

STEVEN
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GALLERY

Glitterati INCORPORATED

Mister Finch's Handmade Museum

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From Mister Finch: Living in a Fairytale World

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Mister Finch. *Dead Birds*. Composed of new and vintage fabric scraps, plastic, paper, wire, fake flower petals, clay, floral tape, and found objects. Approximately 12 inches long.



From *Mister Finch: Living in a Fairytale World*

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Mister Finch is a modern-day magician of sorts, creating stunning works of art from recycled fabrics and textiles. His first book, *Mister Finch: Living in a Fairytale World* (Glitterati Incorporated) was published in 2014 to critical and commercial success, garnering tremendous support from a worldwide fan base. The artist, who has been living and working quietly in Leeds, England, for nearly two decades, has arrived in New York.

Mister Finch's Handmade Museum, his debut gallery exhibition, is on view at Steven Kasher Gallery through July 31, 2015. Featuring more than fifty new sculptures made from stained and painted cotton fabric, the exhibition is a cabinet of curiosities, housing specimens both pretty and poisonous, from the wondrous world of Mister Finch.

Over-sized toadstools and fungus sculptures take inspiration from bonsai trees, antique naturalist specimens, and the colors and textures of Japanese netsuke and grow out of wooden bases sourced from vintage lamps, furniture legs and wooden bowls. A display case, appointed as one might find in a nineteenth-century apothecary, showcases a collection of tightly stitched birds. These intensely detailed pieces, battered and frail, are a quiet but poignant reminder of the life cycle. A collection of huge, plump spiders, the largest ever created by the artist, sit in stark contrast to the minutely delicate works held in display cases. Some spiders hang down from a single thread, shifting from peaceful to malevolent, ready to pounce at any moment.

Mister Finch writes, "Folklore is so beautifully rich in fabulous stories and warnings and never ceases to be at the heart of what I make: shape-shifting witches, moon-gazing hares and a smartly dressed devil ready to invite you to stray from the path. Velvet curtains from an old hotel, a threadbare wedding dress and a vintage apron become birds and beasts, looking for new owners and adventures to have, storytelling creatures for people who are also a little lost, found and forgotten. I want to inject a bit of old-fashioned magic back into the world."

Over the last several years, Mister Finch has amassed an eclectic mix of upcycled and new materials: discarded wire, steel, and wood, vintage tablecloths, antique silverware and rescued cottons. From these he creates his woodland creatures. British folklore and the life cycles of insects and flowers are literally and figuratively woven together in his stuffed sculptures. Though he has no formal training, Mister Finch's mastery of the needle can be seen in the intricate details of his impeccably hand-sewn menagerie.

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In *Mister Finch: Living in a Fairytale World*, the artist reveals, “I actually have no formal training in anything I make and apart from a short art course I did many years ago I’ve learned all I know myself. I’ve tried many areas creatively over the years and now I find myself sewing, which I adore. I’ve tried lots of different mediums over the years and liked all of them for different reasons but nothing really ‘stuck’ like working in textiles.

“I get up around 9:00 a.m., drink lots of tea, and then spend about an hour doing my blog and replying to emails. Then I start sewing and making stuff until about 7:00 p.m. I have my dinner and then carry on often until 1:00 a.m. (I work long hours and do everything myself—sewing labeling, everything). When I’m not at home, usually on the weekends, I go to car boots and jumble sales and look for things to use in my work.

“I live in the city but the city is not far from the countryside—half an hour’s drive—where there are rolling hills and incredible views. But inspiration comes from so many different things—places, books, films, superstitions, and folklore.

“My main inspiration comes from nature and often I return to certain ideas again and again. Flowers, insects, and birds really fascinate me with their amazing life cycles and extraordinary nests and behavior. British folklore is also so beautifully rich in fabulous stories and warnings and never ceases to be at the heart of what I make: shape-shifting witches, moon-gazing hares, and a smartly dressed devil ready to invite you to stray from the path. Humanizing animals with shoes and clothes is something I’ve always done and I imagine them to come alive at night, getting dressed, and helping an elderly shoemaker and a tired housewife.

“Making things has always been incredibly important to me and is often an amazing release to get it out of my system. It’s a joy to hunt for things for my work...the lost, found, and forgotten all have places in what I make. Most of my pieces used recycled materials, not only as an ethical statement, but I believe they add more authenticity and charm. A story sewn in, woven in.

“Velvet curtains from an old hotel, a threadbare wedding dress, and vintage apron become birds and beasts, looking for new owners and adventures to have. Storytelling creatures for people who are also a little lost, found, and forgotten...

“I love to hunt for vintage materials, rescue them, and turn them into new things. I really don’t get any satisfaction ordering rolls of fabric; sometimes I have to but that doesn’t

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resonate with me. I get a huge amount of satisfaction from taking something that's going to get thrown away and creating a creature from it. Then it has a new life as a new object ready to have new adventures.

"Working alone is the best part. I love my own company. When people see my work, I want them to feel... I would love people to like my work, but if they remember it or it causes an emotion in some way then I'm happy with that."



Hummingbirds. Composed of new and vintage fabric scraps, plastic, paper, wire, fake flower petals, clay, floral tape, and found objects. Dimensions variable.

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Dead Birds. Composed of new and vintage fabric scraps, plastic, paper, wire, fake flower petals, clay, floral tape, and found objects. Approximately 13 inches long.



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Mister Finch. *Spider*. Composed of fabric pieces. Dimensions variable.



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