

Elyse Defoor

elyse@elysedefoor.com

www.ElyseDefoor.com

404.667.1902

ARTIST STATEMENT 2026

My work begins with lived experience and expands outward toward our shared humanity.

I use photography, sculpture, installation, drawing, and painting (whatever the work requires) to explore the conditions of being human, where body, psyche, memory, and spirit intersect.

My practice is inspired by moments of joy, pain, and loss. Each body of work begins with pieces of evidence left behind after experiences of transformation and personal evolution. I am drawn to what intrigues me: sometimes an object, an image, a fragment of the body, a memory, or a fleeting moment. I stay with it until it reveals something larger. Ideas unfold, inform, revisit, and expand one another, creating an evolving network of connections across my practice—what I think of as *the art of personal mythology*.

BIOGRAPHY

Fierce and vulnerable, Elyse Defoor shares her inner and outer responses to the world through her art in an ongoing search for connection—to ourselves, to one another, and to our shared humanity. Her work finds beauty and meaning within complexity, holding space for both grief and grace, mystery and memory.

A native Southerner (b. Greenville, SC, 1952) Defoor lives and works in Atlanta. For more than three decades, she has worked across photography, sculpture, installation, drawing, and painting, following what intrigues and inspires her.

Much of Defoor's art begins in lived experience, particularly moments of joy, pain, grief, loss, and transformation. Working with the idea of "pieces of evidence left behind," wedding dresses, bathing suits, bullet casings, knives, switch plates and other familiar things become vehicles through which private experience expands into larger questions about vulnerability, identity, love, violence, memory, and resilience.

Her bodies of art form an evolving network of ideas. Themes and images return, intersect, and transform across time. At the heart of her practice is the desire to create work that touches people. She creates spaces where viewers recognize something of themselves and feel less alone.

Defoor studied at the University of Georgia and the Atlanta College of Art. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally and is held in collections including MOCA GA and the New York Public Library. She is a Fellow of the Hambidge Center for Creative Arts and Sciences and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts.

Video documentation of "Elyse Defoor—Slivers of Time," "Loss. Redemption. Grace," "Uncloaked," "Unbridled," "all of us, alone" and her "Relics of Marriage" outdoor installation, along with exhibition tours may be viewed on Elyse Defoor—YouTube and on her website, ElyseDefoor.com.

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Solo & Group Exhibits

- 2025 *Stripped Down*, The Spruill Gallery, Atlanta, GA
- 2024 *A Room of Her Own*, The ArtsXchange, Atlanta, GA
- 2022 *Slivers of Time*, The Art Institute of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA (solo)
Motion > Blur, Honorable Mention Award, International Juried Photography Exhibition, Praxis Photo Arts Center, Minneapolis, MN
Gathered V, Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia, Atlanta, GA
- 2019 *Uncloaked*, Thomas Deans Fine Art, Atlanta, GA (solo)
The Object Show, EBD4, Atlanta, GA
Loss. Redemption. Grace, EBD4, Atlanta, GA
- 2018 *Unbridled*, City of Atlanta Gallery 72, Atlanta, GA (solo)
Civil Discourse, Kibbee Gallery, Atlanta, GA
Transformers, Dalton Gallery at Agnes Scott College, Decatur, GA
All that is Holy, Blue Mark Gallery, Atlanta, GA
- 2016 *The Garden of Unearthly Delights*, Whitespace Gallery, Atlanta, GA
- 2015 *Relics of Marriage*, Umbrella Arts Gallery, New York, NY (solo)
The Drawing Experiment, Chastain Arts Gallery, Atlanta, GA
Metro Curates Invitational, Umbrella Arts Gallery, New York, NY
Digital Picture Selects for ACP, Mason Fine Art, Atlanta, GA
- 2012 *Relics of Marriage*, The Xchange Gallery at the Arts Exchange, Atlanta, GA (solo)
- 2011 *One Million Thoughts of Joy: Digital Art Installation*, I-85/75 and Williams Street Exit, Atlanta, GA (solo)
- 2010 *Via Dorso: Sonnets to Unguarded Moments*, Wm Turner Gallery, Atlanta, GA (solo)
- 2008 *X.U.M.E.*, Alexandria Museum of Art, Alexandria, LA (solo)
- 2007 *X.U.M.E.*, Wesleyan College, Macon, GA (solo)
- 2006 *Elyse Defoor*, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC (solo)
- 2005 *Soul Signatures*, The Granite Room, Atlanta, GA (solo)
Liquid, Gallery Sklo, Atlanta, GA (solo)
- 2003 *Aerial Chaises*, National Juried Exhibition Emory Chairs Project Site installation, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia

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Curatorial & Juror Experience

City of Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs selection committee for public art
Atlanta, GA
April, 2024

"7th Biennial Alumni Art Exhibition"
University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA
August, 2021

"Drag Queens & Club Kids—Al Clayton Photography"
Atlanta Celebrates Photography 2019
EBD4, Chamblee, GA
October, 2019

"Loss. Redemption. Grace."
EBD4, Chamblee, GA
June, 2019

"SnowGlobe"
EBD4, Chamblee, GA
November, 2018

"40 over 40"
EBD4, Chamblee, GA
November, 2017

Co-Chair at the Xchange Gallery
The Arts Exchange, Atlanta, GA
2012 – 2015

Residencies

The Hambidge Center
2005 – 2008, 2010, 2024

Virginia Center for the Creative Arts
2014

Education

Bachelor of Fine Arts
University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia

Advanced Painting
Atlanta College of Art

Collections

- The Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia
- The New York Public Library
- Acoustic Headquarters, Dunwoody, Georgia
- Private collections throughout the United States, and in Singapore,

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Publications

ArtsATL.org / Atlanta Journal-Constitution
Pearl McHaney
6-3-2024
"Sharing a Room with ArtsXchange Women"

Buckhaven City Lifestyle
Sue G. Collins
February 2024
"Elyse Defoor's World"

ArtsATL.org
Jerry Cullum
12-5-2022
"Cullum's Notebook: Personal mythology in
garter belts, tree stumps, Carolina blue"
The Art Institute of Atlanta

ArtsATL.org
Candice Dyer
7-1-2019
"'Loss. Redemption. Grace.' at EBD4
responds artfully to human tragedies"

ArtsATL.org
Catherine Fox
9-17-2016
"'The Garden of Unearthly Delights' rises to
the occasion with love, humor and creativity at
Whitespace Gallery"

Washington.Post.com/news/the-fix/
Janell Ross
8-29-2015
"The art – and controversy –
of Hurricane Katrina 'X-codes'"
A story focusing on "Southern Spaces"
photo essay curated by Dorothy Moye

ArtsATL.org
Dan Weiskopf
7-28-2015
"Twelve artists respond in diverse ways to
'Drawing Experiment' at Chastain Gallery"

Musée Magazine.com
Andrea Blanch
5-7-2015
"Elyse Defoor: Relics of Marriage at
Umbrella Arts"

Don't Take Pictures.com
Roger Thompson
2-6-2015
"The Evolution of Metro Show 2015"

ArtsATL.org
Jerry Cullum
9-3-2014
"Diverse group of female artists explore
'Sense of Self' at Arts Exchange gallery"

Burnaway.org
Meredith Kooi
8-27-2014
"Is Feminism a Dirty Word in Art?"
The Arts Exchange

Atlanta Journal-Constitution
David Lee Simmons
8-8-2010
"Reflecting on Katrina, 5 years later"
Spruill Gallery

Creative Loafing
Cinque Hicks
8-3-2010
"The fine line between meaningful art
and disaster porn"
Spruill Gallery

ArtsCriticATL.com
Jerry Cullum
2-22-2010
"Elyse Defoor's classical turn at
Wm Turner Gallery"

Winston-Salem Journal
Tom Patterson
3-12-2006
"A Fascinating Crowd:..."
Wake Forest University
Hanes Art Gallery

Atlanta Journal-Constitution
Jerry Cullum
2-3-2005
"Outside the Lines" *Granite Room*

Atlanta Journal-Constitution
Catherine Fox
1-30-2005
"Group exhibit..." *Spruill Gallery*

Emory Magazine
Mary J. Loftus
Summer 2003
"Chair & Chair Alike"

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Podcast & Television

The Cultured Podcast

9-16-2018

"Elyse Defoor – Intimacy in Art"

WPBA 30 "This is Atlanta"

10-27-2010

"Elyse Defoor – X.U.M.E"

NBC Weekend Today

8-28-2010

"X Marks the Spot"

WXIA 11 Alive News

8-28-2010

"Gallery Marks Katrina Anniversary with 'X' "

WSB Channel 2 Action News

8-26-2010

"Gallery Marks Katrina Anniversary with 'X' "