

## MARISA GAGGINO

I'm shy about calling myself an artist. That being said, I have built a career as a highly inventive and improvisational creative; first as a writer of architecture and design, then as a designer/retailer and now a builder/remodeler. All along the way I've made things. I learned traditional women's crafts growing up with women. My mother, her sister, my grandmother and great grandmother were (and are) accomplished and inventive seamstresses.

I learned craft and construction from my very handy father and husband. I left a corporate writing job in 1992 to start an architectural salvage business and had a store for 22 years. In addition to finding and selling salvage, antiques and "objects of interest," I designed furniture and interiors created from and around salvage. I have made lots of stuff from found objects, décor, Christmas ornaments, garden art, gifts etc.

I am driven by an inability to abide waste and have made a career of finding the beauty, worth and integrity in discarded items. Of the thousands of found objects, no item has touched me more than the cache of 1930-40's crime scene photos I found at a flea market 10 years ago. Where others saw thugs and victims in gruesome circumstances, I saw forgotten lives and a kindred spirit who beautifully captured humanity in all its complexities. I wrote about them, printed and sold the images but when I latched onto the idea of embroidering the images, I realized the story I had to tell was not from my head. The vintage crime scene/embroidery project speaks to a desire for unconditional love, women's traditional role to provide it and a deep calling to tell the untold and lost stories of these long, forgotten souls. This is the first project I have ever shown in a gallery setting and which I had ever considered art. Additionally, while I no longer write professionally, I'm a longtime blogger, now on my personal FB page and write about my unconventional and peripatetic life.

## WHY I CREATE?

I see myself as rescuer of orphan items whose value has been overlooked or misunderstood. This stems in no doubt from a tumultuous childhood. I am compelled to write and create and I believe it is a critical component to maintaining my mental health.