

Ana Bikic



P O R T F O L I O



Originally from Argentina, artist and scuba diver Ana Bikic believes that art should play an active roll in environmental education and awareness. Her art work is designed and painted to inspire a positive message that provokes the audience to care and to participate in conservation. X-RAY MAG interviewed Bikic to find out what drives her work and inspires her artistic creations.

Bikic began her career as an artist after studying fine arts in Cordoba at the Figueroa Alcorta School of Fine Arts in Argentina. She then worked in art publishing and marketing in Spain, creating

designs for Moroccan Carpets and exhibited throughout Europe and the UK.

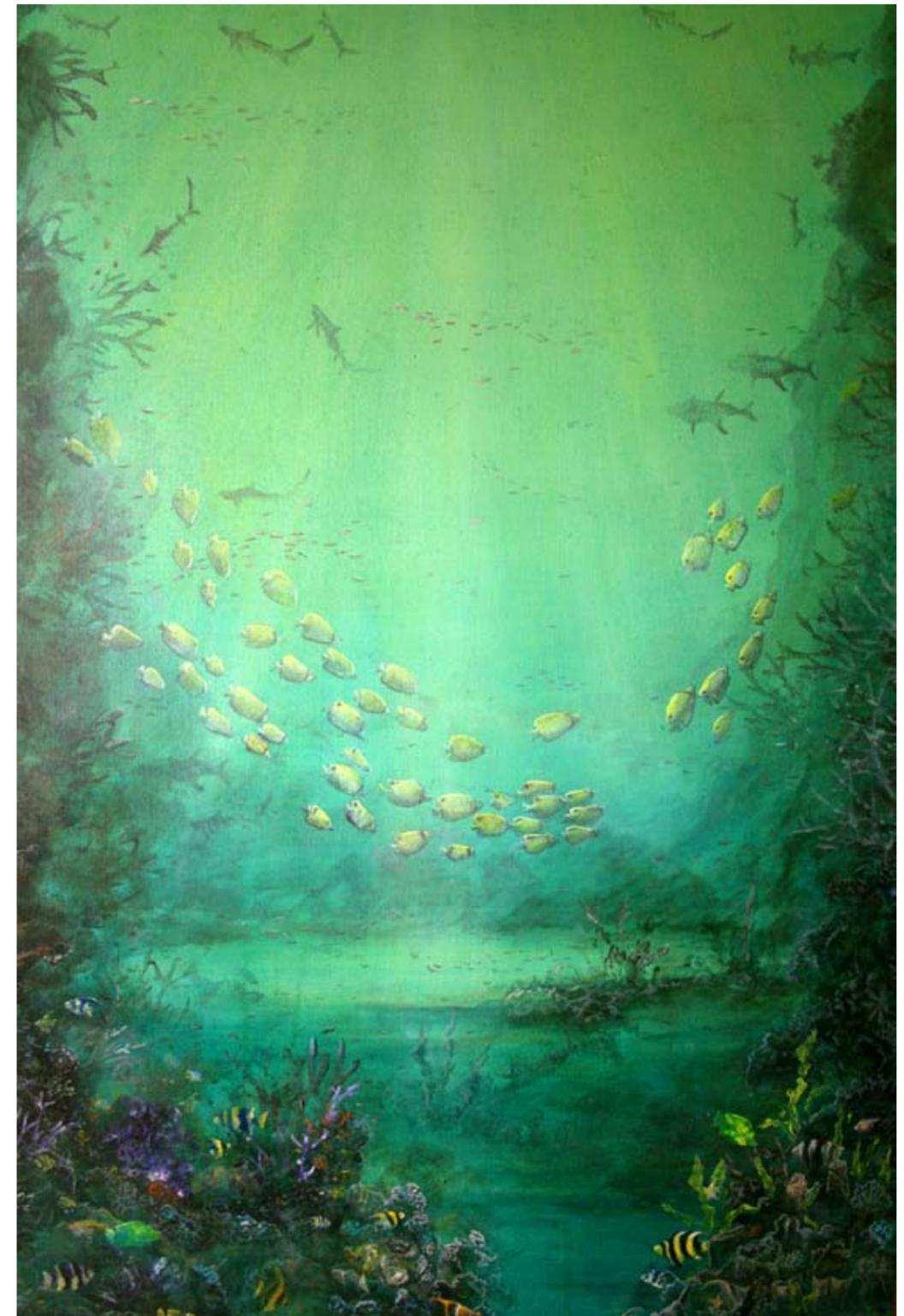
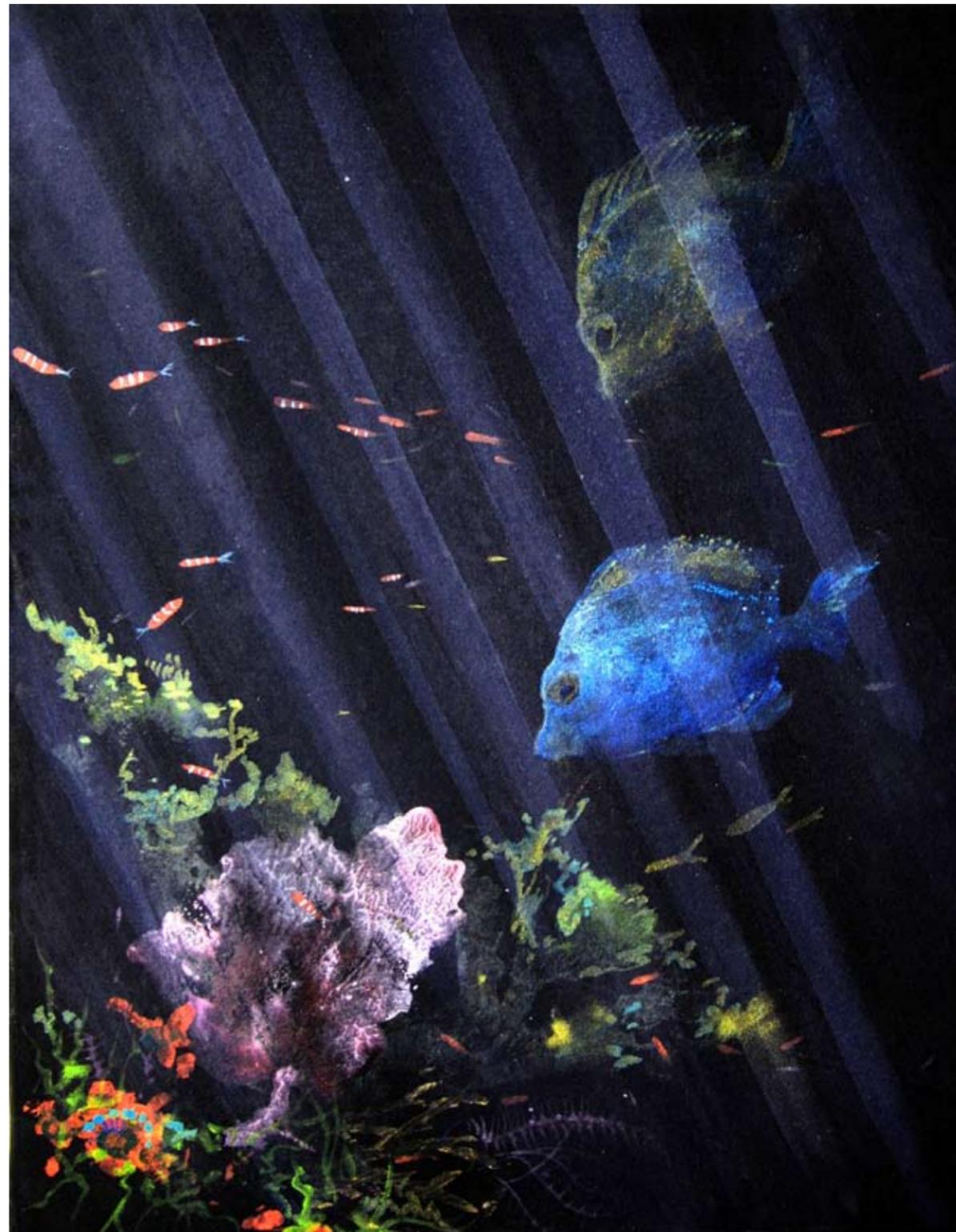
Bikic is currently based in Miami, Florida, and is an active advocate for various regional and International conservancy groups and community arts programs. With a profound fascination for the seemingly infinite designs of marine life and fauna, which continue to be discovered, Bikic has dived in sites around the Mediterranean Sea and now South Florida to explore the reefs.

Recently, Bikic introduced her thesis of Ecosymbolism to the international arts community at the Florence Biennale, Italy, as well as exhibiting some of her underwater paintings from her International Year of the Reef (IYOR) series, which she began in 2004. During the IYOR, Bikic exhibited these art works in South Florida at venues supported by regional groups and environmental

agencies. Her exhibits included petitions and literature, enhancing the visual experience of her paintings with facts and internet links to community conservancy groups.

Bikic edits several artist registries that promote educational and international arts networks and is currently writing a history of Miami's Freedom Tower mural for the Florida Museum and Miami Dade College. In 2007, the Reef Encounter Marine Science magazine featured her work on the cover.

Bikic's art work has been collected, purchased, auctioned and even stolen by a vast variety of people from various walks of life from colleagues in the arts to scientists to divers. Most recently, former governor of Florida, Jeb Bush, and his family acquired artwork by Bikic.



How did you become an artist?
My grandmother, Theresa Someraux, was an international fine artist who exchanged work with Picasso in the Paris café scene. Her home had a wonderful collection of Argentina's best painters, and my father, Dr Felix Bikic, was an avid art collector, too. I was fortunate

to have been surrounded by very good examples of fine art painting and sculpture from childhood on. I studied at Cordoba University and at the Firgueroa School of Fine Arts in the 1980's.

What is your creative process?
My art has been inspired by the

energy and power of creation, and so nature awakened my creativity at an early age. Because of my necessity of reaching others through my work, I have employed new symbols, ecosymbols and art that inspires 'hope' and solutions against 'fatalism' and 'contempt'. I invite you to follow the

trend of communication like the notes from a symphony; Symbols surround us all, uplift us or depress us. Art is linked to math, to learning, to investigation, to questioning, to try and try. We, the artists, have the gift of inspiration when we choose hope and communication. I am looking to inspire the 'art

world' and my peers with the art of 'Ecosymbolism'—to be a protagonist of hope, courage, dialogue and diplomacy; to exchange and engage a communication on modern contemporary art and the great responsibilities that we all are facing together.

LEFT TO RIGHT: *The Beginning*, acrylic on canvas, 26x58 inches; *Blue Tang & Sea Fan IV 2007* acrylic on linen, 18x14 inches; *The Garden*, acrylic on canvas, center panel of three, each 50x26 inches totaling 150x80 inches, from the Ecosymbolism series by Ana Bikic, 2006



portfolio

What is your mission as an artist?

My mission is to influence society and bring new ideas and a new Renaissance. Together, we need to find solutions, a new platform for change and protagonism. Our oceans, still undiscovered, are endangered; their beauty might not be witnessed by our grandchildren, so I paint to preserve that feeling of the quiet aquamarine depths. I find



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TOP TO BOTTOM:
Manatee nursing ground
acrylic on canvas
66x20 inches

Loggerheads
acrylic on canvas
22x66 inches

Endangered Green
acrylic on canvas
21x53 inches



light. The kelp forests or the rain forests, the distortion caused by temperature differences in water or air, the underwater landscape can be just as vast even though you can't really see that far off. I spend hours pouring over other divers' wonderful photos and reading the latest marine biology reports. My environmentalist beliefs come from my family's scientific side. Reasoning, research and the rational solutions still leave us with the need for inspiring action. Art is a powerful tool to share concerns and provoke reactions. Last year, I wrote an art thesis and move-

ment called *Ecosymbolism*. It was presented at the Florence Biennale 2007 and as a literary piece at Books and Books, Coral Gables in 2008. Ecosymbolism art should be inspiring, positive and well studied. The current text is published on line at www.ecosymbolism.org. I invite everyone to read it and join my Facebook page, too.

Where would you like to dive in the future? Around the Indic and Western Pacific ocean would be a magnificent experience, having such diverse schools of colored fish and coral reefs.

that artists have created a reputation for themselves by their unwillingness to attempt difficult subjects and techniques. Symbols of banality abound in art shows, so I am very grateful to X-RAY MAG for this opportunity to talk. Art can catalyze awareness by its iconic or symbolic message; I paint to inspire environmental awareness.

What are your thoughts and feelings about the underwater world? The underwater world is mysterious, full of riches and spirituality, conceding an indescribable feeling. The sensation created by the combination of light, depth and diverse scenarios that this unknown realm has to offer us is truly magical.

Are you a scuba diver and how did you start diving? I'm not a professional scuba diver; I do it for fun and as a hobby, mainly as a working tool for my art work. In other words, I'm an enthusiast—an artist that dives into other people's underwater photography, too.

What are your favorite dive locations and why? Indonesia, Malaysia, and diverse locations around the Indic Ocean are some, due to their beauty and vast amount of different species they have to offer. I also promote and heavily support South Florida and the Caribbean for conservation.

How does the underwater world affect or influence your art work? It's all about the



portfolio

Who are your idols or mentors in art and/or diving? Most of us owe such a debt of gratitude to the Cousteau experience. Even in black and white, his films were so mesmerizing to me as a child. I sometimes wonder how great painters like Rembrandt and Da Vinci would have handled the underwater world if they had scuba dived and cameras to see nature beneath the waves.

What is your favorite quote about art or the underwater realm?

How inappropriate to call this planet "Earth" when clearly it is an Ocean. — Arthur C. Clarke

What are your thoughts on art and ocean conservation? I use my art world as a catalyst to create awareness, bringing humanity to understand we have a moral responsibility. Art has had an impact on society and politics. Everything that revolves around us has an influence on each other, and what we evoke, leaving a legacy of knowledge and dialogue for the future generations.

I hope these events will help us 'naturalist' painters to be taken more seriously and for the voices of conservancy to be honored with real policies that are based on science and not on short term profit gains. No matter how painful the facts that scientists acknowledge, we have a duty to at least listen. The message that some scientists are predicting is catastrophic.

Artists who create with these concerns for the environment will have plenty of challenges to find a more meaningful iconography for contemporary art tastes. I hope the fashion of concern for the conservancy movement really translates into a deeply cultural endeavor for everyone. The



annual beach and waterway clean ups are great local initiatives and spread globally, many artists around the world participate in bringing the media attention to the local culprits.

What are your current and future projects? The IYOR 2008 is ending, but I hope we can keep the awareness effort going, that we can join with other groups protecting rain forests and water quality, too, in order to explain how everything in nature is so indelibly linked.

Locally, I'm very interested in the problem of invasive species like the lionfish along our reefs; they are gobbling up the natural inhabitants at an alarming rate. I believe we are going to need to literally weed them out, like a vegetable garden needs weeding. I have concentrated on the Florida fauna recently, and I am currently researching the Barrier Reef's lat-



CLOCKWISE: *Face of the Reef*, acrylic on canvas, 52x36 inches; *Sponge Cave*, acrylic on canvas; *Blue Tang Sea Fan*, acrylic on linen





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again with the brush. I want to encourage others to witness this, to explore the magnificence of the underwater realm.

Do you have prints available of your work, and if so, how can they be purchased? I have made most of my IYOR 2008 and Ecosymbolism series available on **fineartamerica.com**. I also donate 15 percent of my sales to the Reef Relief groups as well as some originals.



Is there anything else you would like to share with our readers about yourself, your artwork, and/or your relationship with the sea?

Through the dialogue of Ecosymbolism Art, I would like to continue promoting the oceans, educating society, since we need to bring solutions and positive outcomes to the dilemmas that humanity faces today. This year, I'd like to inspire and invite all the other art-

ists to participate and take on the challenge, and through this iconography, to find a new Renaissance of hope, optimism, change and creating a bridge between the sciences and the arts.

Ecosymbolism Art offers positivism expressed in art with sincere and intellectual emotion, empowered by the visual language of symbols. It aims to bring dialogue between audience and subject using inspiration of effort and integrity of content. It hopes to bring a more profound iconography for art, which aspires to create hope and noble solutions through the dialogue of humanity's symbols.

For more information, visit Bikic's website at: **Anabikic.com** and **Ecosymbolism.org** ■

est updates from Reef Encounter, which used my art last year.

www.fit.edu

This year, I'm also working on a theme of immigration and writing an art history article for the Florida Historical Museum about the Miami Freedom Tower Mural. I was involved with the Miami Artisans, and we are very proud to have a significant public art work included with this Landmark Status building.

Are you an underwater photographer and if so, how do you use this in your art work?

I'm not exactly an underwater photographer, I'm more of an enthusiastic, demonstrating my fascination of its environment through my paintings. Everyone has been so generous sharing their images on the net. The advantage of painting an underwater landscape rather than enlarging a photo is that I can create the picture composition and control the light, movement and color. The drama and the ballet of life begin to come to alive

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Redreef, acrylic on canvas, 18x24 inches (above) and *Turning Point*, acrylic on canvas, 30x54 inches (top left) from the Ecosymbolism Art series by Ana Bikic, 2006; portrait of the artist (center inset)