

The Peale, Baltimore

Out of the Blocks Storytelling Series

Recorded by Aaron Henkin; Photographs and Music by Wendel Patrick

Produced for the Out of the Blocks website, created by the Peale, <https://ootb.thepeale.org/>



Lauren Byrd ([00:00](#)):

So we are here on beautiful St. Paul Street, the 2400 block right off 25th Street. I just got off from work at Grind House Juice Bar, 2431 St. Paul Street, and getting ready to place a red, black, and green yarn bomb here on the Cole. And I specifically chose red, black, and green because this stretch of St. Paul Street from Terra Cafe down several businesses past us are all Black-owned businesses, on this particular side of the street. So using the red, black, and green is representative of what we've now nicknamed Black Wall Street here in Baltimore.

Lauren Byrd ([00:42](#)):

Lauren Bird.

Lauren Byrd ([00:44](#)):

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Yarn bombing is essentially seeing yarn out in public somewhere where you wouldn't typically see yarn. I saw all these metal light poles and felt like they would be an awesome place to add some color and add some fabric.

Aaron Henkin ([01:04](#)):

What you do is kind of a combination between street art and knitting?

Lauren Byrd ([01:08](#)):

Yes, so correction it's crochet. Those of us in the crafting world take that pretty seriously and yes, it is considered street art. I have heard it called fabric graffiti.

Lauren Byrd ([01:22](#)):

I haven't determined if this is necessarily aloud or not, but I'm also not going to ask because my father said, "if you give people a chance to say no and they say it, you can't be mad". I learned how to crochet when I was six years old. My mother was the original person who taught me and my mother was actually diagnosed with breast cancer when I was six years old. So during that timeframe, my grandmother would sit with my sisters and I, and she showed us more detailed stitches and how to actually make things, make granny squares and put them together, during the time that my mother was going through her treatment.

Lauren Byrd ([02:10](#)):

And so that kind of became my safe place. Unfortunately, my mother transitioned when I was nine years old, she was 32. And so for me, crocheting has been like my connection to her.

Lauren Byrd ([02:24](#)):

I've been doing it so long that I sometimes have to slow myself down to look at what the steps are because there are no steps left for me. It's just a flow. It's a continual process. [crosstalk 00:02:40]

Aaron Henkin ([02:40](#)):

This is the quietest thing to capture on radio, I'm going to see if it makes any noise whatsoever.

Lauren Byrd ([02:54](#)):

The rhythm, makes me focus on my breathing and just allowing your mind to kind of flow.

Lauren Byrd ([03:14](#)):

Hold on a second. Hey! Hello, hello.

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Mateo Blue ([03:19](#)):

How are you?

Lauren Byrd ([03:20](#)):

I'm good. How are you?

Mateo Blue ([03:20](#)):

You found the one little piece of shade on this corner?

Lauren Byrd ([03:24](#)):

Oh really? Aaron, this is Mateo Blue.

Mateo Blue ([03:25](#)):

How you doing?

Aaron Henkin ([03:26](#)):

Hey Mateo Blue, nice to meet you.

Lauren Byrd ([03:29](#)):

He's the artist who has the pieces over at Terra 2, where we did the interview the other day.

Aaron Henkin ([03:34](#)):

Your work is beautiful. I've been spending a lot of time in there interviewing people on this block and so I've been enjoying being surrounded by it. I'm wondering if you might share your two cents on what it's like to walk up the street and see one of Lauren's yarn bombs.

Mateo Blue ([03:49](#)):

It's refreshing, it's simple yet deep. I do street stickers sometimes. So that, to me, that's just like a whole another respect to a street art and this is the most cultural level that I've honestly witnessed, especially with inner city.

Lauren Byrd ([04:04](#)):

There is this indescribable joy that happens when I see the things that I've created, because it's the balance between humility and like pride. I think, so yeah I just hope that it makes people smile, brings a little joy to their day.

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