

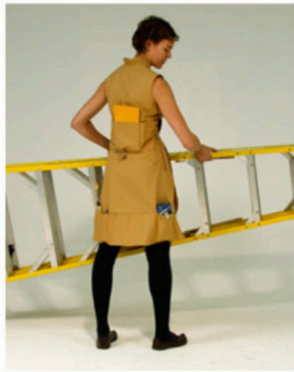


LOG
GOODS
PROJECTS
DEEP DECK
PARTICIPATE
MANIFESTO
LINKS

Categories ▾

Archives ▾

Interview with Caroline Woolard



*I'm continuing to feature an ongoing series of interviews and studio visits with other makers/artisans/crafters. If you would like to introduce yourself and your work to a growing Deep Craft network, I invite you to visit the [PARTICIPATE](#) page of this site. Meanwhile, allow me to introduce you to artist/provocateur **Caroline Woolard**.*

DC: Describe what you do as a maker/artisan.

CW: As a maker, I share small discoveries with other people, stirring up curiosity and optimism. These moments defy expectations and can come from material properties or experiences of the commons. Lately, I am working on a barter/skill-sharing network for artists: www.OurGoods.org



cloud caught

DC: What was the biggest obstacle you had to overcome to gain proficiency with a material or set of skills? Did you have a 'breakthrough' moment?

CW: My biggest obstacle is always impatience. I am not proficient in any material. I am always discovering, hoping that my approach, full of wonder, makes each material receptive to my dialog with it.



LOG
GOODS
PROJECTS
DEEP DECK
PARTICIPATE
MANIFESTO
LINKS

Categories ▾

Archives ▾

DC: Do you have any superstitions connected with making?

CW: Mornings are for precision and measuring. Nights are for risky hopes. Some spaces need to be cleared with salt and sage.

DC: What attracts you to a certain handmade thing?

CW: The person who made it or the sense that the thing has a large life- as nuanced and complicated as a stranger that I will get to know, with a life large enough for endless surprise.



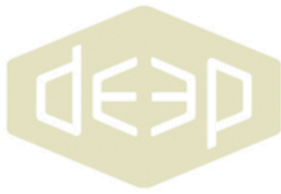
DC: Do you have a favorite process?

CW: Glassblowing. I nearly committed my life to this one material. If only the objects produced reflected the 2000 degree, collaborative event of breathing air into a molten material! Three people work in silent understanding: blowing, blocking heat, and shaping the glass. The “jacks” (metal tongs/tweezers) are greased with beeswax, sparking with flame and honey scent at each moment of contact. I decided to stop following a professional glass track when I realized how precious and fragile the final result inevitably was.



DC: What is the favorite thing you’ve ever made? Why?

CW: Public Seating. I simply bolted wooden seats to stop sign posts in my neighborhoods (Providence RI and Brooklyn NY) and watched so many people use them. I reproduced the slick aesthetic of street furniture to camouflage my project- and it passed in public, living incognito. In Rhode Island, the



LOG
GOODS
PROJECTS
DEEP DECK
PARTICIPATE
MANIFESTO
LINKS

Categories 
Archives 

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DC: Is there any material, tool or technique that really intrigues you that you've never gotten around to learning? What's interesting to you about this?

CW: Grafting, or "Arborsculpture" as practiced by Richard Reames. The patient labor displayed in his book, "My chair grew an inch this year" is humbling. I yearn for this slowness and relationship to results.

DC: Where do you find inspiration? How does this come out in the work?

CW: Everywhere. From the old man who uses an emptied out Cornflakes box as his briefcase. From mushrooms. From Shape Note singing. From 8 legged chairs. From my mom. From gravity. These enthusiasms manifest themselves as a playful optimism despite most odds.

DC: Where do you see yourself in relation to the current trends towards sustainability, DIY, craft, etc.? How has your relationship to these things changed over time?

CW: I am trying to "be the change" rather than preach it. I am engaged in a practice of not-looking-away: researching where everything I buy comes from, including my salary. Since reading Michael Pollan, I am a vegetarian and buy food at my local co-op and CSA.



Shaker Residence

DC: Where do you place yourself in relation to a craft tradition or heritage? Could you talk a bit about your primary influences related to craft?

CW: I am inspired by the Shakers, a group led by a woman two centuries ago, seeing making as "faith in practice" and supporting unconventional communal living with craft sales to "The World."

DC: What advice would you give to someone just starting out in craft/making?

CW: Be as self-aware as possible. I am impatient, and many projects are a struggle between my desire for results and the reality of each material's time demands. I have learned to fight frustration and also when I should accept my personality and work with sensual, "sloppy" materials that better adhere to my sensual practice, where scratches are impossible.