





THROUGH THE EYES OF MICHICO IHARA

I grew up in the center of Osaka City in Japan, where life was just like Times Square in New York City. Osaka was like a concrete jungle, but almost every weekend my parents took my little sister, my younger brother and I to the countryside of Japan. It's absolutely beautiful and there are a lot of small insects, such as butterflies, spiders, and crickets. Going to the countryside every weekend heavily influenced my art and my personality as being a nature lover, which made an impact on who I am today.

Since I was 3 years old, I've always loved to make drawings every day, which I excelled at, and this influenced me to become an artist. After graduating art college in Kyoto, Japan, I moved to Tokyo where I studied more art. I lived in Tokyo for few years, but I had already planned on to moving to New York since high school.

I've now lived in New York for more than decade, and this has definitely become my hometown. I see artists from all over the world in New York City and they always inspire me.

I also love to take care of my backyard. I have many plants and trees, including an apple tree, fig tree, roses, and so many other plants. Believe it or not, we see raccoons, possums, and all kind of birds in my back yard.

I am an avid traveler, and I love to visit new countries and experience new cultures. My favorite places to travel are Arizona, Hawaii, and Jamaica.

My love for nature has inspired me to be a vegetarian for most of my life and recently I became a vegan, which helped me appreciate nature even more. I believe that all aspects of nature have a soul and have their own world, which should not be disturbed. Nature is micro, which represents the universe, and inside all nature there is macro, which lives inside micro.



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Q How did you decide on the name snowflake? How does your snowflake grow? Is it like a mind map? Do you use Photos as well? **A** The person and snowflakes having the same source, that of infinity, inspires in me a sense of awe. Everything tangible in nature has its origins in the infinite possibilities of the universe. Snowflakes are a familiar representation of this, appreciated for their uniqueness and diversity. Combining snowflakes with my creative process is a spring board for even more possibilities.

I always start from the center and grow outward. Sometimes I use photo images.

Q Do you draw your snowflake at once, or put it together? **A** I draw one by one. Never put it together.

Q Do you ever run "out of images", and how do you get your inspiration? **A** If I feel like I am 'Out of images' I don't draw. I will wait until it comes to me. Sometimes I have to wait a long time, sometimes not so long. I can't control it because it's out of my hands.



Q Who inspires you? Artists, designers, or philosophers?

A Henry David Thoreau, Hermann Karl Hesse, Henri Julien Felix Rousseau, Vincent Van Gogh, Jean-Michel Basquiat, OSHO, Gautama Buddha, Seth Material, Native American Wisdom.

Q What would you like to say with your art, is there a lesson to be learned?

A We are one.

Q How does New York fit in your love for nature and snowflakes? **A** NYC is the only place in the world

where people of different religions, skin colors, and cultural backgrounds try to live together. People from all over the Mother Earth create the special energy in here. My home town Brooklyn does not have much tall buildings like mid town in Manhattan. I live nearby a public park (U.S. National Register of historic place) which has wonderful lake with birds, fishes, turtles and tons of big trees and a huge grass field. Such a beautiful place. I just love the vibration of energy there. ❖

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