

John Christian Anderson

Deborah Baronas

David Bogus

Eva Camacho-Sanchez

Jodi Colella

Merill Comeau

Steve Loar

Natasha Morris

Holly Roddenbery

Deborah Santoro

Jessica Skultety

Human Impact:

Stories of the Opioid Epidemic

Presented in partnership with

High Point Treatment Center

Stonehill College

Plymouth County District Attorney's Office

Brockton Hospital

Curated by

Beth C. McLaughlin

FULLER CRAFT MUSEUM

September 28, 2019 – May 3, 2020

Human Impact: Stories of the Opioid Epidemic

Creative expression has long been an effective means to interrogate social issues, and museums often serve as safe spaces to explore these concerns, whether through dialogue, reflection, or education. Together, artists and the cultural institutions that support them can incite change. *Human Impact: Stories of the Opioid Epidemic*, an exhibition at Fuller Craft Museum, aims to broaden awareness of the crisis, eradicate associated stigma, and offer messages of remembrance, hope, and resiliency.

Since the turn of the millennium, the opioid epidemic has swept across the United States, laying waste to inner cities, suburbs, and rural areas. It is the deadliest drug in American history, with overdose fatalities report-

fueled the creation of new art forms, with each artist responding to the larger societal devastation as well as the personal experiences of the interview subject(s) with whom s/he was paired. The works on view in *Human Impact* convey these diverse perspectives.

Several of the participating artists worked with textiles to create their interpretations. **Jodi Colella's** two-sided column *Once Was (Remembrance)* is stitched with 3,600 handmade poppies, each constructed from repurposed clothing as a powerful statement on loss, memory, and connection. **Merill Comeau's** *I Cry at the Joyous Parts and I Cry at the Sad Parts* similarly integrates clothing of significance—worker's overalls, a velvet ball gown, and a golden bikini. Fashioned in the "crazy quilt" style, the

It is the deadliest drug in American history, with overdose fatalities reported as the leading cause of death for adults under the age of fifty. Individuals of all ages, races, and socioeconomic backgrounds are affected, and New England is one of the hardest hit areas in the United States.

ed as the leading cause of death for adults under the age of fifty. Individuals of all ages, races, and socioeconomic backgrounds are affected, and New England is one of the hardest hit areas in the United States. Thus, efforts to raise awareness of this public health emergency are especially important in this region.

In November 2018, the eleven *Human Impact* artists met with clients of Brockton's High Point Treatment Center for candid conversations about the drug's devastating effects. The varied stories shared that day—from losing loved ones to sustaining recovery—

garments are harbingers of memory that embody lost love. **Deborah Baronas's** installation *Beyond Stereotype* affirms the nondiscriminatory nature of opioid addiction with ethereal panels that have been silkscreened with various figures. The haunting work offers universal messages of hope, while inviting viewers to consider their own experiences with grief.

Also conceived in fiber, **Eva Camacho-Sanchez's** *Corrosive Epidemic* transforms bundles of material into a scarred, evolving landscape, reflecting the strange beauty of trauma. **Natasha Morris** likewise incorpo-

rates prodigious material to suggest the immensity and complexity of the crisis in *Stitched Recrudescence*. The profusion and saturated color of Morris's threads reveal the contradictions at play, such as fragility and strength, connection and isolation, hope and despair. Quilt artist **Jessica Skultety's** *Unsaid*—inspired by a lost handwritten marriage proposal—conflates the time-honored traditions of quilt-making and letter-writing to assert the power of words and the power of the stitch. **Deborah Santoro** calls upon her personal experience to create *RECEIVED/DECEIVED*, an immersive environment that expands her practice as a printmaker and serves as both storytelling vehicle and educational tool.

Other artists in *Human Impact* intermix multiple media in their expressions. For example, sculptor **John Christian Anderson's** *Sacrificial Lamb* combines wood, steel, ceramic, and paint to evoke tumult, while emphasizing the pharmaceutical companies' victimization of the public. **David Bogus** submits a related condemnation of "big pharma" in *Profits Over People*, as his outsized pills occupy a chalk outline to conjure the deadly consequence of opioids. **Steve Loar's** sculpture, *Collateral Damage/So hard to leave what you've defended*, is constructed of domestic items—an antique bed finial, firewood, wicker cast-offs—to demonstrate the multiplicity of perspectives within one family. **Holly Roddenbery's** turned wood teardrops, aptly named *A Few Drops of Compassion*, feature delicate paths of inlaid stones, reminding viewers of the importance of compassion in managing grief and the healing process.



This project would not have been possible without the support and commitment of the *Human Impact* partnership team: Fuller Craft Museum, High Point Treatment Center, Stonehill College, Plymouth County

District Attorney's Office, Brockton Hospital, and Project Advisor Susan Friedman. By forming a strategic alliance to cultivate awareness of opioid use, this collaborative aimed for improved community health, meaningful creative expression, and social change. On behalf of Fuller Craft Museum, I wholeheartedly thank all allies for their efforts.

I would especially like to thank High Point Treatment Center's Hillary Dubois Farquharson and Stonehill College's Ann Marie Rocheleau for their able efforts aligning many parts into a cohesive whole. Additional thanks go to the Stonehill College students who documented the conversations between the artists and High Point Treatment Center clients.

Further appreciation goes to Fuller Craft Museum's leadership and Exhibitions Committee for supporting this experimental project and to the curatorial staff for executing it with sensitivity and diligence. I gratefully acknowledge the eleven talented artists who bravely took on the challenge of interpreting the opioid crisis and its resultant trauma. Finally, I humbly thank the clients of High Point Treatment Center for generously participating in this initiative. On behalf of Fuller Craft Museum, I thank them for their openness and trust in sharing their stories.

Beth C. McLaughlin
Chief Curator of Exhibitions and Collections

Partnership Team

Fuller Craft Museum

Beth C. McLaughlin, Chief Curator of Exhibitions and Collections
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Brockton Hospital

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Statements

High Point Treatment Center

Many factors led to the opioid crisis, but the most significant and clear relate back to the overprescribing of opioid painkillers. It is estimated that the United States consumes more than 80% of the global supply of prescription opioids, while making up only 5% of the world's population. Despite advocacy and sanctions, the United States continues to prescribe opioids at a rate of about four times that of most European countries. Additionally, more than 80% of those who use illicit drugs like heroin or fentanyl started with prescription drugs.

Last year, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) reported that in 2017, more than 72,000 Americans died from drug overdoses and more than 47,000 of those fatalities involved opioids. This number equates to nearly 130 people dying every day in the U.S. from an opioid related overdose, and Massachusetts ranks amongst the highest states for these deaths.

While the CDC has not released final data for 2018, it is anticipated that these numbers will show the first nationwide decline in the rates of fatal overdoses since the 1990's. In Massachusetts there has been a continuous decline in the number of confirmed fatal overdoses since 2017. Locally, Plymouth County police departments through a police assisted recovery initiative known as Plymouth County Outreach, reported up to a near 26% decrease in the number of fatal overdoses between 2017 and 2018 in the county. An increased awareness of the issue overall, as well as increased access to life saving information and the overdose reversal antidote naloxone have all been attributed to the decline in fatalities.

Hillary Dubois Farquharson, MS
Director of Prevention Services
High Point Treatment Center



Plymouth County District Attorney's Office

For the past eighteen years I have had the privilege of serving Plymouth County as District Attorney. During this time our office has dedicated its resources to the prosecution of approximately 20,000 annual criminal cases. We have an office full of hard working attorneys, victim witness advocates, state police detectives, and support staff striving for justice, accountability, and truth every day. However, our sense of justice has evolved over the years, particularly as it relates to prevention. We have a duty to maintain community stability, whether through criminal prosecution, or using the best science to prevent the next cycle of violence, abuse, and addiction. The opioid crisis specifically challenged our traditional notions of prevention and caused all stakeholders to re-envision a community's response to addiction.

Thanks in large part to persons with substance use disorders (SUDs), their families, and those in recovery coming forward to tell their stories, we as a community became more educated and more aware. Together, we built coalitions, shared information, and responded. In 2015 we launched the Plymouth County Drug Abuse Task Force, a collaboration of county-wide sectors dedicated to holistically addressing all aspects of the opioid crisis. And in 2017, our law enforcement, healthcare, and recovery community partnered to form Plymouth County Outreach (PCO), which has pioneered a new approach to helping SUD individuals access treatment after an overdose.

These new, innovative strategies are the result of the community listening to the stories of those impacted by the opioid crisis, and accepting the challenge to do better. As a result, we are excited to be a sponsor of Fuller Craft Museum's exhibition, *Human Impact: Stories of the Opioid Epidemic*. Our office values the opportunity for affected families to share their stories, their pain, their suffering, and most importantly their hope. We encourage you to visit the exhibition and leave inspired to return to the community with a renewed sense of mission.

Timothy J. Cruz
District Attorney
Plymouth County



Stonehill College

As a professor of Sociology & Criminology at Stonehill College, I like to connect what I teach in the classroom to what is happening in the world. Happily, I was told about Fuller Craft Museum's intent to do an exhibition about the opioid crisis from Ed Jacoubs, the Director of Grants and Sponsored Projects with the Plymouth County District Attorney's Office. Given the project's timeframe, I was able to plan student participation from my Drug Abuse & Addiction classes in the fall of 2018 and 2019.

In the 2018 class, twelve students sat in on interviews between the artists and families of opioid users. Students recorded the sessions, each of which was shared with the respective artist. Other students listened to those recordings, pulling out relevant quotes for possible future use. Both sets of students wrote essays about the interviews, incorporating class information. These essays, in turn, were shared with the artists, providing a different perspective about opioid use. This fall, new class participants will be escorting and talking to young students from Brockton who will come to visit the exhibit.

This collaboration has been a very rewarding experience for myself and my college students. Not only have they learned more about the opioid crisis, but it has given them the opportunity to hear directly from affected family members, to see how artists interpret the pain and suffering associated with the epidemic, and to realize that collaboration among unlikely partners can result in an innovative and worthwhile experience.

Ann Marie Rocheleau, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Sociology & Criminology
Stonehill College



John Christian Anderson

At the beginning of this project, I felt lost as I tried to make connections between all of the heartbreaking stories that were competing to be heard. In these situations I always turn to drawing, letting my pencil wander over the page like a dowser searching for water. Over time my sketchbook filled with simple forms that evolved into objects, leading me to a deeper understanding about the overall composition. Most importantly, Fuller Craft Museum arranged to have each artist meet with a family member who willingly shared personal experiences with the opioid crisis. Those stories were intimate and powerful, allowing me to have the courage to express my outrage.

My sculpture, *Sacrificial Lamb*, went through numerous changes. Eventually, the arrangement of forms started to take on certain attributes similar to the altars used in Aztec and Mayan rituals, where citizens became human sacrifices to both honor the gods and bring wealth to the community. In this case, however, “wealth” is a misnomer when corporations like Purdue Pharma cynically misrepresented themselves to the community in order to sell their products.

The upside down head floating above hundreds of drug containers becomes a metaphor for the wave of drugs that addiction attracts. The hunger to get high overrides everything else, turning one’s life upside down. The cone rising out from the head is a system of interwoven veins where chemicals replace rational thought, emotional stability, and spiritual awareness. Viewed from a distance, all of these forms combine and read like some trophy or fountain for a dystopian future.

I see a large part of this crisis as a breakdown in trust, as some doctors and corporations misled their communities into thinking certain drugs were safe. Now there is a more accurate picture of the deception and greed that drove this crisis. The primitive bomb sitting quietly in the center of the funnel signifies a warning; this crisis could be nothing compared to what lies ahead.



“The cravings are so strong, I don’t have power over it.”

– Client S

Sacrificial Lamb
2019
Wood, steel, ceramic,
paint, plaster, ink
76” x 36” x 36”
Collection of the Artist





Deborah Baronas

My artwork depicts the fabric of everyday lives—daily routines, work environment, and restorative recreation. I use multiple layers to create a sense of time, depth, and movement. Translucent layered fabric panels, stenciled and silkscreened, create a three-dimensional sense of space. As viewers experience the work, the patterns and colors shift, animating the figures and transforming the light.

The work is designed to evoke a personal, private response. Storytelling is central, but the tales are suggested rather than detailed. I believe this ambiguity allows people to connect with the work on a deeply personal level.

When invited to participate in *Human Impact: Stories of the Opioid Epidemic*, I was hesitant to take on the challenge. Opioid addiction is a sociological phenomenon that is beyond familiar territory. How could I possibly make artwork in response to an epidemic of this magnitude? How could I listen to tragic stories of opioid addiction and study the root of the epidemic and the impossible task of altering its course and represent it in a meaningful way? How could I find the spirit, tenacity, and hope in this story?

The family I met lost their loved one from a fentanyl overdose. She was a young woman, loved and loving, beautiful and fun, and up until her death, healthy by all appearances. She was not what you would expect a heroin addict to look like. I was struck by how indiscriminate opioid addiction is, how the most unlikely of people fall prey to this poisonous chemical, and how the stereotype of the substance user as a degenerate, disenfranchised human being is so wrong.

My goal was to personify those “types” of individuals who become substance users. The criteria was that the work needed to be beautiful, vibrant, serene, seductive, and be able to portray light and darkness, hope and melancholy. Saturated euphoric jewel tones interrupted by dusty earth tones anchor the piece, and patterns created by the layered figures abstract the subjects and create a cocoon-like den contributing to the miasma born out of substance use disorders.

Beyond Stereotype
2019
Fabric dye stenciled and silkscreened on cotton and silk
108" x 84" x 48"
Collection of the Artist



**“One bad decision,
just one bad decision,
one bad day,
one bad choice, and
you can’t get it back.
It’s gone. And when
it’s that easy for her
to do it, it’s that easy
for everyone to do it.
She was terrified of
needles.”**

– Client K



David Bogus

In the United States, profits over people have infected many aspects of our lives—whether it is global warming due to oil and gas, foods that lack nutrition, or prisons that profit from mass incarceration. Sadly, even our health care system prioritizes the bottom line over everything else. When a patient visits a doctor, there is an inherent trust that this professional will prescribe the best treatment for the health of the patient, but how can patients trust that medical doctors have their best interests first?

During the development process for *Human Impact: Stories of the Opioid Epidemic*, Client A told me, “Everyone in my dad’s neighborhood saw the same doctor. They all knew he would write the [prescriptions] they were looking for.” Five years after her dad’s death, she is still angry. Her anger is directed at the pharmaceutical companies and the doctor who prescribed these pills. There is plenty of blame to go around, but ultimately the crisis is not difficult to understand; it’s murder for money.

When interviewing A, I could empathize with her story and I could feel the impact that the death of her father had on her wellbeing.

There are many emotions we both shared. The most motivating emotion to participate in the project and for A to share her story was anger. How could anyone not be angry that our country let greed kill over five hundred thousand Americans?

I was compelled to participate in *Human Impact* because the topic of addiction and opioids is personal to me and the exhibition offers another opportunity to encourage change and awareness through my work. Over the past five years, I have moved my practice to take an activist approach. I think artists have the ability to change the world through art and outreach, and this topic resonates in many parts of this country.

I am most thankful for being a part of this experience as a way to use these emotions to help change what is broken in America: profits over people.

“When I found out, it was more like disbelief and like straight up fear.”

– Client A



Profits Over People
2019
Ceramic
72" x 36" x 48"
Collection of the Artist



“I got to the point where I didn’t want to live, but I couldn’t die. In addiction I lost everything, and in recovery I gained it all back, and more.” –Client V

Eva Camacho-Sanchez

I interviewed V in November 2018 for *Human Impact: Stories of the Opioid Epidemic*. Before I met her, I had only learned from news reports how opioid addiction was affecting the United States. Learning about her personal experience really opened my eyes to the urgency required to solve this problem. Opioid use affects both the individual suffering the ravages of addiction and the fabric of communities overall. It is a corrosive epidemic that leaves so many lives marked and scarred, summarized by V in one sentence: “It could happen to anyone, so no one is immune to it.”

Her substance use disorder lasted approximately four years. During that period, she lost many important things to her: her son, her job, her home, many of her friends, and herself. She was afraid to come forward due to the stigma associated with addiction. But she bravely did, and as a result she found the support she needed the most—her family. Together, they moved forward on her path to recovery. As she explains, “In addiction I lost everything, and in recovery I gained it all back, and more.”

I see the opioid epidemic in this country as a process that corrodes the human body and soul. Corrosion leaves marks that can never be washed away, and these marks represent the scars many families carry until the end of their days. These scars are stitched, representing the persistence, diligence, passion, and resilience of many families, who draw strength from within their deepest scars, some of which never fully close. This long piece represents the highs and lows endured by a person suffering addiction. It starts as very white, a symbol of purity and innocence, and through its undulations grows increasingly darker with rust stains, a representation of the corrosive and devastating effects of addiction on members of our communities.

Something that shocked me after meeting with V was her positivity and hopeful attitude after everything she and her family have endured. After four years fighting this addiction, she met her husband during her recovery, and they both now dedicate their time to educating young children in schools throughout Massachusetts. She transmitted so much hope to me, that I decided to end the piece as white, illuminating a path out of the darkness, yet full of stitches to represent scars that will always remain as reminders of the devastating power of opioid addiction.



Corrosive Epidemic
2019
Silk chiffon, merino wool, rusted pieces, embroidery cotton thread, hand-dyed cotton thread
20" x 420"
Collection of the Artist

Jodi Colella

Once Was (Remembrance) is a memorial for all those lost to the opioid epidemic in the prime of their lives. This 12 foot, 2-sided tower is covered with 3,600 poppies that are stitched and then sewn onto a plush black velvet foundation. The poppies are made from repurposed clothing donated by those I spent time with talking about this project and the opioid crisis. The resulting array of patterns, colors, styles, and materials represents the lives of all people of every age, gender, relation, ethnicity, etc. The empty centers are outlined in bright red to embody the victims, and the void reveals black velvet beneath—a funerary symbol—adding gravity and symbolizing loss.

As part of *Human Impact: Stories of the Opioid Epidemic*, I formed a relationship with a single mom who lost her son to a fentanyl overdose. His story is like so many others, where an unexpected dependence grew from a painkiller prescribed after an accident. The anguish and consequence of such a tragic loss of life is heartbreaking, and the horrifying fact is that this is only one family. According to the *National Institute on Drug Abuse*, every day more than 130 people in the United States die after overdosing on opioids, and it is estimated that there have been approximately 720,000 deaths since 1999 due to opioid-related substances. Each of the 3,600 remembrance poppies of the memorial *Once Was* stands for 200 such individuals.

It is striking to think that this monument only captures this moment in time, especially since it required so much time and labor to create. The sad truth is that when this project is complete these numbers will already be obsolete. The crisis is ongoing, and the casualties are mounting.

I hope that *Human Impact* raises awareness about the facts of the epidemic and highlights the need to offer aid to families in trouble, to initiate legislation to regulate the administration of pharmaceuticals, and to provide effective treatment for those who are actively afflicted. The numbers are unfathomable. To feel the magnitude of this struggle for yourself, just stand closely in front of *Once Was* and look up.

“I wanted to be there with him. Now he is everywhere with us.” –Client L

Once Was (Remembrance)
2019
Donated clothing, linen, cotton, wool thread, velvet, cotton canvas, rare earth magnets
144” x 60”
Collection of the Artist





Merill Comeau

For my interview, I spoke with H, a woman who reconnected with her high school boyfriend as an adult and re-found love. She portrays him as strong, creative, and caring—inquiring about her day and listening to her answers. Slowly the disease of addiction crept up on the couple before devastating their relationship, and today she carries the fear of not knowing where he is, how he is doing, or if he is still alive. To H, participating in *Human Impact: Stories of the Opioid Epidemic* is a particularly appropriate way to honor the man about whom she still feels so deeply. She believes he would appreciate the creativity of the process and the resulting artwork.

In addition to H's experience, the son of one of my closest friends has struggled with the disease of addiction for fifteen years. I have witnessed the destruction caused by his illness and the rippling effects on an extended family. I've seen a repeated cycle of treatment and relapse. Today, thanks to dedicated efforts and the assistance of replacement therapy, my friend's son is excelling at his new job and hopeful about his future.

The title of the piece, *I Cry at the Joyous Parts and I Cry at the Sad Parts*, is a direct quote from H that reflects the range of our emotions in coping with disease. I use fabrics, garments, patchwork, stitching, and embroidery as symbols of human life: our bodies are wrapped in constructed textiles every day. My materials are repurposed, I believe they carry memories of lives lived.

The vertical stacking of elements illustrates the hope of treatment: it is a hard climb, but the view from the top is worth it. The velvet ball gown at the bottom represents the seductive high substances initially deliver. As addiction sets in, life fractures and disintegrates—evidenced by the patchwork of fabrics fading into monochromatic frayed snippets. (People often describe the loss of their ability to perceive color when suffering from a substance use disorder.) The rugged overalls in the center represent H's boyfriend and the hard work required in treatment. The restructuring and healing of the brain is represented in the introduction of color and by the semi-ordered seaming of the crazy quilt. The top section sports a gold bikini, evoking the need to bare oneself, accept your imperfections, and exalt in your naked glory.

I Cry at the Joyous Parts and I Cry at the Sad Parts
Garments, painted and printed repurposed fabrics, composted toile, commercial fabrics, sequins, thread, hand and machine stitching
214" x 48" x 30"
Collection of the Artist

“He’s a man’s man...he has the most beautiful smile...and he loves ice cream.”

— Client H



Steve Loar

This is a story of two epiphanies: one had by a brother and another by his sister. The brother (B) cheated death resulting from two heroin overdoses, climaxing seven years of heroin addiction. The sister (S) strayed into using alcohol as a defense mechanism, then came to realize that alcohol is merely a more socially acceptable drug.

S, now 29, always felt stronger than B, three years younger. She assumed the role of his protector from their father and extended family of addicts and alcoholics. (Every male in the father’s wing of the family has had addiction problems.) S saw her position as “offensively guarding against my father’s family,” a role she explains was “never a placid guardianship or embrace.” B began experimenting with substances during high school and later stepped up to heroin after S moved to college.

For her, the following years of emergency trips home were “constant chaos all the time—consuming and tiring.” Administering superficial care, she would then escape back to school. After a second overdose, B’s epiphany was to wake up to the truth of what so many people had been telling him: “Man, that shit will kill you.” Both S and B, and many others, suffered collateral damage during the seven years of heroin addiction. They all must continue to live with the anxiety that, at any time, B could have a relapse. S observes that “the sensation is tiring—like running up a mountain.” Despite all this, S feels that her relationship with B is, in some ways, better than before. S has achieved her goal of being a high school art teacher, while B has been off of drugs for three years.

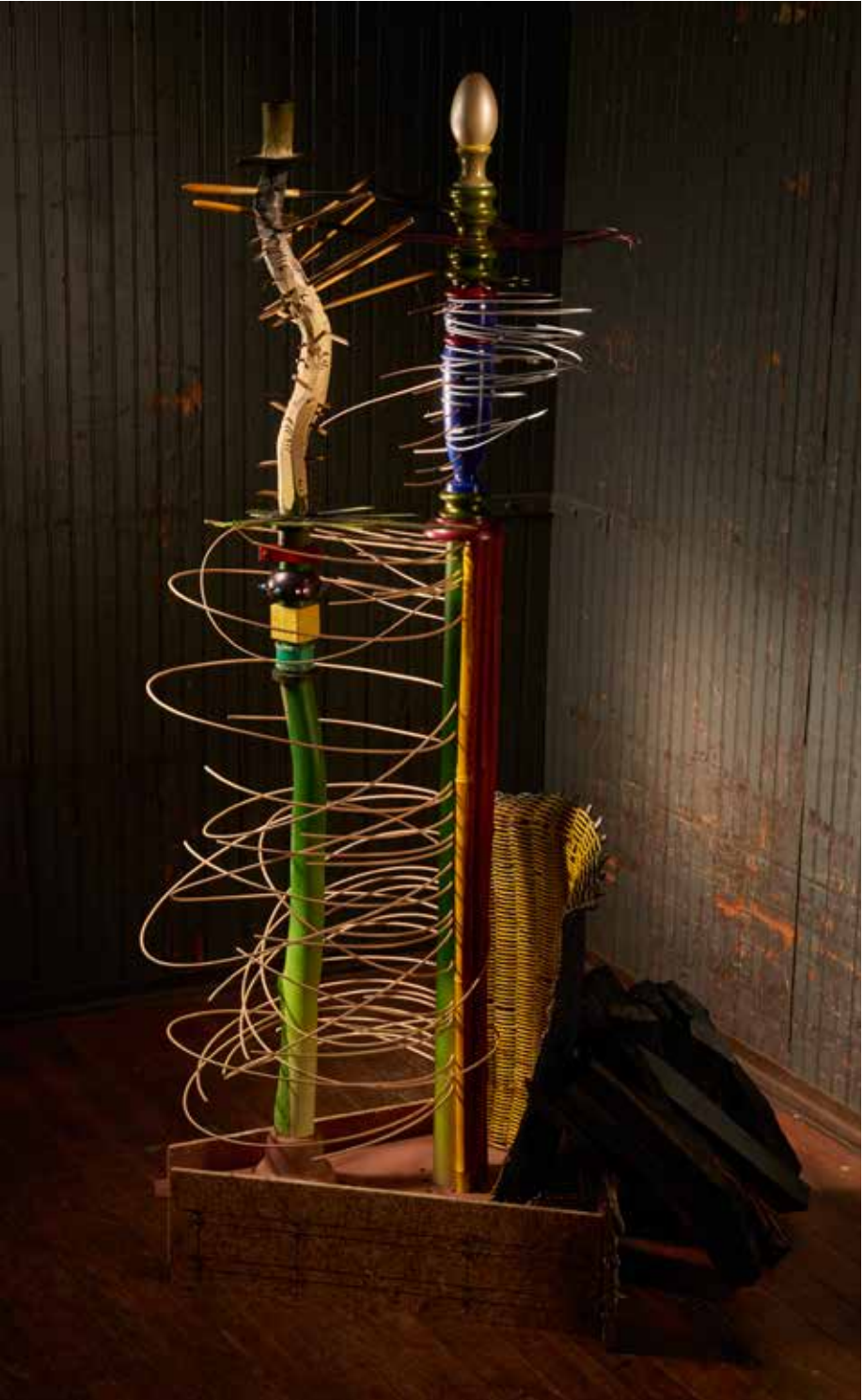
The essence of effective abstraction and storytelling is the maintenance of a consistent attitude, in order to establish a consistent tone that is engaging and evocative; wherever the artist chooses to operate along the spectrum of implicit to explicit. Despite a career of exploring figurative abstractions using stylized forms, colors, and finishes, I found that conveying the story of 26 years of two intertwined lives and the presence (and effects) of addiction proved demanding. And then, no matter how well you’ve presented the story, there is always one undeniable truth: Every viewer brings their own ghosts to the viewing of the piece.

“His addiction story is not mine to tell, I can only tell my story.”

– Client K



Collateral Damage / So hard to leave what you’ve defended
2019
Wood, reed, antique wicker, antique bed finial, bamboo, flake board, firewood, found materials, paint, dye
67” x 46” x 29”
Collection of the Artist





Stitched Recrudescence
2019
Embroidery floss, aida cloth,
Plexiglass, fabric dye, hardware
90" x 12"
Collection of the Artist

Natasha Morris

Mementos are private moments attended to in public spaces. The simple reassurance of feeling it in your pocket to ensure its safety. Taking it out to caress it. Stealing away a moment to admire it. During my featured family's testimony of their personal journey through the opioid crisis, they shared mementos of their own. My aim in this piece was to create a tribute catered to my specific interview subject, yet facilitating a likeness to reach a wider audience.

In my current body of work, I look to question, challenge, and contradict traditional jewelry themes of preciousness and adornment. In creating this piece, I looked to preserve the essence of our conversation, as well as their collective items, by creating a piece valued greater due to its instilled time and detail versus the use of precious materials with great monetary value. My desire was to attach a breath of memory personal to them, remaining subtle in the imagery used, as well as discrete in its placement on the human form. Small in size and delicate in material, the piece creates a tenderness worth protecting, yet remains dramatic in weight and overall public display.

Connection was a word regularly repeated in conversation with my family. A longing for a networking system between those involved in the crisis and a surreal, yet practically tangible, link to their lost one. The multitude of threads used is only a small reflection of the connection between all those afflicted within the crisis. The threads remain darkened and difficult to define, yet material and comparable to the unsounded numbers of individuals affected by the epidemic. The choice of body adornment, as a brooch, becomes a one-size-fits-all opportunity. The piece remains unfitted to a specific individual and feasible for all to wear as well as endure.

“When he died, from the minute that I knew he had died, I was just okay. I don’t have to have any previous thoughts; this is now my reality.”

– Client A





Holly Roddenbery

The piece titled *A Few Drops of Compassion* is a sculpture that memorializes and honors those whose lives have been touched by the opioid epidemic. The artwork consists of five sculptural wood teardrops that are intricately adorned with silver inlay and various gems. The inlaying of each piece of silver is a highly involved process. As the many pieces lined up to form a pattern, they also began to take on a metaphor for the numerous lives that have been lost.

I was inspired to make this piece after conversing with my subject about “ingredients for the cure” in regards to the opioid epidemic. We both agreed that compassion is a necessary mindset for a healthy recovery, as well as a lens to view those who struggle. Sadly, she lost her fiancé and uncle to the epidemic. After hearing her story, I shared empathy for her losses and saw beauty in her season of grief. The stigma which surrounds substance misuse often shades the process of mourning and healing. Through a sensory experience, I aim to communicate dignity, honor, and ultimately compassion towards the impacted. With this sculpture, I want to declare a safe space, a memorial, a place for grief and healing to transpire.



A Few Drops of Compassion
2019
Wood, silver, stone, acrylic
102" x 24" x 24"
Collection of the Artist

“It’s not just the person under the bridge. It’s me too.”

— Client B

Deborah Santoro

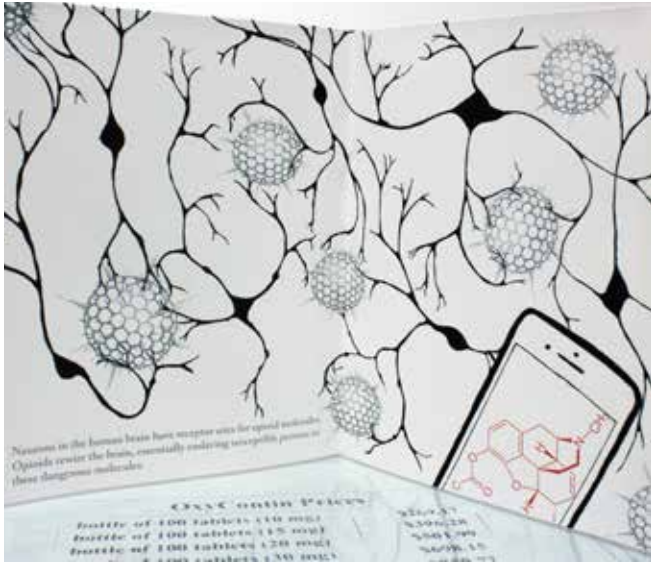
The room was crowded, and there were crosscurrents of noise. We were all a little nervous as we prepared to meet each other, prepared to meet a stranger and hear/tell the personal story of a life impacted by opioid addiction. I worried that my subject wouldn't relate to me enough to share, that it would be awkward. Instead, I met Client L whose daughter's life took a dangerous turn into opioid addiction after being prescribed OxyContin for knee surgery. We both cried as she generously and bravely shared a tale of addiction, loss, and recovery.

It's personal, because I lost a sister to complications due to heroin addiction in 2015, and I know well the fear, agony, and shame. This disease thrives in darkness and secrecy. Healing begins when we speak openly about our experiences as relatives, friends, lovers, and survivors.

A unique aspect of L's experience is that she worked as a forensic interviewer for a drug court, and she saw children that she knew from preschool come through the court for drug-related crimes. The presiding judge was wise and did her best to find

solutions that encouraged rehabilitation. When L's own daughter became addicted, it was often the voice of the judge in her head that helped her make decisions to support her daughter and her family, and not the demon of addiction.

This project pushed me into new artistic territory. I originally trained as a painter and became a printmaker later in life, enthralled with layers, image transfer, and the collaborative nature of working in print media. For *RECEIVED/DECEIVED*, I learned how to make an accordion-fold book and how to silkscreen onto a desk. Conceptually I pushed myself to think of the most effective way to show how easy it is to fall, how difficult it is to escape the nexus of addiction in our society, and how corporate greed has been the lynchpin allowing the number of opioid-related deaths to explode in the last decade. When, I wonder, will the cost be too high?



“I would see kids that my kids went to school with, now they’re on the docket for violating probation for using heroin or finding a needle. And I was like, “Wait a minute—I volunteered in the classroom when you were in your overalls—what happened?”

– Client L

RECEIVED/DECEIVED
2019
Accordion book, silkscreen, repurposed desk
40" x 36" x 66"
Collection of the Artist





Jessica Skultety

Unsaid is inspired by one local family's story. A man promised to write down a detailed wedding proposal. He died from an overdose, and his intended has not been able to locate this hidden letter. The theme of letters becomes a way to showcase the unsaid: the secrets, little notes, and exclamations that those who perish and their loved ones can no longer relay to each other.

These communications are both positive and negative—joyful, regretful, exciting, revelatory, humorous, spiteful, and loving—which is represented by the many colors and fonts. The cascade of envelopes demonstrates just how many of these hidden messages exist and will continue to exist as long as the opioid epidemic rages. A letter proposing marriage can at least be found on this quilt, if not in real life.

The title, *Unsaid*, also represents the wider stigma about drug use and the opioid epidemic specifically. Why is so much “unsaid?” Why have we for so long practiced othering to separate ourselves from people who need our support? Why NOT support Narcan distribution if it saves lives?

Though quilts are traditionally used for comfort and decoration, they also have a lengthy history in politics and activism. The envelopes were cut from fabric scraps and appliquéd by machine. The messages were free motion quilted on a domestic sewing machine, and the additional line quilting was done with a walking foot. It represents the echoing effects of opioids on American lives.

If anything, this quilt is meant to emphasize how many stories are left untold when opioids continue to claim lives, and to bring to light the dire need for treatment, monetary support, respect, care, and, most of all, understanding from one human to another.



“He came from a really nice family, a really nice neighborhood. It wasn’t that he didn’t come from a really nice family.”

—Client B

Unsaid
2019
Cotton fabric and thread
39" x 66"
Collection of the Artist

Checklist

John Christian Anderson

Sacrificial Lamb
2019
Wood, steel, ceramic, paint, plaster, ink
76" x 36" x 36
Collection of the Artist

Deborah Baronas

Beyond Stereotype
2019
Fabric dye stenciled and silkscreened on cotton and silk
108" x 84" x 48"
Collection of the Artist

David Bogus

Profits Over People
2019
Ceramic
72" x 36" x 48"
Collection of the Artist

Eva Camacho-Sanchez

Corrosive Epidemic
2019
Silk chiffon, merino wool, rusted pieces, embroidery cotton thread, hand-dyed cotton thread
20" x 420"
Collection of the Artist

Jodi Colella

Once Was (Remembrance)
2019
Donated clothing, linen, cotton, wool thread, velvet, cotton canvas, rare earth magnets
144" x 60"
Collection of the Artist

Merill Comeau

I Cry at the Joyous Parts and I Cry at the Sad Parts
Garments, painted and printed repurposed fabrics, composted toile, commercial fabrics, sequins, thread, hand and machine stitching
214" x 48" x 30"
Collection of the Artist

Steve Loar

Collateral Damage / So hard to leave what you've defended
2019
Wood, reed, antique wicker, antique bed finial, bamboo, flake board, firewood, found materials, paint, dye
67" x 46" x 29"
Collection of the Artist

Natasha Morris

Stitched Recrudescence
2019
Embroidery floss, aida cloth, Plexiglass, fabric dye, hardware
90" x 12"
Collection of the Artist

Holly Roddenbery

A Few Drops of Compassion
2019
Wood, silver, stone, acrylic
102" x 24" x 24"
Collection of the Artist

Deborah Santoro

RECEIVED/DECEIVED
2019
Accordion book, silkscreen, repurposed desk
40" x 36" x 66"
Collection of the Artist

Jessica Skultety

Unsaid
2019
Cotton fabric and thread
39" x 66"
Collection of the Artist

Credits

This catalogue accompanies the exhibition *Human Impact: Stories of the Opioid Epidemic*, presented at Fuller Craft Museum from September 28, 2019–May 3, 2020. This exhibition was curated by Beth C. McLaughlin, Fuller Craft Museum Chief Curator of Exhibitions and Collections.

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Front cover: Deborah Baronas, *Beyond Stereotype*, 2019 (detail)

Back cover: Holly Roddenbery, *A Few Drops of Compassion*, 2019

Inside front cover: Eva Camacho-Sanchez, *Corrosive Epidemic*, 2019 (detail)

Inside back cover: Deborah Santoro, *RECEIVED/DECEIVED*, 2019 (detail)

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