



My Heart Is An Island

18 x 20 inches
Fiber

Sage Billig

Bio

I grew up in the arms of the back-to-the-land movement, in a home built by hand, fed on home grown food, and surrounded by the ethos of making. I learned to value craftsmanship and creativity early, raised by artists, and given plenty of room and tools to experiment. As I grew up, I began to find my own voice, deeply connected to the natural world. My early career as an artist began as a collaboration with my artist mother, shifting into a solo practice that I continued for a dozen years, supporting myself showing and selling sculptural jewelry created with tiny glass beads stitched into organic-inspired forms. I met my partner, Ben Buonaiuto, at an art show and moved to the desert, and soon we began to look for a format that we could collaborate on. We fell in love with bookbinding and spent the next phase of our lives collecting found objects and beautiful papers to create handbound books. Eventually, we moved back to Arkansas and had a child. During the early years with our son, our focus shifted to urban homesteading, community building, and childrearing, pouring our creativity into these living forms. As our son grew up, we both began to work in our studios again, Ben in stone and me in textiles. I find that my work always circles back to fiber arts, and I am happily digging deeper in my exploration of this medium. I continue to push myself to learn new techniques and ways of working, while staying anchored to the rich traditions of fiberwork that precedes me.

Artist Statement

I was raised deep in the woods of Arkansas and grew up close to the land, happy with acorns and berries and stones for playthings. My studio work carries that connection forward, both as a response to the environment and in the physical use of the plants that I forage or grow in my garden.

I work with mostly re-purposed fabrics, natural plant dyes, cyanotype printing, direct contact plant printing and intentional staining. Using an assortment of these techniques, I begin by manipulating the color and pattern of the fabrics, creating a platform for layers of stitching. I stitch both by hand and by machine, letting the patterns of the fabric dyes, prints and stains guide my mark making and inform the imagery I stitch over them. My processes are long and slow and thoughtful, often employing repetitive marks.