



Curated By You: Elsa Boucinha makes a Linen Memory Guardian Narwhal

Description



MIST Heavyweight Linen

Tell us a bit about yourself and what you do.

My name is Elsa, I'm 39 years old and I make memory guardians in the form of fabric dolls.

I graduated in architecture and after 10 years working on large scale projects, I became a mother and started sewing toys for my children. Through playing with natural materials and curious shapes, I wanted to reinforce their natural development, inspire curiosity and creativity. I wanted toys that enriched interaction and didn't overload their senses (or mine). Thus the small handmade brand mauvais marie was born. Now my children are 4 and 2 years old, they give opinions about new designs and make special requests and the fabric dolls are still great friends and are memory triggers for these first years of life.

Why do you sew?

I started sewing to bring to life a series of fabric animal ideas that came to me when I became pregnant with my first baby. I had never sewed before but it was a wonderful discovery, working with natural fabrics and building something you can use from an idea.



Elsa in the process of making the Narwal

What do you like to listen to when you're working (and why)?

While I work on normal things in the studio I listen to endless playlists on Spotify of Indie pop, Pop rock, Folk, Indie rock, Portuguese music from the 80s... I'm a music fan. Also if I'm on an embroidery marathon I can be watching/listening to a series on Amazon Prime or Netflix, or a course on YouTube about anything. But if I'm doing a new design, or a complicated part of sewing, silence is my best friend. In those times I have to choose what to focus on.

As a child, what was your first encounter and memory of beauty?

I grew up on the outskirts of Lisbon, in a villa instead of an apartment and my house until I was 7 years old was surrounded by empty fields and we had a barn next to the house full of golden straw. I always liked walking outside, the smells and the sound of cicadas. There were always flowers. Many flowers. My mother always had fragrant roses in her garden. I think my first memories of beauty are flowers.

Where is home and how does it affect what you do?

I have lived in two different countries (in Portugal and also in Spain – Barcelona for 6 years) and I have lived in many different houses. Now I feel that my home is where my children and my partner are. They are my shelter, my inspiration and my source of courage and creativity. They affect everything I do.



FS MIX NATURAL Midweight Linen and FS GREY MIST Heavyweight Linen

Name a book that you've recently read which inspired you and why?

I read compulsively because it's the only way I can relax to fall asleep. But I can clearly pick out two Patti Smith books that have profoundly affected me in recent years and have influenced the path I'm on now. Just Kids and M-Train. The courage to embrace life and the poetry of the simple things are so strong in Patti's words that they gave me the courage to try new things and enjoy the path, not the destination.

What was the first thing you ever remember making on your own? Tell us about this memory.

I remember making a cat out of clay at school. I did it all by myself in the craft class and was very proud when I took it home. My mom loved the cat which made me feel very talented. He lived above the fireplace for many years.



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Who are your muses and inspiration?

I'm inspired by creative and courageous people. and people who believe in causes and fight for them. And people who stay good and help and care. So luckily I have a long list of muses. But to name a few, Patti Smith of course, David Bowie, Vivian Maier and Gunta Stölzl.

Do you have a community of crafters/ makers around you or do you find you are on your own?

I started alone working with fabrics and I'm introverted by nature so sometimes it's a lonely path but I'm part of a community of various artisans called Portugal Manual who have brought me inspiration, help, contact and incentives.



How important is it to make something with your hands?

Doing things with my hands is fundamental. This is how I make sense of the world, relax, build my self-confidence and transmit love.

What does success mean to you?

Success for me is feeling good about myself, without anxiety, creating and doing things that fulfill me, being good with my family, being able to earn enough to live and being able to positively affect other people.

What have you chosen to make out of FS linen and why?

I'm making a narwhal. Narwhals are strange and beautiful creatures with long tusks protruding from their heads, which are often called the unicorns of the sea. They remind us of the magic that exists in nature and the seas we have to protect.

CATEGORY

1. COMMUNITY
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Author

masha