For my first solo exhibition I created a motorized sound and light installation called “Rhetoric Machine.” Kinetic sculptures of old televisions, spinning globes, and eagles spun and flapped in synch with samples from an archive of presidential war speeches. My practice has always concerned the intersection of art and politics but since that initial exhibition I’ve expanded further into the social realm, at times merging my research with engaged activism. I’ve initiated a group called Occupy Museums whose actions and exhibitions follow in the footsteps of groups like Art Workers Coalition, Asco, and the Guerrilla Girls. However, unlike many other socially engaged practitioners, I embrace the contradictions of politics and studio practice rather than depart from it. I use a productive tension between the two modes of practice as inspirational material: one practice leaps into the public forum to challenge the powers that be while the other kind of practice challenges my own assumptions through each aesthetic decision.

Sustaining the tension between these approaches allows two kinds of intelligence enter into the work: intuition and criticality. Intuition results from my focus on drawing and sculpture practices that trust the eye and allow elements to unite poetically in new aggregate forms and potential meanings (at elements also unite through electric or audio/visual systems) Criticality explores and defends the social value of this art practice, never allowing it to exist in a vacuum but rather ascribing social responsibility to the role of artist. This means that the work is often put to use testing socially constructed boundaries. For example, after working on a series of “Financial Relief Objects” exploring the history of currency, I decided to literally wear the coins as masks and stage durational performances in public space on the Wall Street Stock Exchange. These performances in turn led to my involvement in the Occupy Movement, which was an inspiring and unexpected form of direct-experience research. I have come to trust this “flow” between intuitive making and critical thinking as the basis for an expanded art practice which doubles as a life journey.

Aesthetically, I’m interested in creating things that approximate everyday struggle and innovation and the workings of the active mind. The spirit of the work is communicated through texture and touch; sculptures and drawings are layered with histories containing innovation, error, and repair: tenderness and roughness. The Kinetic Installations, Financial Relief Currency, or more recent Snapshots of Future Occupations map out a narratives through uses of symbols and audio, but also through their surfaces. This is where abstract thinking becomes concrete; where thoughts enter the physical realm which is ultimately where our body resides; where we live and die. Although I’m involved in the expansion of sculpture into social movements, the most essential political project in my view is redefining beauty: beauty as accumulated struggle and tenderness: a beauty that is flexible and democratic.