

LUCY CONGDON HANSON

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

I have been a visual artist my entire adult life. Going to graduate school was my way of answering how deep that interest and commitment really was for me. I see art as a lifestyle, a lens that I view so much through.

Growing up in Colorado, I was inspired by local history, the mining industry, the 'hard scrabble life.' I thought a lot about uses for related materials like railroad ties and horseshoe nails – old metal of all kinds.

My first large-scale projects were installations. I would fill an entire room or space with one idea, like a set or stage. At some point, I became more interested in the individual object, even while creating a related series my interest became focused on the individual – related like cousins but still standing apart.

The body of sculptures named after constellations is inspired by three recurring elements – the use of wood and steel combined (an ode to Colorado's history), the abstract figure – spare, but with versions of shoulders, hips, pelvises, and boots – and trajectories in the sky and beyond – like points on a constellation. These are not representational maps, but ideas formed by three-dimensions...

I believe sculpture occupies the same physical dimensions as we do. It can function to make us more aware of our surroundings and how we fit into that environment. I strive to create work that addresses the formal elements of sculpture, while accentuating a sense of tension, animation, and whimsy.

My sculptural works range in size from life-size to tabletop dimensions. They are made from a variety of materials including wood, steel, bronze, copper, aluminum and clay. Some are outdoor works, others specifically indoor and many are kinetic. All of them are contemporary in style. My older works are more abstract. I consider my newer works to be conceptual, even though realistic in form.

My smaller-scale spoons take my ideas to this newer place. They are about taking a seat at the table of life – sharing a communal meal, family, and safety. They began with my passion for food and feeding my family. I have long-loved the root of the word companion - one with whom you share bread. These spoons, plus a large-scale outdoor spoon sculpture that serves as an interactive birdbath, have led to my most recent work.

Serve is a 14-foot hand-fabricated stainless steel fork. This sculpture takes the ideas surrounding the spoons and brings them to the forefront of my consciousness. Serve represents the silent, but giant, role of women in households over generations - lovingly nurturing their families. Serve is about power, but the protective kind.

This large-scale fork also becomes other things – the nude figure, or a flamenco dancer. Gradually it leaves me, the artist – it becomes alive and starts to move on its own.

To me, a finished piece is not just an object, but an intuitive interpretation, a recorded experience, a loved upon object that has been turned in your hand a thousand times. And, maybe I have the 'BIG disease' in my art-making. Making something so large seems like taking a bravery test. It's also exhilarating to me – like skiing downhill with your mouth open – feeling the adrenaline. It is also about finding my own voice, seeking a seat at a different table – dinner talk with the art world.

The real journey is in the making. I invest in my own curiosity. What you can imagine can indeed come true. It is very exciting to create something larger than you, and stand in its shadow and look up!

I would like to thank Walter Trisdale for his help with the fabrication of Serve, and for helping me to continue to realize my artistic voice on a larger scale. So now, my mind's eye looks up into that vast sky and wonders...

- Lucy Congdon Hanson