

Gyöngy Laky  
Artist Statement

In the context of a personal examination of our complex relationship with the world around us, my work sometimes combines materials sourced from nature (orchard pruning, park and garden trimmings and street trees) with screws or nails. The incongruity of hardware protruding from branches hints at edgy relationships as well as the flux of human interaction with nature. I employ hand-construction techniques developed through an extensive background building sculptural works invigorated by my attraction to human ingenuity about constructing things. My works are visually diverse and, generally, tactilely intense.

Educated among artists and architects at UC Berkeley, I borrow freely from various methods and materials associated with architecture while pursuing an aesthetic, intellectual and social enterprise. My concerns cross a variety of subjects and social issues. In addition to my environmental concerns, my feminist leanings evolved while a UC professor. I was particularly active in diversifying the faculty ranks and promoting gender equity - especially during the George W. Bush presidency. Some have referred to my works with protruding nails as having an aspect of "crown of thorns."

My works are sometimes playful and quirky and some, an incongruous assemblage of items and ideas. I like to tease the brain - to promote or even to provoke or cajole, a visual dialogue with the viewer. Some have described my work as "elegant and ornery," "crude and tidy," "playful and suggesting menace," "perfectly formed masses of chaos" that attract and, yet, can suggest the possibility of trouble "making dissonance work" for my intent.

With simple construction methods I hope to entice a complexity of potential meaning. I explore what is recognized and what is suggested, seeking mental connections one might not otherwise make.

I think of my construction approach as working in the realm of what I call textile architecture. Extensive travels developed my interest in simple, vernacular, hand built, structures with natural materials - fences, grills, lattices, trellises, scaffolding and, even, foot bridges. Living in California introduced me to the brilliance of Native American basketry. The vertical and horizontal elements of textile technology - ubiquitous in textile constructions of all sorts underpins so much of human ingenuity about building and making things and led us, eventually, to the age of computers.