



Kathy Weaver
2713 Port Clinton Rd.
Highland Park, IL 60035
kweaverarts@comcast.net
www.kweaverarts.com

**Artist's Statement – *Habeas Corpus...The Great Writ*
*Freedom, the Fiber of our Country, Textile Center, Minneapolis, MN***

Using the low-tech tools of a loaded airbrush and a threaded needle, I delve into questions of technological progress and its role in the industrial military complex and rabidly consumerist society. The 21st century allows the artist novel and divergent models for the human narrative. The robot form has been my metaphor to explore these issues.

Habeas Corpus...The Great Writ directly places the robot, now in an orange jumpsuit with black goggles, into our current Guantanamo laced political environment. One of the essential fibers of our legal system is the historical British concept of habeas corpus. Stretching back to prior to the Magna Carta, 1215, habeas corpus is the principle that no person should be imprisoned except by the rule of law. The Magna Carta established the concept that even the King was not above of the law and could not imprison persons unless by the proper laws and procedures.

Because of the abuses of King George III and England, our founding fathers were quite emphatic about our basic rights. With the passage of the Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution, our rights of freedom of speech and religion and the right to petition the government were underlined as guiding principles of our country. The right of a person to seek relief from unlawful detention of himself or another person, habeas corpus or the "Great Writ" as it was referred to in England, became an essential thread in our country's freedom.

Yet, President Bush has taken it up himself to imprison individuals at Guantanamo indefinitely without charges and without legal recourse. These and other individuals were subjected to torture, euphemistically called "aggressive interrogation techniques," by the administration. When challenged in court, our extraordinarily conservative Supreme Court has ruled against the President each time, providing these prisoners with the fundamental rights associated with our country's history. The Syllabus, or summary, of the most recent Supreme Court ruling, *Boumediene et al v. Bush* is found on the rear of the fiber piece and ruled that detainees at Guantanamo Bay are entitled to the protection of the Fifth Amendment right not to be deprived of liberty without due process of law and of the Geneva Conventions.

This piece protests the profound detour taken by the Bush administration, a detour from our glorious heritage of freedom and basic human rights. Hopefully, these rights will be restored and our democracy, the fiber of our nation, will once again be respected at home and abroad as a country where the rule of law governs and no person is imprisoned without habeas corpus and the right to defend him or herself.

Kathy Weaver, July 2008