

Julia LaBay: Space & Construct(ion)

January 31 - March 21, 2026

20 NORTH GALLERY

18 N. St. Clair Street, Toledo, Ohio 43604 419-241-2400
20northgallery.com — info@20northgallery.com

A multimedia exhibition reframing the common tool in uncommon ways.

Julia LaBay's multimedia series explore the importance, symbolism and power of common hand tools. Through her *Tools Series* of monoprints, *Constructed Space Series* of wood sculpture, *Tool Impressions Series* of bas relief aluminum screening, *Printed Space Series* of abstract edifices and her *Retired Tools Series* of bronze and found objects, LaBay creates captivating compositions that present the viewer with a unique perspective on the symbolic role and usefulness of hand tools—comprising a curated collection of traditional and conceptual artworks.

As a sculptor, LaBay is acutely aware of the role of tools in creation; as an art and construction-skills educator, she works to remove the perceived exclusivity of construction tools and empower young women with access to this skillset. From these combined experiences, LaBay's artworks share the stories that tools hold.

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*A multimedia exhibition
reframing the common tool
in uncommon ways*

View the online catalogue at
20northgallery.com



*Retired Tool Series:
Wrench In Situ*



*Printed Space #3:
Hammer*

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Toledo, Ohio 43604
419 - 241- 2400
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20 NORTH GALLERY

Gallery Hours:
Wed. - Sat.
Noon - 4 p.m.
Or By Appointment

BACKGROUND IMAGE: *Tools #59*, monoprint (detail, in B&W). Photos courtesy of the artist. © 2026 20 North Gallery. All rights reserved.

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Forward:

20 North Gallery is proud to present *Space & Construct(ion)*, a solo exhibition by Julia LaBay, displayed in an installation format echoing the repetitive nature that its depicted tools would convey if they were called into in action. The artist states, “That rhythm is kind of symbolic to how the tool is being used in a space...if you’re hammering, you’re repeating that over and over again,” a pattern visualized in both the individual artworks and the installation of the exhibition, itself.

Indeed, the concept of “the tool” is particularly significant to the history of 20 North Gallery. In 1993 the gallery was launched as a means to draw people (and potential real estate investors) back to a long-abandoned downtown—after gallery co-founder and owner Eric Hillenbrand had begun renovating several buildings in the neighborhood, including the one that housed the gallery. The literal “tools of the trade” he employed were not only essential components of his construction business, but embodiments of invention, engineering, imagination and, ultimately, works of art, in and of themselves.

With bold imagery and bright traditionally-feminine hues, Julia Labay’s tool-themed, multimedia series artworks display a playful dichotomy, while subtly underlining the power of tool-using to build engaging spaces in which we live and work. Her prints and sculptures succeed as stand-alone artworks, or as room-scale installations, a construct that serves to emphasize the universality of the common tool.

The idea of “the tool that does the work *is* the work of art” is a great concept, a great show.

Condessa Croninger
Art Director, 20 North Gallery

Julia LaBay

Toledo, Ohio

Artist Biography

Julia LaBay received her B.F.A. in sculpture at The University of Toledo in 2012 and her M.F.A. from Bowling Green State University (Bowling Green, Ohio) in 2015. LaBay is an instructor and the 3D Technical Assistant at The University of Toledo Department of Art (Ohio) in addition to managing her own design company. She works with youth through Young Women of Toledo, teaching girls and young women how to use power tools. LaBay is also a past Curator for the Blair Museum of Lithophanes (Elmore, Ohio).

Her work has been shown regionally as well as nationally at galleries and museums including the Toledo Museum of Art (Ohio), Northern Kentucky University (Highland Heights, Kentucky), Marygrove College (Detroit, Michigan) and Manifest Gallery (Cincinnati, Ohio). LaBay has won several awards and grants for her arts practice, including a recent Accelerator Grant awarded through the Arts Commission (Toledo, Ohio). Additionally, LaBay recently was a visiting artist at Imagination Station in Toledo.



Julia LaBay

Photo courtesy of the artist

Artist Statement

My work reimagines everyday tools by shifting them into new, unexpected forms. I'm interested in how objects like hammers and pliers—often seen as symbols of strength or masculinity—can become soft, playful, or even tender. In some pieces, tools appear to melt or stretch; in others, they're built into bold, geometric shapes. These transformations invite viewers to see familiar objects in a new light.

My connection to tools began when I was young, building things with my father. Those early experiences taught me how powerful it can feel to make something with your hands. Today, I extend that feeling into my artwork and into my teaching, especially when working with young women+. I want people to see tools as something open and empowering, not intimidating or exclusive.

Across this series, I explore how tools carry stories of work, identity, and who gets to build. By changing their form, I hope to open up new possibilities for what these objects can mean and who they can belong to.



Julia LaBay in the studio
Photo courtesy of the artist

Artwork

All work available for purchase. All artwork images provided by Julia LaBay, unless otherwise noted.

Framed Monoprints:



Tools #66; \$450
Monoprint; 24"H x 18"W; 2025



Tools #22; \$450
Monoprint; 24"H x 18"W; 2024



Tools #24; \$450
Monoprint; 24"H x 18"W; 2024



Tools #27; \$450
Monoprint; 24"H x 18"W; 2024



Tools #25; \$450
Monoprint; 24"H x 18"W; 2024



Tools #58; \$140
Monoprint;
12"H x 9"W; 2025



Tools #10; \$140
Monoprint
12"H x 9"W; 2024



Tools #57; \$140
Monoprint;
12"H x 9"W; 2025



Tools #1; \$140
Monoprint
12"H x 9"W; 2024



Tools #32; \$450
Monoprint; 24"H x 18"W; 2024



Tools #33; \$450
Monoprint; 24"H x 18"W; 2024



Tools #34; \$450
Monoprint; 24"H x 18"W; 2024



Tools #20; \$450
Monoprint; 24"H x 18"W; 2024



Tools #67; \$450
Monoprint; 24"H x 18"W; 2025



Tools #65; \$450
Monoprint; 24"H x 18"W; 2025



Tools #56; \$140
Monoprint
12"H x 9"W; 2025



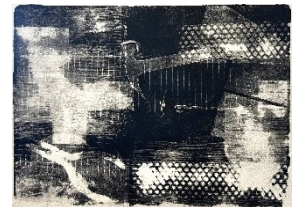
Tools #18; \$140
Monoprint
12"H x 9"W; 2024



Tools #60; \$140
Monoprint;
12"H x 9"W; 2025

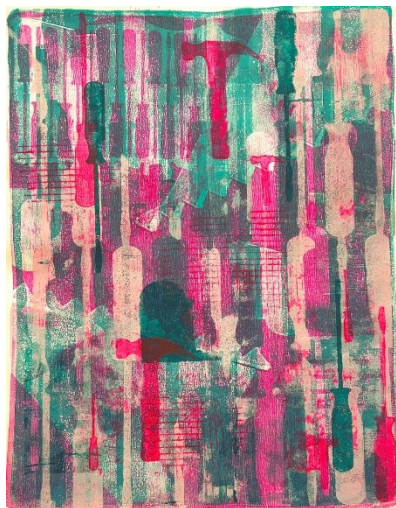


Tools #61; \$140
Monoprint;
12"H x 9"W; 2025



Tools #9; \$140
Monoprint;
9"H x 12"W; 2024

Unframed Monoprints:



Tools #63; \$410
Monoprint; 24"H x 18"W; 2025



Tools #64; \$410
Monoprint; 24"H x 18"W; 2025



Tools #62; \$410
Monoprint; 24"H x 18"W; 2025

Tools #2; \$120
Monoprint
12"H x 9"W;
2024



Tools #47; \$120
Monoprint
12"H x 9"W;
2025



Tools #21; \$410
Monoprint; 24"H x 18"W; 2024



Tools #29; \$410
Monoprint; 24"H x 18"W; 2024



Tools #51; \$120
Monoprint
12"H x 9"W; 2025



Tools #7; \$120
Monoprint
12"H x 9"W; 2024



Tools #53; \$120
Monoprint
12"H x 9"W; 2025



Tools #54; \$120
Monoprint
12"H x 9"W; 2025



Tools #55; \$120
Monoprint
12"H x 9"W; 2025

Installations:



Tool Impressions series; \$50 each

\$40 each when purchasing 5 or more

\$30 each when purchasing 25 or more

Metal screen; Individual dimensions vary
(full installation as pictured: 4"H x 11" W)
2012-2024

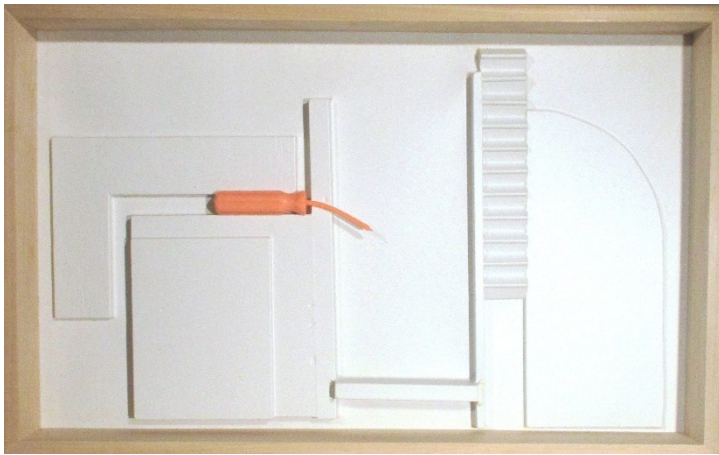
Photo by 20 North Gallery

Detail view

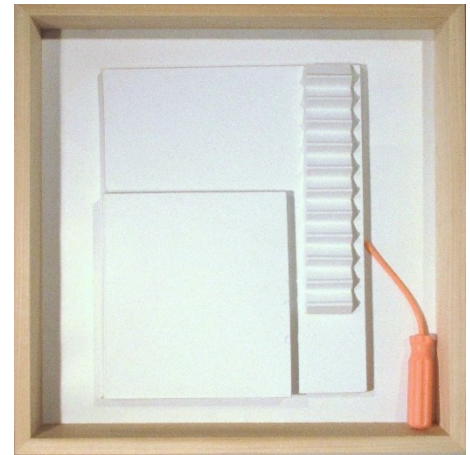


Feminine Drip; \$950

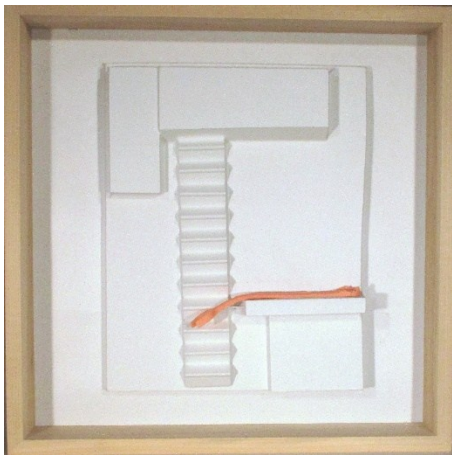
Cast aluminum, rubber and shelf;
6"H x 18"W x 8"D; 2022



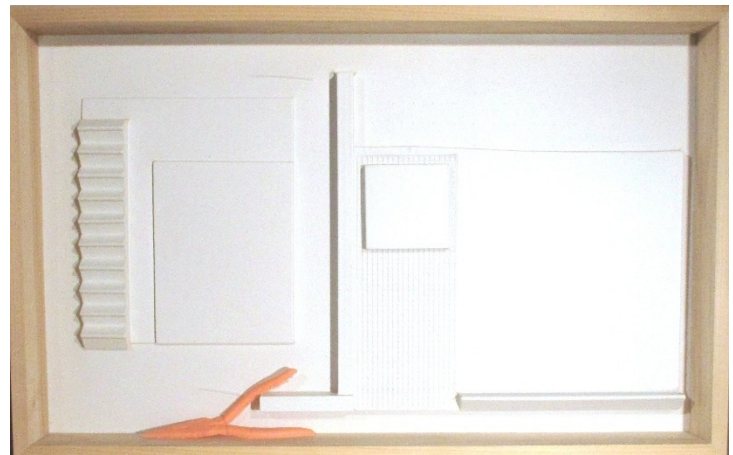
Constructed Space #4; \$600
Mixed media;
33.75"H x 21.25"W x 3.5"D; 2024
Photo by 20 North Gallery



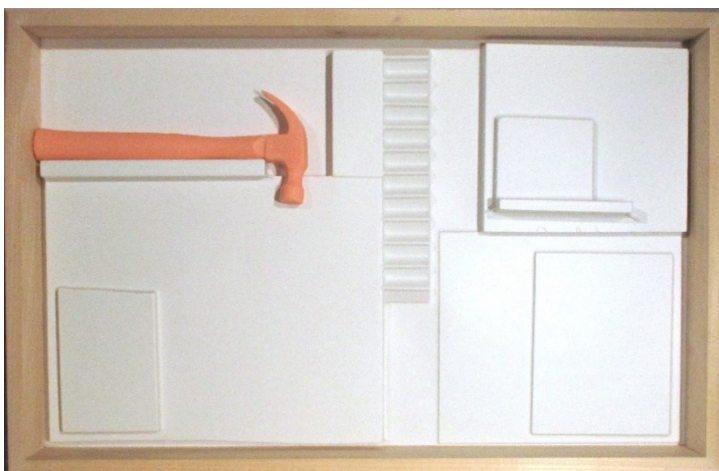
Constructed Space #8; \$400
Mixed media;
21.25"H x 21.25"W x 3.5"D; 2024
Photo by 20 North Gallery



Constructed Space #9; \$400
Mixed media;
21.25"H x 21.25"W x 3.5"D; 2024
Photo by 20 North Gallery



Constructed Space #5; \$600
Mixed media;
33.75"H x 21.25"W x 3.5"D; 2024
Photo by 20 North Gallery

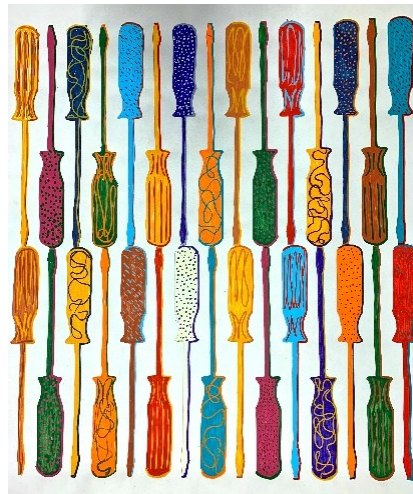


Constructed Space #7; \$600
Mixed media;
33"H x 21.25"W x 3.5"D; 2024
Photo by 20 North Gallery



Screwdriver Scroll – 26:390; \$900
Posca markers on paper; 24'H x 24"W; 2023-2024

Photo by 20 North Gallery



Detail view



2025 (Painted Space series); \$850
Paint sample cards;
32"H x 22"W; 2026

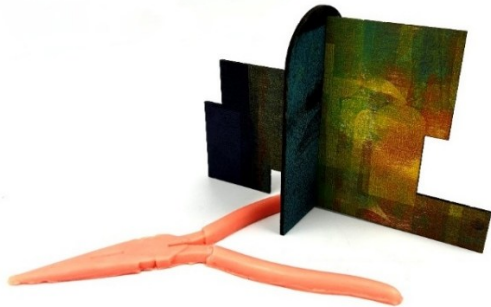
3D Sculpture:



Wrench in Situ (Retired Tools series); \$1,400
Bronze, found materials
5.25"H x 10"W x 5.5"D; 2025



Needle Nose Pliers in Situ (Retired Tools series); \$1,000
Bronze, found materials
4.5"H x 9.5"W x 3.25"D; 2025



Printed Space #4: Needle Nose Pliers; \$500
Wood, paint and rubber
5.5"H x 11"W x 10"D; 2024



Screwdriver in Situ (Retired Tools series); \$1,000
Bronze, found materials
5"H x 8.5"W x 2.5"D; 2025



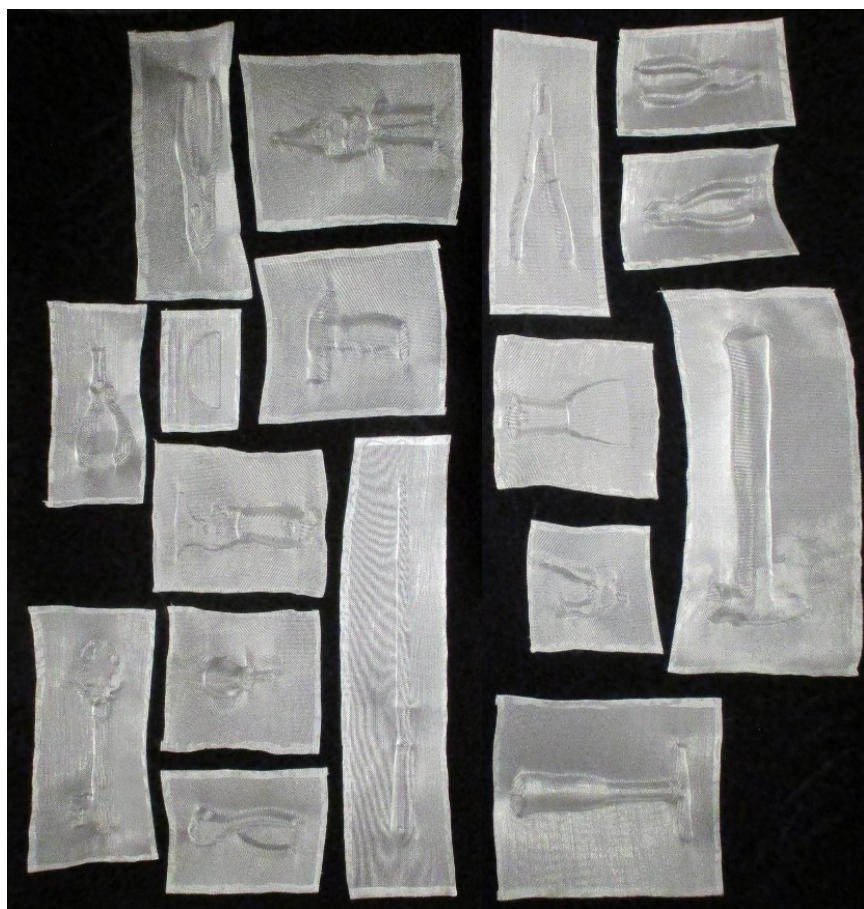
Printed Space #2: Screwdriver; \$500
Wood, paint and rubber
10"H x 11"W x 7.25"D; 2024



Printed Space #3: Hammer; \$500
Wood, paint and rubber
6.75"H x 11.5"W x 12"D; 2024

Reserve Artwork:

Reserve artwork available for private viewing and immediate acquisition. Contact a Gallery Associate for details.



Tools #14; \$140
Monoprint;
12"H x 9"W; 2024



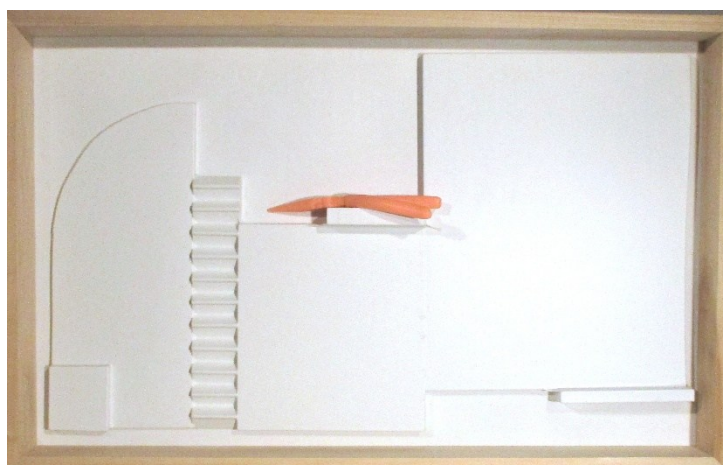
Tools #59 \$140
Monoprint;
12"H x 9"W; 2025

Tool Impressions series; \$50 each;

\$40 each when purchasing 5 or more; \$30 each when purchasing 25 or more

Metal screen; Individual dimensions vary, (full installation as pictured: 4'H x 4' W); 2012-2024

Photo by 20 North Gallery



Constructed Space #6; \$600

Mixed media;

33.75"H x 21.25"W x 3.5"D; 2024

Photo by 20 North Gallery

Julia LaBay: Space & Construct(ion)

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