

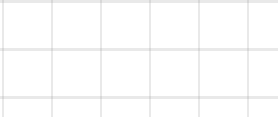
ARTIST OF THE WEEK

Caroline Wells Chandler

October 31, 2018

carolinewellschandler.com

Caroline Wells Chandler (American, b. 1985) lives and works in Queens, NY. Stemming out of a 1970's feminist craft history, Chandler's brightly colored hand crocheted figures explore queerness and the art historical canon. He received his BFA from Southern Methodist University (Dallas, TX) in 2007 and his MFA from Yale University in 2011 where he received the Ralph Mayer Prize for proficiency in materials and techniques. From 2016-17 he was a recipient of the Sharpe Walentas Studio Program. He has had recent solo exhibitions at Andrew Rafacz (Chicago, IL), Lord Ludd (Philadelphia, PA), and Roberto Paradise (San Juan, PR). Recent group exhibitions include Nathalie Karg (New York, NY), Marinaro Gallery, (New York, NY), Dio Horia (Mykonos, Greece), MRS. (Maspeth, NY), Kate Werble Gallery (New York, NY), 11R (New York, NY), The Hole (New York, NY), and Brand New Gallery (Milan, Italy). His work has been featured in The New York Times, Hyperallergic, The Huffington Post, TimeOut, Juxtapoze, Modern Painters, MaaKe Magazine, and AEQAL. Chandler is the proud papa bear of his painting and drawing students at Pratt Institute, and Norwalk Community College.


Tell us a little bit about yourself and what you do.

My grandmother Patsy use to tell me that I was a writer, but somehow I ended up making images. I'm not sure where she got that idea. She was clairvoyant even though she never would have claimed an ability associated with something so fringe. Patsy died three days before I moved to New York, almost six years ago. I think she did that on purpose. My grandmother Florence recently left us. She died during Hurricane Florence but not a result of it. Florence read a book and a half a day was very kind. When I saw that the storm was going to hit the Carolinas I thought it would take her soul because of the story structures in magical realism.

I make lots of things but I'm best known for my large colorful figurative hand crocheted works. I think about narrative structure a lot. If you watched Star Wars growing up, it shouldn't really be a shock that we find ourselves in a chapter of the story where the evil forces are running the show at the Whitehouse. I'm waiting for a plot twist. I hope that everybody votes in the midterm elections.

I also adjunct at four schools. This semester I'm teaching four classes at three different schools. Eventually I hope to have a full-time tenure track position at a public college. Teaching is just as important to me as making art. I find it to be more fulfilling than every faucet in our field except for having time and resources to make work. Being able to help a young artist get closer to what they want to do is really fulfilling. It has a deeper intrinsic value than a flashy show or high profile review. The high of both of those things only lasts about two days. To have a positive impact on the development of someone's work when they need help the most is much more meaningful to me.



Molly McIntire as a Glow Worm hand crocheted assorted fibers 22" x 50" 2018

What are some recent, upcoming or current projects you are working on?

I'm working on several projects for the Spring and Summer. In March I will be in a four person show at Choi and Lager with Katherine Bradford, Rose Wylie and Katherine Bernhardt. I think the title will be something like *Girl Meets Girl* which was Katherine (Bradford's) idea but I'm not sure. In April I will have a solo show of my sewn drawings and works on paper at Mrs. in Maspeth. I will also have my first museum solo show this summer at MOCA Tucson. I need to get to work!

What materials do you use and what does your process look like?

I draw a lot. I draw on computer paper with magic marker. I try to draw everyday but that isn't always possible. I also use a lot of yarn. I like thick yarn because it's faster than thin yarn.



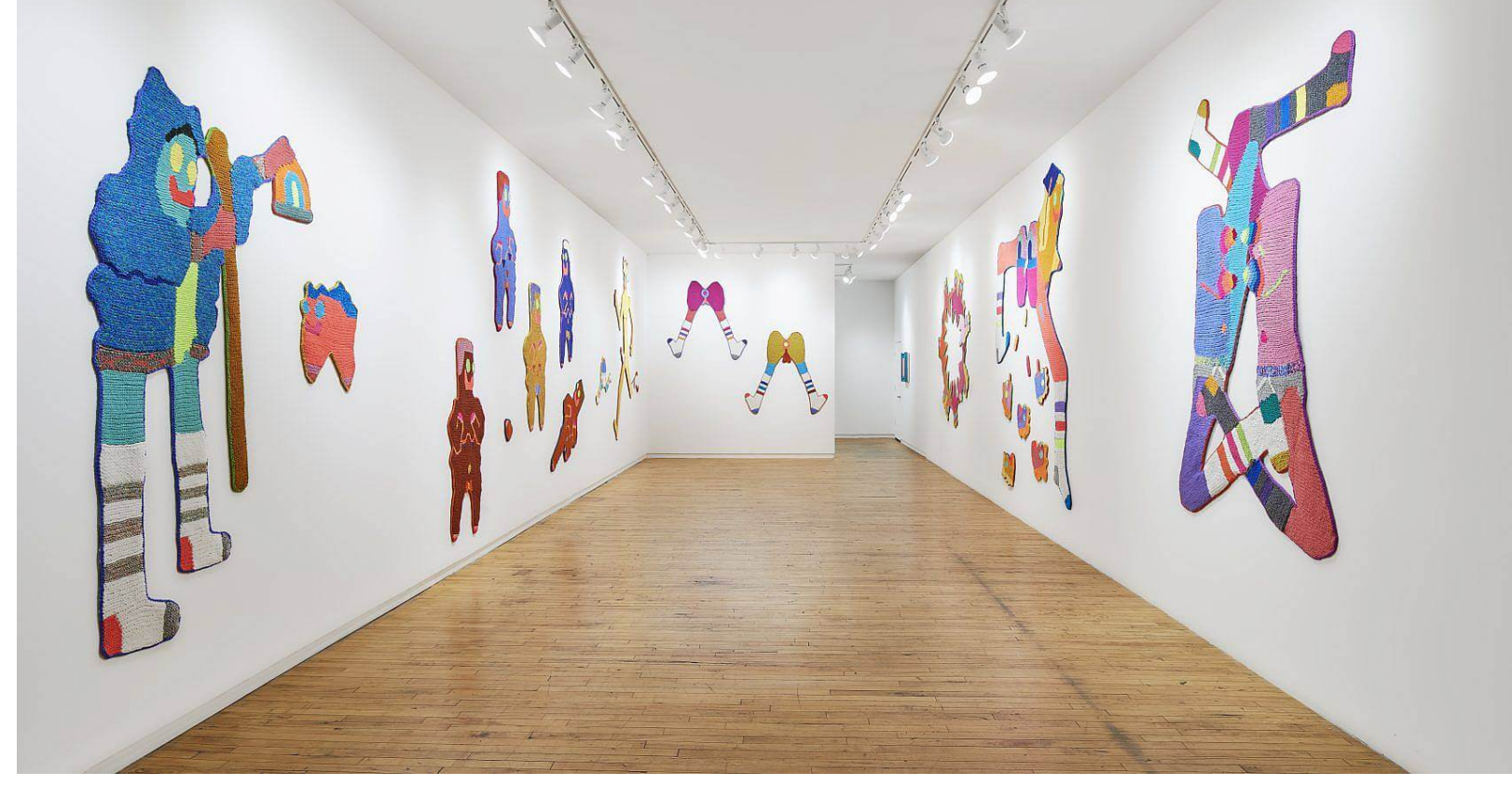
Why are there so many songs about rainbows? And what's on the other side? 9" x 12" mixed media on bristol 2018

When did your interest in fiber begin?

I've always liked making things and I never really made a distinction between fiber and other materials. I guess it really took off after undergrad when I was living next door to my grandparents. I thought it was lame to ditch them to make terrible paintings so I brought my yarn over and would hang out and try to make terrible crocheted art instead.

Who or what do the figures you crocheted represent?

Some of them are inspired by art. Some of them are my friends and loved ones. Some of them are strangers.



Orange Sunshine Andrew Rafacz Chicago, IL hand crocheted assorted fiber 11' x 50' x 15' 2017-18

What other artists are you interested in right now?

Trisha Baga, Polly Apfelbaum, Henry Taylor, 16th c. Indian Court painting, and Nick Payne.

Do you collect anything?

Yes. I collect art and use to collect art books. I'm not allowed to collect any more things until I get a house. The book problem is comparable to Toad's automobile addiction in *The Wind and the Willows*. Katherine Bradford, Ryan Travis Christian, Celeste Rapone, Brandi Twilley, Manal Abu-Shaheen, Rachel Schmidhofer, Matthew Fischer, Gideon Barnett, Thomas Shaheen, and Jake Manning are some of the artists that I live with.

I also have a big collection of works from Project Onward which is the best place in the world. The artists in residence there are ten times more prolific and creative than any aspiring MFA student at some top tier art school. Some of my favorite art works that I live with are made by Ruby Bradford, Sereno Wilson, Molly McGrath, Adam Hines, Franklin Armstrong, Stephon Doby, and David Holt. I fantasize about going to Chicago just to see what they are up to.



Wagging Centaur hand crocheted assorted fibers 72" x 55" 2018

What inspires your sense of humor?

I'm not really sure. All of my work stems out of drawing and basically what I do (the hand crocheted figurative works) is drawing. I tend to gravitate towards the drawings that make me smile or are more outrageous. I use drawing for entertainment.

Describe your current studio or workspace.

I prefer to work at home. My studio is a tiny room about 120 square feet in my 500 square foot Queens apartment. I have a comfy chair, the walls are lined with yarn, and our dining room butcher block table is also my drawing table. I have three windows. My partner is also an artist and we both have studios with doors. Our bed is in our living room.



The Greatest Love of All, and crocheted assorted fibers 108" x 85" 2017

What is one important thing you consider when installing your work?

It's all intuitive. I only need a ladder and a staple gun and I prefer quiet. I don't mind music but I do not like it when people talk at me when I'm on a ladder. I request a floor plan prior to making works for a show. Most of the work is made specifically for the space it's shown in.

Where do you see your practice going next? Any major changes happening in the studio?

I see myself crocheting for a long time. I have endless ideas to explore the figure in that material. I'm also really into collaborative drawing which is something that I've been doing for the past two years with my friends and family. The first works of art were collaborative and made over a span of 1000's of years. When you learn how to draw well with others, you learn how to harmonize, listen, give, and compromise. I'm also bringing back sewn drawings into my practice. I think about making paintings and sculptures a lot but I need a yard and a more permanent set up if I ever decide to go down that road. I'm hopeful that my work will be really solid by the time I'm 65.



Strange Attractor for Agnes Martin, Hand crocheted assorted fibers 6' x 7' 2017

What advice can you give to emerging artists?

Get a job that you don't hate, plan for the long term, set some goals, and if you are into pairing off, choose your partner wisely. Focus on trying to make a happy and sustainable life for yourself centered around art. That looks like a lot of different things. Remember to sleep and don't drink too much. If you need to escape reality, weed is a much healthier option to calm the nerves. Don't be an asshole.

#andrew rafacz #aow #art #artist #artist of the week #caroline #caroline wells chandler #chandler #crocheted #crochet #fiber #figures #interview #large scale #lv3 #lv3 gallery #lv3 interview #lv3 media #lv3 official #lv3gallery #lv3official #pratt institute #queer #queerness #wells #yale university

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