



Artist Interview CONVERSATION KARA MARIA

Mark Moore Fine Art

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We caught up with Kara Maria in her Bay Area studio recently for a look at her most recent work and a brief discussion. Maria's paintings and work on paper seamlessly blend contemporary painting techniques with thought-provoking themes such as feminism, war, and the environment. In this interview, we'll delve into her inspirations, process, and the intersection of art and activism. Join us on a journey through the vibrant and captivating

world of Kara Maria's art.



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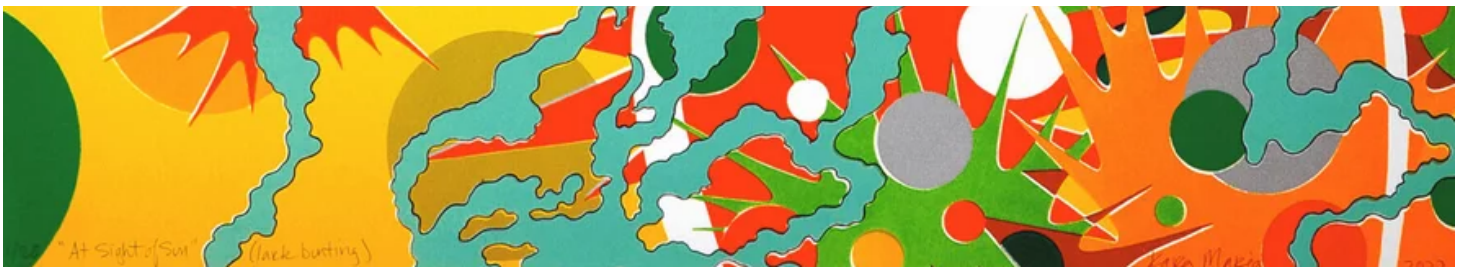


Kara Maria

Stargazer (Great Basin Silverspot Butterfly), 2024

US\$9,000





Kara Maria

At Sight of Sun, 2022

US\$1,800

[View works \(11\)](#)

“Maria’s vibrant works serve as a weirdly joyful and kinetic rendition of this impending animal death...” – Jamie Baron, SquareCylinder.com, 4/16/22

Kara Maria paints carefully rendered miniature portraits of endangered animals into larger compositions to focus attention on the alarming rate of species extinction now being caused by human activity. Swirling and exploding shapes, bright colors, representational elements, and unlikely spatial relationships in the greater painting illustrate how our progressively chaotic environment displaces fauna and the systems that support it.

Maria received her BA and MFA from the University of California, Berkeley. She has exhibited in solo and group exhibitions throughout the United States at venues including the Nevada Museum of Art, Reno; the Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University; the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston, Texas; the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art; and the Katonah Museum of Art in New York; among others.

In 2016, Maria's work was featured in a solo exhibition, *Head Over Heels*, at the University Art Gallery at California State University, Chico, which included an accompanying monograph. Her work has garnered critical attention in the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *Art in America*. Maria has completed residencies at the Montalvo Arts Center, Recology Artist in Residence Program, Djerassi Resident Artists Program, and at the de Young's Artist Studio. She is recipient of multiple awards and honors, including a grant from Artadia and an Eisner Prize in Art from the University of California, Berkeley.

What is your background as an artist?

I received my BA and MFA from the University of California, Berkeley after moving to California from the East Coast at the age of 21. My artwork has been exhibited widely and is included in the permanent collections of the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, and the San Jose Museum of Art, among several others.

Kara Maria in her studio

What are you working on now?

My current body of artwork combines abstraction with a focus on elements of realism – specifically endangered species – in paintings, works on paper, and prints.

Maria Studio (May 2024)

What influenced you to focus on endangered species?

Elizabeth Kolbert's 2014 book *The Sixth Extinction*, in which she asserts that we are now witnessing the largest mass extinction since the annihilation of the dinosaurs about sixty-six million years ago, inspired this work. Alongside images of globally endangered species, I focus on those from the US and especially those from California.

Kara Maria, Stargazer (Great Basin Silverspot Butterfly), 2024 / acrylic on canvas / 40 x 32 inches

What do you hope to communicate through the work?

The impact of species loss on human survival is a deep concern that informs the ideas behind my artwork. Wild animals are at tremendous risk. The consequences of this jeopardize our collective future. Humans are not independent of the natural world's ecosystems. I urge people to contemplate what we risk losing.

DETAIL: Stargazer (Great Basin Silverspot Butterfly), 2024 / acrylic on canvas / 40 x 32 ins

What motivates you to continue this series?

I want to draw attention to the broad range of wildlife that is disappearing world-wide: from pollinators like rusty patched bumble bees, mollusks such as Hawaiian tree snails, marine mammals like vaquitas, to larger predators including Sumatran tigers, and many others.

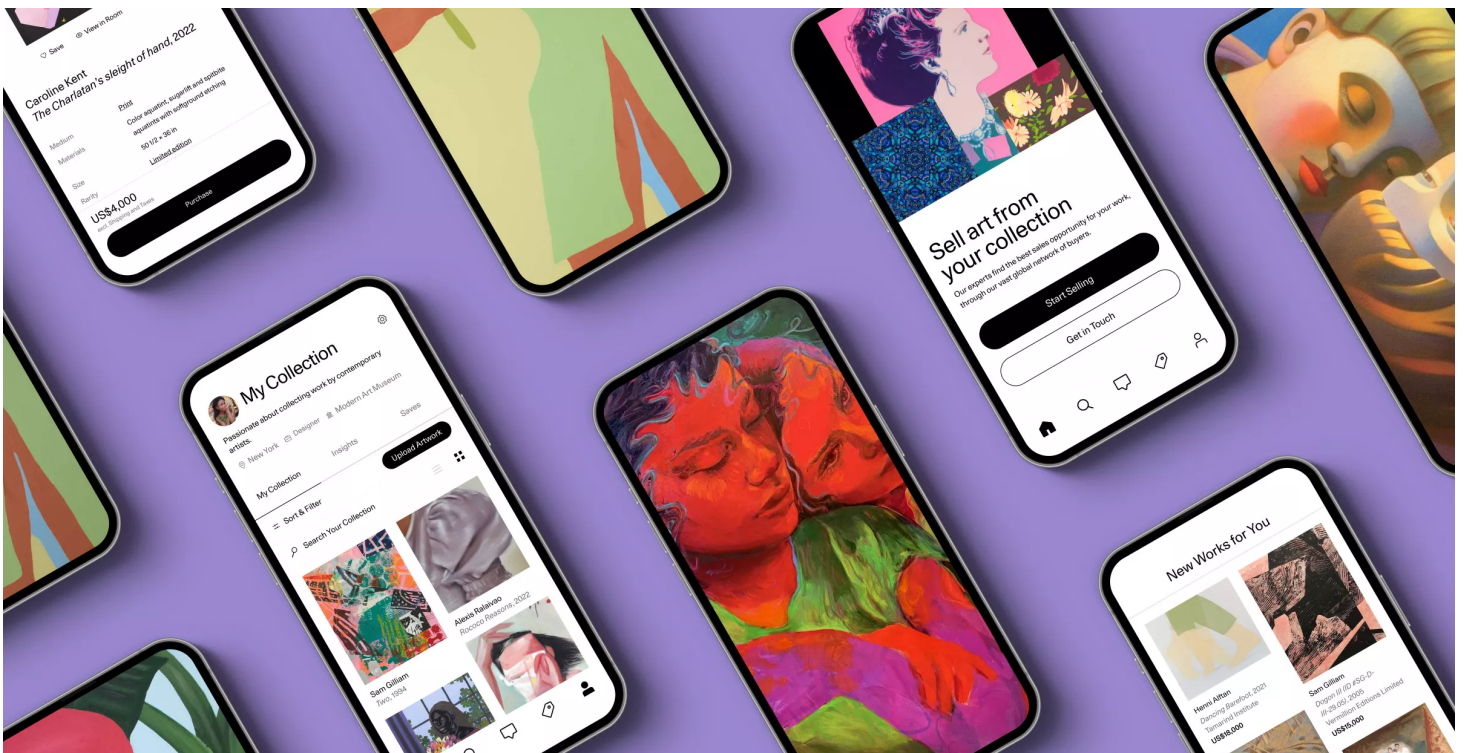
Kara Maria, Post-Nature, (Honduran emerald hummingbird), 2017 / acrylic on canvas / 48 x 36 inches

What else would you like to share?

According to the Center for Biological Diversity, dozens of species are going extinct every day. They predict that 30 to 50 percent of all species will be heading toward extinction by mid-century. I want to acknowledge these animals in my paintings.

DETAIL: Post-Nature (Honduran emerald hummingbird), 2017 / acrylic on canvas / 48 x 36 ins

View works (11)



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