



ART April M Rimpow Art Exploring Cultures through Color

Having travelled extensively across the United States and abroad, artist April Rimpow captures and shares her experiences in her bold acrylics and watercolors. Rimpow's work allows the viewer to experience new cultures, and the stories and people of far-off places.

Rimpow uses color and textures in her acrylic and watercolor paintings to set the mood and sense of energy she feels best communicate the emotion of the scene. About her subject matter Rimpow says,

"Starting in my teens I was fascinated by people like Lewis Leakey and Jane Goodall and their pursuit of explanations of human evolution through archaeology and behavioral sciences, respectively. In college I first studied Anthropology, and found out in addition to Archaeology I enjoyed Social Anthropology where modern cultures are studied and explored. This interest in people and cultures has found its way into my art, where I love to share tidbits of life."

Rimpo started drawing as a child. Her father and grandfather both painted so her inclination to draw came naturally. The first external motivation came in 3rd grade when her teacher displayed her drawings of cartoon characters in class. Later in junior high school she brought a painting to class and her English teacher asked to display it. The painting remained on display for the balance of the year.

While Rimpo was in high school she decided to take some formal art training from an artist in her home town of Springfield, Massachusetts. She had not taken art in public school because she felt the music program was stronger and she has always loved to sing. April funded these art lessons with money she earned over several years of working summers in her parent's small manufacturing business.

Even though I love color, I have always felt my first art teacher's lessons in value contrast were critical to my later successes.

The instructor's primary focus with every new student was to make sure they understood the importance of darks and lights in their paintings. He started everyone with graphite pencil drawing and wouldn't let them move onto other media until he felt they had captured the values (i.e., darks and lights) properly. Rimpo chose to move from graphite to colored pencil and then to oils during the 2 years she studied with this artist.



"Aerial Bikes II" Fluid Acrylic & Watercolor

These classes led to her first exhibit, where she displayed one of her first colored pencil drawings. A national art material manufacturer who attended the opening reception offered to purchase her drawing to use in an ad for his materials. Despite the positive feedback, she knew she was not ready and did not sell the drawing, which she still owns.

In college, Rimpo first studied Anthropology but let her practical side take over and graduated with an Electrical Engineering degree. After college she took an engineering job in the Southwest. Her engineering career lasted for 32 years before deciding to shift to a full time career in art. Rimpo says,

"My background in engineering taught me to see the world in a broad, expansive way, through the eyes of others."



"Madison Square Fountain" watercolor

As a result of looking for solutions for customers' needs she felt she had to view the options from a variety of perspectives. This way of looking at the world has translated into Rimpo's art, where she captures a wide variety of subjects from unique perspectives. Fellow artists have said Rimpo sees things in the world that they have never noticed.



Rimpo believes it is the fact that watercolor has a mind of its own that inspires her to work primarily in aqueous media

Rimpo continued with pencil drawing and oil for many years but also delved into stained glass and fused glass. She took occasional art classes while working as an engineer, because she felt compelled to do artwork to “keep my sanity,” as art relaxes her and releases stress.

Rimpo says, “Watermedia fully absorbs me into the work; watching it flow and responding to the paint allows the piece to develop in directions not fully planned. This is part of the thrill of working in watercolor and fluid acrylic that I didn't find in other media.”

In the 1990s Rimpo shifted to part time work for a couple years while her son was entering his teens, allowing her to spend more time with him. Mid-day, while he was in school, she took a class in oil painting that met weekly. This is when the importance of art in her life moved more to the forefront. For the first time her engineering peers learned Rimpo was also an artist.

She returns full time to engineering just before moving to Maryland. Wanting to continue art training she searched for oil classes but none fit with her work schedule, so she took her first watercolor class. Rimpo fell in love with watercolor and has done nothing but watermedia since.



"Movement II" Fluid Acrylic

After several years of taking weekly classes, Rimpo started to take countless workshops from several different nationally and internationally known watercolor artists. Their breadth of style and techniques have fed her imagination and allowed her to develop her own style and set of techniques. Rimpo uses these techniques as they apply to the mood and emotion she wants to communicate in each painting.

Although Rimpo adjusts her painting as she goes, that doesn't mean she starts a painting without a plan. In her current work, her goal is to share bits of life that require capturing a moment in time. She hopes to invoke an emotional response in her audience and to allow them to fill in a story and feel a part of the world she portrays. When doing commissioned paintings Rimpo tries to understand the meaning of a place to the collector so their story shines through.

“The painting is fantastic! I love it! It really captures the feel of our favorite vacation spot. And, I knew right away who the people were once I saw them! At first I thought it was a purchased photograph until I saw the family. A wonderful surprise gift from my wife!” - Richard Perona Gilbert, AZ

April has always loved the Impressionists' use of texture, color, light, and the dynamic flow they achieved in their paintings. In particular Van Gogh and Monet are among her favorites. On the U.S. front Rimpo admires Winslow Homer for the sense of story in his paintings and Ed Hopper for his way of simplifying a subject to capture its essence. She believes these influences are why color, light, and texture are critical design elements, providing her with an ability to set a mood and tell a story.

Current influencers are watermedia artists Nicholas, Simmons, John Salminen, Keiko Tanabe, and Joseph Zbukvis. She admires Nicholas Simmons for his courage to ignore standard watercolor rules and create exciting semi-abstract paintings full of energy. He also introduced Rimpo to fluid acrylic, for which she is grateful, as this medium has taken her artwork into new directions. The other three artists have very different ways of capturing light in their paintings that Rimpo loves. John Salminen's subtle use of color within paintings significantly filled with a wide variety of grays shows the power of value and deliberate use of color. Both Keiko Tanabe and Joseph Zbukvic are masters at aerial perspective and the power of light. So color and light are recurring themes that draw Rimpo to art. It is not surprising these elements of design are important in Rimpo's artwork as well.



"Fresh Fruit to Go" Watercolor

Rimpo loves to add organic, rough edges into paintings that include foliage, wood, or rock. Sometimes she intentionally adds small drops of water to areas that have started to dry, causing small water blossoms that add just the right note of texture. Other paintings seem to call out for drips that add emotion and interest.

Rimpo says, "I feel strongly it is important to use a technique that enhances the painting and not to use techniques for technique's sake."

If a technique won't improve the painting or if it conflicts with the overall mood she is trying to achieve, then she doesn't use the technique. For example, in her city-scapes the repetition of patterns in the city is often the focus. Hard edged shapes are important, so Rimpo uses more controlled techniques to keep the edges crisp, but still uses wet-into-wet blending within shapes to achieve color variety.



"Basket Maker" Fluid Acrylic and Watercolor

Color may be the most important design element to Rimpo. She often uses color to set a mood and to provide an interesting design that attracts viewers and encourages them to take their time exploring the painting. She looks for the same strength of color as she achieved with oil, while maintaining the translucence that only watermedia permit. Rimpo's goal is for color, texture, and design to create excitement for the viewer.

"It is such a lovely painting, I have harbored a desire for it since I first saw it, so now owning it is a dream come true."
Karen Henderson, Gaithersburg, MD

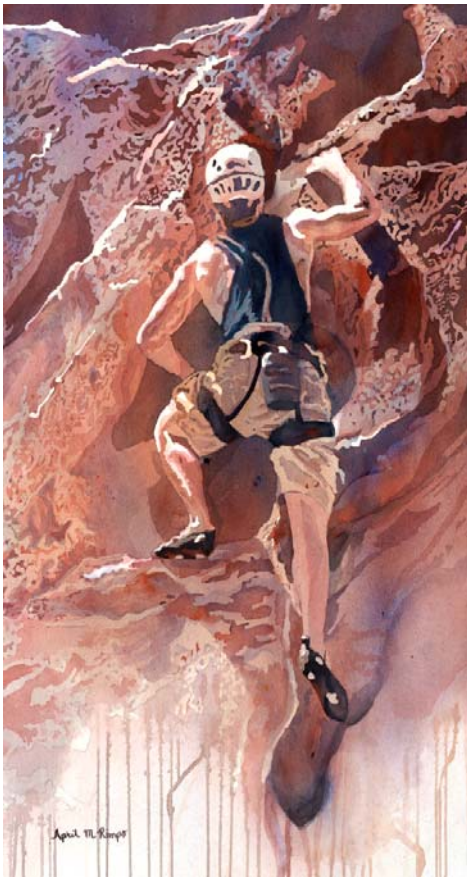


"Struggles in the Southwest" Fluid Acrylic

In 2012 Rimpo decided it was time to enter national exhibitions and is proud that a dozen or more paintings have been accepted each year. Some of the most notable exhibitions include the National Watercolor Society's 92nd Annual International, the 31st Annual Adirondacks National Exhibition, several International exhibitions held by the Pennsylvania Watercolor

Society, Illinois Watercolor Society, and Watercolor Art Society-Houston. Her painting, ***Moving Up***, was selected for an International Society of Experimental Artists' exhibition.

During this time she achieved Signature Member status in two additional watermedia organizations: Illinois Watercolor Society and Pennsylvania Watercolor Society. She already had Signature status in The Baltimore Watercolor Society and the Washington Water Color Association. Rimpo participates in numerous art groups holding Executive Board positions in two. She has been the Membership Chair for the Baltimore Watercolor Society since 2003 and is Webmaster for Laurel Art Guild.



"Moving Up" Fluid Acrylic

Rimpo's artwork has been featured in three solo exhibitions and two small group exhibitions in the last three years, with two more solo exhibitions scheduled in 2015. Awards include Excellence in Figurative 2013 in the Illinois Watercolor Society's National exhibit, an Honorable Mention in the 2013 Pennsylvania Watercolor International, and she received 4th Place in the Painting Category (7th Place Overall) in Light Space & Time Online Art Gallery's "CityScapes 2015" competition.

Recently April had two paintings selected to be included in a 2016 North Light book, *AcrylicWorks 3: Creative Textures*. ***Moving Up*** and ***Struggles in the Southwest*** are featured with a synopsis of Rimpo's textural techniques used in these paintings.