

CRISTIN TIERNEY

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Art Installation Pushes Voting in the Midterms

FEATURES



© John Muggenborg, Neil Goldberg, *VOTE IN THE MIDTERM ELECTIONS*, 2018, Courtesy of the artist and Cristin Tierney Gallery, New York

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A rectangular box fitted with red framing and a rotatable wheel sits holding an array of note cards in Chelsea's Cristin Tierney Gallery. The note cards started out as a way for Neil Goldberg to keep track of his thoughts and plans, some twenty years ago, before they turned into an immersive exhibit. In the artist's self-described "suicide-note" style font, he has turned his handwritten note cards into a political statement under the title *VOTE IN THE MIDTERM ELECTIONS*.

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Goldberg’s exhibit features this notecard collection, using it to start a dialogue with visitors. He projects a notecard onto a pristine white wall to start meaningful conversations with people, ranging in topic from socialized self-presentation to the killing of innocent children. Goldberg believes that while the work isn’t explicitly political, it is these deep discussions that bring a political meaning to the art.

“Having conversations with people feels like a political act,” Goldberg said. “The idea of meeting in real space to talk to people, to listen to people ... feels intrinsically political.”

By calling it *VOTE IN THE MIDTERM ELECTIONS*, Goldberg’s says the exhibition is a “modest call to action” through repeating the agenda of getting out the vote. Goldberg sees his art as being like the midterm elections themselves because much of his art is not focused on the consequential but rather finds the local to be worth exploring.



© Neil Goldberg, *Other Peoples’ Prescriptions*, 2018, Courtesy of the artist and Cristin Tierney Gallery, New York

CRISTIN TIERNEY

Goldberg sees exploring the subjective experience of individuals as a key aspect of how his art is political, both in discussions surrounding the index cards and in his other work on display in the gallery. There is a series of photographs framing different people's prescription eye glasses so the viewer sees their perspective of the world. "My feeling about art and politics is it connects to subjectivity and broadening your awareness of the multiplicity of points of view," Goldberg said. "So, the best art for me makes me question my take on things, and I think that questioning is ultimately a political act."

While Goldberg describes today's political moment as being one of disconnect from other people's experiences, he has some hope. Goldberg sees voting as a way to compensate for the current state of disenfranchisement. Politicians like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Antonio Delgado, challenging political establishments, have shown Goldberg there is hope for the future of this country.

"This political moment is really shaped by a type of willful disconnection from difference, other people's subjectivities, empathy, and I feel like this [exhibition] is meant to speak to that." said Goldberg.



© Neil Goldberg, *Inhibited Bites: The Suburban*, 2017, Courtesy of the artist and Cristin Tierney Gallery, New York



© Neil Goldberg, *Inhibited Bites: Vortex Version*, 2018, Courtesy of the artist and Cristin Tierney Gallery, New York

For Goldberg, we are in a distinct political time as shown through his art, but NYU Tisch professor of art and politics Kathy Engel reflects on this being an overarching theme throughout human history. According to Engel, art

CRISTIN TIERNEY

as a political statement is not a new trend in our current Trumpian era, but something consistently seen over time because “art and politics are inextricably related.”

Certainly, elements of how art is created and shared have changed over time, such as with social media today, but it is fundamentally an important outlet for human expression. “These expressions have opened opportunities as an invitation to people to engage together with ideas and challenges in ways that weren’t as easily opened in other forms,” Engel said.

This ability to engage with ideas reflects what Goldberg is accomplishing through his exhibition. From pushing voter turnout to deep meaningful discussions, Goldberg shows how art can be an effective means of political expression en lieu of the upcoming midterms. To see Goldberg’s work for yourself, visit the [Cristin Tierney Gallery](#) through December 15th.