

GQ STYLE

Four Artists Whose Work You've Just Gotta See

In the second installment of GQ's Fresh Paint series, we visit the studios of four visual artists who are making the art world lively and engaging right now.

BY HELEN HOLMES

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Harry Gould Harvey IV works out of an old factory building in Fall River, Massachusetts, where he and his wife, Brittini Ann Harvey, founded the Fall River Museum of Contemporary Art. Photographs by Buck Squibb

Harry Gould Harvey IV

Fall River, MA

B. 1991

During the pandemic, many drifted inward. Instead, multidisciplinary artist Harry Gould Harvey IV and his wife, artist Brittni Ann Harvey, founded the Fall River Museum of Contemporary Art on the ground floor of an active textile manufacturer in Fall River, Massachusetts. A talented photographer who found his first success making photos as a teenager, Harvey managed to capture the art world's attention when he began creating his arresting, occasionally gothic and hexed-seeming objects. He's landed a spot in this fall's New Museum Triennial, as well as in an upcoming two-person exhibition at Brown University's David Winton Bell Gallery with the eco-feminist artist Faith Wilding, and he doesn't half-ass anything: Harvey IV's respect for Wilding is so acute, he has her name tattooed on his hand.



ARTSAVES<3/2021 Courtesy of the artist

GQ STYLE: How did you make the transition from commercial photography to the art you're making now?

HARRY GOULD HARVEY IV: I started out as a bit of a troubled youth in the greater South Coast, Massachusetts, region. I was a high school dropout—I got expelled from nearly every school I went to. Ultimately I realized that educational institutions didn't really work well with whatever neurodivergent soup I was in, or even just my colorful lived experience. So I went touring in punk bands around the U.S., and that experience in documenting that kind of lifestyle became something I learned how to commodify at a young age. By the time I was 18 or 19, I was working for *Time* magazine and *The Fader* and all these different magazines. Those initial trips to New York City, where I would start to acquire contacts or figure out how to navigate the spectacle of media, were incredibly formative to my art practice as a whole.

Is that why wood and fabrication play into your work? Is it a reaction to the digital ether?

Initially I had to pare down my art practice out of economic struggle. I couldn't produce photographs anymore, I couldn't make larger sculptures. Back in 2015, I had a pretty severe mental episode where I lost language, and through drawing I rediscovered ways to communicate more effectively. Once I had the drawings, I realized it was important to protect and guard and revere these drawings with some type of object. I realized that traditional frames are kind of afterthoughts, or something that is meant to be quiet in relation to the objects that they're framing. I saw it as an opportunity to protect these spiritual ruminations with a crown of thorns.

I happen to have friends that had a black walnut tree that was poisoning their yard. They had to cut it down, and I started milling that wood. I have a lot of interest in ecology, so I was already interested in the whole ecosystem and how the black walnut tree relates to native and non-native species, how it has certain pollinators that relate to it, how it has certain moths that are attracted to it. Not only did the wood come to me by chance, but it became something that I could manipulate to protect these drawings.



How did pandemic isolation suit you?

I mounted a solo show and started a museum during it, so in a certain sense I thrived. But it was also really tough because my mother passed away immediately before COVID hit. It was a pretty tumultuous time—she was only 56—and then I went into this isolation and hit a depressive wall. But any day could be anything for me; I try to deal with things holistically. Ultimately I found the pandemic to be pretty rewarding, because I didn't have to travel to New York so often.

How has opening your own museum affected your work or perspective as an artist?

We started it last October, and it's one of the more integral things to my practice. There are certain aspects of creating and making art that can ultimately feel self-serving, and the museum allows me to use the cultural capital that I've been able to acquire within art media and within the gallery structure and institutional structure to illuminate socio-economic issues in the city of Fall River.