



ART

April M Rimpopo Art

Exploring **Color** and **Light**
to **Tell Stories of Life**

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

Rimpopo 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 Rimpopo 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."

Rimpopo started drawing as a child. Her father and grandfather both painted so her inclination to draw came naturally. The first



Making Tortillas - Fluid Acrylic & Watercolor
on Watercolor Paper

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.



"Madison Square Fountain" watercolor

Right after high school Rimpo decided to take some formal art training from an artist in her hometown 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 would not 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.

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.



"Movement II" Fluid Acrylic



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

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 of the United States. 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.”

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 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.

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 returned 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.

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. Rimpo uses these techniques as they apply to the mood and emotion she wants to communicate in each painting.

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."

Although Rimpo adjusts her painting as she goes, that does not mean she starts a painting without a plan. In most of her work, Rimpo's goal is to share bits of life by capturing a moment in time. She hopes to evoke an emotional response in her audience and allow them to fill in their own story. When doing commissioned paintings Rimpo tries to understand the meaning of a place to the collector so their story shines through.

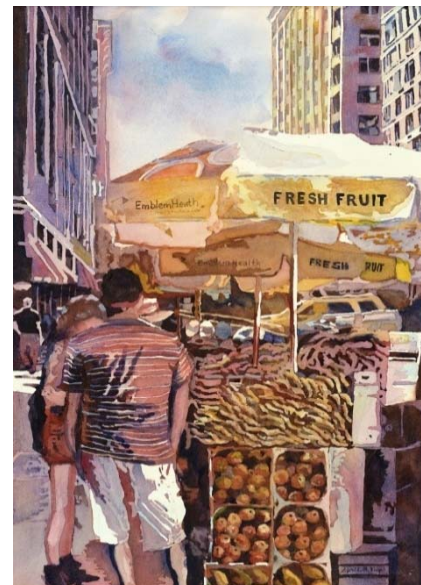
"The painting is fantastic! I love it! It really captures the feel of our favorite vacation spot. And, I knew right away who the people were once I saw them! At first, I thought it was a purchased photograph until I saw the family. A wonderful surprise gift from my wife!"
- Richard Perona Gilbert, AZ

Rimpo loves the Impressionists' use of texture, color, light, and the dynamic flow they achieved in their paintings. Van Gogh and Monet are among her favorites starting when she was a young artist. 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. Nicholas Simmons introduced Rimpo to fluid acrylic taking her artwork in new directions. Although she has returned to watercolor for most of her work, influences from her time with fluid acrylic carry into her watercolors.

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 her work.



"Fresh Fruit to Go" Watercolor

If a technique does not improve the painting or if it conflicts with the overall mood Rimpo is trying to achieve, then she does not use it. For example, in her cityscapes 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.

Rimpo's latest work looks to portray the inner stories she sees in people or reveal a personal history that she feels defined the person's life.



"Heritage" - Watercolor, Varnished & Framed without Glass

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 and fluid acrylic, while maintaining the translucence that only watercolor permit. Rimpo's goal is for color, texture, and design to create excitement for the viewer. One of her collectors said,

"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. I cherish the painting." Karen Henderson, Gaithersburg, MD.

In 2012 Rimpo decided it was time to enter national exhibitions and is proud that over 70 painting have been accepted since them. 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, Missouri Watercolor Society, and Watercolor Art Society-Houston. She has received awards in local, National, and International exhibition. In addition, Rimpo had five solo exhibitions and was featured in shows in galleries from NYC to DC.

During this time, Rimpo achieved Signature Member status in seven watercolor organization, the International Society of Acrylic Painters, and the International Society of Experimental Artists. Rimpo participates in numerous art groups holding an Executive Board position originally as Membership Chair and now Treasurer for the Baltimore Watercolor Society; where she's been a member since 2003.

Her work is published in three North Light Publishers Best of Acrylic books, one Best of Watercolor book: Splash 19, and is included in The Best of Watercolor Magazine Splash 21 Competition Winners.



"Wondering" - A Gallery Wrapped Watercolor