

Project Statement: *The Bricklayers and The Bridgemakers (2005-2007)*

Statement date: 9-6-15

I began “The Bricklayers” and “The Bridgemakers” paintings in order to access a vivid and recurrent memory I had of laying bricks at night underneath strands of hot light bulbs with a close friend. This experience, which took place in Italy, was already embedded with romanticism and theatricality, and my memory of it was even further romanticized and dramatized. I began the paintings by relying on my memory, but eventually decided I needed source material to make the images come to life in the way I wanted. I decided to involve my family in my process and asked them to restage my experience while I took photographs. I held 3 reenactments, over the course of a year, in my family’s backyard in suburban Pennsylvania. Ultimately, I became quite removed from the experience that inspired the paintings. I became most interested in relinquishing control over my final image as my family reinterpreted my directions (in fact; I stopped giving instructions altogether and decided however they wanted to dress, interact, and pose would enter my final paintings), and also became intrigued by the underlying narratives of rituals and group dynamics. While I gave instructions for the poses for “The Bricklayers,” my family decided to dress in costume and change poses in “The Bridgemakers.”

Looking back on the paintings, completed in 2005-2007, I am most engaged with how much the people and the dynamics and relationships between people in the paintings and photos have changed. While I am still quite attracted to the possible metaphors of laying bricks, building, and physical interaction, as well as the theatricality of lights, fire, and costumes, I am also intrigued by the possibilities of altering the narratives to reflect an ever-changing story. And as I have returned to this process of reenacting for several projects throughout the years, I realize that the reenactments become about desperation to relive something, to see it again, to make it real again, to make it tangible, and to reevaluate and re-contextualize fleeting moments.