

Andrew Kreps
Gallery

22 Cortlandt Alley,
New York, NY 10013

Tue–Sat, 10 am–6 pm
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Andrea Bowers

Democracy Needs Our Courage

22 Cortlandt Alley
September 18 – October 31, 2026
Opening Reception: Friday, September 18, 6 – 8 pm

Andrew Kreps Gallery is pleased to announce *Democracy Needs Our Courage*, an exhibition of new works by Andrea Bowers (b. 1965, Wilmington, OH) at the gallery's 22 Cortlandt Alley location, the artist's sixth solo exhibition with the gallery.

Bowers' practice is equally engaged in the activism of the present, as it is with the history of protest and direct action. Documenting the ways in which activists speak up for social justice issues, her work forms a living archive of the ways in which feminist, labor, and environmental causes intersect, and impact one another. Including new drawings on paper and cardboard, neon and LED works, and a film program, curated with Lindsay Mofford, of documentaries and shorts made from the 1970s until now, the exhibition responds to the precarity of our current moment as we approach the 2026 midterm elections. As Donald Trump's response to protestors becomes increasingly aggressive, including the fifteen members of Direct Action Minnesota and the Black Cat Worker's Collective who have been federally indicted for their role in ANTI-ICE protests, there has been a simultaneous surge in the popularity of candidates promoting socialist policies and ideas. While previously dismissed by the Democratic establishment, these candidates have been winning contested elections across the country.

Drawing on slogans used in worker's rights movements from the turn of the twentieth century, as well as her own archive of political graphics, Bowers looks to connect the movements of the past to our present. In a new, large-scale drawing on collaged cardboard supports, a woman triumphantly sits atop an anvil, a longstanding symbol of worker's rights, positioned as a political force in her own right. In another, the anvil is used as a tool as a woman connects the final link of a chain that reads, "vote for women." A series of highly detailed graphite drawings isolate individual protestors on the page. Each realized from photographs taken by Bowers at protests throughout Donald Trump's first presidential term, Bowers utilizes her own labor to elevate these figures, memorializing their actions in intimately scaled works that feel monumental. Their slogans, such as "families

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belong together,” join those of new light-based works in neon and LED, which announce “Fascism Isn’t Freedom,” and “Eco Not Ego.” The black cat, originally designed by writer and activist Ralph Chaplin in 1910 for the Industrial Workers of the World union, and now employed by the Minneapolis-based Black Cat Worker’s Collective, stands atop accounts of the actions of the Minnesota 15, and Prairieland Nine, non-violent activists who face, or have been given prison sentences that far exceed any resulting from the January 6 Capitol Attack. Seen together, Bowers works both honor the increasing risks faced by activists, while creating new rallying cries in a time when now more than ever, democracy needs our courage.

Andrea Bowers lives and works in Los Angeles. Her work is currently the subject of a survey exhibition on long term view at Glenstone, Potomac, MD. For over three decades, her multidisciplinary practice has bridged art with advocacy, creating videos, sculptures, neon, as well as drawings on paper and cardboard that are shaped by her collaborations with front-line activists. Past solo exhibitions of Bowers’ work include *Exist, Flourish, Evolve*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland, OH, 2024; *Moving in Space without Asking Permission*, Fondazione Furla and GAM – Galleria d’Arte Moderna, Milan, Italy, 2022; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 2021-2022, which later traveled to the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2022; *Grief and Hope*, Abteiberg Museum, Mönchengladbach, Germany, 2020; *Light and Gravity*, Weserburg Museum, Bremen, Germany, 2019; *Climate Change is Real*, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA, 2019; *Hammer Projects: Andrea Bowers*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2017; *Womxn Workers of the World Unite!*, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, 2017; *Andrea Bowers: Sanctuary*, Bronx Museum, New York, 2016; *In Situ 1 - Andrea Bowers*, Espace Culturel Louis Vuitton, Paris, 2014; *#sweetjane*, Pomona and Pitzer College Museum of Art, Claremont, 2014; and *The Weight of Relevance*, Wiener Secession, Vienna, traveled to The Power Plant, Toronto, 2007.

Bowers’ work is held in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, DC, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, SFMOMA, San Francisco, Tate Modern, London; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among others.