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What Is It Like To Be A Problem?

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Abstract

In this thesis paper I explore the factors contributing to my current art making. I investigate motivations behind my practice in an exploration of conceptual and narrative experience that create its foundation and background.

I will notate the development and exhibit examples of my current works in relation to the past three years of MFA research. I will discuss the Arab "problem," and through five installation artworks focus on memories of situations in my family and the Pittsburgh Arab community. Throughout the paper I will include current contemporary artists working with similar media and references in social and political environments.

"WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A PROBLEM?"

by

Chelsey Albert

Art Education, Ceramics, BA Carlow University, 2013

Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts in Ceramics.

Syracuse University

June 2018

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Chelsey Albert 2018. Picture Day

Artist Statement

My work integrates memory, audio, and interview as a platform for social change. The recent artworks incorporate ceramics and mixed media. The subject matter documents both the lives of my mixed Arab family and the Arab American community. My installations and figures act as a visual diary of the current political climate in America and taboos associated with Arab culture. Through my installations, I try to humanize the Arab population and bring attention to the violence and hatred they encounter daily.

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Background and Memories

I am one of five children from a mixed Arab European family. My father's side is from Beirut, Lebanon and Aleppo, Syria. My mother is French-Nordic, a white blond-haired woman with ice blue eyes. I am the only one out of my five siblings that look like her. Culture is everything to my family, my father's culture being the more dominant of the two worlds. The women carry on their tradition through behavior, etiquette and food; however, tradition is a relic of our grandparent's own memories of a country that they once knew, not the country that the modern day people would recognize. Culture to us is preservation of our ancestors, a museum culture of the children of immigrants.

"Without memory, there is no culture. Without memory, there would be no civilization, no society, no future." - Elie Wiesel ¹

Early Work: Legacy

In an earlier artwork titled **Legacy**, I created a ceramics and wall vinyl diorama of the life of my immigrant Syrian grandfather. My grandfather, John Albert (Haddad), and his family, were immigrants from Aleppo, Syria. Through this diorama I use semiotics with ceramic objects that dictate meaningful markers of him as a person. He died prematurely when I was three years old. The only memories I have of him are just a blur. What I know of him is mostly from stories I heard about him from other members of my family. I try to imagine what he must have been like or who he was. This artwork helped me to honor him, and also to humanize a population, shedding light on many who are seen as undesirable from his region given current world issues. Where many are being denied citizenship, he never took it for granted and had great pride in this country. For those we now call refugees and for those we see as less than human, all have a story and a legacy. I see my family, I see dedication. I am his legacy, displaying his life like my own personal museum of cultural memory.



Legacy, An Immigrant's Untold Story, 10/2016 ceramic, vinyl, luster, underglaze, cold finish, wire and lace.

The ideas of culture and memory are also exemplified through the work of artist Akio Takamori. He writes:

"I create my figures from memories. I examine and visualize the meaning of scale, space, material and dimension of my memories. I refer my work to the historical drawings of Eastern Asia and turn great focus towards the grouping of figures, as well as the relationship between the oriental paper and ink, and how it compares to the clay and underglaze of my work."

-Akio Takamori



Left: Akio Takamori, Memory of Women, 2001 ceramic and underglaze Right: Equivalents, 2006 ceramic and underglaze

Akio, like myself, has a reverence for his memories and culture. He derives his works from his past experiences. How he addresses his figures through underglaze and paper

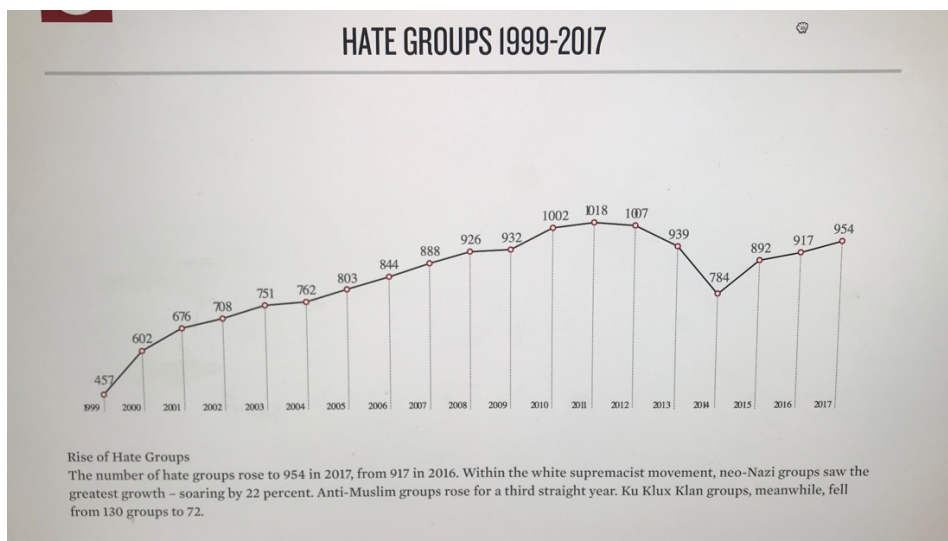
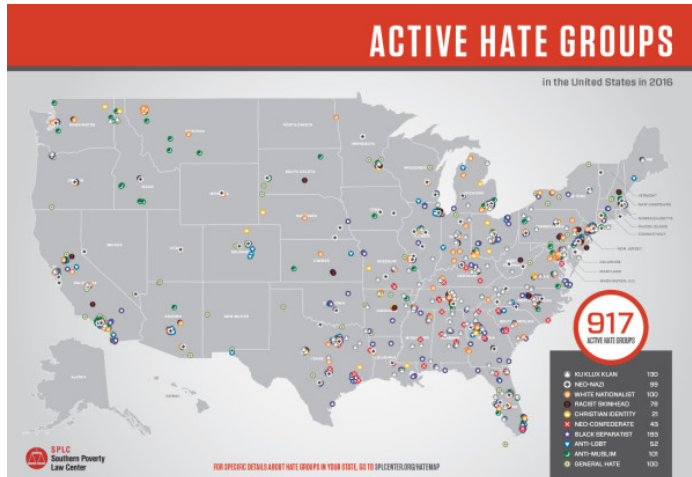
and ink is similar to my own painted surfaces and convictions. One of the earliest art experiences and memories that I have, is with paper, made with my neighborhood art class. It took place at my best friend Ann Zhou's house. Paper ink drawings, watercolor classes, and traditional Asian art techniques were my early interactions with cultural art practices underlined by Akio Takamori.

Collecting figurines was a very big custom in our family. They marked a special time, a celebration, birthday, holiday or mourning the loss of a loved one. They were makers of milestones and, although little, they were valuable. The armament of a collection my family had was staggering and together, told a story and celebrated the progression of life. Often, I enjoy using figurines in my work because I feel that they do just that: create small intimate lenses into a person's life or memory. They create something tangible to hold in the palm of your hand and ponder. I sometimes incorporate figurines and take-away objects so the viewer can take the memory with them.

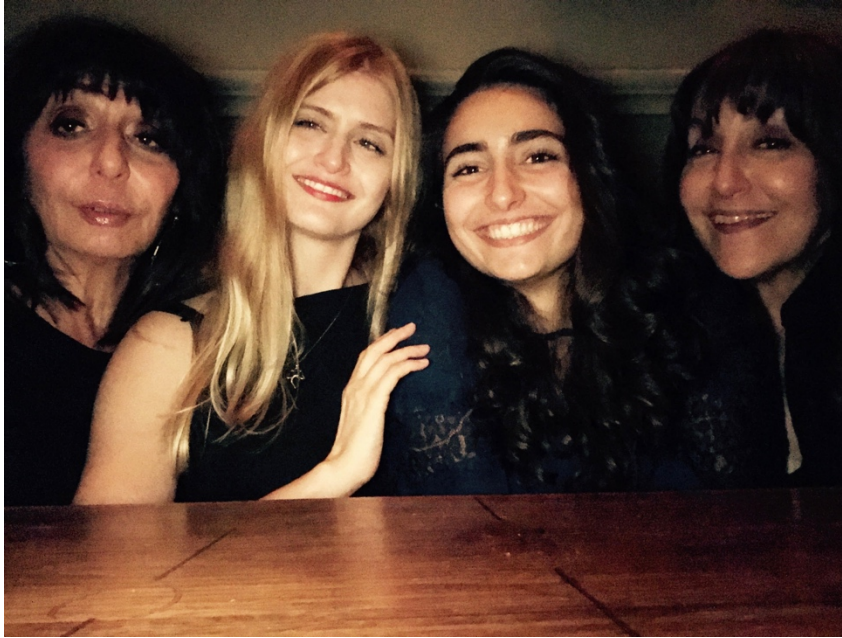
Akio likes to use historical drawings of eastern Asia, while my references differ, given my middle eastern background. Instead of using Asian drawings, I draw my inspiration from my own photographs, experiences and other personally relevant narrative source.

The Arab Problem in America And in My Life

Since 9/11, people in America have been afraid of Arab "terrorists" and Arab "phobia" is rampant. Under such circumstances outsider and marginalized groups are presented as no longer citizens or community members but are reimagined as problems. Then action, often of horrific proportion, follows. Hitler solved the Jewish "problem." Violence against innocent marginalized bystanders continues to be on the rise. See for example the statistics and evidence by The Southern Poverty Law Center.



My only little sister is 19 and just starting college where she is exposed to contradictory opinions of what life in America is today. She and I are very different in appearance: Maria has the physical traits of how one would describe an Arab woman. I look the complete opposite as a blond haired, green eyed American beauty ideal. At times, I feel that all I can do is watch from afar as my younger sister is confronted by the hatred of a community that is apprehensive due to the impact of social media, politics and current world events.



My Sister, Aunts and I. 10/ 2017

My work is a reflection of my hopes for my sister as well as my other three siblings. It also reflects the fears I have for them due to America's growing hostility towards ethnic groups. As Americans, we have been privileged with where we were born and I have a naïve belief that our country of birth will keep us safe. Since 9/11, there has been a gradual crescendo that has marginalized my family as an undesirable in this country as an Arab American. Before 9/11 I felt safe, comfortable and had national pride, now there are no guarantees.

How does it feel to be young and Arab in America today? How does it feel to be treated like a "problem?" In my current artwork, **Then and Now, Conversations** and **Hiding in Plain Sight**, I include memories from growing up in a mixed ethnic Arab European household. The works cover a series of family and world events from 2001 to the present day. Through my installations I want to challenge the stereotypes and taboos of Muslim and Arab ethnicity. I want to inspire more young women and men to come forward and share their stories. All voices deserve to be heard.



Sisters Pittsburgh 2001-Alleppo 2017, 11/ 2017, ceramic, concrete, gilded gold, home video, cast concrete.

Then and Now Works: Sisters Pittsburgh 2001-Alleppo 2017

This piece confronts current life in Syria and relates to what it is like for those who are Syrian. On the left there is a home video of my little sister when she was four years old singing the first song she had learned to sing, " God Bless America." This is contrasted with the figure on the right of a Syrian child standing amidst the rubble of her city Aleppo. My grandfather had originally immigrated from Aleppo, Syria. It makes me really think how time changes everything. No one knew who Syrians were, and Arabs were invisible before 9/11. Had my grandfather tried to immigrate to America today, I am positive he would have had a much different result. I connect these two girls because their uniforms for school were the same as mine and my sister's when growing up. Even though we live in different areas of the world we are both Syrian. The weight of suffering on current Syrians, their feelings of helplessness, particularly for those in my grandfather's hometown, is a heavy burden upon my family. It's a hollowing feeling recognizing, for an instant, that in different circumstances it could be us, war torn and suffering like this little girl.

"An apple fell to the ground and Newton discovered the Law of Gravity. Thousands of Syrians fall and no one has discovered humanity." -Shaykh Zahir Mahmood

"Our nation is currently echoing messages of hate, xenophobia, oppression and inequality. As an immigrant, I have experienced these impressions and the challenges of my upbringing and adapting to a foreign culture, language, and lifestyle. As an artist I feel that I have the responsibility to address the issues that affect my community and to create awareness and propose actions through my art" -Salvador Jiménez Flores



Salvador Jimenez Flores, *No One Discovered The Americas*, 2016, ceramic, luster, dirt, vinyl, wood.

Salvador Jiménez Flores' art practice is informed by historical revisionism and explores the themes of colonization, migration whether voluntary or involuntary, stereotypes and cultural appropriation. He is interested in events that have shaped the United States throughout history and the people in it. In his work **No One Discovered the Americans**, he explores questions about what it means to discover or be discovered and what are the consequences of the imposition of religion, language, and culture on the people discovered. The discovered group, such as the indigenous people of the United States, were pushed out of their homes and land. Salvador Jimenes Flores work connects to mine because we both work through visual and cultural syncretism by using portrait series. We also combine imagery that is relevant to our different cultures, as well as using current imagery and symbols in a hybridized form. Salvador is an immigrant and I am different in that my grandparents were immigrants. Still, I feel that being an Arab American, I have a responsibility to address the issues that affect my community and to create an awareness of what's going on in this current political climate.

I can relate my work "**Sisters Pittsburgh 2001- Aleppo 2017**" to his piece "**No One Discovered the Americas**" due to the color palette of the figures and the subject matter. Both of us explore our ethnicity and culture and stereotypes of them present in mainstream American culture. I can connect my work with his as we are both addressing current world theme concerns. I wish to highlight the refugee crisis in Syria and the need for immigration reform with my installations. In his work, and in my installation, the figures are white like ghosts. On the wall and on the opposite side of the work, on the window, is a cut out of a person. In the creation of the United States there are other individuals and peoples that are invisible in our United States history. Both our work represents these invisible populations. The native people of Flores' America were wiped out, pushed under the rug, and forgotten. I feel that the Syrian population from my grandfather family's hometown of Aleppo is being put through similar circumstances. Today there is nothing but ghost-towns, invisible to the outside world. Syrians are both visible as a "problem," and invisible in their humanity and "other" who nobody wants to deal with. From perspectives of an Arab American it seems as if the world at large would rather turn a blind eye and wipe them off the face of the earth than give them a shot of humanity or welcome them as refugees. The dirt that he has painted on his installation wall shows that these "others" and indigenous people hold the Americas on their backs. My dirt and the concrete in my installation is different because it is on the floor. Even though our placement of media is different I feel that the overall similarities of our creative process is revealed in comparing them.



Then and Now, Jonathan Albert: Picture Day 9/11/2001- 9/11/2017, ceramic, cast concrete, cold finishes, school board, photograph.

Then and Now Jonathan Albert: Picture Day 9/11/2001-9/11/2017

*"I got my hat turned backwards because the sun don't shine here,
loose jeans to fit all this baggage that I carry,
Strong Arms from all baggage that I buried.
Shackle-free, I turn tragedy to triumph,
I'm thankful for struggles in life and being free to make art about them."* Roberto Lugo

It was September 11, 2001. I was sick at home with the flu and I watched it all on television. It was picture day at South Fayette middle school. I saw with my own eyes on TV as the plane hit the World Trade Center. It didn't even look real, just something like a Saturday morning cartoon. My brother was at school that day. My mother brought me in to get my picture taken and we didn't quite realize the gravity of the situation. At South Fayette Middle School, parents were taking their kids home from school.

Everyone was in a mass panic. My brother did not realize why he had to go home from school. My brother always liked school. That happy, fun-loving boy changed that day. Everybody knew that we were Middle Eastern and where we were from. After 9/11, kids at school would tease my brother and say "you better look out or he'll fly a plane into the school. They would say you should just kill yourself before the government finds you and takes you and your family away." The fun and carefree brother that I knew was gone the day after these events took place. He became a quiet recluse who would at any chance, deny his heritage and just say: " I'm just Irish, I'm just Irish. I am not those people. I am not like the ones who flew a plane into the World Trade Center, I don't even know how to fly a plane."

My brother's demeanor has never really changed since then. His trust in people grew less and less and he never even had a girlfriend in high school. My brother still lives at home with my mother. He ended up getting scholarships and became a computer engineer. He has one friend named Ben and his closest friends are my siblings. Around the time he graduated from The University of Pittsburgh he had the most long and beautiful ethnic black hair. During his pursuit of a job, everyone would ask what his ethnic background was instead of his qualifications. He was afraid that he would not get a job if he expressed the physical traits associated with his ethnic background. Even though his hair was everything to him and a part of his identity, he decided to get it cut so that he would look more American and be more hireable. He was hired by MS Consultants and they're paying for his master's degree. I hope that one day my brother is happy and finds someone else other than my mother, sister and brother to make him happy. I hope he can embrace who he is. I hope that he takes his experiences and instead of letting them hold him back, that he embraces them as a strength.

It's not easy looking like an Arab. My brother says." *Every portrait my mother tries to take of me looks like a mug shot and like the people who blew up The World Trade Center.*" My brother hates getting his picture taken. Within this artwork, I felt it was important to include a photograph of my brother before and after his hair was being cut. To my family members it's a handsome photograph of my brother marking his transition to manhood. To my brother, it's just a mugshot.

Regardless of the other events that happened after 9/11, factual evidence shows, **2,000** Arab American people were incarcerated based upon their ethnicity and their religious background alone. The deportations of citizens with green cards and others who had all the right paperwork and every right to be in this country was barbaric and unconstitutional. The emotional strain and mental abuse has touched many families and people of the Arab community that are US citizens. Before 9/11, in the year 2000, the census, for the first time ever, you had the option to check your ethnicity as a Middle Eastern. My family along with **1,697,570** Arabs were registered as a result of the 2000 census. With this information people were interrogated, phones were tapped and their constitutional rights were obstructed. What the Bush administration did to United States citizens and all those who had every right to be in this country, was illegal. These events fuel my making process. I want to use these memories and parts of history within my work so we are not to repeat this again in this current political time of upheaval and Trumpian rhetoric of racism.

There are a lot of people in this world that are perceived differently based upon the color of their skin and appearance alone. The effects vary by the degree of obvious ethnic identifiers. Pigmentation can even affect whether someone gets hired or denied other basic inalienable rights that one has by living and being a citizen in this country. Roberto Lugo's artist practices align with my own in that we both express our political activism through ceramics. He brings to light, and honors, those who are undesirable within this country: those of lower economical status, people of color. He also explores in his work the current injustices that occur to those in the news today.



Roberto Lugo The Expulsion of Colin Kaepernick and John Brown, 2017, Porcelain, china paint, luster

"My life's story takes shape in the form of teapots, poetry, murals, rap, artist talks, and sheer acts of activism. I teach communities to make mosaic murals that pay homage to those killed in their neighborhood streets; promoting equality by exhibiting the same respect for the lost people of the ghetto in the same way Christian saints were paid tribute in renaissance Italy. It takes courage to talk about what happens behind closed doors. When I speak of my experience, someone might say, "I didn't know anyone else went through that or felt that way too".- Roberto Lugo

The above work of Roberto Lugo depicts a very public figure, Colin Kaepernick, a football player, who decided to use silent protest and kneel during the national anthem before a game on August 26, 2016. As a result of his act, this man can no longer get a job in the NFL and no one will represent him. He is depicted by Lugo as a martyr with his afro as a saintly crown upon his head incrustated with graffiti. Many questioned his patriotism and thought it was in poor taste to kneel. Kaepernick replied: "There are bodies in the street and people are paid to get away with murder." Both Lugo and I want to bring to light the injustices that plague society today that create people of "otherness".

Through my work, I want these memories and life experiences to show what happens behind closed doors, hiding in plain sight. This cultural struggle that Arabs go through, as well as many other people of color and ethnicity, are valid experiences and it is important to speak up and out about the injustice that is plaguing many marginalized ethnicities within America and the world today.



Then and Now, Maria Albert Naïve Patriotism 07/04/2001-12/2017 ceramic, cast concrete, astroturf, picket fence, audio, books, clothing, photography.

Then and Now Maria Albert Naïve Patriotism 07/04/2001- 12/2017

When we are young, we are taught in school that regardless of where we were born, our country is the best above all else. We are taught the American dream, the belief that as long as you have a heart you can accomplish anything and that all people are welcome. My great grandmother and aunts immigrated to New York, landing on Ellis Island, from Beirut, Lebanon. My Great Grandmother Ann would repeat what was written on the Statue of Liberty to me when I was growing up: *"Give me your tired your poor your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free the wretched refuse of your teeming shore tempest tossed to me I lift my lamp beside the golden door. "*

I was taught a love for country, love for God and a hope for fairness within our judicial system. The first song my little sister ever learned how to sing was "God Bless America." There's something beautiful about watching a four-year-old sing that song with passion, with purity, and with the innocence of a child. I interviewed my sister in December 2017 and asked if she still feels that same way about the same country that wants to deny refugees from our grandfather's Syria, a country that now treats her like a "problem". When Maria walks down the street people are afraid of what she might do based upon her appearance alone. When people meet my sister the first thing that they ask her is where are you from? *"Where am I from, I was born here, I was born in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania at St. Clair Hospital."* *"No, they reply where are you really from?"* My sister says that while growing up she was very confused about her cultural identity and ethnic background because she felt that others were labeling her as Mexican, or African-American, or Indian. Anything but what she actually was: an Arab American. The little girls from India would follow my sister around in school because my mother refused to cut her beautiful black hair.

She reflects why, *"I guess there are certain ethnic markers that you just never know until you ask somebody about it."* In the interview we talk about life, and what it's like to be an Arab woman today in this current political climate. She talks about how she believes we can achieve social change. She says, *"Chelsey, culture and ethnicity are not just black-and-white. You can't always tell when you look at a person. Some are easily identified. I think it's silly that Americans are so caught up in labels and of where you come from or your ethnic background. I didn't even care or even wanted to voice*

where my grandparents came from until 9/11. I didn't think I had to. Aren't we all Americans anyhow?"

At the present time, my sister is going to Washington & Jefferson University for linguistics. The sculpture of her differs from my other works with concrete because it is a present day representation. The colorful blouse is one of her favorites, it symbolizes the life and the breath that she feels with her culture and that she is drawing upon from the past to build her future. The white books symbolize the purity of knowledge and the hope and possibility for a better future through education.

With my figures I draw inspiration from the artist Cristina Cordova.



Cristina Cordova, Jungla, photograph polyptych, ceramic 2017 . Dame Flores, 2018 Ceramic & steel

"Córdova's work is eerie and introspective; her characters often seem melancholic and displaced. They are representations of complex beings isolated within some mysterious drama and immersed in dreamy insularity. Often the serious content of the work is at odds with the expressions on the faces. Her series of heads of women, some with flowers in their hair, are simply decorative and represent a celebration of Puerto Rican life and tradition. She does not translate the Spanish titles because she feels that the language she pulls from is

colloquial and nuanced and often does not translate specifically word for word without losing something." (Ceramic Arts Network 1).

Cordova and I both reference complicated political relationships between the United States and our countries of origin. The serious content of my figures work, like Cordova's, is of contrast to the facial expressions on my figures. In my work I hope to continue working on this life size scale. I feel that given the aesthetic and material choices I made, my work is on a similar path to that of Cordova's.



Conversations: Culture versus Religion, Orjwan and Esra 12/2017, ceramic, concrete, audio interview, cast concrete, cloth.



Conversations: Culture versus Religion, Orjwan and Esra 12/2017, ceramic, concrete, audio interview, cast concrete, cloth.

Conversations: Culture versus Religion, Orjwan & Esra

The project is ongoing and growing. My "Conversations" series address not only aspects of my culture, but my friends and community as well. I am a granddaughter of immigrants and because I grew up in a mixed Syrian, Lebanese, and Nordic household. Community is important to me, regardless of creed and origin. My family welcomed all people into their home. My parents have hosted several Saudi Arabians in our home, making them feel safe as they pursue their education. Esra and Orjwan are my friends. There is a lot of fear and anger in this current political climate associated with the Hijab and with Arab culture. Through my installation I want to break the stereotypical images and taboos associated with these variations of ethnicities. All voices deserve to be heard.

I want to educate others to the multifaceted aspects of cultures through interactive audio and active participation through tea ceremony.



Manal AlDowayan, *Esmi-My Name*, Medium: Maple wood beads with natural wool rope hand made by beduin women. Sizes 4 meters long. 2012

Manal AlDowayan's work also is used to empower women of the middle eastern population. My work **Conversations** deals with similarities of AlDowayan's representation of Saudi Arabian women. Manal AlDowayan's work uses multiple mediums and encompasses black and white photography, sculpture, video, sound, neon and large-scale participatory installations. Her artistic themes include active forgetting, archives, and collective memory, with a large focus on the state of Saudi women and their representation.

"She has documented social groups like the oil men and women of Saudi Arabia in her project, **If I Forget You Don't Forget Me**, and has addressed the impact of mass media on propagating intentional erasing of identities in her project *Crash*, highlighting the unnamed Saudi teachers dying in car crashes across Saudi Arabia. Her participatory projects have attracted hundreds of women to use art as a new platform to address social injustice like **Tree of Guardians**, **Esmi-My Name**, and **Suspended Together**."

- Manal AlDowayan

Conclusion

The content of my artwork is a fusion of family stories, history, religion, politics, and Arab culture and it is driven by my life experiences. I take an interdisciplinary approach with my work by choosing the media that will best fit the idea I am trying to convey. As an artist, I feel I have the responsibility to address the issues that affect my community and to create an awareness of the experiences of an immigrant family, my work is a critique of " Arab problem, " and how physical looks are perceived in America today.

What does it mean to be young and Arab in America today? The popular image we hold of American youth, in general, is one of carefree living, a time of breezy self-indulgences and creative self –inventions. This is the stage of life to be treasured, because it is far away from the pressures of adult responsibilities and the burdens of politics. But the stories of many suggest that being young and being Arab Urban American, can never be so simple. The “war on terror” encroaches on young Arab and Muslim Americans and complicates their lives as they are often invisible to the general public. Hiding in plain sight, young Arab and Muslim Americans chase fate in a volatile mixture of fear, suspicion, curiosity, and misunderstanding within society's framework, all the while seeking to discover who they are. In these times Arab youth have to deal with the slew of new realities uncomfortably born out of the age we are living in.

" The people in the middle east dictate the direction of their lives, as the pendulum swings of federal law-enforcement, now completely overhauled to terrorism prevention. Even in high school, with all its highs and lows becomes not nearly a popularity contest but a political trial of tolerance and respect. In this rocky terrain, young Arab and Muslim Americans are forging their lives as the newest minority in the American imagination, in their circumstances, and out of their actions, they are also shaping the contours of the future American society and they don't always succeed in their efforts. The human drama, their predicament has now become, a part of what it means to be an American."
(Mustafa Bayoumi, pg. 259-260)

My experiences as an Arab American inform my Arab American history. With my education in critical theory, art education, art history, and ceramics I have developed a studio practice that communicates with various diverse audiences. I strive to bring art to

those that do not believe they need to see it and engage in deeper ways of informing, knowing, learning and thinking.

In the future I wish to develop these projects on a larger scale engaging my ethnic community to come forward and tell their stories. I aim to create work and leave a public art installation in every city that I travel to, my ambitious hopes are to touch every state of the United States.



Chelsey Albert 2017. Conversations: Culture Versus Religion, Esra & Orjwan

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Chelsey A Albert

EDUCATION

Carlow University, Pittsburgh, PA

Bachelor of Arts in Education

PA Certifications: Bachelors of Fine Arts Education

Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY

Masters of Fine Arts in Ceramics

STUDY ABROAD

Denmark, International Woodfire Ceramic Symposium & Workshop 7/2010-8/2010

- Pizza Kiln build at Guldagergaard - International Ceramic Research Center
- Created ceramic teapots, and other various ceramic works and assisted in an anagama Woodfire
- Coordinated wood-firing shifts, maintained detailed kiln log, ect.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teacher Assistant for Linda Zhang, Architecture, Mold Making and Slip Casting 01/18-05/2018

- Demonstrated through various demos in casting and moldmaking, mold technical support, clay slip formulations and color variations
- Assisting in all firings, class prep work, aiding students one on one casting and mold making instruction
- Installing, casting, mold designer, casting slip formulator for the Boghosian monument exhibition and architecture symposium

Hand-building Ceramic Instructor, Syracuse University 08/27- 12/15/2017

- Facilitated and managed art lessons, tools and materials in the art room.
- Taught Ceramic Hand building foundations to undergraduates
- Demonstrated through various demos in ceramics (coil, slab, pinch), surface decoration (scraffito, mishima, underglaze) glazing techniques, kiln firing (electric, gas, raku)

Sculpture Instructor, Talent Agency, Warehouse, Syracuse University 07/11- 08/18/2017

- Facilitated and managed art lessons, tools and materials in the art room.
- Taught sculpture foundations to high school students that builds their portfolio to get ready for college
- Demonstrated and thought various demos in ceramics, mold making, silicone mold making, alienate casting, wax casting, plaster work, mixed media sculpture: wire, cardboard, tape and lights.

Teacher Assistant for Margie Hughto, Hand Building, Syracuse University 01/2017-05/2017

- Scheduling and Firing Kilns
- Assisting in classroom prep-work, aiding students, one on one hand building demonstrations

Teacher Assistant for Alberto Veronica, Mold Making & Slip Casting, Syracuse University 01/2016-05/2016

- Facilitated and managed art lessons, tools and materials in the art room.
- Demonstrated and taught various ceramic demos in mold making, slip fabrication and sculpting.

Teacher Assistant for Errol Willett, Hand Building, Syracuse University

- Assisting in classroom prep-work, tools, materials in the art room, aiding students

Stray Cat Studio, Ceramic Workshops, Beaver Falls, PA 10/2013- 08/2015

- Facilitated and managed art lessons, tools and materials in the art room.
- Demonstrated and taught various ceramic demos in hand-building, sculpting and wheel throwing.

Substitute Teacher, ParaEducator, South Fayette School District, McDonald, PA 08/2012-08/2015

Manchester Craftsman Guild, Ceramic Workshop, Pittsburgh, PA 11/2012

9th -12th Grade

- Created 4 phases of sculpting human figure cups beginning with design sketching, integrating the 2D to 3D language and techniques of art teachers

Upper Saint Clair School District, Student Teacher, Upper St. Clair, PA 2/2013-5/2013

- Establish and Achieve learning targets Grades k-8
- Facilitated and managed all art lessons, assignments and materials in the art room

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Kiln Technician for Syracuse University Ceramic Department 08/2016-06/2017

- Fired work for all classes
- Repair kilns and installing elements
- Firing of gas kilns
- Blauw kiln programing and firing

Teacher, Society for Contemporary Craft, Pittsburgh, PA October 2017

- Taught adult students mold making and slip casting
- Students brought in found objects, thrown objects to make molds. Then cast multiple molds to assemble contemporary functional objects.

Carnegie Museum of Art, Assistant Teacher, Art Connection, Pittsburgh, PA 5/2008- 8/2010

- Assist and taught 5th- 9th grade students art concepts and activities
- Students explore galleries and identify key art concepts and express their creativity through their sketches and projects

Assistant Teacher, Summer Camp, Dance Your Art Out, Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, PA

Assist and Taught art and dance activities with children ages 4-8 to assist in summer enrichment

Carlow University, Studio Tech, Ceramic Assistant, Pittsburgh PA 2009- 2013

- Assist in studio duties, firing kilns: gas, wood, electric, soda, ect.
- Demonstrate various ceramic demos in Hand-building, wheel throwing, figurative sculpting, Woodfire techniques, Soda fire techniques

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Welding: Mig and tig welding certification, wax casting Carnegie Mellon 2006

Fine Metals (Jewelry) CCAC 2009

Wood shop skills

Plastic Fabrications : Thermoplastic, Resin casting, Silicone

Mold making: Alginate life casting, plaster, silicone, slipcasting ceramic

Illustration: figurative, children's books, graphic novels

Digital fabrication: Laser cutter, CNC milling, modeling with Rhino software, 3D printer

KILNBUILDING AND REPAIR

Kiln assistant builder for Ted Neal Soda Kiln, Syracuse, NY	03/31/17-04/05/17
Kiln Technician for Syracuse University Ceramic Department	08/2016-06/2017
Soda Gas Kiln Rebuild Carlow University, Pittsburgh, PA	05/2015
Stray Cat Studio Kiln Repair, Beaver Falls, PA	1/2014
Pizza Kiln Build Clarion University, Clarion, PA	8/2014
Touchstone Kiln Build	9/2012
Kiln Building/ Repair, Clarion, PA Summer	8/2009

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS

Big Fish Small Pot IV, V & VI International Small Teapot Show, American Museum of Ceramic Art, Viejo & Ponom, CA
2/2010-Present

International Wood Fire Symposium Pittsburgh, PA	6/2009-7/2009
International Symposium Denmark	7/2010-8/2010

GROUP SHOWS

Art Aqua, Art Basil, Miami, FL	12/07-/12/10/2018
Hiding in Plain Sight MFA Thesis Exhibition, Community Folk Art Center, Syracuse, NY	04/06- 05/15/2018
Hiding In Plain Sight, MFA Exhibition, Art Helix Brooklyn, NY	03/08/-03/10/2018
Standard Ceramic NCECA Container Show	03/12-03/17/2018
NCECA Carlow Alumni Exhibition, Pittsburgh, PA	03/12-03/17/2018
"Milling", Shoppingtown Mall, Syracuse, NY	12/08/-12/10/2017
"I know what you did last semester", Delavan Center, Syracuse, NY	05/06/2017
Emerging, Hot out of the kiln, Clay Place at Standard, Pittsburgh, PA	05/12-06/12/2017
Made in New York, Schweinfurth Art Center, Auburn, NY	03/24/2017-05/21/2017
"Cheeky, Cheeky, Cheeky," Apostrophe S Gallery, Syracuse, NY	12/01- 12/ 06/ 2016
Hott Stuff, Coyn Gallery, Syracuse, NY	10/10-10/20/2016
Contemporary Ceramics, Edgewood Gallery, Syracuse, NY	10/2015-12/2015
Mentors & Makers, Very Fine Art Gallery, Pittsburgh, PA	08/2015-09/2015
Highland Park Pottery Tour, Pittsburgh, PA	12/2013-Present
The Daily Ritual: The Ceramic Cup Exhibit, Saxonburgh, PA	11/2014-12/2014
Three Rivers Arts Festival, Confluence: New Works, Society of Sculptors Show, 937 Gallery Pittsburgh PA	6/2013
Sculptoberfest, Society of Sculptors Show, ICAG, Pittsburgh, PA	10/2012

FIRINGS

Wolf's Den Pottery Wood Fires, Pittsburgh, PA	05/2011-Present
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Clarion Wood Fires, Clarion, PA 8/2009- Present

Carlow Soda Fires 8/2008-Present

CRAFT FAIRS

37th Annual Pottery Fair, Casinovia Art Tour, Casinovia, NY August 19-20 2017

Highland Park Pottery Tour 12/ 2013- 12/2015

Organic Theater Earth Day Art Festival, Union Project, Pittsburgh, PA 4/2013

Pots in the Park, Arts Fair, Oil City, PA 6/2011

MOSAIC BEAUTIFICATION PROJECTS

Octopus Garden, Community Garden, Assistant, Pittsburgh, PA 07/2013-09/2013

Natrona Mosaic Colonnade History Natrona Heights Park Project, Assistant, Pittsburgh, PA Summer 2011

Carlow Mosaic 9/2010

CONFRENCES

NCECA Conference Philadelphia, PA Tampa, FL, Providence, RI, Kansas City, MO 4/2010- Present

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Shaped Clay Society, Board Member, Poster Designer, Exhibitions, Social Media, Event Planning, Secretary, Syracuse, NY 2015-Present

Society of Sculptors, Board Member, Exhibitions, Social, Social Media, Pittsburgh, PA 2011- Present

HONORS CCAC & Carlow University Deans List 2007-2014

MEMBERSHIPS Shaped Clay Society (2015-Present), Society of Sculptors (2011- Present), PA Student Education Association,(2011-2013); National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts, (2009-Present)

COMPUTER SKILLS GradePlus, Blackboard, SmartBoard, MSWord, PowerPoint, Excel, Access, Photoshop, Illustrator, Rhino

- References provided upon Request