



BRAIDED TABLE
Table made of braided mild steel
& African mahogany.





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Website

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Biography

Born and raised in Tennessee, mostly growing up in Knoxville. I went to the University of Tennessee and studied Architecture & Design for six years, although I never graduated. Worked with Populous architectural group, and also grew up in the hospitality industry working in hotels from the age of 14 to 26. I graduated from Camberwell College of Arts in London, U.K. with a BA (Honours) in Drawing and I am currently pursuing an MFA in Furniture Design from Rhode Island School of Design. All of my exhibitions have been in London, including FLOCK at GX Gallery, FloatArt at Bargehouse, and others. My two Publishing Projects include *Dynamic Ornament: Completing the Project of Modernism* and *Temporality in Southeast London Manifested in Architecture*.



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Why did you decide to become a creative artist?

Wow, great question! I currently volunteer at a local high school here in Rhode Island teaching 2D Drawing and I get asked this question a lot! As an artist, I truly believe it's my responsibility (and all artists around the world) to give back and help each other. It took a lot of people to help get me where I am today, and artists have it hard enough getting started (not to mention keeping going) already, right? Even as a small child I knew I wanted to be an artist and my aunt and uncle nurtured my curiosity throughout growing up (since my parents had NO idea about art.) But then college decision time came around. As a compromise with my parents, I agreed to go into Architecture since, as my dad put it, "it's the only kind of art you can actually make money at!" While there are so many things I found out I loved about Architecture - Architectural History, Technical Drawing, and Model-Making, which are still prevalent influences in my work today - it just wasn't quite right for me in the end. There was way too much purely analytical thinking for me! Where was the "play?" After "not quitting" architecture, I finally had to throw in the towel and find a different path. Then, I found this amazing degree program in London in drawing! I truly found myself as both a person and an artist at Camberwell College of Arts and in the big city of London. I love Paul Klee's quote that, "drawing is taking a line for a walk." That means drawing can be anything - sculpture, installation art, pencil on paper, whatever! This is where I learned the idea of "play." Just playing with things, materials, motions, anything in life, inspires my work. Back to the question at hand though: I decided to become a creative artist because it's who I am - it's my love, my passion, and my life.

How did you get your start?

Like I mentioned before, it was really my aunt and uncle that nurtured my artistic curiosity as a child and allowed me to develop as an artist. Every birthday and Christmas brought a new and exciting material, medium, or instrument to further my artistic, young self. One year

that even included a full microscope set! As I got older, my mom always found art classes for me around Knoxville that I could go to and she also hired me a private drawing tutor at one point. My skills developed fairly rapidly, since I began so young. I was even enrolled in university courses before middle school; talk about a weird kid! Then my life as an artist really started in London during my time at Camberwell College of Arts. It was the first time I called myself an "artist." London is an amazing city with so much history, culture, and art around you, all the time. It's where I learned to "play," and I slowly learned to dial down my analytical mind when I needed/wanted to. Upon arrival, the first encounter I had with my tutor included about 15 minutes of me asking him to explain the phrase "do whatever you want" to me. I just could not understand! A degree program with no syllabus, no project list?! I didn't understand! Coming from a background in Architecture, that was a completely foreign concept! As I progressed in my program, I finally allowed myself the freedom to explore and make whatever I wanted, and my artwork became something truly amazing for me personally. My first truly magical experience as an artist, happened at my first-year show. Seeing strangers go up to my work, just inches from the page on the wall, and then back away again, simply looking, was when I knew I had finally found my passion in life. I had realized what life is all about.

What themes occur/reoccur in your work?

The main artistic concerns that surround my practice focus on the physical immediacy between artist and designer, material, and the labour of making. A variety of conventional roles are challenged, including the function of materials themselves as well as the masculine aesthetic my work exhibits, given that I am a female artist. My primary focus is to investigate the interstice between sculpture and furniture, combining fine art practice (particularly drawing) with design functionality. My work has a common thematic approach, juxtaposing opposites such as permanence and flexibility, form versus function, conventional use of materials versus

the unconventional use thereof. I also seek to highlight design within a fine art context, foregrounding human procession and contrasting potentiality versus the residue of human action. In doing so, I incorporate methodologies from architectural and design theory as well as experiment with a variety of materials, removing them from their typical contexts. Recently, I've begun to incorporate etymology, semantic variation, and cultural meaning-making as it informs my overall thematic approach.

To put it simply: For me, my art starts with a research rabbit-hole, then playing with the materials during the creation process. It's all about the making. Touching, manipulating, distorting - getting them to behave in ways they don't necessarily want to while getting a feeling about a material's character.

What drives you as an artist?

Love, Laughter, Passion, and Life. My family, including my amazing husband, David - who moved across the ocean and back for me to pursue my dreams - as well as our 2 dogs, Apollo and Willow, and our cat, Bruce Bruce (and yes, named after the rapper). I try to love and live my life to the fullest, and my art is just a physical manifestation of that (as cheesy as that sounds, it's true!)

Where do you find inspiration?

Absolutely everywhere! I love reading and falling into research rabbit-holes. Art and architectural theory, history of cultures, architectural ornament - one of my problems is that I have too many interests I think. Trying to find a common ground for my art and my love of research is a fun challenge though. After learning about the Conceptual Art period, I fell in love with the artists' ideals and in particular, Joseph Kosuth and Robert Morris. Kosuth's "One and Three Chairs" as well as Morris's "Card File" changed my life and the way I approach my work. Words, visuals, spoken language - it's still all "language" and I find that this is exactly what drawing is, pure language, in whatever form drawing may take. Morris's work and this idea of "collecting" also keeps me inspired every day. I've already told you I'm an

APOTROPAIC

36m x 2.5m Installation

300 continuous meters of Sisal Rope, epoxy resin,
bronze casts, 780 lbs in weight total



avid reader, and since 2012 I've been collecting a list of words that I don't know the meaning of out of context. I look at this list for inspiration when I'm in a creative rut. How can I make a physical form out of the word "apotropaic" or "inchoate doxy"? It's my go-to creative mind un-blocking.

What mediums do you work with?

Whatever I can get my hands on, and make that material become something that can be interacted with by others, and that I can manipulate to my whims. At the moment though I've been focused on wood and metal - trying to learn some of the rules, so that I can break them!

Where do you create your art?

At my studio at RISD right now. I have a "clean" studio space and then my workbench area connected to the woodshed. I prefer my shop studio!

Is there a piece you are most proud of? Why that particular piece?

I love my *Apotropaic* piece because it was the most intensive piece I ever made! So much physical labour, and yet it all began with a single word, "Apotropaic."

What risks have you taken with your work or for your work?

All of my most treasured pieces have literally included blood, sweat, and tears. It's starting to become a trend for me. I love the physicality of making art and the tears part just seems to happen after working without enough sleep. Grad school emotions!





In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing art today?

Getting rid of the distinctions between titles like “artist” and “designer”, and even between disciplines. “Drawing” can be “Sculpture”, “Printmaking” can be “Installation”, “Painting” can be “Photography”, and vice versa, etc. As “artists,” I don’t see why we still allow these titles to separate us. If we, as artists, can’t stick together, how are we ever truly going to change the way society views art? I feel that sometimes artists allow ourselves to be powerless and remain powerless in the industry. Artists now have and have always had the power, if we could only claim it again.

What is something you wish you knew when you started your career?

I don’t have any regrets in my life in general, my journey has made me who I am. I’m still constantly learning though, and I guess I would say something like “enjoy the moment” as cliché as that sounds. I feel like I spent a lot of my life trying to figure out this “grand master plan” the universe had for me. I constantly felt less-than because I couldn’t figure it this plan, while everyone else around me seemed to have been handed a tally-sheet of their plans! Once I started living in the moment though - letting the past rest in the past, and allowing the future stay what it is, the future - I truly began to enjoy who I am and what I loved, and I found my passion in life.

Words of wisdom? A motto, favourite quote?

“Learn the rules like a pro, so you can break them like an artist.”
- Pablo Picasso