

Artist Statement / Selected Creative Research

My work uses still photography and time based media to investigate the ideas and agency around intolerance and acceptance, inequality and gender identity. Some of what a person believes is based on evidence or facts acquired from what they have seen; yet other beliefs are founded in what one is told. Unacceptance of others is culturally learned behavior that is perpetuated through social and religious groups, class systems and familial piety. Moreover, what a person believes, or believes in, is a choice that becomes their reality. When a group or an individual is negatively judged because they appear different or they don't share similar beliefs to their peers, we create a world filled with separation and intolerance. This intolerance can control society, and therefore can have some control over all of our lives. I use documentary methods, constructed narratives, and time-based media to investigate human beliefs in contemporary social structures.

In both *Seeing Belief* and *Define Revelation* (2008 / 2009), I use photography to question religious intolerance and religion's power over society and individuals. Some of the images document visual culture in the east and southeast areas of the United States. Others images are constructed narratives relating to biblical text or religious ideology and oppression of women. The varied interpretations that can be elicited by religious doctrines are central to judgment and intolerance all over the world. Through this work, I seek to show how religion and religious beliefs affect people and society.

For the video work *Being With* (2011), I focus on the ideas of to whom we listen, and how the media affects the beliefs of the public. This project, an observation of the present, uses interaction in the form of an interview as a point of departure and the main informer. It intends to strip away the constraints of the ideology of the mass-media, and to suggest possibilities in our relation to the other. *Being With* is a video installation consisting of 5 separate pieces on 7 monitors, arranged in a way that intervenes with the public passers by, where a viewer can consciously engage with the work - to view and hear the videos, or possibly be non-consciously affected as they pass through the space. The video pieces are cut into three to four minute clips and are choreographed to appear on the different monitors at different times, giving variation to the conversation heard, the tempo of the work, and to the experience of the viewer. This work is about interaction with the other and the value of listening, both of which are as important as the end result in a gallery space. With this installation, I am not only giving voice to these individuals, but I am creating a new reality in the transitional space. This is as an extension of work I've done previously with interventions, as well as a new and different way of speaking about my previous subject matter of intolerance.

In the most recent body of work, *SHE* (ongoing), I examine feminism and the empowerment of women by exploring gender inequality and oppression. Through figurative imagery I use a dress mannequin to deconstruct stereotypes and challenge perceptions of women. Paradoxes arise in broad cultural expectations of the female gender: being on a pedestal while playing the part of a doting full-time mother, doing the dirty work of housekeeping while being constantly visually attractive, succeeding as career woman while staying firmly in a woman's *place*. I address issues of societal gender roles, the resulting constraints on women, and the psychological liminal space in which they exist – between – before reaching equality, yet knowing that they are inherently equal by the basic tenants of human rights. It is my intent to inspire thought and dialogue, to raise awareness, and to empower women to reach beyond the beauty myth and above the glass ceiling.

Art should engage the viewer, asking them to contemplate their own relationship to the subject matter, and thus the rest of the world. I love questioning human intent, and feel that my work is most effective when it instills self-reflection in viewer.