

Manifesto



THE CENSORSHIP ISSUE

Silence is Golden, Duct Tape is Silver

Written by Debra Wright

The current administration is hellbent on dragging us back to an era when forced compliance silenced us, allowing them dictate the entire, poisoned narrative. They're trying to suffocate us with blankets of lies and the tired, rotting promise that our obedience is requisite to curing the plagues they have unleashed on us.

But our cage is open and we are not going back in quietly. So...

Enter duct tape, the sticky stuff deployed by cinematic villains to muzzle their captives. It's manifesting for us as canceled shows, imposed content restrictions and retracted work offers all because we refuse to forfeit the few, defiant inches of freedom we've worked hard to carve out for ourselves.

However, yet again, they've underestimated us. We're women artists. We're resilient. And we're masters of making repairs with what we have on hand.

Duct tape is the ultimate metaphor for grassroots action. It's the ugly, necessary tool you grab when the elegant solution has failed, when you're out of options and just need to stop the damn leak. And it sticks. Like a righteous, relentless motherfucker.

We've got a massive patch job to do, a gaping wound to seal and our unyielding adhesion is the most assured remedy.

So, keep making noise. Keep standing up for your colleagues. Keep showing up for your friends. Keep boycotting the spaces, publications and companies that want us to shut up and behave.

Grab a roll and rip.

Many hands make light work. But pure audacity will burn the house down.

Libraries and Churches

Written by Sarah Schneiderman



Schneiderman's *Glasseye Snapper* — *Threatened by Overfishing*, non-recyclable trash on wood, 19" X 54" (2025), was one of several works deemed controversial by Friends of the Simsbury Public Library

A library censored free speech, and a church welcomed it.

"We may disagree with your views," Vice President JD Vance said in February [2025].
"But we will fight to defend your right to offer it in the public square." [1]

Simsbury Public Library in Simsbury, CT, invited me to show my assemblage fish in October of 2025. The subject matter was of aquatic life I've seen while scuba diving. I use non-recyclable trash as my medium. Most of this material is plastic.

About five weeks before the show, the arts coordinator — a volunteer with the Friends of the Library — told me that I couldn't use the words 'climate change' or 'ocean warming' in my exhibition description. All the text, including the titles of the works, had to be neutral. While many of the works are just the name of the fish, some other titles address plastic pollution directly, such as "Brown Coney in a Habitat Threatened by the Plastic in Tea Bags," "Golden Opportunity to Keep Plastic Out of the Ocean (Goldentail Eel)," and "Plastic is Harmful to the Health of the Ocean Surgeonfish." Alongside a growing number of artists, I pulled my show from the censoring organization.

I suggested to the library that we hang two posters — one of the First Amendment and one of Section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment of the US Constitution. The library told me I couldn't do that either. Section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment is the vehicle that makes the First Amendment apply not just to the federal government but also to state and local governments.

[1] Adam B. Kushner, State Censorship, September 19, 2025, New York Times

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Libraries and Churches, continued



Snap Out of Your Plastic Habit (Black Snapper), non-recyclable trash on board, 8.5" X 15.5" (2022)

It's not the library staff that is censoring free speech and artistic expression, but people higher up in local government. The Chair of the library board wrote, "I'd like to explain the position of the Library regarding art exhibits, especially during current times. The Library must be welcoming to all. In addition to Library events, the building's Friends Program Room is used by many community groups, Town Departments, and Town Boards. For that reason, Library Administration must err on the side of caution when considering exhibits and consider very seriously if the art and its accompanying text might create a welcoming or unwelcoming environment for everyone." She went on to say that she believed that my show did not meet the Library's current exhibit policy.

Through this show, I intended to shine a light on the pervasiveness of plastic, to highlight the problems of plastic pollution, and to provide practical ways for people to reduce their plastic use. While this library censored my show, a local church welcomed it.

What does it say about our society when libraries impose censorship while churches open their doors to free speech?

EDITOR'S NOTE: Friends of the Simsbury Public Library can be reached by email at simsburyfriends@fspl.info and on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/friendssimlib>



Golden Opportunity to Keep Plastic Out of the Ocean (Goldentail Eel), non-recyclable trash on canvas, 9.5" X 11.5" (2020)



Brown Coney in a Habitat Threatened by the Plastic in Tea Bags, non-recyclable trash on board, 6.75" X 11" (2019)

Statement Made, Message Heard

Curator known as “Notorious” flips the script—and the bird!—at the establishment, installing *Censored X*, an anti-censorship exhibition



Got a great image to share?

Email it to the editor with “Manifesto Pix” in the subject line!

info@debrawrightstudio.com

Navigating censorship is like sprinting through a high-stakes maze where the walls move and exits vanish without warning.

Don't give up!

KEEP GOING!

