

SELF

2016
Mar 14
2:13 PM

TRENDING
By Lindsey Lanquist

This Artist Transforms Yoga Mats Into Works Of Art

Alex Ebstein is turning your favorite fitness tool, the yoga mat, into a beautiful mat-sterpiece.



Mixed media artist Alex Ebstein didn't intend to have a career in yoga mat collages. But after a car crash in graduate school left her with an arm injury, she found herself limited in her ability to use certain tools. Determined to make the most of a tough situation, Ebstein began experimenting with the objects surrounding her, and she fell in love with one in particular: her trusted yoga mat. Ebstein has since used yoga mats in a variety of ways—always drawing on them to visually convey her changing relationships with her body and the world around her.

Ebstein's early work involved solid white mats, which she removed pieces from to create "minimal, lacy planes." These carefully torn holes reflected Ebstein's journey from injury to recovery, showing the evolution of how she felt about her body post-accident. When hung from the wall, the lacy mats created an art installation so beautifully textured it became hard to imagine anyone ever standing on them and perfecting their downward dog.

"I used the white mats to talk about the body and deterioration, emphasizing the yoga mats' emulation of skin and sag," Ebstein told SELF. "Abstraction allows me to highlight a single gesture or feeling and allow it to be the central element of a composition: a slump, a bend, a sigh, etc. ... The way a viewer relates to a painting and enters into a piece is steered by the push and pull of the surface textures versus the implied space of the pictorial elements."

Since then, she's moved on to creating yoga mat collages that resemble the paper cut-outs Henri Matisse made toward the end of his career. Ebstein plays with shape and color, piecing together parts of yoga mats like an abstract art puzzle. The result is a series of rectangular collages that are both minimalistic and symbolic in nature. With titles like Memento and Gathering the Moon Milk, it's clear a deep level of thought goes into each Ebstein's pieces.

March, 2016

<http://www.self.com/trending/2016/03/this-artist-transforms-yoga-mats-into-works-of-art/>

SELF



“The texture of the mats is sort of a foil to the sense of space in the pieces,” Ebstein told SELF. “The imposed limitation of the palette of the mats ... pushes me beyond my intuitive use of color and the things that become exciting are those that feel new and surprising.”

The next time you roll out your yoga mat, it may be hard not to imagine Ebstein’s intricate combinations of shapes and colors. But try not to let it interfere too much with your practice. We’d hate for you to fall out of your leg high while dreaming of your trusty mat as a beautiful work of art.