

A decorative border in shades of blue and purple surrounds the text. It features stylized flowers, leaves, and swirling vine-like patterns. The elements are scattered around the perimeter of the page, creating a frame for the central text.

MARISOL ORTEGA

LIVES FOR THE

ARTISTIC EXPERIENCE





Marisol Ortega Lives for The Immediate Artistic Experience

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Published on : October 6, 2025

“Where, the more work you do, and the more exploration you do within your work for different things. Then you kind of just of form an opinion just by default. So, then you just voice as an artist really comes out right? That’s where u start to see kind of some of your work like having similar characteristics you know one project to the other. So I think that that’s super important to kind of keep and stay true to! Or at least that’s something I try to do because I feel like yeah, we can easily be consumed by like what’s next or making you know pulling a trend to whatever is happening. But, I think as a rule of thumb I like to keep my north star as to why I like to do things. My point of view as an artist is unique.”

This is what Marisol; as a Mexican-American Designer and illustrator in Seattle, Washington has expressed of what its like for artists to be shaped as an artist and sort of see yourself as an artist what type of stuff that settles down what type of Techniques and styles feels authentic especially in her work, she likes to have her work be as ordinary and feel the sense of being a unique taste because its what will be recognized from her, when looked at her body of works. She continues to do what she loves as a self-taught illustrator but still having some background in graphic design, she continues to pursue what makes her feel happy and dive in this world of bold enriching colors but also having to navigate themes that just makes her really passionate and self driven to do illustrations that comes to live.

Her education started at art institute in Seattle for graphic design along with her self taught skills towards illustrations and the design educational background, she scrambles of trying to explore the in-house places in profiting various companies. Diving into how whenever doing creative work, it brings Ortega towards the exploration in her own work to interact with different experiences in the real of art. It dives into what art can mean to her.

“So, I actually go to school for graphic design and literally didn’t become an illustrator till much later in my career.. I worked mostly in a bunch of in house places that profits, different companies. Like Theo chocolate. Little moms and pops shops here in the Seattle area. Cause I went to school here to the art institute in Seattle. So, Once I graduated, I kind of just stayed. It wasn’t until like I started working at Starbucks, where I did lot of illustration work. So I working at Starbucks creative studio for about 3 years before I left. I do some work for them as a freelancer but in-house, I work for them. So I am kind of self taught illustration with a twist of having a design background basically right?! Which I think makes it more fun cause you kind of understand bits of amounts of things like working with di lines, what it takes to have a good composition for something that you are. You know whether that be a tutorial or for a packaging or something else. So.. It gives you a bit of insight into those things.”

Her thought of formulating opinion creates the artistic voice she mentions shows up. Having visuals of the work that’s being produced, catching upon similar characteristics from one another demonstrates the ability of pure uniqueness styles and being true to that concept of it throughout artistic practices. Easily, as the artist can be easily influenced and consumed by the next trend and get away with having it not be authentic enough to sticking to the unique features and originality. To not lose that spark of what makes it distinctive to art artworks, per say. Her point of view brings her expert professional voice and wisdom into perspectives that are surrounded by the ongoing design world.



After post-graduation, her work settled down in where she grew up, in Seattle, Washington, where she began to work with the Starbucks headquarters company there in the creative studio as a freelancer and in house designer as well. Working into the process of deadlines in order to make sure that there's a good level of composition in producing a packaging product, a tutorial, or anything in regards to the process of design making. She also became an art vendor for some creative conferences like Adobe Max as being one of them that later on, she will be participating in Los Angeles of this year, 2025 and selling her own artistic products there and has been doing that for a while, selling her work on the side as a freelance opportunity to achieve in her district area .

“ I don't know, like I have a love hate relationship with design conferences because I feel like as a student. At least for me, when I was a student, I never couldn't afford to go and the only time I went was when one of my workplaces send me. But I remember like having to make a case for myself like why to be inspired by all these stuff and so it ended up being more work than it was worth and I also felt like a lot of the designers that you know have speak like a speaker circuit. You kind of keep hearing the same ones over and over again and like It just very disconnected like where you are in your career either or starting out as a student. Even like early in your career and then seeing these people talking about like you know what I mean. There's just a huge disconnect. You can't relate to every being that good right or anything like that.”

During the time of her visit, it was more pleasant to talk with other designers in a smaller conference space and was a really good design conference memory that felt powerful but felt fresh and more exciting to actually network. Being able to become her own speaking host towards schools, colleges, and workshops to ensure that there is an actual worth of difference, a good impactful influence and feeling more rewarding in that atmosphere and can really have takeaways of acknowledging greater design perspectives that motivates and inspire others to transform in their future contributions in design and art or any time of fine art medium that best speaks to them .

She likes more on a professional one on one network connections as its would be more powerful but also that she discusses how she consider herself to be a design speaker for more of a school/college educative setting rather than a design conference and she can connect with other incoming design and illustration students that want to hear more about Marisol's design background as she compels with other students and can have those takeaways from learning from other students but also they learning from her/. A learning exchange sessions that can be life changing or just make a difference in the lives of these students. Therefore, Ortega mentions



When design schools and its system really pressures design students to build that professional identity to entitle a particular style and just be different from everyone else. There's an artistic disagreement with the notion of having a specific style because there's no believe that it is a true definition of what the whole purpose of being a designer should be or stand on within the category of society in the first place. Just eliminating the category of this design conversation of playing around to a professional reflection on what artistic identity is being brought about and a very sincere reflection as to what creative environment she creates to produce these kind of work. Experimenting with various art movements and techniques to figure out that spot on niche as it helps bring what that artistic version best represent an artist's professional development.

"I think school pushes a lot to be different and like have a style. I don't think that exists. I don't agree with the notion that we have to have something like that because that defeats the whole purpose of being a designer right? We try to find I guess the visual language for whatever project that you are taking on. Sometimes like different styles or different era or whatever it may be right? So like it feels like you kind of have to like playing and exploring different styles and different time periods to just kind of like gain more knowledge. But I just don't. I mean there's definitely some qualities about my work that I feel like are like a thread, kind of like help it. Feel like its me but its mostly just like me drawing organically. Me playing with color. I tend to draw a lot of flowers and things that are more like I guess organic in nature. But that doesn't mean that I cant do other styles and like other stuff."

The advantages that Marisol has taken as a freelancer pushed her to continue having to work a full time job. There was a time, where she worked for Walmart company and was working with projects that weren't necessarily her "styles" but still have to cooperate in producing work of illustrations for the company's visual wardrobe collection that will be displayed to encourage audience for marketing purposes for the season. A good catch of how graphic design and illustration come to hand on hand on like the fact that the visual communication comes out through its art language and creates a fresh look of how it is influenced in mass media culture and in production.

“ There’s a range. I mean I guess what I was doing at amazon. It was so cool for time research. Like I was working at the gift card department. It has nothing to do with fashion but there comes a point where you realize that design is so much more than just color and packaging and things. It’s actually everywhere. So, it kind of permeates into other places in our society as well and how we shop and how we think of things. How companies make clothes seasons ahead of time, things like that and so really that was really fun exercise to kind of think about okay, well if the colors are gonna be trending like now 2025. How can we use these colors to inform our customers, something that feels fresh. Something that feels innovative. So that part of it was really cool and I think that there’s a lot in there that we take and just like customers, user testing. Trying to figure out. I don’t want to say what customers want. That sounds lame. But any insights to what people think. “



She treasures her sketchbooks for personal purposes and rather much do those creative input ideas onto loose leaf paper because as a hand crafty person, she feels a special connection to keep those notebooks as a form of collection rather than be utilized for design purposes drafts of work to be progressed within time. “I don’t like to use a sketchbook. I want.. to curate my sketchbook and not like sincerely have it like just be a brain dump. I tend to like draw on loose papers and things. If I have an idea about something, I end up doing it. But, yea like you see like this paper clip thing close by. Color exploration stuff. “

There was a sketchbook that she showed that are illustrative on a either two type of mediums utilized; watercolor and /or painting and aren’t really showed in the main portfolio because they were rough drafts of thrown ideas of random sketches and so much more. It’s an opening of her drafts of her doing color explorations and walking us through that journey and welcoming an invitation to take a look in her world of illustrations and her world of craftsmanship to her interests in organic in nature along with tying it to her own culture. Gathering those unique things has a really nice sense of touch of feeling with playfulness and really wonderful and enjoying quick moments through creating those pages with mediums like watercolor and painting/ media to after turn the pages after creating from a physical objective sketchbook/technological item. Giving that opportunity really enriches this experiences through our conversations to get to know her more on a level of what it’s like during moments, when doing her exploration journey with different colors in mediums that she feels strongly appealed too and most utilized but still feels fresh, playful, energetic, and pleasant to the eye.

“ Sometimes, But yea like this is the extent of it. I think like for when I be working with projects like briefing stuff, I tend to. Sometimes they have briefs and sometimes they don’t. Sometimes its more of a collaborative thing in which like a kickoff happen like that. I would make a word map of things. There’s some additions, something that might work for it. I might do some sketches again is either on loose paper or I have an iPad. My iPad pro, I just like quickly on procreate like draw something out there. That’s really it and if like I need to do more research on a project, I do that. But usually when I brief, it’s pretty specific and prescribed what its for, things like that.“

Her process goes within having sketches drawn on the loose leaf paper material or using a digital machine like the iPad Pro product and have them in creating productive illustrations and quickly sketching out those ideas out from her creative mindset onto it. It’s a way that works effectively that best works to bring out her artistic vision and form of working and playing around with how she does her art in the digital world that’s super quick and effective. It is her daily tool, procreate and Photoshop to combine into one experimental project that makes the illustrations come out alive. It’s more of how things move forward and let that progress and see how it goes because its her ongoing work routine.



“I mean I still like a lot of my work. A lot of the work I do is primarily like done on I guess by hand and then I scan it in and kind of put it together on Photoshop. That’s kind of a lot of collaging. But I also do a lot of like stuff on my iPad. So again like procreate. I think those are like my three top like my top three. So I’ve done adobe fresco. I’ve done procreate and I use them differently for different projects and then illustrator and then Photoshop.”

Most of her work has definitely been defined as hand drawn/crafty and then scans it to put it together onto the application of Photoshop. It’s seen as perhaps collaging her work to be defined more in the digital world for a better quality of her work to be displayed on portfolio or just a good eventual work being produced for the client’s products. With that in mind, it was also an adaptation to what it looks like digitally, capturing a really nice fine details on it just simply by transferring over to physical and move it on digital. Both worlds combine so well into compiling into one. She feels that the experience of doing this creates a visual of its own, even if the final product might end up looking something different or if it does happen to look like what it should. Her strongest and most comfortable feeling that she likes and continues to go back is procreate for its flexible workflow and brings the studio art experience as what Marisol mentions.

“There’s like two things that come to mind that work for me. Like I push through it because I have deadlines and like stuff to do. So I just have to like power through it right. But, most of the time, I take a break from it like go do something else that I don’t do. I do house work on the laundry. I’ll like you know I’ll garden. I’ll take my kids to the park. Like whatever it is to like not be doing it and I kind of just like learned that its just part of the process. Sometimes, I think I’m procrastinating or cause I’m not working fast enough but i’m thinking about it. Don’t exactly know where to move so, I don’t know I think like I still have a hard time with personal art like I don’t make enough time to make personal art for myself. So, that’s always a hard one so I always try to make sure like I can schedule some time, when I am not busy” .

The act of a creative block during the development of a work in progress especially during design and illustrating, her way of coping with a creative block , it is mainly like being able to not be in the bubble of development, something more of doing extracurricular activities outside of that helps break that barrier down and its resembles so much on how typically a challenging part of a creative process is being stuck in whatever part of that development, whether that’s from the beginning or to the end or right in the middle. When there is one, its something so unexplainable to discuss but so common for practitioner designers to experience it once or multiple times. The challenging storm of bringing new ideas into the work.



Discussing where her studio as an artist is located at. Which is her basement in her house that is demonstrated and giving a walk-through tour on the studio and some of the amazing design work that she collected from friends and stuff she did on her own. Having some work of clients that are not permitted to be shown due to profession work rules that must be completed. However, there was a bunch of few artifacts that represent who she is as an individual, but also as a designer and illustrator as well. The little objects gave a distinct meaning but still connect with her and her passions in the artwork. It all ties back to the art and digital/hand crafted world that she geeks and have fun discussing all the time.

“ So, my studio is inside my house. So, I have this bunch of artwork. Some of it is online, some of it is mine. Some of it is found stuff and a lot of work from friends. I don’t know if you follow her (the painting with a black cat), Lansouri. She has done all of these. They’re beautiful. That’s Stevie show. There’s lot of cool designers. Anyway, but this is my studio. Its nothing exciting. Here’s some of my stuff that I’ve done. I have, these are some samples of my work. All that. Up here too! Some of the paintings I’ve done. Little trinkets. Things I like. A bunch of alebrijes. I have lot of books. Its mostly lot of textiles Lot of trinkets. Masks. Candles. Things I’ve tapped. Then I have this whole other part, I have a shop. So, I just like pin up stuff as im working here. This is all my work. I got my flat files and more crap. It’s a lot. Its a lot. But like what I end up doing is. “

She shows a watercolor paper goldfish that was an initial sketch. “Here I can show you a sample. What I mean by what I do stuff like. I’ve done this already (context: shows a progress of work of a goldfish) like something I have sketch about. I ad I add a few things and things to do it. To be able to kind of like brighten it up and then, This is what I paint. I just use it, kind of like my guidelines. I start drawing and painting some of my stuff. Then I scan it in. I bring it to the computer. You see how it still like obtain a lot of the texture. But, its just like all just watercolor. So basically that’s how I make my work. It’s a lot of layers. A lot of layers. This is what I mean by like I ‘ll do stuff by hand and then scan it in and mess around with it. Cause if I wanted to, I can move it here. I can move this around. It’s transparent. Depending what it is that I do and this is what I do in procreate style or adobe fresco. “ It’s transparent. Depending what it is that I do and this is what I do in procreate style or adobe fresco. “

Adding a few things to it in, Photoshop like messing around with the brightness of the scanned photo and utilize that as a guideline. Having to do steps that follow; first start drawing and painting and then scan it into the computer and can sort of see the fine texture through the material of watercolor. This was a demonstration of what it was like for her working by hand and just messing around, in general. That’s where there are hands on tools, techniques, and variety of brushes and tools that she applies in all of her work. Which is a nice perspective to see that walk through process of using procreate rather than In Design or illustrator, but more of a more common practical daily usage digital and still manage to create beautiful pieces of work for the meaningful purposes that should convey and promote through artistic expression and just what ways are being played around here and we can see that through a simple demo and sounds a very easy applicable process that any designer or illustrator or both can do from home, from workspace and still be able to get good results enhanced.



In her cultural contribution, its not globally but locally that can be impactful in Los Angeles shared community based that's locally, specially towards Mexican and Mexican-Americans that can relate to her work to an extent. With that being said, when its mainly locally, its in the area of Seattle, in Los Angeles and worldwide too of other Mexican designers and other Mexican artists that can driven a connection to culture, through similar art aesthetics and design foundations, if that's the case. It's something that Marisol was fascinated about hearing that an opportunity like that even exist in the first place. Being able to be in the same room, and connect with your culture through designers gives a nice transparency of welcoming. It also get to learn new perspectives from same culture of being informed of how other designers work and just get inspired and collaborate with designers makes great teamwork. It's a professional growth that as a collaborator to make and get those advantages of new insights and much more on design perspectives from others as a whole.

"I think specifically I would say not necessarily the world but maybe someone who is also Mexican American and sees themselves in the work I do. I honestly didn't even know that was something I can do. I didn't know anybody in my school that did that. I didn't even know other Mexican artists that were in the field till I work at Starbucks. "

"When I work with victor Melendez and we spoke Spanish. Oh my gosh this is insane, somebody else like me. That was crazy, I feel like that really hits at home, for me. I try really hard to say yes to things like this! talk about cause obviously it affects. I bring a lot of my culture into my work. So, its super colorful, its like the things that I draw. A lot are from memory. The only reason why I did those was because be a senior designer on the creative studio. So I was already giving out packaging before them in the Starbucks gift cards. It was an easy transition to do larger artwork per guess for the art program. But then when I left there, I kind of just kept freelancing there and I got an opportunity to work with. They have a program called the Starbucks art program. So basically what happened was that they tried to hire local artists from the area including the Starbucks store to like to fill in the gap of the artwork that's inside and whenever that's possible, they use from a catalog and so I made a lot of the artwork from the catalog. I mean I guess there's no different than any other projects that I have done like freelancing jobs or things like that. The only thing is that its more artful because sometimes I get to install them myself. I have to u know project it, freehand it. It just kind of depends on".

Describing her collaboration of giving the chance to work on murals for starbucks headquarters in Seattle as a freelancing thing on the side. Coming to gather in collaboration with other local artists in the area to make such a beautiful piece of mural artwork that is creative but tells an interesting storytelling for their audience to come and enjoy the space environment filled with bunch of work elements from variety of artists, not just one. The multi talent that shows very brightly comes along really well. However, there also lot of other work that doesn't required art like installations setup and all that good stuff. This art program for designers are another great way to engage with other designers and build that professional relationship with them because its so important to be accessible and mutually respecting others because collaborations are an important assignment that designers have to do within the field of graphic design. Something that Marisol opened up about as a great advice for incoming designers.



Marisol's personality is observable to be having characteristics of sincerity, straightforwardness, uplifting, joyful/cheerful, charismatic, wise, nature lover and open-minded creative artistic persona as we talk through different ranges of artistic conversations within the interview. Therefore, I picked up on some of the unique elements or per say qualities that were symbolic or just powerful in her own work, where a lot of enriching qualities of textiles, really bold colors, very importantly to note; the styles of vibrant floral and fauna illustrations. She is highly interested in wanting to experiment more on the route of textiles patterns and elements to incorporate in her future work that connects with her culture as well. Since her cultures is very heavily involved in her own work.

“ They are the things that bring me joy because they're colorful. I think doing more textiles stuff . Cause I done like art for a parallel things like that not enough I think would really enjoy doing that. Just cause in my past job, amazon, I was working as a creative director, I did a lot of research and things like that for projects. it really fascinates me. People think that how we buy things. So I really enjoy doing that. A parallel or something in the fashion industry would be cool! But in terms of other things, I knit, I crochet, I embroider, you know what I mean. I do lot of line cut stuff. I paint, I draw. So like I am already doing lot of things with my hands anyway. Maybe I would say that textiles and maybe more animation. Kind of like play around with procreate cloud. I enjoy working with my hands, the ideas, cross collaborating. The actual act of making the thing process. Its just so much more interesting rather than a final product that like im proud of.

She loves to work in an older fashion way by manipulating and playing around with her hands, the work that she crafts upon. She loves to see what in her creative mindset make up the ideas as how it comes along. In other words, trusting the process but also she doesn't necessarily stress about the outcomes, just enjoy the time of creation; of the actual experience. Also has the curiosity driven in her to some point in her career try animation and fashion design at some point, if there's a chance of will to take it. Having to be proud of herself for even being blessed to do what she loves and just being able to at the first place, taking that meaningful gratitude rather than what the projects she works on can turn up into, what it will lead into.

To add to this, also a lot of organic elements, textures, and shapes are very much alive within her body of work to express sometimes her culture or within other areas of a creative brief brought to her. Ortega collects colorful objects that make her feel happy. She is a very crafty, hands on artist that is passionate, highly motivated and more intrigued with the act of making the process rather than how it becomes as the final result.

Marisol's practice was her perspective on the design world but also being very true to herself. Being able to just show humbleness and really passionate of what she creates, she values a lot the craftsmanship rather than how it ends up being. The experience she goes through in every project, I can tell she just finds a lot of great qualities and good process throughout because that's what she treasures the most along with that colorful vivid palettes and cultural symbolisms throughout her work. What other designers can learn from their approach is to be organic, authentic and unique to the enriching quality is that is rare (because every artist is very unique to what they bring in their work of art) but a good quality of rareness and to always be true to yourself and very important to be unique from everyone else including the system of design. Their work and their design knowledge along with their own artistic perspective on the design industry, she challenges her work by changing cultural movements of not entitled to have positions, but to be creative free. oHave that creative liberty of doing artistic decisions and be a wreck away from rules and norms that design education has taught in schools.

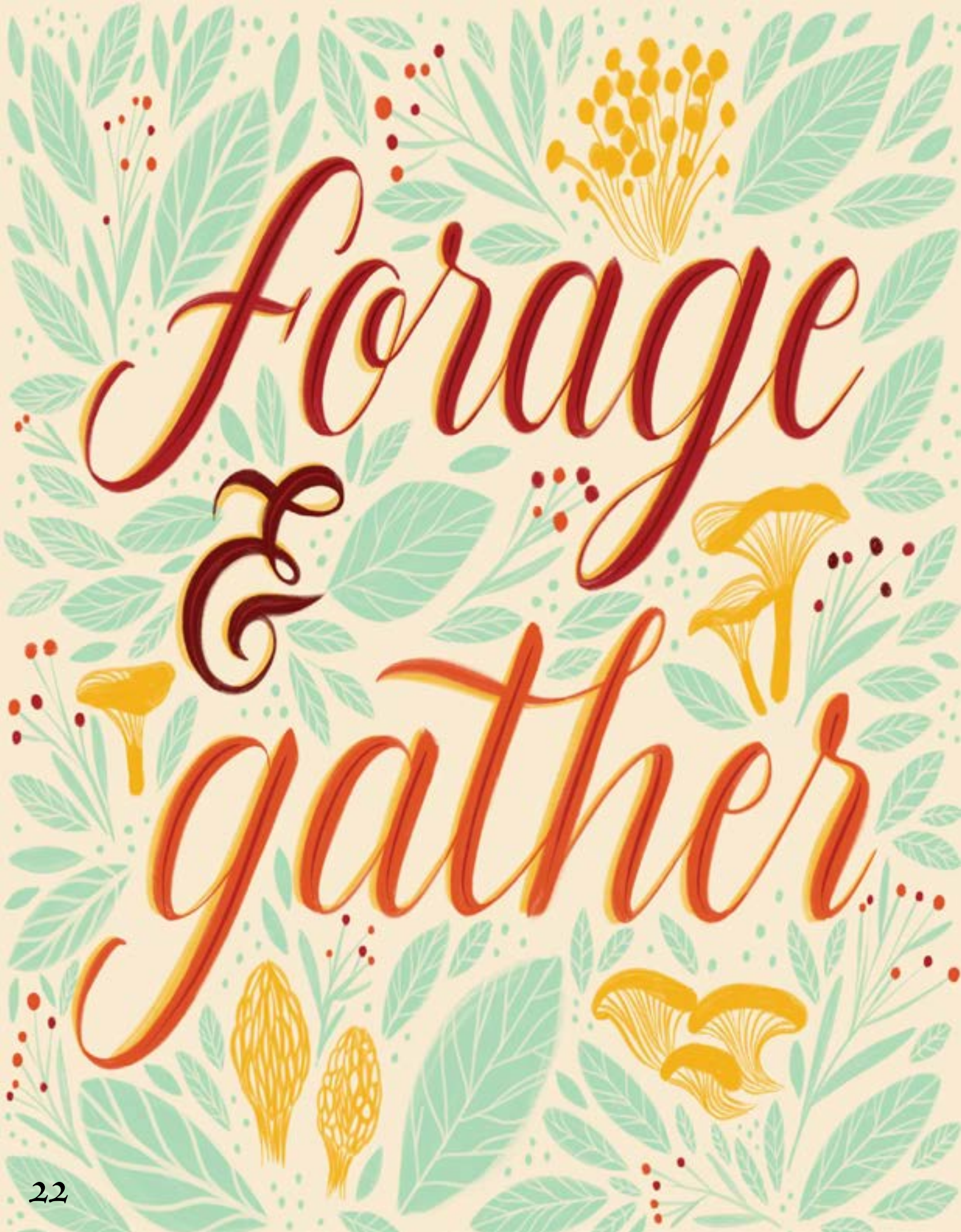


“Probably somewhere in the middle of nowhere. Nothing to do with technology. I’m only half kidding. But seriously, kind of feel like. I don’t know. Its just like I don’t know I have a lot of thoughts about this. But in the future, what I want do, something what I always wanted to do was to be an art teacher. So probably doing something like that later on in the retirement or something. But, that’s really it. The rest of the stuff is just like how interesting is it. How I think my only thoughts for students and people who are into the design industry, to be nice. Be nice, don’t burn your bridges because what ends up happening a lot of our colleges would go on to work for other companies. When they leave, and you don’t work with them anymore. They will remember you. Whether you were an asshole or you were nice. We are a great collaborator. All of that, follows you everywhere. I have always made it a point to be a good collaborator and to always be a good co worker, when I was working with others right and I think I’ve had lots and lots of word of mouth projects and clients and you know, I do zero reach out like I never cold email anybody. So, super lucky to like and like I feel like I own that to that. Me being nice, me being a good collaborator and always helping others. Things like that. It’s a non competitive form of collaborative state of mind. It’s really beneficial. That’s it.”

One of her future dreams that she always wanted to do becoming an art teacher. Incorporating my personal reflection on important insights and advice that I can say that upon from Marisol, which I take in consideration for my future practices and career after graduation as a future designer and multimedia artist that I want to be. She feels like that’s not true and more of the aspect of not having any entitlement to her work nor in the conversation of choosing/picking a style and sticking with that. Which is something that stood out as something being said so powerfully. But another note is the advices that she learned from experience that will benefit any design and illustrator student, when going beyond college and feel the workspace of the real world graphic design or illustration based jobs offers helped her succeed to where she is today! Even if she creates her work under her own household basement, still being able to get that taste on the design world with prestige companies already sets higher goals for Marisol.

Overall, learning as Marisol takes on many design journey trips across different recognizable brands and consume us with her colorful, fauna and floral pieces of artistic element touch to her nature as a designer and illustrator. There sense of greater versatility in everything she does that is admirable in a designer perspective. She creates her own environment away from whatever norms and typical conversations are held in this field. Ortega really fights for what she loves, in this case is handcrafting it and bring it to digital world to make it accessible in her platform of portfolio and other collaborative companies. The capability of extended powerful knowledge of genuine sincerity of being honest as how she feels of how she in cooperates herself within this particular industry but also to rise up for success and push herself of what a reminder art can be. Which sometimes we tend to forget as designers, is also to have fun and not be pressured of what higher expectations there is as how society formulates it, indeed. However, learning so much about many things in terms of how and what ways work is being manipulated to create pieces of finished work to her own honest true being truth of the design processes involved to getting to know her on what can be the next steps of vision for her future as a designer. I think all that applies to how many ups and downs as a designer you can take and all the challenges coming your way and still be able to produce the good amount of quality of body of work.

Realizing that the work that a designer do will be a next signature permanent that will be captured in some form or way within the next chapter of centuries of design history to be told in future and future centuries from this era we live in. No matter if its not considered art or if it is, within books, within context to context. At the end of the day, there’s still existence and shall be recognized for its invention and its contribution because design history should be tell the full story in order to find values within creating work and become great designers of telling history, of producing content for the greater humanity, for greater communities, for shape of our lives and the society we live in. Marisol really got this self empowering aspect to her design work of expressing this one sentence “being able to take step by step and live in just the artistic experience rather than the actual finish touch!”







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