

THE PAPER ARTIST

Folding an aeroplane is one thing, but Natasha Frisch is taking the potential of paper to a whole other level.

WORDS JANA ROOSE PHOTOS NATASHA FRISCH

Natasha Frisch is a lady with a lot of quirk; she keeps plants as pets, used to be a door bitch at a dodgy Melbourne nightclub, and – the biggest of all – she painstakingly creates high-realism sculptures out of the world's most fickle material, tracing paper. "Tracing paper is completely unforgiving. It dints, buckles, bruises and melts when it gets wet," she says. "During the construction process I spend hours trying to avoid imperfections, but once the work is installed I have to let it go. The temporary constructions exist only for the lifetime of the exhibition and upon de-installation the work is documented and then destroyed." And sometimes, destruction isn't even a choice. The first time she exhibited *Somewhere in Between*, a 3D imitation of two wooden chairs made in white paper, the effect was so realistic someone sat on them. "I remember seeing it happen as if it was a film in slow motion and whilst I thought 'do something, stop her' I was paralysed by shock and couldn't move. Months of intensive work, gone in a matter of seconds. I enjoy watching people interact with my work but it can sometimes be an anxious experience. Viewers don't tend to believe that the work is made from paper so they have to touch it to make sure." In a way, it's the backhanded compliment of the paper-art world. Frisch's work is so real it's unreal.

Frisch studied photography and that's where her process always starts. From a frozen moment she extracts an element to re-create in tracing paper. She's made all manner of plants from weeds to grass and basil, as well as full-scale window bars and shutters, a ladder (also broken during an exhibition courtesy of some Tarzan), a fence, and a book of matches.

There's a lot more she'd like to make, but a bridge is at the forefront of her mind. "I was recently awarded a three-month residency at The New York Art Residency and Studios Foundation in Brooklyn for late 2013. I intend to research the bridges of New York City and construct one out of trace." Natasha's first solo international exhibition will take place in November at Gallery Brooklyn, New York. Please, for the love of art, no touching. ⚡

See more of Natasha's work at natashafrisch.com

