

Leo Louise Cunningham

Baltimore, MD / thanksfriend@fastmail.com / instagram [@thanksfriendstudio](#) / thanksfriendstudio.com

Bio

Leo Louise Cunningham (they/them) is a queer and trans non-binary artist and educator, working primarily in wood sculpture. Their work celebrates non-conformity, mutualism, and patterns of brilliant abundance in nature.

Education

2011 BFA, Recorded Music, Tisch School for the Arts, New York University, New York, NY (Minor in Environmental Studies)

Studied Under

2024 Kate Hawes
2024 Danielle Rose Byrd
2023 & 2024 Graeme Priddle
2023 Annie Meyer
2023 Rick Cannon
2023 Melissa Engler

Awards & Grants

2024 Summer Workshop Scholarship, Pocosin Arts School of Fine Craft
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Group Exhibitions

2024 [New Shapes](#), Not Real Art (online exhibition)
2023 [Small Wonders](#), Circle Gallery, Annapolis, MD (Maryland Federation of Art)
Honorable Mention, "Two, Or More?"
Juried by Lillian Bayley Hoover

Artworks Contributed to Edited Volumes

2023 *Suboart Magazine*, [Print Issue #10](#), September 2023. Pgs. 110-111.

Relevant Experience & Professional Associations

Thanks Friend Studio, Baltimore, MD (*April 2023 - now*)
Owner, Artist

Station North Tool Library, Baltimore, MD (*March 2023 - now*)
Woodworking Instructor, Woodshop Monitor & Tool Librarian

Pocosin School of Fine Crafts, Columbia, NC (*July 2025–expected*)
Studio Assistant for Melissa Engler

Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle, ME (*August 2024*)
Studio Assistant Fellow for Kate Hawes

Shakerag Workshops, Sewanee, TN (*June 2024*)
Studio Assistant for Graeme Priddle

A Workshop of Our Own, Baltimore, MD (*2021 - now*)
Member

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Heavy Paper Co., Baltimore, MD (*April 2023 - August 2023*)

Part-Time Woodshop Assistant

Artist Statement

Brightly colored slime mold, bulging bunches of snail eggs, bacterial colonies, and mutated seed pods—these natural wonders fascinate me. They're organic reminders that patterns of reproduction and cooperation are brilliant and big moments of change always feel freaky at first.

By carving, burning, and painting driftwood and reclaimed woodshop scraps, I create intricate patterns of collaboration that look both grotesque and delicate. These sculptures honor mutations and multitudes as metaphors for non-conformity as a precursor of growth and challenging dominant narratives of scarcity, competition, and individual advantage.

This is a personal journey to dispel the inherited American myths of self-sufficiency and an ego-driven purpose. Through my art practice—and together with the wonderful people I meet along the way—I center the values of collective prosperity and celebrate the prescience of non-conformity.