

# The Guardian

## 'We invest in artists as changemakers': using art to help increase US voter participation

*Michelle Obama's non-partisan organization When We All Vote has partnered with Art for Change for a new collection of artwork aimed at enhancing voter turnout*

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Rico Gatson - Shirley #3, 2023 Photograph: Courtesy of the artist

Everything is politics, so the saying goes, and never more so during an election year. With its newest collection, Art for Change is taking the “everything” one step further.

Since 2018, Art for Change has curated programs of online sales and exhibitions to raise money for a number of charities. Ahead of the 2024 presidential election, Art for Change has partnered with When We All Vote, a non-partisan non-profit founded by Michelle Obama that seeks to up voter participation.

On their own, many of the pieces in this collection may not feel overtly political. An art novice would probably imagine a collaboration like this to include art similar to the red, white and blue of Shepard Fairey's Hope and We The People posters – not Jordan Kasey's surreal illustration of a baby and mother, Daniel Gordon's still life of red apples and white poppies, or Aaron Johnson's vivid auroral depiction of a couple with a bird flying from one's heart.

But interspersed with pieces like Caris Reid's playful rendering of the word “VOTE” against a starry backdrop and Rico Gatson's colorful celebration of Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman elected to Congress, each piece in this collection takes on new context. Especially under the mission statement of When We All Vote, which will receive a portion of all the sales of prints and original works, the artwork of this collection come together to show what's at stake with each election – what exactly a person risks losing by choosing not to vote.

“The When We All Vote collection as a whole creates a narrative that we hope evokes various nuances of America,” said Jeanne Masel, founder of Art for Change. “As a group, they convey a sense of Americana, from the image of an apple to a whimsical take on a ‘Vote’ poster, to abstractions that evoke raw emotions.”

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