A bit of background on my work
I have been influenced by the natural world – by the use of earthen materials and inspired from species’ form. My work is shaped by ecosystem observation and researched historical botanical motifs found in historical craft (domestic handcrafted items such as Persian rugs and Victorian lace). The sculptural work is made for the wall and floor, and connects site specifically to architecture. It focuses, formally and structurally, on the respect for architecture. My interest is in the details: quality of craft, connections, and structure. Conceptually, I explore sustainable relationships within the ecosystem through craft to gain an understanding of all physical parts to the whole. These site-responsive clay and fibrous sculptural works are made from recycled 100% natural fiber clothing or harvested garden materials beat down to pulp and formed into handmade sheets and shapes. I also use industrial castoff surplus materials, like cotton thread from the bedding industry, sisal from the burlap bag industry, or upcycled off-line currency, combined and attached with clay. Like a bird or squirrel that uses the vernacular from place, I, too, upcycle humble materials and remake them into what I hope to be exquisite sculptural forms, utilizing the vernacular-harvest as content and, through craft, a refined formal quality.

My early work was an exploration in gathering materials and developing form. The forms acted as both a vessel, with reference to...
safety and home, and a reflection on communal existence. I made
form next to form, investigating the charged space and proximity
among the forms, as well as the space available to the viewer to
walk among the works. Presently, I am referencing observed plant
behavior; the work is more engaged with the theme of thriving
and productivity. I continue, through observation, to look at diverse
states: structure of nature, the interaction of various and competing
forces of nature, biological diversity, and the resilience of life itself
manifested as the struggle to grow, expand, reproduce and nurture.

The sculptures, some of which sit on the floor, some that are sus-
pended from the wall, all connect to architecture. Like the growth
of weeds, they connect and grow around something that may have
lost its purpose. Like new life moving in, quietly repurposing space,
they are nestled in amongst the layers of history. Working on site
has always been a process of listening to space and then, after
listening, connecting and interacting to offer new insights to the
architectural reality. Materially, I combine my knowledge of two
specialties: ceramics and hand-made paper. Clay and fiber, like a
species’ choice for animal architecture or like architecture made by
indigenous cultures. It is a perfect fit structurally and conceptually.

Don Wilkinson, author of Diverse States of Existence: Instinctive
Formations at Shattuck, writes about my current work:

Her work is largely botanical in appearance. There is a common ten-
dency to create great divides between big disciplines such as art and
science. But Hutchinson is having none of that. As the daughter of
scientists, she has a raging curiosity and a learned point of view. Her
sculptures are the result of careful observation, informed decisions
and a meticulous handling of materials. She digs into the muck, both
figuratively and literally, physically and spiritually embracing nature as
her muse. In works collectively called the “Determinate Growth” series,
she takes inspiration from root systems, rock outcroppings, moss, the
forest floor, invasive species and the species that fight against them,
the strength and fragility of small-and large-scale ecosystems, floral
beauty and ferocity, and plant formations of all kinds, ecophysiology,
the biological discipline that studies the adaptation of an organism’s
physiology to environmental conditions. Hutchinson constructs the
sculptures by combining the clay and paper elements in such a manner
that they seem to have always coexisted. The individual components
are brought together in a composite harmony with the application of
a mixture of paper pulp and clay, seemingly as thick as peanut butter,
which acts as a near-indestructible bonding agent as it hardens. They
are tatterdemalions transformed into something that manages to be
both earth bound and ethereal.

Craft
When reflecting about the act of making, I acknowledge that craft
is about connection, the intimacy of connection. Literally hand to
material and hand to a tool, or when needed, hand to equipment.
In addition, intimacy of connection occurs formally. Formal devices
such as color, line, pattern, and space guide form until aesthetics
begin to work in a syncretic way. Looking good, looking masterful,
requires all visual parts working together towards beauty. Also, in
my work, the crafted object has a connection to place. I respect
and enjoy the various organizations I must interact with or specific
departments within the museum organization. I have roles with

Left: Installation view from Form and Nature, Turman Larison Contemporary, Helena, Montana Right: Orange Burst, fired and unfired porcelain paper clay, handmade paper, organic material 60” x 60” x 12”

curatorial, marketing, and preparatory staff, engaging with them all as the large site works find “home”. The act of making employs literal touch connection, aesthetic connection and, in my work, a physical connection for the viewer to (hopefully) visually enjoy.

Craft requires interaction and respect for the “other” to make this connection. It is through the connection of hand to tool, that a sensitive mark results. It places the maker as the listener, the negotiator, the requester, then the engager. The respect for this connection to the tool or to the material completes the desired end result. The completion of task is an act of collaboration. The maker is the humbled requester for this interaction. The act of making connection is collaboration. The maker moves from the “I” did it role to the “we” committed to this to gain a result. Whether it is hand in tool, hand on material, or formal visual mastery through part of object to parts of object working together, the role of making craft is an active role in collaboration.

**Sustainability**

Making and craft is a micro model for sustainability. The making takes more than the “I,” it proceeds into the “we”, engaging in respect for the parts to the whole. Craft functions in participating in the “whole,” which in turn encourages the most fundamental role for sustaining on the earth: participation in multiple components, upholding respect beyond one entity or one motion for completion. It celebrates that all components are essential and important.

In nature (spider web or fungus growth, for example) there is intimate, if not instinctual, knowledge of all aspects to a decision of how things are built knowing what is connected to what. The craft of nature, the craft of humans, offers the model for transformative behavior, to change human approach to existence. It can move our decisions to researched responsible connection directions. Understanding all parts to the whole means respect for everyone and respect for everything. We have the ability to render new progressive thinking.