

Loren Eiferman - *Artist Statement*

We have all at one point or another picked up a stick from the ground—touched the wood, peeled the bark off with our fingernails. My work taps into that same primal desire of touching nature and being close to it. Trees connect us back to nature, back to this Earth.

I start my process with a drawing of an idea. Each morning begins with a walk in the woods surrounding my studio to collect tree limbs and branches that have fallen to the ground. I never chop down a living tree or use green wood. I allow the wood time to cure in the studio to make sure it won't check or crack. Next, I debark the branch to reveal the shapes that are found within each stick. Using a Japanese hand-saw, I cut and connect these small naturally formed shapes together using dowels and wood glue. Then, all the open joints get filled with a putty, which once dried is then sanded till it's smooth. This putty and sanding process is repeated at least three times. The new sculpture appears like my original line drawing but in space. I want the work to appear as if it grew in nature, when in fact each sculpture is composed of hundreds of small pieces of wood that are meticulously crafted together. My work can be called the ultimate recycling: taking the detritus of nature and giving it a new life.

My latest body of work, is inspired by the illustrations found in the Voynich Manuscript. This 250-page book, is believed to have been written in the early 15th century, is of a mysterious origin and purpose. Written in an unknown language, by an unknown author and currently housed at Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book Library, the manuscript has eluded all attempts in the intervening centuries to decode or decipher its purpose and meaning. This enigmatic manuscript is divided into 6 different sections (herbal, astronomical, biological, cosmological, pharmaceutical and recipes). Having discovered the images contained in Voynich Manuscript over the Internet, I felt an immediate, profound, and inexplicable connection to this manuscript and its creator. For the past ten years, I have been transposing the "herbal" section of this manuscript into wood sculptures. This section is filled with illustrations of plants and flowers that do not really exist in nature—past or present. These aren't just pretty images of flowers—they also contain the wacky root systems and seemingly out of proportion leaves, petals, rhizomes, and pistils. I am interested in conveying the wonder and mysteries that are still swirling around us daily.

Loren Eiferman was born in Brooklyn, NY. She received her BFA from SUNY Purchase. Her work has been exhibited extensively throughout the New York Tri-State region including gallery and museum exhibitions in NYC, the Hudson Valley and Connecticut. Her artwork is included in numerous corporate and private art collections. In 2014 she was awarded a NYC MTA Arts & Design art commission to produce steel railings for a Metro North train station. She currently maintains a studio in the Hudson Valley.