

**Artist Statement**

Making art keeps me present, grounded, and connected. My individual art making process is inspired by nature and executed with curiosity and experimentation, from foraging natural materials to make my own paints, dyes, and inks; to paintings, photography, and temporary installations created outdoors. Making art as a meditative practice helps to slow me down and become more observant, grateful, and joyful. For the community art projects I create and lead, I aspire to provide art making opportunities that provide similar experiences for others and often ends up also providing social connections more valuable than the communal pieces created.

**Artist Bio**

Kersten Harries was born in 1977 and raised in the foothills of the Catskill mountains; much of her youth was spent outdoors enjoying nature. She spent a year of high school as an exchange student in Costa Rica, an extremely positive experience that left her fluent in Spanish and fed her desire to travel more and live abroad again later.

In 2000, Kersten graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design with a BFA and BArch. At RISD she created her first temporary installation art pieces and fell in love with their transformative impact on spaces and the meditative quality experienced when making them.

As an architect Kersten was most interested in roles that allowed her to make a positive social impact, authentically engage with communities, and realize projects that were sustainably responsible. She worked and taught in USA, Mexico, Italy, and Spain, before moving to Sleepy Hollow, NY in 2015.

Kersten completed a year long Creative Placemaking Certificate Program in 2019, while simultaneously volunteering on various Village of Sleepy Hollow Committees and Planning Board. Her focus shifted from transforming spaces to building relationships for future collaborative and inclusive projects.

In 2020, with The Wishing Wall, a 520' long temporary community mural, Kersten experienced the full potential of collaborative art making as a community building tool, besides the project's impact as a public art installation. Subsequently she helped organize annual community art exhibits with themes designed to celebrate positive common ground.

Dedicated to making more installation art, both on her own and collaboratively with others, Kersten has recently created and lead unique large scale community made art projects utilizing up-cycled materials such as Sleepy Hollow Snowflakes and Community Weave. She enjoys experimenting creatively and learning new skills, with a current interest in fiber arts and natural dyes and inks.