

What does it mean to bear witness?

How does this idea manifest itself in the visual arts?

From tourism to war to social critique, at the local, regional, national, or international level, the concept of bearing witness through the arts provides a means by which one can better understand a place, an issue, or a person. It can undermine the powerful, or serve as a tool of propaganda. It can retell the stories that we have heard before, or make space for new voices and new stories.

Visual works, such as the photograph on the right, can play a vital role in our understanding of the world. It was photographs such as this that helped bear witness to and disseminate information about the atrocities of the Holocaust.

Works from the Augustana Teaching Museum of Art's collections dig into this idea of bearing witness. In addition, the exhibition features a listening booth to share first-person stories of members of the Quad Cities through a listening station for *The Great Quad Cities Listen*, a WVIK project - a means of witnessing the stories of our own Quad Cities community.

The Augustana Teaching Museum of Art would like to thank WVIK for sharing *The Great Quad Cities Listen*, Katherine Hellberg for exhibition installation assistance, and to Comet Blecha for the design of the gallery labels. This exhibition was curated by Dr. Claire Kovacs, Director of the Augustana Teaching Museum of Art.