

# My Instagram: Conny Goelz Schmitt combines harmony and history through sculpture

By **Grace Griffin** Globe Correspondent, Updated March 9, 2020, 9:52 a.m.



"Sidelines" by Conny Goelz Schmitt protrudes from the wall it hangs on. CONNY GOELZ SCHMITT (CUSTOM CREDIT)/CONNY GOELZ SCHMITT

Conny Goelz Schmitt (@connygoelzschmitt) infuses balance and harmony into her sculptural endeavors. A collage artist at heart, Schmitt creates wall-protruding, ceiling-suspended, and pedestal-elevated sculptures from vintage books. The artist grew up in Germany, spent much of her twenties in Taiwan, and found herself in the U.S. in 1996 where she has lived since. Schmitt draws inspiration from the three cultures that have shaped her life, and has had her work featured in galleries across the country, including the Kingston Gallery and the Danforth Art Museum in Massachusetts.

**Q:** Can you tell me a bit about how you make your sculptural works?

**A:** I take out the papers from the books and then I work with the actual book covers and put them together with binding. I use everything you would use to create a book, but I make it 3D. I don't only use the pages, I also use the book covers and every part of the book. Sometimes it's hidden, sometimes if you take the book cover off, there are amazing textures inside.



"Cloud Cover" by Conny Goelz Schmitt. CONNY GOELZ SCHMITT (CUSTOM CREDIT)/CONNY GOELZ SCHMITT

**Q:** Why did you start using books?

**A:** It comes out of my collage background, because back then, I totally limited everything to vintage books. Also, a long time ago I studied literature in Germany, maybe it has something to do with that. I just like the textures and the aged feeling of the books. I used to live in Asia, and this Asian feeling comes across in these textures and through these books. I'm a little homesick, although I don't come from Asia originally, but these are my formative years that I spent there.

**Q:** On your website, you mention using a rules-based system when creating. Can you tell me about that?

**A:** Everybody has their different rules that they follow. There are color rules like when you use red and green in one painting to make your eye wander. But for me, it's also the way I decide my structure. It's not even deciding, it's rules in my head that every time I draw an angle, I counterpart it with a straight line. It has to come together like some type of harmonious or balanced work. It's all different kind of rules, and by the end of the day, you forget which rules you apply to your work. When you're a writer, you learn the basics of writing, then in the end you forget where you used certain grammar rules or rules of writing an essay.

**Q:** Is there any message you're trying to express with these works?

**A:** I think it's up to everybody else. For me, I want people to access my work. That's why I did these sculptures you can touch and manipulate yourself. I want people to make up their own world, in a way. Sometimes if I put a sculpture in a certain way, it's surprising to me what it looks like. It was not intended to be like that. It's open what people think of it. I don't want to manipulate people into thinking something about my work.



Conny Goelz Schmitt creates interactive sculptures like this one titled "What Goes Around Comes Around." CONNY GOELZ SCHMITT (CUSTOM CREDIT)/CONNY GOELZ SCHMITT

**Q:** How have you used Instagram to show your work?

**A:** I first used Instagram when I took over the Instagram of the Kingston Gallery in the South End. I took this over for a while and I really liked how it connected artists all over the world. It's so lonely to do your work and not talk all day long. You can see how much you have in common with all these artists all over the world. Maybe it helps. I've made a lot of connections. I'm in a lot of shows because of Instagram. It really helps.

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