

C O L L E E N T O L E D A N O

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ARTIST STATEMENT

OVER THE COURSE OF HISTORY PEOPLE HAVE GLADLY SUFFERED INCREDIBLE PAIN TO ACHIEVE THEIR VISION OF PERSONAL BEAUTY. PARTICIPATION IN BEAUTY RITUALS LIKE SCARIFICATION, THE WEARING OF CORSETS AND, MORE RECENTLY, MAKE-UP TATTOOING AND LIPOSUCTION CAN ENCOURAGE THE PRACTITIONER TO FEEL BETTER ABOUT THEMSELVES. CULTURAL STANDARDS MAY DISAGREE ABOUT WHAT CONSTITUTES AESTHETIC ENHANCEMENT VERSUS PHYSICAL DISFIGUREMENT, BUT THE DESIRE TO CHANGE FOR THE "BETTER" IS CONSTANT ACROSS CULTURES. WHILE THE PRESSURE TO OBTAIN GOOD LOOKS IS BROUGHT ON BY SOCIETY, TO PHYSICALLY AND PERMANENTLY MODIFY ONE'S BODY REMAINS A PERSONAL DECISION. THE PRICE OF BEAUTY CAN BE SUFFERING AND EVEN TORTUROUS, BUT THE REWARDS CAN BE SELF-EMPOWERING, MAKING THE PRACTITIONER AN ACTIVE INVESTOR IN THEMSELVES.

MY WORK DRAWS NOT ONLY FROM HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS, BUT ALSO FROM THE INCREASINGLY POPULAR CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES OF ELECTIVE SURGERY AND "DO-IT-YOURSELF" IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS. I MAKE SITUATION-SPECIFIC TOOLS THAT SPEAK TO THE EMPOWERMENT GAINED THROUGH THE OWNERSHIP AND TOOLS' USE. THE INSTRUMENTS ARE DESIGNED FOR THE OWNER TO BE A SELF-SUFFICIENT IN THEIR CHOSEN BEAUTIFICATION PROCEDURE.

MY PIECES CONTAIN SIMULTANEOUS REFERENCES TO THE UTILITY OF BOTH DOMESTIC OBJECTS SUCH AS SPOONS AND SPATULAS COMBINED WITH SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS SUCH AS FORCEPS AND SPECULUMS TO CREATE NOVEL FUNCTIONALITIES. THE LEATHER AND FOAM TRAYS IN MY WORK IMPLY COMFORT AND PROVIDE A HOME FOR MY TOOLS. THE USE OF LUXURIOUS MATERIALS SUCH AS PORCELAIN, LEATHER AND CAST PEWTER ALLUDES TO THE COSTLY EXPENSE NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THIS TYPE OF TRANSFORMATION. THE UNUSUAL AND RICH INTERACTION BETWEEN THE ATTRACTIVE AESTHETICS AND THE SEEMINGLY GROTESQUE FUNCTION OF THE PIECE REFLECT CURRENT COSMETIC SURGERIES.

MY LOVE FOR MY OBJECTS AND MY DESIRE TO FIND THEM THE LOVE AND DESIRE OF AN AUDIENCE ESSENTIALLY FETISHIZES THEM. I HOPE THAT THE OUTWARD INTRICACY AND THE DELICACY OF THE PIECES AND THEIR DEVELOPED SENSE OF FUNCTION SECURES THEM AS A NECESSARY PART OF THE VIEWER'S LIVES.

-COLLEEN TOLEDANO