

Marina Thompson

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Marina Thompson is a mixed media artist, born in 1952 in Lexington, Massachusetts. Her father was an architect and partner of Walter Gropius. Because her father always looked unapologetically towards the future, Marina's home was a design experiment that refused to cater to nostalgia of any sort. Her parents valued work experience as much, or more, than education. Marina worked at her father's retail store, Design Research, then later at his architectural office in Cambridge. Continuing the work/study theme, she attended Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio in 1970, majoring in Secondary Art Education. While on a work semester, she traveled to Patzcuaro and Uruapan, Mexico, where she studied weaving with three generations of Mexican Indian women.

Always inspired by textiles and process, in 1972 Marina partnered with a friend to open a retail store in Yellow Springs selling weaving, spinning, and craft supplies, and importing yarns and equipment from all over the world. While in college she worked at the busy store and taught classes. In 1976 the partners sold their store. Marina moved back to Cambridge, Massachusetts where she continued to teach weaving classes while starting a rug business designing, producing, and marketing colorful rag rugs to many stores across the country, including Crate & Barrel and Marimekko.

In the 1980's Marina spent a few years working for Marimekko, designing fabric and childrenswear. From 1989-1991 she attended the Boston Art Institute to study illustration in order to work from home while raising her son. She began working in gouache and pastels, but quickly transitioned to computer illustration in the early 1990s as the publishing world simultaneously went digital. Computer language came naturally to her after many years of working on looms as weaving technology originally formed the basis for binary computer programming. She enjoys finding expression within the parameters, challenges, and always expanding possibilities of computer software. Not accepting the limits of existing tools and applications, she redesigns them to fulfill her design ideas. She experiments broadly with printing materials and techniques as well as unusual uses of mixed media.

In her 15 years as freelance Illustrator, Marina's work was published in many magazines—Time, Essence, Mother Jones, Sunset Magazine and gardening books, many travel magazines, educational publications, book covers, advertising, and corporate logos. Her digital work has been highlighted for her innovative techniques in several U.S. and Japanese electronic design magazines and books. In 2002 Marina completed over 2000 square feet of wall murals for the new Miami Children's Museum. She also has work at the Denver Children's Hospital and Boston Children's Hospital.

Exploring additional design options in 2004, Thompson entered the elite Industrial Design graduate program at Rhode Island School of Design. Halfway through the program she realized she preferred to express herself in two dimensions. She now works from her studio in Lexington on abstract mixed media painting, combining her design & computer skills with encaustic and other paints.

Drawing on the Bauhaus-influenced world from her childhood, her art is graphically strong, as well as informed by her years in textile design and illustration. The work is colorful, rhythmic, layered, and often speaks of sounds, both local and cosmic, while her visual elements are both macroscopic and microscopic. Thompson deliberately chooses to share a somewhat flattened view of the world as she sees it. Since childhood she has had one slightly lazy eye that reduces her depth of field. Aware of this eye system, she feels it is a unique view of perspective to share. Using an Epson printer, she prints her work on a range of papers from heavyweight cotton to very lightweight Japanese papers. The lighter papers are waxed to increase transparency, layered, and painted front or back with pigment sticks, gouache, or flashe. She loves Persian miniature painting for its flattened, multi-layered, aerial perspectives and inspiring color palette. Other influences include Howard Hodgkin, Paul Klee, Josef and Anni Albers, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Calder, Cy Twombly, and Brice Marden.

In the 1980s Marina's rugs were shown in several galleries in New England. She also exhibited her pastel drawings on Newbury Street in Boston. Her work in private collections includes a pastel in the collection of Ann & Graham Gund, Cambridge Mass. Marina's mixed-media work has been shown in numerous group shows. In 2016 she had a show at R&F Handmade Paints in Kingston New York. R&F is the premier manufacturer of encaustic paint in the United States. Her solo show, *Reversible Floating Spaces*, was at Fitchburg State University in the Fall of 2016.