

# CIVILLIAN

ART PROJECTS



Civilian Art Projects announces **DAN TAGUE: Post Nihilist Utopia**, a solo exhibition opening at the gallery on April 25 and closing on May 30, 2015. There will be a public reception from 6:30 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. on April 25th. The artist will perform at 7:30pm, giving away artwork to anyone who answers the question "What is money?" Responses will be compiled into a stream-of-consciousness book published by the artist later.

Dan Tague's work pokes at the American dream in all of its varied forms. He challenges the ways in which elected leaders and the populace embrace idolatry, propaganda, and the status quo to perpetuate injustice and the lack of basic humans rights to shelter, protection, and education.

For his third solo exhibition with the gallery, Tague combines works on paper, painting, sculpture, and performance with messages and symbols that address corruption, human rights, gentrification, and the proposed contentment of the artist in the face of nihilism. His work is both hand-made and industrially fabricated, with layers of tangled meaning that reflect a jaded hopefulness, a mirror to our industrial past -- particularly that of the Mississippi River basin. In this surprisingly colorful work, he playfully and sardonically addresses our leadership's

W, TH, SAT 1 to 5:00 p.m. & by appointment  
4718 14th St NW/ Washington, DC / 202-607-3804 / [civilianartprojects.com](http://civilianartprojects.com)

# CIVILIAN

---

## ART PROJECTS

continued failure to do better, as if in celebration, while boldly and absolutely illustrating that this failure is taking place. Beyond nihilism, he has found a certain utopia, or peace, in this unbelievable reality.

Tague's activist artwork was triggered by losing everything in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, in New Orleans where he was born and raised. After the breach of the levies, he sat on his roof and witnessed everything he owned being destroyed by polluted water. He soon found a boat and began rescuing neighbors, or bringing them provisions. His growing outrage at the government's response to the people of New Orleans, and his personal homelessness, led him to create a series of artworks challenging the meaning of currency and the promises of our democracy. He folded the first bill, "Osama Wars," while exiled in California.

Works in **Post Nihilist Utopia** include an aluminum gorilla titled "I Hope You're Happy." Symbolizing the 800-pound gorilla in the room, the piece was cast from a rubber mold made by the artist, fabricated in a hot-rod shop in New Orleans, and painted a color created by the artist through the combination of the collective skin tone of all elected leaders in Congress. (It is remarkably orange.) Other works in the exhibition include paintings created by folding a dollar bill to display a phrase found in the letters on the bill, then having the bill printed through a dye sublimation process on a thick woven canvas that is later stretched, painted, and stitched. Unique works on paper of graphite drawings hang in the downstairs gallery, reading "Burn baby burn," "Holy Shit," and "No Future."

An eight-by-eight feet wooden wall piece made from oak and pine reads "Made It Through That Water." The bottom half of the piece, made in pine with rusty nails, was soaked in the Gulf of Mexico, near the Industrial Canal that breached during Katrina. Pine, a cheaper wood, symbolizes what was left after the flood, and the oak hints to the more expensive, refined wood of new residents calling New Orleans home. In the words of the artist, "they say they made it through the disaster, when in fact they were not there at all."

Finally, with "Old Glory Holes," Tague has removed the bathroom stall walls of the punk club Siberia near his house, cut them, and made them into royalty symbols that feature George Washington's eye and that of the Queen of England. Each piece wears the requisite crown of king or queen. Graffiti from the bar patrons accumulated on the wood while it was installed in the bathrooms.

Dan Tague lives in New Orleans with his wife, Ashley, and their three dogs, Marcelle, Chicken, and Larry. His art has been exhibited in museums and galleries internationally. His work has appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*, and has been used in conjunction with The Spirit Initiative, The Clinton Bush Fund for Haiti, Help USA, and Teach for America. His work is in the collections of the Whitney Museum of Art, the Weisman Foundation, and many private collections. He received an MFA in Studio Arts from the University of New Orleans in 2000.