



AUDREY STONE

STATEMENT

*Rome series*

The *Rome* series was inspired by the question of what is and isn't known about my paternal family's history [as Jews] in Rome, Italy. In the city archive, I was able to trace my family line back to the 1700s; our roots in Rome may go back even further, but that's where the books stop. Thinking about those centuries of life, I wonder about what has been told – or withheld – in the sharing of information from one generation to the next, especially about experiences of trauma. I think about the ways these stories become mutated by the vagaries of memory, the age the teller was when the original experience happened, the age of the people being told, even perhaps by denial or a desire to protect others from difficult truths. All these elements also contend with the limitations of my own memory, which may or may not have been receptive ground for the stories I've been told.

Having recently spent some time in Rome, I was struck by the layering of the physical artifacts of so many periods of history throughout the city. Standing on the street where my father was born, seeing the ruin in the piazza he saw being excavated and restored when he was a child, gave me an astonishing feeling of connection and of the fluidity of history. These paintings are also an expression of an unfortunate acknowledgement that history repeats itself and reflect my anxiety that something perhaps very similar to what my father's family experienced in the 1930s and '40s may now be brewing again.

The seven paintings in the series are a nod to my father's favorite and lucky number, reflective of his birthdate (7/7). Seven is sacred in many world religions. As a prime number, seven is indivisible, and I like to think the use of seven in the series is a way to create unity out of this history of fracture.