

WALKING IN TRAFFIC

DEBRA SMITH



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Exhibit Statement:

Walking In Traffic is a meditation on movement – hesitation and trust, chaos and flow. Inspired by a moment in Cairo, where a young man I'd met the night before in the hotel restaurant reappeared just as my mother and I stood stranded before six relentless lanes of traffic. When I asked how to cross, he simply said with calm certainty, "You just have to go, They will stop for you." Then, with quiet confidence, he guided us forward, and what had seemed impossible, became fluid and instinctive.

That same trust – stepping into uncertainty with faith – is echoed in my artistic practice when I enter my studio. But in this relentless political climate, where chaos overwhelms and uncertainty stretches endlessly, creating feels like an act of defiance – both necessary, and impossibly difficult. Some days the weight of it all dulls instinct; other days the work itself becomes the only way forward.

As a third-generation textile artist, my work is deeply inspired by the passions and explorations of my mother and grandmother, women who



instilled in me a reverence for fabric – its history, its makers, and the memories it holds. Working with vintage textiles, I honor the hands that wove them before me, preserving their essence, while transforming them into a contemporary narrative.

Through intuitive cutting, piecing, and layering, each work becomes more than material – it is a bridge between generations, a conversation across cultures, and a declaration that even in uncertainty, we continue forward, shaping what comes next.