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I Poked You Where We Were Connected

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I POKED YOU WHERE WE WERE CONNECTED

by

Sophia Ruppert

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Major: Art

Under the supervision of Professor Santiago Cal

Lincoln, Nebraska

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I POKED YOU WHERE WE WERE CONNECTED

Sophia Ruppert, M. F. A

University of Nebraska, 2020

Advisor: Santiago Cal

Life leaves behind physical and mental residue. Some of these remnants are precious while others are tragic. Regardless of its origin, this residue can be made beautiful. Remnants of the objects that surround us chronicle our history as complex individuals. My sculptures investigate my own physical and mental residue to dissect and examine my personal history.

I unravel experiences that are residually prominent in my memories. Of particular importance are events and objects that have shaped my perception of self.

stories told by my grandmothers
a dysfunctional family dynamic
objects that provide visual touchstones to my childhood

These fragments are a testimony of personal description. My work attempts to calm the dissonance of these memories and share the resulting narrative. Ultimately, it describes self, history, and a personal theology in transformation. This theology allows me to create beauty in spite of trauma.

My materials are carefully considered and manipulated. By selecting discarded materials that are worn or contain a rich visual association, my work contains an embedded but indirect history. Objects whisper.

a scrap of stained lace
chandelier fragments
an unrecognizable item

I analyze these objects and either lovingly preserve or thoughtfully dissect and reshape them. One method is a contemplative collection. The other is a rebirth. Both draw out stories embedded within.

The metaphoric act of sewing is central to my work. This craft process harkens back to the traditional idea that women are preservers who mend what is broken. Rather than the gendered practice for domestic use, I reclaim the act of sewing to re-contextualize my experiences. I mend what is torn and tear what needs freed. By creating from destruction, I piece together a complex, beautiful history.



Nokomis Fragments

Found and altered objects

Dimensions variable

2019-ongoing



Undone

Altered baskets

62x54x14"

2020



Time Intensity Method

Duvet cover, thread

70x95x6"

2019



Pillows from my Bed

Pillows, thread, sweat

18x47x8"

2018



Domiciliary Apparatus

Cotton, jack stand, pitchfork, drain snake, rust

96x25x96"

2020



Repurposed Tools: Reclamation and Seduction

Pitchfork, rope, trap, wool

35x27x5"

2020



Ritual Via Rural Assemblage

Fish basket, birds nest, feathers, rabbit skin glue, two wheeled cart, rope, twine

79x96x16"

2020



What Have We Caught Today?

Fishing pole, thread, broomcorn

35x107x9"

2020



Put the Poles Away

Fishing pole, thread, twine

34x12x2"

2020

I Poked You Where We Were Connected

Installation Images

Eisentrager Howard Gallery





