

# Every Which Way

by Jessica Scriver

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*Scriver is on a quest for direction in her show “Every Which Way,” committing herself fully to the possibilities of her tools and materials, with process as her only guide.*

If life’s decisions were represented as arrows or, even more accurately, vectors with magnitude and direction, what would our life’s path look like? Would it all add up to a straight line? Or would it be like a murmuration, pulsing in beautiful, mysterious coordination? A single starling cannot know the effect of her flying in intuitive coordination with those around her. I want my work to be like the starling’s—responding spontaneously in connection with my present conditions.

So much gets in the way of this simple pursuit. We barely pay attention to our surroundings even in the act of navigation, turning our attention to devices that tell us when to turn and where. Moment by moment tragic news, politics, wars, social media influencers swirl around us and, subtly or not, affect our direction—like iron filings shifting in a magnetic field—and their influences feel as unavoidable as the pull of gravity.

Arrows abound in the work, some like synchronized murmurations and others pointing wherever—like invisible forces that guide or misguide us on our path. In the studio, I am on a quest for direction—not the kind of direction that can be gleaned from following arrows along a trail, but the kind that is achieved by paying attention to where I have been and holding true to the unfolding of the path ahead. It is my hope that, in my commitment to this work, something true shines through.

## BIO

At nine years old, Jessica Scriver attended a retrospective of her late relative, Gustave Baumann, the renowned woodblock artist and painter. For Scriver, the most exciting aspect of the exhibit was the display of woodblocks and the printing press showing how the work was created. The idea that art-making is a job and that Gus Baumann made a life out of it made a lasting impression.

A painter by way of a degree in biology, Scriver’s interest lies in the reactive quality of her work. She sets the experiment, pushing one medium against another, to create a tension, a moment of kinetic shift. Scriver does the work she asks of her materials: to move, to change. In that commerce of reaction, Scriver plays in a flat field, where her tools, her paints, and her own participation are equal. Following the movement of her work, she labors alongside it with satisfying equity. “My job is a constant dialogue of motion; to follow the movement, to let my honest response further a reply from the materials. For me, the authenticity arrives in the rejection of rigid control, and obtaining the most out of the moment, finding meaning through process.” She earned a degree in biology from The University of Texas, Austin and studied art at Indiana University, Rhode Island School of Design, The New York Studio School, and Vermont College. She lives with her family in Charlotte, Vermont.