



AN INTERVIEW WITH AN ARTIST

MERSUKA DOPAZO'S PAINTINGS ARE PORTRAITS OF THE WORLD, ITS PEOPLE AND THEIR EMOTIONS. RESIDENT IN BALI, THE SPANISH-BORN ARTIST CREATES EXPRESSIONS OF REALITY, WHICH HAVE EMERGED FROM HER MULTIPLE TRAVELS AND BECOME INTERTWINED WITH HER OWN LIFE AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCES. MERSUKA'S COLLABORATION WITH ARTIST TERESA CALDERON, MEANWHILE, PRODUCES BOISTEROUS AND CHEERFUL WORKS, SUGGESTING A CELEBRATION OF IMAGINATION, FANTASY AND SPONTANEITY.

TEXT BY RACHEL LOVE



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RL: Why did you become an artist?

MD: I studied law, but my heart and character was not in the field of law at all. Actually, I have been painting all my life, I took several art courses in Spain and other countries, but essentially I'm self taught. Up until 20 years ago, I was living in the Spanish countryside, painting a lot but not doing it professionally.

RL: What inspires you?

MD: My life. Every moment inspires me. I don't understand why some artists choose to do the same thing all the time, I just want to experiment with anything that falls into my hands and I change the theme of my paintings constantly because there is always something new that I want to do. For example I was watching my son play ball in the pool the other day and I was immediately inspired to do a series of paintings of my four sons.

RL: What are your materials?

MD: I love to use all the things around me. I use everything – paper, net, Thai silk, wood, paint, neon paints, textured fabrics, pencil, charcoal, paper napkins, trinkets... But I always use high quality materials. I can make a painting from anything – clothes, sandals – any object can inspire me.

RL: What brought you to Bali?

MD: I've lived in many places including India and Africa, and then I had four babies in five years. I'd been to Bali before and heard about the Green School, and decided it would be a good place for my kids. I've now been here for three years with my husband and my sons.



Facing page:
Japanese portraits.
The artist is inspired
by faces and
costumes.

Top: Boy Playing -
one of the paintings
that was inspired
by seeing her sons
playing recently.

Above: The artist's
studio overlooking
her sunny garden
in the corner of her
villa near Canggu.



Japanese women in multi-media; Pinocchio: the artist once crafted some puppets which she then turned into a painting, spawning a whole new series.

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RL: Tell us about your Balinese Princess Collection?

MD: For this I have collaborated with another Spanish artist, Teresa Calderon. I met her when she was on holiday in Bali and we decided to try painting in tandem. We were both inspired and enchanted by the beauty and charisma of Balinese women, especially when dressed in their traditional attire. We work in absolute harmony together, I am more detailed and Teresa is more colourful. She comes here four times a year and I go to Spain twice a year. We had our first joint exhibition in Spain and didn't expect to sell much because of the financial crisis, but we sold everything – 25 paintings, and the exhibition was extended from three weeks to five weeks.

RL: Has your work changed since you moved to Bali?

MD: Yes, in the beginning I only worked with paint, and my work was mainly figures and faces inspired by Africa and done in oils. I now use acrylic and collage elements, and my colours have totally changed. Before my work was more monochromatic, and earth colours; now it's bright and florescent.



Flip flop: This piece is typical of Mersuka's early work. She has always used materials that come to hand – even flip flops.

RL: What are your traits when you're working?

MD: When I'm working I can't stop, especially when I'm unsure about what I'm going to do, but once I discover the way forward then I'm more relaxed. My work reflects my changes of mood and the thoughts that are going through my mind at the time.

RL: I understand you're also an art collector?

MD: Yes, I have quite a large collection of valuable artwork and am planning a five-day silent auction in Bali at W Retreat from 22nd

August, with a live auction on 28th August. It will be the first auction of its kind in Bali.

FRV

More of Mersuka Dopazo's artwork can be seen on her website (www.mersuka.com) or at Purpa Art Gallery, Jl Mertanadi 97, Kerobokan, which will be celebrating its Grand Opening on 18th June at 6.30pm, and showcasing a solo exhibition of Mersuka's artwork on August 13th. www.purpagallerybali.com