

Zia Gipson
Artist Statement and Bio

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Artist Statement

If you're lucky, sometime in a long life as an artist/maker you'll fall in love with some idea, technique, sculptural form or other aspect of art at least once. For me, the most recent *coup de foudre* happened with felted paper (aka joomchi) some eight years ago. I was drawn instantly to this technique of fusing long fiber paper (usually Korean or Japanese) without glue. Since then, I've been set loose to re-explore the infinitely variable and expressive possibilities of many diverse forms of paper. Lately I've been inspired by the simple beauty of crimped shipping paper, the cast off remains of our culture addicted to "get it now".

My favorite paper is handmade, specialty plant-derived paper usually kozo/hanji made from the mulberry shrub *broussonetia papyrifera*. The centuries-old labor-intensive indigenous traditions of making papers from mulberry and other special plant fibers is dying out but not yet lost entirely as new generations take up the tools to make their own. To use handmade paper as I do is to celebrate the exquisite, painstaking process of making paper by hand.

Thematically, I've been working with the idea of loss for some years. Hence "Locked Up" about the loss of our freedom of movement during the Covid era and, in the social/political sphere, of a common, shared sense of truth and reality.

To me "Locked Up" also encapsulates my fantasies of locking up a recent U.S. president. Finally, I cannot help but acknowledge in the chain form of "Locked Up" the jails and cells in this nation holding immigrants without due process.

In "Half Moons", I've hand-stitched handmade paper shapes (stuffed with tissue paper) into rows of repeating half moons reminding us that the beauty of Earth's moon has always been human kind's most gentle guardian.

I'm not wedded to a singular style, material or type of art. In my art making, I just try to get 'out of the way' and let the muse have her way with me. No one is more surprised by what I make than I am.

I've been exhibiting work around the world for more than 40 years. A long-time member of Northwest Designer Craftsmen, I also belong to International Association of Hand Papermakers and Paper Artists. My small work, usually in the form of jewelry or artist books is sold at the Bainbridge Museum of Art and elsewhere. I've taught several art classes at Bainbridge BARN, Bainbridge Museum of Art and the Pacific Northwest Museum of Quilt and Fiber Arts.

