

## Cliff Tresner

### Artist Statement

In the simplest terms, my work is about testing conventions. I grew up the son of a farmhand in the plains of central Illinois and was the first in my family to graduate high school and attend college. In many ways I was initially ill-equipped to lead the life of a college professor. Assuming the sense of sage refinement often associated with those in academia has always seemed elusive, and exploring my role as an educator and artist is still a work in progress.

It is at this junction where my studio practice and professional life meet. I always gauge others' reactions to a variety of situations and to the creative process. I do this primarily out of a sense of discovery. I am always learning on the fly and testing boundaries - seeing how things work, and often, fail to work.

I also do this in the studio. Individual works may deal with specific subject matter, but under it all is this sense of questioning the nature of relationships. I am constantly working out the elements of a composition, balancing what I know of furniture design and other so called functional crafts with fine art practices, questioning mine and others' relative worth in society and, frankly, anything that comes to mind. When I am making a successful piece, walking the line between its content and form, I realize how interconnected my practice is with all aspects of my life.

My influences are as varied as the way I piece together my work. I take great pleasure discovering other artists' work, analyzing how they are perceived, and taking what I need from them. All things relative, I borrow my historical perspective, sense of craft, mastery, conceptual flexibility, playfulness, ideas, and connection to my materials from the likes of Marcel Duchamp, Anthony Gormley, David Nash, and Leonardo da Vinci. This is by no means a definitive statement, but it is an effective introduction to my work and myself.