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Artist Statement

Delicate Strength • Amanda Moyer

Masculine or femine, strong or delicate: the world is full of categories, which define individuals, objects, and spaces. Most things do not fit within such easily defined classifications. The world is not black and white; it is a sea of grays, overlapping classifications, that give each object and being depth.

This body of work explores the gray areas of materials and gender rewards, and rewards the time taken to understand the similarities and differences of classified beings and objects. Look at the pieces from afar to see the logical classification, then look closer and peel away the overlapping layers to discover the unique shades of gray.

Artist Bio

Delicate Strength • Amanda Moyer

Amanda Moyer was born in Wayne, Michigan in 1989 and currently lives and works in southeast Michigan. She received a BFA in Integrated Design from Finlandia University in 2011. Her work has been exhibited at the Finlandia University Gallery, Reflection Gallery, Center for Creative Studies Gallery, Raandesk Gallery NYC, and in traveling exhibitions with stops in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Missouri. Moyer's work can be found in personal collections in Michigan, Iowa, Kentucky, and Japan.



Education

2011 BFA in Sustainable Design

Finlandia University Hancock, MI Art and Design

• Co-Valedictorian, Summa Cum Laude

Experience

Green Map Systems (906)482-2060 New York, NY 2011

• Intern, initiated social media campaigns, designed graphics for print and webiste

Greenfield Village (313)982-6013 Dearborn, MI 2009- Present

• Historic Presenter • perform public presentations about historic lifestyles and demonstrate historic fiber traditions and techniques

Greenman's Printing and Imaging (248)478-2600 Farmington, MI 2008-2009

• Produced graphic designs for print

Accent Remodeling Inc. (734)455-0202 Canton, MI 2007

• Shadowed an interior designer through all stages of the remodeling process

Awards

Honorable Mention: Ceramic Design

Best of Show: Sculpture Best of Show: Fiber Design

Michigan Fiber Festival Scholarship Kuhlman Foundation Scholarship Best of Show: Interdisciplinary Design

Virginia Fund Scholarship Best of Show: Graphic Design Best of Show: Glass Design

Dean's List 2007-11 Dean's Scholarship Meap Scholarship Finlandia Student Juried Exhibition 2011

Finlandia Student Juried Exhibition 2011 Finlandia Student Juried Exhibition 2009

2009

2008, 2009, 2010

Finlandia Student Juried Exhibition 2009 Finlandia University Honors Banquet 2008 Finlandia Student Juried Exhibition 2008 Finlandia Student Juried Exhibition 2008

Finlandia University Finlandia University State of Michigan

Exhibitions

"Kuhlmann Exhibition" 2011Finlandia Reflection Gallery, Hancock, MI "2011 BFA Diploma Works Exhibition" Finnish American Heritage Center, Hancock, MI "The Apron Show" 2010 traveling exhibition, Hancock, MI, Madison, WI, and St Louis, MO "Student Juried Exhibition 2008-2011" Finnish American Heritage Center, Hancock, MI "Scholastic Art and Writing Competition 2007" CCS Gallery, Detroit, MI "Livonia Public Schools Annual Art Exhibit 2005-2007" Civic Center Gallery, Livonia, MI

Private and Public Collections

Shino Imada Toyota, Aichi, Japan John and Linda Benoit Indianola, IA
Walter Dowling N St Paul, MN
Barbara Heidmann Wayne, MI
Phyllis Fredendall Hancock, MI
Pam Kotila Houghton, MI

Community Involvement/ Volunteering

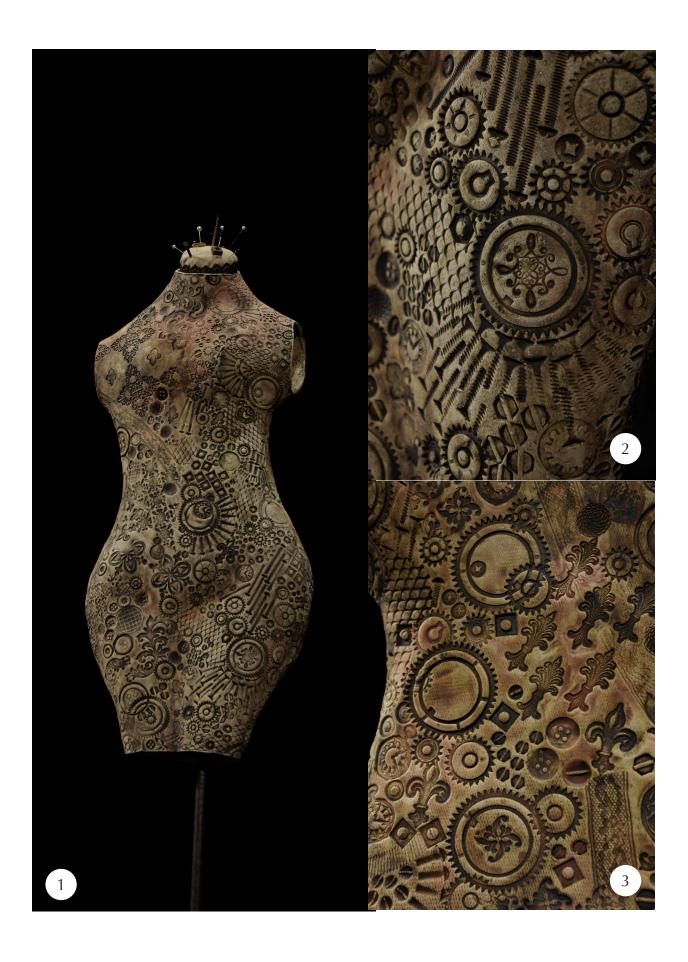
Women's Caucus for the Arts Member, 2010- Present
Officer of Finlandia Young Women's Caucus, 2010- 2011
Finlandia University Resident Assistant 2009-2010
Finlandia University Reflections Gallery Director 2010
Finlandia University International Club Member 2007-2011
Vice President: Finlandia University and Michigan Tech University Rotaract Club 2009-10
Finlandia University Campus Ministry 2007- Present

Citations

"Finlandia students float toilet recycling project"
By: Kurt Hauglie, The Daily Mining Gazette,
"Finlandia shows off fashion"
By: Layla Aslani, The Daily Mining Gazette,
"You want me to build a WHAT?"
By: Stacey Ashcraft, Daily Mining Gazette,
March 13, 2008

References:

Work:	Education:	Character:
Wendy E. Brawer Green Map System 220 A East Fourth St. New York, NY 10009 Office: 212-674-1631	Rick Loduha Office: 906-487-7211 rick.loduha@finlandia.edu	Patricia Van Pelt 340 Navy St, Unit 1 Hancock, MI 49930 906-482-0160 patriciavp@pasty.net



Diploma Works 2011 • By Amanda Moyer

DELICATE Strength

Lace bricks. Woven clay.

Two phrases such as these make most stop and inquire. In a world where bricks are used to create robust structures and fibers form a woven cloth, "Lace bricks" and "woven clay" create a paradox that bewilders. *Delicate Strength* embraces this confusion in order to explore gender roles associated with materials, as well as challenge the physical expectations set upon materials such as lace and clay.

In 2010 Melissa Hronkin challenged the Finlandia University Sculpture class to create a sculpture that incorporated some version or representation of the human form. During the ideation process for this sculpture, questions about gender roles and the masculine versus feminine elements of my artwork continually manifested themselves. The result was a clay sculpture entitled, The Antithesis of Masculinity and Femininity, which formed a sculptural portrait of my artistic passion (figure 1). This clay and found metal sculpture is covered in impressions of masculine and feminine objects. The masculine side has the impression of nuts and bolts, wire mesh, gears, and other small industrial items that hint at the masculine tradition of the industrial trade (figure 2). The other half of the ceramic body form is impressed with feminine patterns, lace, and buttons to represent the feminine textile industry (figure 3). These contrasting items impressed onto one body form represent the masculine and feminine aspects of my designs, artistic desires, and the media in which I work. The personal understanding that resulted from this sculpture, of a conscious thread that connects my work in all media, led to the exploration of masculinity and femininity of materials for this senior project. Unexpected objects become the medium for my designs. These designs challenge the traditional expectations of media through contradiction; men's neckties become feminine garments and toilets become functional flotation devices. To continue with the ideas behind *The Antithesis of Masculinity and Femininity*, Delicate Strength explores contrasting materials and forms, utilizes found objects, and highlights the grey areas of social expectations often defined in black and white.

Research

The desire to challenge different media through masculine and feminine associations for this Diploma Works project initiated research into the current views of femininity and masculinity within society. In order to ensure the most extreme contradictions, understanding society's black and white definitions are the best place to start. According to the online Oxford Dictionaries, feminine is defined as "having qualities or appearance traditionally associated with women, especially delicacy and prettiness: a feminine frilled blouse." Masculine on the other hand is defined by Oxford as "having qualities or appearance traditionally associated with men, especially strength and aggressiveness: he is outstandingly handsome and robust, very masculine."

Most people and objects in this world are not entirely black or white, masculine or feminine. In today's 21st century world men and women are exploring the masculine and feminine components of themselves as women are wearing pants, military inspired garments, and doing the same jobs as men, and as men are designing clothing, cooking, and taking care of children.

Roget's online thesaurus further supports the black and white definitions by classifying masculine with the synonyms "...bold, brave... courageous, gallant... muscular... powerful... resolute...robust...strong...vigorous, [and] well built" and feminine with the synonyms "dainty, effeminate, female, ladylike, soft, tender, womanish, [and] womanly."

With masculine and feminine occupying complete opposite ends of the spectrum, the next stage of research focused on the history of the materials, lace and clay, and the history of processes, weaving and bricklaying, in relation to gender roles.

"Lacemaking in Venice (which had a pioneering role in European lacemaking in the sixteenth century) was exclusively a domain of women's work" (Datta, 184). Lace originated before the 16th century through inspiration from similar processes found in

embroidery such as the darning of nets (lacis), drawn work, and cutwork (Vallasi, 1512). Weaving is also a feminine process in terms of the formation of fabric and in terms of basket weaving. According to The Columbia Encyclopedia "In primitive cultures [weaving] was practiced mainly by women" (2941) and "Often a basket maker's finest work would be buried with her or burned in her pyre. (Basketry was exclusively the province of women in many societies.)" (Harvey, 17).

Clay and bricks are closely related since they both form structures and since a brick is a "ceramic structural material that, in modern times, is made by pressing clay into blocks and firing them to the requisite hardness in a kiln" (Vallasi, 364-5). In Colonial Williamsburg "anybody—men, women, and children—could assist because brickmaking was unskilled labor." However, "bricklaying definitely was for the well trained" and "required physical endurance," which left the men for the process of bricklaying.

Rather than make bricks out of clay and create intricate details with fibers, Delicate Strength inverses the roles of lace and clay by using contradictory processes; hence, pieces of lace become structural bricks and clay is woven into delicate details.





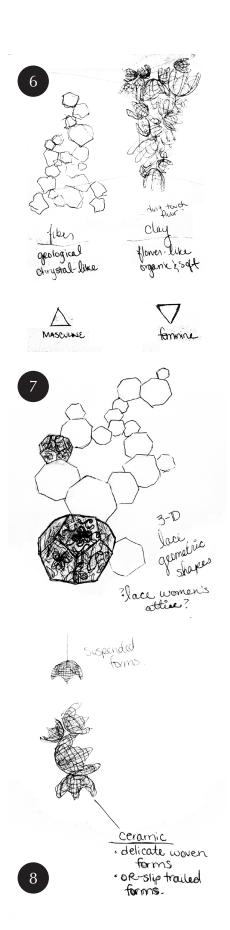
Artistic Ancestors

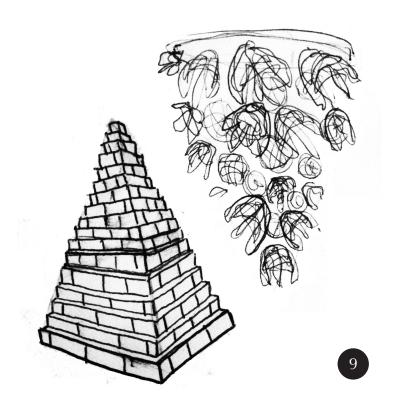
A major inspiration for this project is the New York based artist Cal Lane. Extreme pleasure is found in the contradiction of industrial metal objects into which she cuts elaborately delicate lace patterns (figure 4). The juxtaposition of something rusty and masculine next to such delicate, feminine details brings extreme beauty and depth to her pieces. Lane says, "[I] work as a visual devil's advocate, using contradiction as a vehicle for finding my way to an empathetic image, an image of opposition that creates a balance - as well as a clash - by comparing and contrasting ideas and materials"(Lane).

Delicate Strength strives to develop contradictions by utilizing materials in such a way that creates an unexpected juxtaposition of material and form. The retained social expectations, associations, and histories of the materials in *Delicate Strength* are exploited in order to ensure the highest degree of contrast. Not only are the social views that relate to these media stretched, but the physical characteristics of clay and fiber are challenged as well.

The *Crochet Chair* by Marcel Wanders is another inspiration for this project, as well as a reassurance that structural fiber is possible. This chair is made of circular crochet doilies with no visible support structure (figure 5). One is easily enamored with this piece because of the visual puzzle triggered by a delicate material utilized as structure.

The initial vision of the *Strength* sculpture lacked masculinity and angular geometry, so as plans for a second version of the lace sculpture came into fruition, Wander's chair was referenced to find a method of giving lace structure. Wander's crochet material is soaked in an epoxy resin and molded around a form to achieve its structure. Epoxy resin is not an earth friendly process, so Wander's design was not the answer for this project; however, the inspiration from the crochet chair still remains. Wanders' ability to create form and structure from a delicate material encouraged the prospect of structural lace forms for *Strength*.





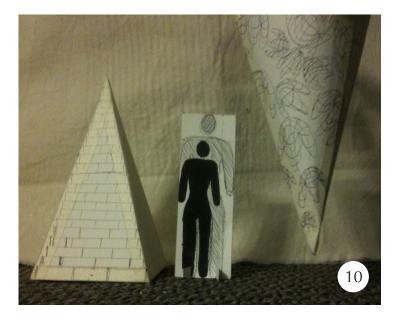


Figure 6: Early plan for lace and clay sculptures
Figure 7: Detail of first version for lace sculpture
Figure 8: Initial ideations for ceramic sculpture
Figure 9: Sketch of final plan for both sculptures
Figure 10: 3/4" scale model of final sculpture plan

Process

The form of the finished sculptures is derived from the ancient symbolism behind the triangle. The triangle, with one flat edge on the bottom, has been connected to ideas of strength and stability; these qualities have been the descriptive terms for masculine. The inverted triangle, with one point facing down, has inversely stood for delicate and unstable, which is often connected to the feminine. The final sculptures will be reminiscent of these triangles, with lace becoming the masculine, structural triangle and clay the delicate feminine as it hangs from the ceiling figure 9-10).



Figure 11: Woven forms after cone 06 bisque firing, where the paper fibers burned away. Figure 12: Gas kiln loaded with taller woven forms on the bottom. Figure 13: Woven form proped by kiln shelf piece awaiting glaze firing Figure 14: Large woven form warped by gravity during the glaze firing.

Delicate

The ceramic sculpture is made up of paper clay.

 H_2O + cellulose fiber = Pulp + Clay Body = Paper Clay. Simple.

Delicate's paper clay is made from toilet paper (cellulose fiber) and a white stoneware body. First pulverize the cellulose fiber (toilet paper) in enough water to allow a drill mixer to spin without stress. If the drill begins to whine or make abnormal sounds add more water. Once the fiber has assumed the look of a cotton field after a rainstorm, squeeze all of the water out. The now slightly dehydrated paper pulp can be added to the ingredients that will make up the clay body. A pug mill is the best way to achieve a consistent texture. The clay body looks the same; however, upon close inspection you should notice the fibers along an edge of the clay that has been torn apart. These miniscule fibers give the clay body a new structural quality that allows for delicate forms, smaller detail, and shapes that stretch the traditional boundaries of ceramic art. The firing process works typically the same for a clay body, with or without fibers introduced. During the bisque firing (cone 06) process the fibers in paper clay are burned away, leaving the clay particles. At this point the form looks the same, but might feel slightly lighter than the same form made with regular clay; this is due to the fact that the paper fibers make up part of the weight and volume of the form until they are burned out in the bisque firing (figure 11). The woven test forms for this project were first made with white stoneware, but the final pieces were constructed in paper clay in order to avoid higher rates of breaking during the drying process and to help reduce the weight of the final pieces since the overall sculpture is hung from the ceiling.

After the bisque firing, the form is glazed. Paper clay can be glaze fired the same as its base clay. In this case a cone 9 glaze was used and the paper clay was fired in a gas kiln (figure 12). Due to the delicate structure of these forms and the high temperatures of the gas kiln, there was some warping that occurred. Fascinatingly the warping happened in line with gravity; during the construction of the woven structures gravity works with the clay to create the shape, but when the woven piece is flipped over for drying and firing, gravity fights against the clay the rest of the way, only to be ultimately hung in a suspension that defies gravity. Of the forms created, the ones with the taller, more steeply

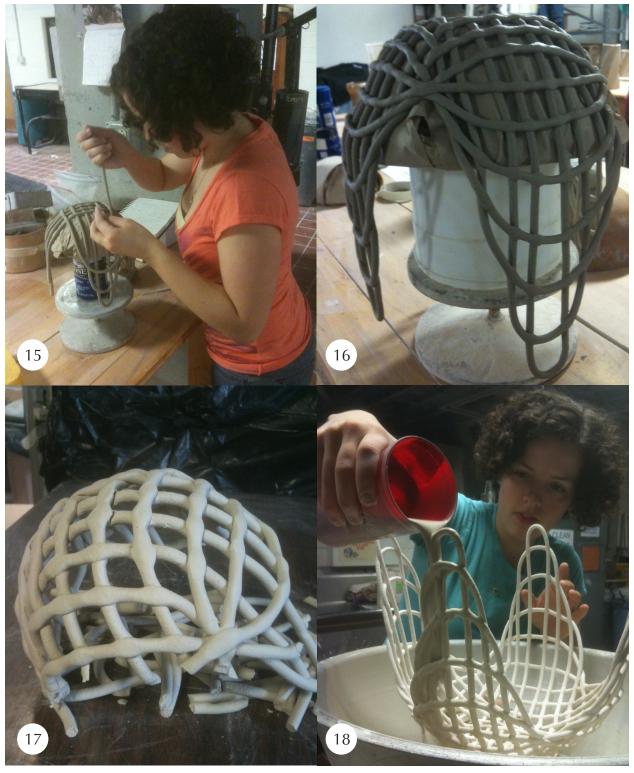


Figure 15: Laying coils in the weaving process; by turning the band wheel 90 degrees after each coil perpendicular coils overlap to create a partial weave.

- Figure 16: Completed woven structure on the draping form (bowl covered in paper towel).
- Figure 17: Dried on the drapping form too long, the clay was broken to remove the bowl.
- Figure 18: Pouring Mead White glaze onto a bisque woven form.

angled sides warped the most because the sides, already at a slight angle, were pulled down further by gravity. During one kiln load two forms were tilted slightly by placing a piece of kiln shelf, approximately one half inch high, under one side of the base of these forms (figure 13). The kiln shelf was placed under the left side and all of the sides of the form warped to the right as gravity pulled them down (figure 14). This is something to consider when firing delicate components at higher temperatures. Consider gravity to avoid warping, or to enhance warping to the advantage of a form. The final glazed form's surface does not visually look any different from a form made with non-paper clay; however, the paper clay form is produced with less percentage of breaking during the fragile green ware stage.

The extruder is a wonderful tool. The childhood Play-Doh Fun Factory toy that, depending on the die you put in, produces everything from spaghetti strands to star logs was unexpected research for the Brent Clay Extruder that was used in the making of the clay forms for *Delicate*. An extruder is essentially an adult version of a Play-Doh press, easy to use and equally as enjoyable. Pressing coils out of the extruder through a small circle shaped die is the key to allowing the woven forms to be produced in multiples without the headache of hand rolling each coil. When extruding paper clay the clay must contain less moisture than a standard clay body, otherwise the coils tend to be irregular as the paper pulp becomes clogged in the die. Experimentation with the moisture is the only way to ensure soft enough clay to use in the extruder, yet dry enough to ensure consistent coils. After experimentation with clay extrusion and possible woven structures, the form was finalized and a feasible production process was devised.

Begin with a form that can be slumped over. Keep in mind that clay sticks to glass, plastic, and metal; wrap paper towel over any slumping form that the clay might stick to. Place the form on a stand that gives about twelve inches of space for the coils to hang down. A quarter inch diameter circle die was used to achieve the thinner coils that make up the woven forms. With the slumping form close to the extruder the weaving process can begin. Start with a long coil; place one end near the center of the slumping form. Allow the coil to run down the side of the form and create a loop that leads back to the center of the form approximately one half inch from the starting end. Allow the coil to repeat the

shape on the opposite side of the form and join the coil to the starting end. Turn the form ninety degrees and repeat the process (figure 15). Turn ninety degrees again and start the next coil in the center, one half inch away from the previous loop, allow it to hang down one inch shorter than the former loop and repeat the process in both directions. These steps are repeated until a form is created that looks woven without actually weaving the clay (figure 16). This method minimizes the amount of stress applied to the clay coils. After the clay has dried enough to support itself, the support forms should be removed from inside the woven clay structure. If the clay is left to dry fully, the coils will crack because the form does not allow the clay's inherent inward shrinking to occur (figure 17). Once dry the pieces are bisque fired to cone 04.

The bisque woven forms are covered in a cone 9 Mead White glaze (figure 18), which gives a fairly opaque-white glossy surface that allows some of the gray tones of the stoneware to show through. Colors often have strong personal associations to objects, events, and genders, so it is important that these sculptures be a color with the least amount of color-induced associations as possible. *Delicate* and *Strength* are the same color in order to thrust them onto a level playing field for a more accurate comparison and the color white is chosen for its relation to a blank canvas. White allows the viewer's history and ideas to paint a unique interpretation of the sculptures, free from gender associations of other colors such as pink and blue.

Slight warping occurs on the higher points of the woven forms during glaze firing temperature when the clay coils must withstand temperatures in excess of 2000 degrees Fahrenheit, so all of the clay forms receive a cone 9 glaze firing as opposed to hotter cone 10 firing. Another step taken to avoid warping is to stack the kiln with the taller pieces, which encounter more warping, at the bottom where the kiln is cooler, thus less likely to cause warping (figure 12).

The final glazed woven forms are hung from the wooden and hardware mesh hanging system using fishing line, which allows the ceramic pieces to be suspended midair. This suspension adds a weightless sense of fragility to the already delicate woven forms.

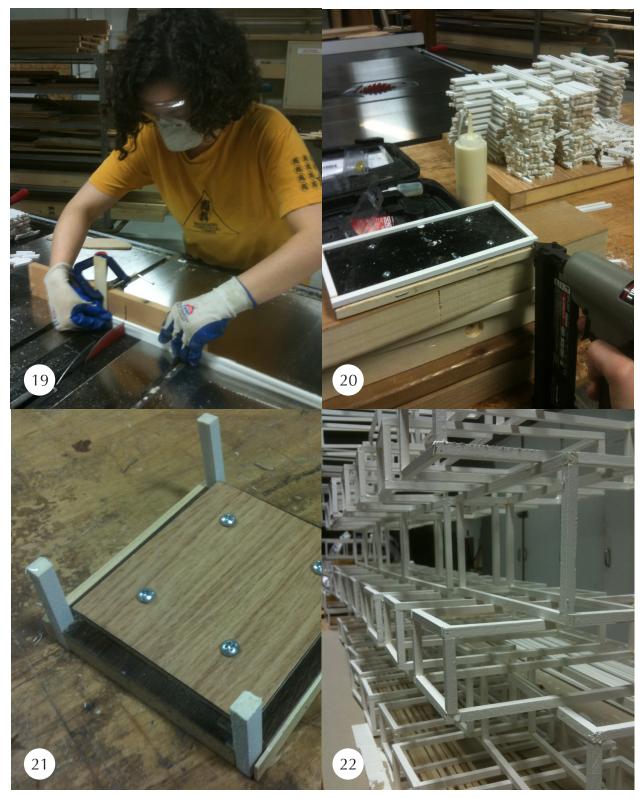


Figure 19: Cutting 4' painted rods to length on the table saw.

Figure 20: Pin nail gun connecting the wooden rods together at the corners on the 8" jig.

Figure 21: 4" brick jig holding rods that will form the sides of the 3-Dimensional brick.

Figure 22: Finished brick structures.

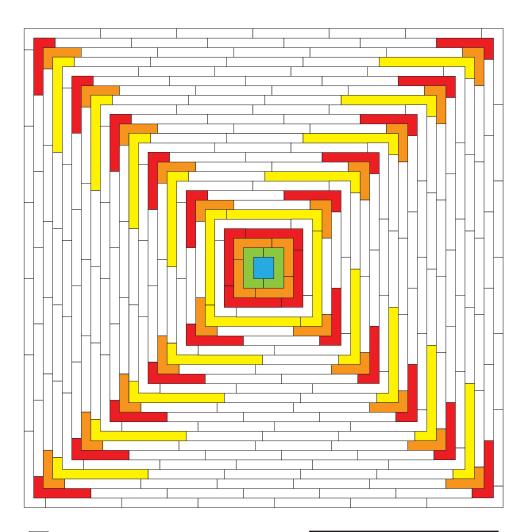
Strength

White PVC plastic, epoxy resin, and painted wood were materials considered to fabricate the brick structures; painted wood was chosen for sustainable reasons, as well as its price, and local accessibility. Poplar from Keweenaw Specialty Wood, a store local to the sculpture's building location, is the wood of choice for its pale color. Eight foot by six and a half inch by two-inch boards get planed and cut to four-foot lengths for easy handling. Next the poplar is cut down to ¼" x ¼" x 4' rods which get painted white. The white rods are cut down to the lengths needed for the varying brick sizes (figure 19). Wood glue and a pin nail gun secure the wooden rods together to form the brick structures (figures 20-22).

314 bricks combine to form the final sculpture, a pyramid with a 50.25'' square base, approximately 7.5' tall. The aerial plan (figure 23) highlights the number and varying sizes of bricks required to maintain a consistent pitch all the way up the sides of the pyramid. The brick sizes are based on the standard building brick size, which is $8'' \times 3.625'' \times 2.25''$ (The Brick Site).

All of the lace in this sculpture is reclaimed from second hand stores. The lace once held the form of curtains, women's shirts, tablecloths, and a wedding dress; these individual histories emphasize the cultural associations of lace. As the epitome of feminine delicacy, the lace allows for an enriched dichotomy between the medium and the final form of the sculpture.

To cover the brick structures through ease of production and quality craftsmanship, the lace is cut into two rectangles to cover the smallest sides of the brick and a long rectangle to cover all four longer sides of the brick (figure 25). Tacky glue attaches lace to one side of the brick and the brick is weighted and left to dry (figure 26). After several bricks have been covered on one side, the next side is adhered to the lace and weighted until all six sides have been covered. Finally, the brick is trimmed where lace extends over the edges. Covering the bricks using a production style set up drastically cuts down building time



= 8" x 2.25" x 3.625" Brick (Standard)

= 6" x 2.25" x 3.625" Brick

= 4" x 2.25" x 3.625" Brick

= 10" x 2.25" x 3.625" Brick

= 4.25" x 4.25" x 3.625" Brick****

= 2.25" x 2.25" x 3.625" Brick

TOTAL STANDARD	244
TOTAL 6" x 2.25" x 3.625"	24
TOTAL 4" x 2.25" x 3.625"	24
TOTAL 10" x 2.25" x 3.625"	20
TOTAL 4.25" x 4.25" x 3.625"****	1
TOTAL 2.25" x 2.25" x 3.625"	1

**** Make with Center Brace

LACE BRICK PYRAMID

AERIAL LAYOUT

2011© AMANDA MOYER



Figure 23: Aerial Layout plan for *Strength*.

- Figure 24: Production line: covering 8" bricks in lace.
- Figure 25: Cutting a lace curtain into the rectangles needed to cover 8" bricks.
- Figure 26: Applying tacky glue to the wood frame. Weights hold down the drying bricks.
- Figure 27: Ribbon tied around a layer of the bricks creates tension which holds the bricks together for the building of the pyramid.

since the time spent waiting for glue to dry on one brick can be spent working on other bricks (figure 24).

To assemble the final pyramid the lace bricks are set up one layer at a time. Each layer is placed on the floor and wrapped tightly with a string. The string is then pulled from opposite sides, which holds the layer in place through tension so that the entire layer remains intact as it is picked up and placed upon the previous layer (figure 27). The resulting pyramid appears grounded and strong while retaining the feminine details of the lace.

By challenging the traditional definitions of masculinity and femininity, *Delicate Strength* transforms lace, an undeniably feminine material, into an overtly masculine, lithic form. Masculine clay is interpreted as fine filigree lines that suggest gentle, feminine elegance. The contradictions between form, content and the materials' associated genders prompt questions about social expectations. Art consistently questions finite classifications and assumptions. *Delicate Strength combines* non-traditional and reclaimed materials and challenges the capacity of the media while simultaneously asking society to consider redefining and reevaluating customary thought patterns.

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Photo Credits

Fred Knoch Figure 1-3 Figure 4 http://frenchantiques.blogspot.com/2010/07/ metal-lacework-of-sculptor-cal-lane.html Figure 5 http://conceptrends.com/2008/03/01/crochet-chair-by-marcel-wanders/ Figure 6-13 Amanda Moyer Fred Knoch Figure 14 Figure 15 Susie Danielson Figure 16-17 Amanda Moyer Susie Danielson Figure 18 Figure 19 Erica Gerstner Figure 20-22 Amanda Moyer Figure 23 Digital Aerial Plan by Amanda Moyer Figure 24 Susie Danielso Figure 25-26 Amanda Moyer Figure 27 Amanda Mears

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