

00:00 - I identify as much as a consumer, as I do an artist.
00:04 My cultural identity beyond my work is as with most people,
00:08 wrapped up in my purchasing habits and my compulsion habits.
00:12 Working in assemblage and brick collage gives me license
00:14 to unload that anxiety and guilt
00:16 into a sort of static encapsulated place
00:19 while at the same time, addressing the pain,
00:21 cultural phenomenon, we're all sharing
00:23 in this new age of single use and single global retail.
00:28 Most of my work happens like (hands banging) right here.
00:31 This table is my pride and joy, it weighs 400 pounds.
00:36 What I generally have is a sort of pivot
00:38 and grab situation going,
00:40 this is my favorite materials over here.
00:44 Balloons, fake nails are a big favorite of mine
00:49 as you can see here.
00:52 Random deconstructed cheap necklaces from Alibaba.
01:00 Eyeballs.
01:01 So generally I'll be over here with the glue gun,
01:05 the drill, this seems great for carpentry.
01:08 Anything can go on at this table.
01:11 So my undergraduate degree is in illustration.
01:14 I went to Pratt Institute.
01:17 I got to study under some fantastic professors there,
01:20 including Rudy Gutierrez and Donald Albright,
01:22 who's no longer on the staff there.
01:24 I was always kind of a science fiction and fantasy nerd.
01:27 Not that you can tell from the work,
01:31 but again sort of the fantastical and the very extra
01:36 always informed my work and my practice
01:39 even when I was working in editorial in 2D.
01:42 This is where all of my advanced materials take place.
01:45 So my portables, my latexes, my epoxies,
01:49 both of which I'm very allergic to,
01:51 my phones, all these sort of non identifiable.
01:57 I like to call them the things
01:58 that aren't a familiar object, like a fork or an umbrella.
02:03 They all come from here.
02:05 I've had a neighbor who was the acquisitioning budge.
02:08 I've bought a bunch.
02:09 And again, it's just really nice to have that intuitive flow
02:13 where you want to see an effect and you can just grab it
02:17 and you don't have to research it and then source it.
02:20 Having it on hand is really good
02:22 to have a non disrupted sort of workflow.
02:26 I still pull heavily from my illustration training
02:30 in my work though, I love a graphic silhouette.
02:34 I love just evocative, decorative textures and motifs,
02:41 and something that I've learned as a weakness
02:44 is that my illustration background gives me
02:46 a very literal sense of surface treatment,
02:49 meaning I have trouble getting abstract.
02:52 So that single handicap actually is what first informed me

02:59 to do the monochromatic surface treatments.
03:01 'Cause it basically just annex that part
03:04 of my artistic tendencies and separate it.
03:08 You know, I didn't have to make the choices.
03:09 I didn't have to let the literal part of my brain come in.
03:12 I could just have one color and it was effective.
03:17 So necessity informs invention I guess.
03:22 I grew up in Boston, sort of in the '80s and '90s
03:28 in the Back Bay where most of the Back Bay was built up
03:32 in a very lavish, Victorian Baroque style
03:35 to accommodate the very wealthy people
03:37 who lived there at the time.
03:39 So I got to experience the Back Bay
03:41 when it was coming out of urban decline.
03:45 Post-surgery 1960s and '70s, urban white flight.
03:48 And so my childhood was really saturated
03:54 with this decade, but preserved deteriorating,
04:00 decorative motifs.
04:02 And I think that having that be such an unpressurized
04:06 and pervasive aspect of my childhood gave me the freedom
04:10 that I have in my work now
04:12 to sort of execute on those motifs in an irreverent way,
04:17 namely with garbage
04:18 and sort of pre-consumer disposable plastics.
04:23 And I really just sort of up its accessibility
04:27 and almost sort of lovingly poke fun at it.
04:30 The way that the idea of middle-class family
04:34 raising four kids in a Victorian brownstone
04:38 that one's house some of the social elite.
04:40 Would also kind of lovingly pull
04:43 that whole or back down to earth.
04:45 I like surface beauty because it entices people.
04:48 It gets you engaged in it,
04:52 it gets into your heart a little bit
04:54 and then it stays there after you leave.
04:55 And it might be just sort of an innocuous thing
04:59 that you never chew on again, or it might creep up on you.
05:01 The other facet of my childhood was natural history museums.
05:05 This is something that's carried through
05:06 into my adult years.
05:08 My involvement with the museum of natural history
05:11 is Mineral Hall.
05:13 Which is again, a similarly parallel interpretation
05:18 of nature through the lens of man
05:20 and an engineered encounter with a moment
05:22 when you think about the Victorian natural history diorama
05:25 and taxidermy's academic specimens,
05:30 they're meant to give you this sort of weight
05:31 or it's like illusion of a captured moment in time
05:35 that maybe humans wouldn't have tried on.
05:37 But in fact, they're all very theatrical and embellish
05:40 and idealize.
05:41 And I don't know, all those three things
05:45 that sort of accessibility that sort of joke

05:49 on natural motifs, which is very prevalent in Baroque
05:52 and Victorian architecture, that sort of idea
05:56 that man knows best and can execute on these things.
05:58 And then this sort of all encompassing melancholia
06:02 of the need to control nature in the sense
06:05 that it's lost in the urban environment.
06:07 Those all play in very heavily into where my work explores
06:13 the intersection of man and nature.
06:15 Anyway, you can see that this is really where tension
06:20 is at its highest for me as a consumer,
06:23 because it's hard not to have something seem useful
06:29 when you're working in this assemblage style.
06:33 So I have to put pretty severe guidelines on myself
06:38 to not just pocket every little piece of plastic
06:41 that comes into our life.
06:42 So I save white bottle caps, which you can see it used here.
06:47 They're kind of fun 'cause once you start saving them
06:49 it become sort of a measure of time.
06:52 You know, how long have you had this practice for?
06:56 Right here, this wall I'm quite fond of,
06:59 this is a Relic from my ceramic days,
07:02 and I have it the heart to take it down
07:04 because when I had open studios,
07:05 this would always be the thing
07:06 that people would react to the most.
07:10 It's just test tiles, you know,
07:12 various glazes on top of other various glazes.
07:14 And I like to keep it there to remind me of my roots.
07:17 After three to five years of ceramics,
07:19 I decided that I had mastered the technical aspects
07:24 of the material and was reaching the edges
07:26 of what I could do with it.
07:27 It was becoming not me working with the material,
07:30 but rather be working against it.
07:32 And I did for such a wonderful, I don't know,
07:36 almost sacred material as clay, I felt bad fighting with it.
07:40 So I started to pull back.
07:42 I could tell it was kind of coming
07:44 to a stopping point with it,
07:46 but I didn't know what the next phase of my life would be
07:51 as an artist.
07:52 I didn't have any real formal training of fine arts
07:55 the illustration background I had, there was, you know,
07:58 one-on-one drawing and such,
08:00 but I didn't have the fine arts training
08:04 beyond just a basic art history understanding.
08:07 I didn't know how to speak the language.
08:09 So I started looking at graduate programs
08:11 and wound up at Leslie Art & Designs,
08:14 low residency program, which was terrific
08:17 because it enabled me
08:18 to keep my studio practice virtually untouched,
08:22 you know, without having to portion off parts of my life,
08:27 to go to academics three times a week, et cetera, et cetera.

08:31 And was almost an immersive fluency program
08:37 for those two weeks you were on campus.
08:39 It really was, yeah, it felt like learning a language.
08:42 I'm also very particular about lighting.
08:44 So I keep a lot of modular lighting around
08:46 to try and figure out, you know,
08:49 what makes a piece look good?
08:50 It's hard when you have a monochrome,
08:52 especially white to understand what lighting can do for it.
08:57 And I graduated in January and then COVID hit.
09:02 So I've had to really adapt on the fly.
09:06 The moment I hit the ground with my roller skates on,
09:10 so to speak.
09:11 I don't wanna play the victim,
09:13 but I think that sculptors and installation artists
09:16 got one of the shorter ends of the stick here.
09:21 It's been really amazing and fascinating and very inspiring
09:24 watching all of these creative types pivoting,
09:30 galleries pivoting, performances pivoting
09:33 to an online distance space essentially.
09:41 But for sculpture,
09:42 there is a unique problem of really engaging
09:45 in that third dimension.
09:47 I think sculpture got a pretty raw bargain compared to say,
09:53 a print artists or photographers.
09:57 So what I have done in the wake of COVID
10:02 is tried to pivot with it.