

My Designs In American Identity pieces explore what it should mean to live in this country of immigrants. I take designs from cultures that have a presence here in the U.S. and paint the designs on both sides of a transparent mylar sheet. On one side I have the original colors, and the other is at least partially in the red, white, and blue of the American flag. By harmonizing these compositions, my hope is to show that we can live harmoniously in this country as well.

My Family Album Series is about trying to capture that fleeting sense of familial connections through the time-bound things that many families collect to spur those memories-- snapshots, old linens, and sometimes buttons and other sewing notions. Some people see this stuff as junk to cart away to the Goodwill, but to me they are golden.

When I was growing up my Grandmother, whom we called Nana, taught me how to quilt. We made a small quilt for my dolls-- I think I probably still have it somewhere even after many moves. She gave me my first sewing box too. It was a re-purposed handbag made of straw that caught my eye in the supermarket one day. Learning from her is one of the most cherished memories of my childhood. I also learned to do embroidery at the YMCA one summer in camp as a kid.

I include all these elements in my handkerchief pieces. The very first handkerchiefs I used for these works came from my Father. After he passed my Mother gave me his collection of handkerchiefs. These had a rich patina of memory for me because I recall him going to church every Sunday with one of them in his lapel pocket to set off his suit. He had about 20 or so of them. I set them aside for about eight years, not sure of just what to do with them. In this series I want to explore family photos both contemporary and those that pre-date me. The old pictures of my immediate family especially fascinate me. Who were these people-- my relatives-- who are so young and full of life's promise before I came along and they were suddenly old? How I am coping with their loss, now that my generation is suddenly in charge and in my parents' place?

The embroidery, my button collection, the photos, and the handkerchiefs are all important parts of this mix; I consider each piece a page of my family album, and I also have expanded that idea to include my painted version of photos of friends and their families. I also think of each piece as a block from a quilt. In the past I have displayed them that way. Nod to my Nana.