

# Home & Garden

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## DESIGN



Photos by Leah Millis / The Chronicle

Melina Raissnia, co-owner of Peace Industry, uses yarn to stitch a display for the company, a manufacturer and importer of rugs in the Mission District.

## A city's crafty clusters

SFMade Week focuses on places where manufacturers gather together

By Nancy Davis Kho

SFMade Week, which celebrates the San Francisco's manufacturing sector each May, will take a turn for the hyper-local by casting a spotlight on the "Makerhoods." These are the geographic centers such as Dogpatch, the Bayview and the Mission where manufacturers of housewares, food and apparel cluster and cross-pollinate, encouraged in part by the squeeze of rising real estate prices.

Your guide to SFMade's Makerhood events see Pages N4-N5

Janet Lees is senior director at SFMade.org, the nonprofit that focuses on building San Francisco's economic base by developing the local manufacturing sector and organizes SFMade Week. "We are collaborating with the city to build more industrial space over time," Lees says. "And we encourage manufacturers to cluster together in areas like the Bayview where vacancies exist. It's helping to revitalize neighborhoods."

Compared to last year's 15 events, there are already 60 demonstrations and workshops, factory tours, sales, and pop-up shops on the calendar. While activities are scheduled all over the city Monday through next Sunday, Makerhood events provide a closer look at the places where manufacturers are making goods while being good neighbors.



Peace Industry uses rug scraps to create ottomans called "choobs."



Russell Yip / The Chronicle

Tiffanie Turner tends to a work in progress, one of her crepe paper dahlias, for her "Heads" exhibition, which opens later this month at Rare Device.

## STUDIO VISIT

### Floral sculptures, supersized

By Chantal Lamers

When it comes to building her mighty, signature paper peonies, Tiffanie Turner isn't merely engrossed with duplicating the popular flowers' stunning layers of floaty, frilly ruffled petals. As one might expect from an artist, architect and performer, she is partial to a considerably heightened, fantastical interpretation. One that's larger than life.

"Flowers are so amazing, so beautiful, so mean-

ingful," says Turner. "Although I love making paper flowers, given the choice between a paper bouquet and a fresh bouquet of flowers, I would always choose the fresh flowers. Why replicate something that is so perfect unless you can take it to another level?"

A series of her large-scale crepe paper sculptures are on exhibition through May 28 at Rare Device in San Francisco. For the show, titled "Heads," Turner composed a collection of enor-

mous yet undeniably realistic blooms in a fittingly spring palette of soft and hot pinks, coral and saturated burgundy mixed among varying shades of cream and white.

Turner began fabricating the intricate line of paper florets — mostly peonies but also marigolds, asters, chrysanthemums, dahlias and cabbage roses — in August. Zealots have since plucked them via One Kings Lane, her Etsy

*Flowers continues on N6*

HOME



Photos by Russell Yip / The Chronicle

Calendars, cards and an assortment of Internet sources, above, inspire Tiffanie Turner and her fantastical paper flower creations, right.

# Architecture, craft intersect in hybrid art

Flowers from page N1

shop papelsf and through commissions. Each 24- to 30-inch flower consists of up to 1,000 petals hand cut from an Italian floral crepe paper because she firmly believes “that if it didn’t take a long time, you’re not doing it right.”

“My work in paper stems from my background as an architect, particularly my interest in how things are made and the use of repetitive elements, along with my lifelong obsession with flowers and botanical drawings,” says Turner. “The exploration of scale plays heavily into everything I do, and the organized chaos and rhythms in nature make the heads of flowers an excellent case study for me.”

It’s also easy to draw a connection from Turner’s East Coast childhood to her preoccupation with craft and building. Her mother worked in a guidance counselor’s office and spent her spare time quilting and dollmaking, often into the wee hours. Her father, an engineer,

## On display

**Heads:** An exhibition of Tiffanie Turner’s oversize paper flowers continues through May 28 at Rare Device, 600 Divisadero St., S.F. (415) 863-3969. [www.raredevice.net](http://www.raredevice.net). [www.papelsf.com](http://www.papelsf.com). For a list of upcoming workshops, go to [www.bit.ly/liAKeqT](http://www.bit.ly/liAKeqT).

had a super-sparse aesthetic that she’d always appreciated.

That entangled with a longtime love affair with drawing and collecting all things botanical along with an infatuation for flamenco and later, burlesque. It all led up to these larger-than-life blooms. “I feel like performance is where it’s rooted, and that’s why they are so big in a way,” says Turner.

Nearly five years ago, shortly after her second child was born, Turner’s left eye suddenly stopped functioning. The incident led to a possible diagnosis of multiple sclerosis. Turner decided she needed to do something with



herself. Fast. That’s when she discovered burlesque.

“So that was kind of my thing. I was going to do something crazy just in case this was the beginning of the end somehow,” said Turner, who hasn’t experienced any more episodes.

Turner began studying with Bombshell Betty and performing at the El Rio and Elbo Room. Being onstage meant designing costumes each month. She was cast as Frida Kahlo and, obviously, that necessitated an incredible floral hairpiece.

“I was looking online, and there were a lot of precious flower tutorials online but nothing really hardy,” said Turner. “I designed a way to make them super heavy and stocky and you could glue a bunch together and make a headpiece that

you could whip around while you’re dancing and it wouldn’t fall off or come apart.”

Last summer, shortly before leaving for a family road trip, Turner decided to take her paper flowers to the next level. She thought, “You know what’s really hot? Peonies. You know what else is really hot? People love freaking paper. You know what else is really hot? People love piñatas.”

So Turner went to work, creating a tutorial for her blog, Corner Blog ([www.bloggcorner.com](http://www.bloggcorner.com)). Over the course of a few weeks, Turner developed a process for crafting the magically enormous flowers. Her husband, David Vazquez, and her kids, Stella, 8, and Oliver, 4, helped photograph the flowers in the yard out-

side their San Francisco flat.

Turner clicked “post” on her blog and set out on a trip to the desert. After a few days without Internet access, she went online to find that her giant paper peony piñatas had been unearthed by the far corners of the Internet. “It was just like pa-pow! It was all over Pinterest. All over everything. I just knew it. It had the three Ps.”

Each flower takes anywhere from 35 to 80 hours. She begins by applying three layers of papier-mâché to a large balloon. She cuts away the top of the balloon, inverting it to create a concaved end, then stitches it closed with a needle, thread and hot glue.

Then come the petals. When it comes to peonies, for example, she designs various shapes and colors, depending on the flower’s respective stage: when its petals begin to spread and let loose from a tight, wadded bud to the point where the petals begin to change color and

blow open before they start to drop, drop, drop away.

Using her thumbs, she gingerly stretches the center of each petal to create full cupped forms, before neatly bending the bottoms to be affixed to the base. She works outward from a center cluster, hot glue in hand, until she conceals the newspapered surface.

“To me, the process of creating one of these pieces is similar to that of a person sitting down to work at a loom or to sew a huge quilt together from small pieces of material, except that at some point metastasis occurs and the pieces become out of control,” says Turner.

Then of course, you have the option of filling it with candy. But at \$350-\$1,200 each, does anyone ever do that? “No, nobody ever smashed them,” says Turner, who has since ceased referring to them as piñatas.

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