

Zoë Shulman

THE ALLEGORY OF GOOD AND BAD GOVERNMENT

ARTIST'S STATEMENT - JANUARY 2018

“The Allegory of Good and Bad Government” is a series of twenty digital painting and mixed media works printed on aluminum hexagons. The prints are arranged as diptychs in which the virtues and vices of government, expressed as elaborate geometric symbols, contrast chiaroscuro within a candle-lit gallery space. The exhibition’s large centerpiece juxtaposes good and bad government, while smaller meditations of the individual virtues and vices line the gallery walls. Like a religious shrine, the diptychs offer a space for inner transformation, moral enlightenment, and salvation in the face of fascism.

The goal of this exhibition is to provide a vision of America’s democratic republic that is both morally introspective and politically active. My process involves translating the fundamental allegoric structure of Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s medieval fresco, “Good and Bad Government”, into a system of geometric symbolism that conveys a moral American government. Informed by cross-cultural symbols, biblical and religious themes, and the ancient philosophy of alchemy, this geometric symbolism resonates with humanity’s timeless aspirations and fears, prompting the viewer to compare idealisms between the work and their own political reality.