"WILDLY CONFIDENT, A BIT AGGRESSIVE, AND VERY HOT. TRULY A STUNNING VISION OF FEMININITY"

—LIANA SATENSTEIN, VOGUE
ELENA VELEZ INCORPORATES AN
APPRECIATION FOR THE
ARTISANAL HERITAGE OF THE
AMERICAN MIDWEST, EPILOGIZED
BY THE METALSMITH INDUSTRY—A
HISTORICALLY QUINTESSENTIAL
TRADEMARK OF OUR HOMETOWN,
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN.

THE AUTHENTICITY OF OUR
DESIGN PROCESS IS PARAMOUNT
TO THE SUCCESS OF THE WORK
AND IS BUILT ON COLLABORATIVE
RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOCAL
ARTISANS TO REVISIT AND
RE-CONTEXTUALIZE ICONIC
REGIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP.
PROONENTS OF AUTHENTIC
PROCESS AND CREATIVITY UNDER
CONSTRAINT, OUR COLLECTIONS
OFTEN INCORPORATE FOUND,
SALVAGED, AND SITE-SPECIFIC
MATERIALITY.

THROUGH AN AGGRESSIVELY
DELICATE AESTHETIC SIGNATURE,
THE ELENA VELEZ BRAND DESIGNS
WITH THE TACTILE SENSIBILITY
OF A MAKER WHO PRIORITIZES
FUNCTIONALITY AND UTILITY
OVER PERFECTION OR BEAUTY,
WORKING BEYOND
CONTEMPORARY REFERENCES TO
INVESTIGATE THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN FEMININITY AND FORCE.
“A GUTSINESS THAT DOESN’T FEEL NEW YORK OR LONDON... SO NEW AND EVOLVING THAT IT’S HARD TO QUANTIFY.”

—CATHY HORYN, THE CUT
ABOUT

ELENA VELEZ IS AN AMERICAN FASHION DESIGNER AND ARTIST FROM MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, BASED IN NEW YORK CITY. A GRADUATE OF PARSONS SCHOOL OF DESIGN AND CENTRAL SAINT MARTINS, HER WORK IS KNOWN FOR ITS NON TRADITIONAL SYNTHESIS OF METALSMITH AND HIGH FASHION. THE BRAND MADE ITS FIRST OFFICIAL NEW YORK FASHION WEEK DEBUT IN SEPTEMBER 2021, FEATURED SHORTLY AFTER IN FORBES FOR ITS WORK WITH MIDWESTERN MAKERS AND MISSION TO "DEMOCRATIZE RESOURCES AND RECOGNITION" FOR ARTISTS OUTSIDE OF TRADITIONALLY ESTABLISHED CREATIVE CAPITALS.

"A DELICATE BALANCE BETWEEN STRONG UTILITARIANISM AND FRAGILE BEAUTY."

SAVANNAH WHITMER, OFFICE MAGAZINE
“INDUSTRIAL LUXURY AND PERFECTLY TAILORED GRIME, IN THE MOST FEMININE WAY”.

-METAL SHOP

MOST NOTABLY, ELENA’S WORK HAS RECEIVED INTERNATIONAL ACCLAIM FOR HER INTEGRATION OF HAND FORGED, BESPOKE STEEL ARCHITECTURE - THE PRODUCT OF A COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL ARTISANS TO RECONTEXTUALIZE A HISTORICALLY ICONIC REGIONAL CRAFT FROM HER HOMETOWN, KNOWN REGIONALLY AS THE MACHINE SHOP OF THE AMERICAN MIDWEST.
“ONE OF NYFW'S MOST EXCITING NAMES”

- JOSE CRIALES-UNZUETA, i-D MAGAZINE

“ONE OF THE MOST ANTICIPATED AT NEW YORK FASHION WEEK”

- LARA JOHNSON WHEELER, ANOTHER

“THE MOST SCINTILLATING RUNWAY OF THE WEEK.”

- KEVIN LEBLANC, ELLE
THE EV COLLABORATOR STUDIO, ESTABLISHED IN 2020, IS A REMOTE RESIDENCY AND ROTATING ARTIST SHOWCASE THAT OVERSEES THE CREATION OF LIMITED, CODESIGN PRODUCTS WITH MAKERS CURATED BASED ON A MISSION PARALLEL TO THE ELENA VELEZ BRAND.

THE STUDIO SERVES AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO ARTICULATE OUR CREATIVE UNIVERSE ACROSS VERTICAL CREATIVE MARKETS INCLUDING FURNITURE, INDUSTRIAL DESIGN, SPACE, WEARABLES, AND EPHEMERAL PERFORMANCES.

THE STUDIO FOCUSES ON DEMOCRATISING CREATIVE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL RESOURCES FOR MAKERS OUTSIDE OF TYPICALLY ESTABLISHED CREATIVE CAPITALS AND PROVIDES A PIPELINE TO THE INDUSTRY FOR SMALL BRANDS THROUGH SALES OPPORTUNITY AND CIRCULATORY ACCESS WITHIN THE BRANDS NETWORK OF STYLISTS AND CELEBRITY AMBASSADORS.

"ELENA IS OPENING A VERY IMPORTANT DOOR FOR OUR COMMUNITY OF MIDWESTERN DESIGNERS, MAKERS, AND ARTISTS.
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING OUR COLLABORATION FOR NYFW, OUR COMPANY BROKE GROUND WITH CELEBRITY STYLISTS, MAJOR DESIGN PUBLICATIONS, AND LUXURY ECOMMERCE BRANDS THAT ARE INTERESTED IN OUR FOOTWEAR DESIGNS. ELENA HAS LET US INTO HER NETWORK, AND IN SHARING HER PLATFORM, SHE HAS TRULY ELEVATED OUR VOICES. THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH ELENA VELEZ HAS BEEN AN IMMENSE BENEFIT FOR OUR STUDIO"

- @MRPH.DESIGN

"ON THE PULSE OF ELEVATING REGIONAL MIDWESTERN HERITAGE AND CRAFT"
- BOOTH MOORE, WWD
"Working with Elena Velez has opened doors that I did not know existed. When we began working together, I was working in a metal shop and creating jewelry in my free time... it was Elena that validated the work and encouraged me to grow this concept into a potential business.

Overall, being a creative is filled with self-doubt and reasons not to execute ideas. Working in the EV Collaborator community has not only helped me trust and develop my identity as an artist and maker, but has also resulted in work of art that I am proud to be a part of."

- @NELS.STUDIO

"There is so much artistic potential in the trades," agreed Nelson Kies, a metal worker who grew up in Milwaukee with Velez and is creating accessories, such as rings, necklaces, earrings and even tiaras to complete her looks.

"I just started messing around with scrap materials—waste products—in the metal shop and came up with various pieces," he said. Like Velez's designs, his accessories combine the "dirtiness" of machinery with the elegance of high fashion.

Kies, who now runs his own brand, Nels Studio, calls his process "cladding," which in construction refers to the act of placing layers of material over a building to either provide protection or improve its appearance. The same, he said, can be said for the role of accessories and clothes on a body.