

# JESSICA ESCH

# ARTIST PRESS KIT

# ARTIST STATEMENT

Jessica Esch's *Fill in the Blanks* typelooping series plays with both the repetition of life in a global pandemic and the centering of mantras in the face of uncertainty. Like much of her work, this series draws on her talent as a writer and illustrator to create multi-sensory experiences where words and found materials become meditative chants and unexpectedly beautiful.

Esch created typelooping to provide focus, stamina, and surprise in an unsettling but routine time. Recognizable phrases gain new meaning when grammar norms are ignored and redundant words are eliminated. Capturing words without spaces or punctuation conveys the constraints of self-isolation and physical distance.

She reflects the moment by using materials on hand like disposable masks, paper bags, leaves, and recycled packaging that she massages to feed through one of her seven typewriters. This juxtaposition of tedium and unanticipated delight speaks to her days during this pandemic.

Esch invites the viewer to pay close attention and read the letters deliberately so as to allow the original meaning to surface. This intentional slowing parallels the downshift caused by a global pandemic, as well as showcases the positive benefits of repetitive language.

[illegible]

BEBETTERBEBETTERBEBETTERBEBETTERBEBETTERBEBETTER  
BEBETTERBEBETTERBEBETTERBEBETTERBEBETTERBEBETTERBE  
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BEBETTERBEBETTERBEBETTERBEBETTERBEBETTERBEBETTERBE

8 X 8 GRID

**8 X 10 INCH GRID**  
1/8" Divided  
Overall size 8.5" X 12"  
80 Acid Free Sheets  
Micro-perforated



## QUATTRO

ITEM NO. 35534

A barcode sticker from 'THE ART MART' showing two prices: \$11.79 and \$10.61. The number 5534 is printed at the bottom right of the sticker.

MADE IN MALAYSIA

# ARTIST BIO

## Jessica Esch

Esch is a Maine writer and artist whose concise yet profound words and clean images have expanded people's hearts, minds, and way of being in the world for more than 20 years. Creativity has always been a pull in Esch's life, showing up in different ways from creating bookmarks in middle school to bold acrylic canvases brightening homes around the country. Curiosity, sense-making, and commitment to the common good underpin her work.

Esch co-founded Shinebolt in 2019 to take her work to the next level and shine a light on other artists. A Top 10 finalist for an international COVID-19 Design Innovation Grant, she created 58 illustrations encouraging people to stay home, wear a mask, and practice social distancing. The illustrations regularly run in Masthead Maine's media outlets, including the Portland Press Herald. Her latest project, *Fill in the Blanks*, is a mashup of prose and design that creates a multi-sensory experience where words and found materials become meditative chants and unexpectedly beautiful.

In addition to creating The New York Gender Tally and co-founding HSBARS Worldwide, Esch champions Illustration Institute, Olympia Snowe Women's Leadership Institute, and Portland Public Library. Her work has appeared in Space Gallery, the Center for Maine Contemporary Art, *Harvard Ed.*, ARCADE, and *The Sketchnote Handbook: The Illustrated Guide to Visual Note Taking*.

Make a brighter world with Jess at [shinebolt.com](http://shinebolt.com), [jessicaesch.com](http://jessicaesch.com), @jesch30 (Instagram/Twitter), and @jeschnotes (Facebook).



Photo: Suzi Pond, Redbird Media Group

## February 2021

“I just write and write, and I don’t take a look at the whole thing until I have a sense that I might have arrived somewhere—I never know where exactly, but a place where the text might reveal something surprising. Then I basically just cut and rearrange and cut and rearrange and cut—I’m a really neurotic editor.”

Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore by Amy  
Gall, *BOMB Magazine* 154, Winter 2021

Wanderer-Werke Continental  
typewriter

5 3/4" x 8 1/4"





## Encore

Original Quote:  
"You can clap." -Toni Cade Bambara

Details:  
Underwood-Olivetti Studio 44  
typewriter  
Oxbow Brewing Co. packaging  
6" x 6 1/8"

[illegible]

Jessica Esch: *Fill in the Blanks*  
November 2020

“And I came to realize--and it sounds arrogant now but I wanted to be a major American artist, god damn it. And I had to make huge changes to do that, in my work, in myself, in my home, everything. // I think I really wanted to make art that was totally mine, god damn it. I really want this to look like mine and no one else's in the world, please.” -Kay WalkingStick

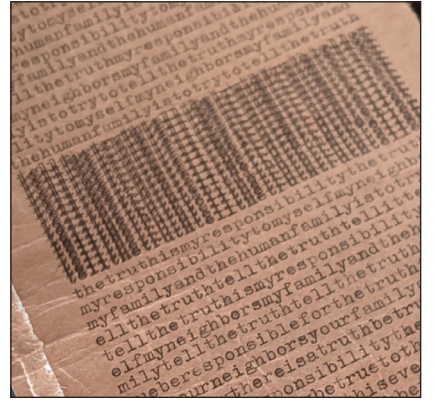
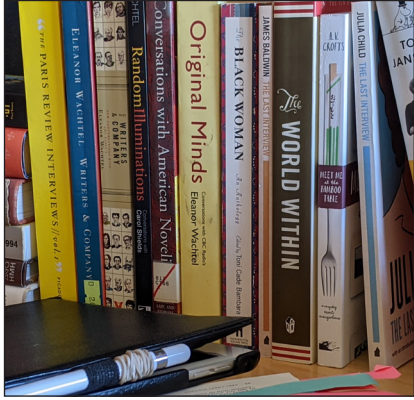
Oral history interview with Kay WalkingStick, 2011 Dec 14-15. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. (Page 19 and Pages 23-24, respectively)

1938 Corona Standard typewriter  
Underwood-Olivetti Studio 44  
typewriter  
Frosted Flakes cereal box interior  
6 1/4" x 12 1/2"

“When I first saw this work I was reminded that the word ‘text’ comes from texture and textile. Jess’s typelooping invites us into a dialogue woven with words, ideas, and a typewriter, creating a tapestry that’s profound and passionate.”

— Melissa Sweet, author and illustrator





# SHINEBOLT

make a brighter world

Jessica Esch's *Fill in the Blanks* exhibition is brought to you by Shinebolt.

Shinebolt makes a brighter world by bringing  
people together, stories to life, and art to market.

We help artists cultivate community, share their story, and  
grow their presence through retail, wholesale, and gallery exhibitions.  
Current collections include Jessica Esch, Scott Nash, and Illustration Institute.

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