

Artist Statement, Nicole J. Aulicino

This work is depicting the Russian heritage of the artist, through the modern recreation of iconographic work that was refurbished by her maternal grandmother during the childhood of the artist. The work seeks influence from the contemporary American media portrayal of women, sexual objectification and objectification, in order to create an historical lineages of the progression of perception of women, specific to the subject of the reproductive organs as symbols of power, the breast as a nurturing component, and the value of breastfeeding for nutrition and comfort.

The artist is a member of the LGBTQ, and strives to illustrate the trauma of contemporary life on the female anatomy throughout the life span. Through the use of wood grain, textures, and layers the artist invites the viewer to experience the weight, wear and the passage of time, as it is worn and juxtaposed with her beautiful subjects.

The artist grapples with ideas of parenting, as she is the fourth generation of single mother in her family. Through her ideals of natural and attachment parenting style, she has encountered multiple conflicts with observers while breastfeeding in public, before protective laws were passed. The artist considers herself to be a feminist, and in many ways traditional, yet within the context of contemporary social construct, has been viewed as a revolutionary. While her children were very young she started them on solid food by chewing it herself, and then feeding it to her four month old infant. This method was not well-received by observers in restaurants, and she was asked to refrain or leave establishments for this practice, as well as told that she is welcome to breastfeed in the lavatory. The overall vision of the artist is to display the natural state of existence of mother and child, and to make holy the couple by remembrance of the classical Madonna and child. Through the addition of exposed breasts, and the illustration of animal features to this image, the artist portrays the classical coupling of mother and child as a primitive duo, seeking to nurture in the contemporary social context of the corporate, and concrete world in which she finds herself. The artist expects to normalize these ideals through the viewer. This work is a progression from the artists' original workings of rotund women. This work fits into contemporary art, as it seeks to change perceptions of women within contemporary social constructs built by the mainstream media, and it's portrayal of breasts as sexual stimulants to sell alcoholic beverages. Historically, women have been portrayed in art as nurturers, being portrayed with children, and partially nude. This work fits into the whole of the artist's creations, as she continues to handle the female form in historically beautiful positions, but not contemporary ideals of beauty. The flattening of the head, which is portrayed as mask-like is notable in that the classical Russian icons were created in a flat style. This artist believes that a finished work ought to hold characteristics of the process of creation, as well as the product intended for the viewer.

Through this work, the artist hopes to capture the beauty of infant nurturing, and the breast as a symbol of the Goddess, or holy women, rather than an objectified sexual organ. The artists'

intention is normalize the images of female genitalia, and the ideas of natural, mother-child connectedness in its most primitive form.