



Amber Mustafic

You incorporate unique frames, family heirlooms, and repurpose vintage textiles into your compositions. Do found objects and materials choices guide your design process? What is your process for developing a composition?

Found objects definitely guide my design process which is never linear. Sometimes a certain frame or textile will immediately inspire a composition, or it will linger around my studio for months until a composition feels perfect for it. I never force the merging of a concept with a found object. It has to be a natural coming-together of the two, where the found object perfectly fits the idea and enhances it. As for developing a composition, I take reference photos of myself, or have a photo-shoot with loved ones, and from there I create pencil drawings where I test out different compositions and have fun with it, incorporating symbols and motifs. Once I decide on the final drawing, I transfer it to fabric using carbon paper or a projector. From there I use my painting skills to make all of the color decisions on the spot, filling in the whole composition with thread by hand, spontaneously adding elements that weren't in the original drawing as well.

Do you have any tips for repurposing materials, or sources for great vintage or deadstock materials?

Whenever I leave the city I love visiting antique and thrift stores in smaller, more rural towns. I love to poke around for vintage doilies, table runners, fabrics and frames. I feel extra inspired when I travel, but since I cannot be in the studio, I love scouring for materials to bring back home with me. It's amazing because when I am home I hardly want to leave my studio cave, so traveling is the perfect opportunity for me to not be in my head and really look around for cool things.

Your work has beautiful, rich colors— do you find the texture, feel, or age of your materials influence the colors in your composition?

My work is all about emotional experiences and our internal worlds, so I naturally gravitate towards colors and materials that reflect a sort of softness, depth, but also an intensity. While I use rich



colors, I am not often drawn to garish, super-loud colors in my work, which is the same reason I am drawn to gentle vintage textiles with scalloped edges or lace, with washed out tertiary colors. I really enjoy the delicate, feminine aspect of worn vintage textiles and find that my color choices reflect that sensibility. For me, color choice is just as impactful as a compositional decision and I love to use color strategically to communicate certain emotions and energies.



Amber Mustafic is an Albanian-American artist based in New York City. She creates autobiographical thread-paintings that chronicle her spiritual and emotional experiences. Through self-portraiture and depictions of loved ones, layered with symbols and motifs, she creates ethereal dreamscapes in which figures are suspended in profound moments of transformations and realizations regarding identity, ephemerality, love and womanhood.

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