

Maria Schechter

Artist | Designer | Educator | Researcher



ADDRESS

maria@soil2surface.com

SOCIAL MEDIA

@soil2surface

www.soil2surface.com

Art: www.soil2surface.com Design: www.culturedsocial.org

WORK EXPERIENCE: Summary

www.culturedsocial.org/about

In 2000 I founded What Is Art – What Is Sound initially an arts collective of 11 artists. In just three years the collective grew into a non-profit founded in 13 countries and 28 cities around the world. This work led to initiating graduate study with New York University with the Visual Art Administration program. Since 2009 I began consulting with a variety of Silicon Valley Companies such as; Cisco, The Clorox Company and 11 of their brands including Brita, Burt's Bees, Fresh Step, Green Works, Hidden Valley Ranch, Kingsford Charcoal and a variety of other American brands. I have also designed for other brand clients like Victoria Secret Inc. and individual Hollywood celebrity clients such as Laura Dahl Fashion, Tom Franco, David Letterman, Boy George, and a variety of visual and performing artists. I later moved into arts management and served artists by designing their websites, developing strategy, managing social media and securing exhibitions along with communications publications and brand positioning.

TEACHING: Summary

www.soil2surface.com

I have been teaching for the past five years both online and in-person. I host a variety of classes from art and business, design, to working with algae and mycelium as well as developing historical painting palettes inspired by Leonardo da Vinci and artists who used plant based pigments up until the mid-1800's when synthetics were introduced. For the last four years I have participated in the Yale University Teacher Leadership Program. This is a cohort of teaching artists who work with the museums collections to further deepen our teaching methodologies. I work exclusively with plant-based materials and natural dyes, embracing processes that are renewable, biodegradable, and deeply connected to the environment. By incorporating recycled and repurposed materials, I extend the life of existing resources and reduce waste, allowing each piece to carry both a history and a renewed purpose. My practice is rooted in mindfulness—working slowly, intentionally, and with respect for the natural cycles that provide the materials I use. Every stage of the process, from sourcing to making, reflects a commitment to minimizing environmental impact while celebrating the beauty and resilience of the natural world. Sustainability is not simply a consideration within my work; it is the foundation of my creative philosophy, shaping both the objects I create and the values they embody. Ancient Kitchen is the research component of my practice. Ancient Kitchen explores the history of color, color's origin story, tracing its use from ancient times to today, suggesting that plants are not only sources of beauty, but also records of human history, science, medicine, and culture. My classes and student projects can be viewed on my website.

EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

Bachelor of Fine Art in Design

(1994-1998)

Cornish College of the Arts: The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Design program is structured in two phases that develop both technical skills and creative practice. The first two years focus on foundational instruction, followed by two years of self-directed study that encourage independent exploration and professional growth. My foundational coursework included color theory, art history, drawing, and painting, as well as classes on adobe creative suite and visual language provided a strong artistic and conceptual base. During my senior year, I developed and presented my B.F.A. exhibition while serving as class president. In this leadership role, I facilitated development meetings, coordinated my classmates throughout the planning process, and organized our senior B.F.A. exhibition.

Masters Visual Art Administration

(2006-2007)

In 2006 I initiated my graduate work with New York University working towards a masters in visual art administration. After my first year I was provided an award to transfer to Schiller International University to pursue study with their institution.

Masters of International Business

(2007-2009)

In 2007 I was offered the Benjamin Franklin award to transfer to Germany to pursue a masters in International Business. In my first year we went through modules of multinational marketing, international business, research methodologies and economics for business. In my second year I continued taking classes and was primarily focused on the development of my thesis which was published and argued successfully in May of 2009.

AWARDS

01

Robert Rauschenberg Medical Emergency Cycle 35. NYFA. 2026

02

DeHaan Artist of Distinction Award, 2025.

03

Artist Achievement Award, UCLA, California Arts Council. 2023.

04

Environmental Commission, Bloomington, IN, Award, 2023.

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Art & Exhibition: Summary

Select Exhibitions

SWOPE Art Museum , 82nd Wabash Valley Exhibition, October - January 2027, Terre Haute, IN, group	
Indiana University Art Gallery , Rooted In Nature, June-July, Kokomo, IN, group	2026
Minnetrista Museum of Art and Gardens , Open Space: Art About The Land, November - January, Muncie, IN, group	
Indiana Museum of Art , Newfields, November - December, Indianapolis, IN, group	
Indianapolis Art Council, Gallery 924 , DeHaan Artist of Distinction, October - November, IN, group	
Fishers Arts Council , July - October, Fishers, IN, group	
Anderson Museum of Art , Open Space: Art About The Land, November - January, Anderson, IN, group	2025
The Waldron Arts Center , Blooming Earth, August - September, Bloomington, IN, solo	
Hamilton Public Library , 24 Blooms & 24 Recipes, August - October, Fishers, IN, solo	
Minnetrista Museum & Gardens , The 34th Annual Juried Art Show, March-May, Muncie, IN, group	2024
Hamilton Public Library East - Ignite , The 700's, February - April, Fishers, IN, group	
Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts , Gatekeepers Returns to Earth, ongoing, Gatlinburg, TN, solo	
Minnetrista Museum & Gardens , Open Space: Art About the Land, November - January, Muncie, IN, group	
Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts ,	2023
Degrees of Commitment : Climate, Ecosystems, and Society, September - November, Gatlinburg, TN, group	
University of Applied Sciences, Captcha Design Festival , September, Mannheim, Germany, group	
Palo Alto City Library , Enchanted Garden, June - July, Palo Alto, CA, solo	
Bloomington City Hall , Eco-Heroes Contest, May, Bloomington, IN, group	
Michigan State University-Lansing, LookOut! Gallery , Creativity in the Time of COVID-19: Art as a Tool for Combating Inequity and Injustice (permanent collection: https://d.lib.msu.edu/ctc/104), MSU Libraries/Digital Repository	
Creativity in The Time of Covid-19 , March - April, group	
Las Laguna Art Gallery , Climate Changing, February - March, Laguna Beach, CA, group	
Las Laguna Art Gallery , Botanical Illustration, January - March, Laguna Beach, CA, group	
Studio Alchemy Gallery , Roots, January, Indianapolis, IN, group	2022
Radical Mycology Convergence , MushLove, October, Portland, OR, group	
Garfield Park Arts Center , Red, June, Indianapolis, IN, group	
EcoAware Gallery , Dispose to Reuse, February, India, group	
Sacramento County Board of Chambers , Women of Courage, January - July, Sacramento, CA, solo	
Las Laguna Art Gallery , Botanical Art and Illustration, December, Laguna Beach, CA, group	2021
Blue Line Arts , Members Medley, September, Roseville, CA, group	
Humanifest Indy , Health and Wellness Fair, August, Indianapolis, IN, group	
Women Soaring Project: Women Suffragists , Online Exhibition, September, New York, NY, Group	2020
Triton Museum , Covid-19: Life in a Pandemic, Online Pocket Exhibition, June, Santa Clara, CA, group	
Triton Museum , We Can't Breathe, Online Pocket Exhibition, May, Santa Clara, CA, group	
Abrams Claghorn Gallery , The Ground Upon Which We Stand, April-May, Albany, CA, group	
Palo Alto Art Center, Happy Place : a Members Exhibit: Womens Caucas for Art, Palo Alto, CA, group	

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Awards, Residency & Teaching Summary

Robert Rauschenberg Medical Emergency Cycle 35 , administered by the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA)	2026
CERF+ , Get Ready Grant	2025
DeHaan Artist of Distinction Award , Indianapolis Arts Council, IN, Award	
National Society of Arts and Letters , Visual Arts Competition, Juror	
Hamilton Public Library East , Ignite Studio, The 700's, First Place, Fishers, IN, Award	2024
Hamilton Public Library East , Solo Exhibition, Award	
Artist Achievement Award , UCLA, Los Angeles, CA, Award	2023
Eco-Heroes , 2nd place, City of Bloomington, Office of the Mayor	
Environmental Commission , Bloomington, IN, Award	
Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Emergency Grant , New York, NY, Grant	2022
16lb. donation of mycelium by Ecovative , New York, Donation	2021
Arts and Accessibility Grant , UCLA , Los Angeles, CA, Grant	
Center for Cultural Innovation , Los Angeles, CA, Grant	
Fantastic Fungi Global Summit , Scholarship, Los Angeles, CA, Scholarship	
MacArthur Award , Nominee	2002
Goethe Institute Mannheim , Germany, Grant	2002 - 2003

Select Artist Residencies

Ayatana's Biophilium: Science School for Artists	2023
1. Mycology: Mushroom School for Artists: September	
2. Earth Pigments/WildCraft: August	
3. Ecology/Symbiosis: July	
Ignite Artist in Residency, AIR , Hamilton Public Library, East Fishers. I develop a sustainable program for youth of all ages. The Artist in resident program is from May - August of 2026.	

Teaching

Yale University : Teacher Leadership Program	2022-2026
The Teacher Leadership Program is led by Jessica Sack, the Jan and Frederick Mayer Curator of Public Education; Wurtele Gallery teachers; and Education Department staff. In this program, arts educators explore innovative ways to connect their curricula and interest in art with the Yale University Art Gallery's collection. The sessions also address online and in-person teaching methodologies.	
Bloomingfoods , Eco-Printing a sustainable art workshop serving the Bloomington community. The workshop was hosted by Bloomingfoods for the EarthFest 2026 program.	2026
Bloomington Community Orchard , Eco-Printing a documentation of the Orchard, October, sponsored by Target and the Bloomington Community Orchard. Details here: https://www.soil2surface.com/bco-workshop	2025
Bloomington Forestry School : Soul Craft, Forage, Fossils and Fun, Youth class, April, Bloomington, IN, Sponsored by Minnetrista Museum. Details here: https://www.soil2surface.com/bloomington-forestry-school	
Monroe County Public Library Southwest Branch , Processing Avocado Seeds into a pink dye, Adult class, March, Bloomington, IN, sponsored by Fresh Thyme Market. Details here: https://www.soil2surface.com/monroe-librarysw	

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Teaching Summary & Select Publications

- Hamilton Public Library East**, August, Adult Botanical Painting, Fishers, IN 2024
Details here: <https://www.soil2surface.com/hamilton-library-adult-workshop>
- Hamilton Public Library East**, August, Youth Botanical Painting, Fishers, IN
- The FAR Center on Contemporary Art**, July, Birds in Space. This was a one hour, youth workshop: Inspired by Romanian sculptor Brancusi. Bloomington, IN 2023
- The FAR Center on Contemporary Art**, April, Mycelium as a Medium, The Importance of Trees, and Botanical Palettes. Workshop. This was a 3 hour, adult workshop sponsored by The FAR, North Spore, and Rainbow Bakery, Bloomington, IN. Details here: <https://www.soil2surface.com/far-adult-workshop>
- Studio Alchemy Gallery**, January, Mycelium as a Medium, The Importance of Trees and Botanical Palettes. A 3 hour adult workshop, Indianapolis, IN. Details here: <https://www.soil2surface.com/alchemy-gallery-workshop> 2022
- Crocker Art Museum**, August, Teacher Training, (E.S.L) Emotional, Social, Learning, online program, Sacramento, CA 2021
- Online instruction:** Teaching; Drawing, Painting and Art History 2020
- Palo Alto Arts Center**, Arts Instructor, City of Palo Alto, CA
(postponed due to covid-19)

Select Publications

- Rivera Amin, Lakshmi, "A View From the Easel," Hyperallergic Magazine, <https://hyperallergic.com/a-view-from-the-easel-321>. January, 2026
- Newfields (Indianapolis Museum of Art). "Arte Club." Waller Gallery, IMS at Newfields. December, 2025. <https://discovernewfields.org/events-exhibitions/arte-club>
- Spagnoli Gabardi, Chiara, "Eco Friendly Artists Who Will Blow Your Mind." Eco Home Magazine, July, 2025.
- WFIU-NPR, Maria Schechter, Interview: Pop of Culture (Producer). (n.d.). S02 E29: We Can't Stop the Beat [Audio podcast episode]. In Pop of Culture. Indiana Public Radio. Retrieved August 22, 2025, <https://indianapublicradio.org/popofculture>.
- Honored Listee, Marquis Who's Who of American Women, 2025.
- Mack, Justin, "DeHaan Artists of Distinction. Axios Indianapolis, February 2025, <https://www.axios.com/local/indianapolis/2025/02/06/dehaan-artists-of-distinction>.
- Schechter, Chris. "Foraging as a way of life." INTERALIA MAGAZINE, April 2024, <https://www.interaliamag.org/articles/maria-medina-schechter-foraging-as-a-way-of-life>.
- Adams, Megan. "Arrowmont Welcomes Bio Artist Maria Schechter's Mycelium Sculpture The Gatekeepers to Campus." Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, January 24, 2024, <https://www.arrowmont.org/arrowmont-welcomes-bio-artist-maria-schechters-mycelium-sculpture-the-gatekeepers-to-campus>.
- Danridge, Janet E., Snyder, Dannie, "Episode 9: Maria Schechter, Bio Artist." Re-flect - Calibrate, November, 2023, <https://reflectcalibrate.buzzsprout.com/1600303/13988726>.
- Hirschten, Addie. "The Studio Alchemy Podcast: Episode 99, Bio Art with Maria Medina-Schechter." May 21, 2023, <https://tunein.com/podcasts/Arts--Culture-Podcasts/The-Alchemy-of-Art-p1369555/?topicId=286708344>.
- Emily's Blog. "Maria Medina-Schechter." February 10, 2023, <https://myriverside.sd43.bc.ca/emilym2019/2023/02/10/inquiry-long-term-project>.
- Schechter, Maria, "Enchanted." NATUREVOLVE Magazine, June 23, 2023, https://issuu.com/naturevolve/docs/210623_naturevolve.
- Spagnoli Gabardi, Chiara, "ECO FRIENDLY ARTISTS WHO WILL BLOW YOUR MIND." ELUXE Magazine, February 24, 2022, <https://eluxemagazine.com/culture/articles/eco-friendly-artists>.