

ISOLATION INTERVIEWS  
ANNA GONZALEZ NOGUCHI





## ISSUE 16

Continuing the Isolation Interviews: a new series of weekly artist and curator profiles highlighting current concerns, accompanied by a selection of available works.

We know that these are precarious and uncertain times for everyone and with so many people staying at home, self-isolating or social distancing, we want to be able to continue sharing some of our favourite art and artists with you. The Isolation Interviews are a weekly series of conversations with artists and curators that will explore how these new circumstances are affecting their practices, projects and productivity. We'll hear how they are finding solutions - and even opportunities - and what their plans and hopes are for the future.

Brooke Benington is committed to supporting and creating opportunities for artists. We believe that this is needed now more than ever. Most artists are self-employed, often supplementing their income by working as technicians, fabricators, assistants, teachers and a whole host of other jobs. Now, many have very suddenly lost a vital source of income. With this in mind, we are accompanying each Isolation Interview with a curated selection of work by that artist, available for purchase.

Thank you for your continued support. Stay safe and look after one another.

Lily & George  
Directors, Brooke Benington





**You are based in Athens where you, along with your partner the artist James Fuller, moved and established your studio in 2019. How have you found the experience of moving to a new city and new culture has impacted on your practice?**

I had a good gut feeling about Athens when I first visited but honestly it's better than I could've ever imagined. The city has so much to offer through its industries. There are loads of different suppliers and secondary processes that are easily accessible. The scale of the city is perfect; I can go buy metal in the morning, do some welding and then in the afternoon drop off ceramics for firing. It's nice actually getting to know these people I interact with, it's more personal so it makes doing something as simple as buying 20 washers from our fixing shop enjoyable. In my experience, there's a real openness to work with artists and try things out even if they haven't done it before which makes it feel like any idea is achievable. There's a good energy in the art scene here, so much good work has been done in terms of self-initiated projects and artist run spaces long before we turned up and it's continuing

to shift and grow all of the time. We put a lot of effort into making our studio the most productive for our work. We totally stripped it out, redid the electrics, touched every surface and drove the van from the UK to Athens with everything to build the workshop. I know that the same set up back in London would be impossible and I wouldn't have time or even be able to produce or afford most of the works I've made here so it's definitely been transformational. We've been all in from the start and I can't imagine working anywhere else right now.

**There are various reoccurring motifs within your practice - botanical illustrations, Japanese characters and imagery/advertising (?). How, if at all is your practice shaped by your own personal history and cultural heritage?**

I'd say that almost all of my practise is informed by my personal background. Being half Spanish and half Japanese, and brought up in a lot of countries messed with my identity. Naturally, I've focused on my Japanese side because I'm most conflicted with it. Feeling both intimately

connected and disconnected and for most of my life being physically distant and unable to communicate. These reoccurring motifs have entered my practise as they're things that have existed in these spaces that I've been dipping in and out of my whole life. In a way it's an obsession; meticulously documenting the spaces that my Grandparent's used to live and work in and removing and relocating objects to exist in new territories. Obsessing over my Grandfather's orchids obsession that is archived thoroughly through diary entries and photographs. Pharmaceutical branded magnets, folders and towels that reflects their medical profession are domesticated, adapted and rebranded with the hand written name のぐち かずこ as a way to be reminded of what is hers as dementia sets in. These reoccurring motifs bring into conversation different aspects of professional and creative expression, and then I as an artist am able to bring together a botanical



drawing of an unfinished wood cut with a hand-written note of a self-reflective response to a medical text on death. It isn't necessary for people to know the backstory in each work but I'm interested in trying to make sense of the relationships we have to possessions - what it means to possess things and embed memories, personal histories and wider connections—and how this has implications for everyone in terms of how we live, work and express ourselves. I don't feel like I'm done with this project, it's not exhausted yet, I'm not sure when or if it will be. There are still many more things to unpick. Like a handwritten karaoke playlist of 94 Japanese folk songs. Let's see where that goes.





Could you talk a little bit about the dynamic between mass production and traditional craft processes within your practice?

I'm interested in the functionality of mass production which is contrasted with the handmade aesthetic and care given in traditional craft. I've always been fascinated with traditional crafts in Japanese culture whether it's the way traditional houses have been built or how Koseki dolls are turned out of wood. But also the memory and emotions of people are often contained with their use and proximity of everyday mass produced objects all the time. So I produce these industrial finished surfaces in such a way that often become shelving systems to organise, pre-existing and handmade objects and photographs. I think also there is an almost clinical feel to these industrial surfaces which creates a process of distillation and gives these hand crafted objects more focus.

Although working across a variety of media, exploring and integrating new processes into your practice, you manage

to have a distinct and cohesive aesthetic that links these various strands together. Is there a particular characteristic or trait that you feel defines your work? or perhaps something that you feel a piece needs to be fully resolved?

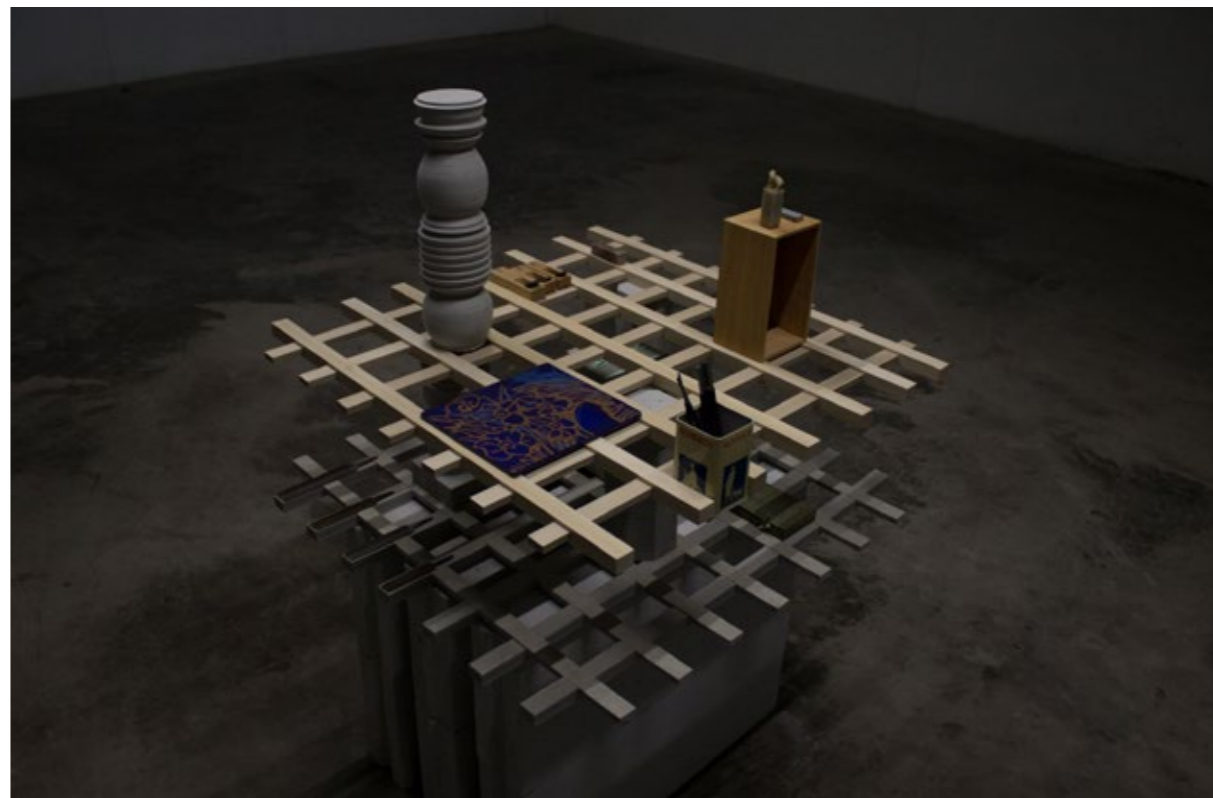
I guess because the works that I have been producing come from a specific origin point there is a distinctive style that has developed over time from it. This year, I have focused quite a lot on making several different tile works in which the glaze is etched away to reveal an image. While I'd say the wood turned elements and these tile works become a defining part of my practise I think there is a way that I handle, layer and contain materials that defines my cohesive aesthetic but it's difficult to define in words. I'm not really good at stopping after completing a work and really internalising what I've done ... I am always thinking about what I'm going to do next. Definitely being able to produce so much of the work myself allows for a continuous dialogue - naturally flowing from one material process to the next. This immersion also propagates unexpected moments some of which lead to new works that otherwise wouldn't be realised.

As an international artist who has lived in several different countries, on different continents, are you surprised by how this year we have seen communities - both artistic and otherwise - coming together (while apart) and finding new ways to collaborate, cooperate and rise above the difficulties of the situation? And do you have a sense of how international dialogue in the arts might be possible in the future without the need to travel so much?

I'm not surprised that there has been the coming together in the art world because the online infrastructure already existed to facilitate this and it just needed adapting to. In a way, it's something that I would have hoped to have already been happening regardless of pandemic or not but it's better now than never. It's cool because it feels like the art world has become a bit more decentralised to specific cities and artists and galleries everywhere can have a bit more of an even playing field and have the opportunities to access different material from different people and spaces that would be normally be more closed off. Personally there was the slight concern that the move to Athens would impact the opportunities I have, even things like studio visits but



this period of time has shown that it's still possible to have these things happen, it's just in a different way. I mean, I don't think the experience of viewing art in person can every fully be replaced but I really like the option to continue having access to the international art world when I can't afford to travel and most of all when the climate is at stake and massive behavioural changes will be demanded of all of us.







## ANNA GONZALEZ NOGUCHI

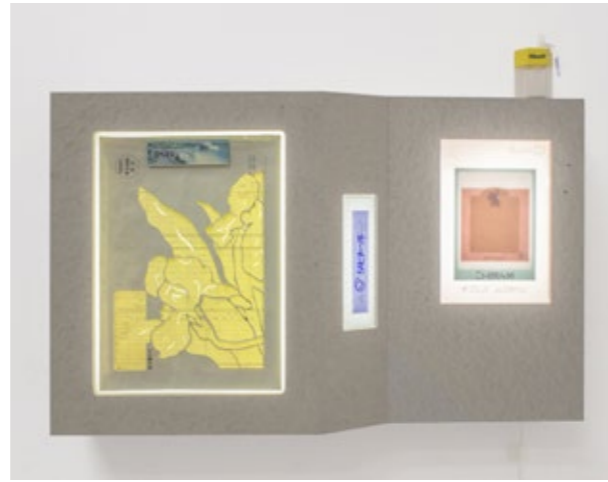
Anna Gonzalez Noguchi completed a BA in Sculpture and University of Brighton(2011-2014) and a MA in Sculpture at Royal College of Art (2016-2018). She is a recipient of the Gilbert & Bayes Trust and Eaton Art Fund. Her recent exhibitions include Under the Volcano at Studio Block M74, Mexico City (2020), NEW FOUND LAND at Caustic Coastal Salford, UK (2019), To The Core at White Crypt, London (2018), Nomadic Vitrine at Recent Activity, Birmingham (2018).

[www.annagonzaleznoguchi.com](http://www.annagonzaleznoguchi.com)





*The Golden Leila, 2020*  
Sandblasted tiles  
123 x 72 x 12 cm  
48 1/2 x 28 3/8 x 4 3/4 in.  
Unique



*Dedicated to 野口病院, 2019*  
Used medical envelope, medical form, pharmaceutical ruler, kyorin folder, paper, color paper clip holder, LED lights, paper pulp board, magnet  
40 x 75 x 16 cm  
15 3/4 x 29 1/2 x 6 3/8 in.  
Unique



*省略の美 (Shoryaku nobi) : Beauty of Elimination, 2019*  
96 ceramic sandblasted tiles, aluminium v-slot fixings  
165 x 248 x 0.7 cm  
65 x 97 5/8 x 1/4 in.  
Unique



*Powerless to provide relief, 2020*  
Sandblasted tiles of unfinished wood cut print, engraved felt  
32 x 22 x 3.8 cm  
12 5/8 x 8 5/8 x 1 1/2 in.  
Unique



*One Night Only, 2020*  
Handmade polar magnets, acetate photographic prints, envelope, fabric, memo pad, wash paper, glass, powder coated metal, aluminium  
52 x 94 x 6 cm  
20 1/2 x 37 x 2 3/8 in.  
Unique



*Soft Relief, 2019*  
Pharmaceutical company hand towel, acetate print, glass, sundeala board (paper pulp)  
30 x 20 x 2 cm  
11 7/8 x 7 7/8 x 3/4 in.  
Unique

# BROOKE BENINGTON

LONDON

[lily@brookebenington.com](mailto:lily@brookebenington.com)

+44 (0)7557 036181

FULMER

[george@brookebenington.com](mailto:george@brookebenington.com)

+44 (0)7988 941056

[brookebenington.com](http://brookebenington.com)

[@brookebenington](#)

Photographs courtesy of Anna Gonzalez Noguchi  
& Caustic Coastal

Design by [mingomingo.co.uk](http://mingomingo.co.uk)