

## Remix: Record Cover Collage by Jessica Barnett DeCuir Artist's Statement

**REMIX:** A *remix* is a piece of media such as a recorded song which has been altered by deconstructing and rearranging or parts from the original, creating a recontextualization.

As a visual artist & musician, I continually look for ways to blur the boundaries between art & music, whether through installation art, collaborative live music performances, or mixed media works. This series of collages are created using album covers featuring pop & rock bands of the 1970's and 80's. I limited myself to these two decades because the albums are easy to come by and are the nostalgic, often cheesy soundtrack of my years growing up and listening to radio, records and tapes. Many of the original album covers contained subliminal content, later to be revealed through my 2x2" square cutting process.

Rooted in early 20<sup>th</sup> century modern art, collage was an integral part of the avant-garde Dada movement in Europe. Hannah Höch and Raoul Hausmann used the medium of collage as a subversive and defiant rejection of traditional art materials and methods.

The concept of appropriation, deconstruction, and the collage of various record covers was greatly inspired by listening to the contemporary postmodern phenomenon of audio "mash-ups" and remixes. Mash-ups combine two or more different musical tracks to create a new song, often pointing out similarities between the musical styles or harmoniously merging the disparities between them. Similarly, remixes offer a new twist on a familiar song, showing the DJ or artist's personal style or aesthetic. This way of working is very similar to how I approach and teach concepts in design, building a new work from the fragmented pieces, merging discordant and harmonious elements of art. The grid is a visual and structural format that allows me to make connections between the individuals squares, creating a new gestalt.

The series began when I found a small fragment cut from a record cover in the garbage. When I showed it to my husband, a fellow musician and vinyl junkie, he was instantly able to identify the album it came from, while to me it was an interesting abstract image. Surrounded by a couple of thousand records in our home music studio, it was not difficult to get inspiration for the project that began in 2006 and has continued off-and-on through 2015.

These collages can be appreciated on a purely abstract level as well as offering to music buffs a game of "Name that Record Cover", while others may generate new readings that poke fun at pop stars, advertising, and bad fashion. It's surprising to see the colorful, creepy and humorous arrangements that come from cutting and placement in the grid compositions.

**Artist's Note:** After considerable research into fair use copyright law, it is the artist's opinion that the work meets the qualifications as "fair use" of appropriated imagery due to the finished works being "transformative"; altering the original album cover images with 'new expression, meaning, or message.'" (US Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, May 2013 ruling)