

Abstract  
ReCollection  
By: Laura Wood  
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Director: Linda Darty  
AREA OF METAL DESIGN

The intent of this written research document is to support the creative research works entitled: *ReCollection*. This work supports an investigation of collecting and accumulation of material items in the American culture. I intend to question the importance and place that material possessions have in our culture, considering both how and why they are an integral part of our contemporary world.

This thesis work consists of six different series of art pieces that have developed from an interest in the relationship that humans have with objects. I have chosen to execute the work using a variety of materials and fabrication techniques to gain a better understanding of the broad topic - collection. Metalsmithing, papermaking, textiles, and printmaking processes have all been implemented in the creation of a visual narrative about collecting.

ReCollection

A Thesis

Presented To

The Faculty of the School of Art and Design

East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Fine Art

by

Laura Wood

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Laura Wood

ReCollection

by

Laura Wood

APPROVED BY:

DIRECTOR OF THESIS: \_\_\_\_\_

Linda Darty

COMMITTEE MEMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

Bob Ebendorf

COMMITTEE MEMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

Mi-Sook Hur

COMMITTEE MEMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

Kelly Adams

DIRECTOR OF THE SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN:

\_\_\_\_\_

Michael Drought

DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

\_\_\_\_\_

Paul J. Gemperline, PhD



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## INTRODUCTION

*ReCollection* is the physical result of my research of objects in an American society. This work is a source for understanding the presence of possessions in our lives and investigates how the meanings of these objects shift with the change of hands. This work analyzes the deliberate activity of acquiring objects to develop a sense of identity and the intuitive collections of an individual as a result of living in the world. I am interested in the semiotics of things and how this evolves through generations. I have chosen to appropriate items of desire disembodied and altered from their original state. This way of working allows me to analyze these objects and propose conversations about them in terms of our identity as individuals and as an American society. The materials I have chosen to use in the creation of this work are linked to the history of the development of a collecting culture. Each material is used as a means of creating a visual mark, recording my thoughts on the subject and encouraging further dialogue. The six bodies of work on exhibition function as parts of a whole. With the participation of invited guests and the sale of work, I strive to create a conversation about the impact of material possessions in our lives. Although I have chosen imagery and material relating to my own aesthetic preference, I anticipate that viewers will see a part of themselves in the work due to their own experiences in the world we share.

## HISTORY

Collecting has a very old and diverse cultural history in America and this activity has shaped and will continue to influence American culture. The context of the exhibition is heavily based in the research and observation of material items, thus it is important to acknowledge the relationship humans have had to objects over time. The gathering of material objects can be traced back in anthropological studies to the classical era, a period of cultural history including ancient Greece and Rome, through Christianity and the Middle Ages. The act of collection is simultaneous with the historical growth of this country and can be broken down into many areas of discussion from settlement to consumerism. This research examines the amassment of objects in early America and its contribution to the advancement of our contemporary culture. Collection, in a sense, is the reflection of social activity and therefore I will emphasize the human interaction with objects.

Much of this research has been gathered through literature based in anthropological studies. The following professionals have written about this subject and I have pulled largely from their research in the understanding of collecting as a practice: Susan M. Pearce, professor of museum studies at the University of Leicester; Leah Dilworth, associate professor of English at Long Island University; John Elsner, research fellow at Corpus Christi College; Roger Cardinal, author; Francesca Rochberg, American assyriologist; Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, psychologist. "Collecting is a set of things which people do, as an aspect of individual and social practice which is important in the public and private life as a means of constructing the way in which we relate to the material world and so build [their] lives. It is essentially an investigation into an aspect of human experience" (Martin and Wastell, 93). This description by author Susan Pearce, is making note of an interesting dynamic between people and their things. Objects are an important part of daily life, both publicly and privately, and are much more a part of how we experience the world than we may think. Pearce goes on to say, "Because we and our world are material, and our ways of understanding are tied to the physical reality of material, one of the prime ways in which this sense is created is through the accumulation and juxtaposition of material things"(Contemporary Voices, 7). This comparison of objects is most notably the origin of collecting. The insertion of objects domestically, collecting in the industry and the importance of this activity on a personal level are all key aspects in this research. The motivation for the phenomenon of collecting is interconnected within all of these categories.

## Early Collecting in America

The ancestors of North America in European countries greatly influenced how the New World came into being. The lineage of the collecting practice is important to understanding contemporary forms of this activity. The garnering of things in North America stems from a vast European tradition. The Middle Ages in European history stretches from 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD to the mid nineteenth century (Elsner and Cardinal, 177). With the discovery of America in 1492 European Renaissance collections began to include natural and artificial representations of the New World (Elsner and Cardinal, 17). In Medieval times the church, which contained religious relics representing sacred symbols for faith, dominated object collections. Between c.1550 and 1750 cabinets of curiosities containing rare extraordinary and exotic findings were prevalent in Germany, France, Austria, Switzerland and Italy (Elsner and Cardinal, 180). These cabinets were unlike the religious materials intended to reinforce spirituality and faith. These cabinets of curiosity sought to gain a deeper knowledge of the workings of nature and the universe (Elsner and Cardinal, 181). Krzysztof Pomian, Polish philosopher describes curiosity as a form of passion or desire to understand the relationships of objects. Individuals who practiced this activity were known as encyclopedic collectors or “curieux”. Items such as sculptures of divinities, ancient instruments, Egyptian rings with seals, stones and gems, natural substances, shells, prints, animals, and plants and flowers were found in these collections as reflections of the world. In the 1570’s Francesco I of the Medici became Grande Duke of Tuscany and displayed his collection publicly at the newly built Uffizi Palace in Florence. This initiated a lineage of rulers celebrating their influence and status through prestigious material collections (Elsner and Cardinal, 186).

## Introduction of the Museum

Museums did not become a part of North American history until 1784 with the founding of the Philadelphia Museum, later named the Peale Museum after founder, Charles Wilson Peale. Peale was a noted artist of his time who also took a great interest in natural history. His paintings, as well as his collections, displayed a post-war American society. His portraits memorialized the heroes and patrons of the war for independence and his collections of cultural and natural objects provided a miniature synopsis of the New World (Elsner and Cardinal, 207). His work as a painter also contributed to an American history, capturing moments frozen in time for later analysis by historians. The Peale Museum provides a great source for knowledge and understanding the world. Peale often referred to himself as a ‘memorialist’, meaning that he painted the

dead in the service of future memory (Elsner and Cardinal, 223). Peale was an active participant in preserving his environment and he created work that would contribute to the value of objects of that time. Object significance is a large resource for understanding different cultures and individual personalities.

### Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud is also a known American collector. Freud began collecting in the 1890's and his collection was mainly comprised of antiquities from ancient Rome, Greece, Egypt and later China. Freud is among the first to associate collecting with self-analysis. He applied this to himself after the realization that his personal collection was representative of his struggle with the death of his father. Freud was also a scientific collector, collecting case studies to better inform his work. These scientific collections contributed to many of his most well known works such as his *Interpretations of Dreams* in 1900 (Elsner and Cardinal, 234). Freud's work creates an interesting insight into the world of collecting because it is tangible, through the ancient objects, and intangible, through the analysis of dreams and psychoanalysis. This new development in the analysis of objects and collection creates a second layer in the investigation of accumulation in a social American history.

### Domestic Life

The activity of collecting is deeply rooted in the North American culture because of a natural inclination for humans to understand their environment. As North American life became more settled the objects of collections became more diverse and began to incorporate things pertaining to the home. For early settlers in North America, barest house hold necessities were needed to provide shelter and food. As time passed and more colonists arrived, life became easier and by mid century it became possible to devote attention to household furnishings other than for functional purposes. By 1640 solid furnishings became a part of the household and by 1650 silver vessels and spoons were being used for serving. Ceramic ware can be traced back to 1687 and glass made an appearance earlier on in 1608 but did not fully operate until 1641 in Salem, Massachusetts (Stillinger, 39). These material items were used as functional but also began to serve as status symbols and items for collecting. Long before collections of mass-produced items became a part of public discussion, people nurtured personal collections. In 1981, in a study focused on human attachment to particular household objects, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton stated, "Collecting is not simply about creating a collection of a certain object: domestically, it can be about the very

chairs we sit on or plates we eat from” (Pearce and Martin, 265). This statement is referencing the natural tendency to attain objects based on the progress of culture. Objects and the accumulation of them over a period of time are the physical evidence of a society.

Museums are an important aspect of understanding the evolution of collecting. These institutions played an important role in conserving American history. The early museums helped us develop a sense of our world and how cultures differed from one another. The American way of life became increasingly complex in the documentation of its material history. Collections within the home have become a source for understanding our civilization from a personal perspective. In 1990, the Walsall Museum and Art Gallery, located in the United Kingdom, presented *The People's Show*. This exhibition showcasing everyday things that people collect displayed objects from wacky to mundane and was a scope into what people collect in their private dwellings (Pearce and Martin, 76). This exhibition was a success and was joined by more than fifty other museums across the country for the second installment in 1994 (Pearce and Martin, 76). The Walsall Museum questioned the museum's role in society and also opened a new dialogue for discussing the phenomenon for collection. This statement was recorded from a visitor of the show: “In every possible nook and cranny a different collection reveals itself, not a section of space is wasted. Batman rubs shoulders with bicycles and the Beatles jostle with the hippos collection. The list of them all stands at the entrance to the exhibition, next to the introductory panel, that tells you this is a ‘celebration’. *The People's Show* at Walsall this year is exhibiting eighty-eight local people's collections of everyday, familiar objects, over 25,000 items on display, the largest exhibition we have ever mounted”(Pearce and Martin, 77). Although this exhibition took place in Britain this type of collecting and interest was also occurring in the United States at the time. Objects like the ones on display at the Walsall Museum do not differ very much from the silver spoons and ceramic bowls used for serving by early settlers. This exhibition highlights the idea that home can be both a site for a themed environment and also a receptacle of unwanted material, making it very similar to a museum. They both display the essence of the society that enjoyed them. Society will continue to grow and the things we collect throughout time are indicators of how we interact with our environment and each other. Items disembodied from the home and placed in a museum encourage an exciting dialogue about what material creations are deemed important over periods of time and what can represent an ever-evolving American custom.

## Advertisement/Consumerism

Furniture and other household wares, allowed for the introduction of advertisement as a means to differentiate makers, designers, and businesses. An early form of advertisement came with the trading card in 1880 as a result of moving from home production to bought goods in the market place (Dilworth, 67). These cards created a national culture to associate consumers with a familiar brand recognized by a slogan or color scheme. These cards eventually became an item for collection and were intended to seduce children into buying particular products. With the growth of technology came chromolithographic printing, which enabled the printing of vibrant color imagery. By 1890 this process made it possible to create custom trading cards for a specific product, or social engagements for personal use. The novelty of this process made the cards ideal for a collection and quickly became an object of social interaction (Dilworth, 72). Advertisers noticed their role in the collecting culture and began to tailor their designs based on specific desires. One author points out the addition of bird species and facts onto a card while another educates the buyer about where the product would be best used (Dilworth, 76). The notion of a collectable became yet another element of the collecting phenomenon. This idea of creating something with authenticity, or rarity is a key element in early consumer culture. Today there are a variety of choices for one to explore with intentions of beginning or adding to a collection. This could be a localized effort by visiting a department store, novelty or secondhand shop, or one could go online to eBay or one of the other thousand online boutiques. There is also the avenue of the found object collector who prefers to add discarded, but precious components, to an existing collection. The development of industry is a large contributing factor in the lineage of collecting.

## Personal Identity

Collecting is closely related to developing a sense of self and a society as a whole. As discussed previously, the activity of collecting has shaped how we understand our past history and continuously participates in the progression of domestic life. Object attachment is an act that is nurtured from birth. A personal association with an object can have a large affect on developing a sense of personal identity. The emotional attachment humans develop with objects is another reason for the phenomenon of collecting. Pearce writes, "The emotional relationship of projection and internalization which we have with objects seem to belong with our very earliest experience and remains important to us all our lives. Equally, this line of thought brings us back to the intrinsic link between our



understanding of our own bodies and the imaginative construction of the material world” (Elsner and Cardinal, 102). This description states that because we learn through objects and our interaction with them, it is a reason for us to have a sense of connection to the things that surround us. Ellen Garvey points out the importance of learning through collecting objects with this statement, “Nineteenth century writers and educators understood collecting as an educational practice. It disciplined the collector, especially the child, and especially the child’s eye, to notice more about the world through the categories into which he or she had learned to sort it” (Acts of Possession, 68). Both Pearce and Garvey have linked collecting as an important aspect of developing a sense of self and a means to understand the world. Pearce has also written about the union between collections and historical preservation. This statement was taken from her book *On Collecting*, “The wealth of evidence from collectors and from what is recorded about the purpose and significance of surviving collections makes it clear that the capacity of collected material to create a sense of past within the present is emotionally immensely significant to us, so much so that it is the mainspring of much collecting activity”(Elsner and Cardinal, 250). A visual catalog of objects like that of the Smithsonian in Washington D.C. and others found in private collections throughout North America are examples of how these references contribute to an understanding of our past. Objects are also key in helping us transition from one place to another. In childhood this is called the “transitional object”, such as the pacifier or baby blanket. These items are physical indicators of moving from one stage of life to another. Material possession in the form of gift, reward, or discovery can serve as an emotional aid to accepting change, and thus, objects are then incorporated into how we move through the world.

### Historical Conclusion

The progression of material culture has shaped how we view ourselves as a country. The act of collecting is important to our historical preservation, domestic life, cultural understanding, and personal identity. The accumulation of objects can be a visual description of who we are as individuals and as a community; collections are also a site of cultural memory and reproduction. The understanding of the material development of our time allows for a dialogue about how to progress as a community. As a collector and artist contributing to a collecting culture I take seriously the responsibility I have in making objects. I would like the things I make to reflect the time I live in and offer my perspective of the world I know. I collect experience, memories, and objects from my life history. I am fascinated with the interconnectedness of objects and why I choose to work with those that are very much part of an intimate relationship with a

person; that being jewelry. “Ultimately, whatever form collecting takes, whatever its motivations and however we perceive its expression, it is undeniably an integral part of how we relate to the contemporary world”(Pearce and Martin, 3) states that collecting is and will always be a source for interacting with the environment. I believe that universal phenomenon will continue to be a contributing factor in understanding our past, present and future.

## TECHNIQUE

I am an artist with interests in many materials and this has shaped the direction of the work within the six series. The overall theme of exploring ideas of collection and accumulation in American culture has led me to utilize the material that best suites the idea. Each body of work speaks through different processes. Metalsmithing, papermaking, printmaking, and textile techniques have all been explored and each process is deliberate to the content in each piece.

### Metalsmithing:

Jewelry techniques are used in both the *Tangled and Twisted* and *Tarped* series. I used basic metalsmithing techniques to create a traditional jewelry format for the works. Piercing and soldering are necessary in the creation of a silhouette form to allude to a tangled collar necklace in any given jewelry box. Fabrication of a historical jewelry shape paired with the found costume jewelry pieces in *Tarped* reference both a jewelry lineage and contemporary means of dealing with over accumulation. Jewelry has a deep-rooted history with sentiment and collection. It is necessary for me as a trained jewelry maker and self-proclaimed collector to insert these techniques and art forms into this exhibition about American consumption and collection history.

### Papermaking:

Papermaking techniques intrigue me and I have researched them in depth while creating this work. Paper is material that lends itself easily to manipulation for art making purposes and it also has a connection to a consumer society. Because of the connection paper and purchase innately have, I have chosen to use it as a dominant material in the work. *ReCollection* is comprised of several hundred handmade paper plates. Each plate is made with two to three handmade sheets of paper that are stretched wet over porcelain plates to dry. The paper is left to dry over night on the porcelain plates and then trimmed off to reveal a perfectly cast replica, in paper, of the original plate. The cast plates are collected from friends, family, and my own collection. Designs of jewelry, lace, and other objects of my desire are superimposed on the paper I used to

stretch over each plate. The plate form is chosen not as a direct reference to the form but as a means to conjure thoughts on the many things that accumulate in our personal spaces over time. I am focused on these objects of desire disembodied from their original state; paper replicas are the representation of accumulation as a source for reflection. Muted tones and silhouettes offer a relatable image but an obvious stand in for the objects. Paper is a universal material used for communication and documentation and is a leading contributor to the advancement of civilization. The art of collection is a serious activity and paper is a strong durable material. The paper medium combined with the content of collection confirms material culture of the past and through contemporary techniques begins a conversation for the present and future.

#### Printmaking:

The printmaking process has given me the opportunity to insert a historical connection to art and collecting process in this work. *Receipt of Purchase* has been executed using letterpress and embossing techniques just as they were used in early advertisements for the industry. Each work in the *Tangled and Twisted* series has been documented with photography. I then utilized each shape from the original necklace for all twenty-eight brooches. I chose a pattern to cut out of metal to create an embossing. The metal was placed underneath a printer press and rolled through on top of printmaking paper. This resulted in an embossed image of the brooch. After the shape was pressed into the paper I took each receipt and printed by hand the text that reads:

*Tangled and Twisted*

No. \_\_\_\_\_

2011

Date Acquired \_\_\_\_\_

with thanks,

Laura Wood

This printed text confirms the purchase of art while also inviting the patron into an exchange of ideas about the topic of collection.

### Textile/Papermaking:

Textile and paper making techniques are used in *Tangled and Twisted*, *Tarped*, *Sharing the Heirloom*, *Recollection*, and *Rethinking the Heirloom I and II*. Freestyle beading is used in *Tangled and Twisted* to allude to a once beloved but now neglected necklace. This process is achieved by stringing one bead at a time with needle and thread, creating a strand to thread through the metal jewelry form. The beads begin to wrap around the form and themselves, creating a tangled composition.

Paper is layered together two at a time and manipulated with the blow out process to create the silhouette of a beaded collar or lace shape in the works *Sharing the Heirloom* and *Rethinking the Heirloom I and II*. First, the lace or collar is placed on top of the two sheets of paper (wet). By applying forced water with a spray nozzle I am able to spray away portions of the top sheet of paper leaving the bottom sheet to show through in places. While wet, the paper is placed under pressure in a large hydraulic press to squeeze out excess water. After the water is pressed out of the paper it is place one sheet at a time in a dry press. The dry press is made up of triple ply corrugated cardboard with two sheets of cotton linters in between sheets. The dry press is held under pressure in the hydraulic press over night, in front of a fan, to finish drying the paper. After the paper is dry, the hydraulic press is opened to release the pressure and the paper is then ready for installation. The abaca fiber used in these pieces is translucent and the cotton is dyed to be opaque gray. *Sharing the Heirloom I and II* have both been placed in the hydraulic press over night. The papers seen in *Sharing the Heirloom*, *Tarped*, and *ReCollection* have been pressed wet and then stretched over armatures or objects to dry in their current position.

## EXHIBITION

It has remained an important conscious effort in the creation of this work to speak objectively about the items I am referencing and making. Personal possessions are naturally linked to an emotional human sensibility. Although I am intrigued by how a relationship is formed and nurtured with objects, I have intentionally focused on physical aspects of the presence of things in our lives. By eliminating human sentiments I can more clearly investigate the linguistics of things- literally.

The discussion of the following works has been broken down into categories pertaining to the research I have done within six series. In order to better comprehend the phenomenon of collection I felt it best to approach the subject of acquiring things from a few perspectives: inheritance, disbursement of things, hoarding, neglect, and preservation. I created each series separate from one another building on information from one to the next. They are listed in the order in which they were made.

*Rethinking the Heirloom I and II*

Objects leave physical and mental impressions. They may go unnoticed in the world but are still capable of leaving a mark. Memory preserves things from our life experience long after they have dissipated from existence. The word heirloom is a direct reference to having been passed from one life to another. These pieces were made as a starting point to creating work devised around ideas of a conversation about the heirloom and about objects of significance passing from one person to another. They are paper, flat, and not made for the body - the opposite of what the original object is in reality. These works question if is this what happens in the passing down of things from one person to another over time. They are the reinterpretation of “stuf

(Plate 1) *Rethinking the Heirloom I and II*





*Sharing the Heirloom*

This work analyzes the disassemblage of personal possessions. Each person has a unique way of acquiring things in one lifetime. Thrift store, flea markets, and online sites offer a range of things that can be bought second hand. Our contemporary culture repurposes past objects and gives things a second life after disassembly.

This piece is comprised of thirty-six brooches that can be displayed or worn together to form one necklace. Each brooch may go on to live with different people and this is part of the work. With the purchase of each piece a common link is created between people.

(Plate 2) *Sharing the Heirloom*



*ReCollection*

I fabricated *ReCollection* as a way to initiate discussion about the topic of collection and accumulation in American culture. I am interested in the connection we develop with objects over time and how this bond is formed and broken. I have chosen the plate to represent not only an iconic object of collection but to represent the many things we accumulate over time. This mound of stuff is a translation of a china cabinet, closet, common room table, or junk drawer as well as the intangible memories we hoard in the mind. Each plate is unique and different from the next, yet they all share familiarity that inevitably becomes the fabric of our existence. These plates are made with paper making techniques that allow them to be delicate and translucent. I intend for the plates to reveal their many layers as collections do when investigated with any thought. The creation of this work was labor intensive, repetitive, obsessive, and gratifying: an experience that allowed time for me to reflect on my thoughts about collection and the many characteristics of that activity



(Plate 3) *ReCollection*



*Tangled and Twisted*

This collection of jewelry honors the neglected objects in our lives. I notice in my own personal collections the hierarchy of possessions. This work was created from beaded collars I have collected and they are my own way of creating a new life for discarded jewels. There are many items in the industry made with the intention that they will be collected, porcelain dolls, plates, plastic figurines, and card. I find the brooch format to be appropriate for presenting these items and there are twenty-eight brooches in this series. I chose this number deliberately. The Twenty-eight brooches correlate to my current age so I found this to be a satisfactory number for completion of the series. Artists hope that their work will be collected, and we also collect for inspiration and materials. This work is a cyclical reference to the activity of collection, both intuitively and participatory.

(Plate 4) *Tangled and Twisted*

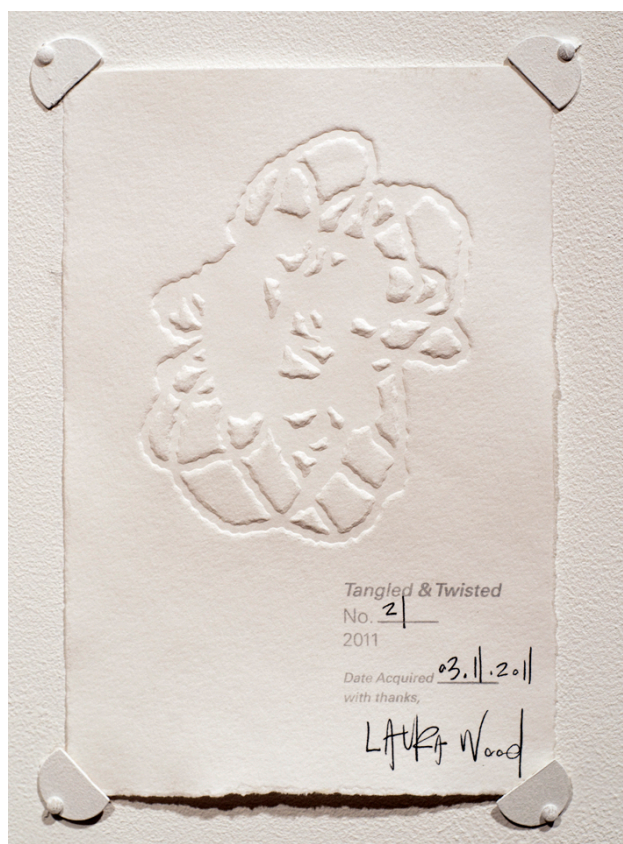


*Receipt of Purchase*

These hand-printed and embossed receipts correspond with the *Tangled and Twisted* series. These certificates are a means for me to invite viewers into the thoughts and ideas I have been working through over the past few years. With the purchase of a brooch the transaction is completed with these tokens of appreciation. The act of collecting is a universal practice admitted to by the majority of our American society. These receipts are an invitation to join me in a dialogue about the subject of material presence in our lives.



(Plate 5) *Receipt of Purchase*





*Tarped*

There is a certain mystery in things you cannot see. Silhouettes can seem familiar and intriguing. I have chosen to use costume jewelry hidden by a paper façade with the pieces in this series. In some cases I have selected to leave the original pin back or earring clasp exposed. This allows me to be very honest about what these wrapped fragments are and where they may have come from. Jewelry does not have to be made out of precious metal to be special. There are many conflicting ideas within this series of work such as fragile verses structural and real verses fake. There are an equal number of philosophies about what is deemed wearable, valuable or collectable. I enjoy using paper as a means of accentuating a profile and shape. Using a peculiar material such as paper to conceal an already fit to wear piece of machine made jewelry may seem redundant, but I see this as a way to highlight an idea. If these pieces evoke thoughts about jewelry, objects, or curiosity, I will have done my job as the artist.

(Plate 6) *Tarped*



## Installation

The exhibition space for this work was designed with the history of collection in mind. Each series has a specific display that relates to the concept of each work. When the group of six are placed in close quarters with one another a dialogue is created from one work to the next. *ReCollection* displays a sense of chaos and just over the crest of plates is the plaque of brooches entitled *Tangled and Twisted*. They represent two vastly different ways of dealing with the accumulation of items. The plates spill over onto each other, as do piles of trash, bills, or receipts. The glass reveals the bottom of the pile, a side we rarely see in a mound of things. *Tangled and Twisted* is reminiscent of how a coveted butterfly specimen collection may be seen in a museum. *Tarped* has been treated with the thoughtful display like that of a 17<sup>th</sup> century parure. The whole series is grouped together on boards as if you were peering into a well-matched jewelry box. *Sharing the Heirloom I and II* have been set between glass plates to highlight the translucency of the material. You can see yourself in the reflection of the glass as well as others passing by. They are constantly changing based on what is placed in front of them, much like objects do, depending on who uses them. *Sharing the Heirloom* is assembled altogether in the shape of the collar it was made with and the individual brooches are spaced apart just enough to realize that they are not one component. The piece can be taken apart and worn by as many as thirty-three people at once; an example of how many people can be bound by the love of one object. *Receipt of Purchase* lay stacked and tied with a string waiting to be purchased and included into a new family of objects. The entire installation is heavily based in a museum display history. Not all objects of importance end up in a gallery or museum but when they are of any significance or emotional value they are handled with care. I have chosen to place the work in this setting as a link to American history, and the way our society has handled this subject of culture.

(Plate 7) Installation



## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I view this work as an entry point to a larger conversation about object attachment in America. The very subject of material culture is a relatively new field of research. I have become more aware of our history through objects and have gained a new understanding of how we function as humans in a world now increasingly filling with our own creations. I have sought to research the way in which we deal with objects in our lives. With the completion of this thesis work I feel I have learned more about the evolution of our culture through material. The question of how and why we collect will continue to be an on going question in the pursuit of researching American history. Individualism is often learned through the connection to objects and my interests are founded in the phenomenon of one object having many meanings. I hope that my research will be a motivation to those who view and engage with the work to also question the role of objects in their lives and better understand their environment. I have created a hand-fabricated cabinet of curiosity motivated by the historical lineage of how humans interact with material things.



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## GLOSSARY

Blow out	A process in papermaking. Water is used to spray paper pulp away with pressure. It can be used with stencils or by placing objects on top of the wet paper as resist.
Cast	A process through which a replica is made through applying plaster or some other pliable material to an original object. After plaster has set it can be removed and any material such as paper or metal can be applied to create a mold of the object.
Emboss	The process of creating a shape into paper with pressure. Usually made with a material such as brass, copper, wood or plastic.
Letterpress	Printmaking process of relief printing with text and image. A raised surface is inked and then pressed into a sheet of paper.
Mold	A shaped cavity used to give a definitive form or a frame on which something may be constructed.
Parure	A set of various items of matching jewelry displayed together in a custom jewelry box. Popular in 17 <sup>th</sup> century Europe.
Piercing	To cut or pass through with a sharp small saw blade.
Semiotics	The study of a cultural sign.
Silhouette	The image of a person, an object or scene consisting of the outline and a featureless interior. Traditionally black.
Soldering	A process using heat to join metallic surfaces.