

WALLS OF DEMAND

The Art of Manny Oliver and Margi Weir

On exhibit at CCPArt from February 8—March 15, 2019

We present this exhibit, hoping it will make you angry.

It commemorates the 1st anniversary of the senseless murder of 17 students and teachers at the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida --- and another year of what can only be described as criminal negligence on the part of the gun lobby and the President and Congress of the United States.

One of the Parkland students you will become acquainted with as you walk through the exhibit is Joaquin Oliver. A handsome, talented 17-year-old kid who had recently become an American citizen, Joaquin had his whole life ahead of him when he left home for school last February 14th. Instead, he would become yet another victim of the gun violence in a country where teenagers considered too young to buy cigarettes or beer can load up on guns with no questions asked, thanks to the NRA.



The images of Joaquin you will see were created by his father, Manny Oliver. An artist, he decided to use his talent “to give Joaquin a voice” in the on-going debate over gun violence in America. Since his son’s murder, Manny has painted what he calls Walls of Demand at locations across the country, including in front of the NRA headquarters building in northern Virginia.

Using a graffiti-like style that captures both Joaquin’s innocence and Manny’s sorrow, each wall is made up of panels 8 feet tall and 4 feet wide. He paints them in public places to call attention to his principal demand, that our government defy the NRA and pass laws that will prevent mass murders like the one in Parkland from happening again.

We are honored to display nine of these panels because we agree with their message and judge them to be superb examples of protest art: haunting images that once seen, cannot be easily forgotten.

We’re also pleased to present Margi Weir’s mixed media paintings and vinyl multiples; their style is more formal, yet equally compelling. The artist’s sense of irony and dark humor neatly undermine the illogic of the NRA’s catch-phrase, “Guns don’t kill people. People do.”

An associate professor of painting and drawing at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, Margi uses figurative arrangements seen in Egyptian tombs and Grecian amphorae to create visually arresting art that addresses 21st Century social and political controversies. Her series addressing gun violence dates from 2014, after two close friends, both armed, were shot to death by a third man during an argument over an abandoned house in Detroit.

Also on display are family/survivor portraits from Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence and the winning entries from an art contest sponsored by MoCo4Change, a student group formed in Montgomery County, MD last year after the Parkland murders.