

[P O R T F O L I O]

Danna Margo

(+27) 726599008 | dannamargohall@gmail.com
www.dannamargo.com
@dannamargohall

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Danna Margo (b.1995) is a South African multidisciplinary artist. She received her BAFA Degree from the University of Pretoria in 2017, specialising in mixed media, sculpture, and installation. Her process is materially driven, exploring the nuances found within wood glue and ink. Margo has exhibited with the Pretoria Art Museum, culminating in the Exhibition Abolition and the Interchange of Time (2018), as well as taking part in the Turbine Art Fair (2019). In 2018, she was selected as one of Absa L'Atelier's Top 100, and in 2021, she was invited by Absa Gallery (in collaboration with Strauss & Co) to participate in a sculpture auction to raise funds for the Qhubeka Foundation. Most recently, she was accepted into the Turbine Art Fair's 6-month Unearthed mentorship and professional practice program, culminating in a group exhibition at the Turbine Art Fair in July 2022.

My process employs an experimental investigation into the delicate nuances found within matter, specifically the curious characteristics of wood glue, so as to decipher how it operates in accordance with me as well as its inherent capability to create access points to sensitive socio-political issues on a broader scale. Pregnant with meaning, the material is an active agent that informs every aspect of my practice. Adhesives can be regarded as 'shape' substances, sensitive and stubborn, translucent and opaque. This temperamental liquid has the unique capability of operating as an unseen conveyor of information that has been synthesized to be unnoticeable and forgotten. As vibrant matter, glue has the unique ability to adapt not only to the movement of air and the element of heat but most fascinatingly to the surfaces it's placed on. It is a master of mimicry, embedding each and every detail of a surface into its velvety skin once dried. So intense is this characteristic that it can expose the porous nature of ceramic tile, or the countless lines and scratches found on a printmaker's table. With this in mind, one can push the boundaries and construct manipulated surfaces for the adhesives to play on by introducing culturally significant and universally known symbols, like the tally mark, to the liquid. Combining the known with the unknown in order to open new material dialogues.

I've spent the last few years traversing the tally mark for my current body of work, exploring its textural qualities and inherent meaning. The mark can be considered one of the most inconvenient ways to count large sets of numbers, yet it remains the most effective way to represent quantity without losing the impact of each individual unit. Put simply, it is a form of mark-making that has been used for centuries by our ancient ancestors, mathematicians, and convicts alike. Through the embossed tally marks glue sheets that drape the figures, one is confronted with line upon line of almost invisible grooves and dents, counting to a seemingly endless and undetermined number. The material itself functions as an active contradiction. It serves to cover as well as reveal, disguises yet defines, and in the end, alludes to an abstract figure that one can choose to objectify. Regardless if such objectification is made, it is elevated by the use of drapery as form, which historically enables a material to 'ennoble and dignify its wearer'.

EDUCATION:

- 2014 - 2017 BA(FA) Fine Arts, University of Pretoria
2009 - 2013 National Senior Certificate, St. Peter's College, Johannesburg

EXPERIENCE:

- 2022 "Turbine Art Fair Unearthed mentorship program", Artist. Turbine Fair Special Projects, Sponsored by NAC, Johannesburg
2021 "Absa Auction for good for the Qhubeka charity: Modern, Post-War, Contemporary Art and Decorative Arts", Strauss & Co online auction
2019 "Kopanong art studio residency program", Adjudicator. Pretoria Art Museum. Pretoria
2019 "HMC Fair", Intern. Johannesburg
2019 "FNB Art Fair", Intern. Johannesburg
2018 "Children tile art project: Future Families Workshop", Instructor. Pretoria Art Museum. Pretoria
2017 "For-Sale show", Volunteer. Pretoria Art Museum. Pretoria

GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2022 "Turbine Art Fair Unearthed group exhibition", Johannesburg
2021 "Triptych" Johann van Heerden Gallery. Pretoria
2021 "Connectivity group exhibition" Johann van Heerden Gallery. Pretoria
2019 "RMB Turbine Art Fair" Pretoria Art Museum. Johannesburg
2019 "Unbearable" Trent Gallery. Pretoria
2018 "For-Sale Project dual exhibition: Danna Margo and Sello Letswalo", Pretoria Art Museum. Pretoria
2017 "For-Sale group exhibition", Pretoria Art Museum. Pretoria
2017 "Parabilis", University of Pretoria

AWARDS:

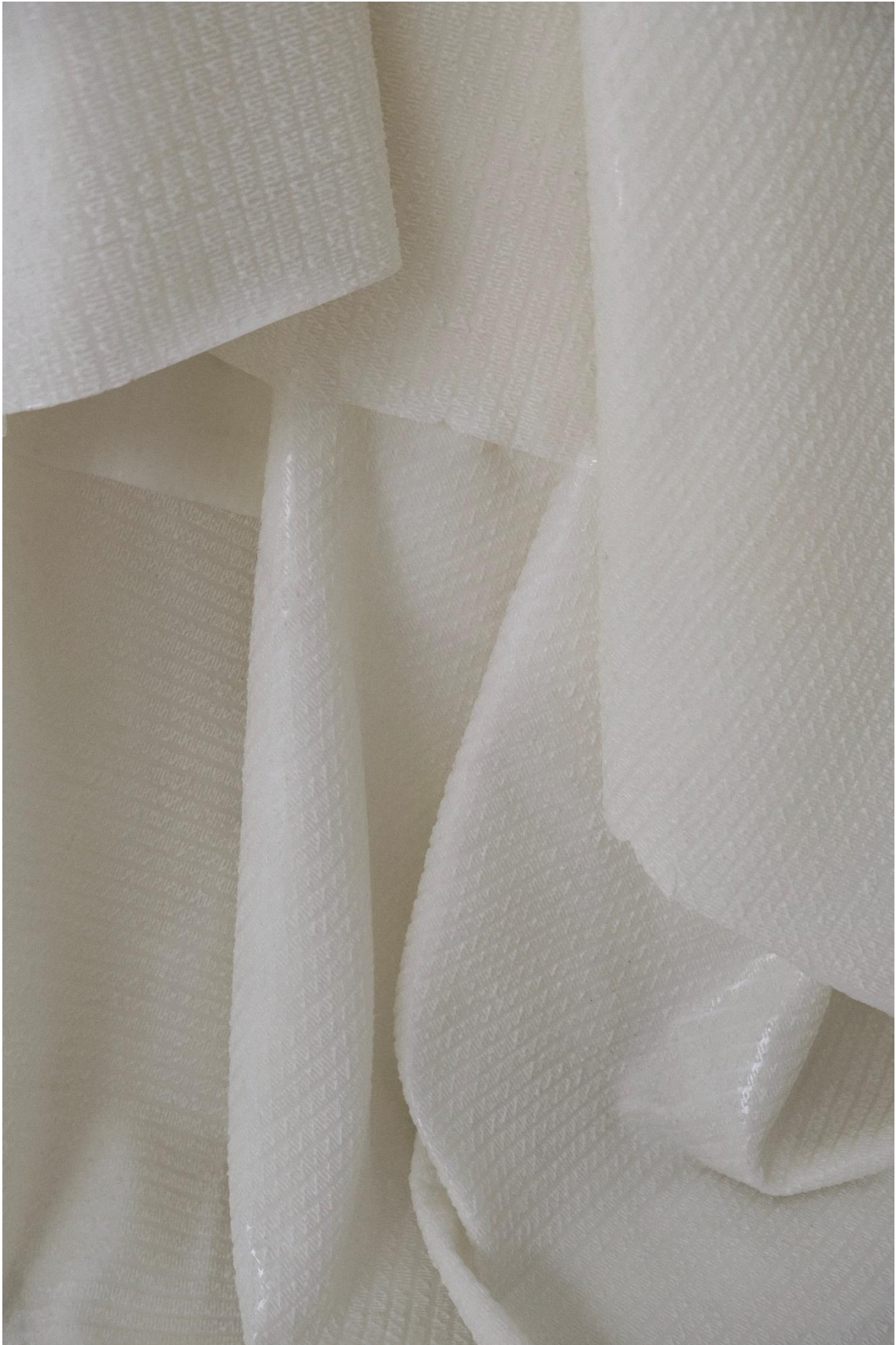
- 2018 "L'Atelier Top 100", Absa Art Gallery. Johannesburg
2017 Golden Key International Honour Society



Doe 1014 (2022). Wood glue, fiberglass, and supawood. 1940mm x 1500mm



Doe 1014 (2022) Detail. Wood glue, fiberglass, and supawood. 1940mm x 1500mm



Doe 1014 (2022) Detail. Wood glue, fiberglass, and supawood. 1940mm x 1500mm



Baby Doe 1311 (2022). Wood glue, fiberglass, and supawood. 1300mm x 1200mm



Baby Doe 1311 (2022) Detail. Wood glue, fiberglass, and supawood. 1300mm x 1200mm



Baby Doe 1311 (2022) Detail. Wood glue, fiberglass, and supawood. 1300mm x 1200mm



Baby Doe 208 (2022). Wood glue, sellotape, bubble wrap, and supawood.
502mm x 595mm



Baby Doe 208 (2022). Wood glue, sellotape, bubble wrap, and supawood.
502mm x 595mm



Baby Doe 208 & 1311 (2022). Wood glue, fiberglass, sellotape, bubble wrap, and supawood.



HEADLINER (2022). Wood glue and ink. 1023mm x 2045mm



HEADLINER (2022) Detail. Wood glue and ink. 1023mm x 2045mm





Creeping Replica (2019 - 2022). Screenshots of short video.
Dimensions vary



Fluid Mechanics: I (2021). Wood glue and ink. 340mm x 440mm



Untitled (No. 1 Embellishment) (2021). Wood glue and found object installation.
710mm x 490mm