NATIONAL LIBERTY MUSEUM
2000 - 2020
20 YEARS OF INSPIRING HEROES

## Philadelphia's Freedom Artist Spotlight

# Interview with NTEL

**How did you hear about the opportunity to participate in the Philadelphia's Freedom exhibition at NLM?**

My first experience with The National Liberty Museum was my contribution of a Mural, Installation, and small Artwork for the 'We Can Be Heroes' exhibit; a Tribute to Davie Bowie. This opportunity was made possible with facilitation and invitation to participate from Jocelyn Beaucher. The experience was so positive and successful for all involved parties, that I was made aware of Philadelphia's Freedom exhibit and invited to create another Mural, along with Installation and Artwork.

**What made you want to submit artwork to the exhibition?**

I wanted to submit artwork because of the wonderful experiences I have had with the Museum and its staff, plus the topic of conversation conceived for this Exhibit is something that resonates deeply within my Work and has been a huge part of my Life since birth.

**How do you personally define freedom?**

Freedom, I believe, would be that a Person maintains the right to do (basically) anything they want within their own Space, or to Property, and for Life to sustain said life; or increase it's quality without wronging or injuring another Person or causing harm and adverse effects to the Plants and Animals of the Earth, along with its delicate balances. Though the answer to this question is very complicated and multi-faceted along with meaning something different to everyone, I would also include that Freedom would give the average citizens of the World more power than Politicians, Governments, and the Wealthy. Life-long debts or fees for essential services that better Humanity would also be dissolved. These could include Education, Medicine, Food, Water, and possibly even Housing and Energy. Perhaps true Freedom comes from the abolishment of a purely money driven Society that surrounds us now?

**How would you describe your art?**

My art is a mix of different techniques, styles, and agendas. I am influenced by the Abstract Expressionism movement, Pop Art, and Graffiti with Political, Poetic, and emotional under-tones. I use a lot of color, layers, materials and textures.

**How would you describe your process in making art?**

My process is long and drawn out with a lot of time spent in thought. I usually let the artwork tell me what it wants and what to do next. Sometimes the tables turn, and the artwork becomes my victim to do with it what I want; even if it 'ruins' some perceived 'progress' that has been made on the piece. I will just erase large sections, and spray or scribble indiscriminately over areas for not much intent or vision in mind. For murals the process is very similar though I will usually mix hand drawings and computer renderings on-site during the execution of the Mural.

**What mediums do you primarily work with?**
I work in a variety of mediums and most literally all materials. I Paint, Sculpt, and build with almost anything. Anything I have, find, or acquire that comes into my hands is a potential creative material. I also design and build functional works, do Graphic Design, write Poetry and other literal types, dabble in Stained Glass, and so on. Most every piece of mine will have Spray paint and some other Enamel, Acrylic, Ink or Graphite. The piece may be then further embellished with Resin, Parchment, Textiles, Wood, Cement, Plants (real and false), Glass, Metals, Objects, Corrosives, etc.

**How does the concept of freedom in this exhibition influence how and what you create as an artist?**
Since freedom is so universal and means so many different things, I was immediately influenced to portray some of the things that threaten our freedom. I know our freedom can be threatened by Police and Policy makers, and History and deceit. I also know freedom is peace, and happiness, and honesty, and living without worry. Though, the lack of humanity, lies, and mis-use of power are some of what we universally know, freedom is *not*.

**Has the pandemic had an effect on your processes? If so, please elaborate how.**
No, I do not believe the pandemic had any effect on my processes at this time.

**How has the pandemic changed the way you perceive freedom?**
The pandemic hasn't changed my perception of Freedom, but rather reminded me of how quickly things can change, and how much Power the People *do not* have over 'The *Overseers'*. It also reminded me that Freedom is relative and policeable, and can often be mistreated or altered during times of crisis; usually under the guise that the decisions being made are beneficial for society. I believe this pandemic will be similar to 9-11 in that there will be a lot of changes and policies made during this time that will now remain forever, and not all of them will be in the best interest of the People.

**What inspirations tied to the ideals of freedom led you to the creation of the artwork you submitted?**
I was inspired by my upbringing; spending my first 18 years as a dependent to 2 career soldiers with over 50 years of service between them. We lived all over the World experiencing different cultures and points-of-view, along with getting a look at America from the other side, and hearing how people felt about America's global occupation while simultaneously learning how it felt to be a 'foreigner' or 'alien'. In addition, the politics involved with balancing civilian and military life, can have many restrictions. I learned a lot in those years about how the government negatively influences freedom, and how money and surveillance can control us. I was also influenced by the mistreatment my loved ones have inflicted *and* endured, along with the abuse of other citizens, alike.

**What do you hope your audience will take away from this artwork?**
I hope they will feel peace and happiness in the subtle tones of the environment, while considering the stark contrast of content blended within those colors. I hope they may consider how their own life has been affected by moments from generations past, illegitimate consequences others suffer whom they may never know, and decisions made thousands of miles away, today. Question everything you read, or in this case; see.

**Finally, when you think of someone who embodies the fight for freedom, who comes to mind and why?**
You, the Citizen.