

WESTFAIR
OFF THE PALETTE MARYLYN DINTENFASS
BY GEORGETTE GOUVEIA
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Marylyn, you're an abstract artist in an age in which representational art has held sway. Do you feel sometimes as if you're going against the grain?

"Not at all. While not figurative, my work is narrative and autobiographical. It comments on themes in contemporary culture and my personal experiences through my own particular lexicon of gestural and color notions that form a storytelling language. As an example, my current series of paintings originated through an enduring love affair with the automobile, especially muscle cars that were around when I was a teenager."

The titles of your pieces are quite descriptive. Are you attempting to distill an experience or an emotion in your works, or is it all about felicitous shapes and colors?

"That is a great question and a good one to address. My titles act as a bridge between the visceral, what you see when you look at the painting, and the intellectual, what was the impetus for the work. Titles can also set the stage for a viewing experience by annotating the image, similar to how musical notes can enhance a symphonic performance.

"Dashboard Lights on Paradise Night", "Maybellene in a Coup de Ville", and "Stickshift, Knees and Thighs" are titles of new paintings in my exhibition at the Rauschenberg Gallery in Fort Myers, which celebrates both my affinity for shiny paint and steel, speed and sound and the freedom that was represented by these machines. My primary interest is in giving the viewer a visual experience that generates other kinds of feelings, thoughts or energy. While my own personal motivations for an image are important to me, they need not be a concern of the viewer."

Speaking of shapes and colors, can you explain how your works come together?

"The creative process is a mystery even, or especially, while engaged. It is intuitive intimate, filled with false starts, do-overs, highs, lows, contemplation and joy. I usually know what I want, what I expect of a work of art before I begin, and sometimes I get exactly that. Other times I become an instrument of the art. Usually, however, the imagery and colors are worked out internally over a period of time. Composers can create compositions by hearing the notes in their minds, without instruments. I compose my paintings in a similar fashion, mentally conceived without referring to my palette."

You do works on paper as well as paintings. Are the works on paper sometimes preparatory drawings? Isn't there a point at which studies become finished works in the viewer's mind anyway?

"I constantly have sketch books with me and in the studio, to capture ideas, thoughts, notes and drawings.

Ideas for paintings come from sketches, other paintings and works on paper. But the other way is also true. My works on paper are not preliminary pieces at all. Each series is unique and stands on its own as finished works."

Many people are intimidated by art and especially abstraction. How would you suggest the viewer approach it?

"As one listens to music - open, aware, available for surprise and just a bit skeptical."