

# UTOPIA/DYSTOPIA

Kerry McAleer-Keeler  
Fredricksburg, VA



“*In A Perfect World* explores a Utopian approach to the exhibition theme. A quote by Thomas Jefferson became the inspiration for this piece.”

## *In a Perfect World*

Sculptural piece created with bookboard, bookcloth, decorative paper, wood veneer, found photographic images from the late 1800/early 1900s, found objects, and cyanotype small print. 9.75” w x 4” d x 12.75” h

### **Statement**

I’m an artist who wishes to tell you a visual story.

I am compelled to make tangible, permanent objects — art that ruminates in a hectic world. It is important that my prints and book objects express a commonality of human experiences. My work seeks to address universal issues confronted by all individuals over a lifetime; namely those of love, origin, isolation, spirituality and comfort.

In my work, certain symbolic elements have developed into a visual vocabulary. Birds, hands, materials from nature, antique photographs, butterflies, playing cards and spirals are all elements that perform an important role in my pieces. Freedom, chance, the natural lifecycle, and the human spirit are themes that these objects reflect.

My pieces are an exploration of memory in relationship to real time. My work addresses the need to bear all and the desire to be heard through its tactile quality with the goal being to create a universal sense of self-discovery.

*In A Perfect World* explores a Utopian approach to the exhibition theme. A quote by Thomas Jefferson became the inspiration for this piece — “I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy as cause for withdrawing from a friend.”

This quote addresses the current political climate where a difference of political opinion, of race or of religion can be blown out of proportion or taken as offense. This quote brought concerns into perspective. Photographs from the rise of the industrial era were used in the piece when America felt an uptick of immigration and a time when many can trace their own lineage. The text “We were all immigrants once” notes sympathy with immigrants now simply wanting what other ancestors did—a better way of life. In a perfect world, this would be understood.

### **Biography**

Kerry McAleer-Keeler is an Associate Professor of Art and Design at the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design at George Washington University, Washington, DC. She hold an MFA from George Washington University and a BA from Mount Holyoke College

Her personal studio is part of the LibertyTown Arts Workshop in Fredericksburg, VA. She has taught printmaking and book arts at the Corcoran since 1998 and served as Program Head of the MA, Art and the Book graduate program from 2009 to 2016.

Ms. McAleer-Keeler's work is in such collections as the Smithsonian's American Art and National Portrait Gallery Library, Washington, DC, Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections, Washington, DC, National Museum of Women In the Arts, Washington, DC, George Washington University, Washington, DC, Stafford Hospital Center, Stafford, VA, St. Mary's College, St. Mary's, MD, George Mason University, Fenwick Library, Fairfax, VA, Vanderbilt University, Jean and Alexander Heard Library, Nashville, TN, Jaffe Center for Book Arts, Florida Atlantic University Libraries, Wimberly Library, Boca Raton, FL and the Southern Graphics Council Archives. Her work has been selected for individual, group, and juried exhibitions nationally and internationally. She currently serves as Executive Vice President for the College Book Art Association.

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