

And Justice for All Is a multi-year social justice project inspired by the individuals I have met in my role as a counselor, and forensic caseworker within the criminal justice system. I am well aware that if I had not been born white to a rural well-to-do family in Texas, I may have ended up on the other side of the thick plexi barrier through which I converse with my clients in the Attorney Visitation Rooms at the jail. But I was born white to a family of privilege, so I was able to get a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and dyslexia that led to accommodations and support that allowed me to flourish academically and creatively earning an MA in Clinical Psychology and later an MFA in photography. In my work as a forensic caseworker at the Lubbock Public Defenders Office, I witnessed people with mental illness, IDD, autism and other disorders get trapped in the criminal justice system waiting for competency restoration.

When I started this project, my goal was to “lift people up” through my creative process. Instead, I learned that people experiencing complex legal and mental health problems don’t need to be lifted up, they need the same opportunities I had to reach their full potential. I began to understand my own experience with a disability and to see it as a path to advocacy for policy change and better opportunities and access for individuals with mental illness/IDD/and autism.

My creative projects incorporate historical processes as a conceptual foundation. In the 19th-century people often set a tiny tintype of a loved one in a piece of jewelry and called it a “Gem.” I printed 500 small tintype portraits and set them into bottle caps to create the Gem piece that features the mugshots of these individuals.

I use the Daguerreotype process for its historical significance, its expense and exclusivity, and unique mirrored surface. The Daguerreotype is precious, just like each individual that cycles through the legal system. When the viewer looks at the Daguerreotype, we see our own reflections implicating each of us in the racism that continues to shape our legal system.

The installation pieces are a voice from inside the jail and are designed based on the plexiglass barriers in the Attorney Visitation Rooms. These sculptures represent a visual translation of “How to be an Antiracist and the new Jim Crow.” One of the sculptures consists of 1000 mugshots. On the wall behind each mug shot is a colored mark that represents that individual’s race. The second sculpture consists of photographs of the people writing and implementing legal policy and their race.