



*CORKGUN*, 33"H x 17"W x 12"D\_2009\_ America Homeland Series\_ hand-painted cord and mason line, digital printing on fabric, iridescent stainless steel paint, string, cork\_ Shows: Bearing Witness: Art as Social Action at ARC Gallery in Chicago 2009; Fiber: Twentyten at Foundry Art Center, Saint Charles, Missouri 2010; featured in Exposures-Surface Design Magazine Winter 2010; Uncommon Threads, Trenton Artworks, New Jersey 2011; Made In New York at Schweinfurth Art Center, Auburn, New York 2012; National Fiber Directions at The Wichita Center For the Arts, Kansas 2013; Spoken Threads at ArtRage Gallery in Syracuse, New York 2013; Art From The Boros II at Denise Bibro Fine Art in New York City 2014. Photo: D. James Dee



*Trail of Tears/The Long Walk*, installed 53"H x 29"W x 43"D\_2014\_ hand-painted, forcefully twisted rope, digital printing on fabric, teardrop and other beads, feathers\_ Shows: Day By Day at Arts Guild New Jersey 2014; Art From The Boros II at Denise Bibro Fine Art in New York City; Focus: Fiber 2014 at the Erie Art Museum, Pennsylvania; International Fiber Arts II, Sebastopol Center For The Arts Sebastopol, California 2015. Photo: Michael Hnatov



Previous page and bottom: *No One Is Listening*, 6.5"H x 24"W x 17"D\_2008\_ America Homeland Series\_ hand-painted, forcefully twisted cord and mason line, digital printing on fabric, thread\_ Shows: Bend, Fold, Manipulate at ACA Gallery in Toronto, Canada 2008; Green: the Color and the Cause at The Textile Museum in Washington D.C. 2011; The Marylou Hillyer 25th International Juried Show Silver Anniversary at Visual Arts Center of New Jersey 2011; Art From The Boros II at Denise Bibro Fine Art in New York City 2014. Photo: D. James Dee

Curator and critic, Sue Scott, described my work as "mounds of painted rope (that) somehow become something more than the sum of their parts."

She was describing 'Methane Migration', a forcefully twisted rope sculpture in blues and oranges that has burning sticks embedded into it, so that fire becomes part of the sculpture, symbolizing methane that has migrated into water, contaminating it in such a way that it can actually burn.

Forcefully twisted rope painted with stainless steel paint becomes the gun in 'Corkgun', which also features a cork hanging from a string and digitally printed strips of fabric telling the story of a boy with a cork gun playing cops and robbers with his friends, mistaken by security police for a gunman and shot dead.

Forcefully twisted rope squeezes a piece of fur in 'Trapped', and becomes the top of the headdress in 'Trail of Tears/The Long Walk', while trailing teardrop beads, beaded rope and digitally printed strips of fabric, describe the ethnic cleansing and forced relocation of the American Indians in the 1800s.

My work is not as complex in its structure as it is in its symbolism, and it is in its symbolism that it becomes more than the sum of its parts.

Rope is a material that is generally considered for its utilitarian function. The very process of rope-making is a controlled twisting motion. What I am doing in my sculptures is forcing it beyond that -controlled twisting, creating such tension within the rope that it contorts and twists back upon itself with so much force that it becomes a dance with the rope to control it. It seems to have a life of its own at this point. There is actually something kinetic about my work even after it is completed. >>

**“ALTHOUGH IT CAN BE ACCEPTED ON ITS PURELY HUMOROUS OR DECORATIVE APPEARANCE, ONE MUST DELVE INTO THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE WORK TO TRULY APPRECIATE AND UNDERSTAND IT”**

I like the tactile feel of the rope in my hands. I feel as though I am drawing with it, whether draping, stitching, knotting or twisting it together to create a sculptural mass. I am methodical about the way in which I go about my work, but I am always surprised in the end by what the rope does in the process. I paint all my rope by hand. My titles, symbolic colour and the placement of my rope are integral to the meaning of the work. In 'Corkgun', on one side of the gun, white rope with the strips of digitally printed story symbolize innocence, while the red rope on the other side of the gun symbolize violence and bloodshed. In 'Bailout', a small, red, white and blue twisted top is enough to signify the USA, while the \$100 bills digitally printed on fabric, and one fabric strip that says "chances are you're NOT getting a federal bailout... spend wisely", convey the message while adding humour to the piece. In 'A Precise Point of Balance', the entire twist balances on one point of contact and is held there by a small wood ball in the back. In any other position, it will topple over.

The very first piece in which I used rope was 'Minuend' in 1968; layers of sheer fabrics into which I inserted a dirty clothesline. Rope was and still is my choice for my large hanging works. It becomes the flag in both 'Ellis Island' and 'In Grateful Memory', the aids victims in 'AIDS', the clarinet and string instruments in 'Opal', the finger exercise in 'Extension/Velocity', stardust and night in 'Stardust for Twenty Angels', the pool of blood in 'Cross By The Side Of The Road'. As a teenager, I spent hours working in my father's shop surrounded by cotton flex in all sizes. When he retired, I inherited huge spools of flex which became the stress wrapped around 'Stress and Release' and the playful elements in 'Hinoki' and 'Pappagallo'. My work is also an amalgam of my early years in painting, printmaking and publishing. >>

Bottom row, left to right:  
*Trapped*, 7"H x 22.5"W x 13"D\_2008\_America Homeland Series\_hand-painted, forcefully twisted cord and mason line, iridescent stainless steel paint, fur\_Shows: Surface:Layered, Flagstaff, Arizona 2008; Katherine Butler Gallery, Sarasota, Florida 2009. Photo: D. James Dee

*Adieu Ma Bonne Amie*, 14"H x 22"W x 14.5"D\_2008\_America Homeland Series\_hand-painted, forcefully twisted rope\_Shows: Silvermine Art of the Northeast 2008 in Connecticut; honorable mention at Visual Art Center of New Jersey 23rd International Juried Show 2009. Photo: D. James Dee

*Hinoki*, 13:H x 28.75"W x 13.25"D\_hand-painted rope, mason line, cord, large cotton flex\_2010\_Shows: Northeast Regional Contemporary Fiber Exhibition at Rochester Contemporary Art Center, New York 2011; featured in the Democrat and Chronicle and Rochester City Newspaper 2011; Prismatic at Arts Guild New Jersey 2011; Academy of Fine Arts in Lynchburg, Virginia 2014. Photo: D. James Dee

*Pappagallo*, 13.75"H x 27.75"W x 21"D\_2010\_hand-painted, forcefully twisted rope, large cotton flex; Shows: Prismatic at Arts Guild New Jersey 2012; photo: D. James Dee

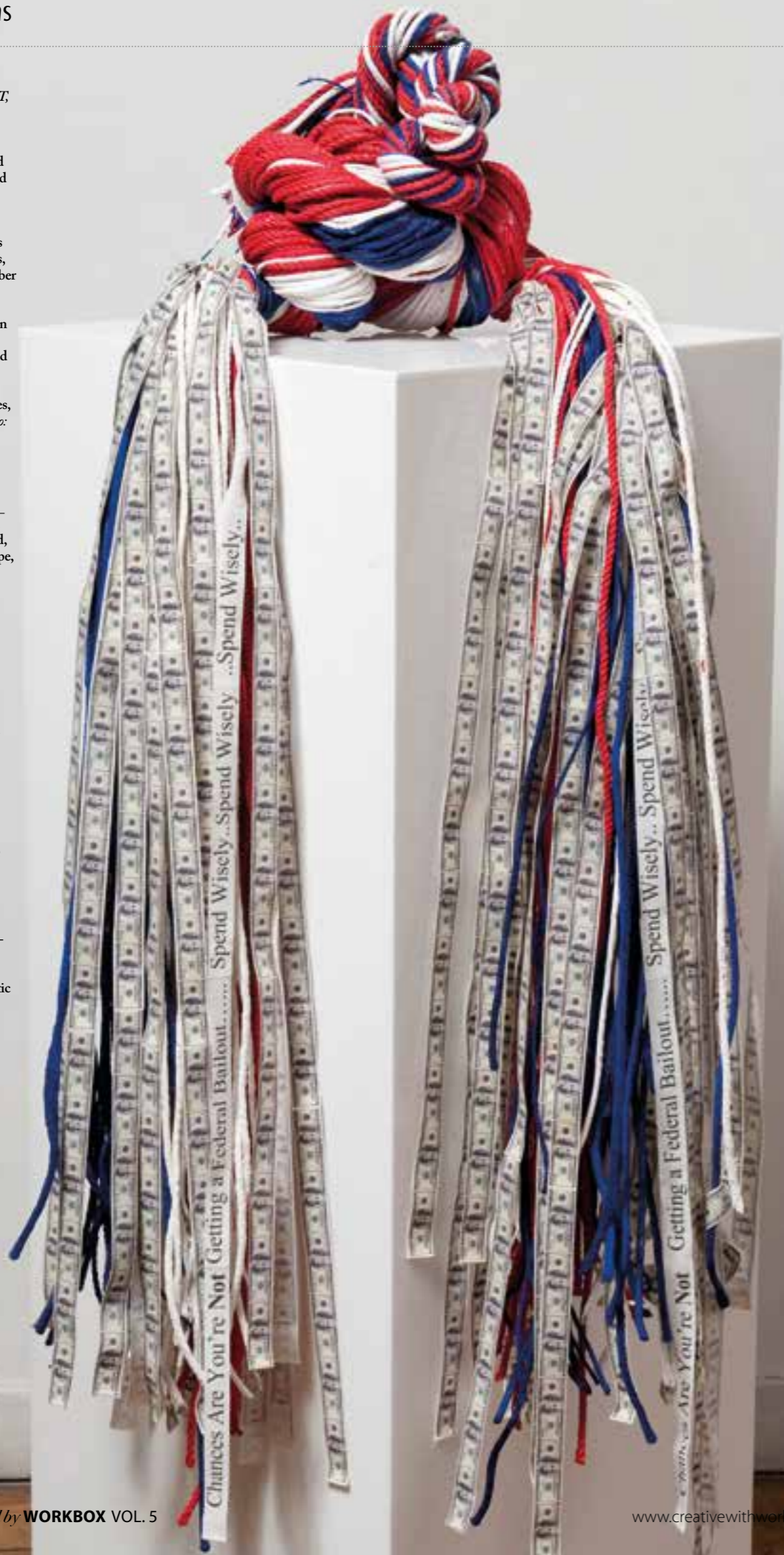


This page: *BALLOUT*, 32.5"H x 13.5"W x 13.5"D, 2009, America Homeland Series, hand-painted and forcefully twisted cord and mason line, digital printing on fabric. Shows: Uncommon Threads at Trenton Artworks, New Jersey 2011; Fiber Options: Material Explorations at Maryland Federation of Art Gallery, Annapolis, Maryland 2012; Fiber Fever at Foundry Art Center, Saint Charles, Missouri 2014. Photo: D. James Dee

Opposite top to bottom: *Metbane Migration*, 11"H x 28"W x 16"D, 2012, America Homeland Series, hand-painted, forcefully twisted rope, sticks, fire. Shows: Day By Day at Arts Guild New Jersey 2014; Viewpoints at aljira Center for Contemporary Art in Newark, New Jersey 2014; Focus: Fiber 2014 at the Erie Art Museum, Pennsylvania. Photo: Michael Hnatov

*Stress and Release*, 8.5"H x 20"W x 12"D, 2010, hand-painted, forcefully twisted rope. Photo: D. James Dee, private collection

*A Precise Point of Balance*, 14.5"H x 18.5"W x 12.5"D, 2009, hand-painted, forcefully twisted rope, wood ball. Shows: Prismatic at Arts Guild New Jersey 2012. Photo: D. James Dee



It was quite by accident that I began to twist rope in 2007. I had made a cheerful rope hanging for a dear friend who was battling breast cancer. When she lost the battle, I tore down the hanging and began twisting it, with the intention of throwing it out. Instead, it became 'Adieu Ma Bonne Amie' and 'An Unexpected Turn', my first twisted sculptures. It was in 2008, for a show in Toronto, Canada – 'Bend, Fold, Manipulate' (for a better world) – that I began using digital printing on fabric. I read that a creek in Brooklyn where I live, was so heavily polluted from industry dating back to the industrial revolution, that the polluted muck was now undulating underground in the rock crevices formed by receding glaciers during the glacial age, and that the toxic fumes were seeping into buildings. No one I knew seemed to be aware of this situation, or to even care, and that was when I created 'No One Is Listening', a powerful statement on the devastating results of toxic pollution. After Toronto, 'No One Is Listening' was displayed in a video in 'Green: the colour and the cause' at The Textile Museum in Washington D.C. 'Corkgun' was appropriately exhibited in 'Bearing Witness: Art as Social Action' at the ARC Gallery in Chicago. It was subsequently exhibited in seven venues from Kansas to New York City and was featured in Surface Design Magazine. 'Trail of Tears/The Long Walk' was first exhibited at Denise Bibro Gallery in New York City. From there, it was selected by The Textile Alliance of The Cleveland Museum of Art for their first national exhibition at The Erie Museum in Erie, Pennsylvania. It has just returned from International Fiber Arts II in Sebastopol, California.

I have been told that there is poignancy in my work. Although it can be accepted on its purely humorous or decorative appearance, one must delve into the complexities of the work to truly appreciate and understand it. My narratives relate the story but never offer an opinion. The viewer is left to form his or her own opinion. ■

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