

Precious Scars

Donna Bassin

In order to cope with our current turbulent and violent times, I returned to a series of photographs taken in Kyoto, Japan while on a Zen Buddhist meditation trip. I needed to re-experience the solace and tranquility evoked by the spiritual aesthetics of this ancient city. During my visit, I was inspired by the practice of Kintsugi, where broken pottery is put back together with a metallic lacquer so that the damage is highlighted rather than hidden. I was moved by the acceptance of injury as part of the object's life rather than the end of it, and by extension, the acknowledgment that we need to recognize personal and societal wounds to mend.

I applied this practice of Kintsugi to photographs printed on rice paper. I tore the prints and then put them back together, sewing them with embroidery thread and fragments from other torn prints. The repaired photographs were dipped in an encaustic beeswax medium creating a translucent skin-like texture. Each resulting photograph became a layered material object containing a process of transformation from injury to repair.



Precious Scars.Kyoto.Monastery.4A
Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Tricycle

The Buddhist Review



Precious Scars: Art as Practice

Photo Essay by Barry Magid and Donna Bassin

2021



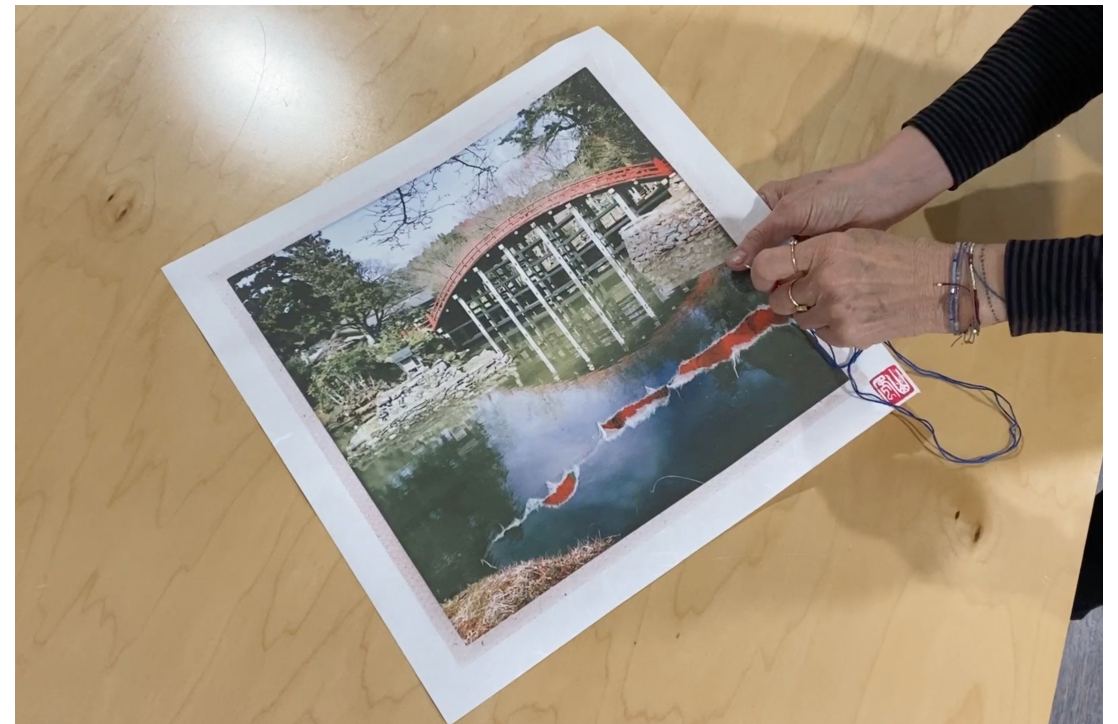
Precious Scars.18

Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Rip

My Process



Sew

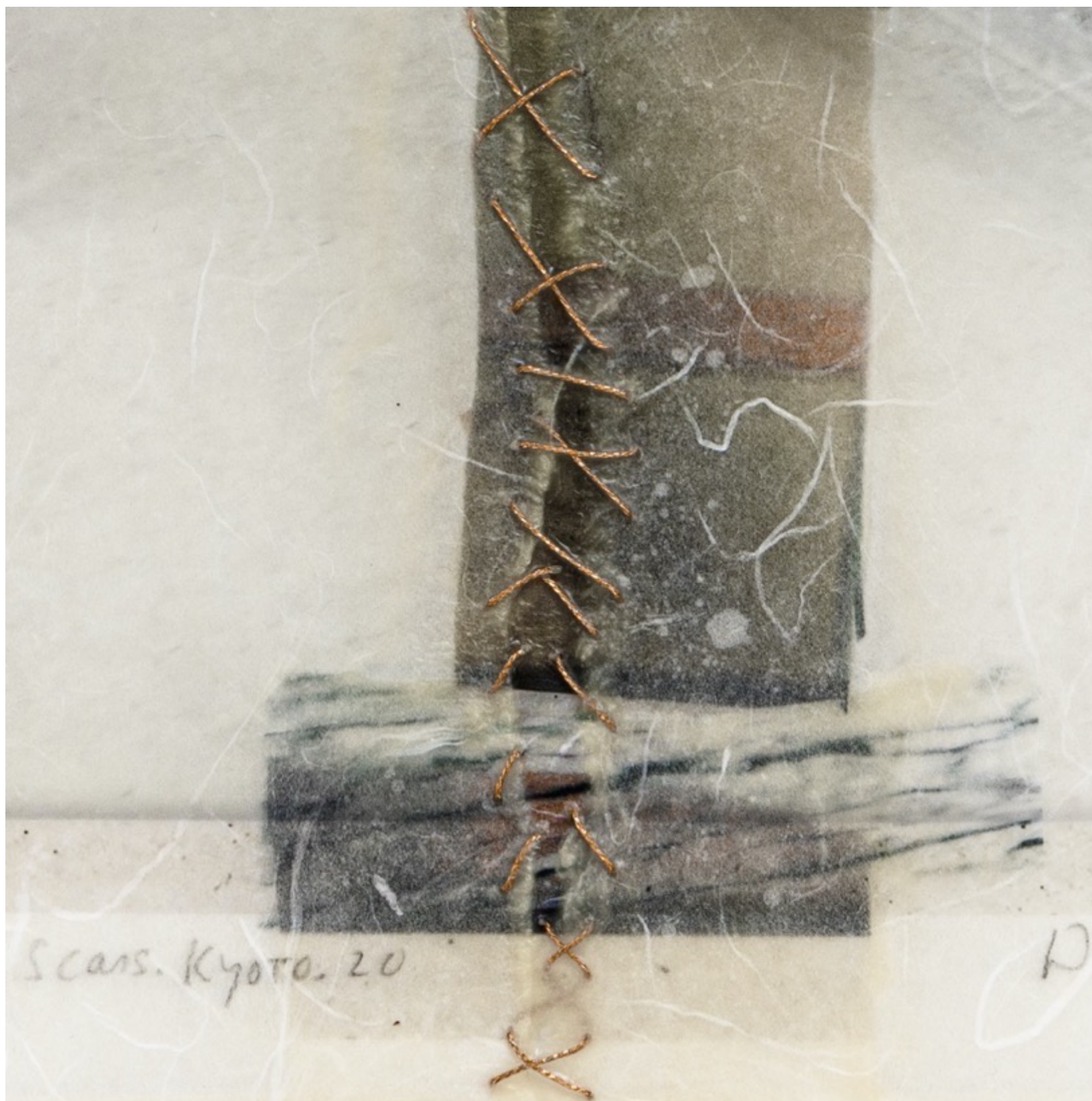


Dip



Precious Scars.Kyoto.20

Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Detail: Precious Scars.Kyoto.20
Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Precious Scars.Kyoto.Monk.8A

Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique

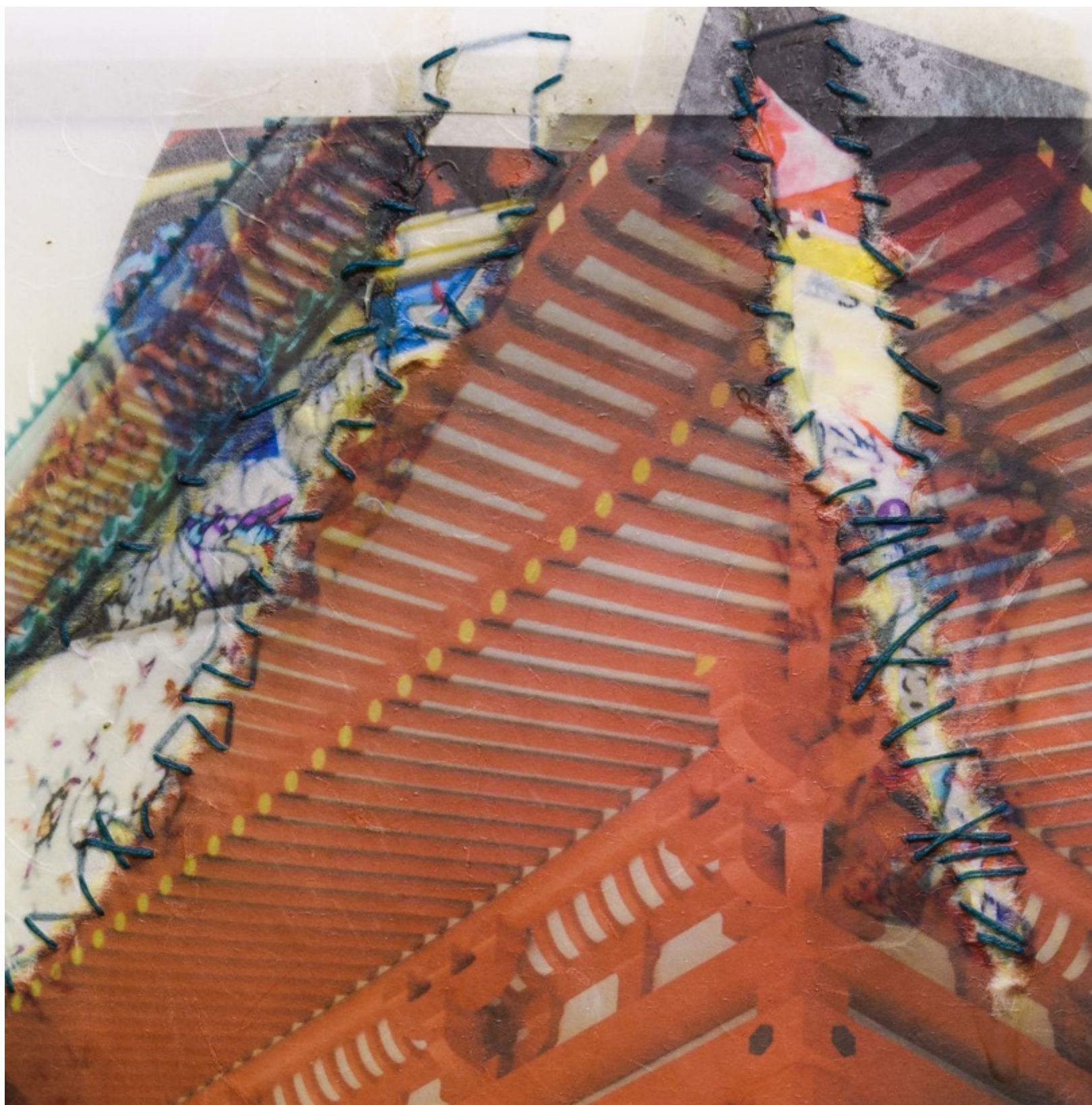


Precious Scars.Kyoto.Monastery.3A
Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Precious Scars.Kyoto.Temples.2A

Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Detail: Precious Scars.Kyoto.Temples.2A
Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Precious Scars.Kyoto.Temples.4A
Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Precious Scars.Kyoto.Temples.8B
Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Precious Scars.Kyoto.7

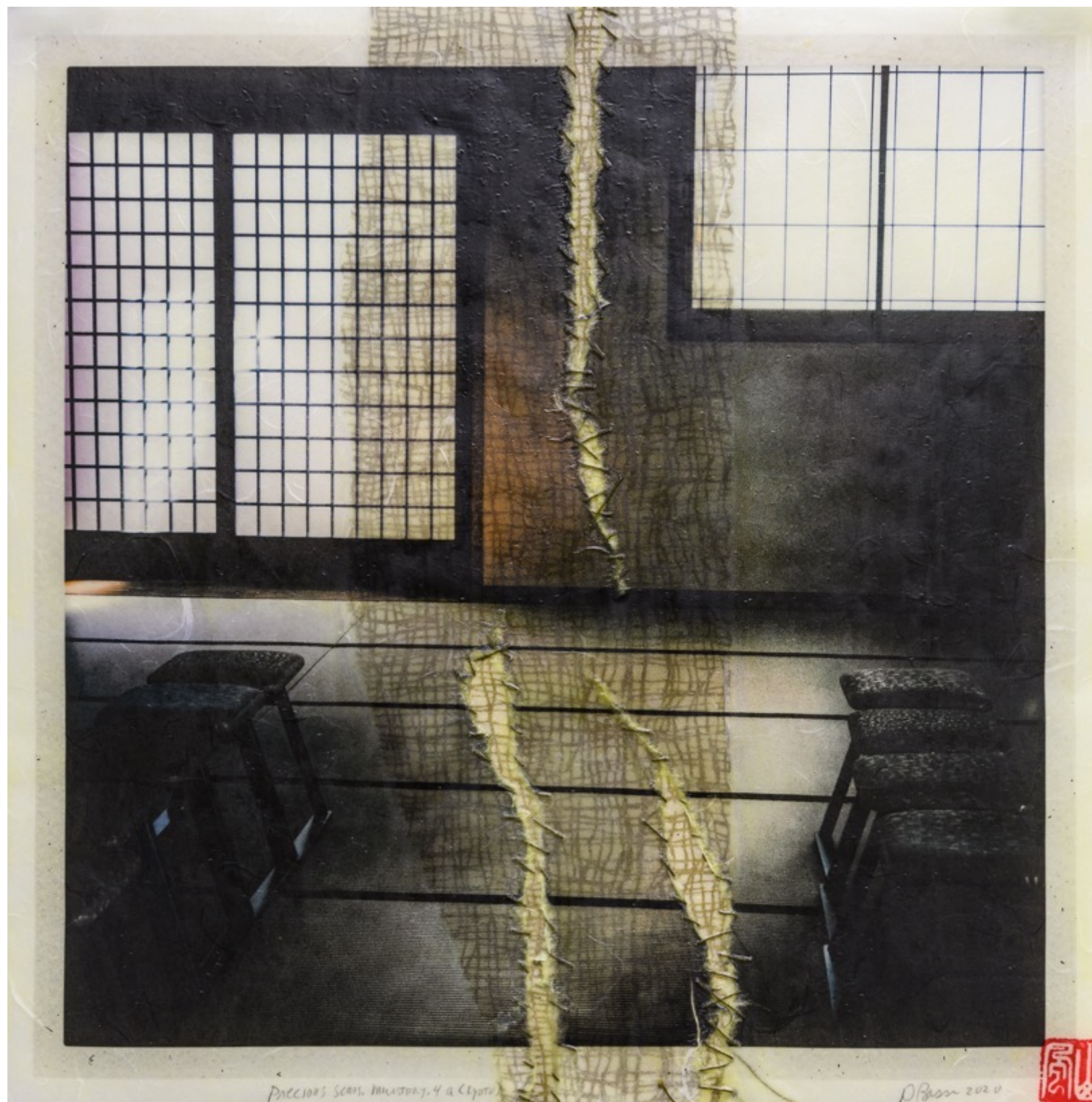
Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Precious Scars.Kyoto.Monastery.2A
Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Detail: Precious Scars.Kyoto.Monastery.2A
Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



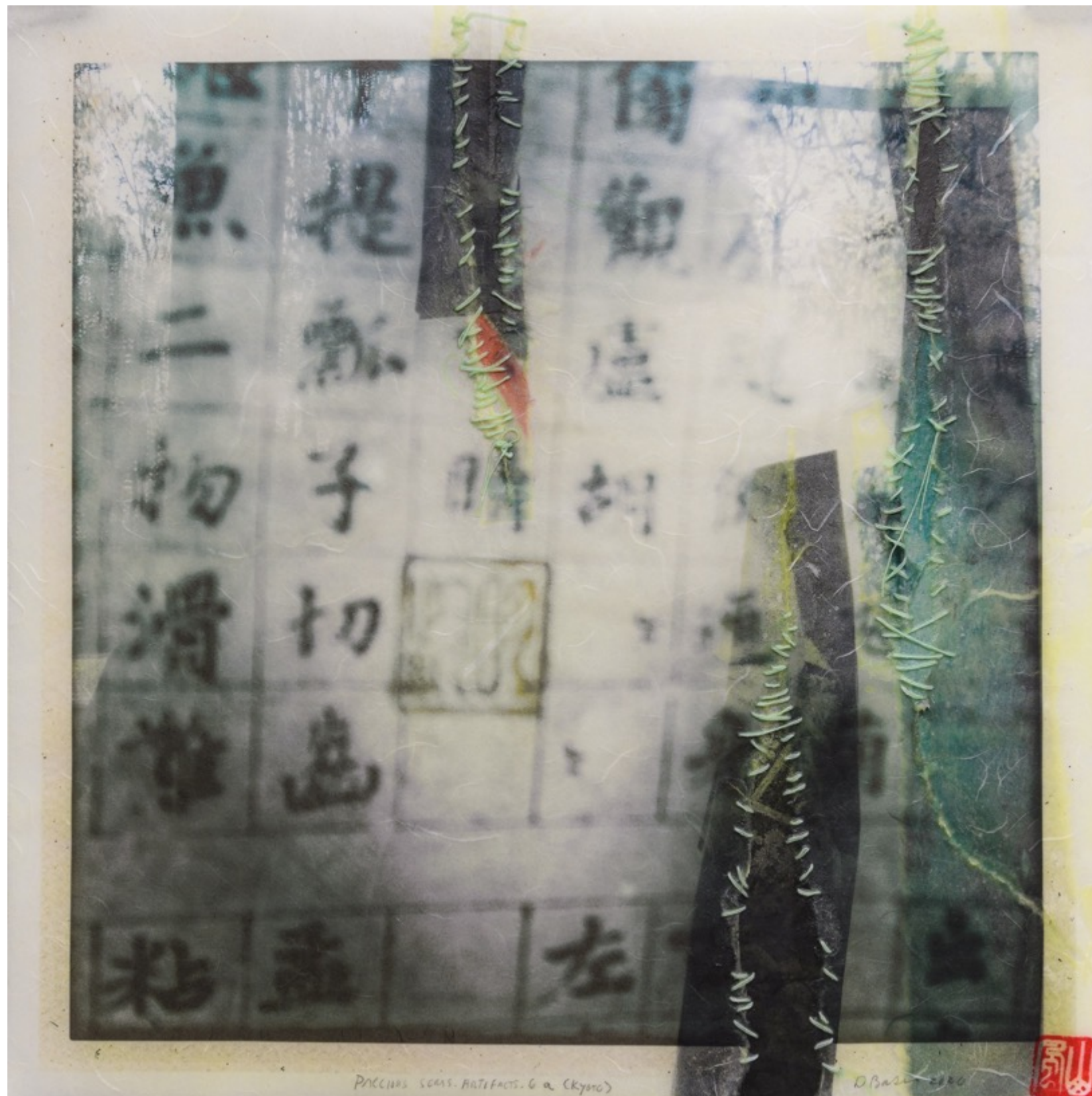
Precious Scars. Kyoto. Monastery. 4A
Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Detail: Precious Scars.Kyoto.Monastery.4A
Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Precious Scars.Kyoto.Monastery.5A
Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Precious Scars.Kyoto.Artifacts.6A
Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Precious Scars.Kyoto.24A

Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Precious Scars.Kyoto.18

Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Precious Scars.Kyoto.26

Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Precious Scars.Kyoto.28

Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Detail: Precious Scars.Kyoto.28
Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Precious Scars.Kyoto.10

Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Detail: Precious Scars.Kyoto.10

Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Precious Scars.Kyoto.Jizo.16A

Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Precious Scars.Kyoto.27
Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Precious Scars.Kyoto.Geishas.6A
Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Precious Scars.Kyoto.Nature.8A

Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



Detail: Precious Scars.Kyoto.Nature.8A
Pigment print, embroidery thread, encaustic; 16" x 16"; Unique



1



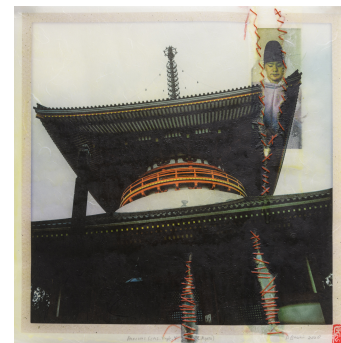
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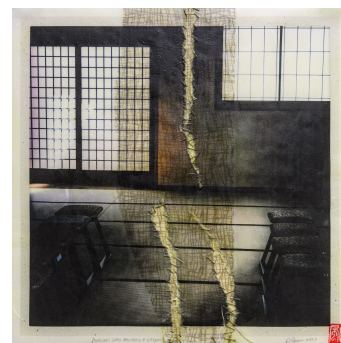
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Notes on Print Production

Precious Scars is a series of 40 photographs taken in Kyoto, Japan, and produced in a 3-step process.

Each image is layered and printed on 16" x 16" Moab Moenkopi Washi Unryu rice paper and ripped. Torn fragments from other photographs in the series and embroidery thread are used to "repair" the rip in the style of Kintsugi. The photographs are dipped in R&F archival beeswax encaustic medium to provide a skin-like texture. The translucency from the wax bath highlights the rip as well as the repair. Each image is signed with a seal script stamp of the artist's name, Mountain Wind, given to her by her Buddhist calligraphy/meditation teacher.

Edition of 8 with 2 AP. Each of the 10 is unique based on variations in the ripping and sewing.

Two handmade boxes "8 ¾" x "8 ¾" x "1 ¾", covered in red cloth, contain the full series of 40 original photographs printed on Moab Moenkopi Washi Unryu rice paper at 8"x 8" and dipped in R&F archival beeswax encaustic medium (without the rip and repair) and signed with the seal script stamp.



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2021

My Own Witness: Rupture and Repair, Curators: Larry Davis and Thom O'Connor, Soho Photo Gallery, New York, NY

Her Flag – New Jersey, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.

New Jersey Arts Annual: ReVision and Respond, Curator: Muhammad Abdul-Mubdi, Jurors: Kristen J. Owens, Amy Simon Hopwood, The Newark Museum of Art, Newark, NJ

The Empowering, Curator: Danielle Scott, Pro Arts Jersey City, Jersey City, NJ

Privilege, Power and Everyday Life, Curator: Theda Sandiford, Studio Montclair, Montclair, NJ

2020

Prayers for the Pandemic; Prayers for Progress; Prayers for the Planet; Prayers for the Presidency!, Curator: Anne Trauben, Drawing Rooms, Jersey City, NJ

For Which It Stands, Curators: Eileen Jeng-Lynch, Emily Alesandrini, Natasha Becker, Ford Foundation Gallery and Assembly Room, New York, NY

Exploring Humanity, Curator: Marisa Caichiolo, Los Angeles Center of Photography 5th Annual Fine Art Exhibition, Los Angeles, CA

Curator's Choice, Curators: Anonda Bell, Laura Bonas-Palmer, Virginia Butera, Wilson Duggan, Donna Kessinger, Eileen Jeng-Lynch, Jo-El Lopez, Cheryl and Christopher Mack, Judith Page, Pro Arts Jersey City, Jersey City, NJ

Artists for Social Justice, Curator: Virginia Mallon, Kupferberg Center for the Arts at Queens College, New York, NY; Arc Gallery & Educational Foundation, Chicago, IL

Portrait 2020, Juror: Brandon Thibodeaux, SE Center for Photography, Greenville, SC

Bound Up Together: On the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment, Curator: Rachel Gugelberger, Smack Mellon, Brooklyn, NY

Art4Equality x Life, Liberty, & The Pursuit of Happiness, SaveArtSpace/Art4Equality, Curator: Indira Cesarine, The Untitled Space, New York, NY

Art4Equality x Life, Liberty, & The Pursuit of Happiness, SaveArtSpace, Curator: Indira Cesarine, Billboard at McGuinness Blvd & Calyer St, Brooklyn, NY

Art Off-Screen, Curator: Eileen Jeng-Lynch, Neumeraki, D*FIT Studio, Montclair, NJ

Her Flag, Curator/Project Lead: Marilyn Artus, Old Barracks Museum, Trenton, NJ

2019

Little by Little, Juror: Peter Bugg, Art Intersection, Gilbert, AZ

State of the Art 2019, Curator: Susanna Baker, Studio Montclair, Montclair, NJ

Contemporary Portraiture: To See Each Other, Curator: Kelly Ruffel, Passaic County Arts Center, Hawthorne, NJ

ViewPoints 2019, Juror: Jeanne Brasile, Studio Montclair, Montclair, NJ

2018

Armistice Day 2018, Puffin Cultural Forum and Frontline Arts, Teaneck, NJ

Call & Response: The Art of Listening, Curator: Yvette Lucas, 1978 Maplewood Arts Center, Maplewood, NJ

Natural Encounters, Curator: Fran Forman, N.Y. Photo Curator – Global Photography Awards

Viewpoints 2018, Juror: Gary G. Schneider, Studio Montclair, Montclair, NJ

2017

Art Connections 13, Curator: Andrea Marshall, George Segal Gallery, Montclair State University, Montclair, NJ

Street Photography, Curator: Maria Toutoudaki, Blank Wall Gallery, Athens, Greece

2016

Cherry Blossoms in Winter, Curator: Frances Bartkowski, Rutgers-Newark, Branch Brook Park, Newark, NJ

Trois Poissons in a Big Sea, Curator: Dana Calbi, Sterling Sound, New York, NY

Viewpoints 2016, Juror: Mary Birmingham, Aljira: a Center for Contemporary Art, Newark, NJ

Art Connections 12, Curator: Andrea Marshall, George Segal Gallery, Montclair State University, Montclair, NJ

AWARDS AND GRANTS

2021

Individual Artist Fellowship Award, New Jersey State Council on the Arts

2020

First Place, Los Angeles Center of Photography – 5th Annual Juried Exhibition, *Exploring Humanity*
Curator's Choice 2020, Pro Arts Jersey City

2018

Honorable Mention – Segregation and Human Rights, 12th Julia Margaret Cameron Award/Photography Gala Awards
Second Place, *Viewpoints 2018*, Studio Montclair
First Place, *Natural Encounters*, New York Photo Curator – Global Photography Awards

2017

National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis Gradiva Award for *The Mourning After*

2014

Film Grant for *The Mourning After*, Psychoanalytic Electronic Publishing

2008

Official Selection - *Leave No Soldier* (Director/Producer. Documentary), Rhode Island International Film Festival, The Big Muddy, New Filmmakers Festival
Best Director, First Glance Film Festival
Merit Award, Accolade Film Festival

2007

Division 39 Section IX Achievement Award, The American Psychological Association

2005

National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis Gradiva Award for Artwork Contributions to Psychoanalysis

2004

Featured Artist of the Month, New Jersey Council of the Arts
Development Grant, Pratt Institute
Roy W. Dean Film & Video Grant Finalist, for *The Mourning After*
Finishing Funds for *Dollhouse*, Experimental Television Center Ltd.

2003

Gold Bell Leadership Award for Contributions to Mental Health Through the Arts, Mental Health Association of New Jersey



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THANK YOU.

Donna Bassin, Ph.D., is an award-winning fine art photographer, installation artist, author, professor, and filmmaker. As an artist heavily influenced by her work as a clinical psychologist and her experiences working with war veterans and at Ground Zero, Donna uses art to explore the creative edge of collective loss, grief, mourning, and transformation. She is known for her documentaries, *Leave No Soldier* and *The Mourning After*, and her photo series *The Afterlife of Dolls* – a solo exhibition at Montclair Art Museum that was featured on PBS' *State of the Arts* and received both a Golden Bell and Gradiva Award. She was selected as a recipient for the 2021 New Jersey Council on the Arts Fellowship in Photography.

Her work has been juried and shown in numerous group exhibitions stretching from New York City to Los Angeles. Her photographs have also been commissioned for book covers and are in private and museum collections.

Donna has contributed portraits from her series, *My Own Witness*, to Smack Mellon Gallery for their exhibition of *Bound Up Together: On the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment*, and to SaveArtSpace and Art4Equality for a billboard installation, both located in Brooklyn, New York. Taking part in the *Her Flag* project (www.herflag.com), she created the stripe for New Jersey, which will be displayed at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C. on Flag Day of 2021.

Donna's current projects, *My Own Witness: Rupture and Repair* and *Precious Scars*, explore the human desire for reconciliation in the wake of social fractures. *My Own Witness: Rupture and Repair* will be featured in the Newark Museum for the 2021 New Jersey Arts Annual: *ReVision and Respond* and as an upcoming solo exhibition for July 2021 at the Soho Photo Gallery in New York City.