

# Selwedge

## DESIGNER EDGE



### XIMENA ESCOBAR PIEDRAHITA

Ximena Escobar Piedrahita comes from a long line of female artists who share a love of nature. Her great grandmother was an avid orchid collector who also drew and painted the exotic blooms. Ximena's grandmother made beautiful one-of-a-kind paper flowers, and her own sister has inherited that talent, but rings the changes with all kinds of materials.



Ximena's artworks are 'women and nature' themed, the subjects being vibrant blooms, exotic birds and faces with strong features. Each is created using a paint-by-numbers format. Felt cut-outs are separated into numbered colours, so the image can be constructed numerically. "The face is the most complicated and delicate part," says Ximena. "It's a tricky process because the portrait kind of changes while I do it. But this is the most interesting part of the work."

Ximena has a background in graphic design but wanted to set herself new challenges by applying graphics to different surfaces and materials. "I wanted to go beyond what I knew or what I saw as predictable," she says. "I love the texture of felt and how everything looks 'furry'.



It helps me to create an aesthetic that communicates what I really want to say."

The home of Ximena's artwork is Medellín, Colombia. "I was blessed with the privilege of having been born in a country rich with biodiversity, where you can find all sorts of climates and ecosystems and you are always surrounded by nature, no matter where you are. This has deeply influenced my development as a person and as an artist. It has always been present within my work," she says.

Her workroom is part of an art collective occupying what was once a school. The building is exclusively art focused, with the exception of a pastry company on the ground floor – perfect for those with an appetite for creativity! Studio space is shared with two graphic-designer friends and a large collection of plants. Inside the studio and on

the balcony, there's a mixture of succulents and tropical plants, which provide a constant source of inspiration.

She has two work stations: one is where all the digital and administrative activity takes place; the other is for handmade work. Studio walls display current creativity and visual research material. (Recently, quartz, fungus and jellyfish were up there on show as part of a collaboration with a furniture brand.)

Ximena's eco-feminist outlook has become a trademark. "The relationship between woman/earth inspires me. Nature means life, the wild, the organic and fertile. It gives me joy, inspires my curiosity and nurtures my femininity and self-discovery."

See Ximena's website ([www.ximenaescobar.com](http://www.ximenaescobar.com)), Facebook page ([ximenaescobarillustration](https://www.facebook.com/ximenaescobarillustration)), Instagram (@[ximescobar](https://www.instagram.com/ximescobar)), or email her ([escobar.ximena@gmail.com](mailto:escobar.ximena@gmail.com)) to find out more.

— Janai Velez