

# NIGHT GALLERY

2276 E. 16th Street, Los Angeles, California 90021

[nightgallery.ca](http://nightgallery.ca)

Lindsay Preston Zappas, "Art Insider June 9: Artist sets up sign-making stations at LA protests," *KCRW*, June 9, 2020.

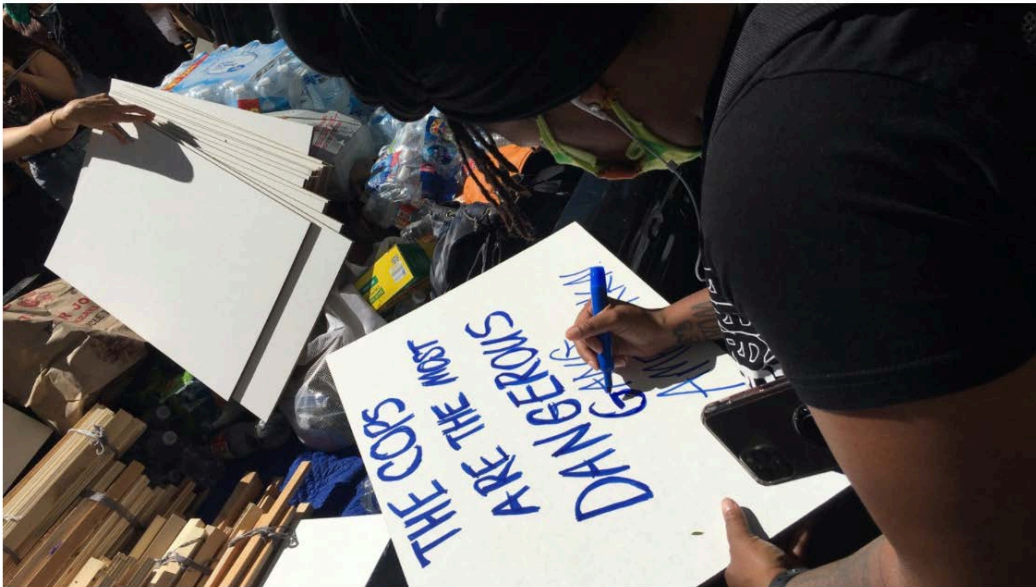


ARTS & CULTURE STORIES

## Art Insider June 9: Artist sets up sign-making stations at LA protests

Written by Lindsay Preston Zappas • Jun. 09, 2020

ARTS



A participant makes a sign at Sunday's protest.

*Image courtesy of Greg Ito.*

In the midst of global protests, LA artist Greg Ito has been taking action. He auctioned off a drawing on Instagram with a starting bid of \$50. The bidding quickly escalated, closing at \$2,750, with 100% of proceeds going to Black Lives Matter Los Angeles. He was selected by the LA Times as one of 14 artists to respond creatively to the protests. He created a beautiful piece that highlights the importance of filming the police and documenting the movement.

# NIGHT GALLERY

2276 E. 16th Street, Los Angeles, California 90021

[nightgallery.ca](http://nightgallery.ca)

Still, Ito wanted to do more to physically participate. Last week, he organized sign-making stations at two LA protests, and he plans to do more. He told me over email that he had been seeing a lot of digital action, but not enough in the streets. “I took a look at the media and noticed how they were curating their images, and how signs played a big role in their section process. Images with strong messages in signs tend to be selected because you can’t read what’s going on in the protester’s mind, but you can read their sign. I took my artist brain and put it to work using what I know from my practice, and what I had in my studio and put the two to work.”

Ito used his art connections to get \$300 worth of cardboard sheets (that he orders often to pack his artwork). He cut the sheets and wood handles to create more than 300 signs. At last Wednesday’s protest Downtown at City Hall, Ito and his wife set up a folding table with markers, hand sanitizer, and snacks, and invited people to make signs.

Family and friends jumped on board to bring more water, snacks, hand sanitizer, and supplies, and others that had brought supplies to the protest started dropping them off at Ito’s station. “It was so heartwarming to see this — the power of the people taking care of other people,” Ito said.

After two hours, they ran out of signs. “It was so amazing seeing how excited and happy people were to draw and write their messages,” Ito said. “The power of creativity and art put to use, to shape our future.”

At Sunday’s protest in Hollywood— which was attended by an estimated 50,000-100,000 Angelenos — Ito mobilized more sign supplies and volunteers to build a four-table station in the middle of the protest. To prepare, Ito raised \$900 in just two hours on Instagram, enough to purchase 110 sheets of cardboard to make 1320 signs. “We cut so many that it melted the rubber belt that spins the saw,” Ito said.

There was also an outpouring of support from friends and family wanting to get involved. Ito added, “My cousin’s wife’s family’s Japanese restaurant brought us meals too!”

He arrived at the protest site with his team a few hours early and parked two trucks and a car filled with supplies as close to the advertised address as possible. “When you’re driving up, it’s hard not to feel nervous,” Ito said. “Nervous of being kicked out by the cops, or that things would get crazy. But once you set up and see how happy and grateful people are for the signs and how excited they are to make a sign, it’s all worth it. There are also so many people setting up and providing supplies to the people out protesting.”

# NIGHT GALLERY

2276 E. 16th Street, Los Angeles, California 90021

[nightgallery.ca](http://nightgallery.ca)



*Participants make signs at Greg Ito's pop-up station at Sunday's protest. Image courtesy of Greg Ito.*

Ito added that it was great to see almost all the protesters wearing masks, but he encourages everyone who attends to get a COVID-19 test. He and his wife are taking this week off of protesting to get tested and start to plan their next pop-up. "The next one we want to make bigger and better," he said.

Ito explains that the urgency of this moment led him to action. "I am not in any way an activist. I vote, but didn't attend big protests and rallies until now. I'm just an artist who was fed up seeing the art world not do enough, and remain silent. I wanted to do something creative but powerful. I do it for the people, but I also do it for my wife who is Black, and for our future children. I'm Japanese American and don't know the Black experience like her, but I am listening and learning and putting my skills to work to lend a helping hand to the BLM movement."



# NIGHT GALLERY

2276 E. 16th Street, Los Angeles, California 90021

[nightgallery.ca](http://nightgallery.ca)

## More artists and gallerists rally to raise funds



*Blum & Poe has been matching donations to The Underground Museum this week.  
Image courtesy of the Underground Museum.*

Over the past week, artists have taken to Instagram to auction off their work, ranging from \$50 to \$5000. Artists like Ry Rocklen, Paul Mpagi Sepuya, Alec Egan, and Devin Troy Strother raised money for Black Lives Matter, Color of Change, and the Laundromat Project.

Galleries have also offered to match donations. David Kordansky matched \$10,000 of donations to Lauren Halsey's Summaeverythang Community Center — a food distribution project serving Watts and South Central LA. They are even on their second round of donation matching.

Blum & Poe similarly matched \$10,000 in donations to support The Underground Museum, and are in a second round of donation matching.

Night Gallery has an upcoming online auction with 100% of the gallery's proceeds going to Black Lives Matter and a handful of other organizations. The gallery explained in an email, "During this moment of profound and necessary upheaval, Night Gallery recognizes the call for deep reflection and a commitment to ongoing work to face the injustices that plague this society."