

# Art-to-Art Palette *Journal*



*"Unspoken"*

**A PORTRAIT OF MONIKA STEINER**



"Arrived"

## *Artist's works speak with feelings*

Just as her work was beginning to be noticed by galleries and juried exhibitions the accident happened. **Monika Steiner** was thrown from a horse and broke her back.

Lying in a body cast and staring at the ceiling can be just about as bad as it can get. Add to that a divorce and living in a different country and life can become unbearable real fast. The mind can be an enemy or a solace in times of despair and sometimes we just need to stop and listen. Monika chose the latter.

"I became interested in life and the unseen aspects of life. I started to read a lot about metaphysics, meditate daily etc, and I am trying to express what can't be seen with our eyes, but maybe felt and expressed through abstract art," says Steiner in reliving those days only a few years ago.

Born in 1972, Steiner and grew up on a small farm in Bern, Switzerland where everything was real. Chores needed done, school led to a good education and you selected a straightforward skill that would concrete your future. So Monika became a schoolteacher and a teacher she would stay because that was the way of the world.

Moving to the US was not only an exciting transition to Steiner at the turn of the century, but also a disappointing one. Teaching credentials were different from those in Europe and she found herself out of the job market. Art had always been her hobby in Switzerland, so she enrolled at *Sonoma State University* in California and earned a B.F.A. degree.

Monika was inspired by an instructor at the university to view the world in a more abstract manner instead of the figures and realism teachings that she had been taught. Her work reflected the right balance of color, the harmony and composition needed to bring attention to the movement in and out of space.

The artist favors a platform of birch wood prepared through rabbit skin glue to the traditional canvas for beginning her mind stimulating displays. "I love this totally smooth, hard, surface because it allows me to create texture, use sandpaper, and at the same time glaze thin layers and do drips that flow smoothly," says Monika.

Fascinated by spheres, Steiner has discovered an astounding shape that is as vast as the planets in the universe but as tiny to be hidden from the human eye in atoms and forms of matter. Linked to our mind energy in mysterious ways, the sphere allows one to breed new ideas and reach new dimensions of thought.

Monika expresses, "I believe everything begins as simply potential, an idea that's waiting to be born or an object that could be created if we put our intention to it, and through compounding creates the complexity of life itself with all it offers."

The relationship between her paintings and the simplistic awakening of the brain is evident in the major collections now seen at the *Trump Hotel* in Panama City, Panama, the *JW Marriott Hotel Ankara*, in Ankara, Turkey, and the *Maturango Museum Ridgecrest*, California to name a few. Many group and solo exhibitions are also noted with a recent show in Columbus, Ohio that opened the minds of several Midwesterners.

Sculpting is a secondary passion of Steiner's. Her bronze creations are a unique display of density and negative space, balance, and polished edges against



shadow and texture. Very difficult to achieve through a long process of modeling in wax, making molds, casting, sand blasting and grinding, Monika loves the ancient technique that was used 1000 years ago.

Monika lives in San Francisco, California where she continues to be a full time artist and revels in the creation of images that bring about a beauty that only the mind can mold and shape into the meaning of it all.

Aside from her forthcoming shows this July 2 at the *Janine Bean Gallery* in Berlin, Germany and opening August 15 at the *Muse Gallery* in Columbus, Ohio, you can discover more at [www.monikasteiner.com](http://www.monikasteiner.com).

*Editor's note: The following has been excerpted from artist's statement about works:*

"When I began working on **Arrive**, I was still exploring the line idea, but was noticing more and more spheres emerging in my thoughts and work. In this piece, I felt I had "arrived" at the essence of the insight I was seeking by following our "lines" that led from one state of consciousness to the next."

"**Unspoken** is a metaphor for how often thoughts or ideas are unspoken and just barely visible beneath the surface of our consciousness. Although some mental formations, exist only as fragments of potential, and never fully manifest into something recognizable, they still have enormous power and unconsciously shape our lives."

"**Reaching for the Truth** is an early work and is a reflection of my life changes as I searched for what really mattered to me. I felt a deep part of myself emerging, like a little plant that was growing towards the light. The high polished round balls, at the top of those stems, represent the highest potential being illuminated by the perfection of light."

"**Offering** is a sphere within an open sphere, representing our core of pure potential being surrounded and held within an outer aspect of ourselves."





*"This work came about while recovering from a broken back in 2005. Being taken to the hospital, I had an 'outer body' experience and I became interested in life and the unseen aspects of life. I started to read a lot about metaphysics, meditate daily and "Blue Shadows" is where I am trying to express what cannot be seen with our eyes, but maybe felt and expressed through abstract art. While confined to my hospital bed, I noticed shadows on the ceiling of the room. I realized the lines I was seeing were metaphors for the fracture lines of my bones both breaking apart, but also merging back together. I became fascinated by this dual aspect of lines as signifiers of demarcation and also connection. Exactly a year to the day after my accident, I was chosen to make 11 large paintings for the lobby of the Bank of America building in downtown San Francisco. "Blue shadows" was a 5' x 8' painting of one of the color sketches I made in the hospital."*