

For Immediate Release

## ACTIVIST ARTIST DECLARES WAR ON WAR

-----  
**Washington DC-Based Visual Artist Michele Colburn  
to Present New Works in Philadelphia and Cleveland  
Prior to Democratic and Republican Conventions**  
-----



WASHINGTON, DC, (*July 12, 2016*) -- Artist and activist Michele Colburn will present a provocative new art/action work protesting the costly and continuing U.S. military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan later this month in Cleveland and Philadelphia prior to the opening of the Republican and Democratic national conventions.

Titled *Burdens' Beast, 2016*, her performance-based art action fuses aspects of Protest and Relational Art to address the cost of war. It includes a 20-pound assemblage work, titled *Forever Wars?* --- which Colburn will carry on her back while she traverses both convention cities. The work is mixed media and includes Vietnam-era trip wire, scraps, detritus, camouflage fabric pieces, gauze, wood, and ceramics.

*Burdens' Beast, 2016* is designed to encourage and provoke conversation between the artist and the public about continuing U.S. military involvement in the Middle East, which began with the invasion of Iraq 13 years ago and Afghanistan in 2001. Colburn's conversations and interactions with people on the street will be recorded on video, adding another medium and dimension to her larger project.

"I hope to engage in meaningful conversations and record responses regarding this single most costly aspect of the American budget," she said.

The artist will also hand out printed cards listing facts regarding U.S. losses in Iraq and Afghanistan; the cards are titled "Do You Know?"

Colburn cites American artist Kim Jones' *Mud Man* performance, from



---

(Above) *Burdens' Beast, 2016* (Michele Colburn with *Forever Wars?*)  
< *Forever Wars?* by Michele Colburn (trip wire, scraps, detritus, camouflage fabric pieces, gauze, wood, and ceramics)

the 1960s, and Edward Kienholz's *Portable War Memorial* from 1968, as having influenced *Burden's Beast*.

The artist will also bring her *Trip Wire Project* to both Cleveland and Philadelphia. The work documents the deaths of U.S. soldiers and noncombatant civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan since the beginning of US involvement there; hand-knitted by the artist using surplus military trip wire from the Vietnam War, each stitch represents a life. The artist will "knit bomb" the sculpture *American War Mother and Her Sons* in Germantown, Philadelphia and the Soldiers and Sailors Monument in Cleveland on the Sundays she is in each city.

Michele Colburn is a native Washingtonian living and working in the capital. A professional artist for over 15 years, she has exhibited in Washington, Philadelphia, Denver, New York, Los Angeles, and Boston. Colburn is represented in Washington by Charles Krause/Reporting Fine Art and maintains a studio at Arlington Arts Center in Arlington, Va. She was the recipient of a Puffin Foundation Grant in 2015.

Most recently, Colburn's central focus has been on socio-political themes. Her work is influenced by our 15-year involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan; the traumatizing effects of mass violence on the American public; and by personal experiences when a close friend reenlisted and served two terms in Iraq. For Colburn, the personal is political and the political is personal.

## **SCHEDULED ACTIONS:**

### **Cleveland:**

**SATURDAY, July 16, 10 - 11 AM:** Walking the Public Square and near the *Soldiers and Sailors Memorial* aka. *Fountain of Eternal Life*.

**4 - 5 PM:** The artist will attempt to drape the *Soldiers and Sailors Memorial* with the *Trip Wire Project* and photograph it.

**SUNDAY, July 17: 10 AM – Burden's Beast at the Cleveland Art Museum,** in front and on public spaces.

### **Philadelphia:**

**SATURDAY, July 23, 10 AM – 12 Noon.** Colburn will walk from the Historic Quaker Meeting House, at 320 Arch Street, up Arch past the Federal Reserve, past the Pennsylvania Convention Center (where there is a big Politifest) to the Civic Park and *Love* statue by Robert Indiana. Around Civic Park/Square

**4- 5 30 PM.** Philadelphia Art Museum steps and the Monument to George Washington on the side with the dead or wounded soldiers.

**SUNDAY, July 24, 11 AM** -Trip Wire will be draped on and around the statue, *American War Mother and her Sons* in Germantown, Philadelphia.

---

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Charles Krause, Charles Krause/Reporting Fine Art (202) 638-3612

Michele Colburn: 202-257-2088 (prior to and on location)