

# Featured Librarian

Each month a new “librarian” shares their favorite fixing publications and remembers their proudest fix...

## My Proudest Fix...

It's hard to isolate my proudest fix. And this has less to do with a lack of ideas than an overabundance. Simply put, I can't think of a time when I haven't fixed. Fixing for me is integral to the everyday. It's the in between time, and not the after thought. I make dinner by fiddling with herbs, ratios, and temperatures. I chat with students to give feedback and resolve questions. I sing songs with my daughter, all the while tweaking what we want to listen to and what we'd like to do next. Even this blog post involves many tiny adjustments and revisions, always 'fixing' the work along the way.

But if I was to call out one moment, one object or circumstance, that makes me smile, it would probably be the act that most directly brought together my professional life with my family life – a vessel I've called a 'broken probe' (Ikemiya and Rosner 2013). The vessel encountered the blunt end of a metal hammer when I shattered it at the end of my wedding ceremony, a Jewish tradition of “breaking the glass.” The gesture served as a reminder that enjoyment does not come without hardship. But unlike most hardships – and unlike most glass artifacts crushed after wedding vows – this one remained intact, with elegant blue lines marking my act of breakage. A plastic resin adhesive painted on the inside of the vessel held it together under the weight of my blow.

The inspiration for this project came from my collaboration with the ceramicist and design student Miwa Ikemiya a year earlier. When Miwa came to my class with a broken white plate put back together using a colorful adhesive material called Sugru I was intrigued. The cracks of the plate had transformed an otherwise generic, massproduced object into something quite stunning: a vessel tracing unfolding ruptures across time and space.

To explore this more, we decided to invite a group of bloggers, actors, and journalists to break more of this pottery and use it as a medium to tell their stories. Miwa first coated each object internally with resin to retain its form. The storytellers then painted the cracks with bright cyan liquid, and marked their traces with software run on their mobile phones, a medium familiar for chronicling ongoing events. Using the software, the cracks worked as a unique signifier (or barcode) for later recalling these tales. For us this method called to mind the Japanese philosophy of kintsugi, a process of fixing cracked ceramics with gold dusted resin, celebrating the integrity of imperfection.

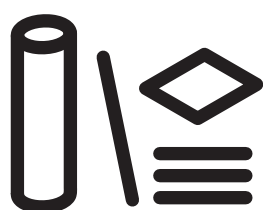
Today the kintsugi-like vessel from my wedding sits on my kitchen windowsill and commemorates that final moment on the alter. It's no longer fully intact (actually, it ended up in the dishwasher, which cleared away much of the resin and color). But it's also in a state of always already connectedness. A fractured act 'fixed' with symbolism and silicon, it suggests opportunities for reimaging the aesthetics of breakdown and repair. Like the coffee stain or the crumpled paper featured in my daughter's children's book, it's full of possibly (Saltzberg 2010). It shows me there's always room for material change – for doing things differently. Inspired by that children's book of the same name, I call this a 'beautiful oops' (ibid 2010).

### References

Ikemiya, Miwa, and Daniela K. Rosner. "Broken Probes: Toward the Design of Worn Media." *Personal and Ubiquitous Computing* 18, no. 3 (2014): 671-683.

Saltzberg, Barney. *Beautiful Oops!*. Workman Publishing, 2010.

September: Daniela K. Rosner



Maker Library