



Artist Statement

I am an artist, art writer and educator from Chicago, currently based in Michigan and Ohio. I began my career in metalsmithing and fibers, focusing on the conceptual potential of functional objects. It is through this background that I gained a deep fascination with the diaristic capacity of everyday items; even the most mundane things have the ability to reveal truths about the social systems of which they are a product. In this way, banal objects such as clothing from a thrift store, children's toys, and national flags can be seen as keys to our collective psyche; they contain the story of our past mistakes, our current woes, and our hopes for the future.

Through my work, I investigate the complexity of American identity in the 21st century, and how that identity is made manifest through visual language. Like many symbols, those associated with American identity are both sacred and profane in nature. As a sacred object, the American flag is used to cover the caskets of fallen soldiers, but as a profane image it is used as a print for bikinis, bumper stickers, even toilet paper. A gun can be associated with the founding of the United States and the sacred duty of police officers to protect their community; yet this symbol is also fraught, bearing with it a history of institutional violence and brutal subjugation.

While visual symbols are often imagined to be immutable, they are in fact shifting signifiers whose meaning changes according to context, and how one interprets these symbols is often used as a way to delineate between social groups. Besides being reductive and potentially dangerous, this method of categorization can show the extreme limitation of these American icons. Complex ideas, emotions, and histories deserve complex symbols. Using the vocabulary of surrealism and pop-art, I deconstruct, combine, and repurpose this American visual shorthand, creating objects which seem frozen in transition, caught between contradictory states of being. By destroying, investigating, and ultimately rebuilding common symbols associated with American identity, I aim to question the relationship between signifier and signified, image and object, sacred and profane.