

# Lauren Kussro



## P O R T F O L I O

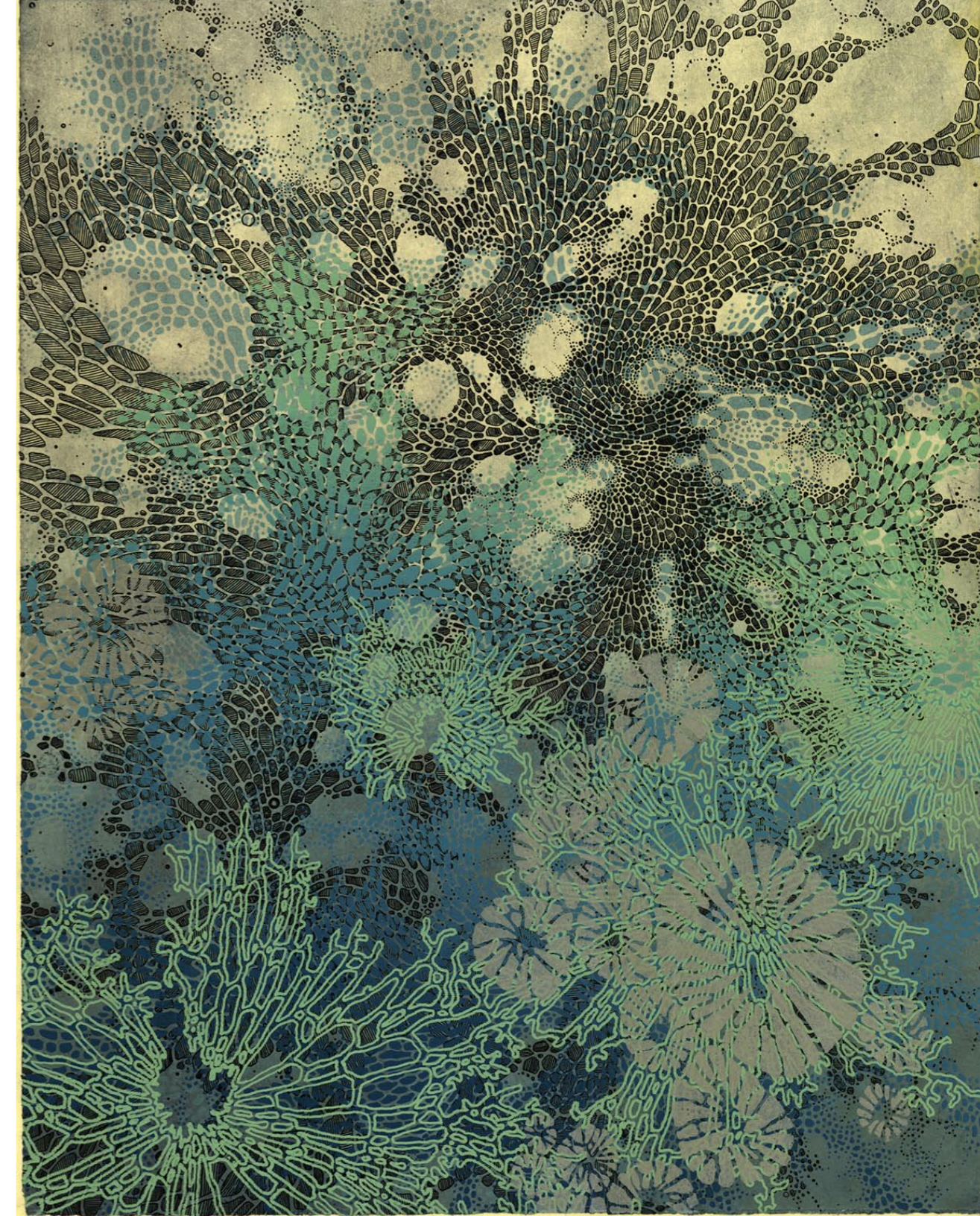
American artist, Lauren Kussro, has been inspired by the sea to create work that is extraordinary, unique and meticulous, capturing in printmaking and printinstallations the intricate beauty and poetry of marine creatures and

underwater life forms, which divers know and love so well. **X-RAY MAG** interviewed the artist to find out more about her mesmerizing work and artistic vision.

Text edited by Gunild Symes  
Photos courtesy of Lauren Kussro

*X-RAY MAG:* Tell us about your print-making and printinstallations. How did you come up with the concept and how are the art works made or constructed—what is your method?

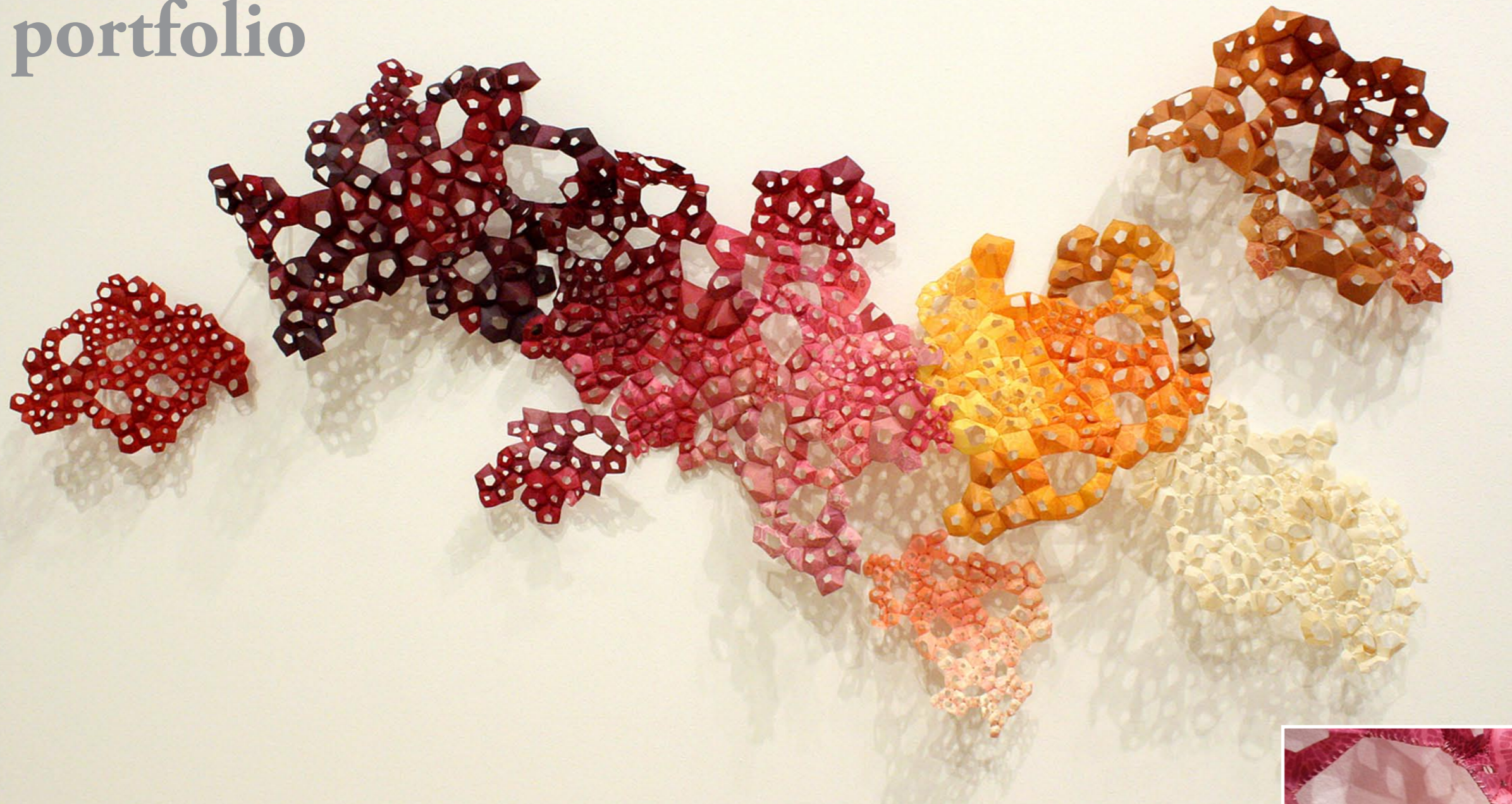
LK: Most of my subject matter is based in nature, so typically my process begins with some general research, mainly image searches on existing organisms



PREVIOUS PAGE AND LEFT:  
*Coral Confection*  
Installation by Lauren Kussro. Etching, monotype and silkscreen on paper and wood, paint, cut paper and beads

ABOVE: *Deep Calls to Deep*  
by Lauren Kussro. Etching, monotype and silkscreen on paper, 11x14 inches

*We held to each other so tightly, we became as one*, installation by Lauren Kussro. Monotype and silk-screen on paper, glue, beads, thread



graduated from high school. I then went on to earn my Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the Herron School of Art in Indianapolis in 1998 and went on to earn my Master of Fine Arts degree at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville in 2003.

As a printmaker, I'm intrigued by multiplicity. In my art I tend to be very attracted to items in nature that occur in clusters or groups because it allows me to investigate the multiple. There is also something in the detail and inherent design contained in the natural world that I find profoundly humbling, and wonderful to explore as an artist. As far as subject matter, I've been interested in things like plants/leaves, flowers, cells, fungi, fossils, etc. Many sea forms such as coral, shells, kelp and barnacles can be found in the multiple as well, and those have been a lot of fun to incorporate.

from nature that give me ideas and inspiration on what I might like to start attempting to make in paper or wood. From there I do a lot of experimenting with paper, to see what kinds of forms will work and will be effective as multiples.

Often at the same time I'll be working on drawings that are also based in that same research and that end up becoming the patterns on the paper I use. All the paper that I use, I print on first to give it the color and visual texture I want. Initially, I print flats of color, using a monotype technique with

oil-based ink, and then print the patterns using silkscreen. When the paper is ready and after I've settled on a sculptural form or model that I am pleased with, I'll start to make the actual piece.

*Printstallation* to me means a large print-based sculptural piece or installation. Being able to figure out ways of making this kind of art is exciting to me. I love the idea that art could take over a space and be more engaging for the viewer. I find most art in galleries to be very static—people are often separated from it by glass. Sculptural

work that is visually very engaging, that has a variety of texture and is surprising in its presentation can be very fun for viewers to experience.

*X-RAY MAG: Tell us about your background, training, experience and how you developed your artistic process in connection with themes of the sea or the underwater world.*

LK: I grew up in Indiana and was home-schooled all the way through until I



Detail of art work above entitled, *We held to each other so tightly, we became as one*, installation by Lauren Kussro



*X-RAY MAG: What about the ocean and its creatures inspires you?*

LK: I find the ocean world to be somewhat mysterious. It is a bit more difficult to explore than many above-water locations, and I'm sure there are a lot of creatures and organisms yet to be discovered. I think one of the reasons I like ocean life is that it looks really familiar to us but also extremely alien in a way. Coral is so

similar to above water plant forms, but is so bizarre and weird at times! I love that.

*X-RAY MAG: What is your artistic mission or vision?*

LK: I see my mission as an artist being both the pursuit of beauty and the sharing of that beauty. Through the time I spend in the process of creating art I affirm that beauty

has worth and value. Through the sharing of that art I invite the viewer to participate in investigating and enjoying the beautiful.

*X-RAY MAG: Are you a scuba diver? If you do not dive or snorkel, what sources do you use to inspire or inform your art works related to the marine environment and ecosystem?*

LK: I'm not a diver, but when I was



ABOVE: *We held on so tightly, we got stuck there*, installation by Lauren Kussro. Silkscreen on paper and wood, glue

LEFT: Detail of *We held on so tightly, we got stuck there*, installation by Lauren Kussro



LEFT: *Our Ocean*, by Lauren Kussro. Coral pieces are made out of monotype/silkscreened paper and wood, thread and wax. Larger backdrop pieces are made with wood, paint, and silkscreen. Seven pieces total, made for a space roughly 6x18 feet

BELOW: Detail of *Our Ocean*, by Lauren Kussro



young I was fascinated by the ocean and read a ton of books about the different types of ocean life. I think that fascination is still with me today, and I'd love to eventually have the chance to do some diving. As far as sources, I do a lot of image searches online for organisms I am already familiar with (such as barnacles) and learn information that often leads me to look at other types of creatures. I also make use of the public library

and check out books on coral reefs, shells, etc.

*X-RAY MAG: What are your favorite underwater subjects?*

LK: Right now I'm mainly intrigued by coral and barnacles. As a printmaker they both appeal to me because of their variety and multiplicity, and the way they often cover a large area. They also seem very related to plant

forms, which have been a previous subject matter for me.

*X-RAY MAG: How does your art relate to conservation or environmental issues facing our oceans and reefs?*

LK: I think it can raise people's awareness of the beauty of the natural world, and perhaps a greater appreciation of it.

*X-RAY MAG: What upcoming projects, if any, related to the ocean or marine environment are you working on?*

LK: I'm actually getting ready to start some new work, and I'm not entirely sure what that will be yet!

*For more information, visit the artist's blog at [laurenkussro.wordpress.com](http://laurenkussro.wordpress.com)*

