

TATE FOLEY

POST NO BILLS

Tate Foley's work revolves around printing and bookmaking, often examining connections between language and social issues. Part of the 2016 Great Rivers Biennial, *Post No Bills*, an installation of large-scale sculptures and twelve single-channel videos, reframes the language of protest. Foley's freestanding structures are architectural, geometric, and assembled with an attention to detail that defies their seemingly make-shift construction. Created with a Risograph—a digital printing technology that came to the fore in the 1980s—prints of phonetically spelled words are wheat pasted to the structures' facades. Such terms as “bourgeoisie,” “systematic,” and “explicit” envelop the sculptures, which formally recall bulletin boards. Often used by the media to discuss issues of gender, ethnicity, and class, these terms hint at the possibility of antagonism and exclusion.

Adjacent to the structures, twelve flat-screen monitors are laid out in a four-by-three grid, with each screen displaying the artist's hand painting a large letter onto a sheet of paper. Foley rhythmically forms the uniform, linear shapes to reveal potent three-syllable words. As with his sculptures, the artist alters each word's conventional spelling into its phonetic components: “volatile” becomes “VAH-LIH-TULL.” Through the deconstruction of language, Foley dismantles systems of power, allowing viewers to interrogate the impact of prescribed definitions and construct their own nuanced meanings of often essentializing terms.

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