

## Artist Statement

I make revolutionary art to propel history forward. I look towards an era without exploitation or oppression. I don't accept the political structures, economic foundation, social relations and governing ideas of America. This perspective has empowered me to make artworks that view leaders of slave revolts as heroes, challenge American patriotism as a unifying value, burn the US Constitution (an outmoded impediment to freedom), position the police as successors to lynch mob terror, and burn money to highlight the absurdity of a system that treats life necessities as commodities.

In 1989, my artwork *What is the Proper Way to Display a US Flag?*, a conceptual artwork for audience participation, became the subject of national conversation over its use of the American flag. President G.H.W Bush called it "disgraceful" and the Senate denounced and outlawed it. This public conversation confirmed my belief that art, including fine art, could be part of changing the world.

I work in a range of media: performance, installation, video, photography, printmaking and painting. Two threads that connect them are: an engagement with significant social questions and a desire to push formal and conceptual boundaries as part of contributing to artistic development. My projects are presented in venues ranging from museum galleries to street corners. I bring contemporary art to a broad public and the audience is often an active element of the art.

*Dread Scott: Decision* was a performance that reflected on America, a country whose democracy is rooted in slavery. To show how slavery is woven into the fabric of the country and its founding documents, I read from the text of 1857 Supreme Court Dred Scott decision while a group of four nude Black performers was controlled by two live German Shepherd dogs. The audience was part of the work and had to pass through the men to go into a "voting booth" and where they were asked to reflect on an ethical question raised by the whole artwork.