

# WHIMS OF THE MUSE



William Marazzi on the art of Chiang Rai based artist Lisa Moses who uses Cast Acrylic Prints to give voice to her muse.

**T**he north of Thailand around Chiang Rai boasts a thriving art community. A few foreign artists have also settled over there. Drawn to the natural beauty and the serenity of this region they left their homes in the West and started a new life, or developed their lives further with the aesthetic stimuli provided by Thai culture and the local people.

Lisa Moses and her husband Danny were introduced to the former Mengrai kingdom by an American friend. They left Los Angeles in 2007, quite happy to have done so. Lisa is a painter and Danny a musician and a composer. I am mentioning Danny's musical occupation because it fits right in with his wife's imagery and former profession as a ballerina with the Los Angeles Chamber Ballet and other dance companies located in the United States.

Dance was Lisa's prime artistic passion. She reveals, "Dance was my first love. I studied ballet from the age of five and then at nineteen I

joined the first Disney Parade touring show where I met my husband. We toured the Eastern United States and Canada for several months. Subsequently we left the show and settled in Los Angeles. "During the next ten years I danced with various ballet companies in Southern California. When I retired I missed the thrill of live performances so I studied acting for eight years and performed with theatre groups in Southern California."

In 1999, she set her mind on becoming a painter; she enrolled at UCLA and took up life drawing, watercolour and acrylic painting, "I was not new to the making of art, my father, Joseph Zirker, is a printmaker and a sculptor. As for me I had always worked with pen and ink, and oil pastels." In 2002, she began creating art with a novel intent pursuing the technique invented by her father about thirteen years ago, namely Cast Acrylic Print.

Lisa explains, "This method allows for the creation of monotype



From left:  
Reverence; Encounter;  
Gentle and Lullaby; the  
artist Lisa Moses.



prints without a press. I apply acrylic paints to glass or a sheet of polyethylene plastic. The paint dries – then I peel off the artwork ... that's a one-time print. A variant... I can use mixed media and collage, in which case the collaged pieces are applied with acrylic gel. Thereafter I brush acrylics gel over the entire composition and lay cloth or paper over the wet gel. Again you must wait for everything to set and dry thoroughly – some five hours in the sun – before peeling the work off the plastic or glass support. The result is smooth, unlike regular collage that shows texture.”

The symbols she brings together in poetic images takes the viewer into a paranormal

dimension that resonates to the beat of fairy tales. I mention Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She replies, “Of late I have been focusing on creating cast acrylic prints with a galactic theme. I download photographs of distant galaxies taken by the Hubble space telescope – it's free, no copy rights. These photos have an emotional impact on me – it's a profound experience. I enter them in my compositions, blend them in my drawings and colour schemes. The shots of the universe are stunning and mystical; this access into the beauty of the cosmos opens an unfathomable range of creative possibilities for me.”

Music and movement have never left her,



Clockwise from top left:  
Vision; Companions; Cats;  
Layers.



they breathe life into her art. “My years as a ballerina surface in my art. The rhythm, the lines ... it’s all there. Much of my work focuses on expressing the strength, muscle tension, and abandon of dancers in motion.”

Her layering of symbols touches on Surrealism. “I use birds – mainly cranes, elephants and giraffes; they are so graceful. I introduce human silhouettes and faces. I like mystery, forms that are not immediately apparent, surprises for the viewer. I might put an elephant within an elephant, or hide a tiny dancer inside a galaxy. I like to combine the universe and cloudy skies with people, animals, the earth and the stars; whatever is near with whatever is very far. Music is another crucial element that I input in my work. Danny and his music make a good model,” she explains,

Lisa started exhibiting her acrylic print-collages in 2012, at the Neilson Hays Library in Bangkok and at Sangdee Gallery in Chiang Mai, under the title: *A Woman’s Dream Of The Night Sky*. Part of the

proceeds she donated to the foundation SOLD PROJECT, whose mission it is to curb child prostitution.

As to the future of her art, she won’t be specific, and she honestly can’t be; every time she sets to work she must keep a channel open to the whims of the muse and be the receptive, patient messenger. She indicates there might be a change as she senses the pull of fresh ideas germinating in her psyche.

In the meantime, I get from her art that freedom and peace are attainable, readily within anyone’s reach in the depth of being if one stops and looks beneath the humbug of the ego. Gentleness, poetry, love, fun, joy – these humane qualities are constant features of her visual vernacular. She is a Symbolist artist, a visionary who does not go on and on about spirituality and does not wring your brain with lofty ideals when she talks painting and the universe, and that’s what charms me also about her and her cast acrylic prints. ■