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MINUS A

A face behind *Painted Mary*, **Mary Finlayson** is a contemporary artist with a focus on vibrant interior spaces. Her work is full of feminine energy and vivid with colors, patterns, and textures which are reflected in the artist's optimistic outlook on the world. Working with gouache paint and a bold polychromatic palette, Mary captures the true ambiance of various spaces and individual objects that make that space unique. Finlayson is more interested in color and balance on the canvas than visual accuracy, capturing the feeling of the interiors portrayed and the stories behind the places people inhabit. Originally from Canada, Finlayson currently resides in San Francisco.

As MINUS37, we took the opportunity to chat with Mary Finlayson about her work and its meaning.

"De Kooning With Plants" by Mary Finlayson

Tell us a little bit about your life. Was art always present?

I really can't remember a time in my life when I wasn't interested in painting. I grew up in a very busy family and was the youngest of four. My mom always kept a huge drawer in the kitchen full of art supplies so after school I would entertain myself at the table drawing and painting until it was time for dinner. Later I took a lot of after-school art classes and went to a high school where I was able to choose art as a concentration. I went on to get degrees in Fine Arts, Art Education, and Art Therapy. Art has always played a huge role in my life and my career.

"Alexander Girard, Plants and Books" by Mary Finlayson, gouache on canvas

**What is your artistic background, when and how did you start?
How did you end up with the style you currently work in?**

I have a BFA in *Painting/Printmaking*, a masters in *Art Therapy* and a BEd in *Art Education*. My formal training really gave me the discipline and respect for this craft. However, my artistic voice formed years after I graduated through experimentation and real-world experiences. For me, formal training was very important, mostly for the fact that it challenged me hugely and helped me to understand the level of discipline it would take to pursue art professionally.

"Pink Room With Palm" by Mary Finlayson, gouache on canvas, 2017

How do you usually work and where do you draw inspiration from?

I like to think of interiors as portraits that contain their own narratives. I am interested in the stories that they contain and how these spaces are used to tell stories about the people who inhabit them. I'm drawn to rooms that feel personal – **places with meaning full of important objects that create accidental compositions.** I paint from photos and still lives. Sometimes the rooms look very similar to real life but often they contain imagined elements. I always flatten the space and work with a very narrow depth of field. I like surface tension and crowded compositions. I am more interested in color and balance than I am in achieving accuracy. It's more important to me to depict the feeling of space than the reality of it.

Can you tell us about some of your favorite tools to work with?

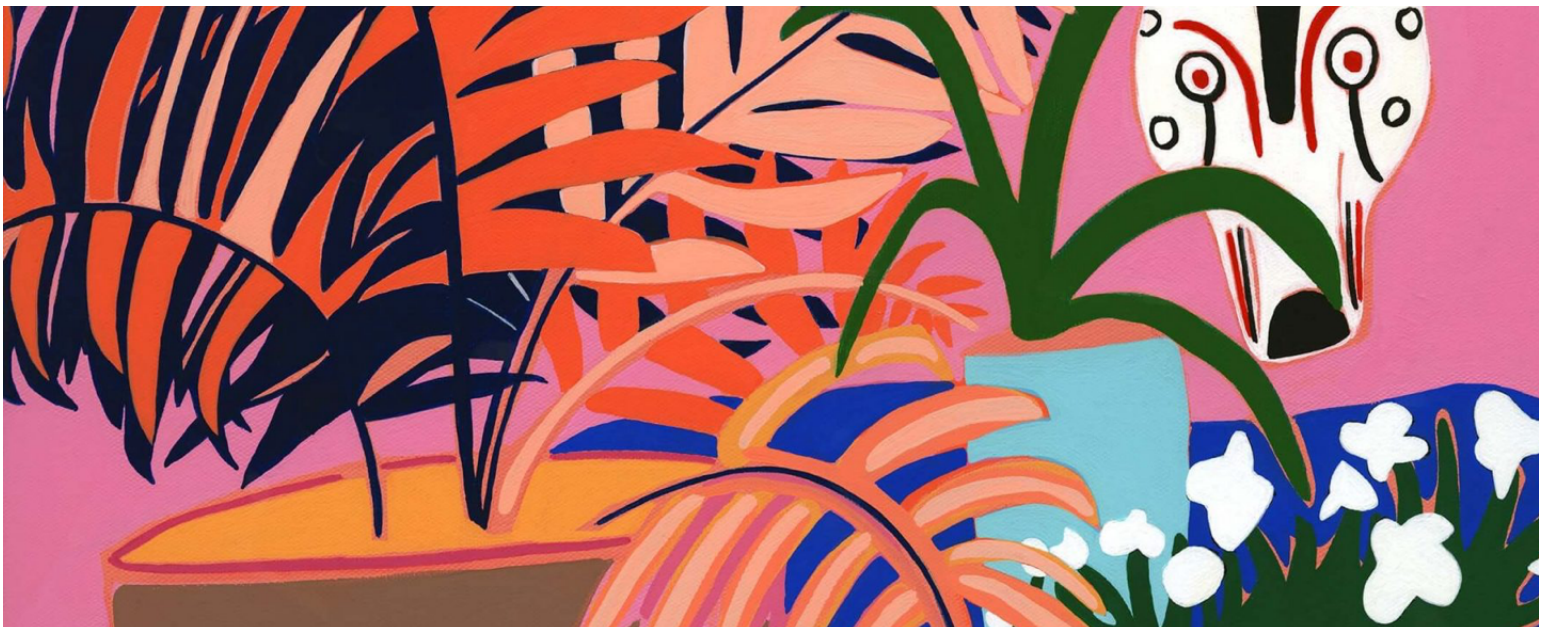
My medium of choice is painting so my brushes and paints are my favorite tools. There is no better feeling than using a new brush for the first time and the clean line you can achieve with it. I have a guilty pleasure for new brushes and even though I treat my brushes kindly and try to be gentle on them I go through them quickly! I also love gouache paint because it has this beautiful matte, velvety finish that you can't achieve with other paints. The finished product almost looks like a silkscreen (depending on whether or not you dilute the paint). I like to use the paint with as little water as possible so that the colors are very bright and saturated and the finish on them is almost completely matte. Usually, this means I use many layers of paint per color.

"Striped Wall" by Mary Finlayson, gouache on canvas, 2017

What do you hope your work achieves or invokes?

I hope the work is able to speak for itself and that people can engage with it freely without feeling a need to understand what the work is about. It's important to me that the work evokes a feeling in the viewer and that it resonates with people without them necessarily having to understand why.





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"California Art Books And Mask" by Mary Finlayson, gouache on canvas, 2017

How do you feel about being a young artist in a modern society?

For more information on this and other art-related topics, visit www.maryfinlayson.com

I feel like maybe I'm on the older side of what it means to be a young artist, but I do think that having access to tools like *Instagram* has made it much easier to have access to a broader audience. *Instagram* has been really helpful in connecting me with other artists and curators and has led to a lot of opportunities I don't think I would have had access to otherwise.

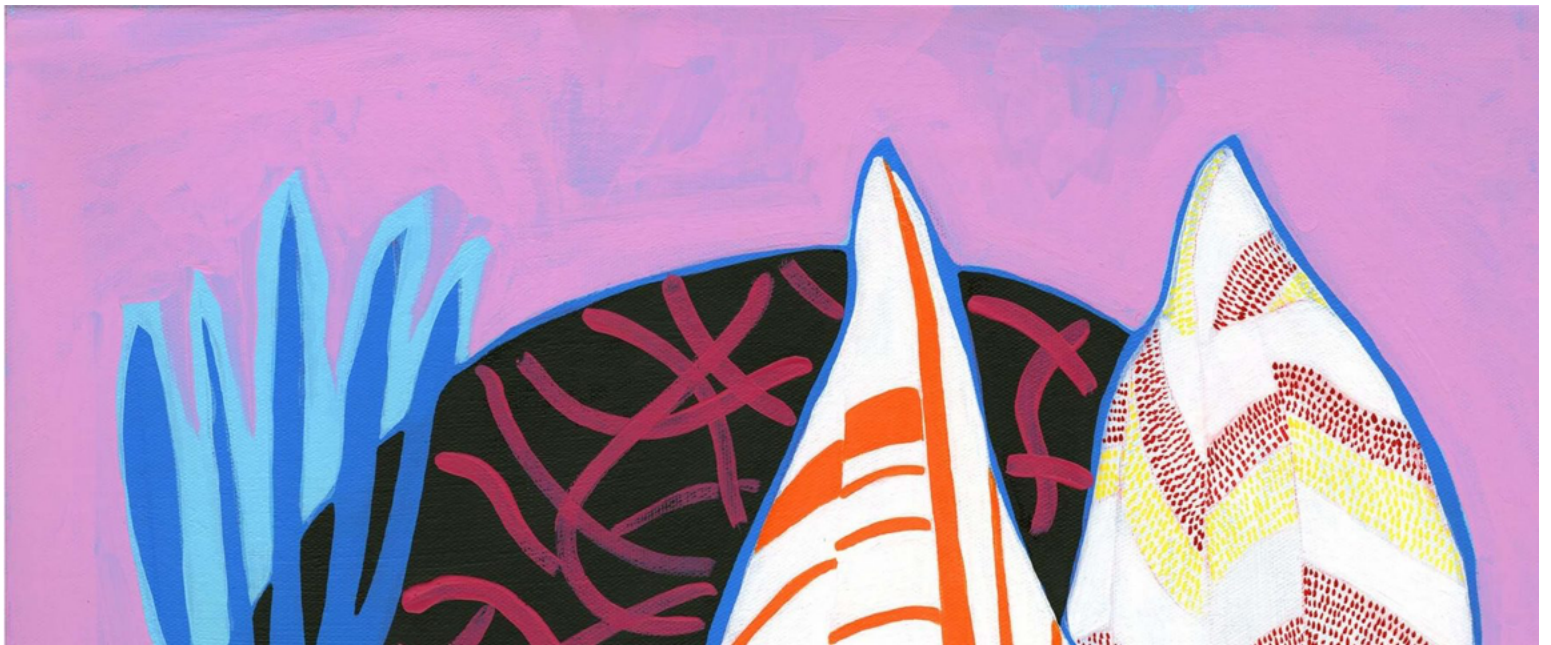
All images and text courtesy of Mary Finlayson

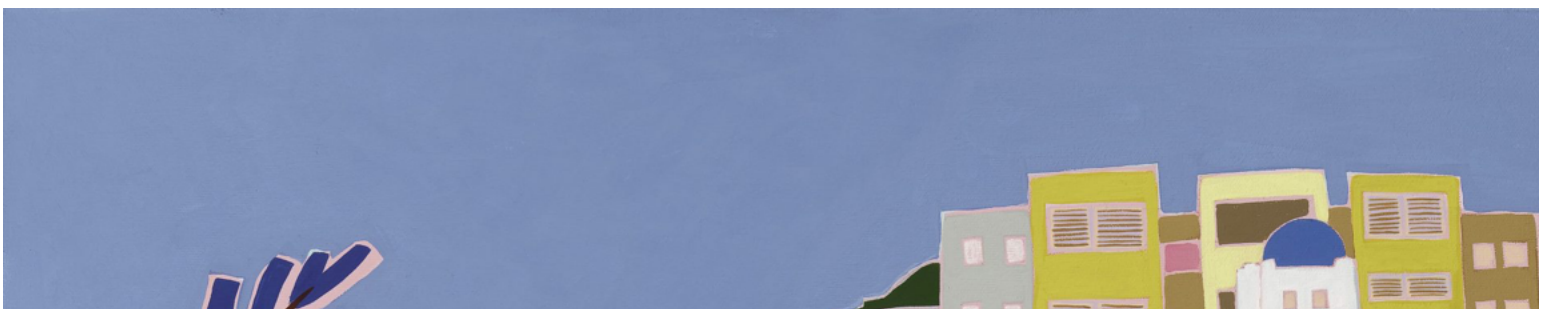
You can view more work by Mary on her [Instagram](#) and [website](#).

Intro written by *Abeer Khan*



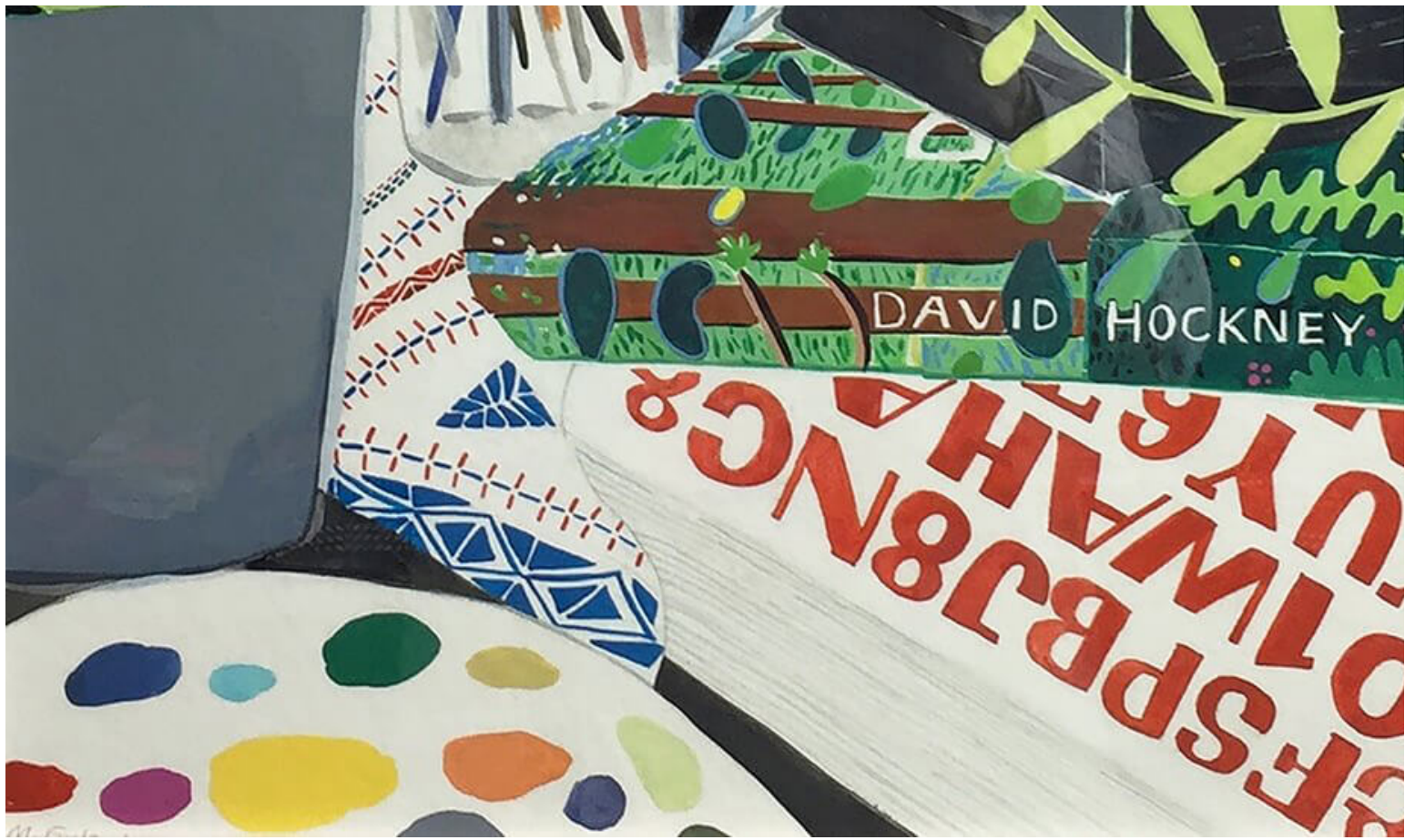














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