

Lyse Paquette

Sweet Escape



Margaux, mixed media, 30 x 40 in

For the last fourteen years, Lyse Paquette has devoted her talent to the service of softness and beauty. Permeated with sensuality and emotion, her paintings distinguish themselves through their bold graphic effectiveness and their recurrent subject: the feminine face.

As far as she can remember, Lyse Paquette has always been drawing. Her mother taught her two daughters the rudiments of art at a very young age. "I dreamed of attending the School of Fine-Arts," says the Laval painter. "My father, a graduate from HEC business school, viewed his daughter setting out on an artistic path with some concern. He suggested I rather pursue a career in what was then called commercial design." As it happened,

she fell in love with graphic art from the onset. She was passionate about the creative aspect of her work, regardless of the stress and pressure inherent to the job. "I spent 30 marvelous years in a field where I felt I was exactly where I needed to be."

Then in the 1990s, the computer became the main instrument of graphic design. Lyse Paquette no longer experienced much enjoyment in her work. "I loved working with my hands, on my drawing table, using varied materials. The computer just wasn't as much fun." Having lost the aesthetic aspect of her work, her interest in painting was rekindled. She soon sets-up a small studio area in her home. Her previously favorite medium, oil, no longer corresponding to the speed and rhythm of

execution conditioned by thirty years of graphic design, she adopts acrylic for its fluidity and ease of use. A few courses at the Saidye Bronfman centre and continued practice allow her to amass a good sampling of her talents.

Her subjects of the period are flowers and fruits, painted in vibrant colours. A friend arranges a meeting with an art teacher with the purpose of organizing a first showing. In 2002, she opens a solo exhibition at Ile-des-Moulins in Terrebonne, which is held over for two months. "It was quite rewarding to see my paintings grouped together and presented in such a professional manner. I was impressed. I started to believe that my dream was attainable." Art acts as therapy for the stressed



Lea, mixed media, 30 x 30 in

advertiser and she feels the need to take a break. She leaves her job and starts strolling along Saint-Paul Street in Montréal carrying her portfolio under the arm. A gallery owner, Guy Bourget, provides her with her first opportunity. Thus begins her true artistic production.

Six well-filled years go by. Then, she is bereaved with the death of her spouse. The maelstrom of emotions and the powerlessness that engulfs her will hamper the path she is on. The artist, henceforth marked by this sad event, realizes that her painting will ineluctably be transformed. She seeks a new direction. Digging through her sketches, she finds the portrait of a woman which she decides to further develop on canvas. She first shows her new

creation during an exhibition of art by women in Ste-Agathe-des-Monts. Based on the positive feedback she received, Lyse Paquette chooses the human form as her new subject.

It's from that point in time that the artist's body of work takes on its current appearance, although it is still in progress. Close-up women's faces, coloured lips, windswept hair and eyes filled with emotion are characteristic of the majority of her works. Naked male and female bodies in a more abstract rendition are also part of her collection.

Her canvases display this sense of balance and composition that comes from the practice of graphic design. So does her research method, which includes selecting

images in magazines, sketching from photographs and preparing canvases with textured primer. Then, the painting is begun, without pre-sketching, with the face's bone structure. Shadow and light, colour and dimension will follow. Details, such as the hair and the textural atmosphere of the piece, are kept for the end. A mirror set-up behind the artist helps her detect disparities. Her feminine faces are very smooth and idealized. The underlying texture shatters this almost photographic perfection, adding tactile interest. The artist relaxes her thoroughness for a more expressive tracing of the hair and face contour. The rather monochrome palette is broken by the colours of the eyes and lips.



Au masculin, mixed media, 48 x36 in

Extremely active, Lyse Paquette participates in a great number of exhibitions. 2013 has been a particularly busy year as she held one show per month, including one in New York and another in France at a winery in the Saint-Émilion region. In 2014, she is approached by Harley-Davidson, who are seeking the image of a proud and strong woman to better target a prestigious feminine clientele.

Notwithstanding these great successes, the artist wishes she could build-up her confidence even more over the coming years. Doubt and self-questioning, which are the lot of creative individuals, are the most difficult aspects of her reality as a painter. Artistically, Lyse Paquette is proceeding towards a less precise brushstroke, which leaves space for mystery while not losing in sensuality. Leaving her comfort zone is an exercise she intends to repeat frequently in order to maintain her body of work in perpetual evolution.

Isabelle Gauthier

The artist is represented by:
Galerie Céleste, Saint-Sauveur; Galerie d'art Royale et associés, Québec; Galerie d'art Beauchamp, Baie-Saint-Paul; Beauchamp Art Gallery, Toronto; Galerie Rimawi, Rosemère