**MARTINE MARTEL**

 **About:**

Martine Martel grew up in Belgium. Since childhood she's been fascinated by art and very active in painting. Early on she's also been exposed to the work of the great Belgian Masters of modern and contemporary art that have subconsciously inspired her. But it is the views of the infinite sea and skies and the bright Mediterranean light that floods her high-perched studio in Monaco that lead her to focus on the SUN and the MOON as recurrent subjects in her work. The ever changing vistas they offer, day and night, are to her an endless source of inspiration, and quite often of solace for her fleeting states of mind. In time they have indeed become expressions of her deep emotions, pulsating with her poetic sensitivity.

**Artist's Statement:**

“Introspective and acutely self-aware, rather withdrawn into my private world, and at times infinitely lonely, painting is an act of cathartic necessity for me that releases my stress, indeed brings me serenity, as well as solace in my melancholic moods. I wish to also bring solace and inner peace to the viewer who will identify with the deep emotions that I express on canvas”.

**Movement: Abstract Naturalism**

Martine aspires to serenity and solace and releases this sentiment in a clean and simple style, eliminating most obstacles between her feelings and the painting, between her inspiration and the viewer, and keeping only the essential. This characteristic absence of detail, this simplification of the image, this abstraction of the view, in fact adds meaning to her work. Martine’s “MOONRISE” e.g. is less about recording a moonlit view in all its details, in the pure tradition of romanticism, than of expressing the artist's sentiment and philosophy of life. It is thus not the naturalistic observation of the cosmos and its subjects that first strikes the observer of this artist's work, rather what conveys it power is the surreal character of the single abstract images, separate from subject and personality, expressed mostly through colour, line, shape, texture - or absence thereof - , composition, and through the atmospheric vibration of light in itself. While the mood is indeed expressionistic, because the work's power emerges from a simplified representation of nature, Martine's work is in essence akin to abstract naturalism.

*"...abstract art does not employ subject matter that is obvious as either the anecdote or familiar objects, yet it must appeal to our experience in some way. Instead of appealing to our sense of the familiar, it simply functions in another category."* Mark Rothko

**Philosophy: "Aspirational Art"**

While it is common for artists to acknowledge current societal concerns in their work, this practice often leads to stereotyping of art. The custom amidst contemporary artists is to overburden their creations with allusions to societal issues. As an independent artist who likes to distance herself from her peers, and although not impervious to socio-economical discomfort, and at times even to angst and nostalgia, Martine adopts a distinctive positive view, in an individual quest for an antidote for the overall morosity associated with the socio-economical climate below, as well as for personal pain that constitutes the secret part of her work. By way of an abstract exploration of the cosmos, which she has coined “Aspirational Art” , Martine delves into the infinite depths of space and depicts its appearance almost as a poet, as a humanistic philosopher, bestowing it with ideological significance, in a secular re-visitation of artistic trends that prevailed in the Renaissance and Baroque periods, when artists where looking up at the angels in the sky, and away from the Plague that was rife in the slums down under, while Romantic artists in the 19th century extolled cloud-beauty in their art, seeing in clouds an antidote to the rigid order and classification of science. In her ethic of joy and happiness, the cosmos becomes a true, purely ideal space that corresponds to the deepest needs of the soul....

While the divine radiance of the sun or moon, supplemented by the bright Mediterranean light that’s in the colour itself, remain the main sources of illumination of her work and of her life, Martine further expresses her quest for clarity, for serenity, for solace in a clean and simple style, of deep evocative power. Although it is unclear which deity presides in her search for grace, in her quest to fulfill some inner longing of her own, the artist pacifies our reality by bestowing special powers to the Sun and the Moon, whose physical position closer to heaven than to earth associates them to a higher order. In her view Sun = Moon = Nature = Beauty = Happiness= projection of an idea of perfection that every human being wants and needs. Thus, the joy of putting an emotion naked may be enough to secure or safeguard happiness.

*“It is good to create dream and beauty, precisely in these times as rough and as harsh”* Raf Simmons,  DIOR

**Technique:**

Martine Martel has adopted oil, applied in a smooth texture, as if to soften the rough edges of the human drama that constitutes her daily fare. Her technique consists in layering on canvas veils of home-made glazes of pigments and oil, in subtle variations of hues, one by one atop of each other.

The colour glazes may be gossamer-thin, but layered in multiple coats they alternately evoke the infinite depth of the universe or the rich translucency of stained glass. Indeed, much in the manner of a stained glass window, light seems to lithe the colour from behind. In effect, the bright Mediterranean light is IN the colour and dominates Martine's work.

**Exhibitions:** 2013-2014:

1 / Art Monaco, stand "Ladies and Art", 25-28 April 2013;
2 / JCI European Conference 2013 Monte Carlo, May 29 - June 1, 2013;
3 / Zamenhof Art di Milano: Premio Internazionale d'Arte Contemporanea "Il Segno" Palazzo della Racchetta Ferrara, 20 to 27 September 2013: selected work "Chiaro di Luna sul Spiaggia di Monte-Carlo";
4 / Berufsverband Bildener Kunstler / Innen Liechtenstein (BBKL) and the Monegasque National Committee of the International Association of Plastic Arts at UNESCO (IIAP), Vaduz, Liechtenstein, November 5 to December 15, 2013;
5 / Personal exhibition in the exhibition space of the Monegasque National Committee of the International Association of Plastic Arts at UNESCO, 14-24 January 2014
6 / Galleria d'Arte Contemporanea, Museum located in San Donato Milanese, Italy
Group exhibition, from February 22 to March 16;
7 / Centro d'Arte Moderna, Pisa, Italy, "Donne in Arte" from February 22 to March 6, 2014
8 / First Biennale of Art, Hotel de Paris, Monte Carlo, February 27-March 3, 2014;

9 / 8th Meeting Artistic Monaco - Japan, organized by Reijinsha and Monegasque National Committee of the IAA, 7-10 March 2014;
10 / OASIS 2014 Mediatheque, Sendai, Japan, 4-8 April 2014;
11 / OASIS 2014 Twin 21 OBP, Osaka, Japan, from 16 to 18 May 2014;
12 / Artists Forum Monaco, Department of Cultural Affairs of Monaco, Rainier III Auditorium, 5-15 June 2014;

13 / Yacht Club Monaco, solo exhibition to be held October 2-16, 2014

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