

## Thoughts on Thorn Works

Working with thorns from the honey locust tree, I create discrete sculptures as well as wall installations that I consider three-dimensional drawings. Like cross-hatch drawings, mark responding to mark, the thorns find their way across the surface of the wall.

The thorns on the honey locust tree grow up and around the trunk to protect the bark from predators. They date from the Pleistocene Era and can grow to be as long as 18 inches or more. When they are young they are pliable and a lovely olive green color. As they mature they turn a rich mahogany, still maintaining some of their flexibility. As age sets in they dry and take on a gray or slate color and in many cases they become host to lichens that cover their surface with blue green and golden textures.

These thorns are elegant and daunting; I am drawn to work with them for a number of reasons. Their geometry is fascinating. I respond to the myriad metaphors and associations they suggest.

I use the pencil point tip of a burning tool to pierce holes through which the thorns are self-doweled. The process is very meditative and at times there is a thin plume of smoke that wafts its way out of the thorn.

For some time I resisted casting the thorns in bronze because I was committed to their natural properties. After experimenting for a number of years, I find that the bronze thorns have a character all their own. I still find them malleable, and I appreciate how their permanence is a way of holding on to the properties that I find most compelling about the thorns: their fragility, geometry, suggestion of darkness, even danger, housed in their very real elegance of form.

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