

Project Statement: Good Intentions (2009-2011) Statement date: 7-05-26

Good Intentions is a series of paintings and sculptures that grew from ironic, ambiguous gestures of generosity I observed in public while living in Italy. Each work traces a layered process: an observed incident → my invented narrative about it → a family reenactment carried out from abroad → photographic documentation sent back to me → my interpretation and translation into a final image or object. The distance and translation inherent in this method make the works about perception, miscommunication, and the unreliability of generous acts.

Method

- I witnessed small, puzzling public scenes and imagined explanations for them.
- Instead of reenacting the scenes myself, I narrated the scenarios to family members overseas; their performances and photos became my source material.
- The final paintings and sculptures are thus twice removed: filtered first through my speculation, then through my family's interpretation, and finally through my artistic reconstruction.

Selected works

- Good Intentions #1 (O Holy Night): In Florence's main piazza, carolers are interrupted when two Santas—both in charge—begin arguing loudly. The confrontation undercuts the festive moment and leaves the crowd stunned. The work examines how public ritual can collapse into farce.
- Good Intentions #2 (Mama Needs a New Pair O' Shoes): From a fourth-floor window, a man tosses strappy heels to a gypsy below. The gift appears mismatched to the recipient's needs and context; the act's theatricality calls the sincerity of the gesture into question.
- Good Intentions #3 (The Calling): In a Neapolitan church with visible confessionals, a priest answers a phone while a woman confesses. His casual demeanor suggests an ordinary social call, rendering the sacred moment strangely mundane and comic.
- Good Intentions #4 (Dammi i Sacchi): Two American shoppers hand over designer bags to an Italian-speaking gypsy despite a clear language barrier, then exchange a high-five and part ways. The exchange resists a single reading: is it generosity, coercion, performance, or mutual incomprehension?

Sculptures and aesthetic

- The sculptural works, created last in the series, render these encounters as slightly clumsy, awkward objects—formal echoes of the social discomfort they represent. Their roughness and comic strain mirror the uncertain, unresolved motivations behind each gesture.
- Across the series, the contiguous themes are ambiguity, translation (linguistic and interpretive), and the uneasy border between altruism and spectacle.

Ultimately, Good Intentions asks: when generosity becomes performance—or when language and context break down—how do we read the moral weight of an action?