

● **Colleen Sargen, Artist Statement**

Because I design and build art with a broad diversity of materials, the inspiration and motivation constantly changes – from use of a found object as a starting point – to selecting material that will most effectively express a particular idea. Therefore, one day I’m an engineer, the next, a painter or a printmaker, on yet another day, a sculptor, and always a student.

Having taken as many geological and cultural anthropology classes as I could at university, it seems that seeking out found objects to use in my work is like some sort of archeological dig; these findings, objects, their history, their designer’s intentions. A found object or material presents the challenge of marrying it to a minimal number of other elements into an assemblage that is direct in design and visually compelling. I like that it forces me to set design parameters and cultivates a responsibility toward seeking out value in unexpected places. In reuse of salvaged materials, I like to believe that I also can bring attention to practices destructive to our world - disposable products, excessive consumerism and present the idea that we often discard items that could continue to be useful.

I’m equally interested in starting with fresh canvas or paper, paints or ink, or with camera in hand. I favor abstracted style and geometric structure. Photography is introduced in mixed media works.

Contemporary artists who change my world are for example, Kara Walker whose intense focus on articulating her own voice through such powerful imagery challenges me to boldness. Judith Pfaff’s unending ability to surprise. The sensual patina and powerful yet fragile language of Richard Serra’s massive metal sculptures. And he and Chuck Close in their declaration that art making is not as much about the inspiration as it is about working hard.

My current projects explore carrying the line and structure of my sculptural work forward into paintings and printmaking compositions. Substrates for these works include handmade papers, photographs printed onto rag paper, and surfaces that I’ve layered with metal and over time with outdoor weathering, carry rust markings and patterns that serve as yet another layer of information.