

# LYNETTE HAGGARD

## ARTIST INTERVIEWS & MY ART NEWS

Tuesday, October 1, 2013

### Christine Shannon Aaron: Larchmont, New York



Christine Shannon Aaron

1. Please share a little about yourself. Where did you grow up and what (if any) were any early influences on your work?

I grew up on Long Island in New York. My parents always encouraged creativity and free play. My Mom made sure we went to museums and international restaurants in New York City. My Dad played the trumpet (and still does) and my Mom was very creative design-wise. I am one of four children. We never went to summer camp and there were few afternoon activities until we reached high school. As a result, my younger sister and I entertained ourselves by creating games, making forts, creating secret hideaways, sewing costumes and imagining entire other worlds. I think that experience of creating something out of ideas in our minds fostered both a vivid imagination and self reliance. I

currently live in Larchmont, New York.



*Tree Muse* Illithographic monoprint, asian paper, rust print encaustic on panel 24 x 18

2. Did you receive any formal art training? If yes where and what did you major in?

I did not receive any formal art training. My Mom was diagnosed with a chronic illness when I was 14 and she died when I was 23. I think this had a significant impact on my career choice. It was no coincidence that I chose to pursue social work, and my younger sister became a nurse. I received a B.S. in Education from Cornell University and my Master's degree in social work from Hunter College in New York City. I practiced social work for more than 10 years. I think these experiences find their way into and directly impact the themes I explore in my artwork today.

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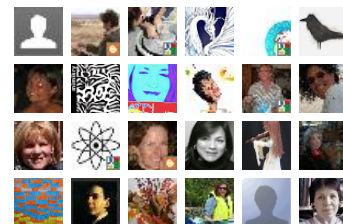
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*Forest Muse*  
lithograph, asian paper, encaustic on patinated copper, 24 x 24

I sketched and painted with watercolor throughout high school and took a few drawing classes in college. I was always interested in creative writing and art, but felt neither were "viable" career options. When my youngest daughter was about one-year-old, I started taking an evening watercolor class. Within a year I was experimenting with mixed media. I took my first printmaking class a couple of years later, and my first workshop in encaustic with [Laura Moriarty](#) in 2003. Since then, I've taken many workshops at the [Center for Contemporary Printmaking \(CCP\)](#) in Norwalk (e.g., a fantastic mark making class with [Lori Glessner](#)), one at [RF Paints](#) (with [Lisa Pressman](#)), as well as one-on-one tutorials with artists whose professionalism and teaching skills I respect. Somewhere in that first couple of years I realized that I was challenged intellectually, and creatively and actively engaged in the process of art making and started to work towards becoming a full-time artist. I do feel that I am constantly trying to "get up to speed" with learning and filling in all I missed by not having a degree in art.



*Evening II*  
lithograph on aged mirror 16x24

### 3. What is your current work about?

My work focuses on themes of memory, loss, the inexorable passage of time and the fragility of human connection. The imagery of trees drives these themes. Trees mark time; they serve as a metaphor for the cycle of life, symbols of dormancy and growth, strength and renewal. Trees hold the record of their lives in their rings. These inner marks remain hidden from view--the way that humans hold within the physical, mental and emotional marks of personal experience. This intellectual and emotional content directly guides my selection of materials and use of technique and imagery.

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*Storm*  
lithographic monoprint 24 x 18

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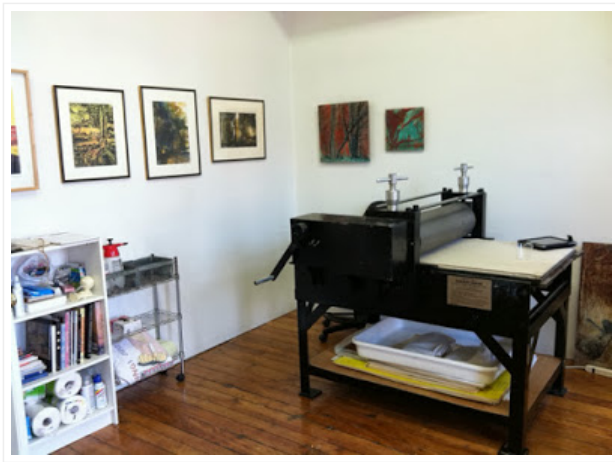
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I choose media where traces of the process remain in the work. Printmaking and encaustic allow me to develop through layering much the way human perception and memories are formed, and convey a visual sense of the archeological act of recollection. I embed, layer, deconstruct and reconstruct images approximating the way in which we revisit, and reevaluate our memories and experiences. For instance, I rust and oxidize metal substrates so that time itself becomes an integral part of the completed work. I work on mirror because the perception of the piece by the viewer shifts depending upon the vantage point at which it's viewed. My current solo exhibit marks my first foray into installation work. The concept for the installation grew out of my desire to enable the viewer to become immersed physically and experientially in the work and contains an audio piece as well as the ability to walk through the piece itself. Hopefully the viewer becomes engaged in this world and is encouraged to delve into the work and their own experience of it more deeply.



#### 4. What is your workspace like?

For many years I worked in my dining room. About 7 or 8 years ago, I moved to a studio in Port Chester, New York. There are a number of artists in the building though unfortunately we are scattered across many floors and corners as the building takes up an entire block. I shared a studio with 3 other artists for 5 years. Two and half years ago I moved into my own space. I really enjoy spreading out, and having the luxury of working on many things at once. I found that as my space expanded, so did my ability to think more "largely." I am primarily a mixed media artist, with my current mediums of choice being printmaking and encaustic. I have a full size Charles Brand Press, and a set up of encaustic palettes and professional venting system in the studio. As well as many other 'tools of the trade' so to speak! I am now greedily craving more space.



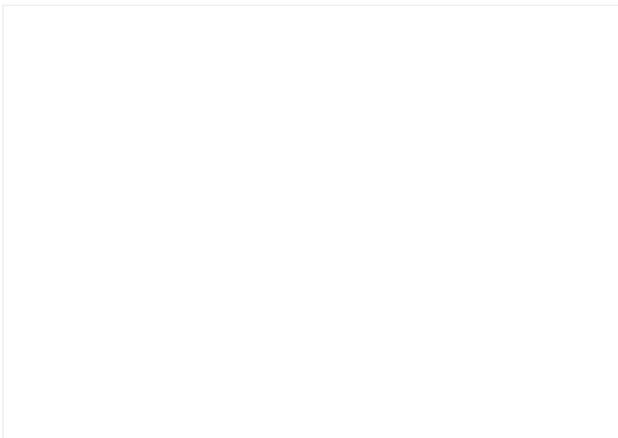


Aaron's studio in Port Chester (above and below)



5. Are you involved with any arts groups or communities? If yes, what do you gain from that affiliation and what do you contribute to it?

I belong to a number of really terrific art organizations. The Center for Contemporary Printmaking (CCP), Silvermine Art Guild, Mamaroneck Artists Guild (MAG) and the National Association of Woman Artists (NAWA). Additionally I attended the [International Encaustic Conference](#) (created by Joanne Mattera and now co-run with Cherie Mittenthal) a few years ago (and every year since). The conference has proved for me to be a rich ground for meeting and interacting with a great many professional artists, and has led to online supportive artist groups where we are able (across the country) to share issues concerning our art practice as well as discuss many topics including professional standards, marketing, content, current exhibits, and all other things art.





*Presence*  
lithographic monoprint 18x18

I have held various positions in or volunteered for each organization. For example, I created and co-chaired MAG's (now) annual Open Juried Small Works Show for the first 7 of its 8 years. I have been on the MAG Board of Directors for over 15 years. I've participated in a number of fundraisers at both Silvermine and CCP.

I feel very privileged to be involved with such vibrant artistic communities. My involvement with them all has grown exponentially. Constant exposure to the art, ideas, curiosity, challenge, investigation and creativity of those around me encourage my own artistic voice.

**6. How do you develop a sense of community with other artists, and how do you support your colleagues?**

It's important to me to be an active participant in the artistic communities of which I am a part. To me, that means not only volunteering within the organizations and groups, but also being honest and open in sharing my own work, while supporting my fellow artists. I purchase art when I am able, share opportunities of which I'm aware, and introduce artists to one another. I donate work to a select few art organizations' fundraisers, go to openings, post about these, and participate in Facebook forums about art, professional standards, techniques, concept and many other art related topics. I really do feel that supporting fellow artists, actually ends up feeding me.

And speaking of "feeding"...one of my favorite methods of support involves "feeding" quite literally. Larchmont has several incredible shops that make a variety of cakes and chocolate, etc. So, I ...umm...have a propensity to bring/send really delicious treats (cake, chocolate, pastry, breads) whenever there is the slightest excuse to do so. And really, who doesn't benefit from and enjoy a little something sweet?



*Vestige II*

7. Do you have other jobs other than making art? If so, please give us some details.

After leaving the practice of social work, and psychological testing, I worked in a friend's high end jewelry store. This supported my studio practice for about 6 years. I also got to meet some very wonderful jewelry designers, learn about their vision, process and hand creation of their work. About 18 months ago, I stopped working there to commit myself to my art full time. I am extremely fortunate to have a husband and family (three children, two of which are out of college and living on their own, and a third currently in college) that are incredibly supportive of me.

I am constantly grateful that at this point in my life I do not have to support myself with my art. That has been a huge gift, and has given me an incredible freedom to pursue what I wish to without the constraint of needing to make a living. I am acutely aware that it is a luxury that few artists enjoy. That being said, my desire is to develop my work and my practice to the point where I could actually support myself if necessary, and to pursue the highest standards of integrity and professionalism in my art practice.



One view of Aaron's "*Liminal States*" exhibit  
now on view at Silvermine Arts  
(and 2 more photos, below)





## 8. Anything else?

I have a solo exhibit now at Silvermine Art Guild called "*Liminal States: Beneath the Surface*". It's up through October 26th. I hope to have installation views and a video loop with audio on my website soon. I also have an accompanying catalog for the exhibit.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to be part of your artist interview series. Thank you, Christine for this glimpse into you and your creative world!

website: [www.christineaaron.com](http://www.christineaaron.com)

Posted by [Lynette Haggard](#) at 6:00 AM

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Great interview Lynette and Christine!!! Christine, your artwork is superb!!! xo

[October 1, 2013 at 11:23 PM](#)



[Lynette Haggard](#) said...

Thank you, Dora!

[October 3, 2013 at 2:33 PM](#)

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