

Sophie Lou Jacobsen

To imagine solidity and rigidness as something malleable,
a tactility subject to one’s will, it takes a gift.

Sophie Lou Jacobsen is to see movement where it doesn’t yet exist, and to encapsulate it in a moment — a tangible flash of curves. Glass and stainless steel are the materials in which she designs small pieces of joy. Within each one, Sophie leaves a trace of her own bliss and ships it off to its forever home, where it will bring the brightness and serenity with which it was conceived. Because these objects may be inanimate, but they are surely not lifeless.

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lalala.



Charcoal cotton long-sleeved with logo sweater, brown trousers with attached brown leather belt and black leather square toe block heel with silver detail PRADA

You moved to France as a teenager, at 16. How did the country and the experience overseas influence your career choice and later on your work?

I finished high school there. Both my parents are French, so I've been going back and forth between France and the United States my whole life, spending summers there. It has always been a big part of my life. My culture growing up was very French. At home, we spoke French. I was prepared to move, and it wasn't such a huge cultural shock, but it definitely affected my career choice. Completely candidly, the French high school system is so much more rigorous than the American that at the end of my senior year, I had no desire to go to a classic French university. I'd always really enjoyed my art classes and my creative side, so I decided to do an art foundation course instead, which then led me to design school. Had I not moved to France, I'm not sure I would have necessarily gone to an art school. I might have gone to a liberal arts school, or something like that, so it wouldn't have been as clear of a path.

What city in France did you live in?

I was in Paris.

So a big cultural hub? Big cultural hub, yes, and I definitely think that the move had a huge impact on me, my life, my cultural references, my sensibilities towards design and history. Because Paris is much more in tune with those types of things than Seattle, where I grew up. It's something that I really perceived, being bicultural, growing up in the States, to French parents, and then moving to France... I've moved several times after that, but it made me very observant to culture and to the way that people live, as well as adaptive in a certain way. I think that ended up, in a way, influencing my appreciation for industrial design and objects because of my understanding of different rituals in different countries, what sort of instruments and tools people use.



And then, later on, you went to London, to Central Saint Martins. It was there that you decided to become a designer? Or was it already set in stone when you went to college?

I studied industrial design at Central Saint Martins. The choice to study design came when I was completing my art foundation course in Paris. I already knew about design through my parents; they brought a lot of Bauhaus pieces into our home, and they have quite an appreciation for furniture, objects and spaces. However, I didn't really consider it as a job or a professional path. I always thought I would probably study architecture. It was thanks to a teacher that I had in my art foundation course that I was sort of introduced to the field. I would say she really took me under her wing, and guided me in that direction.



Navy suit vest, navy suit jacket and navy trousers TIBI
Brown leather flats PHOEBE PHILLO
Gold and ruby earring with hoop charm drop RENATO CIPULLO
Gold ear cuff and wide gold ring COMPLETEDWORKS

What led you to go back home to the US?

I ended up spending eight years in London. I felt like I wasn't really finding my dimension there, I wasn't really advancing in the ways that I wanted to. At the same time, I was keeping an eye on what was happening in New York. There were so many independent design studios that were opening there at that time, doing things that really attracted me, from an aesthetic point of view. It seems like there was a lot of momentum. And I felt like that was something that I wanted to explore here.

Your work feels very antique-like. Do you think French flea markets or that kind of more local commerce and contact with antiques influenced in your practice?

Yeah, definitely. A lot of the things that I'm creating are drawn from personal memories or experiences. Whether that is something I might have come across at a flea market or at home, I draw from the past a lot when I'm thinking of objects, and specifically French ones, because that's my culture and what I have the most experience with. It would make sense that kind of classic French design, objects or typologies find their way into the things that I'm making. Flea markets, museums, house museums... I also spend a lot of time researching archives for either antiques or just different objects from different periods of time.



You've had quite a few collections, all very different. How do you renew or keep that creativity going?

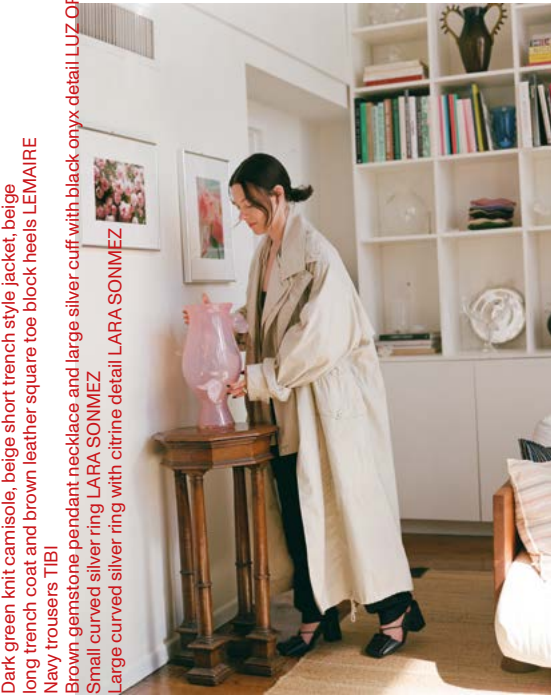
I definitely find a lot of inspiration and creativity through travel. That's something that's very important to me. Even if I'm not necessarily constantly traveling to new places, I tend to go around a lot of the same places over and over again. A change of scenery always manages to get my creative juices going. Also because my practice has two sides to it. There's a more commercial brand, and then there's more of an art practice. Being able to change my intention from one to the other is really helpful, as I can take a break from one focus on the other. They balance each other off, and then there's always something that happens in one that will end up feeding the other.

How do you manage to work with so many different materials, such as metal or glass, which differ from each other in many ways, from techniques, tactility or even just fragility? They're completely different. The process of working with glass is extremely romantic and magical. It's something that feels like a living being and I feel very close to that process. I work closely with a glass blower here, and so even though I'm not blowing glass, over the years I have gained gained a lot of knowledge on how to work with it, all the things that are possible. So I'm part of it, whereas metal is something that I have manufactured, because it's not something that I can work with myself. I'm much more removed from that process of working with the material. So I don't have the same relationship with it by any means. It's a very industrial process. And I think what I love about glass is that it's really just one thing, you can make different parts and assemble them, but often my work is just one



Black and white striped knit bodysuit, long black satin skirt with beaded floral embellishment, navy suede and nylon sneakers PRADA

Dark green knit camisole, beige short trench style jacket, beige long trench coat and brown leather square toe block heels LEMAIRE
Navy trousers TIBI
Brown gemstone pendant necklace and large silver cuff with black onyx detail LUZ ORTIZ
Small curved silver ring LARA SONMEZ
Large curved silver ring with citrine detail LARA SONMEZ



solid piece of glass that's made at one time. With metal, there's soldering. There are and other elements that come into play, metal can rust. There is more technical difficulties with working with it. That was definitely a learning curve for me when I started. What attracts me to working with stainless steel, similarly to glass, is that it's very utilitarian. And I think I'm interested in finding ways to bring softness to such a rigid material. That really comes in the design, while with glass, the softness is somewhat inherent.

How do you handle it when one of your pieces breaks? It's the nature of working with glass. We can spend two hours working on a piece and it breaks right before we put it in the annealer, or it can break overnight, or after being placed on a shelf. Obviously, it's always a little heartbreak, but I've become so accustomed to it that, at this point, I have to accept that it's part of the process. You must be practical about it. It's a bit harder if someone else breaks it. However, I break things so often that I understand how it happens; it's just part of it.

I wonder whether you believe your pieces should be collected or used. Definitely used. I come from an industrial design background. The use of a product is always the nucleus, the basis of where it originates. But as I mentioned, I have these two aspects of my practice: the commercial brand and one that's more of an art practice. I refer to those pieces as collectibles. They align more with collectible design and come at a much higher price point. The process of making them is very different and far more labor-intensive. So while they always serve a function-and my intention, my hope, is that people use them-they are also these delicate pieces. These are the ones you want to handle with more care. The vases, too, are works of art in their own right, and they don't need to be used. They can be displayed, collected, and admired. I genuinely hope they're being used, but some pieces are more usable than others.

What do you hope a piece of work of yours brings into someone's home?

Joy. I hope that, whether it's merely something you're observing or utilizing, it offers a moment of escape and enables your mind to daydream, and drift elsewhere. Whether that's another time, another place, or just a bit of wandering.

You keep some pieces for yourself, right?

How do you choose those? Well, I actually have everything. I live and work in the same place. My home is also my studio and my office, and in a way, a showroom. So I live with everything, and I don't always love that. If I did have a separate space for living, then I would be a lot more selective with the pieces, just because you can get really tired of things if you're seeing them over and over and over again. But at the same time, I do enjoy this, because I do think that living with the objects and the work is really important. It helps me to either iterate or improve or understand how other people might be living with them, or experiencing them. So that's the good thing. But if I had to be more selective, it would be quite hard.



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Navy knit sweater and white skirt with sheer overlay and beaded embellishments WALES BONNER
Silver suede and nylon sneakers PRADA
Silver and black onyx ring LUZ ORTIZ
Black knit camisole LISA YAN