



ALISON BALCANOFF

Press Kit

ABOUT ALISON BALCANOFF



Alison Balcanoff is a Chicago-area artist who primarily works with paper. Alison graduated from Suffolk University with her BFA in Fine Arts and obtained her MA in Art History and Museum Studies Certification from Northern Illinois University. She's participated in several group exhibitions, most notably at the Hyde Park Art Center, The Foundry Art Centre, The Associated Artists of Pittsburgh, and the Terrain Biennial.

In addition to her studio practice, Alison has held positions in museums and arts administration. In her role as the Director of the St. Charles Arts Council she worked as a local arts advocate and curated several exhibitions. She's also curated museum exhibitions, and her work in anthropological collections at The Field Museum and the Burma Art Collection at NIU has influenced her work as an artist: furthering her interest in specimens, cabinets of curiosities, and the natural world.

ARTIST STATEMENT

My work is an exercise in manipulating paper through cutting, folding, burning, and layering. As I carve out negative spaces, collage, layer, and construct shadow systems, I investigate how this simple, flat material can be transformed and made more dimensional. The mark-making I employ is intuitive and relies on very little pre-planning or sketching. Instead, my blade draws almost meditatively to create fluid compositions reminiscent of natural formations and patterning.

I'm deeply inspired by the natural world, and as such, much of my work is an imitation or abstraction of nature. I'm particularly interested in forests as ecosystems, symbiotic relationships between organisms, and fractals in nature. I pull much of my visual language from exploring these concepts.

Also integral to my practice is my role as mother and primary caregiver. As an artist mother, my creative process is both a respite from the challenges of motherhood and a celebration of the new eyes I've gained through the lens of my children. As child-scientists, my children use experimentation and play to navigate the world around them and approach their natural environment with intense awe and curiosity. I try to apply this same approach to art-making despite my precision and perfectionist tendencies. Each work is an experiment in materials and processes and an attempt to dissect and better understand the world around me.



Silvastrata #1, 8"x8", acrylic on hand-cut Tyvek, 2022



Silvastrata #2, 8"x8", acrylic on hand-cut Tyvek, 2022



Climbing Magnolias, 12" x 12", acrylic on hand-cut Tyvek mounted on birch panel



Chasing Robins, 12" x 12", acrylic on hand-cut Tyvek mounted on birch panel



Shadowscape #11, 11" x 35", colored pencil on hand-burned kozo, 2021



Nature Enshrined #1, 13" x 17", hand-burned kozo, 2021

ALISON BALCANOFF

Curriculum Vitae

Education

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Master of Art, Art History, 2014

Graduate Certificate, Museum Studies, 2014

SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY

Bachelor of Fine Art, Fine Arts (Minor in Art History), 2007

Group Exhibitions

2022

"Understory," Highfield Hall and Gardens, Falmouth, MA

2021

"Extending A Hand: An Exhibition of Paper Artists," Associated Artists of Pittsburgh Exhibition Space, Pittsburgh, PA

"Keep In Touch," Terrain Biennial 2021, Studio of Art, Oak Park, IL

"Drawn to Paper," Fulton Street Collective, Chicago, IL

"Fox River Arts Ramble Gallery," Presented by the St. Charles Arts Council at Kava Diem, St. Charles, IL

"Going Dutch Festival," Side Street Studio Arts, Elgin, IL (Featured Artist)

2020

"Paperworks VII," Foundry Art Centre, St. Charles, MO

2011

"Abstract/Primitive," Next Gallery at Shelby, St. Charles, IL

"Summer Show," Water Street Studios, Batavia, IL

"Winter Show," Water Street Studio, Batavia, IL

2009

"(Re)Collect," Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, IL

"Four Hour Friends," 2023 South Racine, Chicago, IL

Group Exhibitions cont'd

2007

"Senior Thesis Show," New England School of Art and Design, Boston, MA

2006

"Offshoots: Artists and their Students," Brickbottom Gallery, Somerville, MA

"Eyegasm," New England School of Art and Design, Boston, MA

Honors and Awards

2021 Featured Artist, Going Dutch Festival, Side Street Studio Arts, Elgin, IL

2014 Graduate Student of the Year Award, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL

2013 Illinois Association of Museums Award of Excellence for "MAPPING"

2013 Illinois Association of Museums Award of Merit for "Tagged: Exploring Modern Graffiti"

2011 Honorable Mention Award, "Winter Show," Water Street Studios, Batavia, IL

Art Collections

Mildred F. Sawyer Library, Suffolk University, Boston, MA

Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts, Hartford, CT

Private collections in the United States

Selected Curatorial Projects

2014

"Graffiti Imagery in Contemporary Art," Jack Olson Gallery, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL

"Movie Magic," Downers Grove Museum, Downers Grove, IL

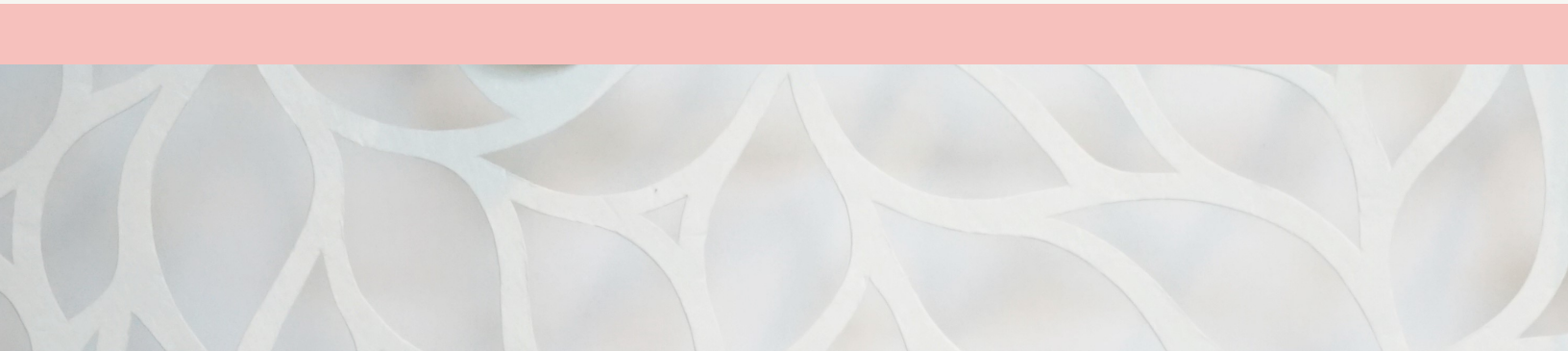
2013

"Tai Cultures at Northern Illinois University," Altgeld Hall, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL

"Mapping: Measuring Across Place and Period, Information, Navigation, and Geography," NIU Art Museum, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL

2012

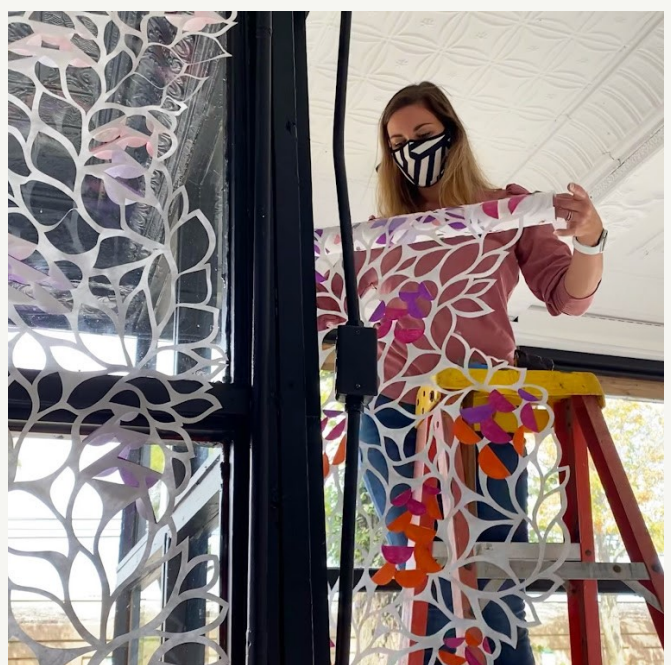
"Tagged: Exploring Modern Graffiti," Gallery 214, DeKalb, IL



ART INSTALLATION



Shadowscape (Home), installed as part of the 2021 Terrain Biennial at Studio of Art, Oak Park, IL





Tree Totem, installation in St. Charles, IL, 2021



Shadowscape series, installed as part of "Going Dutch" at Side Street Studio Arts in Elgin, IL, 2021



CONTACT INFORMATION

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