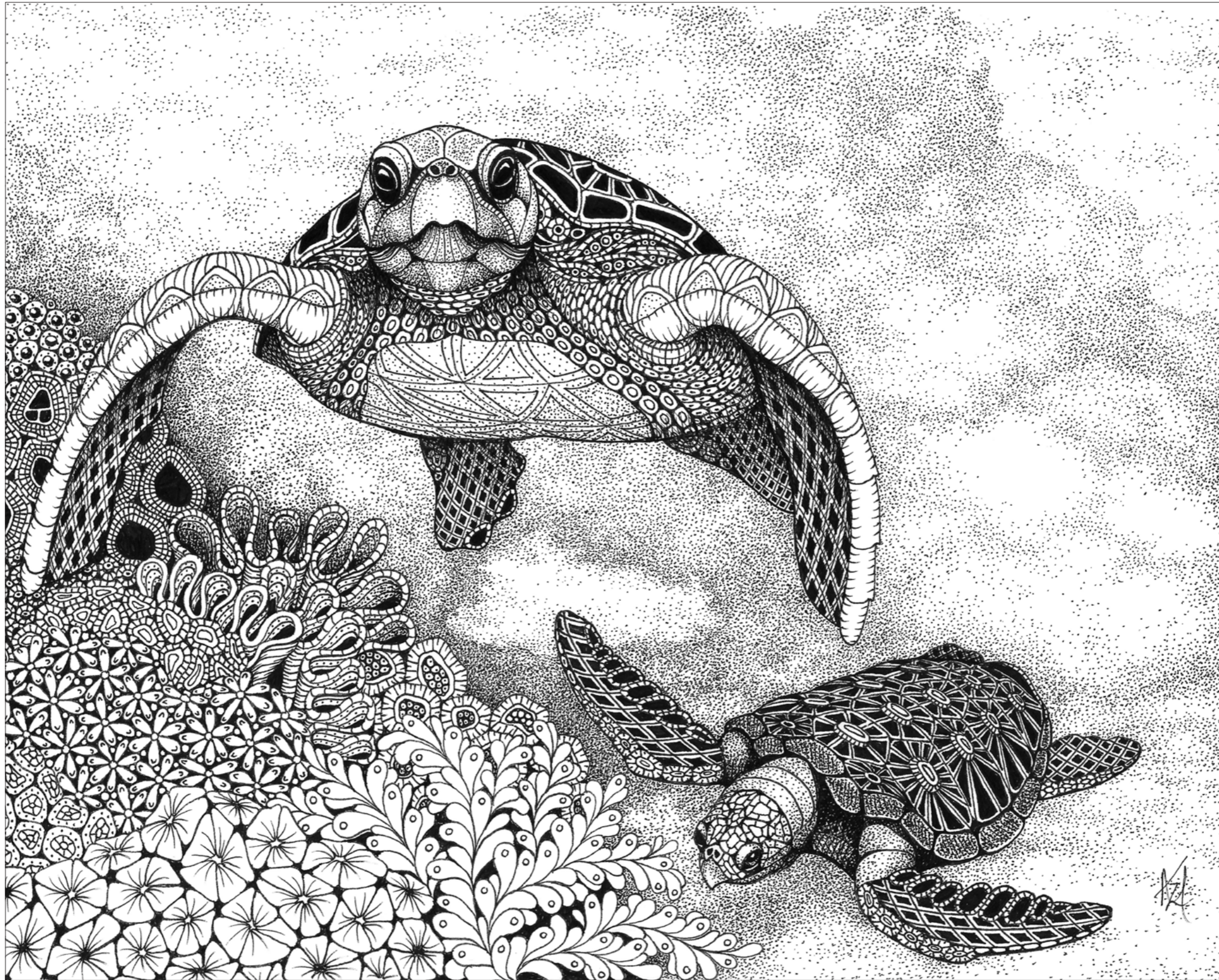
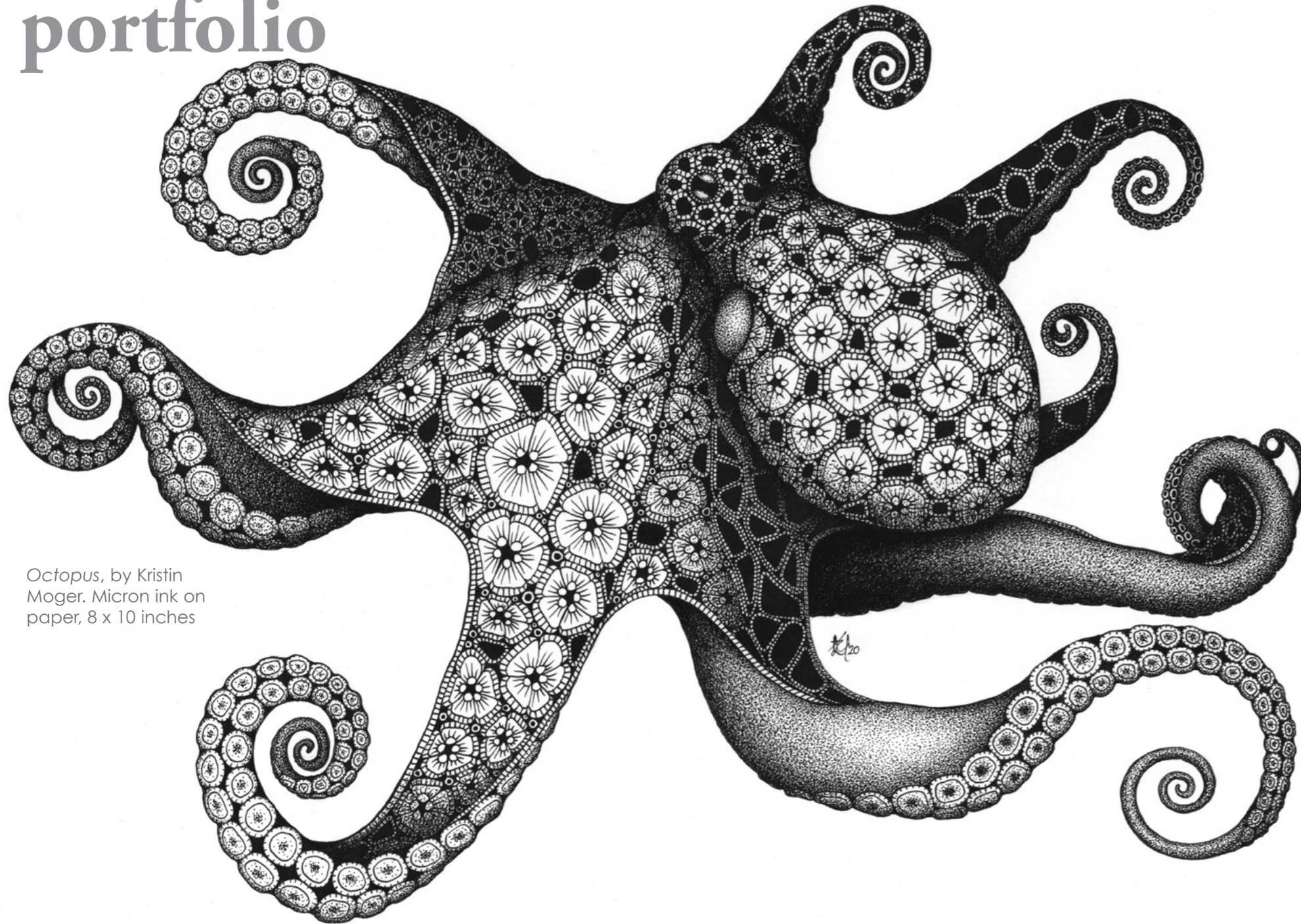


# Kristin Moger



## P O R T F O L I O





*Octopus*, by Kristin Moger. Micron ink on paper, 8 x 10 inches

**American artist Kristin Moger, who is based in Pennsylvania, creates beautiful, precise and intricately patterned black-and-white drawings of marine life, bringing to life the animals' dynamic and sublime personalities on paper. *X-Ray Mag* interviewed the artist to learn more about her creative process and perspectives on art, nature and conservation.**

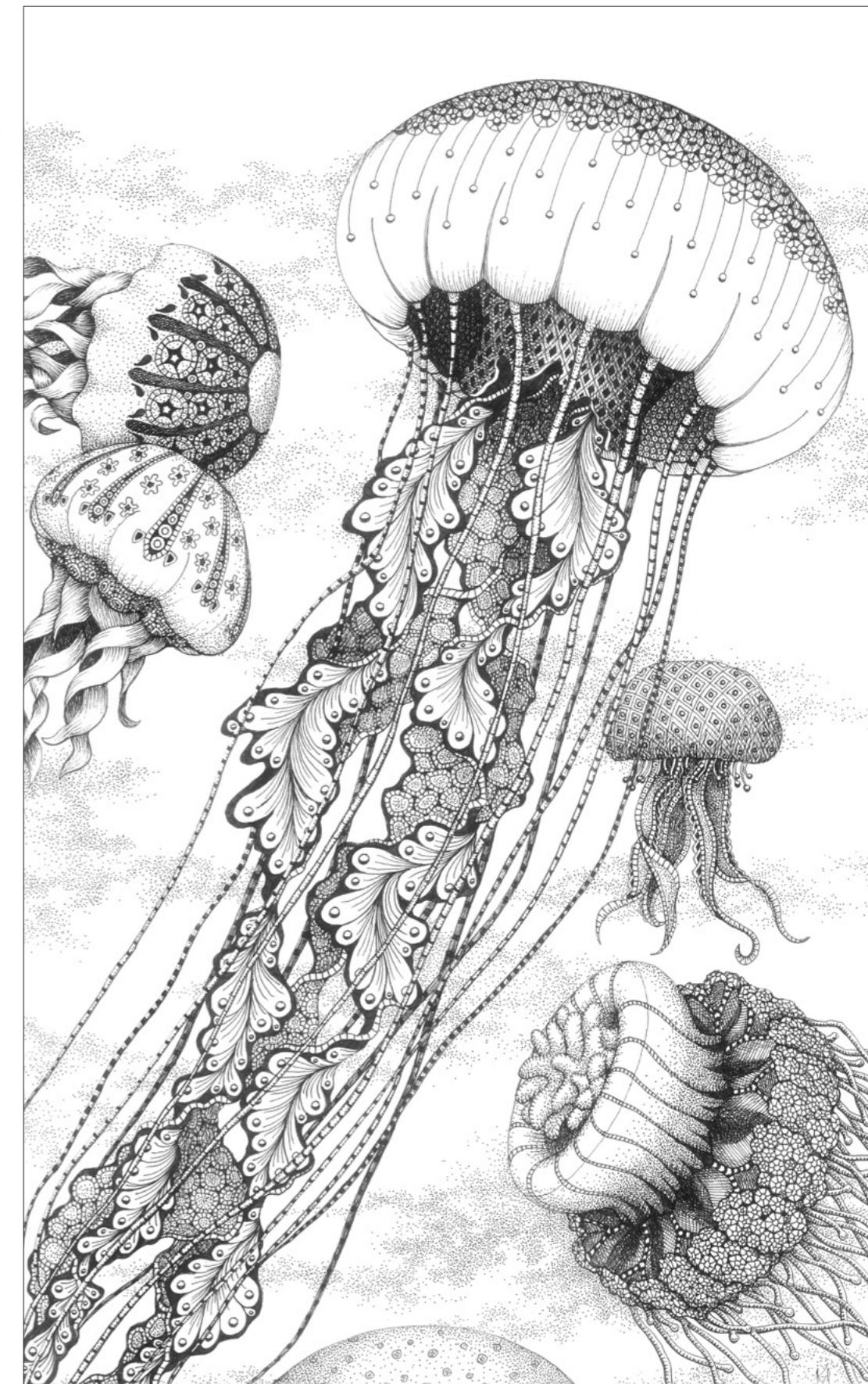
Text edited by G. Symes  
All artwork and photos by Kristin Moger

*X-RAY MAG:* Tell us about yourself, your background and how you became an artist.

KM: I have always loved art and creating with my hands. I was hand-sewing at age two (yup, my mom kept the little cloth turtle I created) and I drew during free time at school. My parents fostered this with art supplies, encouragement and cultural experiences.

In middle school, I overheard my art teacher tell another student (who was quite

talented, but comparing her work to mine, feeling inadequate) that I would never amount to anything (in my art). Devastated, I cried passionately when I got home. My father kindly told me that I could believe this teacher and stop doing what I loved, or use the comment to fuel my desire to grow and learn. At age 13, I dug deeper and decided to pursue my passion and grow in my knowledge and skills. I chose to pursue a degree in fine arts (painting) and art education to foster both my own artist's heart as well as encourage children to explore their creative sides.

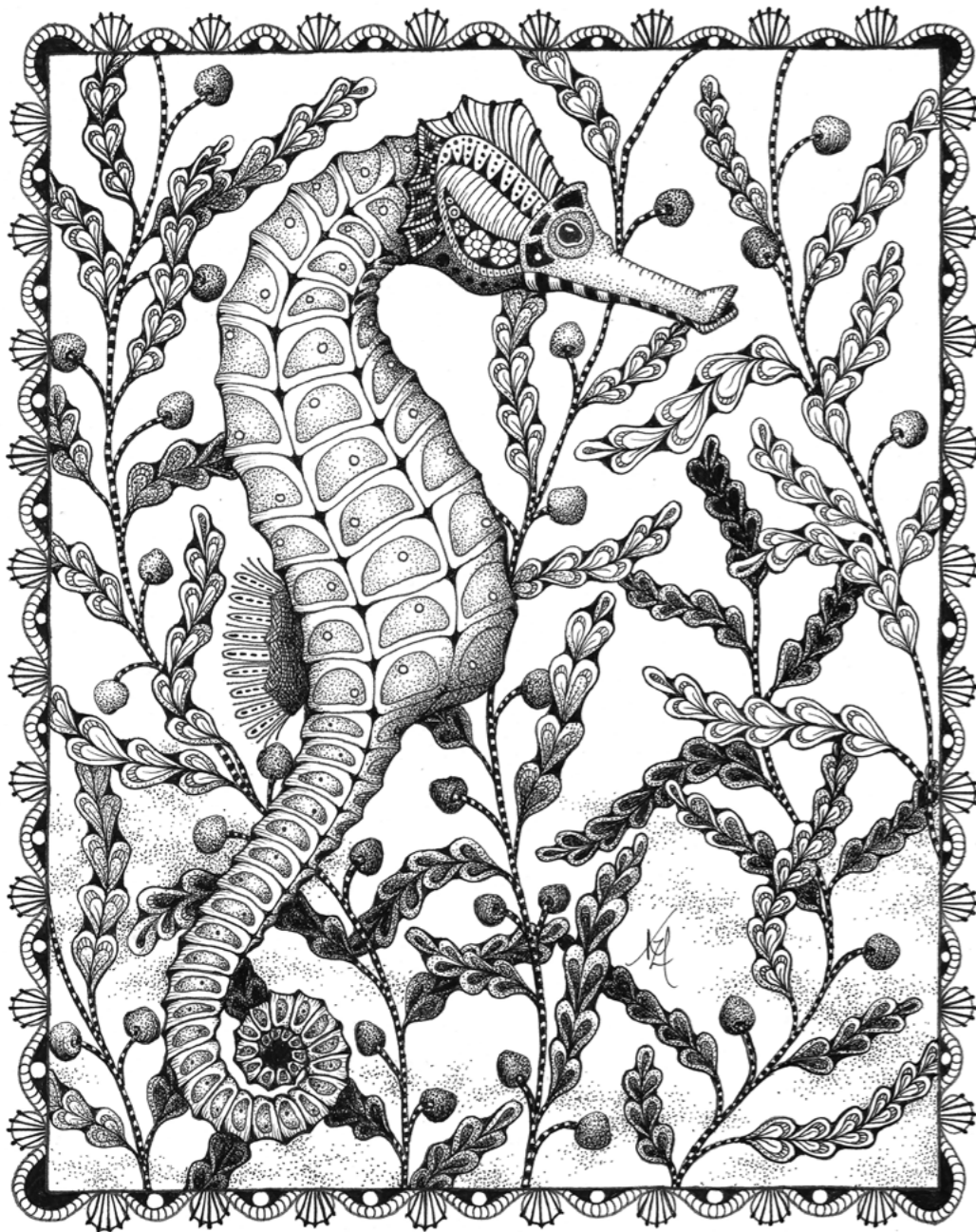


*Jellyfish Dance*, by Kristin Moger. Micron ink on paper, 17 x 11 inches

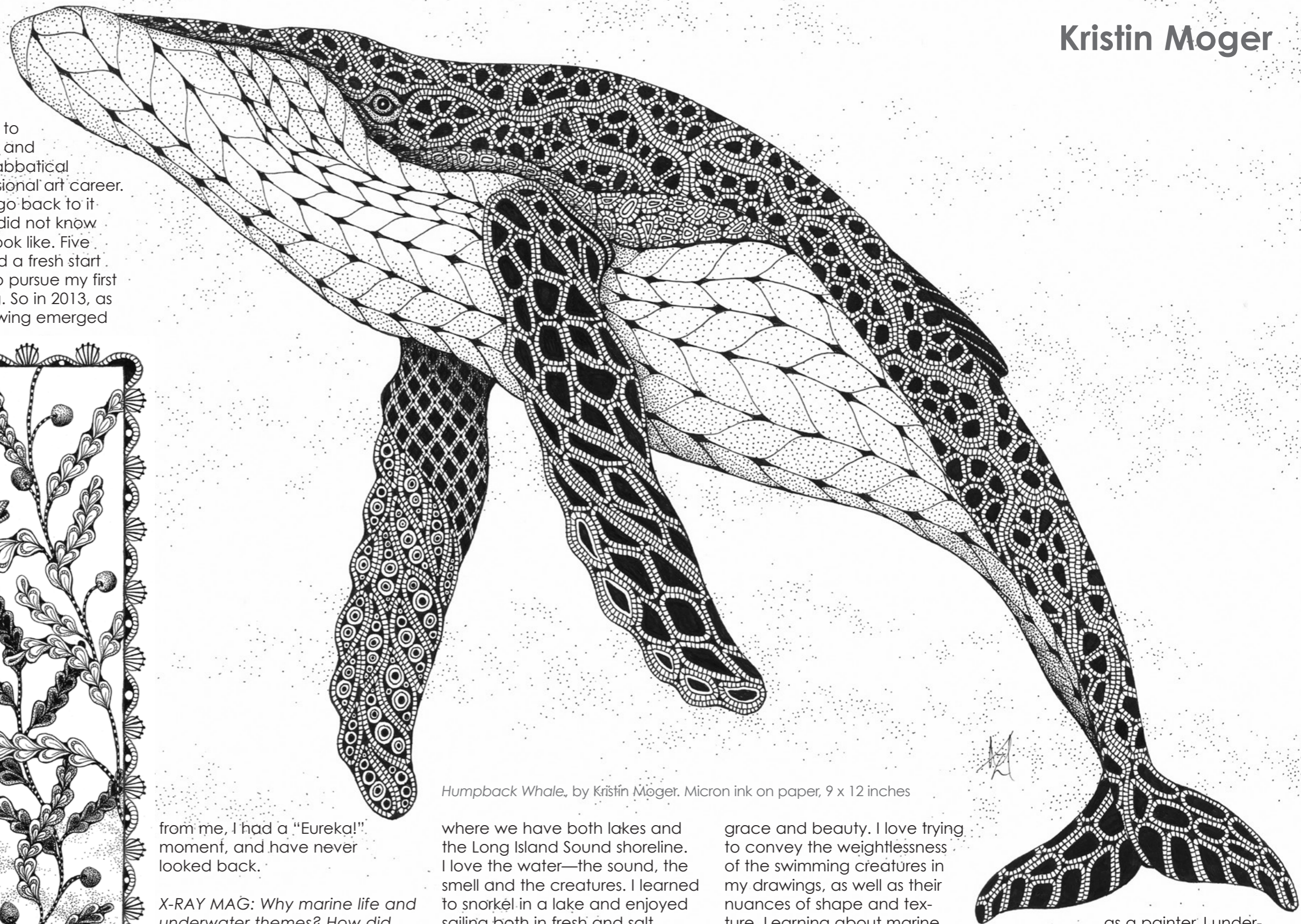


I taught art at both public and private schools as well as dabbled in my own creative expression for the next 20 years. I explored so many different media in those days—paint, clay, print-making, jewelry, clothing, knitting, drawing and mixed media—but never really landed for more than a few years on any one of them.

In 2008, I had to take a medical and life-changing sabbatical from my professional art career. I knew I would go back to it sometime, but did not know what it would look like. Five years later, I had a fresh start and decided to pursue my first love of drawing. So in 2013, as this style of drawing emerged



Sea Horse, by Kristin Moger. Micron ink on paper, 10 x 8 inches



Humpback Whale, by Kristin Moger. Micron ink on paper, 9 x 12 inches

from me, I had a "Eureka!" moment, and have never looked back.

**X-RAY MAG:** Why marine life and underwater themes? How did you come to these themes and how did you develop your style of drawing?

**KM:** I grew up in Connecticut,

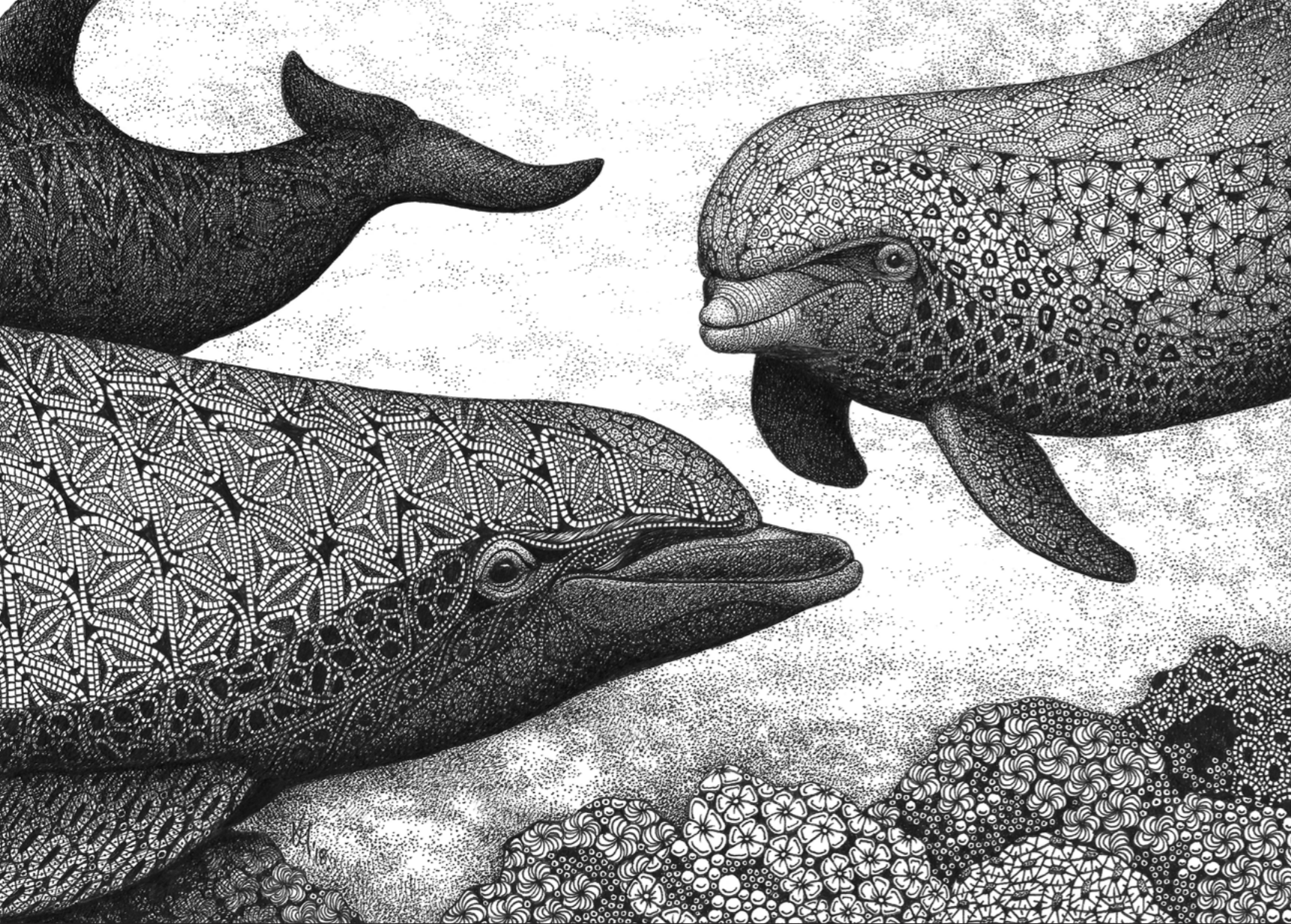
where we have both lakes and the Long Island Sound shoreline. I love the water—the sound, the smell and the creatures. I learned to snorkel in a lake and enjoyed sailing both in fresh and salt water. I went to Mystic Aquarium (in Connecticut) and was mesmerized by the marine life. Even today, I can quietly watch sea life and lose track of time in its

grace and beauty. I love trying to convey the weightlessness of the swimming creatures in my drawings, as well as their nuances of shape and texture. Learning about marine life is important and enjoyable to me as I attempt to bring them to life in my drawings.

The colors of marine life can be astoundingly beautiful. Trained

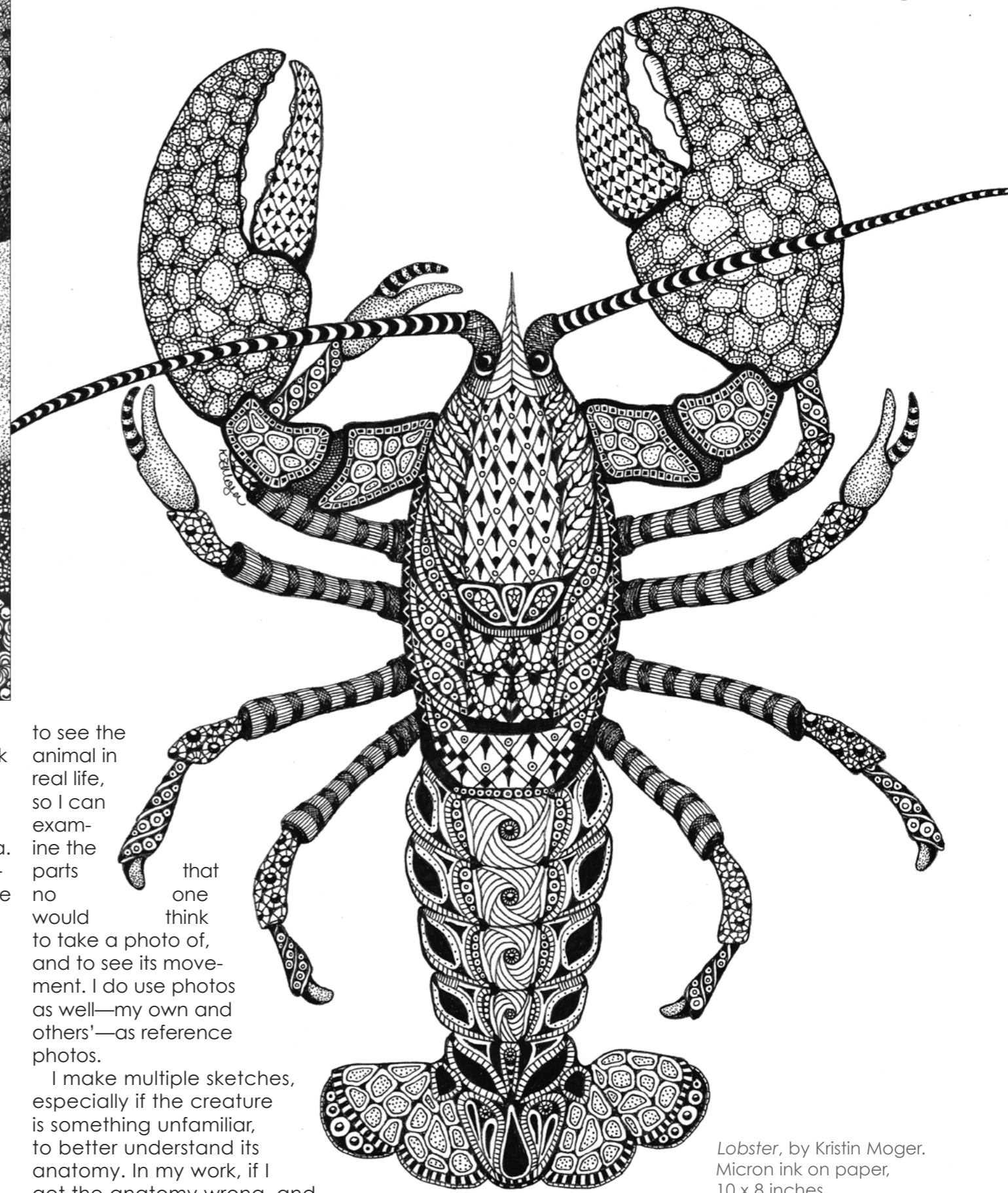
as a painter, I understand how color works in art, and I love color. But as an artist, it is a creative challenge to me to create something astoundingly beautiful and compelling just





*Dolphins*, by Kristin Moger.  
Micron ink on paper,  
8 x 10 inches

Kristin Moger



*Lobster*, by Kristin Moger.  
Micron ink on paper,  
10 x 8 inches

from black and white patterns, and limiting myself to ink on paper. I want the work to have depth that keeps the attention of the viewer over and over again, as well as evoke emotion and sympathy for the creature.

*X-RAY MAG:* Who or what has inspired you and your artwork and why?

KM: It is hard to say what, in a lifetime of education and experiences, influences my current work. But, as I reflect back to my early years, I loved and studied architecture, biology, textiles, calligraphy, illuminated manuscripts, old etchings and lithography, and the Renaissance masters' painting and drawing. I have also loved learning about indigenous peoples around the globe and how

they express themselves through art. So many groups of people use pattern and designs to decorate common objects in their lives, and I have undoubtedly been influenced by that in my own work. None of this is purposeful, but we all acquire visual information over our lives, translate it, and it emerges as part of us, not always knowing exactly from where it came.

In 2013, at the end of my health sabbatical, I decided to take a free workshop on "tangling" at a local library, just for fun. I always loved to doodle (my schoolbooks were covered with it), so I thought it would be a way to start some joyful playing again after a long stretch of hard life. As I started the simple task of drawing repetitive shapes, my mind

became a whirl with images and possibilities. The work harkened back to all of the things I loved about art from the beginning, and related (in my mind) to the most recent work I had been doing in 3-D mixed media. The artistic problem was the same—to create a dynamic cohesive whole from unlike parts using pattern and design. But it was so much more than what I had been doing previously. It did not have the limitations of resources and space, and it utilized my gift and love of drawing!

*X-RAY MAG:* What is your artistic method or creative process?

KM: Each drawing starts with research—the anatomy, habitat and behavior of the animal. I prefer

to see the animal in real life, so I can examine the parts that no one would think to take a photo of, and to see its movement. I do use photos as well—my own and others'—as reference photos.

I make multiple sketches, especially if the creature is something unfamiliar, to better understand its anatomy. In my work, if I get the anatomy wrong, and





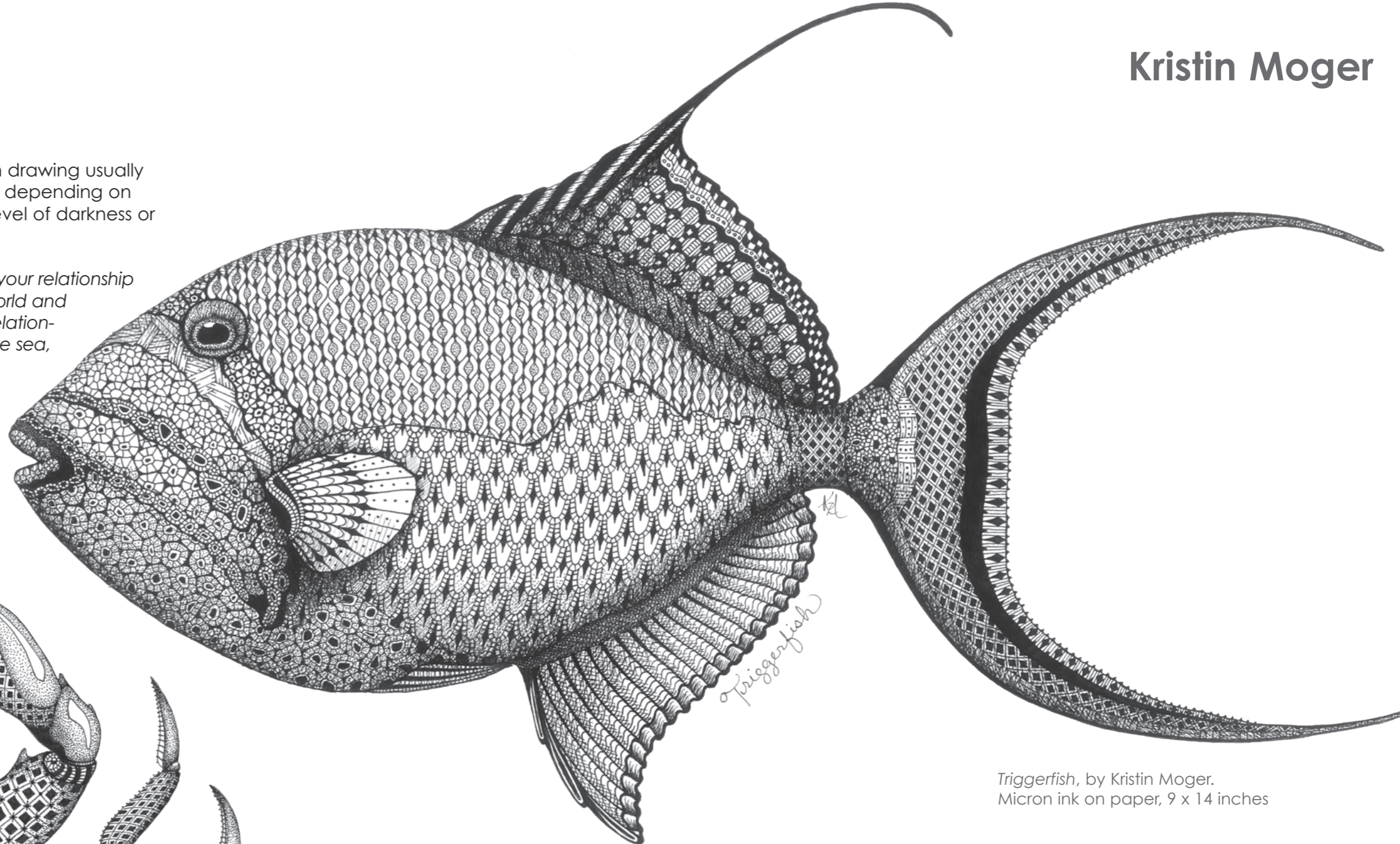
then put all these crazy patterns on it, the drawing will not be cohesive and pleasing. That is a whole other artistic style!

After I decide on and sketch the main composition, I outline the main lines in ink. Then the fun starts! I usually have one pattern in mind for a specific area and lay that in. Then I slowly and meticulously fill in areas with various patterns to create the form, texture, depth and mood of the drawing. I think strategically about the patterns I choose—the direction and shapes matter. I always have to guard against going too dark too fast—there is no erasing in this medium! I frequently use stippling (tiny pin-point dots) to create underwater effects. This is very labor-intensive

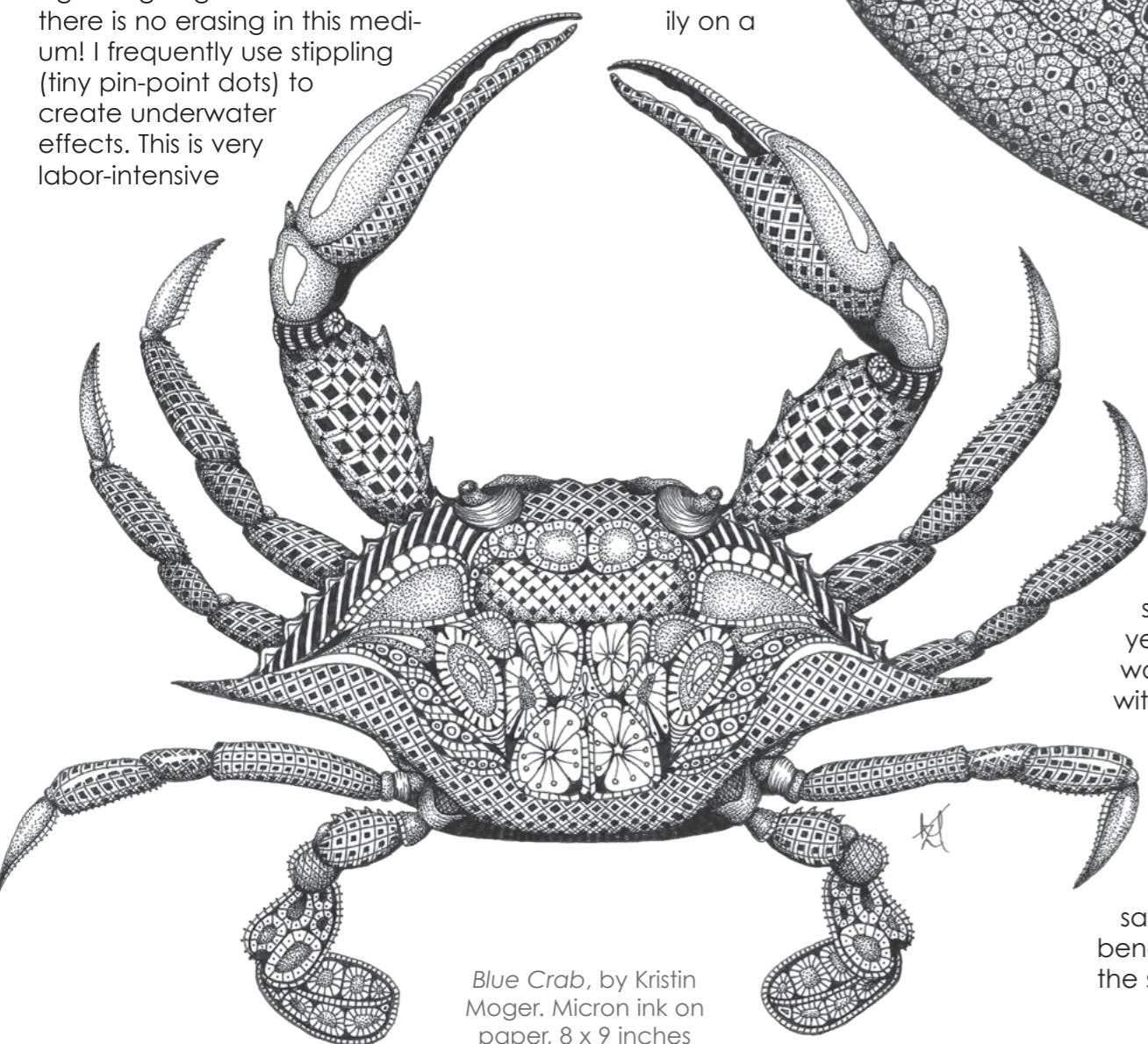
work—an 8 x 10 inch drawing usually takes 30 to 50 hours, depending on the detail and the level of darkness or stippling it has.

*X-RAY MAG: What is your relationship to the underwater world and coral reefs? In your relationship with reefs and the sea, where have you had your favorite experiences?*

*KM: I think I was 10 when my parents took the family on a*



*Triggerfish*, by Kristin Moger. Micron ink on paper, 9 x 14 inches



*Blue Crab*, by Kristin Moger. Micron ink on paper, 8 x 9 inches

three-week sailing trip around the Virgin Islands. They were very skilled sailors and had sailed these areas for years. We snorkeled about every day. I was able to get up close and personal with gorgeous reef fish, coral, anemone, sea urchins (ouch!), and a very nosy barracuda that needed to investigate my mask. I remember holding my breath and gently backing away from that four-foot torpedo with teeth. Later that evening, we saw a number of barracuda tussling beneath our grill as it dripped juice into the sea. It reminded me of the wildness of

the ocean and that I was just a visitor. The beauty of the reefs that we got to explore have stuck with me through my life.

*X-RAY MAG: What are your thoughts on ocean conservation and coral reef management and how does your artwork relate to these issues?*

*KM: I love the ocean and recognize that it really is a resource that we need to guard and protect. Over the last 20 years, I have been learning more about conservation and what I can do now to cut down on waste and pollution. My husband and*

I have converted to solar power in our home, with the help of government incentives. I experience the waste that washes up on the shore every day as I walk the Connecticut shore in the summer (with a bag to collect trash as well as one to collect rocks and shells). I continue to seek out applicable education in areas of abuse and protection of our oceans and vulnerable reefs and seek to collaborate with rescue and conservation organizations.

The materials that I use to create my art are minimal, and I repurpose, reuse and recycle as much as possible in order to cut waste. Who does not love a fabulous



Manatee, by Kristin Moger.  
Micron ink on paper,  
8 x 10 inches

## Kristin Moger

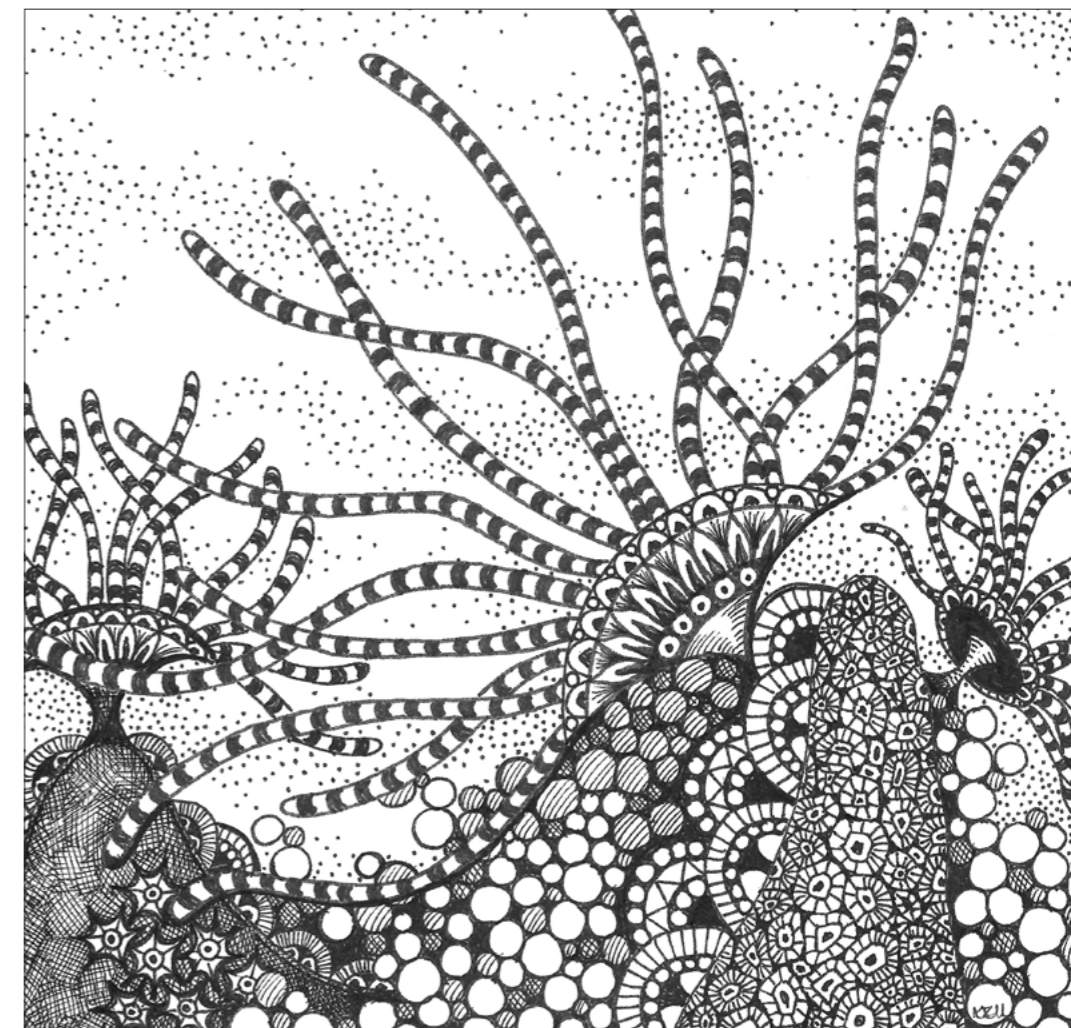
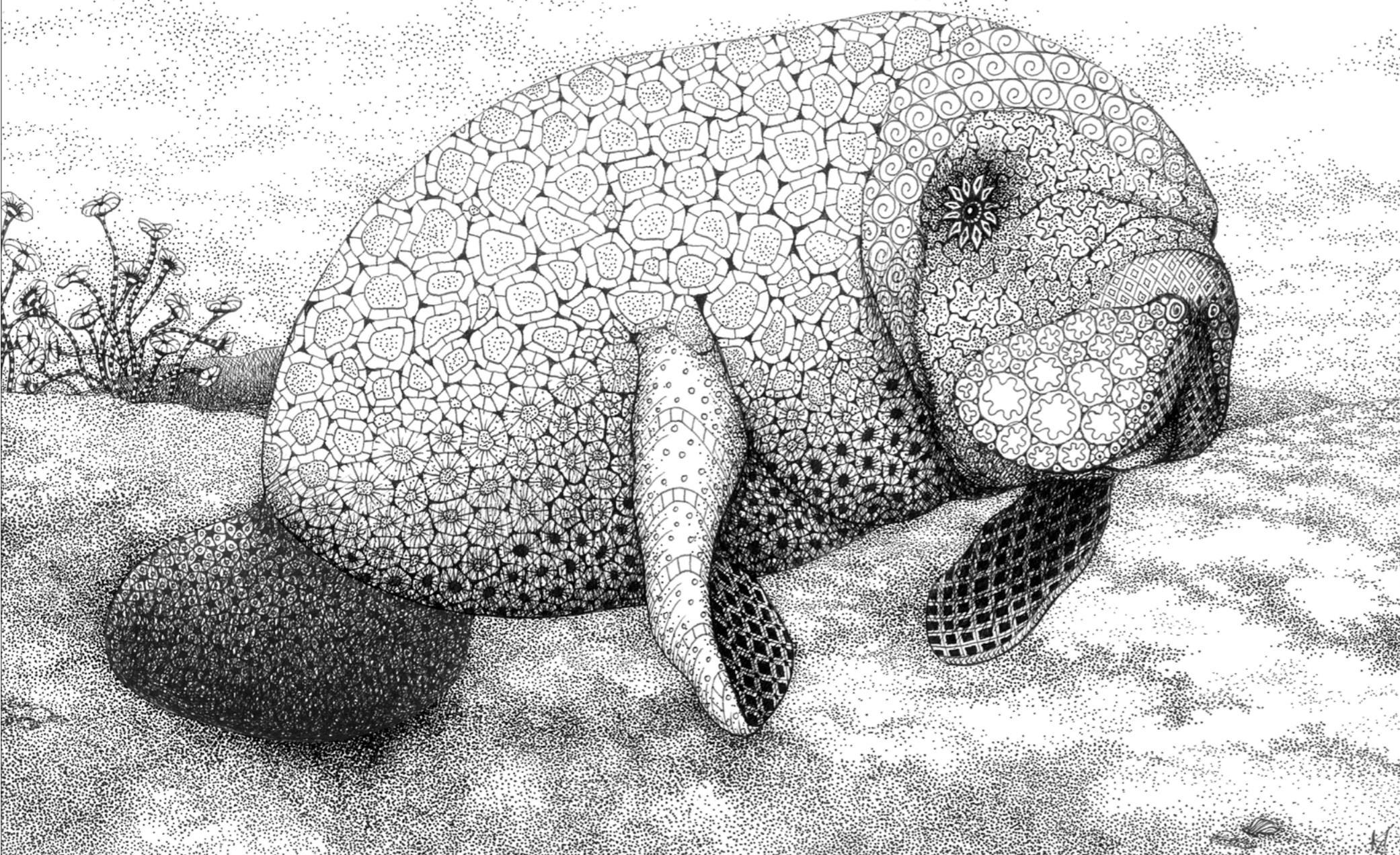
to change their interests and style over time, and you want the freedom to do that and the tools to do it. Then follow your passion, work hard and be a person of integrity. It will show in your art, and your collectors will want to connect with you and share your artwork with others.

*X-RAY MAG:* How do people—adults and children—respond to your works?

*KM:* A jeweler friend of mine observed, after watching me sell my work at a fine art show, that my clientele was “all over the map.” It’s true. My work appeals to a wide array of peo-

ple. Science- and math-minded people love the patterning and visual references to cell structures and other microscopic images. Biologists have appreciated the accuracy of my anatomy. Artists are amazed by the detail and precision of my work, which comes very naturally to me. Viewers enjoy the surprise of seeing a recognizable animal that they love, then realizing that it is composed of patterns. They are drawn closer to the image as they see more and more detail.

Parents frequently ask children to find certain animals in my display, or what animals they see. It amazes me that even the wee ones (who I can barely under-



Anemone, by Kristin Moger. Micron ink on paper, 5 x 5 inches

vintage frame and pre-used shipping materials?

*X-RAY MAG:* What is the message or experience you want viewers of your artwork to have or understand?

*KM:* I create my artwork from a place of joy, peace and a great

appreciation for all living things. I want my art to connect with people on a heart level, evoking appreciation, joy and compassion so that they will be inspired to protect what they love.

*X-RAY MAG:* What are the challenges or benefits of being an artist in the world today? Any

thoughts or advice for aspiring artists in ocean arts?

*KM:* It is hard to be a full-time artist. It takes discipline, courage and vision that the the artist alone is responsible to foster. Gratefully—because of technology—tools, training, connections and support are more available than ever.

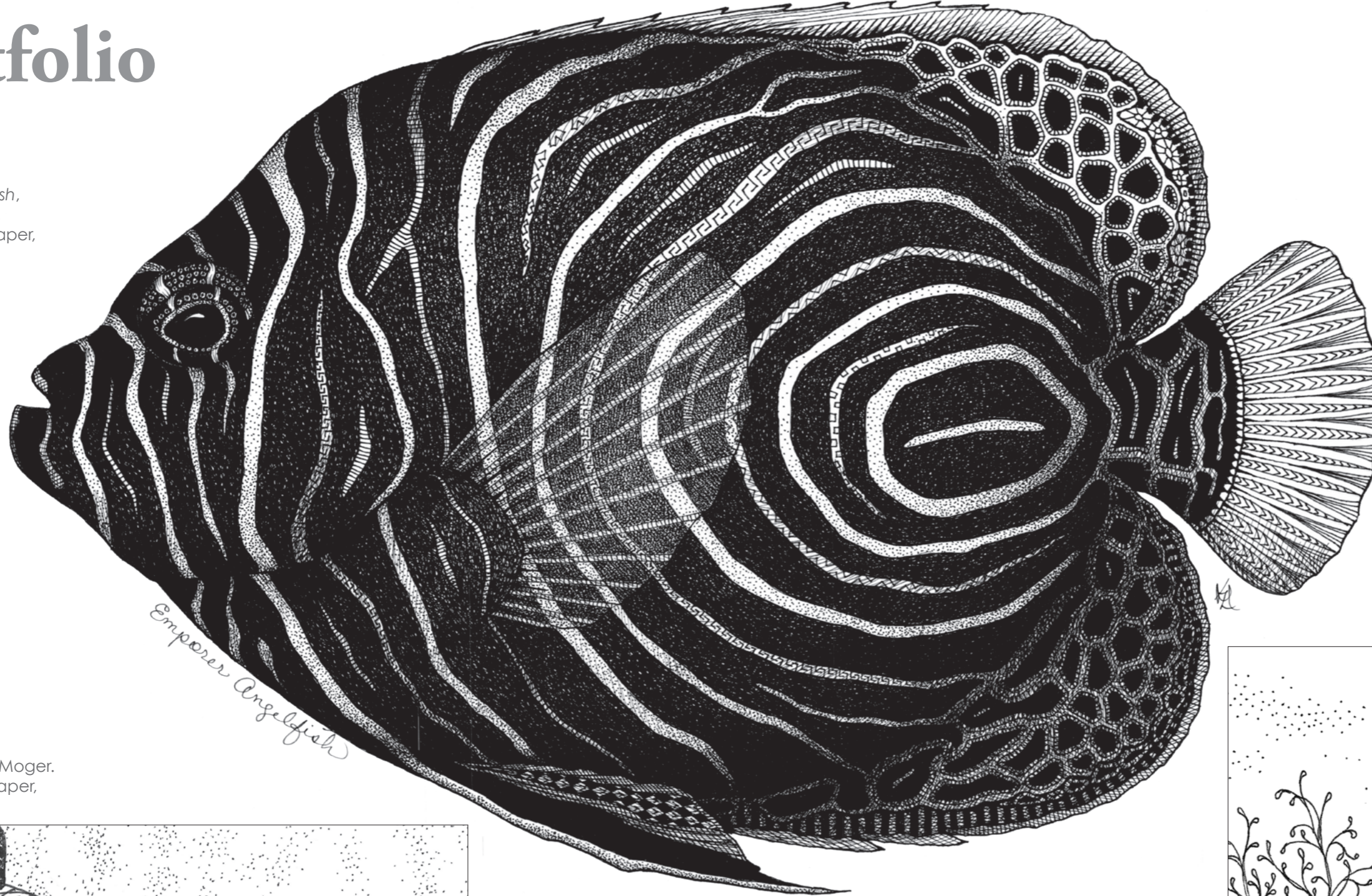
Young artists will find it easier to access those resources than those of us who began working as artists before the Internet era. But if you love the ocean and its treasures—learn everything you can. I tell students to stuff their toolboxes with knowledge and skills, even if it does not precisely fit what you think you want to do. Artists tend



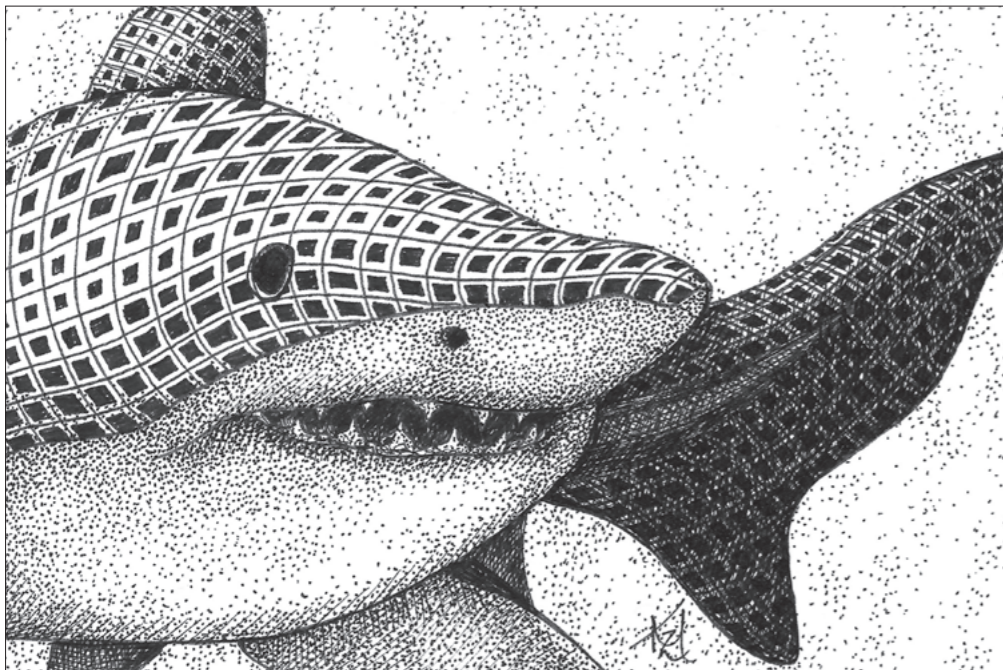
# portfolio

Kristin Moger

Emperor Angelfish,  
by Kristin Moger.  
Micron ink on paper,  
11 x 14 inches



Shark, by Kristin Moger.  
Micron ink on paper,  
3 x 5 inches



stand) still recognize the animals, despite there being no color and are composed of crazy patterns.

One of my biggest delights is when a child spends a long time looking at my work, goes away to see other people's fabulous artwork at the show, and then comes back announcing that they have chosen to get their "very first real art piece" from me. The sparkle in their eyes and the delight on their face makes my day.

**X-RAY MAG:** What are your upcoming projects, art courses or events?

KM: I am hoping to be able to show my work again this year at large art festivals. It invigorates me to interact with people as they encounter my work, reminds me of the purpose of my art, and connects me to other humans as they share their stories with me.

I have identified some conservation and rescue organizations that I hope to partner with on projects and outreach events this year. Making connections between these organizations and artists for mutual benefit is something I believe in.

I also plan to create more cre-

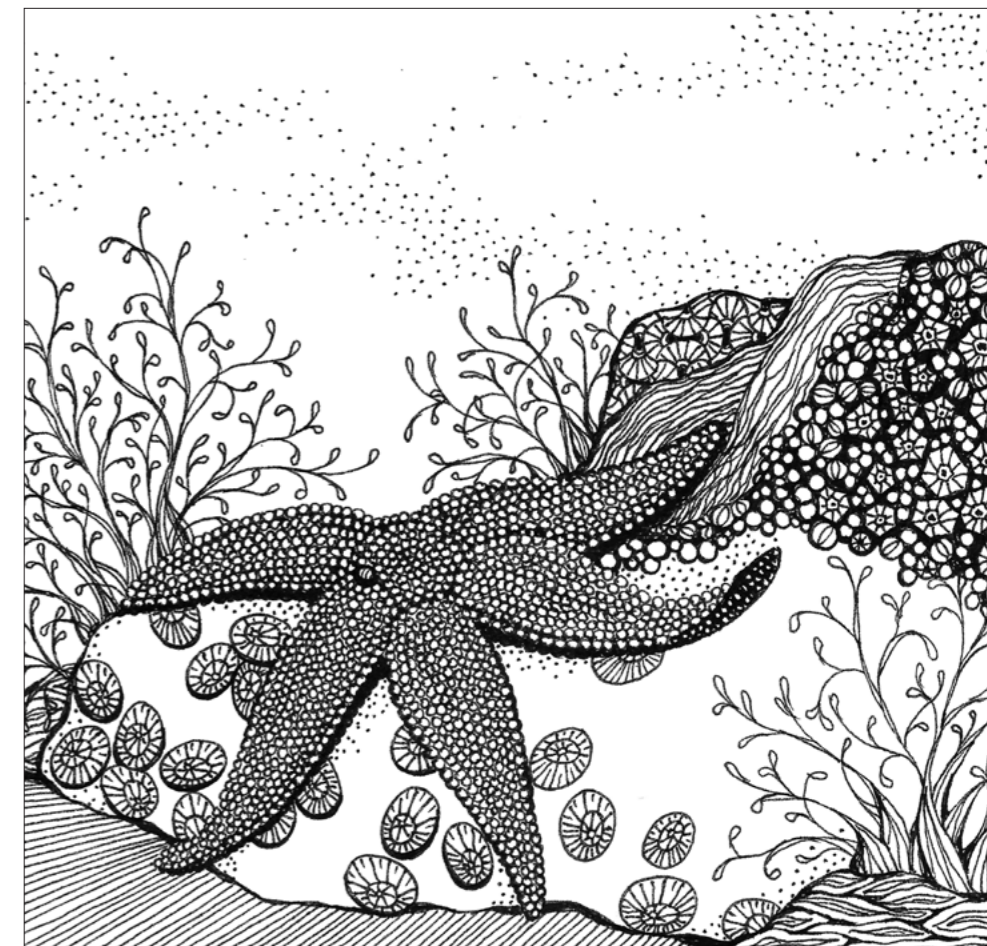
ative process videos this year to share on Instagram and YouTube so that people can see "the method behind the madness."

**X-RAY MAG:** Lastly, is there anything else you would like to tell our readers about yourself and your artwork?

KM: I love doing commissioned work. It gives me an opportunity to learn new things and hear people's stories. People matter to me, and their stories matter. I am always honored when people choose to share something of their lives with me and am equally honored when they desire to know me too.

You can get details about custom commission work on my website at: [kristinmogerart.com/custom-commissions](http://kristinmogerart.com/custom-commissions). ■

For more information or to purchase prints, please visit the artist's website at: [kristinmogerart.com](http://kristinmogerart.com).



Star Fish, by Kristin Moger. Micron ink on paper, 5 x 5 inches

