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American **Craft**

Vol. 78, No. 6
December/January 2019

*Tea* photo: Dan Kvitka

*On the cover*
**Howard Jones**' *Rubber Glove Brush* (2013) reinvents this common tool. "As much as I have a great fondness for hammers and shovels," Jones says, "it has been the brush that has proved to be my muse." Photo: Mark LaFavor
**page 44**

*Above*
**Charissa Brock** combines bamboo, her signature material, with fused glass in elegant forms such as *Tea With Grace* (2017).
**page 26**

## *Departments*

*Features*



**Stacey Lee Webber**
*Silver Edition: Hammer,* 2012, silver dimes, 4 x 10 x 2 in.
**page 74**

Photo: Joseph Leroux

# PALM BEACH
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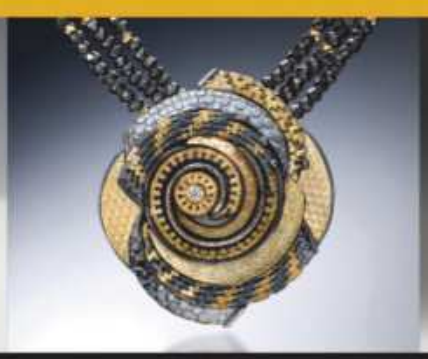


A PALM BEACH SHOW GROUP EVENT

Andy Cooperman's Seattle studio is packed with tools. To make the *Hexagonal Colony Ring* (2017), the metalsmith used, among other implements, a hexagonal bezel block and a punch to form the shapes from sterling silver tubes.

# Tools, Useful and Otherwise

EVERY ISSUE WE PUBLISH HAS a theme, and as you might imagine, I'm more attuned to some than to others. Take this issue's focus on tools. As the stories trickled in, it occurred to me that I'm not really a tool nerd, so maybe I'd need to rely on others' insights.

And yet, the morning is young, and already I've used two cups, a blender, a towel, a toothbrush, a hairbrush, a hair dryer, a phone, a pen, a computer, and a car. Tools are just as essential to my making life, of course; recently, a friend showed me a new kind of clasp cover, which has made the necklaces I like to make not only better-looking, but also more comfortable.

That said, my use of tools – and this is no doubt true for others – is usually semi-conscious and transactional. I don't really think about the knife I'm using to chop onions – unless the handle starts to wobble, and then I'm irritated. A poor craftsman blames his tools, as the saying goes; a good one, I've decided, forms a deeper, more respectful relationship with them, recognizing their limitations as well as their potential.

If you're human, you use tools all day, every day. (That's true for other species, too, as metalsmith Andy Cooperman points out on page 28). And the more you consider them, the more interesting tools become. For one thing, as blacksmith Tuli Fisher (page 16) found when he homed in on gardeners as his prime audience, well-made tools make everything better. "A good, solid set of gardening tools makes most people happy," he says.

Sophisticated tool users recognize that any tool is just a starting point. Cooperman regularly alters his pliers and dapping punches, customizing them to help him make better rings, brooches, and sculpture. He thinks critically about all of the tools in his studio, asking if they can do more. At the same time, he acknowledges their emotional weight, especially those he's gotten from other metalsmiths, whether he knows them or not. "Hanging in my studio are pliers and hammers that I found at yard and estate sales. Small histories are soaked into their handles," he writes. "I think about these makers every time I pick up one of these tools."

Like Cooperman, Howard Jones also alters tools, but his are not for use; they're an end in themselves. A mild-mannered retired art teacher, Jones makes outrageous, tool-informed sculptures – a paintbrush with a deer hoof where the bristles should be, a chair with hammerheads for feet. His work grabs us by the lapels and asks us to see, really see, the devices we rely on every day (page 44). "With their surreal imagery, sly humor, and strange beauty," Joyce Lovelace writes, "his eccentric implements are pleasantly unsettling, prompting us to consider how we relate to the tools of daily life."

If you become more aware of the tools you use every day, my own experience suggests, you may become more aware of your environment in general and, maybe, more mindful and grateful about everything. When you think about it, that's pretty useful.

**Monica Moses**
*Editor in Chief*

Photos: Andy Cooperman

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# Tools, Retooled

*Makers expand utensils beyond the utilitarian and into the realm of art.*

Jeffrey Bruce

**Joseph Pintz**'s ceramic work centers on the power and meaning of everyday objects. In 2016, as part of a culinary event, the Missouri artist recast gardening tools as tableware, producing clay dessert plates in the shape of shovels. The plates, he says, help retrace the food's origin – in the soil.

Deborah Lozier

In 2005, jeweler and cross-disciplinary artist **Deborah Lozier** took a trip to Norway to visit her husband's family. Far from her Bay Area studio, Lozier took to collecting distinctive sticks as a kind of creative outlet. Eventually, she began to wonder: "If plants grew tools, what would they look like?" Using remnants from her mother-in-law's kitchen (who, since their visit, had died of Alzheimer's), Lozier created the nature-inspired tools of *Hand-me-down* as a kind of memorial, testaments to both organic form and human ingenuity.

Janet Dwyer

**Lou Lynn,** a Pilchuck-trained glass artist living in British Columbia, admits she is "a bit of a collector." Among her lot is a series of unlikely, hard-to-parse tools, which she says possess "an implied function from some unknown task." Lynn saw sculptural potential in these pieces and set about re-creating them in glass, and her project *Tools as Artifacts* was born. The pieces are "explorations of form and materials," she says – the building blocks of creative expression.

Schaller Gallery

"It used to be said that toolmaking sets us above the other beings on planet Earth," Michigan potter and paintbrush maker **Troy Bungart** says. "We now know it's not so clear-cut, but it is true that toolmaking is an integral component of human creativity." Bungart's brushes elevate that component: With hardwood or bamboo handles in a variety of shapes, ceramic ferrules, and animal hair bristles, they help others make their own art, but are also worth contemplating for their form alone.

Arizona metalworker **Carson Terry** has a knack for the things that fill in the background of life, such as eating utensils and combs. In Terry's hands, these everyday staples take on new heft and hand-hewn distinction. The steel of *Folding Spoon and Fork Set* (2018) is expertly forged, but without mass-produced perfection – reminding users of the maker's hand that preceded the machine.

Dan Kvitka

# american craft inquiry

## volume 2 issue 2


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# ZOOM

*A timely survey of shows, media, people, and work*

## *On Our Radar*
## *Camila Chiriboga*

LEFT (2):
Camila Chiriboga designs clothing that adapts to the wearer's physical and medical needs – and looks good, too. These tops feature easy access points for catheters and blood draws.

WHEN KIDNEY SURGERY LEFT Camila Chiriboga unable to dress herself for a couple of weeks, she realized how much independence lay in the simple act of putting on clothes. "I felt terribly vulnerable," she remembers. "And then I realized how much it would affect the lives of people who actually have this challenge every single day." She was a sophomore studying fashion design at Parsons School of Design, and the experience got her thinking about how she could use her skills to make a difference.

A series of classes on designing clothes for people with physical and medical needs helped her get started. "We collaborated with occupational therapists and engineers to holistically think of how we approach the body," she says, "and how to develop innovative technology or processes to create the clothes." For a client with cerebral palsy, Chiriboga made a custom coat that allows for a wider range of motion. She also sewed apparel with handy access points for people who use dialysis machines and insulin pumps.

For her senior thesis, Chiriboga created Ve°, a collection for people with visual impairment. In preparation, she spent months volunteering at a center for those with limited sight, learning how they navigate the world. She then worked closely with three center clients to design clothes for their specific needs. Zippered pockets help keep objects from slipping out unnoticed, a variety of textures adds nonvisual interest, and because every item is reversible, it's never inside out. Chiriboga also created tags that describe the item's color and other features when scanned with a smartphone. Without the tags, she says, people with visual impairment often must rely on others to dictate their style. Choosing clothing is important, she says; "it's a reflection of yourself."

Although Ve° was designed for people with low vision, Chiriboga, 23, emphasizes that the collection has wide appeal. "Anyone can use it," she says. "It just has special features."

After graduating in 2017, Chiriboga joined the LIO Innovation Lab, part of fashion conglomerate Global Brands Group. In the yearlong program, she worked on inclusiveness strategies for the company.

In September, she moved to Tokyo to join the design team at fashion company Uniqlo, where she hopes to become an intermediary between Japan's aging population and the fashion industry. The work is about more than making attractive clothing for people, Chiriboga says. "It's focusing on their lived experiences to create products they need."

**~ALIA JERAJ**

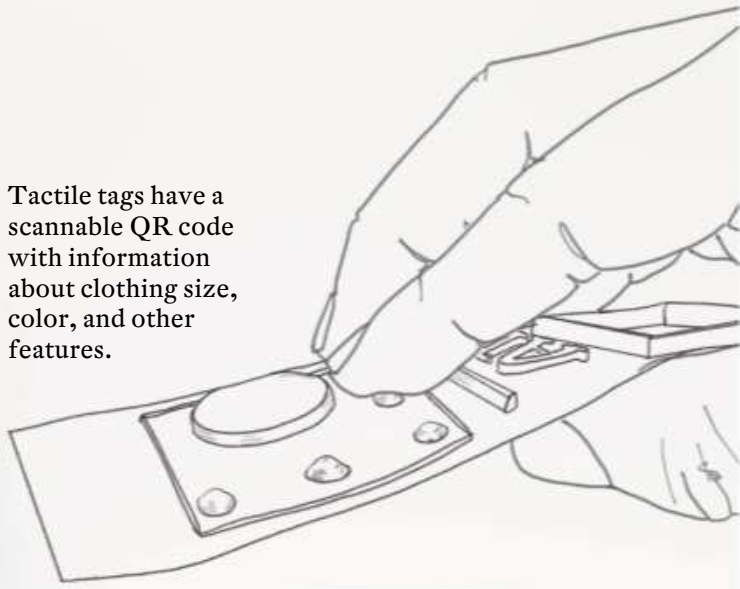
ABOVE:
Chiriboga checks the fit of a coat. She works closely with clients to create her designs.

LEFT:
Chiriboga worked with Gus Chalkias to create this coat. Inspirational phrases by Chalkias, whose sight is limited, are heat-pressed in braille across the surface.

camichiriboga.com

*Alia Jeraj is* American Craft*'s editorial intern.*

Top photos (2): Abbie Miller / Chiriboga and client photo: Jiayin Xu



Tactile tags have a scannable QR code with information about clothing size, color, and other features.

## Dressing the Part

**Must-have:** "My favorite tool is a scissors. It allows you to transform anything and give it a new life. It is used during every single step of a garment, from ideation to final design."

**Comes by it honestly:** Chiriboga grew up running through her father's clothing factories. Her parents bought her a sewing machine when she was 8 years old – "the best gift they ever gave me," she says.

**In others' shoes:** For four months, Chiriboga dressed herself blindfolded as she worked on her collection for people with visual impairment. She learned that she selected clothes based on how they feel, rather than how they look.

**Flora and fauna:** Chiriboga's upbringing in Ecuador has shaped her work. Her Ve° collection draws inspiration from the Amazon jungle, where animals and plants often communicate in nonvisual ways – "through sound, textures … even releasing different kinds of substances," she says.

This winter jacket is reversible, so there's no "right" side to choose. The feature helps people with visual impairment dress with confidence; it's also one that anyone with a busy life can appreciate.

Braille and double-sided coat photos (2): Andres Burgos / Tag drawing: Camila Chiriboga

*Product Placement*

# *Fisher Blacksmithing*

TULI FISHER HAS HAD A LOT on his plate in recent months. As sole proprietor of Fisher Blacksmithing, he hammers out 3,000 to 4,000 garden tools every year – trowels, hoes, rakes. And when he spoke by phone in late August, he was deep in the throes of wedding planning, preparing for his nuptials in September.

The 47-year-old has been working at his smithy in Bozeman, Montana, for 20 years, first as a farrier, and since 2006, as the maker of the sought-after tools, whose runaway success took him by surprise.

He's used to taking risks. Fisher started his career in sales and marketing; he was a natural and made a lot of money, but after a few years found he was bored and generally unfulfilled. "I woke up one morning and thought, 'You know what, I'm through with this.' " He had grown up in Indiana farm country, always "crafty and handy," and started working with a farrier (a blacksmith who makes horseshoes). Then, on the advice of his mentor, he crammed everything he owned into his truck and headed to Big Sky Country, where he found a supportive network – and a lot still to learn. He spent a few years working with different farriers, then struck out on his own in 1999.

Like many blacksmiths, he started out making his own tools. He moved on to tools for woodworkers and stonemasons but quickly saw that market was already well-served. So he tried something else.

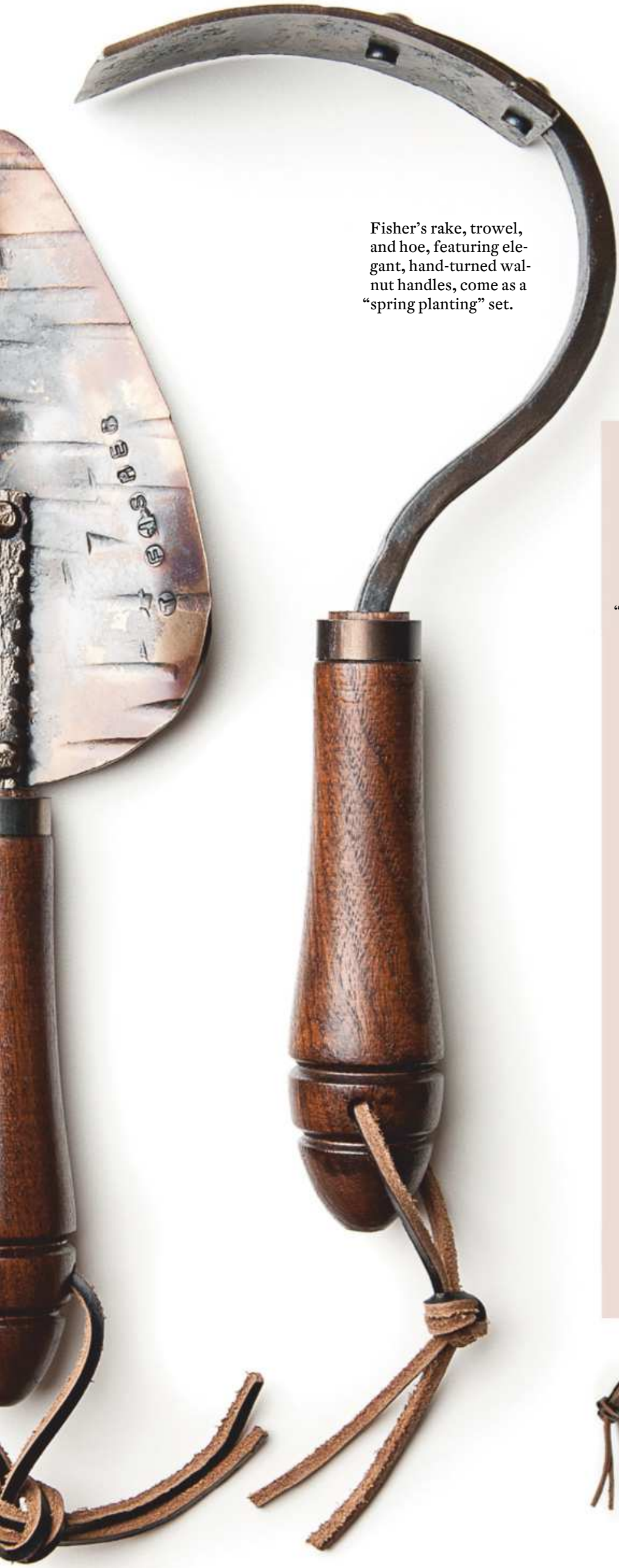
"I made my first set of garden tools in 2003," he says. "They were really ugly." But he realized he'd found a niche waiting to be filled – most of what was available was cheap and mass-produced, whereas "a good, solid set of gardening tools makes most people happy," he says.

By the time his daughter was born in 2010, he realized he wanted to be able to spend more time with his baby girl and switched to garden tools full time.

It was yet another leap of faith – but one he was ready to take. "My philosophy from the beginning was 'I don't know how this is going to go, but the most important thing is to make

Tuli Fisher started his blacksmithing career shoeing horses, but he found his niche making garden tools in his workshop in Bozeman, Montana.

Photos: Rab Cummings



Fisher's rake, trowel, and hoe, featuring elegant, hand-turned walnut handles, come as a "spring planting" set.

## Fisher's Favorites

**For blacksmithing:** Tongs by the late (and legendary) Jay Sharp. "I use them every day. They have a good grip; they're strong, yet lightweight – they hold on to stuff really well." He also likes his personal connection with the maker. Sharp charged what the pieces were worth ($300 wasn't out of the question, Fisher says) but was about as down-to-earth as possible: "He used to show up at the State Fair in a beat-up old Subaru and just open up the back of it, like an old-time traveling tinker," Fisher recalls.

**For gardening:** His narrow perennial trowel. For years he resisted suggestions to add teeth to the sides, but one day, tired of hearing it, he acquiesced. It was a classic what-took-me-so-long moment. "You can cut twine with it, cut open bags of soil, separate roots with it," he says, listing a few of the uses for the versatile tool. "People loved it. *I* loved it."

something people want. Then I'm going to make a hell of a lot of them and make them really good.' "

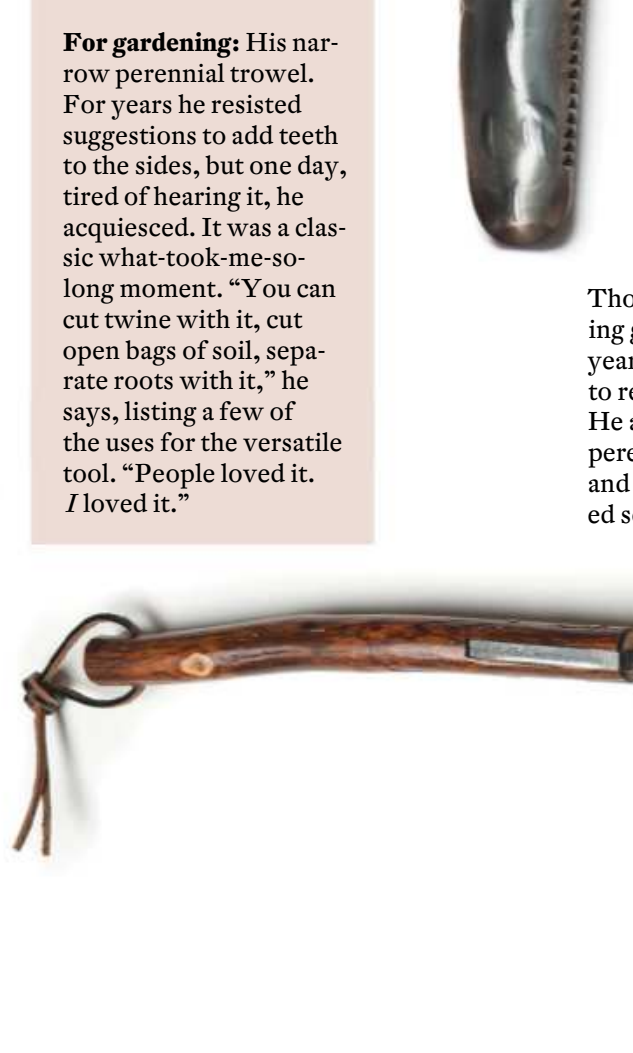
He hired a professional to create a website ("a wise decision," he says, and worth every penny), with a shopping cart so people could buy tools right off the site. And when the conventional path branched off in a new direction, he took it. He started showing up at garden and landscaping shows, which led to a surprising new market: curated online boutiques such as the *Grommet*.

Now that the wedding is over, he's considering hiring some help in the smithy, since he's got more products in mind, including an agave cutter. (He farms out the wooden handles, which he used to turn himself.) In the meantime, he'll be back at the anvil. "I've been able to sell every one of my tools for the last 15 years," he says with pride, adding with a wink, "even the ugly ones."

**~JUDY ARGINTEANU**

fisherblacksmithing.com

*Judy Arginteanu is the copy editor for* American Craft.



Though he's been making garden tools for 15 years, Fisher continues to reinvent his pieces. He added teeth to the perennial trowel (above) and created an elongated square hoe (below).

*Goods*

# *Schlep, Rattle, and Roll*

➔ Australian **Molly Younger** has long been interested in the intersection of fashion and sculpture. To create her bags, she paints layers of handmade natural latex onto a plaster mold. The Bubbled Tote features the eponymous bubble-wrap surface on one side, with her signature plaster texture on the other.
mollyyounger.com


Jack Younger

➔ Alex Rosenhaus and Drew Arrison met in New York City, when she was working for a high-end furniture maker, he for a production house and model-maker. The two began collaborating, and in 2013, started **Alex Drew & No One,** their own line of furniture and home accessories. Shortly thereafter, the couple moved back to Alex's hometown of Detroit, where they continue to produce lighthearted pieces such as Étagère No. 1.
alex-drew.com

Samantha Rothwell

Alex Drew & No One

➔ In her studio in Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains, JoAnn Stratakos and the 15 employees at **Mudworks Pottery** create ceramic stoneware such as the Boomer sound amplifier. Fill the room with music from your smartphone when you place it in the critter's "mouth," then let natural acoustics do the work – no electricity needed.
mudworkspotterypa.com

Linda Hsiao

➔ Linda Hsiao and Kagan Taylor used to spend evenings and weekends making things out of salvaged wood. When their friends had a baby, they created a carabiner rattle, which they loved so much it was "almost too beautiful to give away." At **Knotwork LA,** Hsiao now produces a full line of functional ceramics, but the rattles remain popular, with the ultimate "baby tested and approved" imprimatur.
knotworkla.com

➔ Ten friends – artists, designers, musicians, mechanics, and craftspeople – make up **Red Clouds Collective,** which creates sturdy, high-quality clothing, tool accessories, and bags. Their blanket carrier, made in Portland, Oregon, uses vegetable-tanned leather from a family-owned company, with solid brass buckles that can adjust to fit various blankets – to take along if you're camping, hiking, or just having a picnic in the park.
redcloudscollective.com

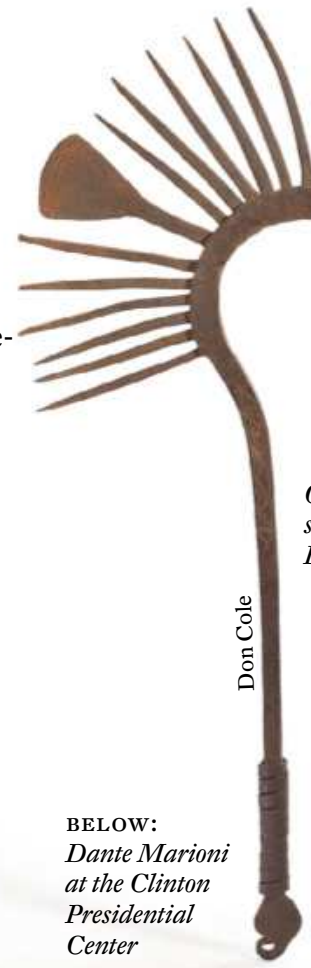


Courtesy of Red Clouds Collective

# Shows to See

*It's Personal* *In the heart of winter, exhibitions show up-close views of three very different artists and their work. In Anchorage, Gertrude Svarny's art illuminates aspects of her life and Alaska Native culture. In Connecticut, master weaver Helena Hernmarck invites viewers directly into her process. And in Bellevue, Washington, Clyde Petersen's cardboard sculptures take visitors on the road with the punk bands he shepherded for two decades.*

AK / Anchorage
*Anchorage Art Museum*
**Gertrude Svarny: Ukuqanaadan**
to Jan. 20
anchoragemuseum.org
Gertrude Svarny finds art materials such as sea lion whiskers, sinew, and seal intestine in her native Aleutian Islands; the history, culture, and maritime home of her Unangax̂ people provide her subject matter and inspiration. This show of the multifaceted artist includes 70 of her works in weaving, carving, and bentwood.


Don Cole

*Ga'anda ritual sickle at the Fowler Museum*

AR / Little Rock
*Clinton Presidential Center*
**The White House Collection of American Crafts: 25th Anniversary Exhibit**
to Mar. 31
clintonpresidentialcenter.org
Once upon a time, Republican President George H.W. Bush declared 1993 the "Year of American Craft"; Hillary Clinton, First Lady of the succeeding Democratic administration, brought it to fruition. (And that, dear reader, is what bipartisan cooperation looked like before it turned into a unicorn and flew away.) This show, with work by some of the greatest artists in the land (Sam Maloof, Dale Chihuly, Robyn Horn), is on view for the first time since 2000.

BELOW:
*Dante Marioni at the Clinton Presidential Center*

BELOW:
*Alessandro Gallo at AMOCA*

BOTTOM RIGHT:
*Wedgewood soup plate with mussels at Winterthur*


Courtesy of the artist

CA / Los Angeles
*Fowler Museum at UCLA*
**Striking Iron: The Art of African Blacksmiths**
to Dec. 30
fowler.ucla.edu
For more than 2,000 years, African blacksmiths have heated and hammered their elemental material into tools, weapons, jewelry, currency, musical instruments, and symbols of spirituality and power. The 225-plus works in iron comprise a spectacular survey of skills and styles across time and the vast sub-Saharan part of the continent, revealing how objects and cultures help shape one another.

CA / Pomona
*American Museum of Ceramic Art*
**The Incongruous Body**
to Jan. 20
www.amoca.org
The title refers to philosophy's incongruity theory, which posits that humor happens when the concept of a thing and the real-world perception of it don't line up. The human body is a figure of fun in thought- and smile-provoking work by 14 artists.

CT / Ridgefield
*Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum*
**Helena Hernmarck: Weaving in Progress**
to Jan. 19
aldrichart.org
Diverse and finely rendered imagery, trompe l'oeil techniques, and glowing colors are some of the trademarks of revered weaver Helena Hernmarck. Amid photos, prototypes, and other artifacts from her half-century career, the artist weaves on-site three days a week, making her process as much a part of the show as the work itself.


Courtesy of Winterthur

Shoji Satake

*Shoji Satake at Wayne Art Center*

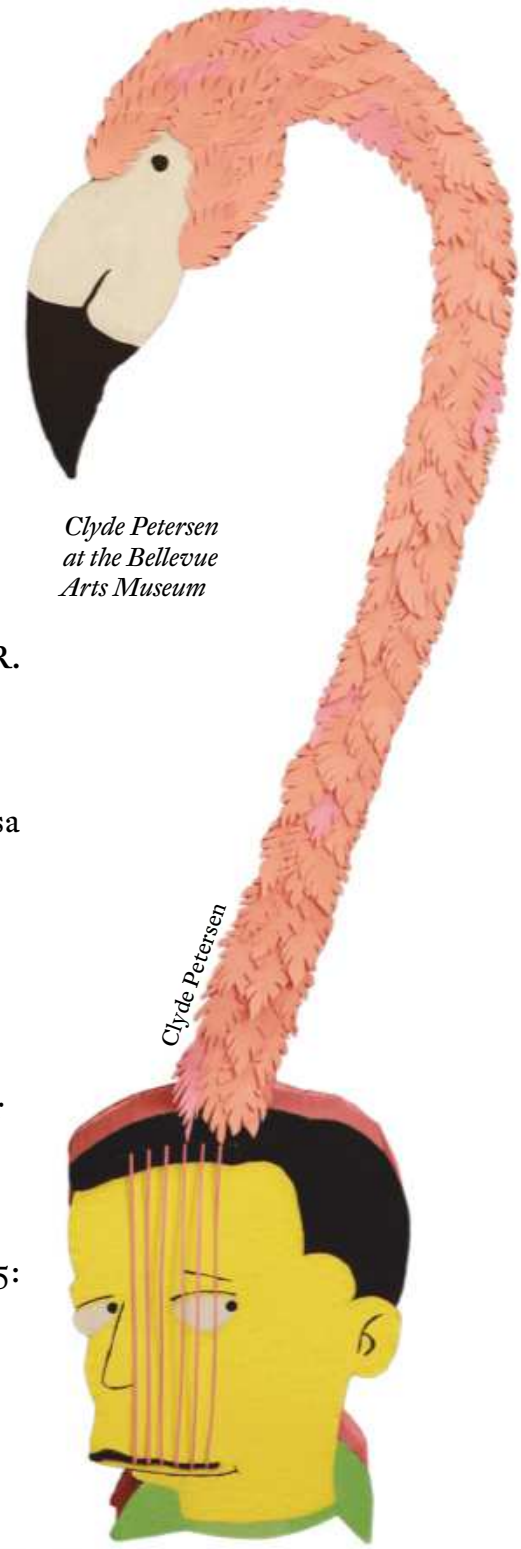
DE / Winterthur
*Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library*
**Dining by Design: Nature Displayed on the Dinner Table**
to Jan. 6
winterthur.org
Nature meets nurture in this globe-spanning show of ceramic and silver dinnerware from the 1600s to the present, adorned with images of flowers, leaves, birds, fruits, and animals, arranged to suggest how these pieces were used in their natural habitats.

MN / St. Paul
*Minnesota Museum of American Art*
**100 Years and Counting**
Dec. 2 – Feb. 17
mmaa.org
To celebrate reopening in its new, bigger space, the museum has chosen about 45 pieces from its collection. Among them: works of midcentury studio craft and Native American art, wood sculpture by George Morrison, and recent acquisitions by contemporary artists.

NC / Asheville
*The Center for Craft*
**In Times of Seismic Sorrows**
to Jan. 26
craftcreativitydesign.org
Rena Detrixhe and Tali Weinberg have created weaving, sculpture, installation, and prints to explore and mourn how climate change, water pollution, and other human by-products affect Earth, and to envision how we might mend our relationship with it.

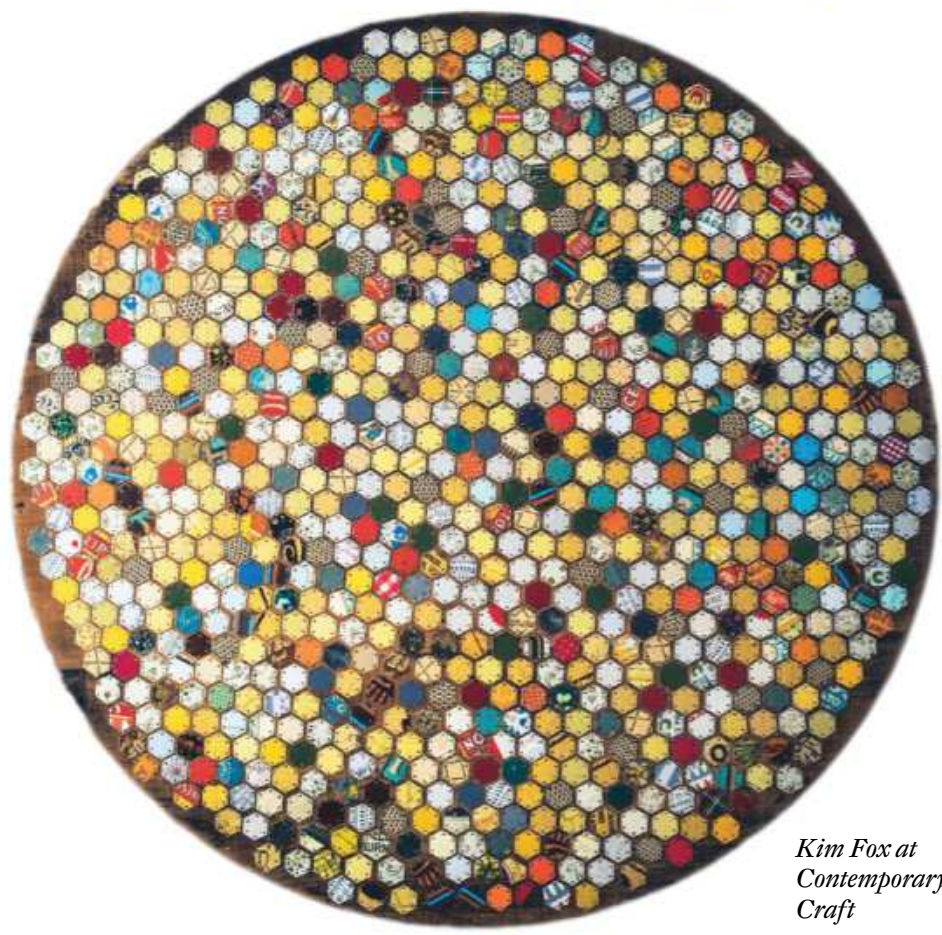
Marioni photo: John Bigelow Taylor

PA / Pittsburgh
*Contemporary Craft*
**Transformation 10: Contemporary Works in Found Materials**
to Mar. 23
contemporarycraft.org
All 26 winners of Contemporary Craft's annual Elizabeth R. Raphael Founder's Prize have work in this biennial show. This year's theme is found materials. Seattle artist Melissa Cameron, the current winner, collected materials from the 55 sites where gun violence occurred in this country on one day (Jan. 1, 2017), then used them to create portraits of the 66 guns involved. Other artists include Katie Hudnall, Ted Lott, and Ellie Richards, all recently profiled in these pages. Also on view until Jan. 5: "Handwork," 15 of Kim Fox's colorful meditations on birds, bees, and the circle of decay and rebirth in her quilts of salvaged wood and tin.



Clyde Petersen

*Clyde Petersen at the Bellevue Arts Museum*



Matt Dayak

*Kim Fox at Contemporary Craft*

PA / Wayne
*Wayne Art Center*
**Cast: Art & Objects Craft Forms 2018**
Dec. 7 – Jan. 26
wayneart.org
Jen Townsend and Renée Zettle-Sterling, authors of *Cast: Art and Objects Made Using Humanity's Most Transformational Process,* curate an exhibition based on their encyclopedic book, which explores what glories can result when artists pour a liquefied material – porcelain, rubber, glass, metal, wax, and plaster, to name a few – into a mold. On view: work by 80 artists such as Emiko Oye, and ACC Fellows Myra Mimlitsch-Gray and Tom Joyce. (For a review of the book, see Oct./Nov. 2017.) Concurrently, the 24th juried international "Craft Forms" show presents work by emerging and established artists.

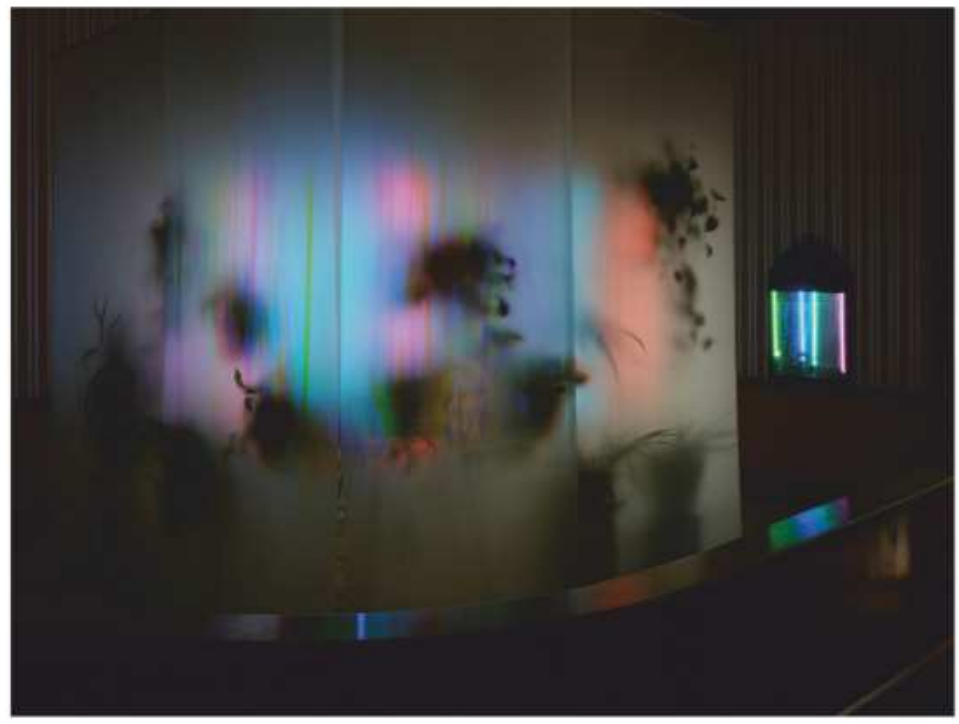
TX / Houston
*Houston Center for Contemporary Craft*
**CraftTexas 2018**
to Jan. 6
crafthouston.org
This is the 10th annual juried roundup of the state's finest craft, with 50 works by 36 Lone Star artists.

WA / Bellevue
*Bellevue Arts Museum*
**Clyde Petersen: Merch & Destroy**
to Apr. 14
bellevuearts.org
After 20 years as a tour manager, Clyde Petersen knows the seamy underbelly (i.e., the only underbelly) of traveling with punk bands. With a soundtrack culled from his erstwhile roadmates' work, these cardboard structures and sculptures evoke the chaos and community found in grungy green rooms and grimy tour vans.

*Spotlight*

# *Symbiotic Spheres*

NJ / Millville
*Museum of American Glass at WheatonArts*
**Symbiotic Spheres: The Interlocking Worlds of Glass, Science, and Art**
to Dec. 30
wheatonarts.org



GLASS HAS BUILT-IN DUALITY: It's neither a typical solid nor a liquid, yet it has the structural qualities of both. It's equally at home in science labs and art studios – as suitable for beakers and test tubes as it is for creative inquiry and expression – making it the perfect material for exploring their overlap.

With an MFA in glass and a bachelor's in biology, Brooklyn artist Benjamin Wright was a natural to curate this show. "A lot is made about the differences between science and art, but I am acutely aware of the curiosity, creativity, and experimentation integral to groundbreaking work in either field," he says.

From a deep bench of artists from various disciplines, Wright invited nearly 30 to consider the museum's 25,000 pieces of historic and contemporary glass as raw material for their own work. "It was important that the show interact with the museum's collection," he says. "It moves in and out of display cases and also works to make a million connections between objects and art throughout the museum."


TOP:
*Ultraviolet* (2013), an installation by **Hiromi Takizawa,** pairs neon lights with plants.

ABOVE:
**David King**'s *All Things Are Only Transitory* (detail, 2018) explores color theory through found objects and items from the museum collection.

LEFT:
**Richard Marquis'** *Zanfirico Retort with Chemistry Set* (2001) is a fun take on the versatility of glass.

Of the installations, "none consist of a single stand-alone piece," says Kristin Qualls, director of exhibitions and collections. "They are a mix of newly made artwork, older pieces original to the artists, and conversations with artifacts and artworks from the museum's permanent collections." In *Suggested Parameters,* artist Zac Weinberg created a taxonomy for Wright to follow when filling a showcase, with vertical and horizontal axes that place glass objects along the spectrum of industry, science, and art, with their various methods and intents. In David King's *All Things Are Only Transitory,* priceless glass works and chunks of broken glass are arranged purely by hue, an illumination of color theory, as well as our perception of value and beauty.

Among new works in the show are a group of space vessel sculptures by Rik Allen and Lanny Bergner, Jen Elek's precisely engineered composition of colored and counterweighted glass plates, and tiny crystalline sculptures by Karen Donnellan and John Hogan that are scattered throughout the exhibition, adding shots of light and color.

"The artists who constructed installations in the museum or worked directly with the collection did an amazing job of embracing and amplifying the weird," Wright says.

"Symbiotic Spheres" also pays tribute to its home turf with a display of wares from South Jersey scientific glassware makers, curated by retired glass technology professor Dennis Briening.

The museum hopes to send visitors home with refreshed ideas about science, art, and glass. As Wright says, "These are all artists who ask open-ended questions and challenge the audience to do the same."

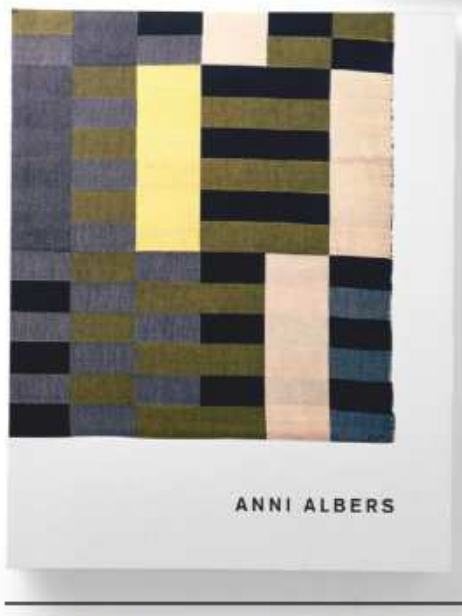
**~BARBARA HAUGEN**

*Barbara Haugen is* American Craft*'s shows editor.*

Photos: Robert C. Beck and Sarah Max Beck

*The Short List*

# *Forebears and the Future*




**Anni Albers**
Edited by Ann Coxon, Briony Fer, and Maria Müller-Schareck
Yale University Press, $50

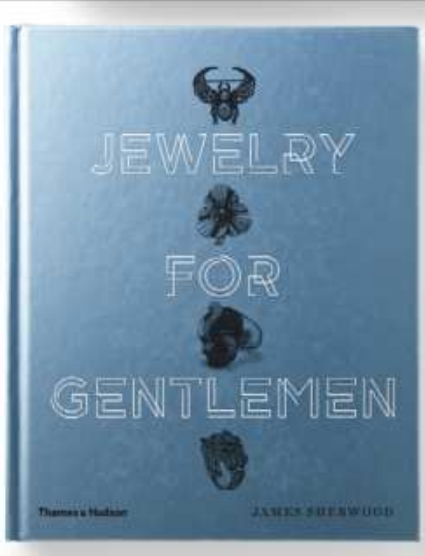
IN 1981, ANNI ALBERS WON the American Craft Council Gold Medal for her work in fiber, adding it to her substantial and lofty collection of awards. However, a common sentiment holds that her immense contributions to her field still haven't received the recognition they deserve, because of the high-wattage celebrity of her Bauhaus contemporaries, perhaps, and because textile work historically has not been held in as high regard as painting or sculpture. In the introduction to *Anni Albers,* a new comprehensive look at the pioneering artist, the editors write that they aim to "question the hierarchy of mediums of which Albers spoke and provide long-overdue recognition."

The pages that follow are filled with stunning images of Albers' work alongside essays detailing the various stages of her creative life. What results is a fascinating glimpse into history, a thought-provoking narrative of the artist once dubbed a "reluctant weaver" who became a fiber virtuoso. It's also a reminder that it is the quality of the imagination, not the mode of its expression, that truly distinguishes art. **~ALIA JERAJ**


**How to Be a Craftivist: The Art of Gentle Protest**
By Sarah Corbett
Unbound, $21.95

SARAH CORBETT GOT HER start in craftivism in the late 2000s, when she reached out to a lawmaker in an uncommon way. "My local politician had been ignoring my petitions and requests to take particular actions against injustice," Corbett writes, "so I hand-embroidered a message on to a handkerchief." She found that her gift had more of an effect than signing online petitions – and so began a career of meaningful political making.

Over the course of her book – which focuses on European politics but has lessons that apply everywhere – Corbett lays out the strategies and advantages of craftivism. Political making, she argues, can include people not constituted for the rah-rah settings of marches and rallies; it can make adversaries into "critical friends rather than aggressive enemies." In Corbett's telling, the investment of time that craft requires creates the possibility of more lasting change. "We focus on long-term transformation," she writes, "not quick, short-term transactions of relief." **~ROBERT O'CONNELL**



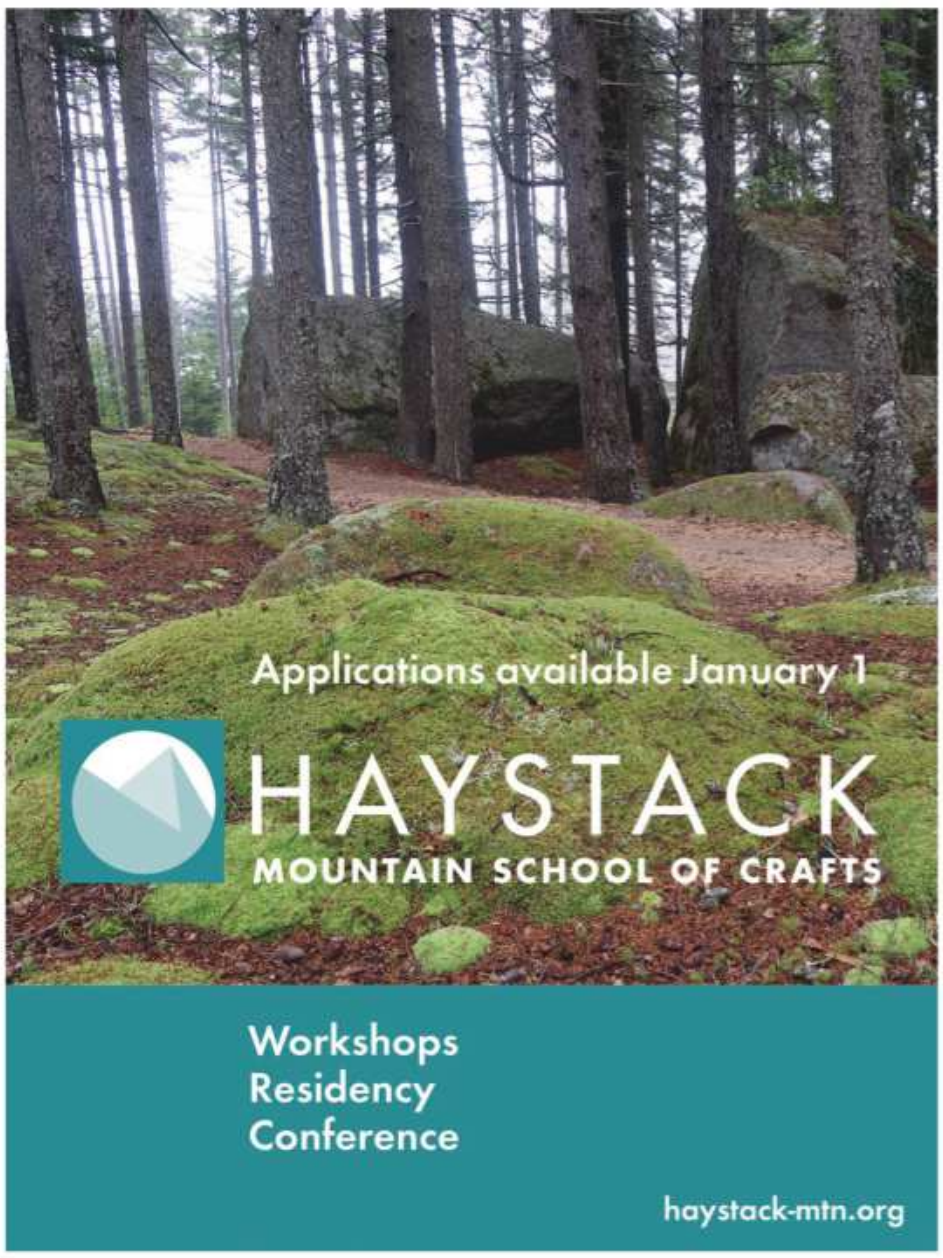

**Jewelry for Gentlemen**
By James Sherwood
Thames & Hudson, $45

On the scale of human history, men's jewelry is nothing new; as James Sherwood's introduction notes, "Celtic thanes, Egyptian pharaohs, and Chinese emperors all chose sartorial treasures." In recent decades, though, jewelry has been most associated with women, with men's pieces restricted – in mainstream culture, at least – to expensive watches and boring tie clips.

Sherwood, a London fashion journalist, lays out a convincing case that attitudes are changing. After acquainting the reader with the historical trends of men's jewelry, he notes how they have been revived. The book is broken into categories containing short histories of the cufflink's or pendant's re-emergence at galas and on red carpets. (Movie stars abound.)

The aim here is to enable readers to adapt A-listers' looks to their own ends; "*Jewelry for Gentlemen* takes a pragmatic rather than a fantastical stance on the subject," Sherwood writes. One wonders, though, whether cultivating personal style is sacrificed on the altar of fleeting trends. **~RO**

Photos: Mark LaFavor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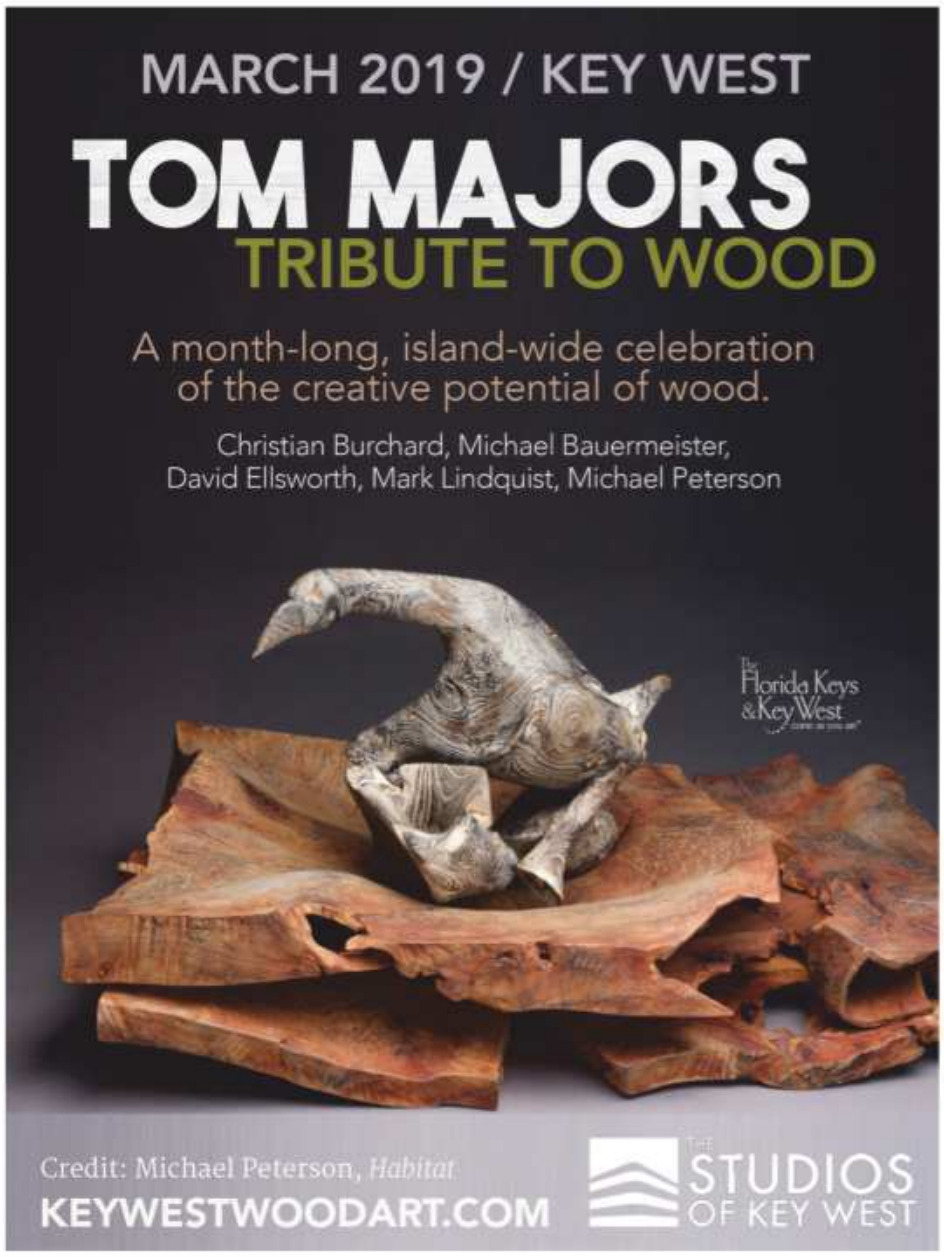
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# Big Bamboo

*Charissa Brock has found her passion, inspiration, and ongoing challenge in the versatile plant.*

**STORY BY**
*Diane Daniel*

THE MOMENT CHARISSA Brock saw her first grove of bamboo, its beauty captivated her. "I immediately started having images of what I could create based on the innate patterns of the bamboo," she says. "It looked like a living, breathing tapestry, and it was talking to me. It was like love at first sight."

Since that day in 1999 near Philadelphia, Brock has continued the conversation with her muse. Now based in Portland, Oregon, she is entering her 20th year as a bamboo artist, making everything from jewelry and bowls to vessels, wall sculptures, and installations. She also teaches bamboo techniques to students who visit her 900-square-foot studio and in workshops around the country.

She grew up in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where "art was just what we did," says Brock, 47. Her parents sold their stained-glass work on the craft fair circuit until she was in her teens, when Habatat Gallery started representing her mother, Emily. Her sister, Kendra Grace Brock, is a fabric and clothing designer.

Brock was in her second year of her MFA in fiber at Tyler School of Art when she fell hard for bamboo – which she knew nothing about. "This was basically pre-internet, and there weren't even books on it in our library," she says. Her go-to method was the same as in her fiber work – "make a bunch of tiny little pieces of bamboo and put the pieces back together again."

After graduating in 2001, Brock moved to Portland for a residency at Oregon College of Art and Craft. "I didn't even know if bamboo grew in Oregon, so I packed two refrigerator boxes filled with bamboo and shipped them there," says Brock.

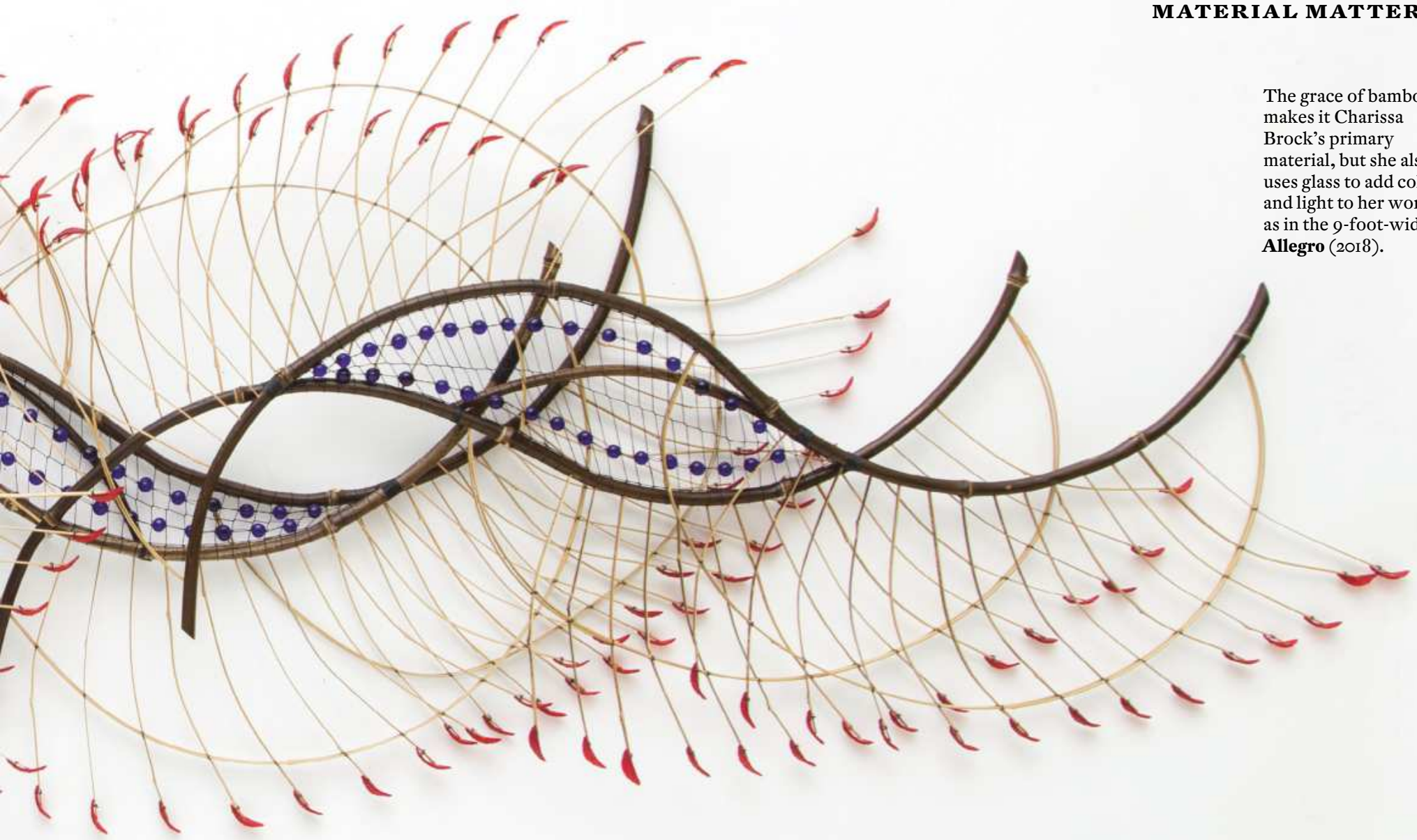
As it turned out, not only did bamboo flourish in Oregon, it had a community of enthusiasts who welcomed her. It also was home to two leaders in the field – the late Ned Jaquith, who started the 20-acre Bamboo Garden nursery outside of Portland, and basketmaker and sculptor Jiro Yonezawa (who has since returned to Japan).

"Ned took me under his wing, giving me materials and sharing so much knowledge," says Brock, who sometimes teaches at the nursery, which grows more than 300 species. Yonezawa taught her the tricks of the trade, including how to use a splitting knife developed specifically for bamboo and how to apply heat to bend the material. "Discovering new tools, techniques, and materials have been the catapults to my work," she says.

Brock favors black bamboo for its color and ease of splitting but uses several other species of the renewable plant, which spreads rapidly. Most of her material comes from groves within two hours of her home, and she'll happily do the labor-intensive work of cleaning up and pruning a grove in exchange for the bounty.

Some of Brock's most recent work employs kiln-fired glass to add touches of color to graceful geometric wall sculptures. (She worked for a few years at Bullseye Glass Co. in Portland.) In the wall piece *Allegro* (2018), blue beads are woven into waves of black bamboo, while red petals extend gracefully from above and below. "I like

*River* photo: Richard Hallman



The grace of bamboo makes it Charissa Brock's primary material, but she also uses glass to add color and light to her work, as in the 9-foot-wide **Allegro** (2018).

BOTTOM:
**Hood River Installation,** 2017, 10-foot bamboo poles, recycled kite materials

BELOW:
**Tea With Edna,** 2017, bamboo, cast paper, linen thread, glass, 11 x 15 x 8 in.

BOTTOM:
Brock with **Float** (2018), which combines bamboo and glass.

BELOW:
**Fire Circle,** 2016, black bamboo, glass, steel, linen thread, 6 x 8 x 4 ft.

that color creates an uplift in the work, and I'm also looking at things like attracting light and casting shadows," she says.

Brock is passionate about sharing her skills and knowledge of bamboo as an artistic and utilitarian material, and she dreams of opening a bamboo school at her studio. At the same time, she herself is continuing to learn, to reach further. "After almost 20 years in bamboo, I'm finding less of a gap between the ideas I have in my head and what ends up coming out in the physical work, so now I have more energy to focus on the conceptual aspects." The bamboo is still talking.

✚

charissabrock.com

*Charissa Brock will have a solo show at RiverSea Gallery in Astoria, Oregon, July 13 – August 6. Diane Daniel is a writer based in Florida and the Netherlands.*

Other photos: Dan Kvitka

# Prisoners of Their Own Devices

*Tools are invaluable, a metalsmith argues, but makers shouldn't idolize them.*

ESSAY BY
*Andy Cooperman*

A WELL-MADE TOOL IS A TRANscendent object, its allure equal parts functional potential and elegance of form. Even if its purpose now seems obscure or irrelevant (a soldering blowpipe and an alcohol lamp come to mind), it still matters as a reminder of how things were and how things were done. It remains a compelling and often beautiful object.

It's easy for a maker to stand in awe of a good tool. My tools are an extension of my body, allowing me to perform tasks more precisely or effectively than I can with my body alone. I can't manifest an idea in physical form without tools. In the end, though, I know better than to revere a tool – because when an idea is screaming to be born, the fear of permanently altering a beloved tool, or facing its loss, can become an insurmountable hurdle. Tool reverence is dangerous for any maker.

That said, I understand the deference toward even humble tools. Hanging in my studio are pliers and hammers that I found at yard and estate sales. Small histories are soaked into their handles. These tools come from the benches of smiths I've never met; I'm not sure about their genders, their politics, their abilities, or their favorite foods, but I think about these makers every time I pick up one of these tools. And I know that, on one basic level, we would understand each other.

Tool use runs from simple to sublime. Sometimes we need a very basic tool to get a job done, and we'll grab whatever is at hand (not necessarily the best practice). Other times, extending the use of a tool by reorienting or reapplying it – say, using a hammer's handle instead of its head – can help get the job done.

But sometimes a tool needs to be seriously altered. In my studio, I seek a balance between my respectful use of a tool and the potential it offers. Let's say that I have an idea for an object, and I have a tool in my studio that will allow me to bring it to life. But the tool must be altered, perhaps permanently, or even entirely consumed in the process. If it's an ordinary, replaceable tool that I'm not attached to, I'll consider changing it.

When I remodeled my studio several years ago, I treated myself to a new, grown-up jeweler's bench. It was an expensive piece of furniture, made by a cabinetmaker and exponentially better than all those benches I had built myself over the years. But the top just didn't have the specific scooped profile that worked for me. I desperately pined for that old curve, but I just couldn't bring myself to violate this new beauty. I didn't want to scratch or drill holes in it, let alone bring out the saber saw. Then, after a month of frustration, I finally cut deeply into the 2-inch-thick oak slab. As the severed oak dropped away, I felt barbaric and irresponsible. But it was the right thing to do.

Andy Cooperman regularly customizes his tools, such as these dapping punches, to suit specific tasks.

Cooperman ground these pliers with a bur to create a space to hold tiny pieces, such as this short section of sterling silver tube.

It's no wonder we collect tools. It's no wonder that we coddle them, and no surprise that sometimes we end up worshiping them. And that's where the trouble can begin. Sure, we should respect and care for our tools; they provide us with the ability to realize our ideas. They enrich our lives. But there is a difference between healthy respect for a tool and tool infatuation. And even though some tools hold a special place of power in our hearts, studios aren't shrines; they're not altars on which to worship tools. When tools are sacred icons, they can be barriers between ourselves and what we want to make. We are less likely to push a material – or ourselves – if we're worried about damaging a tool. We can become tight and overly cautious and, worst of all, lose our sense of play. No matter how useful or lovely, a tool is just a means to an end.

✚

andycooperman.com

*Andy Cooperman is a metalsmith in Seattle.*

## Tool-users great and small

Many species, including chimpanzees, use tools.

AS SPECIAL AS OUR RELATIONship with tools is, we are not the only species that uses them. Egyptian vultures break open thick-shelled ostrich eggs with stones. Otters pound open sea urchins against rocks held on their chests. Seagulls drop mussels on rocks to break them open. Chimps and some finches use sticks or cactus spines to fish out insects from hollow tree limbs. Dolphins have even been known to use scavenged sea sponges to cushion and protect their snouts when hunting in a rocky seabed.

Some animals even make tools. The male bowerbird, for

Chimpanzee photo: Konrad Wothe/Minden Pictures

Other photos: Andy Cooperman

example, builds beautiful and innovative arbor-like structures, or bowers, decorated with shells, feathers, bits of tin cans, paper, cellophane, or anything that catches his eye – designed to lure a lady bowerbird into a relationship. In building his bower, the male has been reported to create a kind of paint brush by fraying a twig against a rock before using it to apply berry juice to his construction. By adding a bright, enticing color to an already extravagant structure, the bird amps things up, communicating need and desire, maybe even pride, through ornamentation and embellishment.

And like the bowerbird, aren't we makers also using tools to court others with our ideas, sharing our needs and points of view by making objects that aspire to bridge gaps and form relationships? We may be stating our case or venting emotion, stirring the pot or trying to change another's perspective by sharing something beautiful or compelling. Beauty, creativity, love, communication, society, and culture, continuity of thought and even of species – all of these require tools. **~AC**

Cooperman had to overcome his own self-described "tool reverence" before he could scoop out part of his new jeweler's bench. But he doesn't regret it.

ABOVE:
**Thatched Pool Ring,** 2017, sterling silver, 14k and 18k gold, opal

**Tim's Mantel Piece,** 2017, bronze, mild steel, stainless steel, pearl, 10 x 6 x 6 in.

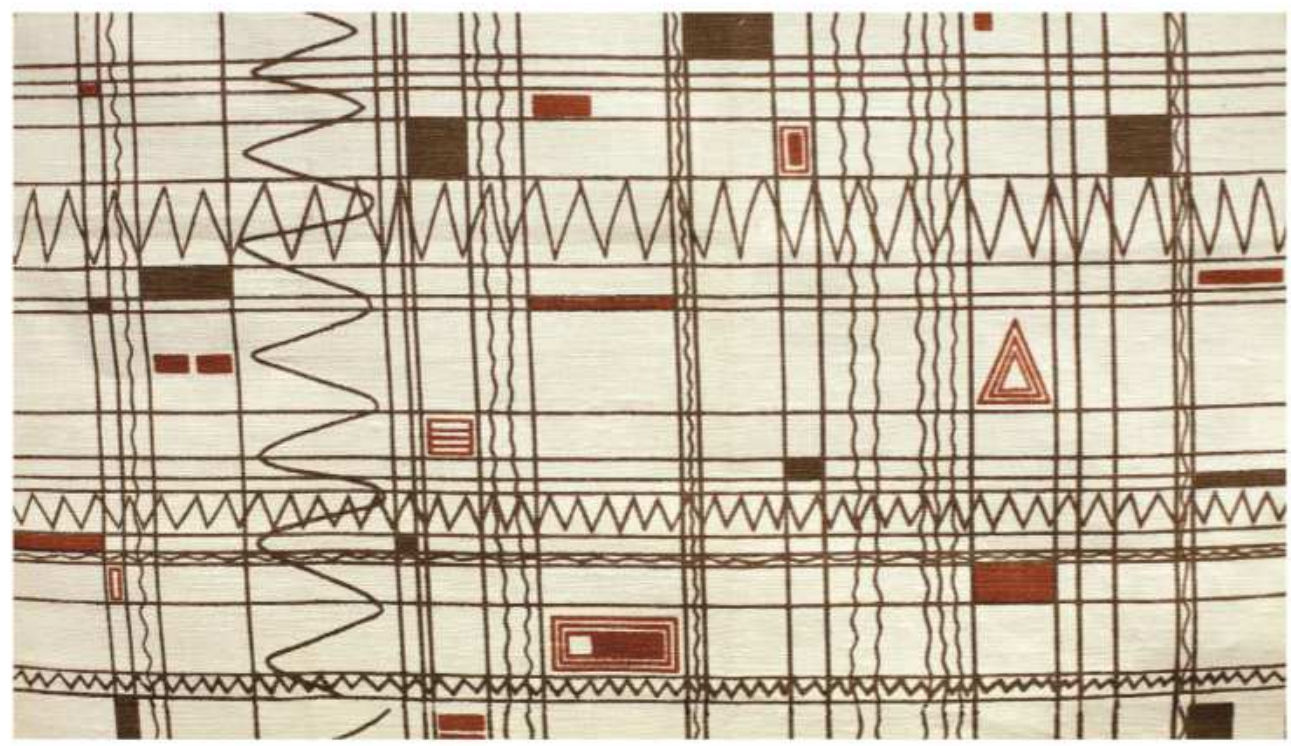
# It's All Design

*Ruth Adler Schnee distilled the optimism of midcentury modernism in her textiles. Now her work is receiving a well-deserved second look.*

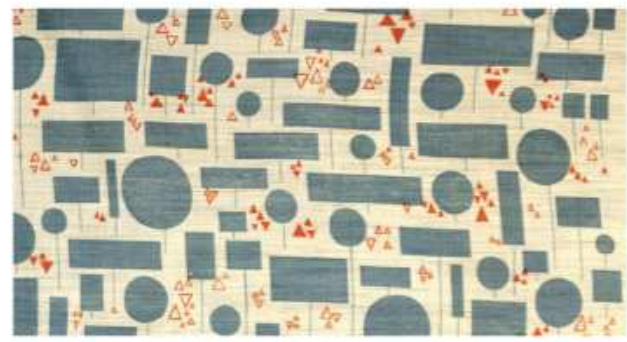
**STORY BY**
*Robert O'Connell*

**Slits and Slats,** 1947
Adler-Schnee Associates; reissued 2001

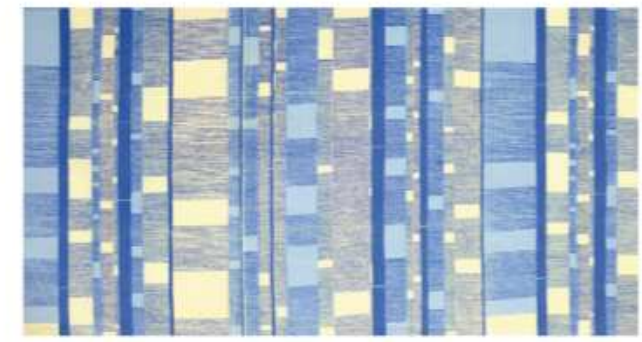
**Humpty Dumpty,** 1949
Adler-Schnee Associates



**Construction,** 1950
Adler-Schnee Associates



**Country Fair,** 1951
Adler-Schnee Associates; reissued 2001



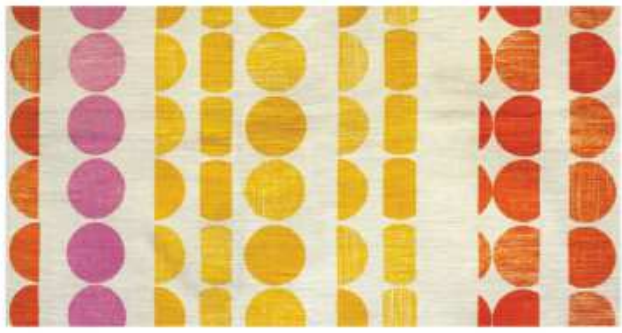
**Plaid,** 1956
Adler-Schnee Associates; reissued 2001

RUTH ADLER SCHNEE WAS destined to create. Born in 1923 to a Bauhaus-trained mother in Frankfurt, Germany, she soon moved with her family to the cultural capital of Düsseldorf. Hers was an environment of unwavering encouragement: She drew, painted, designed her own clothes, and had a renowned neighbor. "Paul Klee, who was at the Bauhaus when my mother was there, moved to Düsseldorf," she says. "And I actually played in the Klee studio."

That idyllic childhood was abruptly interrupted; shortly after Kristallnacht, Schnee's family left Germany, settling in Detroit in 1939. Schnee continued her education at the renowned Cass Technical High School before studying architecture at Rhode Island School of Design, returning to the Detroit area for her master's degree at Cranbrook Academy of Art. There, she studied under Eliel Saarinen, whose approach led Schnee to start exploring what, over seven ensuing decades, would become her trademark: intricate, idiosyncratic textile patterns that both channel a midcentury modern aesthetic and reflect Schnee's distinctive view of the world.

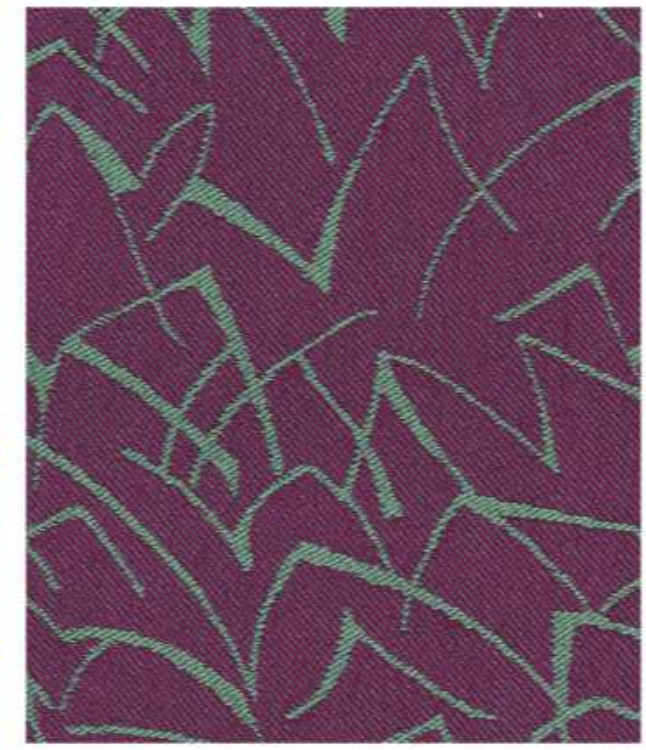
After graduating from Cranbrook, Schnee considered a career in architecture but found the doors shut tight – because she was Jewish and, worse still, a woman. "They wouldn't hire women in architecture," she remembers. "Absolutely not." So Schnee and her economics-trained husband, Edward, opened an interior design firm in Detroit; he focused on the sales figures, she on the wares themselves. Among the goods available at Adler-Schnee Associates were some of her early professional forays into textile design.

Photos: Courtesy of Julie Pincus, the Kresge Foundation



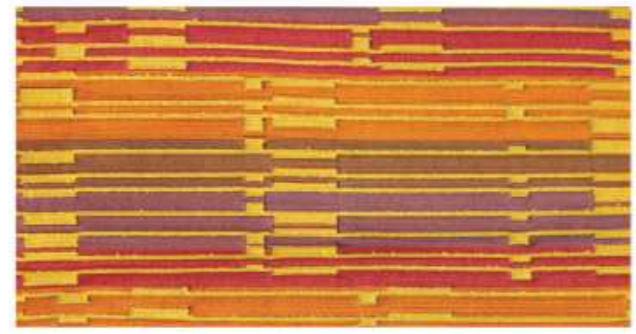
**Fission Chips,** 1957
Adler-Schnee Associates, reissued 2013

**Bells,** 1995
Anzea Textiles



**Birds in Flight,** 1995
Anzea Textiles

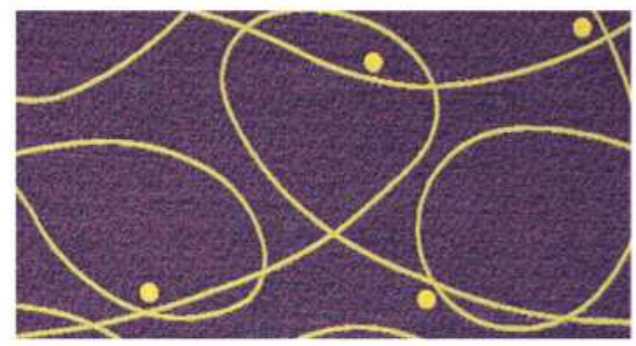
**Pipe Dreams,** 1995
Anzea Textiles



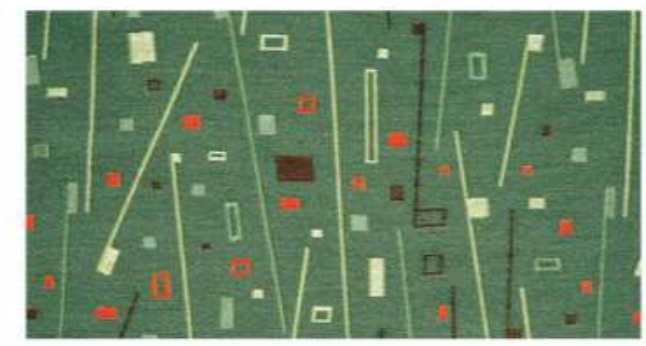
**Cadenza,** 1998
Anzea Textiles

**Braided Logs,** 2000
Anzea Textiles

**Kaleidoscope,** 2000
Anzea Textiles



**Playball,** 2011
Anzea Textiles



**Pogo Sticks,** 2014
Anzea Textiles

Schnee's patterns, which they silkscreened onto fabrics, reflected a color-rich Bauhaus aesthetic and the bustle of mid-20th-century urban American life. Humpty Dumpty, from 1949, features a burnt-red jumble of angled partygoers against a mustard-yellow background. (Edward often came up with the whimsical names.) Fission Chips (1957) lays out rounded shapes in textured pinks and yellows. The blue-toned Plaid (1956) evokes a downtown cityscape in day and night at the same time.

In those early years, her textiles garnered more critical acclaim than paying customers. "Eddie would spend hours trying to tell people how beautiful the designs are, how simple, and they just didn't believe him," Schnee remembers. But, as the public turned back to the midcentury look some 40 years later, her work found new life. In 1994, she began to work with upholstery company Anzea, which re-released old patterns and gave her the opportunity to create new ones. She began a similar collaboration with Knoll in 2012.

At 95, Schnee greets this late surge in popularity with disarming simplicity: "I'm glad I'm living long enough to witness it."

Schnee's early and recent work alike is a testament to her observational power; she pays close attention to the forms of daily life. "The inspiration comes from the world around us, because everything is a design, whether it's a leaf or whatever," she says. "So I just put that on paper." She describes a purity of feeling when a pattern meets her standards: "It starts to sing, so to speak – it sings to me. That's when the design is finished."

Recently, Schnee has taken a break from producing new textiles; she recently wrote the foreword for a book on architect and textile designer Alexander Girard and is helping restore a Girard house in suburban Detroit. She credits her adaptability to her education in Germany and the US and worries that the next generation of artists won't be so lucky. "They don't teach it in schools," she says – "to look and see your surroundings, and see them as designs." She stands as proof of the wonder that can come from learning to look around.

✚

*Robert O'Connell is an associate editor for* American Craft.

# Plasma Fantastica

*Glass artist Percy Echols II eagerly enters a dawning era.*

STORY BY *Erik Hane*

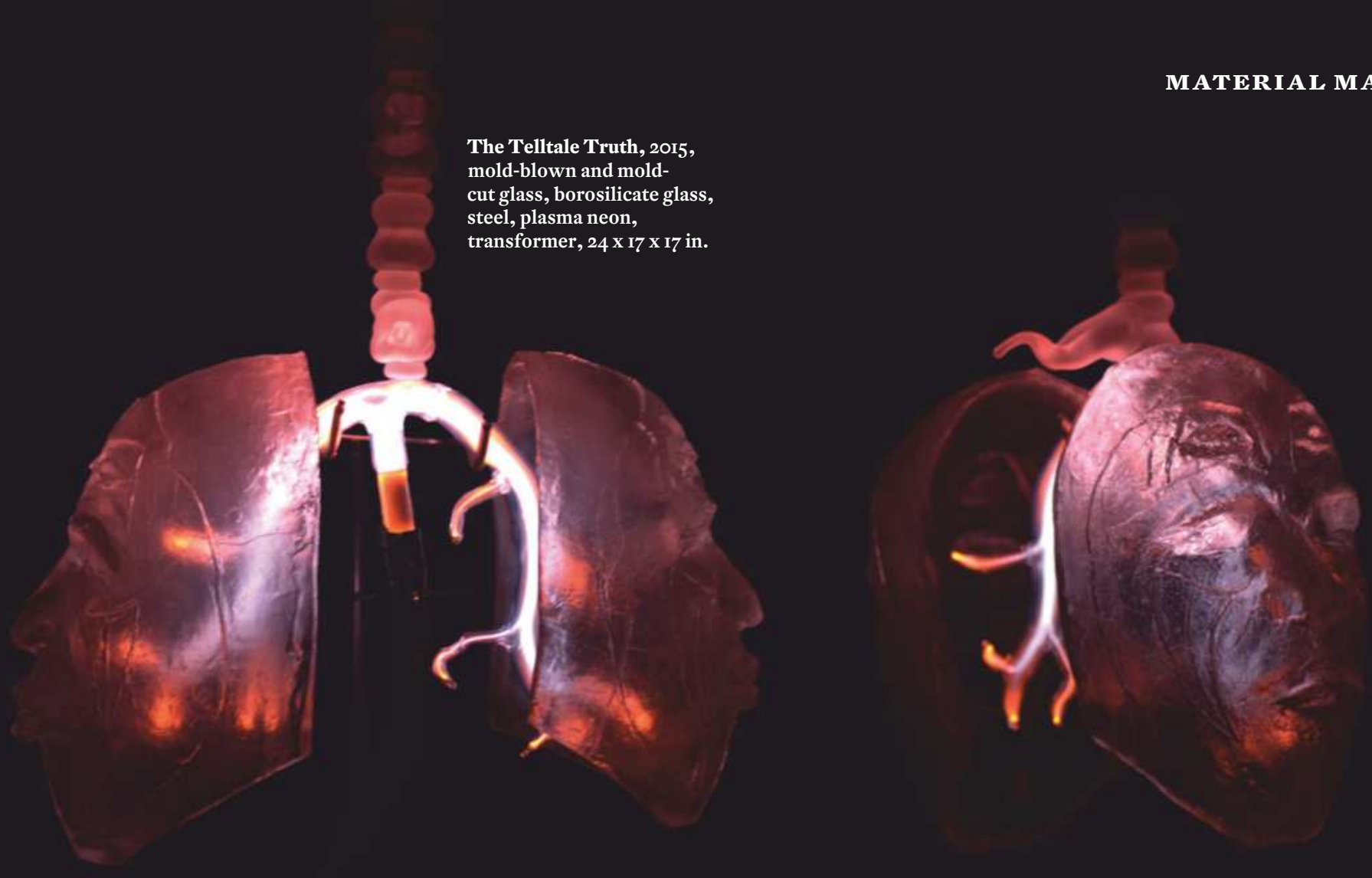
**Illuminated Lady**, 2017, blown and flameworked glass, neon, conductive base, 7 x 11 x 11 in.

PERCY ECHOLS II DIDN'T SET out to work with glass. Growing up in Bloomington, Illinois, he poured his artistic energy into drawing during his high school years. When he enrolled at Illinois State University, he felt pulled toward graphic design, which seemed like "the perfect balance between art and financial success," Echols says. He now realizes "it doesn't matter what field you study … it's really about your ability to connect with those [professional] spaces in general."

When a college friend asked him to take a glassblowing course on a whim, Echols didn't even know what it was, but his connection to the form was intense and immediate. Glassblowing's tactile, physical nature reinforced the sense of elemental making: "You could take something that normally you drink water out of and shape that; I thought that was really amazing." That interplay between function and design lies at the heart of his work to this day.

In 2015, after earning his BFA, he went to the Pittsburgh Glass Center as a studio technical apprentice. The 29-year-old

*Lady* photo: Nathan J. Shaulis / *Truth* photos (2): John B. Klein



**The Telltale Truth,** 2015, mold-blown and mold-cut glass, borosilicate glass, steel, plasma neon, transformer, 24 x 17 x 17 in.

Flame photo: Nathan J. Shaulis / Lab photo: Percy Echols II

Echols remains there on a residency, as the first winner of an award honoring creativity and imagination in glass.

His output ranges from tilted wine glasses to more traditional sculptural work, but his current focus is using plasma, a relatively new medium (similar to neon, which he also works with), to create interactive light sculptures (think of those novelty plasma globes that change as you touch them). Echols examines how light changes the glass form itself; he likens his role to that of a house's interior designer. *The Telltale Truth* (2015) exemplifies the effect, as veins of light pulse beneath a pair of glass faces that double as lungs.

Ask the artist what his most important tool is, and you might expect him to select from his vast array of equipment. But the process is so involved – managing the vessel itself, the gas mixture, and the electricity feeding into it – that it's impossible to do without assistance. So what does Echols rely on? "Personal relationships." It's not just about the actual work, which requires helping hands, but about the larger community of like-minded adventurers in glass and light. "What really attracts me to plasma is how unexplored it is," he says. "We're all new explorers in this process."

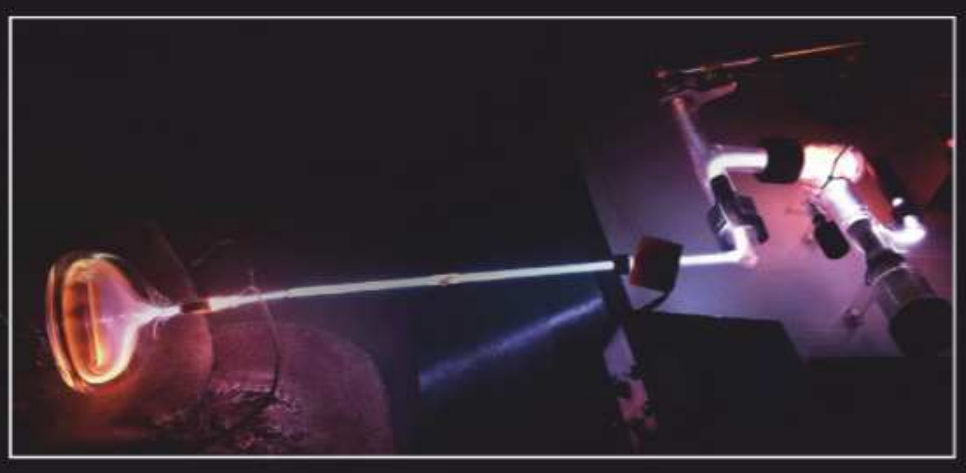
Echols knows progress won't come if he goes it alone. That's why he started his blog and podcast, *Taming Lightning.* It doesn't just provide him a reason and venue to trade thoughts with his artistic peers; the recordings also serve as what he calls "a public directory of research" for other artists, a means by which he can grow and organize the burgeoning community.

Moving forward, Echols' goal is to "further establish plasma as an accessible medium," whether that's through his own artistic work, his podcast, or writing a book. He believes artists cannot separate personal ambition and community, and that developing both himself and the field he's a part of will require an "unyielding effort." He wouldn't have it any other way.

✚

percyechols.com

*Erik Hane is a writer and editor in Minneapolis.*



The complex processes of plasma glass work necessitate collaboration – which Echols calls his favorite tool.

# A Different Feather

*Textile artist Deborah Kruger turns to plastics.*

**STORY BY** *Rebecca J. Ritzel*

**Flourish,** 2017, screenprinting on fused plastic bags, thread, 3 x 2.25 ft.

BELOW:
**Cambodia,** 2018, screenprinting on fused plastic bags, thread, 3.5 x 4.25 ft.

RIGHT:
**Turbulence,** 2018, screenprinting on fused plastic bags, thread, 5.25 x 8.5 ft.

AS THE FOUNDER OF AN artist residency, Deborah Kruger has often found herself staring at applicants' work and finding that the form didn't match the concept. Since 2012, Kruger and her partner, Christian Robertson, have run 360 Xochi Quetzal (it means "sacred bird" in Nahuatl, an indigenous language), an artists' and writers' residency and retreat in Chapala, Mexico. In her fourth year of reviewing samples, she had an unnerving epiphany: "I realized that I'd never stopped to apply that same criterion to my own art," Kruger says.

For more than a decade, Kruger, a native of Queens and a former wallpaper and textile designer, had been producing a series of works constructed from fabric feathers cut into long crescents, outlined with encaustic. She arranged them into annular patterns, integrated them into tapestries, and even formed them into baskets. The work brought her success, with numerous group shows south of the border, and in 2010 she moved to Chapala to work in an airy, light-filled studio. But running the residency made her realize she had more to say as an artist. And she wasn't going to say it with fabric.

Regrouping took time and a fresh mind-set. In the fall of 2016, Kruger took off for an artist residency of her own in a tiny medieval French town. There, she researched and drew 18 highly endangered species, such as Madagascar serpent eagles, California condors, Bengal floricans. The creatures were rife with symbolism. "As a Jewish person," Kruger says, "I'd always had an affinity for birds. We've been through so many migrations and lost so many habitats."

When Kruger returned to Mexico, she began experimenting with new options for the feathers and using an iron to fuse plastic bags – a symbol of trash and excess – to create a sort of crinkly plastic paper. In Mexico, the plastic bags retailers use are not necessarily plain white with "Muchas Gracias" stamped on them; they come in bright and distinctive colors.

Kruger and her assistant, graphic designer Sandra Hernandez, began noting the new colors that resulted from layering the bags. They didn't stop with simple color-wheel configurations – red and blue makes purple, etc. – but added subtler variations. They developed more than 80 possible hues using combinations of three colors. A black bag on the bottom made a purple into a rich

Portrait: Miguel Mata

The feather form, whether layered or spun, as in **Vortex** (2018), resonates with Kruger, particularly as a symbol of migration and diaspora.

Other photos: Carlos Díaz Corona

eggplant; an extra pink layer on top yielded a pale lilac.

Onto those "bag papers," Kruger and Hernandez began silkscreening images of birds, based on the drawings she'd made in France. The women limit themselves to printing in a handful of ink shades – relying mostly on black, deep jewel tones, and metallics – and cut the results into Kruger's signature feather pattern. It's a labor-intensive process, but Kruger has hired nine women to work in the studio, running a silkscreen mini-assembly line.

As the process evolved, Kruger and Hernandez wanted to add another layer, literally and figuratively. They began printing images of birds on one side of each fused sheet and text on the other. Some finished works feature lines from Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring,* the book that launched the modern environmental movement and a longtime inspiration for Kruger. Other sheets feature text in Yiddish and shorthand, and lists of indigenous Mexican languages with few living speakers left.

"The best of art is a dialogue," Kruger says. "It's form and content. And I'm asking myself, 'Am I making these connections well?' I want a child to walk into the exhibit and say, 'Mommy, what is that?' "

Curators are beginning to take notice. This fall, a piece goes on view at New York's Hebrew Union College as part of an exhibition examining climate change through a Jewish moral lens; it will remain on view through June 2019. Closer to home, she recently installed her first solo show at the Chapala cultural center. Fittingly, the building sits just two blocks from Mexico's largest freshwater lake, full of pelicans, herons, and egrets.

You might think Kruger spends hours lakeside admiring them, but she doesn't. "I never really was much of a birdwatcher," she admits. "My work really is about using them as metaphors for other things."

✚

deborahkruger.com

*From her perch in Washington, DC, Rebecca J. Ritzel travels in search of art and adventure.*

# Economy of Scale

*For Marco Terenzi, tiny tools are a big obsession.*

**STORY BY** *Nancy R. Hiller*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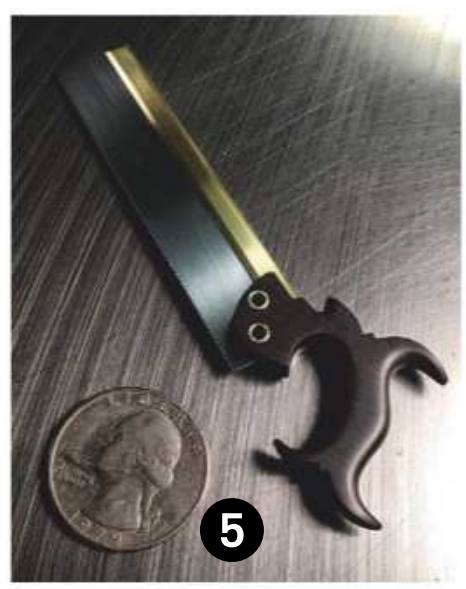
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IN A CULTURE WHERE BIGGER is widely considered better, Marco Terenzi stands out as a champion of small.

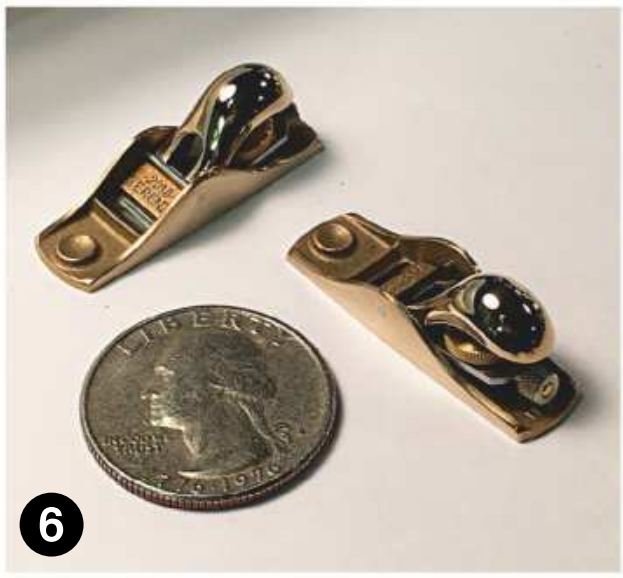
The 28-year-old makes exquisitely detailed woodworking tools, many one-quarter scale – "the perfect scale for me to incorporate every detail, to make a tool fully functional and still be challenged in the process," he says. He's been intrigued by miniatures for as long as he can remember. "As a kid, I loved model cars, miniature skateboards, doll houses, anything that resembled a full-size object that I could fit in my pocket." The more detailed the pieces were, the more he treasured them. "I always wished the miniatures were real – every material, construction, and function the same as the full-size version."

Terenzi turned that wish into reality after graduating in 2012 with a BFA in art furniture from Detroit's College for Creative Studies. He has been producing miniature tools ever since – saws, dividers, squares, planes, and hammers, each made to function as well as its full-scale counterpart. His pieces stand out both for their detailed craftsmanship and because they're modeled on contemporary counterparts rather than antiques. "The common tools," he says, "like Lie-Nielsen No. 62 planes. A lot of people have them."

His work is more technically sophisticated than the word "miniatures" might suggest, however. Consider how he crafts a hammer, one of the simplest tools. We're just talking about a handle and a head, right?

Not so fast. Because Terenzi makes his miniatures as realistic as possible, he can't use just any wood; the grain must be tight enough to avoid revealing the tool's scale in a close-up image. He shapes the handles

Photos: Marco Terenzi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**1 Tenon and Dovetail Saw Set,** 2017, steel, mountain mahogany, brass, pine, 4 x 6 x 1.5 in.

**2 Panel Saws,** 2017, steel, boxwood, mountain mahogany, brass, 1.75 x 6 x .25 in. ea.

**3 Low-Angle Jack Planes,** 2015, white bronze, mountain mahogany, steel, brass, nickel silver, 1.25 x .5 x .25 in. ea.

**4 Divider,** 2016, tool steel, 1.5 x .25 x .125 in.

**5 Dovetail Saw,** 2017, brass, steel, ebony, 1.2 x 4 x .25 in.

**6 Block Planes,** 2018, bronze, tool steel, brass, nickel silver, stainless steel, 1.2 x .5 x .5 in. ea.

**7 Chasing Hammer,** 2018, mountain mahogany, tool steel, 1.25 x .5 x .25 in.

**8 Square,** 2014, pattern-welded steel, rosewood, brass, 1.75 x 1.25 x .15 in.

**Marco Terenzi uses many full-size tools to craft his miniatures. The microscopes he keeps at his bench and lathe help him work tiny.**

with a pantograph (an instrument for copying an outline on a different scale), finesses the forms with files and sandpaper, then finishes them with gunstock oil.

The heads are even more involved. After shaping the metal, Terenzi blasts it with glass beads (think sandblasting) to create an even texture. After hardening and tempering the heads with heat, he cleans and polishes them, then applies a gun-blue pigment that turns them jet black. Next (you thought he was done?), he brushes them with steel wool before applying a wax finish. Only after this sequence of painstaking steps is he ready to attach the head to the handle.

The craftsman works in limited editions, a choice he says is as much about self-awareness as it is about marketing. By the time he's fabricated a batch of 20 or 100, "my mind is so over it that I don't know if I could get back into it." Based in the Detroit area, he primarily sells his work online, where he has cultivated a market of passionate tool collectors and woodworkers – buyers with close relationships to the full-size versions of his miniatures. Intrigued by Terenzi's fine craftsmanship, many will buy every new piece he produces.

Terenzi shares their fascination. "I've always had this thing in my head: Do I just like the tools, or do I like using them? I've found a middle ground where I can use all the tools to build even more tools. I'm just obsessed with extremely fine craftsmanship," he says. "It's a disease, really. I never know when to call it done; there's always that thing you could fix." ✚

marcoterenzi.com

*Nancy R. Hiller is a cabinetmaker and writer in Indiana.*

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iamthatsam.com • 415-834-5668

Left to right, from top: Melanie Abrantes (planters), Ashley Buchanan (necklace), Marylou Ozbolt-Storer (jacket), Matthew Nafranowicz (chair), Gabrielle Gould (earrings), Corry Blanc (cookware)

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# Tools from the Sideways Universe

*Howard Jones looks at ordinary objects from an oblique angle.*

STORY BY
*Joyce Lovelace*

PORTRAIT BY
*Mark Katzman*

*Howard Jones' work prompts us to reconsider our relationship with tools.*

"BE REGULAR AND ORDERLY in your life, like a bourgeois, so that you may be violent and original in your work," novelist Gustave Flaubert advised artists. It's one of Howard Jones' favorite quotations.

"You can be a regular sort of person and live as an artist," says Jones, a genial, plain-spoken man who crafts startling, absurdist art in his garage on a quiet suburban street in Middle America. "You don't necessarily have to always be avant-garde in every aspect of your life." He pauses, then adds, as he often does, "Does that make sense?"

Jones' sculptures make sense, until they don't. At first glance, they appear to be familiar objects – hammers, shoes, chairs. But there's always a bizarre twist: The hammer has four handles and four heads. The high-heeled pump is double-footed. The chair's seat is made of hard, spiky sweet-gum seedpods. With their surreal imagery, sly humor, and strange beauty, his eccentric implements are pleasantly unsettling, prompting us to consider our relationships with the tools of daily life.

"Tools have an intention that is part of their being," says Jones, who has always loved them. "They're made to do something. Often it's to be an extension of us, if that makes sense – like a shovel is better than digging with your hands. I'm just giving them a different meaning by altering them a little bit."

He combines found objects with parts he builds out of materials such as brick ("I like brick; it's a real humble sort of stuff") or wood ("2-by-12s, not fancy"). Brushes and shoes are his favorite forms to reimagine. He'll take a used, spattered commercial paintbrush handle and replace the bristles with typewriter keys or affix bristles to an antique wooden crutch. (Not surprisingly, housepainters get a kick out of his work; a painting contractor's magazine once featured him on the cover, "which was very kind of them. I was in the caulking issue," he says proudly.) Often, he'll repurpose odds and ends from around his house or yard, things that hold meaning for him. When his daughter went off to college, he attached a tangle of roots to the soles of the saddle shoes she wore as a kid, a poignant reflection on growing up and letting go.

Our experience of Jones' art is visceral, sensory. We put ourselves in his cast-concrete *Rocking Shoes* (2002), a pair of lace-ups on curve-bottomed blocks, and imagine being at once in motion and stuck. A paddle made of bricks suggests the heavy, tiring work of canoeing. Boots with scrub brushes for toes evoke the silly sensation of sweeping as we stroll. How would it feel, we wonder, to wield a shovel with a snake-like handle? What could we chop with a triple-bladed axe?

Then there are the psychological dimensions of these dreamlike pieces, things that make us go "hmmm." A paintbrush of thorns (from the bushes in front of Jones' house) conjures a dark fairy tale or biblical agony. Other brushes seem to comment on the nature of art, through such elements as a rusty grenade (explosive potential) or a pink light bulb

**Typewriter Brush,** 2016, metal, wood, 14 x 7 x 2 in.

LEFT:
**Spray Can Brush,** 2013, metal, plastic, 11 x 4 x 3 in.

RIGHT:
**Yellow Pencil Brush,** 2018, wood, metal, pencils, 12 x 5 x 3 in.

Photos: Howard Jones

**Blue Bulb Brush,**
2013, wood, metal, bulb, 11 x 3 x 3 in.

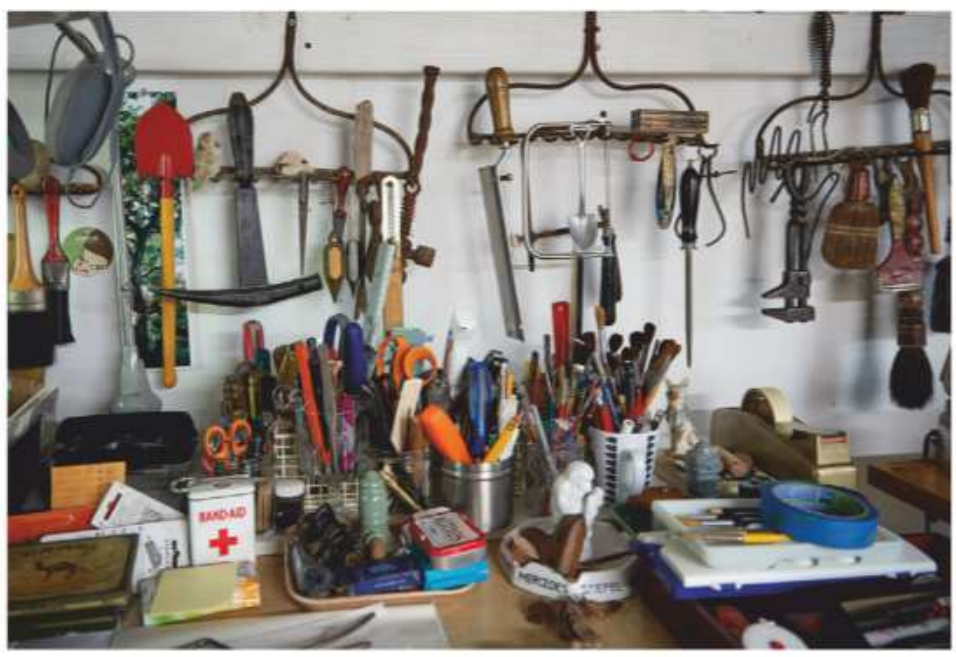

**Thorn Brush,**
2013, wood, thorns, 16 x 12 x 6 in.

**Rug Brush,**
2018, wood, metal, rug fragment, 12 x 10 x 2 in.

*A contractor's magazine once featured Jones' brushes – "the caulking issue," he says proudly.*

**Brush Boots (His),** 2006, leather, rubber, bristles, 6 x 6 x 12 in. ea.

In his studio, Jones also finds practical new uses for tools, such as these rake heads turned tool racks.



Studio photo: Mark Katzman / Other photos: Howard Jones

(illuminative power). Rifle shell casings filled with fine-tipped bristles resemble lipstick tubes, alluding to sex and danger. Interpretations of his art often surprise Jones, and he likes that. "I welcome it. I don't know that, once I'm done with a piece, that it's done, intellectually or conceptually."

His work may be a trip, but Jones' own journey has been pretty normal. He was born in Pittsburgh in 1954 and spent his early childhood in Ohio. When he was 9, his family relocated to Connecticut, where his father, a business executive, and mother, a homemaker, encouraged his interest in art. In his teens, he would ride the train into Manhattan to visit the great museums.

"That was a regular thing to do. You'd walk up Fifth Avenue, go to the Whitney, the Guggenheim. I remember seeing Picasso's *Guernica* when it was still at the Museum of Modern Art."

After he graduated from Kenyon College with a degree

**Brush Boots (Hers),** 2006, leather, rubber, bristles, 8 x 5 x 11 in. ea.

BELOW LEFT:
**High Heel,** 2012, leather, 4 x 7 x 11 in.

BELOW:
**Toddler Shoe,** 2013, leather, 3 x 5.5 x 7 in.

in studio art and humanities, he married (his wife, Barbara Smythe-Jones, is a public relations consultant) and earned an MFA in painting and printmaking at Ohio University in Athens. There he honed his printmaking skills working on the Trisolini Print Project, where he collaborated with well-known artists such as Robert Stackhouse, Nancy Holt, and Tom Doyle to create original editions. In 1983 he settled with his young family in St. Louis to work at

**Little Rake Chair,** 2015, wood, metal, 28 x 20 x 15 in.

**Hammer Cluster,** 2017, wood, metal, 14 x 6 x 6 in.

*When drawing began to feel more like a burden than a challenge, Jones started making objects.*

Recently retired, Jones is reveling in more studio time. He's happy to release his creations into the world, ready for new interpretations.

Washington University, making prints and drawings on his own time and eventually working as a freelance printmaker, earning a reputation as a master of the craft.

By the mid-1990s, he was ready for a change. A studio fire a few years before had put an end to his printmaking, and he began teaching art at a private high school, but drawing no longer fulfilled him.

"I was marking time, thinking about how long it would take to draw that thing – a curtain, a dress, a lemon, whatever," he says, recalling how composing such elements on paper had once excited him. "A challenge became, it seemed, a burden." So he switched to making objects, which proved "equally intriguing, but more immediate, even if ultimately they required as much attention," Jones says. "Some of these [pieces] I think of as drawings, in a way – flat, wall-based things, almost like collages, combining elements at my whim." While he continues to draw – figures, still lifes, variations on his sculptural themes – the objects are "the most satisfying stuff I've made."

Recently retired from teaching, he's enjoying the freedom "to travel and do things without a calendar in the way. I'm making good use of my time in the studio." The Joneses live in a 120-year-old house ("clapboard-sided, straightforward, an upstairs and downstairs, not a lot of ornament") where he gets to ply his tools on the upkeep of an older dwelling. ("You're never done," he sighs.) After 35 years in the Show-Me State, he considers himself Midwestern in his sensibilities. Is there a link between his Rust Belt roots, heartland home, and the motifs of industry, farming, and labor that abound in his sculptures? Not that he's aware of, but Jones is open to the idea. "That's not bad. I kind of like it, actually."

✚

howardjonesartist.com

*Joyce Lovelace is* American Craft*'s contributing editor.*

Portrait: Mark Katzman / Other photos: Howard Jones

**Spiral Shovel,**
2014, wood, metal,
54 x 9 x 7 in.

**Shovel Cluster,**
2016, wood, metal,
40 x 20 x 20 in.

**Snake Paddle,**
2016, wood,
58 x 7 x 2 in.

*Hawaii artist Esther Shimazu's figures exude happiness in the raw.*

STORY BY *Rebecca J. Ritzel* PORTRAIT BY *Marco Garcia*

# Joie de Vivre

**Be Cool,** 2013,
stoneware, porcelain,
8.5 x 4.25 x 3.5 in.

**Spotty Bitch,**
2010, stoneware,
porcelain,
9.5 x 8 x 8 in.

**Big Kitty,** 2016,
stoneware, porcelain,
9 x 8 x 7 in.

OVERLEAF:
Esther Shimazu's gleeful nudes populate her back-porch studio on Oahu.

ESTHER SHIMAZU WAS 5 YEARS old when she committed her life to clay. She was in kindergarten and fell in love while making her first pot. Yet from the beginning, she felt what she calls the "push-pull" – wanting to create figurative work instead of functional ware. It wasn't until she was a student at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, studying advanced ceramics far from her home in Hawaii, that she got up the guts to sculpt a nude.

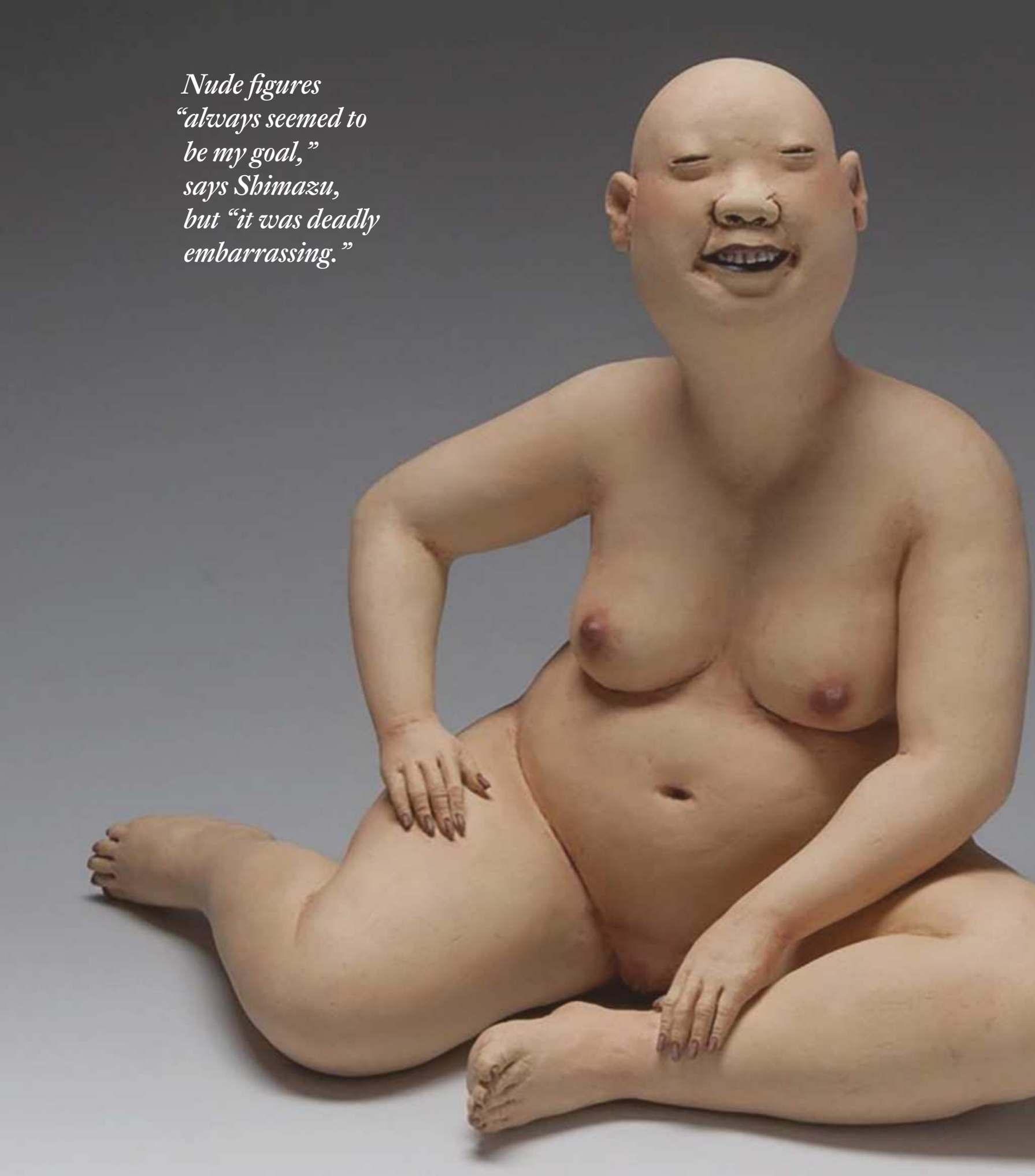
"I asked if I could, and the professor patted me on the back and said, 'Go ahead,' " she recalls. "I made my first nudes in Massachusetts because nobody knew who the heck I was," Shimazu says. "I really wanted to do them; they always seemed to be my goal, but on the other hand, it was deadly embarrassing."

Ever since that day some 40 years ago, she's been sculpting nudes. Getting past her own taboos about the body was one barrier. She also felt vulnerable as one of the only students of color in her UMass classes; plus, she was making work unlike others'.

Today, her sculpture is so unmistakable that even casual ceramics fans are likely to know it: fleshy, naked, hairless, gender-blurry Asian people. They are usually smiling, and they always have incredibly detailed toes. Why does she put so much time into those digits? "Somebody has to," Shimazu deadpans. "Feet are great."

Photos: Paul Kodama

*Nude figures "always seemed to be my goal," says Shimazu, but "it was deadly embarrassing."*



**Miss Penny,** 2016, stoneware, porcelain, 13.5 x 16.5 x 10 in.

"Esther has her own unique voice, and she is speaking to us through her art, through her very precise details, down to the toes," says California gallerist John Natsoulas, who has been representing Shimazu since 1992. She also occasionally sculpts animals – mostly grinning dogs, and those canines have carefully carved, er, canines.

When he first met her, he says, she was shy and not necessarily confident in the wider appeal of her work. It took some persuading before she believed that the ceramics she intended to represent herself, and Hawaiian culture, would resonate with collectors from elsewhere. But, as Natsoulas points out, Shimazu's collectors aren't limited to the islands. They tend to be "women with a sense of humor," he says.

For her part, she says, "if it weren't for John, I wouldn't have a career."

Shimazu's grandparents emigrated to Hawaii from Japan in the 1920s, and her parents grew up on a huge Maui sugar plantation. Her father joined ROTC in college and was a student on Oahu when Japanese planes flew over en route to Pearl Harbor. He and other Japanese Americans were soon kicked out of ROTC, but he was later allowed to enlist in the Army's 442nd Infantry Regiment, one of the most decorated units in US military history. The regiment, almost all Asian American, suffered heavy losses in France and Belgium before

*Shimazu lavishes detail on features that are easy to overlook – teeth, fingers, toes.*

BELOW, LEFT:
**What You Got There?** 2008, stoneware, porcelain, 19.5 x 13 x 15 in.

RIGHT:
**Pastiche,** 2015, stoneware, porcelain, 9.5 x 9.5 x 8 in.

helping to liberate the Dachau concentration camp in 1945.

"My father told my mother that after surviving that war, anything else was just a bonus," Shimazu says.

Her parents met after Shimazu's father finished engineering degrees at top Midwestern schools through the GI Bill and returned to Hawaii. Shimazu's maternal grandparents were not sent to an internment camp, but they had to hand over all Japanese literature, photos of the emperor, and even cooking knives. Local authorities also outlawed fishing and imposed strict curfews. Perhaps because both parents had survived such hardships, they encouraged all six of their children to at least dabble in music and the visual arts.

"Everybody was fairly artsy-fartsy, but clay was my thing," says Shimazu, who works on a back-porch studio within sight of the Pacific Ocean. Her modest ranch house is in Kailua, on the northeast shore of Oahu, across a misty, tree-covered mountain range from the touristy beaches and bustle of Honolulu. She shares the home with one of her three sisters, who works as a jeweler and industrial designer, and a cat named Midge.

Housing is crazy-expensive in Hawaii, and Shimazu knows she's lucky to be making a living as an artist in her home state. Her career has been possible, she says, only because Natsoulas promotes her ceramics around the world and because of her initial career opportunities with the US Army.

Shimazu worked "a whole bunch of wacky jobs" before landing full-time work in 1985 supervising amateur artists at a military craft studio. For seven years, she built pinch-pots and taught jewelry to kids, spouses, and civilian staff, and in the evenings and on weekends she made her figures. Fort Shafter closed the studio in 1992 – "It was too good to be true," she says – and Shimazu was reassigned to a primitive Macintosh to create computer graphics. Around that time, she met Natsoulas, who came to her studio while visiting Oahu to install work by another artist.

"He liked my work, and he wanted me to get the hell out of [my day job]," Shimazu says, who has a fondness for salty language. "I wanted to get out of there too, but, you know, job security."

It took three years, but he finally persuaded her to become a full-time artist. After several trips to bring her and her work to the mainland, including the SOFA Expo in Chicago, he asked Shimazu point-blank how much money she needed to maintain her home on Oahu. "He said, 'Fine, we can do that,'" Shimazu says, "and he did."

"Esther is one of Hawaii's most successful artists," says Aisha Buntin, a co-owner of Robyn Buntin gallery in Honolulu, where Shimazu's works are prominently featured among traditional Asian art and antiques. A swanky hotel gallery on Maui also carries her work, as do Studio 7 gallery on the Big Island and the shop at the Hawai'i State Art Museum in Honolulu. Hawaiian collectors appreciate her work, and she'll occasionally donate a piece to help a local charity.

"I think this year they are getting a dog or maybe a pig," she says.

Now 62, Shimazu has evolved from an artist so steeped in a conservative culture that she could sculpt nudes only halfway around the world to a woman revered as an artistic ambassador for her state.

Shimazu shrugs off the accolades. "The island is like a small town," she says. "It's my home."

✚

esthershimazu.com

*From her perch in Washington, DC, Rebecca J. Ritzel travels in search of art and adventure.*

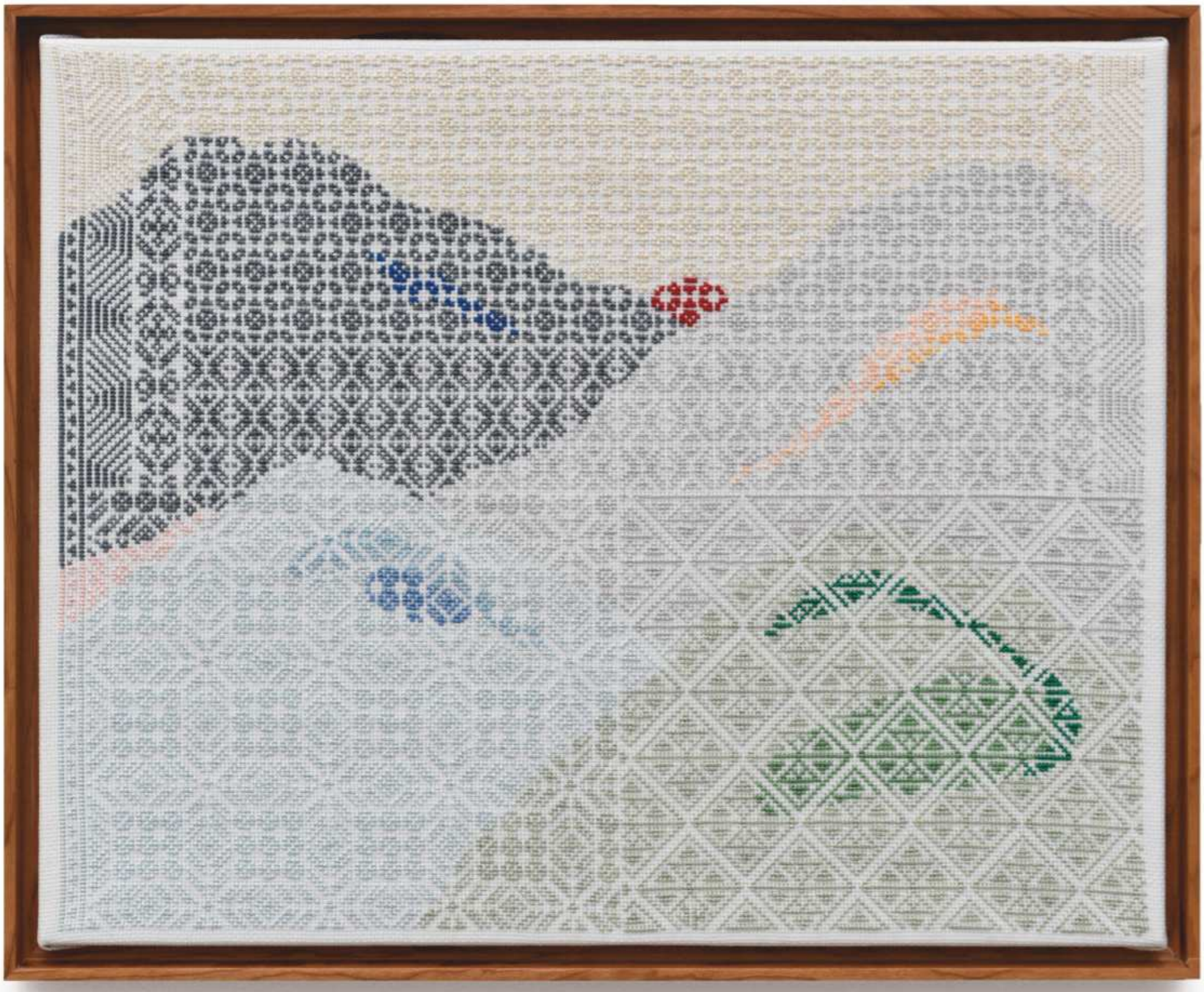
Photos: Paul Kodama

*In vivid embroideries, Jordan Nassar considers how divergent cultures overlap and coexist.*

# GRAY AREA

**INTERVIEW BY**
*Kavitha Rajagopalan*

**PORTRAIT BY**
*Michael O'Neill*



JORDAN NASSAR WANTS TO make beautiful art, but he also wants to talk about his identity, his marriage, and his diasporic experience. An American artist with an international sensibility, a man of Palestinian descent weaving tight bonds with Israeli society, a man doing so-called women's work, Nassar crosses many boundaries in both his art and his life.

The 33-year-old New Yorker grew up in Manhattan's Upper West Side with a Polish mother and a Palestinian father. His childhood was steeped in Palestinian culture at home, and in Jewish-American culture outside the door. But it was only after marrying Israeli artist Amir Guberstein that Nassar began exploring his own heritage through art – and with it, his connection to a society whose fabric has been frayed by the strain of protracted exile, civil conflict, and military occupation. His embroideries, which resemble hazy dreamscapes, reside firmly within the storied tradition of Palestinian *tatriz* embroidery while breaking the grid of its conventional form. But the embroidery is just one part of his mission; the artist is also devoted to conversations that might well stitch together his many divided communities. We sat down in his cozy Brooklyn studio among brightly colored spools of thread and piles of embroidered cushions to have one such conversation.

**I see that media coverage of your work tends to focus on your identity, your history. How does that feel to you? Is it fetishizing?**

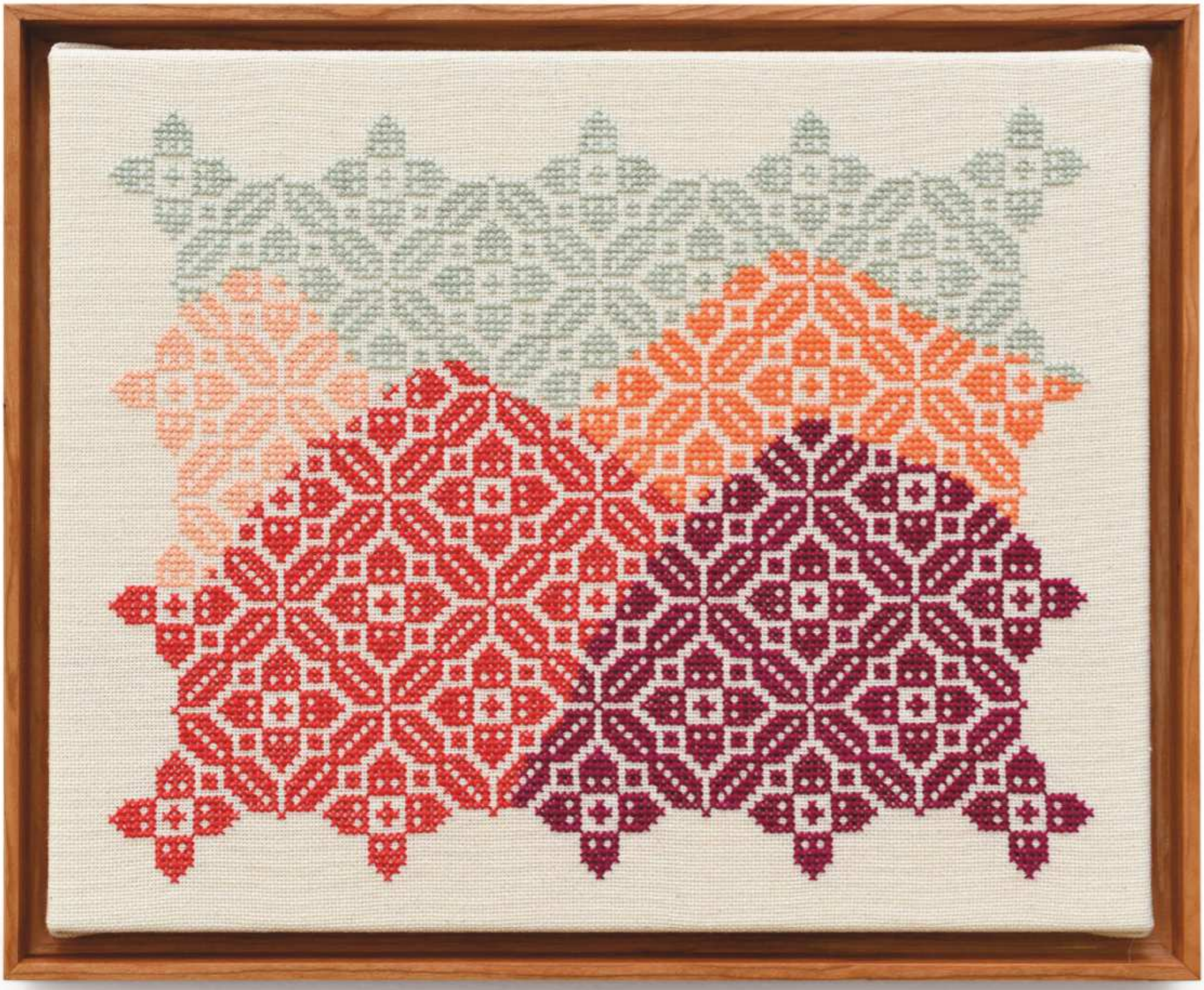
No. I grew up feeling not Arab enough, fake. But what dawned on me very recently is that there's basically two kinds of Palestinians: There's Palestinians in Palestine, and the Palestinian diaspora.

The fact that I'm removed and that I feel uncomfortable in the West Bank and feel like an alien there is because I'm part of the diaspora. It's not because I'm not Palestinian enough; it's because one of the costs of a diaspora is that you are told, "This is your culture." You embrace it, you like it, you're used to it; but also, when you're actually there, which should be your happiest time, you feel out of place. So this is a big part of my work, sharing what that experience is like and educating people.

**Many children of immigrants claim their culture through food and dress and music, but claiming Palestinian identity is often about engaging with its political history. Was it that way for you?**

I grew up half-Palestinian but totally a New Yorker – born and

Photos: Courtesy of the artist and Anat Ebgi



*The son of a Palestinian, Jordan Nassar has straddled cultures for years.*

LEFT:
**My Right Eye Is a Sun,** 2017, aida cloth, cotton thread, 16 x 20 in.

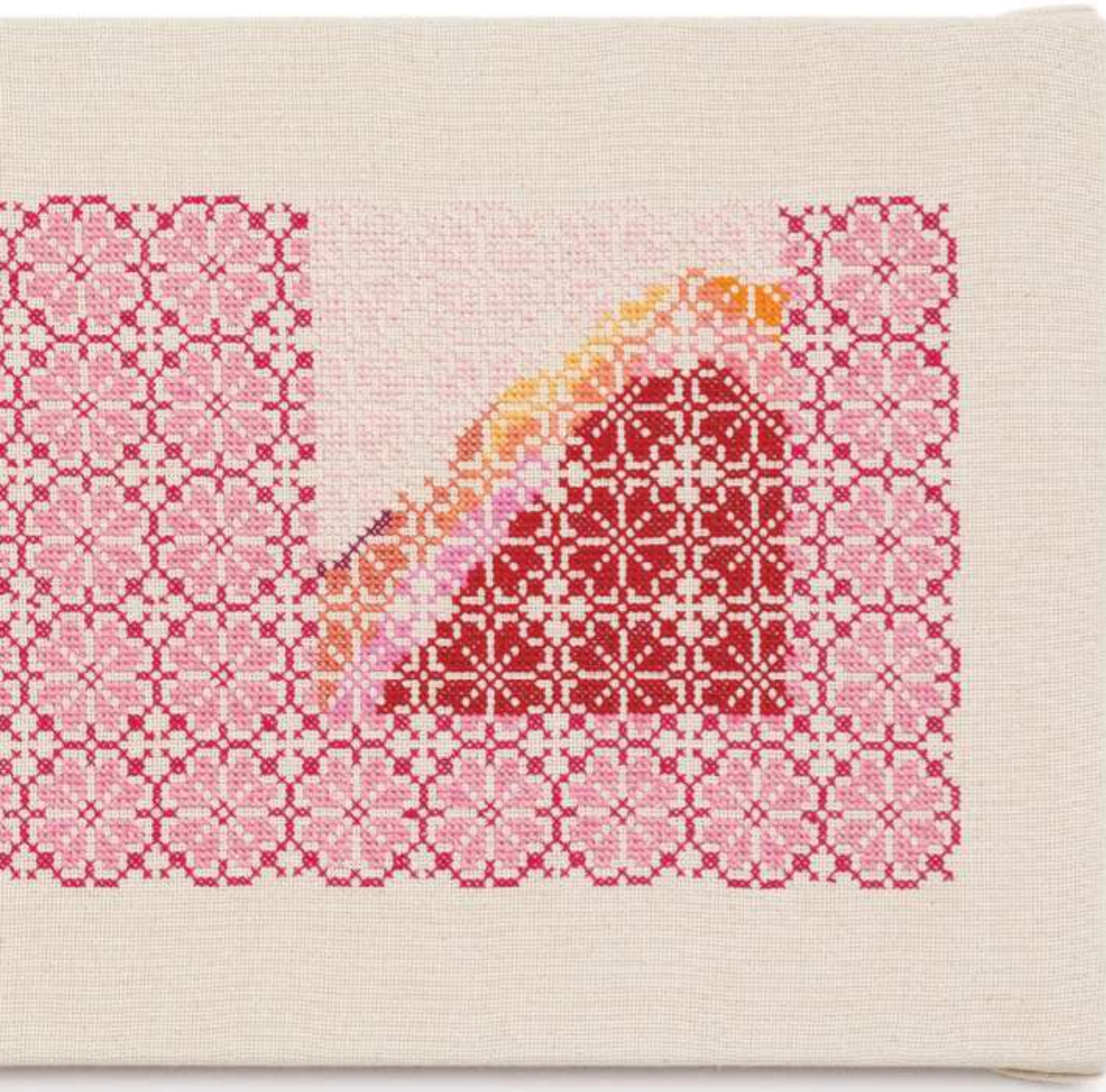
ABOVE:
**The Field Is Infinite,** 2017, cotton, cotton thread, 11 x 14 in.

raised here and really feeling American, most of the time. But my father raised us to call ourselves Palestinian. I think it was politically important for him to make sure we were aware of what was going on there and that we felt an attachment to it.

At the same time, I grew up feeling conflicted about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, because I grew up in New York, where the status quo was support for Israel. I went to Palestine with my family when I was 15, and I'll never forget telling some of my girlfriends what I'd seen in Hebron [a divided West Bank city with one part governed by the Palestinian Authority and the other under Israeli military control]; some of them got mad at me and said I was being anti-Semitic. And that, I think, was really scarring for me.

**I read that Palestinian embroidery originally only featured abstracted, geometric symbols, but ultimately started incorporating Eastern European flower patterns.**
What I ask is how long until these patterns are just considered Palestinian? Because they've been used in Palestine for 200 years now, so are they Palestinian patterns yet? Women I work with don't see a difference. They're like, "I love this rose pattern. My grandmother taught me this." And it's like this is clearly from Europe. But that doesn't matter to them; it's a Palestinian pattern, for them. This pattern in this book says it's from the Ramallah area, but obviously is European. Tree with lions? This is from England. Traditional Palestinian embroidery is abstract representation. … This is cultural absorption, passive accident.

**You describe cultural absorption as one culture taking on, transforming, and dispersing the products and practices of a proximate culture (as opposed to cultural appropriation, which is exploitative and oppressive). But what if the "absorption" of cultural traits**



*Beyond embroidery, Nassar is devoted to conversations that stitch together communities.*

LEFT:
**Wander and Wonder,** 2018, cotton, cotton thread, 12 x 34 in.

FAR LEFT:
**With the Fragrance of the Earth in Your Garments,** 2018, cotton, cotton thread, 20.5 x 37.5 in.

LEFT:
**The Green Paths Your Alleys,** 2017, cotton, cotton thread, 20 x 20 in.

Photos: Courtesy of the artist and Anat Ebgi

**is precipitated by profound violence and trauma, like forced migration, colonization, occupation?**
Well, I think that, for me, it's more about the future. With my work, it's not that I'm ignoring the harsh realities, but it comforts me to think about all of the similarities and the moving-forward trend [of cultures growing] closer and closer.

When I married Amir and started going to Israel often, I learned that much of the country is Arab Jews, what they call *mizrahi,* primarily from Morocco, Iraq, Yemen, Syria, but, really, every Arab country. So the Arab culture that's present in Israel is not just Palestinian. *Jachnun* [a kind of pastry] is Yemeni, and couscous is Moroccan. Mimouna is a festival that happens at the end of Passover in Morocco, and it originally came about because communities there were very mixed, but for the week of Passover they had to be separate; when they came back together they had this big *hafla* [get-together]. Now it's an Israeli thing.

Going there as an adult has really opened my eyes to how much is shared. I definitely just spend a lot of time exploring the nuances of that, because it's complicated, and I also think it is a hopeful trend.

**Israel recently passed a controversial law declaring Israel a Jewish state and removing Arabic as a national language. Do you think "cultural absorption" could mend the divisions brought about by such a government policy?**
It's something that we're seeing everywhere in the world right now, and some people say it's a dying breath of this kind of mentality. I think it's more complicated than that. Of course, it has a lot to do with colonialism and a lot to do with people in power wanting to stay in power, and rich people wanting to stay rich. And there will be many

victories on their part. In Palestine, there's no way around it. Palestinians are living under military occupation. It's a form of apartheid. There's really very little to talk about and argue about with what is going on in the West Bank. But what's going on in Israel, for me, is where it gets interesting.

Going there makes me feel better, even though it's so overwhelming to be in Israel, and so hard, every day, because you see things that are not fair and that are not true. But then, you also see all of the crazy nuances and all of the people who are very aware and passionate and active and trying, even though they're supposed to be on the Israeli side. And for me this is hopeful.

**Gender is another thing that can either bring people together or separate them. As a man working in a traditionally feminine craft, do you think about that?**
I grew up really flamboyantly gay and just being teased my entire life – called a girl until everyone learned worse words for gay people – so I grew up sticking out without a choice. That made me comfortable not fitting in. There's something freeing about that. I just do what I want, and I don't worry about if it's masculine or feminine, because that ship has sailed a long time ago. Gender isn't something that the work addresses; [it does] in its essence – you can't get around it – but what I'm much more focused on is the diaspora experience, Israel and Palestine, shared culture.

I recently started working with some women in the West Bank on collaborative work. I met them through this Israeli-Palestinian foundation at their office in Beit Jala. When I showed them my work, they were shocked that I was a boy. But then they were like, "Oh, it's because your blood is Palestinian." That's what they told

TOP:
**Would The Valleys Were Your Streets,** 2017, cotton, cotton thread, 28 x 28 in.

ABOVE LEFT:
**The Future with Longing,** 2018, cotton, cotton thread, 22 x 22 in.

ABOVE RIGHT:
**Whose Door Is the Morning Mist,** 2018, cotton, cotton thread, 21 x 21 in.

OPPOSITE:
**Tomorrow Is Today's Dream,** 2018, cotton, cotton thread, 22 x 22 in.

Process photo: Michael O'Neill

*Shows in Dubai and Tel Aviv suggest he's managing to reach both sides.*

me. It's more important that you're Palestinian, to them, than that you're a guy and you shouldn't be doing this.

**These interactions seem central to your practice.**
At first, I started working with this embroidery as a way of connecting with Palestine and because I was looking for something that meant "Palestine" to me. But now it's really becoming about just having these conversations.

My plans for 2019 couldn't be more exciting because I'm having one show in Dubai and one show in Tel Aviv. And that, to me, shows I'm managing, somehow, to talk with both sides and not close off people.

I'm kind of doing a switcheroo, where people are like, "Oh, what a pretty embroidered thing. It's so detailed and has such pretty colors." And then, they want to know more. In a way, it's disarming. It's not in-your-face explicit "Free Palestine." It's about conversation.

I sometimes feel self-conscious that I could be accused of being ambiguous with my political statements or something, because I'm not out there being an activist. I just feel like the conversation is so much more complicated than that.

**There's something really powerful about helping people with different beliefs learn how to trust and engage with one another.**
If people can take one thing away, I want them to take away that I'm Israeli-related, and I'm Palestinian, and that I exist, and that I like being in both places, and that I defend both places at different times. My mission here is to show how complicated it is. There's no way to cut it where there's a good and a bad, or a right and a wrong. Of course, yes, the occupation is wrong. But that doesn't mean Israel shouldn't exist or it should. You can't extrapolate these firm anythings.

It's really hard, I think, talking about "trying to change the world with your work." It feels so impossible.

**You're just trying to share your perspective.**
This is just my life, all the time. Even when I give my husband a hug. That's also part of the [Israeli-Palestinian] conflict.

✚

jordannassar.com

*Kavitha Rajagopalan is the author of* Muslims of Metropolis *and a senior fellow at the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs. She lives in Brooklyn.*

BELOW:
The artist layers sharply delineated grids over soft, landscape-inspired color fields. Each piece is made up of about 75,000 stitches.

Other photos: Courtesy of the artist and Anat Ebgi

# On Her Own Terms

*As an artist and a teacher, Alison Croney Moses sees no reason to be boxed in.*

**STORY BY**
*Joyce Lovelace*

**PORTRAIT BY**
*Cary Wolinsky*

FOR ALISON CRONEY MOSES, life, work, and creativity are all of a piece. To borrow a lyric from Stephen Sondheim, the art is putting it together.

In her studio, Croney Moses bends and blends cuts of wood into sinuous vessels and small sculptures. As an educator and administrator with the Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts, she places craft tools, materials, and teachers in Boston public schools, opening new avenues of learning and expression for kids. At home, she's a wife and mom, drawing pictures with her toddler son. (She is expecting her second child soon.)

"It's easy to feel like you need to fit into one category or the other," the 35-year-old artist says of the balancing act she, like many women, maintains on a daily basis. "I consider myself a maker but also many other things. They're all valid, and they make each other work."

Among her credentials, Croney Moses holds a master's

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*She teaches kids "to be creative and problem-solve, because that's what happens in shop spaces."*


ABOVE:
Croney Moses helps run a partnership program with public schools, bringing making back to the classroom. The program often blends craft with subjects such as math, reading, and science.

LEFT:
The program, which also supplies tools, serves about 2,000 students a year.

LEFT:
Croney Moses shows her students an example of the gumball machine they're about to build, encouraging them to put their own spin on the design.

degree in sustainable business and communities. She's interested in how sustainability can be practiced in every area of life, on a personal as well as a global level: in how we eat, farm, teach, build. She believes a holistic approach – understanding the connections between things, going with the flow, and occasionally against the grain – can lead to extraordinary outcomes that feel natural and right.

Consider her artworks, graceful objects with velvety-smooth skins that invite us to touch. They resemble natural forms such as pods, shells, and cloves; during her first pregnancy, she saw her own shape in their contours. Making them is akin to "a natural mathematical process," she says, one that produces organic structures as a matter of course. She starts with whatever responsibly sourced solid woods or thin veneers are on hand – cedar, walnut, holly, beech, redwood. Using traditional bent lamination, coopering, and hand-carving techniques, she'll mold, assemble, and sculpt staves and segments into angles and curves, composing with texture, color, grain, and seam lines. "I loosely measure, but it's more about the feel," she says. "I put them together in a way that feels right to me, focusing on the joints." As she pushes the limits of flexibility and tension, the wood fibers will sometimes resist the force of the bend and split off in other directions, adding to the animation of a piece. That's fine with her.

"That back-and-forth, push-and-pull between me and the material is a collaboration I really enjoy," she says. "When I have so many other things going on, that's what drives me back into the shop."

A daughter of immigrants from Guyana, Croney Moses grew up in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, in a household where making was an everyday

Eliot School photos (4): Sandhya Ramachandran and Haiyun Jiang / *Chair* photo: Mark Johnston

The swooping improvisational moods of Croney Moses' pieces, such as **Walnut Chair** (2005), reflect the process behind them. "I loosely measure," the artist says, "but it's more about the feel."

Croney Moses started out in art school as a graphic design major; **Chard** (2015), a watercolor, demonstrates her precise observational skills.

Croney Moses uses a vacuum bag to bend wood. As a student, she switched to furniture making because "it looked fun."

activity, done for enjoyment as well as necessity. When she wanted a dress for a dance, she and her mother would thread up the sewing machine. Her father built wood pieces – a desk for her sister, a step stool that doubled as a house for Barbies. He had artistic leanings, too. "I remember coming home, excited to draw a tree," she says. "My dad sat me down and showed me this really realistic, detailed technique. I would draw trees like that for years to come."

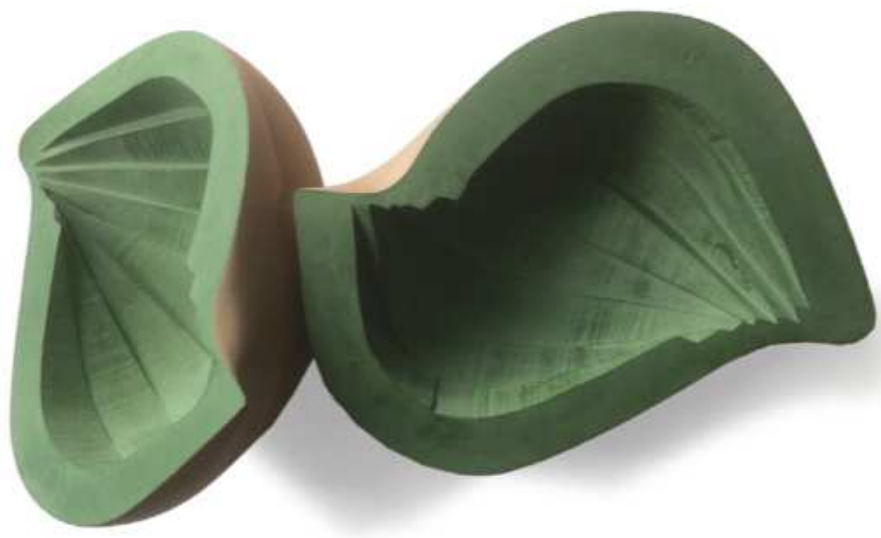
After graduating from an all-girls college prep academy,

*Chard* and open *Green* photos: Alison Croney Moses / Process photo: Cary Wolinsky

*Her organic shapes evolve as a matter of course, she says.*

**Cedar Pod Blue,** 2016, cedar, milk paint, 9 x 8 in. dia.

ABOVE:
**Cedar Pod Salmon,** 2017, cedar, milk paint, 10 x 8 in. dia.



**Cedar Pod Green Twisted** (open and closed), 2017, cedar, milk paint, 8 x 7 x 6 in.

*Blue* photo: Nora Belal / Other Pod photos: M. Davidson-Schapiro Photography

she debated whether to pursue art or science, ultimately choosing to attend Rhode Island School of Design. She first majored in graphic design but soon realized it wasn't a fit. "I saw all my friends in furniture design and thought it looked fun, so I switched over. It was the best decision I could have made," says Croney Moses, who found her passion for bent lamination and coopering at RISD.

(It's worth noting that by the mid-2000s, a woman woodworker was no longer a novelty, and many of her classmates were female. Later on, however, as a young woman in more traditional workshop environments with a preponderance of older men, she would occasionally encounter people "who would look at me and assume I was there to sweep the shop." Still, she says, her professional experiences have been mostly positive and supportive.)

Croney Moses kept a hand in woodworking as she navigated her post-college career, trying on different hats at various organizations. She spent about three years at the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, developing its education program. She got her master's at Goddard College, writing her thesis on teaching sustainability to K-12 students. For about five years she lived in New York City, where she put her ideas into practice working for her brother-in-law's company, Red Rabbit, which provides healthy school meals for children and leads workshops in gardening and cooking for kids, parents, and teachers.

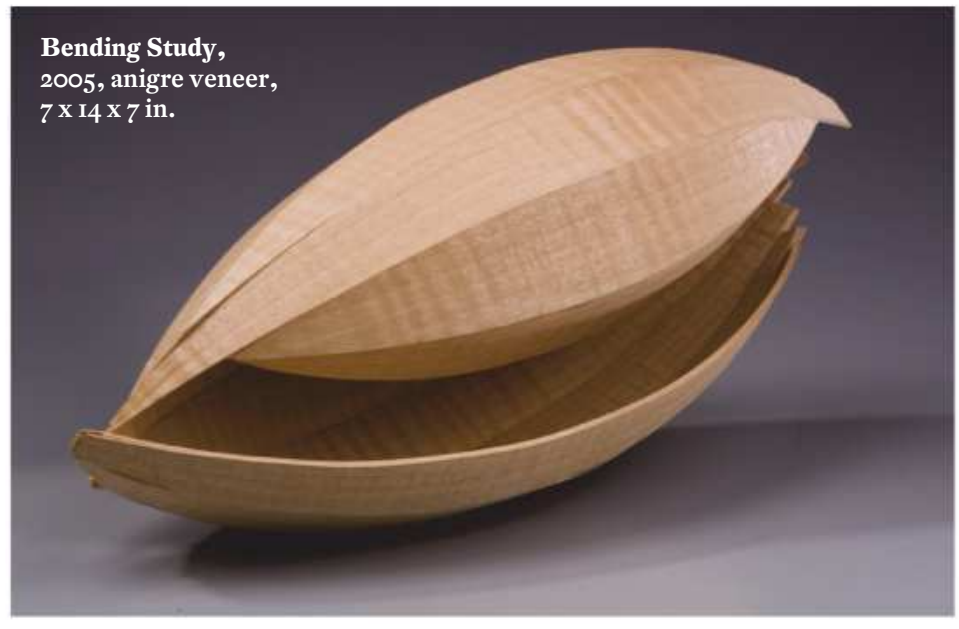
In 2013, she moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to join her now-husband, David Moses, a designer with the Urban Risk Lab at MIT. She taught woodworking, had a baby, and became program coordinator of school and community partnership at the Eliot School, a nonprofit art center in Jamaica Plain. Founded as a grammar school in 1676, Eliot had turned its focus in the 19th century to the manual arts. Today, it serves several thousand students throughout the Boston public school system, bringing visual arts and woodworking back to classrooms. "There was a huge need. A lot of the schools didn't have an art program at all," she says. "We bring in a big bin of hand

**White Shell,** 2005, holly veneer, 2.25 x 1.5 x 1.75 ft.

tools. Kids learn how to clamp things to a tabletop, how to measure with a tape and Speed Square and rulers, how to cut with a straight or coping saw. They learn to use their hands, to see, to be creative and problem-solve, because that's what happens in shop spaces."

Busy as Croney Moses is, she manages to carve out studio time and make it count. While her style and process have been consistent, "I've seen my relationship with the pieces and the material shift over time," she says. For one thing, "I'm more clear and intentional about the color of the wood that I'm choosing, thinking about my own identity. I'm Guyanese American but consider myself African American. I have a brown child, teach mostly brown students, and use these beautiful materials that are all shades of brown. It's interesting to see those connections."

**Shell,** 2007, Italian beech veneer, walnut veneer, 7 x 12 x 7 in.



**Bending Study,** 2005, anigre veneer, 7 x 14 x 7 in.

For inspiration, she looks to those who have crafted creative lives on their own terms – notably Martin Puryear, whose poetic wood sculptures resonate with her, and ceramist and installation artist Theaster Gates, known for his collaborative community projects in Chicago ["Intentions and Impact," Aug/Sep 2017]. "Instead of thinking about different categories, he took his interest in community, social justice, and making and merged them, creating something absolutely new," she says of Gates. There is power, she observes, in the ability to think beyond barriers and the expectations of others, envision one's own world, and turn it into sustainable reality.

"You define what you want to be about," she says, "and the difference you want to make."

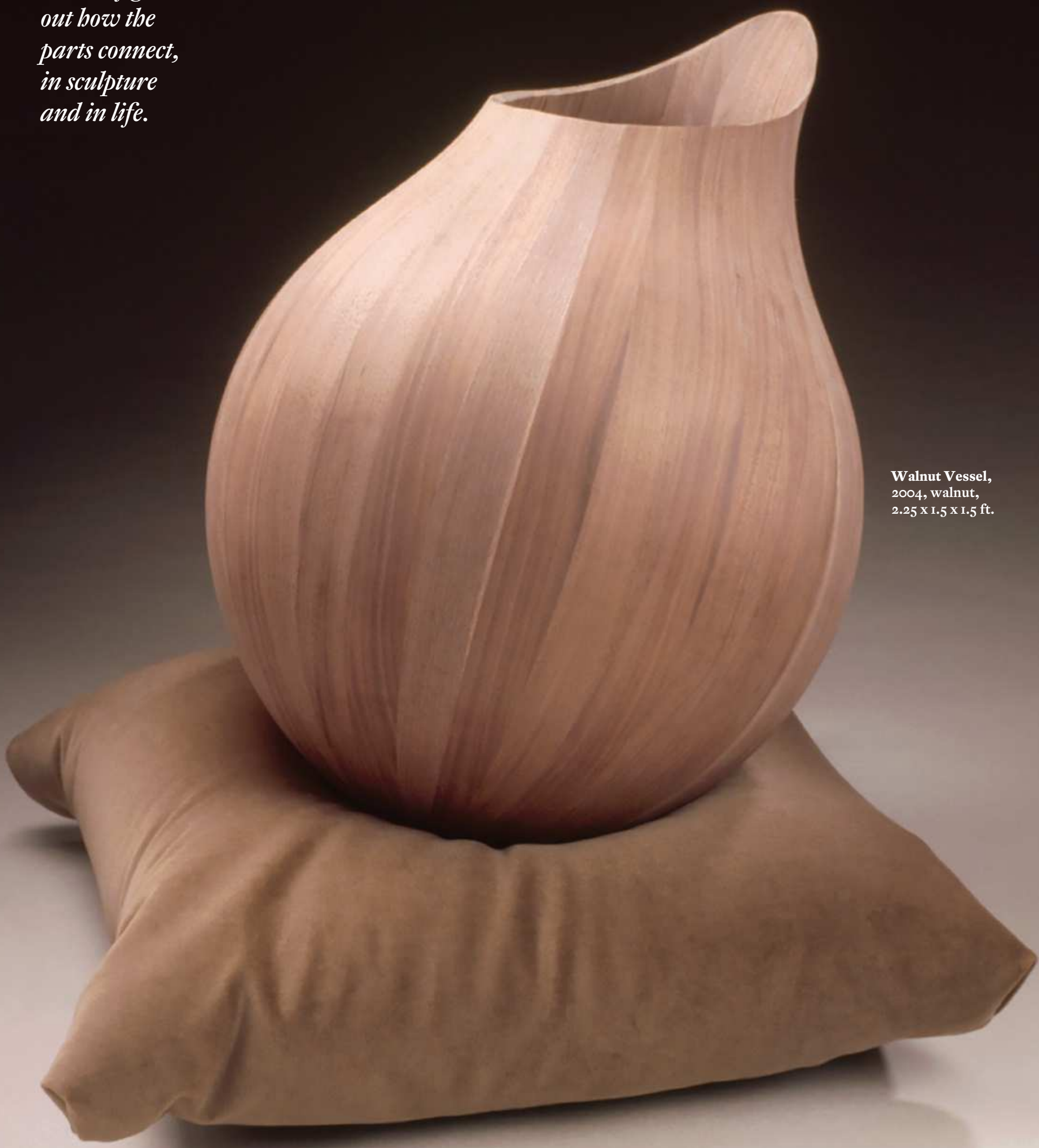
✚

alisoncroney.com

*Joyce Lovelace is* American Craft*'s contributing editor.*

*Shell* (2007) photo: Michael Vinluan / Other photos: Mark Johnston

*The artist loves to figure out how the parts connect, in sculpture and in life.*



**Walnut Vessel,**
2004, walnut,
2.25 x 1.5 x 1.5 ft.

*Crafted Lives*

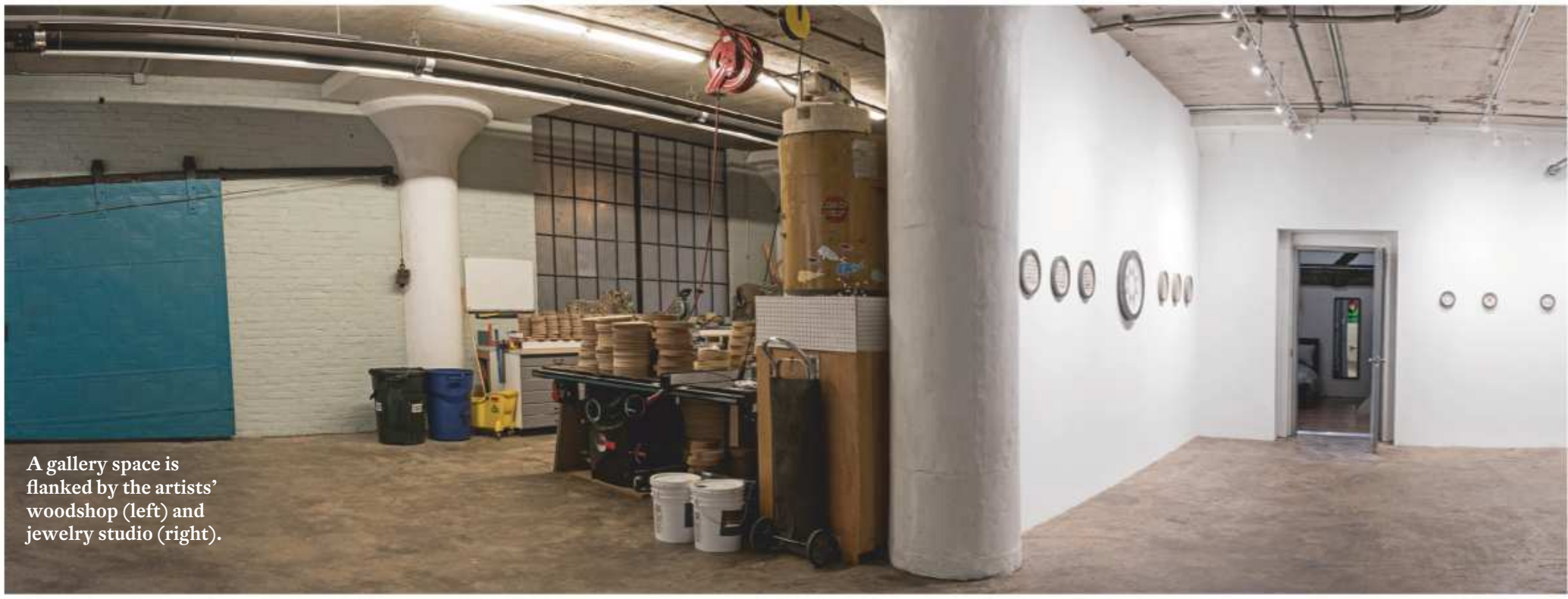
# HOME MAKERS

*Stacey Lee Webber and Joseph Leroux were seeking studio space. They found that, plus a place to live and a built-in community.*

**INTERVIEW BY**
*Emily Zilber*

**PHOTOGRAPHY BY**
*Jared Castaldi*

**Stacey Lee Webber and Joseph Leroux live and work in a 3,500-square-foot space in what used to be an enormous yarn-dyeing factory in Philadelphia.**



A gallery space is flanked by the artists' woodshop (left) and jewelry studio (right).

Webber modeled this pruning-shears sculpture, commissioned by a family-owned plant nursery, after the tool used by the owner's father. The altered pennies that make up the blade are all dated 1970, the year the collector was born.

ARTISTS STACEY LEE WEBBER and Joseph Leroux have gone all-in on Globe Dye Works. The artists live, work, and even got married at the 145,000-square-foot complex, a collection of 10 industrial buildings in Philadelphia's Frankford neighborhood. Much of Webber's artistic practice – she is best known for jewelry and objects using altered currency, including impeccable renderings of tools from the world of industry – echoes in the history of her home. Established in 1865, Globe Dye Works was a hub for the dyeing and bleaching industries until it closed in 2005; remnants of that work remain here, including enormous dye vats and spools of thread in every color of the rainbow.

The building didn't lie dormant for long: In 2007, new owners began to rehab and reimagine the space. They envisioned the building as headquarters for artists, designers, and entrepreneurs – emerging and established – who are deeply connected to Philadelphia's creative scene. As two of the first occupants, Webber, 36, and Leroux, 34, have worked tirelessly to build a life, a community, and a business within the walls of their 3,500-square-foot live-work space. We asked Webber to tell us how it all works.

Sculpture, *Landing* photos (3): Joseph Leroux

*Putting up two walls to create a gallery was "one of the best things we've done."*

**How did you come to Globe Dye Works?**
We've been here 7½ years, and it's evolved a lot. We met in Madison, Wisconsin, and followed our friend Matthias Pliessnig, who makes steam-bent furniture, to Philly. A year later, two of the owners of Globe Dye Works came to a studio party. They actually found us through the artist Donald Lipski, who had lived in Philly and liked my work; he's done coin benches, public art with tokens. He connected us with one of the owners.

**Were you immediately excited about the space? Or did it take time to warm up to the idea?**
The building was so different then. It was definitely a work in progress. We'd visited the building initially before moving out here, and we weren't sure about it. We would have been two of the first five people and

LEFT:
Joseph Leroux's installation *The Landing* (2012) comments on pop culture, advertising, and the discomfort of living in a hostile society.

ABOVE:
This piece from Webber's Imagine series features Lincoln busts hand-cut from solid copper pennies (minted before 1982) that have been gold-plated.

*Building tenants have become real neighbors. "It's fun to think about who could move in next."*


thought we might need a little more community than that in a new city. A year later, we thought we should give it a shot. More people had moved in, it's so beautiful here, and the owners were so supportive of our work. They just kind of hooked us. We love the other people in the building: metalsmith Ken Derengowski, whom we know from Madison, Weckerly's ice cream, Rival Bros. Coffee. We met Brian Giniewski when he was in the [Hip Pop] emerging-artists section at an ACC show, and he has his studio here now. We grill with people in the building almost every night when it's nice out, and they're almost like an alternative family. It's fun to think about who could move in next.

**What are the biggest rewards and challenges of living where you work and working where you live?**

Having our living and working spaces together was always our vision, mostly just for efficiency. We knew it would take our full being if we wanted to make this work as a career, and we've only been full time for about two or three years now. Up until then, we had part-time jobs, burning the midnight oil, and you had to get into the studio with any time you could spare. Honestly, this kind of setup is all we've ever known. If I have 100 things to do and could do them by staying up 24 hours a day, I kind of try.

These ceramic pots are by upstairs neighbor Brian Giniewski. The couple has only other people's work in their living space.

**Have the architecture and history of these spaces affected the work you make?**

Definitely. The "raw building" feel, the brick-and-concrete aesthetic – I think we already have that ingrained in us naturally, but it definitely comes out more being here. History is everywhere. Our bathroom used to be the women's locker room for the workers at the factory, and our bedroom is carved out of one of the original dye houses. There were different dye rooms for different colors, and cranes over the whole space, which has a sawtooth roof with a series of ridges to allow light into the factory. We got married in the boiler room five years ago.

They've done such a nice job keeping the character of the space that we've just kept doubling down on being here. We just signed a three-year lease.

Little [art] pieces seem even tinier living in this giant building, so your mind opens to ideas of scale, texture, and materials. We get calls from other people in the building looking to use our tools, we've set up our shop to be able to make anything – it's kind of like how you might set up a kitchen. We have a metals area with my bench and my coin drawer, a woodworking area, and a welding area with good tools. Building that has been a continuous process. At this point, it would take several tractor trailers to move everything out of this building. When we moved here, everything fit in one small area of the studio. We thought we had so

**TOP LEFT:**
Webber and Leroux like to stroll around their neighborhood. Artists from Mural Arts Philadelphia are restoring the building's old sign.

**RIGHT:**
A ceramic deer-head lamp by Joe Gower overlooks the turtle tank. Mike Rea made the wood sculpture to the left. The stools are by James Pearce; the sink painting is by Kyle Coffin. The tile floor (right) is a holdover from the factory.

*Much of the couple's collection comes from trades with other artists at shows.*

much space. We've had a lot of room to grow.

**Your living area is filled with artwork. How do you decide which pieces you want to come home to?**
We made a clear decision to have only other people's work in the living space; it's one of our separation tactics. The biggest piece that we bought together is by Morgan Sims from Chicago. We love the color. We have another piece by him in the bedroom, and when we like artists, we really go all-in. There's a piece by Mike Rea, whom we know from Madison, who makes these giant wooden robots. We know pretty quickly when we want to live with something.

When we have a successful show, we might try to buy something for our home. Most of our collection comes from trades at shows – these Nicole Aquillano and Ani Kasten vessels, for example.

One of the best things we've done is put up two new walls in the working space to create our gallery, Bertrand Productions – a really clean space between two studios. We've been able to bring other people into our space to have shows lasting about a month. We get to live with that work for a small amount of time, and we can take the same money we used to buy one piece with and support people we think are doing really cool things.

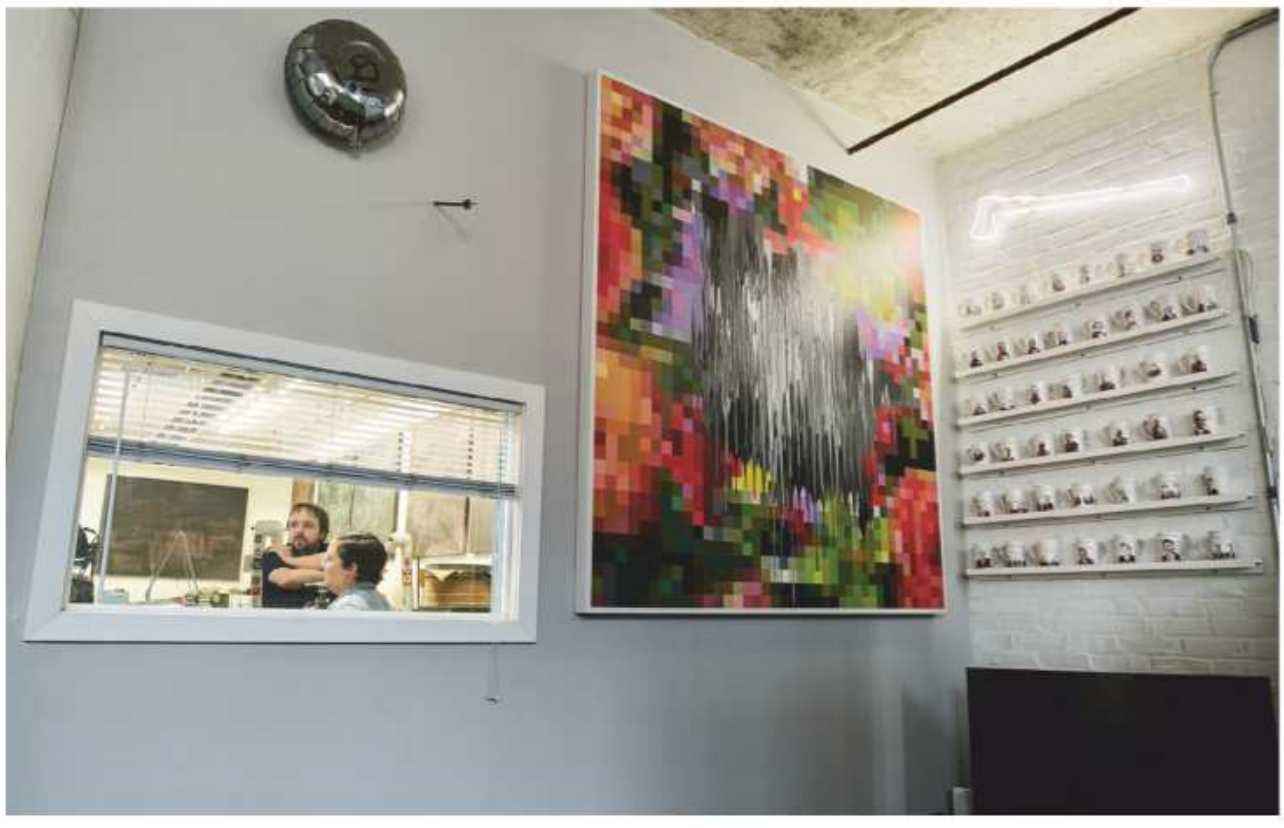
I covet Mallory Weston's work, which we've shown. We just got this image of a piece that was in our last show: an astronaut wearing a 24-karat gold mask by Aidan Rumack, who also has a space at Globe. And the next show is with Mark Wagner, whom I've collaborated with and whose work I definitely covet.

**How do you feel living here now that it's become a destination for so many people?**
It's great. We have a high school group in Washington, DC, that comes up once a year to visit the studio. We have collectors over all the time; everyone wants to visit the building.

One morning we weren't even awake yet, and we got a call that our local political representative was here. There are no inherent boundaries; I thought it was a big deal to get a bedroom with a door!

✚

*Emily Zilber is a curator and the editor for the Society of North American Goldsmiths, overseeing publications including* Metalsmith *and* Metalsmith Tech.



Tiffany Atlas

ABOVE:
The painting is by Morgan Sims, a friend from the couple's grad-school days. The mirrored glass "balloon" is by Joanna Manousis. The mugs by Justin Rothshank picture presidents from Washington to Obama. The neon ax is by Keith Lemley.

RIGHT:
Good friend Evan Chambers made the glass-and-copper lamps.

ABOVE:
Webber and Leroux got married in the building's old boiler room in 2013.

RIGHT:
The glowing rabbit above the bed is a print by Morgan Sims. The encrusted lips piece is by Lauren Kalman. Leroux made the shelf at left for Webber's family photos. "The metal drawers underneath contain my killer collection of jewelry," she says.

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"Tidelands Brooch" by Joan Tenenbaum

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Hand Built Boat Form, Tim Scull

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Lieve Jerger, detail, The Carriage of Lost Love

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**413 Maplewood Avenue, Wayne PA 19087**
**wayneart.org**

# Zen and the Art of

*An online resource helps makers take care of their most important tool.*

**INTERVIEW BY**
*Megan Guerber*

LEFT:
Jeweler and wellness coach Missy Graff Ballone is on a mission to keep makers healthy.

RIGHT:
This simple wrist stretch not only eases tension but also improves mobility, Graff Ballone says.

FAR RIGHT:
Sometimes self-care is as simple as taking a break. Graff Ballone recommends putting both your work and smartphone aside for a few minutes throughout the day, even if you're busy. Settling into a restorative pose such as this one and focusing on your breath helps you feel relaxed and rejuvenated – and can make you more productive.

AS A JEWELER, MISSY GRAFF Ballone knows firsthand the aches and pains makers often experience; as a massage therapist (it's how she put herself through art school) and yoga teacher, she also knows how to soothe and help prevent them. By combining her training in making and wellness, she's helping those who work with their hands learn the nuts and bolts of self-care. Since 2015, she's given in-person workshops, sold simple massage tools, and managed a collaborative online resource called Wellness for Makers that shares stretches, strength-building exercises, and other tricks to help artists keep their minds and bodies in optimal working condition. The New Jersey maker, 31, talked with us about the value of self-care in building a sustainable career and why practicing wellness is easier than it might seem.

**Why did you start Wellness for Makers?**
A few years ago, I was having a conversation with a group of artists. We were just talking about the pain that we were all experiencing in our hands and our bodies as a result of what we were practicing. And a couple of them were really accepting of the fact that we were all just going to end up with a repetitive strain injury. That was just going to be our way of life, and, eventually, we'd get older and wouldn't be able to make, or would be making with a lot of pain.

It was really alarming to hear my peers expressing that pain and repetitive strain injuries are just something artists should accept. Instantly, I was like, "No, no, no." I went back to my room that night and started looking for a central resource for artists, but I couldn't find anything. I was like, "I have to create one." As someone who has a background in wellness, I just felt a very strong responsibility to the field.

**But if so many makers experience pain in the studio, is it actually preventable?**
Pain isn't necessarily a bad thing. Pain is your body's way of telling you that there is an issue you have the opportunity to change. Pain is a signal. If we didn't feel pain at all in our bodies, we would be in danger. So if you feel pain in your wrists, that's your body's way of telling you maybe you should create variety in the way that you do this thing. It's not that you can't do it anymore; it's "how can you change the way you do this or add some variety to the way you do it?"

I think that, a lot of times, people feel certain pains in their

Portrait: Monica Zaldivar

# Maker Maintenance

Other photos: Eye Spy Photography, illustration: Julianna Brazill

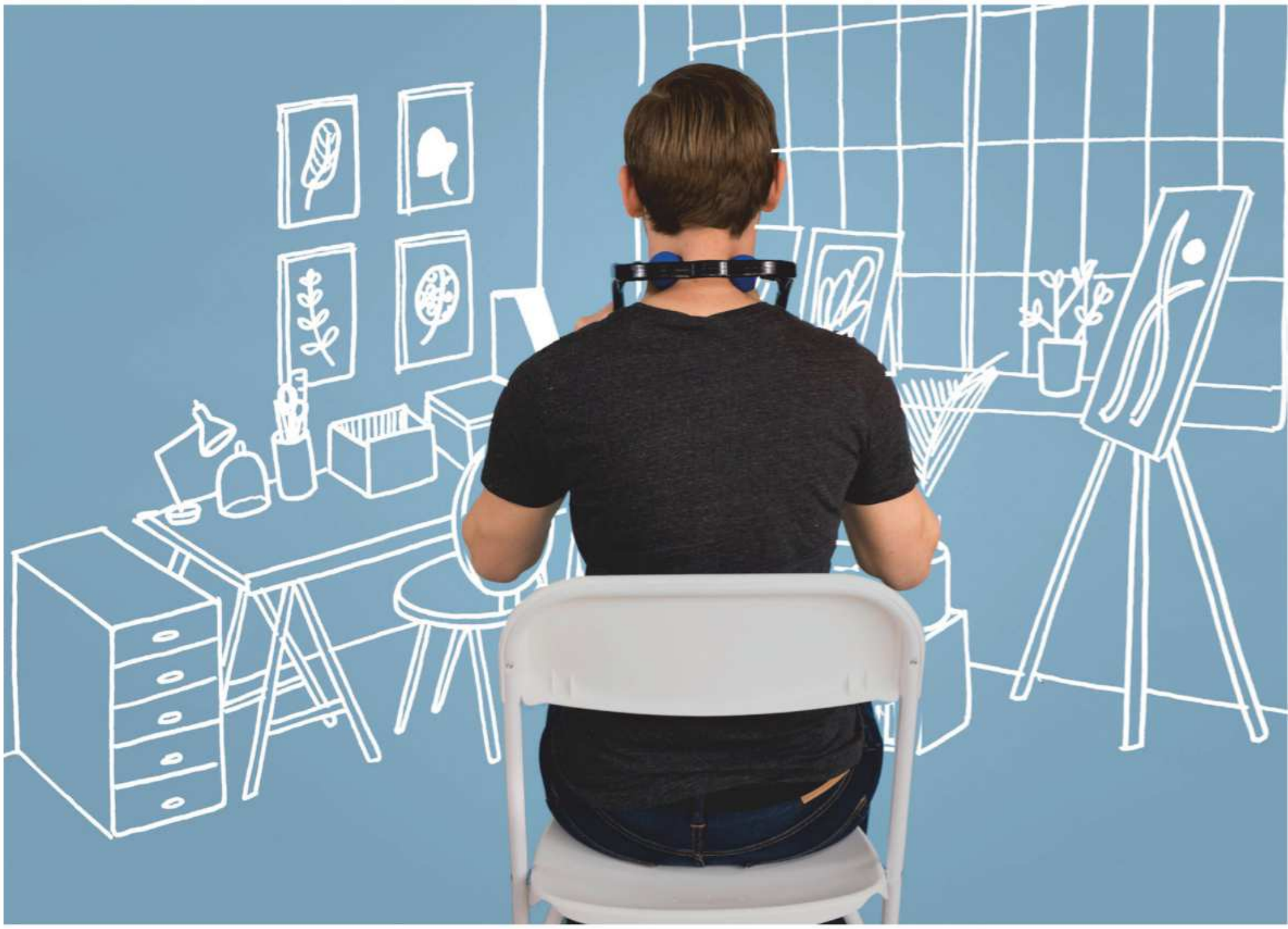
bodies and just accept that [they're] getting carpal tunnel, and there's no way to stop it.

**Or they might say, "I'm getting older."**
Or "I'm getting older, and that's just the way that it happens; when you age, you just get a lot of pain in your body." I disagree with that so much. Obviously, there's only so much we can do – we all get older. But I have 70-year-olds in my yoga classes, and they're doing handstands and being strong in their bodies, because they have a very consistent practice of taking care of themselves.

**How can makers take better care of themselves in the studio?**
I think that you have to create a practice that includes stretching, strengthening, massage, and variety. Creating variety in your movements is critical for maintaining the health of your hands and body. Taking time to switch tasks might sound inefficient [until makers] think about how inefficient it would be for them to be out of work for a few months because of a repetitive strain injury. A lot of times it's like, "I have to keep making. I have to finish this order. I have to finish for this show. I have to get ready for ACC," all of these things. They're pushing themselves through, and they're afraid of taking breaks.

**How can makers add variety to their movements?**
Rather than eliminating any movement entirely and replacing it with another, try alternating tasks. So, for example, if you sit for a majority of your day, try alternating sitting and standing. It's not to say that standing is better than sitting, which is what a lot of the vibe is right now. It's important to give your joints and muscles a break from staying in one position too long. Even if you're sitting, eventually your knee joints and your legs are going to get tired, too, because they're not getting the circulation they need.

If you stand for extended periods, remind yourself to move around the workspace and change the types of surfaces that you stand on. A lot of times, in these collaborative studio spaces, we're standing on cement floors. How can we switch that up? Maybe [stand on] an anti-fatigue mat for part of the day. There are a lot of different types of surfaces you can choose to stand on in your studio, and that can help reduce pressure on the joints.



**What about the hands?**
If you're a maker who fabricates very small objects, that process requires your hand to grip tools or the piece. Holding anything too tightly for long periods can create strain in your hands, wrists, and forearms, and ultimately create a repetitive strain injury. So loosening the grip is very important. [If your tools don't have] ergonomic handles, I encourage wrapping them in foam padding from your local hardware store so it's a little softer and wider; some artists get tape or medical tape.

Also, if you're holding a tool tightly for long periods – say, it's a jeweler sawing, and they are holding this very small saw frame for long periods – eventually, that tightens up the wrist area and your hands and fingers, and then your forearms, leading into your elbow. It's all connected. By loosening the grip, it makes the whole movement a little bit looser and easier on the joints.

**What else?**
I guess the other thing to think about is just checking in with your body every 30 minutes and being consistent about that. You can set a reminder on your phone or on your computer. And it's just a check-in time. It doesn't mean you have to take a 30-minute break every 30 minutes. But just set a reminder to notice: Am I slouching? Am I hunching over? Am I hungry? Am I thirsty? I know that I have just ignored it, because you don't want to get up to grab a glass of water or something to eat because you're working so diligently. And then two hours pass by. Things like that are really critical – just listening to and respecting your body's needs.

Taking a break can be as simple as focusing on your breath for a few moments. And that's really great if you're really experiencing some anxiety, like you've got to get this application in, you've got to do this, you've got to do that, or your piece isn't working out the way you want it to; just taking the time to notice your breath – the sounds, feelings, and movement of it – can physically calm down your nervous system. It only takes a few moments, and it goes a long way.

**Does looking down at smartphones affect our bodies?**
Oh, sure. I talk about smartphones in almost all of my workshops, because we are on them so much. We're on them promoting ourselves. We're on them texting, communicating,

Neck photo: Eye Spy Photography, illustration: Julianna Brazill

OPPOSITE:
Whether at a jewelry bench or a computer, it's easy to jut your head forward. Using a massage tool can help relieve tension in the neck, which may relieve headaches.

LEFT:
Working with your hands all day can increase your risk of injury over time, Graff Ballone warns. Running your forearm over a foam roller not only soothes sore muscles but also increases blood flow. The practice takes just a few minutes and has lasting benefits.

RIGHT:
You may rely on your thumbs to massage aching muscles, but makers need to be extra careful not to wear them out. A soft foam ball is a helpful tool for relieving tension. Rolling and compressing it between your hands for a minute at a time helps to hydrate connective tissues and lubricate joints.

Forearm photo: Monica Zaldivar / Hand photo: Missy Graff Ballone

calling, all these things. One of the main things that I talk about is saving our thumbs – most people depend on them to scroll and to type – because we need them so much in our making process. What I try to encourage makers to do is alternate between thumbs and fingers. Your hands will thank you.

Another tip is to lift your phone out in front of you. It's a common tendency to hold our phones by our waists and look down, and that adds so much strain to your neck.

And then, also, just take a break from screens. Relax your eyes. We're on our screens so much. But if you're going to be looking at a screen for an extended time, you can set timers to look away, or just lightly massage your temples and focus on a point in the distance.

**It sounds so simple. Why do so many struggle with self-care?**
I think that money is part of it. Also, because we're not educated about the body in school, we end up thinking that the only way to feel better is to get a massage or visit a chiropractor. And those are very important, but not every artist can afford them.

[People] think of wellness as a spa. They think spa, yoga, things like that. It's important to me to educate artists on other ways of practicing self-care in the studio. Even if you are someone who can go to movement classes and get massaged, you still need self-care in your studio practice.

**I also think it's hard to make self-care a priority.**
I think that's true. It's looked at as a luxury. And when artists are working so hard and not always getting paid what they deserve, it's like, "I have to spend time making as much as possible, so that way, I can afford to do what I need to do." And they might not set that time aside for themselves.

And yet, as artists, we have no problem investing in really great tools. We have no problem taking care of our tools. You want a really nice wheel, you get a really nice wheel. You need a hydraulic press, you're going to buy a hydraulic press. You need a great loom, you're going to get a great loom, because you want your work to be great. But your body is your most important tool, and if you don't have it, you're not going to be able to make. So why not invest in your body, as well?

✚

wellnessformakers.com

*Megan Guerber is an associate editor for* American Craft.

## Lancaster, Pennsylvania

*A centuries-old making tradition meets modern life.*

# The Heart *of* It

**STORY BY**
*Kate Mooney*

Set amid Amish farm country, Lancaster has a 350-year-old history and vibrant craft roots.

LEFT:
A compact downtown offers arts and nightlife options such as Annie Bailey's Irish Public House.

ON A SUNNY SATURDAY MORNING, downtown Lancaster, Pennsylvania, vibes with an easy energy. Iced coffees in one hand, dog leashes in the other, people pause to watch bands at outdoor stages for the 10th annual Launch Music Festival. Residents and tourists stroll the aisles of the historic Central Market, a 300-year-old farmers' market known for prepared foods and locally sourced cheese, produce, and meat, much of it from Amish vendors. At Tellus360, a downtown pub and music venue, Creatively Lancaster's makers' market is in full swing. About 40 local vendors display their art and handcrafted goods, while a singer croons upbeat folk tunes and shoppers sip pints of local microbrews.

This urban scene is about a 20-minute drive from the horse-and-buggy farmland of Amish country. Located some 80 miles west of Philadelphia – travel stories have dubbed the city of 60,000 the "new Brooklyn" – Lancaster features trendy craft beers and art markets, but Creatively Lancaster founders Steph Fleetman and Christine Miller say the modern-day crafting community isn't so far removed from its forebears, known especially for their woodworking and quilting traditions.

"We still have those roots – that Pennsylvania Dutch, make-it-yourself, DIY spirit – but this is the new renaissance of that," explains Miller.

Take Hannah Schmittel of Reclaim Supply Co., who makes jewelry from tree branches she salvages in her yard. When she finds a piece she likes, she'll slice it with a

Photos: DiscoverLancaster.com


**Creatively Lancaster**

ABOVE (2), RIGHT: Creatively Lancaster hosts makers' markets all around the city, popping up at pubs and shops. Patrons can find wares by local makers such as Vagabond Bowties (top), Dazzling Daizy Designs (above), and Dovekie & Finch (right) – and, in the tight-knit Lancaster scene, rub elbows with the makers themselves.

**Realm & Reason**

ABOVE (2): Realm & Reason functions as both a boutique and a community gathering place. The store sells clothes and jewelry (including work by co-owner Emily Moccero), as well as gift items such as greeting cards and bath bombs. It also hosts a new show by mostly local artists every month.

band saw, sand it down, then coat it with lacquer and resin before turning it into earrings or a pendant. Schmittel says she picked up her woodworking skills at a young age, passed down from her mom's Mennonite side of the family.

From her perch as one of its leaders, Fleetman says the city's arts scene is thriving. She and Miller, who previously owned [Re]chic, which upcycled vintage items into jewelry and home décor, launched the first Creatively Lancaster market in September 2017; held at various venues, the markets, they say, are a way to foster a community for the local talent.

Permanent brick-and-mortar spaces help anchor the scene. Lancaster's downtown shopping district boasts a cluster of art galleries, boutiques, and retro general stores. The 100 block of North Prince Street, dubbed Gallery Row, packs in about a half-dozen galleries bookended by the Pennsylvania College of Art & Design, which has its own gallery space. Some nearby shops combine efforts, like Realm & Reason, a clothing boutique that doubles as an art gallery-event space and showcase for co-owner Emily Moccero's jewelry.

There's also the 300 Block, a hub of galleries, cafés, and boutiques along North Queen Street, where you'll find Building Character, a multi-

Photos: Courtesy of Creatively Lancaster (3), Realm & Reason (2)




## Central Market

TOP:
The 300-year-old farmers market, in an 1899 building, offers a wide range of edibles from nearby farms.

## Gallery Row

ABOVE, BELOW:
The 100 block of Prince Street, known as Gallery Row, is the city's artistic heart; it beats especially strong on First Fridays.

## Building Character

ABOVE (3), LEFT:
The warehouse complex Building Character houses some 60 merchants selling handmade and vintage goods, including Henschel Trees ceramics (above left), items of reclaimed wood by Urban Legacy (above), and leather work by Michael Glick (left).

Building Character interior photos (3): Courtesy of Building Character / Exterior and gallery photos (4): DiscoverLancaster.com


### Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen

The group offers a wide range of hands-on classes in its Lancaster headquarters, as well as craft fairs in Philadelphia, about 80 miles away.

Guild photos (3): Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen / Fair photo: Jane Fetner, Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen

warehouse marketplace of more than 60 merchants offering vintage, recycled, and handmade goods. Residents flock to First Fridays every month, when businesses stay open until 9 p.m., galleries debut new exhibitions, food trucks park on Lancaster Square, and live music spills into the streets.

Locals who want to make something with their own two hands can attend weekly workshops at the Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen in mediums including jewelry, ceramics, and glass. Those who just want to get their feet wet can sign up for Craft on Tap, the guild's monthly make-and-take session that pairs with a complimentary beer from local Wacker Brewing Co. The guild also has a boutique filled with work by Pennsylvania artisans, and on First Fridays, visitors can watch artists demonstrating their craft.

For a more rustic environment, drive down Lincoln Highway East or Old Philadelphia Pike. You'll pass countless Amish furniture outlets packed to the gills with traditional wares: dining room sets, beds, chests, you name it. Back downtown, you'll feel the pulse of the maker scene that's happening right now – and building.

✚

*Kate Mooney is a Brooklyn culture writer whose work has appeared in* Lifehacker, MEL Magazine, Vice, *and elsewhere.*


Map: Michael Kline, dogfoose.com

# If You Go

## Gallery Row

Look for new exhibitions in the 100 block of Prince Street during First Fridays each month or stop in any time during open viewing hours. **Artisans Gallery** presents local work in a range of mediums, including jewelry and sculpture. At the end of the block, the **Pennsylvania College of Art & Design** hosts regular exhibitions in its front gallery space. Need a beer? Head a few blocks south on Prince and one block east on West King to the **Spring House Brewing Co.** Be sure to soak up the suds with a pretzel braid and spicy whole-grain mustard.

**Red Raven Art Co.**
138 N. Prince St.
redravenartcompany.com

**Artisans Gallery**
114 N. Prince St.
114artisansgallery.com

**Liz Hess Gallery**
140 N. Prince St.
lizhess.com

**Pennsylvania College of Art & Design**
204 N. Prince St.
pcad.edu

**Taproom by Spring House Brewing Co.**
25 W. King St.
springhousebeer.com

## The 300 Block

The district actually encompasses several blocks of North Queen Street, where you'll find galleries, vintage shops, cafés, and boutiques. Fuel up with coffee and brunch at **Commonwealth on Queen** before window shopping. At **Madcap & Co.,** come for the American-made and fair-trade goods, stay for the retro candy counter. Browse the craft store at the **Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen**; on First Fridays, visiting artists offer live demonstrations on-site.

If you're in the mood to wander a while, check out **Building Character,** a multi-warehouse marketplace featuring more than 60 vendors selling vintage, recycled, and handmade merchandise. The space also houses the Heritage Press Museum, a vintage-style print shop that hosts weekly demonstrations in the art of letterpress.

**Commonwealth on Queen**
301 N. Queen St.
commonwealthonqueen.com

**Madcap & Co.**
310 N. Queen St.
madcapandco.com

**Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen**
335 N. Queen St.
pacrafts.org

**Building Character**
342 N. Queen St.
buildingcharacter.biz

## Amish Country

About a 15-minute drive east of downtown, you'll find yourself in Amish country: long stretches of farmland dotted with roadside furniture outlets and quilt shops. Out on Lincoln Highway East, just past the Dutch Wonderland amusement park and the Amish Farm and House, which offers tours and education on Amish history and heritage, grab a slice of traditional shoo-fly pie at kitschy attraction **Dutch Haven. Amish Stuff Etc.,** located behind Dutch Haven, is known for its cedar chests. Next door at **Dutchland Quilt Patch,** you'll find handwoven quilts, along with home décor. About a 10-minute drive north to West Newport Road, visit **Fisher's Quality Furniture,** a family-owned store and showroom of handcrafted bedroom sets, dining room tables, and custom cabinets.

**Dutch Haven**
2857A Lincoln Hwy. E.
Ronks, PA
dutchhaven.com

**Amish Stuff Etc.**
2857A Lincoln Hwy. E.
Ronks, PA
dutchhaven.com/amish_stuff_etc.html

**Dutchland Quilt Patch**
2851 Lincoln Hwy. E.
Ronks, PA
dutchlandquilts.com

**Fisher's Quality Furniture**
3061 W. Newport Rd.
Ronks, PA
fishersqualityfurniture.com

COMING NEXT ISSUE

# Ceramics Galore

**Travis Winters**
*Blind,* 2018

Photo: Travis Winters

More than two dozen artists telling stories and making their mark in clay

**PLUS**

Jessica Calderwood, the craft scene in Florence, and the psychology of aesthetics



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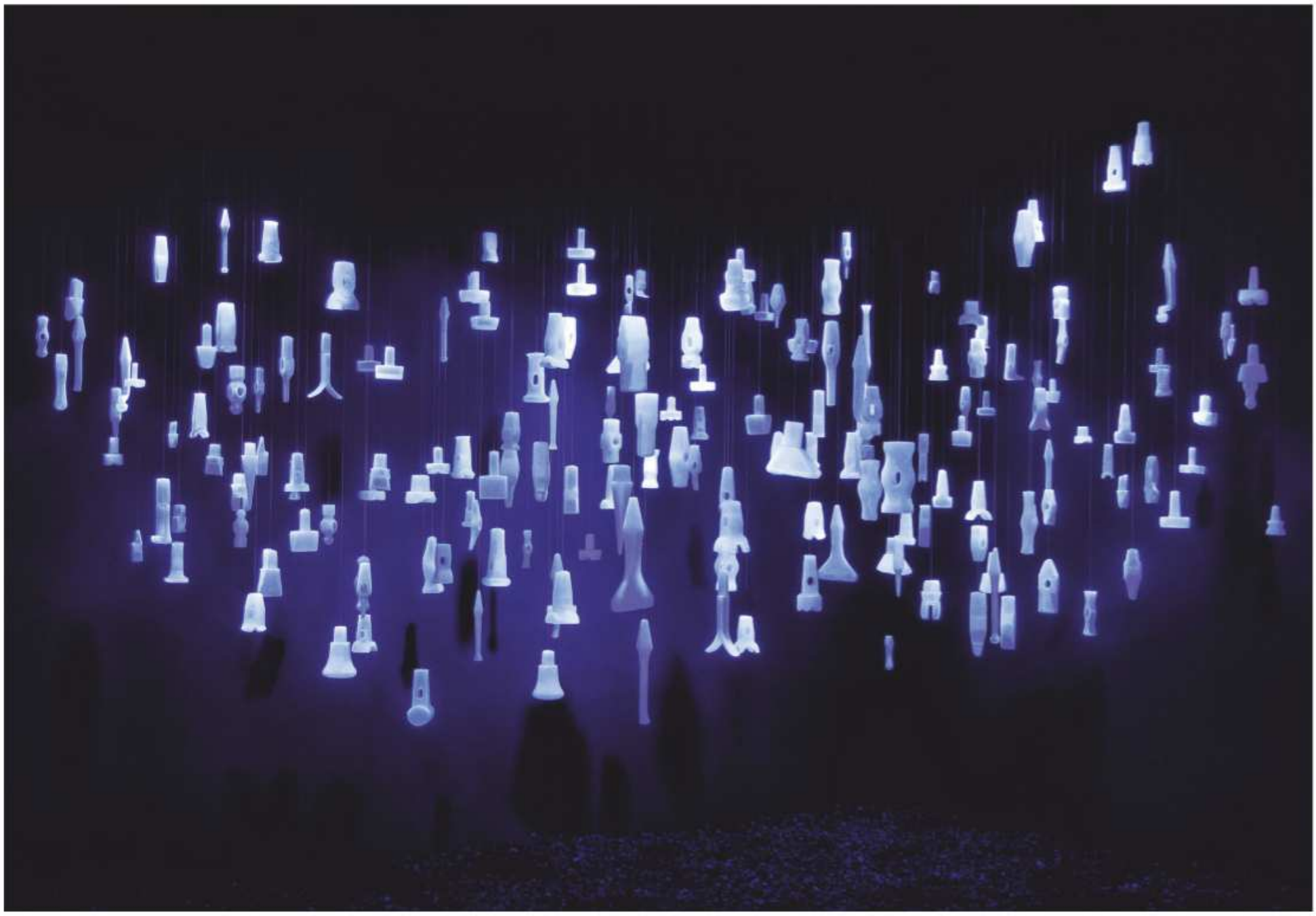
The American Craft Council is committed to justice, inclusiveness, and equity. Drawing on craft's rich legacy of openness and its deep roots in all cultures, the Council will work to create opportunities for creative people from all walks of life.



**Tom Joyce,** *Tenet,* 2017 installation at the Center for Contemporary Arts Santa Fe, 3D-printed clear polycarbonate, LED lights, metallurgical coke, 12 x 24 x 20 ft.

Photo: Daniel Barsotti

# Ghost in the Machine

MAKERS OFTEN FORM A CLOSE bond with their tools: hammers that have shaped metal, wood, and stone; knives with handles custom-made to fit their grip; ribs they've used since college to trim pots. But what happens when better-performing, easier-to-use tools come along? Can the hand, let alone the heart, move on?

With *Tenet,* Tom Joyce, who trained as a blacksmith, pays tribute to the instruments and equipment that were once indispensable in his daily practice. Once a tool is retired from service, he catalogues it; then it's scanned, 3D-printed, and added to the ever-growing, glow-in-the-dark assemblage of items (185 at last count), joining "a ghost-like cloud of tool forms, artifacts now sidelined by the diverse technologies I've chosen to adopt," says the artist, a 2003 ACC Fellow.

The installation takes its name from the Latin verb *tenere,* which means "to hold, grasp, possess, or maintain."

"The tools of my training will always be recognized as foundational for the explicit knowledge they facilitated, but for the moment, these devices are no longer held in the hand," Joyce explains. "Rather, they float, apparently weightless, as emblematic apparitions of the parts they once played." These tools may no longer serve their original purpose, the artist says, but their value lingers.

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"Leaves" by Helga Winter at White Bird Gallery. (diptych) Reconstructed Books, Pigmented Bees Wax. 24 x 48 x 3 in.

"Ebb & Flow" by Marcus Thesing at L'Attitude Gallery. Blown glass piece with an interesting matte surface. The colors and organic forms of Thesing's pieces are inspired by nature. 30 x 10 x 2.5 in.

"Lollipop Flowers" Silk Chiffon Vest by Cheri Reckers at Weyrich Gallery/The Rare Vision Art Galerie. Fiber-reactive dyes on silk chiffon.