

Union Hall is pleased to present *Poems for Our Country*, an exhibition of commissioned artworks from Jackie Barry (Ypsilanti, MI/Denver, CO), Sally Chung (Los Angeles, CA), Johnny DeFeo (Denver, CO), Steven Frost (Boulder, CO), Umar Rashid (Frohawk Twofeathers) (Los Angeles, CA), Noah Schneiderman (Denver, CO), Mary Welcome (Palouse, WA) and Susan Wick (Denver, CO).

Given the prompt “Poems for Our Country,” the artists featured in this exhibition were asked to lend their voices by creating a banner containing a slogan, message, or sentiment for the year to come. This exhibition is the last show of Union Hall’s first exhibition season and runs into the very beginning of 2020: a new decade, and another election year with very high stakes, representing both hope and fear for many. With this exhibition, Union Hall aims to create a space within the gallery for critical conversations, setting positive intentions, and taking action on the issues that matter to us in 2020.

The artists featured in this exhibition represent diverse backgrounds, ages, interests, perspectives and communities, and the messages that they present are similarly wide-ranging. From environmental activism, to critiquing governmental corruption, to calls for love, connection, and growth; each artwork is as layered in meaning as the artists are in experience. The commonality between the diverse roster of artists in this exhibition is their connection to either text-based or textile-based artmaking. The banner format of the artworks intentionally recalls civic and community centers; places where we come together to play, volunteer, celebrate, and share ideas, food, and experiences with our friends, families, and neighbors; places where we meet with allies to strategize, or with opposition to hash out differences and advocate for change. All the artworks are displayed from the gallery’s ceiling like banners in a high school gym or flags at the United Nations, setting the stage for meaningful conversation and collaboration within the gallery.

Throughout *Poems for Our Country's* run of show, Union Hall will present programming and events focused on mindfulness, community building, and social and environmental justice. Entering into 2020, Union Hall's mission remains to be a true cultural community partner aiming to advance opportunities for emerging artists and creatives, and to create engaging, enriching and educational creative experiences, serving the neighborhood as a community focused arts space and culture concierge. We invite you to join us in support of this exhibition, and to participate by lending your own intention, message, or call for action for 2020 in the interactive portion of the exhibition- where guests can write their own *Poems for Our Country*.