A Survey of Political Printmaking in America as Workshop for High School Students with Instructional Zines.

by

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Rationale

This research project is a guide for teaching high school students about political printmaking through the study of works rooted in American activist movements, alongside understanding the medium itself. The motivation for this project comes out of a desire to create a workshop which would have impacted me the most as a young art student. I wanted to shape the knowledge from both an art history and printmaking degree into something that could start my thinking as an educator, while not having been formally trained as one. What resulted was the research base and instructional material for a workshop that I hope I will be able to share, organize and grow.

The project will ultimately create a framework for students to understand how art, politics and action have functioned in the past. An understanding of print history, I believe, will give young people the tools to execute projects as both art-makers and future leaders. The workshop begins with an explanation of print processes. I will focus on explaining the processes for the primary mediums used in the examples which are also most accessible for at home printing. Subsequently, I will provide analysis of examples which best portray the activist work of printmakers in North America since the twentieth century. I will provide an in-depth look into their history as political art. Following are discussion questions which prompt a zine project in response to the form, style or content of the prints. All of the materials and instructions are printable and distributable in PDF form. The project will introduce students to printmaking with the purpose of introducing them to a tradition of community collaboration to accomplish meaningful projects.

During my start as a student at public high school in New Jersey, I had an interest in art but at that point, only a basic understanding of its history or process. I discovered the print community and its connection to activism in college. But, I have never stopped wondering why printmaking, considering its usefulness and deep connection to art history in America, is not integral to art education from the beginning. Remembering that experience has resulted in imagining how these students would benefit from a more diverse art curriculum. That is, a curriculum with a wide range of artists whose work is culturally, socially or politically relevant to our lives today. An introduction to printmaking and art that is political would not only expand their knowledge but would open their eyes to diverse and civically minded ways of creating. Young people deserve to know about our history, which is art history beyond still lives and French impressionism. They deserve to be exposed to the art world outside of museums: to artists who are in dialogue with communities and activists, and who would push them to reach beyond their definitions of what an image can do.

It is also difficult to disregard the contempt American high school students have for their educational institutions. The fragility of education today has been exposed in the time of a pandemic and national cry for civil rights in response to dozens of tragic instances of police brutality. Art, History and English classrooms completely omit decades of American history, which perpetuate this institutional racism at the core of America. Students are demanding that we urgently stop the use of outdated, racist and eurocentric curricula. It's a crisis being covered by news outlets, exposed on social media and being protested by the Black Lives Matter movement across the country today, in 2020.

To respond to students asking for more from schools, we need to give them a reason to participate in their own education. We need to listen to them, and create curricula that is inclusive. We need to make projects which encourage reading, doing or making outside of the classroom. While perpetuating the use of standardized testing to measure ability in numbers, students are rarely participating in active learning. Workshops like this could speak to not only those involved in visual art, but also in history, law, politics and group activism. When our institutions crumble, students need to have the tools to become the facilitators of their own education. Providing them with the knowledge of political art and DIY art-making processes will empower them to speak articulately about these injustices we are experiencing all around us.

Introduction: Printmaking as a Political Act

For as long as there has been a need to create multiples, artists have worked to solve the puzzle of printmaking. Early prints often replicated art hanging behind closed doors in wealthy homes, and instead distributed their contents through books, posters and replicas. The strength of the spirit of democracy in North America led to artists embracing print and never looking back.

With this in mind, printmaking has historically been an answer to the problem facing paintings for centuries. How can more artwork impact a wider audience and reach beyond the systems of social stratification and inequality? Printmakers maximize the accessibility of their work by working less expensively: with paper rather than canvas. They also print on functional objects like T-shirts, which you can wear, and also newspapers, which you can read. But, what is a print?

A print can be defined generally as an image that is made from an impression of a plate or "matrix." In other words, artists can create hundreds of impressions that are the exact same from a single source. However, this pre-computer technology can be subject to human error. Alternatively, it can be open to the shifting of variables like color, or tone as the artist continues to work. Materials and methods include: basic stencils, screenprint, relief in wood (later linoleum) and lithography on limestone or aluminum. (While there are extensive ways of making prints, there are two more basic forms of printmaking this paper doesn't discuss: Intaglio or etching in metal and monoprint.) However, new techniques have reached far beyond traditional woodcut, lithography, etching and silkscreen with the introduction of the xerox inkjet printer.[1] The methods of printmaking are still alive but have been constantly expanding over time with the

[1] Saunders, Gill, and Rosie Miles. *Prints Now: Directions and Definitions*. V & A Publications, 2006.

additions of these computer processes. Contemporary artists have innovated by introducing new materials, combining mediums and bending the rules. Yet, since this spread of digital technology, the analog printmaking of the past has not been forgotten by artists who recognize the power and expression in creating multiples by hand. In fact, printmaking has adapted to photo/computer processes and is a more powerful and versatile tool than ever before.[2]

In addition to innovation, the accessibility of work is one of the most important puzzle pieces for many artists and activists who historically made prints. A look at the history of woodcuts and lithographs in America includes a long line of political cartoons published in newspapers and as posters. Later in the 1960's screen printing became a tool for the growing civil rights and counter cultural movements.[3] Additionally, non-profit organizations created community centers where screenprinting could take place and be accessible to anyone.[4] Throughout history, printmaking has grown and adapted to suit the needs of the people. Over time the community has never been short of artists who recognize its power to spread information and create impactful works of art.

Relief: Woodcut and Linoleum

Relief is a process of carving line into a material like wood or linoleum in order to reveal an image when printed. It is arguably the printmaking method which is most accessible to people as it requires no press or large expensive equipment. All the materials truly needed to make a relief print are the essential carving tools and anything flat and pliable to carve into. Blocks of

[2] Saunders, Gill, and Rosie Miles. *Prints Now: Directions and Definitions*.
[3] *The Print Shop: A History of Screen-Printing*, Museum of Arts and Design. https://madmuseum.org/sites/default/files/static/ed/The_Print_Shop_booklet_150504_OUTLINED.pdf
[4] *The Print Shop: A History of Screen-Printing,* Museum of Arts and Design.

wood and linoleum can be substituted with styrofoam, potato halves or cardboard. These relief prints range from elaborate multilayered images to simple stamps.

The origin of relief printing can be traced back to 868 in China from the book, The Diamond Sutra. This is art history's earliest surviving example of a relief print made from wood. [5] The intricate carving techniques and level of training needed to make this first image leads scholars to believe that woodblock printing must already have been a tradition from many years before.[6] In the following 800 years, woodblock printing took root all throughout Asia, evolving to suit the needs of the communities it reached. In Korea, woodblocks with text were made for books on history, genealogy and philosophy-- helping to spread the philosophical movement of Confucianism. In India a tradition of woodblocks printed on textiles in elaborately carved patterns began. Later in the 1600's Japan's Ukiyo-e artistic movement became the center for arguably the most famous examples of woodblock prints.

In fifteenth century Germany, the invention of the printing press and movable type by Johannes Gutenberg made woodblock prints essential elements of illustration in books which grew in numbers throughout Europe. The industry of relief printing solidified printmaking in the world of not only art, but craft and trade. A print shop required the work of not only artists but also skilled printers. Images from artists would be given to carvers, a job which required ten years of apprenticeship. A master printer would then print the blocks.[7] Much later, German Expressionist artists of the early twentieth century used woodblock printing as an expressive

[5] Williamson, Caspar. *Low-Tech Print: Contemporary Hand-Made Printing*. Laurence King Publishing, 2014. (129)
[6] Williamson, *Low Tech Print*, (129)
[7] Williamson, *Low Tech Print*, (130)

tool for working-class image-making fueled by ties to their country's rich history of industrial printing.[8]

In summary, woodblock printing can take a wide variety of forms and produce diverse results. Artists can make elaborate images which contain intricate linework with tiny carving tools and use multiple blocks to create layers. Or, an image can have quick marks and lay matte black ink onto the paper. Options for variation are endless: hand printed, press printed, stencils, and ink. Relief is a medium that can be stretched and adapted to each artist as they grow to understand it.

Lithography

The history of political art is also deeply informed by lithography. This is a process used throughout the twentieth century to print all the newspapers, magazines, political cartoons and posters. It was invented in the eighteenth century. People were looking for any material that could create an image and do away with the process of carving. It is a chemical resist process based on the simple idea that oil will resist water. A drawing on a stone with a greasy crayon will attract ink to the drawing and resist the ink with water in the negative spaces. This is a revolutionary process in which artists do not carve at all, they only draw. The print resembles almost exactly what they have drawn, it is just backwards.

For the sketch artist or political cartoonist, working in lithography was a faster, more immediate process which made sense in the world of book and newspaper printing. For the first time, the image could be produced and printed fast enough to match the spread of news and

[8] Hults, Linda C. *The Print in the Western World*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1996. (120)

information. There is immediacy to drawing directly onto the stone and being able to grain the image away hundreds of times. Sketches could be freer and materials reused.

A New York political cartoonist from the 19th century famously employed lithography to create his images which exposed corruption of "New York public officials who stole millions of dollars from the public treasury."[9] As an artist with notoriety and eventually fame, Thomas Nast was commissioned by newspapers to create almost photographic-type, documentary images which illustrate the struggles of American people during the tumultuous Civil War. This history of political upheaval throughout North America is captured by printmaking through the extensive records of hundreds of his illustrations and political cartoons. Another artist of the nineteenth Century in Mexico, Jose Guadalupe Posada, made lithographic prints which informed the future of Mexican political printmaking. His illustrations and style were adopted by artists of later print movements in Mexico such as the TGP in Mexico City and the Chicano art movement in America.[10]

Offset lithography, invented in 1875, is the truest form of industrialization in printmaking. The image on the stone or plate is transferred through a large machine that has the capabilities of printing the image exactly how it presents on the plate and at record speeds. The artist wouldn't have to reverse the text which required planning and skill. And, once running, the machines required much less physical work from the printer. Text, which is an important element to many artists working in print, could be written forwards and printed forwards.

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[9] Coward, John M. "Thomas Nast: The Father of Modern Political Cartooning." *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 91.1 (2014): 188-90. *ProQuest.* Web. 30 July 2020. (235)

[10] Nikas, Jim. "Chicano Art, Imagery of Social Movements and Jose Guadalupe Posada." *GeoVerde*, 2015. https://26258999-6129-4686-bc9d-67b53cdaef29.filesusr.com/ugd/8aa335_0382074ac79f4302ba3f4f9de79c27a2.pdf

Newspapers like the New York times are still printing their papers in rooms of large and complex offset lithograph machines. Today, few community print shops make use of offset lithography in favor of a similar process of risography, digital prints or screen print. The reason is that the machines simply take up more space than a printer or a computer. However, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, both traditional and offset lithography were essential tools for rapidly disseminating information similar to how we do so online today.

Silkscreen, Screen print, Serigraphy

The process of image-making which we refer to today as screen print may also be referred to as silkscreen and serigraphy. Screen print reached peak popularity in the twentieth century for its ability to create complex colorful images with water based materials and print them on fabric. Its beginning is difficult for historians to pinpoint. Methods of printing through a screen can be traced back to the Song Dynasty in China (960-1297).[11] Fine textiles and color in printed images were added through the process of pushing ink through a stencil on a simple mesh screen made of silk. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the silk trade spread "silkscreen" from Asia to the rest of the world until the medium reached its peak in the twentieth century.

Since then, materials and uses for screenprint have developed alongside new technology as they were introduced. Screen print's ability to comply with artists' budgets, print on textiles, change scale, produce results quickly and in great numbers have made it one of the most popular and accessible printmaking techniques to this day. Yet, the principle of creating a stencil resist,

[11] *The Print Shop: A History of Screen-Printing*, Museum of Arts and Design.

adhering it to a fine mesh, and pushing through, is the same basic process that originated centuries ago.

The difference in our process today is material. Our supplies use synthetic fibers in the build of the screen instead of silk, and acrylic inks are made of plastic in place of fine dyes. However, the general concept of using a screen to achieve a finer, quicker image remains. Developments in the United States during the 1960's included the invention of a rotary screen-printing machine. In this pre-digital age, printmaking was standard knowledge throughout commercial industries like advertising and clothing manufacturing. Pop artists of the same decade also latched onto screen print as a fine art tool. It was transformed during its peak in the 1960's, the movement people are most familiar with today.

Since then, screen print has faced decades of commercialization and decommercialization, both due to advancements in technology. Yet, some would say the introduction of digital technology to industrial printing incited a resurgence in print communities. Printers wanted to preserve history by keeping screen print alive. Further, the decline in commercial screen printing left a gift for artists looking to start their own workshops. A wide abundance of leftover materials and knowledge made materials accessible. It was and is a DIY tool for people without big budgets for digital printers. The process can easily create large work or large amounts of work in multiples.

The best part is, that the basic rules and structure are easy to show a friend in order for them to start printing too. Today, screen print is consistently recognized as a rewarding, giving and productive tool. Work can be made quickly in response to events and spread widely. It can be

used in collaboration with activist movements. It can be introduced to novice printers due to its easy to understand principles and thriving spirit of community.

With the endless resources available online there has never been a better time to print than now. Printers' innovations are catalogued through word of mouth and blog posts. Thousands of images are at our fingertips as scans in digital archives online. Not only this, but all throughout the waxing and waning history of screen print, communities of people formed with this knowledge and the desire to share it.

Looking at Political Prints

Artists throughout history have made use of all three processes to distribute work widely for their cause. The artists' works I will present are organized based on their medium rather than content to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the capabilities of each. While not chronological, I will reference how the movements and works build on each other. As mentioned, printmaking is also not limited to relief, lithography and screen print, nor are they limited to posters or T-shirts. They can be digital, traditional, on paper, on fabric, in books, or large scale on the side of a building. Hopefully some of the prints included will inspire pushing the boundaries of this idea.

People's Relief and the Print Revolution

The early twentieth century was the beginning of a long history of expressive relief printing in response to global struggles after World War I. In opposition to oppressive

governments, artists responded with anti-war, anti-corruption, pro-labor and anti-fascist sentiments in their writing and images.[12] These artists fought for freedom of the press, the relief of the working class, and relied heavily on inexpensive methods for distribution of their news, opinion and ideas. They formed art collectives with centers of Germany in Europe, and of Mexico in the Americas. This period of global unrest provoked the rapid spread of woodblock printing throughout Mexico City as a forceful and cogent form of protest.

This Mexico City-based movement whose primary method of image-making relied heavily on wood-carving began at Taller de Gráfica Popular or TGP in 1937. The doctrine of the TGP (also known as The People's Printmaking Workshop) existed in their radical independence from the mainstream press.[13] An author of a book on *Leopoldo Mendez,* a founder of the TGP describes their work as a "rupture to capitalist production… directed at a proletarian audience."[14] The workshop or *taller* consisted of a group of artists working collectively towards a common goal. The TGP functioned dissimilarly from the commercial *taller* in that the members were solely in charge of the contents of the prints and their dissemination. They used image and text printed with movable type as a direct method for conveying their political motives to the people. Hundreds of images produced by artists of the workshop detail a story of life and politics in Mexico. They range from both fine art prints with emotive illustrations to allegorical political cartoons which were once posted on street corners in 1940's Mexico City. Their own Declaration of Principles published in 1949 reads: "The Taller de Gráfica Popular continually puts its forces

[12] Nikas, Jim. "Chicano Art, Imagery of Social Movements and Jose Guadalupe Posada." *GeoVerde*, 2015.
[13] Caplow, Deborah. "Leopoldo Mendez, Revolutionary Art, and the Mexican Print: In Service of the People." *University of Washington*, 1999. (217-222)
[14] Caplow, "Leopoldo Mendez," (217)

toward production that will benefit the progressive and democratic interests of the Mexican people, principally in its struggle against fascist reaction."[15]

The works detail intricacies of life in Mexico with great craftsmanship. In a print from 1947 entitled *Little School Teacher How Great is Your Will (Pequeña Maestra, ¡Qué Inmensa es Tu Voluntad!)*, a woman is pictured walking along a path in a landscape of dramatic mark-making resembling mountains or weather. This print like many others focused on the growing threats to the working class and freedom of speech and press. The linoleum was carved in long sweeping strokes-- elongating the path the schoolteacher has to travel on. Both emotive and purposeful, these woodcut artists are ingrained in the history of printmaking as masters of relief.

The TGP also believed in socialization of art and images accompanied by forceful political demands. As a direct result, other prints were grotesque depictions of war, poverty and oppression. Throughout the 1930's the threat to facism grew with the rise of the Camisas Doradas, a revolutionary paramilitary organization.[16] People's responses of protest were invoked by stories from European political refugees of the terrors of facism. The political turmoil and an impending world war were clear to artists globally. Mendez and the growing number of Mexican, European and American artists who became a part of the workshop continued to produce images. The 1945 woodblock print entitled *What May Come* or *That Which May not Come* reveals the concern over the future of Mexico.[17] The print shows the destruction of the symbols of the nation, the Eagle, the Cactus and the Snake.

[15] Caplow, *"*Leopoldo Mendez," (222)
[16] Caplow, "Leopoldo Mendez," (239)
[17] Caplow, "Leopoldo Mendez," (239).

Many more of their prints were often didactic illustrations which made heavy use of symbolism to convey a message. This was a conceptual and visual practice which ran deeply throughout the work of the *taller*. It grew out of a necessity to create posters, flyers and brochures for distribution at labor rallies. As artists, the TGP were granted access to a privileged social position. However, they self-identified as members of the proletariat based on their mission of printing for the people with bold simple images and text. These decisively straightforward images on posters were ultimately made for the authentic representation of the demands of working class people. Their work was even perceived as a threat, and was constantly censored by ruling forces. Members of the workshop were threatened by the loss of their teaching positions, arrested or sent out of Mexico City.[18]

As a result of this movement for years afterward in every corner of Mexico relief prints and lithographs were the primary force of conveying ideas in the medium of printmaking.[19] As a direct result, image politics fueled the municipal government of Mexico City's 1956 ban of the practice of putting posters on walls.[20] Many subsequent movements in political art looked toward these examples of relief printmaking in Mexico as paradigms of the power of prints.

If we fast forward to today, linoleum and woodblock artists from cities across North America are still influenced by the TGP's powerful communication through print. They are referenced as historic models of not only how to create relief prints but also powerful politically focused print collectives.

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[18] Pomade, Rita. *Printmaking - From Revolution to Establishment*. 1 Jan. 2006, www.mexconnect.com/articles/1063-printmaking-from-revolution-to-establishment.
[19] Pomade, *Printmaking - From Revolution to Establishment*.
[20] Caplow, "Leopoldo Mendez," (218)

Artists throughout history have modeled their workshops and activism around those of the Taller. Many of them have been influenced by the distinct style of carving and expression used during this period informing a rich tradition of art-making which followed. In the Bronx, New York, contemporary relief artist **Alejandra Delfin** makes relief prints. In 2008 she created Studio 889 where she held art education workshops serving a district which lacked art education. Having been trained at a distinguished New York print studio with its roots in the fine art world, Atelier 17, she has a strong technical knowledge of print.[21] However, like many others across the country she reacted to the conservative approach to art and used her technical expertise to found a print studio with a focus on education and community instead. Her prints read as articulate, powerful communications of community demands. "Plant an Urban Farm Garden, Planta un Huerto Urbano," is a work in support of a movement for a Sustainable South Bronx. Her expressive mark making is reflective of those early prints from Mexico but also speaks to the tradition founded at the Taller to use the medium as a political force.

Visual elements of these prints make careful and deliberate use of the inexpensive materials of linoleum and wood. They tell stories through chatter: the seemingly accidental marks on the print which indicate the movement of the artist's tool. Skilled relief artists understand chatter as a form of shadow or movement in between light and dark. They intentionally create this texture by carving either lighter or deeper and more or less.

For those artists already using their city walls as canvas the answer to the question "how to post that image in more places than one?" is in printmaking. **Swoon** is an example of a street artist who distributes work to a wider audience through printmaking. She makes life size relief

[21] "Alejandra Delfin, Associated Artists." *Pepitan*, 2010, www.pepatian.org/alejandra-delfin/.

images which are pasted on sides of buildings in cities. The works are completely mobile. The artist prints the image on paper, carries it rolled up to the location and finishes applying the image to any surface with wheatpaste. Her works are based on observational drawing and are meant to mirror life in the city. They are made from either large digital prints of drawings and more often relief prints. The reason Swoon chooses a woodcut is that a digital print would either require a large printer or the time to tile an image together out of small prints.

The location of her work is specifically the act of resistance. The prints identify beauty in neighborhoods, in the people or the street itself. They make an extremely visible statement about the need for a neighborhood's recognition and preservation. Additionally, she subverts the commercial art world by placing these life size interactive prints outside-- a place where people are truly interacting.[22] Art that exists outside of a gallery subverts contemporary society which makes art inaccessible to people outside of its circles. If a print about the people of the city were displayed in a gallery, it is likely many of those people would never actually see the work. The works become a part of the neighborhood and the people take care of them or add their own comments or marks.[23] She describes making street art as having to do with agency as a citizen of a city by "being a part of the visual creation of your neighborhood." "They are gentle, provocative reminders that artifice and art can be found anywhere and everywhere." [24]

Posters for Mass Distribution: Screen Prints and Lithographs

Removing art from the gallery is an inherently political act. Throughout history print has introduced art to spaces like schools, community centers and public spaces. And, with the rise of

[22] *The Graphic Unconscious:* Philagrafika, 2011. (218)
[23] *The Graphic Unconscious*, (218)
[24] *The Graphic Unconscious*, (218)

accessible materials such as paper and books, those images belonged to the people. The answer to the artists asking the question of "how to distribute their work?" is undeniably on the walls of their cities and towns, blank as an empty sheet of paper.

Later, throughout the 1960's and 70's, a growing number of prints were made that could function in their form and contents alongside activists battling for American civil rights. Posters were used as tools to more directly express artists' political views, include text and disseminate knowledge. Without the help of the internet to spread word of this work, artists relied heavily on the distribution of physical copies.

Barbara Kruger is an example of an artist whose screen-printed political images in their form and function talk directly to advertisement strategies used by companies to disseminate information. She collaged pithy slogans across images collected from working as a graphic designer for "women's magazines" during the 1950's and 60's.[25] The black and white photos are appropriated and dismantled underneath red and white text. The poster "We don't need Another Hero," (1987) presents a slogan that dismantles a recognizably familiar image of the archetypal boy and girl. The images represent the reactions to a decade of conservative politics in America under the Reagan and Bush administration. The prints were picked up by movements across the U.S. as the poster for protests and marches.[26] Succinct claims and bold messages made them slogans that protest movements could unite around.

Faith Ringgold, an artist and civil rights activist, created prints as a member of the black women artist's collective Where We At. Although traditionally a painter and quilter, she screen printed posters in conjunction with the Civil Rights movement in New York City. The offset

[25] Wye, Deborah. *Thinking Print: Books to Billboards, 1980-95*. (15)
[26] *Gosling, Lucinda, et al. The Art of Feminism: Images That Shaped the Fight for Equality 1857-2017*. Edited by Helena Reckitt, Chronicle Books, 2018. (126)

lithograph poster titled *United States of Attica, 1972* shows a response to the acts of violence at Attica Prison. The print is a written memorialization of historic events and applies a different version of her voice as an artist. The poster itself is a map of the United States in green and red with information which locates even more acts of violence that occured in each state. The memorializations include "race riots, witch-hunts, presidential assassinations, lynchings and wars." Around the outside of the map are the histories of the dead and wounded from American wars since the eighteenth century.[27]

While her paintings are figurative, narrative and employ true to life use of color, the prints tell a different sort of narrative. They are part of a collection of posters that contain solely text and no figures. A lack of figurative image is due to the ability in printmaking to replicate text and maintain the gesture of the artist's handwriting. Through a process of transfers, Ringgold's handwritten word is copied directly from where it was written and printed thousands of times. The power of the artist's hand and thoughts are therefore preserved throughout its subsequent distribution. Further, the acts of violence are solidified in their position on the map through the scrawling of names, dates and locations. No demonstration through figurative image is needed to express the poignancy of these events. Additionally, the poster's reproducibility enabled the inscription at the bottom: "This map of American violence is incomplete, please write in whatever you find lacking."

Of all of the printmaking processes, screen print and offset lithography are the only two which allow for the artist to draw the image forwards rather than flipped. An offset is a method of printmaking where an image is printed onto a roller which then transfers it to paper, exactly

[27] Ringgold, Faith. "United States of Attica, 1972." *Faithringgold.com*, www.faithringgold.com/portfolio/united-states-of-attica/.

how it appeared on the plate. The most popular use for offset lithography was newspaper printing, as prints could be made quickly and in large numbers. Mistakes were easy to recognize with the image appearing exactly the way it would be printed. The opportunity to create a lithograph which has the capability of being copied thousands of times likely influenced the artist's careful consideration of form and strength of the message. United States of Attica was one of the most widely distributed Ringgold posters of the 1970's.[28]

In 1982, **Esther Hernandez** used screen print to direct attention to the water contamination affecting immigrants working and living near the agricultural industry in California's San Joaquin Valley.[29] Her prints *Sun Mad* (1987) and later *Sun Raid* (2008) make overt references to nationally recognizable iconography of the Sun Maid raisin company brand and their advertisements. This work is part of a movement of Mexican American artists. It began in the 1960's in response to the work of civil rights and labor reform leader Cesar Chavez as well as a group called the National Farm Workers Association (or United Farm Workers UNF). [30]

The original Sun Maid Raisin brand logo features a woman unrepresentative of the real people who are affected by abuse of pesticides. Throughout the 80's and 90's the agricultural industry's contamination of drinking water due to pesticides created clusters of illnesses like cancer caused by unknowingly impotable water. In response, Hernandez's image is not of a woman, but a skeleton, detailing the long lasting and devastating health effects of this poison on the community. The project was motivated by firsthand concern for her friends and family who live in the town where the grapes are harvested.

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[28] Ringgold, "United States of Attica, 1972." *Faithringgold.com*.
[29] Williams, Lyle W. *Estampas De La Raza: Contemporary Prints from the Romo Collection*. McNay, 2012. (38)
[30] Williams, *Estampas De La Raza*. (63)

In 2008, after acquiring notoriety as an artist, she re-printed the poster and included an immigration and customs enforcement bracelet. Since then, *Sun Raid* has been a widely known image about the experience of poorly paid immigrants who are wrongfully manipulated by the unfair labor practices, voting restrictions and threats of deportation by the U.S. government. The image is emblematic of the political voices of artists who were a part of the Chicano art movement and of the beginnings of environmental art.

Her work, among many others, follows the path paved by Chavez and the UNF. They are famously remembered for successful labor reform work achieved through a non-violent movement in Delano, California. In 1968, Chavez led strikes and grape boycotts which gathered support of artists and people across America. They displayed affordable prints in the form of pins and bumper stickers which supported the movement's boycott "no uvas" or "no grapes." [31] **Carlos Francisco Jackson**'s screenprint *Huelga* (2009), which means Strike, shows the moment where Cesar Chavez meets with Robert F. Kennedy. The meeting was a symbol of his endorsement of RFK's campaign for the democratic nomination.[32] The print tells the story of the exhaustion of Chavez due to the physical toll of hunger strike and the weight of carrying a civil rights movement. Red signs dictating "huelga" with the UNF's symbol underneath are held up by people behind news reporters holding microphones with forceful, outstretched hands. Layers of black and gray detail the arms of people in suits which is in high contrast to the signs' bright red.

Later, in the wake of the global health epidemic of HIV and AIDS in the 1980's, three artists in Toronto called General Idea created the poster Imagevirus. It was based on the popular

[31] Williams,. *Estampas De La Raza*. (63)
[32] Williams,. *Estampas De La Raza*. (63)

1960's image and logo LOVE by Robert Indiana. Indiana's poster became a symbol of the movement for peace in the 1960's. It was difficult and shocking for people to associate this sentiment of acceptance from the 60's with the global health epidemic of HIV and AIDS over a decade later. It called attention to the media silencing of the ongoing fight for civil rights of minority groups including the queer community.

General Idea's work was based on the government's overt ignoring of healthcare for the LGBTQ community and lack of providing access to treatment. Homophobia seemed to be the root of federal actions during the crisis. The image became a center of a campaign to end this discrimination. General Idea relied on hundreds of screenprints in order to ensure recognition of their image city-wide and eventually worldwide. It was posted on streets, subways, stamps, lottery tickets and the covers of medical journals.[33] The image was also simple enough to copy and reproduce by other printers. The spread of the image represented a visual confrontation with society while it was choosing to ignore the lack of treatment. In response to both LOVE and Imagevirus, **Dread Scott** made the screen print HATE in 2017. HATE refers to the pain of the 1960's during the fight for civil rights. However, it similarly makes the point that racism is washed over by history with ideas of "love."

As seen in General Idea's work, a poster does not need to be confined to paper. **Peggy Diggs** developed *Domestic Violence Milk Carton Project* in 1992 in response to interviews with victims of domestic violence, police, women's advocates and shelter workers.[34] The images became a campaign against domestic violence and were proposed to dairy farms to print on the side of milk cartons. Based on the statistics and studies she researched, the placement of the

[33] Wye, *Thinking Print: Books to Billboards*. (86)
[34] Wye, *Thinking Print: Books to Billboards*. (86)

campaign on an everyday object like a milk carton ensured it would likely reach a person who had fallen victim to domestic violence.

Only one farm accepted the proposal, but they circulated 1,500,000 milk cartons with her prints. The phrase they deemed most inoffensive was: "When you argue at home, does it always get out of hand?" At the bottom of the carton was written, "If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence: call the National Domestic Violence Hotline." Soon after, Peggy Diggs was asked to speak on her project at a 1994 hearing in Washington as part of an initiative to inform representatives preparing to vote on the "Violence Against Women Bill." [35]

Artist **Adrian Piper** also communicates messages directly to the viewer in the form of prints exclusively made of text. In her ongoing project begun in 1986, *My Calling Card*, she presents a printed statement which confronts their racism. The beginning of the card reads, "Dear Friend, I am black. I am sure you did not realize this when you made/laughed at/agreed with that racist remark." Piper's work challenges microaggressions and racist remarks in the form of a print that she herself distributes.

Jenny Holzer is an example of an artist who made use of other objects to contain prints that people could take with them, wear, and display. They were distributed in the form of clothing, pencils, t-shirts, baseball caps and golf balls. Holzer made use of advertising strategies to create desirable objects and increase their accessibility. It spread the products and consequently, their political demands. An example from the series is a t-shirt which reads in plain red and black text, "Raise Boys and Girls the Same Way." It functions as a demand to the

[35] Wye. *Thinking Print: Books to Billboards*. (85)

reader but also to prompt conversation as it travels throughout the world. Holzer claims, "I am even happy when people steal it because they do part of the work of distribution for me."[36]

The anonymous group of artists the **Guerrilla Girls** make text-based images that are similarly confrontational. They challenge the quiet sexism and racism of museums, galleries and institutions in their exclusion of women and minority artists. The titles of their prints are often rhetorical questions followed by exact presentations of evidence in facts and statistics. One widely distributed 1990 screen print asks, "*How Many Women Had One Person Exhibitions at NYC Museums Last Year?*" The answer is relayed underneath: Guggenheim: 0, Metropolitan: 0, Modern: 1 and Whitney: 0. Other posters include, *You're Seeing Less than Half the Picture Without the Vision of Women Artists and Artists of Color*. The text itself is representative of how many artists and women of color are pushed to the side, leaving more than half of the image completely empty. Additionally, although the Guerrilla Girls' collective is increasingly well known, all throughout the 1970's 80's and 90's artists were forming collectives. A long-standing tradition of collaboration was developed after artists realized the benefits of this collaboration and community.

The Print Community

Making prints has never been a one person operation. Community has always been a fundamental part of the process. This history spans from sixteenth century workshops with technicians assigned to different parts of production, to contemporary print shops where print artists depend on access to shared space, equipment and ideas to create work.

[36] Wye. *Thinking Print: Books to Billboards*. (16)

Collectives are also a historically powerful force for artists working on projects aimed towards a common goal. They are not only formed by artists and activists to support each other but in direct protest to exclusionary practices of the art world. Two New York City collectives were the artists for Black Liberation and Where We At: Black Women Artists. They also provided spaces for themselves to exhibit work when the majority of artists who galleries supported were white. Many of Faith Ringgold's posters were created with Where We At. Their work called attention to the demands of intersectional feminism and included work by Vivian Browne and many other famous women artists.

Looking back to the work of **Emory Douglas** in the late 1960's shows the power of image which is supported by the work of the Black Panther party and a collaboration of artists, writers and activists. At the age of thirteen in 1956 he was arrested for playing dice and sent to the California Institute of Juvenile Justice where he worked in a print shop and learned commercial design and printing.[37] He served as the graphic designer, and maker of illustrations for the 1970 paper called The Black Panther. The illustrations printed in the paper later became posters, but more largely symbols of their work to effect change through exposing racism, police brutality and harmful capitalism.[38] One of the most famous images shows a member of the party in action and distributing the newspaper. Written on the newspaper within the newspaper in bold exclamatory letters is the message they hoped to convey through their work; "All Power to the People" (1970).

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[37] Valentine, Victoria L. *Emory Douglas: 'I Was the Revolutionary Artist of the Black Panther Party.'* 23 Apr. 2019, www.culturetype.com/2019/04/23/emory-douglas-i-was-the-revolutionary-artist-of-the-black-panther-party/.
[38] Smith, Melissa. *Legendary Black Panther Artist Emory Douglas on How Digital Media Can Be Harnessed to Make Protest Art Far More Effective than Ever*. 30 June 2020, news.artnet.com/art-world/emory-douglas-interview-1889924.

An additional work from the newspaper "Soul of a Nation… We Shall Survive Without A Doubt" (1971) has been reprinted with Emory Douglas's support of the Black Lives Matter Movement today. The image is of a happy child wearing sunglasses, in which are reflected images of the free breakfast program that the party implemented to feed children of working class families.[39] This is a reference to the social work that the Black Panthers were advocating for to make sure children are able to stay in school, and break the pattern of arrests that are the root of the school to prison pipeline. The print makes use of both additive color blocking and subtracting from photographs: using elements of both collage and print. Printmaking allows for the use of digital media like photography through bitmap in a screen print or image transfer. Douglas' use of photographs gives power to those real people pictured and represents the humanity of the movement.

Self Help Graphics was a community-based print shop founded in East L.A. in the height of the Chicano Civil Rights movement by a group of artists and nuns with knowledge of the trade of printmaking. The group of artists were frustrated by the inaccessibility of art school, studios and access to printmaking for the strong immigrant and Mexican American community in East Los Angeles, also a community lacking in arts education.[40] In 1972 they converted an old gymnasium into a professional screenprint studio and developed El Barrio Mobile Art Studio. The mobile van was a way for the organization to fulfill their mission for community outreach by being able to actually reach people by travelling to them. They would work with schools and introduce students to art that provided a platform to connect through shared migrant experience:

[39] Reynolds, Cory. "Soul of a Nation...We Shall Survive. Without a Doubt." *ARTBOOK.COM and D.A.P. / Distributed Art Publishers*, Artbook, 3 Feb. 2018, www.artbook.com/blog-black-panther-soul-of-a-nation.html.
[40] "History." *Self Help Graphics & Art*, Self Help Graphics, www.selfhelpgraphics.com/history.

of identity, culture and community. The Barrio Mobile Art Studio served as a prototype for the Los Angeles Public School District's Arts Education curriculum.

Self Help Graphics is a thriving studio today but also an incredibly important fixture of art education and youth development in East L.A. today. Il Barrio Mobile Art Studio still travels with their workshops for young people. It is a preservation of history from the 1960's by similarly giving voices to artists today. At Self Help in 1994 artist Roberto Gutierrez created a screenprint entitled, "Cesar E. Chavez Avenida." The print is a commemoration of East L.A.'s main street name change to Cesar E. Chavez Avenue.[41] The print makes use of not only energetic color, but detailed illustration of the street, its contents and its people in order to celebrate the renaming and preserve history.

Just Seeds Collective is a group formed in 1998 to support and produce work by artists who address social reform and environmental issues. They work with activist groups and organizations but also create portfolios of artists' work to address a common political issue. Their projects include such works as "Migration Now!" which addresses the social and emotional aspects of immigration, and "This is an Emergency!" about reproductive rights and gender justice. "Voices from Outside: Critical Resistance" are a group of screenprints which critique the prison industrial complex in the United States and additionally promote efforts to abolish the U.S. prison system. The works include Melanie Cervantes' "Build Families Not Prisons," "Our Passion" from the Amour y Resistencia Collective and "Prisons in Wisconsin" by Brandon Bauer.[42]

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[41] Sayej, Nadja. "These Latinx Artists Used Protest Posters as a Vibrant Form of Resistance." *I-D*, 23 Oct. 2019, i-d.vice.com/en_us/article/gyz3p7/these-latinx-artists-used-protest-posters-as-a-vibrant-form-of-resistance

[42] "Voices From Outside: Artists Against the Prison Industrial Complex." *Justseeds*, 27 Jan. 2010, justseeds.org/portfolio/critical-resistance/.

Just Seeds' organization of these artists and their images strengthens each individual's political work and builds a more powerful collective message. The collective is an example of how print shops today work with technology through downloadable images and make use of how information can spread predominantly online and through social media. They recognize the function of a traditional on site print shop, but choose to bring artists from across America together. These artists are enabled to have a conversation about common issues, collect a wide range of experiences from different places and organize information to build up national movements for political reform.

II. 3 Instructional Zines

Discussion Questions

Part 1.

- **In what specific ways do the political posters from Mexico make use of the materiality of linoleum or wood?**
  - **Describe a conceptual or stylistic reason you would choose to make a print.**

- **How was interactivity essential in Faith Ringgold's *United States of Attica* ?**
  - **How does the artist ask the viewer to participate in the discussion?**

- **How does taking art outside of the gallery and making it public affect people or communities?**
  - **Use either an example that was discussed or your own. Examples can include murals, posters, clothing, etc.**

Part 2.

- **What are ways in which you can collaborate with other students?**
  - **Collaboration can be strengthened by shared experiences or ideas and can take the form of storytelling, drawing, writing etc.**

- **In what ways do you currently create? What ideas are you most passionate about?**
  - **How would you translate them into a print or zine?**

- **How could you ask a viewer to participate in your discussion?**
  - **This could be other students, your community, or friends.**

How to Make a Zine

- ❑ What are Zines?
- ❑ Zine History Brief
- ❑ Supplies
- ❑ Secret Page: How to Fold a Zine

❑ What are Zines?

Zines are handmade and self-published print media. They are pamphlets, brochures,comics, poetry, essays and criticism in many different shapes and sizes. They are simply: the DIY artist's tool for distributing images, thoughts and ideas. The most basic zine can be made from a single sheet of 8.5" x 11" computer paper and just 4 folds. There is an expansive world of zines and artist books as well as endless ways to make them.The evolution of Zine-making throughout history points to this medium's strength in conveying complex ideas and information with community participation.

❑ Zine History Brief

Zines were originally born out of the idea that books could be self-published by using simple materials and readily available printmaking technology. The term was first used in the 1940's to describe sci-fi fan books and later in the 70's by musicians to counteract elitism in the music industry. Historically, zines were not just a form of expression, but became a widely respected platform for critiquing injustices and demanding civil rights reform. They were an essential element in many movements throughout the 20th century in America.

Online catalogues of these small documents of history are availible on the websites of the Queer Zine Archive Project and the People of Color Zine Project.

Zines have the capacity to hold both visual and textual information. They are simple to produce en masse, and small enough to be distributed widely. As zines were replaced by social media and blogging websites like Tumblr and Wordpress many are unfamiliar with them today. Yet, even though all the information we could ever ask for is at our fingertips online, people undeniably recognize the power of art that exists in the physical world.

There is a special element in the creation of an artist book which can include drawings, handwritten text or personal touches that aren't accessible online. Not only are they special, but once you've created your first zine the doors to a community of artists, activists and writers will be open to you. Community gatherings like zine fests keep the art of the zine and history of zines alive.

❑ **Materials you need to make a Zine:**

1. Paper
2. Pen or Pencil
3. Printer or Copy Machine (at your school, a library or copy store)
4. Scissors

❑ **Other supplies include but are not limited to:**

❑ Linoleum, Woodcut or Silkscreen
❑ Gluestick
❑ Scissors
❑ Markers
❑ Stickers
❑ Old magazines

How to Make a Linocut

- ❑ What is a Linocut?
- ❑ How to Make a Multi-color Linocut
- ❑ Materials
- ❑ Safety Instructions

❑ What is a Linocut?

Relief is a process of carving line into a material like wood or linoleum in order to reveal an image when printed. It is arguably the printmaking method which is most accessible to people as it requires no press or large expensive equipment. All the materials truly needed to make a relief print are the essential carving tools and anything flat and pliable to carve into. Blocks of wood and linoleum can be substituted with styrofoam, potato halves or cardboard.

Relief prints have been a part of centuries of traditions in bookmaking, textile printing and illustration. The invention of linoleum in 1860 prompted the repurposing of this new flooring material for art-making. when artists realized its soft texture and superior carvability in comparison to a block of wood. Not only is the material cheaper than wood but it also is much softer allowing for easier hand carving and printing.

Linocuts can be elaborate images with intricate linework made by tiny carving tools. Multiple blocks of the same size can be used to create layers. Or, an image can be made with quick marks and matte black ink. They tell stories through chatter, the seemingly accidental printed marks which indicate the movement of the artist's tool. This texture is a tell-tale sign of a relief image which appears in the final print in between the carved lines. It is a form of shadow or movement in between light and dark. Carving either lighter or deeper and more or less will result in a variety of textures. Options for variation are endless: hand printed, press printed, stencils, and ink.

❑ How to Make a Multi-color Linocut

A single piece of linoleum can be carved multiple times to achieve either multiple layers of color or a progression from light to dark. For a two color image, you will need two shades of ink: for example, black and grey. The first carving and printing of the block will be the grey parts of the image. The carved places of the first print will be the white spaces in the image. In the second carving you will take away areas of the image that should be grey. The newly carved spaces in the second print will be the grey spaces in the image. When printing multiple layers it is important to use a registration system.

- **Materials**
  - Linoleum
    - ("Easy-Carve" Linoleum blocks are also a great option).
  - Lino cutter
  - Water Soluble Ink
  - Brayer
    - Sponge
  - Paper
    - (Fabric and clothing can be printed on with the use of fabric specific inks)
  - Palette, Palette Knife
    - (Anything to hold and spread ink)
  - Newsprint
    - Newspaper
  - Baren
    - Wooden Spoon

- **Safety Instructions:**
  1. Always carve the block with the lino cutter facing away from your body.
  2. Always make sure your non-carving hand is behind the blade and never in front.
  3. For easier carving, the Linoleum can be heated until warm with a household iron.

- ❑ What are Zines?
- ❑ Zine History Brief
- ❑ Supplies

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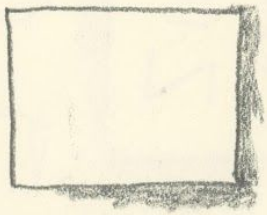
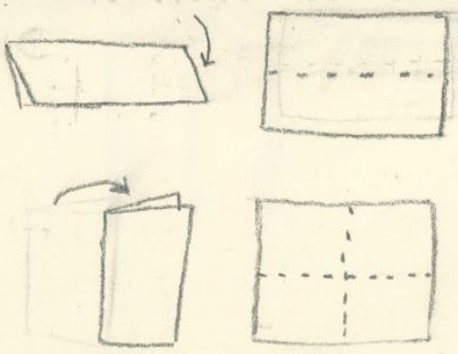
How to Fold a 6 Page ZINE

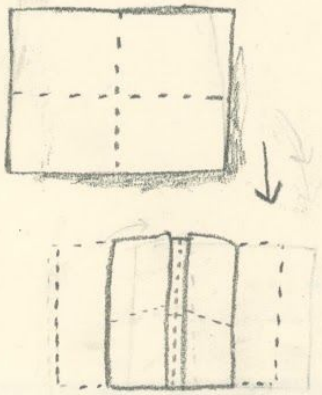


① Blank 8.5" x 11" sheet of paper

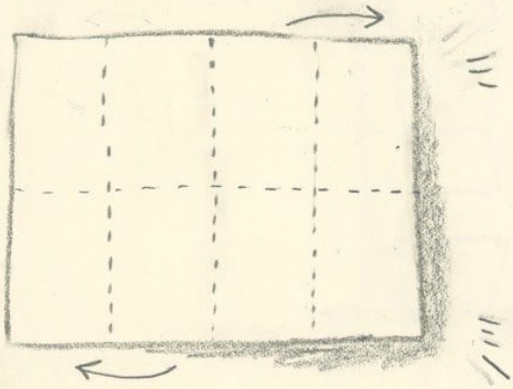
② Fold in half both ways.



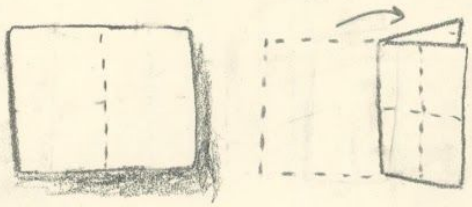
③ Fold 2 more times, into fourths

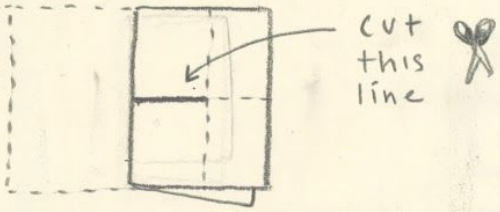


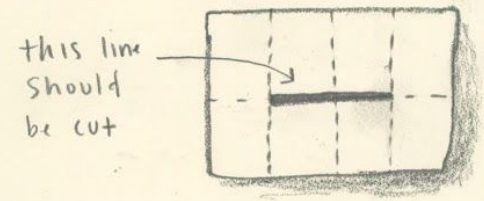
④ Unfold to Reveal 8 pages



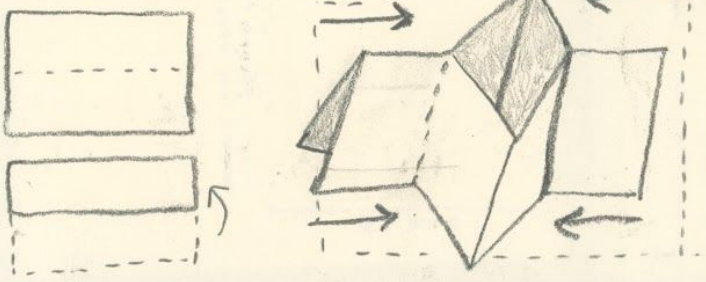
⑤ Fold the page in half and cut down the middle lengthwise.



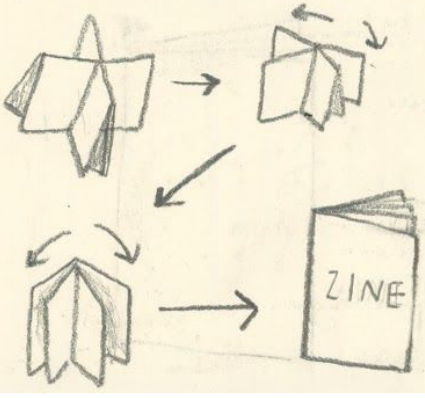




⑥ Fold in half the other way and press the ends together



⑦ Finished book!



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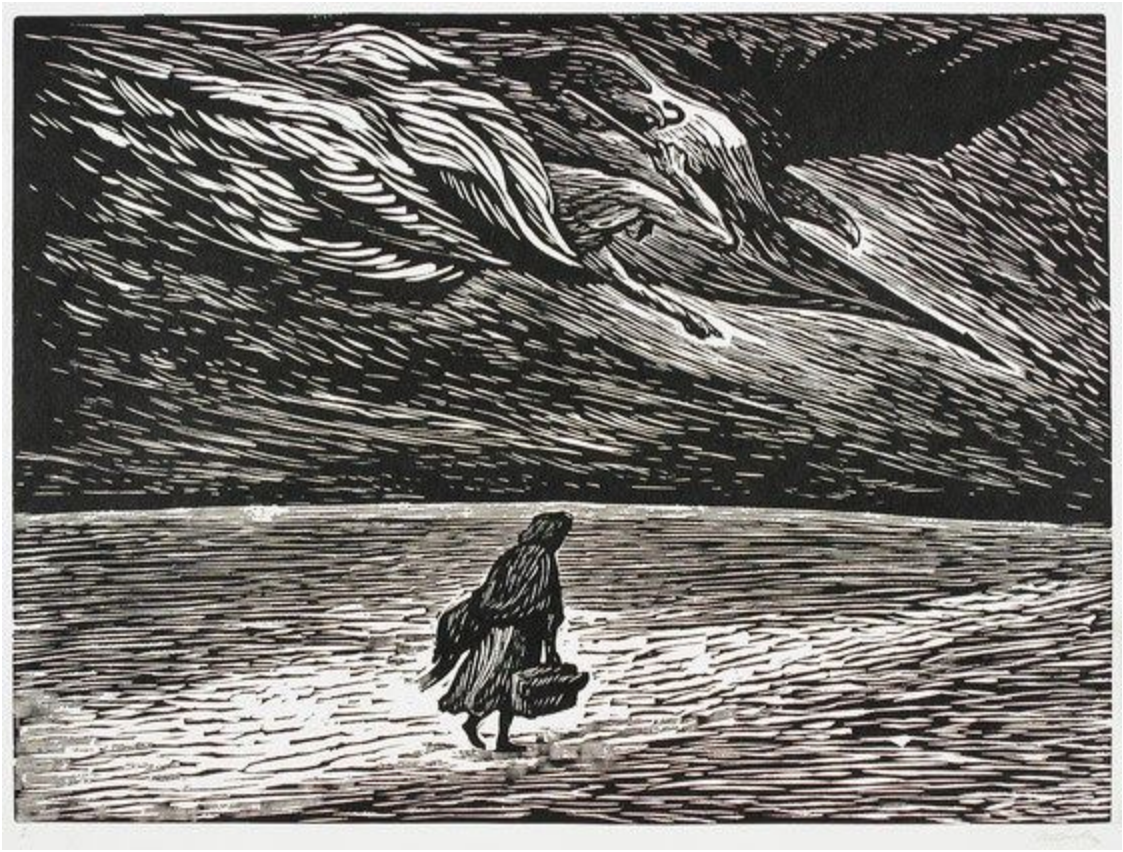


Little School Teacher How Great is Your Will (Pequeña maestra, ¡qué inmensa es tu voluntad!)
Leopoldo Mendez
1947
Linoleum cut
16 x 20 in.
https://collections.lacma.org/node/207453

Album of 25 Illustrated Educational Handbills
Taller de Gráfica Popular
1938-1942
Relief and Letterpress
17” x 13 x 10 mm
https://www.artic.edu/artworks/51976/album-of-25-illustrated-educational-handbills

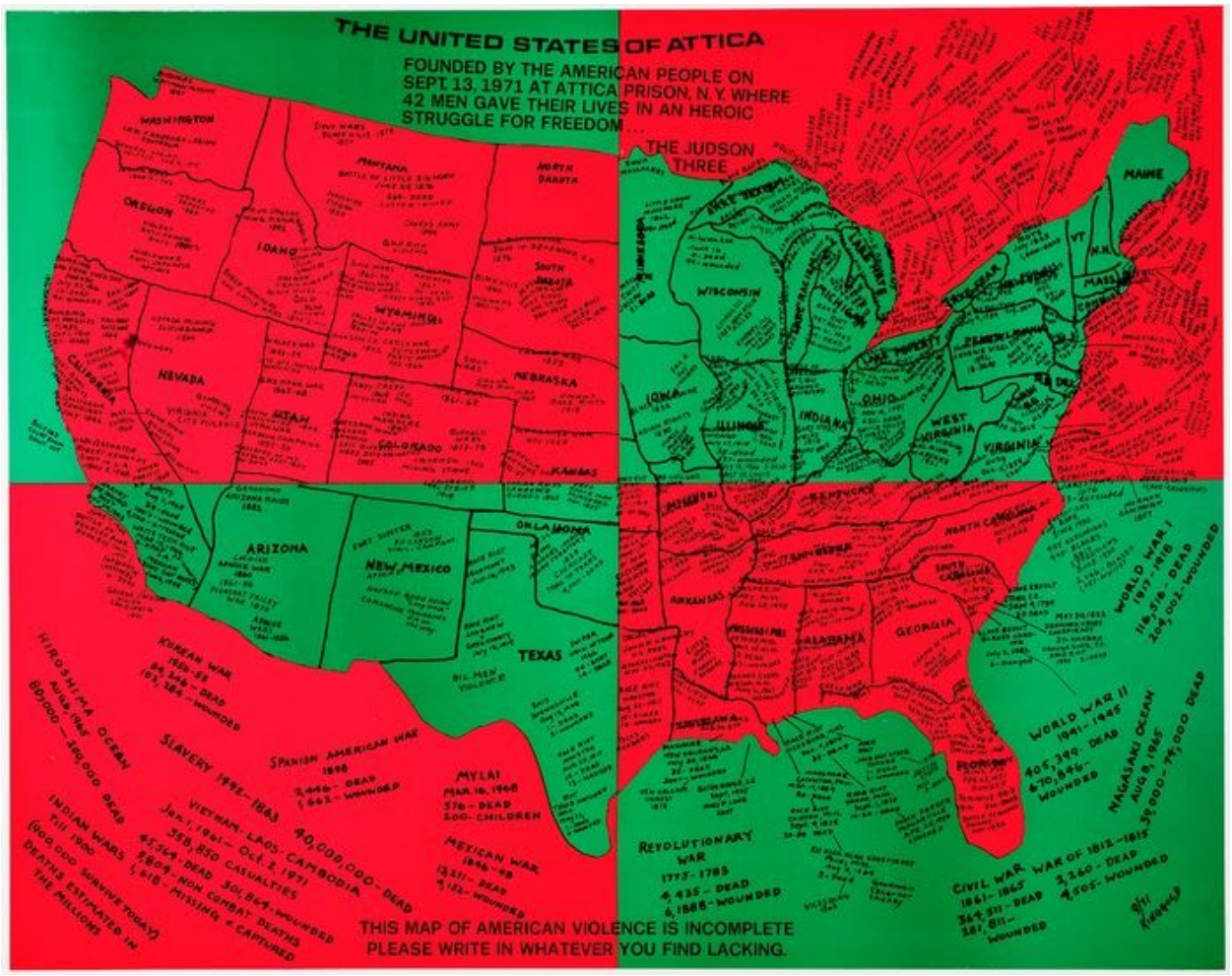
What May Come
Leopoldo Mendez
Wood Engraving
11” x 7”
https://www.artic.edu/artworks/54598/what-may-come-mexico-1945

Plant an Urban Farm Garden, Planta un Huerto Urbano
From the Justseeds portfolio *Resourced*
Alejandra Delfin
2010
24” x 18”
https://justseeds.org/graphic/plant-an-urban-farm-garden-planta-un-huerto-urbano/

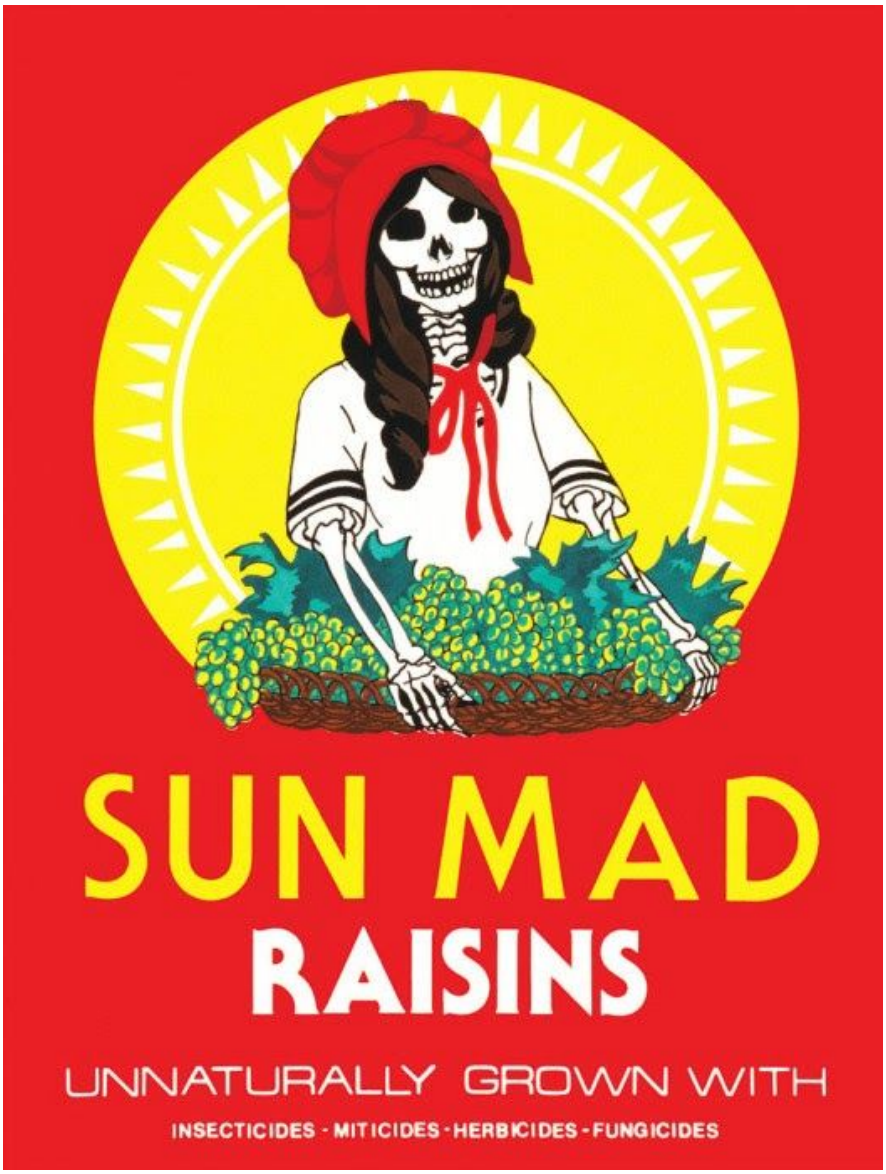
Swoon
Untitled Installations, Brooklyn
Linoleum, Woodcut
https://www.brooklynstreetart.com/2014/05/05/new-swoon-in-bushwick/
http://www.streetmuseumofart.org/swoon


Eleven 7
Deli
ATM

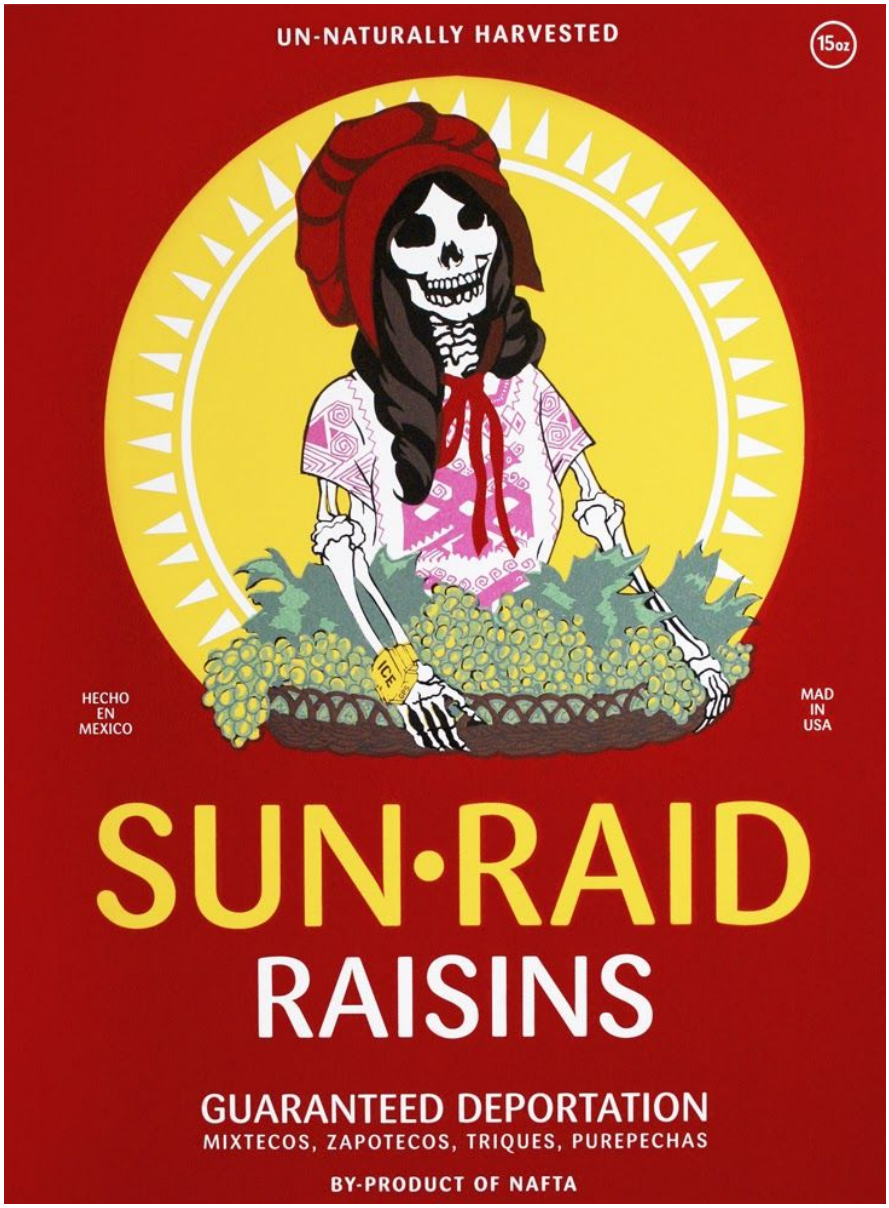
We Don't Need Another Hero
Barbara Kruger
1987
108 ⅞" × 209 3/16" × 2 ½"
Screen print
https://whitney.org/collection/works/34103



United States of Attica
Faith Ringgold
1972
Offset Lithograph
21 ¾" x 27 ½"
https://www.icp.org/browse/archive/objects/the-united-states-of-attic**a**



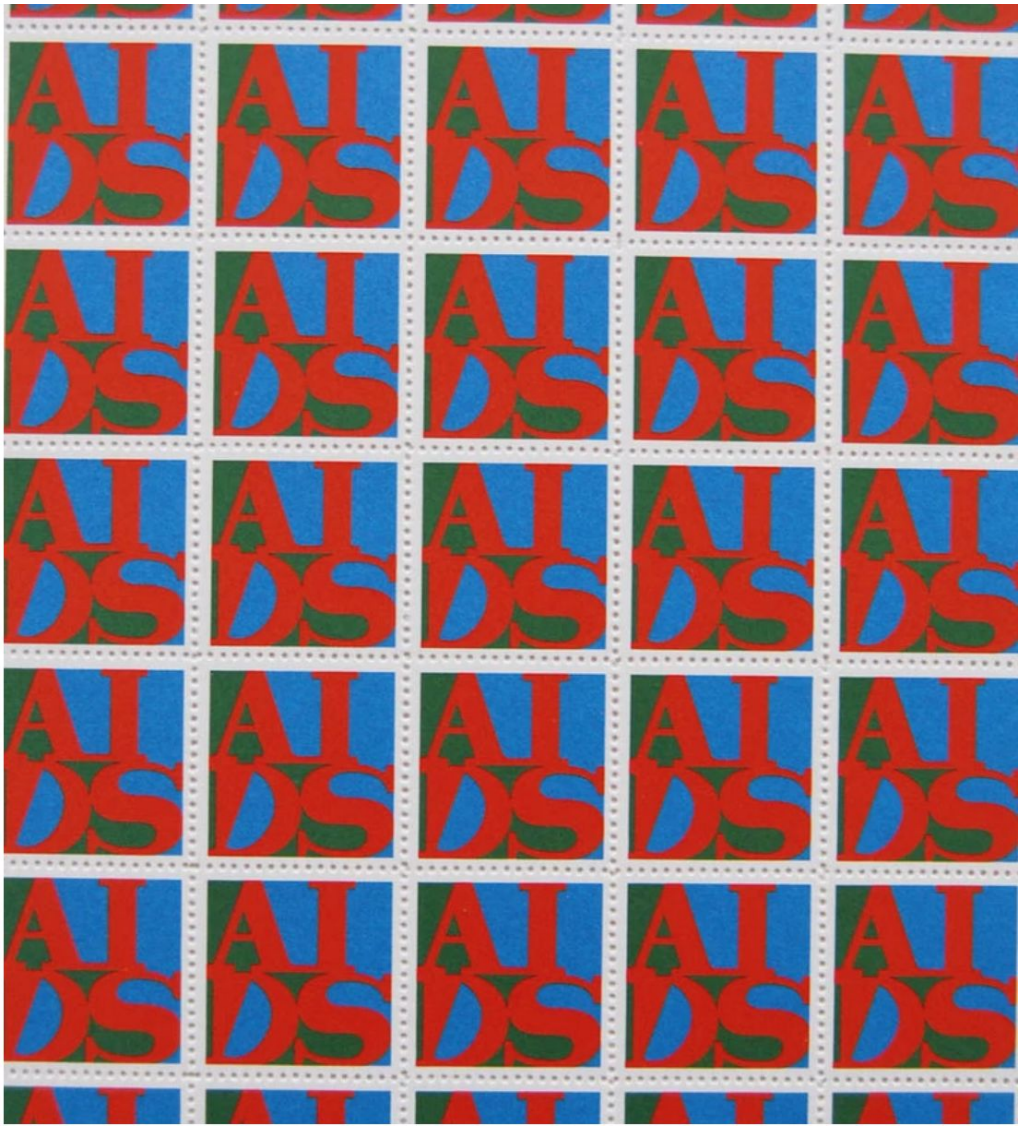
Sun Mad
Ester Hernandez
1982
26” x 20”
Screen print
https://artinprint.org/article/ester-hernandez-sun-mad/



Sun Raid
Ester Hernandez
2008
26” x 20”
Screen print

https://serieproject.org/product/ester-hernandez/

Huelga
Carlos Francisco Jackson
2009
Screenprint
25 ¼” x 38 ½”
https://collection.mcnayart.org/objects/19534

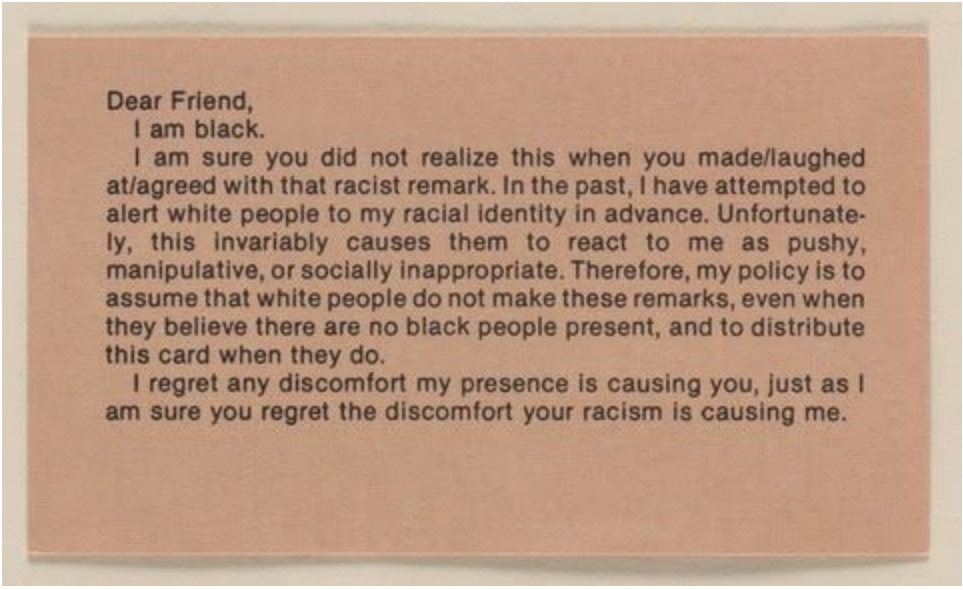


AIDS Stamps
General Idea
1988
Offset Lithograph
https://www.caviar20.com/products/general-idea-aids-stamps-framed

HATE
Dread Scott
2017
Screenprint
https://www.dreadscott.net/portfolio_page/hate/

Domestic Violence Milk Carton Project
Peggy Diggs
1.5 Million Milk Cartons
1992

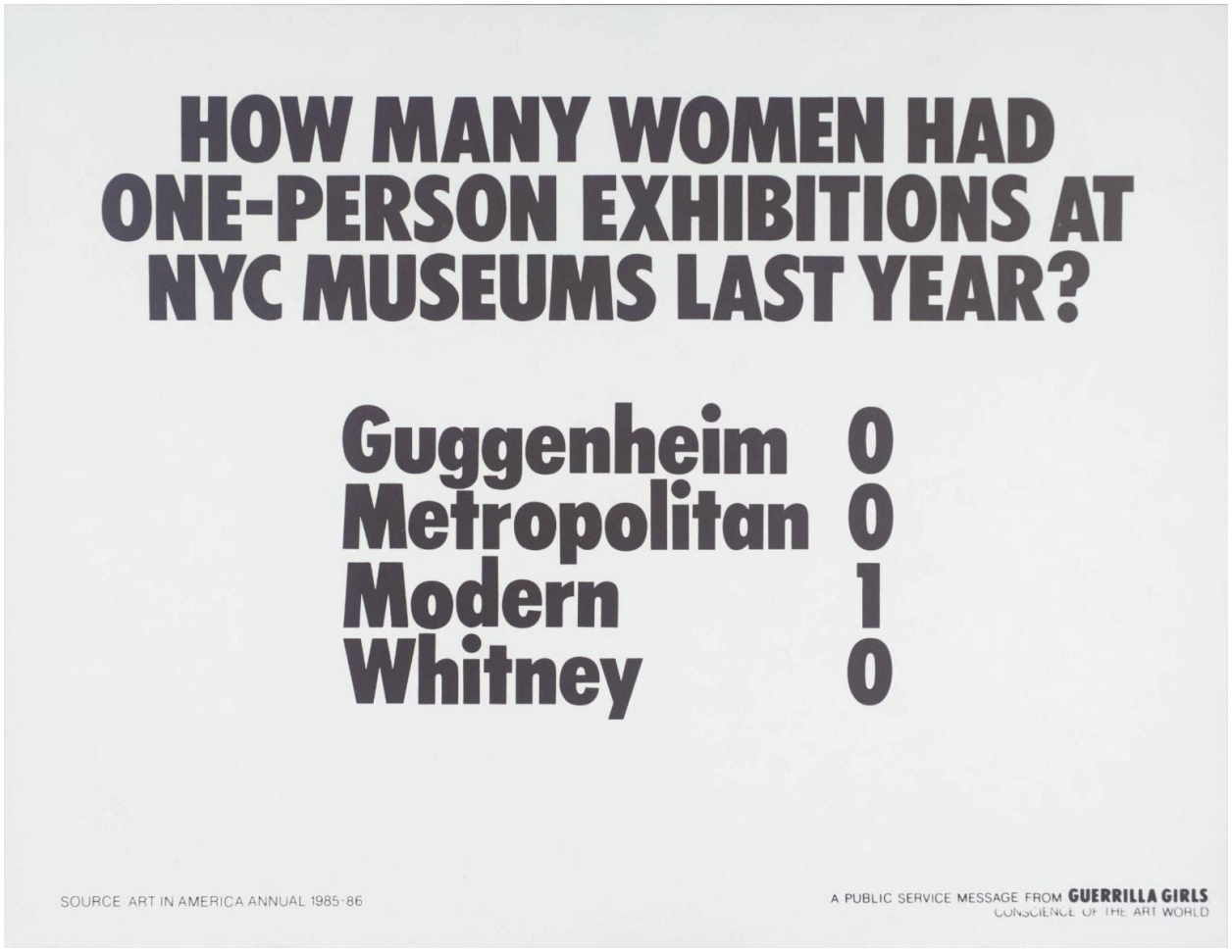
http://www.peggydiggs.net/milk-carton



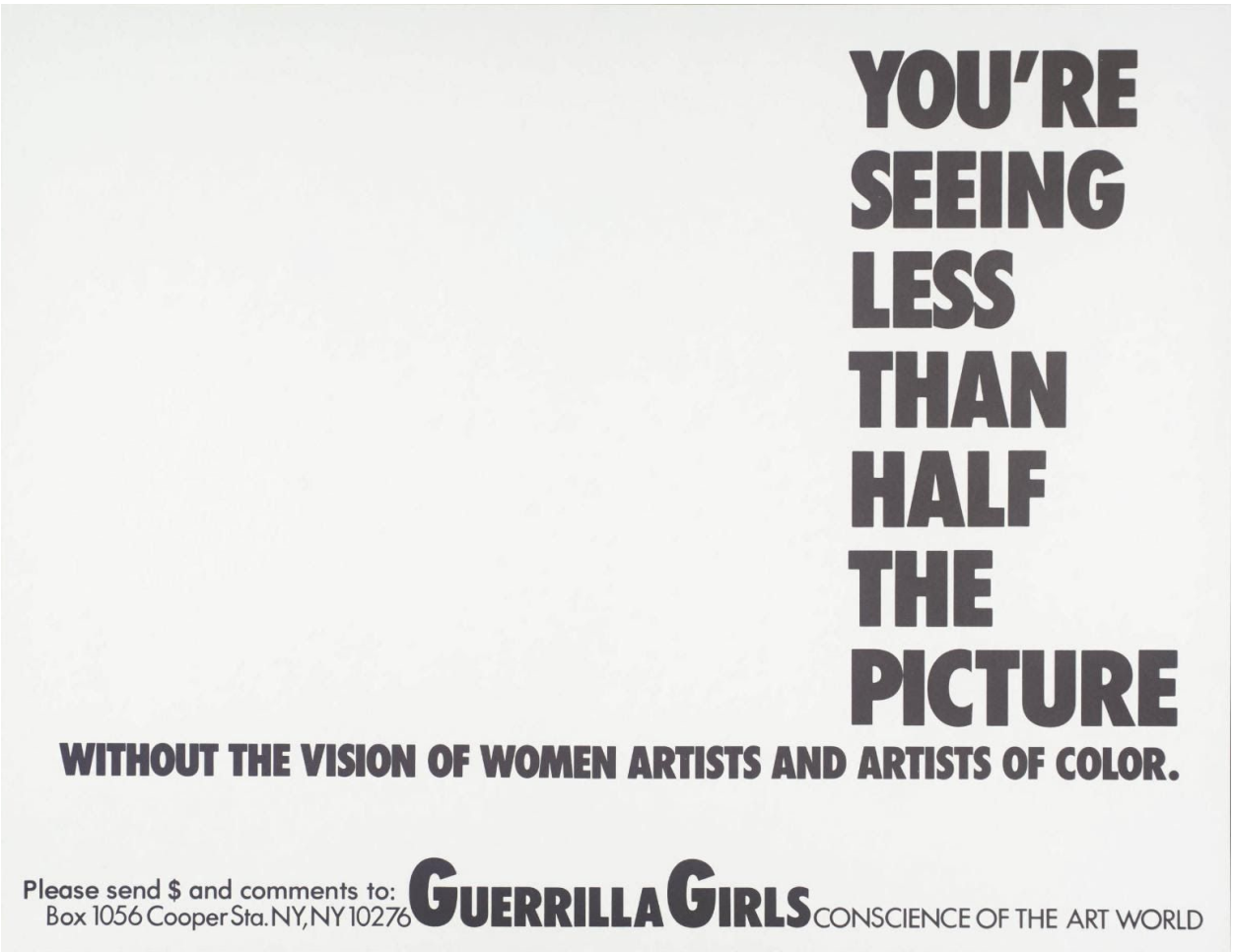
My Calling Card #1
Adrian Piper
1986
2” x 3 ½”
Offset Lithograph

https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/218575

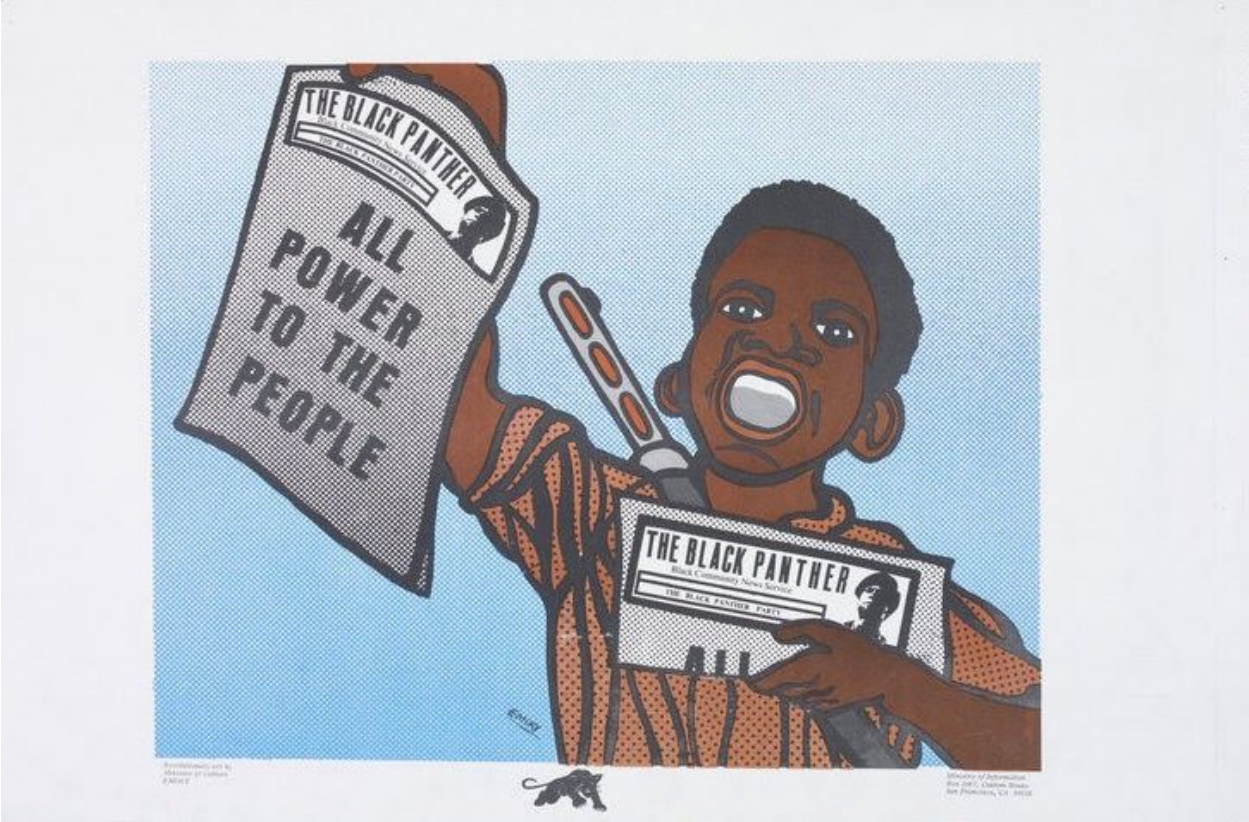
Jenny Holzer
Raise Boys and Girls the Same Way
1978-87
96” x 40”
Screen print



How Many Women Had One-Person Exhibitions at NYC Museums Last Year?
Guerrilla Girls
1985
17” x 20”
Screen print
https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/guerrilla-girls-how-many-women-artists-had-one-person-exhibitions-in-nyc-art-museums-last-p78811



You're Seeing Less Than Half the Picture
Guerrilla Girls
1989
17" x 22"
Offset Lithograph
https://www.sfmoma.org/artwork/2017.205/



All Power to the People
Emory Douglas
The Black Panther Magazine
1970
Offset Lithograph
https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O102221/all-power-to-the-people-poster-douglas-emory/

Soul of a Nation/ We Shall Survive Without a Doubt
Emory Douglas
1971
17” x 22”
Offset Lithograph
https://frieze.com/article/soul-nation-art-age-black-power

Cesar E. Chavez Avenida
Roberto Gutierrez
1994
23” x 26 ⅛”
Screen print
https://collection.mcnayart.org/objects/19411

Build Families Not Prisons
Melanie Cervantes
From Justseeds Portfolio project "Voices from Outside: Artists Against the Prison Industrial Complex."
2008
12" x 12"
Screen print
https://justseeds.org/graphic/build-families-not-prisons/

Our Passion
The Amour y Resistencia Collective
From the Justeeds portfolio "Voices From Outside: Artists Against the Prison Industrial Complex."
2008
5" x 5"
https://justseeds.org/graphic/our-passion/

Prisons in Wisconsin
Brandon Bauer
2008
From Justseeds Portfolio project "Voices from Outside: Artists Against the Prison Industrial Complex."
Screenprint
5" x 5"
https://justseeds.org/graphic/prisons-in-wisconsin/