

ART IS JUSTICE

Deborah Luster on how art heals

Deborah Luster uses photography as a way to process the pain in her own life while amplifying the stories of others.

This video is part of the #ArtIsJustice series. Throughout U.S. history, artists and cultural leaders have been at the forefront of social change. Today, in the face of growing intolerance and widening inequality, artists stand up to these injustices, reminding us all that Art IS Justice.

Transcript begins

[The words “Art Is” appear, followed by scrolling words...Empathy, Perspective, Hope, Change, Beauty...it stops at Healing. Art Is Healing.]

Deborah Luster, visual artist: An artist of change is an artist that wants to make a difference—not just put out a painting or a sculpture but really make a difference in society. The prison project ... I took over 25,000 photographs of inmates in Louisiana prisons and they were printed on five-by-four pieces of metal and then stored in this cabinet. What led me to this project was the homicide of my mother. When you have a tragedy in your life, you tell the story over and over and over to try to heal from it. And I’ve realized that that’s what I was doing with this project. This very arduous process of preparing the plates, coating the plates, drying the plates—this constant repetition—was telling my story through someone else’s story. I hope that people find a connection there—you know, in their bones—that they feel something and the work inhabits them.

[The words “Art is” appear, followed by scrolling words...Healing, Expression, Change, Creativity, Hope...it stops at Justice. Hashtag Art Is Justice. Agree? Share this video.]

[Ford Foundation logo: a globe made up of a series of small, varied circles.]

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Photographs Courtesy of

Deborah Luster

End of transcript.