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DISQUIETUDE

Before • During • After

by

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Thesis

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Fine Art
Drawing

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Disquietude: *Before, During, After*

Chairperson: Professor James Bailey

Disquietude explores the wide range of psychological, social, and global ramifications of living in the age of terrorism. The unifying thread that ties the work together is ambiguity: each piece provides a safe haven for each viewer to consider and reflect upon the many emotions and repercussions of terrorism, before, during and after it has happened. The imagery represents the duality we must face in today's climate; life vs. death, security vs. vulnerability, anxiety vs. peace, hope vs. despair. Combining photography, printmaking, encaustic and installation, my aim is to allow a multi-faceted approach to the many ways we interpret the status of our well-being at any given time, amidst a constant barrage of media referencing the last, current or impending attack from terrorists--at home or abroad.

The past two and one half years have allowed me to realize through imagery one of the most important challenges of my own life, dealing with death, trauma, and pain, and discovering the beauty that lies beyond. Terrorism has become a metaphor for me personally, as it represents horror in unspeakable forms, which leave behind darkness, psychological fallout and death on many levels, individually and worldwide. What ultimately gives us hope and the will to persevere is the human spirit and the contemplation of what may lie beyond.

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DISQUIETUDE

Introduction

In a post 9/11 world, the global war on terrorism influences what we think, do and feel, casting a perpetual shadow from which we cannot escape. We live in a state of disquietude. Amidst unspeakable events and traumas, we experience censored media, invasion of privacy in the name of heightened “homeland security,” erosion of freedom of speech, and constant rhetoric serving the politics of fear. Art in the age of terrorism is an attempt to bring interpretation and meaning to these timely issues by portraying multiple perspectives, which address the philosophical, social, political and cultural interventions that the war against terrorism has created. It encourages dialogue between various world views and political sources.

When images promote meaningful discussion and contemplation, we are given the opportunity to better understand situations that are beyond words. Yet, artists in the age of terrorism face difficult challenges. As they attempt to bring meaning to unfathomable horrors or question the level of truth and accuracy in the media, their work may be censored for political, social or any number of other reasons. Creative interpretations in the age of terrorism often incorporate modern technologies in their processes and focus on the psychological consequences of a society living on the edge of fear. Clearly, this is a reflection of art that is in step with its time, paving the way for understanding, dialogue and healing amidst traumatic events.

In my thesis, I will explain what inspired me to explore my own views on the duality surrounding life in the global age of terrorism. On one hand, there is paranoia,

chronic fear, and a sense of insecurity with potential for mass destruction. What lies on the other side is the quiet finality of death, renewal following destruction, and beauty in the ephemeral nature of life itself. Finding contemporary artists addressing topics such as these was not easy. For this reason, it seemed necessary to elaborate upon the most influential artists who informed my thought process on this topic. Only through research and understanding of their processes and intent was I able to formulate a clear and vital message of my own. I will also describe the process, methods and media used to express content in my own thesis work, and comment on what I hope to accomplish with this body of work.

I was inspired to explore the ramifications of terrorism when thinking about personal encounters with terrorism related to places our family had lived or visited. Shortly before my husband attended a conference in Madrid, terrorists bombed the commuter train system, killing almost 200 people in 2004. When suicide bombers attacked the London Underground between the Kings Cross and Russell Square stations in 2005, the location was unnervingly close to home; my husband and I had lived for more than a year between these two stations, right above the explosions. And, with close relatives in Nagasaki, I have also been keenly aware of the destructive power of atomic weapons: bodies vaporized by the nuclear bomb left permanent afterimages of human shadows etched on the walls of buildings in both Nagasaki and Hiroshima. For these reasons, I found myself drawn to the topic of terrorism and began to ask myself questions. This body of work seeks to respond to just some of them.

For example, I questioned how we respond to such horrendous events, both as individuals and as a society. Do we relinquish our freedom in the name of safety and live in a perpetual state of fear? What are the real versus the imagined risks? Bombarded by news from all angles describing the latest massacre, suicide attack or threat of nuclear annihilation, we feel that the world is an increasingly menacing place. Yet ultimately, the words and blood-stained images blur together and our attention numbs. As an artist, I must consider effective ways to initiate dialogue regarding the far-reaching repercussions of terrorism (nuclear, chemical, biological, etc.). This needs to be done in a way which engages the audience and allows them to face potential fears in a comfortable space, without being redundant, banal or reverting to the gut wrenching gore with which they are all too familiar. Can terrorism be contemplated in a different way?

I felt the need to understand contemporary work pertaining to this issue and see how other artists were responding to terrorism. I wanted to know how they expressed their individual ideas and what materials and methods they used to get their messages across. It was a fascinating, though challenging journey. Although my interests in the potential of mass destruction began with an exhibition at the University of Montana's Mansfield Library dealing with the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it led to an investigation of terrorism in general, as well as its psychological, social, and global repercussions. I sought out contemporary artists addressing this topic, finding particular interest in artists whose work elicited an emotional response as confirmed by contemporary critics. Three of the artists who most inspired my thesis

work are Gregor Schneider, Laurie Anderson, and Krzysztof Wodiczko.

RESEARCH

Gregor Schneider's *Cube*, Venice 2005, a fifteen meter tall cube sculpture inspired by the Ka'ba was, for security reasons, never installed in St. Mark's Square, Venice. In fact, the only existing documentation of *Cube* appears in a book published in 2006 by the artist.

Originally attracted by the purity of the cube and its relationship to space, both visible and hidden, German artist Gregor Schneider planned *Cube* as part of the 51st Venice Biennale (Fig 1). Although the cube is a common geometrical form, it is also one of the basic shapes of our civilization and a common subject throughout art history. Constructivist Kazimir Malevich painted *Black Square* in 1913-1914, and James Lee Byars, in his *Table of the Perfect* (1989) made a 6' x 6' x 6' cube out of solid white marble and covered it in gold leaf, in homage to Malevich's *Black Square*. Klaus Biesenbach, a curator in the Department of Film and Media at MoMA, New York, notes that abstract symbols rarely remain void of meaning for long, and that there exists "no zone in the world where there is identical understanding of the use and interpretation of representation and image. There is always a plurality of languages and meanings."¹ Biesenbach sees Schneider's *Cube* as more than just a pure abstract sculpture, as it alludes and explicitly refers to the well-known Ka'ba (Arabic for cube), the oldest temple in Islam (Fig 2).

¹ Schneider, Gregor. *Cubes: Art in the Age of Global Terrorism*. Milan: VG Bild-Kunst, 2006, 12.

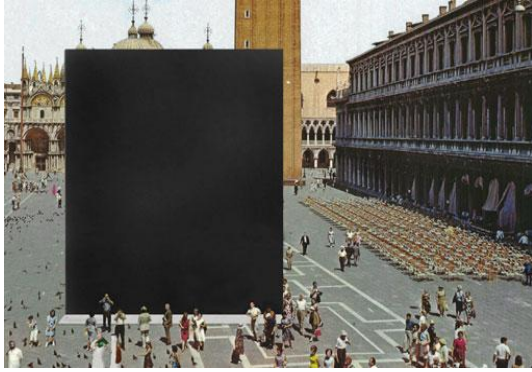


Fig 1. *Cube* Venice 2005, graphic elaboration



Fig 2. Ka'ba, Mecca

Given the post 9/11 realization of the great polarization between Western image-filled culture and the more conservative and differently structured way of life in Islamic countries, the debates and insecurities that surrounded Schneider's cube project reflect the shattered notion of a universal understanding. In spite of globalization, there still exist extreme sectarian audiences and interests. Biesenbach believed that, due to the fact that the *Cube* is so closely reminiscent of the Ka'ba, its placement in St. Mark's Square in Venice would inevitably have taken on a strong emotional charge in terms of public, political, social, cultural and religious space.

Gregor Schneider may not have intended for his sculpture to become a source of confusion, conflict and insecurity. However, the development of world politics fueled a controversy surrounding his work, which ultimately led to his piece being banned from the Biennale. In addition to being denied a building permit for his *Cube*, Schneider received an unofficial letter sent to him from the Biennale's President Davide Croff which stated that, "The final decision is of a political nature and must be accepted as such."² Biennale Director Renato Aglia feared terrorist attacks. Schneider was not

²Schneider, 17.

even allowed to document his work in the catalogue; the six pages allotted to him were blacked out.

In addition to the controversy surrounding Schneider's attempt to open dialogue between religious groups, the Danish cartoon of Mohammed by Kurt Westergaard also erupted in an international controversy and almost cost the artist his life. Danish police arrested several people with a Muslim background suspected of conspiring to kill Westergaard in 2008. Had I not been aware of the risks of discussing religion and its relationship to terrorism, I would have wanted to reference how the three main religions, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, have historically played a role in terrorism.

While Schneider's *Cube* was controversial, contemporary performance artist Laurie Anderson's work, *Happiness*, reaches out in a different vein to receptive audiences, encouraging them to experience her own personal trauma second-hand. She inspired my thesis work because her performance provides a safe environment for her audience to contemplate her first-hand experience with terrorism. Her work exemplifies a response to terrorism which, as Schneider had no doubt hoped to achieve with *Cube*, encourages dialogue in which healing, contemplation and discussion are required. *Happiness* is a performance-based response to her exposure to the terrifying events of 9/11. Most members of the public witness terrorist attacks via television, which often sensationalizes the events, concentrates on representations of mass destruction and despair, and emphasizes the victims' vulnerability and innocence. Noting that the TV screen itself serves as a frame for objectifying events, art critic

Emma Govan suggests that theatre provides an ideal venue to explore the psychological effects of violence because it invites direct response from the audience (Fig 3).



Fig 3. Laurie Anderson, *Happiness*.

Laurie Anderson, with her studio in downtown Manhattan, just blocks away from the Twin Towers, was deeply impacted by the events of 9/11. According to the artist, the shock of terrorism propelled her into a completely different way of thinking. Her work differs from standard media representation in that it does not focus on a re-creation of events or violence, but rather explores the psychological consequences of the tragedy. It is her most autobiographical piece to date. As the title suggests, she chooses to look to the Declaration of Independence for her right to pursue happiness in spite of events that try to undermine an individual's sense of private and public security. In a review of Anderson's piece, Michael Betancourt noted that although her stories leave us with the feeling that many questions still remain unanswered, "simply bearing witness to these horrors through stories is a way of diminishing them through repetition until the meaning goes away."³

³ Betancourt, *Totentanz Transformation*.

During her performance, Anderson appears before a mixing desk and tells the audience how witnessing troubling events upset her sense of personal and public safety. Speaking to her audience in the first person, she also describes the aftershock and the psychic processes she experienced at the time.

Anderson's use of lighting is key in evoking dark empty spaces throughout the performance and serves to bring awareness to what is not being shown. Unlike the endless circulation of images in the media coverage of 9/11, Anderson chooses a more limited range of visual props, i.e. colored lighting and a few abstract projections, thus allowing the audience to focus on her and her autobiographical narration. Anderson presents her personal experience in order to bring together both sociopolitical events and the public's response. By sharing her stories, she allows the audience to experience trauma secondhand, which offers them freedom to explore responses to the material while remaining apart from the direct influence of the terror itself.

In a video project entitled *If You See Something...* artist Krzysztof Wodiczko explores technologies of artistic, military and media culture in yet another interpretation of the war on terror. In this project, Wodiczko feels that his quartet of video projections on walls in a darkened room help define our post 9/11 historical moment. These projections form a collage of immigrants who are either alone or talking to others present about their desperate situations, i.e. deportation proceedings, harassment, and physical humiliations. Their voices fade in and out and convey overlapping personal stories of fear, helplessness and a growing loss of hope (Fig 4).



Fig 4. *If You See Something...* Krzysztof Wodiczko

Each scene creates a vignette or snapshot of strangers seen alone or in pairs conveying both anxious and casual moments; appeals seem to be made and secrets revealed. For example, one sees a woman speaking to a co-worker during a cigarette break; a man confiding in his lawyer; one prisoner talking to another; a man holding up a newspaper against the frosted glass window; and two window washers speaking in Polish. We wonder how these strangers are impacted by the racial, ethnic, class and gender undertones of the traumatic experience. Wodiczko successfully simulates video surveillance, which references discrimination rampant in the name of the war on terror.

For instance, in the window of the installation where a man presses a newspaper up against the frosted glass, it is as if he is appealing to the viewer, yet the content is unreadable through the milky pane. Nonetheless, we sense the importance of his gesture, which reminds us of the pervasiveness of the media and its role in militarizing domestic culture. Like the clouded glass that renders the text unreadable, our experience of the full ramifications of the war on terror on the lives of thousands of

innocent people has been muted. The unreadable paper may be understood as information falsified, suppressed or not yet written.

Wodiczko's *If You See Something...* allows the viewer to witness the consequences of pervasive public fear and suspicion toward immigrants, which causes them to suffer an erosion of democratic rights in the name of homeland security. In seeing this, we must ask ourselves how far removed "we" are from "them." The artist challenges us to question this distance, and perhaps see that it is not only immigrants who are under surveillance but anyone who is not part of the small ruling elite. Realizing this, if "we" are really "them," perhaps it is our responsibility to be more aware of repressive governmental powers and become proactive, rather than exist as passive bystanders.

Art in the age of terrorism sheds new light and understanding on terror's ramifications within public, political, social, cultural and religious spheres. When an artist attempts to bring Christians and Muslims closer together, the art may be surrounded by controversy, as in the case of Gregor Schneider's censored *Cube*, Venice 2005. The ban of Schneider's *Cube* is a missed opportunity for productive dialogue within the public sphere. Laurie Anderson's autobiographical performance entitled *Happiness* offers a theatrical approach to sharing her universal trauma with an audience who is allowed to experience it second-hand. In this context, both social and political events and the public's response to them may come together in a meaningful way. The work of Krzysztof Wodiczko's post 9/11 video and sound projects emerge as effective uses of video, surveillance and media technology. In his piece *If You See*

Something... he successfully simulates video surveillance and allows the opportunity to voyeuristically view the helplessness, fear and anxiety of the immigrant who has lost many human rights in the name of “homeland security.” This work seeks to affect social change through psychological and emotional impact upon both the performers and the audience.

The political, religious, social and psychological issues in the age of terrorism inevitably affect the artist’s process and content. As a kind of social barometer, the artist’s work attempts to wake up a society that is under surveillance, subjected to censorship, and influenced by the politics of fear. Art and image can and must continue to reflect the challenges of our time through thoughtful interpretations, endeavoring to increase dialogue between disparate groups and encourage understanding in our globalized society.

DISCUSSION

Technology in the global war on terrorism includes video surveillance, chemical scanners, biometric devices in airports, radio frequency chips inserted into passports, and robots being developed for deployment in Iraq. In spite of the increase in public surveillance, however, an official U.S. intelligence report between 2000 and 2007 concluded these measures have had no effect on security. In the same way, television has contributed to blurring the line between what is private and public, and the internet has brought images of the war into the home. While video and media technologies have been useful tools for both state and corporate influence and control, they have

also allowed the public an opportunity to bypass government censorship, as evident in the revelation of such atrocities as the tortures at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay. As viewers navigate channels on the television, surf the internet, and read columns in newspapers and magazines, they experience an overload of information relating to the latest terrorist attack or imminent threat.

Having spent considerable time researching how the previously mentioned contemporary artists chose to react to various aspects of terrorism, I wanted to provide a body of work in which the viewer could engage in meaningful contemplation about the global age of terrorism we live in. Knowing I would have three separate galleries to fill, I started to think about “before, during and after” as three different stages for the viewer to experience, providing a journey through the sequence of terrorism. For example, before terrorism, there is the fear of it. During terrorism, the damage is done according to tedious and methodical planning by those who wish to do harm. After terrorism, there is tremendous loss of human life and associated relationships, identifying the dead, finding the missing, helping the injured, and facing the long road of restoring hope.

My goal is for this body of work to provide an atmosphere where one can interpret, respond to, and consider the ramifications of living with the heightened security of our daily lives, perpetual threat from those who seek to harm us, and the consequences of successful terrorist attacks. With this work, I hope to engage the viewer on the many levels that accompany the unavoidable question we ask,

“what if...?” What if there is a nuclear (including dirty bombs), chemical, or biological attack here or elsewhere in the world? What if contraband items slip by security and reveal themselves during a flight, or present themselves on a subway, or enter ports without adequate security? How we perceive the level of security on our behalf can be quite different from how it actually is. I feel “homeland security” is a false sense of security, in large part a façade to allay public fear. However, the more truthful the information we are given, the more we realize that the war on terrorism is one which must be fought not only globally, but personally and internally.

I am interested in the psychological ramifications of the threats and consequences of terrorism. It is my hope that this body of work allows people to contemplate and even act toward achieving a better understanding of where we stand and of what still needs to be done to make our world a safer place in which to live. Using current events to start such a conversation is an important component of my thesis work.

When terrorism strikes, there is fear. Under former President George W. Bush, fear was in some way manipulated with the “color of the day”, which related to the level of threat reported by the CIA and other intelligence sources. This constant reminder to be thinking about what could harm us successfully planted fear and anxiety in our subconscious minds so that we DID think about it. Inspired by Wodzicko’s use of video, frosted glass and multiple vignettes which enabled us to voyeuristically ponder the pervasiveness of public fear, I wanted to create an object which elicited a similar engagement. I chose to create a simple object, a semi-transparent backpack, through

which I could project images of common objects which appear safe or suspicious. The items appear as silhouettes, and reference the abandoned box, backpack or suitcase at the airport, subway, or similar public place. As the images change, one reflects on how uneasy we have become with even the most mundane things (Figure 5).



Figure 5. *Suspect*. Sewn backpack with projected images.

For this piece entitled *Suspect*, I sewed a life-sized, partially transparent backpack made of glassine (coated with polyurethane) as the suspicious item. It sits in a dark corner in the gallery. Through a hole in the backpack, images of both common and suspicious objects are projected onto the front of the backpack. The images include toiletry items—shampoo, toothbrush, dental floss—a gas mask, dolls, coiled wires and potential bomb components meant to slip through security. The images can be seen by the viewer, who wonders whether these seemingly harmless items are truly harmless. A feeling of unease and insecurity arises; even the common object is now suspicious. Visit any airport and you will hear the familiar recorded message reminding you to leave no bag unattended, or it may be confiscated. Inevitably, the audience reflects upon the nervous energy they now commit to the abandoned object and realize the loss of a small freedom once taken for granted: viewing an innocent-looking

object without suspicion.



Figure 6. *WMDs* (NTSA-confiscated airport knives and scissors mounted on 7.5' x 12' plywood)

Another installation piece, entitled, *WMDs* (Figure 6), consists of NTSA-confiscated airport knives and scissors taken from passengers attempting to clear airport security checks across the country. On three plywood panels bolted together to form a 7'6" x 12' surface, over 300 screws of various lengths are used to mount the confiscated items, which are attached with neodymium magnets. The lighting is carefully positioned to maximize the shadows, creating a sense of drama, an ominous quality, and the illusion that there are many more implements than are actually present.

The purpose of this piece is to highlight the irony of this one example of "homeland security." Although a knife can be seen as a weapon, many of us have one with us, or near us. Some of the confiscated knives have innocuous logos, like "Best Western" or "Barney's Food and Grill," etc. The viewer is shown the actual items taken away; are they really dangerous? Do we feel safer with these taken away? Although these items hardly appear harmful under normal circumstances, they are confiscated to

protect us. Yet, scanners are not perfect, and statistics show that 40% of contraband items actually escape security. No matter what is taken away, now or in the future, a person intending to yell “bomb” while flying at 30,000 feet, or who figures out a way to slip through security with bomb components tucked in their body cavities, will go unnoticed. Where will security draw the line? The greater the effort made by “homeland security” to devise a better mousetrap, the harder the mouse will work to evade it and eventually succeed.

Formally, this installation is based on the grid, which provides a structure of order amidst a host of possible interpretations: a perceived sense of security, awe, disgust, fear, paranoia, etc. I have used the grid concept throughout my thesis work because I feel strongly about its relationship to science, math and numbers. This recurring format throughout my body of work allows another thread of continuity, despite the diversity of content and media.

Recently, I did a search online for “London bomb ingredients.” What came up was not only the three chemical components found in each backpack responsible for the London 2005 bomb attacks, but also a possible scenario for getting them on to a plane. Acetone, sulfuric acid (or hydrochloric acid) and hydrogen peroxide can be obtained very easily and when mixed together, form TATP (triacetone triperoxide), a volatile explosive. With a little agitation, TATP forms a powerful bomb. The online writer added, “just put the ingredients in three condoms, swallow each one, pass through airport security, retrieve each one and mix.” The internet cannot be overlooked as a rich source for would-be terrorists. Bombs such as this are not rocket science.

Making one proves to be quite easy, thus adding to our state of fear and paranoia.

Modes of transportation are key for those who plot to harm. The installation of knives and the image-laden backpack begin the conversation, and lead to the second “stage” of my thesis work, which involves where and how terrorists carry out their plots.

Many people throughout the world use public transportation, i.e., metro, bus, airplane, etc. and attend the occasional ball game in a large stadium. Look at any country map and note ports of entry. These are all potential targets for the would-be terrorist and, at times, we hear intelligence reports stating that a certain mode of transportation or location may be in danger of attack. Whether such an attack is carried out or not, and whether it is a success or failure, is important. In either case, however, the effect of fear already constitutes a victory in the terrorist’s mind.

Inciting fear is an excellent way to disrupt the economy, elicit paranoia, and provide political fodder for the next “tough on terrorism” politician. The smaller pieces in the middle gallery of my thesis show are reminders of where, and how, terrorists choose their targets and plot destruction. Through the use of encaustic, photopolymer etching and mezzotint on a much smaller scale, a more intimate atmosphere is created to draw in the viewer for further reflection (figure 7, 8, 9).

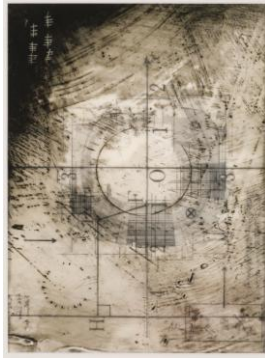


Figure 7. *Stadium*, 9.5"x6.5", encaustic



Figure 8. *Anthrax*, 7x5", photopolymer etching, monotype



Figure 9. *Whorled*, 4x3", mezzotint, monotype

I wanted to utilize both old (mezzotint, encaustic) and new (photopolymer etching) artistic media to layer content and imagery and to combine concepts of macro and micro. The surface quality of an encaustic piece has a smooth, skin-like quality that relates to the body.

Over the summer of 2010, I took a workshop in solarplate printmaking in Santa Fe, NM and later learned the mezzotint process on my own. I wanted to experiment with a different form of photography (photogravure) and etching in a safe, non-toxic way (perhaps an effort to balance the other toxic methods of working with resin and encaustic.) The high contrast values of mezzotint and photopolymer images are dramatic and evocative.

Chemical symbols (sarin, TATP), blueprints of stadiums and large ships, maps of metro stations, an amusement park, and singed clothing are presented in simple or complex forms in order to encourage dialogue and reflection upon the meticulous planning, intelligence, and targets of terrorists. The small mezzotint images offer a counterbalance of beauty and delicacy, serving perhaps as reminders of our

mortality and fragility. Given that mortality is probably what people fear most of all, the third and final “stage” of my thesis work addresses just that, the ultimate victory of terrorism—death.

Given, especially in this country, the lack of ability to face death in any positive way, discussing death outside of church is almost taboo. In addressing death, I wanted to avoid being pedantic, gory, shocking, or too literal. I feel there is already enough of this around - just turn on the nightly news. As stated earlier, I was much inspired by Laurie Anderson’s subtle use of lighting, props, and her ability to use narration to reach out to receptive audiences and help them experience the nature of her personal trauma second-hand. I therefore chose large-scale photography as a means for expressing narrative related to trauma, grief and their residue, with the hope of providing a safe environment for viewers to contemplate these difficult subjects. In all of these photographs, beauty is a constant though superficial lure which draws the viewer closer, only to discover the darkness lurking beneath the surface.

Combining the technology of digital photography and various props (sensuous fabrics, x-rays, subway and passport tickets, pocket knives, etc.) I arranged nine compositions. Pieces of singed fabric, semi-transparent trash bags, burnt lingerie, a melted baby bottle and broken eye glasses, etc. were chosen to make images which suggest either torn relationships or tragic events. The lacy, delicate fabrics and thin plastics serve as metaphors for skin. These items of clothing lie closest to the skin; the viewer senses that whatever happened to the garments, also happened to the skin. Although the images often suggest femininity (in the case of the lingerie), the

compositions reference relationships broken or lost.

For example, the lacy bra next to the melted baby bottle in *Untimely*, (47"x35" photograph coated in UV resin, Figure 10), suggests that a mother and child bond has been disrupted and or irrevocably destroyed. At the same time, a watery abyss appears in the bottom half of the photograph, which is linked to the x-ray.

Another photographic triptych entitled *Til Death* (left panel of triptych, Figure 11) features pink and black lacy garments strewn adjacent to a burnt marriage pillow with rings still attached. The image implies that this bond has been destroyed as well. In this particular photo, the straps and cotton extruding from the collapsed pillow evoke entrails, soft bodily tissue, and even amorphous, jellyfish-like creatures beneath the sea.

Two other images, one entitled *Ticket*, and the other entitled *Passport*, reference ominous events on metros and airplanes, respectively.

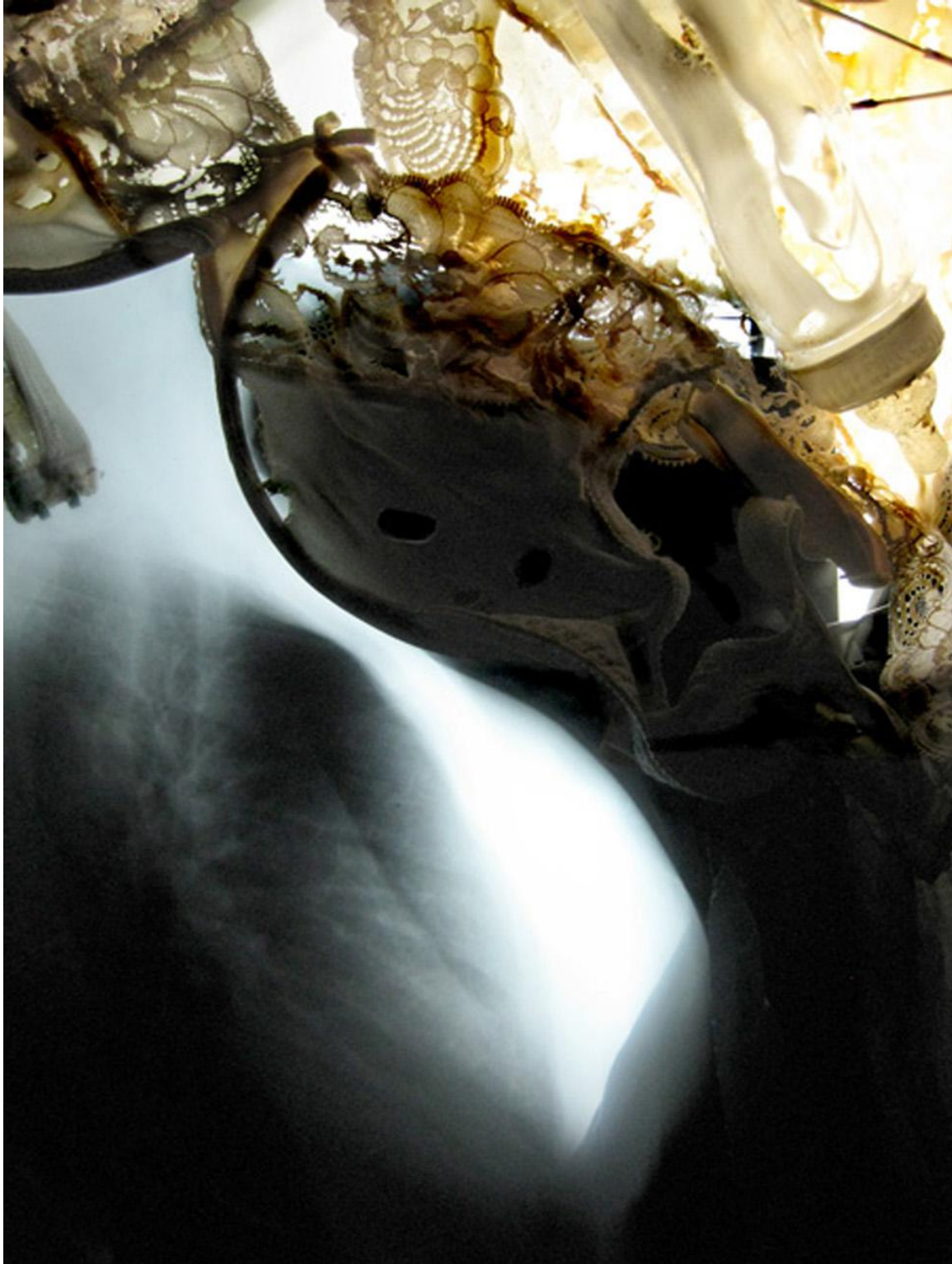


Figure 10. *Untimely*, 47"x35", digital photograph, UV resin



Figure 11. *Til Death*, 47"x35", left panel of triptych, digital photograph, UV resin

Ambiguity is a central component of this photographic series. Opposing adjectives such as stunning, lovely, alarming, ephemeral, poignant, timely, dramatic, ethereal, timeless, delicate, brutal, apply to all. I was drawn to the use of resin because of its skin-like sensuousness, much like the encaustic. Expanding on the ambiguity and subtlety of previously discussed work, another large-scale piece addresses the global nature of terrorism and the importance of each individual.

In *6.9 Billion*, a 4' by 14' plywood piece (two 4' by 7' panels hung side by side) was coated in gesso and covered with individual fingerprints by over thirty participants (Figure 12.)

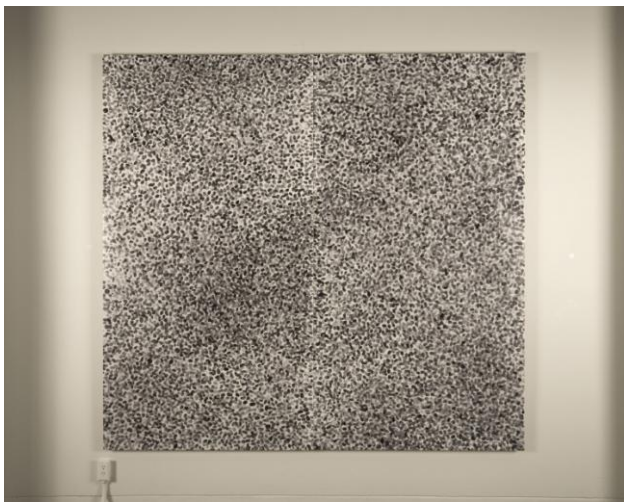


Figure 12. *6.9 Billion*, fingerprints made with archival ink on gessoed panel, UV resin, 7' x 8'.

I then poured a layer of UV resin (1.5 gallons per panel) over the layer of prints. After the glossy surface was rubbed with steel wool (0000 grade) to bring the surface to a satin finish, another layer of fingerprints was applied. The use of resin in this case once again serves as a protective barrier and gives a feeling of something precious

embedded and frozen in time. I also wanted to create a three-dimensional effect.

Although one layer of resin begins to evoke a 3D effect, a second pour of resin would have provided a greater depth (unfortunately, cost prohibitive). My goal was to confront the viewer with the idea of mass, identity, and most importantly, individuality. Large acts of terrorism, no matter where they occur in the world, affect everyone.

When traumatic events occur; enormous amounts of money pour in from nations worldwide. Wars are started, and in the worst-case scenario of nuclear weapons falling into the wrong hands, a true global meltdown (though a remote possibility) could occur. I hope this piece will give viewers the opportunity to consider the widespread ramifications of terrorism on a global scale, yet at the same time allow them to realize that each individual contribution is part of the whole picture. In the next installation piece, I decided to drastically change the format from large-scale to microscopic. Using repetition of shape (the square), but using a gradation of size, I wanted to address death on a very personal, biological level—our DNA.

My background in science contributes to many thoughts of how nuclear, chemical and biological weapons can affect us biologically, both on the cellular and genetic level. These interests led me to design an installation highlighting the damage on a microscopic level depicting damaged or destroyed chromosomes, i.e., referencing residue and consequences, as in the large format photographs. Even though a dirty bomb would most likely not cause mass destruction, the perception of whether an area thus impacted is safe would cause enough panic and fear to clear the area for years due to the known dangers of lingering radiation. It is a well-known scientific fact that

radiation, in doses much higher than daily background levels, affects our DNA and causes mutations, cancer and death. Radiation is odorless, tasteless, and invisible; yet the effects linger on through many generations, as has been seen in the case of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This installation refers to damage and destruction, which applies to any mode of terrorism.

The installation, entitled *46* (figure 13,) consists of drawings of chromosomes on vellum, burnt and manipulated in various ways and hung between two layers of ¼” plexi-glas. It includes squares of different sizes, each suspended from the ceiling in a loose grid-like format. Each piece is backlit to enhance the burnt umber tones, and



Figure 13. *46*, burnt vellum mounted between ¼” plexi-glas

hung askew to suggest disorder and a sudden, haphazard event ending with damage or total destruction to one’s DNA. The burning, stitches and rips imply death, trauma, decay or mutation. On several of the pieces, dates and events of previous terrorist attacks are burnt into the vellum as well, though intentionally obscured. The umber tones entice from a distance but reveal darker meaning upon closer inspection.

CONCLUSION

Disquietude is my attempt to provide a safe, non-threatening environment--an image and installation filled gallery--for all audiences to explore their perceptions and fears related to living in the age of terrorism. My own journey has been a challenging yet fulfilling endeavor. I often feel that the more I research and process information, the harder it is to distill ideas down to their simplest forms. My mixed-media approach results from my need to explore different ways of expressing and maintaining ambiguity. For me, it provides a rich means of conveying my intent while allowing the audience to interpret and engage in dialogue. My greatest hope is for viewers to be shaken awake through shadow, scale, mass, individuality, simplicity, complexity, beauty and horror. I hope the ambiguity allows for interpretations as individual and unique as each fingerprint, and encourages us to think toward a more peaceful state of mind and being, away from disquietude.

INSTALLATION PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph by Pamela Caughey



Photograph by Chris Autio



Photograph by Chris Autio

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