

GWYNNE DUNCAN
Painter
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Bio:

Gwynne Duncan received her BFA at Bard College in 1990. Since then she has been painting in NYC where she grew up. She recently had solo shows at The Fall Cafe, The Cedar Tavern and The Chelsea Hotel in NYC. She has been in group shows at A.I.R. Gallery, Gale Gates et al, Einstein Gallery and The National Arts Club to name a few. She curated two shows at CB's Gallery, and she was one of the curators for *From the Ashes* at C.U.A.N.D.O.. She lives and works in NYC.

Artist Statement:

My paintings are a mix of the dream and waking states. As much as I want to portray reality, portraiture, landscape, interior, I am always lured by the dream imagery that haunts me. It is the fruit and essence of my existence, the world that intrigues me most. I have always felt torn, one foot down to earth, the other in the skies. My paintings are about telling a story, but they always remain mysterious, not all the answers solved, because that is my view of life. A flower in full bloom on a barren iceberg, a woman standing before a golden sky- there is an ever-present element of the make believe.

I use oil paint, collage, gold leaf and frames to construct my works. I use the figure in an environment to tell a story. Timeless objects create symbolism and dream imagery conveys a mood. My work is nostalgic and naive in style, reminding me of Klimt, Chagall, Picasso, Gauguin and Utamaro. Within the collage there are other stories of a hidden nature. Usually faces and hands are painted, and clothing is made up of fabric or collage. The background is separated by a hard edge, and is usually an imaginary landscape or interior.

Although schooled, I always held onto my primitive cartoon-like depictions, creating a naive inverted perspective. My figures are stiff and stylized as the Greek statues were, and the body language and facial expressions show the translucency of a consciousness. Rigid figures, cut-outs in Byzantine dress are outlined and immortalized in ornate frames, standing out from space flattened backgrounds. Vivid reds of India and gold- isolated and repetitive. Intricate and detailed, I use symbolism representing the essence and brilliance of life such as fruit and flowers. There is always a sense of ambivalence, half dreaming half in reality; half-happy, half-sad.

Women dominate this fantasy kingdom, which is a character set I created. My subjects are often about loneliness and relationships, about my own sense of isolation from society, yet my personal harmony with it through history. Many of my figures are autobiographical, and often the same figures appear in painting after painting.

I was born in New York City in 1968, the middle daughter of a writer and sculptor, in a building called Westbeth in the west village. My father is a box sculptor, similar to Joseph Cornell, and my

mother is a feminist writer, who uses surrealism in dream. Their work was filled with imagery and fantasy, strong color and a heaviness, all of which I adopted. I wanted to tell a story with imagery from a young age.

I went to Music and Art High School, where I became more serious about painting. I also studied printmaking, sculpture and photography, which I continue to do as well. I studied figure drawing and painting at the Art Student's League, and then went on to major in painting at Bard College, where I received my BFA in 1990. I moved back to New York City after I graduated from College, and began showing my work at various galleries in the city and Brooklyn. My work matured, but I kept my fantasy/portrait style.