



MARGOT GLASS

STATEMENT

Walnut ink drawings

I began working with organic homemade inks after studying historical materials and traditional methods with the director of conservation at the Smith College Art Museum in Northampton, MA. The exploration of organic pigments and mediums inspired me to continue on my own, researching traditional ink recipes.

Black walnut ink soon became my preferred formula not only for its archival pigment permanence and stability as a medium, but for the incredibly varied chromatic richness, and the beautiful range of cool to warm tones that it produces in layering and washes.

I collect black walnuts on hikes; gathering the materials outdoors while out walking and making the ink in my studio feel integral to the drawing process for me.

I live in Western Massachusetts, and I keep an eye out during autumn when the trees drop the walnuts in their bright green husks. Over time I have learned where to look for them, and I have favorite trees that I visit each fall to collect what I need.

This past year was slightly different, some trees did not produce as they had before, so I consulted with the Smith Botanical Garden to locate more trees, as the entire campus itself is an arboretum. The process of collecting walnuts has heightened my awareness of the impact of weather and climate changes to the area, and I see how the shifting quality of the seasons has impacted trees in general. It has been interesting to witness this phenomenon through the narrow lens of searching for organic materials to make my ink, how it has impacted the supply of what I initially took for granted as regularly available in season.

I dry the walnuts in my studio and make the ink several months later, after the hulls have dried sufficiently. The pigment is potent and I often wear gloves while handling the material. I usually make one batch each year and label the ink with the date after making it.

My drawing process involves primarily drawing with a fine point crow quill pen, dipping into the pan of ink. I sometimes use light washes with a brush to flesh out some of the larger areas before layering with line.