

Oriane Stender: The trade-offs of being an artist in NYC



For Nose to Tail, Oriane Stender submitted five of these pieces. Yao Zu Lu

San Francisco-born textile artist Oriane Stender has lived in New York City for over 20 years. While weaving and painting fabric, she began placing scrap paper beneath her loom to catch dripping paint and discovered that it captured impressions of the threads.

"When I realized the prints were really beautiful themselves, I started doing them on nice, large watercolor paper," she said.

For her, compromises, such as moving farther out, are key to being an artist in the city. Stender does not have a car, rarely buys new clothes, and lives "frugally."

"It sort of depends how much you want to be part of it and what you're willing to give up," she said. "I don't have children — there's a lot of things that I don't do that people think they might want to have with their life. You give up some of that if you want to be an artist."

Today, she lives in a Brooklyn apartment and uses it as her art studio. The only thing she said she misses is traveling.

"New York is expensive, so it's harder just to be an artist for the pure love of being an artist," she said. "I would be making art whether I ever sold it or not."

