



Historic House in Brooklyn, features campaign signs for all 57 candidates who ran for the United States Presidency and lost, from John Adams in 1796 to Mitt Romney in 2012.

Katchadourian first began the project in 2008, just before the election of Barack Obama, as part of a project commissioned by the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art in Arizona. “At a time when the country was preoccupied with the ‘fork in the road’ moment of a major national election,” the artist explained in a statement, “the piece presented a view of the country’s collective political road not taken.”

For decades, political lawn signs have occupied a strange space between folk art and political propaganda. Their language is one of intelligibility and force, stirring immediate reactions of pride and disgust in those who encounter them, depending on their political perspectives.

Many can attest to the comfort and excitement felt walking among a sea of signs for your chosen candidate, indicative of being in a community of likeminded individuals. Likewise, we’ve all experienced the discomfort and agitation of being amid the other side, accompanied by the fearful guessing game of just how many opponents are out there. Enough to win?

The signs exist in all their glory for the months leading up to an election and then, instantly, become obsolete. Morphing from change agents to artifacts.

At 12 p.m. on Nov. 9, Katchadourian installed the newest sign in the collection, one reading “I’m with Hillary 2016.” Like all signs in the piece, it was handmade by the artist herself, created from corrugated plastic sheets. Simple, blunt, evocative, all of the artist’s signs mimic the aesthetic of political endorsements plastered across suburban neighborhoods in recent decades. Even signs advocating candidates running centuries ago appear in the same, relatively contemporary style.

The New Yorker’s Amanda Petrusich watched as Katchadourian welcomed the newest sign into the ground while a crowd of onlookers shuddered in disbelief. Few expected this particular sign to be the newest

addition. “The mood on the park lawn was despondent, funereal,” she wrote. “The signs themselves resembled tombstones wedged into a graveyard.”

Katchadourian’s project does not take sides, suggesting one way or another who should have won. Rather, it offers a monument to all those who were so close to leading this nation, and for some, a space to mourn for what could have been.

*The project is on view until this Sunday, Nov. 13, 2016, in Brooklyn.*