

## Artist Statement

Growing up in Romania, music and art were solid foundations of my cultural upbringing and my paintings draw from this strong Eastern European influence. As a child, I was very gifted in music so my parents enrolled me in the music conservatory. It was at the age of 7 that my career was chosen for me. Studying music in a Communist country was a very rigid and controlling experience. For most of my life this was the path I took: performing concerts and teaching music. However, as I grew older, I came to realize that my concept of a real artist is freedom - and music did not represent that to me.

One day I noticed my tulip garden and suddenly had the urge to paint it. I had never painted before but I was drawn to the colors and forms and I simply had to try. As I continued experimenting with color and form, my desire to paint became so strong that I ultimately gave up teaching and performing music to follow my heart. With painting, I have chosen my own path and in doing so, I choose the path of freedom.

I work from an authenticity derived from my native Romania combined with my experience as a classically trained musician. This experience is channeled into the moment and onto the canvas where space, color and feelings have no boundaries. As a musician and painter I express with color what I hear in my heart. By manipulating formal devices such as thick and thin paint, line and edge, distortion and rhythmic patterns, I create a feeling that allows color to define form.



My concern is not the precision of the subject I see - it is painting the feeling of what I see. The essence of each painting is the connection between the subject matter and me. When I step inside the space I am creating on canvas, I want the viewer to go there with me - to experience the openness of the moment.

Expressing the truth of the present moment is what drives me to paint. The past leads each one of us to the present moment, and yet once we arrive at the present moment, the past falls away and we are left with only the positive now. As I paint, the colors, shapes and forms evolving on the canvas allow me to reach back towards my experiences as a child traveling from behind the Iron Curtain, to New York, and then eventually on to California. Digging deep into a vast pool of feelings I reach out and express on canvas the paradox between reality and dream, embracing the ethereal and the mystery of the unknown.

To this expression, I continuously dedicate my time as an artist. Painting offers a passion to heal the inner soul and an even greater enthusiasm to connect with my true self.

Cristina Marcu