

LOWELL RYAN PROJECTS

VoyageLA

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Meet Amy Keeler

Today we'd like to introduce you to Amy Keeler.

So, before we jump into specific questions, why don't you give us some details about you and your story.



I've been nurse for about 20 years in Women's Health. Several years back, I took a break to try my hand at running a small business. The idea was to make scrubs that weren't so ugly. Well, let's just say it didn't go very well. I recall sitting with over 1000 yards of a particular fabric after accepting that the business was over. I made a decision to think of it as positively as I could rather than seeing it as a hard stop and failure. I cut off a swatch of the fabric and carried it around with me for a week or so, trying to listen to it and figure out what it wanted to become. And wouldn't you know it, it lead me to what is now my art practice. The lesson: Failure can be a good thing if one is willing to wholeheartedly embrace it. In hindsight, I realized that I wasn't meant to run a small business. It was

a sort of pit stop on my way to something that's entirely true to who I am.

Has it been a smooth road?

It's funny where things can lead if you're willing to follow. The whole process of accepting failure or the end of a chapter is never easy. I'm lucky to have been surrounded by family and friends who embraced me throughout that journey as my small business came to an end. But then I was left with a feeling of what to do next. I had about 1000 yards of a particular linen/rayon fabric on massive bolts in my home that I was left to deal with. I remember sitting there just before New Years a few years back thinking I could be really sad about the business failure or I could try to be optimistic about it and find a different way to use this material. And as a new year was

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just about to start, I decided I would give it a go and see where it might lead. I cut off a piece of the fabric and carried it around with me, slept with it, and tried to listen to what it wanted to become. And that was that. That was the beginning of my art practice and I haven't looked back. I think it has always been there waiting for its time, which was right then. And now I can't imagine living without it.

We'd love to hear more about your work and what you are currently focused on. What else should we know?

I'm a mixed media artist and I'm currently in an intense relationship with corrugated cardboard using cotton thread as a sort of paint on this atypical canvas. Exploring form and color in this way has been life-changing for me and it's just the beginning. I'm fascinated by natural forms and rhythms as opposed to man-made ones. Trying to find those forms, rhythms and patterns and facilitating their emergence onto this material is the heart and focus of my work.

Let's touch on your thoughts about our city – what do you like the most and least?

I was born and raised in Los Angeles County, Cerritos to be exact. I've been in the Bay Area for the past 15 years and recently returned and am living in Silver Lake. LA is in my blood. My parents were Dodgers season ticket holders and I grew up going to so many games sitting behind third base. There's a strength, a toughness to the city that I am so proud of and identify with. The mix of people and cultures is unlike anywhere else. It feels safe to me. I know it's not perfect but I feel "seen" in LA. There's a sort of unspoken understanding and acceptance of cultures and its people with an invisible internal protection if you know what I mean. We stick up for each other and are proud to be Angelenos. Maybe too proud! And the art scene is incredible. That's one of the main reasons why I returned. I'm currently working with Lowell Ryan Projects, which is a wonderful gallery in West Adams and my solo show is opening on July 11.

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