

## **Uncanny Theater of Work Features Vision of Otherworldly Realms**

If art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time Ana Maria Hoyos is the rare painter whose work transports viewers into a profoundly personal interior landscape far beyond the world of appearances.

The Colombian-born artist creates compelling paintings, drawings and prints of people, landscapes and mundane objects, executing them in a style that combines figurative and abstract elements.

Hoyos employs the serialization of stains, geometric forms, and diffuse washes of color along with literal painterly shapes, a line or a brush stroke, to create works that command attention.

Her works are underscored by an inherent sense of palpable emotion, illusion and passion mirroring the natural vagaries of life in contemporary society, while at times hinting at a darker imperfect world.

Hoyos has developed an instantly recognizable style of simplified human forms with bold outlines. Anonymous figures and wizened visages imbedded in houses, floating in deep space or peering from abstracted landscapes suggesting primeval forest vistas are featured players in the uncanny theater of her work.

In these striking series of canvases Hoyos succeeds in portraying human nature and a wide range of emotional expression, within a context of the unreal, in a world saturated by rich swaths of color and bold expanses of vigorously applied paint.

At times she suggests the ambiguous yet subtle interplay between positive and negative spaces.

In other expressive works, oscillating with vibrant energy women invade her canvases with a monumental presence.

Hoyos' female protagonists are cinematic in nature and command our attention. The artist situates her cast of characters on a pictorial stage through images that draw the spectator together along with the artist into worlds lying within the deepest realms of her imagination. And, not unlike a film director at the top of their craft, one can't help but experience the authority of the artist lingering from beyond the picture plane.

In works such as *Chaos*, a canvas pulsing with azure blue, creamy, bleached-bone white, carnation pink, delicate lavender and restrained moss green hues, the figure of a woman with her head swept back appears to be skipping near a lake shore in a summery Alpine clearing.

Hoyos' fluid and deliberately disintegrating painting style is carried out on a scale that boldly distorts the familiar figurative elements of her work, and serves to heighten the sense of the physicality of paint and the process of painting itself.

The figure's limbs dissolve into large areas of light as her body almost blends into the backdrop of semi-abstract patterns.

Hoyos draws one's eyes to move back and forth between the figure and the fictive space she creates out of her large, open washes of mellow, limpid colors. We almost feel the distant topography of a mountain peak, the breeze off the lake, the twitter of unseen birds, or the scent of pine needles inviting us to lose ourselves in the fresh Alpine air, as if in a fine summer day.

The artist intoxicates the senses with her meticulously built up surfaces with layer upon layer of brushstrokes in which every gesture is at once fragile and critical.

Yet her distinct style of painting offers an uncompromising strength, complexity and momentum to the figures she portrays. And as in other works, her women seem to possess ambiguous origins, while resisting a determined narrative.

The dialogue between the figural and abstract further appears in *Gypsy*, the eye-catching picture of a dancer performing a fiery Flamenco under a blazing sunset.

The painting is an exercise in rendering a dynamic representation of the body in motion set against a background of the otherwise static abstract composition. In it Hoyos impressively balances the sense of sensuous movement, employing an unusual sensitivity for the volumes of the various forms represented.

At the center of the composition the performer speaks brashly with her gestures. She is inviting and somewhat coquettish placing her right hand on her hip while gracefully swiveling her body.

With diligent attention to detail, Hoyos compellingly articulates every line, wrinkle and shadow of her dancer's flowing skirt. The contours of the woman's exposed midriff, her face proudly defiant and turned from the spectator and her left hand raised heavenward in a moment of sheer elation all combine to elevate the sense of the painting's eloquence. The woman's image almost appears both still life and sculpture.

In her series of paintings incorporating faces in quixotic scenes evoking a sense of the ineffable, Hoyos generates an air of nostalgia almost reminiscent of a childhood memory.

Works such as *Presencia (Presence)* exude a moody, atmospheric vibe operating on a whole other wavelength from the artist's paintings of women.

Rendered with a flattened perspective, this composition depicts the outline of what might be a rural home from which the countenance of an elderly personage stares intently at the viewer from the entirety of the dwelling's façade. Behind the modest house a leafless tree rises. Stripped

of its foliage by time's fleeting nature, the tree's naked limbs suggest the passage of autumn and the approach of a winter full of uncertainty. Likewise, a pair of worn shoes, discarded outside of the house and appearing at the bottom of the canvas, seems to symbolize that their owner has come to the end of a long journey.

The painting's unusual nature brings to mind a hermit's retreat, or a person who rarely opens their blinds to experience the world outside. It evokes a feeling of despair and alienation or a tired old soul's state of disrepair.

The image is powerful because it seems to convey something of importance to the artist who made it and demands our attention because it evokes the liberation of tapping into the unfathomable realms of the personal rather than anything else.

Eerily intimate, angst-ridden and mesmerizing it marks a departure from the staid which is such an important basis of Hoyos' art.

It is also a revelation that as a painter, Hoyos' has a keen eye, unquenchable curiosity and the desire to create works of incremental, seemingly endless possibilities.