



OUT *of* BOUNDS

IN HER NORTH CAROLINA STUDIO, POLYMATH LIANE RICCI EXPLORES HER BREADTH WITH FINE ART AND CUSTOM MURALS.

WRITTEN BY LAURA MORGAN / PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEOFF WOOD



Liane Ricci's medium-jumping oeuvre does not end at abstract paintings; the multidisciplinary artist's dynamic murals, hand-painted wallpapers (both available through Travis & Company in Atlanta) and newly launched heirloom-quality throws only hint at this Chapel Hill talent's manner of marrying color and movement with ease.

"My compositions are bold and modern, and maybe a little bit strange," says Ricci, a former New Yorker and Angeleno, who launched her eponymous studio after moving to North Carolina in 2017. Cutting her teeth in the fast-paced milieu of both cities, she painted a sculpture for Sotheby's Fabergé Big Egg Hunt in 2014 and established herself as a go-to in the L.A. design scene, conjuring up rugs, fabrics and wallpapers for Anthony Monaco and applying custom-painted finishes and gold leaf for Formations and Dennis & Leen furnishings.

Nowadays, her wooded North Carolina neighborhood facilitates the near-daily walks through nature that keep her both grounded and vitalized. "There is a quest for balance and energy in my work," Ricci explains from the filtered light of her home studio, where her three-legged black cat, Devo, dutifully keeps watch over her paint brushes and watercolor pencils. "Connecting with nature is a spiritual practice for me; it reminds me that the art I desire to create already lives within."

The artist's ideas tend to begin with pencil or charcoal sticks on paper. Depending on her purpose, she may scan those sketches, pull images from past work ("New work is always informed by the old," she says), overlap them and "play with the layers" until her ideal shapes appear.

The very nature of Ricci's work keeps her nimble, but a 2016 fresco workshop in Italy taught her to think on a larger scale than she'd previously imagined possible. "Touring the ancient frescoes around Vittorio Veneto and Venice and learning the actual techniques had a powerful effect on me," explains Ricci, who found "breaking out of the boundaries of canvas and thinking in terms of 'room skins,'" liberating. Inspired, she soon launched a line of digitally printed wallpapers featuring prints of her original motifs, custom large-format murals and hand-painted wallpapers.

The results are one-of-a-kind artworks approached in an out-of-the-box way. "I feel my vision is finally coming to fruition," says the artist-entrepreneur, who is currently developing a collection of wool-and-silk rugs hand-knotted in Nepal. Spring of 2020 will bring a new exhibit of paintings at Susan Eley Fine Art in New York, which has represented Ricci steadily since 2006.

"Creating art is an intimate process; so is consuming it," Ricci affirms. "My hope is that my work will spark creativity in others; inspire them to explore what they themselves find beautiful." ■