

Meet Rusty Scruby



Today we'd like to introduce you to Rusty Scruby.

Thanks for sharing your story with us Rusty. So, let's start at the beginning, and we can move on from there.

I am very much a blend of my parents. My dad was a math teacher, and my mom taught in grade school. She sang in local community productions and played the piano.

I grew up with a love of music and math, but the assumption that I would pursue a field in science or math. I moved to TX from Salem, OR to study engineering at Texas A&M, however, in my 4th year, I began studying piano in my spare time. Soon, music (playing and composing) consumed me. I switched schools to North Texas State University to study music composition, but after two years I realized that neither engineering nor music was quite right for me. I finally left school and started pursuing a career in art.

When I was young, math and music intrigued me because of their abstractness, but also their ability to express things in the real world. Music could express an infinite number of moods and emotions using only a few pitches in unending combinations. I love the connection between simplicity and complexity. In my 20s as a young artist, I began asking myself questions about how our eyes worked in relation to our ears. What things do our eyes process that could lead to a "visual music?"

In my 30s I began using repetition as a device in my work. I would take 1000s of copies of old family photos and cut out slightly shifting squares or hexagons in a sequence. I then reconstruct a new version of the image by attaching the shifting sections in progression along grids, but the image is abstracted or

blurred. I sometimes think of this as looking at an object that is underwater, with the ripples in the water's surface causing repeats in what you're seeing. (See image of Blue Bucket).

Now that I am in my 50s, I am still asking similar questions about music, art, and math. New questions lead to new groups of artwork (and new exhibitions), and even newer questions.

Great, so let's dig a little deeper into the story - has it been an easy path overall and if not, what were the challenges you've had to overcome?

Although there have been many wonderful times, the road has never been smooth. The first challenge for me was to realize that I was an artist in the first place. Going through so much engineering and music school and then leaving it for an art career without even an art education, made my parents very nervous.

There have been times that I have felt at a disadvantage without an art education, but I have also felt that I have an advantage at other times. I think everyone chooses their own path and it works out in the end as long as you're able to stick with it long enough to experience the ups with the downs.

Recently, I was asked by Texas A&M to create a commission for their new engineering building. The commission is my largest to date and involves new materials and processes that I'm extremely proud of. (See image of Infinitesimals and installation). Knowing that this commission stems from a time of difficulty from my past, reinforces how much life evens things out.

We'd love to hear more about what you do.

I am a self-employed visual artist. Sometimes I spend months or a year in the studio creating a new body of work. My work is very obsessive, repetitive and exacting and some pieces can take 100s of hours to complete. Luckily, all the detailed work is relaxing and therapeutic for me.

Although I mainly work alone in my studio (except for the three outdoor/studio cats), I rely heavily on the galleries that represent me to assist with exhibitions and promoting my work. I enjoy playing the part of a hermit as much as possible.

I think I'm probably most known for my photographic reconstructions where I explore repetition and create visual frequencies using photographs. I am also known for my use of geometry and my ever-evolving technique.

What are your plans for the future? What are you looking forward to or planning for – any big changes?

I have recently begun to incorporate knitting into my artwork. I have knit my whole life, but until recently hadn't used it as an art material. Now I'm beginning to knit 3-D shapes with imagery that fit over 3-D woodworking structures. (See image of A Way to Infinity). The hard-edged structure merged with the soft yarn imagery makes me think of the blending of male and female or nature and man-made. I feel like I'm getting to the root of something so I'm excited for the new body of work.

I recently had exhibitions at Cris Worley Fine Arts here in Dallas and at the Grace Museum in Abilene. My next show will be in Chicago next summer at Melanee Cooper Gallery. I used to spend more time planning for the future and trying to do the right things from networking to sending out portfolios and entering competitions.

However, it often seemed that good things happened spontaneously and unexpectedly and my efforts often seemed wasted. Lately, I've focused on my work and letting it take me where it needs to go. So my plans are just starting to form a couple years out.

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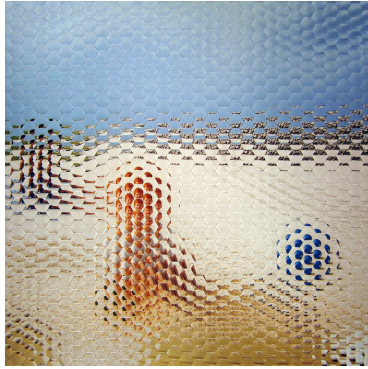


Image Credit: Kevin Todora