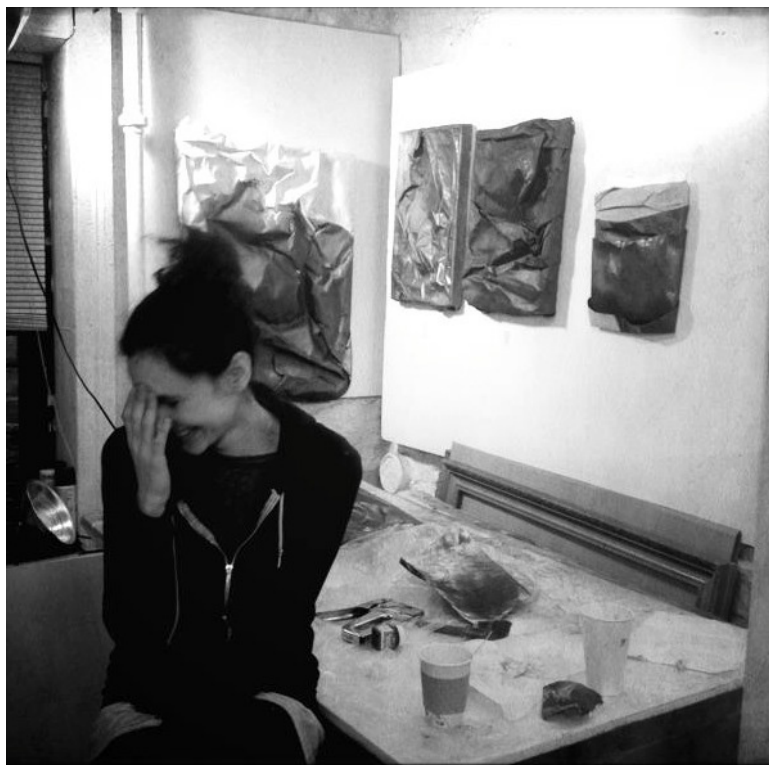


# LVL3

## Artist of the Week: Lauren Sieden



Lauren Seiden (born 1981, lives in New York City) received her B.A. in Painting and Drawing from Bennington College in Vermont. Her recent exhibitions include *Querencia* at Denny Gallery in New York City, *Action+Object+Exchange* at the Drawing Center in New York City, *The Last Brucennial* curated by Vito Schnabel and the Bruce High Quality Foundation in New York City, *SP-Arte* in Sao Paolo, Brazil, *Works Off Canvas* at Denny Gallery, *ORGANIX: Contemporary Art From The USA*, curated by Diego Cortez at the Luciano Benetton Collection in Venice, Italy, *On Drawing Line* at Holly Johnson Gallery in Dallas, Texas, *Eigengrau* at Storefront Gallery in Brooklyn, *Black Lodge* at Interstate Projects

in Brooklyn, *Line and Plane* at McKenzie Fine Art in New York City, *Its Endless Undoing* at Thierry-Goldberg Gallery in New York City, and *Itsa Small, Small World* curated by Hennesy Youngman at Small Business Gallery in New York City. Seiden received the AOL and Chuck Close “25 for 25” Grant Award in 2010, and in 2014 was selected to participate in The Drawing Center’s “Open Sessions” program. Her work resides in numerous private collections.

**Tell us a little bit about yourself and what you do.** Well, I’m an artist. I was born and raised in New York. Aside from college I’ve lived here my entire life and have been working on art full time since 2011. I tend to wake up and spend a few hours answering emails, then go to the studio, continuously pushing and experimenting with the materials, allowing failures to play a valuable role in the development of the work, (being patient with myself/being demanding on myself), and lastly (and most importantly), remembering to have fun and find joy in the making of the art!

**Any current or upcoming shows we should know about?** Towards the end of June, I’m in a group show at Gallery Nosco in London titled, “De-Pict”, where I will be showing alongside Louise Fishman and Niall McClelland (just to name a few). This summer, I will have work at the Mattatuck Museum

in Connecticut, opening August 14th, and in September, I will be heading to Brazil for an artist residency and preparing work to be exhibited at ArtRio 2014. I'm pretty excited about this one because it will be a two-person booth of works on paper with myself and Luciano Fontana (who is one of my art heroes).

**What was the last exhibition you saw that stuck out to you?** The Robert Longo show at Metro Pictures blew my mind! Using charcoal, he reincarnated famous Abstract Expressionist paintings, from artists such as De Kooning, Pollack, and Reinhardt. He maintained the essence and integrity of the originals, yet mastered them in his medium. It's absolutely beautiful, beyond impressive, and completely bad-ass.

**What is your snack/beverage of choice when working in your studio?** I always have an extra large coffee within arm's reach. I'm trying to drink more water, but I usually grab a diet coke instead. There's probably always a Cliff Bar laying around, and my new studio in Greenpoint is around the corner from Oasis...the best falafel in Brooklyn!

**What materials do you use in your work and what is your process like?** I primarily work with graphite and paper (though I also work with mylar). Sometimes the works are densely layered with graphite, creating a textured, reflective surface that resembles metal or an armor like appearance. Other works have a more painterly application of graphite. I use my body and fists to transform the paper into a physical form, situating it around the frame as oppose to within the frame. I apply the graphite after the structure has been created, allowing the shape/folds/depth to dictate the final result of each work.

**How has your work developed within the past year?** Within this last year, my work has become more sculptural. Although I use traditional drawing materials, I try to conceptually maximize the use of graphite by showing the physical properties of my actions left on the paper, as well as a transformation of the paper itself. I have been working with graphite and paper for years, but I found myself consistently yearning to create works that are more and more tangible; further expanding upon the notion of drawing as painting and painting as sculpture.

**If you had to explain your work to a stranger, what would you say?** Hmmm, I would say that I create paper structures with varying applications of graphite. My work explores the essential elements of process and materiality through an intuitive layering of graphite that tests the conventions of drawing; breaking down the surface and transforming the paper into a physical, textural and structural form. The dualities of strength and fragility are encapsulated within this process, and these sculptural



forms present a manipulation of materials that transform these materials into objects.

**How has living in New York affected your art practice?** Well, I would have to say that the fast pace and energy of NYC absolutely affects the work. I often find myself bringing that frenetic energy back to the studio and going into “attack mode”. But on the flip side, the studio is where it can be zen and quiet. It’s a place where I can retreat and escape all the stimuli of the city and instead of hearing all that external noise, I can just hear myself.

**What are your thoughts about the art scene in New York?** A wonderful thing about NY is the art scene! Right now there is a real community of young artists working together, showing together and supporting one another. It has been amazing to watch everyone develop their craft throughout the years...I find myself experiencing a real sense of pride with so many artists who are also dear friends.

**Can you share one of the best or worst reactions you have gotten as a result of your work?** The best AND worst reaction I ever received from my work was a studio visit two years ago with a collector who had been following and supporting my career. She came to my studio after I had completed a series of intricate pencil-line drawings and said “Ya know, I’m an emotional collector...and although these are beautiful, PERFECT even, they don’t move me”. It was a real moment, when I realized that the work had become so much about technique that I had forgotten what the work was actually about. As she was leaving, a piece (the very first of my paper wrapped around stretcher bars) caught her eye. She asked me to pull it out from behind where I was hiding it. She then said, “This is the one! You allowed for mistakes, you took chances, there is life in this, and I can feel YOU in this work again”. It was a huge turning point for me, where I was reminded that the idea of “perfect” was not a part of my process, nor was it my goal. I try and remind myself of this experience every time self doubt finds it’s way into the studio...a reminder trust myself and remember WHY I am making the work that I am.

