



The Red Thread Artist Statement

This body of work, for me represents a new direction with my art and my life. The red thread is the common denominator between all the pieces in this series. This thread represents the gift of creativity, given to us all by the Divine. It is our individuality; that which makes us unique. Each of us has a different kind of "thread", as it were. I am exploring my relationship with that thread. During different times in my life, I have either ignored it, been afraid of it or embraced it.

Through mixed media, I am able to explore and express the emotions I feel around using the gift I was given. By creating this body of work, I have learned to trust; I have learned to trust myself, my art and most importantly trust that art making is the fulfillment of my purpose here on earth.

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1. Evolution - 32"x40" cut paper, thread, charcoal

I was driving one day and heard a song on the radio from high school. In about 1 minute I had the image of this piece completed in my head. The song helped me realize that I am repeating the same old mistakes I made in high school, just in a different way each time. I keep trying and screwing up and trying again and screwing up. Eventually I will learn the lesson.

The repetition of the word REPEAT is done in a different way each time, and the Red Thread weaves through, always there, but never smoothing out till the end.

2. The Woman Who Remembered Who She Was 28"x13"x10", found objects

This crazy sculpture was perhaps the most fun to make. To properly read this work, begin in the heart. Fear is making it's way out with quotes by Rumi. "You were born with wings. Why do you prefer to crawl through life?" is my favorite. Why is it that we are all so afraid to spread our wings and show our true talent? My guess is that revealing our true talent is like revealing a part of our soul, and God forbid someone should judge that.

For women, another piece of the puzzle is that we are most often responsible for the child rearing. And as any mother knows, when the kids come along, it's a long time before it's possible to really concentrate on ourselves again.

At first glance the gold on the mannequin's head looks like a crown. On closer inspection you will see, as you move to the back of the piece that they are warriors, fighting off the negative thoughts that seep in through the cracks in our heads. Through the media, and our own negative self-talk, we listen to a barrage of noise about how we are not good enough the way we are. All that noise prevents our creative flow.

The open door on the back represents the connection to the divine. When we are at peace with ourselves and our minds are quiet, we can connect again and begin to unravel the tangle of Red Thread that has been balled up inside us for so long.

3. Keep Her Safe found objects, 19"x23"x4"

"Starving artist" is the only reference to people making art that I ever heard. When I began college, I majored in psychology because I didn't know being paid to make art was an option. After a couple years in the art department, I switched to a photography major. I couldn't imagine doing anything else with my life.

While my parents were always very supportive, the subtle undercurrent of message that artists are always poor was always there. They worried about me, they wanted me to have a good life, and so my father suggested that I take other jobs that offered a car, steady salary and health insurance "just until you get going with your photography". My answer was always, "How can I concentrate on my photography if I'm doing something else".

A parent's job is always to keep their children safe. There will be choices that our children make that we will not understand, and they will make mistakes, but as parents, we need to be brave enough to let our children soar.

4. Second Birth - found objects, 26"x40"

This was the image that started the whole series. It was a mistake, and a gift. I sold the image to a nursing home and it went to the framers. It went into the dry mount press and came out with two very faint lines on it. They weren't very noticeable, but showed enough to have it reprinted. The framer asked me if I wanted the photo.

I took it home and stared at it for a while. The nest drew me in. I took apart a real nest and added it to the print, and then kept going. Every time I got stuck I would ask the children across the street, who have the ear of the Divine, what to do. They were always right.

The reference to the womb is unmistakable and completely intentional. I am giving birth to the second phase of my art. The Red Thread descends from the heavens along with the eggs, representing the creative projects yet to be made.

5. The Man Who Forgot Who He Was - oil and mixed media, 36"x36"

The Red Thread in this work is found only in a sealed bottle on the shelf. The inscription in Latin behind the skeleton says, "Utere donis quae Dominus tibi dedit", "Use the gifts God has given you".

In this modern world where we are so busy and have so many stresses placed on us, it is easy to lose sight of what is important. We let the flotsam and jetsam of our daily lives crowd out our passions. We put them up on a shelf to be considered again "when we have time".

When you forget to use your gifts, part of you dies.

6. Laid Bare – oil and found objects, 36"x36"

Laid Bare was created with oil paint and found objects. This is my first oil painting and I immediately fell madly in love with the process.

I have always had a German Shepard dog. One of my favorite images that I store away in my mind is the shadow created when I walk on a sunny day with my dog. I don't currently have a dog and miss that relationship very much.

This image is the most obvious self-portrait of the whole group. For me, "laid bare" is the point when everything feels as hard as it can possibly get, and I have nowhere to hide. I've been there recently. At first the feelings were very negative; helplessness, shame, frustration, insecurity.

Part way through the process, I gave up, and felt detached, defenseless, uninhibited. I realized that there was nothing I could do but step back and watch the process unfold.

In the end I realized that the whole journey was a gift and I finally felt healed, nourished and evolved. The emotions I shed as I went through this process lay open on the cutting room floor for all to see.

For me, what started the process of growth and renewal was fully embracing me Red Thread again after many years of only engaging a small piece of it.

7. Blue Jesus, oil, found objects, 15"x30"

This piece was originally a photograph, to which I added oil paint, and found objects to create the final image.

I created Blue Jesus in a very short time, after a very frustrating moment in my relationship with money. It felt like "the monkey on my back". No matter how hard I worked, how talented I was, I could never make enough. I was expressing the feeling of all my talent, aka Red Thread, was being tied to making money, instead of creating art that felt fulfilling to me. I didn't trust that I could create a sustaining income with my most soulful art.

8. Atropos' Inevitable Cut – photograph, dirt, found objects

Atropos is a goddess in Greek Mythology who was known as one of the Three Fates, or the Moiri, goddesses of fate and destiny.

As the oldest of the three, it was Atropos who chose the vehicle of death and ended each mortal life by cutting their thread with her shears. She also decided what happened to people.

For me, this sculpture begins in the dirt. The Red Thread grows from the earth into the child, where it is plentiful, thick and strong. As the child ages, she is wound up in the gift until, as motherhood begins, and the Mother's desires have to take the proverbial backseat to the job of raising children.

Ask any Mother and she will tell you she feels like she has to hold up the world and balance it all at the same time. The Red Thread grows thin at that point. But perseverance and time, can allow the Red Thread to flow again. And if it doesn't, Atropos will come and cut it. For me, that would be the same as death.

9. Divine Healing – gold leaf, oil, paper, herbs on canvas, 36"x36"

This work was made as a healing mandala, healing herbs – lavender, eucalyptus, sage and calendula were used along with gold leaf, oil paint and cut paper.

I was told that I should make a mandala. And since I always do what I'm told, I made one. I asked myself, "What does the world need most?" The immediate answer was healing. Then I thought, "What heals best?" That answer was love. I used the letters of the word, alternating them with the herbs to spiral inward toward the heart.

Three doves in flight grace the mandala, representing the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The spirit of God rests in my heart and heals it.

10. Good But Untidy – mixed media and found objects 20"x18"x9"

This is a scared mother's journey back out of the house, led by her daughter. I created this with objects from my childhood including writing samples from my first grade class. The teacher's comment on one of the papers is "Good But Untidy", which, if I had to create one, would be the title my own mother's life.