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Organic Matter

DALLAS ARTIST JOAN WINTER'S CREATIONS ENCOURAGE VIEWERS TO ENGAGE WITH THE WORLD.

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Artist Joan Winter's Dallas studio houses tables that easily move to accommodate working on two- or three-dimensional pieces. The artist's explorations in Awaji, Japan, inspired her photogravure *Hikari* and soft ground etching *Bamboo* (opposite, top). Her cast-resin sculpture *Counterpoint* (opposite, bottom) explores movement in space.

Hiking through a dense bamboo forest isn't easy, a fact Dallas artist Joan Winter quickly realized while winding through the towering green shoots on Awaji Island. The experience was one adventure on a recent six-week trip to Japan she took for both artistic inspiration and a weeklong woodblock-printing class in Kyoto. The seeds, berries and leaves Winter gathered on her meandering treks—and the photos she captured along the way—have since inspired several new series of 3-D and print pieces. "My work invites the viewer to take a closer look at its underlying forms," she says.

Prior to earning her Master of Fine Arts degree from Southern Methodist University with a focus on sculpture and printmaking, Winter worked in space planning and design for prominent architecture firms in Texas and New Orleans, and her training enables her to move effortlessly from one medium to another, including sculpture, oil painting and flat work. Her printmaking techniques include intaglio etching, screen



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printing and a photogravure process—the transfer of a photograph negative or positive to a film transparency etched on a metal plate used to create an image inked by hand and printed on a press. “Moving between 3-D and flat work is natural for me,” the artist says. “One informs the other.”

While Winter is inspired by found objects in nature, like shells or fallen leaves, her work is anything but happenstance and involves a multistep process. Creating a large sculpture, for instance, requires first making its individual segments, which she then assembles with various types of joinery. “I’m often drawn to the spiral form,” she says. “It’s a timeless idea that represents continual growth.” The mold used for her sculptures has a natural wood grain that often shows through the result, even on clear works composed of translucent and opaque resins. “Light is an element I consider part of their form,” she says, noting these pieces reflect and refract light and create shadows that appear to dance.

To visually connect her 3-D and print works, Winter frequently uses the same wood in both mediums. One of the prints in her *Sunlight* series, for example, shows an abstract pattern created using the impression of woodchips left over from her sculpture projects. This print is approximately the same size as the artist, who prefers producing human-scale pieces. “If the prints are large,” she explains, “people can get up close and be part of the dialogue.”

But something about smaller studies also beckons, Winter acknowledges. The artist points to a more diminutive series of prints depicting the blue moon titled *Moon Rising*, part of a recent exhibit at the Holly Johnson Gallery that received much public acclaim. “It’s so rewarding when someone tells you your work is meaningful to them or made them think about things differently,” Winter says. “I hope my art connects with viewers in an emotional and a positive way.”



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Winter (above), flanked by screen prints from her *Edge of Light* series, is currently working on a sculpture inspired by a fallen bird's nest (opposite). Her etching *Leaves Green* (left) features an overlay of transparent Japanese handmade paper.