



Compass Rose

Literature and Art Journal

Compass Rose interviews **Leah Gauthier**

Compass Rose: *How does one go about becoming an installation artist? Is this something you work toward or is something that you are invited to do based on your portfolio.*

Leah Gauthier: It's a concentration just like painting, sculpture, photography.

CR: *Would you say that your art is created and then its space is found, or do you create new work for each individual installation?*

LG: My work happens when elements converge. I sometimes harbor an idea for years, and the piece materializes at the point at which all of the puzzle pieces come together (materials, place, theoretical foundation).

CR: *Would you say you create your art, or does your art simply use you as a vehicle for its own creation?*

LG: I think a little of both. No one creates in a vacuum.

CR: *Your work involves a passion for food. What three vegetables do you keep in your refrigerator as regular stock?*

LG: Peppers of all kinds, carrots, garlic, the building blocks.

CR: *What amount of thought is put into exhibits such as "Lettuce"? Is work like this something that just wakes you up in the middle of the night, or is there more to it?*

LG: Countless hours of thought, research, planning, and effort went into lettuce. And yes, the "ah ha" moment plays a part too.

CR: *You have exhibited your work quite a bit. Is there someplace that would be your dream place to exhibit?*

LG: No dream place in particular, I just want the work to keep expanding.

CR: *What advice would you have for aspiring artists in hopes of exhibiting their work?*

LG: Tenacity, hard work and some calculated risks. When the art is ready, sometimes it is just a matter of approaching the right person at the right time, and things come together.

CR: *You have traveled to Ireland. What are some of the challenges of being an American artist abroad?*

LG: Beyond language barriers, and expense of doing work at a distance, I've only found cooperation, assistance, and acceptance. Art creates opportunities for shared intimacy, which can lead to understanding,

and friendship.

CR: *Where is your favorite place to "retreat" when you need to refresh your creative juices.*

LG: Home.

CR: *What would you say, artistically speaking, is the difference between your hometown, Chicago, and New England.*

LG: I'm not certain I sense any real differences artistically. Both places have lively art communities, and both are very supportive of artistic endeavors. Or maybe it's just that I feel equally at home in both places.

CR: *Time Magazine recently reported on the success of eco-villages. Have you heard about such places, and is this something that you might find yourself involved with?*

LG: I have heard of them--happy folks are working at living more sustainably. I'm really into the tiny house movement; a group of tiny houses with shared resources sounds very appealing.

CR: *Are you a cat person or a dog person?*

LG: Both. I grew up with dogs, but share my life with two cats right now. I'll add a dog to the family again someday when I'm not traveling so much.

CR: *What did you think of the recent censorship debate that circulated through Tufts University?*

LG: Voltaire once said, "I may not agree with what you say, but to the death I will defend your right to say it." For reasons I cannot comprehend, we the people have been far too willing to hand over our freedoms in the name of every flavored cause of the month, without careful consideration of the consequences. The Constitution is a brilliant piece of work, and we are failing miserably at being its stewards.