

MARTHA WALLULIS
ARTIST STATEMENT

In my painting, I approach freedom. It greets me, nearing me, coming closer as the tide, only to recede again, again, again. I slosh my feet through its icy waters furiously, sometimes greedily, craving the feeling of being truly alive, only to throw my arms up and cry in despair as my mind begins its contrivances, and the paint no longer glides smoothly. It is a continual battle, taking place within every piece, every brushstroke, every breath.

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My current work is in many ways an extension of my Thesis work of early 2007, entitled *The Infinite & The Eternal*, in which I correlated seemingly disparate concepts, including liminality, eternity, infinity, space-time, String Theory, Fractals, Ancient Egyptian Art, Abstract Expressionism, the Byzantine Arts, and metaphorical associations of feminine form.

Since the completion of the Thesis work I have continued to explore various forms of abstraction. This is a necessary break from figuration for me. Having focused on the figure for many years, however, elements within my work do continue to take on a figurative nature. The abstract spaces themselves become portals into other created realities, into which the viewer may navigate and become immersed. I am intrigued by the body's place within and in relation to the Infinite, the Eternal, and the Divine. Art itself as passageway holds within it the capability of linking to both the external and internal passageways of body, soul, mind, and heart.

The paintings often take on an organic, corporeal, curvilinear, exotic, and even visceral nature. They are both external and internal.

My recent palette at times brightens to create a lighter quality/tone. My intimately sized gouache works are often more playful than the oils, which tend to be more weighty and often serious in tone and content, exhibiting more so the struggle experienced to create them. Much of this is due to the nature of each medium and its inherent capabilities.

Each gouache painting is a realization of its own, with one influencing the next. The smaller pieces are intimate, careful, with meticulously painted areas, a balance between spontaneity, intent, and control. They are precious to me. There is a tranquility I feel when I paint with gouache, when the world falls away; it is quite lovely to experience. The intimate scale of the smaller works requires the viewer to come closer as well, physically move toward the piece, peer into it, look carefully to find its subtleties, nuances, painted details.

I am playing with the juxtaposition of the very small with the very large and vast. Each painting reaches both outwards and inwards at once. I do not like the work to be compositionally contained within the canvas or paper but rather to push beyond it. In this way and others I strive for each painting to have a nature that transcends.

Abstraction is freedom from the conventional, commonplace, and often mundane rendering of figure, form, color, shape... representation. Painting for me is about continual growth, change, evolution of vision, content, technique... Abstraction, therefore, is an open doorway. Consequently I find that in my work there is increasingly a greater demand for ambiguity and openness. The spectrum within which I work is broad; several series are being developed simultaneously, across many media. I realize ideas quickly with the smaller works, which I may then choose to expand upon.

Here are several excerpts from my Thesis work for PNCA earlier this year, entitled *The Infinite & The Eternal*. The entire Thesis may be found on Launchpad Gallery's website, www.launchpadgallery.org.

For me, in painting as in all the Arts, the true moment is that wherein everything else falls away in a moment of pure bliss and hyper-focus. Suddenly, all that matters is the paint moving across the canvas, the buttery consistency, the color, the light; the pure sound a note makes; the type as it builds across the page. Thoughts and feelings are no longer fragmented. The thought, the mind, the body, the heart, and the soul all join together in one common purpose: for that brushstroke, for that note, feeling it with every cell and bit of energy, pouring everything into it, and receiving pure joy in return.

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I am a deeply introverted person. I always have been. My work as a result of this has been deeply introverted and most often has a large autobiographical component to it...

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Being true to my nature and my voice as a painter is a way to make an influential impact in both my own work and that of others. Anything less than this is contrived, is false, a lie, to myself, to the world. This opening up of sorts comes at a great cost: I often find that to be true to myself, and the pull of my work, I have to take great risks. I step to the edge and even beyond, in order to find the limits and push the work to its fullest potential and capability. Sacrifices continually must be made.

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Art holds within it an intrinsic power, a *potentiality* of its own. Art may become, through its inception, a vehicle, a catalyst to broadened thought, to social change, to discourse, to debate. Art may be used as a pictorial device to illustrate a simple concept, or it may be used as a didactic tool to educate complex realities, facts, theories. Within itself, art convey's the artist's emotion; it may then in turn harness that emotion and unleash it with the viewer. The strength of this, however, is subjective to the individual, the particular viewer – their associations, aesthetic, education, vocabulary, perspective, and vantage point.

Art is a match, it is lighter fluid, it is a ticking bomb, awaiting responsiveness in the viewer. This responsiveness, this openness, this is what turns the key, this is what starts the motion, the reaction, the following reaction: the snowball... the avalanche; the spark... the explosion. The explosive force lies initially dormant or incubating within the artist, then to be unleashed through a creative act onto the art piece. It is held constant by the medium, and then releases again to varying degrees, dependent on the viewer and their engagement with the work.

Simple paint can be moved around on a surface in such a way as to become a powerful psychological tool to affect both the artist and the viewer in some way. It can form bodies to empathize with, relate to, spaces to navigate, emotions to depict, stories to tell. It can persuade the viewer to feel a certain way, may evoke a psychological or emotional response. It may envelop, it may shock, it may block, it may repulse, it may stimulate an instant visceral response. It may provide a psychological, therapeutic benefit to the artist through a cathartic release. It may serve a spiritual purpose and facilitate meditation and even prayer. For me, painting has filled all these roles.

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On both large scales in the vast skies and depths of the universe, and small scales reaching into subatomic particles, such as those investigated through the field of Quantum Physics, the universal reality is that which is both infinitely complex and infinitely vast. Beyond the human eye's reach, beyond our universe, there is always more than what we know or what we can see or study as human beings. Within our bodies, within the energy, matter, particles which comprise our physical reality, there exists an infinitely vast complexity which can only be partially examined through experiment to find its nature, and then, beyond a certain level, only theories may attempt to reach into its understanding.

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Is this core which we may seek, which I may seek, actually Infinity itself? In which case, the concept of a core and central, fixed point, becomes somewhat negated, and *the passageway itself, the journey through it into ever vast and expanding realms, becomes of utmost and underlying importance.*

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Ultimately, it is an experiential journey.

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There is constant motion within our infinite reality: from, through, into... Even when we are standing in one place we are still in motion, moving through time, breathing within space.

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Space-time itself is malleable... Objects such as stars are said to physically *alter* the fabric of space-time, as is shown through models and theories of supernovae, black holes, and worm holes.

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Therefore, our way of understanding the universe... is comprised of multiple theories, equations, and models, which seem to point us to a central or "universal" truth, equation, or model...

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Does it not make sense, however, that this central or "universal" truth, equation, or model then *open further into infinity*? In other words, rather than a finite point that we may eventually and ultimately attain, does there exist even more complexity, the further we reach? I have seen that in every field of study I have embarked on, as well as every creative effort, there is always a further step, there is always more: ...*an infinite potential.*

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As there is ever more complexity, possibility, and potential in any field of study, so too is this potential and possibility within us, ultimately carrying us forward into the infinite expanse of space and time...

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How many dimensions are there, really, to this reality? In just the physical world around us there are seemingly many. String theory states that there are, in fact, eleven dimensions. Fractals... [speak] of self-similar, branching forms and shapes, which, within a system and process of continuous feedback, continue on through a great number of dimensions as well. From earlier studies of fractals, I have come to appreciate and be fascinated by these concepts of multiple dimensions, non-linear models of reality, and especially non-Euclidian forms. This can be seen in the compositions in my art, painting, writing, and also in my music.

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I am... drawn to the circle and its various meanings/associations. The other shapes I am drawn to are the seemingly irregular ones, the ones found in nature, and also the ones

formed by the throwing of the paint, the dripping of the linseed oil, or other media. There is an element of chaos to these forms, complemented by order.

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As the artist *I am attempting to both reach out of and beyond the painting while also pulling the viewer into the painting at the same time.* I am making a conscious effort to transcend both personal and conventional limitations and explore boundaries.

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Curvilinear and spiraling compositions have always been intriguing to me and are as natural to my painting as breathing. There is an organic quality to these compositional forms, which may be considered as “feminine”.

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Whether or not the viewer is ultimately transformed or deeply affected through her or his experience with my work, I hope that they at least enjoy the ride.

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MARTHA WALLULIS ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Martha I. Wallulis is a Multi Media Artist, Vocalist, and Curator.

Specializing in Painting, M. Wallulis began her study in Oil and through the support of her beloved father at the age of twelve. Quickly, she bridged the gap to becoming a professional artist through private collectors and portraiture.

Among the many media on her palette: Oil, Encaustic, Gouache, and Egg Tempera Painting, Pastel Drawing, Sculpture, Poetry, and Experimental Media. Although she primarily works in Oil, M. Wallulis often utilizes everything and anything that strikes her to create a work of art. She loves to push the limits, taking art from what is "acceptable" or conventional and pushing it forward progressively into exciting territory. Currently, M. Wallulis is continuing an exploration into Abstraction.

Having been born and raised into and within the Greek Orthodox community, Martha's experience with her culture and faith continue to be of central and critical importance to her in both her life and her art. In addition to her multi media work, Martha is pursuing a professional scholarship in the Byzantine Arts. Included in her many travels is a memorable and influential trip to Rhodes, Greece, where the artist stayed at an Orthodox monastery and was given private instruction in Iconography, Byzantine Chant, and Ancient Greek. Currently, Martha is a professional chanter at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church as well as an active member in community events and services.

Martha I. Wallulis has a degree in Liberal Studies from Portland State University and a BFA in Painting from the Pacific NW College of Art (PNCA). She is representing fine artists privately and curates shows at alternative spaces including Blondie! a Salon, the Generator Group as well as LV's Uptown. She enjoys supporting fellow artists and Arts organizations in an effort to help others realize their dreams, achieve their goals, build community ties, and promote not only discourse but collaborative work.

Ms. Wallulis currently teaches workshops in Byzantine Chant and offers private lessons in Painting, Encaustic, Drawing, Voice, and other art forms upon request. She is teaching Art to children at Agia Sophia Academy.

You may contact the artist directly by email at mwallulisart@gmail.com. Inquiries in regards to private lessons, commissioned works, &/or critique on current works and shows, are most welcome and appreciated.