

***Re/Constructing Identity***, The Sheldon Galleries, St. Louis, October 5, 2018 – January 26, 2019  
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The emphasis of my work is to confront personal experiences, stress social issues, and create art that reflects the human condition. The work of artists is often connected to self-identity. Being an artist is an identity in and of itself which supervenes other identities. The notion of identity is complex and composed of many elements but largely shaped by culture and experience. Some identities are chosen, and into others we are helplessly thrown.

For the displaced person, the loss of original culture and the assimilation of a new culture ignite confusion and emptiness. I, along with countless other artists who have been displaced and caught between cultures and identities, confront the difficulties through artwork. In search for meaning, the artist often reflects upon the past and present to connect ideas, experiences, objects, and people. Like memories, which are often fragmented and blurred, artwork can also be captured between the present and past, the concrete and the abstract. Altered and abstracted memories can interfere with present life and affect identity which is caught in between. As a result, one questions existence and attempts to understand the self and others. Relating to certain characteristics of identity, people repeat and transform actions which become ritualistic. By being present and aware, individuals perceive and express their experiences. Through performance, a form of expression, one finds himself or herself in a symbolic system of differences. Within that semiotic system we perform and create meanings by utilizing symbols therefore enhancing the exchange of ideas.

Creating art is a path to connect with people. It is important for me to reflect upon my experiences of living through the war and my subsequent perspective on life. As time goes by, memories become distorted and more abstract. The artwork serves as a reminder of the distress of war and forced immigration. Communication is necessary to keep these stories alive, to improve awareness about cultural conflicts and issues of displacement.