

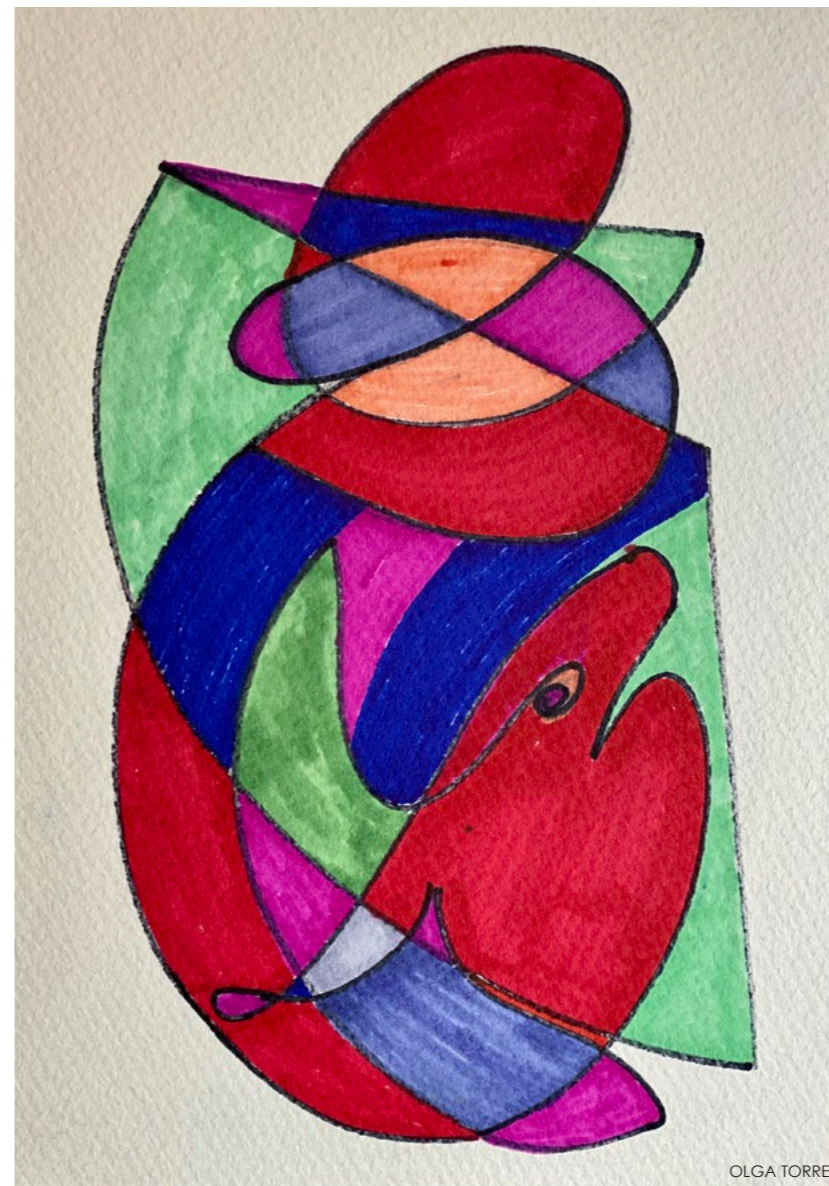
# Art Inspired

by *Underwater Images*

Text by Olga Torrey  
Photos by Olga Torrey  
and Larry Cohen



OLGA TORREY



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Underwater photographer and regular contributor Olga Torrey talks about how fine art and photography can influence each other, as she illustrates in her recent works undertaken in the *X-Ray Mag Photo Challenge*, which asks participants, who are homebound during the coronavirus lockdown, to recreate an underwater image they have taken with objects found around the home or things they can photograph from their windows. Torrey took the challenge to a whole new level by creating original art drawings and paintings inspired by underwater images.



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Sand tiger shark in *Aeolus* shipwreck in North Carolina in photo (top left) and in abstract drawing (above) by Olga Torrey; Silvertip shark in photo by Larry Cohen (right) and in an abstract drawing by Olga Torrey (above)

As a lifetime member of the Art Student League in New York City, I have studied both realistic and abstract painting. I often use my art training to help my photography, both above and below the water's surface. And when I create a realistic painting, I may use a live model or a photo as a reference. In my abstract work, the inspiration comes from within my soul. A feeling or the rhythm of a jazz song might inspire my work.

Recently, I undertook the challenge of turning a few underwater photographs into abstract pieces of art. I had always liked the curved lines in the silvertip shark

photo taken by my dive partner, Larry Cohen, so I decided to draw the head of a shark and to create curves similar to those in the photograph. I used the same technique to draw the sand tiger shark in the photograph I took inside the *Aeolus* shipwreck in the US state of North Carolina.

Using my photograph of two nudibranchs, I decided on a totally abstract design. I let the lines of the nudibranchs be the inspiration of the shapes joining together, which modified their true colors to work in my marker painting.

I took a more realistic approach to the drawing based on my photo-



LARRY COHEN



OLGA TORREY



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Two nudibranchs in photo (above) and abstract marker painting (left) by Olga Torrey; Anemonefish and anemone tentacles in photo (right) and in a two-dimensional graphic representation (top right) by Olga Torrey

graph of an anemonefish. You can recognize the shapes of the anemonefish and the tentacles of an anemone. I wanted to flatten them to make them two-dimensional in order to turn them into a graphic version of the photograph.

With the art school that I used to go to being shut down due to the pandemic, I have not made any drawings in a long time. I found it challenging to start this project. Once I started, I remembered how much I enjoy drawing, and I am planning on doing more. ■

*If you want to try your hand at recreating an underwater*

*image in an original drawing or painting, or with found objects, by taking the X-Ray Mag Photo Challenge, post and share your work on Twitter at [#xraymag-photochallenge](https://twitter.com/xraymag-photochallenge). For tips, go to [xray-mag.com/content/take-x-ray-mag-photo-challenge](https://xray-mag.com/content/take-x-ray-mag-photo-challenge).*

*Olga Torrey and Larry Cohen are well-traveled and published underwater photographers based in New York City, USA. They offer underwater photography courses and presentations to dive shops, clubs and events. For more information, please visit: [fitimage.nyc](https://fitimage.nyc) and [liquidimagesuw.com](https://liquidimagesuw.com).*



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