

## **Re-membering Beauty: Rape Culture, Femicide, and the Shadow**

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*Abstract:* This paper reviews and summarizes the author's inquiry into rape culture and femicide using an arts-based approach and narrative autoethnography. It is based on the author's experience of losing a friend who was sexually assaulted and murdered in the fall of 2014. Using art, personal narrative, and community engagement, the author establishes a healing practice that not only helped her transform her grief into compassion but also raised her community's consciousness about this important topic. The author proposes that such integration of art, narrative, community engagement, and healing practice is capable of impacting individual and collective consciousness.

*Keywords:* Arts-based research, autoethnography, femicide, grief, Jung, rape culture

On Samhain or All Hallows Eve, 2014, my friend Kayla was violently raped and murdered. Rage and grief moved through me in waves, and I was lost for a time in hopeless despair. As I came out of the shock, I was in part, able to face the horror of Kayla's complicated death by using autoethnographic, arts-based inquiry to explore and expose contemporary rape culture. This approach enabled me to address explicitly my personal grief as well as raise critical collective questions. How do we bring awareness to cultural violence and the suffering it causes? How can we make space for collective grief and pain in order to heal these cultural patterns? I knew almost before asking that my personal answer was and always will be creativity, art, and beauty. I also became curious if such an approach could be valuable to others and support collective grieving and awareness? The answer is yes, and this essay tells the story by following the creation of five art pieces: one personal process painting, three portraits, and one interactive installation. It explores the extent to which art can transform the artist and the audience, connecting them through created work to enable the expression of shared human grief. I succeeded in activating a conversation between myself and others that supported my grieving process and helped others to discover their grief and anger about the personal and collective impact of rape culture.

### **Rape Culture and Femicide**

Feminist theory uses the term "rape culture" to describe the way our culture teaches and celebrates gender-based roles constructed on power over, or subjugation of, the feminine. The term designates a society that blames victims of sexual assault and normalizes male sexual violence (Harding, 2015, pp. 1–2). In the words of Lynn Phillips, Senior Lecturer at University of Massachusetts Amherst and author of *Flirting with Danger: Young women's reflections on Sexuality and Domination*, "rape culture is a culture in which dominant cultural ideologies, media images, social practices, and societal institutions

support and condone sexual abuse by normalizing, trivializing and eroticizing male violence against women and blaming victims for their own abuse” (Kacmarek & Geffre, 2013, para. 15). It specifically describes a culture that condones sexual assault due to cultural attitudes about gender and norms governing sexuality. In a “rape culture,” cultural practices encourage, excuse, or otherwise tolerate sexual violence (Buchwald et al., 2005, p. xi; Harding, 2015, p. 2; Keller et al., 2018, p. 4). According to Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network, or RAINN, every 73 seconds an American is sexually assaulted, and only 5 out of every 1,000 perpetrators will end up in prison (RAINN Statistics, 2020).

A recent survey of about 550 experts on women’s issues by the Thomson Reuters Foundation rated the United States among the top ten most dangerous United Nations member countries for women, the only Western country to make the list at number ten (Goldsmith, 2018). The study took into account healthcare, access to economic resources, customary practices, sexual violence, non-sexual violence, and trafficking. The United States shared third place with Syria “for the risks women face in terms of sexual violence, including rape, sexual harassment, coercion into sex and lack of access to justice in rape cases” (para. 17). A direct result of this condition is “femicide,” a term used internationally to denote the “intentional murder of women because they are women” (World Health Organization, 2012, box. 1). Acts of femicide include domestic violence murders, sexual assault resulting in murder, honor killings, or any other murder directed toward a victim because she is female (Alter, 2015, para. 10; Caputi & Russell, 1992, p. 17; World Health Organization, 2012, paras. 3–16). In a recent report by the Violence Policy Center (2019) entitled, *When men murder women*, it was found that men in single-victim/single-offender incidents murdered 1,948 women in the U.S. in 2017, not including the states of Florida and Alabama, a 19% increase since 2014 (pp. 2–3). In an article from *Time* magazine, entitled, *Someone is Finally Starting to Count ‘Femicides’*, Alter (2015) says, “so ‘femicide’ doesn’t just refer to the killing of women—it can also refer to the entire system that condones those murders or fails to persecute those responsible. It’s a similar concept to “rape culture,” except it applies to murder” (para. 11). In this context, I am positing that femicide is a direct result of rape culture and that both rape culture and femicide are deeply hidden unconscious norms, or what analytical psychologists call collective cultural shadows.

### **The Concept of Shadow**

Jungian analyst Sharp (1991) defines shadow as the “hidden or unconscious aspects of oneself, both good and bad, which the ego has either repressed or never recognized” (p. 123). In other words, shadow is the term used to represent all of the aspects of one’s psyche that the ego rejects because they are inconsistent with one’s self-image. Instead, such unconscious characteristics, impulses or qualities are projected onto others (Abrams & Zweig, 1991, p. xviii; Jung, 1968, p. 8–9; Johnson, 1991, p. ix–x; Sharp & Jung, 1991, p. 123; Whitmont, 1991, p. 12).

Just as individuals have a self-image that comprises acceptable characteristics, so do groups. The collective circles we are a part of expand outward and overlap in a myriad of ways such as to family, extended family, communities, cities, states, and countries (Bly, 1991, pp. 11–12). Such groups maintain their identity in part by projecting their shadow onto others. Jungian scholar Whitmont (1991) speaks of the shadow as so dark and hidden

that the projection of collective shadow becomes “the Enemy, the personification of evil” (p. 15). This concept is evident in how repeatedly a collective cultural shadow like sexual violence is projected onto the inherently “evil” individual perpetrator, or the victim herself.

A good example of rape culture is the social context that enabled disgraced Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein to get away with his heinous crimes against women until too recently. Finally, in the last three years, Weinstein has been accused by over 80 women of various incidents of sexual harassment, assault, and rape that occurred over at least 30 years of his distinguished career in the movie business, and in March 2020, Weinstein was sentenced to 23 years in prison for his crimes. The acknowledgement by individuals in the industry that they were aware of these incidents but looked the other way or chose not to report them for fear of retribution or shame illustrates how the collective shadow can silence an entire group.

### **The Role of the Contemporary Artist**

Shaw (2011) speaks of contemporary artists’ in modern society as “voyagers into the underworld—that by the nature of their vocation artists are predisposed to pushing the boundaries and following strange, associative trails to the unconscious ” (p. 25). He suggests, though, that frequently artists themselves do not see this aspect of their work. Lacking awareness, contemporary artists may view the work as a commodity rather than an exploration of the unconscious. Jung (1966a) wrote,

It makes no difference whether the artist knows that his work is generated, grows and matures within him, or whether he imagines that it is his own invention. In reality it grows out of him as a child its mother. The creative process has a feminine quality, and the creative work arises from unconscious depths—we might truly say from the realm of the Mothers. (p. 102)

With his extensive writings on the creative process, Jung (1966b) clearly supported the concept that artists are mediators between the collective unconscious and consciousness. Similar to Shaw, he wrote that “the artist is the unwitting mouthpiece of the psychic secrets of his time, and is often as unconscious as a sleep-walker” (p. 122). Jung (1970) also said “all art intuitively apprehends coming changes in the collective unconscious” (pp. 84–85). In these quotations he is saying that artists serve as guides to the unconscious, whether they know it or not. Since creative work arises from the deep unconscious, the work of individual artists as well as the art produced by a culture will reflect the shadow.

In his personal journey reflected in *The Red Book*, Jung illustrated how creative inquiry offers a unique opportunity to entice unconscious material into consciousness (McNiff, 2011, p. 394). To Jung and many analytical psychologists, creativity is an autonomous process (van den Berk, 2012, p. 30). In other words, the creative instinct has its own agenda.

Art is a kind of innate drive that seizes a human being and makes him its instrument. The artist is not a person endowed with free will who seeks his own ends, but one who allows art to realize its purposes through him. (Jung, 1933, p. 169)

Jung’s (1973) thoughts on the art making process are evident in his 1934 correspondence with Hermann Hesse, in which he speaks of it as “a primary instinct (the artistic instinct)

gripping the whole personality to such an extent that all other instincts are in abeyance, thus giving rise to the work of divine perfection” (p. 173). van den Berk (2012) said in response to Jung’s exploration of *participation mystique* that “the artist is rooted into the collective unconscious of humanity, thus reaching beyond his personal unconscious” and goes on to say “the artist knows how to awaken us from harmful projections” (p.43). Thus, artists can influence and expand conscious awareness in the collective by their inclination to dive into the depths of the underworld to retrieve unconscious material. Bringing awareness to the shadow of rape culture is precisely what I have been called to do in my visionary project—painting murdered women.

### **The Arts and Social Change**

The arts have been used as a catalyst for social change throughout history (Estrella, 2011, p. 25; Reed, 2019, loc. 84, 89). Indeed, one can reference many historical periods when public art projects were paired with waves of activism and social change. Some prime examples are the protest and freedom songs of the civil rights movement, the poetry of the women’s movement, the use of graphic arts by ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) in the AIDS activism movement, and the revolutionary murals of the Chicano/a movement (Reed, 2019). These creative acts were responsible for generating the awareness needed to prompt tangible historical shifts in our culture by exposing collective shadows. In 2011-2012, Occupy Wall Street modernized the art of protest by using new creative technology such as augmented-reality art and giant digital projection to bring awareness to growing income inequality in the United States and around the world (Reed, 2019, loc. 289).

Two well-known memorial projects that have also our shifted cultural story in very directive and public ways are The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall (1982) and the AIDS quilt project (1987). The Vietnam conflict and AIDS pandemic hold shadowy cultural aspects in that they illuminate the conflict and social division around the legitimacy of the Vietnam war and the ongoing cultural conversation about homosexuality, respectively (Sturken, 1997, p. 217). These projects hold space for personal and collective healing, as well as stimulating multi-level cultural and historical discourse on a grand scale by creating public space for grieving (Estrella, 2011, p. 42; Langsam, 2016, para. 1; Sturken, 1997, p. 216). By addressing issues that are culturally uncomfortable and often triggering, these two expanded examples clearly illustrate how powerful community art can be when charged with collective-shadow material. They provoke response because they illuminate pieces of our culture that make us uncomfortable or ashamed—pieces that we, as a collective, might prefer to keep hidden.

In the past 25 years, the AIDS Memorial Quilt (Appendix A) has grown from a grassroots art project to a full-blown national treasure (AIDS Quilt, 1987). Throughout its evolution, the quilt became a powerful tool for social change and awareness by creating a tangible representation and marker of AIDS victims. It personalized the political and invited creative ritual in the making of the individual squares for loved ones left grieving. It created much-needed revenue that funded education and outreach. The AIDS Quilt project shifted fear and created empathy both individually and collectively by honoring those we lost in the pandemic through personal narrative, and it continues to do so. It is a

beautiful illustration of how community art can transform grief into healing by bringing collective shadow into consciousness.

Even if we do not view these memorials in person, they affect us by shifting the cultural narrative. The collective energy of shadow-charged projects attracts media attention and can shift collective awareness through various avenues of exposure. All of the above examples have done just that, affecting so many individuals that they create, at least in part, a platform for inclusive conversation about difficult topics that shifted the shadowed cultural narrative.

### **Autoethnography and Arts-based Research**

Autoethnography in its simplest definition “is a form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context” (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p. 9). Spry (2001) expanded this definition by adding that it is “a self narrative that critiques the situatedness of self and others in a social context (p. 710; Denzin, 2014, p. 19). Engaging with the inquiry from the perspective of the self, autoethnography accesses collective patterns through personal narratives and invites awareness through empathic connection to the story (Adams et al., 2013, p. 669; Denzin, 2014, p. 36). It is well suited for my purpose since it supports freedom to combine personal narratives and arts-based research methods with reflections on the collective cultural patterns about which my project critically speaks. Behind the storytelling and weaving in an autoethnographic text is the desire to compel an emotional response from the audience by embracing “vulnerability with a purpose” (Adams et al., 2015, p. 2; Denzin, 2014, p. 20).

There are many scholars, such as McNiff (2011) and Leavy (2015), who have made great progress in legitimizing the importance of arts-based methods of inquiry. With an arts-based research approach, the artist-researcher employs fine-art practices as a means to produce art as data (Leavy, 2015, p. 227; McNiff, 2011, p. 385). By gaining tacit knowledge through symbolic expression (art-making), the artist-researcher experiences the inquiry in new ways (Jongeward, 2009, p. 241). Arts-based methods connect us to our inner process in unique and potent ways that speak to the questions we are holding (Jongeward, 2009, p. 250; Jung, 2009; McNiff, 2011, p. 387). Accordingly, it seems appropriate that modern scholars of depth psychology are exploring, expanding, and therefore authenticating the use of these alternative but powerful approaches to research.

Nowhere is this authentication more evident than in Jung’s (2009) *Liber Novus*, also known as *The Red Book*. Artist-researcher, McNiff (2011) even references *The Red Book* as an example of “a timely instance of historical support for arts-based research” (p. 394). Although published many years after his death, *The Red Book* follows Jung’s private journey into his own psyche through artistic inquiry that includes painting, poetry, dream work, and active imagination. This record of Jung’s personal journey gives us a glimpse into how he discovered and developed many of his renowned theories through a variety of depth practices that include what could be defined as arts-based research.

### **The Creation of Five Art Pieces**

This section follows the creation of five art pieces: one personal process painting (*Silenced*, 2015, Appendix B); three portraits (*Kayla’s Grace*, 2015, Appendix C; *Danna’s Light*, 2016, Appendix D; *Rosie’s Ascent*, 2017, Appendix E), and one interactive installation. I

began the personal process of painting *Silenced* (2015) many years ago, and it evolved throughout the creation of the other four works. Painting it helped me engage with my own grief, and through this raw expression, connected me to my anger and voice around femicide and rape culture. *Silenced* provided me with a canvas to work out my personal pain while simultaneously working on Kayla's portrait, *Kayla's Grace* (2015).

During the time I was working on *Silenced* (2015) and *Kayla's Grace* (2015), I received an invitation to show Kayla's portrait and to create an interactive art installation honoring her. The fundraising event supported the Surviving & Thriving Center (now called Healing Courage), which is an organization that provides healing support for survivors of intimate violence (regardless of gender) and their allies. This annual San Francisco event is a celebration of survivors. Every year, however, there is an installation to honor those who died.

The installation included two immersive experiences. Participants physically moved through an array of 175 belly dancing hip scarves hanging from above (Appendix F). They were all black, with the exception of four colored scarves that had belonged to Kayla. Her presence radiated through them, by evoking the physical sensations and sounds of the Middle Eastern dancing that she had loved. After passing through the scarves, participants were invited to write a message on a tag and attach it to a meditation bell as a symbolic representation of voice. These were then placed around the venue to be rung by whoever came upon them. Each time a bell rang, the sound echoed out into the space, symbolizing the voice of survivors and sending a message of love to those who did not survive (Appendix G).

Although the installation was inspired by Kayla, who was an exquisite Middle Eastern Dancer, it was dedicated to all those who did not survive—a point I made during the introductory address (which also appeared in the printed program). The event was transformative for me, too. Afterwards, I was able to step outside of my personal grief and into the project in a more expansive way, and began painting the portraits of Danna (*Danna's Light*, 2016) and then Rosie (*Rosie's Ascent*, 2017).

*Silenced* (2015) depicts a silenced crone, the symbol that came to me at the beginning of my conscious exploration of the Artemis archetype just weeks before Kayla's murder. Both the crone and Artemis are archetypal energies that I held as I sought my own voice through the rage and grief that overtook me in the wake of such a complicated loss. The complexity of feeling rage and grief both personally and collectively at the same time was overwhelming. Painting provided a perfect container for processing these multilayered emotions, in that I could work in phases and titrate the discharge both somatically and psychologically.

In its first phase, *Silenced* (2015) was all black, white, gray, and touches of blue with layers and layers of linear, boxed-in patterns. It was very contained and restricted but held tremendous depth visually. After completing the first phase, I tossed the canvas aside where it collected dust in my studio. At some point during the following year, I began to add the image of the hawk but could not bring myself to solidify it any more than the ghostly outline. I believe that the hawk symbolizes my movement away from repressed anger and towards finding my voice. I understand now that my anger was bound, which the visually constrained design symbolized. The physical act of painting felt tight and forced, like the ways in which I was restricting my anger, a less acceptable emotion that forms part of my

shadow. The hawk represents freedom from that repression and the emergence of my sight and voice. I could feel a sense of freedom as I painted the hawk, though I was unable to go beyond the ghostlike image to embrace this freedom fully. It remained unfinished on the wall off to the side as I started work on Kayla's portrait.

While working her portrait one afternoon, I found myself filled with anger. I was pulled towards the *Silenced* painting again, this time holding a brush full of paint. In a painful, grief-stricken frenzy, I began to carve a crone's face in the bottom right-hand corner of the canvas. She emerged with intense cavernous eyes and lips that were both festering and calloused, as if they had been this way for some time. Sewing up her lips was uncomfortable but necessary. Somehow in that moment I began to understand that it was I who had stitched them closed in the first place. As I painted, anger flowed in a way I had never before allowed. With it came the freedom to move into empathy and compassion. Only then was I able to return to working on Kayla's portrait, this time with a more grounded hand and deeper love.

*Silenced* (2015) is not complete. It holds a visual unfolding of my personal story and for me symbolizes the image of the silenced feminine shadow I continue to work with. During its creation, I came to suspect that my anger was not just my own but also signified the collective energy necessary to address the horrors of rape culture. From a systems perspective, frustration and anger are recognized as expressions of problem-solving energy that can be discharged inwardly as depression or outwardly as outrage (Agazarian, 1997, pp. 207–209). Knowing this perspective helped me to see how my own art-making process both supported me in my personal grieving and also contributed to working on rape culture and femicide at a societal level.

Painting *Kayla's Grace* (2015) was difficult, painful, and at the same time exquisitely beautiful. Before beginning a painting, I always create a vision board, a collection of images that is my way of connecting to and being present with the subject of my work. The board often shifts throughout the process as new items come in and others retreat. Seeing images of Kayla and the things she had loved on the vision board brought waves of grief, as well as exquisite feelings of vulnerability, connection, and gratitude. As I painted, I felt her fear, the horrific violence, and the perpetrator's malice, as well as his fear, isolation, and suffering—all the ways in which the culture had abandoned him. I experienced all of these complex feelings while at the same time feeling my own rage at him for hurting my friend, which was confusing but real in all its complexity. I believe that making space for my personal grief during the creative process allowed me to feel something more than the personal; I felt the deep collective emotions that are hidden in the shadow of rape culture.

The installation and bell ritual were designed so that the participants engaged multiple senses and made the experience physically interactive. Through inclusion and creativity they became a dynamic part of the experience in a myriad of ways. It was meant to break the silence symbolically, and it did. The hip scarves danced and chimed as people moved through them. The bell ritual invited participants to write personal messages, tie them to a bell, and ring that bell and any others they chose to ring, again and again. The chime of the hip scarves and the sound of the bells echoed all night through the venue, mixing with tears and laughter. At one point I closed my eyes and just listened. It was exquisitely beautiful.

I witnessed grieving and healing through interpersonal connection and storytelling throughout the evening of the San Francisco fundraiser. Participants were breaking the

silence, listening, and being heard. There were tears but also laughter. I think that we sometimes forget that honest grieving empowers us, creating space for healing and even joy. I see this joy in the image of Shelley and Stephanie, the founders of Surviving & Thriving, as they emerged from the installation (Appendix H). The event helped me make several deep connections to others working to expose the shadow of rape culture and femicide.

Shortly after that night, I began my next portrait of a woman named Danna. I named this second portrait *Danna's Light* (2016) because of her vibrant energy and golden light. Danna was abducted, raped, and murdered over thirty years ago at age sixteen, but she has never been forgotten. I spent time with her sister, listening to stories and feeling into her short but dynamic life. She was an artistically inclined, beautiful high school sophomore. She had big plans for a creative life in art and modeling. The process of painting her was filled with beauty and aliveness, and it opened my senses in unexpected ways. It has been an honor to get to know her and her family through this creative process.

*Danna's Light* (2016) was completed just days before I was to present my work at the culminating event for my graduate program in May of 2016. I was blessed to be able to show all three of these paintings along with a refined version of Kayla's installation, which I have since titled, *Kayla's Dance*, together for the first time. The impact was powerful, and I witnessed profound responses to the work. The experience re-ignited my commitment to following my path as a transformational artist and in particular telling the stories of those murdered in an act of sexual violence. Through my art and the stories I aim to bring awareness to the devastating consequences of rape culture.

*Rosie's Ascent* (2017) is the third completed painting in this series. Rosie was brutally beaten, raped, and murdered in my little rural town in California in 1985. She was only fifteen. Rosie's friends and family recently installed a park bench and planted a tree in our local park in her memory, which is where I learned of her tragic story. Listening to the dedication, then painting Rosie's portrait, provided a beautiful, gentle, and healing experience. Currently, I am working on a fourth portrait of a young girl named Jessie.

### **Reflection and Implications**

Through this process, Kayla has become my mentor and guide. She fortifies my voice as I traverse the cultural shadow that denies and bullies anyone who speaks outwardly about rape culture. When I ask myself what my silence cost me, my answer is always "Kayla." In my mind, complacency equals complicity. I refuse to be silent anymore. Healing can only come with consciousness and deep listening, which compels speaking our stories clearly and without shame. And when I say healing, I mean healing for all, not just victims but the perpetrators, loved ones, and entire communities. My work invites all into the conversation to promote a discourse about rape culture that reflects all of its shadowy complexity. Through this research, I have learned that cultural healing requires deep empathic consciousness as well as willingness to be vulnerable, make mistakes, and be misunderstood. Working with shadow material generates humility and authenticity, which in turn allows transformative creativity to flourish. Art created in authentic vulnerability ignites an empathic charge that taps into the collective unconscious.

Violence against women plagues our modern world as collective shadow. Since collective shadow, like personal shadow, is difficult to address, we often project it outwards



or deny it outright, regardless of whether we are in the perpetrator, victim, or bystander roles. For instance, survivors of sexual assault often feel the collectively acceptable narrative of guilt and shame for their abuse and even project that onto other survivors. Projection effectively removes the responsibility from our collective culture that in reality has an unfathomable tolerance of violence against women. Donald Trump, who verbally admitted to sexual assault yet still managed to become president, illustrates this collective tolerance vividly.

This project explores the beauty and aliveness that is lost when we allow the collective shadow of rape culture to stigmatize victims through silence and shaming. At the very least, those who are murdered in an act of violence are remembered primarily as victims. They are often blamed and shamed for their own deaths. In contrast, my art approaches the personal and cultural numbness that arises when one addresses sexual violence in a way that brings discourse and healing instead of shutdown and denial. It creates space for grief to be felt both personally and collectively, which in turn has the potential to shift the problematic social narrative of rape culture.

According to Prechtel (2015), violence endures, in large part because of our inability to grieve, and true beauty is created through the expressions of our grief (p. 50, 59, 85). Throughout my research, I have seen how art pieces that are created in response to or as an expression of grief can evoke a transformative, healing experience in all who encounter them. I have experienced personal healing and observed the powerful emotional response to my work in others. For example, upon experiencing the installation and viewing Kayla's portrait, renowned sex crimes researcher and survivor Alissa R. Ackerman, Ph.D. wrote,

I was left speechless. Both [pieces] moved me to silence, for it was the first time ever I felt immediately connected to a person I did not know. It was the first time I felt completely seen and understood. Both the installation and the portrait spoke to me in such profound ways. It was as if they were created specifically so I had the privilege to interact with them (personal communication, April 8, 2016).

Ackerman's response is not unique. Every time I have shared these pieces publically, I notice that it opens a space to feel in both the body and the mind. I wonder if this response is partly due to how I re-member beauty in my creative process. I weave the shadow aspects of rape culture and femicide into my works in ways that illuminate the painful loss of loveliness and help others witness that loss. If people are willing to engage with the art, it opens them to feeling something that is uniquely theirs to feel.

Jung (1933) states that "a great work of art is like a dream; for all its apparent obviousness it does not explain itself and is never unequivocal. A dream never says: 'You ought,' or 'This is the truth'" (p. 175). What it does do is bring the liminal into conscious grasp, or the shadow into the light, creating aliveness and healing through potent beauty and meaning. My drive to experience, create, and publically display art is not only about sharing my personal journey of grief and anger but also about creating space and time for others to explore their own. Each work of art is like a dream, soliciting individuals to begin acknowledging and processing their unique relationship to rape culture. It is through the expression of the personal experience that others are able to connect to the art, to each other, and to our collective grief.

Prechtel (2015) wrote that we must fill the empty place left by what or whom we have lost with our truest creations.

Grief expressed out loud, whether in or out of character, unchoreographed and honest, for someone we have lost, or a country or home we have lost, is in itself the greatest praise we could ever give them. Grief is praise, because it is the natural way love honors what it misses. (p. 31)

I create art to honor those who have been murdered in acts of sexual assault. They deserve to be grieved and remembered as the beauty that they were, not just the violence that was done to them. When we can grieve openly, grief transforms into beauty instead of remaining in the shadow. This is the heart of my work: bringing to light the collective shadow of rape culture and femicide, one individual at a time.

### Contributor

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**Appendix A**

*AIDS Memorial Quilt, National Mall in Washington DC (1996)*



**Appendix B**  
*Silenced (2015)*



**Appendix C**  
*Kayla's Grace (2015)*



**Appendix D**  
*Danna's Light* (2016)





**Appendix E**  
*Rosie's Ascent (2017)*



**Appendix F**

*Installation, Surviving & Thriving Event, San Francisco (2015)*



**Appendix G**

*Installation Bells, Surviving & Thriving Event, San Francisco (2015)*



**Appendix H**

*Installation, Shelley and Stephanie, Surviving & Thriving Event, San Francisco (2015)*

