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Details Matter

Ontario-based artist Michele Van Maurik paints close-up flowers brought to life through nuance, light and shadows

Michele Van Maurik was introduced to art as a child, growing up in a home with a father who was an artist. When Van Maurik began her professional career, she worked as a commercial artist. However, over the past five years, she has transitioned to being a full-time fine artist. Much of her work focuses on florals, but she also enjoys painting weathered and rusted trucks, chocolates and desserts, and portraits—anything that allows her to capture details.

Her florals, in particular, are close-up and intimate, but large in size. “I used to paint large-scale murals at one time, as well, so I think that’s what draws me to the larger paintings,” she explains. “I like the subtle details and nuances you necessarily wouldn’t see if they were smaller.”

Van Maurik obtains the flowers she paints from a number of sources, including ones that have been given to her and those she sees during walks through the

neighborhood. However, the light and shadows draw her in. “It’s all about the light flowing through the paintings,” she says. “When people view my work and comment on how the light in my paintings makes them feel joyful and uplifted, I feel like I’ve achieved the ultimate success as an artist.”

Among the flowers Van Maurik enjoys most are daisies and peonies. “I like the layers of petals, and the light illuminates and shines through them at a certain

1
Dancing Orchids,
oil on canvas, 24 x 36"

2
Purple Reign, oil on
canvas, 40 x 30"





angle,” she says. “It makes the flowers look a lot more alive when petals are lit and others are in the shadows. It looks more three dimensional.”

While painting, Van Maurik uses both photographic and live subjects. For example, if she finds an intriguing flower while walking, she will take photos for reference. If the flowers are in her studio, she will set them up. Since the light source on the live subject can change, Van Maurik will also take photos.

“I see painting as a series of decisions and problem solving” says Van Maurik. “I become immersed in what I create; hours seem to pass all too quickly. The daylight fades from my studio and there are dozens of brushes



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3
Fire Poppy, oil on
 canvas, 30 x 30"

4
Pink Peonies,
 oil on canvas, 30 x 40"

5
Purple Rhapsody, oil
 on canvas, 20 x 16"

6
 Michele Van Maurik
 painting in her studio.

7
 Van Maurik stands
 with one of her daisy
 paintings.

strewn about, each one with its own specific color. The physical act of painting ends, however, it continues when I sleep. This is when I resolve any challenges I am having, and when I awake, I will know the answer to something that eluded me the day before."

For the past three years, Van Maurik's artwork has appeared in McMichael Canadian Art Collection's annual autumn sale, where she has been named a top-10 artist every year of participation. In June, she was awarded the Medaille d'Argent (Silver Medal) for excellence in painting by the Arts, Sciences Lettres Academy of Paris, and she also exhibited at the Artistes du Monde Cannes, which was juried by Marina Picasso. ●

Van Maurik was the Grand Prize Winner of International Artist magazine's Challenge No. 85, Florals & Gardens.

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