



THE UNICORN FACTORY X FATALE ART GALLERY  
Issue No. 3



The Unicorn Factory is a contemporary art community that represents artists from all around the world. This is a space for artists and their studio.

We highlight the messy process, the inspiration, and every element of uniqueness in the artist's life.

We are all unicorns full of magic, full of awesome bits and pieces, and The Unicorn Factory is here to share it with you. The Unicorn Factory shares the behind-the-scenes, the trade 'secrets', and the quirkinesses that comes with being an artist.

For this issue, The Unicorn Factory is happy to collaborate with Fatale Art whose mission is to promote the path of women through art.

FATALE ART wants to challenge our perception of women within the realm of art, both as a subject and as an artist. Women have been pushing the boundaries of all artistic practices throughout the ages, and yet only a handful are to be considered in the art canon. FATALE also aims to show that a woman as a entity, can no longer be framed, because she no longer exists. Woman is a fluid multi-faceted concept. Let our artists prove it to you.

#### FRONT PAGE

Francesca Penserini  
Gouffre Concentrique  
Dry media on paper  
15 x 15 in / 38 x 38 cm  
2020

FATALE  
ART

## FEATURED ARTISTS

Anne-Cécile Surga  
Erika Povilonytė  
Fanny Garnichat  
Laia Arqueros  
Nadia Nizamudin  
Geneviève L'Heureux  
Camille Lescarbeau  
Emma Sutherland  
Francesca Penserini  
Ambre Cardinal  
Joann Côté  
Marie Denise Douyon  
Danielle Lamontagne  
Jessica Sallay-Carrington  
Claire Anderson

FIND OUT MORE ON OUR WEBSITES  
[theunicornfactory.ca](http://theunicornfactory.ca)  
[fataleart.com](http://fataleart.com)





ANNE-CÉCILE SURGA

At the Académie Libre des Beaux-Arts Jacques Stanilas Rincon, in Tarascon, Anne-Cecile Surga learns classical art practices such as anatomy and composition, through the techniques of drawing, pastel, Indian ink and oil painting. Surga entered business school in 2006, while taking evening classes in clay sculpture at the Atelier Michel Fontenille in Dijon. In 2012 she leaves for New York to complete a Master's degree in Art History. In parallel, she follows courses in metal sculpture and flaying. In 2013 Surga pursues a residency at the Pablo Atchugarry Foundation in Uruguay, where she learns marble carving. In 2015 the artist opens her marble carving workshop in Ariège where she now lives and works.

#### STATEMENT

I explore the extent of the personal and the emotional, and how our contemporary society affects our way of living, of feeling as well as our way of developing the notion of self.

I am interested in the way in which humans continue to be faithful to themselves despite the daily violence that society forces us to face but also sometimes to commit towards others. My works can be understood as elaborations of emotional reactions to societal problems: indeed, I am not trying to denounce the underlying problem, but I aspire to highlight the feeling that this or that situation gives birth to us.

My work is concerned with representing feelings, especially the most fleeting and subtle, which arise from complex situations on which we have trouble putting words. I'm not trying to explain or understand the problem, but rather to examine how it makes us feel, and our approaches, solutions and limitations to this complexity. I position myself not in the representation of the problem, but in the strategies put in place to transcend it.

As a woman, my work reflects the particular challenges that I face in my private life, and I believe that this also illustrates and comments on the societal problems inherent in our time.





## HOW HAVE YOU BEEN SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC?

I have been okay. I have a solitary practice and I live in a rural area so social distancing did not affect my “normal” social life. Less time going around gave me more time to create and develop new artworks I could not make before, so it is a bonus. But now I am really starving for great museum shows and seeing my friends again.

## TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF - DID YOU DO ART AS A KID?

My mother never allowed my sibling and I to stay in front of TV all day. At the time of course, I was not very happy about it, but looking back she really allowed our creativity to grow. She always brought new activities to the table: watercolour painting, salt dough sculpture, jewelry and creative things with beads. I was also introduced to knitting, crochet lacing, and embroidery.

Then around the age of 8 to 10 years old I began to learn to sew on a machine. I had a big obsession with making dolls. In parallel, my world was also influenced by my father’s doctor practice, there were books and images that led me to think the human body was the most fascinating machine ever. My goal at that age was to make a doll that would replicate everything inside a human body from bones to tissues to skin and hair.

When I was around twelve years old, I began to follow classical art classes once a week, where I was introduced to perspective, colour theory, anatomy and different mediums such as charcoal, china ink, and oil painting. I began experimenting with sculpture on my own a few years later with clay and papier mâché.

IS YOUR CREATIVE PRACTICE INFLUENCED BY THE MANY SHIFTS IN YOUR LIFE? FROM BUSINESS SCHOOL TO OPENING A MARBLE CARVING WORKSHOP IN ARIÈGE? DO YOU FIND THAT THOSE SHIFTS HELPED YOU IN A WAY, ESTABLISH YOUR CREATIVE VOICE?

Of course, my experiences shaped my vision and-

comprehension of the world, which does influence my artistic practice. Nonetheless I do not think these shifts influenced my voice. My voice has always been the same, maybe now more or less tainted here and there by experience.

Geographic shifts from Istanbul to Singapore to New York helped me understand all human beings are longing for love, to belong, to be heard. But we are all aiming towards it differently, that is where difficulties arise. I think my work is aiming toward that shared humanity, even if it is only for a split second.

YOUR MARBLE SCULPTURES HAVE A SOFT FEELING TO THEM, BUT THE UNDERLYING AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE IS PRESENT. WHICH SITUATIONS IN LIFE DO YOU REFER TO?

I might sound pessimistic but life is a struggle. It is a struggle to be a woman and a struggle to be an artist, combine both together and you will get a great deal of energy. Then it is up to you to decide if you want it to be destructive or not with your creative energy.

I think I am moved by unfair situations; it can be against me or what I did to others, or what other people are doing to each other. They happen all the time, most people might move on and forget about these situations whereas I zoom in on them. As a kid when watching an animal documentary, I would always remember the unfair moments like when the lion kills the cubs or when the killer whales play with the seals, not the other 95% beautiful things shown in it. Maybe focusing on experiences that arouse a violent response in me through my art practice is a way to digest them and to remove them from my life.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO CREATE?

It is my way of breathing.

BEST ADVICE YOU EVER GOT OR TRY TO FOLLOW.

You need to work more.

DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE IN THREE WORDS.

Incisive, Sensitive, and Finesse.

THE UNICORN FACTORY - 9











#### DO YOU HAVE A NEW PROJECT ON THE HORIZON?

One goal I have been working on since last February is to be creative in the way I display my works. I am learning more about scenography, placement, and lighting. When I work, I am alone in my atelier with the block, surrounded by other blocks, sculptures and models and it all makes sense. I feel an atmosphere or a sense of integrity can be lost when my sculptures are blankly displayed. They feel slightly less "alive". I am trying to understand why and to explore new ways of offering them to the public, to create an environment that makes sense. Last year I had a carte blanche for a solo show and decided to paint a geometric fresco on the wall with geometric patterns on the floor of the exhibition space and I have to say I was happy with the result. I want to explore more for my next solo show, not just to repeat what has worked once in the past.

#### WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS?

I want to develop new series of work and to be able to grow them together, not one after another. I have a tendency to work full time on a project while stopping everything else, but I believe one project can feed and help to expand the others. I need to find more flexibility to allow myself to work in more directions, in order to bring more creativity in.

#### WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT SO FAR?

It is difficult to list just one, generally I am proud of my latest accomplishment until I have a new one and the former seems obsolete to me. I am proud of where I am today, I began out of nothing except a love for marble after carving only two sculptures. I am so happy to have galleries who trust and support my work. If you would have told me two years ago, I would not have believed you. Every year I learn and I grow, and every day I wake up to do a job that I love. And it is not like any job, being an artist is a privilege. It is far from perfect, but I am glad I have loved-ones who push and support me, people who trust me more than I do in myself. Maybe the greatest accomplishment was to actually take the first step to live my life as an artist and not as the role carved out for me by others.





WHENEVER WE ENTER THE NEXT NEW NORMAL, WHAT NEW THINGS YOU'D LIKE TO IMPLEMENT IN YOUR CREATIVE JOURNEY?

I will definitely try to go to museums more often, I really took for granted the possibility to go and visit an exhibition. Of course, I plan to visit more galleries as well, it goes hand in hand when I normally do "culture trips". Over the last years I would plan exhibitions I would like to see then forget about them until I realized they were not on anymore, and I would think "it is okay I will get the exhibition catalogue" (which I often forgot about as well). But if I learnt something is that nothing will ever compare to the face-to-face confrontation with an object, with the body apprehension of the space, the atmosphere, the person who is with you; The whole package! I thought it was normal to experience it - in a way it is absolutely normal - but let me tell you I am going to drown myself in art exhibitions as soon as I can.

WHICH FEMALE ARTISTS WOULD YOU DREAM TO COLLABORATE WITH (PAST OR PRESENT) AND WHY?

In 2020 I discovered the work of Alina Szapocnikow and I fell head over toes for it. On top of the formal aspect, she had a similar practice of molding her own body parts and integrating intimate elements in her research. I cannot believe I did not hear about her before. I would have so much loved to know her.

I believe to decide to work with someone on a project you need to have a kind of intellectual intimacy, and this you cannot force it, nor can you force a project out of the blue. It grows intrinsically like a relationship that is meant to be. So, I am not sure we would have worked together, but I do have an insatiable will to know more about her as I can project some parts of me in her work.

AS AN ARTIST, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR CAREER HAS BEEN IMPACTED IN ANY WAY BY THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A WOMAN?

I have no doubt about that. There are so many sexist remarks and condescending attitudes that were thrown at me. People blaming me for their mistakes when the situation was so obvious, clear displays of

abuses of power. Some people even thought they had the right to go all the way to question my sexuality right in front of my face. Like why? There have been no barriers to indecency and clearly no respect, all of that in professional settings.

On top I have constantly people asking why would a woman carve marble? She needs to prove something? Does she need to compete with men?

I am tired of having my work constantly under labels that only serve the patriarchal views of the world and totally negate the strength inherent in it. I cannot stand being negatively compared to established male marble carvers because I never tried to be like them, and I am glad I succeed in differentiating my voice and finding a unique formal language.

But honestly, these are just words that affected my spirit. In a way they fuel my rage, so maybe I should thank the haters?

But the problem is these things reflect on the prices of the artworks as well, or at least in the maximum price somebody was willing to pay for my work. And of course, I thought it was normal. It took me a lot of time and work on myself to realize my work is worth something and that I deserve to be paid the right amount for it. I had to learn to give myself the respect the rest of the world was not willing to give. I had to learn to say no and to give my conditions. I am not "there" yet, but I can already realize how much of my time, energy and money I lost because I was conditioned and expected to act a certain way. It leaves a bitter taste in my mouth.

FATALE ART IS AN ART GALLERY THAT REPRESENTS WOMEN ARTISTS, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS KIND OF INITIATIVE?

I absolutely support this, and I will always support any initiative supporting women. One of my professional dreams would be to create a women marble sculpture grant or companionship in the future.



ERIKA POVILONYTĒ





Erika Povilonytė was born in 1997 in Panevėžys, Lithuania. A graduate of the National Fine Arts School of Dijon, France, she spent one semester as an exchange student at the Brera Accademy, Milan in 2019. Since 2018, Erika Povilonytė is represented by online female artists' Gallery Fatale Art, based in Montréal. She has exhibited in Lithuania, France and Canada, including collective shows "La Rivière sans Retour" at the Interface gallery (Dijon, France) and "We are Fatale" in the Livart (Montreal, Canada).

Now she lives and works in France and takes part in a collective art studio La Volière. Erika Povilonytė is currently continuing her Masters Degree studies at ENSA Dijon and preparing her diploma and thesis entitled "The research of marvellous".

Erika's works are about the limits.

They are about the border line between pain and beauty, between burden and lightness, between the object and the living. Inspired by archeology, poetry and music, Erika creates her own mythologies through abstract paintings. Especially interested in paper, she questions its possibilities and weaknesses by creating a sensitive skin for this fragile material. Her paintings, drawings and photos explore the sensations of marvelous and uncanny.





## HOW HAVE YOU BEEN SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC?

It seemed as if the Earth had begun to turn slower allowing me to catch up with this world. The lockdown started just after my Erasmus semester in Accademia Brera in Milan. I was so excited and full of inspiration after this wonderful time in Italy, that the isolation seemed like a time for me to calm down and concentrate on my thoughts.

During the first lockdown in France, I read a lot and worked on my master's thesis. I also had a possibility to focus on a poetry book illustration project for L'Atelier des Noyers Editions. This little book entitled "L'heure violette", mixing short but breezy Denise Desautels poems with my abstract watercolours, was like a song of a caged bird.

Of course, I have continued to paint in my apartment, now I have the possibility to work in a studio. I wouldn't say that the isolation made a difference to my artistic work. Everything goes naturally; my artworks grow, evolve, and adapt themselves to this world.

## TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF - DID YOU DO ART AS A KID?

I grew up in Lithuania, in an artistically sensitive family. My parents encouraged me to play the piano, to dance and to draw. As a child, I attempted music lessons for seven years, and then an Art school in my native town Panevėžys. In fact, I spent loads of time drawing animals, making the passports for my toys and creating paper jewelry sets for my mother. I remember the day when I was discussing with my father about the future and I told him that my biggest dream was to study art in France, to lodge in a tiny room and to be a poor and unknown artist. Once I finished secondary school, I moved to France, and now I am the fifth year student in the National School of Art and Design in Dijon. I live in a small apartment and I am still not famous. My dream has been excessively fulfilled!

In fact, I have always felt the necessity to make art. I think that creating is a part of me. I have to create in order to live.

## PART OF YOUR WORK EXPLORES THE DREAMLIKE WORLD, AND MIXES BEAUTY AND FEAR, WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS THEME?

I think that my artwork is about limits. It is about the border between pain and beauty, between burden and lightness, between the object and the living.

For my watercolours that represent humans and animals I was especially inspired by the old fairy tales as well as by the hunt scenes, by the emotion of fear and marvel.

I am also inspired by the sensation of distance while looking at archeological images or at artifacts in museums. All these objects seem so near and so far from us. They are here, at this time, but were made hundreds or thousands of years ago. In my current creations, I explore the presence and the trace, a moment and the infinity. I try to reach the sensation of the \*uncanny\* in my works, and to create something marvellous and strange at the same time.

My artwork is also about territory: delimiting or delimited.

## WHAT'S THE BEST TIME FOR YOU TO CREATE?

The best time to create is defined by my psychological state, not by hours. In order to be productive, I must be in peace with myself and with the exterior, to trust my own choices and gestures.

## WHAT'S THE MOST RIDICULOUS THING YOU BOUGHT FOR ART?

Choosing the right art material takes an important part of my work. Therefore, I avoid buying objects without first considering them, so it would be difficult to name something particularly ridiculous.

## FAVOURITE TOOL IN THE STUDIO?

Watercolour paint brush, because it holds water longer, thereby allowing me to paint without continually stopping to re-dip it.



## DO YOU HAVE A NEW PROJECT ON THE HORIZON?

This year is my last year in Dijon Art School. So at this moment, I am preparing my DNSEP (Artistic Expression Master Diploma). It will consist of defending my thesis and presenting my artistic work. I've just begun to make wall paintings. My aim for now would be finding the right way to incorporate them in my artistic practice and to make it communicate with creations on paper. The biggest challenge for me is to select the works to show. I try to learn to have the courage to reject some things and to welcome others.

## WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS?

After my graduation, I would really like to participate in artistic residencies, to do an internship in a gallery or as an artist's assistant. My future goals are to meet inspiring people, to visit new places and to end up in interesting situations. My dream is to do the things I love among people I admire.

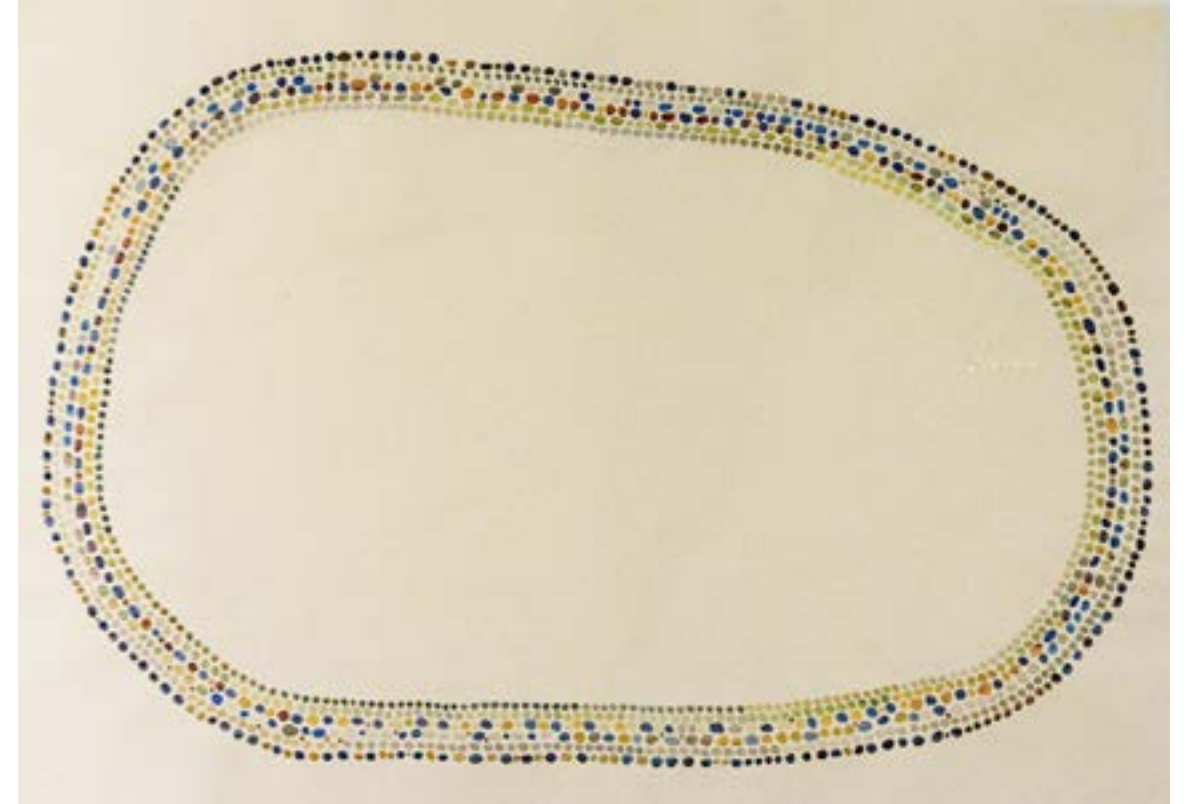
## WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT SO FAR?

I would say that one of the greatest accomplishments is being in France and studying art. Sometimes I forget about how lucky I am to be here.

Taking part of the Fatale Art gallery is also a big achievement. It is an honour to be distinguished as an artist. I feel so delighted when my artworks touch not only me, but find the way to be seen and felt by others.

## WHENEVER WE ENTER THE NEXT NEW NORMAL, WHAT NEW THINGS YOU'D LIKE TO IMPLEMENT IN YOUR CREATIVE JOURNEY?

The presence or the absence of the health crisis does not directly impact my creative discipline. The thing that I miss is visiting galleries and museums, going on trips and meeting people. Art demands to be lived and felt, smelled or even touched. The distance that separates us from those experiences is too large. We need to meet the art in order to be astonished. The astonishment is what is missing at this moment.



AS PART OF YOUR FINAL THESIS, YOU PUBLISHED A POETIC ARTIST'S BOOK, CALLED "THE SERPENT'S DREAM", CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT IT?

It is very difficult to talk about artistic intentions and inspirations, because there is always something impossible to describe. I think that poetry is close to visual art. That's why my thesis entitled "La recherche du merveilleux" ("The research of the marvellous") consists of two parts: theoretical and poetic. I would say that the first part tries to explain my passions and to dissect different layers of my artistic creation, while the second part is more about creating the images like I do in my painting. Poetry allows extreme sincerity and the deepest secret and at the same time. All the poems that I wrote are very short and dense. In the book, they create a dialogue with the pictures of my artworks. I call the poetic part an artist book, because there is a manual aspect. I used different types of paper that was cut differently in each copy. In that way I created different strata, so we can turn the pages, one after another, as if we were the archeologists exploring a buried city.

The title "Serpent's dream" refers to the Aboriginal dreamtime, as well as to the symbolic serpent's meaning in different cultures. This animal is terrestrial, associated to the ground, and at the same time divine because of its magical powers. The idea that I want to express is that all marvellous phenomena are natural.

THE COLOURS OF YOUR WORKS ARE ALWAYS VIBRANT AND SEEM TO HAVE THEIR OWN NARRATIVES, IS THAT THE CASE?

The choice of colour in my works is very important. I am passionate about prehistoric and ancient art and cultures. I use earthy colour palettes that we can find in ancient Greek pottery, in Egyptian papyrus or on Roman wall paintings.

At this moment, I am exploring white colour nuances on white paper. The image hesitates between being visible and invisible. I treat a colour as a musical note. The narrative of each note is not as important as the sound of their chord. My aim is to create the vibrancy and the harmony that vehicles an emotional state, not a story.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO CREATE?

As a French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty wrote in his book "L'Œil et l'Esprit", artists create in order to complete the lacks of the world. An artist is inspired by the things that exist, but is motivated certainly also by those who don't. This absence of something that the artist would like to see forces him to create it, to offer a new vision, a new image, a new reality. If I need some more transparency, some more poetry or lightness in the world, I make it by hand. I invent propositions as the responses to what is missing. What motivates me to make art is the desire to externalize my internal images, and to give a physical appearance to melodies that sound in me, to forces that obsess me. Each time when the brush meets the paper, and when a drop of paint touches the surface, I hold my breath. I consider the act of painting as marvellous.

WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION?

Nature has everything that I need. I look for inspiration in a morning fog, in a never-ending rain, in a purple Milan sky, in the smell of winter. Inspiration comes with the first ray of sun, with a wave in the Baltic Sea, with the disappearing line of the horizon and with the trembling night.

Poetry and music are also important sources of inspiration. I try to coexist, in my paintings, the poetic simplicity with musical vigor.

IF YOU'RE IN A CREATIVE BLOCK - HOW DO YOU GET OUT OF IT?

I try to take a distance and not to force myself to produce. The breaks are very important, and a creative block is a natural thing. While blocked in my mind, I try to read something new. Sometimes I find the answers in the books that are not at all related to my artistic projects.

DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE IN THREE WORDS.

Mysterious, mythological, poetry.







WALK US THROUGH YOUR PROCESS; FROM START TO FINISH.

I start from choosing the paper. The paper is the basis of my work, because it dictates my choice of technique, colours and gestures. I am especially interested in exploring different types of paper and discovering its characteristics and subtleties. At this moment I am using Asian paper that I appreciate for its lightness and softness, for its resemblance to skin. I'd say that I work not only on paper, but with paper – carefully and respectfully. For me, it is a living entity. I lay the sheet and try to imagine what kind of forms could be nesting there. Then I deposit a colour by applying little drops of paint. The process is quite slow, followed by hesitation at every touch. My current paintings are organized of dots, of the contacts between me and the paper. I use dots because it allows me to create light and transparent spaces, without covering the paper completely. Because I think that each sheet of paper is already an image, it always has something on it, it is never empty. As an archeologist, I try to understand the sheet like it was a research area. Every dot is like a beginning, as if I wanted to say or to reveal something, but it was stopped.

When I feel that my work is finished, I leave it to dry. I often think about my work at night.

DO YOU LISTEN TO ANYTHING WHILE CREATING?

Music has to go along with my work. If I listen to music while painting, it should reflect my mood and creative intentions. Sometimes I put on some classical music, like Debussy, Erik Satie, Chopin or Ciurlionis. I have also discovered a young singer and song writer Tamino whose songs remind me of ancient prayers or enchantments. The melodic modulations and Arabic nuances create an unpredictable sensation that I would like to transmit in my paintings.

DO YOU HAVE A RITUAL BEFORE APPROACHING A NEW ARTWORK?

My ritual consists of observing paper and of touching it. I believe that it is necessary to feel its softness and fineness, to discern the surface grain and to hear its rustling in order to create the right image. My aim is to listen to paper and create without hurting it.

BEST ADVICE YOU EVER GOT OR TRY TO FOLLOW.

My painting professor in Brera Academy, Roberto Casiraghi, once said that the best work is the one that surprises its creator.

I think that it is essential to be amazed by your own work. Otherwise, it could become mechanical.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR MEDIUM?

Paper, as well as paint, is like a skin. Creating a contact between these two fragile entities is my biggest passion. When a droplet of paint meets the paper surface, the dialogue begins. Paper can accept or reject this droplet, let it penetrate or refuse it. What I love most, is observing the process of fusion of these different materials, different worlds and personalities.

AS AN ARTIST, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR CAREER HAS BEEN IMPACTED IN ANY WAY BY THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A WOMAN?

Up until this moment, being a woman has never been a disadvantage. There are more and more group shows, galleries and magazines highlighting the work of female artists and this trend seems likely to continue. Woman has a strong voice, and I think that today it is being heard.

FATALE ART IS AN ART GALLERY THAT REPRESENTS WOMEN ARTISTS, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS KIND OF INITIATIVE?

I am glad to be represented by this art gallery, and to see my work among such interesting creations of other artists. What I appreciate most about this initiative, is that Camille Cazin aims to connect not only different female artists' expression forms, but also diverse cultures and nationalities.





FANNY GARNICHAT



Fanny Garnichat is a collage artist based in Paris, France.

There's no beginning, nor end.

Fanny creates paper collages through the use of visual supports that saturate and invade our (her) lives, such as flyers, ads and magazines. In the visual multitude of our time, these collages are a vital and precious escape for her. Leaving behind their initial form and context, these chosen fragments merge to bring forth a bewitching dialogue. The artist brings together worlds, to create a weightless harmony.

The poetry of detail.

The artist inebriates the gaze, reconditioning the spirit in an organic visual wave that questions the limits between repulsive and fascinating. Fanny deploys her language of forms and counterforms where colours reign, where the eye wanders, and where the mind gets lost.

She explores the vibration between images, the contradictions in textures, the loss of reference...Through collage, Fanny brings to life poetic and unusual polymorph creatures, like living planets suspended in empty space.





## HOW HAVE YOU BEEN SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC?

In between storms and rain(bows).

## TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF - DID YOU DO ART AS A KID?

Yes and I'll be a kid forever.

## WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO CREATE?

The need to dream and express my vision of life.

## WALK US THROUGH YOUR PROCESS; FROM START TO FINISH.

My work process is quite methodical actually.

First I use to glean in magazines, books and flyers, I walk them and my eyes stop on details that I tear by hand. Then I cut them clean with my chisel, choosing forms I want to create from. Then organize them and work on composition on a big white paper, so I could see and define a form and a good mix.

Then I come back and back to compose until I find and feel that It is it.

## IF YOU'RE IN A CREATIVE BLOCK - HOW DO YOU GET OUT OF IT?

I take a step back, and do a activity or a project completely different. Then I come back.

## WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION?

Absolutely everywhere, but my favorites subjects are the richness of the seabed, the density of dreaming, fantastics and surrealists worlds.

## IN THE PRACTICE OF COLLAGE, THERE ARE TWO SCHOOLS: THE FANS OF THE CUTTER AND THE GENIUSES OF THE CHISEL. WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

100% Chisel.

## YOU PRODUCE YOUR WORKS FROM THE CONTEMPORARY PRESS. WHY THIS MEDIUM? WHAT IS YOUR RELATION TO THE MATTER?

Collage first came to me not as an option, but as a necessity; express myself.

I studied in a Master of Art Direction in visual communication and graphic design, so I saw hundreds of pictures, I learn famous advertisings, great edition books, many graphics posters, images, photography...

When I finish school, after studying 5 years, my head was totally full of images and references, and I was depressed at the thought of spending my day behind an computer working with softwares programs, on subjects that probably wouldn't mean anything to me.

I had a great need to take a break for perspective on it all. I needed to re-appropriate all these images that surrounded me, as if to better digest them, and keep only what interests me the most.

I realized that I really wanted to explore and bring my own imagination to life.

Collage has always been present in my life and my response to Applied Arts subjects.

It was more than saving at that time in my life because it gave me considerable freedom and outlet.

I spent several months exploring continents of shapes by cutting out the images that surrounded me daily. It got visceral.

This period was decisive, it confirmed to me that collage was my medium and that with it I was going to be able to express myself.

This is also when I found my visual writing.

Collage has become my language, it allows me to play with images.











YOUR WORKS SPEAK OF THE BODY AND ARE AT THE BORDER BETWEEN THE SENSUAL, THE EROTIC AND THE MONSTROUS, WHAT IS THE IDEA BEHIND THEM?

Showing that borders in between attraction and repulsion, fascination and disgusting is really thin. It is a matter of balance and it is also something that belongs to everyone's vision. Beauty and monstrosity can take so many forms.

I like to experiment how according to the way I cut and associate a body or any element (food or textile) that we all know, it can totally change the perception and feeling we have on it.

FAVOURITE TOOL IN THE STUDIO?

My chisel. I have a really sentimental link to them, they belonged to my grandmother. They have always been close to me in a way. They have become a real extension of my fingers a bit like Edward Scissorhands.

WHAT'S THE BEST TIME FOR YOU TO CREATE?

Sunny days.

DO YOU LISTEN TO ANYTHING WHILE CREATING?

Always. From music to podcasts, I love having a sound track that wanders with me during my search for images and my cutting of forms.

BEST ADVICE YOU EVER GOT OR TRY TO FOLLOW.

Trust yourself and be patient.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR MEDIUM?

Collage is a universal language. As I love playing with words, collage is for me a marvelous way to play with images.

DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE IN THREE WORDS.

Surrealism, Abundance, Colours.

DO YOU HAVE A NEW PROJECT ON THE HORIZON?

I plan to work on new collages formats, also on animated collages, and collaboration with other artists, and an exhibition in a gallery in Marseilles (south of France) - as soon as it's possible.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS?

I would love to travel with collages, going to other countries, meet and collaborate with various horizons artists.

WHICH FEMALE ARTISTS WOULD YOU DREAM TO COLLABORATE WITH (PAST OR PRESENT) AND WHY?

Powerful women such as music artists Nathy Peluso, Princess Nokia, Bonnie Banane, Blu Samu, Soko, creative women such as Amélie Pichard, photographers Maisie Cousins and Petra Collins. I love their singular way to express themselves and how they propose a new reading of femininity through their universes.

AS AN ARTIST, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR CAREER HAS BEEN IMPACTED IN ANY WAY BY THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A WOMAN?

No, I so feel lucky to be a woman.

FATALE ART IS AN ART GALLERY THAT REPRESENTS WOMEN ARTISTS, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS KIND OF INITIATIVE?

I'm proud to be part of this new feminine family and I hope it will show people new horizons.



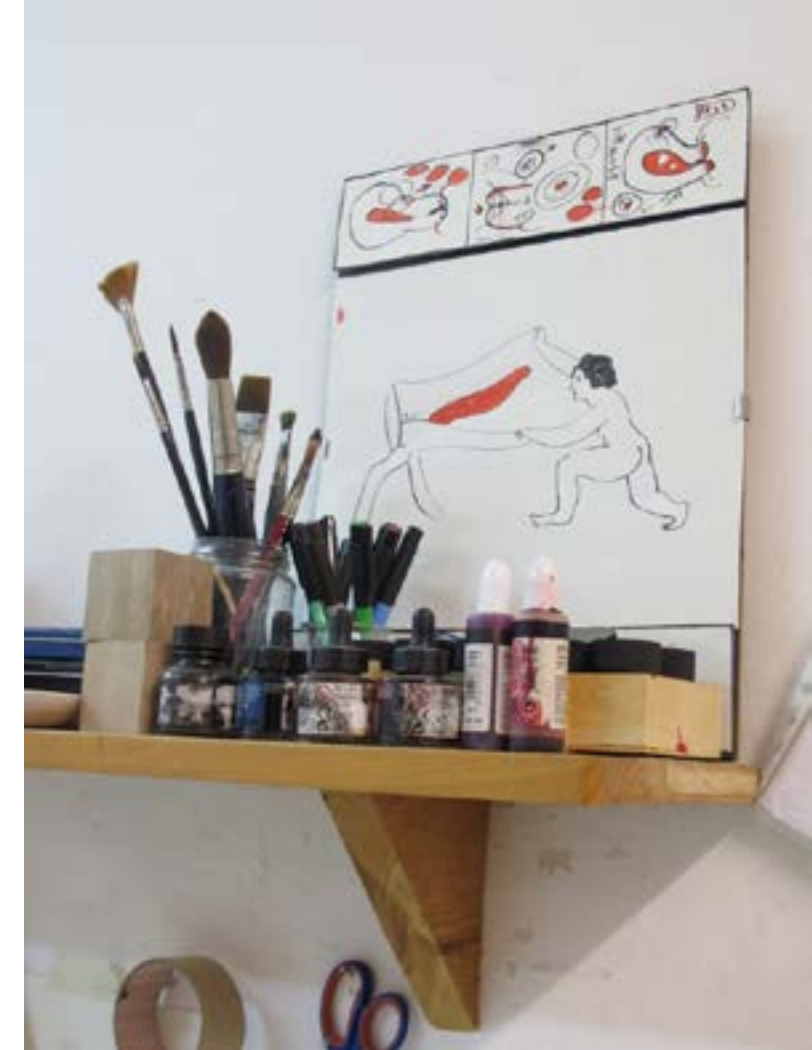
LAIA ARQUEROS



Laia Aqueros (Almería, 1985) graduated in Fine Arts and Illustration. She studied between Granada, Brussels and Barcelona, where she lives since 2008. Her work embraces several disciplines such printmaking, illustration, pottery and audiovisual projects like videoclips and art concept for videogames. Awarded with the first Spanish National Award for Young Illustrators in 2012, her work has been published in books and magazines, and exhibited in galleries and institutions both nationally and internationally.

#### STATEMENT

The graphic approach of my work feeds from classical iconography to generate a completely personal discourse, with Byzantine, Greco-Roman and Japanese reminiscences. My particular gender archaeology is narrated through mainly female or anthropomorphic figures, in mysterious and even cryptic ritual scenes. The aim of my work is to create a new symbolic discourse linked to my life experiences where the voice and visibility of women are the center of attention and reflection.





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#### HOW HAVE YOU BEEN SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC?

Not very well, it is not easy and there are many ups and downs.

#### YOUR WORK FOCUSES ON THE RECONSTRUCTION OR CREATION OF A MYTHOLOGY WHERE FEMALE CHARACTERS HAVE THE MAIN ROLES, HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THE IDEA OF CROSSING ANCIENT MYTHS AND CONTEMPORARY REFLECTION ON THE PLACE OF WOMEN?

From a book I had when I was a child and from seeing classical works in different museums. Our culture is based on the teachings and stories that were explained with it. What I understand that attracts me is that fantastic and sadly timeless setting in that to be able to reverse the male mythos, to appropriate certain narratives of biased historical rigour and work on a discourse symbolic new, to create a mythology of their own.

YOU ARE A MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTIST AND MOST OF YOUR PRODUCTIONS ARE PLURAL, LIKE SOME OF YOUR SCULPTURES WHICH ARE ALSO MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, OR YOUR DRAWINGS OR ETCHINGS WHICH ARE ALSO INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING OTHER OF YOUR WORKS. HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THIS IDEA?

It hasn't been a conscious choice, my journey between different disciplines has a natural flow. I just remain faithful to my curiosity and interest in experimenting with new techniques and/or materials, combined with what feels relevant or concerning to me at the moment. I have been introducing myself to the study of gender archaeology, given that my work is like an archaeological site, I liked the idea of playing with the traditional museographic language of this type of museum. They say that things were like that and the tools were used like that (and we can see that this is only an interpretation of history), so I give mine.

#### TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF - DID YOU DO ART AS A KID?

Memories and photo albums show that the interest and curiosity were always there. I am grateful for the support and motivation I received from the people closest to me who never hesitated to encourage it. I can say that it came very naturally to focus my studies on fine arts at the moment when I had to decide about it.





WHAT'S THE BEST TIME FOR YOU TO CREATE?

Early morning or just after lunch.

DO YOU LISTEN TO ANYTHING WHILE CREATING?

Yes, I listen to the radio or podcasts.

DO YOU HAVE A RITUAL BEFORE APPROACHING A NEW ARTWORK?

I have no ritual other than constancy in my work, trying to go to the workshop every day. Whether or not you have a commission and/or a work in mind, you can always read and research on the subjects you are topics that arouse your curiosity, in my case, classical antiquity, mythology and its mythology and its surprising and sometimes sad timelessness, the contact with nature and the observation of other nature and the observation of other living beings, the history of women, both past and present, the women, those of yesterday and those of today in my environment. And the feminist issues, which lead you to question and reflect on vital matters, provoking an urgency issues, urgently provoking the need to speak through the intentionality of your work.

BEST ADVICE YOU EVER GOT OR TRY TO FOLLOW.

Don't limit your work to one artistic language. Try everything.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR MEDIUM?

The process and the experimentation. When I work with printmaking or ceramics, for example, the technique itself is a ritual. The process in both disciplines is laborious and allows you to keep rethinking, modifying, expanding your initial idea, to which is added that the result is never entirely predictable and the surprise factor ends up being addictive.

DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE IN THREE WORDS.

Narrative, strong, primitive

DO YOU HAVE A NEW PROJECT ON THE HORIZON?

Continuing with my line of research I am working on a new sound sculpture more complex than the previous ones, related to mythology and gynaecological taboos.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS?

Due to my ultra-self demanding personality I prefer not to think long term, I am more of a short term goal person.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT SO FAR?

To be able to develop and share my work.

WHENEVER WE ENTER THE NEXT NEW NORMAL, WHAT NEW THINGS YOU'D LIKE TO IMPLEMENT IN YOUR CREATIVE JOURNEY?

More space for self-care. To give me permission to get out of the capitalist accelerations inertia and get back into a calmer rhythm for my creative process and work production.







#### WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO CREATE?

All the research routes of my work are strongly linked to my personal experience, they are always translations of my vital moments.

#### WALK US THROUGH YOUR PROCESS; FROM START TO FINISH.

I don't have a closed working dynamic, so each process is different. It can start with a book, an anger or a slight feeling that you identify as an intention. Everything happens in the studio, thinking with my hands. You feel that you have finished a piece but you don't consider anything as final, the investigation continues and leads to other processes.

#### IF YOU'RE IN A CREATIVE BLOCK - HOW DO YOU GET OUT OF IT?

So far, continue and insist, being very stubborn. But I need to change my strategy, I suffer a lot.

#### WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION?

Everywhere; from the lame pigeon that comes to my window for lunch every day, to books, films, series, archaeological museums, the work with my students and colleagues, my sessions with the osteopath, the drawings of my gynaecologist, talks with my chosen family.

#### FAVOURITE TOOL IN THE STUDIO?

A kettle.

#### WHICH FEMALE ARTISTS WOULD YOU DREAM TO COLLABORATE WITH (PAST OR PRESENT) AND WHY?

Kiki Smith, Louise Bourgeois, Tracy Emins, Carol Rama, Romaine Brooks, Colette, Annette Messager, Judy Chicago, Moor Mother, Jenny Hval, Lusesita Delicatessen, Marta Beltrán, Ariadna Guiteras, Marta Nieto, and Clara- Iris Ramos.

#### AS AN ARTIST, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR CAREER HAS BEEN IMPACTED IN ANY WAY BY THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A WOMAN?

Being a woman is a fact that defines and affects all aspects of our lives. We fight for change it, so it also affects my professional life. Being a woman affects my work, from the conception of my projects and its realization and also in situations of clear sexist behaviour.

#### FATALE ART IS AN ART GALLERY THAT REPRESENTS WOMEN ARTISTS, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS KIND OF INITIATIVE?

Perfect, as long as we keep talking about artists and "women artists" there will be a reason to create non-mixed projects to reclaim the invisibility of our work.

NADIA NIZAMUDIN

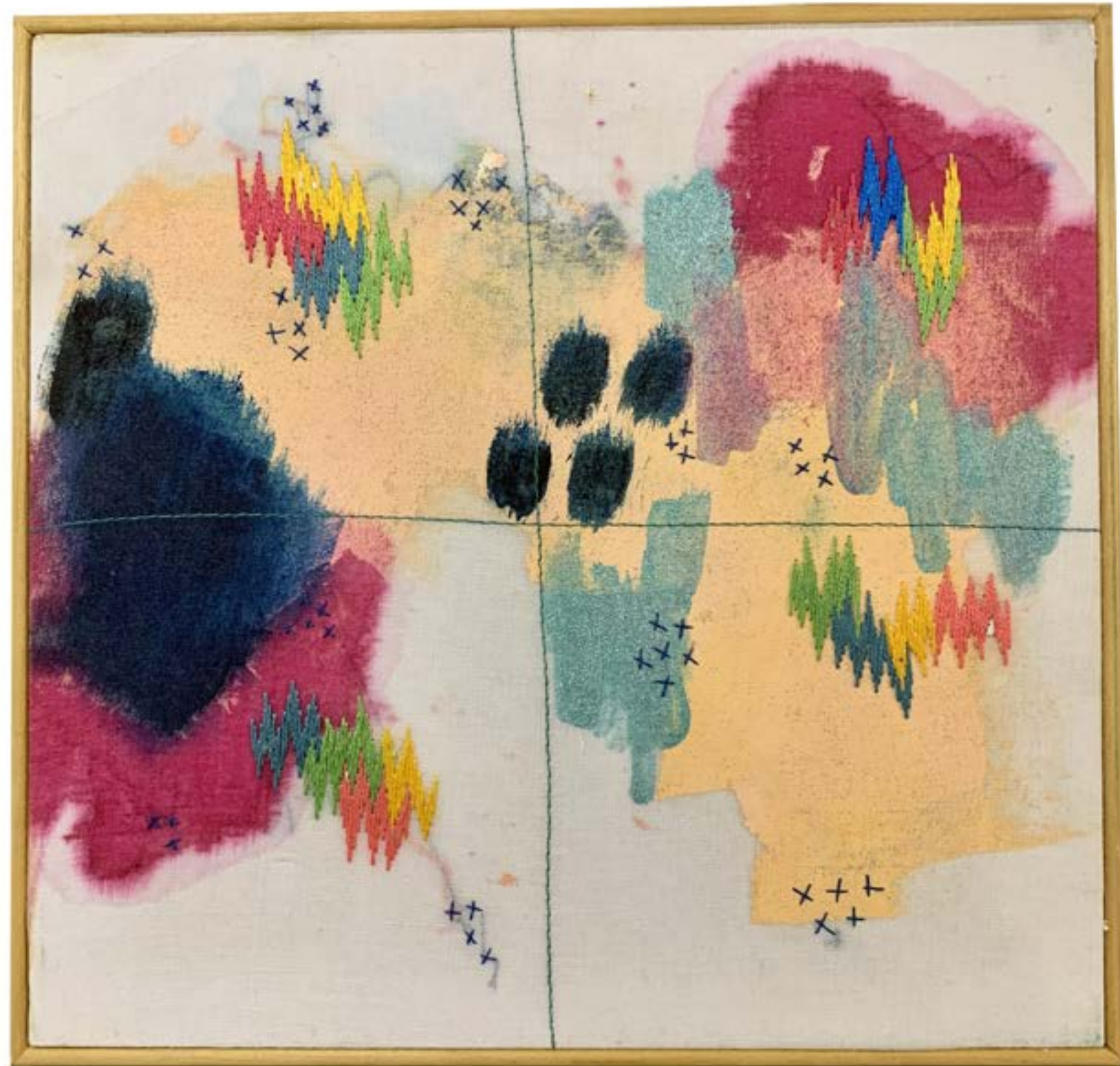




My artwork has the same underlying theme across the different materials: they always explore the concept and raw pain of grief, everyday fatigue and romanticism of day to day tasks.

Although the concept is rather morbid and sad, my work aims to express the opposite of that by using bright, happy colors and almost a dreamlike narrative of subjects. In my collage work I love to use the subjects as exploration of these themes, to convey the message that in our everyday world pain and sadness are almost inaudible and silent, except if you look closely enough, or if you bothered to look at all. For my textile mixed media work, my embroidery stitches the message of heartbreak that exists in between the folds and lines of the paint strokes. Seen in small scales and in groups, the suffering seems to offer a sense of the sufferer's strength and beauty.

I almost always prefer to use found images and recycled or reclaimed items for my work. I feel that it adds to the story and character of what I am trying to express. Used textiles always have a story to them and their fine wear and tear contribute to the fragility of human emotions.



## HOW HAVE YOU BEEN SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC?

I go back and forth between gratitude, joy, weary and a state of malaise. It's a strange situation to be in.

## TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF - DID YOU DO ART AS A KID?

Like many artists I was a creative kid, lots of scissors and glue, colouring books, crafts. I started my interest in paper and textile early, as early as my teenage years.

## WHATEVER YOUR SERIES, YOUR WORK IS BOTH WARM AND MELANCHOLIC, POETIC AND PROTESTING. HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THIS DUALITY IN YOUR WORK?

A few years into my art career I realized that I am mostly interested in conceptual work. I like the idea of having the platform and ability to express or interpret what I process with relation to the way the world works. My work is entirely that.

## YOUR LAST SERIES TREATS ABOUT THE REALITY OF MOTHERHOOD, PARTICULARLY DURING THE PANDEMIC, WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS PARTICULAR PERIOD TO TALK ABOUT THIS REALITY?

I have never been a stay at home mom, and I never really wanted to, because I have always been a working mother. But I found out that I go back and forth between enjoying my motherhood moments being so close to my kids, to the struggle of also keeping up with office work. I want to bring attention to that.

## IN YOUR WORKS, THE SUBJECT OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN COMES UP REGULARLY, IT IS A THEME VERY RARELY TREATED IN ART, WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS SUBJECT?

The same reason that I think art is a platform that not many people can have, and I like to put to good use bringing awareness and light into a topic people are uncomfortable to talk about. I have been interested in this topic ever since I became a mom, and the horrors of knowing that this is happening to children all around.

## WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO CREATE?

The promise of success, even though I don't know what that is. I am driven by boredom and restlessness too. Also sometimes I get inspiration and I can't stop.

## WALK US THROUGH YOUR PROCESS; FROM START TO FINISH.

I usually paint my fabric beforehand so I will reserve a painting day where I will just paint. And then I would just take my time embroidering them. I bring my pieces everywhere, and I am not really gentle with them. I don't treat them like a delicate subject matter because they are not.

## IF YOU'RE IN A CREATIVE BLOCK - HOW DO YOU GET OUT OF IT?

I don't. I just go through it and then wait for inspiration to strike again. I do know like everything else in my life my mind has a way of wanting to relax and recharge and I am ok with that. But for when I need a push, I spend time painting or cutting fabrics, doing studio prep. That always gets things going.

## WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION?

I get inspired by everyday things and moments. Someone brushing the back of the neck of the person they love, a stranger's laugh. I get inspired by the mood I get out of those moments. A train ride is always a good place.

## WHAT'S THE MOST RIDICULOUS THING YOU BOUGHT FOR ART?

Nothing ridiculous as yet, thank God.







#### FAVOURITE TOOL IN THE STUDIO?

My paint rag. It is very important! I cannot work without it because I am a messy painter.

#### WHAT'S THE BEST TIME FOR YOU TO CREATE?

Anytime when my kids are not around. I hate being interrupted when I am in the process (unless it is embroidery) so I prefer to paint or collage when I have free time.

#### DO YOU LISTEN TO ANYTHING WHILE CREATING?

On and off. Lately it has been on. I love listening to Podcasts, ranging from Art podcasts to Poetry.

#### DO YOU HAVE A RITUAL BEFORE APPROACHING A NEW ARTWORK?

I like to do research, however small the research is. I like to read about the concept or topic I want to express, and if the technique is something different or new, then I like to refer to old techniques books for ideas.

#### BEST ADVICE YOU EVER GOT OR TRY TO FOLLOW.

I love Roger Ebert's "The Muse visits during the act of creation, not before. Don't wait for her. Start alone." I think it is going to be my life's mantra.

#### WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR MEDIUM?

That it is so easy to cart around everywhere, and it is forgiving and pliable, and that it is strong without being hard.

#### DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE IN THREE WORDS.

Vibrant, Vivid, Tactile.

#### DO YOU HAVE A NEW PROJECT ON THE HORIZON?

I am currently working on work for this project/group show with the Museum of Contemporary Art Nashville and I am excited to show the work!

#### WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS?

To have a solo show, most definitely. But I am taking my time with it, I really want my solo show to be thoughtful and gripping.

#### WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT SO FAR?

Being represented internationally by 2 female run art galleries. I love that it means they understand the nature of my work and also the schedule and limitations.

#### WHENEVER WE ENTER THE NEXT NEW NORMAL, WHAT NEW THINGS YOU'D LIKE TO IMPLEMENT IN YOUR CREATIVE JOURNEY?

Being more conceptual, trying out new mediums.

#### WHICH FEMALE ARTISTS WOULD YOU DREAM TO COLLABORATE WITH (PAST OR PRESENT) AND WHY?

I would like to collaborate with artists who don't use the same medium as I do, preferably a photographer, like Teresa Freitas, or a ceramic artist, like Madeline Donahue

#### AS AN ARTIST, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR CAREER HAS BEEN IMPACTED IN ANY WAY BY THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A WOMAN?

Yes. Especially being a self taught, mother of young kids, with a professional job. I have no time to network, or visit studio openings, which I think is crucial to grow your art as a business.

#### FATALE ART IS AN ART GALLERY THAT REPRESENTS WOMEN ARTISTS, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS KIND OF INITIATIVE?

I love it. I think of the opportunity that the gallery is fighting for us women artists and I love that if it doesn't go to me it goes to a fellow women artist, and that's ok, because we are in this together.







GENEVIÈVE L'HEUREUX



Geneviève L'Heureux is a visual artist who graduated in Fine Arts from Concordia University. Her artistic practice, essentially two-dimensional, is part of the concept of Slow Art, a movement claiming ecological aesthetic values.

Between traditional mediums and digital arts, she questions the crazy race in which each human is engaged. The evolution of biodiversity, eco-anxiety and habitat are recurring themes in his work.

Giving an important place to details, Geneviève L'Heureux works on forms and the notion of repetition. She marks time with writing, transposes her reflections through drawing and painting. Her compositions evoke a gallery of imaginary environments in eloquent colors, where the elements of nature take on a singular configuration. This unexpected game of pictorial reorganization gives rise to various abbreviated, intriguing illustrations, reflecting her eccentric universe. The abstraction of her works is intended as a means of revealing, of unmasking, in all preciousness.





## HOW HAVE YOU BEEN SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC?

I've been doing pretty well since the start of the pandemic, since I'm lucky to have a room in my apartment that serves as a drawing studio. Keeping up with a work schedule and doing sports was tough at first, but I quickly adapted. Despite a canceled exhibition, I participated in initiatives set up in response to this COVID crisis, such as a live drawing performance or the sale of illustrations aimed to help homeless people. In the end, I was still able to get a few contracts and I managed to keep my motivation to create.

## TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF - DID YOU DO ART AS A KID?

I think my interest in fine arts when I was a kid was pretty clear to my parents and teachers. I'm happy that I had access to all kinds of material, both at home and at school. I remember drawing on my father's computer using Microsoft Paint (I still have plenty of drawings in a "memories" folder). I also had a satchel in which I put all my drawings. On the cover, I wrote: "At art's boundaries". Inside, there were also comics, kinds of "fashion" files with characters in extravagant outfits, and newspapers (I wrote articles on various subjects, but the content was fictitious). In the basement at my parents' house, we would surely find my first paintings on canvas there. A tiger and a parrot that I painted back in 2001. Otherwise, plastic arts was also the subject in which I always had 100% at school, my projects were taken as examples, I won competitions. Even if I had a lot of friends (and still today, I'm a real social creature), I would choose the option of staying indoors and doing crafts, instead of going outside to play. In short, I really liked the arts and it was also natural and easy for me.

## YOU ARE EXTREMELY SENSITIVE TO THE CAUSE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, HOW DOES THIS MATERIALIZE IN YOUR ARTISTIC PRACTICE?

Basically, I am a lover of nature and animals. I have been a florist and horticulturalist in the past, I garden a lot in my yard, I recently completed the certificate in permaculture design (PDC), I am involved in a citizen committee for the re-naturalization of alleys. So I have this natural curiosity towards living organisms,

ecosystems, etc., but over time, I also developed an increased understanding of the various environmental issues in our society. I was already in favour of the "slow" movement, which advocates slowing down our pace of life. So I became interested in this trend which is also reflected in the field of visual arts, with slow art. I therefore try, in my practice, to reduce my impact on the environment. Indeed, I am interested in how I can turn to a production method that is more respectful of my environment, eliminating any dependence on large suppliers and adapting my artistic practice according to the materials that are available locally, at the time of creation. Thus, the mediums I use are mostly made in-house, from ethically obtained raw materials. This approach allows an awareness towards the origin of materials, as well as an understanding of their value and their impact, re-establishing a close link with nature.

In addition to thinking about the imprint of my work, I also tackle certain themes that reflect my environmental values. For example, I created "Solastagia", a solo exhibition presented at the Maison du développement durable in 2018 as well as at the Jacqueline-De Repentigny Library exhibition room in 2019, which dealt with eco-anxiety. Through this exhibition, I shared my vision of the Earth and the life it conceals. Solastalgia was a study about the rivers around us and the paths they take. It was intended to be an abstract representation of the movements of flowing fluids, but also of inhabited subsoils where, under layers of asphalt and concrete, life continues to swarm, lonely. This series of paintings I have presented were created in reaction to the helplessness I felt towards the changes in our environment. These paintings featured shapes reminiscent of mountains, islands and undergrounds, coalescing into compositions full of detail.

Another project that I have done, in connection with the theme of micro-habitats, is my series of drawings "Formes habitables". These "habitable shapes" are tiny houses, sort of like imaginary structures. Patterned shapes, with details and little corners of life swarming. Hidden, less visible spaces. Sometimes it looks like bugs, or legged huts. Something that takes a walk. Something you can pet. Plant hairs. Soil. Its microfauna.





YOUR ARTWORKS ALWAYS HAVE HILARIOUS TITLES, THEY SEEM TO TELL US THE STORY BEHIND THE PIECE. DO YOU PRODUCE THE ARTWORK AND THE TITLE COMES LATER? OR IS IT THE OTHER WAY AROUND, YOU DEPICT A STORY THAT YOU HAVE IN YOUR HEAD?

Although my practice revolves mainly around painting and drawing, poetry is omnipresent. In fact, for ten years now I write what I like to call “mini-poems”, inspired by unusual sentences I have heard, moments I have lived, and new words learned, and I post them on my Tweeter page *Licorne en fleurs folles* ([twitter.com/lenfleursfolles](https://twitter.com/lenfleursfolles)).

Often, writings will be grafted onto my work afterwards, the shapes and the patterns on the paper inspiring me to write something. These texts can be seen in the title or accompanying the work. Other times, it will be the other way around, because a combination of words will have inspired me to create something.

Maela Ohana, an artist and independent curator, also says this about the pivotal role of storytelling and poetry in my art: “She writes short mini-poems on a daily basis - sometimes just three or four words long, unexpected combinations that evoke surrealist thought-imagery. Often, these abstracted literary fragments germinate an idea for her illustrations, loosely translating themselves into equally abstracted pictorial elements - colour, line and form. It is a wonderful exercise to see these illustrations as mini-poems themselves - curious, surprising moments with no beginning, middle or end, that invite the imagination into a world of infinite possibility.”

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO CREATE?

I am a person who really marvels at anything. I’m going to see somethings, and I’m going to be super excited and inspired, while it’ll leave others very neutral. Every object, element in nature, animal, if I observe them, I see them first in the real way (as in the real), but I want/ can imagine them differently.

And my motivation comes in a way from my willingness to share this way of seeing things. I take shapes that appeal to me, and my goal is to show how I perceive the thing, or how my brain has transformed it!

I have a pretty fertile imagination. Add to that the fact that I’m curious, or that I welcome thoughts that come to me at any time, all of that together, it gives material to creation!

Besides my desire to bring people into my world, I would say that I also have this idea that art is one of the best vectors for reconnecting us to the emotions we feel towards our living environment.

I said above that the moral values that drive me are intimately linked to my artistic work; they are as much by the themes that I approach, inviting reflection, as by the small imprint that I try to have.

I often think about how I can make a difference for the environment. As a citizen, I think one of the most important things is to lead by example. And I try to do it by connecting more to nature, by being aware of my environment, by observing (one of the first principles in permaculture!), by greening my apartment, my yard, my alley, by promoting biodiversity, by creating conversations with my neighbors.

Our productivity-driven societies shrink the human being. But art and nature have the possibility of rendering it to all its dimensions. So my motivation also comes from the fact that my art (and more art in general, in our lives) can help people to be more interested in the environment.

IF YOU’RE IN A CREATIVE BLOCK - HOW DO YOU GET OUT OF IT?

When I experience a blockage, I stop. I’m not the type to persevere (being furious) after a work. Often, I will put it aside for a while and come back to it. Everything seems clearer afterwards! And I see where something was missing, where I had to place an element, the little flashes of, “ah, this is the colour that belongs right here” come back.

FAVOURITE TOOL IN THE STUDIO?

Definitely an oil paint stick.







#### WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION?

As mentioned above, when my inspiration does not come from writing, it comes from the little things that amaze me, nature as well as objects. I draw a lot more by memory than by observation. Although I do studies on subjects at times, because suddenly I'm really intrigued by how ferns reproduce; there I'm going to look at a picture and redraw it. But it will never be realistic. I will rather resume forms that appeal to me. Sometimes at night I fall asleep and see super beautiful colour mixes together, and then I get mad because I would have to get up to take note of my ideas. But I am comfortable in my bed. Except I'm still glad I got the flash.

#### WHAT'S THE MOST RIDICULOUS THING YOU BOUGHT FOR ART?

I can't think of anything lately, but I do remember buying some funny things for my Sculpture and Material course with Danica Jojich at Concordia University in 2009. As part of a performance, I bought Easter marshmallows in the shape of a yellow duck. I also bought sparklers that went on each duck, which I then distributed to each person in the class.

#### WHAT'S THE BEST TIME FOR YOU TO CREATE?

I'm a morning person! When I wake up early I am super productive.

#### DO YOU LISTEN TO ANYTHING WHILE CREATING?

Yes, I often listen to music. Either the album of the moment, or playlists that I created. I listen to a lot of emerging and local music. I have been hosting a show since 2013 on CISM 89,3 FM, the student radio station of the University of Montreal, so I regularly discover new singers.

#### DO YOU HAVE A RITUAL BEFORE APPROACHING A NEW ARTWORK?

I don't have any specific rituals other than a lot of observation from the start. I visualize where

I am at ; I take a step back, I move closer, I step back again. And I have to make sure my work environment is in order. In the studio, my primary colours, white and black have to be on my paint palette. I must have my painting mediums and my solvent near me. A rag. My gloves. Everything must be accessible, and above all: it must be a minimum structured. In drawing, my table must be free, I need space for my ideas to be clear!

#### BEST ADVICE YOU EVER GOT OR TRY TO FOLLOW.

I have fond memories of several courses that were memorable for me at the University, and especially of the advice that professors gave me. Advice that I followed and which guided me throughout my artistic career. I remember Shelley Reeves, in my first year, she was my painting teacher. She kept repeating to me: "Geneviève, you should switch to oil!". Because I was painting in acrylics, and she found that the richness of the oil colours would bring my artwork much more justice. She also encouraged me to do large formats. She found that the small sizes were restrictive for me. Another teacher who stood out to me was Sylvain Bouthillette, who taught the painting class the following year. One of the projects to do was called "The unfinished painting", and what he made us work on was the idea of stopping painting at the right moment, even if we had the impression that the work was not finished. This lesson, (more than an advice) still helps me to this day.

#### WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR MEDIUM?

Thinking of painting, it almost makes me salivate! I have that feeling, in fact, by mixing the colours. It almost seems to taste good. I like the plasticity of the paint. What it looks like once on the canvas. I love to see it transform in front of me. I love that the paint that comes out of the tube can give as many results as the ideas that emerge from each person.

DO YOU HAVE A NEW PROJECT ON THE HORIZON?

I am working on a series of medium format paintings, which I will soon finish! This is a series I started in 2017. At the end of each painting session (when I was working on other paintings), I continued to work on these paintings by reusing the unused colours that I had left on my palette. This year, I moved into a studio upstairs above the one I had before, and it made me want to continue this series. There are 16 paintings in all. I take the series from where it is, completing the colours that had been applied somewhat randomly. I go over certain colours, I pass over certain colours again, or completely redo entire passages. So far, I have received good feedback from my studio roommates, so it motivates me to finish it.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS?

I would like to be able to do this job all my life, and achieve in the short term a salary that would allow me to be able to live from it. I would like to be able to create solo exhibition projects more regularly, I would like work opportunities to be more accessible but also always more stimulating and interesting. I got struck by the images I saw from the studio of the artist Juan Miró when I saw the exhibition on his life at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MN-BAQ) in 2019. I know it seems unreal to want such a big studio for yourself. Well, it's true that it could be smaller! But having a studio just for me, which I wouldn't have to rent every month, and a little bigger than the one I have at the moment, that would really be something I would like to have. After my bachelor's degree, I hesitated to pursue a master's degree in visual arts. I had started working as a substitute in arts in elementary and high school, and I wondered if I should not go study in teaching... On the other hand I had always worked in arts organizations as a part-time job and management also interested me. I wanted to find a job with a certain stability so I opted to continue my studies at HEC, by registering for the DESS in Management of Cultural Organizations.

When I think about it, I'm glad I did, except it seems like sometimes I wish I had continued with the MA in Art. My goal in choosing management was to be

able to find a job that would bring me some financial security, but I was so disillusioned with the cultural sector. I think I have never applied to so many jobs in my entire life between 2012 and 2015. It's super hard to find something that is not on contract with good conditions, a good salary... I had to combine so many jobs to get there, that sometimes I had nine tax forms at the end of the year. Project manager here, community manager there. And other jobs like promotional agent or even bartender. In addition to the (sacred!) volunteering, as a journalist or cultural mediator.

I got tired, and it was not until 2016 that I made the decision that I would go back to doing art again. And I'm really happy that I made that choice. But there is nothing guaranteed in this artistic field. This is why I aspire to be able to work as an artist in the long term, while wishing that this profession is more valued in our society. And that damn myth that artists create through suffering! No. The support also leads to creativity, and that's what I would like to wish for all artists.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT SO FAR?

I am still proud to have had my first solo exhibition in 2010, when I was starting my career, in a recognized art centre, under the wings of curator François Renaud who believed in my work. It was the exhibition "Un instant de distraction", at the Diane-Dufresne Art Center (previously the Repentigny Exhibition Center).

At the time, he wrote this in the press release for the exhibition: "To enter Geneviève L'Heureux's creative world is to take the risk of being pleasantly caught up in a contagious joy of living where imaginative worlds, overflowing with forms, signs, symbols and colours are accompanied by poetic texts which come to animate, to varying degrees, the mad race in which each human is engaged. This polymorphous visual exultation sharpens the visitor's senses. The latter is invited to dive into his unconscious and to tell his own stories through the works presented, which under absurd appearances do not hide the truths which are revealed to him only if he knew how to keep his child's heart."

THE UNICORN FACTORY - 69

WHENEVER WE ENTER THE NEXT NEW NORMAL, WHAT NEW THINGS YOU'D LIKE TO IMPLEMENT IN YOUR CREATIVE JOURNEY?

I've been saying for a while that I'm interested in incorporating living materials (plants, mosses, etc.) into my works. I also had this idea of making insect hotels. But that would really take me out of my two-dimensional universe based solely on painting and drawing... All that is still being considered.

WHICH FEMALE ARTISTS WOULD YOU DREAM TO COLLABORATE WITH (PAST OR PRESENT) AND WHY?

There is an artist who inspires me a lot and whose work I have followed for a very long time; Allison Schulnik. I think it's her so unique universe with her characters that are a strange, or scary... As much in her animated videos (like "Forest") than in her paintings. I also love the texture in her paintings. Otherwise, I also really like Dana Schutz. I have also been following her work for years. I also love the work of Cindy Phenix. She has so much her own style, with all these shapes that almost look like legos, puzzles or needlepoint embroidery. I also really like the work of Josiane Lanthier. I even discovered recently that she has already rented the painting studio that I have now, before me! I love the paintings of Leonie Dishaw, who is also a musician. I also find Sophie Privé's work great. Finally, more recently, I came across the work of the duo CHIAOZZA (Adam Frezza & Terri Chiao).

AS AN ARTIST, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR CAREER HAS BEEN IMPACTED IN ANY WAY BY THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A WOMAN?

I could not say whether in the context of a group exhibition, a selection committee could have disadvantaged my application. I do not believe I have experienced the direct impact of any discrimination in this regard. Now, of course, we have been able to observe, throughout the history of art, discriminatory situations faced by women artists and their works in the world of contemporary art. The struggle for women's rights continues, until the changes in mentalities really result in fair treatment.

FATALE ART IS AN ART GALLERY THAT REPRESENTS WOMEN ARTISTS, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS KIND OF INITIATIVE?

I think that giving one more voice to women artists makes sense in a society where the relationship of domination of men over women persists. Too many people still have prejudices about the role of women. Have reservations about the presence of women in politics and business. Do not adhere to the principle of equality.

Women continue to be paid less than men and struggle to break into sectors traditionally attributed to men. So we will continue to give each other the places we would not have if we continued to wait for them!

ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE US TO KNOW?

Yes! That I have been collaborating with the author Jolène Ruest (Monogamies, Bruit la crowd, Les danseurs étoiles parasite ton ciel) since 2019 on « Toutes sortes de » (or "All kinds of"), a project of short artists' books inspired by fanzines, illustrating poems intended for "big kids" and "mini-adults" under different themes. We published "All kinds of colouring rides" last December, and it's available on my website: <https://gelheureux.com/collections/toutes-sortes-de>.



CAMILLE LESCABEAU



Camille Lescarbeau is a multidisciplinary artist based in Montreal.

After spending over a decade in the world of dance, she now dedicates herself to the visual and textile arts. In 2017, she completed her bachelor's degree in Art History and Visual Arts at Concordia University.

She kicked off 2018 with a stay at the NES Artist Residency in Iceland. After having developed her most recent poetry sequel as well as a series of embroideries on handmade paper, her words were published for the first time in the magazine NYX vol. 04 — and her work was displayed at the Livart.







HOW HAVE YOU BEEN SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC?

It's been a very strange moment. Like everyone, I have worried a lot and questioned much in my life, but also felt very grateful for what I have. I have spent months adapting my apartment to make it a space where I can work on my MFA and I am really amazed by this space I have created for myself. Since I lost access to my studio at the beginning of the pandemic, I got a lot of time to reflect and think about who I am, what brought me to make work in this specific way and what is vital for me in my practice. I got a little forced break from making and got a lot of time to think, which feels important.

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF - DID YOU DO ART AS A KID?

I was a dance kid! I danced for a long time and I truly loved it. I took it very seriously. I never missed a dance class, never even had the idea of skipping one. The experiences I've had dancing definitely shaped the visual artist I am today.

THE RELATIONSHIP TO TIME AND SLOWNESS IS SOMETHING VERY PRESENT IN YOUR WORK, IN A SOCIETY WHERE EVERYTHING GOES FAST, WHY CHOOSE SLOWNESS? WHERE DID THIS COME FROM?

I've always felt I had a specific rhythm to me. If you asked my parents, they could tell you I've always liked taking my time. I've always felt like my body resisted going fast. In terms of my art practice, since I love learning new processes and always went from one technique to another, I realized I seemed to always go for the slowest, most difficult and ridiculous way of doing something.

Looking back, I believe it partly comes from my dance background. I find repetition soothing. I like slow and simple processes because on most days, I will know I simply have to show up and keep going. I also find that working slowly in a repetitive matter is conducive to my creativity. Even though it is slow and repetitive, I enter a place of deep attention to what I do and am always open to changing my course of action if an idea arises.

YOU ASSOCIATE YOUR WORK A LOT WITH CRAFT TECHNIQUES, YOU ALSO ATTRIBUTE TO THE CRAFT A THERAPEUTIC POWER. CAN YOU TELL US WHAT YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Craft has a definite therapeutic power in my opinion and experience. Because it is full of slow and repetitive processes, where every step is equally important and requires so much attention, it is, in a way, a meditation. Because you work with materials, I find it is also a way of connecting to the world around me, and it is very empowering to be able to create things or the repair them. It is a way of embracing the things that are very much there, in the present moment. It keeps me grounded.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO CREATE?

I love materials and processes. I am always curious of what could come out of repeating the same process, of trying to make it a little better, or just to try something different. Because I work in such a slow and repetitive way, my mind wanders a lot while I am making. I usually have many ideas of what to do next before I am even done with a project. I get so excited about them that I usually end up working on many things at the same time.

IF YOU'RE IN A CREATIVE BLOCK - HOW DO YOU GET OUT OF IT?

I don't really try to get out of creative blocks. I feel that these creative blocks are there for a reason. When I don't know what to do in the studio, it's because I need to spend time on other things. I guess this is another one of my ways of choosing to take my time. So although it can be difficult, I try to give myself full permission to be unproductive. Usually, I'll end up working through my box of clothes that need repairing, revisiting old projects, playing around with materials.

WALK US THROUGH YOUR PROCESS; FROM START TO FINISH.

My process varies a lot because I work with all kinds of textile techniques, but these days I focus mostly on paper-making. I select some fibres from my bins, like some mail, old notes or drawings, plants, scraps of fabric. I separate them by colour, cut them up into tiny pieces and place them into pots filled with water. I let the fibres bathe in the water for a day or two. Then, I beat the fibres with my blender. I end up with many colours of paper pulp and prepare my surface for couching. I superimpose the different pulps onto each other and assemble it to form a large piece of paper. I delicately place a sheet of fabric onto the wet paper and press with a sponge to push the water out. I let the paper dry for 3 to 4 days until the moment I can finally discover the different shapes, colours and textures intertwining throughout the work.

WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION?

As I try to reduce the environmental impact of my practice, I try to use only repurposed materials — so I would say that I look for inspiration mostly from materials themselves. I hope to honour them so I take my time with them, I try to listen to them. I am also very inspired by textile history and textiles in general. Wherever I go, I am always drawn to fabrics, cushions, clothes and try to understand how they were made. Recently, I was gifted two beautiful books about textile techniques for the home from the 1970s and the 1940s and feel extremely inspired by them.

WHAT'S THE MOST RIDICULOUS THING YOU BOUGHT FOR ART?

I imagine most don't think of a kitchen blender as a tool for art.

FAVOURITE TOOL IN THE STUDIO?

Scissors.

WHAT'S THE BEST TIME FOR YOU TO CREATE?

12:00 pm - 12:00 am.

DO YOU LISTEN TO ANYTHING WHILE CREATING?

I listen to a lot of podcasts while doing prep or embroidery, but when I make paper I prefer music. Paper making being such a physical process already, I end up dancing and singing quite a bit. I feel it keeps me in the moment and helps me to get into that rhythm. It helps me stay brave in the studio.

BEST ADVICE YOU EVER GOT OR TRY TO FOLLOW.

A friend of mine told me he often asks himself what project he would be doing if he didn't have any material, spacial or temporal limits. I keep going back to this and asking myself the same question.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR MEDIUM?

I love paper because the possibilities for reuse are endless. It is fragile and strong, fluid, resilient. The same material can live many lives, take all kinds of forms, over and over. I find this possibility very moving, because it reminds me that renewal is always possible. I find that paper is very much like humans, always in flux, always changing.

DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE IN THREE WORDS.

Delicate, haptic, poetic.

DO YOU HAVE A NEW PROJECT ON THE HORIZON?

I am preparing my MFA thesis show.





WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS?

I am hoping to keep making art that feels meaningful to me and have the chance to share it. I also wish to deepen my technical and historical knowledge of textile practices and hopefully to be able to share that knowledge with others.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT SO FAR?

In 2017, I did an artist residency in Iceland where I worked on my first series of embroidery on hand-made paper. The nature was scary and beautiful and humbling and inspiring. I think about it all the time.

WHENEVER WE ENTER THE NEXT NEW NORMAL, WHAT NEW THINGS YOU'D LIKE TO IMPLEMENT IN YOUR CREATIVE JOURNEY?

I hope to be able to have a studio outside the home again! I am lucky to have been able to change my apartment to work from home but I know this is not a forever option for me. I am also looking to acquire a loom (or two) and get back into weaving more seriously.

WHICH FEMALE ARTISTS WOULD YOU DREAM TO COLLABORATE WITH (PAST OR PRESENT) AND WHY?

I would learn from and work with the female weavers of Bauhaus like Gunta Stölzl and Anni Albers. They were pioneers and paved the way for generations of textile artists for their experimental approaches and discoveries. It would be an honour to learn from them but also just to bathe in their wildly talented presences.

AS AN ARTIST, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR CAREER HAS BEEN IMPACTED IN ANY WAY BY THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A WOMAN?

Coming from a milieu where being an artist did not seem to be a possibility, I feel I had even less models of what the life of a woman artist could look like.

FATALE ART IS AN ART GALLERY THAT REPRESENTS WOMEN ARTISTS, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS KIND OF INITIATIVE?

I think this is a beautiful initiative and I hope to see more and more like it in the future. As an art historical student, I focused on feminist art history and women artists and it is so evident that many voices have not had a chance to be heard in the past. The time has come for all voices to be heard.







EMMA SUTHERLAND



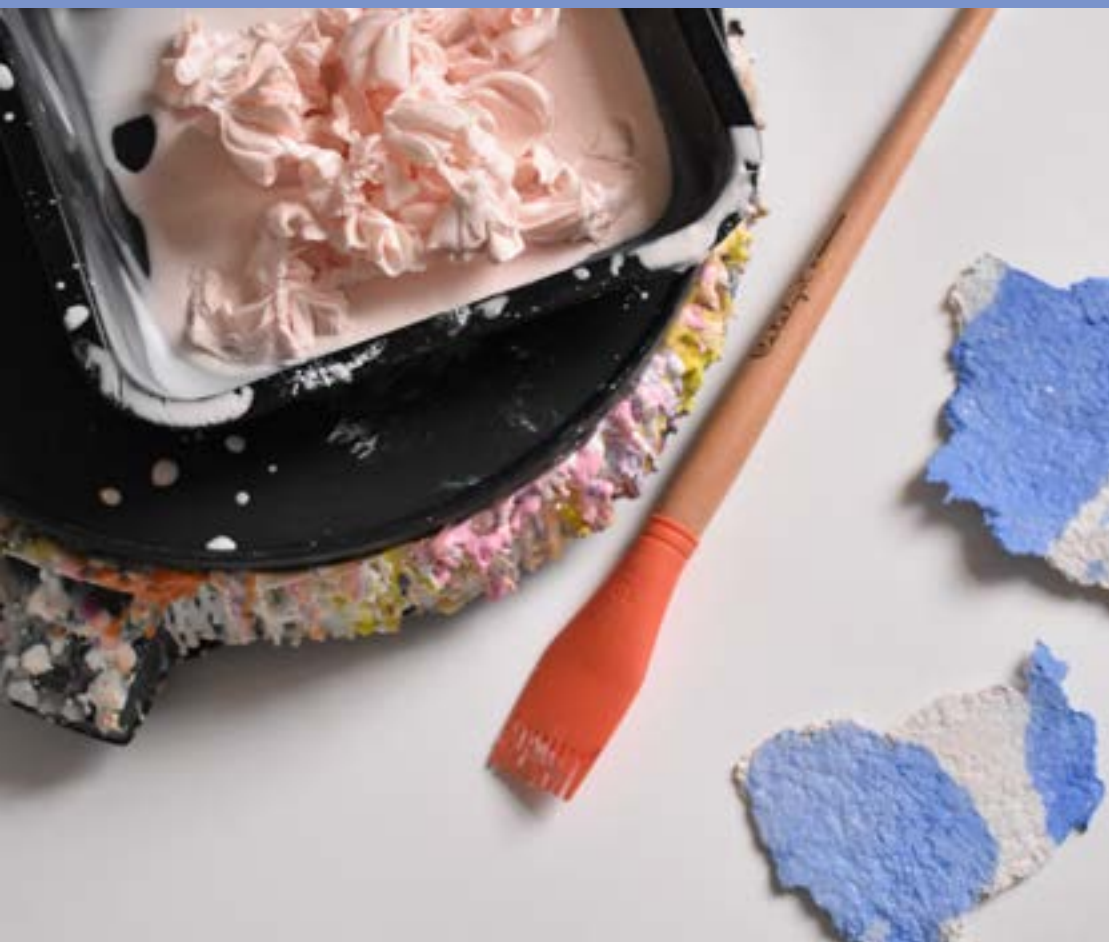
The universal law that energy cannot be created nor destroyed is where my work develops. Working within the paradigm of life, death and rebirth I incorporate dualities found in science, philosophy and spirituality.

The mediums that I use also sit within this model, making my own materials from destruction or conversion of matter. I make my own paper from old books, magazines and ephemera and give life to forgotten images.

I also make encaustic wax made from beeswax and damar resin, both substances created from nature. The combination of materials I use continues to grow and has resulted in a body of work that includes collage, sculpture, textiles and painting.







#### HOW HAVE YOU BEEN SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC?

Trying to just get on with things but taking it very slowly and being kind to myself. I find the endless days are like swimming through syrup. Things could be a lot worse so I feel very grateful.

#### TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF - DID YOU DO ART AS A KID?

I live in my imagination, probably a little too much. Growing up I was always a daydreamer and had my head in the clouds as they say. Dance, music, film and art played a huge part of growing up. Drawing and painting were a hobby I enjoyed but it was only in my late 20s after university and working various jobs that I realized It was all I could think about and knew it was what I had to do.

#### IN SOME OF YOUR WORKS, THE SAME COLOURS POP UP. IS THERE A REASON OR IS IT AN UNCONSCIOUS DECISION?

The colours I use are like a language in my work, I use them to tell a story or set the mood. As my work is about energy and the the law of conversion the neon colours represent pure energy. I also use a lot of pink and red as a way to represent the strength of women, I'm claiming the colour pink back from the usual negative connotations associated with it.

#### YOUR COLLAGE WORKS ARE MADE FROM DIFFERENT MATERIALS EITHER DISREGARDED OR FORGOTTEN, HOW DO YOU COLLECT THEM?

From all sorts of places, old book stores, walking around the street, even other people's homes. You just can't beat a lovely old piece of paper, there's something about the texture and colour that is irresistible.

#### WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO CREATE?

I can't quite describe it, it's instinctual. I don't think about why I need to make art I just know I have to. I ask myself every now and then If money was no object what would I do with my life and all I can ever picture myself doing is creating art.

#### WALK US THROUGH YOUR PROCESS; FROM START TO FINISH.

I'm constantly writing things down, or doodling visions that pop into my head so I have a general idea and direction for what I want to create. It can be a long process if I'm starting from scratch; I have to make my paper, my encaustic medium, add colour to mix batches of paint up and If I'm using collage I search through my stacks of material that I'm always collecting. Other times it feels like magic, once I have all the components it's like a dance and it just flows out.

#### IF YOU'RE IN A CREATIVE BLOCK - HOW DO YOU GET OUT OF IT?

Some days I can tell it's just not going to happen and saying to myself that's ok I can come back tomorrow really helps, I can do some research in the meantime or make some materials to use later. If I still feel blocked the main thing I do is to allow time for play, knowing that I don't have to produce anything for people to see is when I experiment and take risks and that can inspire a whole new series.

#### WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION?

Inspiration really is everywhere for me, It can be in nature, a film I've just watched or even a scrap of old paper. Journaling really helps cement what I'm trying to say though my work and that creates a springboard for the inspiration.

#### WHAT'S THE MOST RIDICULOUS THING YOU BOUGHT FOR ART?

I make my paint on a pancake griddle.

#### FAVOURITE TOOL IN THE STUDIO?

I just got a new silicone sculpting tool that is already a favourite. It's flexible so I can paint with it or use it to create texture.

WHAT'S THE BEST TIME FOR YOU TO CREATE?

Morning is best for me, sometimes even before breakfast, that's when I know there is something that needs to come out of me.

DO YOU LISTEN TO ANYTHING WHILE CREATING?

Since the pandemic I've started listening soundscapes, it keeps me more focused and calm. I've realized I can get too emotional or distracted by music which can be great for experimenting but not when I'm focused on bringing a particular artwork to life.

DO YOU HAVE A RITUAL BEFORE APPROACHING A NEW ARTWORK?

I do a little warm up piece first, it's always the second piece that has the spark.

BEST ADVICE YOU EVER GOT OR TRY TO FOLLOW.

If you're unsure about a work turn it upside down to see if something doesn't look right.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR MEDIUM?

I love that I can make my own materials and that echos what my art is about, the destruction and conversion of matter.

DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE IN THREE WORDS.

Playful, textured and energetic.

DO YOU HAVE A NEW PROJECT ON THE HORIZON?

I'm experimenting with scale and hoping to make some larger pieces.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS?

I want to continue to grow as an artist, I would love to be able to attend residencies once the pandemic is over. I also want to challenge myself and work on larger installations and learn new techniques.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT SO FAR?

Accepting who I am as an artist, my work isn't for everyone and that's ok.

WHENEVER WE ENTER THE NEXT NEW NORMAL, WHAT NEW THINGS YOU'D LIKE TO IMPLEMENT IN YOUR CREATIVE JOURNEY?

I would like to attend more artist meet ups and workshops. It's good to talk to others that share your interests and to never stop learning new skills.

WHICH FEMALE ARTISTS WOULD YOU DREAM TO COLLABORATE WITH (PAST OR PRESENT) AND WHY?

There are almost too many to say, I'm constantly discovering new female artist that are amazing and discovering many that were hidden from history. A present day artist I admire is Katie Bell, I see some similarities in our work, she works in a much larger scale and uses all sorts of discarded building materials. From the past I happened upon Sari Dienes, particularly her Plaster and birch bark collages from the 1950s that I find divine. Again it is her use of materials and textures that I am drawn to.

AS AN ARTIST, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR CAREER HAS BEEN IMPACTED IN ANY WAY BY THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A WOMAN?

When I first started out selling my work I considered using a male alias, I think that says a lot about how I viewed the art world 10 years ago. I am more hopeful now however there is always a new shocking statistic released that keeps it at the forefront of my mind. Even with MoMA declaring an effort to include more women artists in their galleries the numbers show that women are still grossly underrepresented. Gender inequality runs deep in the art world, historically and to this day.



FATALE ART IS AN ART GALLERY THAT REPRESENTS WOMEN ARTISTS, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS KIND OF INITIATIVE?

It is imperative that we have platforms and networks where female artists can be supported and encouraged. The art world reflects the inequality that women face in the world day to day but also has the added baggage of how female artists were hidden and categorized in the past.





FRANCESCA PENSERINI



From Italian origins, Francesca Penserini lives and works in Montreal and Magog. After graduating from Concordia University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1984, she continued her studies in Florence and Chicago.

As a child, she was passionate about drawing and sculpture naturally settled in her career. Over time, she experimented with several production techniques: modeling, assembly, moulding and subtractive woodcarving. She is inspired by complex ancestral methods that she adapts according to her creative needs. She is fond of modeling materials such as plaster, wax and clay. Her creations take the form of installations where the staged elements reveal surfaces marked by the recurring passage of the tool through the material. Without doubt, the family legacy of her mother who was a seamstress.

Intimately linked to nature, the works of Francesca Penserini take a look at the ephemeral, the cycle of life, the passing of time, leaving its erosive imprint on being and on object.

Sandra Miville, 2020

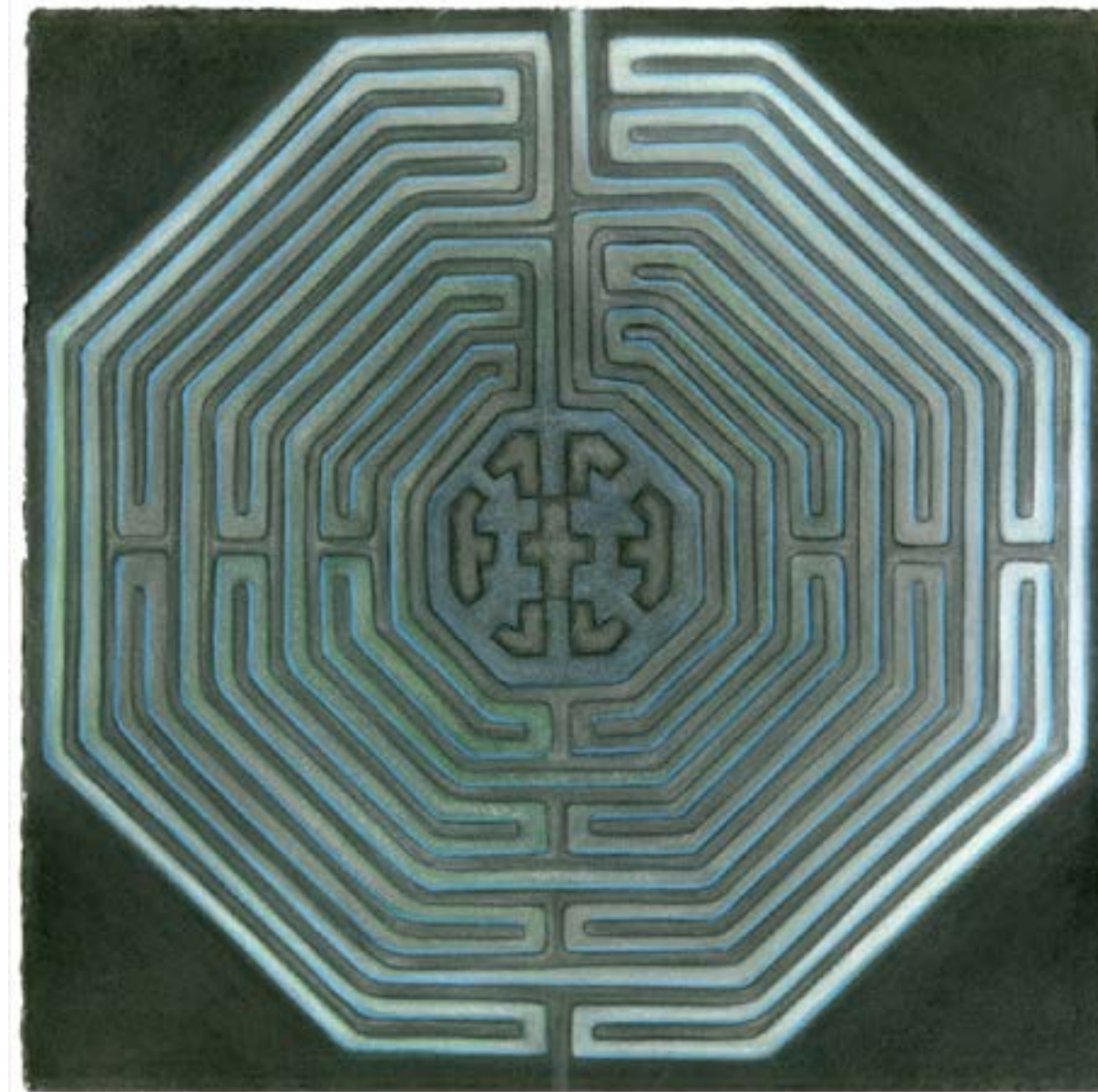
Francesca lives and works in Montreal and Magog. She has completed a B.F.A. at Concordia University in Montreal; MA at Villa Schifanoia in Florence and M.F.A. at the Chicago School of the Art Institute. Her work has been presented in many exhibitions: Quebec's International Linen Biennale in Portneuf; Yvonne L. Bombardier Cultural Center in Valcourt; Rouyn-Noranda MA Museum; Montreal's Maisons de la culture network and Circa art actuel. Her work has been presented in United States, Germany and Italy.

#### STATEMENT

In my creative process, I like to combine drawing and sculpture where elements present their surfaces marked by the multiple passages of the tool on the material or chalk on the drawn surface. Thus, the conceptualization of the work and its media adopts a creative approach that recalls ancient structures and processes

Evolution leaves its mark on living tissue and its constitutive structure adopts characteristics related

to its functions. Revealing the relationship between matter and the identity that transits and reconfigures through it, allows me to sublimate graphic surfaces and volumetric constructions by placing them in interrelation in space. Drawing and sculpture thus offer the elements of a dialogue that exacerbates the tactile quality of textures and brings a balance between the intuitive and the rational.







HOW HAVE YOU BEEN SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC?

My work was part of an exhibition titled 'The cycle of life' presented in Centre culturel Yvonne L. Bombardier, in Valcourt, Quebec. Because of the pandemic, the exhibition, which opened in January, was soon closed to the public. As a compromise, the dates were extended till December 2020; almost a full year's length! In order to give the show more visibility and online access, the Centre culturel Yvonne L. Bombardier organizers published several video interviews with each of the three artists. These documents are still available online. During the beginning of the pandemic, I was able to be in the studio every day and started drawing intertwined knots, lots of knots! This new series is now titled 'Oculus Lucidus'. It is moving along slowly and if everything goes according to plans, it will be part of 'The Biennale du Lin de Portneuf' in June 2021. Also, I've been teaching Creative arts at College level for many years. My colleagues and I have been swamped trying to translate our studio courses for online delivery. Not an easy task! However, the students are showing up and displaying a great level of creativity and this is the best that can be hoped for.

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF - DID YOU DO ART AS A KID?

As a child, I would collect small things, pebbles, cardboard scraps and any rejected fabrics from my mother's studio to build fantastic castles! I was somehow a solitary kid and enjoyed entering imagined worlds. Later, I realized, I could achieve interesting drawings. It gave me precious self-confidence.

IN YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS, YOU LIKE TO COMBINE DRAWING AND SCULPTURE, MAY WE ASK WHY?

The drawings and the sculptures are presented as an installation where they present their surfaces marked by the multiple passages of the tool on the material or chalk on the drawn surface. Thus, the conceptualization of the work and its media adopts a creative approach that recalls ancient structures and processes.

Revealing the relationship between matter and the identity that transits and reconfigures through it, al-

lows me to sublimate graphic surfaces and volumetric constructions by placing them in interrelation in space.

Drawing and sculpture thus offer the elements of a dialogue that exacerbates the tactile quality of textures and brings a balance between the intuitive and the rational.

IN YOUR LAST SERIES "ABYSSES & LABYRINTHS", YOUR WORK EXPLORES THE DEPTHS OF THE UNCONSCIOUS, HOW DID YOU PROCEED TO MATERIALIZE THIS METAPHYSICAL EXPLORATION?

In the series entitled "Abysse & Labyrinths" the abysses refer to the depths of the unconscious while the labyrinths wish to exacerbate the course and the journey. Concretely, the geometric labyrinths and the organic abysses have been drawn graphically so that their lines and chromatic nuances multiply. For their part, the series of semi-sphere sculptures that accompany them have been modelled and painted so that they present corridors and levels where the possibilities of passage become more and more complex and infinite.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO CREATE?

Making art is an act of communication. Making art is the way I chose to apprehend the World. I don't see my Life without art making. It has been a constant challenge to combine motherhood, teaching and art making but I would not want it any different ways. The creative practice opens up a valuable and unique individual strength throughout the labyrinth of decisions we have to make during our life journey.

DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE IN THREE WORDS.

Metaphysical; Installation; Conceptual.

IF YOU'RE IN A CREATIVE BLOCK - HOW DO YOU GET OUT OF IT?

Eat chocolate! My solution is to get busy with something else in the studio that has been 'resting' for a while. It gives me a fresh point of view when I go back with hopefully a new inspiration momentum.





### WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION?

In small things intimately linked to Nature. They are often current things that we don't see anymore because we've grown used to them. I look at the ephemeral, the cycle of life, the passing of time, leaving its erosive imprint on being and on object.

### WHAT'S THE MOST RIDICULOUS THING YOU BOUGHT FOR ART?

Yards of flashy green velvet that I haven't used yet because it looks so precious! I also bought this Vintage Venetian blown glass lamp for future use. But it has gone nowhere...maybe I'll combine it with the velvet one day! J

### FAVOURITE TOOL IN THE STUDIO?

That is a difficult question to answer because I use drawing and sculpting gears. They behave in different ways because of their own physical qualities. For drawing, I love the tactile quality of chalks: pastel, Conté, vine charcoal. In the 3-dimensional side of thing, I model and sculpt. My materials vary depending on the targeted goal. I have a collection of motored chain tools, chisels and so many blades to sculpt with! On the other hand, I appreciate the malleability of clay and plasticine, which is what I've used for the Abysses & Labyrinth series.

### WHAT'S THE BEST TIME FOR YOU TO CREATE?

It all depends on the season and the schedule that I have to compose with. I very often have to 'double shift' starting with teaching a class and then, getting to the studio. So, it often ends up being afternoons and early evenings. I love it when all the surrounding studios empty out and I have the building to myself.

### DO YOU LISTEN TO ANYTHING WHILE CREATING?

Yes, indeed, I enjoy working in parallel to a musical environment. I listen to various types of music ranging from Minimalism (Philip Glass; Richter); New age instrumental (Paterlini); Electronic Dance (Gotan Project & Moby) and Jazz vocal (Melody Gardot & Madeleine Peyroux). It all depends on the mood and type of energy requested by the job at work!







WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR MEDIUM?

Versatility and endless room for growth and development.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS?

Soon, I'll be ending my teaching career and dedicating a maximum of time in the studio. I'd like to concentrate on the art making and allow some energy towards national and international opportunities.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT SO FAR?

Since 2009, my artwork has been presented continuously in many solo and group exhibitions. Jury of peers were involved in most of these events. This tells me, the work is looked at and appreciated.

WHENEVER WE ENTER THE NEXT NEW NORMAL, WHAT NEW THINGS YOU'D LIKE TO IMPLEMENT IN YOUR CREATIVE JOURNEY?

Keep going with the work. Visit exhibitions and museum. Dedicate some time to the Human factor: attend art events and roundtables. Maintain good relationship with people I appreciate and wish to see in person!

WHICH FEMALE ARTISTS WOULD YOU DREAM TO COLLABORATE WITH (PAST OR PRESENT) AND WHY?

Ursula Von Rydingsvard is my heroine! I would love to be in her studio workshop. Her monumental work holds opposite qualities: delicate and massive  
 Artemisia Gentileschi, Camille Claudel, Sonia Delaunay, Tamara De lempicka, Frida Kahlo, Niki de Saint Phalle, are absolutely fascinating women! All had to be extremely determined and strong to keep expressing their creativity. I admire how they were able, even though they went through burdening life experiences, to create wonderfully sensitive work. I am also fond of the collective Gorilla Girls, who took the mandate of denouncing a predominantly male art world.

AS AN ARTIST, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR CAREER HAS BEEN IMPACTED IN ANY WAY BY THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A WOMAN?

Making choices, as a woman artist have indeed, the capacity of having different consequences than maybe for a male artist. I happily choose to have a child. This definitely had an impact on my capacity to make art and follow my art career for several years when my son was a toddler. Also, having a job in order to make a living, which was luckily for me teaching art had consequences. A simple day's work would regularly turn into a three-shift routine with the mothering, teaching and art making!

FATALE ART IS AN ART GALLERY THAT REPRESENTS WOMEN ARTISTS, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS KIND OF INITIATIVE?

It is a great network of women that seek to share a creative platform and possibly seeks business benefits from it.

WALK US THROUGH YOUR PROCESS; FROM START TO FINISH.

It definitely varies from work to work. Some concepts appear as by magic and a series gets delivered efficiently. Other work take years to get solved, they sit and mature slowly. One of them, I am still walking with! One constant factor however, would be that from abstract concept, a 2-dimensional sketch or drawing is produced. Then, search for material and installation layout are reflected upon and everything moves forward. The drawings are re-worked several times, with multiple layers to load them, same thing with the sculptures. I usually put the work away for a resting period and I go back to it after a while, for revisions and editing.

BEST ADVICE YOU EVER GOT OR TRY TO FOLLOW.

Be motivated to do the artwork for yourself, not because of other's expectations: Make no compromises.



AMBRE CARDINAL







Ambre Cardinal, graduated from the Royal College of Art London in 2012, as an artist designer who works across wide range of fields, with a specific focus on art and fashion. She works for emerging and established clients such as Hermes, Estee Lauder, Krug, Lancome. Through experimentation, she manifested her own poetic universe, expressing herself via a diversity of mediums from film to body sculpture. Influenced by Kinetic and Body art, she ultimately focused her creation on body language.

From object to image, a creative alliance of soul and flesh that resonate together. She conceives physical experiences originating from the body to create sculptures reflecting movement. Being an artistic nomad, she is inspired by various art forms and assimilates them together with the cultural diversity she experiences during her travels. She often integrates in her body work the cultural diversity of shapes and traditions discovered in Japan and India.

From the concept to the final realization, each artistic project is an evolution of the precedent one. Today she exhibits her sensual artworks between Paris, Tokyo, Kyoto and Hong Kong.

#### STATEMENT

I create universes that invite contemplation, that is, taking the time to appreciate what surrounds us. The object, like an offering, is a way to reconnect with one's body. By associating dance with my sculptures, I initiate movement in consciousness.

My favorite material is mainly metal, with which I associate organic materials. Appearing cold, metal is actually a conductor of heat. My metal sculptures welcome and diffuse light.

Each person lives their sensory experience which plays on the porosity between the environment and their interiority. This setting up allows participants to access a new sensoriality. Being inside yourself; Being inside a space. Projection of oneself in space; Projection of space in itself.



## HOW HAVE YOU BEEN SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC?

I am good. Of course some downs happen with this frustration of not being in control of Time and any scheduled professional opportunities. This period teach me how to let it go and refocus on myself. It is very rich in creativity for me. I took this opportunity to refine my creative approach and dig in a more artistic and spiritual approach.

## TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF - DID YOU DO ART AS A KID?

I used to draw a lot as kid. From 7 up to 12 years old, I locked myself in my bedroom for hours to draw and design the coolest fashion garment. After as a teenager I was playing Sims all night long to design my favourite interior designed house.

## IN YOUR KINETIC WORKS YOU HAVE A FOCUS ON FLUIDITY AND SENSITIVITY. HOW COULD YOU DEFINE YOUR WORK?

I strive to give life to the material, so it vibrates with the spectator. I infuse an emotional value in each body sculpture, then I give them life in videos or installations. Each creation has a symbolic meaning and is chosen to awaken our body consciousness. The poetic lines and pure forms calm down and plunge into a contemplative state close to meditation.

## HOW OFTEN DO YOU TRAVEL? DO YOU FIND YOUR PRACTICE SHIFTS AND GROW WITH EACH NEW PLACE YOU VISIT?

I usually travel every 3 months. I used to discover new countries since I am 10 years old. My art is fed with a mix of various culture, my travels are my biggest inspirations. All these skills, smells, sounds and colours transport me. At the age of 20, my first trip to Japan was a huge creative shock. Since then I feel like my second home is in Tokyo.

## WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO CREATE?

It is simply my reason to be. This is my communication tool to transmit my vision of the being in our contemporary world. I share a positive and luminous message,

so we return to more spiritual value in our lives.

## WALK US THROUGH YOUR PROCESS; FROM START TO FINISH.

Generally a work series inspires me for the next step. I directly work with the material on the body and in the space. Once I feel it is finished I contemplate the form for few days. Indeed I am working on several body sculptures at the same time. If the shape still resonates well after few days then I consider it accomplished.

## IF YOU'RE IN A CREATIVE BLOCK - HOW DO YOU GET OUT OF IT?

Some days you just don't create right. I either switch to another task like photos or writing or I just take a break and spend a good moment with a friend to reload my energies. Harassment doesn't match with pure creation so I just go with the flow.

## WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION?

My travels and the people, I meet gems who really inspire me a lot. I am always curious to discover a new performance, exhibition or fire ritual for example. Lately I transposed Japanese and Burma Calligraphy on my sculptures to create my own body language.

## WHAT'S THE MOST RIDICULOUS THING YOU BOUGHT FOR ART?

I often buy unexpected things! I bought a sex toy to use vibrating motor on my sculptures.

## FAVOURITE TOOL IN THE STUDIO?

At the moment my favourite tools are my stainless steel snap and my beautiful hammer. I play with them indefinitely to shape metal spheres.





WHAT'S THE BEST TIME FOR YOU TO CREATE?

At night, I love to create when everything is calm around me. I can really concentrate then.

DO YOU LISTEN TO ANYTHING WHILE CREATING?

Yes, I love to listen to Hiroshi Yoshimura ambient music or Tibetan bowls music.

DO YOU HAVE A RITUAL BEFORE APPROACHING A NEW ARTWORK?

I don't have a ritual for new artworks, but when I arrive at my workshop I clean up the space and burn some Palo Santo then start working.

BEST ADVICE YOU EVER GOT OR TRY TO FOLLOW.

The first advice a friend told me in art school that helped me a lot until now "Nobody will believe in your work if you don't believe in it first".

Recently a friend told me "KISS: Keep It Simple Stupid" I love it! It is very efficient.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR MEDIUM?

First I love to combine mediums in my work in order to compose a full universe; metal, wood, photography and video. I have a particular relation to metal because it reflects the light and can be reshaped endlessly. I want my work to spread lights and positive energies.

DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE IN THREE WORDS.

Ethereal, Timeless and Sensual.

DO YOU HAVE A NEW PROJECT ON THE HORIZON?

I am about to finish of a new series of mobile for our homes.

Furthermore I am starting an exciting trans-disciplinary collaboration with a dear friend and great graphic designer. I keep the surprise of what will come out of it.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS?

My near goals I am about to accomplish are the evolution of my jewelry design label to an artist designer. I am up scaling my body sculptures in to mobiles so people can be really immersed in my poetic vision.

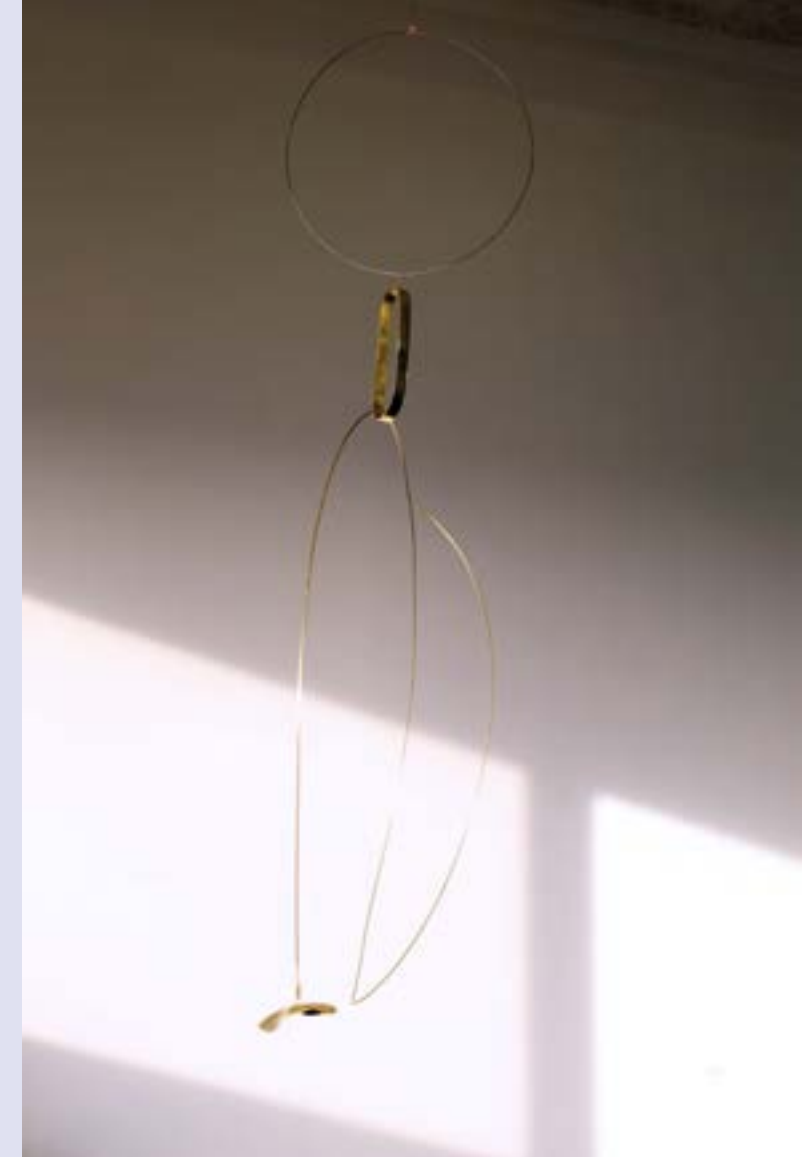
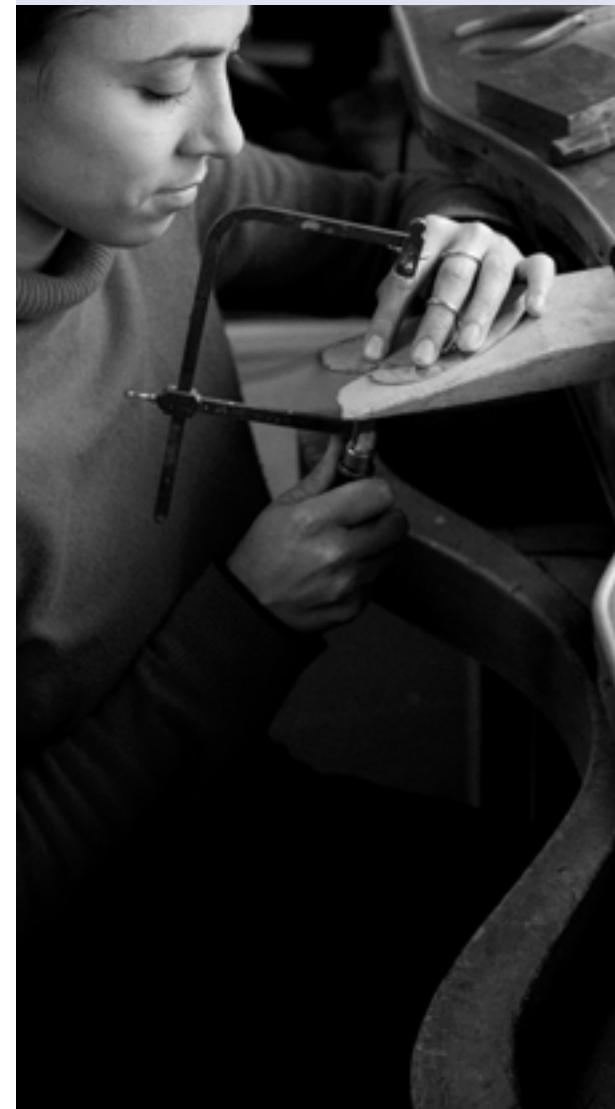
Long term, I really want to build sensorial and spiritual temple. These none religious place, will give us a space to reconnect to ourselves.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT SO FAR?

Three women came to me and confessed that when they discovered my sculptures and videos work they had goose bumps and cried. To reveal the spectator emotions is my greatest accomplishment.

WHENEVER WE ENTER THE NEXT NEW NORMAL, WHAT NEW THINGS YOU'D LIKE TO IMPLEMENT IN YOUR CREATIVE JOURNEY?

More Travel!





WHICH FEMALE ARTISTS WOULD YOU DREAM TO COLLABORATE WITH AND WHY?

Marina Abramovic, she seems to be so authentic, sensitive and strong artist. I love how deep she can connect with her public through her performance. Lygia Pape, a Brazilian Artist died in 2004. I am in love with her installation, I discovered it when I was 20 and it is still one of my favourite artwork. She is multi-disciplinary, and I am as well. I think our mutual visions could create a very poetic and unexpected experience.

AS AN ARTIST, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR CAREER HAS BEEN IMPACTED IN ANY WAY BY THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A WOMAN?

We all have a feminine and masculine side within us. I completely assume both of these sides in my personality. I didn't feel impacted by my gender, and I impose limits when it is needed. I make a good use of my woman power by working and sharing it with other women energies. I personally felt more impacted by my lack of self-confidence.

FATALE ART IS AN ART GALLERY THAT REPRESENTS WOMEN ARTISTS, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS KIND OF INITIATIVE?

I love this sorority initiative. I think between women we have a similar sensibility that we understand each other more easily. Even if I didn't personally felt impacted by being a woman, it is a reality that we are under represented in the art world. It is important to turn this tendency round.

ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE US TO KNOW?

As artists we have the power to reinvent our imaginations and give our civilizations some keys to apprehend life through another angle. We enter this new period of life, things won't be like they used to be and this is very positive. Life is not always about fast actions, and productivity. This new period is a time to overcome patriarchy, we are embracing the feminization of our world. We reappropriate our own body and open new doors to be part of, listen, and be present. Spirituality in Sanskrit means supreme science; let's integrate the knowledge of infinity. We are learning how to let it go and appreciate small happiness and treats of life.





JOANN COTÉ

Over the years, Joann Côté's artistic work has evolved towards a more feminist and manifesto-like approach.

As an artist, she captures and observes certain intolerances and injustices in today's society which she transcribed intuitively.

With sculpture and collage, she tries to translate the complexity of certain sociological and ecological issues. Seduced by the poetry of raw material, she appropriates any substance malleable by diverting it from its original function. A fragile balance oscillates between the social commitment of its purpose and the singularity of the material used.

Denouncing, supporting, criticizing or provoking is a fundamental concern in the development of each artwork and reflect as certain portrait of the artist's identity or the society she lives in.





HOW HAVE YOU BEEN SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC?

The pandemic is a really difficult time for me. I lost my father in December. My teenage daughter has difficulties motivating herself at school so I haven't worked on a new series since the start of the pandemic.

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF - DID YOU DO ART AS A KID?

As far I can remember I was always into Art. People have always called me "The artist", even as a teenager. I have a different approach to life, as my artwork is inseparable from my everyday life. My studio is the heart of my home. I invite other artists to share my space, and I use these artistic residencies to nurture my artistic language.

THE WOMEN THEME COMES UP IN ALLMOST ALL OF YOUR WORK, WHATEVER THE MEDIUM USED, WHY?

I think that I use the woman to carry messages. The multiple roles that women play in society is one of them. I try to denounce injustices and raise awareness about certain inequalities.

YOU ARE A MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTIST : PAINTING, CLAY SCULPTURE, INSTALLATION DRESSES, AND COLLAGE, HOW DO YOU GET FROM A MEDIUM TO ANOTHER?

I work intuitively so I think it this not an issue for me. I just use whatever my hand chooses to serve my artistic impulse.

YOUR ARTISTIC STATEMENT IS MORE AND MORE POLITICAL AND YET YOUR ARTISTIC SIGNATURE IS VERY POETIC AND DELICATE, DO YOU SEE IT AS A CONTRADICTION OR A NATURAL WAY TO COMMUNICATE?

I find it important and interesting to keep the poetry alive, especially when the subject is difficult. It becomes a different layer for reading the art piece.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO CREATE?

I think it gives meaning to my life, especially when I work on a subject that can influence people to change or question their vision.

WALK US THROUGH YOUR PROCESS; FROM START TO FINISH.

I feel deeply what happens around me and in our society in general. I keep it in mind unconsciously. When I begin a series, I don't have a definite idea about what I am going to do. The idea just emerges by itself. Then one idea leads to another and the series eventually comes to life.

IF YOU'RE IN A CREATIVE BLOCK - HOW DO YOU GET OUT OF IT?

I just let go. There is a time to absorb subjects and a time to make them into art pieces. I am not a factory worker. I try to do fewer pieces but make them more significant.

WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION?

I look all around, really. Nature, ordinary objects, garbage, people. Inspiration is wherever we can take time to look at things with a poetic approach.

WHAT'S THE MOST RIDICULOUS THING YOU BOUGHT FOR ART?

A lot of soft bread.

WHAT'S THE BEST TIME FOR YOU TO CREATE?

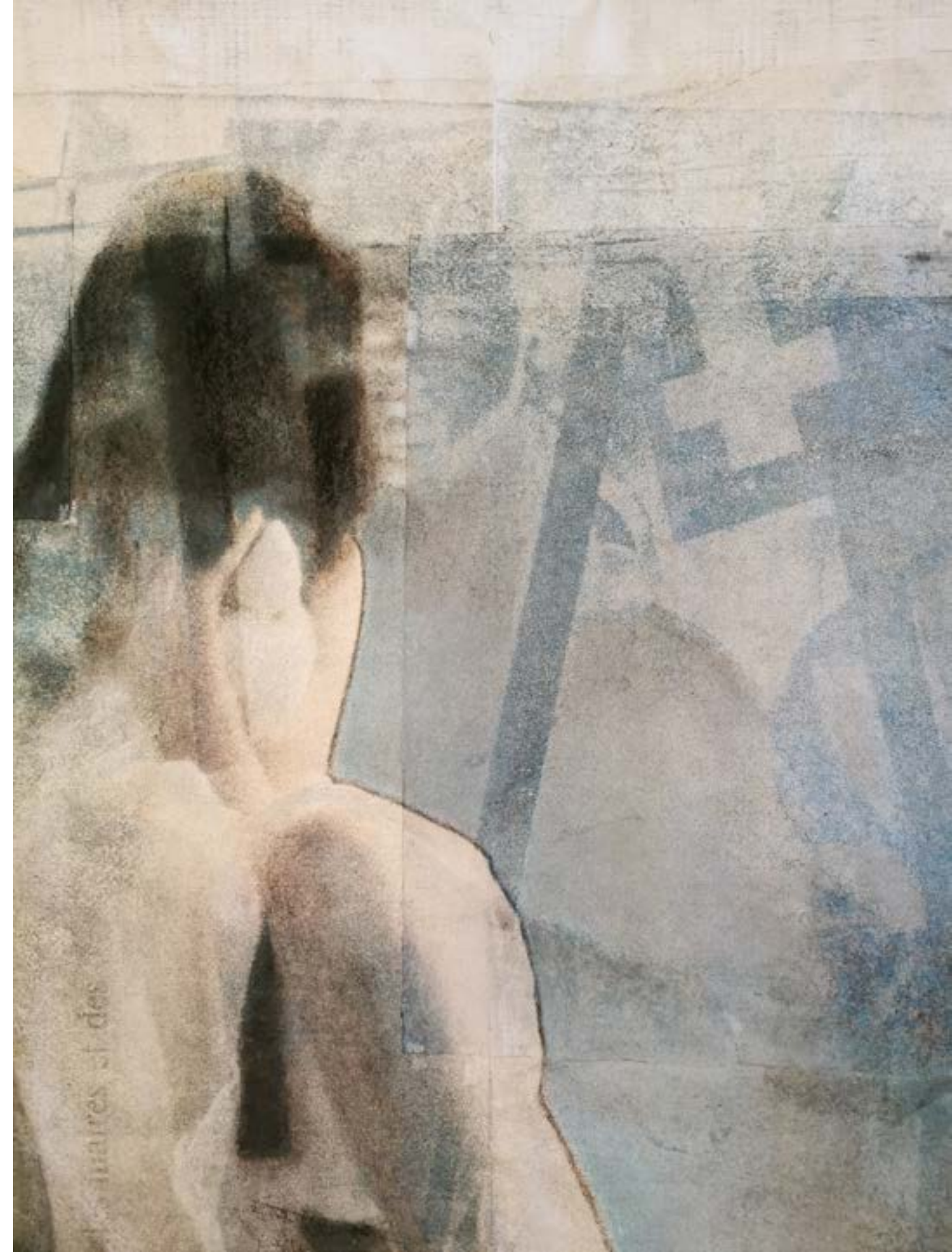
In the afternoon until night.

DO YOU LISTEN TO ANYTHING WHILE CREATING?

I used to listen to music but now I appreciate silence more and more.

BEST ADVICE YOU EVER GOT OR TRY TO FOLLOW.

I am trying to say more with less .







DO YOU HAVE A RITUAL BEFORE APPROACHING A NEW ARTWORK?

Yes. I thoroughly clean my studio and try to locate everything I could possibly need so as not to interrupt the artistic process once it's under way.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR MEDIUM?

At the moment, I like to work with recycled things.

DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE IN THREE WORDS.

Authentic, sensitive, commitment.

DO YOU HAVE A NEW PROJECT ON THE HORIZON?

I don't know yet what it will be but I am really touched by the discrimination against old people in our society.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS?

To remain authentic in my artwork and in my life as a whole. Also, to provide opportunities for other artists to work and create in my exceptional location.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT SO FAR?

Having the guts and courage to organize my life around the creative way. In a global approach, as a way of life.

WHICH FEMALE ARTISTS WOULD YOU DREAM TO COLLABORATE WITH (PAST OR PRESENT) AND WHY?

Agnes Varda, the French cinematographer. Her approach and open spirit are a huge source of inspiration. Also Catherine Dorion who works as a deputy for the Quebec Solidaire but she is first an incredible poet who embraces politics and art together.

AS AN ARTIST, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR CAREER HAS BEEN IMPACTED IN ANY WAY BY THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A WOMAN?

Absolutely. Often people think that I am not really working and just do art for the fun of it. It's a common belief that artist women are supported financially by a man somewhere behind.

FATALE ART IS AN ART GALLERY THAT REPRESENTS WOMEN ARTISTS, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS KIND OF INITIATIVE?

Fatale Art represents women artists who are socially engaged. It is important that women are recognized for their art in the same way that men artists are.

ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE US TO KNOW?

I think that being an artist is a more global approach than simply doing art. Some people work with an intuition and an open mind that is sometimes more advanced than those of a recognized artist.





MARIE DENISE DOUYON





The art of Marie-Denise Douyon reflects a cross-cultural identity informed by the confluence of three societies: her native Haiti, her childhood land, Morocco, and her adopted home, Quebec. Douyon transports us to mythical and sacred places interwoven with warriors, lovers and deities. With the invisible and the visible, she tells a story inspired by the Africa of her childhood, suffused with tenderness, depth, poetry and fantasy.

As a Montrealer in a Quebec increasingly concerned about climate change, Douyon focuses her artistic approach on themes related to global warming, ecological disasters and their social and environmental impacts. A dedicated recycler, she creates unique works from discarded material and found objects. Marie-Denise Douyon has exhibited in Canada, the United-States, Europe and Africa. In Montreal, her artworks has been shown at the Musée du Bardo in Tunis during a Canadian Tunisian group exhibit.





HOW HAVE YOU BEEN SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC?

The measures related to the pandemic took us all by surprise and required major social adaptations. However, since the creative process of writing and painting is a solitary journey, the pandemic gave me the opportunity to pull out a project that was on the backburner. I devoted my time to creating educational songs and videos for francophone children.

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF - DID YOU DO ART AS A KID?

My first memory of painting dates back to the age of 5 or 6 in Casablanca, Morocco, where I grew up. I entered an art contest at the "Fédération des oeuvres laïques" and I had painted a rooster in gouache, which won first prize. I remember my mom framing that painting and having it in my room. According to my mother, I used to draw everywhere and often, so she lined some walls with paper

YOU CALL YOURSELF A WORLD CITIZEN, HOW DOES IT IMPACT YOUR WORK?

I do not believe in changing myself based on my locale. Rather, I claim in this identity of World Citizen a common conscience and a recognition of a collective humanity that is bound by common values of dignity, respect, and tolerance. The "Citizen of the World" identity should respect the freedom of all people to express cultural individuality instead of binding us in cultural imperialism.

YOU ARE A VISUAL ARTIST AND A STORYTELLER, DO YOU FEEL LIKE AN ARTISTIC PRACTICE CAN INFLUENCE THE OTHER?

Depending on the project, I see my creative process like a large toolbox which includes different elements and a variety of tools. Depending on what I have to create, I will choose what appears to be the most appropriate combination of tools to achieve my production. So, in that regard, all my art practices enter into a multi-disciplinary dialogue. I could compare that creative process to cooking. In a recipe there are several ingredients, different dosages that are mixed in order to obtain a specific dish with a specific flavor.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO CREATE?

My artistic motivation is embedded in my DNA. I do not have a specific motivation. Creating is like breathing; it's part of me and it nourishes my everyday activities. However, the initial inspiration that will motivate me to create is linked to my personal experiences, to significant social events, or to my travels.

To summarize my most predominant source of inspiration is mostly a result of my peripatetic lifestyle in which dislocation is a common theme. My exposure to different cultures has fed my questioning of human and social behaviors which has in turn nourished my creative process. My creative process reflects a cross of African and Creole cultures and also an interest in current environmental debates in Quebec. My influences vary depending on the country where I am, which makes my work a real spectrum of aesthetics and societal questions.

For example, in 2018 I travelled to South Africa and Namibia and during that sojourn, I discovered the Herero people. They became an immediate source of inspiration. Fascinated by the aesthetics of the Herero women, I chose the media of collage and ink to transcribe in detail their beauty.

IF YOU'RE IN A CREATIVE BLOCK - HOW DO YOU GET OUT OF IT?

There are indeed periods when the inspiration is low; whenever it occurs, I concentrate on other things, like for example cooking, and wait for the conditions which stimulate creativity to return.







WALK US THROUGH YOUR PROCESS; FROM START TO FINISH.

The process is divided into three phases:

Phase 1 - Finding a topic of interest.

Phase 2 - Doing research and brainstorming.

Phase 3 - Getting into the production period.

The topic is dictated by the inspiration, or in response to a call for project. For example, for the 375th anniversary of the City of Montreal, I submitted with Radu Juster, a photographer and filmmaker and c-curator, an exhibition originally entitled, HAITI-MONTREAL: 2 Islands, 2 Stories. This exhibition is an artistic narration of the Haitian history through contemporary art and summarizes through a sensory and visual experience the unique path of the first black independent nation. From the time of the Tainos, the Spanish conquest, the French colonization, from slavery to the revolution of the Bois Caiman; from Toussaint Louverture to the proclamation of independence by Jean-Jacques Desalines in 1804 ; to the American occupation (1915-1934) and the dictatorship of Duvalier (1957 -1986) and finally to the migratory flows and exile of the Haitians in Montreal. The process consisted first of historical research and meeting with historians to select certain periods. In the second phase, we needed to adapt the literary content into art, hence we had to think of the medium which would be most appropriate to relate the content and the emotions, and then we would proceed into production. Hence, to illustrate the encounters between the Haitian writers fleeing the dictatorship in the 1960's and Duvalier's regime and the Québécois writers both asserting their quest of identity during the "revolution tranquille", we decided to make an installation with two typewriters exchanging words on a piece of fabric, the piece of fabric reflected the social fabric of Quebec during that time period.

WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION?

I do not really look for inspiration, as I mentioned earlier, inspiration is triggered by events, encounters and a multitude of experiences or it could also be triggered by radio broadcasts, or a trip. All these experiences overlap in my mind and trigger different ideas. However, once the idea is triggered, I have to look for a way to convey that idea into an actual piece of art. In

that respect, as a creative recycler, I love to wander through flea markets, hardware stores, and recycling plants, to find odd, discarded objects that I accumulate in the hope of integrating these objects in my artwork. Recycling is part of the magic of creating. The magic of the transformation of a discarded object into an art piece reinforces my view of over-consumerism. Through recycling, I can address issues related to global warming, ecological disasters, and their social and environmental impacts.

WHAT'S THE MOST RIDICULOUS THING YOU BOUGHT FOR ART?

I have no memories of buying the most ridiculous object for art, but I remember, trying to take a shortcut, when I was doing a series of artwork with recycled bike chains, a long time consuming process. In order to save time I used rubber tiles... The result was the most horrendous piece of art I ever made!

FAVORITE TOOL IN THE STUDIO?

I have no favorite tools, I have certain media that attract me, like watercolor because of the softness and elegance of the medium itself. But I believe, what I favor the most in the studio is the smell of the products when I step in and the feeling of well-being that overcomes my heart and soul, once I start creating.

WHAT'S THE BEST TIME FOR YOU TO CREATE?

Morning is the best time to create. I love to go into the studio just after breakfast, my energy level is high, and my thoughts are clear.

DO YOU LISTEN TO ANYTHING WHILE CREATING?

I enjoy listening to classical music while creating, but depending on the task and mood, I can switch to bossa nova, jazz, Latin or Caribbean music.



DO YOU HAVE A RITUAL BEFORE APPROACHING A NEW ARTWORK?

I take a few minutes of silence, an inner “voyage” of spirituality, of prayer to savor the feeling of peace and joy of creating.

BEST ADVICE YOU EVER GOT OR TRY TO FOLLOW.

The first advice is to have a clear intention, or purpose of why I am creating, and to avoid distractions or deviation from it. The second advice is not to deviate from the intention that animates the creative impetus

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR MEDIUM?

As a multi-disciplinary artist, what I enjoy most is the variety and the endless possibilities of combinations of media, with no boundaries on the imagination. If I were to compare the journey of a multi-disciplinary artist to a culinary experience, it’s an unlimited experience to various world-wide cuisines, flavors, scents and spices.

DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE IN THREE WORDS.

Afro-Caribbean and contemporary.

DO YOU HAVE A NEW PROJECT ON THE HORIZON?

I have two new projects, one entitled Muzikiddy, which is already launched. Muzikiddy is a free learning platform for children from 4 to 12 years old. Muzikiddy promotes learning through songs and 2D animation videos and MP3. This platform brings a breath of fresh air by entertaining and intellectually stimulating children. Faced with ever-changing learning needs, Muzikiddy is a tool that offers parents and teachers playful content to develop language, musical meaning, vocabulary, and notions of geography and history.

The second project is to create a literacy tool to facilitate learning of writing and reading for adults and children with disabilities.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS?

I want to pursue my literacy project and develop the platform of Muzikiddy, educational videos for children, in order to reinforce the identity of children from diverse horizons.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT SO FAR?

It depends on what type of accomplishment; I believe there are different types of accomplishments. Artistically speaking, one of the accomplishments I am proud of is the exhibition entitled Haiti-Montreal. This exhibition had an impact on the community and neighborhood of Saint Michel, a diverse and intercultural sector of Montreal. Sharing and exchanging with the visitors on various historical topics and addressing crucial topics of inequity and discrimination brought me such joy. I was profoundly touched and so receptive to the reactions of children and young adults during school visits, especially when I could denote a sense of pride in the youth of Haitian descent.

WHICH FEMALE ARTISTS WOULD YOU DREAM TO COLLABORATE WITH (PAST OR PRESENT) AND WHY?

In visual arts, Frida Khalo; in literature, Toni Morrison; and in music, Myriam Makeba. Their personal struggles in the face of pain, adversity, racism and their ability to turn those difficulties into art and the profoundness of their quest and messages leaves me in admiration.

THE LAST YEARS HAS BEEN INTENSE REGARDING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, AND YOU STAND FOR BLM MOVEMENTS WITH AN ARTISTIC COLLABORATION IN MONTREAL STREET. AS AN ARTIST, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR CAREER HAS BEEN IMPACTED IN ANY WAY BY THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A WOMAN OR BLACK?

During my entire life I witnessed the disastrous effects of discrimination and racism. I feel I cannot remain silent in the face of social inequities based on racism and intolerance.

FATALE ART IS AN ART GALLERY THAT REPRESENTS WOMEN ARTISTS, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS KIND OF INITIATIVE?

I had the opportunity to see an exhibition of a group of women artists in Cape Town, South Africa, outlining the astonishing gender inequity in the art world in terms of visibility, leadership, and compensation, in the art market, museum, art fairs, auctions, and other artistic sectors. For that reason, I believe that any initiative taken to propel women artists and raise awareness on the underrepresentation and undervaluation of their art has to be encouraged or saluted. In this regard, Fatale Art gallery has all my admiration.





DANIELLE LAMONTAGNE



Born in 1962, Danielle Lamontagne lives and works in Montreal. She holds a bachelor's degree in graphic design (1996) from the Université du Québec à Montréal, where she also completed a master's degree en Arts et lettre, with a concentration in interactive multimedia (2000).

A visionary, Danielle Lamontagne is one of the precursors of the use of digital technology in art creation; videos, animations and digital works printed on paper. The virtues of these mediums were still underestimated by the arts community at the end of the 1990s. She did not hesitate to also use multimedia platforms for the distribution of her works (cd-rom, internet). She then innovated by creating virtual galleries for several of her exhibitions (digital and animated images). These digital platforms (internet) will mainly be used by the artist from 2000 to 2015 for her diffusion. Digital works and immersive media installations are very present in her current career. They include projections, videos, digital images, sounds and complementary objects. Light, textures and movements are omnipresent, cohabiting with multiple materials, materializing a reflection and a conceptual approach.

From 2000 to 2018 she participates in several group exhibitions: in 2015 at the Ward-Nasse Gallery, New York, USA, in 2017-2018, she creates an ephemeral sculpture for the city of Sorel-Tracy in collaboration with the artist Peter Gnass and participates in 6 exhibitions at the POPOP CIRCA gallery with the NPO Art session Mtl, of which she is one of the co-founders. More recently she participated in a group exhibition in the contemporary art space Occurrence (Art Session Mtl).







HOW HAVE YOU BEEN SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC?

I am very lucky to be doing very well. It seems that everything has been set up for me to avoid having to go through this crisis with difficulty. I moved into a very large apartment 1 month before the confinement, it was perfect for my family. I was very happy to telework and even be unemployed for 3 months. For me it was a gift, time to create, as a liberation a play space. I have to admit that my life was a real whirlwind. I took advantage of this space of introspection to find myself, to return to my depths. Very sensitive to what other less fortunate people go through, I questioned myself on the role of art, of the artist in times of crisis. So I decided to publish images of the texts of the poems from time to time to bring joy and sweetness, I started a blog and interviews to inspire, to give hope. We need to take care of each other.

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF - DID YOU DO ART AS A KID?

For as long as I can remember I was scribbling with crayolas (wax crayons). I was a shy, quiet child, but very creative. My father had studied art and we had everything we needed at home. I had a whole paraphernalia of pencils, paints, colored paper, brushes. My mother would set up a big paper grocery bag next to the table and at the end of the day it was full of drawings and cut-outs, no need for a babysitter. With my little sister we would make theatrical stagings, spaceships with foil and rolls of toilet paper, haunted house runs with witch cauldrons (everything in the kitchen cupboard would go through).

We also did dance choreographies, songs with a dancing rope as a microphone. In fact, friends would gather at our house because my mother tolerated the fact that our room was turned upside down for days at a time so that we could realize our children's worlds. At school it was the same scenario I used to draw during class because otherwise I would have found the time very long. I remember that even at that age this was what allowed me to connect to life, as a benevolent refuge, because I didn't always understand what was going on around me.

YOUR LAST SERIES "DREAM" IS ABOUT WOMEN AND THEIR DREAMS, CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT IT ?

This project comes directly from my experience. I am a mother of 3 children, they are grown up now but this "crossing" as a mother and breadwinner, as a woman in the couple and the job market has made me realize how strong and constant we must be to not lose our passions in the flow of life. And what about those women who are not fortunate enough to have our rights and freedom? We must remain at peace with all the stages we go through, without ever forgetting the little inner fire that belongs only to us. Nothing is ever finished, everything can always begin or continue. Women have always tended to forget themselves a little... But to take good care of each other we must remain vibrant, passionate, active in all sorts of ways. There is no need to collaborate on the concepts of our consumer societies, valuing performance at all costs, excessive career, success by accumulating assets. Success and balance may be found in simplicity and authenticity and not in quantity.

I had to cross my desert to understand this and go through burnout and a feeling of never reaching my goals, of spreading myself too thin, only to finally realize that these goals were not mine. I hope I can inspire other women no matter what they are going through, the injustices, the precariousness, the prohibitions, we must persevere not to accept the unacceptable and be proud of the richness of our journey. For the road to the dream, strewn with pitfalls, is just as important and fascinating. We are already in a waking dream, the word dream here means creating its reality, one day at a time and tasting it.

WHAT'S THE BEST TIME FOR YOU TO CREATE?

When I have a large enough space-time, when there is just no sensation of time. This allows me to enter my bubble not to be interrupted and to immerse myself in my world very gently.



MOST OF YOUR THEMES ARE ABOUT SOCIAL SUBJECTS: RACISM, ECOLOGY, FEMINISM; DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE TO BE AN ACTIVIST AS AN ARTIST?

I've always been like this, I'm sure that when I was straight out of my mother's womb in the hospital, I was already claiming for better environments for women to give birth and to be in this world. Unfortunately or fortunately for them, my words were incomprehensible at that age. At the age of 6 I wanted to save all animals and go as a missionary to Africa (I didn't know what the word missionary meant at that time) and I loved those cultures.

As at 6 years old, I am still as much in love with creation, animals, nature and Africa. I didn't decide to be an activist I honestly think I was born that way. You don't change but... you evolve on the other hand, I am no longer the adolescent claimant, the angry woman, I feel in a great inner peace, a wiser interaction and without judgment of what surrounds me and without judgment of myself (I'm trying). My definition of activism is to embrace the artistic representation of the reality I perceive and transmute this energy into hope and desire to act to create beauty. The reality that surrounds us is a reflection of what is inside us. Whoever looks in the mirror will never be able to change their reflection without transforming themselves. So I can say that it is a way to transform myself. I think that until my last breath I will work for a world of peace and light. It is an impulse a passion a feeling of being born at a crucial moment, at a time when there is a very important transition taking place. Art is my language, my verb, my gesture, the expression of this impulse.

Racism, ecology and feminism are recurring and sensitive subjects, they touch me personally because they are linked to my life path. I had two children with a father of Senegalese origin, I am a woman and my home is the mother earth, a nurturing mother. I can even admit that I address one and the same overarching theme in all my projects, this lack of balance between masculine energy and masculine qualities versus feminine energy and feminine qualities in our societies. Western societies are sailing on values that are currently 95% masculine. We reject what is different, yet it is the complementarity of these two poles creating a whole that can give us balance. The 50-50 comple-

mentarity of feminine and masculine energies could correct the current dissonance. It is a little bit what carries the approach and the content of my creation.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO CREATE?

I honestly don't know. It's like breathing. For me it's not a profession it's a "way of life" in the sense that it encompasses all aspects of my being. I create when I put a meal on my plate and organize the colors so that it is beautiful. I create when I'm wrapping a gift package and I create when I'm working on an artistic image in Photoshop. For me this question could be a philosophical debate as complex as why art exists. I believe that we are spiritual energies experiencing matter in all its forms. I have simply never forgotten that and matter is an extraordinary playground and the creative energy that inhabits us is powerful. We are all creators.

WALK US THROUGH YOUR PROCESS; FROM START TO FINISH.

I could give a concrete example of the project I am currently working on and the interrelation between all living things. This summer I went on vacation in the Bic National Park and the Mont-Tremblant Park. I immersed myself in nature and without consciously deciding, I started to see images in my inner screen, to feel words then sentences, it comes by itself without forcing it is like a flow. I started to create with my cell phone photos of the videos, like a story. A ray of sunshine, a rock texture, a reflection in the water. I live both in reality and in this creative dimension. I can say that I didn't choose this subject, I experienced a connection, it resurfaced and I will recreate this space-time through an artistic concept. Moreover, the friend who accompanied me had a lot of trouble understanding what I could do when I was fixing the ground or a rock for 20 minutes, she was more in the outdoor sports mode.

Finally when I came back, the words and sentences will be transformed into poems, the images and videos will be imported into Photoshop and After Effect. I will play in this playground light shapes and colors to transmit this space of poetry that I lived, this connection to nature, until in immersion I can feel again this inner "feeling", this moment of magic that I lived there.



IF YOU'RE IN A CREATIVE BLOCK - HOW DO YOU GET OUT OF IT?

I don't remember this happening to me. I rather have the opposite problem I never manage to realize all my ideas or inspirations, it is sometimes very frustrating. Sometimes I don't know how to realize in my software what I see in my head. There are also times when I'm not satisfied with the visual result so I don't force myself to do something else and when I go back to the artwork what was wrong with it is obvious to me. It's the hindsight, the distance in time, which is my best strategy.

WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION?

In order to find it, one would first have to accept the concept that it is not there all the time, that it is out there and must be found. For me it is within me it is everywhere in the felt in the lived in the matter so I don't have to look for it. It is more a question of being able to receive it, to open up to it, to capture it. It is in the living, in the imaginary, in the intuition. In the wind, in the water, the sun, the bird, the other in front of me. Inspiration is everywhere... I try to be in a state of inspiration all the time. If I lose this state it is because there is stress or fear. So I meditate, I breathe, I go for a walk in nature, I listen to music and it comes back.

WHAT'S THE MOST RIDICULOUS THING YOU BOUGHT FOR ART?

If you ask my children, they will tell you that these are the 4 pockets of concrete that have been lying around the house for years and have never been used until now. Especially since they have had to move them several times, it is so heavy! For my part, I still believe that they will eventually become a creative project but I don't know when. When the gyms closed my son used them as weights to train, we laughed a lot. That it was not useless after all.

FAVORITE TOOL IN THE STUDIO?

As I use a lot of technology to create, I really like the software I work with. Photoshop, After Effect, Mad mapper. But it is also essential for me to complete the gesture with the work of ink or acrylic on handmade art paper, with the pencils or the brushes. A little to add "the matter" through the light and sound produced by my software. I like to present these material elements to my installations.

DO YOU LISTEN TO ANYTHING WHILE CREATING?

I almost always listen to music that is rather contemplative, meditative... so as not to distract me more like a background ambiance that helps me to enter the zone of alphas waves.

DO YOU HAVE A RITUAL BEFORE APPROACHING A NEW ARTWORK?

I lock myself up in my studio, I meditate a little, sometimes I sing and dance, I stretch, I move a little the objects in the space and often I accompany myself with an herbal tea or a vegetable milk with macha. Sometimes a small coffee...

Occasionally I make a prayer by choosing an object, semi-precious stone, crystal, feather, heart-shaped stone picked up on a trip. Everything carries a meaning for me.

BEST ADVICE YOU EVER GOT OR TRY TO FOLLOW.

In this world of extreme complexity, to stay in simplicity which means to breathe and live one thing at a time in the present moment, to get out of the "noise" and stay in the eye of the storm. For the arts. I met a well-known artist from 83 who had a long and prolific career, and still as active at his age, animated and inspired. A career lasts a while, art is for life.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR MEDIUM?

I can work from anywhere if I'm travelling with a laptop and I can send a file anywhere easily and quickly. It gives me a feeling of freedom. I like the contact with the light of the projection and the vibration of the sound. As a human being I need it. Sometimes in the evening I project a video on my wall to relax.

DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE IN THREE WORDS.

Connected Immersive Engaged







WHENEVER WE ENTER THE NEXT NEW NORMAL, WHAT NEW THINGS YOU'D LIKE TO IMPLEMENT IN YOUR CREATIVE JOURNEY?

I would very much like to make exchanges, conferences on the place of women in this world, of artists woman, about feminine energy and why it is important to realize our inner righteousness. I would like to travel to meet other women to share my vision of regaining our power to reclaim our right to do things our way.

WHICH FEMALE ARTISTS WOULD YOU DREAM TO COLLABORATE WITH (PAST OR PRESENT) AND WHY?

Now you really catch me off guard with this question! I'll have to think about it... For the moment all I can say is that I would like to collaborate with a woman in the field of contemporary dance or experimental singing to complement the medium I'm developing, it would be really incredible.

AS AN ARTIST, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR CAREER HAS BEEN IMPACTED IN ANY WAY BY THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A WOMAN?

Enormously impacted. It is probably more difficult to make a career as a professional woman artist, but in the occidental world we are still blessed with the opportunity to make that choice. On the other hand, I can shout out loud and clear that being a mother has directly impacted my career as an artist. I had to choose food work very often before my creative projects, conceptual art as I do is not something that can be sold easily and filling out grant applications above all this whirlwind seemed impossible to me. Feeding my children quality time was my priority. Especially when I found myself alone with them. When I started my family I didn't realize that I would often have to put my passion aside, that I would have to choose between the two sometimes. So there were ups and downs of discouragement and at the end of the road a burnout. Why should you have to choose between the two or be in a state of extreme fatigue? Yet today, with hindsight, I think it's the concept of "career" that puts us under immense pressure. I don't need to exhibit in a museum of contemporary art to feel accomplished. Do I necessarily need to adhere to these performance-based society scales with the help of our

institutions? If it suits us so much it's a great challenge! But if it's too much, you have to readjust and keep the balance. Art is not fashion, the approach matures over time.

Today for me being an artist is my "life purpose" which includes the whole being. The concept of career fragments the work of the artist and places it at the level of an artist/object that one gets bored of. He has to achieve notoriety, to win prizes exhibited in prestigious galleries according to artistic career scales propelled by our institutions most often run by men. This is not the only viable circuit. This opening up of the fields of possibilities removes the pressure of urgency and that of performance, which is so detrimental to women. Without this pressure they can reconcile family and passion in the long term. I work and with this new perspective I have nothing more to prove to anyone, I move forward at my own pace, what a liberation. That's a little for this reason that I realized the RÊVE/DREAM PROJECT. It's a little my way to encourage all women to persevere at their own pace according to their context.

FATALE ART IS AN ART GALLERY THAT REPRESENTS WOMEN ARTISTS, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS KIND OF INITIATIVE?

It was about time! As I mentioned earlier, women are under-represented in the arts. Camille Cazin and Fatale Art Gallery is a gallery concept committed to the visibility of women in art. Indeed it is a huge work, extraordinary because while honoring the vocation of the gallery that must sell the work of its artists, it also promotes the "cause" of women artists. This cause helps to make the market evolve so that women can be seen and represented as much as possible. We come back to the need for a 50-50 balance between the feminine and masculine again and again.

This concept also allows women to meet each other, to group together, to exhibit together. This trendy concept, on the lookout, offers opportunities such as this one, allowing women artists to make themselves known, to have a voice in web magazines, podcasts etc. It's really interesting and motivating for us.







JESSICA SALLAY-CARRINGTON



Jessica Sallay-Carrington is a queer and non-binary sculptural ceramic artist, originating from Vancouver BC and currently living in Montreal. In 2014 Jessica received their BFA in ceramics at Concordia University. Currently Jessica continues to produce work in their home studio and actively pursues artistic travel opportunities. Attending artist residencies and teaching workshops has brought Jessica to Greece, Italy, Denmark, as well as multiple locations around Canada and USA. Jessica has been featured in multiple publications including CBC Exhibitionists, New York's ArtTour International Magazine, and the book *Ceramique: 90 Artistes Contemporain*. They have been the recipient of grants from SODEC and CALQ and was a finalist in the 2019 Winifred Shantz Award.

#### STATEMENT

Jessica Sallay-Carrington is a sculptural ceramic artist creating figurative works of human behaviour. Jessica has mainly focused on how feminism, sexuality and gender are presented and expressed in modern western society. As a queer and non-binary individual, Jessica's work reflects experiences from this perspective. Through ceramic sculpture, they dismantle taboos and stigmas around the diverse expressions of gender and sexuality, while promoting self confidence and body positivity.

By creating nude figures Jessica questions the shame that individuals are taught to have about their own bodies. The inclusion of zoomorphism in Jessica's work displays the hidden parts of human identities. Using animals to represent certain human behaviour and emotions, as every animal comes with its own story and associations. A creature that, through sculpture, exposes a part of the figure's character which might not be apparent at first glance.







**HOW HAVE YOU BEEN SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC?**

I have had my ups and downs since the start of the pandemic, like a lot of people I think. But I have been so lucky and grateful to have my art studio at home! And with the help of a grant in the early days of the pandemic I was able to get myself a kiln and improve my studio space, which I am thrilled about. Since I work pretty obsessively on my art, I was able to just create a lot of new work during the whole pandemic, keeping me busy.

**TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF - DID YOU DO ART AS A KID?**

Yes, I have been an artist for as long as I can remember, my mum likes to tell me that as a child, as long as I had crayons in my hands, I was quiet and busy in a corner somewhere. I like to travel, I have attended lots of artist residencies and taught workshops all over Canada, USA and some in Europe. These kinds of travels allow me to meet art communities in other places which I really enjoy. My life pretty much revolves around my art and I love all the opportunities it has brought to my life. Also, my favourite thing is to be naked in the woods and collecting animal skulls and bones that I find on my nature adventures.

**YOUR WORK IS SPEAKING A LOT ABOUT EXPLORATION OF GENDER AND SEX, WHY THE SUBJECT MATTERS TO YOU?**

As a kid I never fit into the mold of what a "girl" should look like or act, I was commonly mistaken for a boy and I loved that feeling, but I didn't know what that meant. Still to this day, when people don't know if I am a boy or a girl it brings me so much joy. I love messing with people's perception of what it means to be a girl, since a lot of people make assumptions or judge based on stereotypes. I consider myself non-binary, or agender, I don't feel I fit into the category of "girl" but really I don't care what gender people think I am, as long as they don't judge me on what they think I am capable of doing.

As for the sexual themes in my work, I like to encourage people to talk about sexuality and be as sexual as they like, not to let the judgements of society determine

how they will act. Women will get slut-shamed and men will be celebrated for their sexual endeavors. So I mostly sculpt female bodied people, to celebrate their sexuality for themselves and not for the male gaze. Also, talking about sex encourages discussions about consent and safe sex, and makes people feel safe about exploring their sexuality. I am a polyamorous person, and it was through exploring my sexuality that I discovered I was queer. I mean, I kind of knew for a long time, but I wasn't sure until I claimed myself as a slut and just enjoyed all the sexual exploring I could. That's how I discovered what I liked and who I liked to do it with!

**WE READ THE ZOOMORPHISM IN YOUR WORK DISPLAYS THE HIDDEN PARTS OF HUMAN IDENTITIES, HOW DID IT COME TO YOU? AND WHY THIS METAPHOR?**

I have always sculpted animals, I was sculpting them before I started making human forms. I am fascinated by animals, I wonder what it would feel like to have big antlers, or to hunt small animals, or live as a prey animal in a big herd. So it just made sense to use animals to describe how I see people. There are aspects of each person that can relate to different animals, sometimes they are traits or understandings that cannot be seen by others, or they are blatantly obvious. Such as secret desires, how someone sees themselves in their community, or how they present themselves, may relate to one animal or another. I think people are more like animals than they think.

**WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO CREATE?**

I love to keep my hands moving, I am fascinated with all the possibilities of clay, and I have so many images in my head that I want to bring to life! I love creating works that get people thinking.

**DO YOU HAVE A RITUAL BEFORE APPROACHING A NEW ARTWORK?**

I draw it in my sketchbook.







## WALK US THROUGH YOUR PROCESS; FROM START TO FINISH.

I usually start with the desire to create a specific animal or a human body in a certain position. I research the animal and gather photos and take photos of myself or of volunteers for the human aspect. I build all my sculptures from solid forms, so I lump all the clay together and with my hands and tools I build the shape. Once it has been formed, most of the details are there and it's in the position I want it to be in, I will let the sculpture sit for a few days, this will let the sculpture harden enough that I can hollow it out and it won't lose its shape. The longest part of the process is hollowing it out, since I have to cut it into several pieces, hollow out all the pieces, then stick it all back together again. Once it's back into one piece then I fix all the seam lines and add the last bit of details such as textures, horns, ears, fingers, all the small stuff. When it's done being built it dries fully, then is fired in the kiln once, colours such as glazes or stains are added, fired again, then BOOM! DONE! It's a pretty long process from beginning to end, especially with the time of waiting for the sculpture to dry between each step.

## IF YOU'RE IN A CREATIVE BLOCK - HOW DO YOU GET OUT OF IT?

a. I go for a run to initially get out of it. But that's usually the time when I create pottery instead of sculptures. If my sculpture creativity is blocked I will create mugs or pots as a way of continuing to work but taking a break from the challenges of sculptures. Selling pottery is what funds a lot of my work so I need to do it anyways, I enjoy making pottery but not as much as I love making sculptures.

## WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION?

Nature documentaries and bad-ass women/gender diverse people.

## WHAT'S THE MOST RIDICULOUS THING YOU BOUGHT FOR ART?

I think the better question is what is the most ridiculous thing I have brought home for art. I am a bit of a trash panda, I find so many good things in the garbage, like my massive studio table! I found it on the

street and it's the weirdest colour of marbled greens and I love it. But I did buy myself a kiln recently, which was really expensive so that felt pretty ridiculous...but necessary. Also maybe bones and skulls, I collect them and have quite a few at this point. As part of my vegetarian values, I don't pay money to support the death of the animals, I just find them in all the places I go to explore...but I'm always bringing dead things home, I get a lot of inspiration from my dead things.

## FAVORITE TOOL IN THE STUDIO?

I have this one little wooden tool that looks kind-of a knife on one side, and a round end on the other. I have used it so much it's been worn down and is so much smaller than it used to be. I have to sand it every now and then to get the pointy end sharp again.

## WHAT'S THE BEST TIME FOR YOU TO CREATE?

Early in the morning I will start, and if I am on a roll I will just keep going straight through the day until I need to sleep.

## DO YOU LISTEN TO ANYTHING WHILE CREATING?

I listen to music mostly while I am sculpting. When I am hollowing out a piece, since it's pretty repetitive and I don't need to think or plan what I am doing, I watch a lot of tv shows.

## BEST ADVICE YOU EVER GOT OR TRY TO FOLLOW.

Be open to new opportunities, take advantage when they come around and don't give up applying for stuff no matter how many rejection letters you get.

## WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR MEDIUM?

Clay can be sculpted into pretty much any shape! Plus it can be functional, i love drinking and eating from things that were hand made.

## DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE IN THREE WORDS.

Creature. Naked. Feminist.









DO YOU HAVE A NEW PROJECT ON THE HORIZON?

I do! I have some big ones, I am the progress of sending off a bunch of applications to new opportunities...so we will see what happens when I hear back from those!

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS?

I want to make life sizes figures, I want to fill a gallery with a whole body of work and I want to make a living off of my art, either by selling work and/or teaching more regularly.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT SO FAR?

How much I have been able to travel with my art. Attending artist residencies and teaching workshops has brought me all over Canada and the USA as well as Rome and Denmark. As well as making it to a point in my career where I could own my own kiln, that feels like a big step in my career, and now I can offer studio and kiln space to other ceramic artists, since I know those are hard to find.

WHENEVER WE ENTER THE NEXT NEW NORMAL, WHAT NEW THINGS YOU'D LIKE TO IMPLEMENT IN YOUR CREATIVE JOURNEY?

Traveling again. Doing a longer residency with a wood fire kiln or other kinds of kilns or facilities that I don't normally have access to. I want to experiment with new things with ceramics!

WHICH FEMALE ARTISTS WOULD YOU DREAM TO COLLABORATE WITH (PAST OR PRESENT) AND WHY?

Frida Khalo, she has always been such an inspiration with her strength and will to continue creating, even though so much pain. With her exaggerated mustache and unibrow she challenged the gender norms and beauty standards of her time.

Tricia Cline, who is a figurative sculptor working with porcelain. I love how she combines animals and people, how all the figures interact, and the tremendous amount of detail in her work.

AS AN ARTIST, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR CAREER HAS BEEN IMPACTED IN ANY WAY BY THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A WOMAN?

I feel it has driven me to work harder because I have had to prove myself. Most of my sculptures are of female bodied people in poses which are full of confidence. I want to portray women and other female bodied people as capable, strong and independent. I make work like this probably

because in the past people have made me feel like I wasn't those things, so I work hard to make sure I am.

FATALE ART IS AN ART GALLERY THAT REPRESENTS WOMEN ARTISTS, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS KIND OF INITIATIVE?

I think female artists have been under-represented through most of history, so it's about time women and other female bodied people got to be in the spotlight!





CLAIRE ANDERSON



Claire Anderson is a professional conceptual artist who specializes in, but is not limited to, glass. She creates multi-media sculptures and installations that explore a range of interwoven themes, including the undulating wave of societal female roles and the unbalanced power structures created by humans throughout history.

#### STATEMENT

My exploration is to reinterpret these figurines in my own artistic language. The choice to create these as sculptures in glass upon concrete emphasizes the contradictory sentiments of the feminine. The fragility and strength, the ethereal beauty and stability, the social expectations and enduring power of womanhood.

PREVIOUS PHOTO CREDIT  
'Discoballs' by Grace Wardlaw







HOW HAVE YOU BEEN SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC?

Up and down, but mostly up. The start of the pandemic marked a huge life shift for me that was overall very positive but still an extremely difficult process. I've actually benefited from being forced to stay home in many ways and was lucky enough to have a studio with at least some access to glass. It's been a rocky road for so many of us so I just count myself very lucky that I can at least express those ups and downs through my work.

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF - DID YOU DO ART AS A KID?

Absolutely I did art as a kid. My parents and other family members really encouraged it. As I grew up I just got more and more into it, and in highschool I had a couple of really amazing art teachers that inspired me to focus on it for my actual life - something that seemed like a pipe dream. It's not exactly a career option that is recommended or understood in any way. But I like a challenge so here I am! I went straight to Sheridan College, found glass, discovered my passion for sculpture and fought as hard as I could to be in the industry. I've worked in a few different glassblowing studios, built my own, built a few different businesses... Currently, I'm working as an artist and a maker and have been self employed for the past seven years. I'm basically working as hard as I can to make sure I can continue to do whatever I want all the time.

IN YOUR LAST SERIES, YOU ARE REINTERPRETING PREHISTORICAL VENUSES SCULPTURES, CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT THIS IDEA ?

I would love to tell you more about this idea! I discovered them in college in my art history class. Just a little bit - the iconic Venus of Willendorf being the example. And she just lingered with me. I loved the voluptuous form and the idea that these women were some of the first artwork ever created. I used to make them for colour tests, I used one as an assignment in school. I didn't take them seriously but I just kept making them and reading about them.

I was in a relationship and a mental space for a very long time where I was almost ashamed of my own

femininity. I wanted to compete and prove myself and that meant burying my emotions and vulnerabilities. When I finally left my husband and life, everything I had buried exploded out of me - I got a lot of professional help and help from friends and really discovered the power of female and got entranced with it, finally truly embraced it in myself. The Venus figures were the perfect representation of that - these mysterious and quiet beings that have endured since the beginning of humanity. They are often coined as 'fertility goddesses' but that is just one of MANY theories. We will never really know why they exist, but it shows that women were important enough to represent in three dimensional forms at a time when we were barely even standing yet. And glass just encapsulated the contradictory sentiments that make women so powerful. The beauty and fragility, but also the solid strength and power of such an incredible material.

IF YOU'RE IN A CREATIVE BLOCK - HOW DO YOU GET OUT OF IT?

I haven't really had a creative block yet. If anything I sometimes get into a mode of making at such a rapid pace and with such narrow focus that the pieces get stale. Then I need to force myself to stop and breathe. Do something for fun, make something that's not for anything, draw something silly, don't do ANYTHING for a while (I struggle so hard with that). Journaling also helps. Trying a new material usually sparks something. Just staying playful in general helps to keep ideas fresh and flowing.

DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE IN THREE WORDS.

Raw, Beautiful, Unsettling.

WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION?

Currently I'm using my own experiences as inspiration. I'm working through a new series that's very personal to me (and also quite a universal experience). But that, now that I think about it, is where I find inspiration; shared human experiences told through the only lens I have, which is mine. I am interested in humans, our history, the patterns we act out, the rules we make up for ourselves, the social structures we create, etc.





Walk us through your process; from start to finish.

Oh that's a long one but I'll do my best. First is concept - I work in series and each series has its own conceptual theme. Each piece a different iteration of that theme, or a slightly different version. So for every piece I begin with what I want it to say.

After I figure out what I want to say, I figure out imagery. Usually, since I'm working in themes, I'll use variations of the same imagery - maybe a few symbols per theme. For example the Venus figures. Then I might play with colour, with scale, with form to see how each change feels and how it affects the message.

Once that is all drawn out in my sketchbook, I start with the actual materials. With the Venuses I'm using a lost wax casting technique for the glass and also casting the concrete. But each sculpture is different and involves many different materials, some favourites being blown and flame worked glass, concrete, found objects (usually rusty metal), more recently papier mache and painting.

Sometimes - most of the time - the materials lead you in different directions. Or lead to complications that might change your original imagery. Or spark other ideas so I will work more instinctively. Every piece is different! And every piece has mistakes and learning curves. It's a bit of an emotional rollercoaster but that's what makes creating so special.

WHAT'S THE MOST RIDICULOUS THING YOU BOUGHT FOR ART?

I'm not sure, nothing too crazy; big bags of dentist's alginate? A case of army surplus plaster bandages, all in waterproof tins? An assortment of rusty metal scraps and chains? I once drove for twelve hours to pick up used and VERY cheap parts for a glass melting furnace.

FAVORITE TOOL IN THE STUDIO?

Oh my, that's a tough one. Depends on what I'm doing. Right now I'm IN LOVE with my glass melting kiln. She's my pride and joy. However, if I'm blowing glass, my 'jacks' are definitely a favorite.

But all of those tools are pretty rad. I love my angle grinder. I also love my flexible rubber bucket for casting. And my sketchbook! That's a tool, ya? Each process I use ends up having an assortment of tools that I grow very attached to.

WHAT'S THE BEST TIME FOR YOU TO CREATE?

I'm a daytime person. My ideal day is to get up early, have a leisurely coffee/breakfast/yoga. Creative time starts at 11 at the latest then lasts until dinner or so, though sometimes I run out of steam earlier. But I'm also not set to a really regimented schedule. Sometimes I just want to use the evenings to create. I mainly just try to aim for a certain amount of hours logged per week or month so I stay productive & inspired.

DO YOU LISTEN TO ANYTHING WHILE CREATING?

Yes! If I really need to focus, and most often in general, I listen to music and a very wide range of music. If it's a super tedious process, I might put on a podcast. If it's mindless labour sometimes I watch movies.

DO YOU HAVE A RITUAL BEFORE APPROACHING A NEW ARTWORK?

Not really. Just to try to let go of the old. Learn from it but don't cling to it. This is also not my strong suit. I tend to get really fixated on things so letting go and starting fresh can be a challenge.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS?

I joke that my goal is to be shown in a museum at some point in my career. If I aim that high, then hopefully even if I 'fail' I'll be doing ok. But honestly, I just want to keep being able to do what I do full time. I want to continue to make work that I am interested in and that I feel is important all the time and just be able to pay my bills.



## BEST ADVICE YOU EVER GOT OR TRY TO FOLLOW.

Don't ever get comfortable in a paycheque. It was an alumni advising me not to get a job at a gallery opening back when I was still in college. I know everyone's circumstances are different, and I did have to get 'jobs' since then, but that always stuck in the back of my mind. If you don't have a backup plan, you are forced to hustle. And the more you hustle the better you get. Once I stepped away from all gainful employment (even being employed at studios in my industry) I took myself more seriously. I don't know if this is good advice for everyone but it really dramatically changed my life. I think to be an artist you have to try and not get too comfortable in anything - growing is uncomfortable and to be an artist you need to be constantly growing.

## WORKING ON GLASS IS UNUSUAL IN FINE ART, WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR MEDIUM?

So many things I could spend pages on all the reasons why I love glass. It's so difficult to use and extremely hot and also cold and sharp. It's insanely frustrating as it seems to have a mind of its own but really high highs when things actually work out. But mostly, it's such a fascinating material conceptually. Glass is representative of so many things and is a very unique material. It can be soft, sharp, hard, hot, cold, strong and fragile. It's so many contradictory things and it's these 'flaws' or inconsistencies in its molecular makeup that make it that way. That is so human. Each one of us is a completely unique bundle of contradictions.

## DO YOU HAVE A NEW PROJECT ON THE HORIZON?

Sure do! I've been working on a new series for a few months now. I have a couple of pieces finished but have many big ideas that I am still picking away at. Very exciting, I've really been opening up to new materials and new aesthetics with this one. It's still me - still glass and rusty metal, but I've been playing with papier mache, painting, collaging, drawing, plaster work, clay, etc.

## WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT SO FAR?

I have a strange one because one led to the next. Very recently, my greatest accomplishment was building a glassblowing studio and gallery with my soon to be ex husband and running our successful business together. But now, my greatest accomplishment has been the strength to walk away from it all when things got very out of hand. Walk away from my entire life and career that I built from the ground up and shift into what I'm doing now. Which is working in a new, much healthier space, making work that is exponentially more important to me, and trying very hard to grow and develop as an independent artist.

## WHENEVER WE ENTER THE NEXT NEW NORMAL, WHAT NEW THINGS YOU'D LIKE TO IMPLEMENT IN YOUR CREATIVE JOURNEY?

I can't wait to travel. Do artist residencies in as many different places as I can. And also do exhibitions with the public again. I want to both participate in art shows and I have aspirations to run my own - collaborate with other, crazy talented creatives that I am lucky enough to know.

## WHICH FEMALE ARTISTS WOULD YOU DREAM TO COLLABORATE WITH (PAST OR PRESENT) AND WHY?

So many. There are so many talented women out there. I guess one of my main heroes for so many reasons is Simone de Beauvoir - an existential author and all around feminist badass. She lived her life in a way I am actively trying to emulate so I would love nothing more than to try and meld minds with her. I love words and reading so also working with a creative type of a completely different medium than me would be an experience I'm sure.

I also love Diane Arbus and her sensitive and vaguely dark portraiture, Louise Bourgeois for her insight and powerful sculptural works. Christina Bothwell is a contemporary glass sculpture artist that I would love to work with and learn from, Irene Frolic is another.

## AS AN ARTIST, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR CAREER HAS BEEN IMPACTED IN ANY WAY BY THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A WOMAN?

It has - but in a way that I didn't see for a long time. Glass, though that is rapidly changing, has traditionally been a very male dominated field, which is part of the reason why I adopted the 'keeping up with the boys' mentality. However, what I came to understand more recently is the thing that was holding me back the most was my extremely controlling and emotionally (and later on physically) abusive relationship. I was holding myself back by not being fully authentic because I couldn't when I was with him. His jealousy and my catering to his fragile ego lead to me being withholding - even from myself. And since I was too afraid to look deeply inside of myself (because that would mean facing the fact that the life I had worked so hard to create was not the right one for me), my concepts and artwork remained slightly surface level. Now I'm digging as deep as I can into the pain and discomfort, and also joy and love to find who I really am and to talk about that process as I go.



## FATALE ART IS AN ART GALLERY THAT REPRESENTS WOMEN ARTISTS, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS KIND OF INITIATIVE?

I think this is a great initiative. While I am happy to be a woman living at this time, we still have some work to do as far as becoming fully equal goes. I think initiatives like this help us band together and support one another as we should! There is still some gender training that leads to women not supporting one another, but we are beings that can be so full of love and compassion and ingenuity that we need to be working together like this! It's not about women vs men. It's about women working together to hold each other up.

## ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE US TO KNOW?

Well, I'm very proud of this new company I built with another insanely talented artist and very dear friend so I want to talk about it here. On top of being a sculpture and installation artist, I'm also a blown glass sex toy maker! Grace Wardlaw and myself share a studio space and are the proud moms of Peace Lily Toys, an elevated sex toy experience. I'm also a climber & yogi, a recovering alcoholic, a bit of a space cadet and an adrenaline junkie. I think that about sums it up.



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