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Speaking Volumes: Transforming Hate' opens Jan. 7 at MMAC

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MISSOULA —

A traveling exhibition featuring artists from across the United States who used white supremacist propaganda to create thought-provoking works of art will open Thursday, Jan. 7, at the Montana Museum of Art & Culture.

“Speaking Volumes: Transforming Hate” will be at MMAC through Saturday, March 6. An opening reception will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. Jan. 7 in the museum’s Meloy and Paxson galleries, located in the Performing Arts and Radio/Television Center at The University of Montana.

The exhibition is traveling through the Museum of Art Gallery Directors Association of Montana. It was developed as a partnership between the Holter Museum of Art in Helena and the Montana Human Rights Network.

In 2004, MHRN secured more than 4,000 volumes of white supremacist propaganda from a defecting member of the World Church of the Creator, including numerous pamphlets and other literature written by church founder Ben Klassen. Klassen’s most widely circulated book was “The White Man’s Bible.” During the 1990s, the group held conferences and meetings near Superior and distributed hate literature in Bozeman, Butte, Missoula, Helena and other Montana towns.
Rather than destroy the material, MHRN decided in partnership with the Holter Museum of Art to invite artists from across the nation to reflect upon, respond to or transform the volumes. Messages of intolerance and hate were transformed into a collection of objects intended to promote civic dialogue.

Martin Luther King Jr. said: “Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

The exhibition’s artworks, which will be at MMAC as the nation celebrates Martin Luther King Jr. Day, are both astonishing and moving. Sculpture, video, painting, photography, collage, printmaking, book arts, beadwork, fiber and performance all offer thought-provoking, insightful and beautiful answers to King’s plea to turn darkness into light.


Two public events will take place in February in conjunction with the exhibition:

- 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 4: Lecture by Katie Knight, curator of “Speaking Volumes: Transforming Hate,” at the Masquer Theatre in the PAR/TV Center.
- 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 25: Panel discussion featuring artists Dana Boussard, Stephen Glueckert and Lisa Jarrett at the Montana Theatre in the PAR/TV Center. Panel moderator will be former MHRN Director Ken Toole.

MMAC has partnered with the following organizations for the exhibition: UM’s Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library and Diversity Advisory Council, Jeannette Rankin Peace Center,

MMAC gallery hours are 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday and 4 to 8:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. A $5 donation is suggested, and free parking is available near the northeast corner of the PAR/TV Center.

For more information, call 406-243-2019 or visit the museum’s Web site at

http://www.umt.edu/montanamuseum.

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NOTE TO MEDIA: Digital images of selected artworks included in the exhibition are available by request. Call Becky Garner, MMAC coordinator of programs and publications, at 406-243-2019 or e-mail rebecca.garner@mso.umt.edu.

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