

Lauren Careese Alexander End Term Artist Statement F23

Growing up biracial meant that I existed between one culture and the other. I am able to portray my liminal existence and understand feelings of otherness that have haunted my everyday life through mixed media paintings and fragmented ceramic vessels. This series of work is a reflection on memories and a representation of my current self.

The memories of my adolescent years are not as concrete or trustworthy as I would like them to be. The mixed media paintings are composed of scraps of unstretched canvas and linen, delicately held aloft by strands of crocheted wire and ribbon, to convey the delicate nature of my fleeting memories. The imagery in the paintings comes from photographs, objects I can trust, and from what I can remember, which is often unreliable. The ceramic vessels are sculpted, cut up, and then reassembled before or after the firing process. Both the paintings and ceramics are composed of different pieces assembled together to highlight the disjointed and disorienting experience of living in a space occupied by two cultures and their combatting ideals. By combining different colors, textures, patterns, images, and symbolism, I am able to describe what it feels like to live in a biracial body.

Kintsugi (“golden joinery”), my initial influence, is a Japanese technique to repair broken pottery in a way that highlights its history, rather than attempting to cover it up. However, I am more interested in artist Glenn Martin Taylor’s approach to kintsugi; to reassemble broken pottery with barbed wire, scissors, spikes, fabrics, nails, and many other harsh materials. *Don’t Love Me* by Glenn Martin Taylor, *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, and the painted story-telling quilts of Faith Ringgold are three guiding inspirations for this current body of work. The pieced-together work of Glenn Martin Taylor as well as the pieced-together “Monster” from *Frankenstein*, who never feels as if he belongs or could ever belong anywhere, helped me to understand better my own existence where I often feel in-between and as if I am a piecing-together of two different cultures. Secondly, Faith Ringgold’s story-telling quilts, looking through old photographs of my childhood, and dwelling on fuzzy memories as they resurface guided me toward the more representational series of mixed media paintings.