

Bought & Sold: Voices of Human Trafficking

by Kay Chernush, ArtWorks For Freedom

The goal of this exhibition is to prompt a re-consideration of the commodification of human beings and the de-humanizing social interactions that make it possible for slavery to exist today, in every country, 150 years after we thought it had been abolished.

Bought & Sold speaks to the experiences and suffering of the millions of men, women and children caught up in slavery's web. The exhibit asks you, the public, to consider their plight from their perspective. Looking outward through the victims' eyes, the images challenge us to imagine the daily horrors, tedium, desperation and ambiguities of their lives—and to take action.

In taking on this challenge, I wanted to adopt an approach that would convey the truth of what underlies the experience of being enslaved. The challenges were both moral and aesthetic: how to make visually compelling images without further endangering the very people I want to help and how to avoid enabling public stereotypes, judgment and voyeurism. In response to these challenges, I decided to actively involve trafficked persons in a process that explores their personal experience and helps transform how they see themselves.

Bought & Sold conveys the fact that trafficking exists all around us, hidden in plain sight. Since the work is neither fully abstract nor representational, the survivors' stories are used as counterpoint to help portray each person's ordeal, suffering and resolve. As a photographer and artist, I hope the images will change how viewers think about this global human rights atrocity and inspire creative action to end it.

MSU Global Innovation Circle & 'Meet & Greet' the Artist

March 17, 2015

3:30 p.m.

Artist 'Meet & Greet'

MSU College of Law 4th floor atrium.

4:00 p.m.

Kay Chernush will be making a presentation titled: "About Human Trafficking: A Photographer at the Intersection of Art & Human Rights."

MSU College of Law Boardroom

Co-Sponsors

MSU College of Law

Michigan Human Trafficking Task Force

MSU College of Music

Center for Gender in Global Context

MSU Global

MSU College of Arts & Letters

MSU School of Social Work

MSU Office for Inclusion &

Intercultural Initiatives

MSU University Outreach and Engagement

Research Consortium for Gender-based
Violence

MSU Matrix - the Center for Digital
Humanities and Social Sciences

MSU Museum