



ACLU of Wisconsin Recognizes Censored Milwaukee Area Artists

Open House Event to be Held During the Third Ward Gallery Night

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MILWAUKEE, WI – The ACLU of Wisconsin Foundation will host an event featuring three Milwaukee area artists who have faced some form of censorship or limits on their expressive work. The “Eye of the Beholder: Censorship in Art from Eden to Milwaukee” event will be held on April 20, 2012.

As a part of the Historic Third Ward’s Gallery Night in Milwaukee, the ACLU of Wisconsin open house will be among several galleries in the Robert Marshall Building that will be open to the public between 5:00 and 10:00 p.m. The Robert Marshall Building is a sponsor of the ACLU of Wisconsin Foundation event.

About the artists:

Anne Kingsbury has been the Executive Director of the Woodland Pattern Book Center in Milwaukee since 1979. She holds a Master of Fine Arts degree and has over forty years of experience in arts creation, education and program management. Among her honors, Kingsbury has received a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, three grants from the Wisconsin Arts Board, a grant from the Milwaukee Artists Foundation and an artist’s fellowship from Art Futures.

Her mixed media art often centers on both the human form and traditionally feminine objects such as dolls and quilts. Kingsbury offers drawings, but much of her hand-sewn work reflects both the organic nature of the materials and represents what is natural in the human form. Her work came under fire early in her career when her contract as an art professor at Nebraska’s Hastings University was not renewed in 1969 based on criticism that her anatomically correct dolls were “too sophisticated” for the university audience. She faced similar censorship at a faculty art show in Flint, Michigan when her dolls would “disappear” when funders visited the show.

Fahimeh Vahdat is an Iranian-born, Baha’i, mixed-media installation artist who has lived in exile in the United States since 1981 after was forced to leave her country after the Revolution of 1979. As an educator, artist and activist, her work embraces themes of freedom but also includes topics on human rights, female oppression, violence against women and children and problems in prison systems, especially in Iran and the US. Currently she is on sabbatical from the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design (MIAD), is an artist in residence at RedLine Milwaukee, and is a mentor of visual arts with the Milwaukee Artists Resource and Network (MARN).

Last June Vahdat's 10-foot tall painting entitled "A Prison Called Iran" from her "Freedom Series" was censored at the Intercontinental Hotel's M Gallery in Milwaukee which was a part of the annual MARN group exhibition of mentor and mentees' work. Due to the outline of a female nude figure, the work was considered inappropriate for general display at the hotel. An article by Mary Louise Schumacher in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel gives some background behind [the decisions made by the Marcus Corporation and the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design](#). In response, Vahdat turned her work facing the wall and had a silent performance at the show's opening to protest the censorship. The painting "A Prison Called Iran" is being shown to the public for the first time at the ACLU of Wisconsin Foundation's Gallery Night event. In 2012, the MARN exhibition will be held at Cardinal Stritch University in July.

Philip Krejcarek has been a Professor of Art at the Waukesha's Carroll University since 1977 and has been the Chairman of the Department of Visual and Performing Arts since 2009. He holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and has published books of his work including the 1997 "Digital Photography: A Hands-on Introduction" and the 2003 "An Introduction to Digital Imaging." His collections have been featured in the Milwaukee Art Museum; Haggerty Museum of Art, Milwaukee; Denver Art Museum; Wustum Museum of Fine Arts, Racine and across the City of Milwaukee.

Krejcarek's photos in his series "Sanctuary" came under fire from a talk-show radio host in 2008. While his photos' subjects involve the female form and themes of early Catholic concepts of adoration of women, talk show host Mark Belling criticized Krejcarek's work as being anti-Christian. Ultimately Carroll University did not respond to Belling's calls for comment and university leadership allowed Krejcarek's work to remain on display.

The ACLU of Wisconsin Foundation successfully defended the [Milwaukee Gay Arts Center in 2010 when the play "Naked Boys Singing" was shut down by police](#). Most recently, the [ACLU of Wisconsin came out in support of Madison-area political cartoonist Mike Konopacki](#) after he came under fire for distributing a satirical, parody press release in response to a state lawmaker who pressured a university department to cancel a politically-themed art show.

The Gallery Night event is free, but donations in support of the civil liberties litigation and public education work of the ACLU of Wisconsin Foundation are welcome. You can RSVP to the event or share it on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/events/380014135363765/>). For more information or to be a sponsor of the event, contact Marion Ecks at mecks@aclu-wi.org.

The ACLU of Wisconsin Foundation is a non-profit civil liberties and civil rights organization working to protect the rights of all Wisconsinites. For more on the work of the American Civil Liberties Union and Foundation of Wisconsin, visit our [webpage](#), like us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on Twitter [@ACLUofWisconsin](#) and [@ACLUMadison](#). Read more news and opinion on civil liberties in Wisconsin on the [Forward for Liberty](#) blog.

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