

# SELF PORTRAITURE AS MEDICINE

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In the vibrant world of graphic artistry, IreneSofia stands as a luminary, casting beams of joyous radiance through her larger-than-life self-portraiture.

Self-portraiture, for IreneSofia, transcends mere representation; her images of florals, shadows, and even eclipses become a form of medicine, a means of intuitive exploration and self-discovery.

Through her art, she delves into the essence of each moment while asking the poignant questions that lead to profound revelations. In this process, she sheds the layers of belief systems that no longer serve her and finds both healing and liberation in the act of creation.

Central to IreneSofia's artistic narrative is her personal journey with polio, which has presented a lifetime of challenges that constantly demand courage, resilience, and perseverance.

Yet, amid the shadows of polio, her artistry becomes a beacon of light, radiating with the pure ecstasy of being alive.

In her work, viewers will find not only a reflection of the artist's journey but a universal testament to the transformative power of art to heal, inspire, and illuminate the path to joy.

IreneSofia invites you to embark on your own voyage of self-discovery, embrace your courage within, and find solace in the beauty of the present moment.



*Irene Sofia*  
Conceptual Artist



## MYSELF

Growing up wearing a leg-brace, people often assumed that IreneSofia needed their help.

Yet it was her fire of self-reliance that refused to let her physical challenges define who she was.

“*It became my mission to prove that I could do it myself!*”

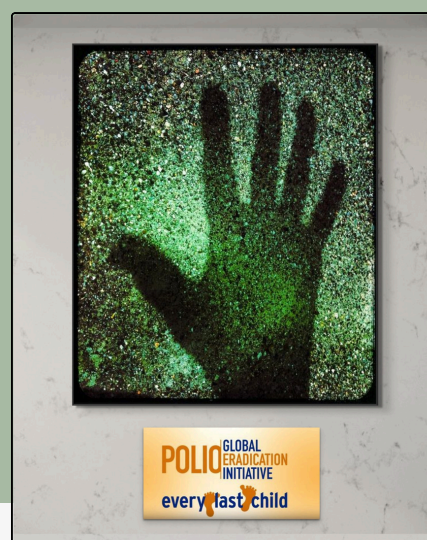
That stubborn determination earned her the nickname “MySelf” -- an appropriate moniker that remained with her throughout childhood and has even found its way into her computer passwords!

Once IreneSofia started exploring Self Portraiture as Medicine, she noticed a recurring theme in her artwork and began shooting a series of images she titled “Myself”.

Much to her surprise, she saw the person she had become: someone who had triumphed over adversity, who had become independent, courageous, accomplished, and above all, filled with an extraordinary abundance of joy in simply being alive. This overwhelming sense of joy became the uplifting and driving force behind her artwork.

Inspired by the radiant sunlight that bathes southeastern Arizona, IreneSofia began to incorporate her shadow—her MySelf—into these self-portraits. The resulting series of images seemed to emit a glow, capturing the immense joy that fills her soul.

Ask this artist what inspires her, and she’ll say, “It is this energy of joy that propels me to strive for more, to experiment more, and to feel more—not only in my art but in all I do.”



*A portion of IreneSofia sales is donated to help eradicate polio worldwide.*  
[Learn More](#)



# IRENE SOFIA INTERVIEW

In a recent interview, IreneSofia was asked about her life experiences with polio, which she contracted at 24 months old just as she was learning to walk. This interview focuses on how her life lessons spill over into the sensational art she creates.

What lessons have you learned living with the effects of polio?

*I know the effects of polio have given me the courage to create bold statements about personal strength, courage, and perseverance in many ways but especially in my art.*

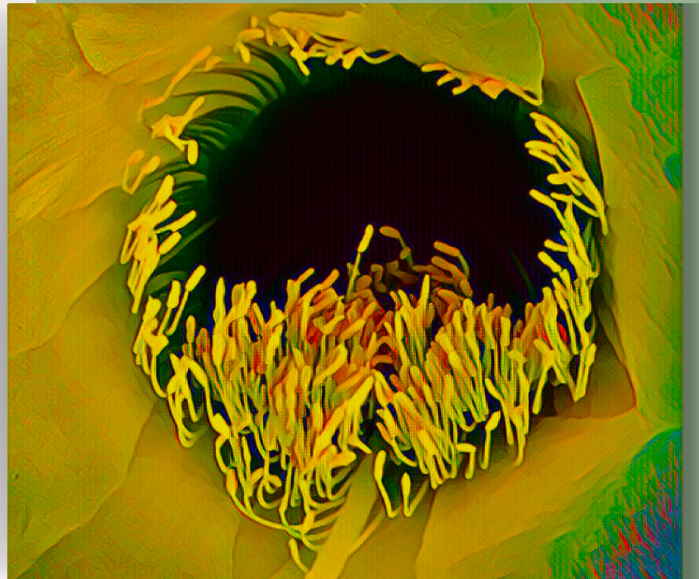
How have these lessons influenced your art?

*My art conveys not only the beauty of the physical world but also the inner strength that can arise from overcoming life's challenges. My joy of being alive shines through it all with grace and ecstasy.*

*I define my self-portraits as a celebration of life, a testament to the power of joy, and a reminder that determination can turn challenges into triumphs.*

How do you see your art inspiring others?

*My images capture the energy of a moment—energy to inspire, to uplift the spirit, to reflect on one's own joy of being alive.*



## LET'S BEGIN HERE.

When did you first realize that you wanted to be an artist?

*I can remember it to this day!*

*Enduring two corrective surgeries as a young child meant long days laying on my back in a hospital bed. One day, a volunteer walked in with an art project.*

*We cut out colored felt shapes, glued them together into a gorgeous bouquet and onto a felt bookmark. I was an instant artist!*

*That's when I realized I love beauty and beautiful things, and I wanted to create a world filled with that beauty!*



# LIVING A BOLD LIFE

Born in New York City during a polio epidemic, IreneSofia has lived boldly all her life.

At age two, she was diagnosed with polio, and at age eight, she moved with her family to south Florida's warm climate. There, she swam in the warm ocean waters that served as her rehabilitation and strengthened her polio-stricken leg.

Surrounded by bold tropical colors and Caribbean influences, she was inspired by the vibrant art scene and Old-World architecture that flourished within a mile of her home. That area was called Little Havana due to the 1960s' influx of Cuban refugees.

In that environment, she learned to ride a bike, dive off the high board, perfect deep sea fishing, give oral recitals, and more. All the time, she had to wear a knee-high metal leg brace. In later years, even with a fused ankle and weak leg, she climbed to the top of a glacier. Nothing seemed to phase her.

In high school, IreneSofia thrived on her school's national award-winning debate team. At the same time, she discovered her love for theater as an usher at the world-renowned Coconut Grove Playhouse. That exposed her to the magic of Broadway performances, opening her world to the unlimited possibilities of self-expression.

Reading Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1968 changed her big-city-girl perspective to become a wilderness woman yearning to live in the outdoors and fully embrace nature.

IreneSofia's artistic self-expression emerged when she taught an "Art In The Park" program in Knoxville, Tennessee, stocking her art supplies in a VW Van. It was during the Civil Rights Movement, and she found herself lovingly surrounded by eager African American children. "All fear and prejudice melted from their faces once a paintbrush was in hand. I knew then I could make a difference in the world through art!" she says.

***"I knew then that I  
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art!"***

After earning a BS in Science Education *cum laude* from the University of Tennessee in 1970, IreneSofia taught fifth grade in Cottonwood, Arizona. There, a Navajo student brought in newly shorn sheep fleece and asked her to teach him how to spin and weave this ancestral wool fiber.



Beautiful Places



"This was a turning point in my life. I dove into the world of spinning, dyeing, and weaving. From my love of spinning cotton, I moved to Arkansas and began a business called Cotton Clouds. Over 40 years, it grew to become the #1 Source of Quality Cotton Yarns for weaving, knitting, and crocheting in the U.S."

Never forgetting her love of nature, IreneSofia has hiked the rugged peaks of the Rockies, repelled down steep canyons, lived in a small forest cabin without electricity and running water, swum in the warm healing waters of the Gulf of Mexico—always seeking that magic communion with the spirit of the natural world.

In these moments of nirvana, IreneSofia knew that "just as I needed food, clothing, and shelter for sustenance, I also needed to be in these beautiful places."

From this inspiration, her artistic photographic images have been born.

After selling Cotton Clouds, IreneSofia retired. But like her father who began painting at age 70, she studied watercolor and started experimenting with photography and digital editing.

Today, she lives in a passive solar home in the Sonoran Desert with her husband Ron.

They are surrounded by an 11,000-foot mountain where she searches for those perfect images that speak to her nature-loving, artistic soul—and to the souls of all who see them.





## I R E N E S O P H I A EMERGING ARTIST

IreneSofia is an emerging conceptual artist who uses highly manipulated digital photos to reflect a world of natural beauty. Her images can easily transport the viewer to an alternative, parallel universe..

As *The String Theory* suggests, IreneSofia believes that our universe is not the only one; many universes exist parallel to each other. As she says, “I create art that takes the viewer to the other side of this reality where joy always abides.”

In sync with her minimalist lifestyle, an iPhone camera is all IreneSofia needs to capture the energy of any elusive moment. As a result, her images are fresh and honest sometimes with a dreamy quality as if to say “all is illusion—so live this moment in its pure joy!”

IreneSofia experiments with a range of digital photography apps to create her intriguing images, with three noted here.

Hipstomatic gives surprising results with double exposure and an other-worldly greenish tint. (Myself series)

SlowShutter allows her to capture motion as she dances across her living room. (Dancing Into Life series)

Prisma is an AI app that creates magnificent images, transporting the viewer into parallel universes by creating intriguing abstract art.

In *Nature as Abstract*, her newest exploration, she manipulates images of nature on her iPhone 14 and in the Prisma app. (Eclipse and Sap series)





# Irene Sofia

State-of-the-art MetalPrints on a large surface area, illuminate the energy of joy IreneSofia has captured.

