

Josée Gauthier

Tell me a Story



Victoire, 40 x 24 in

Artist Josée Gauthier's work can best be described as a palette of vibrant colours where faceless figures are the main actors. Whimsical and Zen, her paintings are like open windows on a brighter world.

At the confines of illustration, her figures are engaged in seemingly anodine situations but brimming with symbolism: a boy casually swings on a swing; a woman, bag in hand, comes to a crossroad; a boy looks sadly at his icecream cone dropped to the ground. Simple to understand and, mostly, simple to recognize the colorful images as slices of our own life. "Expressed in my paintings are experiences I've known." One era features young children or entire families, another concentrates on the feminine perspective, on romance and seduction. One painting shows a father holding his child by one hand, a bag packed with clothes and teddy bear in the other hand. The work is entitled 'Every other weekend': fifty percent of the population instantly understands its significance. The artist doesn't hold back, shows things as they really are; that is probably why Josée Gauthier has received so many public's choice awards while participating in numerous symposiums. Those who appreciate her work recognize instants of their own lives, colourfully painted and with a dose of poetry.

The correspondence of colours and emotions is so real to her that, during a recent difficult stage in her life, the joy she finds in vibrant colours simply could no longer express itself. The artist, uninspired by 'grey emotions', has had to take a break from painting during that period of grief, to only pick-up her brushes once she neared her 'coloured bubble' again. "My emotions and my palette of colours were conflicting. Emotion is the basis of all my work. For the first time in my almost ten year career, it feels like I'm making a new start. I want to play; I don't want to force anything but simply let things happen on the canvas." Technically, this translates in a semi abstract and semi figurative approach and a desire to go beyond the unconscious framework that has established itself over the years. Loosening her grip and allowing her instinct to reign is therefore Josée Gauthier's aim. "I can't wait to fully reintegrate my colour bubble!"





Cornée marian, 24 x 48 in.

Born in St-Eustache, Josée worked many years for the SAAQ. In fact, the first exhibition she participated in was with a group of this society's employees, followed a year later with solo exhibitions which heighten her self-confidence and give rein to her dream of becoming an artist. Being a positive and determined woman, she soon after leaves her employ at the SAAQ and embarks without hesitation on an artistic path. "In life, misery is optional. I never give-in to difficulties but rather always search for the positive in everything." Her artistic path begins with making the round of symposiums across the province. She is enthusiastic and participates in more than a dozen such events annually. She also travels.

She paints one work at a time, not being able to shed the initial emotion once it's there. Texture is at first freely applied on canvas, then the main idea develops itself and the figures take place. Unusual detail, Josée Gauthier doesn't mind receiving special requests. She doesn't consider it hinders her creativity. "When someone comes to me for a painting, I love listening to the story being told; images immediately come to me." She also amuses herself by creating paintings initiated by words or expressions.

In this vein, in 2009 she illustrated a children's book published by Robert Blake, entitled *Le bleu de l'espoir*, a project that speaks of child abuse. Although the painter's faceless figures appear to be

fitting to broach such a delicate subject in a universal manner, the artist found it hard to immerse herself in such a harsh reality. After a year of hard work and emotional turmoil, Josée Gauthier was proud of her work and of having participated in a book that continues to travel and is used in open discussion in schools and libraries.

More recently, parts of her paintings have become decidedly abstract. "I am not particularly in love with abstraction, but I do love colour. I am thus able to create very interesting backgrounds. I keep some abstract canvases as is, without adding figures, while I build up others. I do not wish to choose between the two styles."

At the onset of a new creative vein, Josée Gauthier remains concerned with authenticity and mindful of her initial artistic vision. "My wish is not only to create something beautiful but to create something that speaks to others." As many other artists, she cannot predict where the wind will blow her next, but she is ready for the adventure.

Isabelle Gauthier

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