Victoria May

I remember going to a street art fair and deciding then that I wanted to be an artist. I was probably about 6. Not sure now what made me so convinced at that time. I think already then I was into pure process and the thought that one could earn a living as the result of continual engagement with process, sounded good to me. One of my earliest memories of engaging with art was of first grade and wanting to finish class work ASAP so I could go to the easels in the back of the room and paint.

I guess I always kind of drew, though I didn’t feel particularly skilled. I enjoyed crayons and pens immensely. My mother exploited this early on and much to my dread I had to create a unique card for every damn kid’s birthday party I went to. And inevitably, the kid’s mother would have to point out that I was the kid who created a homemade card. It was painfully embarrassing at the time because it was just another way that I didn’t fit in. I dreamed of just buying a card. To this day I feel bad about buying a card from a store.

I learned to sew around the age of 10 and sewing clothes for myself became a passion and creative outlet. Fabric stores were like candy shops. I loved the smells, running my hands along the bolts, pouring over the pattern books. My parents really encouraged this; again there was an element of resourcefulness that fit their agenda, but I think they were happy to fuel my developing skill, though it was still predicated by commercial patterns. By high school I was known for my wacky outfits and fellow students marveled at my sewing ability.

My father also bought me books of weird art and took me to edgy animations. It was also a matter of course in our family to visit museums and theatre performances. Fine Art wasn’t really a part of school very much, or at least I chose drama over art for electives. Though in high school I was on the yearbook staff and I loved doing the layout and art directing.

Striving to be a good student from around middle school on took all my energy. And of course there was severe self-criticism since I wasn’t a natural at drawing and I didn’t know of other forms of expression at the time. As I grew older, the impossibility of earning a living as an artist was impressed upon me. I opted to study Design as a compromise. It wasn’t until graduate school that I figured out how to merge sewing and fabrics with art making and have been encouraged and hooked ever since.