



## ANNABELLE MARQUIS

### Touching mind through sight

For several years, Annabelle Marquis has been pursuing a most unusual mode of pictorial expression, at once bold and perceptive. Feeling is not excluded, but primarily manifests in revelation, surprise and amazement. Do not expect to find a specific message or perhaps spleen. Rather, she favours a playful approach to form through aesthetic wonder. Crossovers of materials and textures closely interact with a subject that may or may not be recognizable.

First and foremost, touch appeals to Annabelle Marquis. Certainly, she aims to captivate the gaze of the beholder as well as her own, but she also strives to connect with the mind. She creates visual ambushes, pictorial scavenger hunts where rules are dictated by the tenuous thread that links conscious to unconscious. Hers. Ours. In fact, as we explore her paintings, we retrace the paths upon which they evolved... consciously, but mostly unconsciously. What are they, and how did they come to be? Let us see.

Annabelle Marquis enjoys haptic contact with the medium before all else. Touching, stroking, feeling and manipulating are her second sight. Far from innocuous, this peculiarity is an important element of her artistic approach and undeniably influences her creative process. Indeed, her tactile interactions with substance literally trace the contours of the inchoate work. The unconscious becomes uterus; the conscious, seed and impetus. Through touch, the painting slowly takes shape. Her psyche shreds magazine, paper, fabric... She rends these materials, touching them as a blind person might read Braille. "I do not start off with a preconceived idea; the paper guides me." She spreads her torn handiwork upon the canvas and, little by little, forms come into being. "I enjoy the sensation of dried glue and pigment on my hands." Subjects emerge thusly, sometimes discernable but sometimes less so, nevertheless never springing forth from nothing but always representing a state, an idea. They are delineated by her craft, subject to her profound desire to communicate and share a facet of herself and the spontaneous amazement she experiences upon touching raw materials.

In this approach, focus must necessarily play an important part of the overall creative process. It merges with traces of the artist's past, now become second nature... Her father, a set photographer (and simply photographer in daily life), has repeatedly shown her the importance of framing in capturing one's surroundings since her childhood. He instilled in her the notion of conceptualizing the image, situating it in a dynamic mental space. Her former work as a graphic artist also left valuable traces of its own. Visual experience directly influences the painting's direction throughout the creative process. Equilibrium of masses, composition and impact force are all weighed and assessed instinctually. The resulting image must never leave us, the beholder, indifferent. It must capture our gaze and kindle our interest, so that details might accomplish the rest. In this way, conscious and unconscious come together in an exploration of visual hypotheses. The artist is always mindful of making space for the Other's unpredictable gaze as well as her own.

In Annabelle Marquis, the value of craft meets an impressive intuitive strength. This prolific union creates a universe in which rich patterns and textures nourish sight and spirit, to our utmost delight.

Robert Bernier  
(translated from French by mariemello)