



Marquis's Wings/Les ailes d'Icare, mixed media on canvas, 2009, 36 x 48 in. 1st grand jury's prize CAPSO Contest in 2009

Aeolus and Annabelle

Annabelle Marquis

To feel simultaneously sucked-in and blown-away while contemplating a work of art is undoubtedly an uncommon analogy. The breathtaking atmospheric works of Annabelle Marquis could certainly be qualified as ethereal but the sensory perception they induce is so complete, it doesn't require further explanation.

In brilliant displays of colours and contrasts, her paintings harmoniously generate opposite qualifiers: airy while sombre and colourful, soft and forceful, tranquil and agitated. Far from being concerned with these antinomies, the artist gives free reign to her inspiration and readily follows the flow of her creative gesture. "I start each work by setting the composition. Once all elements are in place, the painting slowly reveals itself."

The 34 years old painter surprised the artistic milieu by including collage into her works. At first very subtly then squarely on the foreground, confectionary papers or pages out of a magazine strikingly

became integral parts of the pictorial entity. Twirling around on a nebulous background or adorning a figurative subject, the eye is easily diverted by this printed and juxtaposed information. A fluttering effect, a movement declined in intense colours creates a universe where one can happily wander.

Annabelle Marquis wasn't quite happy working as a graphics designer. While on maternity leave, she tries her hand at painting and happily renews contact with matter, an element absent from her job which was largely centered on the computer. For her own pleasure, she organizes for her entourage an exhibition of her works and sells all the pieces. People come to her and encourage her to pursue on this path. "In my mind, being a painter wasn't really a viable occupation. I didn't think it was possible to live by art alone." Someone suggests that she contact another artist to help her validate her questioning.



Le vaisseau d'or, mixed media on canvas, 2010, 60 x 30 in.

"I am on a treasure hunt and you are my next clue," she tells artist Sophie Lambert over the phone, who bursts out in laughter. The two women find they have a lot in common, the latter encouraging the first to continue on her path, underlining the importance of being proactive. "You have to work at finding your craft," she tells her.

Naturally determined and passionate about marketing, Annabelle confidently launches herself and her works are soon displayed in many galleries across the country. "I submitted my paintings in art competitions and my name started to circulate. My painting *Les ailes d'Icare* won first prize at the International Visual Arts Gala in 2009 and my phone started ringing." Although this kind of effervescence is quite exciting indeed, one must keep in mind the artistic path envisaged and avoid the pitfalls of a market thirsty for something new. The young artist keeps both feet on the ground and remains true to her dream. "Progressively, I started to see how I wanted to work and with which galleries. I also need time to re-energize myself." She allows herself free time when she needs it and leafs through magazines for inspiration. "Often a subject comes to me through decoupages I've gathered. I may have a pile of clippings on an animal and start working when I feel I have enough material. At other times, the amalgam of paper on the canvas will dictate the subject." Dragon, bull, fish, her training in graphic design is apparent through her compositions and her choices of dynamic themes.

Socially aware and enthusiastic, Annabelle Marquis felt some concern about isolating herself in her studio. "I quickly found a good balance between my social life and my creative work. I feel a constant need to find myself alone with my canvases." She also finds this daily tête-à-tête very formative: "I learn a lot about life while painting alone. My works are like children; each has their own individuality. You have wishes and expectations on what they will become, but things never turn out as you first thought and that's fine as it is!" More philosophical outlooks, such as the benefits of accidental occurrences, cultivate in this artist a positive mentality and openness towards the unknown. "I often create my own obstacles, in an effort to push myself out of my comfort zone. The more I feel insecure, the more I learn."

Conscious that her style is anchored in her technique, she endeavours to renew herself through her themes which include portraits of women, animals and abstractions. What's important for her is to create with authenticity and integrity. Each canvas partakes of her whole creative élan, as guaranteed through her personal professional code of ethics and with due respect for the buying public. "I call it the Marquis standard of quality," states the marketing expert, smiling.

Annabelle Marquis takes time to think before putting her brush to canvas. She follows her instincts and knows when a piece is completed. "When it's done, it's monumental!" Sailing the sometimes troubled waters of an artistic career appears to be second nature for this artist who injects a breath of fresh air into the art world.