

Flower Manifesto

People are incredulous when I tell them that paintings of flowers are my most political work. I point out to them, I don't mean that they are "THE most political work", but that they are MY most political artworks. That I consider the flower paintings to be MY most radical statement and that the propaganda comes from the Latin root to propagate- to spread... that in a sense all my work is about propaganda and these flowers are the purest form of propaganda- its core.

Remember, it was flowers that the demonstrators put in soldiers' guns when they were protesting the Vietnam War.

For me, my flowers are pure ideology—they are the force behind the letters the USSA- like Dylan Thomas's poem, "The Force That Through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower." As I worked on the Assembly project (the state church of the USSA) I thought that religion would need a sacred garden; that garden is where all these flowers grow.

I am interested in how flower paintings are relegated to kitsch and that how somehow if everyone paints flowers, then that they aren't serious or intellectual because "amateurs" paint them... to me that seems precisely why flower paintings are political: everyone can do it and does— children, people in nursing homes, coffee houses, flea markets, airport galleries, hospitals. It's not the exclusive province of the 1% of the contemporary art world marketplace.

I'd argue maybe it's not so hard to make serious art about serious things. Maybe it's just as hard, and represents as much risk, to make art about seemingly mundane and frivolous things... things we all share... maybe that constitutes another type of risk and another type of reward.

Flowers are weird and alien-like and sexy and erotic and (for some people) borderline offensive in their blatant exhibitionism.

I love that aggressive expressionism in flowers.

I love their biology.

I love that something so beautiful could make you uncomfortable or, if you are the type of person who isn't made uncomfortable about the frank display of sexuality by flowers, well, that says something too.

I think a political movement could harness that energy as a counter-attack against the forces of evil that are animating our world. Maybe others have thought about this already. Maybe this is not my idea. Maybe I'm just an agent of all these flowers. Maybe this manifesto is already manifest and spreading.

Natural Propaganda.

A Language of Flowers: a political language, that is sexy, erotic, offensive, aggressive, built out of a machine of desire, composed of violent laughter, gentle, able to bend in a storm, able to bend the storm, surprising, fashioned from images of life and death, tired, curious-eyed listener, a silent partner who sings in the night, dreaming's speechless glow, a face without a face— beautiful.

USSA

-- Since 2010, Zachary Cahill has worked on the USSA, a fiction engaged with the concept of nation-building through a variety of formats including exhibitions, performances, and writing. While constructing this fantasy nation-state, he has focused on a number of infrastructural entities to form thematics for a series of works—such as a Wellness Center, a State Farm, an Orphanage, a Gift Shop, an Assembly (a church), and a Postal Service. The artist has noted, " The USSA is a conceptual collage...a proposition for a resolved antimony or maybe a utopian fable told over time." Taken as a whole, the USSA is a long meditation on the individual's position within a media environment saturated by propaganda and tries to ascertain where the state ends and a self begins.