

FANTASTICAL ECSTATIC

by Phillip Ward for Carlos Aquilino, June 2016

Poetry, pure poetry is the first impression one may have upon viewing the fantastical paintings by Carlos Aquilino. Ecstatically so. At first glance, floating graceful figures move about the sky and undefined space, across surrealistic curved landscapes that only Aquilino can provide the viewer, and you too become swept away by their mysterious voluptuousness. Innately, you immediately take flight and become one with the scenario and sensually move through corridors, portals of passion and action, as though mercurial enlightenment has taken root into one's subconscious. It is spontaneous, this gliding into interconnected images and thoughts gathered in pastoral yet visually warped distorted vistas filled with buildings and undefined structures peppered with colorful flora. The fluidity of humanlike characters and angelic protectors fly across the terrain, taking you along for the journey of happiness and love, where sky become water and vice versa, linking every element in sensual action and exaltation.

Love and happiness are the true messages presented in Carlos Aquilino's art, whether it is his black-n-white or colored line drawings or his sculpture and even his paintings. Moreover, his use of color melds everything into one total mystical experience. In essence, and unexpected nod, Aquilino's paintings are true expressions of what Aldous Huxley would say are true "doors of perception".

Aquilino has a lovely and unique style in the execution of his art. Each painting is like a transcendent portrait into a parallel reality where the subjects are reminiscent of wingless angels as seen under a gentle lens of an ethereal microscope. They are protozoan like with unseen wisps of painted energy in their wake. Also, one gets the sense that they will float across the cosmic lens at any moment giving us a sweet amnesia about the brushstrokes frozen in time. It is through the instantaneous thawing of the boundary between mutable and immutable that this work creates a portal in time where we too become unfrozen. Embrace these portals of active passion where water and sky, levitating angelic and human forms, and poetic phraseology of color live.

Carlos Aquilino was born and lives in Madrid, Spain, and is where he continues to work to create snapshots of fantastical scenes where figures and color intertwine and morph into their environment and where subject and surrounding become one. His exploration of natural forms, often in zoom-like fashion, pulls together every possible element of style and size, even unnatural monstrous overstatements that become compositions of breathless surrealistic embroidery. Aquilino is a self-taught artist who has built his artistic personality via his open embrace of multicultural experiences throughout his life and artistic career.

In 1975, Carlos Aquilino started his career with his first exhibition in Las Palmas, Spain, and with his illustrations for the book of poetry titled *Máscaras, Palabras y Poderes*. After winning the Painting Prize of the City of Madrid in 1977, which led him to *Academia de España* in Rome, Italy, his success continued with the Grand Medal of Sculpture at the Anzio International Art Competition in Rome. Since then, Aquilino has continued to travel the globe to refine his artistic craft, in such places as Austria, China, France, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Turkey, and across various cities in the United States.

Aquilino's long and varied career in art is testament to his commitment of engaging the public with the message of happiness through art. And to quote writer Jill Smith, "Employing his keen and compulsive observation of the world around him, he finds inspiration in every aspect of his daily life. Through his unflinching gaze, he captures life's deeper truths, gleaned through a lifetime of experience and travel. Instinctive and intuitive, Aquilino is fanatical about his art, working constantly. Always marching to the beat of his own drum, he is not concerned by the ebbs and flows of trends and fashions; rather, he is perpetually true to his own spirit."

Phillip Ward is a poet and artist based in NYC