

# BONNIE SALAND

**BONNIE SALAND** is a practicing artist and psychoanalyst based in Pasadena and The Sea Ranch, California. In her own diverse visual language, she offers inventive interpretations of the universal themes of birth, survival, death, and regeneration. Here we join her at her seaside studio as she paints, prints, cuts, pastes, recycles and repeats, incorporating traditional patterning, abstraction, and the poetic use of color in an ongoing reconfiguration.

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Photography by Ron Bolander / Diana Koenigsberg





# I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A SEEKER

enjoying both travel and interior investigation, but home as a grounding in self or a sheltering physical space has been pivotal to my sense of wellbeing. In my fifties, after decades of immersion in the roles of wife, mother and psychoanalyst, circumstance and circumspection conspired and led me to ponder a new direction with greater concentration on articulating my own voice as creative subject. I felt compelled to participate in art training and take my creative practice outside of the domestic realm.

This led to a low residency MFA program at the Provincetown Work Center that was under the umbrella of Massachusetts College of Art and Design. I finished with a large body of abstract patterning that, in my naiveté, I thought would be simple enough to take out into the world as a textile commercial venture; "Philomela Textiles". The Greek myth of Philomela involves a woman who loses her voice to instruments of aggression and finds a way to tell her story through woven tapestry. As women have been telling their tales through the centuries in the language of textile, so to this was a way for me to tell my particular story.











Beyond paying attention to my own muse, central to my goal as a developing artist/designer was a “studio at the sea.” We all have a fantasy of where and how we might develop our greatest selves, and for whatever reason this was mine. I combed the United States looking for a suitable spot and landed on a location on the Sonoma Coast. There are many places where one feels that there is a thin veil between this world and the greater unknown, and for me the north coast of California is one of those spots.

Rugged, isolated and composed of amazing natural beauty, one easily finds perspective on one’s place in the larger scheme of things. The house is part of the iconic Sea Ranch, an early modernist planned community developed around the values of stewardship to the land. There is a thriving local community of artists and all manner of creative types, affording plenty of activity and connection.







Once I found the spot with essential support from my ever-patient husband and the help of a wonderful team of designers and artisans, we renovated the house to provide physical representation of my newly developed identification in art making. An existing two-level garage and breezeway was turned into my studio, which makes up a third of the building space; the remainder of the living space is an installation of sorts filled with my own prints, paintings, pottery and home goods.

AS I WRITE, I'M THINKING  
THAT THIS IS ALL A FAIRLY  
IDYLIC REPRESENTATION OF  
AN INTENTIONAL LIFE, AND  
INDEED I HAVE A GREAT DEAL  
TO BE GRATEFUL FOR.

Like any other presentation, it is far from blemish free. I've always been motivated by two strong forces—creativity and engaging in relationships of mutuality and empowerment. This has manifested in union organizing, home remodels, a children's shop offering hand-made items for children, practicing psychotherapy, and my most recent incarnation as artist/designer/textile entrepreneur.

The skill sets necessary to conduct a successful business—sales, personnel and production management and fiscal acuity are not part of my God given attributes, and although I have worked with a wonderfully talented team of people, the sail has not been a smooth one. When you throw your resources into a passion project, particularly without the buffer of youth, you do cast off a safety net and are bound to get pummeled by the winds and opposing tides.









Creative thinking often happens best at breaktime with outdoor inspiration. Studio assistant extraordinaire, my girl Gallie (Galaxy), a shelter pup who came from an inter-terrestrial litter of like-named astrological creatures, is always close at hand.



I KEEP A VISUAL JOURNAL AT ALL TIMES FOR THOUGHTS, IDEAS AND GEOGRAPHIC REFERENCES.



Given the rigors of any journey, you do want to hope, as much as you often miss the shore line, and despite the unexpected twists and turns, that you are pointed in the right direction, and charting the rightful course. I do feel confident, with absolutely no clarity on where it will lead, that I am on mine.

**More On Bonnie**

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