

# Why burn books?

Every book has its own flame and pace. The fire is comforting and warm. When I burn a book, it is part of a ritual born from years of practice that is based loosely on the Hindu poojah performed at temples that involve the burning of coconut shells. The media is a strong source of fuel. The flame is a change agent. The book starts out as a tactile object, the flame is deliberately introduced, it deconstructs back into paper and to ink in an exchange for energy and ash. This book could save your life one day.

The books salvaged to burn are selected with rigorous criteria; Sick books, moldy books, contagious books, books with cracked spines, overprints, outdated reference books. I like to think a Master's in Library Science gives me a license to burn the same way a doctor is licensed to practice medicine. Besides, I publish books too. I've made thousands more books than I'll ever burn.

Burning books is a great space to work in. It's evocative and often considered controversial. Knee jerk reactions consider it censorship and akin to Nazi fascism. This is exactly the baggage I'm trying to shed. The ideas and images instilled in the collective conscious by the mass media have too much influence. It hinders our ability to think independently about what it is we see, how we live, in our imMEDIAted surroundings. The books go up as part of a beautiful celebration in the caring hands of a bibliophile.

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