

Richmond

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Shop Talk

ASIAN PERSUASION

The furniture on the second floor of Frankie Slaughter's Auburn Street studio is covered in fabric swatches. "I start with a few pieces, and I just keep piling them on," she says. "My couch is like my mood board."

Take, for instance, the pile of purple suede, gray-and-black wool, embossed brown leather, vintage purple lace that she found in a New York City flea market, and green-and-black-embroidered trim from a hill tribe north of Hanoi, Vietnam. Rather than risk losing the combination of swatches through the act of relocation, she

simply sits on top of them. She is in her element, or rather, the space she has created reflects the time in her life when she felt most in her element.

A few years ago, in 2005, Slaughter and her family returned from a nine-year stay in Hong Kong for her husband's job. While overseas, she had taken her artwork, mostly clay figurative sculpture and found-object collage, to a new medium: women's jackets accented with the exotic textiles she found in Hong Kong and throughout Asia.

In May, she hosted an open house at her studio, allowing the curious to view her artwork, which included many of the 72 jackets in her current collection. Though intended for wear, the one-of-a-kind designs are nothing like what you'd expect to find in a department store. Each contains several textiles sewn together to create an artistic, aesthetic appeal. Slaughter uses a seamstress in Hong Kong to fuse her fabric collages and the structural pieces, never creating the same style twice.

Her work, she finds, is a way to bring those beloved years in Asia back to Richmond. "I was inundated with beautiful colors and exotic rituals on a daily basis," she says of that time in her life. Now those colors translate into creations that sell at price points between \$400 and \$1,300. In addition, she makes tunics for \$175 to \$300 and bags for \$85.

A true artist, Slaughter has no current plans to mass-produce, yet she does hope to work with exclusive boutiques and gift shops to carry her pieces. For more information or to book an appointment to see her work, call 787-0788 or visit frankieslaughter.com - Ashley Nichols

