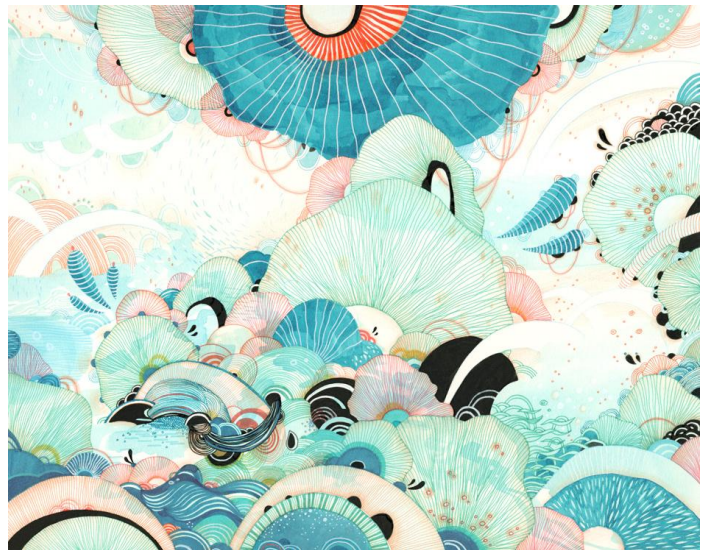




[Yellena James](#) is an artist and designer from Sarajevo. She creates highly detailed and intricate works of art that are inspired by our environment, natural forms and organic shapes. Using mixed-media, Yellena James invents wonderfully bright new worlds in her art that resemble plants, flowers and natural textures.



Yellena James is an artist from Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She was born in 1977 and now lives and works in Portland, Oregon, USA. She is famous for her incredibly vibrant and detailed artworks that show strange natural forms such as flowers that look like mushrooms or clouds that look like plants!

Yellena James's floral paintings usually show layers of plants, petals, colours and organic shapes. Her paintings and illustrations usually fill whole walls, making it seem like we are looking into a strange, lush alien world. How do you think Yellena James adds so many details to her artwork?



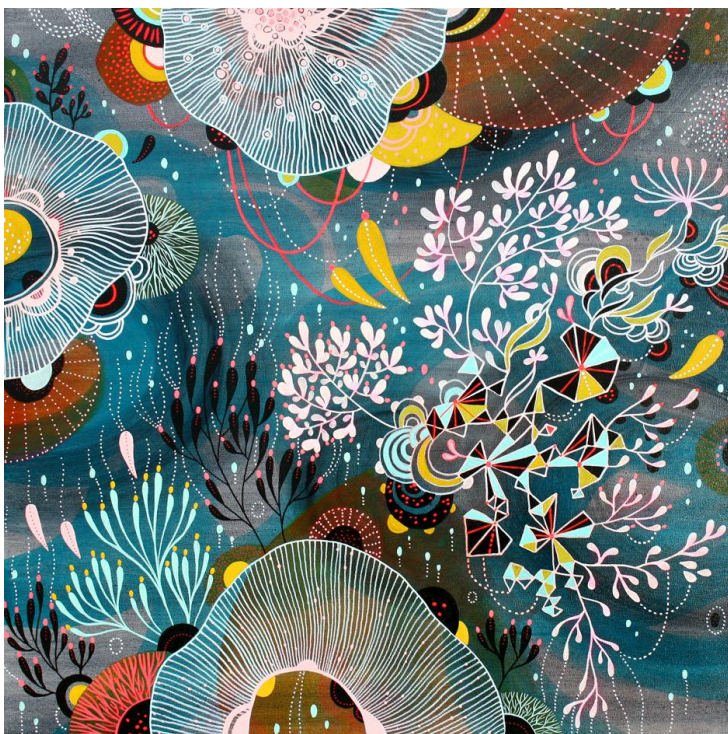


Top facts about artist Yellena James:

- Yellena James is an artist, illustrator and author
- James was born in 1977
- She was born in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- James gained a BA in painting and graphic design at UCF
- Aged 18, Yellena James moved to the USA
- James now lives in Portland, Oregon, USA
- Yellena James has exhibited her artwork in galleries around the world, including the USA and UK
- James has been commissioned to make artwork for famous brands such as Microsoft, Marks & Spencer and Urban Outfitters
- James says *'I attempt to create an ethereal place which is hypnotically familiar and yet hauntingly exotic'*
- Yellena James has written a book called *"Star, Branch, Spiral, Fan: Learn to Draw from Nature's Perfect Design Structures"*

Look carefully at Yellena James's paintings and you will be able to see different unusual shapes that are clearly inspired by the environment and natural forms such as plants, flowers, coral, shells and funghi. James focuses on formal elements like colour, shape and line; enhancing the shapes by simplifying them and using colour inventively to make the shapes appear more vivid and clear.

Working with layers, James is able to build up her irregular shapes then add details and textures over the top. Some of her peculiar shapes are given a solid, bold colour and some are painted in more gentle hues - this makes her compositions balanced. Often, James will use heavy outlines on her shapes to make them clearer. This means that, even though her artwork is very busy and visually complex, no elements of her design get lost.





How has Yellena James used complementary colours to make small details and shapes stand out against the background? What shapes or patterns can you see repeated? What impact does this have?

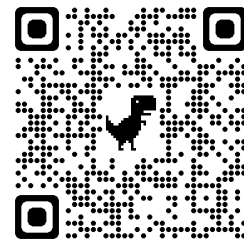


Yellena James uses a range of materials and equipment to make her artwork, and she works on a very large scale - her paintings often take up whole walls! To create a layered effect, it is probable that James starts with her background colours.

To get a lucid, fluid background like Yellena James you could use Indian inks mixed with lots of water.

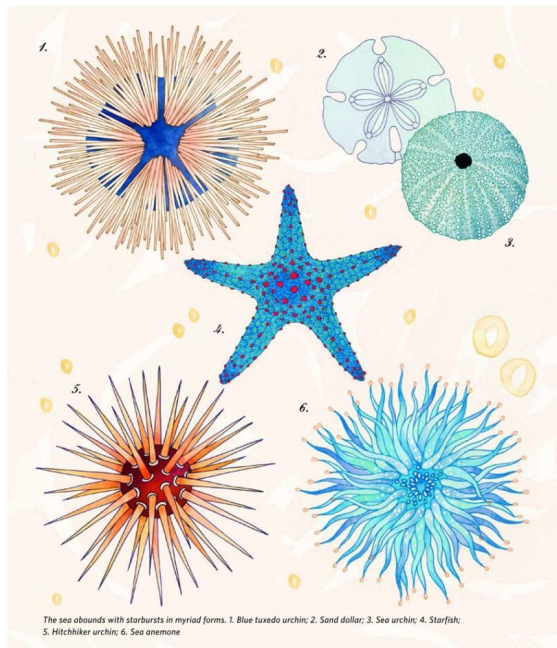
Working over the background, James draws shapes and forms that are inspired by organic, natural objects such as petals or shells, but she alters them slightly to make them feel strange and unfamiliar. We can see shapes that we recognise but not fully understand, making her artwork more abstract in style. James fills a lot of her shapes with bright colours that stand out against her background, possibly using acrylic or gouache paints which are thicker and dry opaque. To add intricate and delicate details such as lines, dots and dashes, it is likely that James uses pens such as Posca paint pens.

Yellena James is famous for her otherworldly, ethereal paintings that transport the viewer into a strangely recognisable new world. Using outlines, contours and silhouettes that we recognise but changing them into something more abstract allows her to create her own alien landscapes.



Her artwork looks like it could both be underwater and in outer space at the same time! The images from her book show her initial research ideas and explain how she focuses on patterns and textures found in nature.





16 STAR, BRANCH, SPIRAL, FAN



THE BRANCH 57



72 STAR, BRANCH, SPIRAL, FAN

How has Yellena James developed her work? From her initial drawings or natural forms from direct observation to her final pieces, what steps do you think James has taken?

What do you think of Yellena James's artwork? How could you describe it? What real-life objects can you see in her work? Let me know in the comments!