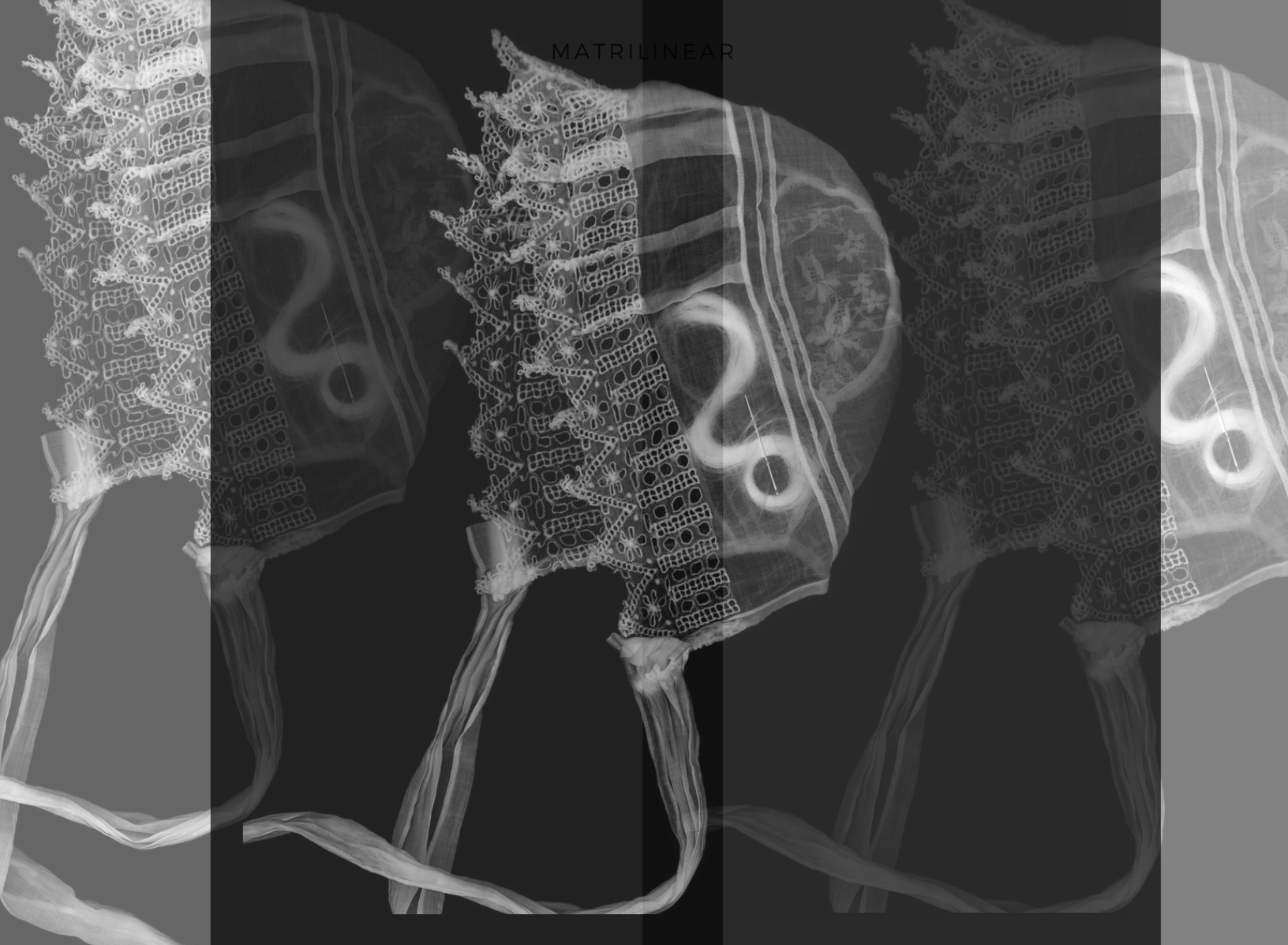


MATRILINEAR

E L I Z A B E T H M . C L A F F E Y





MATRILINEAR

A B O U T M A T R I L I N E A R

Knowledge is defined as something that is obtained through experience or education. Knowledge is often praised when it has been acquired through what society has defined as a “proper” education. However, Elizabeth M. Claffey has created a visual representation of how knowledge is passed along within our homes and the culture in which we were raised.

Matrilinear, exhibited from June 5 until November 7, 2020 at The Turchin Center for the Visual Arts, expresses an alternate view of how we develop in life. Claffey provides us with a reflection of her past with items and clothing passed down from generations of women in her family. This exhibit shows how women can learn about and understand history within their own family & gender.

[CLICK HERE FOR A GALLERY WALKTHROUGH VIDEO](#)

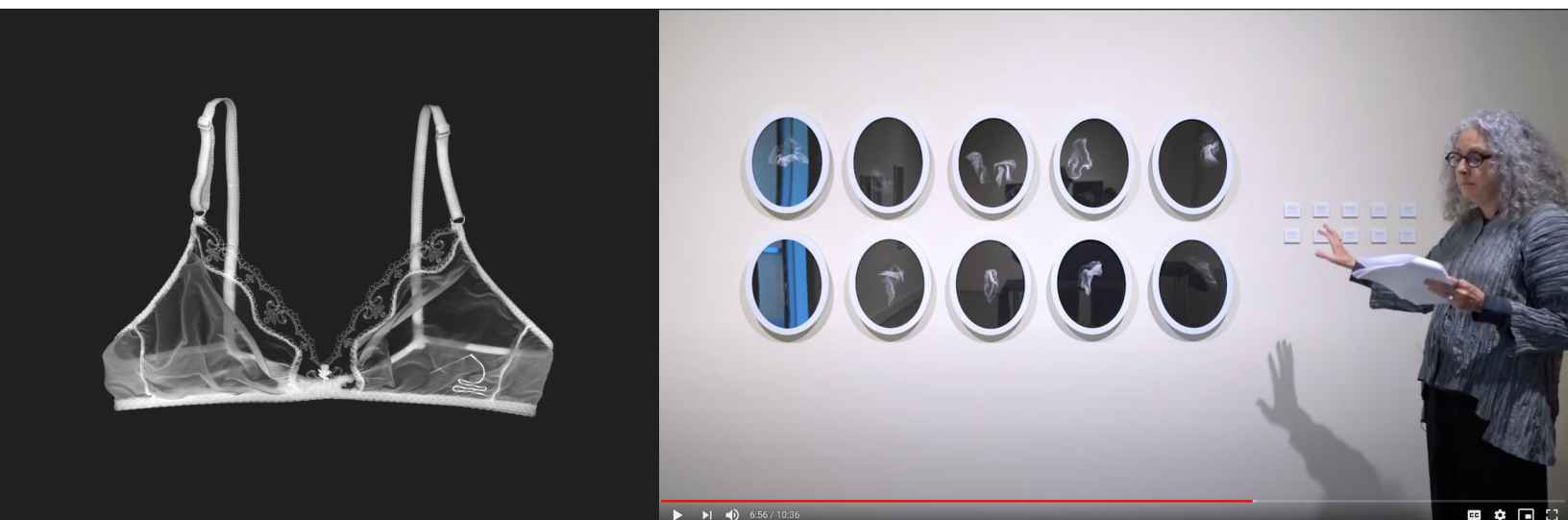
MATRILINEAR, ARTIST STATEMENT

Matrilinear is an ongoing series that addresses embodied memory and its relationship to personal, familial, and cultural identity. In mainstream Western culture, public forms of power are often passed down through patriarchal lines of heritage, along with dominant historical narratives that can socially condition peoples and shape identities. However, women have often interrupted this power and conditioning through traditions of story-telling and object sharing. These images examine family folklore, ritual, and mnemonic objects passed down through generations of women. The photographs of each object reveal the physical remnants of a body long gone; including stains, tears, and loose thread from clothing that was kept close to the body for comfort and protection. The stitching and /photographic representations are both a visualization and an expansion of stories shared as family lore. These interruptions also represent the deep influence of one's familial past on personal identity and perceptions of the body.

Matrilinear II revisualizes tissues found in the pockets of old garments passed down through generations of women.

Endless amounts of Kleenex that had been long used and often washed within the clothing. While these pieces of disposable cloth carry no value or specific story, it is a struggle to let them go as they were once held close to my mother's body - and the act of finding them embodies a memory, a ritual, and a premonition of my future self. By expressing domestic rituals and objects to explore their meanings within public con-texts, this work aims to interrupt and transform normative cultural narratives. Through varying perspectives and translations, the practices and keepsakes that construct familial stories become basic to a more inclusive collective memory and global story of the past. Women play many complex roles within the structures of kinship: daughter, sister, cousin, mother, aunt, grandmother; these roles can be fluid and at times overlap. Matrilinear aims to create space for the deep knowledge base that women can develop through interaction with home space and each other. The series also draws upon the vernacular of an archive to imply the critical nature of women's experiences within the greater context of history

-Elizabeth M. Claffey



CLICK THE ABOVE VIDEO FOR A CLOSER LOOK AT MATRILINEAR

ABOUT

ARTIST ELIZABETH M. CLAFFEY

Elizabeth M. Claffey is an Assistant Professor of Photography at Indiana University in Bloomington and a 2019-20 Research Fellow at The Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction. She is an honor's graduate of Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, and has an MFA in Studio Art from Texas Woman's University, where she also earned a Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies. In 2012, she was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship which she used to support her documentary work in Eastern Europe - she spent a year photographing in Albania.

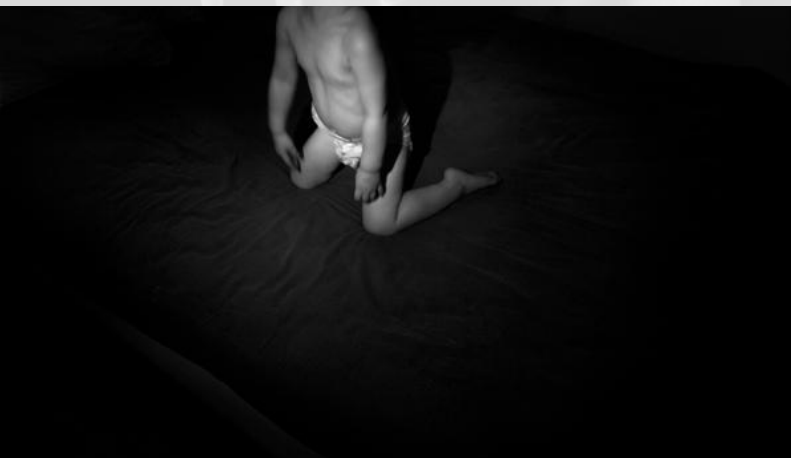
Elizabeth's creative work focuses on the way personal and familial narratives are shaped by interactions with both domestic and institutional structures and spaces. Her work has been recognized by PDN Magazine, Center Santa Fe, the Eddie Adams Workshop, Strange Fire Collective, Don't Take Pictures Magazine, The Chronicle of Higher Education, The Dallas Morning News, and Western Exhibitions in Chicago. Elizabeth M. Claffey's work is specifically aimed at starting conversations within community. She uses visual art as a catalyst for storytelling and to express the knowledge of people often under-recognized within the public sphere. Claffey's projects examine cultural and social context, engage in community dialogue, and encourage critical inquiry.



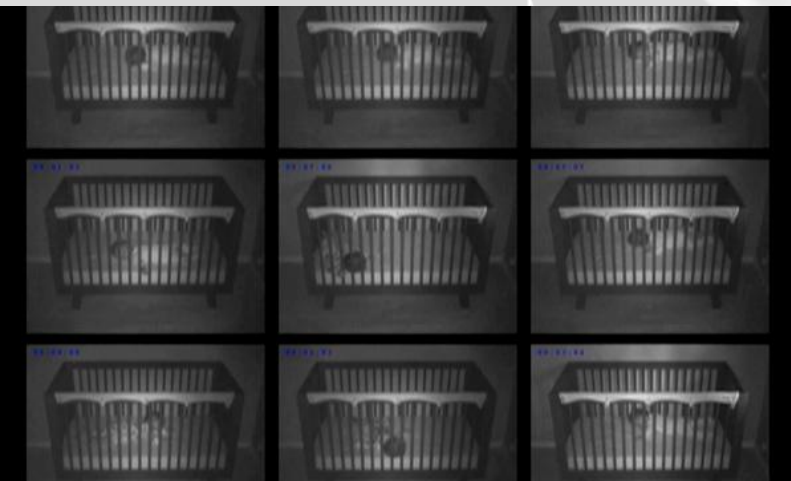
Matrilinear embodies these core ideas and beliefs. The series allows people of any race, culture or identity to reflect on their own experiences with motherhood or other female roles and examine how it has shaped their story.



OTHER EXHIBITIONS BY ARTIST



[https://elizabethclaffey.com/darkness-and-nothing-more/1](https://elizabethclaffey.com/darkness-and-nothing-more/)



<https://elizabethclaffey.com/the-ordinary-and-the-domestic/1/2>

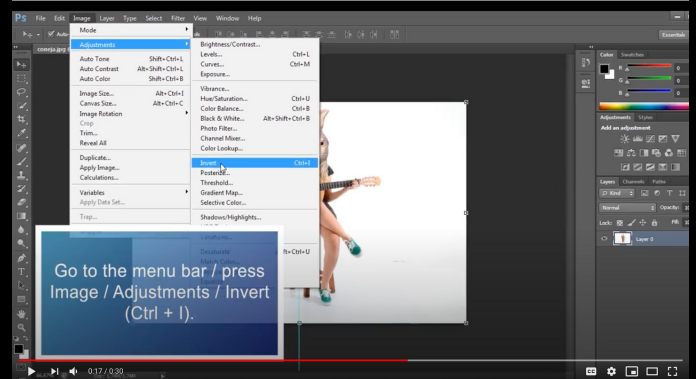
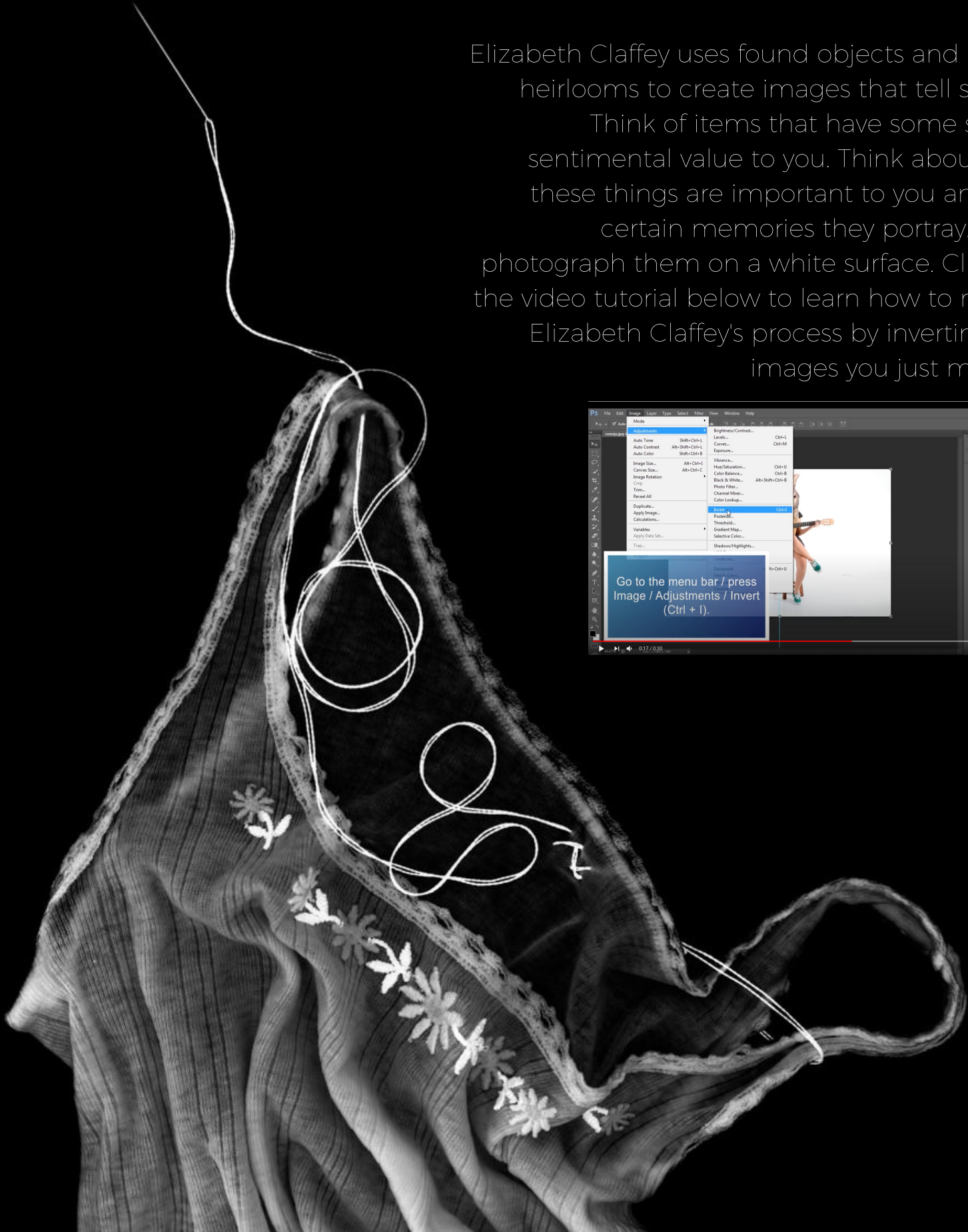
QUESTIONS/ THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER

- What knowledge and techniques have you gained from personal or family experiences?
- Have you dug deep into your heritage to find ways that explain certain morals or ideals that you have?
- What components of Elizabeth's pictures remind you of something from your history? How do they differ?

CREATE YOUR OWN "MATRILINEAR" ART PIECE!

Elizabeth Claffey uses found objects and family heirlooms to create images that tell stories.

Think of items that have some sort of sentimental value to you. Think about why these things are important to you and the certain memories they portray. Then photograph them on a white surface. Click on the video tutorial below to learn how to mimic Elizabeth Claffey's process by inverting the images you just made!





THANK

YOU

FROM THE TURCHIN CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

The Turchin Center for the Visual Arts at Appalachian State University engages visitors from the university, community, nation and beyond in creating unique experiences through dynamic and accessible exhibition, education, outreach and collection programs. These programs inspire and support a lifelong engagement with the visual arts and create opportunities for participants to learn more about themselves and the world around them.

SHARE YOUR WORK WITH US AT #TCVAATHOME !

