

Shelf Life

The Art of Laurene Krasny Brown



OLDE
HOPE



Laurene Krasny Brown

From the start my artwork has attempted to extract and express something emotionally and aesthetically essential from the humblest, most intimate swatches of life. Working primarily in paper, I create collage, assemblage, work in relief and small sculpture.

My work is grounded in the belief that even the simplest domestic acts and most ordinary of objects offer us the opportunity to bestow on our lives a certain grace and beauty.

I take much inspiration from the traditions of American folk art: appreciation for a material, fine craftsmanship, ingenuity, attention to detail, an economy of means and especially the ways an object often ages to advantage.

This material is the tangible fabric of our cultural history. Creating conversations between my work and American antiques makes this show very special for me; it's why I feel so much at home here.

Of course, every artist by necessity speaks from their own time and place, even when being influenced by something old. Into our homes we bring some version of the current world. It is at once the most personal site we occupy and a reflection of how we experience our speck of the universe. That is what makes the conversation so interesting.

Shelf Life, the show's title, is meant to bring the passage of time to the foreground. What exactly is it about an object that prolongs its usefulness, relevance and longevity, that is, its shelf life? When an aged object is reinterpreted in the present, does that help to keep it alive? Is it simply the cherishing of a thing that serves to endow it with special value? We leave the subject open for reflection and discussion.



Target Board

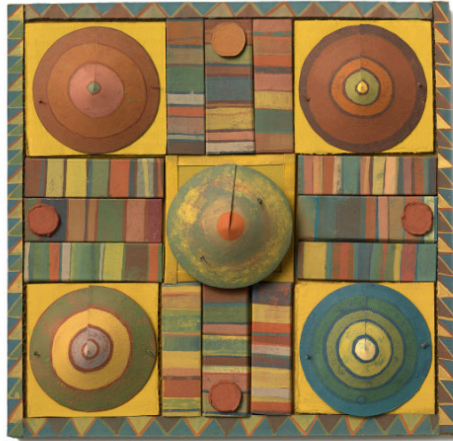
Handmade abaca, wire mesh,
waxed linen on board

36×36×1.5 inches

2012



Parcheesi 1
2020



Parcheesi 2
2011



Parcheesi 3
2011



Parcheesi 4
2020

Parcheesi 1,2,3,4

Gouache on cut paper
11×11×.5 inches





Summer Bouquet

Gouache, colored pencil, thread
on plain and printed paper

10.5×9.5×.5 inches

2017



A Democracy of Domes

Gouache, thread on paper

40×40×1.5 inches

2020





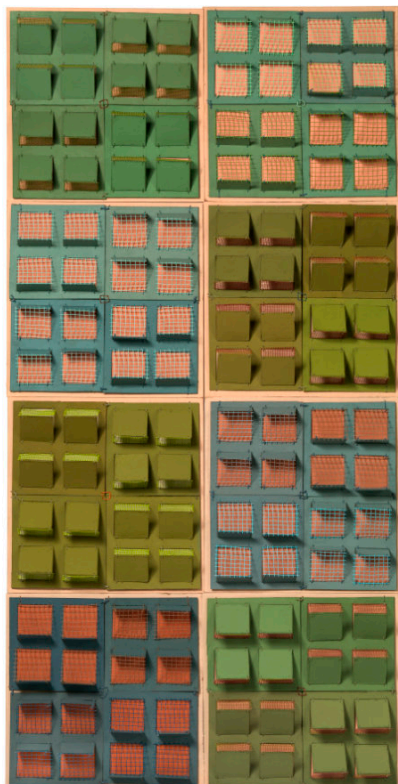
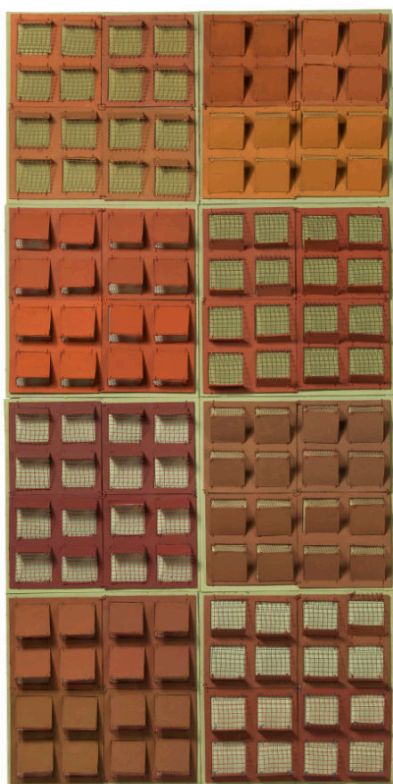
Oblivion: Collage

Gouache, colored pencil,
ink on paper

9.5×12.5 inches

2020





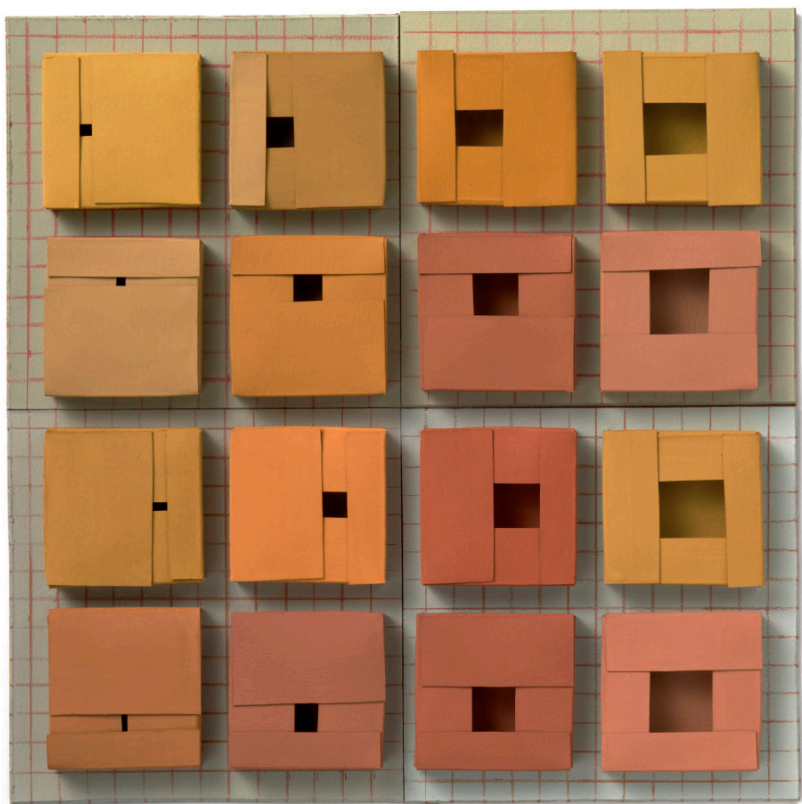
Facades No. 1
Facades No. 2

Gouache, acrylic, wire mesh, thread
on paper

42×21×1.5 inches

2022





Box Rental: Growing Hole

Gouache on cut paper

11×11×.75 inches

2007





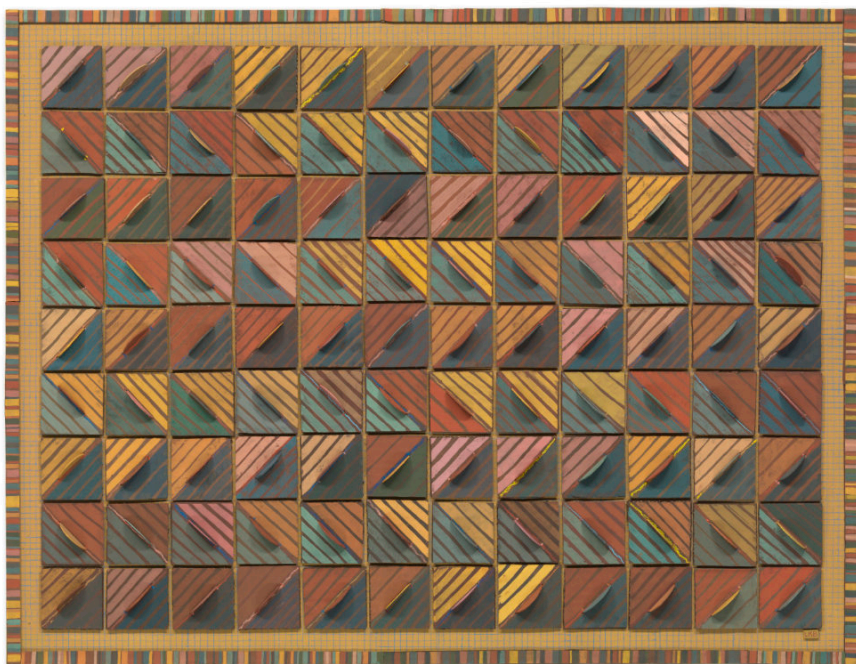
Twist of Fate

Gouache on cut paper, hand-molded paper, wax linen

26×26×2.5 inches

2014



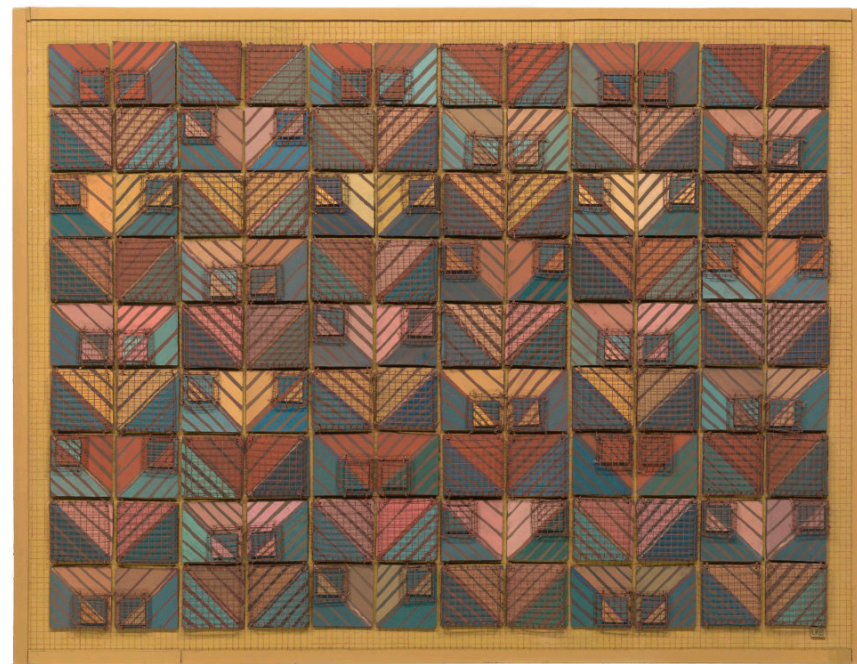


Game Board: According to Whose Rules Part One

Gouache, colored pencil, acrylic, thread on cardboard

27×35×.5 inches

2021



Game Board: According to Whose Rules Part Two

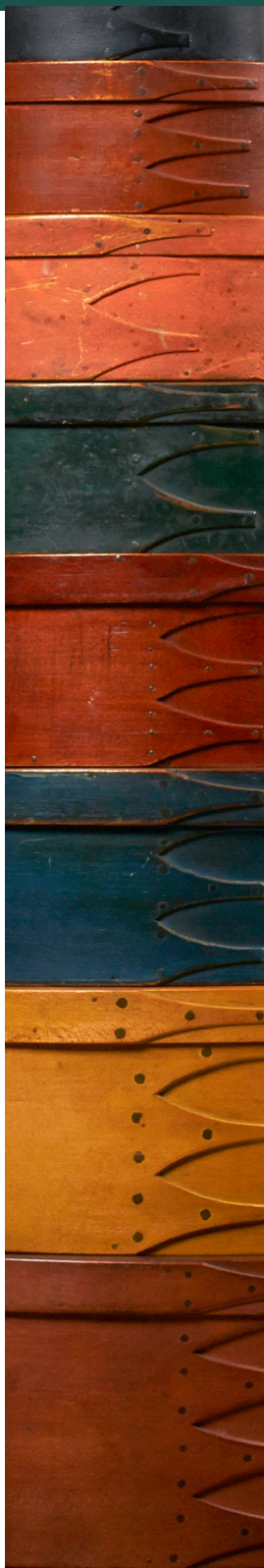
Gouache, colored pencil, acrylic, metal screening, thread on cardboard

27×35×.5 inches

2021

Tiny Abstracts
a,b,d

Gouache on cut
and pieced paper
3×3 inches
2019



Tiny Abstracts
e,f,g

Gouache on cut
and pieced paper
3×3 inches
2019

Paper: A Love Story

By Stacy C. Hollander

Laurene Krasny Brown has an affinity for paper. You feel it in her tender ministrations that change and transform the medium, yet never deny its materiality: It remains true to itself. Her compositions and constructions contain echoes, drawing upon the nature of paper as a palimpsest of associations that whisper of missives, prayers, declarations, gestural lines. Brown's process is slow, thoughtful, and deliberate. She favors *Arches En-Tous-Cas*, a heavy archival white paper, hot pressed on one side and cold pressed on the reverse, that she cuts off a large roll and submerges in a dye bath of saturated gouache. After drying and weighting, the paper is ready to be cut, shaped, marked, and painted using gouache, gold ink, and colored pencil; or pierced and collaged with found materials stitched with waxed linen threads in gorgeous hues. A treasured piece of recycled paper might find its destiny in an artwork, such as the vintage print forming the background in *Summer Bouquet* (2017) [see p04]. Her palette is quiet and earthy, given to stripes and grids and occasional bubbles that both underlay and embellish the surface of shallow constructions that cast strong shadows. The richest tones appear in the tiniest format, the *Tiny Abstractions* that explore sinuous shapes, patterns, and colors in a three-inch square or rectangle.

Brown finds emotional resonance in the unburied essence of American folk art that has inspired her recent series based on nineteenth-century game boards and still-life theorem

paintings. In *Berry Bowl* (2017) [see p15] she inverts the theorem technique, which is based on the negative space of a hollow-cut stencil. She instead makes a positive of the hollow with cut-paper that she builds into a three-dimensional still-life composition. Lovely representational works reference domestic vignettes from her own environment, such as the antique wall-hung cupboard stacked with yellow ware that is surprisingly moving in its reverence for the simplicity of its contents and pleasure in small things.

Early works deploy an army of geometric forms seemingly placed with military precision. A closer look reveals restless differences, as each shape appears to shift its weight and assert its individuality. This is further explored in her interpretations of classic game boards, whose brilliant colors and striking geometric pattern find unanticipated depth in surfaces disrupted with raised elements. *Parcheesi Board* (2011) [see pp02, 03] adds a tongue-in-cheek reference to the folded paper children's game called Chatterbox or Fortune Teller.

Brown's art is intimate and labor intensive, the result unexpectedly healing. It may not be directly related to her previous professional life with children, but it uses the tools of childhood: paper, paint, and scissors. And with an undiminished sense of wonder and possibility, Brown assesses disorder in the world and through the deft touch of her hand she straightens, calms, nourishes, and restores rightness.

BERRY BOWL DETAIL



Stacy C. Hollander is an award-winning curator and writer. She is the former Director of Curatorial Affairs, Chief Curator, and Director of Exhibitions at the American Folk Art Museum.

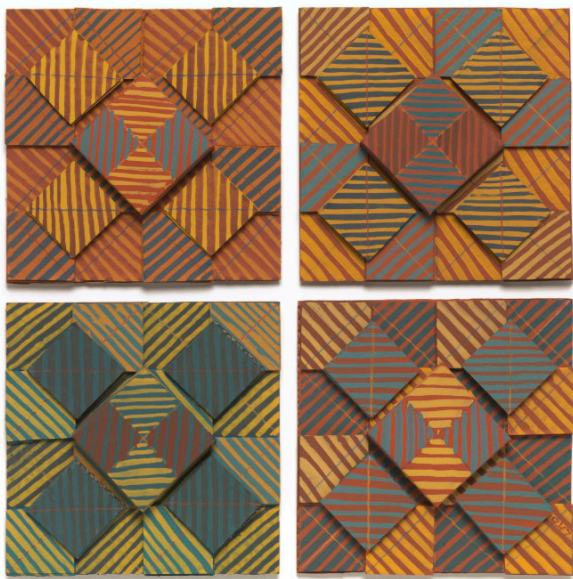


Berry Bowl

Gouache on cut paper

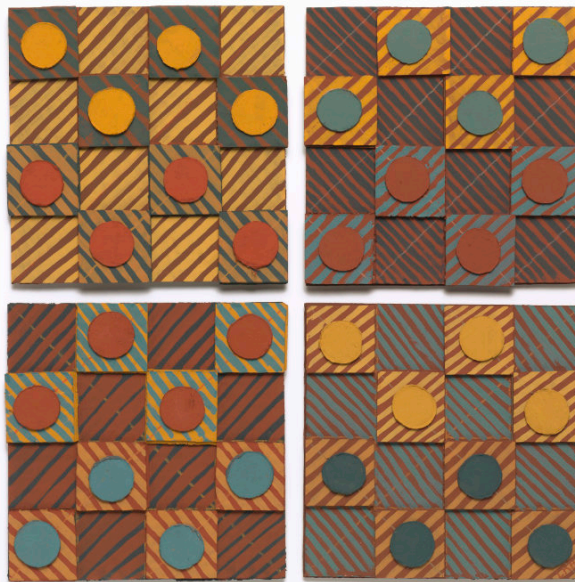
10.5×9.5 inches

2017



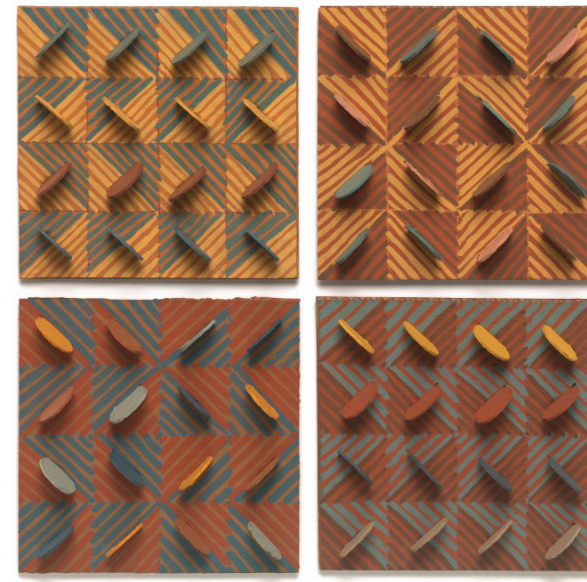
Game Panel with
Raised Centers

Gouache on cardboard
15.5×15.5×.5 inches
2013



Game Panel
with Discs

Gouache on cardboard
15.5×15.5 inches
2013



Game Panel with
Standing Discs

Gouache on cardboard
15.5×15.5×1.5 inches
2013





Interior View: Black and White Thinking Room

Gouache, graphite, wool, thread, vellum on
paper and cardboard

8×10×5 inches

2021



BERRY HEIST DETAIL



Berry Heist

Gouache, parchment, cut paper

8×19×.5 inches

2017



Tiny Abstracts h,i

Gouache on cut and pieced paper
3×3 inches
2020



Tiny Abstracts j,k

Gouache on cut and pieced paper
3×3 inches
2020



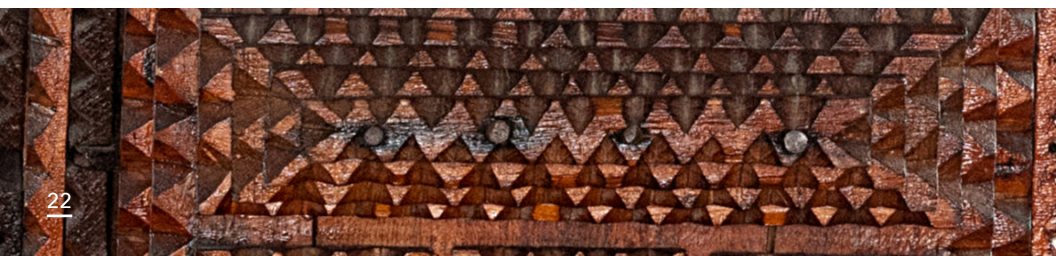


Box with Thorny Surface

Gouache on cut paper, woodblocks

8×7×6 inches

2016



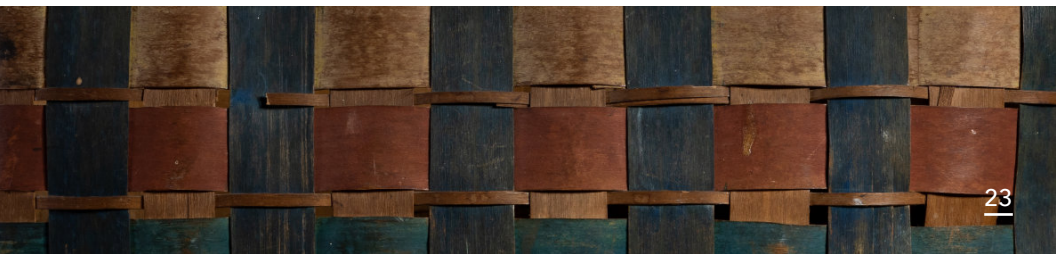


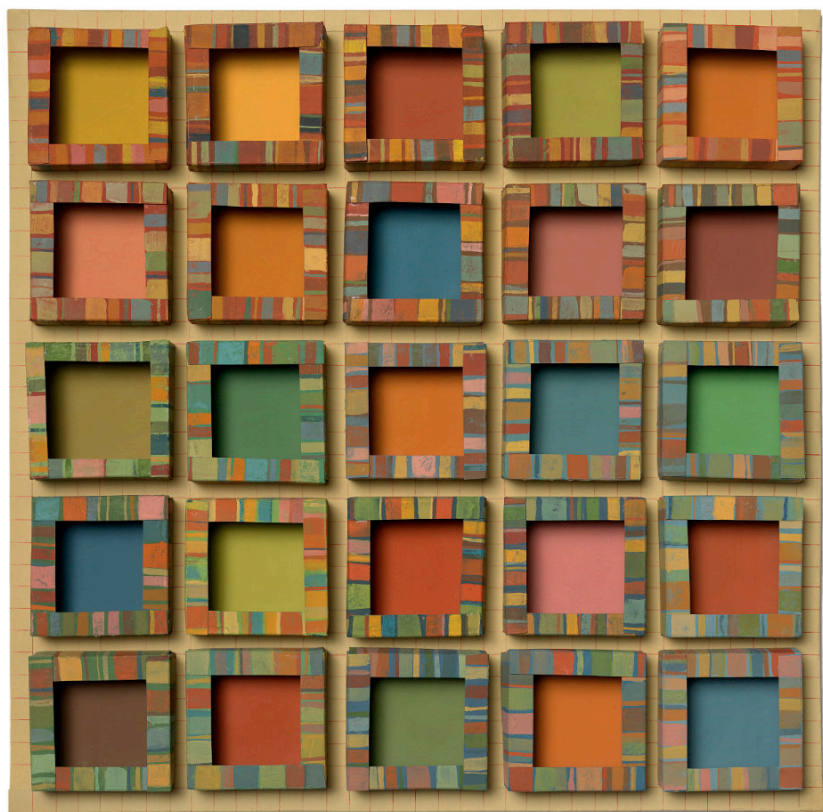
Basket of Oranges: Collage

Gouache, colored pencil on cut paper

10×8×.5 inches

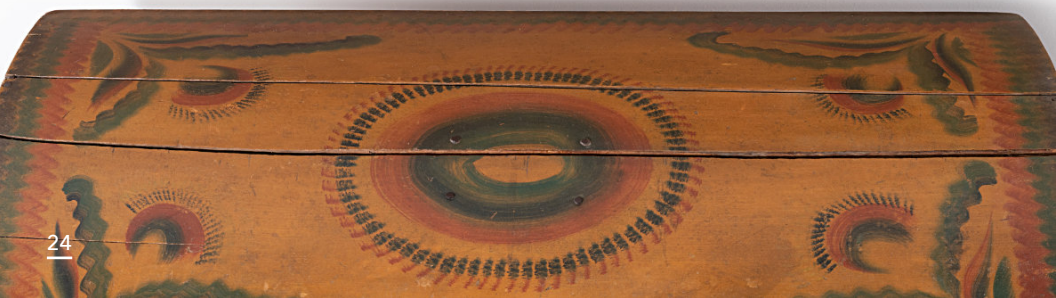
2017





Unobstructed Views

Gouache on paper
18×18×1.5 inches
2009





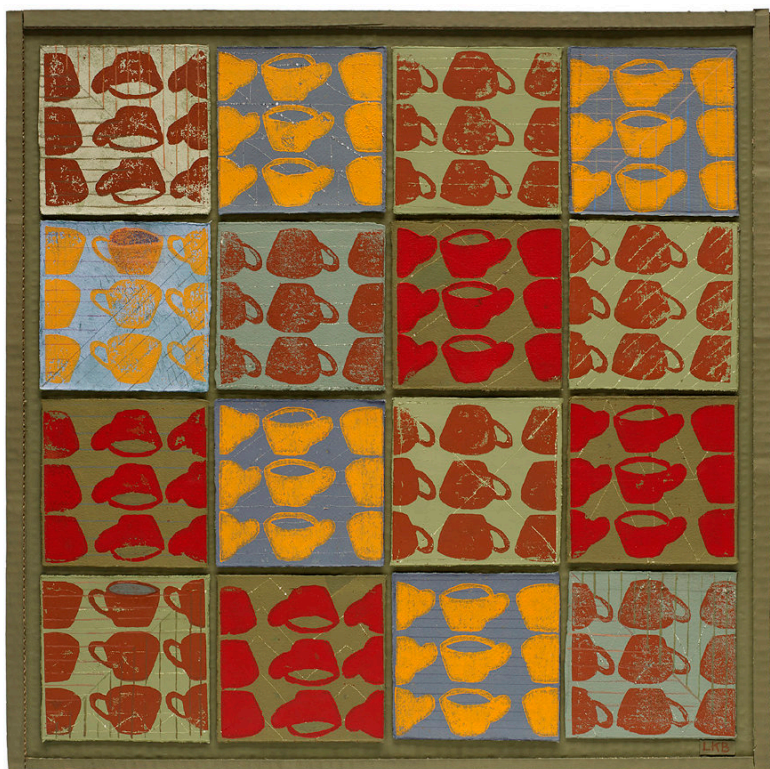
Cupboard

Gouache on cut paper

10×20×1 inches

2017





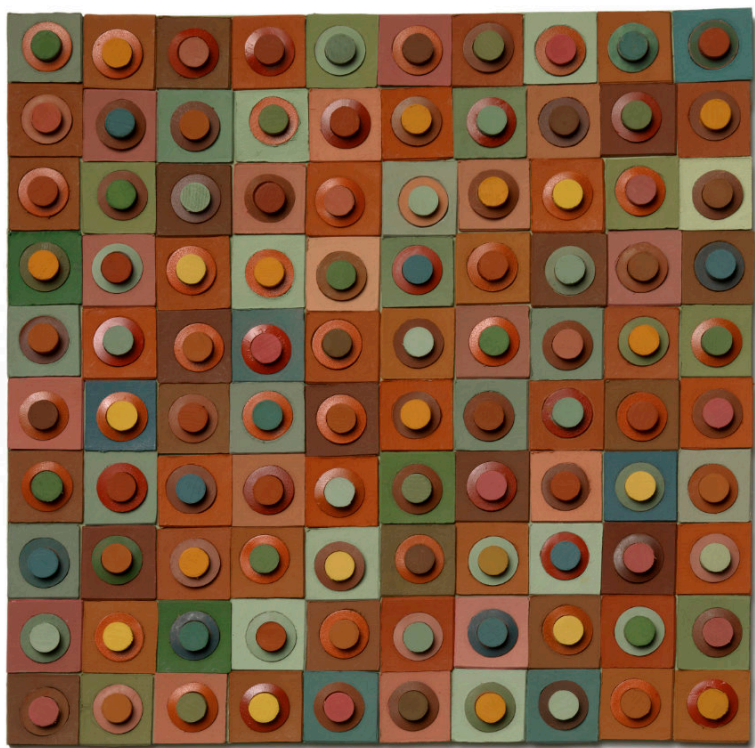
Drinking Cups

Lino block print with gouache,
colored pencil on cut paper

21×21 inches

2019





Game Board: Plugging Away

Gouache, rubber, wood, cut paper

15.5×15.5×1 inches

2009





Interior View: Night Room

Gouache, ink, colored pencil, thread, bird figure
and toy props on paper and cardboard

8×10×5 inches

2021

Laurene Krasny Brown

Brief Biography 2022

Laurene Krasny Brown was born and raised in New York City. She attended the High School of Music and Art as a music major, with higher degrees from Cornell University (B.S.), Columbia University (M.A.) and a Doctorate in Education from Harvard University. She has broad professional experience in education, the arts, research and children's cognitive development. (This includes teaching and evaluating for the National Head Start Program, being educational toy consultant at FAO Schwarz, conducting market research for major advertisers of children's products, consulting with producers at Children's Television Workshop, testifying about food advertising to children before the FTC and co-directing six years of research on children's learning from media at Harvard Project Zero.)

Prior to her career in fine art, Laurene authored and for one title, illustrated seventeen popular picture books for young children. Mostly non-fiction, these include titles dealing with well being, divorce, death, sexuality and friendship. Most recently she collaborated with her husband Marc Brown on their joint publication, *Democracy for Dinosaurs: A Guide for Young Citizens*.

For the past twenty years, however, she has turned her attention to fine art. Inspired by American folk art and working primarily with paper, Laurene has created work in collage, in relief and as three dimensional constructions. Her art has been exhibited both nationally and internationally, with galleries in NYC, Boston and New England. Her solo gallery exhibitions include shows at Stephen Score Art and Antiques, American Primitive Gallery, Olde Hope Antiques, Brian Morris Gallery, Shaw Cramer and Copley Society of Art. She has been a Visiting Artist working and exhibiting in Amherst Virginia, Paros Greece, Auvillar and Marnay-sur-Seine France and, most recently, at The American Academy in Rome. She exhibited in 2020 with JVS Project Space at Art on Paper, a New York City art fair. Her first solo museum show was just on exhibit at Fenimore Art Museum.



Selected Solo Exhibitions:

- 2022 Olde Hope, New York NY
- 2021 Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown NY
- 2019 Creamery, Stonover Farm, Lenox MA
- 2019 Tisbury Open Studio, Vineyard Haven MA
- 2019 Survival by Discreet Measures, American Academy in Rome, Rome Italy 2018 Le Mur Mûr (The Ripe Wall), Moulin à Nef, Auvillar France
- 2017 Homage à l'Orange, Virginia Center for Creative Arts, Amherst VA
- 2015 Assisted Migration, American Academy in Rome, Rome Italy
- 2015 Sanctuary of the Square, Brian Morris Gallery, New York NY
- 2014 At the Playhouse, Martha's Vineyard Playhouse, Vineyard Haven MA
- 2014 Toying with the World, American Primitive Gallery, New York NY
- 2011 Another Island, Shaw Cramer Gallery, Vineyard Haven MA
- 2010 Precious (and Not So Precious) Things, Apothiki Art Center, Paros Greece 2009 Laurene Krasny Brown, American Primitive Gallery, New York NY
- 2007 Preaching Paper, Gallery at First Parish, Weston MA
- 2006 Laurene Krasny Brown, Shaw Cramer Gallery, Vineyard Haven MA 2005 Paper Route, Copley Society of Art, Boston MA
- 2002 Constructs: Two Person Exhibition, Gallery of Graphic Arts, NYC
- 2001 Paper Work, Stephen Score Gallery and Antiques, Boston MA

Selected Group Exhibitions:

Laurene has participated in shows with European Artists Association, CAMAC, Featherstone Center for the Arts, Della Piana Gallery, Brickbottom Gallery, Cambridge Art Association, Copley Society of Art, Bromfield Art Gallery, Muskat Studios, Organization of Independent Artists, Arts and Business Council Boston, Harvard Faculty Club, Trustman Gallery Simmons College, The Cambridge School of Weston, Piano Crafts Gallery, Rocky Neck Art Colony, Gallery at Stonover Farm, Stamford Art Association in their Faber-Birren National Color Award Shows, The Metro Show, Fresco Decorative Paint, Washington Square East Gallery, New York School of Law, Harlem School of the Arts, National Association of Women Artists at NY Public Library Riverside, Denise Bibro Fine Art, Andrew Edlin Underground, Salmagundi Art Club, Kansas City Artists Coalition, Galatea Fine Arts, Katohah Museum Artists Association, Endicott College, the Danforth Museum and the Hammond Museum.

For more information, see
www.laurenekrasnybrown.com



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