

# MY STORY

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# Childhood

For as long as I can recall, I have enjoyed being creative. I can remember going through my mom's art supplies as a child; I was constantly making a mess with anything I could find lying around the house.

When I was 18 I started to purchase tiny square tiles off of Ebay. I put a large wooden table out in my parents driveway and painstakingly glued them on to fill the surface with shiny patterns. I believe this was the first time my brain started to really think in mosaics; but recently I've recalled what I now remember as my first memory of the concept: Michael Jackson's 1993 half time Superbowl performance.

I can vividly remember watching it live as an impressionable 8 year old, and being in awe watching each member of the audience hold up a different colored piece of cardboard, fascinated at how all of those pieces could fit together to create images of children while he sang "Heal the World". I have recently forced friends to rewatch the grainy performance on youtube and I seem to be the only one who remembers it's profound effect even through a TV screen hundreds of miles away.



2003, Mosaic table, Ebay Tiles



1993, Michael Jackson Superbowl Performance

Eventually, the Ebay tiles became too expensive for me to work with so I began to ask local tile shops for any materials they might be looking to get rid of. I would drive around and collect boards covered in tiles, and in order to use the pieces, I would have to forcefully yank them off from the seemingly permanent adhesive that was used to display each one on the surface.

Later, with these tiles, I made my first sale. It was a small Bob Marley image that was terribly attached to a piece of wood, but someone bought it within an hour of me posting it on craigslist. I actually let the guy into my parents house, and exchanged the piece for a hundred bucks. He asked me to sign the back, and then he left. And like any responsible 21 year old would do - I immediately called my friends and went out to spend it on a couple rounds of drinks.

During that time of tile hunting, I found a post on craigslist by a woman who was looking to sell the contents of a tile shop she was closing after 20+ years of being in business. I reached out to her, and she agreed to let me come poke around in the shop. I had very little money at the time and she ended up giving me the contents of her store for free. Well..... as much as I could take, which ended up being two car loads full. Most of them are still collecting dust in my parent's basement (sorry mom and dad!) but having access to this many colors and textures opened up a whole new world of creativity.

Later, I worked in a pottery studio and this is where I learned how to run a kiln. I started to make my own tiles and I taught a mosaic workshop.



2005, Bob Marley



2006, Steal Your Face clock



2006, Ski Dangling Bear

## Music

During this time I would sit, listen to music, and create mostly band logos of songs I loved. Lots of dancing bears, Bob Marley, stealies, Phish and the like. A local restaurant would hang my work and allow me to take one hundred percent of the sales. I turned some of them into clocks. Every one of them sold, but eventually I got tired of looking at images that were not born from my own brain.

These logos, and music in general, have always played a huge role in my life. I can remember sitting in front of my parents CD player as a young child, shuffling through their CD collection and flipping through the lyrics and artwork that came printed in the front of each one. The Grateful Dead was my first recollection of listening to songs as poems and I admired the artwork inside each album. I would go to the library as young as eight years old and photocopy Grateful Dead books so that I could go home and color the images in. I am still highly influenced by music and collect as many live shows as my life allows.



2006, Hale Street Restaurant Mosaic



2005, Villa in La Napoule, France

# Travel

I have always been an adventure seeker.

During my college years, I felt like one professor really took me under her wings. Rosanne Retz. I owe a lot to her, because she was the one that encouraged me to participate in a summer program in France during my sophomore year of college. The trip had such a profound effect on me that I ended up doing it again two years later - and here I am at almost forty years old talking about it.

I spent a total of twelve weeks in France during those summers, and man... we had fun. I often think of this as a pivotal point in my life; It was my first opportunity to travel overseas and it provided a mind altering experience I might not have had if my professor had not tried to entice me to go.

Now that I have kids, I hope to pass on my love for travel to them.



2006, Experimenting with Paint



## Media

When I was in college, I had a hard time figuring out what medium I liked best. I still don't know and I dabble in whatever I feel like doing that day. Sometimes I like to sprinkle clay bits all over my house, and other days I work on a screen because I don't feel like cleaning up a mess.

I never wanted to be one medium - I wanted to learn it all while I had the opportunity to pick so many professor brains. Some of the art courses I took included ceramics, printmaking, photoshop, information design, video editing, painting, photography.... if it fit into my schedule and sounded fun- I took it.

I also loved philosophy.

My professors had to create a new major since my course load didn't fit in the checkboxes that were designed for the art program. I became the first "interdisciplinary" graduate - which I believe to be synonymous with "short attention span."

I have since built a studio in my home with a kiln, pottery wheels and a slab roller; so my focus has been on clay although I see myself forever jumping between different media.

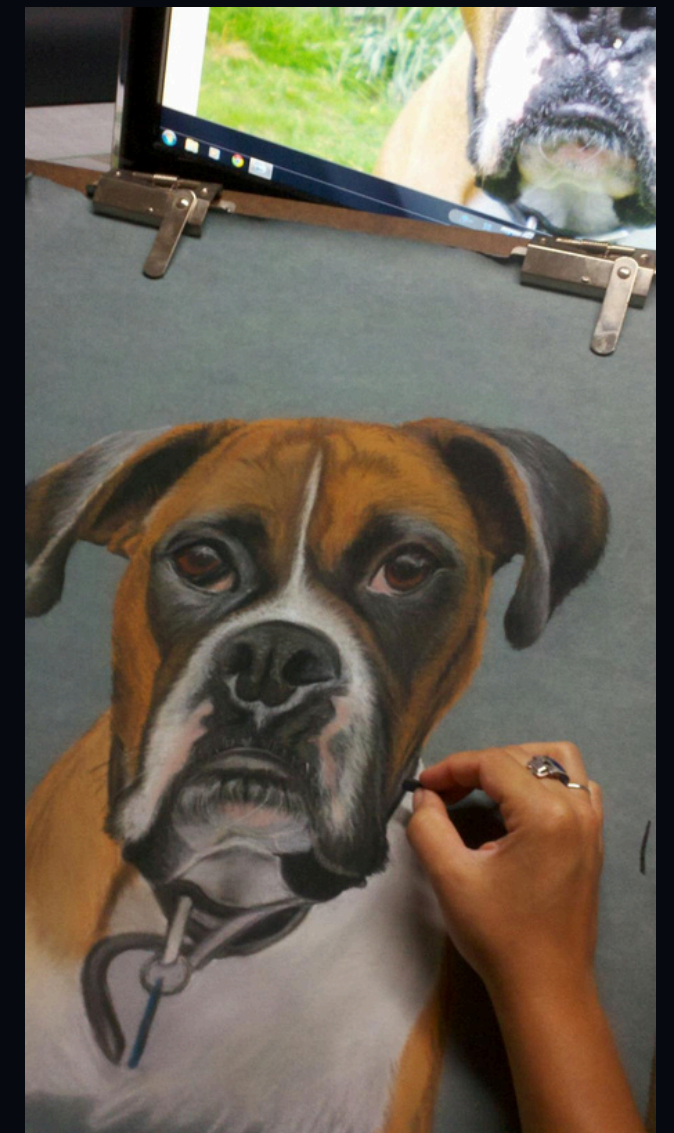
# Past Work 2009-2012



Silkscreen



Linoleum Print



Conte Drawing



Conte Drawing



Batik on Fabric

# Teaching

I have always enjoyed working with kids. The idea of inspiring another human and being a positive influence on another life is what drew me into teaching. After I received my Master's degree, I moved on to teach high school art for five years at a progressive high school. During this time I learned a lot from both my students. I have always been a big thinker, and my classroom gave me an opportunity to explore new ideas.

I taught classes in Photoshop, printmaking, street art, upcycling, silkscreening, and just about anything else I was excited about. My students learned how to take a drawing, adjust it in photoshop and program a CNC router to carve their design out of wood for printmaking. Our art shows were meticulously organized by our art department, allowing students to frame, price, and sell their work at the end of year art show. By the time some of my students left high school, they had the skills to start their own silkscreen company.

I also had the idea to bring a steamroller to the school and create an event; the steamroller would act as a printing press for giant wooden boards my students worked tirelessly to carve.



2017, Steamroller Printmaking Event



2017, Student Work



2017, Student Work





2015, Camera Obscura

Another project I am proud of during my teaching years, was turning my classroom into a camera obscura. I covered every inch of window with opaque trash bags, poked a hole in, and watched as there was a moving image on a poster board being held up by a student. It's moments like that in the classroom I hope will not be forgotten.



2018, Medicine Vial Cap Mural

At the time, my mom was working at Beverly Hospital; and like me, she saw use for a material that would have otherwise been tossed in the trash. Medicine vial caps. They were colorful, they were circles, and best of all? They were free. My mom collected bags of them for years. I was able to guide a very talented student through the process of creating an 8 foot tall seahorse using the caps.

# student work



Recycled Records + Spray Paint



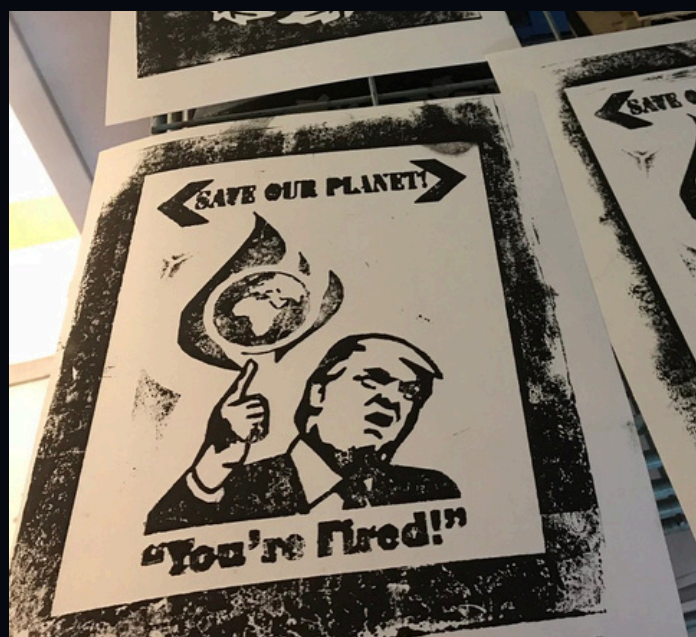
CNC process



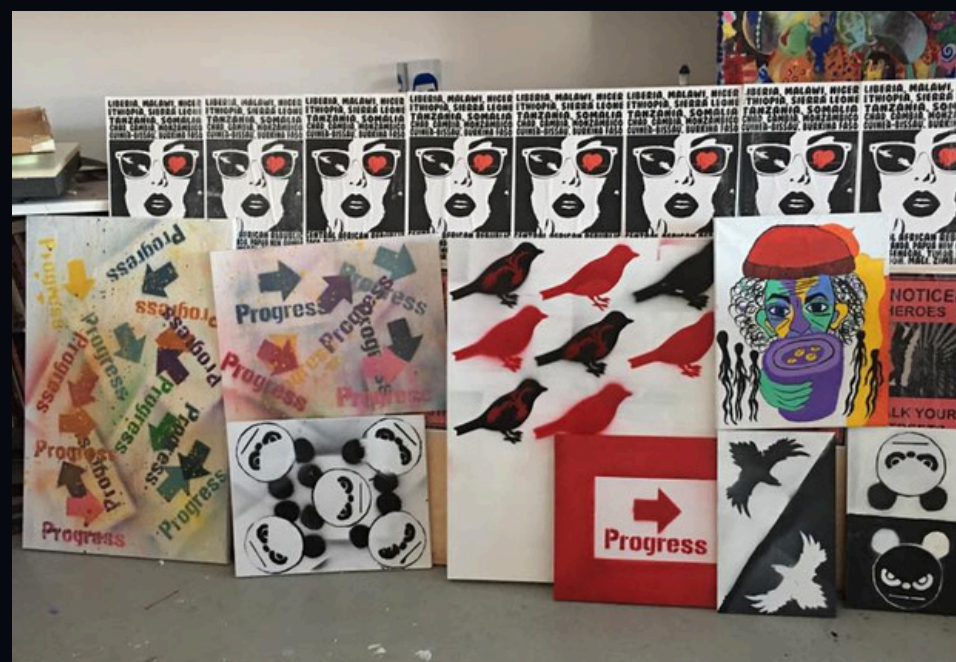
Linocuts



Woodcuts



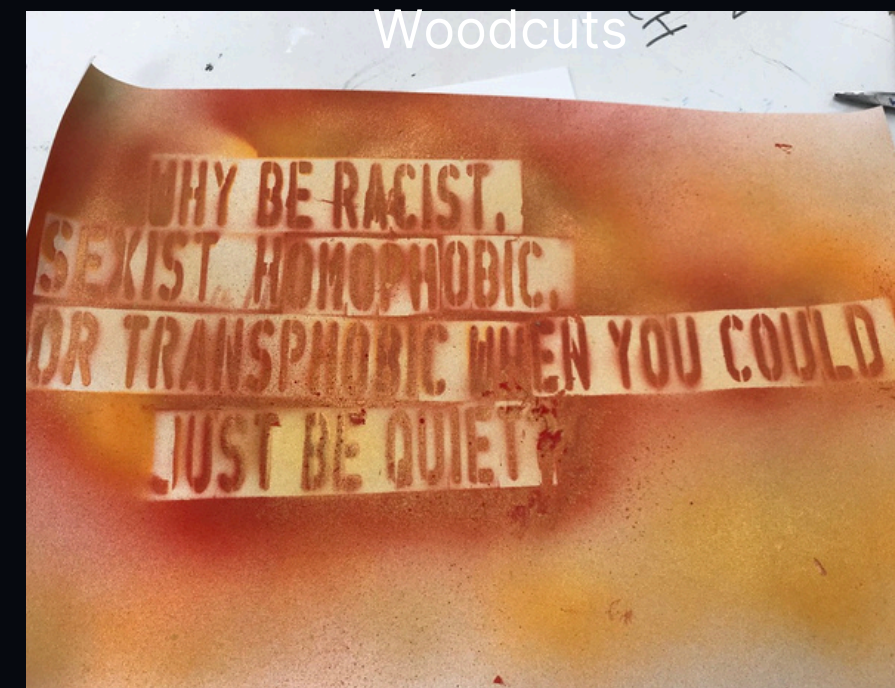
CNC Printmaking



Street Art Posters



Acrylic Painting



Spraypaint



2019, Complete Mosaic Mural

One of the final projects I worked on during my teaching years was a tiled ocean themed mosaic, designed by a student during a month long, full day course with ten students. I co-taught this course with a friend and colleague, Jennifer Silver; I learned a lot from her and together it felt that we could make any idea come to life no matter how big it was .

The process we used in the geometric parts of this project mimicked the tiles I was creating back when I worked at the pottery studio in my 20's. It also brought in Jen's vision of creating three dimensional fish to add unique elements to the water.



2019, Mural Process

# Studio

After taking five years off to raise my family, I am stepping back out into the world as I find myself with time to get creative again.

My husband and I built a studio, installed a kiln, and purchased the contents of a pottery studio outside of Philadelphia.

Now, I am taking this journey one day at a time. I am grateful for this life we have created that allows me to follow this path and do what I love and believe in.

Joanna



2022, finished studio



2023, Driving to Philadelphia for pottery supplies



**MEADOWHAWK**  
*studio*