

RACHEL SELEKMAN ARTIST STATEMENT

In my sculptures and works on paper, reference to the human body, the use of everyday objects, fine craftsmanship, and the dynamism of elements that literally, in the sculptures, or figuratively, in the collages, reach out to the viewer are paramount. The sculptures from 2009 and 2010 explore the dynamics of relationships, of intimacy—how people engage and interact. *The Conversation* and *The Lovers* show two “figures” in this dynamic, whereas *Mouth Wide Open*, as a single figure/object, implicates the viewer in the pas de deux. In *The Listener* the action suggested is “taking things in”—reception and synthesis—as the title suggests. These scenarios take form in mixed-media sculptures that have watering can bases and/or watering can remnants, stand-ins for the human body and skin, respectively.

Wall sculptures sans watering cans, *Reveal (Taking Stock 1)* and *Burst 4 (Taking Stock 2)* are departures from earlier pieces and indicative of the direction of my forthcoming 3D pieces. Deciding to start incorporating all the materials I have left over from other pieces into new work, *Reveal*, for example, includes almost all the beads, buttons, and sew-ons from my stockpile, as well as leftover fabric. *Burst 4* used up most of my leftover velvet flowers and some of the watering can scraps I’ve saved, and in both pieces, “taking stock” in the title references this approach.

This self-imposed directive came to be for two reasons: a milestone birthday and the accompanying reflections and my day-to-day life as an avid recycler, composter, and upcycler. With these practices in mind, I thought, why let all these beautiful materials lay fallow in my closet? So moving forward, I will use my stockpile to make visually complex and engaging sculptures.

My collages employ a lexicon of images and often vintage materials, where hand sewing and collage are the dominant modes of construction. Works from the *Fifty* series are about time passing—a new phase beginning and one ending; sadness and loss versus hope and expectation. Additionally, in the series, I am revisiting ideas that have long interested me, working on ones I haven’t had time to focus on, and developing new ideas. They incorporate motifs that have been part of my oeuvre for years (hands, tears, crotch), and new ones: hourglass and watch faces, with the hourglass particularly potent because when the “sand” is in the top of the hourglass, it’s full of potential, whereas, when it’s in the bottom, it’s as if time has run out. *Golden Flow*, like some pieces from the *Fifty* series, also addresses aging, but as it relates to women’s biological clocks.