

Liz Hamilton Quay

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What is your artist's/creative philosophy/outlook/approach to your work?

My creative approach is based on my natural curiosity for materials and a love for making. One of my greatest joys is researching and learning different techniques that I can apply to new works. These skills have a vast range and include everything from extremely traditional and technical fiber processes to digital formats such as video. My portfolio is very diverse in process but it all stems from similar questions. New pieces emerge from the threads of inquiry. They are approached through the material that best suits the work and are not constrained to a particular medium. I identify with fibers and materials studies most closely because texture is a very important aspect in all of my work. Texture, over any other element, allows me to more deeply explore visceral feelings that draw the viewer into my world. My newer work is no exception, it relies heavily on hand manipulation and transformation of materials in both sculptural and two-dimensional forms. I am driven by my relentless urge to describe feelings through each process. Conceptually, my work is based on the tension or stagnation generated through managing emotional balance. The journey is never smooth; therefore, I aim to capture the varying stages that emerge. In its many forms, the newer work focuses on how it feels to return the body to stasis. Ultimately, I hope to evoke an alluring outcome from the pain.

What is your educational philosophy toward teaching in the arts?

Art making is a process, so should learning and teaching art. While the main objective is for the teacher to impart as much knowledge as possible to the student, I believe that this process is also symbiotic. As the student grows and learns so should the teacher. The teacher must challenge themselves to be able to provide the learner with progressive and thorough knowledge whether it is through skills or the resources to obtain them. I have had the pleasure of teaching art to an array of ages and skill levels. During the process, I have come to the understanding that every student learns in their own way. Having the ability to be flexible in my teaching method, I feel that I can reach each maker's full potential. In order to achieve this, it is my opinion, that the student must be fully engaged through skill learning, investigating references, and open-ended projects that delve and ask the maker to reach.

In the studio, I feel it is most important to learn the basics of the intended skill and build upon technique. Having a strong foundation in any discipline will develop a language in which the student may begin to bring questioning to their work. This root gives depth to the work and a reason to continue to investigate new and advanced methods by which to share the maker's expression.

Beyond creating a strong base in technique, I believe that it is imperative to look at established artist's work, emerging artists and historical references. This investigation will lead to a well-rounded approach to a variety of technical applications. Developing a complex and diverse vocabulary in what has been done and what is being done can spark a new vision for each student and break the myopic context to a seemingly simple technique.

In a well-rounded educational environment, developing projects that illicit curiosity is important for students to be fully engaged and willing to take their work to the next level. It is my opinion that lessons that strongly lean on a personal element will trigger a deeper appreciation for the work and allow them to explore advanced and innovative techniques to the fullest. Throughout the process of practice and trial of ideas, I will continually create individual touch bases with the students to ensure they are on a path that is pushing their creative process and ability. In bringing these elements together, my students may begin to develop a strong voice in the Fibers and Materials Studies world of art.