

June 19, 2015

From: Mr. Gerald Shields

To: Exhibitions; Brentwood Arts Exchange  
3901 Rhode Island Avenue  
Brentwood, Maryland 20722

Dear Brentwood Arts Exchange,

Below is the curatorial statement for the display of the enclosed digital photograph. I propose to print the digital photograph out on a standard poster board and autograph the reverse side; one of one. Whatever payment is received, I plan to donate it, minus printing costs, to the Brentwood Arts Exchange.

Curatorial Statement of *Capitalist Realism* by Gerald Shields

*Capitalist Realism*, by Gerald Shields, is a digital photograph as part of performance art.

The essence and beauty of photography is that we can use images to create layers of transparent meanings, both to clarify ideologies and to reach abstract depths of meaning that evoke a visceral response. Whether referencing an immediately identifiable ideology or one that is conceptual and abstract, each photograph encourages the viewer to contemplate – or decipher – the ideological context in which the photograph was taken.

The context of the photograph is an apparent Maoist pose of leading the proletariat forward. The performance was in Dandong, People's Republic of China at the museum for The War against American Aggression. The historical context is the Cold War of the late Twentieth Century through to golden age of the United States of America.

However, if the audience examines to photograph closely, the performers are facing stage right, wearing name brand outfits in all black clothing. The two performers have no red in their clothing. The left facing soldiers are in a distant and blurred past. When the audience realizes this, the socialist ideology of the past has been repackaged into the capitalist future. The use of the red ideological pose was to encourage the audience to consider the conceptual and thematic idea of capitalism in an inventive way.

Then, to turn capitalism on its head even further, the digital photograph has been released to the public under the Creative Commons, which causes the audience to rethink the common themes of capitalism and socialism. To get an electronic copy of this photograph, the price is to pay what you want.

The trinity of layers engages the audience to rethink economics and art. In this way, the visual language of ideology can trigger an intuitive response to stimulate subconscious sensations for which we have no words.

It's a realization of modern *Capitalist Realism*, with a renewed realism.