

Labor is the foundation for which all life is built. We labor physically, mentally, and often without recognition. Raised by a machinist and a mechanic, the physicality of life in work, love, family, and play were emphasized daily and engrained in my being. We were always *doing* something. Dirty and cracked hands, metal shavings in hair, navy blue pants and shirts, steel toed boots, aprons, custom fit ear plugs, gloves, goggles, singe marks, tears in fabric, stains, aching muscles, cuts, bruises, burns, motor oil, solvents, dirty red rags, over-time, crossword puzzles with coffee, MAC tools calendars and mugs, tool boxes, hearty appetites and laughter, bear hugs, and tired smiles...this is what I come from.

There exists amongst us a group of skilled, talented, and dedicated individuals who take pride in doing a job right. They are masters, journeymen, and apprentices. They are blue collar. They use tools and work with their hands as well as their minds. Quality supersedes quantity in their efforts. Amid the smell of grease and solvents, the sound of clashing metal, and the taste of sweat, you can find a community of labor. This community exemplifies the core of being human. These images are part of a series which explores the often turbulent lives of the independent service provider; the individuals who have spent a lifetime learning and developing their skills and struggle to produce a service of labor through love of their craft. The reputation of their work is their livelihood.

My artwork captures and reflects that which embodies the essence of these laborers. Through countless visits and conversations about lessons in life I am slowly given entry into these communities. I engage the individuals, the space, the tools, and the objects looking for the quintessence of this way of life that lingers as activity continues. The process of copper plate photogravure embraces the power of the photographic image and the dimensionality of printmaking, as well as craftsmanship, dedication to skill, and creates beauty in an unlikely space. This technique, which takes many days to complete and requires much patience, commitment, and hard work, is a continuation of the communing with this subculture that has not only entranced me, but also created me.

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