



Nathalie Marino | An Emotional Landscape

Strongly influenced by abstract expressionism and action, acrylic painter Nathalie Marino has always identified with a creative, emotional energy. Her attraction to spontaneous gesture and freedom help Marino to work intuitively and to develop strong, compositionally vibrant pieces. Although she works with acrylic paint to create elements of texture and beautiful lines and shapes, she is always exploring and ready to incorporate different effects. Each piece is powerfully emotional, allowing Marino to pass along her passion to the viewer.

Marino was born in Montreal, Quebec, Canada but raised in Laval to a loving family that supported her early artistic impulses. She was highly intellectual, received good grades, and was also involved with many different sports activities; track and field, skating, and dancing. Above all else, she was happiest when she was creating, with drawing at the center of her early

focus. Her other activities served as further inspiration to her artwork.

"I got into dance; from flamenco to ballet, modern to jazz funky. Skating was also important to me and in fact, what I liked the most about skating was the feeling of lightness, the fluid movement of my body and the wind in my hair. I guess this is why movement and liberty is so important in my art practice right now."

Without fully understanding it at the time, Marino was developing an artistic eye and naturally gravitating to visual stimuli and the feeling that it creates. Although she knew she wanted to be an artist early on, Marino was not quite tapping into her creative energy and chose a different directional path for a career, not wanting to take on the "starving artist" lifestyle.



"When it was time to choose a study program, my parents had an enormous influence in my choice," explains Marino. "They did not feel that an artistic career was a great choice and I remember them telling me, 'you're going to starve.' So I didn't follow my heart and I made a compromise. I went into an architecture program where I thought I could use both my artistic and intellectual side."

In 1991, Marino graduated from Montmorency College, Laval with a DEC in Architecture Technology. Although she enjoyed the program and even found work in her field, the construction business was slowing down and Marino was never sure what the next day would bring. Between contracts, she was able to transition to a full time job with a financial company that provided a safe, comfortable position.

"During all that time, I got more and more depressed," she recalls. "I was searching for myself and kept asking, 'who is the real me?' I was not satisfied and the more time passed, the more I felt dead. My boss even pushed me to study a master's degree in public administration and like a good little girl, I listened. That's the problem I had, I was making every people around me happy and I was ignoring my needs."

Marino found herself in the public administration program while working full time. She finished half the program while maintaining impeccable grades, until one night, her stress and unhappiness took a toll on her physical well being. She was driving back from work when, on the radio, she heard a commercial about an insurance company.

"I heard the words, 'strategic planning' and I got dizzy," she explains. "I got physically disturbed and I wanted to throw up. That was it! I had enough of all the strict work and the mundane existence that led me to my depression. So I quit the program and promised myself that the next thing I would study was going to be for myself. I was ignoring a visceral need to express myself and it affected me greatly."

She held true to her promise by taking a professional photography course at the New York Institute of Photography. Although she enjoyed the course, Marino felt that something was still missing. She continued to search for her place of peace and purpose.



About that time, Marino stumbled upon a reality show television program that starred one of her favorite artists, Richard Grieco. During the course of the show, the artists were asked to paint an experience. Grieco painted a face representing anger towards a painful life event. Marino identified with this and purchased the painting once it went to auction.

After making the purchase, Marino was able to get in touch with the artist. “We talked and I saw more paintings he did during the course of his life. I was really into his paintings. The more he talked to me about his passion, how it helps him

express his innermost feelings and his creative process, the more I realized that it was the thing that was missing from my life. My time with Richard made me realize that there was another way to express myself.

Marino strongly believes that if she hadn't suffered her mental break at school and met Grieco, she would not be where she is today. After her wake up call, she began to open up and followed the path to her artistic calling. She took art workshops and courses that helped her hone her skills and techniques while cultivating a ‘voice’ for her work.



“I don’t want to paint in a controlled fashion,” she explains of her process with abstract creations. “During the course of my architecture years, I did draw, but everything had to be so perfect; all according to reality. That is fun but it’s not nurturing to me. I had to do something without thinking, just let the emotion guide me.”

Marino utilizes vibrant acrylic colors to tell the story of her internal world. Most of her creations deal with human behavior and emotions. “When I start a piece, I let my emotions guide me and set the tone,” she states. “I choose the colors and then allow the work to happen by letting my hand move freely on the canvas. Throughout this subconscious creative process, the subject reveals itself to me. When the image forms, I move from there to complete the subject consciously.”

Marino incorporates elements of texture, layering, and of course, her own unique brush stroke. Patterns emerge and there is an energy and movement. With the added ease and fast drying time of acrylic paints, she is able to play around and has added new tools to her process; inviting in a dynamic experience for every masterpiece.

After a lot of experience and dedication, Marino's work has gained recognition in shows and collections. Her art was showcased in 2015 at the National Military Museum in Bucharest, Romania. She's also won a distinction award at an International Exhibition held at *Le Beffroi* monument in Bruges, Belgium early that same year. She's been a part of several collective exhibitions held in Montreal since 2011, and in 2014 was in the Contemporary Perspectives show for Agora Gallery, New York. In addition, she had a solo exhibition in 2014 for the show, "In the State of FuZion" at L'Espace Contemporain Art Gallery, Montreal.



Marino remains passionate about her work, now more than ever. *"It's been hard for me to find and follow my dreams but I've found that I have learned a lot in a short amount of time. I probably went further into my development in a short time then I would have if I started my career in my younger years. My maturity and the fact that I have competence in management, administration, and business are helping me a lot. When you are young, you don't have that knowledge."*

Marino currently lives and creates in her studio in Laval, Quebec. She is always experimenting with her art, telling the story of her inner world to her viewer, inviting them to connect and explore their own emotional landscape.

"I consider my work successful when a viewer identifies with the ideas represented and experiences their own personal feelings and emotions. By sharing my story and the story of others, I want to awake and bring up emotions, provoke a reaction to the viewer."

