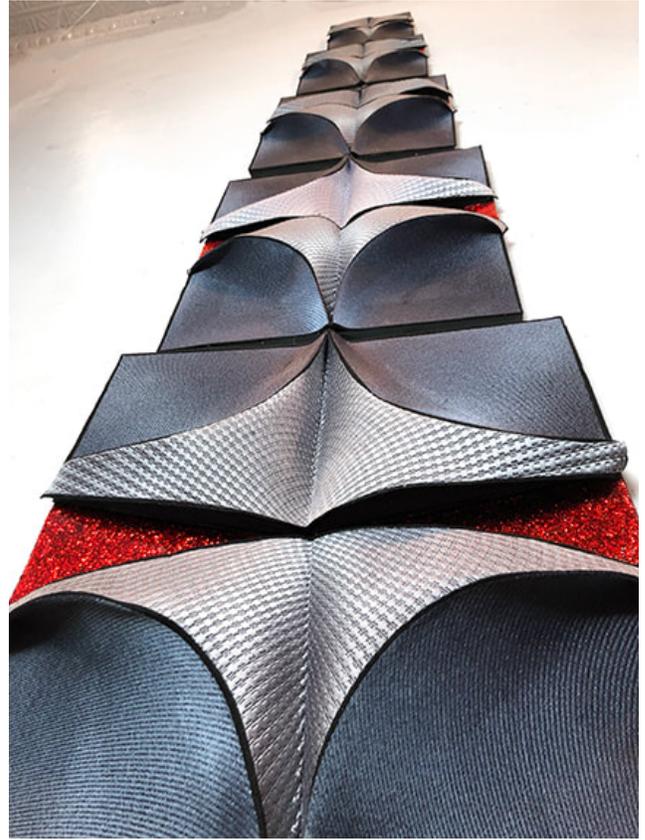


# Susan Hensel

Minneapolis, MN



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[Susan Hensel](#) received her BFA from University of Michigan in 1972 with a double major in painting and sculpture and a concentration in ceramics. Her continued study includes Haystack Mountain School of Craft, Penland, Christies Education, Praxis Center for Aesthetic studies among others. She has a history, to date, of well over 300 exhibitions, 38 of them solo, 28 garnering awards. Upcoming, Susan has 2-person and group exhibitions scheduled with the Howard County Art Council, Ellicott, MD, Artistry, Bloomington, MN and the Garrett Museum of Art, Garrett, Indiana.

Hensel's artwork is known and collected nationwide, represented in collecting libraries and museums as disparate as the Museum of Modern Art in New York and The Getty Research Institute with major holdings at Minnesota Center for Book Arts , University of Washington, Baylor University and University of Colorado at Boulder. Archives pertaining to her artists books are available at the University of Washington Libraries in Seattle.

Her new innovative work that blends commercial embroidery processes with sculptural concerns is gaining attention and awards in the U.S. with inroads into Europe. Susan's

In recent years, Hensel has been awarded multiple grants and residencies through the Jerome Foundation, Minnesota State Arts Board, Virginia Center for Creative Arts and Ragdale Foundation.

Hensel's curatorial work began in 2000 in East Lansing, Michigan with the Art Apartment and deepened with ownership of the Susan Hensel Gallery in Minneapolis. The Susan Hensel Gallery continues on [Artsy.net](https://www.artsy.net) as an online project promoting Midwest artists with a particular interest in materiality.

*Published on \_\_ 2022. Artist responses collected in months previous.*

### **What are you currently excited about in your art practice?**

It is an exciting time in the studio. I have been working since summer 2021 to find connections between my geometric, digital textile practice and my organic drawing practice. It is exciting to be finding mixed media combinations that reflect both sides of my artistic practice. This was made possible by 2 residencies: one I made for myself in a cabin in northern Minnesota and a recent one at the Virginia Center for Contemporary Arts. I am working on a series of sculptures that combine plaster and textile; stiff wire screen and textile and a partnering body of works-on-paper combining paper/paint/drawing and stitching. I feel like the back and forth is becoming seamless...the materials are simply the "tools" I work with. The characteristics of the various media are what guide the choices: matte vs gloss; line vs form; 3D vs 2D; activation of surface and negative space.

### **What were some of the challenges you faced last year as an artist? Was your work/ art practice affected by the pandemic this year, if so how?**

The emotional toll of the pandemic, political discord and rioting and crime in Minneapolis was large. Very few exhibitions were as yet occurring in person. My personal safety was questionable. My home and studio are just on the edge of the riot zone. I often questioned

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and legacy building this year as well.

**What does a typical day in the studio (or wherever you're making work) look like for you these days? What time of day are you at your studio, what are your studio must haves (ex: music, coffee, tools, etc), and what does your creative space look like?**

I arrive in the studio, 6 days per week, by 10am, after a healthy breakfast and exercise. I begin my day on the computer, fielding emails, proposals and doing research. I used to confine administrative tasks to Monday only, but they became too broad and demanding for that to work. As a consequence, I will soon be hiring an assistant again to help with that. Most days, after lunch, I am in contact with materials... HOORAY!!!! My favorite part of any day. Most of my day is quiet, devoid of sound. However, I learned at the last residency that I enter "flow" much more quickly with Mozart or Bach! So, I will be adding music back into my must haves. After dinner, I return to the studio to finish up tasks and prepare for the following day. My studio is always somewhat messy: organized on the brink of chaos, you might say. I plan to get an architect friend in soon to give me ideas of how to use my space better. I could easily use double the studio space... but I do not want to move, so it is a continuing conundrum.

**What resources for artists have you found helpful that may be helpful for other artists?**

ZOOM! I swear Zoom kept me sane during the worst of the pandemic, before vaccination was available. (I sincerely hope the worst is behind us!) I took advantage of every interactive/networking possibility that came my way. I kept in touch with friends. Formed a "safe bubble" of vaccinated people I could be in-person with. I maintained and developed multiple communities who helped sustain me. I maintained my sabbath-practice of taking off one day per week to do nothing but read, write, think, sleep, watch movies... It still feeds me. I took museum courses at MOMA and the Whitney since I could not safely travel to New York.

**What in your art career are you looking forward to in the upcoming year? Do you have any specific goals or projects in mind?**

I expect to see an uptick in sales and recognition. The growth of my websites indicates that

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1. Get more time in contact with materials
2. Hire an assistant
3. Work toward a "studio team" model
4. Re-examine the estate questions of the older artist with my attorney
5. Change my art storage solution/location
6. Expand my network of creative friends
7. Increase woodworking skills
8. Make the studio space work better

And, of course, most importantly, Make Lots of Stuff! And have fun doing it.



Find Susan Hensel on [Instagram](#)

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**Studio at Virginia Center for Creative Arts**

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