

C. ALANA TIBBETS ARTIST STATEMENT

My creative process is very informal. I have a Ph.D. in biology, and the discipline of being a working scientist has definitely affected the way I work. I approach a new project in the same way I would a question in science: with a foundation of knowledge and techniques, but with an open mind. I experiment a lot, utilizing methods from a variety of traditional textile arts I was taught as a child (clothing construction, quilting, embroidery, crochet) and other related craft forms (polymer clay, beading, etc.). My preferred materials are wool and silk textiles, almost all from recycled clothing.

I am constantly inspired by the detail and artistry of European aristocratic clothing from the 14th - 18th centuries, and the designs of Erte from the 20's and 30's. Classical Egyptian and Assyrian designs are endlessly fascinating to me, as well as their incorporation of animals into their artworks. I am entranced by the colors and patterns of all animals and plants, especially those aspects that are uncommon and often hidden.

In my current work, I create cloth figures with human bodies, but with heads of birds or animals from the western United States, my home. The figures usually have a beetle companion - a nod to the millions of insects with whom we share the world, often more intimately than we realize. Although my work has been variously interpreted by others as nature spirits, voodoo dolls, or animal legends, I assign no particular message to the pieces. My goal is to capture the character of a species and translate it successfully into cloth.