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This System Has Failed Us

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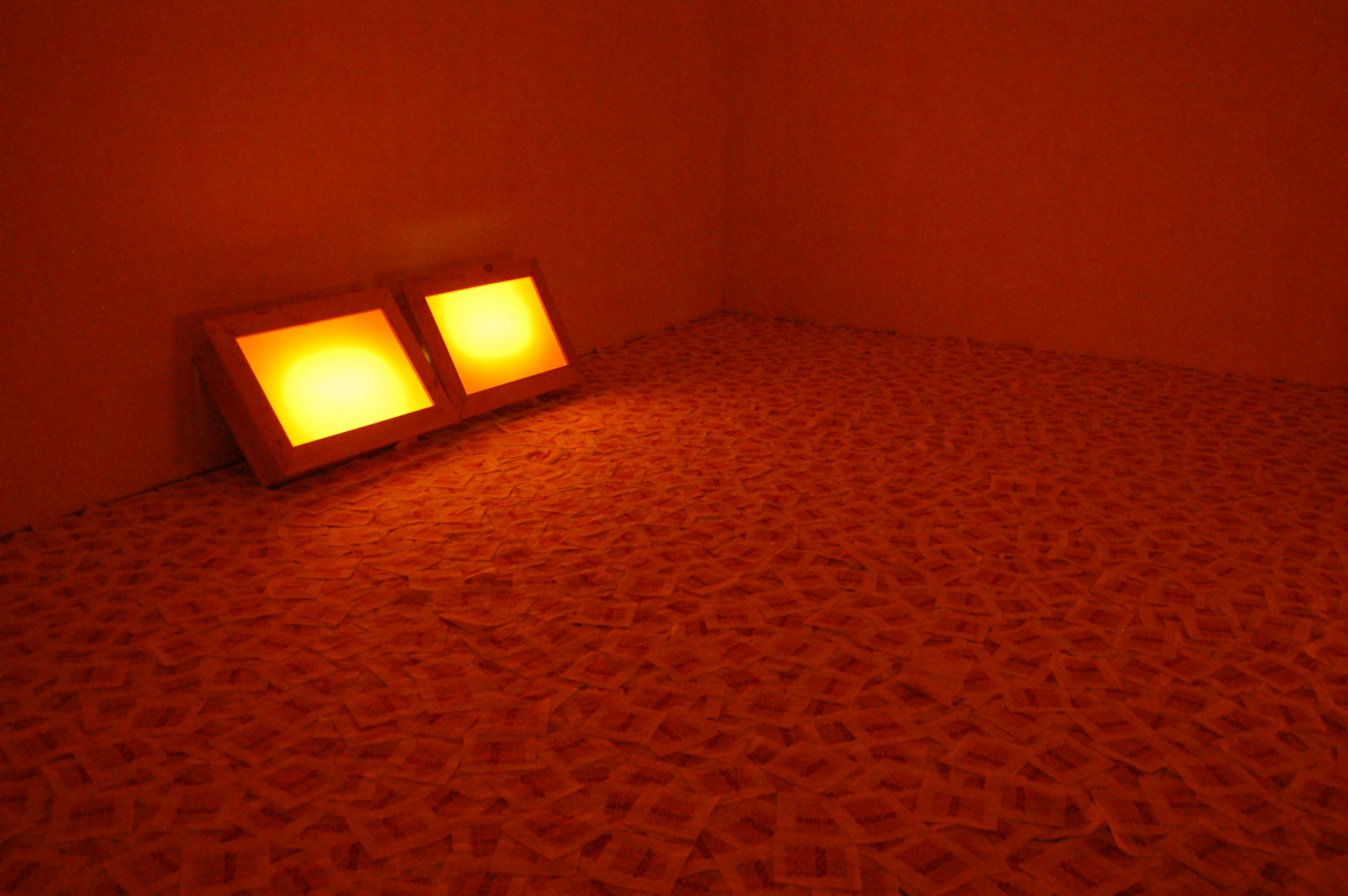
Bard

Kate Bickhardt

Artist Statement

When I go to a courtroom the only color I see is orange. I don't want to talk down to people. The projection is level to the floor. There are 2,500 napkins. They are the people, the garbage, and the repetition of the excess, and my hope of giving them importance. There are roughly 2,500 people in the Orleans Parish Prison on any given day, but the system is bigger than them. It's more consuming and this is not nearly the amount of napkins it would take to represent the people in even just one state's carceral system. The space is empty. There are so many people that couldn't be here. This isn't about white guilt. This is a reflection of what I have seen, reformed and repurposed to be better understood. The system has failed us. But it hasn't failed me, and I'm the system. I make art because I can't change those truths without acknowledging them.

It's that when you try to reason
with yourself whether what you're
doing is right



WHERE IS THE GARBAGE? DO YOU KNOW WHERE
I CAN THROW THIS OUT? IT WOULD BE BETTER IF I
COULD RECYCLE IT, IS THAT POSSIBLE? I DON'T WANT
TO HOLD IT, YOU THINK IT'S OKAY IF I JUST DROP IT
ON THE GROUND HERE? IT'S JUST A NAPKIN, IT'LL
DECOMPOSE, OKAY? HOW MANY PIECES OF GARBAGE
WOULD IT TAKE FOR PEOPLE TO NOTICE IT? I GUESS
IT'S DIFFERENT IF THERE ARE DIFFERENT TYPES OF
GARBAGE, SINCE BIGGER PIECES OF TRASH ARE MORE
NOTICEABLE? HOW MANY PIECES WOULD IT TAKE FOR
YOU TO NOTICE? HOW MANY BEDS DOES IT TAKE TO
CONFINE THE EXCESS? 2,500? WHO ARE THE EXCESS?
WHERE DO THEY SLEEP? ARE THEIR BEDS NICE? WHERE
ARE THEY? SHOULD I CARE ABOUT THEM? WHO CARES
ABOUT THEM? ARE THEY NEEDED? WHAT HAPPENS TO
THE PEOPLE THAT KNOW THEM? DO I KNOW THEM? IF
I DON'T KNOW THEM DOES IT MATTER THAT I NOTICE
THAT THEY'RE GONE? EVEN IF I NOTICE, DOES THAT
HELP THEM? HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE ME TO NOTICE?