

Irene Koronas: Renaissance Woman



ON A GRAY SOFT RAINY DAY I set out to meet with artist and poet Irene Koronas. I knew that I was going to view the work of a unique artist. I turned down the lane to Irene's house. Trees created a niche for her house to fit into, just leaving an opening for the few steps to her porch and door. Although I was not far from; I felt as far as one can get from the hustle and bustle of the city.

Prior to our meeting I have read some of Irene's poetry. Her poetry is composed with the use of visual descriptions. When I read Irene's poetry I feel as though I am on a path where my imagination continues after her last settled word.

I have seen some of Irene's art on book covers and in her small hand-made books. These books no bigger than the palm of one's hand; contain collages composed from disparate images of art, poetry, society and human nature. The cut out shapes, writings, and color incorporate abstract, surreal, and real images. These little works of art are powerful and unique in content. I was intrigued to see other forms of Irene's art, and so I asked Irene for the opportunity to come to her studio and discuss the idea of exhibiting her art on the Wilderness House Literary Review's visual arts component.

I knocked softly on her door; Irene called out to come in. She greeted me from her living room at the top of a small set of stairs. Where ever I looked there were pieces of her art. I followed her into her cozy kitchen where a plate of stuffed grape leaves and mushroom marinade had been set out for our time together. She made both of us a cup of tea and sat down ready to share who she is as an artist.

Two of her grid paintings hung on the wall next to the table. I started my interview with the usual question one asks an artist, "What is the creative process like for you?", specifically acknowledging the grid paintings above the table. She proceeded to speak about her art, inspiration, and life, all of which were naturally intermingled.

I decided that I did not want my note taking to get in the way of being fully present with this wonderful artist in her surroundings. About three minutes into my time with her I was able to scribble down what is in the following paragraph, after which I put the pen down.

Irene's initial inspirations as a young girl was love poems about boys. Her art was inspired by the impressionist landscape painters. She would often go to the Mount Auburn Cemetery and sit and draw for hours. At home she would draw many portraits of her family, her mother and herself.

She lead me upstairs to her studio. It was a small space but full of light. On every wall and surface was her art. Irene is a prolific artist, from

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her icon paintings to her colored grid paintings, and compositions formed through writing, symbols, and images. She told me her painting and writing is conceived simultaneously. She writes during the day and paints at night.

All of Irene's art shows her attention to color. She has an innate and intellectual understanding of color; this knowledge is reflected especially in her grid paintings, and the drawings and paintings which use a combination of writing, shape and image. A sense of rhythm is created through the placement of these elements, as with her writing her art is an ongoing evolution of visual poetry.

I wished I could have had more time with Irene. I knew there was so much more to learn about this wonderful woman, artist, poet, and teacher

Beyond our time together her day was planned for other things. So my friends I must end here wanting to know and share more.

Wilderness House Literary Review is honored to present the art of Irene Koronas.



I play with deconstruction and manipulate symbols, like the equal sign or the plus sign. I have always worked in series, each one comes from the previous work. Working with grids comes from my childhood exposure to Byzantine surroundings, church and customs within the family. My mother was a factory worker who knitted, crocheted, and created clothes. My father was a shoemaker and kept numbers on sheets of paper, conjectures to win through gambling; thus inspired a fascination with numbers and symbols

— Irene Koronas

IRENE KORONAS has a fine arts degree from Mass College of Art. She is a multi-media artist, working with paint, collage, mono-printing, artists' books and words. Embedding words in paint, she

became interested in the origins of the alphabet; understanding a single letter has multiple meanings; she began to delve into language, philosophy and the implication of meaning. She is interested in the historical understanding of given words and the words' various transitions through

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out time. she plays with deconstruction and manipulates symbols like the equal sign or the plus sign. She works in series and each series comes from the previous work. Working with grids comes from her background; her Byzantine surroundings, church and customs within the family. Her mother was a factory worker who knitted, crocheted, and created clothes. Her father was a shoemaker and kept numbers on sheets of paper, conjectures to win through gambling. Thus a fascination with numbers and symbols. Also her lean toward the grid and boundaries. Tiles and Byzantine art work done within the boundary of the figure which was done on a flat surface, with at least three paint layers and apparel abstractions. Koronas's work moves from paper to page, from page to book to photograph to poetry and all connections are from the same intuitive expressions, discipline and revision, color fields to printed surface. Separating her work is a mistake. The work is one process done with different materials.



Irene Koronas for many years showed her paintings in local galleries that have since closed their doors. She shows her work in her local library and during open studio. She does book covers for poetry books and teaches drawing once a week in a private lower grade school. She sells her work privately. Painting and writing are her way of life and she meets with friends who share her love of art. Once a week she meets in a cafe in Davis Sq. Somerville, with the bagel bards, writers and poets.

Exhibits:

Tokyo Art Museum Japan 1977-1979
Cambridge Adult Center 1979
Cambridge Public library 1979
Habitat Belmont 1980
Cambridge Center for Adult Education 1980
Boston Visual Artists' Union 1980
Cambridge Independent Artist Organization 1984
The Gallery at Bentley 1985
Ponce Art 1987
The Gallery at Henri iv 1988
Ponce Art 1990
M & M gallery 1991
The Open Gallery 1992
The Cambridge Art Association Book Arts 1998
Cambridge O'Neal library 2005-11
North Cambridge Open Studio 2006 - 2011

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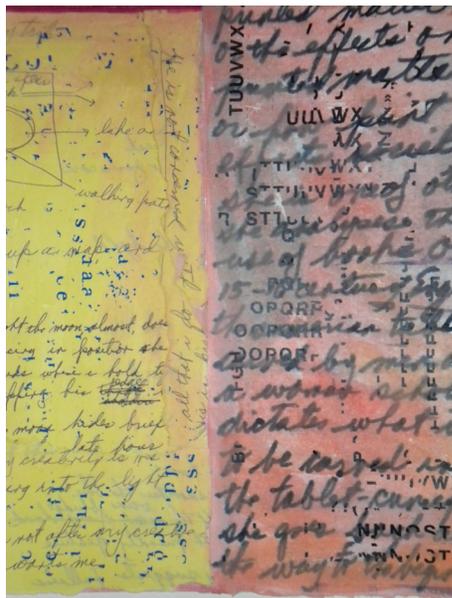
taught: collage at 'the paper source' Cambridge 1994-8
drawing teacher: Chinese School Belmont 2010-11



IRENE KORONAS IS THE POETRY EDITOR FOR WILDERNESS HOUSE LITERARY REVIEW.. Her poetry has appeared in Clarion 13, Clarion 14, LummoX, Free Verse, Posey, Presa:S:Press, Counterexample Poetics and on-line zines, Divine Dirt, Spreadhead, Index poetry, Unblog, Haiku Hut and Lynx, Pop Art, Right Hand Pointing. Anthologies: Bagel Bards Vol. 1-3, Wilderness House Literary Review, 1-3 and Presa. With two full length books, 'Self Portrait Drawn From Many,' Ibbetson Street Press, 2007, 'Pentakomo Cyprus' Cervana Barva Press' 2009. Her most recent chap-books, 'Zero Boundaries', Cervana Barva Press, 2008 and 'Emily Dickinson,' Propaganda Press, 2010.



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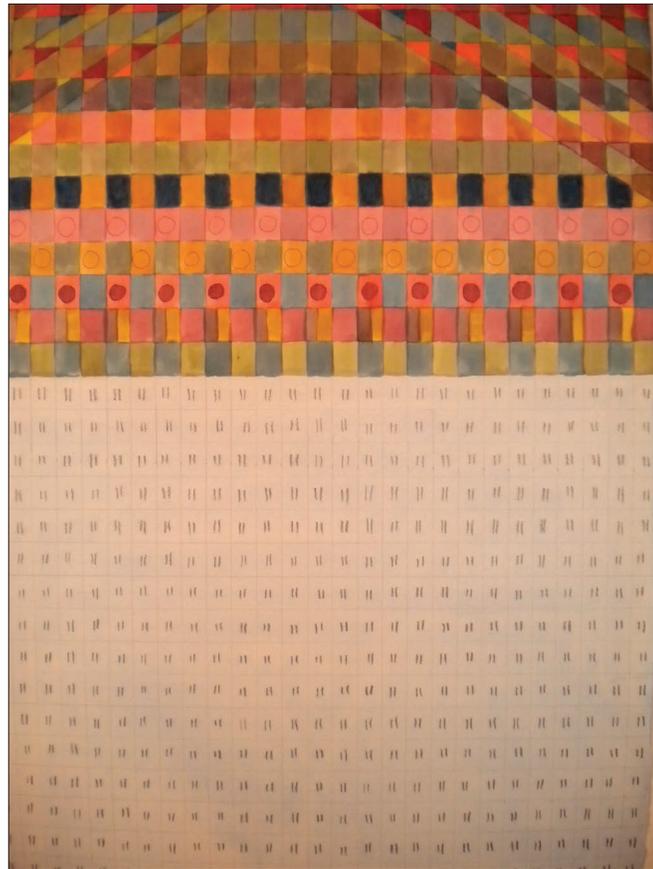
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lines

line after line after line the lines accumulate
day after day the lines differ each time each
second line resembles the one before each line
differs after each lines mark twists its slight
turning toward the line after it becomes its
own reason to line line after line after line
lines lining long narrow lines lining the surface