

***“WORLD OF TEARS”***  
***The Bully, the Victim and the Bystander***

***by Terry V. Thomas***

My artwork critically explores the theme of bullying through the depiction of the bully, the victim and the bystander. This installation of the bullying web awakens the viewer to the issue of bullying as the seed of many, if not most, of the world’s great social justice upheavals. It is my hope that the exhibit will help visitors connect the dots between the sometimes subtle forms of intimidation that occur daily on elementary school playgrounds and the conscience shocking humanitarian crisis’ of history, crisis’ like the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the Jewish Holocaust, the ruthless McCarthyism of the 1950’s, and the Jacksonian era Trail of Tears, the tragic episode from which the inspiration for my exhibit’s name is drawn. Through its contrasting shapes and colors in enamel, I want to raise the point that insensitive and hurtful passive-aggressive interactions between children, if left unchecked, can fester and grow into adult behavior capable of altering and negatively impacting the lives of millions.

In my exhibit, the bully shows its face in stark wicked red, tormenting, intimidating, terrorizing, twisting and turning in all shapes and sizes, positioning for attack. The bystander is passively standing on the periphery, in curved bronze-colored lines, somewhat removed from the victim, hesitant and unsure whether to intercede or not. The “Trail of Tears”, an uneven tear-dropped pattern of ruggedness and pain, represents the unsettled path of the victim. The “World of Tears” symbolizes the circular bond of everyone in the world who has ever been bullied coming together in mutual consolation. I chose aluminum as the ideal canvas for this installation because of its’ cold metallic nature to emphasize the insensitivity of bullying in the human dynamic.