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# [INS&OUTS]

Long Island City & Upcoming Neighborhoods of New York





# A World AS SMALL AS YOUR Fingertip

BY LAUREN MARTIELLO

ARTIST SHARON LOUDEN'S STUDIO IS IN LIC BUT her work has permeated right through the walls of her Center Boulevard address. Her creations have been seen from New York City to Miami, Philadelphia to Greensboro, N.C., Houston to London.

Her animation, "The Bridge" was recently shown at the Queens International Film Festival.

Louden said this is the first time in five years she's had a break. "It's refreshing and wonderful," Louden said, and with the time off she "enjoys re-examining the purpose of being an artist."

Also, this past August, Louden and her husband, Vinson Valega traveled the county to promote her artwork. In twenty-six days they traveled to twenty cities and arranged thirty meetings. They met new friends, reconnected with old ones, dined with directors, listened to whistlers practicing for the Iowa State fair, and discovered what a truly small world it is.

One story Louden shares is as follows: On their way to Albuquerque, the pair stopped at a Chevron station for gas. While there, they got to talking to a man who appeared to work there, and Louden and Valega asked for a restaurant recommendation. Louden had another recommendation from a friend, so they went there first and didn't like the vibe. They then went to "The Chevron Man's" recommendation, El Paragua.

They got to the place, which was packed, and sat at the bar to eat. They got to talking to the waitress...and long story short, the waitress' sister worked in Louden's studio as an intern for a year!

"I couldn't believe it," Louden said. "In this place I had never been, directed to us by 'The Chevron Man' who we happened to just meet randomly, in a town that we dropped in on along our travels, we would meet the sister of someone I knew and is in my database! SMALL WORLD."

Although no current local shows, places where Louden's pieces are in permanent collections are: The Neuberger Museum of Art in Purchase, N.Y., Whitney Museum of American Art on Madi-

son Ave, National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., Arkansas Arts Center, Yale University Art Gallery, Weatherspoon Art Museum in Greensboro, N.C., and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Stories about Louden's work have been written in The New York Times, Art in America, The Washington Post, Sculpture Magazine, and The Philadelphia Inquirer.

Louden works in various mediums; she has paintings, drawings, prints, animations, and installations. Louden said, "My visual vocabulary is of movement and gesture, explored through many different media including animation, drawing, painting, and installation. I love using various materials to give different character to the work, opening up a wide range of possibilities."

Louden, who graduated with a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and an MFA from Yale University, School of Art, said, "I love making art that is whimsical, beautiful, and elegant."

According to the catalogue published by the Birmingham Museum of Art, *Taking Turns* is Louden's newly commissioned work for the Birmingham Museum of Art, which is comprised of a suite of fourteen small paintings, a video projection, and an installation of fiber-optic sculptural "drawings" in the treetops of the museum's sculpture garden.

"Louden fuses the imposed precision and clarity of geometry with the sensual and exploratory gesture. At the core of her visual vocabulary is a signature gestural mark – a single stroke – that she describes as her essence," Ron Platt, the Hugh Kaul Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, said in the catalogue.

"Many of Louden's marks are fingertip width, furthering the sense of an individual's touch," Platt said.

Louden said she loves being apart of and vested in the community here in LIC. The artists who work for her frequent local places, Louden said, "I'm contributing to the city as much as I can!" [sharonlouden.com](http://sharonlouden.com)

