

Fork, Knife or Spoon?

A Question of Identity

Size: variable; table: 3.5' x 8.5' 2'

Wood, paper, plexiglass, pencils, paint.

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Our terminology for self-description is so fraught with layers of self-consciousness that most people refuse to define themselves for fear of being judged.

Using silverware as the core of a light-hearted, alternate language of self-definition, I asked my family members to choose a fork, knife or spoon that they felt represented themselves. I received immediate responses with surprising truthfulness, depth, and nuance. It unmasked a core of identity that had never been expressed to me before.

Building on this metaphor and my past work of sibling relationships, I have created a body of work based on identity, family and lineage.

This installation consists of a long table with a multitude of eating utensils on its face. There are tracing paper and pencils in a tray at the end. Viewers are instructed to choose the utensil that they feel best represents them and why. They can draw or trace the utensil then write why they chose it and their age. They then pinned it to the wall – covering it over the course of the exhibition – and sparking great conversations between participants.

The responses ranged from thoughtful to hilarious. Some examples:

"I am a steak knife, but my friends think I am a salad fork." Age 42

"I used to be a knife. It was a good defense mechanism, but I got hammered so much that now I'm a spoon." Age 56

"I chose a gigantic serving spoon. It's big enough so I never have to say that something doesn't fit into my life." Age 28

Julie Levesque

