

Lauren Ceike
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Artist Statement:

I never knew that drug bags were drug bags. I see them on the ground everywhere I go: nice neighborhoods, “bad” neighborhoods, big cities, and family-friendly parks in small towns. I always thought they were for craft supplies, hardware, buttons, etc. I didn't question their purpose, I knew exactly what they were, until it hit me one day. My naiveté should be embarrassing, I suppose, but I think it's endearing. My family has been haunted by drug abuse for more than half my life. In some ways my adolescence was robbed from me. Memories I thought didn't exist suddenly came to me when I discovered the truth of these bags; I now recall a bag floating in my family's pool, at the time I figured it was for nuts & bolts. Most of the items I put in these bags are things I have saved from childhood. I often tried to limit the use of things special to me as a way to preserve them. Even as a kid I felt nostalgia for being a kid, maybe I somehow knew innocence wasn't as easy to hang on to as I hoped.

The bags in this collection were predominately acquired from the streets in the city where I live Providence, Rhode Island. There are a few from exciting places like NYC and Miami, and, unsurprising to me, from my small hometown of Townsend, Massachusetts.

Biography:

Creating artwork for me is deeply personal and perhaps selfish. It is therapy, a compulsion to create something as a way to express a feeling. Often and regrettably my work is never seen by others, but it has performed its purpose and I feel satisfied. I want it to be appealing to other people, of course, but I'm not always sure if it is. In this way I feel like a true artist: I process emotions and experiences through art. While my formal education is in photography, I enjoy using any medium that I feel best helps me reach a destination, including performance, which can be difficult for a person like me who considers herself shy. My work is typically variations on the themes of family and nostalgia, and may suggest sadness, though I like to think of it more as heavy-hearted.

Exhibitions:

2020 *Sequin Fix*, Griffin Museum of Photography, Winchester, MA
2019 *Members exhibition* (Juror's Prize), Griffin Museum of Photography,
 Winchester MA