

## IRELAND TAKES HER PAINTINGS TO NEW HEIGHTS

*Painting greets travelers as they make their way through LAX terminal.*

By Roberta Carasso, Art Waves

May 10, 2007

Orange County Register Laguna News Post

Image: Thalassa

Image caption: POLYTYCH: Artist Georgeana Ireland's work is on exhibit at LAX.

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If you enter Terminal Two of LAX through the breezeway of the fourth floor, you can't help but pass a polytych, a large four panel, six foot abstract painting.

It was created by Laguna Beach artist Georgeana Ireland who won first place in a competition sponsored by the city of Los Angeles and Municipal Art Gallery.

The painting, which greets a steady stream of visitors daily, was selected over hundreds of works by other artists.

The Oregon-born artist creates in oils and metal pigments, building textured layer upon layer, forming an undulating under-surface that works well with the colors, lines, and shapes above the surface.

Her goal is to capture the quality of "Eternal Beauty" that characterizes the Romantic works of Joseph Mallard, William Turner, Odilon Redon, Gustav Moreau, and the Hudson River School.

These master artists focused on the spiritualization of light, capturing an indefinable atmosphere.

Often, by leaving out solid objects and people, they rendered imaginative scenes upon which people can project their own stories.

Like them, Ireland seeks to create art that has an ethereal, enigmatic quality that is timeless and transcends the mundane.

Ireland works intuitively, letting the image on the canvas lead her. Thus, her art has developed its own particular features.

Each canvas is the meeting point between abstraction and landscape where the horizon line separates what seems like a vast sky and an immense solitary landscape.

With a variety of colors, often earth tones, Ireland conveys a sense of the natural world. Some paintings are calm, light and radiant, having an idyllic presence.

In other paintings, there is turbulence, a storm swelling in a sea-like area below, or an agitated sky ablaze with color.

Although it is not her intent, many of her paintings resemble photographs taken by astronauts in space, as a broad sweep of the sky hovers over an expanse of unknown land.

The artist finds that listening to orchestral music, particularly classic rock and the classics, are inspiring.

The beauty of the music puts her in a mood to find the ethereal in the painted image. Depending on her frame of mind that day, an image takes shape.

The work can become a state of light or darkness, but always with a textured surface, built up by metallic pigments and careful placement of under and over glazes.

Ireland has had the unique opportunity to travel extensively and visit major museums around the world. In these memorable places, she always studies the masters and draws from them, seeking out exemplary art to emulate. These become benchmarks to measure her art and to improve her work. Ireland studied with artists Jim Daly in Oregon and William Whittaker in Utah. In fact, she continues to study, learning from art books, museum visits, and exhibitions.

"Abyss" is a dark abstract scene. A rocky cavern composed of browns, oranges and touches of blues and green placed below a light-colored sky.

There is a sense of solitary emptiness, as if the world was just created.

In another untitled painting, there appears to be a dark blue sea with a streak of white light across the horizon and a dark sky above with hints of color and clouds.

Ireland's art can be seen in the Azali on Forest Fine Art Gallery, which, for the last four months, has new owners.

Annette Van Der Laan is the gallery co-owner, along with her cousin Mari Vermeulen-Breedt, who is a noted South African artist.

Vermeulen-Breedt also shows her art at Azali.

(Note: A list of galleries currently representing Ireland's work is listed on the gallery page of her website, <http://www.georgeanastudio.com/gallery.html>.)