Nia Michaels

Seattle, WA

www.niamichaels.com @studioniam

After working in painting and mixed media for many years, a long held obsession with decorative tins took over my studio and I began to work exclusively in tin.

I am drawn to the intricate patterns, the range of colors and the effects of aging; the rust, dents, scratches and fading. The tins are flattened and snipped and assembled into pieces that combine appropriated commercial imagery from the past into something new.

I often incorporate Civil War-era tintype photos. The contrast and balance of the colorful tins with the gray tones of the tintypes and the somber expressions of the tintype faces is an essential part of my compositions, often evoking a sense of nostalgia and melancholy that is central to my work. Choosing the perfect photo for each piece is a sort of casting call. I comb through hundreds of photos to find the perfect image.

I am fascinated with the seemingly endless possibilities and stories that I can coax from these small pieces of metal.

The pieces included in this show are from my 'Neighborhood' series. I began this series before the pandemic, before we went into the isolation of staying in our homes. Like many people, I began to take long walks around my neighborhood and would catch glimpses of people in their homes. Sometimes we would wave to each other. These pieces began to feel prescient and now I cannot separate them from that intense period of time.

My work has been shown over the years in many exhibits, juried shows and has won awards . I have previously shown at BIMA in 2015, in a show of artists who work in tin called "Cut and Bent".

Inspired by my 'Patron Saint' series, the poet Knox Gardner began a series of poems that ultimately became a book collaboration and was published by Entre Rios books.

