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Statement: *Bitter Chill*

This body of work was sparked by my despair in the outcome of 2016's presidential election, when over the following winter of 2017, I found myself drawn outside by New England's late winter storms. While wandering out in the wild areas of woods and water, my worry for the country resonated with the occluded and frozen wilderness. I felt that the election marked a parallel chilling of American morals.

Following those adventures, our family took a trip to Washington D.C. in the early spring where I was struck by the messages of freedom and justice honored in stone at the city's monuments and memorials. It seemed to me they stood in stark contrast to the messages coming from the new administration. Returning home, I felt moved to research more of these voices of our nation's character, and to juxtapose hand-lettered renditions of their quotations with landscape paintings depicting some of the winter scenes I remembered. In addition to words of the original framers of the government, I felt it was important also to draw upon a more diverse field of notable women and people of color who helped re-frame the country in progressive directions.

After many experiments in implementation, I conceived the viewer's experience of the series to begin quietly, as they first noticed the winter scenes. But I hoped the subtle presence of the text would draw them close, where they would be moved to reflect upon the quotations in conjunction with the emptiness and chill of the paintings.

Now seen in the context of a historic impeachment, an atmosphere of growing misinformation and mismanagement of a global pandemic, this painting series urges viewers to reflect upon the responsibility and trust given to our elected representatives, and also the power of the collective moral will wielded by the citizens who elected them. While perhaps barely discernible through the storm, I hope the words of these leaders will point the way.