



MEET

Wells Mason

We recently connected with Wells Mason and have shared our conversation below.

Wells, appreciate you joining us today. Has your work ever been misunderstood or mischaracterized?

This is a great question! Yes, my work is regularly misunderstood and mischaracterized. I wouldn't have it any other way.

I think people like to put creatives in a neat little folder. You're a painter? You go here. You're a writer? You go here. You're a musician? In this folder. You're supposed to go in a folder and stay there.

But most creatives don't fit in a neat little



folder. Most creatives are curious and restless. They are distractible and impulsive. They are naturally multi-disciplinary. People who aren't creative have trouble with this concept, I think. If something is uncategorical, it's confusing. It's too messy.



I'm a designer and a sculptor. I'm also a poet, a teacher, and a community activist, among other things. I build chairs you can't sit on, I make conceptual art that's coincidentally functional, and I'm drawn to impossible-sounding community projects. These things might seem inimical, but, instead, they fuel the fire of my creativity. It's very messy.



Wells, before we move on to more of these sorts of questions, can you take some time to bring our readers up to speed on you and what you do?

I founded Ironwood Industries in Austin, Texas in 1995. Almost immediately, Ironwood Industries was recognized locally as an avant-garde design house and capable fabrication studio. Bursting at the seams, I relocated Ironwood to Coupland, Texas in 1999. For years, we operated as a small but mighty powerhouse of craft and design in Texas. We built everything from custom furniture to contemporary sculpture, decorative lighting to commercial signage, plus countless site-specific installations.



These days, we operate Ironwood Industries as a design house and wood and metal studio. As a designer and sculptor, I focus on my signature designs and my conceptual sculpture. As a registered interior designer, my wife Jessica specializes in architectural hardware. She sells beautifully crafted hardware from the world's leading hardware manufacturers. We have an ever-evolving inventory of furniture and sculpture that's regularly exhibited in galleries and museums around the country, and we have an impressive roster of clients and private collectors near and far. Plus, we have in-house design services for expert assistance with architectural hardware for complex residential and commercial projects.

Sometimes, I'm a bit baffled by my career. I've completed countless projects in Texas and around the country. I've worked with notable design firms. I've shipped my work internationally. I've been featured in numerous publications. I've exhibited my work in galleries and museums. I've won awards. I'm honestly baffled by it. But I'm also deeply grateful.

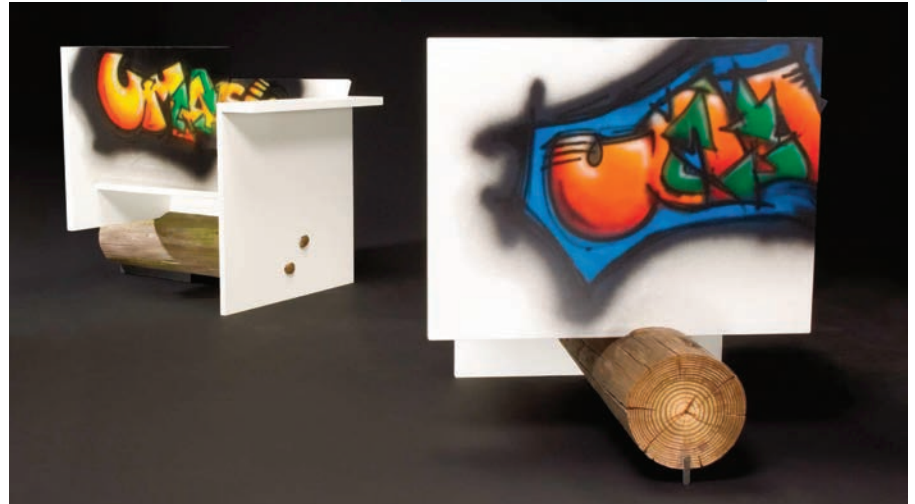
Are there any resources you wish you knew about earlier in your creative journey?

There are more resources now than ever, and they're just a few keystrokes away. There are local, regional, and national publications that are a great source of inspiration. There are news outlets that cover specific industries. There are blogs and Facebook groups and social media hubs. As a creative in any industry, you're never alone. I've made friends with designers and artists half a world away, and they are part of my support structure.

But if I were to zoom in on one resource that's often overlooked, it would be certain

unexpected individuals in your circle of family or friends. Let me explain...

Your family, and many of your friends, might not support you in the way that you need their support. They might not encourage you, or celebrate your wins, or mourn your losses. They might even want you to fail. You need to ignore them...



Fortunately, there are certain individuals who are there for you every step of the way. They are genuinely interested in what you're doing, and they want you to succeed. They might not even completely understand what you're doing, but they support you anyway. It might be a great-aunt, or a former high school teacher, or an old friend. These people support you emotionally, and that kind of support is indescribably important. I think they are one of your best resources throughout your creative career.

Do you think there is something that non-creatives might struggle to understand about your journey as a creative? Maybe you can shed some light?

Yes. Non-creatives tend to think in terms of dollar value. How much does it cost? How long did it take? Who's buying it? These things don't motivate most artists. They are motivated by something fiercely personal and usually undefinable. They are producing work simply because they can't not produce work. They are compelled to do it.

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