested in building a collective power for a more inclusive field of contemporary art and a peaceful world of equality and justice. Through the network of the participating artists, we met new artists, scholars, and activists, and we invited

them to talk about their current project, as a part of our series of discussions and artist talks.

Through the exhibition, we learned a critical point that initially surprised us. Some progressive artists do not feel comfortable showing their work alongside work by North Korean artists because they believe that it would manifest their acknowledgement of the North Korean totalitarian regime and propaganda art. Their argument is similar to the U.S. media criticism of President Trump that he would be acknowledging the dictatorship simply by meeting Chairman Kim. The artists' refusal shows how deep the sense of fissure is between the two countries and peoples. It loudly justifies our work of creating possibilities for engagement with North Korea. We believe that one should talk to one's enemy to solve the enmity.



### Complementary Programs

Talking About the Korean Détente at Ozaneaux ArtSpace  
on Tuesday, May 29, 6 – 7pm

An informative talk by Juyeon Rhee (activist) and JT Takagi (filmmaker) on the easing of tensions on the Korean Peninsula. While recounting their work and experiences of advocating peace on the Korean peninsula, the speakers shared their thoughts about the recent detente with North Korea. Takagi presented excerpts from her film about separated Korean family.

KAF Artist Talk at Ozaneaux ArtSpace  
on Thursday, May 31, 7 – 8pm

This talk invited Phillip Baldwin, Christine Choy, Jihoe Koo, Nina Kuo, Gregory Sholette. Each artist presented their creative work, sharing provoking ideas about how artists might help to solve various social and political issues.

Our discussion series was organized to strengthen the art community as a whole in the wake of worsening domestic political divide and increasing international tensions in the United States. We sought to unite diverse voices of artists and individual powers for a greater good. The discussions also were meant to create a framework of contemporary art that does not advance by the “winner-take-all” logic of competition and contradiction, but propels our community and society by the communal practices of coexistence and cooperation to fight increasing concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a privileged few.

# Interview with Justin Rozdolski

This interview between Justin Rozdolski and Heng-Gil Han spontaneously took place when Rozdolski visited the exhibition We The People the second time in May 2018. Rozdolski is an emerging American sculptor who combines found objects and everyday materials to explore myths overseen in our everyday life.

**HAN:** Thanks for visiting the show. What made you come to see the show? What is your expectation? Have you read the press release?

**ROZDOLSKI:** Yes I read the press release and I knew that there are some artworks from North Korea. I came with open mind

to see something I didn't know. It was curiosity to discover unexpected artworks or art elements. All we know in America is that North Korean artists only make propaganda art or propaganda imageries. I wanted to see what kind of images North Korean artists make who consider themselves an artist.

**HAN:** How is the exhibition? Does it offer what you looked for?

**ROZDOLSKI:** Yes. It was unexpected to see expressive works. The amount of expression is a lot in each of these drawings or ink paintings. Regardless the regime, the artists are thinking a lot of visuals and they seem to express their opinions.

**HAN:** I am curious how you receive the fact that we juxtapose arts from North and South Korea and the U.S.

**ROZDOLSKI:** I think it opens our minds, people's ideas. The diversity of images is immediate. Though it comes through uniformed. It is not similarities and differences that connect these works with one another or separate them from one another. Actually, if I don't see the exhibition checklist, I would not necessarily recognize where the work are from. That's because partially, I don't know much about North Korean art, and partially also, North Korean arts are not so different from what we imagine of an artwork. They much reflect those qualities of paintings we see here, too. Would South Koreans recognize North Korean artworks that they are from North Korea just by looking at them without any additional information?

**HAN:** Interesting.

**ROZDOLSKI:** I think that the exhibition would expose Americans to Asian arts. You can investigate differences between arts from different countries within the spectrum that all of these arts take part in.

**HAN:** You are touching the issue of cultural or artistic identities here. For the work I do, I visited Beijing, China, last year, and I found many Chinese artists were concerned about their cultural and artistic identity or the identity of their cultural and artistic expressions. Old way of making art, such as ink painting, is no longer valuable as it used to be. They think a lot how to renew qualities that came with their traditional materials of ink and

paper. Since opening up the country in the 1970s, many artists adopted artistic methods that came with the "Western" culture. And they now ask what, which quality, is uniquely Chinese. They go to great pains with the questions of what is Chinese and what is an original art.

**ROZDOLSKI:** I know some schools in China. They only teach traditional art and nothing else. And students have to come to here, the U.S. to explore what we are doing. And they use what they learned in their art. I can see their questions and understand their concerns. But they will find their way out. It is not like you become an American you change your appearance. Your cultural backgrounds, education, local situation etc will come through in your art no matter which medium you use.

**HAN:** That's a great insight. Let's talk about what you see in this work. It was made by Suh Yongsun, who is in South Korea.

**ROZDOLSKI:** There is a lot happening. There are protests, suppression on people, and music on the background. I see this is a Candlelight vigil. Policemen are there on a side and the people are trying to break away some institution. Statues, prison, and newscast – all elements direct that they are resisting to something. Resistance is a good sign for change. The picture is very dramatic. Way off on the background, there is a hope. I can feel it. The red in colors draws me the most. Is it supposed to signify happiness in Korea? I thought that it was like China.

**HAN:** Great description and sharp observation of the painting. Thank you. We can go on talking about art and the exhibition all night. But time is now over and we have to end our conversation here. Thank you for speaking out your thoughts this evening. And thanks for coming back to see the show.

**ROZDOLSKI:** My pleasure and thank you for interviewing me. It is an interesting show and there are much more things that we can talk about. I don't know if we can ever exhaust all things that are here offered for us to see and think. Thanks for creating a room where we Americans reflect on various issues.





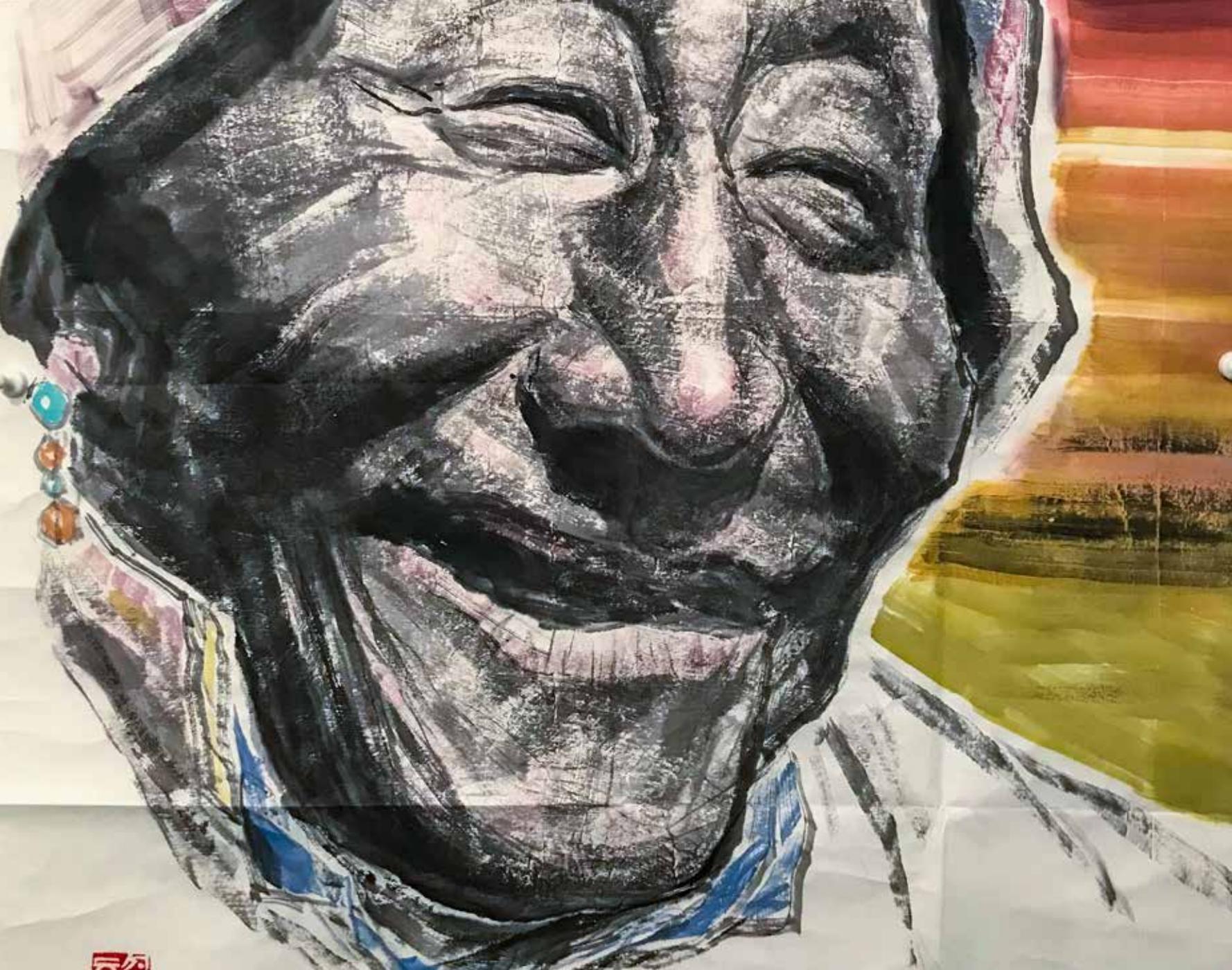
Kyungbo Han (N. Korea).  
Festival Participants Rally for One Korea at Munsoogangan Street, 1989.  
Pencil on paper;  
14 x 24.5 cm (5.51 x 9.45 inches).  
Courtesy of Beijing Mansudae Art Gallery.



Youngjun Hwang (N. Korea).  
People Protesting Against Demolition of Shantytown in Seoul, 1969.  
Pencil and watercolor on paper;  
15.25 x 24 cm (6 x 9.5 inches).  
Courtesy of Beijing Mansudae Art Gallery.



Suh Yongsun (S. Korea).  
December 2016 in Seoul, 2016-2017.  
Acrylic on linen; 203 x 368.3 cm (80 x 145 inches)  
Courtesy of the Artist.



Song Gwang Hong (N. Korea).  
Tibetan, 2012.  
Ink on paper;  
113 x 87 cm (44.48 x 34.25 inches).  
Courtesy of Beijing Mansudae Art Gallery.



Jihoe Koo (S. Korea/U.S.).

There it is, 2016.

Drawing with marker, pencil, pen, water-  
color, photo collage, digital print on  
Printmaking paper;  
13 x 19 inches.

Courtesy of the Artist



Gregory Sholette (U.S.).  
Our Barricades: recycling Gehry, 2014.  
Painted cast resin on poly panel;  
20 x 30 x 3 inches.  
Courtesy of the Artist.



Hank Willis Thomas (U.S.).  
From *Cain't See in the Mornin' til Cain't See at Night*, 2011.  
Digital cprint;  
21 7/8 x 70 inches  
23 1/2 x 71 3/4 x 2 1/4 inches (framed)  
Edition M3 of 5, with 1 artist proof  
Inventory #HWT11.004.M3  
Courtesy of Jack Shainman.



Emmanuel Faure (Spain/U.S.).  
Triptych Trilogy a Chromosomic Collection,  
(The triptych panel titles: Je n'aime pas les garages,  
Pink napkins, Lucha libre), 2003.  
Photographic print;  
50 x 40 inches.  
Courtesy of the Artist.



Alicia Grullon (U.S.).  
The Rule is Love, 2017.  
Performance at The 8th Floor;  
Duration varies.  
Courtesy of the Artist.



Nina Kuo (U.S.).  
 Danny Chen Shopping Bag, 2013-4.  
 Painted over Abercrombie & Fitch  
 Shopping Bag,  
 14 x 12 ½ x 6 ½ inches  
 Courtesy of the Artist

Vincent Chin Tribute Baseball Bat , 2018.  
 Wooden bat, chopsticks, yarn, signs,  
 37 x 7 ½ inches  
 Courtesy of the Artist

# Exhibition Checklist 1/2



Kyungbo Han (N. Korea).  
*Festival Participants Rally for One Korea at Munsoogangan Street, 1989.*  
Pencil on paper;  
14 x 24.5 cm (5.51 x 9.45 inches).  
Courtesy of Beijing Mansudae Art Gallery.



Kyungbo Han (N. Korea).  
*At the Columbia Club, 1989.*  
Pencil on paper;  
13 x 19 cm (5.11 x 7.48 inches).  
Courtesy of Beijing Mansudae Art Gallery.



Kyungbo Han (N. Korea).  
*International Students Photography Exhibition, 1989.*  
Pencil on paper;  
15.5 x 19 cm (6.10 x 7.48 inches).  
Courtesy of Beijing Mansudae Art Gallery.



Youngjun Hwang (N. Korea).  
*People Protesting Against Demolition of Shantytown in Seoul, 1969.*  
Pencil and watercolor on paper;  
12.7 x 21.59 cm (5 x 8.5 inches).  
Courtesy of Beijing Mansudae Art Gallery.



Youngjun Hwang (N. Korea).  
*People Protesting Against Demolition of Shantytown in Seoul, 1970.*  
Pencil and watercolor on paper;  
15.25 x 24 cm (6 x 9.5 inches)  
Courtesy of Beijing Mansudae Art Gallery.



Youngjun Hwang (N. Korea).  
*People Protesting Against Demolition of Shantytown in Seoul, 1969.*  
Pencil and watercolor on paper;  
14 x 21.59 cm (5.5 x 8.5 inches)  
Courtesy of Beijing Mansudae Art Gallery.



Youngjun Hwang (N. Korea).  
*People Protesting Against Demolition of Shantytown in Seoul, 1970.*  
Pencil and watercolor on paper;  
14 x 21.59 cm (5.5 x 8.5 inches)  
Courtesy of Beijing Mansudae Art Gallery.



Youngjun Hwang (N. Korea).  
*Seoul Citizens Protesting Against Demolition of Shantytown, 1969.*  
Pencil on paper;  
19.5 x 24 cm (7.51 x 9.5 inches)  
Courtesy of Beijing Mansudae Art Gallery.



Suh Yongsun (S. Korea).  
*December 2016 in Seoul, 2016-2017.*  
Acrylic on linen;  
203 x 368.3 cm (80 x 145 inches).  
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Song Gwang Hong (N. Korea).  
*Tibetan, 2012.*  
Ink on paper;  
113 x 87 cm (44.48 x 34.25 inches).  
Courtesy of Beijing Mansudae Art Gallery.



Jihoe Koo (S. Korea/U.S.).  
*Carousel\_Central Park, 2011.*  
Drawing with marker, pencil, pen, watercolor, photo collage, digital print on Printmaking paper;  
7 x 9.5 inches.  
Courtesy of the Artist



Jihoe Koo (S. Korea/U.S.).  
*Swedish Cottage\_Central Park, 2011.*  
Drawing with marker, pencil, pen, watercolor, photo collage, digital print on Printmaking paper;  
7 x 9.5 inches.  
Courtesy of the Artist



Jihoe Koo (S. Korea/U.S.).  
*Song of the butterfly\_Voices of Spring Waltz, 2016.*  
Drawing with marker, pencil, pen, watercolor, photo collage, digital print on Printmaking paper;  
13 x 19 inches.  
Courtesy of the Artist



Jihoe Koo (S. Korea/U.S.).  
*The Scent of Spring\_Blossom, 2015.*  
Drawing with marker, pencil, pen, watercolor, photo collage, digital print on Printmaking paper;  
19 x 13 inches.  
Courtesy of the Artist



Jihoe Koo (S. Korea/U.S.).  
*Two little girls with umbrella \_'Nothing in there!\_ Childhood Memories, 2015.*  
Drawing with marker, pencil, pen, watercolor, photo collage, digital print on Printmaking paper,  
19 x 13 inches.  
Courtesy of the Artist.



Jihoe Koo (S. Korea/U.S.).  
*Ami is Mon amie\_Walk along the path, 2016.*  
Drawing with marker, pencil, pen, watercolor, photo collage, digital print on Printmaking paper;  
13 x 19 inches.  
Courtesy of the Artist.

## Exhibition Checklist 2/2



Jihoe Koo (S. Korea/U.S.).  
*Playing hide and seek*, 2016.  
Drawing with marker, pencil, pen, watercolor, photo collage, digital print on Printmaking paper;  
19 x 13 inches.  
Courtesy of the Artist.



Jihoe Koo (S. Korea/U.S.).  
*Little girls with hula hoops*, 2016.  
Drawing with marker, pencil, pen, watercolor, photo collage, digital print on Printmaking paper;  
13 x 19 inches.  
Courtesy of the Artist.



Jihoe Koo (S. Korea/U.S.).  
*There it is*, 2016.  
Drawing with marker, pencil, pen, watercolor, photo collage, digital print on Printmaking paper;  
19 x 13 inches.  
Courtesy of the Artist.



Gregory Sholette (U.S.).  
*Our Barricades with drone 2*, 2014  
Painted cast resin on poly panel;  
20 x 30 x 3 inches.  
Courtesy of the Artist.



Gregory Sholette (U.S.).  
*Our Barricades with chairs*, 2014  
Painted cast resin on poly panel;  
20 x 30 x 3 inches.  
Courtesy of the Artist.



Gregory Sholette (U.S.).  
*Our Barricades: recycling Gehry*, 2014.  
Painted cast resin on poly panel;  
20 x 30 x 3 inches.  
Courtesy of the Artist.



Gregory Sholette (U.S.).  
*Our Barricades: recycling Gehry/ safety beyond the barricades*, 2014.  
Painted cast resin on poly panel;  
20 x 30 x 3 inches.  
Courtesy of the Artist.



Hank Willis Thomas (U.S.).  
*From Cain't See in the Mornin' til Cain't See at Night*, 2011.  
Digital cprint;  
21 7/8 x 70 inches  
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Triptych Trilogy a Chromosomic Collection,  
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Pink napkins, Lucha libre), 2003.  
Photographic print;  
50 x 40 inches.  
Courtesy of the Artist.



Alicia Grullon (U.S.).  
*The Rule is Love*, 2017.  
Performance at The 8th Floor;  
Duration varies.  
Courtesy of the Artist.



Nina Kuo (U.S.).  
*WE Danny CHEN*, 2014.  
Artist book, Photo, paint, tape;  
6 x 60 1/2 inches when open,  
6 x 4 x 1 1/4 inches when closed.  
Courtesy of the Artist



Nina Kuo (U.S.).  
Danny Chen Posters with Flag, 2013-4.  
4 laser prints;  
11 x 17 each.  
Courtesy of the Artist



Nina Kuo (U.S.).  
Black Rice Bowl with Crochet Flag, 2014  
Ceramic, yarn, wood, paint;  
4 x 3 1/2 inch diameter.  
Courtesy of the Artist.



Nina Kuo (U.S.).  
Danny Chen Shopping Bag, 2013-4  
Painted over Abercrombie & Fitch Shopping Bag,  
14 x 12 1/2 x 6 1/2 inches  
Courtesy of the Artist



Nina Kuo (U.S.).  
Vincent Chin Tribute Baseball Bat, 2018.  
Wooden bat, chopsticks, yarn, signs,  
37 x 7 1/2 inches  
Courtesy of the Artist

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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**Mennonite  
Central  
Committee**

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