

An interview with Color Book Artist Pippa Rossi in Café Rouge, Greenwich London U.K. in the spring of 2015.

We know you as the artist of the Lost Garden Coloring Book and would like to ask what inspires you as an artist?

Nature and the old masters, whose work can be seen in museums. Not only paintings inspire me but also folklore, carvings, old traditional French and Hungarian clothing, textiles, bordure from Hungary and Transylvania, French pottery, beautiful patterns in textiles from India and Japanese prints.

Since when have you been doing this?

My father was an artist, more precisely a painter and as a child I saw him painting his paintings and there was a theatre where we lived. Before Christmas time they used to perform a play, like Goldini's Servant of two Masters, which is an Italian play. My father painted the decors for the theatre. He got a big room to paint the decors next to the theatre and as a small girl I used to admire how he painted the decor. I liked the smell of the paint. It seemed magical to me and I still vividly remember it. And when later I saw him make drawings and paintings, I always thought how nice it was. When he left some paint on his table, I took a newspaper and painted a house on it with my finger, a painting he treasured and saved all his life. I think it's important to not only make drawings but also to see things. When I'm walking even when I'm not making drawings I see interesting things, like shadows (small things have big shadows). Basically I like more to paint without the form, I don't make a drawing but immediately paint. It was a challenge to draw with a pencil for the color books. I enjoy making these color books and every time I see more and more possibilities.

What is your favourite colour?

I like mixed colors, like pastel tones. I don't often use strong colors (straight from the tube). I like making still lifes, portraits and landscapes.

Can you tell something more about your work and your inspiration?

I went to an art high school. Where I learned to weave (goblin). I thought about becoming a textile designer, but decided to become a painter instead. But my love for textiles and patterns has persisted, and I collect textiles. I think this education in my youth and my textile collection is of advantage in drawing for the coloring books.

In the spring time my workshop is full with flowers and leaves and all the time I have bouquets because I like the form of flowers so much. I like the singing of the birds, and I know the latin names of some birds, for example, Picus viridis. A bird which has a nice song but is rare to see.

In Holland there are markets where there are many kinds of fish on the stall table and I always enjoy to look at them when I'm in the country. Of course I also like to cook and to eat them! I'm working on a coloring cooking book.

Early morning in Venice, Italy, the vegetable and fish market, like in Holland, is interesting to see.

They say the color books are healing, anti-stress and an art therapy. Why is this?

Coloring is an easy way to calm down and keep the hands busy. Choosing the colors to create your art work and the repetitive action of coloring in the drawings in the books, makes you focus on the present and lets you be far away from stress and problems. Many people let me know it's calming to color my flowers, landscapes, birds, patterns etc.

Are your drawing made on a computer or drawn by hand?

All my drawings are drawn by hand and the computer is only used to make some finishing touches. Other people can make digital illustrations but I work by hand with fineliners on paper, a human and natural way to create art. The coloring by hand is also the attraction for the buyers of the books, to be creative by yourself. Not connected to the ineternet, emails or social media.

What are your next books?

My next book is the Lost Bird coloring book which will be on the market in

September 2015. In October we will publish *Magical Ships*, an art therapy coloring book with a maritime theme. Some more titles are coming along fine but I cannot give details at the moment.

What materials do you advice to color with?

The book can be colored with various techniques like color pencils and watercolor. When you use watercolor you can get various colors, almost any color of the rainbow, by mixing them. The three basic colors are red, yellow and blue. The secondary colors are green, orange, and violet. By mixing them you can, for example, get 10 different shades of green or any other color you wish to use. You can place a piece of paper behind the page which you want to color so the colors won't touch the next drawing.