

# The New York Times

T AGITPROP

## 5 Artists Respond to: Charlottesville



Top row, from left: Robert Longo, Toyin Ojih Odutola and Andrea Bowers. Bottom row, from left: Michael Hauptman and Sanford Biggers. Credit Björn Wallander; Abigail, The Third; Monica Nouwens; Courtesy of Michael Hauptman; Alex Freundt

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Art doesn't just reflect the world — it engages with it. In a new series, T magazine asks artists to submit works inspired by world events. For the first installment, Robert Longo, Andrea Bowers, Toyin Ojih Odutola, Sanford Biggers and Michael Hauptman respond to the violent events in Charlottesville, Va., and provide statements.



“Men with Torches,” 2010–2017, digital text on ink and charcoal on vellum drawing. (Longo is part of a new show, “Proof: Francisco Goya, Sergei Eisenstein, Robert Longo,” which runs Sept. 8-Jan. 7 at the Brooklyn Museum.) Credit Robert Longo

**Robert Longo**

Artwork created exclusively for T

“As an American and as a human being, the events in Charlottesville are deeply disturbing to me. I am outraged not only by the white supremacists, the neo-Nazis and the fascists, but also by the way our president has failed to respond to this emboldened, racist cancer in our country.”



“The Treatment 33, 2016,” pen ink, gel ink and pencil on paper, © Toyin Ojih Odutola. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York. Credit Toyin Ojih Odutola

**Toyin Ojih Odutola**

“Among so many other things, to be a person of America involves a particular nature of having to constantly adjust oneself to the confines of a recurring, debilitating, insidious definition — which time and again reaffirms itself in the most horrific forms. It is always beyond you: beyond history, beyond inheritance, beyond land, beyond blood; yet is comprised of disparate elements which make up what you are. You look at the news reel and see a mirror; it’s not of your reflection, but of a nation’s innards. Somehow you are still caught up in that image,

you are *involved*. You almost fall into the trap of believing this is all your fault. Why must it always be your fault? And then you realize that this has nothing to do with you and has everything to do with what we, as a country, can afford. And after 200-plus years, the questions still hover: how far will people go to hold on to their fear? How far will they go to make that privilege known?”



“My Mom Survived the Nazis / My Dad Survived Jim Crow,” 2017. Credit Andrea Bowers, Ingrid von Sydow, and Angel Alvarado



“Young, Gifted, and Black (May Day March, 2015, Los Angeles, California),” 2016. Credit Graphite on paper, 15” H x 22” W. Courtesy of the artist and Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects. Photograph by Jeff McLane

### **Andrea Bowers**

Top artwork created exclusively for T

“My response to the events in

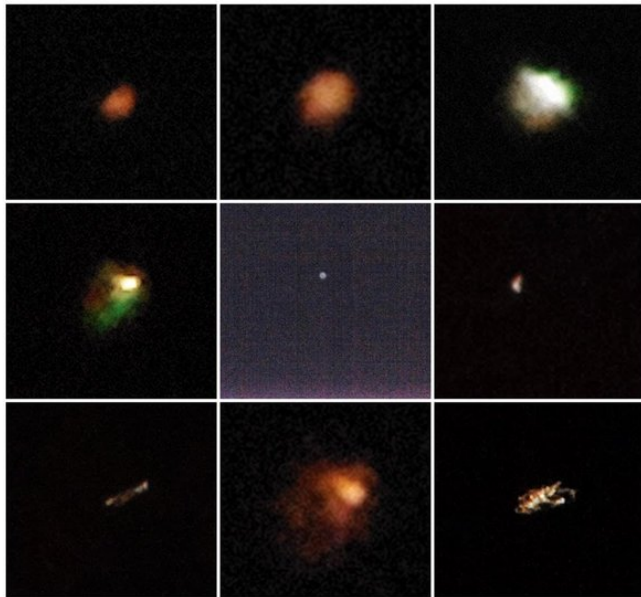
Charlottesville is an increased sense of urgency to collaborate with activists and artists who labor and resist white supremacy, neo-Nazis, union-busting bosses, anti-immigration and anti-environment legislation and business. I have been making drawings, photographs and other works that aim to amplify the voices of these activists and of those who are most impacted by the violence and hate speech espoused by the many white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups last weekend, today and every day.

I work with many artists who are impacted by the lived realities of racism, anti-Semitism and homophobia, so I asked two of them if they would like to collaborate with me on this project and express their response to the events in Charlottesville. The result is a series of photographs (one image is shown at top), shot by Angel Alvarado and directed by me, of Ingrid von Sydow, a visual artist, wearing a T-shirt of her own design that reads: My Mom Survived the Nazis, Dad Survived Jim Crow.

The shared authorship of this photo series reflects our belief in intersectionality as a model for the future. Von Sydow’s mother is a Polish-Jewish Holocaust survivor and vividly remembers

the fascism that she narrowly escaped. In her artistic practice von Sydow explores the very real, everyday traumas experienced by othered people, demonstrating how simply existing and persisting can become an activist effort.

In addition to the photo series that we produced for T magazine, I've included an image of one of my intimate and labor-intensive drawings of protesters, this one of a Black Lives Matter protester at a May Day March in 2015 (bottom). His shirt reads: Young, Gifted, and Black."



"Untitled170825." Credit Michael Hauptman

### **Michael Hauptman**

"I've always found comfort in imagining the vastness of space and have romanticized the idea of all humans coming together for the greater good of one another and the singular planet we all inhabit. As Carl Sagan said, 'To my mind, there is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly and compassionately with one another and to

preserve and cherish that pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known.'"

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Photograph by Biggers; a patch in a vintage shop, Berlin, 2015. Credit Sanford Biggers

### **Sanford Biggers**

“I went to my first Klan rally protest when I was in college. As firm believers of free speech and expression, my friends and I felt obliged to voice and show our opposition. It was a paltry march in one the country’s most ‘predominately black cities’ and the protesters vastly outnumbered the Klan. I left less angry about the rally than the fact that I paid them any mind to begin with. Now that they are being enabled again, it’s fascinating to watch their rebranding efforts as evidenced in this patch. As necessary as it is for our nation to understand the history of racism in the US, it seems more effective to discuss and combat its continual presence.”