

Alette Simmons-Jimenez



# I Am A Nobody

by Alette Simmons-Jiménez - September 2017

As a young child I was exposed to diverse cultural influences stretching from Italy and Germany, to Portugal, to Atlanta, Ohio, Virginia, New Orleans, the Dominican Republic, New York, Florida and more places. Living in diverse cultures and places has shaped my identity and my creative output. My works are built around this wide range and variety of experience - from a Grandmother's embroidered handkerchief to preformed concrete, and from gold leaf and rebar wire to my mother's childhood sketches. The materials I choose and the shapes they take, become a testament to time and place. They are manipulated, deconstructed and then reassembled, mixing and collaborating aesthetically. Layers upon layers of thoughts come together to interpret my own personal journey and identity.



Detail: Red Rivers, mixed media installation  
On the cover: Loosing My Past, dog hair and stitching



Pendulum, pastel on paper on canvas

Moving through life with no definite "homeland" shaped my strong connection to the constancy of the physical world. To experience the touch, the smell, and the feel of things - of paper, of wood, of dirt, rocks, and streams, is a catalyst for every piece.

My work reflects the complexities between man and nature. I have a broad vocabulary of materials, marks, shapes, and forms that encroach and interact, pushing and pulling the surfaces. I like to think that the work is part harmony and part dissonance, an ode to humanity's desire for freedom coexisting with the responsibility and gravity of our presence here.

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The title of my presentation "I Am A Nobody" is a phrase attributed to artist Eva Hesse. Like her, every day of my life has been obsessively focused on the making of art. Like her, I want to be surprised by life and by my work. I am also dedicated to discovery through experimentation with materials and re-purposed objects. But unlike Eva, I did not feel like a Nobody. I never would choose to call myself a Nobody.

That is, until just recently.

I entered the art world at the end of her generation's influence. Although, in the 1970's we were still trained that an artist chose to work for the sake of creating art, and it was completely unacceptable to believe in or guide your work to the market. We were taught that we could find other ways and means to survive financially. It was believed that making a living off of income from a studio practice was not likely to happen. And further, that to involve yourself in the market and strategies for selling your work would destroy the sincerity of your work. Your practice would no longer have any true artistic value.



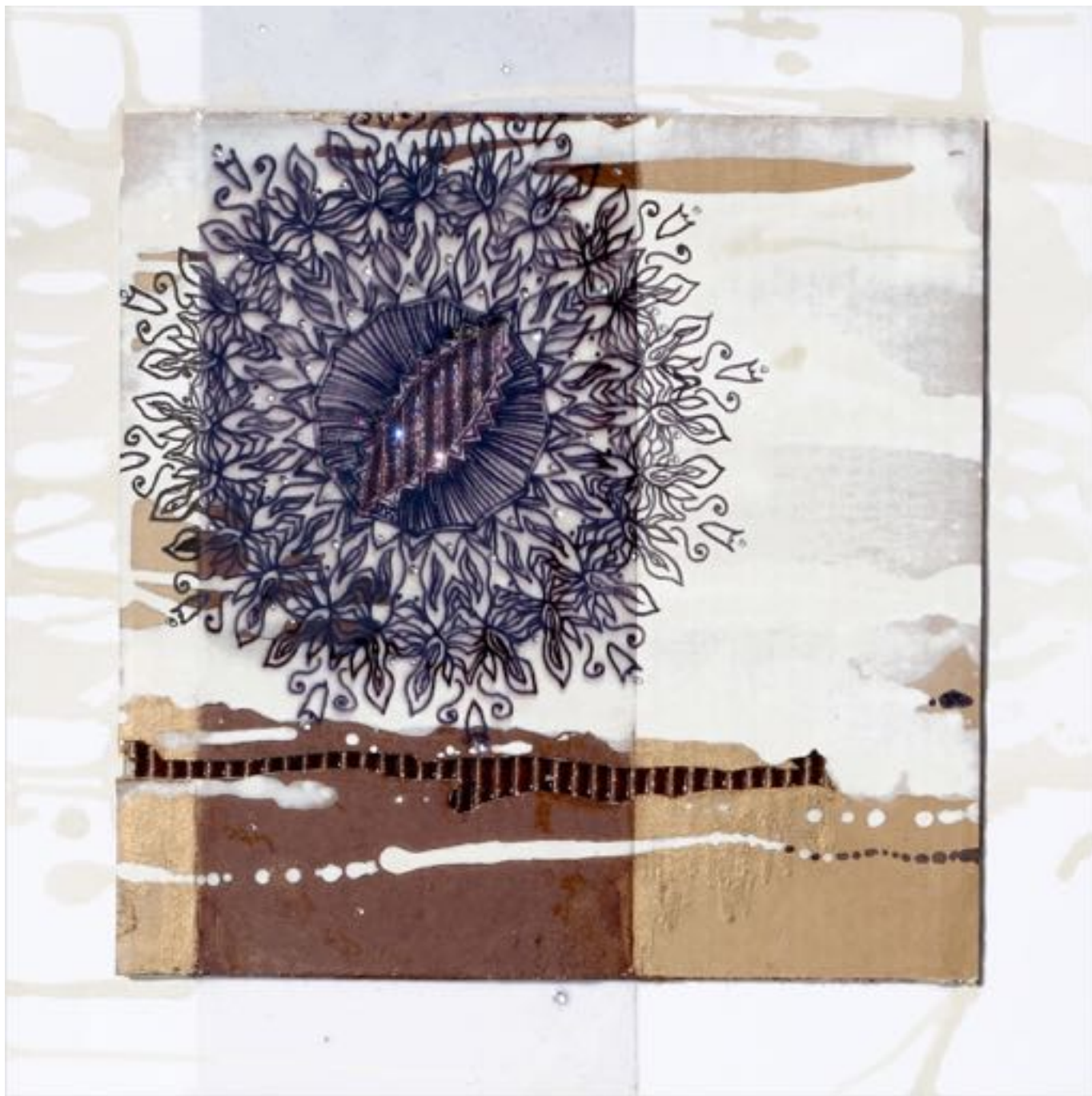
**EASY OPEN, tecnica mixta 122cm x 122cm**

Right from the beginning I was involved multiple media and diverse disciplines. It created a big challenge with my colleagues, I was often considered seriously lacking focus and dedication. I was told I should only be exploring one direction. But several years later, as a result of tremendous growth and advances in technology, great changes came about all over the planet. The art world that was developing in the 80's and 90's experienced a great opening. Suddenly there was so much freedom. Artists working across disciplines and in mixed medias became an overwhelming majority. Market, exposure, hype, and later social media became the tools pushed into the forefront of one's five-year plan.



I began to question the values behind my gallery representation, and chose to follow an independent course. After a time, I grew stronger, had more control over my work, and received increased respect. But, as advantageous as the new technologies became they also became a machine that overwhelmed the directions of even those that avowed to critical thinking and conceptualism. It felt as if suddenly every artist wanted and needed to be "Somebody" and life and work became more about being "Somebody" than about sincere creativity and the exploration of thought and vision.

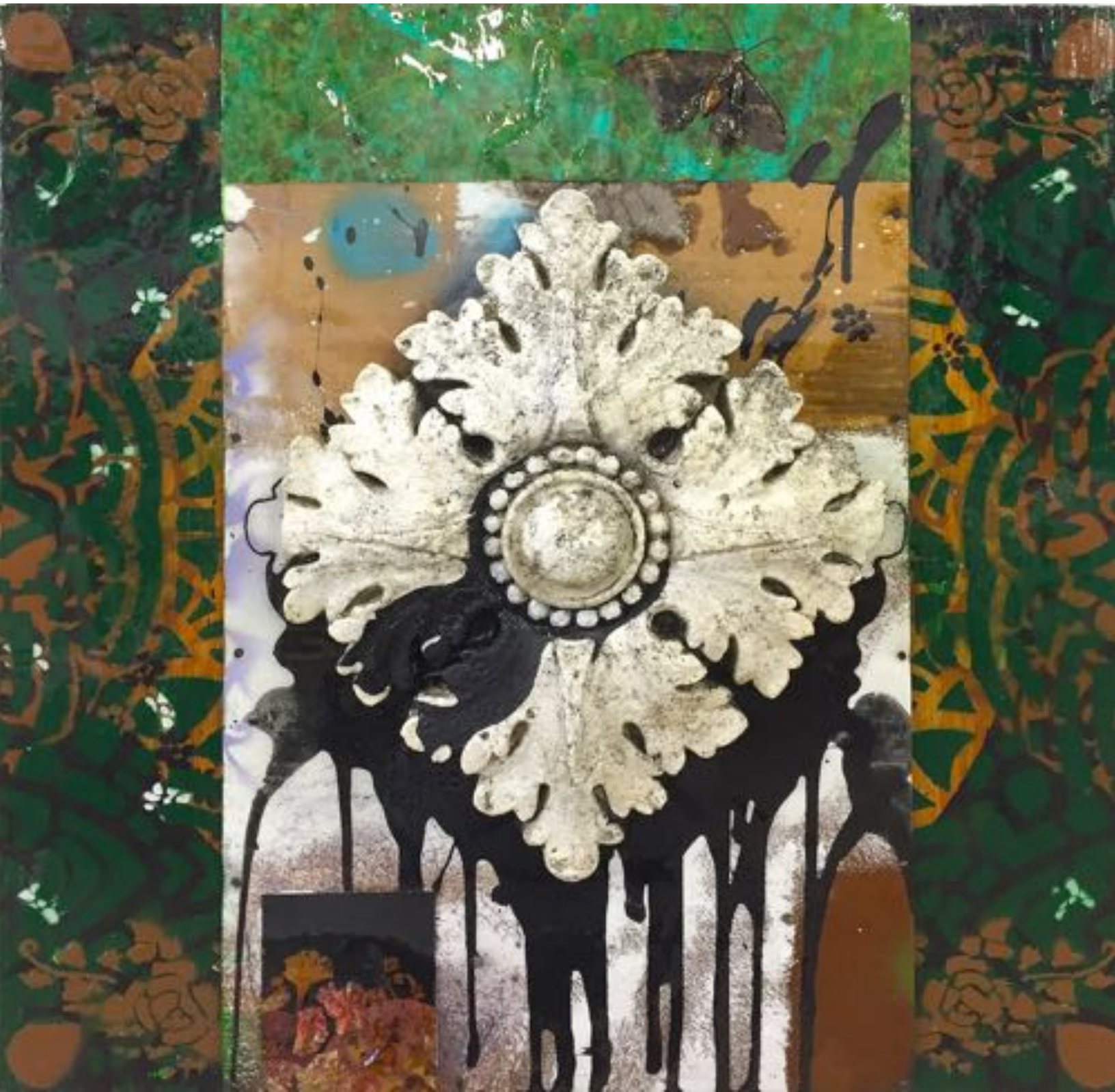
This was, and is, a trap, and I am guilty of falling for it. It is not to say that I, and many others, have not created work of substance, of thought, or of some importance. But now, I think I see more clearly the meaning behind the words of Eva Hesse. There is a great personal benefit in striving to be “A Nobody.” I have taught myself to find inspiration in my own thoughts, and suddenly I can see through the fog and speak my own heart and mind. For me, this is the only thing of true importance.



*Blush*, tecnica mixta 122cm x 122cm



*Wedding Gifts*, tecnica mixta 122cm x 122cm



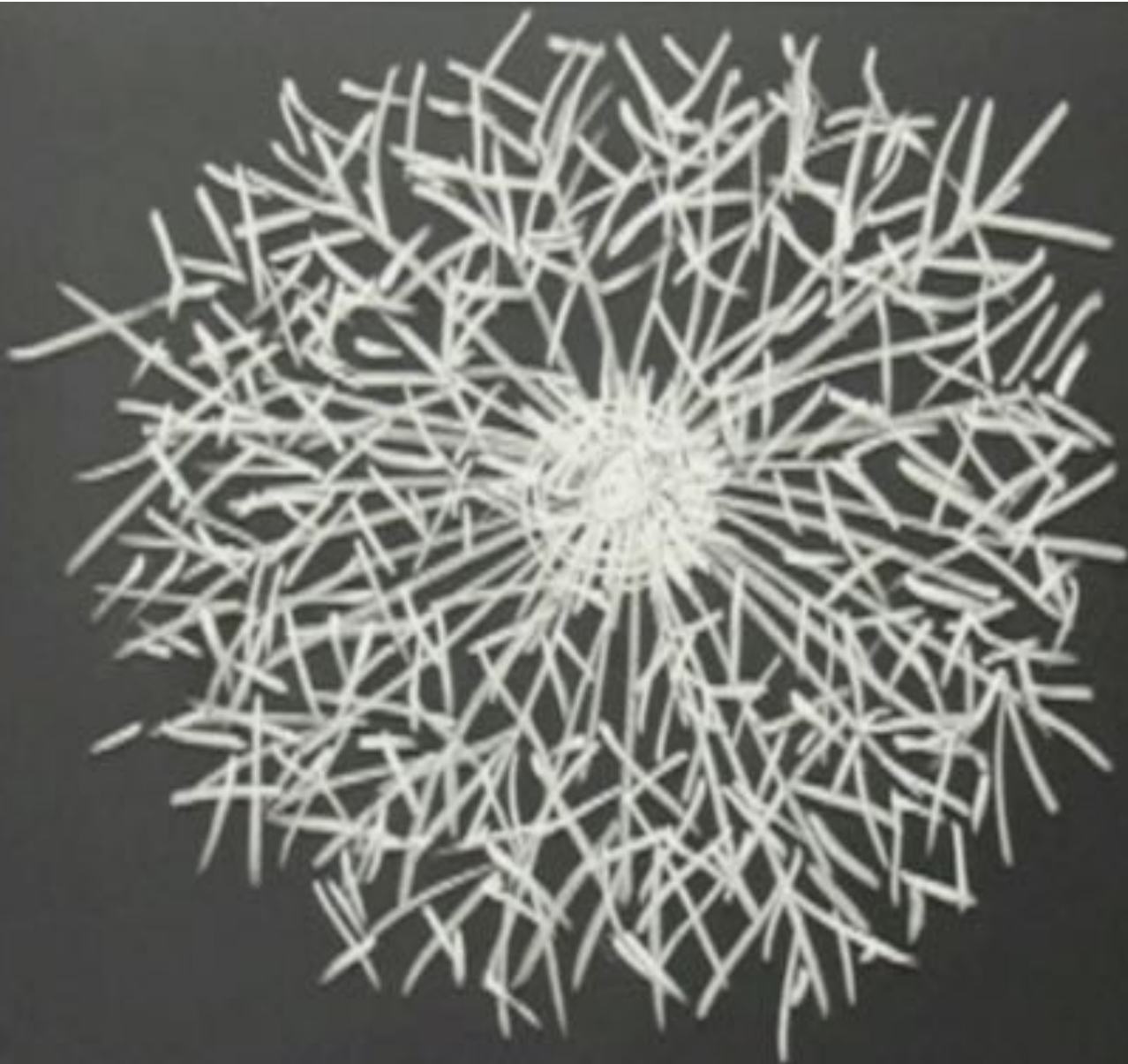












# WELCOME TO THE STUDIO















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