



Michelle Lockwood Mansfield



Artist Statement

Within my personal work, the act of creation is very much attached to my surroundings and the way in which I immerse myself daily in nature. It is a process of observing, photographing, collecting, and repositioning pieces of my life into tangible glimpses of a thought, a feeling, or a memory. It is fluid, shifting, and subjective.

In my professional work, there has always been some form of a pre-existing visual problem to solve—usually as identified by a client and directly related to an end goal. It is stable, defined, and objective.

In both, there is a catalyst for the making. It is either internal (personal) or external (client), so while the process can be similar and connected, one is innately intuitive while the other is inherently rational.

Currently, my interests lie primarily within the personal work, and I am attempting to slow down, observe, experiment, and follow my intuition as to what the form becomes and where it leads. My goal is to step back from client demands and external objectives, and instead to be within the process and allow that to inform the work.

The pieces shown here follow an intuitive approach to making. They represent parts of three experimental groups, with the connecting thread being the process of production, which all involve laser engraving and/or cutting. That process, or tool, allows the vision to evolve and shift in multiple forms. A word play becomes a letterform sketch, becomes a digital design, which is then cut into different types and levels of wood. When placed together the material begins to affect and inform the message. A photograph is digitally traced and then dissected into pieces, all of which are cut into different types of wood and repositioned together. The grain, level, and color of the wood add to the form and shift it from its original state as a photograph. A watercolor painting is scanned and engraved into wood that has been pre-stained, bringing forth the natural color of the wood positioned beneath the contrasting lightness of the stain.

These are all referred to as 'experiments' because my work is in a state of experimental play. As someone who has spent the past 30+ years as a graphic designer, this type of intuitive making is both challenging and invigorating. My only goal now is to trust the process as I let go of the outcome and allow the work to emerge.