Becky

“For me, art is rooted in tradition, it’s craft, skill, diligence, and experimentation fueled by inspiration.”

Becky’s calm demeanor, understated confidence, and grounded nature makes it easy to talk with her, yet she considers herself sort of an anomaly in her family. “No one really knows or understands where my interest in sewing and knitting and art comes from. It’s just there and I’ve been interested in art since I was in 5th and 6th grade,” she says. Becky’s parents and brother have never been particularly engaged in art or interested in arts activities and access to these types of things was a little limited in the small town where she grew up in southern Minnesota near Mankato.

However, Becky talks affectionately about her former art teacher from middle and high school, and fondly remembers her involvement in choir. “I took every art class I could get my hands on in school and just kept experimenting with sewing and eventually knitting after taking a workshop at JoAnn Fabrics in town,” she says. “When I was really young, I used to make very intricate paper clothes for my dolls. I still have some of them actually, we came across them when I was cleaning out my bedroom a few years ago.”

After graduation from AHS Becky is interested in studying massage therapy, herbology, wild crafting and alternative medicine. Her interest in these things developed gradually after exploring and entertaining many other education and career options. “I was going to go into fashion design,” she states, “but after exploring it and looking into programs and learning about the career path of a fashion designer during an internship experience I had last summer, I decided not to because I really don’t like the media's
idea of beauty and I don't want to perpetuate that or work in those constructs. I also know I don't want to forge a career in the corporate world, so I decided that I'd rather keep my work on a smaller scale for a smaller audience, so I decided to seek training in other ways that aren't based on an expensive, four-year structured sort of program that I could never afford to pay back. So I'm looking for shorter term, more affordable learning options for the fashion stuff I want to do and in the meantime I’m going to explore these other things.”

Becky is a self-professed “granola cruncher with a hippie twist.” Her artistic inspiration is derived from nature and ideas of sustainability. “Materials can instantly inspire me to make something. I like taking raw materials and making them into things that are practical but can be aesthetically enjoyed every day too,” she states confidently. She goes on to discuss how she thinks clothing and textiles can become sentimentally meaningful to us, “almost like a member of the family. When you put on a favorite sweater or scarf there are memories and feelings attached to it that make you associate emotions with it, that then give that garment personal meaning for you.” She explains that she thinks this happens because when a garment touches you, the feelings and memories you have associated with it from your experiences with it are conjured up much like when you smell something or hear music that prompts a memory in the brain. “This phenomenon can be heightened by what the garment is made of, who made it for you, or because it evokes memories of experiences you’ve had while wearing it. And people are going to have different perspectives about what a garment comes to mean to them according to their preferences and diversity of experiences.” Becky goes on to
say, “When I make something, I like to play with this diversity of perception, so I want to be the type of artist that makes those treasured things for people.”

The self-portrait piece Becky submitted for exhibition, *Untitled Mini Sweater*, clearly portrays her learned skills and artistic passion for crafting raw materials into functional objects that can become sentimental. With wool yarn she hand-dyed with plant-based pigments, Becky uses the elements of pattern, color and texture to provoke viewers to touch what she makes, to engage with it tactilely. Becky states, “By learning how to knit and by studying art and aesthetics, I’ve learned to make practical and wearable things that are also beautiful. I like to explore the convergence of indulgence, personal meaning, and beauty so that the people who wear what I make can experience a sort of freedom to express their personality, preferences, perceptions and desires.”

Becky’s artistic explorations, although they haven’t been very structured, have helped her learn to experiment and just jump in and try things. For her, art is practical self-expression. “I’ve also learned a lot of practical skills and ways of studio practice and thinking, and artistic and analytical thinking that I think can be considered universal to lots of different areas of life for my whole lifetime. I also think I’ve learned not only how to solve problems but how to find them, examine them, and do or say something about them to call attention to them.”
Becky

*beet*

mediums: vintage and new fabric, re-purposed vintage leather belt, vintage buttons, handmade silver buttons

Becky’s original artistic love was painting before she found fiber arts. Through studying art Becky has learned skills that allow her to take raw materials and make them into functional, beautiful objects. Becky has also learned to craft practical and wearable things that converge with indulgence, personal meaning, and beauty to become a daily aesthetic experience and freedom of expression for the wearer. When she makes a garment, she tries to appeal to different people’s perspectives and diversity of experiences through using different elements and principles of art and design to make a garment visually appealing so the wearer with want to engage with it and maybe find meaning in it through touch.

The concept of wearable beauty appealing to diverse perspectives was my inspiration for this portrait of Becky. The yoyos in the body of the belt are made from several different kinds of fabrics and present an abundance of luxe, exotic textures both visually and tactiley, while the vintage buttons adorning the yoyos signify the dully common yet extravagant nature of wearable beauty we can experience every day. Lastly, the handmade, silver buttons throughout the belt are each imprinted with the words “Perspectives” and “Diversity” to denote what inspires and drives Becky to make her art, and it is my hope that when Becky puts this belt on she is simply reminded of and inspired to continue to pursue and develop her artistic passion.
**Untitled Mini Sweater**

*cable knit sweater*

medium: hand dyed wool yarn

Becky Montgomery

This sweater symbolizes me as an artist because it contains all of the elements of my hand knit work: natural fibers, natural colors, and it’s been designed by me. My current design tastes includes cables and split necks, so I included them on this sweater. Untitled Mini Sweater is a miniature representation of my whole body of work as a fiber artist.