The base for the painting is wood, panels or solid boards, which are cut and prepared to the dimensions of the composition. So before anything else, the wood, symbolic of the tree of life, awaits the image of the person. As I waited for the panels of the project to be prepared to my specifications by a craftsman, the drawings were prepared. This stage provides critical space for considering the composition of each piece as well as the spatial relationships of the boards in the installation. Intrinsic to this step is also the consideration of each image of a person, or persons, in relationship to one another. As my drawings were developing from direct studies, photographs, memory and in the presence of the person(s), conversing while drawing, the concept of the whole body of work was being formed as well.

Once the boards arrived I was struck with both the perfection and potential they suggested to me visually. The smell of the material as I sanded, brushed on rabbitskin glue and looked at the beautiful surface and grain. I experienced both a resistance to imposing my ideas upon this humble material, and an excitement generated by its organic beauty that ignited the project.