

# STUDIO 280

Visual Art | Baking | Jessica Kalmar | Knitting | Sewing



## Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

There may be a job description, phrase, or singular word that defines each of us when presented with the question "what do you do?". If one hesitates and doesn't answer in a timely manner when asked during a conversation, I like to think that shows a slightly complex person with all sorts of definitions and not sure which to pick. On the other hand, if one

responds quickly, almost robotically, this person is either accustomed to his or her definition, or likes to simplify things so as not to bombard the listener with multiple definitions. My guess is that most of us are what college students who have not declared a major call themselves: undecided. These students are doing it right - realizing the plethora of classes to take, dabbling in what strikes their fancy, and meeting all sorts of different and interesting people along the way. Although they are "undecided," they are confident of all the choices available, and I think that shows a determined character.

### Side Bar

It's very special to know that friends and family help us along by pointing out aspects of ourselves we may not have paid much attention. Constructive criticism becomes life lessons and the more we slow down the more we notice.

| Visually supported books help guide the path of imagination as you'll find in my two picks for summer. |

Recognizing individual trees and getting to know their contributions is the topic for the review section. |

Combining embroidery and photography inspired from basic housework, my recent photographic project is discussed. | The cookie jar is once again filled... for a little while at least. | Please enjoy the newsletter!

*"Take off your hat," the King said to the Hatter.*

*"It isn't mine," said the Hatter.*

*"Stolen!" the King exclaimed, turning to the jury, who instantly made a memorandum of the fact.*

*"I keep them to sell," the Hatter added as an explanation.*

*"I've none of my own. I'm a hatter.*

*- from Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll.*

## Books



*Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* | Ransom Riggs

- This trilogy is a whirlwind of fantastical adventures. Although the writing is very descriptive, Riggs includes found photographs throughout the series, which enhances the imagination.

*The Book of the Sandman and the Alphabet of Sleep* | Rien Poortvliet

- Magical realism comes to mind. This curious story is seemingly both fictional and non-fictional. Paired with the oversized artwork done in watercolor, I finished this book feeling more perceptive and mystified.

## Reviews



*Tree Identification Hike* |

Find one at a state park near you

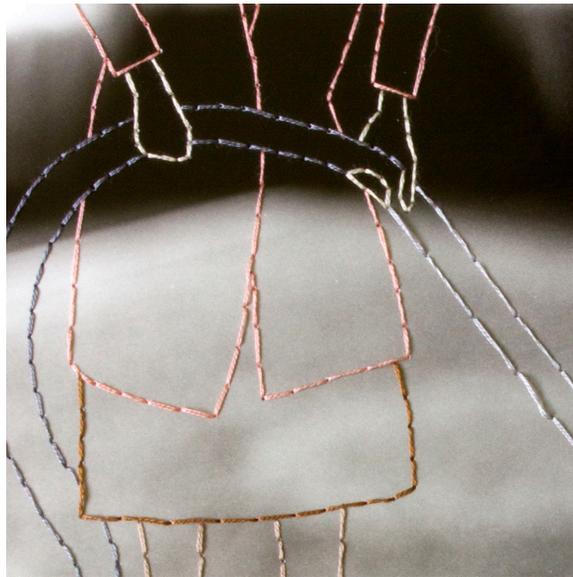
The end of August marks the second year living in our new environment. The first year we explored the area enough to know the places we'd like to revisit. One of which is a state park relatively close to us. This green area of over 7500 acres includes most of the amenities you can imagine a rural state park would have. Among the hiking, swimming, and camping are also free programs. A recent one we did was a two-hour tree identification hike. The information provided allowed us to slow down and tune into our senses. We learned a lot and were able to continue the education in our own backyard.

[www.stateparks.com](http://www.stateparks.com)

The answer most definitely is a little bit of this and that. A piece of you, and a sprinkle of them. Not one specific label, but the combination of how many roles we have and styles we choose. How many hats we wear, as they say.

*Home-maker - A person who manages a home.*

Most of us can relate to this definition and possibly without even realizing it. Whether we keep a home tidy or messy, the home is still maintained. I don't see anything degrading about this role especially since it is very universal. Identifying more with this label as of late, I've noticed the wide range of duties involved and it inspired my most recent photographic project loosely titled *Housewifery*, which includes silver gelatin prints from old and new negatives finished with an embroidered woman carrying out a particular task within the composition.



Detail of embroidery on silver gelatin print.

One moment I am in the studio embroidering a woman vacuuming. Then I find myself dusting and sweeping a room. Cleaning and taking care of the household became my role, and it makes sense to produce a project about a subject I know quite well.

## Embroidery

My recent photographic work involves [embroidering housewifery tasks on silver gelatin prints](#). This current theme evolved in the last few years from using embroidery methods to allow certain elements of the black and white photograph to stand out with the colorful thread. Now I'm creating motifs within the composition.



### *Educator - A person who provides instruction.*

Who *isn't* an educator among the people we know? Neighbors help with gardening questions. Students suggest what new music to try. Nurses inform how best to care for oneself. Cheesemongers know which wines pair with which cheeses. Parents, grandparents, friends and foes; they all have information to give.

*Docendo discimus. "By teaching, we learn."*  
- Latin proverb

This past spring I decided to go back to teaching college students analog photography and recently finished the summer semester. There are aspects of teaching I do not like, but the overall experience is a good one. I'm going back this fall semester.

### *Artist - A person who produces artwork; practices various creative arts; performs; is skilled at a particular task or occupation.*

On the occasion that I've told someone I am an artist, a common reply is that he or she is quite the opposite. I can never imagine that is so. As a constant reader of this newsletter, you know this is an ongoing theme: that everyone has some kind of artistic ability within.

Embroidery has always caught my attention with the intricate stitches that create a three dimensional quality on paper or Aida cloth. Aside from the craftsmanship, the process is also intriguing. In regards to *Housewifery*, I carefully plan each puncture on the photographic paper, thread the needle and gingerly pull it through. A method that requires awareness and dedication, which reminds me of doing household tasks like cleaning, cooking and baking.

## Baking

A classic treat that tastes good anytime, [Oatmeal Raisin Cookies](#) made an excellent addition to the desserts provided during the neighborhood cook-out.

1 C firmly packed brown sugar  
 1/2 tsp. salt  
 1/2 C soft butter  
 1 egg  
 1/2 tsp. vanilla  
 1/4 C buttermilk  
 1 1/4 C all purpose flour  
 1/4 tsp. baking soda  
 1/2 tsp. cinnamon  
 1 C rolled oats  
 3/4 C raisins, chopped (optional)  
 1/2 C walnuts, chopped (optional)

Cream sugar, salt, and butter thoroughly. Beat egg and vanilla into creamed mixture until light and fluffy. Add buttermilk. Sift together flour, soda, and cinnamon. Add flour mixture and oats separately to creamed mixture blending well after each addition. Work raisins and nuts into batter. Drop from tsp. onto ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 400°F for 10 - 12 minutes.

Makes approximately 3 1/2 dozen.

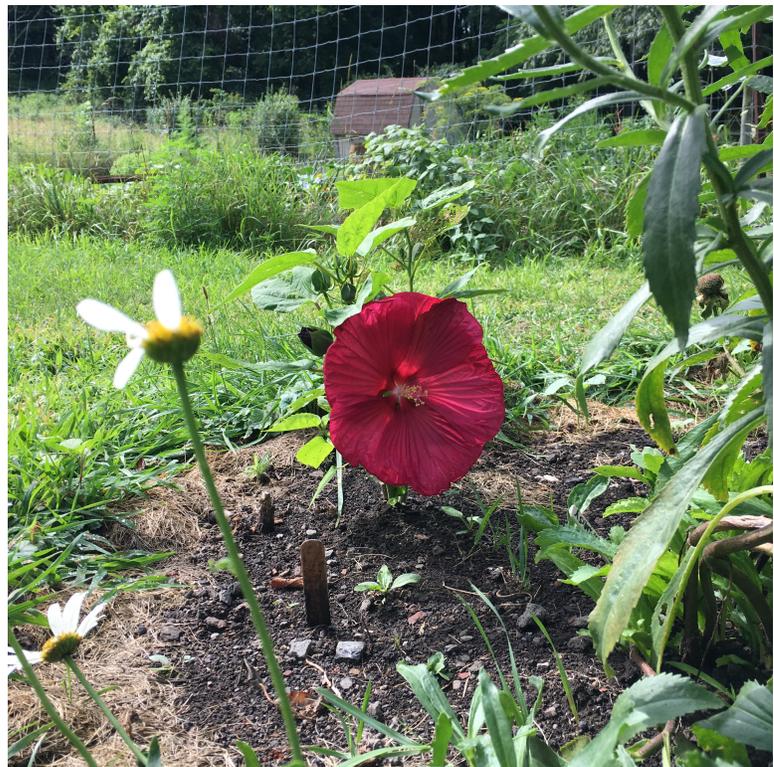


A family recipe.

## Keeping in Touch

The timelessness of simple gestures makes this world go 'round. Things like calling a friend on the phone, baking some goodies for a neighbor, meeting someone for coffee... the list goes on. While keeping up with the garden this summer, which as you may know demands a lot of attention, I thought about how relationships are cultivated. Regular amounts of communication are ideal in keeping in touch, similarly to the frequency of garden visits; planting and writing\*, watering and talking, weeding and helping, harvesting and reciprocating. Straightforward actions with no hard and fast rules.

\*dialing, texting



### *Tomatoes, and Peppers, and Cucumbers, Oh My!*

We planted more than enough vegetable plants hoping at least one of each species would survive. Alas, they all survived. What seemed like a problem at first became a welcomed chore. Even with 14 straight days of heat and no

rain, the garden fought and we were right there beside it pampering each plant with water and persuasive chatter. Finally the rains came and the garden flourished, albeit with weeds but our determination continues and we are out there every day taking care of every plant.

Having consistency in a job, hobby or relationship is important to the growth of that job, hobby or relationship. Randomness, however exciting that may be, doesn't support the nurturing needed with the above mentioned.

We all know this from experience when we realize it's been a while since we called so-and-so or it's been a while since we pulled out that unfinished art project. What the garden taught me this year is that there can't be an erratic schedule with time sensitive material. And isn't that what our jobs, hobbies and friendships are to a degree? Time sensitive material, on whatever time chart you follow, needs reliable attention.



### *For the Table*

Although they know we have a lot in our garden, the neighbors have invited us to pick from their large garden. Since it is an unofficial community garden, and by *community* I mean the small neighborhood we live in, our neighbors suggest picking what we can eat that day then come back and pick some more. As I'm a little overwhelmed with our bounty of cucumbers, this fitting offer is a perfect addition to what we didn't plant.

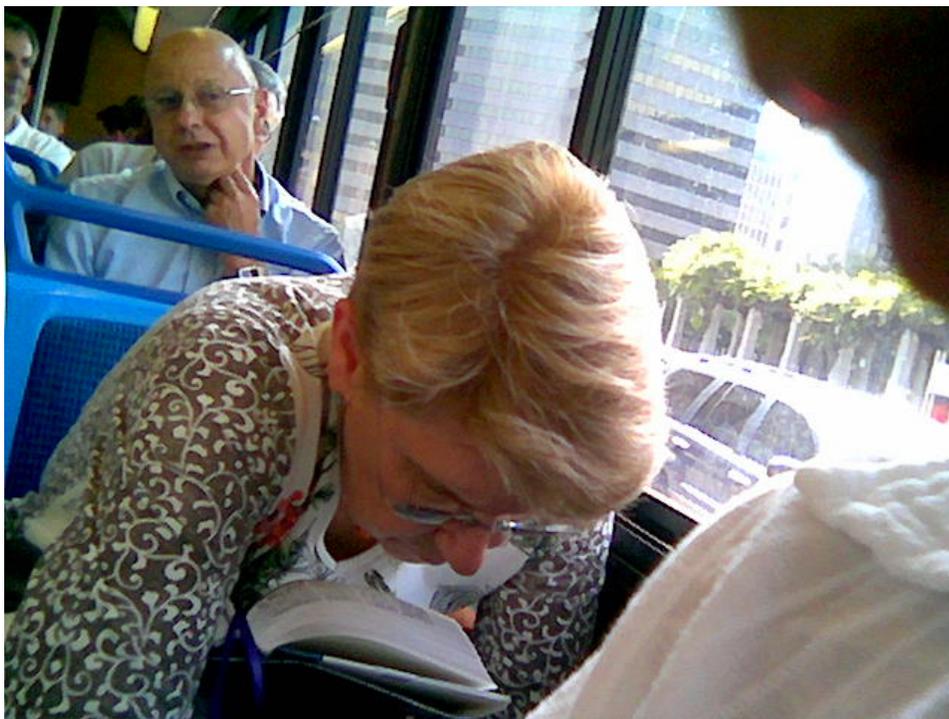
In comparison, how one organizes his or her time with jobs, hobbies, and relationships is like that of carefully harvesting the garden. Too much or too little can be stressful. What is the balance? Finding balance in the garden and workplace. Realizing balance within hobbies and relationships. Trying on all sorts of different hats and understanding which are comfortable and which are awkward. Perhaps the balance happens when we slow down and find discoveries day by day. That is where we find all sorts of wealth!

## Archive

*Static Transmutation*, 2007-2008

Nokia cellular phone  
camera  
Ink jet prints, 3' x 4'

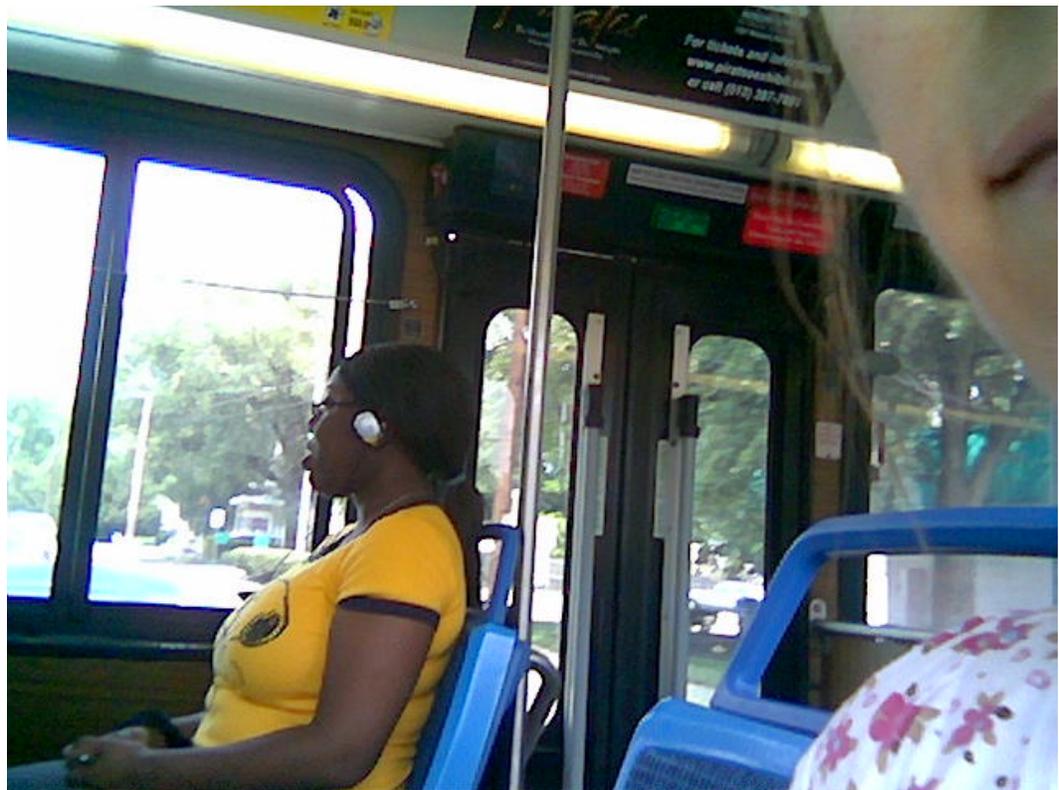
Cohabitation inside a vessel traveling at 50 miles per hour headed in the same direction intended for transport of strangers. Gentle brush of shoulder against shoulder. Eye contact challenged. Enclosed in a capsule, forced to share routine.



To transmute means to change or alter in form, appearance, or nature. A static transmutation would be the equilibrium experienced between people fixed in a tight spot traveling at a specified speed, thereby achieving a common ground.

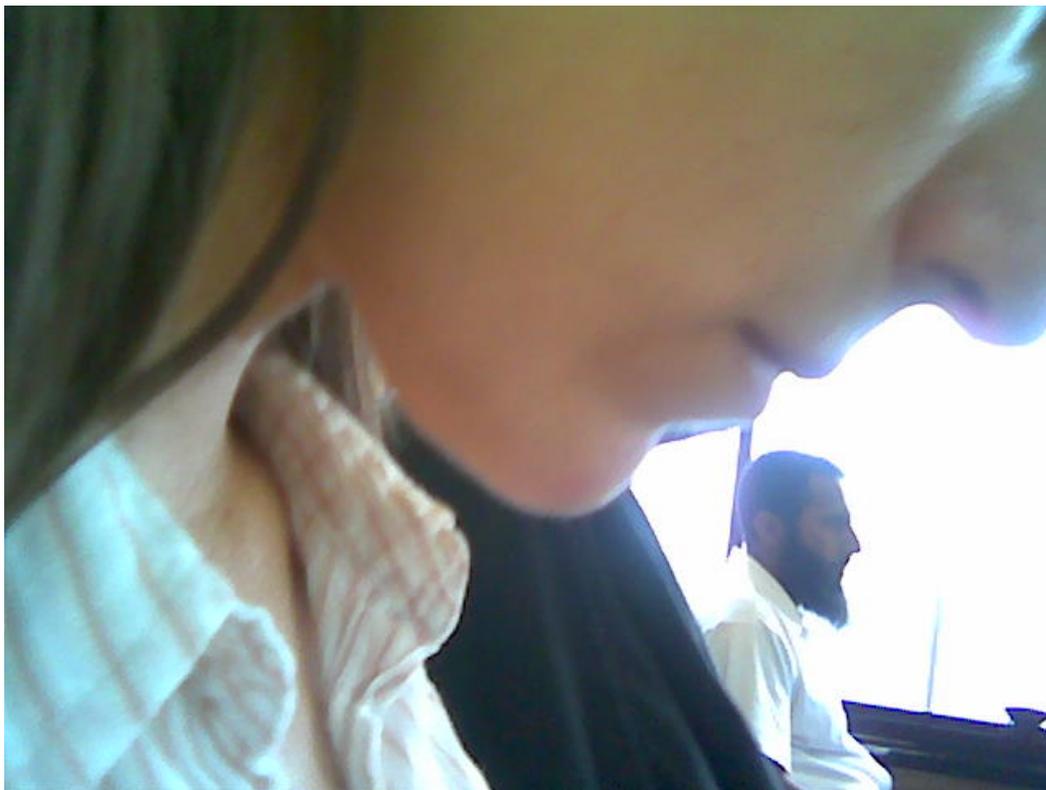


This body of work contains images expressing the parallelism of our lives and the need to recognize each other in the world we share. Anonymity is erased as strangers unknowingly mingle.





Each image incorporates my self portrait, whether it is hair, lips or nose. The importance of my presence within the frame is to show the blending of likenesses, and in the resulting large print, the blending of shared pixels.





A summer festival

Photo by David Dulick

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### Call to Action

My challenge for you is to reach out to somebody with a letter or a card. Dig out that paper, find an easy flowing pen and write. Search for the prettiest birthday card, funniest postcard and mail it. Extra credit for those who finish that drawing or painting started months or years ago, then gift it to somebody special. After all, friends and family are all we've got. Whether that's a lot or a little, they deserve a simple gesture.

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### Thank You

I'm so grateful for my friends and family, showing their true colors with simple gestures of letter writing, calling and stopping by. They always have a little treasure for me, and I hope I reciprocate the warm feelings they bestow. Enjoy the end of summer! Look for the next Studio 280 Newsletter around November 7, 2018.

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Summer 2018 | Cultivate. | [jessicalmar.com](http://jessicalmar.com)