

LILY (LIHTING LI) KOSTRZEWA

For Kandinsky, *blue* is the colour of spirituality: the darker the blue, the more it awakens human desire for the eternal (see his 1911 book *On the Spiritual in Art*).



"BLUE RIDERS AND PINK SPRING" BY LILY KOSTRZEWA 2017, A TRIBUTE SERIES TO FRANZ MARC AND HIS BLUE HORSES

For any artist, the most critical strokes upon the canvas are the introductory ones, which shape and define the skeletal structure that the details of refinement are hung upon, often determining the success, strength, or weakness of one's artistic vision... The artwork of Michigan, USA based artist **Lily (Lihting Li) Kostrzewa** is as compelling and confrontational thematically as it is soothing and spiritual visually. Lily's technique is one that employs a vivid use of color delicately mutated into soft expressionistic tapestries of allusion - similar to the sensation one gets when looking at a single leaf hanging upon a tree while all the other leaves around it dissolve into a kaleidoscope of imagery fading into infinity. Born in Taiwan, after studying art in the best art academy in Taipei and living 25 years in Taiwan, Lily moved to the United States, earning her MFA degree in Modern painting. The balance that Lily brings to exploring the cultural contradictions between East & West through her artwork is as ageless as it is contemporary, relying upon Eastern philosophy and especially the notion of how much of life is about bringing opposing forces - strength & weakness, principle versus amorality - into a unified vision that is universal.

Since the age of nine Lily has dreamed of becoming an artist after one day saw some Cezanne paintings in one of her father's magazines. Three years later her parents sent her to study Chinese art under a Chinese Master. By the age of sixteen, her work had won national awards and was in a collection for the *Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall in Taipei*. At the same time, she began learning oil painting. With four years of art study at the National

Taiwan Normal University, where she studied under many Chinese master artists who have pioneered their techniques from both the traditional Chinese paintings and European art, latter she developed a blend of Eastern artistic elements of bamboo brushes ink, sculpture-like colored sand mixed with acrylic paint, with colorful Western expressionistic renderings of subjects like the human or animal figures, painted on canvas or paper.

Lily's interest in developing this style of merging cultural & artistic influences first began with her focused study of Chinese art. "Chinese art is based upon a philosophy of Zen that employs a lot of delicacy and use of ink and watercolor. When I came to America and started studying Pop Art and German Expressionism, it inspired me to work more with color. The longer that I lived in America I gradually felt that my identity was not really Chinese nor was it American, so this led me to question who I am and how can I make my art unique?" (Review Magazine issue 746, Robert Martin, 2012, USA)

After living in America for more than 25 years, her artistic search has focused on how to bridge the two cultures and bring them together so that East & West can merge.

Lily's paintings have been exhibited in 28 solo exhibits and many group exhibits internationally, including those at the Uffizi Gallery (Museum), Florence, Italy; Miami Art Basel, USA; Angel Orensanz Foundation, NYC, USA; Biennial of Rome, Italy, Biennial Brenta Riviera of Venice, Italy; Zhou B Art Center, Chicago, USA; Michigan Women's Historical Museum, USA; Old Town Art Center Chicago, USA; Saginaw Art Museum, Michigan, USA; The DeVos Place in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA; Odessa Art Museum, Ukraine; the Historical Museum of Infantry, Rome, Italy; UNESCO Art Gallery, Athens, Greece; Gallery Metanoia, Paris, France, Galleria d'arte, Pescara, Italy and the Shanghai Art Fair, China.