

Silvana LaCreta Ravena

Silvana LaCreta Ravena is a versatile painter who works in oils, acrylics, watercolors and encaustic. She also creates wearable art. Her non-encaustic work is both abstract and figurative while the encaustic work is completely abstract. The encaustics, meticulous in their use of color and line, seem at first glimpse to be heavily influenced by Kandinsky and abstract expressionism, especially color field painting. But further acquaintance with Silvana's unique biography and the sources/inspirations behind her oeuvre reveal an artist who has deftly marshaled passion, intellectual rigor, and solid technique to create a genuinely original body of work.

Silvana is originally from Sao Paulo, Brazil, and was educated as a psychologist. She holds degrees in art therapy and art history. A practicing psychotherapist, her experience in the field led to the development of her signature artistic theme: memory. Further study and experimentation led Silvana to develop her own encaustic technique as a vehicle for exploring the subject.

As Silvana discovered, the hot wax used in encaustic painting, with its soft, pliable consistency is an ideal material for expressing the layered nature of memory. Before application, the heat binds the layers of wax to one another, creating a rich and complex surface. Then the wax, combined with pigment, can be sculpted upon the canvas, creating an infinite combination of textures. Silvana's nontraditional technique brings further variety to her paintings through the use of custom made colors and additional manipulations of the material. With different wax mixtures, she can give the raw material varying degrees of opacity and translucency.

"This whole art form is reminiscent of the process we use to store memories...it's an ancient idea – Socrates considered wax a metaphor for memory," says Silvana. The layers Silvana creates in her paintings are intended to bring the layers of memory to life; the paintings' textures are not merely symbolized, but are present on the canvas. The work is decidedly three-dimensional and demands a live experience – it is impossible to perceive the paintings' rich textures by seeing them online or in print.

Drawing upon her training as a psychologist and academic, she incorporates into her work a variety of theoretical ideas, thus infusing it with another range of textures, beyond the pictorial. Freudian concepts such as the unconscious, repression, and latent/manifest content are especially important to the encaustic paintings. Such a range of influences serves to broaden her work, giving it a more fluid, open-ended character that invites the viewer to appreciate it in her/his own unique way.

The unique combination of elements Silvana brings to her work – artistic, personal and professional – gives her the credibility of an original. While each individual piece of hers certainly “speaks for itself,” when seen in the context of the artists' background, ideas and singular technique, it clearly gains a degree of vitality and significance that indicates the true measure of the work. – Adam Eisenstat, art critic and writer, 2009

Gallery Representation

Veronique Wantz Gallery, Minneapolis, MN

Exhibitions

August 2013 – Group Show, Veronique Wantz Gallery, Minneapolis MN

February 2014 – “Introspective & Retrospective”, Group Show, Veronique Wantz Gallery, Minneapolis MN