

Sheryl Oring

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Since launching the “I Wish to Say” project in 2004, artist **Sheryl Oring** has typed thousands of postcards to the President from dozens of campuses and other locations across the U.S. Her book, *Activating Democracy: The I Wish to Say Project*, was published by the University of Chicago Press. Oring, an Associate Professor of Art at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, is at work on a large-scale public art commission at the Tampa International Airport. Her community engaged works operate at the crossroads of art and activism and she firmly believes that students hold the key to social change.

Oring’s work has been shown at Bryant Park in New York City; the Berlin Wall Memorial; the Jewish Museum Berlin; the O1SJ Biennial in San Jose, CA; the San Diego Museum of Art; as well as in major festivals such as Encuentro in São Paulo, Brazil, and the Art Prospect Festival in St. Petersburg, Russia. She recently completed a large-scale public art installation at the San Diego International Airport; and her artist books are in collections including the Library of Congress, Tate Modern and the Bibliothèque nationale de Luxembourg. Oring is a Creative Capital grantee and has received support from Franklin Furnace, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the North Carolina Arts Council, the American Council on Germany and many other organizations.

PARTIAL CLIENT LIST

Performance and exhibition venues

Bryant Park, NY

Tampa Museum of Art, FL

Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, FL

Lois and David Stulberg Gallery, Ringling College of Art and Design, Sarasota, FL

Creative Pinellas, Largo, FL

Oakland Book Festival

Western Michigan University's gallery at ArtPrize, Grand Rapids, MI

Stanjar Gallery, Washington and Lee University, Lexington, VA

Ruffin Gallery, University of Virginia

University Art Gallery, University of California, San Diego

Cameron Art Museum, University of North Carolina at Wilmington

Stamps Gallery, University of Michigan

Elsewhere, Greensboro, NC

Torpedo Factory Art Center, Alexandria, VA

Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem, NC

University of Colorado, Boulder

Contemporary Art Museum Raleigh

Creative Time Summit, Washington, DC

Art in Odd Places, NY

Smack Mellon, Brooklyn, NY

PEN World Voices Festival, NY

San Diego International Airport

Berlin Wall Memorial, Berlin, Germany

Museum THE KENNEDYS, Berlin, Germany

Encuentro 2013, São Paulo, Brazil

Gallery 249, University of Dayton

Art Museum at the University of Memphis

Art Prospect Festival, St. Petersburg, Russia

Center for Book Arts, New York

01SJ Biennial, San Jose, CA

San Diego Museum of Art, CA

The New Children's Museum, San Diego, CA

Belmont University Art Gallery, Nashville, TN

Eldridge Street Project, NY

Rotunda Gallery, Brooklyn, NY

University of Texas at Austin

Boston Public Library, Boston, MA

Nazi Documentation Center, Cologne, Germany

Jewish Museum Berlin, Germany

Frankfurt Book Fair, Germany

Lecture and workshop venues:

Social Practice Queens, Queens College, NY
Museum of Modern Art, NY
The 8th Floor, New York
University of Virginia
Columbia College, Chicago
Stamps Gallery, University of Michigan
Office of Public Art, Pittsburgh
Ringling College of Art and Design, Sarasota, FL
University of Nevada, Reno
Washington and Lee University, VA
Appalachian State University, NC
Monmouth University, NJ
St. Joseph's College, ME
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Longwood University, VA
Victoria College, TX
University of Memphis
Syracuse University
Belmont University, TN
Georgia State University
Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem, NC
College Art Association conference
Southeastern College Art Association conference
College Book Arts Association conference
Florida Association of Public Art Professionals conference
Loft Project Etagi, St. Petersburg, Russia
Creative Pinellas, Largo, FL
University of North Carolina, Greensboro

Artist fellowships and residencies:

Creative Capital
Franklin Furnace
New York Foundation for the Arts
North Carolina Arts Council
Hambidge Center for the Arts, GA
Marble House Project, VT
Center for Art and Nature, Farrera, Spain

// PROGRAMS //

“I Wish to Say” PERFORMANCE

After typing nearly 4,000 postcards to the president from dozens of campuses and other locations around the country, I WISH TO SAY is making another round of campus visits in 2019-20 to engage students in discussions about politics and social change. For each 2-hour show, artist Sheryl Oring dresses in vintage 1960s secretary attire and sets up a makeshift public office on campus – complete with a manual typewriter – and invites students to dictate postcards to the next president. Each card is typed verbatim; originals may be exhibited on campus and then sent to the White House, while Oring keeps a carbon copy for her project archive. To date, Oring has presented more than 100 “I Wish to Say” performances at dozens of venues across the country. In the 2019-20 election season she is highlighting student concerns through this show.



“Urgent”, “Past Due”, “Final Notice” are stamped on postcards typed from dictation of ordinary people and subsequently sent to the president. By listening to and transcribing people’s hopes, dreams, anger and pleas, Sheryl Oring’s “I Wish to Say” is a performative speaking truth to power.

Dread Scott, artist

Walter Benjamin famously asserted that mechanical reproduction would emancipate works of art from ritual, never anticipating the coming age of compulsive Instagram sharing, ritualized text messaging, and overall information-overload. Sheryl Oring improbably dusts-off antiquated slow-technology (the typewriter) in order to resurrect the declining art of non-digital communication. The unhurried, heart-felt messages generated by Oring’s ‘I Wish to Say’ project calmly testify to the significance of her rescue plan for a society bedeviled by pixilated manias and the allure of electronic display screens.

Gregory Sholette, artist, writer, Professor, Queens College

ARTIST TALK

Agitype: Activating Democracy through Art

With this image and video-rich presentation, Sheryl Oring shares inspirational stories about two decades of art-making. Oring a former journalist who worked for publications including the San Francisco Chronicle and The New York Times, first turned to art while living in Berlin, Germany. There she created a sculptural installation called “Writer’s Block” in which hundreds of typewriters are “caged” behind steel bars in a work that began on Berlin’s Bebelplatz, site of a Nazi bookburning in 1933. The work later traveled to Budapest, Boston and New York and is currently on a tour around the U.S. After launching this work, Oring took the typewriter out of the cage and hit the streets, setting up a portable public office and inviting people to dictate postcards to the President with her “I Wish to Say” project. This work began in 2004 and has been performed more than 100 times in dozens of locations around the country; it continues to this day.

Length: 1 hour, including 15-minute Q&A.

MFA STUDIO VISITS

Length: 30-45 minute visits

Participants: No more than 6 per day

WORKSHOPS

Activating Democracy: Making Manifestos

In this workshop, participants will be invited to create their own political manifestos that address the issues they value most and discuss how this relates to their own art practice. The workshop begins with a look at historical artist manifestos culled from the archives of the Museum of Modern Art and other sources. These historical documents serve as models for translating the group’s discussions into powerful prose.

Length: 1-3 hours. (a one-hour workshop will create a group manifesto; longer workshops all time for participants to create their own as well.)

Participants: up to 15

An Artist's Guide to Getting Your Social Practice Project Off the Ground

As an artist, you want to make an impact on your audience. But how do you make your project a reality and engage meaningfully with your community? From finding funding and volunteers to securing sites and sparking your audience's interest, getting your social practice project off the ground can be a challenge. This hands on workshop offers practical advice on how to navigate your project from concept to reality.

Length: 1.5-2 hours

Participants: 10-15

In Search of the Quintessential Question: Understanding What Drives You to Create

A question or questions lie at the heart of most art and yet often it's hard for artists to verbalize the ideas that drive their work. In this workshop, artists are asked to come up with a list of questions that inform their work and then, through discussion and exchange, each person refines their questions. In doing so, participants achieve a much deeper understanding of their work and learn new ways of discussing their creative projects.

Length: 1.5-2 hours

Participants: 10-15

The Secret to Landing a Job in Academia: What Every MFA Student Needs to Know

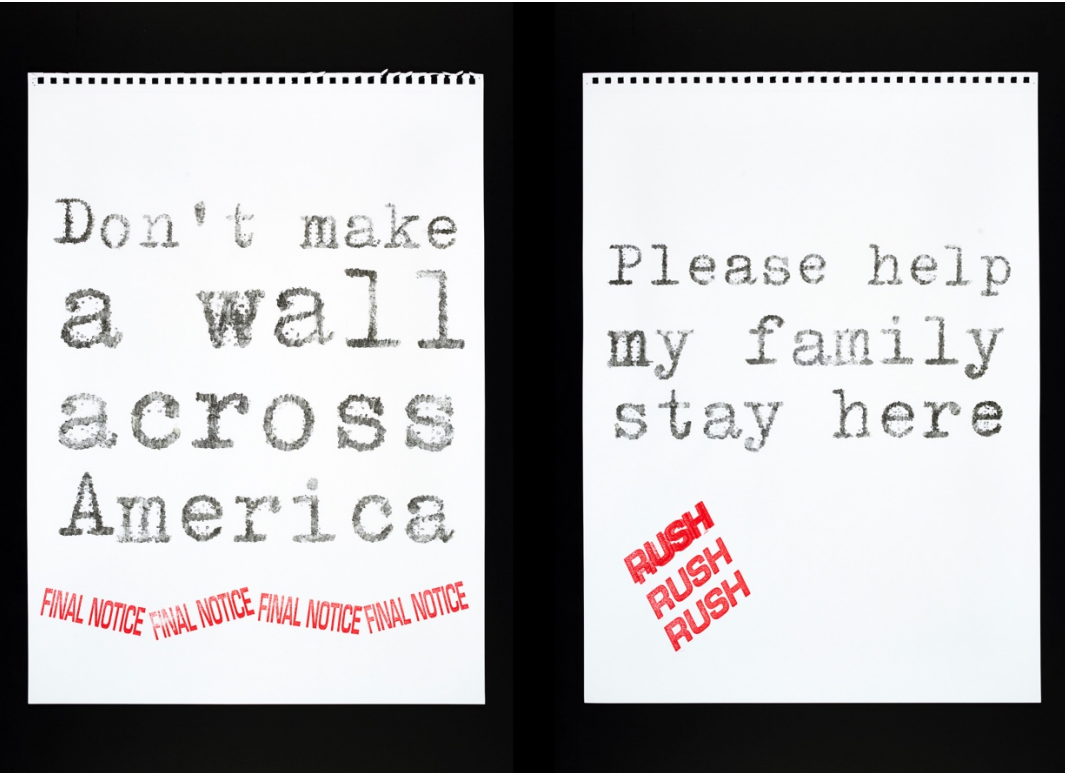
While an MFA qualifies artists to teach at the university level, many MFA programs leave out the practical training required for students who want to pursue a job in academia. From the presentation of work samples to do's and don'ts during interviews, this workshop provides inside information for anyone who's thinking about applying for teaching jobs.

Length: 1.5-2 hours

Participants: 10-15

EXHIBITIONS

A wide range of exhibitions are possible, depending on the venue's size, schedule and budget.





SELECTED PRESS

Nov. 2, 2018

[Washington Post](#)

“ ‘Dear Mr. President,’ the postcards began in 2004. Now the greetings are darker”

April 27, 2016

[NPR, All Things Considered](#)

“ ‘I Wish to Say’ Project Delivers Personal Messages to Presidential Candidates”

April 29, 2017

[Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)

“Volunteer ‘secretaries’ type out, mail letters to Trump”

April 28, 2017

[CBS Pittsburgh](#)

“Unusual Art Display Brings ‘60s Secretaries to Pittsburgh”

Sept. 30, 2018

[Roanoke Times](#)

“W&L Students Share Postcard Messages to Donald Trump in Visiting Art Project”

Sept. 27, 2018

[WDBJ - Roanoke](#)

“Art Display on Freedom of Speech at Washington and Lee”

July 18, 2017

[KUNR](#) (NPR at Univ. of Nevada, Reno)

“What Would You Say to The President?”

Feb. 2, 2017

[The \(Raleigh, NC\) News & Observer](#)

“During Trump's first 100 days, art professor invites people to dictate postcards to him”

Nov. 4, 2016

[San Francisco Chronicle](#)

“Listening Is a Democratic Act”

Oct. 14, 2014

[Reuters](#)

“Professor collects Berlin Wall memories 25 years later”

April 26, 2008

[LA Times](#)

“These are Postcards with an Edge”

ADDITIONAL PRESS

February 2019

[SRQ Magazine \(Sarasota\)](#)

“The Politics of Art”

Oct. 28, 2018

[The Catalyst](#)

Sheryl Oring’s “Agitype: Changing the World One Letter at a Time” at RCAD.

Oct. 12, 2018

[Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#)

“Ringling College Galleries Open Multiple Exhibits”

Oct. 11, 2018

[SRQ magazine](#)

“Ringling College Braces for Second ArtWalk of the Season”

Oct. 1, 2018

[The Ring-tum Phi](#)

“World renowned artist invokes a conversation about conversation”

May 25, 2017

[Daily Californian](#)

"Oakland Book Festival uses public conversation to address inequality"

Jan. 24, 2017

[WUNC \(Chapel Hill, NPR\), The State of Things](#)

“North Carolinians Pen Postcards for the New President”

Jan. 14, 2017

[Tampa Bay Times](#)

“Sheryl Oring wants to hear your stories for a Tampa International Airport art installation”

Oct. 11, 2016

[Pix 11](#)

“Dear Mr. (or Mrs.) President : Artist gives Americans opportunity to tell next president what's on their mind”

Feb. 18, 2016

[The New York Times](#)

“PEN World Voices Returns with Focus on Mexico”

Jan. 27, 2016

[The Carolinian](#)

"Artist Weekly: Professor Sheryl Oring

Nov. 18, 2015

[Art in Odd Places Blog](#)

"Sheryl Oring and the Art in Odd Places Class from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Oct. 24, 2014

[The Jeruslaem Post](#)

"Writing on the Wall"

Oct. 25, 2013

[Arte Al Dia International](#)

"An exhibition regarding Perspectives on Self and Other in Art and Human Rights at The University of Dayton"

Oct. 24, 2013

[Greensboro News and Record](#)

"Find Art in Odd Places Downtown Nov 1st and 2nd

Oct. 23, 2013

[The Daily Tar Heel \(Chapel Hill\)](#)

"Q&A with UNC-Greensboro Art Professor"

Feb. 5, 2013

[WUNC \(Chapel Hill\)](#)

"Artist Takes Public's Words to the President"

Sept. 4, 2012

[Inside Higher Education](#)

"The Democrats Convene"

Sept. 4, 2012

[WFAE \(Charlotte\)](#)

" 'Secretaries' Help People Write Letters to the President"

Sept. 3, 2012

[Charlotte Observer](#)

"Performance Artists Type People's Messages to the President"

Feb. 28, 2012

[ArtForum](#)

"Stalking Distinction"

Feb. 27, 2012

[Hyperallergic](#)

"What is the Role of the Artist?"

September, 2011

[On Being](#)

“Reflections From the Typing Pool”

Sept. 22, 2011

[BBC](#)

“9/11 Anniversary: New York Remembers”

Sept. 9, 2011

[The New Yorker](#)

“For 9/11, Creating a Collective Memory”

April 30, 2009

[KPBS](#)

“Do You Have a Creative Fix for Our Country?”

Nov 17, 2008

[Chicago Tribune](#)

“Notes For Next President”

June 20, 2006

[Houston Chronicle](#)

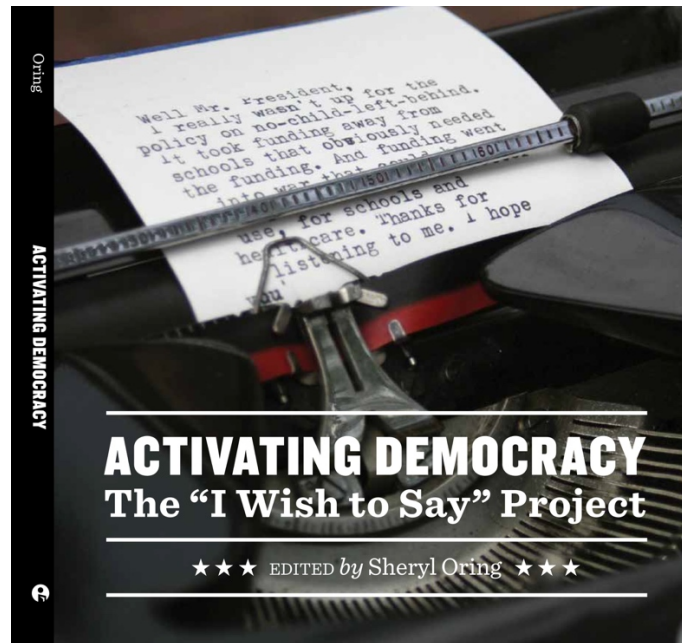
“Brooklyn-based artist brings Birthday Project to Houston”

August 18, 2006

[The New York Times](#)

“A Salute to Free Speech and the Freedom Not to Listen”

PUBLICATIONS



[University of Chicago Press/2016](#). Driven by a powerful belief in the value of free expression, Sheryl Oring has for more than a decade been helping people across the United States voice concerns about public affairs through her "I Wish to Say" project. This book uses that project as the starting point for an exploration of a series of issues of public interest being addressed by artists today. It features essays by contributors ranging from art historians and practicing artists to scholars and creators working in literature, political science, and architecture. All the contributors offer a different approach, but they share a primary goal of sparking a dialogue not just among makers of art, but among viewers, readers, and the concerned public at large. The resulting volume will be an essential resource for politically engaged contemporary artists searching for innovative, cross-disciplinary ways of making and sharing art.

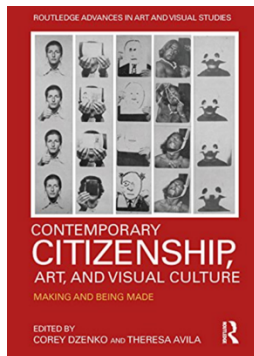
Public Art Review

"Sheryl Oring's multiyear, ongoing *I Wish to Say* project—in which she sets up a desk with a typewriter and invites people to dictate a letter to the President or a presidential candidate, which she types and sends—is a catalyst for a deeper look at artists' intersection with public policy."

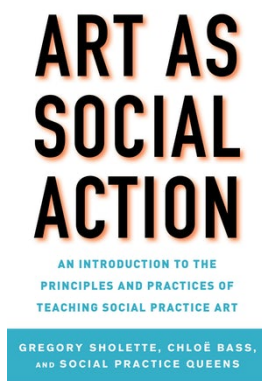
CAA Reviews

"The essays in this volume play off one another, building a robust and comprehensive understanding of Oring's practice. More than anything, the book conveys that after thirteen years of postcards, Oring, above all else, has listened. She has continued her project through the presidencies of George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump, through turbulent election cycles, amid a variety of viewpoints and constituents. In an age where postcards have been replaced by tweets, she takes the time to slow down and emboldens others to do so as well. She asks participants to articulate what they want to say while she commits their words to paper. They contain the hopes, opinions, stories, and critiques all too often expressed but so rarely heard."

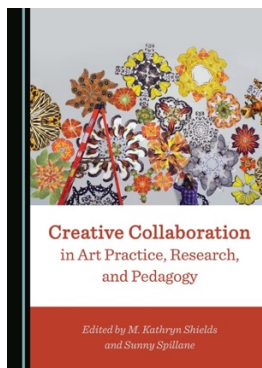
Book Chapters Published in 2018



"Radical Listening: Art and Citizenship in the Public Square - An Interview." Chapter in *Contemporary Citizenship, Art, and Visual Culture: Making and Being Made*. 2018 from Routledge Advances in Art and Visual Studies. Edited Corey Dzenko and Theresa Avila.



"A Training Ground for the Future: Taking on Campus Issues With Art." Chapter in *ART AS SOCIAL ACTION: An Introduction to the Principles & Practices of Teaching Social Practice Art*. 2018 from Allworth Press. Edited by Gregory Sholette, Chloe Bass and Social Practice Queens.



"Everyone Was There: Travel Desk at the San Diego International Airport." Chapter in *Creative Collaboration in Art Practice, Research and Pedagogy*. 2018 from Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Edited by M. Kathryn Shields and Sunny Spillane.