

Lauren Careese Alexander Artist Statement

Growing up biracial meant that I existed between one culture and the other. I portray this liminal existence and the feelings of otherness that it has caused through *Memory Webs* and fragmented ceramic vessels. This series of work is a reflection on memories and a representation of my current self.

I create my *Memory Webs*, 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, which are not as concrete or trustworthy as I would like them to be. The imagery in the paintings comes from photographs, objects I can trust, and from what I can remember, which is often unreliable.

I make ceramic vessels that are sculpted, cut up, and then reassembled before or after the firing process. The *Memory Webs* and ceramics are composed of pieces assembled 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 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 where he reassembles broken pottery with barbed wire, scissors, spikes, fabrics, nails, and 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 my existence where I often feel in-between, 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 *Memory Webs*. My art is where I take the pieces from my disjointed, confused identity and find ways to mend the gaps, to piece myself together, and to quilt my memories into the tapestry of my life.