



ARTIST STATEMENT

“As our eyes follow the lines of destruction now filled with gold, we recognize at some level that there is a story to be told with every crack, every chip. This story inevitably leads to kintsugi’s greatest strength: an intimate metaphoric narrative of loss and recovery, breakage and restoration, tragedy and the ability to overcome it. A kintsugi repair speaks of individuality and uniqueness, fortitude and resilience, and the beauty to be found in survival. Kintsugi leads us to a respectful and appreciative acceptance of hardship and ageing.”

Kemske, Bonnie. 2021. *Kintsugi : The Poetic Mend*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

These photos focus on the faint track marks that still run along my arms, scars from years of IV heroin use. Seven years clean, I see them less as reminders of shame and more as proof that I am a miracle. Inspired by kintsugi, the Japanese art of mending broken pottery with gold, I traced each scar in blue body paint. The same blue covers the Basic Text of Narcotics Anonymous, the book written by addicts, for addicts, that guides my recovery.

We took close-ups of my arms, then pulled back to show the NA circle-and-diamond symbol on my shirt, echoed by small diamonds on my arms. The blue lines turn damage into design, linking my past to the fellowship that helped me rebuild my life after homelessness, incarceration, and the loss of my children.

Kintsugi says cracks can become the most beautiful part of an object. My scars aren’t filled with gold, but the blue paint serves the same purpose: it highlights survival. All photos were taken by my son, Daniel Jaramillo, age 20.

With grace,



Natalie Aragonéz