



# YDJ Blog

Design & art matters, let's make it great!



## Treasure Found: Cinthia James Shares Her Art Journey and Guides You to Uncover Your Creative Identity

February 7, 2024  Hazel Lee

**Cinthia James** is an illustrator who has a unique talent for effortlessly combining custom patterns with portrait art. Her work is influenced by the world of fashion art, music, movies and her love for K-pop.

Long before she dived into pattern design and illustration, her life was filled with self-doubt. Feeling uncertain, she set out on a creative journey that resulted in the creation of a one-of-a-kind artistic process, which she documented in her self-published art book, titled **“Treasure Found: An Art Journey.”**

But “Treasure Found” goes beyond just her creative process. It’s a book that will inspire you on a transformative and rewarding artistic journey.

*“My regular practice turned into a process that became my purpose  
– my Treasure Found.”*

I had the opportunity to speak with Cinthia James to talk about her creative process, her award-winning book and advice she has for artists and designers.

Thanks Cinthia, for taking the time to chat with me.

### **Can you tell us a bit about yourself and your work?**

*Hi, I’m Cinthia James. I live and work in Berlin, Germany, where I create illustrations and surface pattern designs.*

*My work is all about blending illustrations with custom patterns, forming a style that’s playfully sophisticated and full of vibrant color palettes.*

*Early last year, I published my first art book, “Treasure Found: An Art Journey.” In it, I’ve poured my heart into sharing my artistic journey, hoping to inspire other creatives to start or revisit their art processes and ensure a steady flow of inspiration.*

### **What drew you to write “Treasure Found: An Art Journey” and developing your own creative approach?**

*What drew me to write “Treasure Found: An Art Journey” and develop my own creative approach was essentially the need for such a guide after graduating with my Bachelor’s Degree in graphic design.*

*Alongside my studies, I built a corporate career in Pharmaceuticals to support my education. This path was a departure from my original goal of being a designer.*

*Post-graduation, I found myself feeling lost. My corporate career was flourishing and taking me internationally, offering a wealth of learning experiences, and I didn’t fully identify as a graphic designer anymore.*

*Even before completing my studies, I had doubts. My desire was to focus on illustration, but I was often told that graphic design was the more financially viable path in art. So, after graduation, I stopped drawing for several years and missed it deeply. When I decided to return to art, I started by joining challenges and art classes, but I struggled to maintain a creative routine. After each class or challenge, I was left wondering, **“What next? How do I use this information?”** There was no clear guidance on building a routine that didn’t feel like starting from scratch each time.*

*In response, I sat down and revisited the graphic design fundamentals key to my school projects. I adapted these principles, incorporating practice time to improve my skills. My book, “Treasure Found,” is the*

*culmination of this process, filled with activities to overcome art block and self-doubt. It's the book I needed during my studies, after graduation, and it's a resource I continue to use. My hope is that it can serve as a guide for other artists, whether they are beginners or have years of experience.*



*Breathe Shoe – An unwalkable boot adorned with a gorgeous floral pattern. Copyright © Cinthia James*

**In your book, you mentioned that the creative industry is the most affected by imposter syndrome. Why do you think it is so?**

*In the creative world, it's incredibly easy to feel like you're not quite measuring up. Much of what we create is deeply personal, and it can be difficult to gauge what success means, let alone how to achieve it as an artist.*

*This makes it challenging to perceive our worth and the value of our artwork. In “Treasure Found,” I delve into how we, as artists, **can confront these doubts head-on**. It’s about learning to embrace and celebrate our unique creative voices.*

*The book acknowledges the presence of these feelings and offers a process to help sidestep doubts. It’s a journey of recognizing and appreciating our individuality and the unique value we bring to the art world.*

**We are now seeing more applications of generative AI in the creative industry.**

**What in your opinion, can artists and designers do to stay relevant?**

*The rise of generative AI poses a unique challenge and opportunity for artists and designers. While it appears that AI is here to stay and will only grow more influential, it’s essential to safeguard the intellectual property of artists and recognize the cultivation of skill and personal experiences that lead to their final artworks. A prompt in a tool that merely replicates these aspects essentially misuses that property.*

*To stay relevant, artists need to emphasize the human element that AI cannot replicate – **our experiences, emotions, and personal stories** that shape our art. AI can learn patterns and styles, but it cannot replicate an artist’s personal journey or the emotional connection they instil in their work.*

*So, share your process, show how a piece is created, how you obtained your skills, etc. AI will not be able to tell stories like this. It is also important for artists to **be informed** and, where possible, participate in conversations about copyright and the ethical use of AI in art.*

## **What is your biggest takeaway you got from writing “Treasure Found”?**

*My biggest takeaway from writing “Treasure Found” was simply **to go for it** – to create the art, take the class, write the book, and just start.*

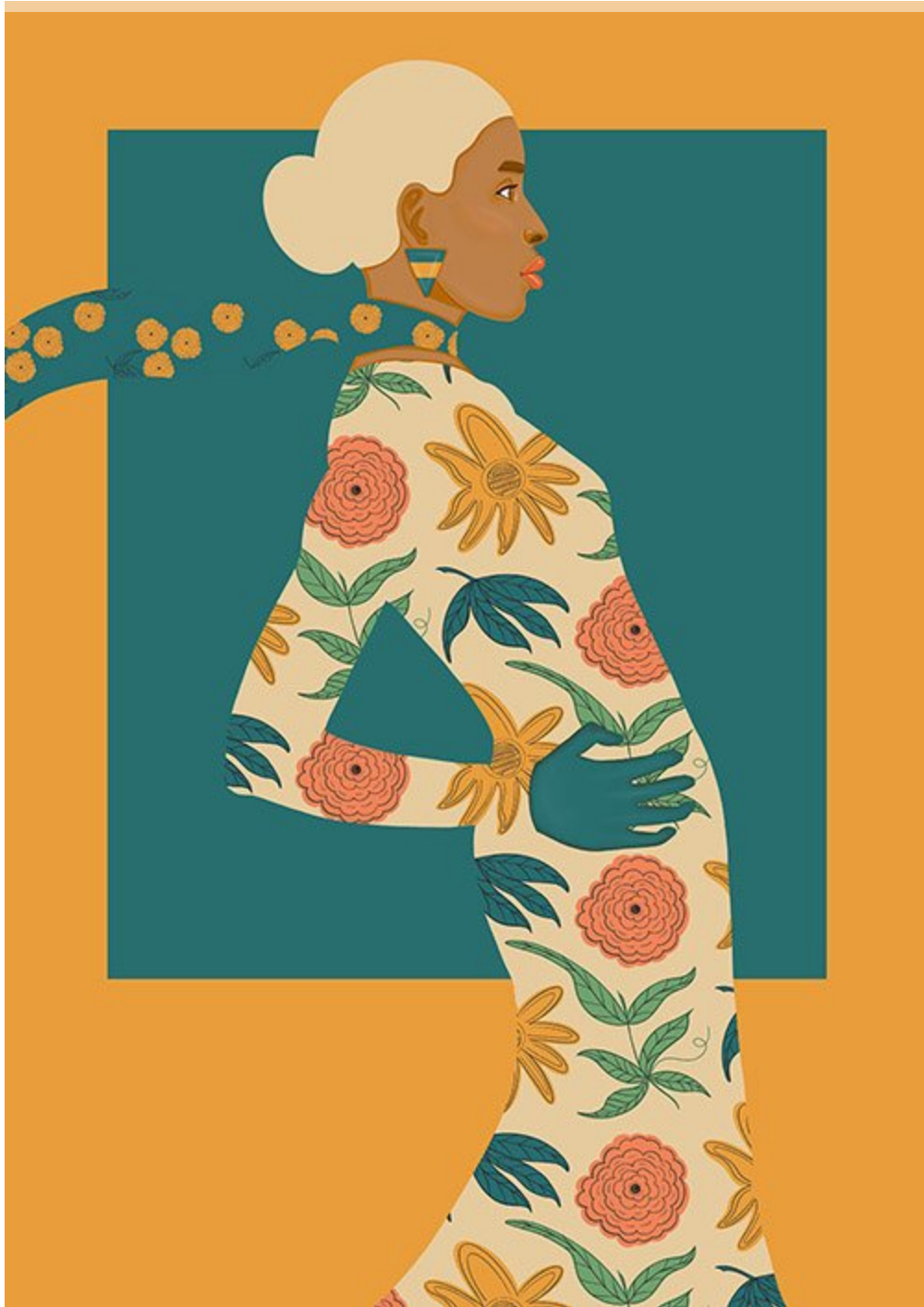
*The dream of creating an art book and sharing what I had learned in my journey of maintaining consistency in drawing and the lessons from my graphic design studies had been brewing for years. The process was challenging, but it was a **phenomenal learning experience**.*

*“Treasure Found” became my most significant personal art project, and through it, I not only achieved my goal but also gained critical acclaim, including book awards and heartfelt messages from fellow creatives.*

*The journey of creating “Treasure Found” led to immense personal growth, helping me sidestep imposter syndrome and reaffirming that following a process can lead to positive outcomes. This experience has kept me drawing and starting new projects, as I continue to discover my own personal treasure.*

Cinthia’s patterns frequently feature as unique accessories, intricate hair details, or dynamic background elements, and she enjoys integrating these patterns into various objects within her artworks.

Additionally, she often names her artwork based on the patterns or pattern collections featured in each piece.



*Flower Patch Illustrated – Features a fierce lady wearing a beautiful floral dress and a waving scarf. Copyright © Cinthia James*



*Hinata – Part of the portrait series of Japanese Girl Group “XG,” this piece’s patterns and overall vibe are inspired by the group’s fresh approach to ’90s nostalgia. Copyright © Cinthia James*





*Plumage Glasses – Experiments with the scaling of her Plumage pattern, transforming bird motifs into abstract shapes. Copyright © Cinthia James*



*Holding Nature – Envisions an imagined floral handbag campaign. Copyright ©  
Cinthia James*

## From Treasure Found: An Art Journey



*Propaganda – Illustration inspired by film Metropolis and the music video Guerilla by ATEEZ. Copyright © Cinthia James*



*Tea Time – Alice and Wonderland inspired with a pattern tied to ATEEZ’s Illusion.  
Copyright © Cinthia James*

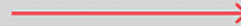
## Treasure Found: An Art Journey (complete book flip through...



You're gonna love Treasure Found: An Art Journey. Get a copy on [Amazon](#) or order via [Barnes & Nobles](#).

Get featured on the YDJ Blog and get lots of attention!

discover the benefits



Written by



**HAZEL LEE**

Hazel Lee is the designer and founder of YDJ™, a startup that helps creatives build a strong brand presence. A graduate of Staffordshire University, she has also earned her first digital marketing

certificate from SEMRUSH. She posts inspirational and informative content on the YDJ Blog. She also provides digital marketing services tailored for artists and designers. Feel free to connect with her on LinkedIn.

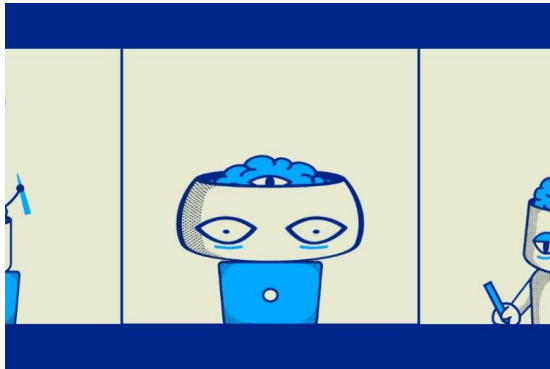
See author's posts



Posted in *Design Showcase, Featured Creatives*

• Tagged *Art / Illustrations, Design Showcase, Featured Creatives* • *Leave a Comment*

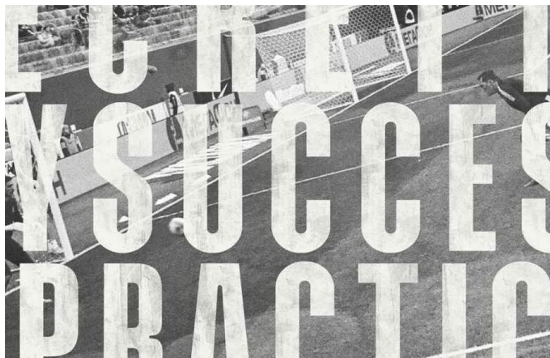
### You may also like:



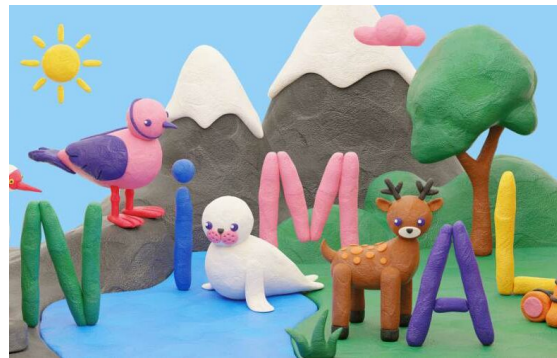
Animated GIFs Inspiration – February 2024



Latest Brand Identity Design Inspiration – January 2024



Beautiful Typography & Hand Lettering Works – January 2024



Awesome Motion Design Inspiration – January 2024