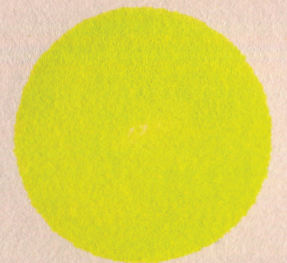


AT HAND

Damien Hoar de Galvan

Cynthia Mason

Ryan Sarah Murphy

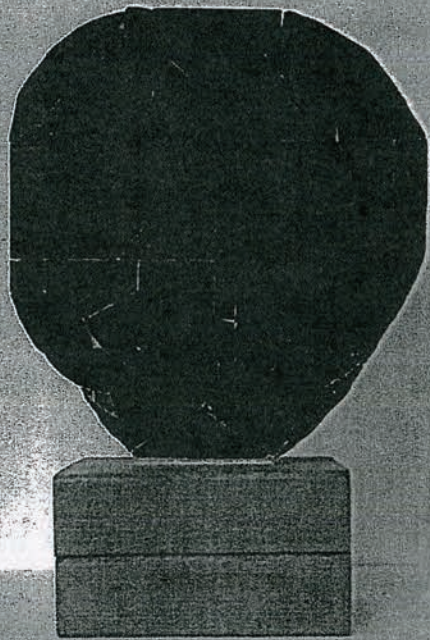


HOW DOES YOUR BIOGRAPHY INFLUENCE YOUR PRACTICE?

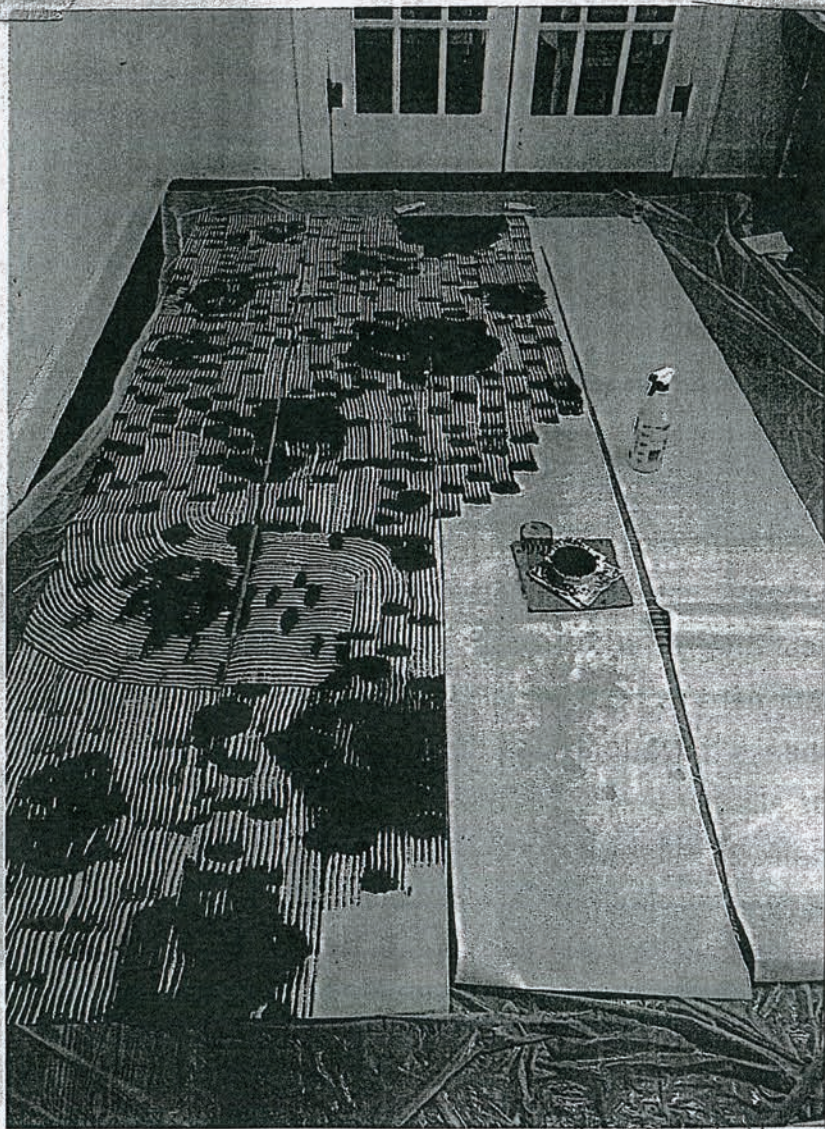
DHdG: My parents are both creative "makers" of various kinds, I'd say I got my foundation at home. In high school there was music/graffiti/skateboarding, and although I wasn't very good at any of those things they certainly helped shape my aesthetics and showed me glimpses of what an artist could do/be. In college although I didn't major in art by senior year I was spending lots of time in the art building on campus and it was probably there that I first had a clear thought of doing that with my life. In 2007 I went back to school for a year and got a post-baccalaureate in fine art from the museum school in Boston, that year in an academic institution kind of finished off my formative experiences I would say.

CM: I studied architecture in the mid-nineties where the Bauhaus played a strong role in my studio practice. My love of materials started there, where I combined and tested the application of any and all materials. I love to reveal how materials repel or merge, ooze and crack, how they patina and shift.

RSM: I was born in Vermont and grew up in New Hampshire. I moved to New York at 18 to go to art school and have lived and worked here ever since. I think growing up in small New England towns close to the seacoast has instilled a real connection to nature, landscape and the horizon line. It's been interesting to see how my intrinsic response to the natural environment has been influenced by city living for all of my adult life. Instead of trees and spacious ground, I've lived among skyscrapers and overcrowded streets. I think it was inevitable that my work would gradually take on a more architectural framework given the inescapable imprint of the city's structure on my psyche.



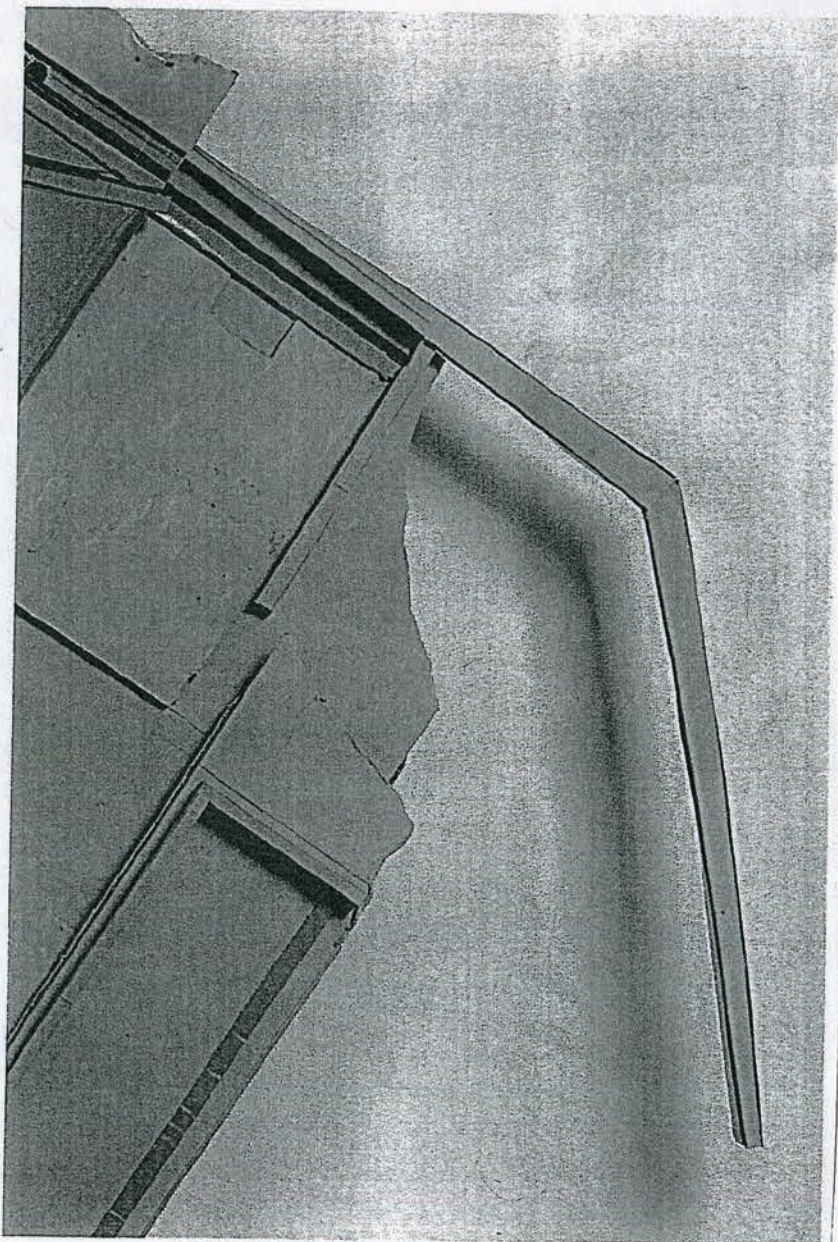
Black by Damien Hoar de Galvan



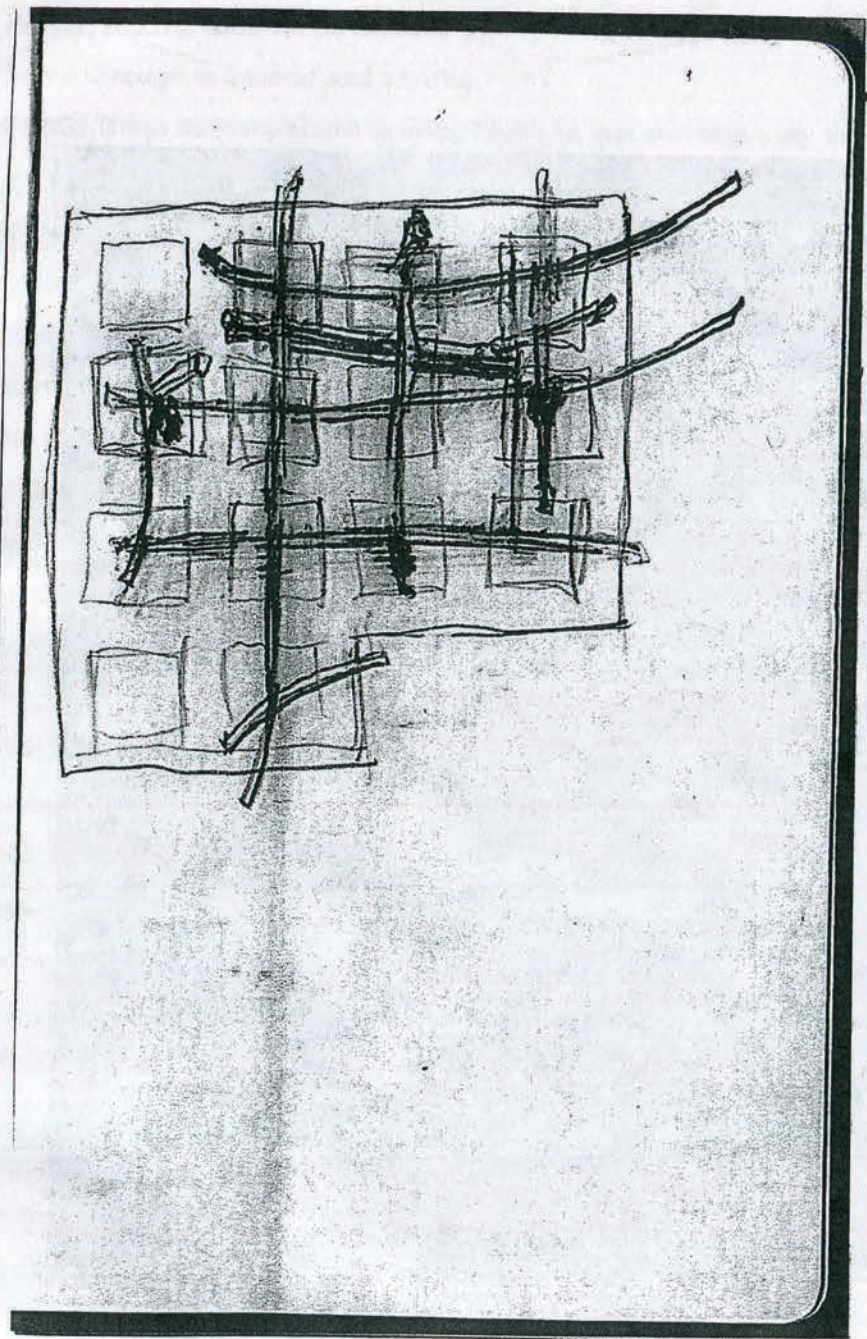
studio of Cynthia Mason



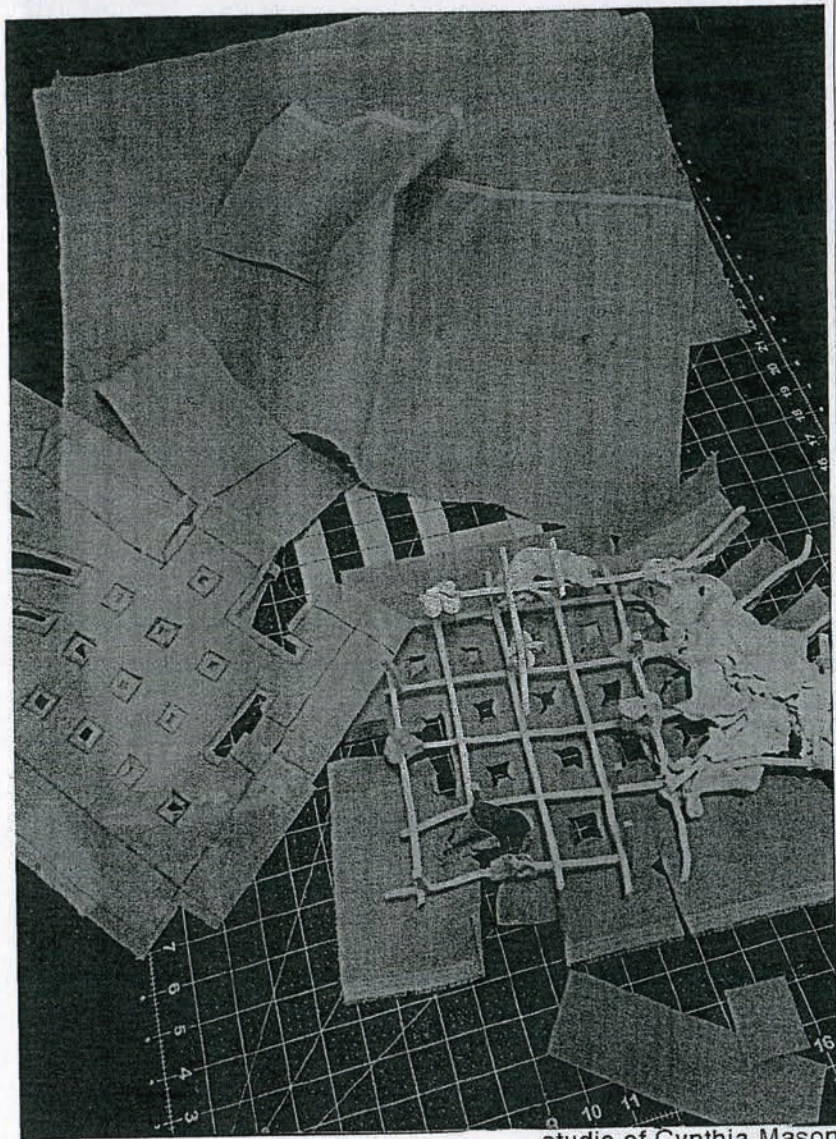
studio of Damien Hoar de Galvan



as long as it takes for the signal to right itself (detail)
by Ryan Sarah Murphy



sketchbook of Cynthia Mason



studio of Cynthia Mason

Please discuss your process in a broad context: thinking about habits, rituals, routine, potentially giving insight into how you move through the world and studio.

DHdG: These days my studio is in my home so that makes it easy to get to, I find that helpful in that I can work whenever I feel the impulse. My wife works full time and my young daughter is in school so I typically keep pretty "normal" hours. When I have a deadline or particular project I'm working towards I think its a bit easier to just start working and not question what I'm doing. Wake up, get the kid to the school bus, coffee/breakfast and then work until school is finished in the afternoon. Sometimes its pretty fun and easy, and sometimes its really challenging. Not seeing or talking to many people during the day can be pretty isolating and there are times motivation can be an issue but for the most part I like what I do and how I do it.

CM: I work in spurts throughout the day and have a few different pieces going at once. It helps to have multiple working distractions so I am not thinking too hard about one particular piece. I like taking my time with the work, sometimes a piece can live in the studio for a year or two before I can move forward on it. Sometimes a piece takes only a week. I usually take a few breaks throughout the day to water my plants and pull weeds.

RSM: In the studio I tend to keep things comfortably cluttered. I'm definitely a minimalist at home and have zero interest in having a lot of stuff in my living space, but in my workspace the tendency to stockpile and borderline-hoard often creeps in. My go-to material in the last few years has been colored cardboard, which is in high-abundance pretty much everywhere you look.

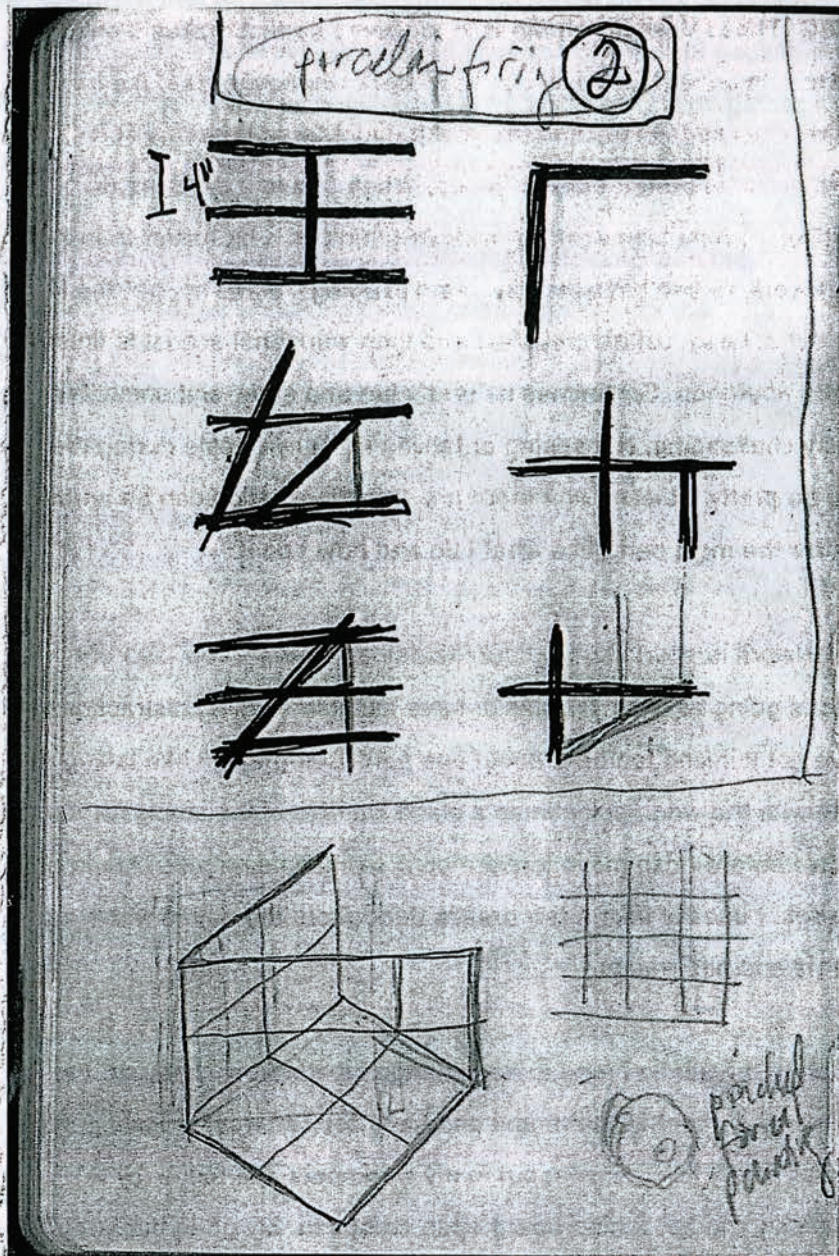
RSM (cont.): It can be hard to walk down the street on city recycling days without some fantastically colored shoebox or piece of packaging catching my eye. So if a color stands out, I pay attention and gather it up.

With color being my sole focus, the first step in dealing with the cardboard was to cut or tear away any text or logos from the packaging. The shapes, pieces and fragments of color that I am left with become the building blocks of the work. From there it's like fitting together a puzzle with no set outcome or known image to work towards. I never know what a piece is going to look like until it's finished. I don't draw or sketch ideas, rather I let the color fragments that I have on hand guide the making of the work. A process of addition, subtraction, layering, tearing away, rotating the composition, simply staring at it without "thinking" about it- all these actions eventually bring the work to fruition.

I generally work on a few wall collages at once, or if I'm working on paper I'll always make at least 2 or more in a series. I find that working within some sort of series-based parameters helps the work flow better. It's interesting to see the relationship between 2 or more pieces that are made at the same time and from the same batch of materials – how they are interconnected and born out of one another in a sense. In the last couple of years I've found myself referencing and directly using my older work as models or guides for new work. I began to take the "map-like" quality of the work quite literally, looking at the structural lines and the torn edges of the finished collages and using them as visual pathways to new forms.



studio of Damien Hoar de Galvan



sketchbook of Cynthia Mason

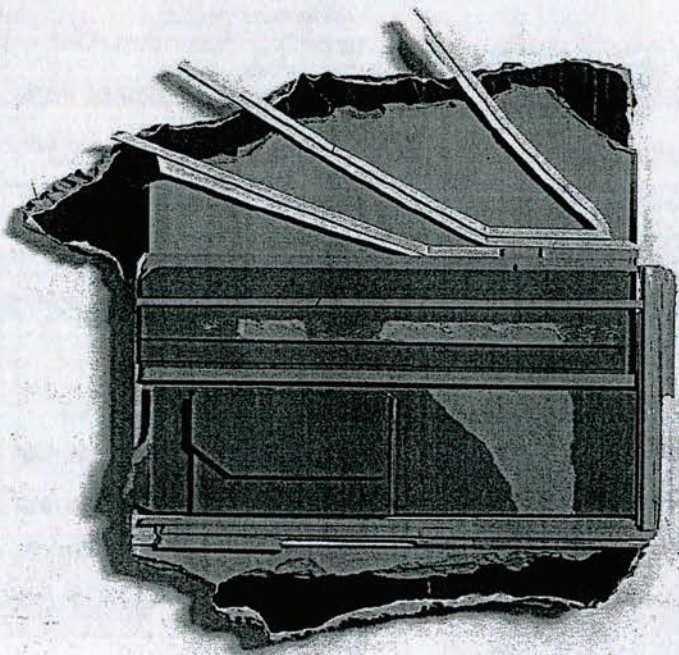
Please discuss the procedure of how you make. Potentially identifying how you have evolved through time or how you arrived at your current methodologies.

DHdG: The way I work currently is just sifting through the material I have on hand or possibly find out in the world and building off that. It is usually just one small piece of wood that will eventually "grow" into some kind of mass of pieces. Sometimes I will begin with the base but often it will just be gluing small bits together until I start to see some sort of shape or form that I work towards. There's not generally a plan or sketch I'm working from, it's a pretty intuitive process that gets a bit more rigid the closer I get to finishing. I think I began working like this because for awhile I was actually cutting holes in wood and then filling them up with collaged bits and slowly I just sort of started doing that without the guide of the hole.

CM: I start by creating quick sketches to get my idea down. Once I have a few concepts I am excited about I will start a batch of work creating anywhere from 3-10 pieces at a time. My interest is in where failures or breaches happen. I tend to use haphazard or makeshift methods of construction, where I am forcing a failure that I have to figure out how to fix. I love seeing how work shifts and starts to fall over time.

RSM: The starting point for my work has always been through the discovery, collection and consideration of found objects and materials. I like the randomness of encountering an object that feels enticing for some mysterious reason, and noticing how it got my attention without really knowing why.

RSM (cont.): As a kid I spent a lot of time assembling and gluing weird little objects together from junk I'd find at yard sales or thrift shops. It made sense to use things that were throwaways, things that had lost their initial value or preciousness and yet still had a very real energy inside of them. I have never been drawn to blank canvases or brand new art supplies. I find that kind of newness paralyzing actually. I think there's a vital energy within discarded stuff or repurposed materials, an energy that's looking to be transformed and carried on. Artists are simply conduits for this energy. I have found that the more I can tune in to that strange attraction to certain materials, whatever they may be, and not question it or dismiss it, the more I know I'm going in the right direction and will eventually end up somewhere new.



Desire Lines by Ryan Sarah Murphy



studio of Damien Hoar de Galvan

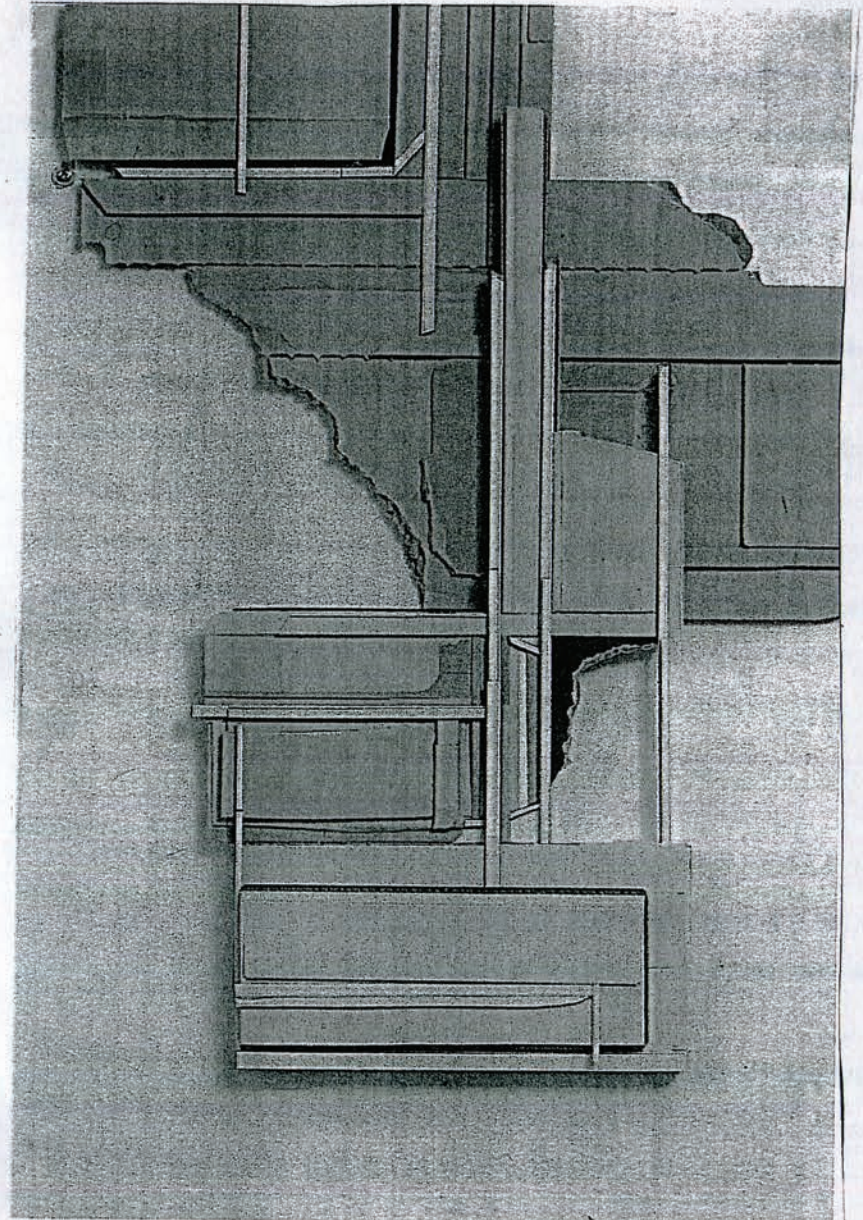
Please discuss your greatest source of influence or inspiration, specifically, non-visual art sources?

DHdG: First off I really do enjoy looking at art and especially modern/contemporary art. Be it in museums or galleries or just on instagram, looking at art inspires me. When in the studio though I listen to a lot of different types of music (spotify) and podcasts, so there is always an auditory influence when I'm working.

CM: I am interested in the intimate relationship between people and their objects. There is a power of everyday objects, or how we are controlled by these objects.

RSM: These are some of the things that come to mind when I think of what inspires me:

- my grandmother who held on to the weirdest stuff, partly out of a depression-era mentality, and partly because she just liked weird stuff and saw the creative potential in everyday materials/having multiple collections of things.
- modern architecture
- neglected/abandoned houses & interior spaces
- flat roofs
- staring out the window on long bus trips, catching glimpses of the backs of houses as you speed by them on the highway.
- computer graphics/glitches
- meditative, repetitive tasks (like chopping vegetables or vacuuming)
- structures on stilts
- books as objects



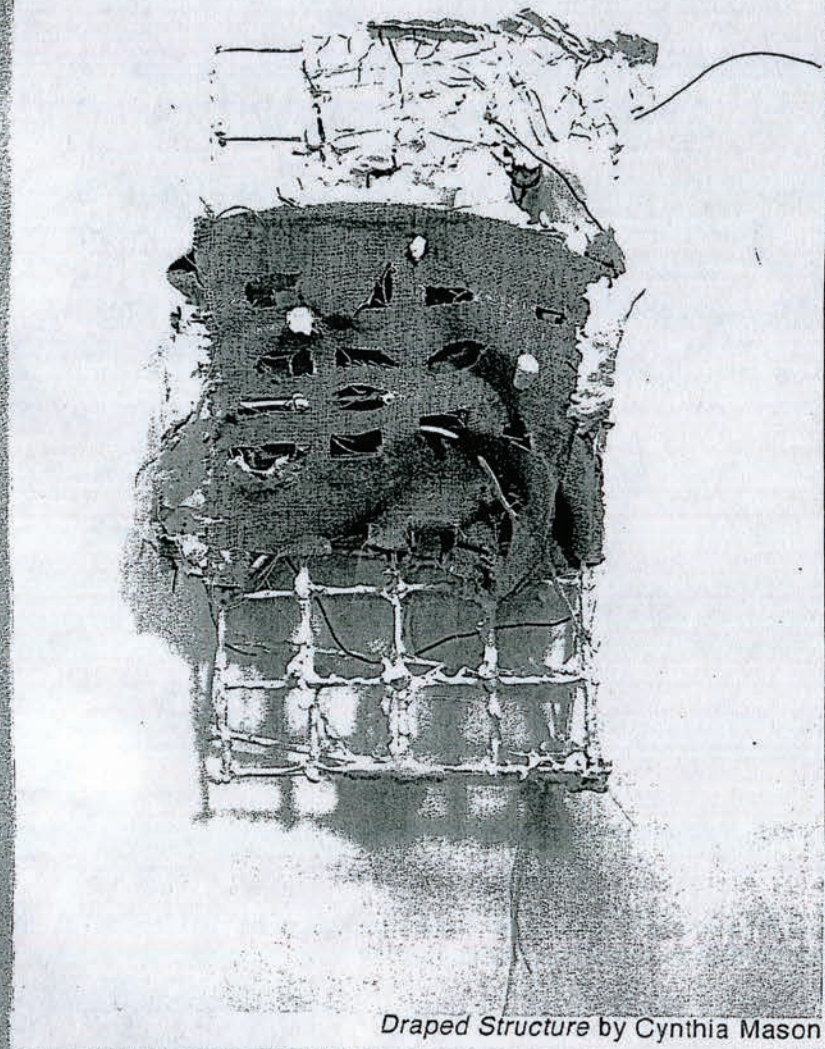
Teeth of Life (detail)
by Ryan Sarah Murphy

Please share any advice you would be willing to give young artists.

DHdG: I guess it would be to make sure you really have a desire and passion to make stuff. If you do, then its a matter of trying out different ways of working until you find something that feels right. I think you know if what you're doing and spending lots of time on feels right and if it doesn't then you should probably find something else to do. I don't think art school is necessary but I also don't think its a bad thing or path to take, everyone is different. It is helpful to be exposed to as much stuff as possible though and art school can help in that way. Because social media didn't exist when I first began making what I thought of as art I'm not sure what that would be like, but I would say at least be wary of mixing the two right off the bat. Sharing your work on say instagram can be a great tool but I'm not sure how helpful it would be when first starting out so maybe wait before showing the internet your work.

CM: I always make sure I have studio time scheduled in on my calendar at least a week ahead. Even if it's only for 2-3 hours a day. Self-imposed deadlines keep my productivity up.

RSM: Find ways to keep your practice moving forward. You need to trust that voice that propels you to make something, even if it makes no sense or feels uncomfortable at times. Remember that it's all just energy working its way through you, so do what you can to stay out of the way! And get comfortable with self-doubt but don't let it overtake you.



Draped Structure by Cynthia Mason