

Odette Graskie (b.1993) is a visual artist from Johannesburg, South Africa. Graskie uses paper, drawing and textile art to create sculptures and interactive artworks that explore memory, emotionality and intimacy. Her work is often relational, and Graskie is known to invite viewers to participate in performative portraiture drawing sessions.

Graskie has been a professional artist since 2016 and completed her MA in Visual Arts (cum laude) through the University of Johannesburg in 2023. She is represented by Berman Contemporary, and is also a bookbinder at Pulp Paperworks. Recently, Graskie has taken part in Paper Positions Berlin and exhibited her solo show, Side Quest, at Berman Contemporary. She has participated in international and local residencies in Howick (South Africa), Guernsey (UK), London (UK), and Ustka (Poland).

Graskie's work has been exhibited at the Investec Cape Town Art Fair (2025), 1:54 Contemporary Art Fair in London (2022), the Turbine Art Fair (2018, 2020) and Paper Positions Berlin (2025). In 2024, she opened her solo exhibition Side Quest at Berman Contemporary. In November, Graskie will take part in the Shanghai Paper Art Biennale at the Fengxian Museum in Shanghai, China.

ARTIST STATEMENT

My work is a tapestry of story, where portraits flow together in an emotive portrait-world. Line on paper and thread in intimate hanging embroideries are touched by the stories of real people. Drawn in a performance, I play with the agency embedded in the drawing, a flow between sitter and artist. These events become a collection of the drawings, as well as a moment of intimacy between me and the human being in the sitters' chair. These lines are translated into new works, the moment recalled and redrawn, each time the connections explored through the filter of my current moment. The portraits blend into a world and become an emotive tapestry, a thread of connections between memory and present, a mapping of the world into an imagined landscape. My practice centres the interconnectedness of human beings. Small intimate moments and empathy (even in the most mundane situations) can be an ailment for loneliness and alienation. Through the building of an emotive paper-thread world, I hope to create spaces wherein emotions can be felt and faced, where connections can be fostered.

Intimacy and connectivity are also embedded in the physicality of the artworks. Handmade paper, paper artworks, fragile embroideries and artists' books invite tactility. They engage participants in a purposeful page-turning, leaning-in and peering-through or stepping-into. The bodily interaction with the work often creates a situation wherein the participant is more involved, and can have an emotive interaction. I want to create works that feel like holding a book and reading a story.