

## CHERI REIF NASELLI



Heart Jerky Series

Cheri Reif Naselli is a conceptual artist, educator and lecturer who uses an unusual and unexpected array of materials to create very personal and profound three-dimensional works of art. She received her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and has exhibited work nationally and internationally. Articles about her have appeared in several publications, in and outside of the US.

Her artistry spans a broad range - from drawing, painting and sculpture, to installations with sound. Ms. Reif Naselli often uses the sound and language to enhance a piece within its space. She was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, attended Ohio University, majoring in Fine Arts with concentrations in ceramics and printmaking. After getting married, moving to Chicago and having two children, she continued working and exploring various media, in a search to express her ideas authentically. Working through ceramics, weaving and basketry, she found a deep resonance with gut- the fiber made from the intestines of animals. This material was introduced to her at a basketry workshop. She continued to explore the material's possibilities, and built a portfolio of sculptured forms, sometimes using large sheet forms and using these as a base to draw upon.



*“Heart Jerky Series,” Audio on headsets  
1 of 28 Sheep hearts (dried), Human hair, Rusty  
nails, Installation with chair, table and vase of  
roses, dried. 2015 -- This work addresses the issue  
of intimacy breeding contempt and the power of  
spoken language to shift and change reality, even  
though it is invisible and intangible.*

*Four of the 5 recordings were part of my Graduate  
Thesis Show titled “Witness.”*

*In this exhibit there was an additional audio piece  
titled “Lord Have Mercy.”*

Eventually, Reif Naselli went to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago where she explored additional media like performance, video and sound as a means of self expression. She found sound and language, in particular, to have the ability to shift and change the viewer's reality. This led to her Thesis proposal, which eventually earned her an MFA in the Fiber and Material Studies Department. Since then she has taught, and also become a member of, and then President of the ARC Gallery and Educational Foundation. She continues to examine media that particularly resonate with her on a visceral level, hoping to connect with viewers in an intimate and non-verbal manner.



Endorphin Factory

***“Endorphin Factory”** – Audio, Cube made of Dove Dark Chocolate wrappers, Wrappers, Candy; 2014 – Each wrapper has a nice saying inside. Living alone, I found myself saving them to reread. I ended up making this sculpture and then recording the sayings in a whispering voice. Eventually I realized that this was a marketing ploy. After a few years, I still find myself reading the sayings of Dove Chocolates and enjoying the smile it brings and endorphins it creates with the help of the chocolate.*

By combining audio with mixed media made up of gut, found objects, roots and fabrics, she hopes to elicit responses that lead to the asking of more questions, the making of new connections or simply the “having of” an enlightening experience. According to Reif Naselli, her work is “ an internal attempt to move past the verbal without losing the intellectual experience.” This kind of work takes a lot of time to think about and to ponder upon on how to create fresh, exciting environments that will effectively engage the viewer.



*Pensée*

*“Pensée,” Silk, screening, wire, fiber sculptures, hair, ink and stitching, 2015 -- This installation succeeded the “Endorphin Factory” project. And the result of asking, “What does a thought look like?” The exploration was not intended to explore the physical aspects of simulated images of the process of synapse between brain cells, but an investigation of what the thoughts themselves might look like. Happy, sad, one leading to another, growing into several additional ideas, or contained in a single thought or concept or moving into an endless spiral. Floating, and inviting the viewer to mingle amongst these delicate, ephemeral objects to engage in the experience of thoughts.*



Exhale

*“Exhale,” Gut, Mat Medium, ink and breath, 2011 – This iteration of this piece was the last of three installations; one at ARC Gallery and Educational Foundation, the second in Paris, France with an exchange with Geni de la Bastille, an artists’ group in the area of the Bastille in Paris. Having used gut as a media for many years in various forms, it represented a life force with it’s delicacy of thin skin with veining and membrane characteristics. I chose to use this material to ‘inscribe’ my life throughout the years, adding bright colors at particularly joyous events and leaving the unlived portion blank.*



Accumulations

*“Accumulations,” Audio, Clothing, Books, Magazines, Divorce papers, etc., 2013 – In planning for an exhibition, I was perplexed with all the stuff I had and concerned with where to store more objects. Feeling overwhelmed, I decided to take some of those objects into a large pile with the intention of performing the burden and sorting process of owning. As I was accumulating the pieces for the show, I recalled their importance and value and reason for keeping them, I made recordings of these monologues and rationalities I was having with myself. The audio played all at once in the space, creating audio confusion, much like the piles of stuff. Throughout the month I organized, folded, sorted and shredded. The resulting imagery was a large pile of the divorce papers, a stack of art magazines, a pile of National Geographic and more.*



### Generations

*“Generations” Yarn, Female doll forms. Gut, 1993 – A body of work around the realization of the repetition of the pattern of abuse throughout generations.*



Deconstruction

*“Deconstruction,” Fabric, Headlines printed on silk, River Stones, Gut, Chandelier, 2017 – This installation, unusually based on current events, is the result of the 2016 US Election. Using strips of fabric to create a maze of barriers, making navigating the space difficult and peppered with the proliferation of headlines from the inauguration in January 20, 2017 to the exhibition of mid June, 2017. The concept was to (re)create a confusion on moving through the space and suggesting the imbalance of the upper .1% (the chandelier) and the river stones, some partially covered with gut, the rest of the population being responsible for everything necessary while struggling to survive.”*



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## Academic Vita

### EDUCATION

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL (May 2000)  
Masters of Fine Arts with 12 additional graduate hours  
Thesis: Investigating the Power of Spoken Language to Shift and Change Reality

Ohio University, Athens, OH (June 1968)  
Bachelor of Fine Arts, Art Education  
Concentration: Printmaking and Ceramics

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

ARC Gallery, Chicago, IL, 2006, '07, '08, '10, '13, '15, '17  
ARC Gallery, Chicago, IL, 2003  
Shimer College, Waukegan, IL, 2002  
ARC Gallery, Chicago, IL, 1997  
Adler Cultural Center, Libertyville, IL, 1995

### PUBLICATIONS

Kotani, Akiko and Bernard Freydberg. "Reviews: Chautauqua International for Fiber Art 1996."  
FIBERARTS 23.4 (1997): 60-61.

The Textile Museum and the Pacific Cultural Foundation. SMALL EXPRESSIONS '94. 1995. 40.

Rothenstein, Michael. Relief Printmaking. New York: Watson-Guptill, 1970. 38.

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Art Movement Krüg, Exchange, Kargholi, Bulgaria, 2017

Genie de la Bastille Exchange Exhibition, Paris, France, 2011

Croatia Exchange Exhibition. Zadar, Croatia, 2009

Drawing on Experience, Woman Made Gallery, Chicago, IL, 2008

Gallery 659 Exchange, Glencoe, IL 2008

ARC Gallery Members' Show, Chicago, IL, 2004 – 2009

Genie de la Bastille Open Studios, Invited to participate in Genie de la Bastille Open Studio Exhibition, Paris, France (2005)

Edinburgh Festival Exhibition, Exchange with WASP Gallery in Edinburgh, Scotland, (2005)

Home, Eye Lounge Gallery, Phoenix, AZ (2005)

Poetic Dialogue, ARC Gallery and Educational Foundation, University of West Florida, FL (2005)

Continuations, Tallgrass Art Association, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago Alumni Invitational, Park Forest, IL (2004)

Summer Show, Gallery 312, Chicago, IL (2001)

FACE OFF, Betty Rymer Gallery, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2001)

§ Work was one of two discussed in the Juror's Statement.

Paper/Fiber XXI, Arts Iowa City, Iowa City, IA (1998)

Cambridge Art Association National Prize Show, Cambridge Art Association, Cambridge, MA (1997)

§ Juror: M. Rogers, Director of Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

Chautauqua International Fiber Art, Adams Gallery, Dunkirk, NY (1996 & 1994)

§ Juror: J. Livingstone, Department Head, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

13th Biennial Evanston and Vicinity, Evanston, IL (1996)

§ Jurors: S. Taylor, Art Historian & Critic, and D. Sobel, Curator, Milwaukee Art Museum.

§ Award received.

1996 National Juried Exhibition, ACNNJ, New Milford, NJ

§ Juror: S.J. Cooke, Curator, Whitney Museum.

Fiber Arts International, 1995, Pittsburgh, PA.

§ Jurors: J. Sauer, A. Sandoval, R. Nagin.

Open Spectrum, Adler Cultural Center, Libertyville, IL (1995)

§ Juror: L. Silverberg, Curator, Chicago Cultural Center.

§ Award received.

Small Expressions 1994, Minneapolis, MN.

§ Work also selected to travel to Taiwan.

Woman's Works, Courthouse Gallery, Woodstock, IL (1991-1994)

§ Received "Best of Show" in 1994, 1991, and an honor in 1992.

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Center for Life and Learning. Fourth Presbyterian Ch., Chicago, IL, Watercolor Instr. (2010-Present)  
Teach fundamentals of Watercolor to Students 60 yr. or more

Illinois Institute of Art-Chicago, Chicago, IL, Adjunct Professor (Fall 2004)  
Taught Fundamentals of Design to prepare students for all majors.

Private Instruction, Home Studio, Lincolnshire, IL (Summer 2004)  
Provided private instruction in observational drawing using graphite, charcoal, and pastels and taught design fundamentals.

Loyola Academy, Wilmette, IL, Visiting Artist (Spring 2004)  
Installation Workshop, helped students discuss installation work, focus on, develop, and organize ideas, and facilitate creating a collaborative installation with the students in the class. Lectured on Installation Art to student body.

Shimer College, Waukegan, IL, Guest Lecturer (Spring 2004)  
Lectured and held workshop on Conceptual Art, a short survey discussing the evolution of Conceptual Art from the beginning of the twentieth century and how it continues in the art of our time.

Loyola Academy, Wilmette, IL, Instructor (Summer 2003)  
Taught observational drawing using graphite, charcoal, oil pastels, pastels, and painting using acrylic and watercolor. Basic design elements and principles, value, and color theory were also covered.

Loyola Academy, Wilmette, IL, Instructor (Summer 2002)  
Taught observational drawing using graphite, charcoal, oil pastels, pastels, and painting using acrylic and watercolor. Basic design elements and principles, color theory, and 3D design were also covered.

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL, Teaching Assistant (Fall 1999)  
Assisted Dimensional Forms Instructor, interacted with students regularly on design and conceptual issues, demonstrated various techniques, worked with individual students, and helped facilitate critiques.

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL, Teaching Assistant (Fall 1999)  
First Year Program, assisted 3-D Design instructor, interacted with students in planning and designing projects, discussed potential ideas, demonstrated techniques, interacted successfully with students to help resolve arising problems, and contributed to the facilitation of critiques.

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL, Guest Instructor (Fall 1997, Spring 1998)  
Led workshop in "Fiber in Conjunction" class, introducing students to gut and skins as a medium. Demonstrated ways of handling material, potential for form, and the various properties of the material.

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL Lecturer (1977-2000)  
Lectured and led discussions with undergraduate students on my current work.

## RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL, ArtWindows Coordinator (2001-2004)

Responsible for placing student work in merchant's windows for the purpose of exhibiting cutting edge art in a highly visible, commercial environment. Interfaced with merchants and students to facilitate the selection and installation of artwork. Compiled information for signs and maps and distributed these materials to the merchants and hotels.

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL, Betty Rymer Gallery, Curator (2002)

Developed concept for Home Work/s, an exhibition investigating the concept of "Home," also Co-curated and Co-Juried with Jin Su Kim and Linda Dolack.

## ORGANIZATIONS

ARC Gallery and Educational Foundation, President- 2017-Present

ARC Gallery and Educational Foundation. February 2004 to Present

Chicago Artist's Coalition. September 2002 to 2010

College Art Association. November 1998 to 2010