Sophie Minto’s shimmering illustrations are perfect for summer

Sophie Minto is a freelance illustrator currently living in South West England, whose work represents her deep fascination with the outdoors and nature, often inspired by travel.

Growing up by the sea, many of her ideas are based on memories of regular adventures on the water or exploring local landscapes.

“I grew up in a seaside town and spent much of my childhood outside,” she tells *Digital Arts*. “I always find myself being pulled to memories from my hometown for concepts related to the sea and outdoor adventures.

“I also really love being anywhere in the Mediterranean and always think back to previous holidays for new subject matters. Summer is definitely my favourite season and this is often shown in my work. Having always been fascinated with travel, I use my art to show places that I have either been to before or would love to visit.”

Sophie’s first job straight out of university was working in a stationery design studio, where she illustrated anything from images for greetings cards to repeat patterns for wrapping paper.

“I made a lot of friends there and everyday was great fun. I learnt so much and it was also a huge bonus to see my work on sale in shops too. I then had a job as a photographer and stylist for a year.

“It was great to explore my interest in photography and discover so much more about compositions and styling. However, I soon started to realise how much I missed illustrating and took the plunge to become a freelance illustrator!”

Sophie begins her pieces with a simple freehand sketch and goes on to vectorise and build colour digitally. All of her work shows a watercolour aesthetic that she layers with brush tools to make her work look more natural to the environment she is illustrating.

“When I first started drawing, I always used to do very labour

intensive pencil drawings. I loved shading and building up layers and textures. It was only when I was at university that I learnt how to draw digitally and I was instantly hooked – the option to undo was a revelation to me!

“I now use Photoshop to combine my digital drawings with hand painted textures and build up details in layers. I try to keep a contemporary and minimal feel to my work. Some of my aesthetic has evolved from my admiration for French fashion illustration – I really like the simplicity and fluidity of the shapes.

“That said, my main influences and favourite illustrators would have to be David Doran, Tom Haugomat and Henry Rivers.”

A partial client list that Sophie has illustrated for in the past includes Marks & Spencer, Laura Ashley, *Viva Magazine* and the surprising illustration-standout that is the Waterstones magazine.

“A recent client project I have done was to create yoga and well-being illustrations for a large UK retailer. I really loved the brief as I practise yoga daily and felt I could really connect with the message behind it. I’m looking forward to revealing the work later this year when it has been printed!

“A real favourite personal project I took part in meanwhile was ‘Bon Voyage Week’ on Instagram. It was a seven day challenge to follow the prompts set by artists to draw

anything travel and adventure related.

“It was great to challenge myself to think differently from the prompts and see what lots of other artists created too.”

Sunbathe with Sophie . Find

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