

*Just as chains of genetic code link one generation to the next, so do waves of behavioral cause and effect set into motion at the beginning of time continually intersect. As we witness these universal intersections of rudimentary physical events we give them meaning from our own frames of reference. I search the meager remnants of my own cultural and biological identity for images to express the passion I feel for these ideas.*

ARYANN  
MILLER

# The Artist as Immigrant



Red Skirt - Acrylic on Canvas - 30"x 40" - 2007

MaryAnn Miller's engagement in memory and reflection on her past provide us with an experience rooted in symbolism, color and narrative. Her new paintings include Red Skirt, Flyway, and Artist as Immigrant, Crossing the Gihon, Security, and Albatross. These new works are "figurative" and yet, highly abstract. The abstraction occurs through the fragmentation of form, the manner in which color is placed and moves around the painting, and by Miller's complex compositional structure. Miller's strong narrative impulse challenges the viewer to search for meaning, and through the complexity of the paintings composition, with the aid of the titles, each viewer can find personal relevance.



Security - Acrylic on Canvas - 30"x 40" - 2007



Albatross - Acrylic on Canvas - 30" x 40" - 2007

Albatross is divided into three horizontal planes. However, the painting also has a strong central curve-a-linear form that is repeated with smaller circular forms that are heads and faces moving on the diagonal across the painting from the lower left to the upper right. There are significant head/face forms that suggest a hidden personality or the hidden self once the mask is removed. The painting's psychological dimensions present the two selves that exist within the immigrant self, which may be actual or a metaphor for the non-immigrant that is marginalized within the dominant culture. Albatross additionally recalls the transatlantic journey that could be filled with peril. Miller reminds us of the need for a good luck charm and the charm the seaman of old required was the luck of the Albatross. The use of circular forms from the large form in the

center of the painting to the oblong circular shapes of the heads and faces, as well as the breast of the bird reveals the continuity of time, the unity of humanity to the earth, and the cyclical nature of life.

The coloration that Miller uses can be characterized as tropical and could be a reference to her Italian heritage. Red Skirt is unsettling because the young woman in the painting is blind folded and her hands are behind her back. Are her hands bound? Her skirt is suggestive of the crinoline skirts of the late 1950's and early 1960's; and it is provocative because the skirt is raised up exposing her upper thigh. Is the young woman in Red Skirt being offered for marriage, a marriage in which she is given little choice?

Flyway provides the viewer and the artist's narrative memory an avenue of escape. The painting contains several birds in a park like setting, and these birds allow Miller to dream of finding different or new pathways to live life. From the figures hand fall seeds that grow new dreams, new life. However, on the other hand could the birds be eagerly eating the seeds before they are rooted in the soil?



Fly Away - Acrylic on Canvas - 30" x 40" - 2007



Artist as Immigrant - Acrylic on Canvas - 30"x 40" - 2007

Miller's complex compositions of Flyway, Red Skirt and Albatross are reminiscent of paintings by artist Mimmo Paladino. Both Miller and Paladino suspend three-dimensional space within their paintings that encourage the viewer to move within an intra-multidimensional space. That space can be perceived as the place in the mind where memory and dream reside. At the same time Miller's adherence to the tradition of painting and paint handling can be seen in the work of Pierre Bonnard of the late 19th century as well as 21st century painter Susan Rothenberg. Miller combines the need to recreate her past in figural terms, as in Bonnard's work, with a post modernist abstraction of three-dimensional space that yields an intra-multi-dimensional space in order to look at and better understand her past. Rothenberg paints the incidents that add drama to life, and Miller paints to understand the drama that grows from heritage and culture that create the drama of an individual life.

Color in Artist as Immigrant is minimized. The painting overtly speaks of serious issues of movement, relocation and memory both physically and psychology. The idea of immigration and migration is evident in the transatlantic ship in the upper left area of the painting. The use of the two dogs or wolf forms also point to the act of immigration, a family moving across the world landscape from Europe to America, from the rural to the suburban. However for the artist, immigration, or migration becomes a way of life. The artist moves from one concept and medium to another looking deeply into her life and work. Miller continues to search for and give meaning to her past and her present and ours. For Miller, to be human requires that we recognize our biological soup, in which culture and heritage are injected to produce our varying humanity.

*Cynthia Hawkins*  
*Director of Galleries*  
*State University of New York, Geneseo*  
*November 2007*



Crossing the Gihon - Acrylic on Canvas - 42"x 60" - 2007

## SELECTED EXHIBITIONS :

- 2008:
- Mind Sight Sound Movement: Exhibition of Paintings, North American/Costa Rican Centro Cultural, May-June
  - The Artist as Immigrant: Solo Exhibition of Paintings, Morris County Library Gallery, Whippany, NJ September
  - More Than a Book, Slippery Rock University of PA, April
  - Women's History Month Exhibition, Soho Creatives, NYC, March
  - More Than a Book, State University of New York at Geneseo, January-February

- 2007:
- The Ink Shop, Ithaca, NY selected prints and artist's books, November.
  - Contemporary Art and Antiques, Gallery 31 North, Glen Gardner, NJ, June-July.
  - Small Impressions International Juried Traveling Exhibition, Printmaking Council of NJ, August-October. Prize Winner
  - More Than; a Book: Lock Haven University of PA, October.

- 2006:
- Telling the Story: Artists' Books, Noyes Museum of Art, Oceanville, NJ, September-December.
  - Exhibition of Prints from Women's Studio Printmaking Workshop, Villa Pignano, Italy August.
  - A Selection of Fine Art Prints and Paintings, Second Story Gallery, Chester, NJ, October-December.
  - More Than a Book, Williams Center for the Arts, Lafayette College, February-March, Traveling to: Manchester Metropolitan University, UK, Centro Cultural, San Jose, Costa Rica, Tiempo Extra Editores, Mexico, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Mexico City, Mexico.
  - Meraviglia: Exhibit of Artist Books , Roethke Humanities Festival, Williams Gallery, Lafayette College, Easton, PA, January.



Contro Furore - Serigraph - 22"x30" - 2007

- 2005:
- Surface Texture Volume, MGP Gallery New Hope, PA, November 2005-February 2006
  - First Annual Affordable Art Soiree, Allentown Art Museum, Allentown, PA, October
  - The Elements, an Exhibition of Artist Books curated by Maria Pisano, Hunterdon Museum of Art, August.
  - Open and Shut: The Case for Artists' Books in the 21st Century, Simon Room, Skillman Library Lafayette College, Easton, PA, Sept-Dec
  - Selected prints at Sally French Fine Arts Gallery, Lambertville, NJ, September
  - Hunterdon Museum of Art Juried Members Show, January
  - Rudimenti: Solo Exhibition of paintings, prints and artist books, March-April 2005 Gallery 31, Glen Gardner, NJ curated by Curlee Raven Holton
  - Muscular Dystrophy National Collection, Curtis Arts & Humanities Center, Greenwood Village, CO, August
  - Raleigh-Durham International Airport, NC, August

- 2004:
- Hunterdon Museum of Art Juried Members Show, January
  - C.M.Kimbo Art Gallery University of Pittsburgh, PA, MDA Collection, February
  - University of Scranton, PA, MDA Collection September.
  - Indianapolis Arts Garden, Indiana, MDA Collection November
  - St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, Tucson, AZ , MDA Collection November 2004- February 2005

- 2003:
- Printmaking Council of NJ, Juried Members Show, December
  - Morris County Library: An Exhibition of Artist Books and Prints, Whippany, NJ, Aug-Oct.
  - Pocket Change: Artists' Books, William Paterson University, Ben Shahn Galleries, Wayne, October 2002-March 2003
  - Women Artists of EPI, David A. Portlock Center, Lafayette College, Easton, PA March-April
  - 47th Annual National Juried Print Exhibition, Hunterdon Museum of Art, Clinton, NJ June
  - Hunt House 150th Anniversary Exhibition, Gallery 31, Glen Gardner, NJ June



Gardeners - Acrylic on canvas - 42" x 60" - 2007

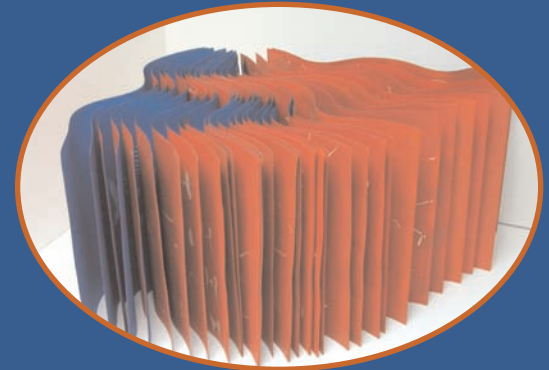
- 2002:
- Printmaking Council of NJ, Award Winners Exhibit January
  - Blackhawk Museum, Danville, CA MDA Art Collection January
  - Artists and the Art of the Book, Banana Factory, Bethlehem,PA March
  - Artists Image Resource (AIR) Pittsburgh, PA, Artists and the Art of the Book, June
  - Access Gallery, MDA Art Collection, Denver, CO June
  - Art as Healing: Community College of Morris, Randolph, NJ, June-July
  - Collaboration: Music Through Art, Banana Factory, Bethlehem, PA, July
  - Museo de Arte y Diseno Contemporaneo, San Jose, Costa Rica ,Artists and the Art of the Book, October
  - NJ Book Arts Symposium Presenter / Exhibitor Rutgers University, Newark, NJ November-December

- 2001:
- Printmaking Council of NJ, Somerville, NJ, Small Impressions Award Winner
  - Williams Center for the Arts, Lafayette College, Easton, PA, They Make Books at Lafayette
  - Hunterdon Museum of Art Juried Members Show, Feb-Mar.
  - MDA Art Collection: Owensboro Museum of Fine Art, Owensboro, KY
  - Art as Healing : Barnes Jewish Hospital, St. Louis, MO Jan-Apr, Camden County Cultural Heritage Commission, Burlington, NJ, June-Aug Children's Specialized Hospital, Mountainside, NJ, Oct

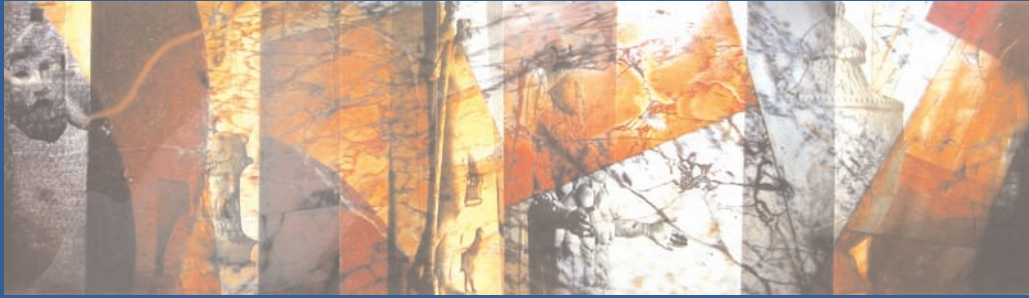
- 2000:
- New Members Exhibit, City Without Walls, Newark, NJ
  - Art as Healing, Printmaking Council of NJ, National Traveling Exhibit
  - Cycles/Women: To Each Her Oeuvre, Montgomery Cultural Center, NJ
  - Somerset Art Association, Members Award of Excellence, Bedminster, NJ
  - Intricacies, NJ Center for Visual Arts, Summit, NJ
  - Cycles: Women in the Arts at Warren County College, President's Gallery
  - Global Art Project, RAW Gallery, Tucson, AZ

- 1999:
- Strange Attractors, Cleopatra Steps Out Gallery, Asbury Park, NJ
  - Holiday Invitational, Ceres Gallery, Soho. NYC
  - Six Points of Abstraction Invitational, Artworks, Trenton, NJ, Michael Madigan, Curator
  - Jersey Girls, Cleopatra Steps Out Gallery, Asbury Park, NJ
  - Cycles: Women in the Arts Showcase, Watchung Arts Center, NJ
  - Blues Meets the Muse, galleryONemain, High Bridge, NJ
  - MDA National Collection: Menu Direct Corp.Piscataway, NJ, Chicago Public Library, Harold Washington Library Center, Chicago, Santa Fe Hotel & Casino Pavilion,LasVegas, NV

- 1995-1998:
- Catherine Lorillard Wolfe Art Club, NYC 102nd Annual Exhibition
  - Stage Gallery, American Watercolorists of 1998, Juror M. Stephen Doherty, Merrick, LI
  - MDA National Collection: JFK Center Vanderbilt U. Nashville, TN, Henry Ford Centennial Library, Dearborn, MI, Evansville Indiana Museum of Art & Science, Forbes Magazine Galleries, NYC
  - AT&T Lobby Gallery, Solo Tapestry Paintings Sequence, Basking Ridge, NJ
  - Ward Nasse Gallery, Images of the Self, Soho, NYC
  - Garden State Watercolor Soc. Annual, Juror David Dewey, Charles & Dorothy Plohn Friends Award, Ellarslie Museum of the City of Trenton, NJ



Galileo's Notebook  
Artist book  
monotypes  
12"x22"  
2005



Sotto Piano - Artist book - Altered photos/serigraphs - 8"x30" - 2007

My work is about the rudiments of human existence, our biological identities, who we are genetically and culturally. I imagine the soundless language of chromosomes. Genetic material is passed on. It mutates; it creates life and lifestyles. Human needs and nature have been tempered by religion, science, and politics. Many of the portrayals of women I create are based on their positions in both social and domestic settings. My intention is to overcome the weapon of indifference, which has often been applied to women as they attempt to fulfill the expectations of the dominant culture.

All of my grandparents came from Italy at the turn of the last century. I was raised to believe Italians are especially fortunate in their richness of culture, invention, creativity and thought, the underside of this being superstition, vigilance, envy and repression.

I didn't understand this fully until I visited to my maternal grandmother's hometown of Benevento, Italy.

I realized what she had left and the courage she must have had to live strangely in a colder, less generous climate. I have a longing to know her true story. I believe that longing drives me to create narratives in the paintings, prints and my artist books.

I liken her story to the life I try to lead as an artist. I think that only a woman could paint these paintings. They were conceived in celebration, have sprung from my ovaries and delivered through a metaphorical vagina. I imagine myself as an immigrant traveling to a new land of art, needing to learn a new language, finding a way to sustain myself, meeting the people who have inhabited this world before me, giving birth to new combinations of these elements.

In Benevento, I discovered the contemporary artist Mimmo Paladino. His work has been a cultural revelation and a conscious influence for me. I count Miriam Schapiro, Natalia Goncharova, Helen Frankenthaler, Mark Rothko and Timothy Hyman as strong influences.

# ARTIST STATEMENT

I have wanted to create beauty that may mask difficulty. I have sought control, and letting go, a balance between. There are literal and symbolic images for conception, fertility, oppression, freedom, transcendence, release, and mobility.



MaryAnn Miller

## SELECTED EDUCATION & EXPERIENCES:

- National Academy of Design School of Fine Art, NY
- BS in Art Education, Edinboro University of PA
- M.Ed. in Counseling, College of NJ
- Bookmaking with Maria Pisano, Kumi Korf, Nancy Callahan
- Printmaking with Eileen Foti, Rutgers Innovative Print & Paper (Brodsky Center),
- Curator for traveling International Artist Book Exhibition: More Than a Book
- Guest teacher Universidad Costa Rica & Universidad Mexico City
- Resident Book Artist Experimental Printmaking Institute, Lafayette College, since 2001
- Painting Residency Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, Vermont, 2007
- Arts Editor Garden State Woman Magazine

*The works represent the richness of her palette and panoply of symbols that stand for her struggle and triumph.*

*She executes these works with strong, confident gestural marks reminiscent of DeKooning's powerful and expressive brush strokes. She layers her painting in a manner that creates a complicated narrative that is simultaneously veiled and revealed. This quality allows us to witness a natural tension between one's inhibitions and one's desire for self-liberation.*

*Curlee Raven Holton  
Head Art Department  
Director Experimental Printmaking Institute  
Lafayette College, Easton PA*

*March 2004*



Autonomy - Acrylic on canvas - 30" x 40" - 2007

#### PERMANENT COLLECTIONS:

North American/Costa Rica Centro Cultural, San Jose, Costa Rica  
Lock Haven University PA Fine Arts Collection,  
William Paterson University Ben Shahn Gallery, Wayne, NJ  
Skillman Library Special Collections, Lafayette College, Easton, PA  
Experimental Printmaking Institute, Lafayette College, Easton, PA  
Muscular Dystrophy Association National Collection, Tucson, AZ  
Hunterdon Medical Cancer Center Collection, Flemington, NJ

#### PRIVATE COLLECTIONS:

New York, Arizona, Texas, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, New Jersey,  
Washington DC, Florida, California, Massachusetts, Colorado