

Art on the Offense

February 27 – April 17, 2026

Contemporary Art Center of Peoria, Preston Jackson Gallery

305 SW Water St., Peoria, IL 61602

Exhibition Prospectus (two pages)

Premise: What can artists do to resist those who erode democratic foundations? Artists have always been utilized to create imagery to encourage the discouraged, inspire others to action or evoke change. The unwritten language transmits a powerful message. Imagery has also been employed throughout history to manipulate the undecided and discourage opposition. Adolf Hitler's chief propagandist and cultural arbiter, Joseph Goebbels, considered that "art is no mere peacetime amusement, but a sharp spiritual weapon of war." Goebbels used art as a weapon to suppress others and even make it easier for German citizens to murder millions. It is no wonder that the first major cultural institutions to suffer were the Kennedy Center and the Smithsonian, like canaries in the coal mine.

We wish to inspire artists to create artwork that mirrors their values as a personal, cathartic exercise but also to rally others to resist the major shift in our governmental systems; perhaps even an end to democracy in the United States of America. To take a stand and create art as a weapon against totalitarianism, unfairness and censorship is a bold step and may even be a dangerous exercise. Let us make known our desire to preserve our civil liberties and uphold the Constitution for which so many have fought and died.

Artwork can take on many forms: a soothing balm of hope amidst turmoil, a subtle persuasion to those on the fence or a lightning bolt destroying norms and illuminating falsehood. We want to extend the reach of the exhibit beyond the gallery walls. To promote freedom of speech, peace and security for everyone, democracy and resistance to authoritarianism, we will encourage visitors to share the images with their social media posts.

Eligibility: The group exhibition will be open to any artist that can deliver and pick up the art, if unsold. Art may be mailed, but at the artists' expense. Artwork that is for sale is preferred. Since exhibition space is limited, exhibitors may be limited to one entry per artist. A Contemporary Art Center of Peoria membership is not required to participate.

Subject Matter: Subject matter for this exhibition is left to the discretion of the artist. CAC Executive Director and curator William Butler may choose to reject work if it is not suitable for the gallery or does not align with the theme.

Media: Only original two or three-dimensional artworks of various media will be accepted. Video may be shown as long as the artist provides necessary means to show it. No reproductions or AI generated imagery allowed. Artworks that are intended to hang on a wall must utilize a wire hanger and be ready for hanging. Sculpture that is not stable will be rejected.

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- Entries:** Artwork must have been created in the last six years. Artwork that is for sale is preferred. Since exhibition space is limited, **exhibitors are limited to one entry per artist**. Artwork for the wall, including the frame, must not exceed 52 inches in width. There is no restriction on height.
- Registration:** An **Exhibitor Registration Form** must be digitally submitted via the online form at peoriacac.org/upcoming-exhibitions. Contact Contemporary Art Center staff if there are obstacles to submitting online.
- Fill out an **Identification Tag** online to accompany / attach to artwork and another tag to place on packaging when dropped off. The form can also be printed out and filled out manually.
- Registration Deadline:** All online registrations may be submitted starting January 1 and no later than the deadline of **Friday, February 13 by midnight**.
- Artwork Delivery:** **February 14 and 17-21** – hours: 11-5:00 and until 8:00pm on Thursday and Friday. Contact Contemporary Art Center staff for additional drop off times if necessary. We are not open on Sunday and Monday. Artwork arriving later than February 27 may not be displayed. **Identification Tag must** accompany / be attached to artwork. Tags will also be available at CAC when dropping off work.
- Art Reception:** **Saturday, March 21**, 6:30pm – 8:30pm The event is free and open to the public. It will also feature and promote artists' work in other galleries.
- 1st Fridays:** Another opportunity for evening viewing is 1st Fridays occurring on **Friday, March 6 & April 3**, 5:00pm – 9:00pm. Exhibiting artists will be encouraged to speak briefly about their work on either date starting at 6:30. When registering, share if and on what date you would like to share about your work in a group artist talk.
- Viewing Hours:** Regular viewing hours are Tuesday-Saturday 11-5:00, during concerts and during 1st Friday events 5-9:00pm.
- Artwork Retrieval:** Artwork may be retrieved starting Tuesday, April 21 through Saturday, April 25 11-5:00pm and till 8:00pm on Thursday and Friday. Contact Contemporary Art Center staff for additional retrieval times if needed.
- Sales:** Contemporary Art Center will retain 30% commission on the sale of artwork. All sales will be deferred to and managed by Contemporary Art Center. Commission checks are mailed to artists within 30 days following sale and payment being received. Sold artwork must remain on display until the end of the exhibit.
- Questions:** Contact William or Darlene at the Contemporary Art Center of Peoria via cac@peoriacac.org or call or text 309-674-6822 during business hours, Tuesday-Saturday 11-5:00.