

# nathan pendlebury : blog

July 20, 2015 July 22, 2015

## Featured Artist : Mary Zeran

20 Questions to Mary Zeran ([www.maryzeran.com](http://www.maryzeran.com))

1: Who are you?

My name is Mary Zeran. I'm an extremely lucky person who gets to make art full time. I live in Cedar Rapids, with my husband and two dogs Stella and Henry.

2: What is your background?

I am a third generation artist, both my mother and her mother, my grandma where artists. I have my BFA and MFA from University of Iowa. I studied metalworking with Chunghi Choo and have minors in sculpture and drawing.

3: Where were you born?

Although, I was born in Iowa City, Iowa, I haven't always lived here. I moved 10 times before I was eight and six times after the age of 18. Places of note, Seattle, WA, Portland, OR, Enkoping, Sweden, Grebbestad, Sweden, Alexandria, VA, Rochester, MN, Milledgeville, GA, Burlington, IA, and now Cedar Rapids, IA. My dad was in medical school during the Vietnam War. We moved a lot for his education. I resumed my nomadic ways after high school. My husband and I chose Iowa when our parents got old.

4: Explain your work in up to 40 words.

My paintings are a group that evolves over time. I paint on polyester film, cut out shapes, and arrange them on a painted surface. This spontaneous and collaborative process allows me to translate what I see, and feel when I am in nature.

5: How has your practice changed over time?

At first it was all about the metalworking...conquering the techniques of working with fire, heat, rigid materials, and design. The year before I got my MFA, all the chemicals gave me a case of Bronchitis that I couldn't get over. Then I got tendonitis in my wrists. It was like my body was YELLING at me to rethink my approach. My Gramma always said if it was a good idea, art could be made out of any material. I started making art out of wool, wood shavings, and acrylic sheeting. Six years ago, I started making collage. Eliminating all the complex techniques freed me up to be spontaneous. I guess I chose breathing over technique.

6: Do you have a favourite medium to work in?

I have always been an assembler. When I started making collage, I was able to quit stumbling over myself.

7: Do you pursue any themes? If so what?

Making work is all about letting those small moments, glimpses, and daily meditations come out the end of my brush. I'm interested in the sense of ahhhh I feel when I walk the dogs or on long car trips. I love the marks I see in nature, for instance the pattern raindrops make in mud, or the long, undulating, repetitive stripes in cornfields

8: What other jobs have you done / do you do other than being an artist?

I've only been a full time artist for 6 years. I've sold art supplies, taught art, cleaned house, done landscaping, been a receptionist, made machines that put feathers in pillowcases, been a security guard at Seattle Art Museum, sold wholesale fabrics to Interior Designers, and been a department store display artist.

9: What research do you do for your art?

Take daily walks in my neighborhood with my dogs, kayak, and meditate.

10: What makes you angry?

Bullying and mean people.

11: What is your favourite colour?

It's all about the color! It is hard to pick a favorite. Anything, that reminds me of juicy fruit is very seductive!

12: What is your favourite piece that you have produced?

The piece that I discover something new.

13: What music / album are you currently listening to?

I'm really into a Nina Simone and Melody Gardot Pandora shuffle. The bluesy, lounge music really relaxes me. Otherwise, I'll go old school and blast the Led Zepplin. It's a "Southern Iowa" thing.

14: What makes you happy?

It's cheesy but, being alive and working in my studio.

15: What are your favourite films?

I love anything with lots of color and great sets. Sophia Coppola's Marie Antoinette was pretty darn gorgeous!

16: Favourite place?

Where I am right now.

17: One or more artists you like?

Matisse, of course, Lucian Freud, Eva Hesse. I really get inspired by facebook artists who are slogging it out day after day.

18: What is your favourite word?

Onward!

19: Professionally what is your goal?

I used to want to be wildly famous. One of those names that goes down in history. The older I get, the less important that seems. I'm happy making my work and having people choose to have it in their homes.

20: What would your dream commission be?

I'm working on a 5 piece series right now for a collector. They said the best thing, "Do what you do. We trust you!"



([https://nathanpendlebury.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/img\\_2132.jpg](https://nathanpendlebury.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/img_2132.jpg))

Courtesy of Mary Zeran.

Posted in **Featured Artist** Tagged **abstract, abstracted, art, artist, color, colour, contemporary,**

## 2 thoughts on “Featured Artist : Mary Zeran”

**MARY ZERAN SAYS:**

**July 21, 2015 at 5:14 pm**

1. Thank you Nathan for the feature. I am delighted and honored!

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**SOPHIE SAYS:**

**July 22, 2015 at 2:00 pm**

2. Wonderful read, Mary is a fabulous creative and fabulous person. Love to see her working away and keeping on making new discoveries and continuing her dream to be painting, learning, growing and painting. Go Mary! xx

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