

Artistic practice is an opportunity to contribute to an unfinished world. However, with an excess of utterances and limited resources, the artist ought to consider the collective toll of any act of making and presentation. I create work with an emphasis on craft while examining the provenance and consequences of materials and actions.

In my three-dimensional work, I use common construction materials as basic elements. I use wood because it is easy to work and readily available. Moreover, it is renewable. I use steel for its strength. I work its surface through finishing and patination until it visually justifies its presence. I use house paint because it dries fast and is less harmful than other paints and stains. Also, a wide variety of colors are available. With plaster molds, I archive textures as I encounter them: a dog's scratches in dirt, dents in wood from hammer's blow, the chiseled traces of a dado cut. I use cast metal and resins sparingly to embed these textures in finished pieces.

I develop compositions using elementary design principles as a springboard. I frame a sketch in squares and root rectangles; then I break it up. Some pieces are confined within a single border, while others spread out across the wall or floor, including the space between elements. I include specific wood samples for their color as well as their grain patterns – pine for its meandering lines like a wash of watercolor, red oak for the staccato of its tyloses. To interact with the natural forms in these materials, I add my own hand through clusters of dado cuts and gouge marks.

My choice of materials is dictated not just by aesthetics. By using construction lumber rather than exotic and endangered woods from niche suppliers, I avoid supporting the increasingly dangerous idea that scarcity equals value equals desirability ad infinitum. Plenty can be done with 2x4s; obsessing over a sub-species of walnut adds to its destruction. Iron and bronze can be conceptually heavy-handed, and logistically impractical. I keep them precious.

In addition to materials, I examine the context of my art practice as well. Living and working in Tuscaloosa for over 15 years, I know how inequality manifests in environments seemingly benign as educational woodshops and local art galleries. Though I keep a personal studio practice that is as self-contained as possible, I also host art nights, house concerts, and poetry readings with my space, prioritizing emerging artists of color and from the LGBTQ+ community. I participate in weekly songwriters nights and I have built studios for many artists in the area. With this combination of an intimate studio practice and collaborative outreach, both my work and I can be part of a community without asking too much of it.

With any utterance, I try to complement limited space rather than occupy it. Resources to create work are scarce and opportunities to present it are rare and exclusive. I want each project to justify its cost and its ongoing existence.