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### Creativity and renewal A Personal journey

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# **Rochester Institute of Technology**

**A thesis Submitted to the Faculty of  
The College of Imaging Arts and Sciences  
In Candidacy for the Degree of  
MASTER OF FINE ARTS**

## **Creativity and Renewal: A Personal Journey**

By

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July 17, 2002

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## Thesis Proposal

### Creativity and Renewal: A Personal Journey

The intention of my thesis is to demonstrate how art can be used as an element in personal renewal. By renewal, I am implying the elevation of the human spirit. It includes, healing, rejuvenation, and nourishment as well as connectedness to the Divine within. Beauty, rhythm and harmony, by their very nature, are essential elements of the constant renewal of life. When the mind is set on love, beauty, or perfection, we are moving into the discovery of ourselves. We must find what nurtures us and in the process we will heal and renew ourselves.

My interests lie in determining what nourishes me as a painter; what is my source of inspiration; how can I achieve a personal breakthrough in my art? During the course of my thesis, I will try to discover the answers to these questions. In order to accomplish this, I will select some of the painters who have had a profound influence on me and I will analyze what these influences were; among these painters are Rembrandt van Rijn ["The Jewish Bride"], Edgar Degas ["The Bather"], Lucian Freud ["Naked Man, Back View"] and Odd Nerdrum ["Woman with Milk"]. The idea is not to copy them, but to try to trace their footsteps in order to discover myself in the process.

I will also describe my own creative process for a series of paintings, collages from found objects, and drawings that will constitute my thesis exhibit. I will document my approach to conceiving a subject, laying out the work and then

continue until it is complete. I will identify the stories, symbolism, colors and textures that I use and why I chose them. I will use a modified version of Degas' palette. My approach will include: spontaneity, time spent in solitude with nature, the use of the subconscious, discussions with people, and listening to music as a prelude to painting.

I will research the options of inspiration and breakthrough ideas by reading the following as well as other works:

Higher Creativity: Liberating the Unconscious for Breakthrough Insights,

Harman PhD, Willis and Rheingold, Howard

"Steven Assael, Revealing Light", The Arts, August 1999, pp 122 – 127

Gift from the Sea, Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Invisible Helpers, Leadbeater, C. W

Paula Modersohn-Becker The Letters and Journals, Busch, Gunter & von

Reinken, Liselotte

A Room of Her Own, Madden, Chris Casson

Meaning in the Visual Arts, Panovsky,

8 Weeks to Optimum Health , Weil M.D., Andrew

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## Artist's Introduction

### The Challenge

The challenge that faces any artist is to discover, within oneself, how to continually create new and original artwork. Where does inspiration and break through ideas come from, how do I tune out the world and all of my mundane thoughts and how do I harness this "energy" to produce a work of art that is truly original? These are only some of the questions that run through my mind. In the words of Paul Gauguin, 1898, *"In art, all who have done something other than their predecessors have merited the epithet of revolutionary; and it is they alone who are masters."* (Gauguin Website)

In this paper, I attempt to document how I personally approach this problem of understanding the creative process. It is, in every sense, a personal journey since each person's quest is unique. What I present may only be directly applicable to me.

Fundamental to my beliefs is that all of the answers lie within myself and to that extent; this is a process of "Self Discovery". But, discovery and creative expression are energy draining, hence the need for a process of "Renewal". Renewal not only restores energy but it is needed to avoid the risk of falling into a rut where one continues to reproduce the same thing over and over again, albeit with subtle differences. To avoid this rut, the artist must set aside all that they have learned in order to discover a new creative vein. In essence, they need to be renewed or even reborn.

## Chapter 1: Self Discovery

An important initial step in Self Discovery is formulating the “right” set of questions.

How do I, a mother, a wife and a member of the community, find time to devote to my art? Giving up these responsibilities is impossible; yet painting is also a part of me. Anne Morrow Lindbergh seemed to have struggled with these same questions.

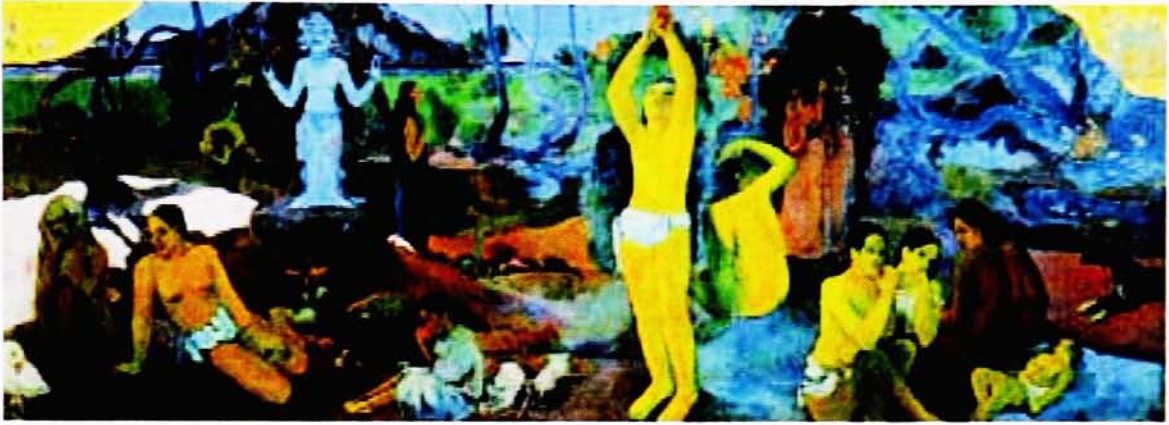
*“What is the answer? There is no easy answer, no complete answer. I have only clues, shells from the sea. The bare beauty of the channeled whelk tells me that one answer, and perhaps a first step is in simplification of life, in cutting out some of the distractions. But how? Total retirement is not possible. I cannot shed my responsibilities; I cannot permanently inhabit a desert island. I cannot be a nun in the midst of a family life. I would not want to be. The solution for me surely, is neither in total renunciation of the world, nor in total acceptance of it. I must find a balance somewhere, or an alternating rhythm between retreat and return. In my periods of retreat, perhaps I can learn something to carry back into my worldly life, as a beginning. I can follow this superficial clue, and see where it leads. Here, I can try.”*

-Anne Morrow Lindbergh, Gift from the Sea

Where does one begin? I cannot let go of whom I am in order to paint; I must understand who I am. As in Gauguin’s great painting, I must seek to understand, “Where do we come from? Who are we? Where are we going?”



The themes of my life are many. I want to live a loving life with my family where we give and take with each other and with the people that nature puts into



"Where do we come from? Who are we? Where are we going?" -Paul Gauguin 1897  
Boston Museum of Fine Arts Oil on canvas 54.75"x147.5"

our path. I want to be a mother, a wife, an artist and a friend. *But most of all – to be at peace with myself. I want to live "in grace" as much of the time as possible. I am not using the term in a strictly theological sense. By grace I mean an inner harmony, essentially spiritual, which can be translated into outward harmony. I am seeking what Socrates asked for in the prayer from the Phaedrus when he said, "May the outward and inward man be at one." (Lindbergh, p. 23)* I believe the more we give to becoming peaceful with our minds the more our bodies renew themselves naturally.

Why do I paint? After much thought, I have decided that I paint because I have been called to painting. It is simply something that I must do or I will not feel complete. I cannot explain it beyond that. Painting, to me, is the lens through which it is possible to enter a certain world. In it the viewer may find an endless number of magic images, objects, remembrances, associations, fears,

joys, hopes and dreams. These are elements that work themselves into my paintings.

I think of colors as I think of sounds; one sound means almost nothing and one isolated color means very little, but a certain organization of sounds may become a glorious symphony. A certain organization of colors can unleash a tempest of emotions in a perceptive viewer.

My paintings are the mirror of the person I am; with an endless reflection of my dreams, my joys, my sorrows, and myself. It is a product of my most primitive instincts, stimulations and impulses.

Many elements go into shaping who we are and how we think, feel and react. Three very important contributors are our families, the teachers we meet along the way and, of course, the great Master artists, both classical and contemporary, whose works can be found in any number of museums and galleries.

## **Family Influences**

United in me are many talents of my descendants. My father was a businessman who spoke five languages and remained a handsome, roguish charmer all his life. My mother had a wonderful gift for oratory – captivating people whenever she talked. She was a writer who was threatened with banishment to a Siberian prison camp if she continued to practice her Christian faith. So, in the middle of night, my mother, father and their two children, Orest and Arcadia, fled with the aid of gypsies to Austria. Everything was left in

Ukraine, land, home, and horses. Only what could be carried on their backs was taken with them as they fled. I was born in Hohenems, Austria, which is on the border with Liechtenstein, Germany and Switzerland. Four years later, cradled in my mother's arms, we arrived by boat in New York City, along with thousands of other immigrants yearning for freedom. A few years ago, I had the good fortune to be able to return to Hohenems. I learned that during the time my family was there it was a haven for refugees from all over Eastern Europe, Ukrainians, Poles, Jews, Serbians and more. Today, it is a haven for Middle Easterners. I am grateful to the generous and hospitable Austrians who opened their hearts and continue opening them to displaced foreigners. This sense of freedom entered into the definition of who I am, and it has entered into my art.

## **Teachers**

My introduction to drawing was a class taught by Denise Heischman at Monroe Community College. She taught me to observe lights and darks, and she gave me freedom to play. While others painted in a crowded classroom, she allowed me to go outside, near the pond. She accepted corrections even after a project had been turned in and graded. I appreciated getting a second chance; this greatly enhanced the learning experience because, instead of stopping with a lower mark and some comments, I went on to correct my mistakes and follow through to a much better drawing.

As a beginning painter in figurative art, I learned from Thomas Insalaco, a master teacher at the Finger Lakes Community College. This was the beginning of when I became aware of and to fall in love with the human figure. He



encouraged me to work as hard as I could, while acknowledging my efforts. When I was struggling with capturing the feet in a large painting, he took the time to sit down beside me while I worked. He said, "You have a need to do this." When I eventually succeeded, he smiled at me, pleased with my accomplishment. This silent approbation pleased me. It was a quiet communication of approval without words. He gave me color combinations for skin tones before I became aware of Degas' palette. He remains a source of information and inspiration to this day. I have a great deal of respect for his genius as a painter.

Ed Miller encouraged exploration and experimentation. Under him I discovered collages assembled from "found art". I loved the tactile feeling of the objects and their three dimensional qualities. Ed is a very original thinker.

Alan Singer taught me to see details and then to stand back and look at the whole effect. He also introduced me to many fine local artists through his seminar class. Alan Singer's psychological analyses were extremely useful and his attention to detail and delicacy made me more aware of it, enhancing my observation for details. He sees a lot more than other people do. He observes in a psychological and spiritual way. Alan's critiques were very insightful and my skills improved based upon them. I get a great deal of pleasure from his watercolors of flowers and birds.

Bob Heischman's love for elegance and awareness of light reaffirms my love for light. His critiques were excellent and incisive. All of my teachers

contributed to my knowledge with stimulating dialogues and pointed criticisms, all of which improved my art and my ability to see and to be aware.

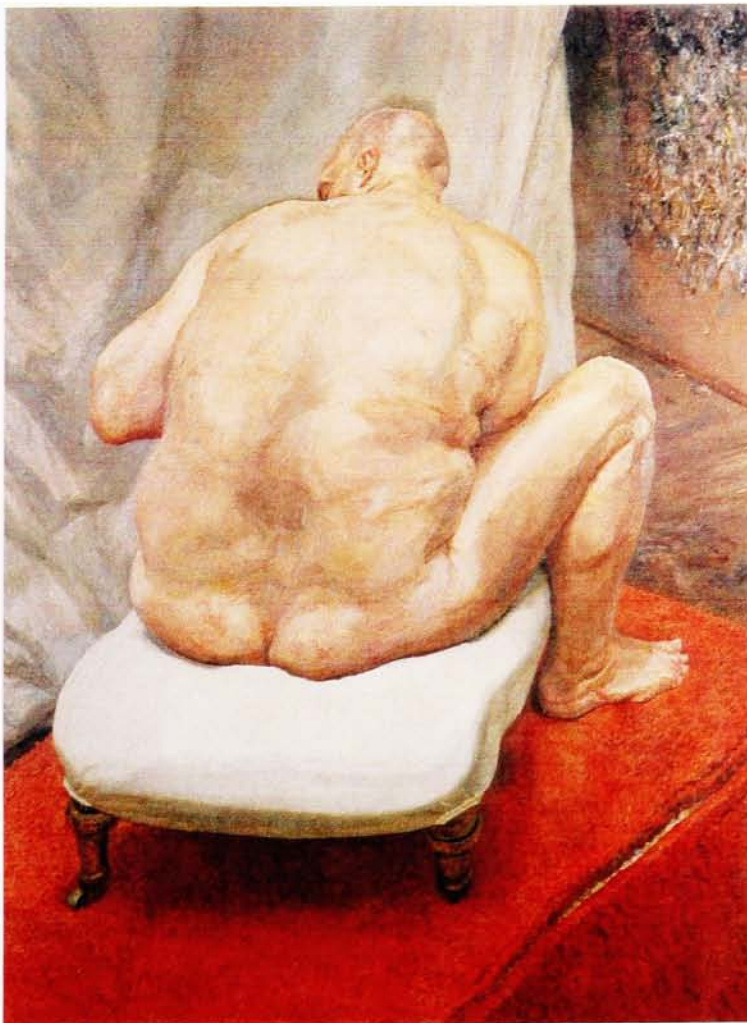
## **Painters**

Travels to major museums in the United States and Europe have fueled my passion for art. I am finding a great deal of pleasure from the works of Degas (1834-1917), Rembrandt (1606-1669), and recently shown works by Lucian Freud (1922-present), Steven Assael (1957-present) and Odd Nerdrum (1944-present). Nerdrum's style is a modern version of Rembrandt. The colors, the brush strokes, the fabrics and textures that he uses are reminiscent of Rembrandt, although I am not always drawn to the stories his paintings tell. Steven Assael captures everyday characters from subways and streets with dazzling emotion. I especially like Assael's works because he chooses to paint people that you might see everyday on the streets and subways of New York City.

## Creativity and Renewal: A Personal Journey

Degas is an impressionist painter. He was, however, in many ways atypical; not sharing many of the convictions and the goals, which characterized that movement. He managed to incorporate and transform the revolutionary nature of impressionist thought to achieve his own effects, dissecting reality with a new eye, examining movement, and the state of his character's being. I am drawn to Degas because of his colors, and the movement expressed by his characters doing every day actions such as bathing and dressing.

Impressionism is very much alive today. We can see wonderful samples of it in the works of Lucian Freud. I am mesmerized by Freud's provocative



**"Naked Man, Back View"**

- Lucian Freud

1991-92

Oil on Canvas 72"x 54"

Metropolitan Museum of  
Art, New York City



images and with his handling of skin textures, flesh colors, and muscle tone. He seems to reach into the subconscious minds of his models. His paintings reveal much more than a mere image.

*People and things exposed to Freud's searching gaze appear to be more themselves and more like themselves than they ever have been or probably ever will be. It would seem as if the artist assimilates the person's life into the life of the picture plane and each gesture it contains. (Freud website)*

*Uninvited, thoughts of Lucian's famous grandfather, Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, come to mind. He, too, helped people to get to know themselves in order to be themselves, among other things by serving as a reflecting screen for their thought projections. In this process his tools were words. His grandchild Lucian's tools are brush and palette, and his projection screen is the canvas. Both render the individual visible to himself and to others, figuratively and literally. (Freud's website)*

*At the end of the 1950s Lucian Freud abandons a strict linear style of thin, carefully laid-on colours, a style characteristic of his work up until then. He begins now to paint in an impasto manner. A new, strong plastic colouration requires stiff paintbrushes and great physical activity and participation. The paint tools now leave imprints and traces in the colour on the canvas, the effect reminiscent of raw tissue. This seems to have had a liberating effect on him and becomes an incentive to further development. (Freud website)*

I am naturally attracted towards realism and approach my work knowing that both conscious and unconscious influences will control its direction. I

believe it is important to keep examining the work of fellow artists, both past and present, and believe that I gain enrichment and understanding from this reflection and study. I have an enormous respect for the art of the past and particularly for that of the great draftsmen of the Italian Renaissance. I believe that one can retain respect for these masters without necessarily imitating or becoming subordinate of them. I realize that my art comes from both art history and life, and there is succession and lineage in all art.

I find that studying the lives and the works of great artists to be of immense value to me. First, it puts their work in perspective and gives them a very human quality. I prefer to see their paintings in person rather than as a reproduction, because their techniques and brush strokes identify them. They speak to me across a gulf of time. Even more importantly, they are an inspiration, a proof of accomplishment, a validation that it can be done. When I am down or at a standstill, looking at great paintings renews my spirit to continue. One of the great benefits of being an artist is that you can spend hours just looking at things, at their beauty and complexity and uniqueness. This uniqueness can, at times, appear unexpected or odd because of the juxtaposition of elements or colors that do not naturally appear together but, somehow, looks correct despite the paradox that the work creates in the mind of the viewer.

## Chapter 2: Renewal

Much of my work is intuitive and I try not to reproduce what others praise me for, because this might destroy my creativity and make it forced.

*“Thus, to reprogram old unconscious beliefs about limitations and potentials, or to program in new ones such as “I can have a breakthrough,” “we need only to vividly imagine the new beliefs—either by visualizing or verbalizing them. If this is done persistently over a period of time, the new belief system will begin to replace the old and become an instinctual part of our lives” (Harman Ph.D. in Rheingold 92).*

*“Not only can affirmation reprogram beliefs about limitations and potentials, but it can help program in new ideas—such as the affirmation of success—as well.” (Harman Ph.D. in Rheingold 92).*

So many things can act as a hindrance or a distraction to the creative process. Daily interruptions, conflicts with people, world events, noise pollution, fear and anxiety and past hurts or failed attempts. How does one cleanse the mind, and close out these distractions is an important part, if not the most important part, of the creative process. Artistic expression itself can be a means of healing – working through traumas.



## **Overcoming Fear**

Many of us in our youth have wondered whether, when the time came, we would be able to master the art of lovemaking. We may have read sex manuals, or perhaps sought a teacher. But then comes the day when we discover that we already know unconsciously how to make love; we need only follow that inner knowing. Similarly, we already know how to use our deep intuition.

## **The importance of the Physical**

Painting is an energy draining activity and I need to get out, clear my mind and stimulate my body (renewal) in order to rejuvenate my spirit. Each day I take a walk near water in Mendon ponds, along the canal, on Lake Ontario or Canandaigua Lake. Nearly every day between late May and early October I swim in Mendon Ponds.

## **The importance of Beauty**

*"Why shouldn't art be pretty? There are enough unpleasant things in the world."* - Pierre-Auguste Renoir, (web site)

My parents were immigrants but they brought culture with them to this country. From my mother, I have a love for European elegance, which has a permanent place in my art form and bears a certain style with foreign influences. I do not know how my work will be interpreted. I know that it is hard to explain what makes a work of art beautiful. I think the best way to express this, is that I or anyone else would never get tired of looking at it, that one always sees more

in it, that it gives you a sense of being satisfied, of being at peace yet alive and eager, just like a good lover. Always wanting to go back and be with the painting.

## **The importance of Freedom**

The importance of freedom was instilled in me at a very young age. Maybe it had something to do with my family's flight from Communism, seeing the Statue of Liberty from a boat railing at age 4 or fleeting images of Ellis Island. My mother encouraged the habit of freedom of thought in childhood. Truth pursued in freedom ended in love. There is no foundation stronger than this. I cannot say enough about the importance of freedom to the artist. We are constantly being inhibited, if not intimidated by other people and often by our own preconceived notions of good and bad, beautiful and repulsive, success and failure, by the original and the mundane. It is essential to constantly push back and to allow ourselves the freedom to look at things in an entirely new light without being judged. It is important to learn to love oneself, to trust oneself to acknowledge the divinity within (enthusiasm); to trust our intuition, and to listen to that small still voice from within. This was especially true in my beginning stages of loving the nude form and the need to know that many artists had painted nudes. I found many female artists have painted nudes. Once I learned this, it freed me to try and see what came out of me. The need to do it skillfully and artistically was important to me. This fear has been tastefully put aside.

## **Chapter 3: The Creative Process**

Although the creative process is primarily one of discovery, and discovery cannot be meticulously planned and certainly not placed on a rigorous schedule, there are many things we can do to “stimulate” discovery. We can carefully choose our environment. We can follow a disciplined process. We can study the works of others and apply a set of disciplines that allow us to focus or concentrate more effectively. We can learn what to look for, to recognize the unexpected. So often we walk past what we are seeking over and over again failing to recognize the obvious. Our mind is caught on a preconception blinding us from the truth.

### **Choosing a Conducive Environment**

As our lives grow busier and the world noisier, a room, a place, that quiet space we call our own, becomes more important than ever. Honoring this space is like honoring ourselves, less an indulgence than a necessity. Certainly, some of the most delicious hours in life are quiet hours, reading to a sleepy child, stroking a tentative kitten, and dressing for an important evening, spreading out the Sunday papers. Simply curling up alone with a cup of tea can be a declared holiday, our time out of time and a time to quiet our minds to allow our inner intuition or inner divinity shine through us

My studio is a newly built room of our house. It is set way off to the side all by itself and it has a door to keep out interruptions. There is no phone but there are plenty of windows that bring in natural light and the landscape is filled



with trees, birds and other wild animals. The sense of being a part of nature has always been important to me. The room is spacious (14'x26') and has light, cream colored walls. The only bold colors are in the Turkish kilim on the floor. Both finished and uncompleted art works are on the walls. There are also some family photographs, for after all, my family is still the most important part of my life. I have a bookcase filled with art books some of which are scattered open on the floor. I have plenty of incandescent lighting and surface space. The largest item of furniture is the easel, which is dwarfed by the large canvases that I choose. I have a comfortable Shaker rocking chair and a good radio with a collection of my favorite music. Music is an item of personal taste and should not be used in group settings, such as classroom studios because what inspires one person will undoubtedly annoy another to distraction. But the beauty of having my own studio is that I can play the music that both calms and focuses me by shutting out more of the outer world. Some of my favorite pieces are the piano concertos of Rachmaninov and Chopin's etudes and sonatas.

### **The importance of Good Tools and Good Media**

Much of my studio may be thought of as messy, but my brushes and paints are meticulously cared for. I painstakingly clean my brushes each day after their use. After all, they are extensions of my own hand and good brushes are essential to good painting. The primary brushes I use are a no. 4, a no. 6 and a no. 8. The no. 8 is only for the laying in of the background color. I prefer sable brushes for their ability to capture subtle details. Using good media is also

important, I choose to work exclusively with Old Holland oil paints but I occasionally experiment with acrylics.

## **The discipline of following a Process**

Artistic expression lives in a realm of infinite possibilities, but in order to create, we need to focus if we are ever to achieve anything. I find it essential, when beginning a new painting, to set some boundaries.

I have chosen the human figure as my focus. Initially I was drawn to the limitless complexities of the body and the challenge in rendering them on canvas. I was awed by the infinite variety of artistic expression not only in painting but anatomical sculpture as well. I then grew to love the body as a thing of beauty. The variations in human anatomy are dazzling.

I have a personal goal to create between five and 8 paintings each year. I came up with this number based on how long I currently take to produce works. In the future, I may be able to work faster, but, my goal will not change, because I will continually be evolving and introducing new techniques and subtleties. This will keep me from repeating myself. It is my goal to be a master figurative painter and to be able to sell my works in order to sustain my growth. I want to teach and share what I love.

## **The importance of Concentration:**

Without concentration, the energy of the mind is dissipated in vague thoughts, worries and fantasies. As disciplined man expresses himself more clearly through concentration; a man of ordinary intellect, with highly developed

concentration, is more creative than the highly intellectual man of poor concentration. Through concentration, a direct link with the cosmic mind is established so that the mind can attend to several things simultaneously. Concentration is no substitute for labor or action, but it does assist the individual in gaining unique experiences and truths hidden in the deeper recesses of the mind. I have learned by some experience, by many examples, and by the writing of countless others beyond myself, also occupied in the search, that certain environments, certain modes of life, certain rules of conduct are more conducive to inner and outer harmony than others. There are, in fact, alternative roads that one may follow. Simplification of life is one of them. In my painting of "Christopher's Vision", we see Christopher calming an agitated mind.

*"Patanjali gave elaborate treatment to the science of concentration for he realized its' utility in calming an agitated mind. Modern scientists now concur with this view and are convinced that only through concentration can one gather together scattered forces and emotions and resolve conflicts. With steady practice the nervous system and the mind are relaxed and the mind then becomes steady, one-pointed and free from the shackles of desire. The aspirant is thus led, through concentration, to the super conscious state where he experiences the bliss divine." (p. 118 Swami Rama)*

## **The importance of Stillness and Meditation:**

What a pleasure to just lay down or sit back and listen. We hear the lively titter of chickadees at the birdfeeder outside, the jeer of a jay. We hear the rustle of a down comforter as we roll over, or the consoling patter of rain against the



window. Most of all, we can listen to our own thoughts, letting the mind become quiet. This is useful in tuning out distractions such as bills, world events, fears, anger and anxiety.

Underneath all, we are taught that there is a voice, which calls to us beyond what is reasonable, and in listening to their flicker of spirit, we often find deep healing. This is the voice of embodiment calling us to live our lives like sheet music played, and it often speaks to us briefly in moments of deep crisis. Sometimes it is so faint we mistake its whisper for wind through leaves. But taking it into the heart of our pain, it can often open the paralysis of our lives.

This brings to mind the story of a young divinity student who was stricken with polio, and from somewhere deep within him came an unlikely voice calling him to, of all things, dance. So, with great difficulty, he quit divinity school and began to dance, and slowly and miraculously, he not only regained the use of his legs, but went on to become one of the fathers of modern dance.

*This is the story of Ted Shawn, and it is compelling for us to realize that studying God did not heal him. Embodying God did. The fact of Ted Shawn's miracle shows us that Dance, in all its forms, is Theology lived. This leads us all to the inescapable act of living out what is kept in, of daring to breathe in muscle and bone what we know and feel and believe--again and again. (Mark Nepo, website)* This story teaches us that to love is to heal ourselves; to try to love ourselves; to love what we are doing and to follow our calling.

## **The importance of Drawing**

Drawing is a skill that is required of all artists. It is fundamental to techniques of painting and sculpture. I am fascinated with the magic of drawing, of making marks that provide parallels with experience, marks that are able to express my feelings for form, space, light and movement. I also consider drawing to be a very personal, discovery process, and a tool for developing my powers of observation and memory.

My approach to painting and printmaking relies very much on drawing. I am attracted to the infinite possibilities of impressing ink onto paper and I find unique textural characteristics of prints to be stimulating, seductive, and full of subtlety and nuance. Keith Howard's printing class was an awakening for me. He is very attentive to the needs of his students. I learned to use printmaking as a reinforcement of drawing. My prints develop and evolve slowly. This gradual process allows me to become very involved with the subject. This is also true of some of my paintings; I take time to add more subtle details. Because of this intense and continual observation, I feel I am able to make a sensitive, and intimate statement about the subject I have chosen for my work.

Many of my prints, which are very different from my paintings, are cartoon like in nature; little, humor oriented sketches created during moments spent in coffee houses. They speak of joy, laughter and song. Each one has its' own unique voice.

## **The importance of Experimentation**

My personal research and experimentation have led me into new ways of seeing and new ways of drawing. This was especially true in my collages and my work in modern drawing. I have taken my work with collages that are composed of found art and I have added painted images to them. I have painted on canvas, wood and fiberboard. I have tried oil paints and acrylics, mixed with different medias and gels, and I have experimented with unique color combinations that at first do not look like they will work, but then I discover that some do. Although my love is for realism, I have also developed works of abstract expressionism. I have tried printmaking and sculpture, but I always come back to painting.

In my art, I have attempted to achieve a solid anchor in the visible world and at the same time to create beauty from my personal experience. Both by temperament and interest I have explored a variety of subject matter ranging from landscape and still life to portrait and figure composition. The creative figure composition challenges me at every level of my ability and allows for a fulfilling expression. It is a pleasure when a canvas reveals a reflective figure as if one were discovering the innermost private moment of ones' subject. This is visible in the painting of "Gail". She brought a strong voluptuous figure to the canvas and a bright mind.



## **My Own Creative Process**

I begin each day early, arising at 7:00 AM with a mug of steaming coffee. I shower to wake myself up; water is very invigorating to me. I go to my studio and just sit there, in the quiet, staring at the painting in progress, waiting for it to speak to me, to tell me what to do next. Sitting there, I also begin to visualize my next steps, frequently working through ideas in my mind before applying paint to canvas. I am fortunate in that I have an active imagination and I can actually see the next step in a painting before I produce it. This allows me to discard ideas that do not work. As I approach a painting, I do not have a complete picture before I start. I only have a vague notion of what I like or what I would like to express. It comes to me mostly in blurry forms and hazy colors. Each painting is truly a work of discovery for me. So much of what I do comes from my own intuition and feeling as I produce the work. At first this was a source of great frustration as I tried to reproduce what was in front of me or if I were told to illustrate an existing idea. When the output that I produced did not look like what it was intended, I felt incompetent. When I finally realized that I had the freedom to work in any order that I liked, the painting and the story revealed themselves simultaneously. The stories and metaphors that drive my painting arise mostly from my subconscious mind, which is fed by the images of my life (childhood though adulthood), parents, friends, family and lovers.

Prior to painting, I carefully select my palette. The colors I use in my paintings are the same ones Degas uses which are yellow ochre, burnt sienna, raw umber, chrome oxide green, mars red, cadmium yellow lemon, cadmium red

light, Vandyke brown, titanium white and ivory black. Like Degas I use thin, light layers of color (white, ochre, lemon yellow) diluted with lots of oil as background colors. This takes a great deal of time but is worthwhile. Sometimes, like Degas would do, I allow that background color to come peeping through without the addition of other layers of color. I have been happy with the limited palette, but will occasionally experiment with other colors. After sitting for a time, I begin to organize my tools. I select the music I want to listen to and then I paint for several hours. At mid morning, about 11:00 AM I take a break and have a light lunch, usually soup or vegetable and fruit. I find that too much food makes me lethargic, as do certain types of food.

When I get back, I spend 15 minutes soaking in what I have done so far. I look into the painting to see what it is trying to tell me. Again I paint for several hours taking a break for an afternoon swim during the summer to revitalize me, or a quick walk in the fresh air when swimming is impossible. If I am tired I take a nap or spend some time in meditation-completely clearing my mind of all thoughts, including, those associated with the work at hand. My husband and I take turns cooking. After supper, I usually am too tired to work at painting so I read. Each evening my husband and I take a walk, somewhere near water if at all possible. Before going to bed, I go into my studio one more time to review the day's progress and to set the stage for letting my subconscious work details as I sleep.

## Getting Started on a New Painting

I study magazines, art books and go to museums and art galleries for ideas. Most of this just adds to the accumulated wealth of images in my mind and is fodder for the subconscious.

I am not an illustrator, I do not know what subject matter I will paint, rather the painting reveals itself as simultaneously, and the story unfolds before the painting. Something from my imagination will strike a chord as I view the models and by instinct I make the connection. I experiment with lighting and shadows and then I take photographs of the hands, feet and face so that I have a reference after the model is gone. About mid-way through the painting, as I see the story evolving, I add appropriate symbols. One of my favorites is water in almost any form, because every emotion can be expressed with water in its different manifestations. Many of the verbal images that I use will reappear as visual images in my art and are often keys to understanding the underlying spiritual significance of my paintings. This is very evident in my collage of "Buddha and the Universal Mother": the male and female parts of ourselves. Divergent trails suggest disorientation. Mountains are symbolic of spiritual ascent. Gates or doors denote either spiritual progress, if the seeker has succeeded in crossing the threshold, or spiritual arrival, if the seeker has reached the threshold; or a spiritual barrier if the gate or door is closed as in the collage "E&T". In this collage, the man has light pouring into his head and the woman has energy flowing out of her. Messengers are transmitters of God's wisdom. Water in general stands for purification and renewal, and rivers, which flow in a



specific direction, suggest transition and movement towards a goal as in “Angel Descending to Earth”.

## **Use of the subconscious**

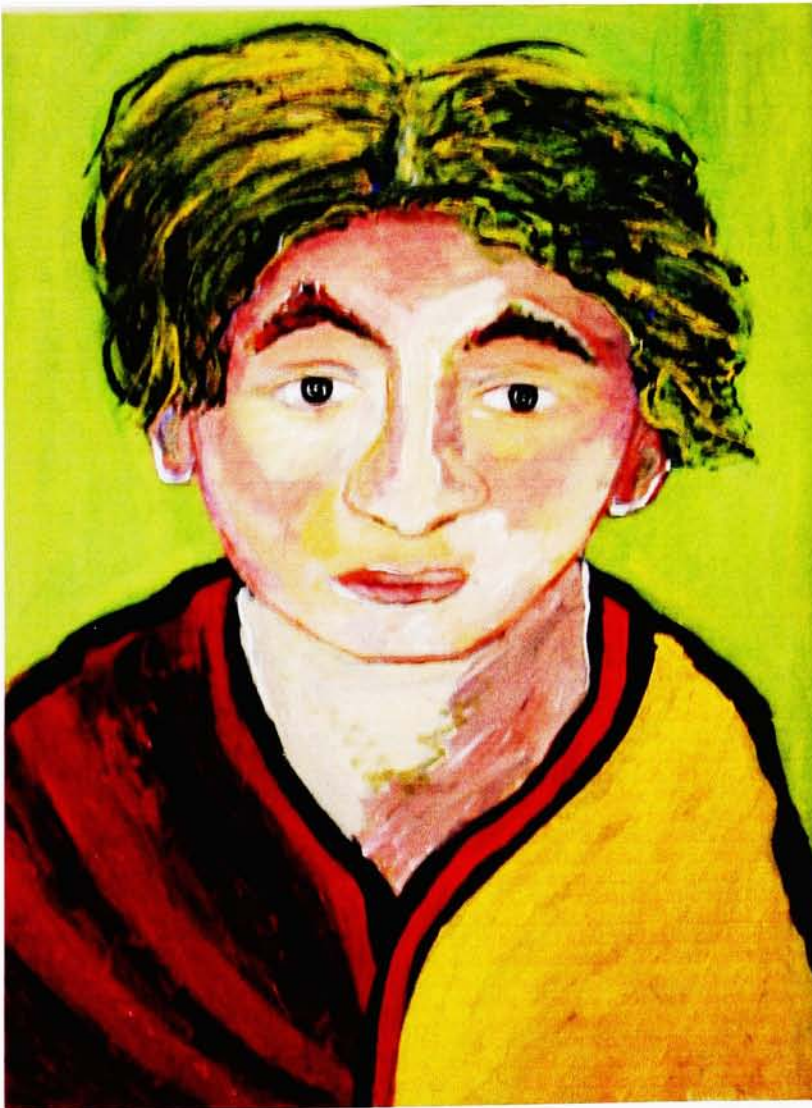
Many great thinkers, scientists, mathematicians, philosophers and artists have learned to harness and rely on their subconscious minds. After struggling with a problem for some time, it is important to let go of it and to do something totally unrelated. During these times, our subconscious minds work to solve the problem. The intention and the decision to turn over all problems to the deep intuition are essential. This is what I must follow.

Having confidence in the knowledge that my technical skills are sharp, I approach my paintings seriously and hope that they will reveal something poetic and sometimes mysterious. When this goes well, it provides intense pleasure, which delights me and enriches my life, and hopefully the lives of others.

## Chapter 4: My Own Works

It is important to note that the works that I have chosen to be part of my MFA thesis do not follow any common theme. They were chosen to illustrate different aspects of the creative process outlined in this paper.

### **“The Missionary”**



**“The Missionary”**  
Tatiana Evanitsky  
Acrylic on canvas  
30"x40"  
2000

“The Missionary” started out as a sketch of my husband. This painting is done in acrylics with large bold brush strokes and the frequent use of my fingers. The paint has been applied thickly leaving marks on the clothing and ridges left by the brush in the waves of the hair. As I reflected on the work, I envisioned a man, working with the poor, serving their needs but filled with internal struggles. He wants to follow his calling, to do what is needed, to make whatever sacrifice is necessary because that is how he has been trained. However, there is an inner longing to be free of it all; to have a more simple path where he does not have to carry the burdens of others or deal with impossible situations. There is reluctance in his eyes. He is deep in thought, wrestling with conflicting passions. He is forcing himself to just “bear it”.

The colors chosen for the painting were: Red for his passion and zeal – after all, he is a missionary. I chose Yellow for the “mind”. Clearly he is deep in thought, and finally I chose Green to designate healing. Healing as it applies to his work and healing as it applies to himself. The green is in the background and in his hair. The brightly colored robes are indicative of native crafts of the people that he serves. The strong lines around the nose show will power and definiteness of purpose, a person with a mission to accomplish, albeit a difficult one. The unfocused gaze hides the inner mental conflicts, and the reluctance to deal with difficult issues.



## **“Man’s Back With Outstretched Arms”**



**“Man's Back With Outstretched Arms”**

**Tatiana Evanitsky**      **Oil on Canvas**  
**30"x40"**      **2001**



**“Man's Back”**

**Steven Assael** **Oil on Panel**  
**24.5"x 13.25"**      **1995**

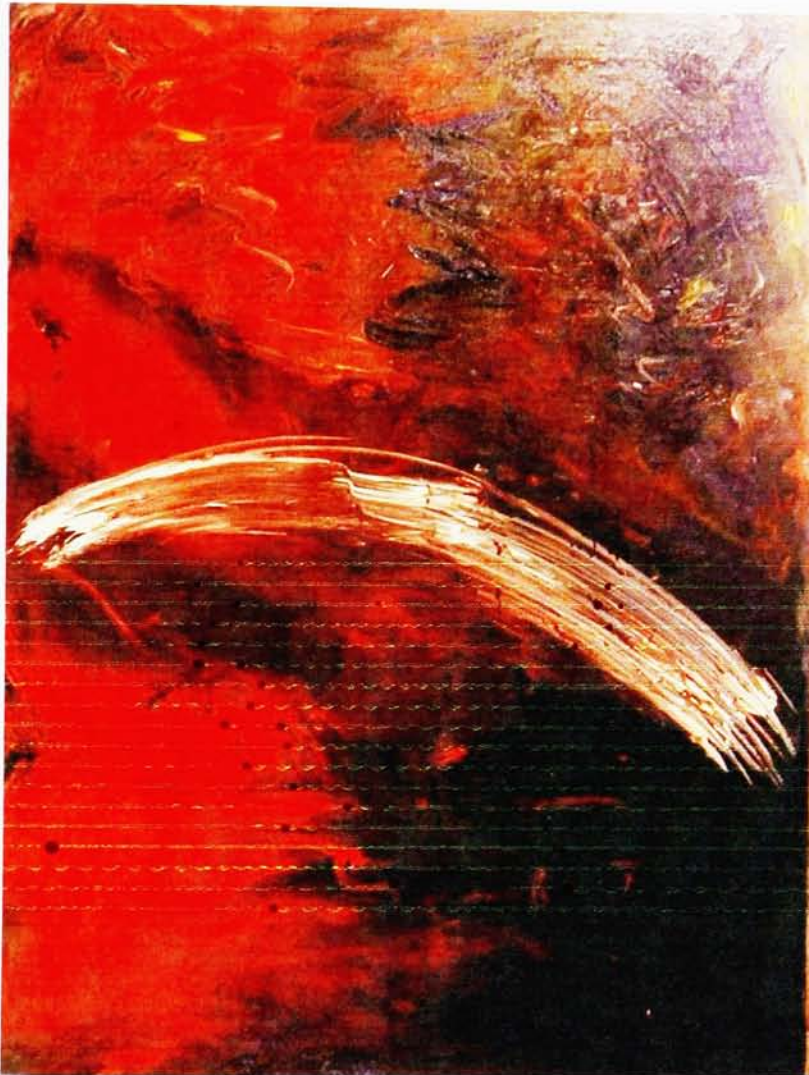
At first glance, “Man’s Back With Outstretched Arms” is an abstract painting, but, on closer examination, the torso appears from the shadows of darkened blue on black. It is detailed and shows great attention to shape and form. This oil painting was done wet on wet. This involves applying colors over and into one another while still wet, and it gives a quite different impression to working wet on dry. Because each new brushstroke mixes to some extent with

those below or adjacent to it, the results are softer, with forms and colors merging into one another without hard boundaries.

The initial inspiration for this picture came from a painting I first saw at the Memorial Art Gallery in Rochester for their Realism Exhibit. The painting of a "Man's Back" was by Steven Assael. I did not care for the theme of the painting, but I did feel that the back of the man and the muscles were beautiful. Assael's painting is painful and evokes suffering. I chose to render my painting as one of praise. The arms are outstretched to the Universe as the body swims in a translucent light of shimmering blue. The background colors represent breakthrough insights. The body is athletic, strong and sensual capturing the muscles and dimensions of the human form without being overly explicit. I was intrigued by the darkness of the composition and the challenge of rendering the skin tones. I played with various lighting on the model until I achieved the desired effect. This painting is a mixture of realism and abstract painting.

The challenge with this painting was in the selection of colors; the intermingling of blacks, blues, grays and whites, and in the background which moves with a quiet, fluid energy. I used large brushes on this canvas, which helped to yield the abstract effect

## **“The Passion Garden”**



**“The Passion Garden”**

**Tatiana Evanitsky**

**Acrylic on canvas**

**30"x40"**

**2001**

“The Passion Garden started out as an experiment in trying to express an emotion on the canvas. It is a major deviation from my primary direction, which is figurative realism. There are no anatomies in this painting. The expression comes entirely from color, and brush strokes. I started by laying down black paint as an undercoating and let it dry completely and then I gradually added



reds and blues. I listened to Gypsy violins as I rhythmically applied more media. Rather than applying the paint in a predefined pattern, I gently guided the brush giving freedom for the paint to move where it wanted. As I worked, I discovered suggestions of trees (swirls of blue) and, when the painting was totally dry, I added the white bridge, which is reminiscent of a musical staff. The bridge is what unites the lovers who are the source of the passion. I was encouraged by the free forms of Leonardo Nierman.

The lower left is filled with a vitality of pure, undiluted color. The upper right has more form. I unintentionally created a swirl of trees. The bridge is like an obi on a Japanese courtesan, a Geisha.



## **“Christopher’s vision”**



**“Christopher's Vision”**

**Tatiana Evanitsky**

**Oil on Canvas**

**30"x 40"**

**2002**

The background of the painting is like a curtain that is about to be drawn. There is a mystery as to what is behind this curtain or what is on the other side of the doorway. I chose to de-emphasize the details of the clothing except for the

choice of the bold, passionate red in the scarf. Instead, I focused on the facial features, his eye, ear, mouth and his hair. I reworked these areas over and over again until I achieved the effect that I wanted. I started out by laying down small amounts of color, with oil layer upon layer, building them up gradually. And then I used a combination of very tiny brush strokes and dots. I added gold to represent knowledge and lavender for spiritual perfection.



**"Subway People" (detail)**  
**Steven Assael**  
**Oil on Canvas**  
**62.5" x 98.25"**

Christopher was an enigmatic personality. His background was black, Latino. I felt a strong yearning from him for deeper meaning in life and I felt he was looking for an answer or a direction. The door way on the left started out as an accident. I inadvertently dropped paint on the canvas and as I began to clean it up, there slowly evolved the open doorway, which marked an opportunity for

Christopher. The door represents mystical experience and Christopher has a choice to accept it or to walk away. He has a noble countenance although, in real life, he did not appear this way

Insights into the spiritual quest can be found in the writings of the great Indian mystic, Sri Aurobindo. *The essential practical thing is to open up to these higher regions. Once there, each individual will receive according to his or her capacity and needs or particular aspiration. The quarrels between materialists and religious men, between philosophers and poets and painters and musicians, are the childish games of an inexperienced humanity in which each individual wants to fit everyone into his own mold. When we reach the luminous Truth, we see that it can contain everything without any quarrel, and that everyone is Its' child. The mystic receives the joy of his loved One, the poet receives poetic joy, the mathematician mathematical joy, and the painter receives colored revelations – and all are spiritual joys.*” (Adventure of Consciousness, p 204)

In this painting, I combine many elements of art history into a single fin-de-siecle statement, a summing up. Although at first glance the work appears to be realist, quickly it is revealed as drawing on elements of painting found in works ranging from Degas, Botticelli, and more recently the contemporary realist painter, Steven Assael. I drew some of my inspiration from Assael's, “The Subway Person”. According to the Forum Gallery, who represents Assael, *“His paintings have a certain mystery to them, and also a kind of spirituality, as if he has captured magic moments in which fundamental aspects of character and*

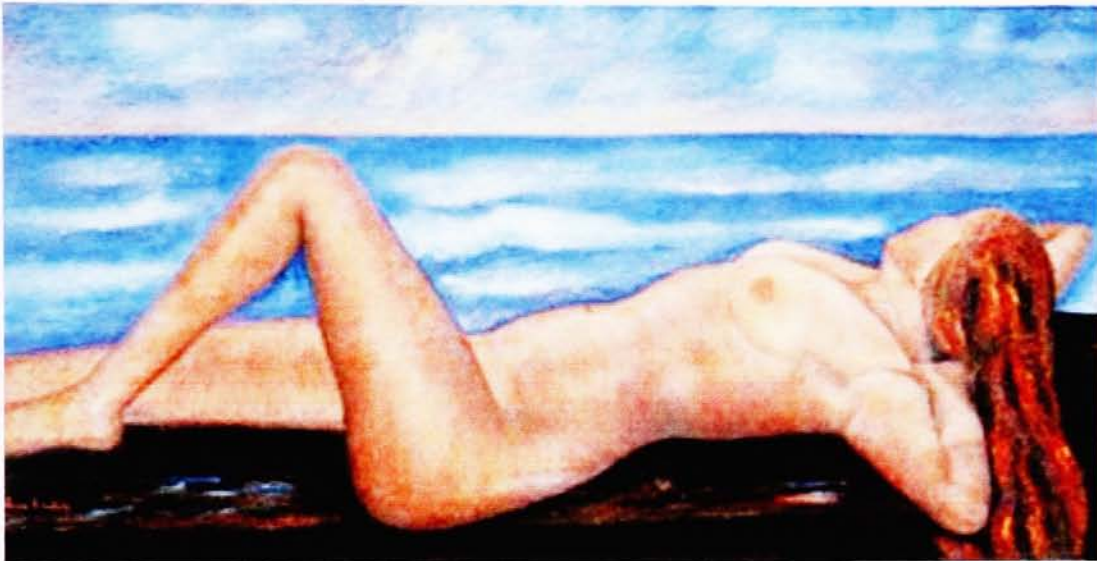
*human relations are revealed and the earthly commingles with the eternal."*

(*Forum Gallery*) "Christopher's Vision" captures a similar sense of spirituality.

Even those whose lives had appeared to be ticking imperturbably under their smiling faces are often trying, like me, to evolve another rhythm with more creative pauses in it, more adjustment to their individual needs, and new and more alive relationships to ourselves as well as others. All of us need a contemplative corner in our lives, as in "Christopher's Vision".



## “Reclining Nude”



“Reclining Nude”

Oil on canvas

72"x36"

Tatiana Evanitsky

2002

“Reclining Nude” was inspired by Degas’ painting of “The Bather”. The turned away head, the flowing red hair, the bend at the elbow and the body that is almost as much geological as it is anatomical are influences of Degas. I began experimenting with clear tar gel. It resulted in a bumpy texture, which was very difficult to work with so I sanded it off, but some of it remains.

While the influences are mainly felt in differing uses of perspective, the mood is my own. “Reclining Nude” is a person of extraordinary presence, as she lies naked and beautiful, in the world of stillness away from the world of noise and demands, held in the silence of the moment. Her body almost floats over the board rather than resting upon it. Delicious softness and gentleness pervades

her as she listens to the waves caressing each other. Each wave welcomes her. The colors of the sky are reflected in her skin tones. All of nature knows that she is a beautiful woman unclothed and yet somehow without the slightest suggestion of the over- sensual. In my own youth, some of my happiest times in life have always involved being surrounded by water. After I read Dr. Andrew Weil, I realized that this was a form of exposure to meditation. In his words,



**"The Bather"**  
Edgar Degas  
Pastel on Paper  
60 cm. x 83 cm.  
Musee d'Orsay, Paris  
1886

*"Connecting with nature is healing. It slows us down, takes us out of our routines, and reminds us that we live on a remarkable planet that we share with many other forms of life. Walking or sitting quietly in a natural setting is a simple form of meditation, an antidote for being too much in our heads, too focused on thoughts and emotions." (Andrew Weil, M.D, page 78)*

I used strong, large brush strokes on the sky and tiny, very distinct brush strokes on the body. The fine brush strokes are almost not detectable on her body. The most challenging parts of the painting were the foreshortened left arm

and elbow, and getting the right atmosphere in the sky. The background of sky and water came from walking, sketching and photographing different views of Lake Ontario. The painting was done from a photograph of a nude model.

Three techniques were used for this oil painting; glazing, wet on dry, and impasto. Thin layers of glazing were put on her body, which I believe brought wonderful luminosity to the painting by using this time consuming process with oil and small brushes. The sky and water were painted by wet on dry with larger brushes and very little oil. I especially needed to do the wet on dry because it enabled me to redo this part of the painting many times. The hair and the wood that the woman is laying on were done using the impasto technique. The paint was applied so thickly that it retains marks and ridges left by the brush. This process adds a certain texture to the piece and can be successfully achieved with a large brush.

The light in this painting is phenomenal. The strong sky accents the soft tones of her body. There are no harsh shadows. As I was painting this picture I came across a poem by Pablo Neruda that resonated with the picture.

*This Beauty is Soft....*

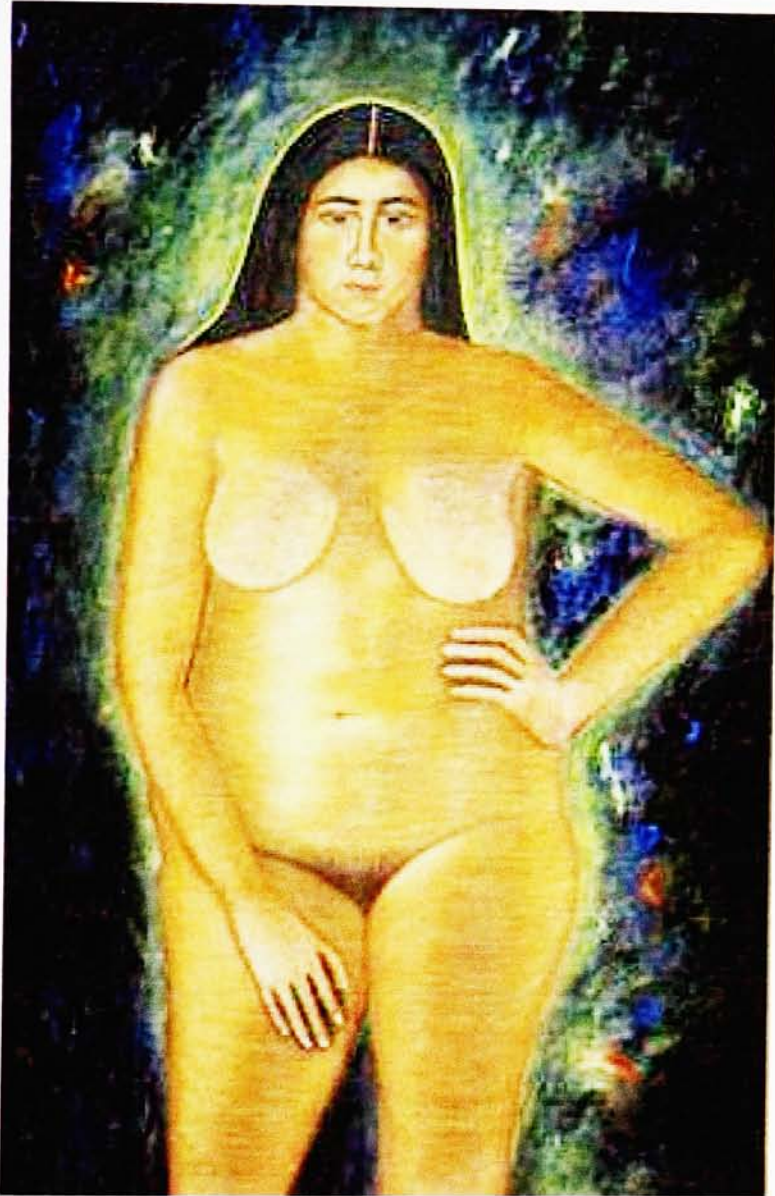
*This beauty is soft -- as if music and wood,  
agate, cloth, wheat, peaches the light shines through  
had made an ephemeral statue.  
And now she sends her freshness out, against the waves.  
The sea dabbles at those tanned feet, repeating  
their shape, just imprinted in the sand.*



*And now she is the womanly fire of a rose,  
the only bubble the sun and the sea contend against.  
Oh, may nothing touch you but the chilly salt!  
May not even love disturb that unbroken springtime!  
Beautiful woman, echo of the endless foam,  
may your statuesque hips in the water make  
a new measure -- a swan, a lily --, as you float  
your form through that eternal crystal. (Pablo Neruda website)*



## **“Gail”**



**“Gail”**

**Tatiana Evanitsky**

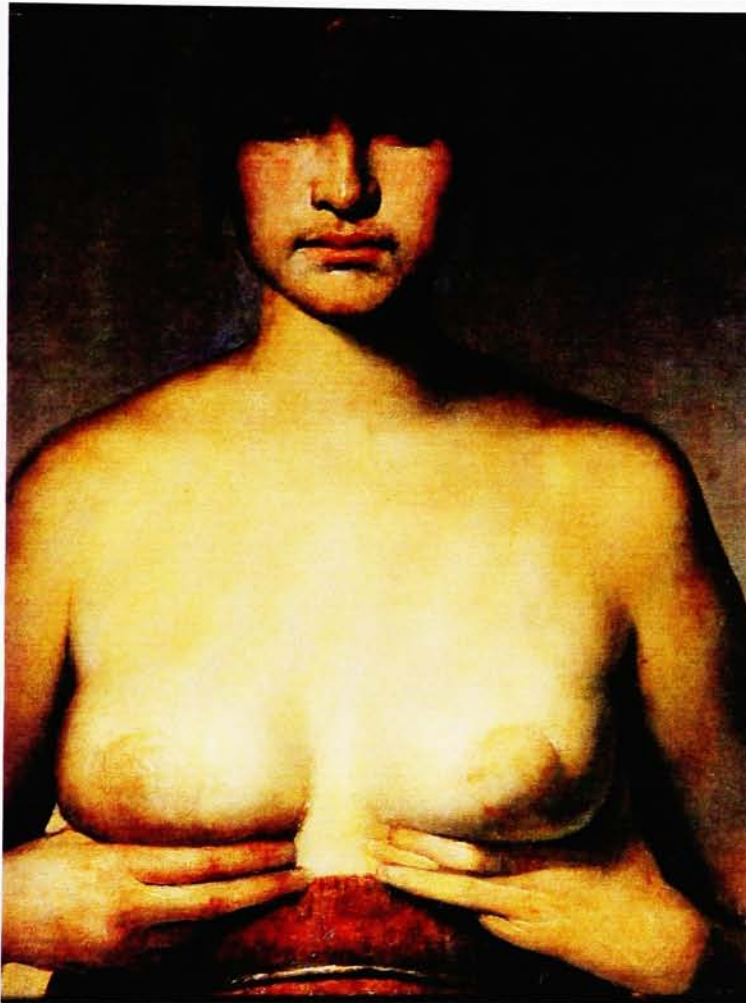
**Oil on Untempered Fiberboard**

**36"x60"**

**2002**

“Gail” also began as an experiment. This is the first time that I ever painted on fiberboard. I used a spray gun to apply several thin coats of Gesso. I used emery cloth between the coats thus creating an extremely smooth surface. I mixed linseed oil with oil paints, and I used tiny brush strokes along with a cloth

to smooth out the paint. I chose chrome oxide green and black for her hair and I also carried the black into her body.



**"Woman with Milk"  
(detail)**

**Odd Nerdrum**

**Oil on Canvas**

**92.5" x 82.75"**

**1988 - 1993**

The painting is influenced by Odd Nerdrum's "Woman with Milk", where he depicts a woman, who may be a wet nurse, with big, full breasts.

In the painting of "Gail", I follow some historic precedents, such as: Rembrandt's use of chiaroscuro, which I use in the background, and parts of her body; and the delicate psychological and emotional emphasis achieved by means of lighting color contrasts and varied brushwork. Here I focus attention on

the legs and hands placing them dramatically at the function of the light and shadow as well as by contrasting them with the sensuous background, rich colors and thick impost of the figure. This also creates a sense of spatial depth. I found great pleasure in seeing the shadows play on Gail's body. The light on her body is like a benediction into an imperfect human world. Her character is a universe unto itself – insight born of compassion.

Some painters will seek to depict only the ideally beautiful and others only the grotesque, I take my cues from my model. "Gail" was painted from life. I found this much easier than imagination. A kind of triangulation took place, in which an interior dialogue accrued between the sitter, the canvas, and me. I let her gradually emerge before me with her various weaknesses and strengths. The result is an unusually complex, many-layered view of human nature. I allow more of the child in Gail to come out rather than the woman. I wanted her to love herself more and allowed for modifications if they enhanced the painting.

The painting has a certain mystery to it, and also a kind of spirituality, as if a magic moment had been captured from which fundamental aspects of character and human relations are revealed and the earthly commingles with the eternal. The body is enwrapped in a Kirillian aura of light. She is attended by what appear to be fairies, like those described in Theosophical literature. The light has a mystery about it; truth – revealing radiance.

The emotion is not in the nude, but it is in the drawing of it. "There is nothing in all the world more beautiful or significant of the laws of the universe than the nude human body. In fact, it is not only among the artists but also

among all people that a greater appreciation and respect for the human body should develop. When we respect the nude, we will no longer have any shame about it." (-Robert Henri, 1865-1929, "Artist to Artist, p. 157)



## **“E & T”**



**“E & T”**

**Tatiana Evanitsky**

**Collage and Oil on plywood**

**24"x36"**

**2001**

This particular work is a collage using found objects on an expressionistic background. It was inspired by Leonardo Nierman's serigraphs of the free form flowing of paint. He also used violin parts but his were painted on. I chose instruments from my children's experience; my son played the violin. I went to a violin repair shop and asked for the discarded pieces, bridges, strings, pegs, etc.

I used violin pieces to fashion a man's face and a woman's face. Her energy is breaking out more and flowing into the universe. She represents the maternal instinct of giving and nourishing. She dwells in the background; the large mouth represents many good ideas that are flowing out of her.

With the man, there is more light pouring into his head. He is opening up to higher wisdom. As in Nierman's "Eternity of Music", I chose a musical theme



**"Eternity of Music"**  
**Leonardo Nierman**  
**Serigraph**  
**30" x 40"**  
**1994**

to represent the rhythm of life. Although the colors are different, they each have the same dark, sensual background. His is smooth and flowing, where my piece is textured and three dimensional because life is multi-dimensional. The deep

reds represent life force. The whites are a pure, pulsating, ethereal energy and the golds are enlightenment. I applied the paint with my hands.

## **“Buddha and the Universal Mother”**



**“Buddha and the Universal Mother”**

**Tatiana Evanitsky**

**Collage and Oil on Plywood**

**36"x24"**

**2001**

The second collage mounted on masonite is symbolic of a wedding or union of two great mystical figures. It is a symbol of two great masters, the Buddha (top left) and the Universal Mother (lower right). They hear what other people do not hear. Each figure is cloaked in a veil. The veil adds mystery as in Nicolas Roerich's painting, "Mother of the World". The chevron shaped symbol of the subconscious, separates them and yet joins them in a crescendo of light. Each is separate yet they are also one – individuals united by a common purpose: to unite us in the purification of Love, moving us into hidden knowledge or wisdom.

It is interesting to note that the word "psychiatry" comes from the Greek roots meaning, "soul doctoring". Many people consider spirit to be in the





**“Mother of the World”**  
**Nicholas Roerich**  
**Tempura on Canvas**  
**40.75”x28.5”**  
**Nicholas Roerich Museum,**  
**New York**

province of religion, but I agree with Dr. Andrew Weil who insists *“on making a clear distinction between spirituality and religion. Spirituality has to do with the nonphysical, immaterial aspects of our beings – with energies, essences, and the part of us that existed before and will exist after the disintegration of the body. Religion attempts to institutionalize spirituality, and much of what goes on in its*

*name concerns perpetuation of the institutions more than the welfare of individuals. It is possible to lead a spiritual life and explore the influence of spirituality on health whether you are religious or not." (Andrew Weil, page 24-25)*

This collage has religious undertones, but it is not constrained to the myopic views of any one faith. I used raw silk paper over their faces along with real beads and earrings. The work evokes elements of Hinduism, Christianity and Buddhism as well as the Yin and Yang of Confucianism.

## “Angel Descending to Earth”



“Angel Descending to Earth”

Tatiana Evanitsky

Oil on Canvas

48" x 60"

2002

The original inspiration for this painting was a photograph by John Wimberley entitled “Descending Angel”. I received it as card. I was immediately drawn to the simple but elegant focus on the beautiful feet and the flowing robes. I chose a similar theme using my own feet as models. I drew them the exact size as my own. I purposely aged them. They are more ancient – feet that have walked the hot dessert sands- working feet. I decided to wrap the figure in a gold cloth. I used the groom’s thick sleeves from Rembrandt’s “Jewish Bride” as a





"Descending Angel" J Wimberley  
Photograph

guide. I wanted to experiment with using gold. This painting was particularly difficult because I did not have a real garment in front of me. I had to use my imagination; unfortunately, it goes astray too many times. The feet are representative of earthly wisdom. In many cultures, to touch the feet is a sign of deep respect and adoration, especially to touch the feet of a great master. Unlike either painting, I

added a surreal background to represent Earth. The shoreline and dark waters are a continuing theme in my paintings. The angel is coming to bring light into the world as the day is dawning. The feet were accomplished by using small dots accompanied by light touches with a soft cloth. On the robe larger strokes were created to give a feeling of movement in the cloth.

"Angel Descending to Earth" brings to mind an enlightening description from Theosophy. *"It is one of the most beautiful characteristics of Theosophy that it gives back to people in a more rational form everything which was really useful and helpful to them in the religions which they have outgrown. Many who have broken through the chrysalis of blind faith, and mounted on the wings of reason and intuition to the freer, nobler mental life of more exalted levels, nevertheless feel that in the process of their glorious gain a something has been lost- that in giving up the beliefs of their childhood they have also cast aside*



*much of the beauty and the poetry of life. The benign being influenced by Theosophy soon discovers that even in this particular there has been no loss at all, but an exceeding great gain – that glory and the beauty and the poetry are*



**"The Jewish Bride"**

**Rembrandt**

**Oil on Canvas**

**48"x65.5"**

**Rijksmuseum,  
Amsterdam**

**1666**

*there in fuller measure than they had ever hoped before, and no longer as a mere pleasant dream, from which the cold light of common sense may at any time rudely awaken them, but as truths of nature which will bear investigation – which become brighter, fuller and more perfect as they are more accurately understood. (C.C. Leadbeater, pp 1-2)* This painting evokes beauty and poetry, an escape from the mundane and a benediction of hope for a nobler, freer, more exalted life.

## **“Man” and “Woman”**



**“Man”** Tatiana Evanitsky  
Drawing on Patterned Paper 22"x29" 2000



**“Woman”** Tatiana Evanitsky  
Drawing on Patterned Paper 22"x29" 2000

The two drawings were an experiment. It was to use the patterned paper to create a distinctive effect. The drawing is done simply so as not to distract the viewer from the background, which hums with life and pulsates with energy. In the picture of the “Man”, the lines evoke shadows; the vertical lines could be tall buildings or even bars of confinement. He is strapped to his work. There is a cacophony of noise in this picture but the man is not agitated, he is focused. The “Woman” on the other hand appears serene, almost meditative. The lines

produce an entirely different effect, almost like gentle waves in a pond. She is more of a reflection than a tangible body.

There is a mystery to each of these paintings, which lies in our inability to know what the subjects are thinking, and they are clearly thinking. The words of another enigmatic artist come to mind. Rene Magritte wrote, *"My painting is visible images which conceal nothing; they evoke mystery and, indeed, when one sees one of my pictures, one asks oneself this simple question 'What does that mean'? It does not mean anything, because mystery means nothing either, it is unknowable."* (Magritte website)



## Conclusion

I have chosen to write my conclusion after the thesis exhibit has come and gone and after the main body of the thesis has been completed and tacitly approved. Reflecting upon the experience, I can say that I did learn more about myself in relation to my art. I started out trying to strike a balance between being an artist and a mother, wife, and community member. What I discovered is that I have achieved more than a mere balance. I have enriched all aspects of my relationships. Clearly my family has influenced my art, but my art has also enriched my family. My devotion to learning and developing my art is a role model for my children. My husband has expanded his thinking and we have grown together. I have also learned that I am a modern classical painter. I started out saying that I was a figurative painter, but through the process, as I studied others and delved deeper into my own work, I transitioned from saying that I am an artist to believing that I am a modern classical painter. I reaffirmed my love for mystery and spirituality in art. As I documented my creative process I began to understand why each step is so important. The experimentation was useful because I took ideas from my abstract experiments and implanted them with the classical figures, such as the background in "Gail". The entire graduate school experience helped to speed up my personal development. In researching Freud, Nerdrum and Assael, I went to art galleries in New York, Rochester and Elmira. Seeing these paintings first hand and observing colors and brush strokes excited me and renewed my enthusiasm to look at my own works with more intensity. Of all the paintings in my thesis exhibit, the most significant was "Angel



Descending” because it was my “Break Through” painting. Somewhere in the process of creation I realized what I could achieve. Somewhere in this process I surprised myself and I knew it was good. I reaffirmed that the discovery process I outlined truly does work. I discovered aspects of myself that I never knew. And there is a lot more to discover. It is not easy to express on canvas what I truly feel but the struggle is worth the journey. Encouraged by my experience, I plan to continue. I need to continue.

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