

## MĂDĂLINA ANDRONIC

Mădălina Andronic is a Bucharest-based Romanian illustrator. With an MA in Illustration from the Camberwell College of Arts in London. She draws inspiration from traditional fairy tales and Romanian folklore. With a distinct, naive style, her work includes editorial and advertising projects for high-profile clients all over the world and nine published books in Romania, UK and US. Visit her website [madiandronic.com](http://madiandronic.com) or find her on Instagram: @madalina\_andronic.

greens are used to symbolise limoncello and summer freshness, sweet sorbet and moments spent with loved ones behind olive trees. Her tableware can be found in the popular breakfast and brunch spot Trofic in Bucharest, a perfect match with the fresh, always colourful dishes on the menu. And it goes further. At this year's Romanian Design Week, Andronic's work was exhibited for her 70-piece tableware set made for ROOTS bistro in Cluj-Napoca, her illustrated dreamy wedding stationery, as well as her illustrated 'Jane Eyre' book for Kinder Guides, by Moppet Books in the United States. The latter is also on stands at Cărturești & Friends (where the former English-language bookstore Anthony Frost can now be found). She also had an exhibition at last year's Vienna Design Week.

These days, campaigns with a strong message win her passion the most. Illustrating for Netflix's #WeRule female empowerment campaign portraying strong women and characters in their shows was one of her favourite projects to be involved in. She drew illustrations for shows such as The Crown, Orange Is the New Black and Glow. Collaborating with other female entrepreneurs is equally important, as part of pop-up shops with other brands selling fashion accessories, women's lingerie or jewelry. "As an artist, I always need to grow and take on new challenges." Perhaps that's how her line of ceramics came about. "I shaped hundreds of bowls in a cold warehouse in Chitila," she says, leaving us baffled at her seemingly limitless abilities as an artist. Luckily, she now has extra help, and the chilly depot is gone.

Hailing from Constanța, on the Black Sea, we're curious how hectic Bucharest suits her artistic spirit. "At the beginning, I really loved everything about Bucharest, the fact that you're in the middle of it all," she admits, "but now I am strongly considering moving on a secluded island." Joke aside, she is one of the people that enjoys getting lost on the historical streets of Bucharest. "I don't like parks, I'd rather stroll on hidden streets in Dorobanți, Floreasca or Kiseleff districts, where I admire each house and observe details of each villa. I'm forever a stalker!" she says, peeking through charming courtyards and ivy-filled gardens, much like the mansion housing her own studio. "That's why I like going to Arome, for their small hidden garden, or at FIX, for their botanical drinks and quirky surprises." We don't blame her, we do too, and we're not even illustrators.

From the moment you enter the quiet, winding alley housing her studio in a beautiful villa shared with the Chemistry fashion brand, you forget it's hot outside, that the traffic was as annoying as ever, and that you're running low on time. Because inside Mădălina Andronic's atelier in the leafy Bucharest quarter of Kiseleff, walls are of a calming white, covered in brightly-coloured illustrations depicting fairies and stories dripped in magic.

Our first instinct is to just stare and take it all in, corner by corner. Interview? What interview?! We're not sure where we first encountered Andronic's work – if on the cover of Blue Air's in-flight magazine or in an exhibit dedicated to local illustrators. The point is that with her trademark romantic yet naive style, the whimsy in her work immediately stood out. Graceful and inspired by love, folk art and nature as she herself proclaims, Andronic seems to dab her magic wand dipped in paint in all sorts of artistic endeavours – ceramics, stationery, fashion accessories and book illustration. Illustration is just the tip of the iceberg.

"I always like to come up with new ideas of where to apply my drawings," she says. At the forefront of Romanian illustration, she's become one of the pioneers in the industry, an endless tap of inspiration and creative ideas. In a country where illustration is not yet on the curriculum of art schools, it's astounding the horizons she's reached. "The graphic design I studied at the National University of Arts in Bucharest (UNARTE) actually helped me see the bigger picture when working on a commission," she says. The MA in London shaped her greatly as an artist but following a year of terrible weather, she says, she was back in Bucharest nailing big clients right from the beginning. She's been riding that wave ever since.

So how did she get her start? "I used to draw on anything I could get my hands on as a child, phone books in particular. And leave dedications, such as 'With love, for Grandma,' the same grandmother she credits for instilling her love for Romanian folklore. She started reading extensively from her mother's books which at the time only had black and white illustrations and painting naive style religious icons on glass; a style which only matured in time, a testament of the traditional whiff with a contemporary twist she now abides by.

And that's exactly what Andronic does best – portraying a modern Romania while celebrating its longstanding heritage and rituals – her illustrated book *Ce vraji mai fac fetele/Love and fate* for girls who can't wait is a stunning example of that (<http://shop.madiandronic.com/love-fate>). Behind every piece of art she creates, there is a story of emotion, a realm in which Andronic excels. And perhaps why she is constantly busy.

"It's reassuring when people quickly recognise my work." Besides the fairy tales she has always drawn inspiration from, her own personal experiences add to her artistic universe. "I love Italy," she confesses, which inspired her Honeymoon ceramics line following her own honeymoon on the Amalfi Coast. In it, yellows and



# The Illustrator

MĂDĂLINA ANDRONIC CALLS HERSELF 'THE FOLKLORE-LOVING ILLUSTRATOR'. SHE TALKS TO MONICA SUMA ABOUT HER WORK, AND GETTING LOST ON BUCHAREST'S HISTORICAL STREETS