

## Vessels of Hope

### “Resistance, Renewal, Rebirth”

During my childhood, my bedroom was like a prison A space with no privacy A space that was not my own A space penetrated by terror and fear A space from which I could not escape.

The imprint of this assault on my freedom and sense of self has been lasting and profound.

The idea of representing my experience of trauma through the depiction of a caged animal was borne of this reality.

I could not transcend this as a child, but now I have the power to do so.

I am my vessel of hope.

I feel a deep spiritual connection with nature and animals. In my travels to Africa and Thailand, I, for the first time, shared physical space with wild animals living in their natural habitat. They were incredibly majestic, awe-inspiring, and most importantly...FREE!

I chose the elephant to represent my being because its strength reflects my unwavering inner strength.

An elephant takes up space and has a voice, which I never felt I had a right to. In fact, I would have done anything to render myself completely invisible in my childhood.

An elephant lives in harmony with other animals, rather than asserting its power over them.

The elephant is part sea creature because I am most at peace in the magical world under the water.

I am whole in the water; I am free.

Only the remnants of a cage remain because through my continued commitment to healing, I can transcend the barriers in my life that suffocate my intuitive voice, and cripple my ability to integrate the beauty of my mind, soul, and body.

The bars of the cage have words on them. The destructive impacts of my experience of incest are captured in the words written on the inside of the bars.

The world can't see these words, because the mask and cloak I wear doesn't reflect the pain I bear. These words I still carry with me: fear, judgment, pain, terror, anger, insecurity, powerlessness, disillusionment, confusion, and anxiety.

The words on the outside of the bars facing the world are those that I am embracing through my healing: hope, strength, individuality, healing, freedom, compassion, self-respect, voice, creativity, and self-determination.

The special people with whom I've developed deep connections along my journey of life join hands around the cage to bear witness to my healing and nourish the continued growth of my true essence. The support of these people has been an invaluable and critical part of my healing.

Liz Lambert 2005

[See photos on next page >](#)

