

CHARLES BENEKE ARTIST

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Prop
Utah State University
Caine College of the Arts
Readymade Gallery
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Artist's Statement

When presented with the insurmountable, how do we respond? Do we mend, right wrongs, fix? Do we rationalize, turn our backs, look away? Or, do we find ways of holding things in place and make the unacceptable seem reasonable because of resistance to and fear of change?

My work directly addresses global warming and our current, human-impelled climate change while calling more broadly for mindfulness and conscious attention to the effects that our individual actions and inactions have upon the world. Using hand-screened wallpaper, I invoke notions of repetition to speak of our cultural penchant for excess and ability to disregard the adverse effects of our actions until faced with the catastrophic.

With *Prop*, the viewer finds a sooty, amorphous, cloud-like form wedged into the far end of the gallery. It is held in place with common construction lumber and struggling to expand. Our current climate change is the result of accumulation—accumulation of carbon and greenhouse gasses, of actions, of inactions, of passive disregard and concerted neglect. Do we choose to be defined by this problem that we have created, how we let it control us, or the strength with which we battle it? Will we simply hold it at bay or act aggressively to better our world?

I speak as an observer of society, a witness to a crisis, and an active participant in this problem. I urge my viewers to take responsibility for how we are changing the world by changing behaviors and habits, by taking action.

Charles Beneke
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