

ARTIST STATEMENT

George Orwell's *1984* featured an imagined totalitarian state with complete control of all public and private spheres in society. In history, we see that totalitarian states can come from both the political left and right. The results are the same: no freedom, no liberty, no tolerance.

One of the concepts in *1984* was called doublethink, where words and phrases contain contradictory meanings and people may hold both to be true.

Some invented words in the novel, such as 'unperson', suggest a meaning, but it is never clear, only implied. In this imaginary world, without free speech and open public discourse, there is no established meaning, only constant edits, censorship, and control by those in power.

Orwell's concepts led to the creation of doublespeak, a name for intentional ambiguity in language or an actual inversion of meaning, often used today by corporations and governments to disguise or confuse the nature of truth.

Art and poetry often feature a related but less severe effect, where symbolism, metaphor, irony, and play with language leave the work open to multiple interpretations.

These concepts merge within the *Miniluv* project, using the language of Orwell, advertising, self help, escapism, and social media, where art and its meaning form in the eye of the beholder.

In a mural installation from the project in Roscoe, New York, different meanings surfaced from early interpretations of the phrase, "time to unperson."

Some viewers reported a message about release from attachment to the self and identity. A local shopper felt that it meant she could be free to buy any interior design objects and not be judged by others. Another person said it meant men should leave their wives and engage in homosexuality.

The range of reflections on meaning in an artwork can be as diverse as those who view it. In this context, art is a mirror.

Here in Roscoe, a few words on a wall revealed how perceptions of self, community, power, and difference can yield a choice between two paths: censorship or tolerance.

Ultimately, the mural was censored and destroyed. Make of this what you will.

