

Adult coloring books growing in popularity

By Adrienne Raphel, New York Times

In 2011, the British publishing house Laurence King asked Johanna Basford, a Scottish artist and commercial illustrator specializing in hand-drawn black-and-white patterns for wine labels and perfume vials, to draw a children's coloring book. Basford suggested instead that she draw one for adults.

For years, she told her publishers, her clients had loved to color in her black-and-white patterns. The publishers were convinced, and ultimately ordered an initial print run for "Secret Garden: An Inky Treasure Hunt and Coloring Book" of thirteen thousand copies.

Since the book's release, in 2013, it has sold about 2 million copies worldwide; for a time earlier this year, "Secret Garden" and a follow-up, "Enchanted Forest: An Inky Quest and Coloring Book," were the two best-selling books on Amazon.

Coloring books for adults have been around for decades, but Basford's success – combined with that of the French publisher Hachette Pratique's "Art-thérapie: 100 coloriages anti-stress" (2012), which has sold more than 3.5 million copies worldwide, and Dover Publishing's "Creative Haven" line for "experienced colorists," which launched in 2012 and sold four hundred thousand copies this May alone – has helped to create a massive new industry category.

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