

*From Tamiment, Alewitz Archive Description:*

*Appendix A {description of collection: e.g., # of boxes, types of materials, format of materials, etc.}*



Mike Alewitz is an agitprop artist, mural painter, political activist, organizer, union scenic artist and sign-painter and a Professor Emeritus in the Art Department at Central Connecticut State University.

As an undergraduate student, he was an antiwar and socialist activist at Kent State University, a witness to the Kent State Massacre and a leading participant in the national student strike of 1970.

Mike's records were compiled during the course of his life and work. His artwork is an act of mutual aid, collaborating with individuals and groups that are participants in global anti-oppression activism. Mike's murals operate as more than pure artwork, they contribute to building solidarity and movement visibility.

Mike may be the most censored artist in the world. The majority of the murals that Mike has painted in the last 30 years have been intentionally destroyed by governments, bureaucrats and companies: painted over, vandalized, neglected, or were commissioned and never painted due to their subversive content.

Mike's records document the creation of his murals and artwork around the world, including photographs, process documentation (i.e., sketches), newspaper clippings, correspondence, and flyers.

Mike also produced dozens of portable murals and banners. These have been used in protests, meetings, forums, and gatherings of various unions and left organizations.

A sample of specific movements, histories, and groups that are documented include: Arts for a New Nicaragua, Labor Party Advocates, United Mine Workers, Teamsters, Jobs with Justice and numerous international and local unions.

Also in the collection are Mike's participation in his own unions as a railroad laborer, machinist, sign-painter and professor.

Sites include Northern Ireland, Palestine, Baghdad, Mexico, Chernobyl and locations in the US. Subject matter includes the Local P-9 Strike in Minnesota, Pittston Coal Strike and the Rodney King Rebellion.

These materials document not just Mike's involvement in leftist movements and politics but provide a broad narrative arc of leftist - in particular, socialist and anarchist - history in the 20th and 21st century.

This collection is estimated to be approximately 70-75 linear feet in size. It is expected that this extent is inclusive of approximately 40 record boxes, 3 flat boxes, and 5 pieces of artwork.

Formats of materials include correspondence, photographs, artworks in the form of portable murals on vinyl and canvas, sketches, flyers, VHS, optical discs and floppy disks, zip disks, digital photographs, digital newsletter, audiocassette, digital audio files, FOIA records, and email.

---

### ***Mike Alewitz on being a part of the Tamiment Labor Archives, NYU***

I'm being preserved. (As in archived, not pickled). Last month a team of eight preservationists, archivists and photographers visited Red Square (my studio/gallery/museum) and began preparations to transfer my archives to the Tamiment Library at New York University. Tamiment is one of the world's leading repositories for labor and radical archives. It's startling to have my work welcomed by such a prominent institution. Or any institution for that matter.

It's not just that my work has been censored, as noted above. Being censored is just a part of the larger phenomenon of being canceled. Workers are the real victims of cancellation. We have disappeared from the mainstream media, our history of militant struggle is hidden - and agitprop art, when used as a weapon in the class struggle, gets canceled too - me along with it.

The archivists at Tamiment have been totally respectful of these materials and seem committed to preserving our history. It's comforting to know that as my composted bones are happily decomposing, these archives will be preserved. Hopefully, in some

small way, they will continue to annoy and ultimately topple our capitalist overlords. And the bureaucrats that serve them in our unions and universities. Let's not forget them.

-----

The value in the Mike Alewitz/ Red Square Archive (working title) derives from five decades of organizing political and cultural projects involving a broad range of individuals and organizations. It's the archive of a socialist activist and working-class agitprop artist.

I'm one of the many thousands of young people of my generation that envisioned a new world, based on human solidarity. We set out to make a revolution, along a path carved out by previous generations. Along the way, we were lucky to be participants in the transformative movements of recent decades.

Our revolutionary movement is not the campaign jingle kind, but the kind where you completely uproot and overthrow capitalism – which still seems like a fine idea to me. In fact, it's more essential than ever. It's worth considering ourselves as custodians of the hard-learned lessons handed down from earlier generations of revolutionaries – now to include our own experiences – and be passed along once again.

Reviewing this work has confirmed how lucky I've been to make art that matters - that gives visual expression to some important strikes and struggles – and those workers deserve to have these documents and images preserved.

-----

For the comrades and friends that helped create this history, please look through the catalog and consider sending along any photos, flyers, stories or other materials that might enrich the archives. The collection includes documents, photographs, correspondence, oral histories, articles, sketches, videos, audio tapes, flyers, optical and floppy disks, zip disks, VHS tapes, digital and audio files, FOIA records, email, etc.

Highlights include:

- The Vietnam antiwar movement; suppressed history of the Kent State Massacre; the 1970 national student strike; social justice movements from 1968 - present
- Activism as a revolutionary party cadre, expanding the socialist movement in Ohio, Texas, Los Angeles, Virginia, New Orleans, Boston, New York, New Jersey and Connecticut

- Broadly sponsored mural projects in Nicaragua, Mexico, Palestine, Baghdad, Chernobyl, Belfast, Los Angeles, Chicago, NY and other locations
- Expansive body of hand-painted banners for international unions, labor federations, labor councils and local unions representing workers from dozens of industries
- Banners and organizing materials for major strikes of the last several decades, including PATCO, P-9, Daily News, Eastern Airlines, Boeing, Pittston, etc.
- Political art and banners for political prisoners, international solidarity actions and cultural organizations
- Performance painting, convention backdrops and workshops at conferences, rallies and concerts for the OCAW, UNITE, UMWA, Jobs with Justice, the Labor Party, etc.
- 1200+ FBI files and other documents regarding pervasive government surveillance
- The extensive censorship and destruction of Alewitz murals – the most censored artist in the world, including The Pathfinder Mural, The Dreams of Harriet Tubman and The City at the Crossroads of History
- Union activity in IBPAT, NJ IUC, BMW, BRAC, IUE 201, AAUP, IATSE
- Creation of Red Square Studio/Gallery/Museum

View the whole catalog of materials here: [https://t.ly/kUwP\\_AlewitzArchive](https://t.ly/kUwP_AlewitzArchive)