

In the studio with...
Elisabeth Condon

Taking inspiration from sources both close to and very far from home, Elisabeth Condon's dramatic paintings are alive with color and texture

Photography **LAURA BARISONZI**



Petal power: Condon's work evokes landscapes and environmental themes by drawing on the traditions of Chinese scrolls, as well as using wallpaper motifs, textile patterns, and floral imagery.

They say that travel broadens the mind. For Elisabeth Condon travel meant she could experience masterpieces she had only ever seen in reproduction, and to “make discoveries I never would have made otherwise.”

After exploring Europe, the LA-born artist ventured to Asia, spurred on by a fascination with the scrolls of the Song Dynasty painters, which she had first heard of in an interview with the painter Philip Guston. “He mentioned how these ancient Chinese masters allowed painting to flow through them. I consulted a book of Song Dynasty painting and found my ‘language’ as if written by someone else.” A visit to Taipei and China soon after gave Condon the chance to see the scrolls.

Those images have influenced her ever since. Describing them as “synthetic landscapes that combine real and imaginary worlds,” Condon's paintings may contain sketches made on her travels, fabrics from her mother, and wallpaper patterns, along with applications of paint and even glitter. “I do not plan how a painting will turn out, so each one is an unfolding experience with an undetermined outcome.”

Condon grew up in Los Angeles and spent her childhood “playing in the canyons, catching tadpoles, and climbing rocks.” Her family also spent time in Hawaii and later moved to Encino, where her mother decorated “enthusiastically.” Knowing that she wanted to be an artist “from the get-go,” Condon majored in art at the University of California San Diego. A stint at UCLA followed, and she ultimately graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Today the artist splits her time between New York and Miami, but travels regularly for projects and residencies. Earlier this year she spent three months on the Winter Workspace Program at Wave Hill, a public garden and cultural center in the Bronx: “a cultivated formal garden with an abundance of ways to maintain a wide range of plant life. Joining these two environments is something I dream of realizing in new paintings.”

www.elisabethcondon.com

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In bloom: Elisabeth Condon photographed exclusively for *Christie's International Real Estate magazine* at Wave Hill, a public garden and cultural center in the Bronx, New York, where she recently held a residency.