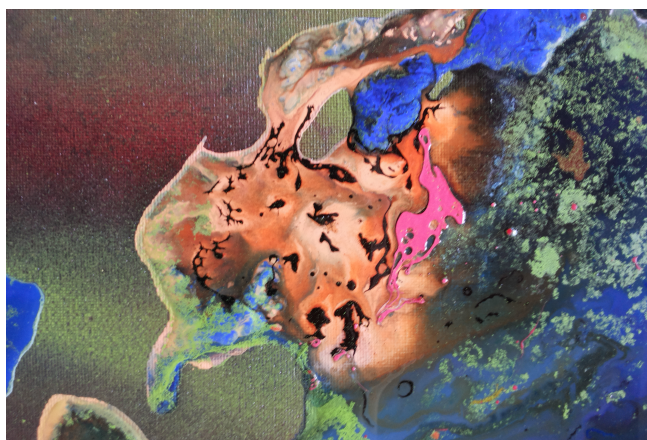




Nadine Micallef-Grimaud is an artist who literally lives art. She studied art under the tutorship of her father, Aldo, and attended courses in painting at the Malta Society of Arts and other foreign institutions. At the age of ten she won her first important art prize in the Fifth World School Children's Art Exhibition held in Taiwan, Republic of China. Later in life, Nadine was awarded many prizes at international level and has registered a notable

success in countries like Durban in South Africa, England and Belgium. She also attained a coveted major award known as the Season's Award in Boston, U.S.A. The artist is also the holder of La Medaglia d'Oro by the Accademia del Mediterraneo, a gold medal by the Malta Horticultural Society, and a Gold Ribbon in Canada.

Nadine's name is also associated with Floral Art and during the years she became a leading exponent of this art form. She is an interdisciplinary artist and creates landscape and figurative images, and abstract works in a variety of media. She also expresses her concepts in installation work. Nadine has a postgraduate certificate in Fine Art and she is also a qualified demonstrator of Floral Art (NAFAS, UK). Recently, she was head of the make-up department in the film 20,000 Reasons (Malta Film Commission - London Film Academy). Apart from dedicating most of her time to painting and sculpture, she teaches floral art and special effects for film and TV makeup at the Malta Society of Arts, Valletta.

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Nadine Micallef-Grimaud

Echo of my Soul



Undoubtedly, an artist who literally lives art is Nadine Micallef-Grimaud. Many times her name is associated with Floral Art because during the years she became a leading exponent of this art form which unfortunately in Malta is not so distinguishable from the other arts. Above all Nadine is a versatile artist and creates all kinds of different artwork from drawing, painting, sculpture, installations, fashion, jewellery, make-up designs for films and photography.

Nadine comes from a family of artists. Her father, the late veteran artist Aldo Micallef-Grimaud (1925-2010) who studied under Robert and Edward Caruana Dingli, was her personal mentor and was greatly influential in her creative endeavour. Her mother, Mariuccia who is a world renowned floral artist also nourished Nadine's love for the arts.

Throughout the years, Nadine established a name also as a painter and participated in many prestigious art exhibitions in Malta and abroad. Her works include portraiture, landscapes and abstract painting.

In recent years the artist focused more on abstract painting. She successfully achieved great results with her continuous exploration and experimentation with new techniques with colours. Nadine is one of the first artists to create original and unusual effects in her abstracts which today is referred to as 'accidental painting'. This method of painting requires great skill and the use of the right media.

The artist commented: ***"Throughout these last few years, I focused mostly on experimenting with a fluid art technique. I took a glimpse at my inspiration and decided to just go all the way working whether it is right or wrong. I was drawn to the making, the painting had a life of its own and I allowed it to lead me to unknown magical territories"*** (personal communication).

Although most of Nadine's abstracts are created in a spontaneous manner, the artist derives her inspiration from many different sources. She uses emotive colours, abstract shapes and surface textures to create visual metaphors from contemporary life.

A recurring theme which the artist expresses in her abstract work is the shape of the snake or its derivative. Snake patterns, the water-snake, the primordial coiled snake or 'Ouroboros', and other circular motifs emerge in some of her paintings executed with the same technique. This archaic, archetypal image is considered as an 'energy symbol'; the serpent force and the symbolic abstraction of the dynamic snake (Gimbutas 1989:324).

Jung observed that serpents and spirals are symbols of psychological growth, and the unconscious mind circling and drawn ever closer to the integrated 'Self'. Nadine argues that ***serpents, cobras, pythons always fascinated me since early childhood. I wear them as part of my jewellery collection, painted them on dresses, sculpted them for abstract formation in floral competitions abroad and also love to incorporate them wherever it is possible. To me the movement of this unique reptile mystifies me, mostly for its agility and for its movement. When I look at this image, I find that its curves, coiling, colour and its mysteriousness strikes a different melody with every movement.*** (personal communication).



These images appear unconsciously to the artist while working on a painting. They emerge and pop up as if coming out of the depth of a cave. The novelty of the presentation is that light and darkness are merged into one and the excessive whimsicality is presented in brilliant colours. The artist strives to create a world of her own. It is a non-objective world which is developed on the canvas during the process of creation. In Nadine's paintings we always encounter some opening into the light. Mostly, such images are developed on the canvas following a dream, which then she incorporates into the painting space. Such non-objective works are highly charged with a spiritual content. As Kandinsky stated that many times abstract art is the ideal visual mode to express an "inner necessity" of the artist and to convey universal human emotions and ideas (Kandinsky 2012). Even Carl Gustav Jung elaborates on the non-objective aspect of painting.

He argues:

Non-objective art draws its content essentially from the 'inside.' This 'inside' cannot correspond to consciousness, since consciousness contains images of objects as they are generally seen, and whose appearance must therefore necessarily conform to general expectations (Jung 1967:136).

Non-objective art preserves a certain protective anonymity which is mostly personal and focuses on the artist's private inner relationship and the absence of human references.

When we look at Nadine Micallef-Grimaud's paintings, what strikes us mostly is in the way the artist used her colours. Colour is mainly appealing because as we know in the visual arts, especially in painting, it is heavily dependent for its impact, mood and depth. The impact of colour on the visual senses of the viewers vary from one person to another. Like the primitivist artist, Nadine expressed her beliefs, joys and sorrows through the colourful idiom of art. Kandinsky also stresses that colours have a psychic effect. Colour is used to "produce a corresponding spiritual vibration, and it is only as a step towards this spiritual vibration that the elementary physical impression is of importance" (Kandinsky 1912:24). Colour is a primitive archetype with a psychological implication. In colour, psychology has identified the most important characteristics, which relay in the developmental process of the brain's imaginative and emotional combinatory potentials.

Nadine Micallef-Grimaud's art is versatile and expressed in different conditions and media. In her recent abstract paintings the artist sought to give importance to the creative process and media. Although her inspiration is sometimes derived from surreal imagery, Nadine takes an opposite direction and finds liberation and aesthetic refuge in non representational expressions. Her paintings convey an art of power, energy, movement and dynamic forms which transcend the self. The artist's aim is to leave an effect on the viewers and create an aesthetic experience of intense, overwhelming beauty - of the Sublime.

Dr Louis Laganà