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'We Painted, Sang, and Danced Our Way to the Polls': Artists React to US President-Elect Joe Biden's Victory

The Joe Biden victory and historic vice presidency of Kamala Harris elicited quite a reaction from artists on social media.

Sarah Cascone, November 9, 2020



President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, stand with their spouses, Jill Biden and Douglas Emhoff, as they wave to supporters after addressing the nation from the Chase Center November 7, 2020 in Wilmington, Delaware. Photo by Andrew Harnik-Pool/Getty Images.

As jubilant Democrats took to the streets in cities across the US on Saturday to celebrate the victory of president-elect Joe Biden and vice president-elect Kamala Harris, artists, too, paid tribute to the election, and shared their reactions on social media.

Feminist artist Judy Chicago posted a short video of herself drawing a commemoration to the moment that “the American people consigned Trump to the garbage can of history,” while Kara Walker contributed a brief sketch of one of her signature silhouettes of a Black woman, this time kicking Trump to the curb.

Walker was widely—and incorrectly—credited for one of the most popular Biden/Harris victory images circulating online, in which a photograph of Harris was edited so that her shadow takes the form of a young Black girl. It’s a gesture to Harris’s groundbreaking victory—the first woman, the first Black person, and the first Asian American to hold the nation’s second-highest office—that is actually the work of an Oakland-based political apparel company, WTF America, and artist and designer Bria Goeller.

The shadow, misidentified as a Walker silhouette, is based on six-year-old Ruby Bridges on her way to make history by desegregating a New Orleans public school, as seen in Norman Rockwell’s famous painting *The Problem We All Live With*.



briagoeller

What a wonderful, wonderful morning. This country chose (albeit not as unanimously as we'd hoped) to elect a team of individuals who are dedicated to compassion and equality.

And I also woke up to, uh, way too many notifications. Turns out the Kamala design of mine and @goodtrubble's has gone ... viral? Which makes me so happy for Gordon, owner of WTF America (Good Trubble). He deserved this. And I cannot stress enough what a wonderful human and business partner he is.

Just to clear up some misinformation (because that should be expected, and it's totally okay) ... the design was by myself and @goodtrubble. Not Kara Walker - although I can see how it's reminiscent of her, for sure! And I love her work. I designed it in Photoshop myself. We have the legal rights to it, and - yes - tagging and mentioning us is so so so appreciated. Spread the word where you can.

Most importantly, if you want a shirt with this design on it, head over to wtfamerica2017.com (link in @goodtrubble's bio) and support a fantastic black-owned business in Sacramento. And if you want a print - lots of people have been asking. We're working on it!! Follow @goodtrubble and stay tuned. We'll announce it when or if we do!

I'll get to responding to all of your wonderful messages and follows and comments soon. But for now I'm tackling @goodtrubble's page, and enjoying THE FANTASTIC NEWS.

Here's to the future.

Illustrator and data sleuth Mona Chalabi, who has been posting infographics about voter demographics throughout the campaign, shared some video stills from her 2017 *Sesame Street* appearance with muppet Count von Count. Though Chalabi was joyful that Biden had hit 270 votes in the Electoral College, she asked followers who had been eagerly awaiting the election results to "apply the same focus to the systemic issues that are plaguing this country 365 days a year."

The Wide Awakes arts group posted Dana Scruggs's portrait of Stacey Abrams—whose organization Fair Fight is credited with helping combat voter suppression in Georgia and secure the state's electoral votes for Biden—clad in a superhero-like cape, recalling the group's historically inspired uniform.



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"Here's the thing," Kamala Harris told Dana Goodyear in 2019. "Every office I've run for I was the first to win. First person of color. First woman. First woman of color. Every time." Read Goodyear's Profile of America's Vice-President-elect at the link in our bio. Photograph by Andres Serrano for The New Yorker.

Los Angeles-based artist Alex Israel posted a photograph of Biden holding a vanilla ice cream cone, juxtaposed with the Statue of Liberty and her golden torch. The *New Yorker* shared Andres Serrano's 2019 portrait of Harris, and *New York Magazine* published a new artwork by Barbara Kruger with text reading "this is the end of something."

German publication *Der Spiegel* also got in on the act, reprising its memorable 2016 cover of Trump beheading the Statue of Liberty with a piece by the same artist, Edel Rodriguez, of Biden restoring the statue.



spiegelmagazin

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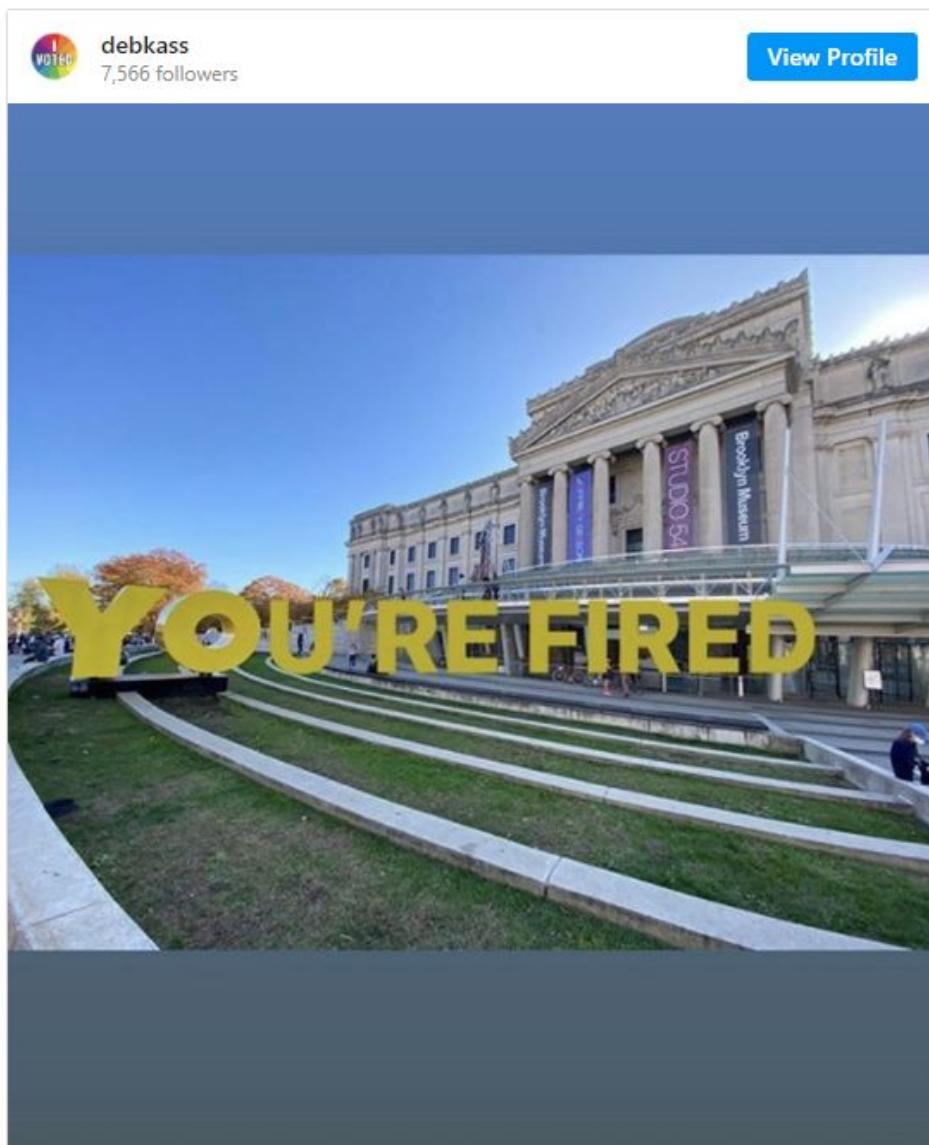
By @edelrodriguez. #uselection2020 #JoeBiden #KamalaHarris

Deborah Kass Photoshopped her Oy/Yo statue outside the Brooklyn Museum to read "You're Fired," and street artist Adrian Wilson, known for his subway sign interventions, worked his magic on the 46th Street station in Queens, remaking the signage to read 46th Biden and 45th Out.

On Facebook, artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, who coined the term “relational architecture,” proclaimed that “I hereby present my candidacy to design Donald Trump’s future presidential library.” He added that the site should be Philadelphia’s newly infamous Four Seasons Total Landscaping, where Trump’s personal lawyer, Rudolph Giuliani, inadvertently gave a press conference on Saturday.

And even Biden himself tipped a hat to artists, with a new video inspired by Lorraine O’Grady’s series “Art Is...” (1983/2009), featuring participants posing behind ornate gold frames. (The campaign got permission to create the homage.)

See these reflections—and more—below.



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