NEST(ing)

By

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My work is a reflection of my thoughts, feelings and my past. I've been creating since I was young, and it's always felt natural and compulsive.Through thinking with my hands, I can create tangible representations of my thoughts and emotions which, at times, I feel very disconnected from. Making is my way to process and learn about the world and all the crazy within it, through mashing, regurgitating and seeing with my eyes the things that are in my head. My fingers feels like they have eyeballs on them as I tap, rub, weld, pick, pull, grope and smooth my works.

My idea of creating nest-like sculptures came from a Haitians wives tale my dad would tell as I was growing up. The tale is that, when you have loose hair from your brush or a haircut, you have to either burn, or flush the hair down the toilet. This is so that a bird won't find it and add it to their nest. The fear is that the person that the hair belongs to will go crazy, or "coocoo". In my junior year, I started to explore this idea literally, and began making nests out of synthetic hair from me and my twin sister's braid extensions. The nests were small and started at the size of an actual birds nest, I would weave with the braids, and braid in more hair to build up the structure.

Over time I started braiding in other elements to the forms, like strips of fabric, plastic bags and recycled elements. In my work I play a lot with using everyday items in unconventional ways and augment their appearance, causing the viewer to try a little harder to figure out the materials used. I'm drawn to creating organic forms, adding industrial materials like plastic, steel, foam and cement. I try to find ways to either abruptly combine or meld these elements together. I love spending time with my pieces for however long it tells me, with each sculpture I create a unique and intricate frenetic build up. As I grew more comfortable with my materials I started to up the scale of new nests, and work with new materials and processes. The materials that i'm most drawn

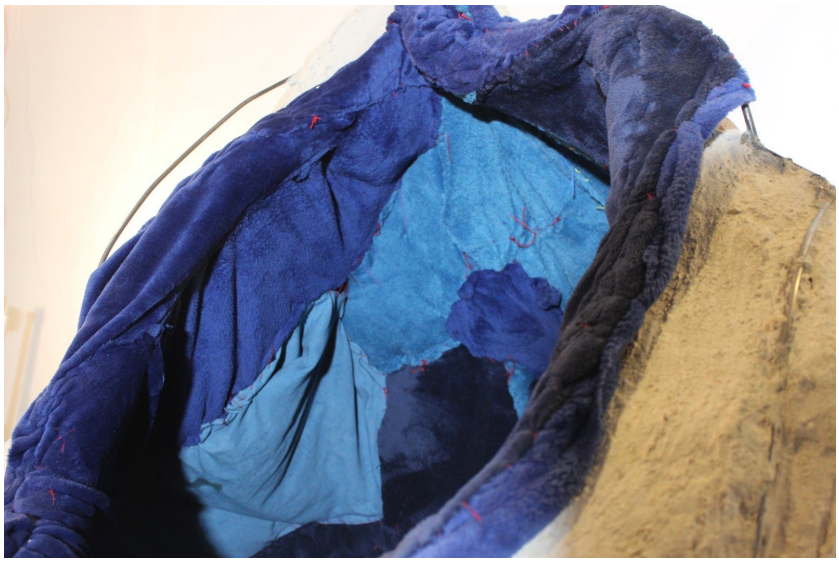
to are textured fabrics, concrete, and steel. As the scale grew, I felt more inclined to create the nest forms to fit my body inside of them. This became an important aspect of my work and continues to be so today.

In 2017 my drive to create larger nests structures grew. I came across the work of Ernesto Neto, and fell in love with the detail and intricacy of his interactive work. The bulbus saggy shapes he is able to create are both visually and spatially enticing. His ability to create a calming chaos is something I appreciate and try to incorporate into my own work.

Paxpa – There Is a Forest Encantada Inside of Us", 2014, Ernesto Neto.

Life is a Body We Are Part of, 2012, Ernesto Neto.

With the inspiration from Neto, the narrative of my nest began to shift from the haitian wives tale, to one of comfort vs discomfort, inside vs outside and self soothing. I began to incorporate more aspects of my life, my internal dialogue and conflicts. With the narrative shift my work started to become more cathartic, as well as more abstract. By exploring this connection, through comfort and discomfort, found and created objects, the natural and unnatural, one is able to find grounding through interaction, balance and love in spite of perceived chaos.



From the age of around three, I always loved to fit myself into small spaces. When I got scared, overwhelmed or sad, I would sneak off and find a tight quiet spot to hide. Some of my favorites were under tables, the back of closets, in between a couch and the wall, and the inside of my parents duvet cover. This was a way to remove myself from the stressful situation, and ground my body and emotions. This was my way to self regulate enough to get myself back to a state to be able to go about the rest of my day.

As I got older and bigger, I began losing the freedom to go off and hide, and my spaces became limited to bathroom stalls at school and corners of vacant stairwells. The end of sixth grade is when I started to retreat into myself and dissociate, I began to act out in moments of high stress because I couldn't figure out how to make the negative feelings go away. My parents called them tantrums, would react negatively and they would always end in a screaming match. As I saw how my actions were affecting my school work and my family, I felt a loss of control and a loss of connection between my body, brain, and emotions. I began down a long and difficult road of self harm, the tantrums stopped visibly, but they were constant internally. The harm to my body would quiet down the chaos in my head and allow me a quick and tainted version of self regulation.

Fast forward to the peak of the turmoil which was when I was in ninth grade. I was desperate, scared, and tired. It took two of the most caring, gracious, and persistent people I know, to convince me and my parents that I needed help.

My teachers, Sarah and JD saved my soul and I am forever thankful for their love and friendship.

After over eight years of therapy, and the help of medication I now have the tools to live happily, productively and know when I need to take a step back. Creating nests has helped me focus my emotions, and have a physical outlet for stress, while in the process, making a new comforting space to retreat and self regulate.

My use of red thread in most of my fabric pieces pays as an homage to my past harm and scars. The red thread is also pulled from one of the first books I read by myself cover to cover and actually enjoyed, *The Tale of Despereaux* by Kate Dicamillo. The brave, heroic mouse Desperaux used a sewing needle as his sword, and a spool of red thread to save his love, Princess Pea. It is such a precious story and I alway think of it when I hand stitch my pieces. Red has also been an important color to my family. In the three homes we have lived, and my dads old studio of twenty years, we painted the front door red. This is because it is believed that red sucks away bad vibes, so my parents wanted to make it so every person that entered their space had clean and positive energy.

The artists that had a big influence on my pieces for *NEST(ing) were*, Martha Jackson Jarvis, Nari Ward, Louise Bourgeois, and Nick Cave. Nari Ward's work really helped me to figure out that a large part of my work has to do with gentrification, and the slow disappearance of culture in my neighborhood of Bed Stuy Brooklyn, and other black communities. These themes are most apparent in my pieces *Rocker*, *Roller*, and *Cielo/Big Guy.*

Roller, *Rocker* and *Cielo* are hyper representations of urban living. Each material contains a rich history, the story of me and the people that came before. They pay homage to my neighbors that got pushed out of their family homes by rent increase, incarceration, or death. They are comfort items. My nests are retreat centers for my body and the story of those around me, and those that came before me. *NEST(ing)* brings all of my ideas together to create physical forms that give viewers a look inside of myself and the way that I view and exist in this world.

Directory

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