

Words Create Worlds

Artists' Statement

*"...Not known, because not looked for
But heard, half-heard, in the stillness
Between two waves of the sea." - T.S. Eliot*

"The phrase "words create worlds" is borrowed from the discipline of Appreciative Inquiry. The "constructionist principle" of Appreciative Inquiry states that reality is constructed through shared language and that word choice is fateful, while the "poetic principle" states that we are the poets of our own lives and that whatever we focus on grows. In other words, we have a choice over the language we use and that particular choice is crucial in creating our future. From the internal dialogue we choose to proliferate (or not) to the actual language we use in our formal and informal conversations, our use of words has important consequences.

As a calligrapher, I'm very conscious of words and the choice to commit words to writing. Calligraphers seem to have a very personal sense of what texts they choose to work with, some liking humor, while others choose aphorisms and still others, the deepest wisdom from the world's greatest traditions.

Our conversations, whether explicit, implicit, internal or external are sometimes clear, sometimes barely audible and sometimes muddy, vague or even unconscious. The words reach us but don't register. Even our internal dialogue often goes unregistered, yet impacts us nonetheless. Here, out of many tens of thousands of choices in English, there are only 42 individual words, one two word phrase and one 3 word phrase represented here. They were somewhat randomly lifted from a year's worth of journal writing investigating the principles of Appreciative Inquiry. A natural question arises: "What kind of world would these words create if they were privileged and kept at the forefront of our conversations?".

As you step into the space, what is your experience reflecting on the words you see? More broadly, we can begin other inquiries. How aware are we of the words we tend to privilege in our conversations? What about our internal dialogue? There are a lot of words going through our minds every minute. Are we aware of the words that we tend to use? Do the words we use internally and externally solidify a reality and future of peace, kindness and prosperity or something different?

Chris Zorn - Calligraphy on paper and walls

Marci Franklin - Paper sculptures

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