

America the (not so) Beautiful, 2020

82.5 x 57 inches

Mixed media and Collage on canvas

“America the Beautiful.” When I see these words, my first reaction is to sing the verses of the hymn out loud, proudly paying homage to this country’s beautiful nature, its limitless potential, its history and its past heroes. The song is indeed a beautiful tribute to America. Somehow, though, my reaction to this tune has changed. I don’t feel right singing it. I’ve become cynical and cannot appreciate it as I once did in *today’s* America. In *today’s* America, I am consistently shocked and dumbfounded by the constant, repetitive flow of information feeding society. I am concerned with the way people are brainwashed into numbness or feel emboldened to demonstrate total disregard for basic human rights and values. The current turmoil within our politics and broader society is disturbing. So how did we get here? What led to this climate? Has it always been here? What does America represent? And how can I, as an artist, mother and woman contribute to the conversation? All these questions were part of the long and challenging process that led to the creation of this painting.. In the end, it is important for me not only to evoke America’s historical and cultural past, but also to carefully choose symbols that represent matters I take seriously and wish to address. “America the Beautiful” is a portrait that tackles such diverse and complex subjects as the pioneer legacy, the decimation of Native Americans, slavery, the American bald eagle, the Women’s and #metoo movements, sanctuary cities, immigration, racism, gun violence, and so many others that have left their mark on the collective American mentality.

1791-2017, 2017

51 x 39 inches

Mixed Media on Canvas and Flag Pole

This painting serves as my reaction to the Constitution being attacked under the Trump administration and people banding together to fight for the rights that it provides. The title evokes the year the Bill of Rights became part of the Constitution in 1791, with 2017 signaling the end of the Constitution as we know it. The colors yellow, orange and black symbolize Trump, whose face appears above the American flag. His eyes and nose consist of data, with his eyes and mouth as zeros (0) and a one (1) where his nose should be. This refers to our data being constantly hacked and the allegations that Trump's administration may have been involved in the process. We also see the flag under attack, with an orange square replacing its stars. Around it are a black square representing a "stop" button and a black "pause" sign, which are my way of calling for the abnormal reality that we live in to stop and pause. The pause button can also be interpreted as equality being flipped under the Trump presidency. Finally, I begin to write out the First Amendment, which at the bottom is in part crossed out with a yellow line, representing Trump's attack on our individual liberties. There is hope in this piece, however, as it shows people fighting back with loose fists taking over and pink hats rising up over the flag from the bottom of the painting, referencing the historical Women's March. These symbols are positioned in the foreground and above the piece's other symbols, signaling resilience and change, while also reminding us of the powerful impact of civic engagement and activism.

The Two Hands of America, 2017

Collage & acrylic on canvas

42.25 x 27 inches

This painting shows the two hands of America and the clashing truth of their coexistence. The lower hand personifies the oath of allegiance, the promise and commitment that one is supposed to make to tell the truth and protect our unalienable rights. The upper hand is the consequential fist representing the oppressed rising up to defend their liberties when under attack. The colors in this painting are significant. The pink fist references the Women's March and the yellow background places the painting during the Trump administration. The lower hand over the flag is emaciated and gruesome, appearing as a death sentence foreboding our collective demise. (reference to Noam Chomsky's warning in January 2017 of the danger the Republican Party poses to the baseline of human survival).

Role Model, 2016
Mixed Media on Strathmore
20x24 inches

This piece signals the importance of having a role model in this chaotic world we live in. The role model appears in the upper left hand section of the painting as a gentleman's face with a top hat raising his fist and leading the way for the next generation, which is depicted as 2 circles at the lower bottom right of the piece. The strong, colorful markings express urban chaos and the generally frenzied movement of life.

Don't Shoot, 2016

39.5 x 27.5 inches

Mixed media on paper

This piece addresses the senseless shootings happening throughout our country, specifically white police officers shooting unarmed African Americans. Here the scene takes place in Chicago, with a police officer represented as a wild dog with gun in hand while a deceased, dapper African American gentleman comes back from death pleading for this violence to stop and for people to listen to his story. His hands are up, referencing the protest chant "hands up, don't shoot." His eyes are "stop" media buttons, and his mouth consist of a 'play' and 'pause' media button, symbolizing the need for people to pause and listen. This is happening in Chicago, where the use of a gold color to portray it represents the sanctuary city, shaking and shaken by the dramatic events it has witnessed. The frame around the piece is an homage to Keith Haring, who dedicated his life to the ideals of equality and social justice.

The Newly Deported, 2017

27 x 39 inches

Mixed media & collage on paper

This piece addresses deportation and families being torn apart. On the right hand side of the piece is a passport picture, a profile of someone being deported. This person is bright and vivid in color and the many markings make up his/her story, capturing the beauty and complex makings of this individual. He/she is shown leaving the canvas, being ousted against his/her will, amidst a darkened background consisting of deteriorating red stripes from the US flag. Looking closely, one can see a profile of a dog's face, sadly watching its owner leaving it forever.

InPulse, 2016

16 x 11.5 inches

Ink on Strathmore

This drawing is my homage to the victims of the deadly Pulse nightclub shooting on June 12, 2016, which saw 49 people killed and another 53 wounded. The process of making this allowed me to express my support of the Queer community and the importance of treating everyone equally and with love. The flags of America and of the United Kingdom place the painting at the time of the Brexit referendum, which is symbolic. The title of the piece is a play on the word “impulse,” that driving force which can be both good and evil.