

# Hostage

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*“Art is like medicine – it can heal.”*

— Damien Hirst

Society has an obligation to acknowledge social injustice in order to motivate action. In my drawings, I subtly portray domestic abuse showing how the action affects the victim’s psychological state. Through the process of drawing, I attempt to represent the history, the cycle of repetition, not only as a form of physical abuse, but also as a pattern of emotional abuse. My investigation is based on humanistic empathy and an interest in the potential of art therapy; specifically I am interested in art as a means for communication for those who are not able to speak.

Psychological trauma can potentially become a consistent source of pain throughout life, and always leaves a mark upon the unconscious; I approached my materials and method of working for this series with a parallel kind of history. In my drawings, the memory of marks relates to the longevity of suffering in the individual. Working with the delicate nature of watercolor, every mark that is produced is permanent, resulting in the conflict between damage and beauty. Working with beet juice, pastels, and watercolor I composed an aesthetically pleasing surface that contributes to the tension created by the offensive subject.

Although the work’s subject matter is uncomfortable, I approached the process, however, with consideration for presenting imagery that would be universal, and that would connect to a general audience. This allows me to approach the figural representation as structure. I work from photographs in the genre of family portraits. Specifically, the wife taking an image of father and daughter, a traditional display of family pride and joy. Selection of the father and daughter imagery is acknowledgement of the biological fact, that man was created from woman. In my drawings, I use the photograph as a vantage point to reveal the husband’s abuse upon the mother through his own children. The mother’s passivity, whether conscious or unconscious, takes on the disturbing

role of enabler. The mother's denial or acceptance of abuse, symbolized through taking the photograph, represents the connection between physical and psychological damage produced from the abuse on the mother and that the child witnesses.

My work serves to promote social awareness. My hope is that these drawings reduce the acceptance of the act of violence, increase the probability of intervention, and promote physical and psychological healing to those who suffer.



Jessica Bamman (2005)  
"Hostage", Fourth Generation  
34" x 47"  
Pastel, Watercolor, Beet Juice



Jessica Bamman (2005)  
“Hostage”, Second Generation  
34” x 47”  
Pastel, Watercolor, Beet Juice



Jessica Bamman (2005)  
“Hostage”, Third Generation  
34” x 47”  
Pastel, Watercolor, Beet Juice





Jessica Bamman (2005)  
"Hostage", First Generation  
34" x 47"  
Pastel, Watercolor, Beet Juice