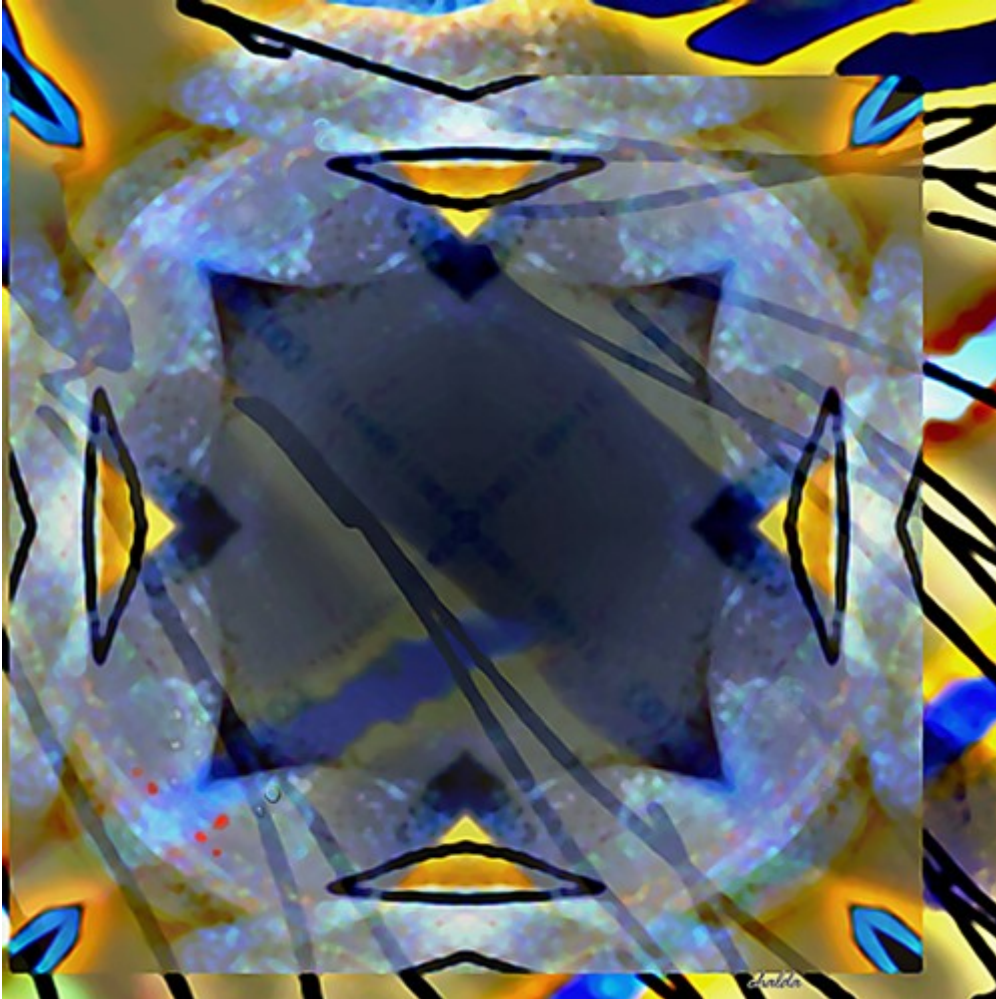


Artist Interview Chalda Maloff

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What is your name: Chalda Maloff

Do you have a formal art education or are you a self taught artist: I have a B.A. in the History of Art from UC Berkeley.

What is the style of your pieces: My current art is mostly abstract. I do not use the term "nonrepresentational" because each piece definitely represents something, but it represents an idea or emotion rather than a physical object.

What is the medium in which you work: Digital painting. My tools are an electronic pen or stylus, an electronic tablet, and computer software. Much of my process involves making virtual strokes with the stylus on the tablet, not unlike conventional drawing or painting. The information from these strokes is captured by the computer. When I am finished, I have an image file that is ready

to be printed. Technologically, it is possible to make any number of prints from an image file. But I have made the decision to make only one finished print from each file.

The digital medium allows me to get extraordinary aesthetic effects that would be impossible in any other medium, but more than that, it uniquely suits my thought process and the way I conceive and develop an image.

What started you on your path as an artist: I cannot remember a time when I was not making art.

What is one of the most important things that art has brought to your life: Making art on a regular basis helps me keep an open, inquiring mind, and encourages me to trust my instincts.

What is your favorite genre of art besides the one you work in: Some years ago I was doing small figurative works in aquatint, a medium that is related to etching. I completed a series of dancers in pseudo-theatrical settings. It is on my bucket list to return to that genre and medium. I love the tactile process of submerging a metal plate into a tray of acid over and over, as the image slowly emerges. Aquatint is an exacting and unforgiving medium. A mistake, once made, can be difficult or impossible to correct. The procedure requires an almost meditative degree of focus.

Believe it or not, the process of aquatint has similarities to digital art. Both mediums are conducive to developing the artwork as an integrated whole. With aquatint, each acid bath addresses the parts of the image that will turn out to be a certain color. So you do not work on a tree first and then the sky; rather, you work across the entire surface of the image on everything of that shade or hue. Similarly with digital painting, there is a technical construct called a "layer" which affects the image as a whole. I make extensive use of this capability in my digital art, building up each image layer by layer, toward the goal of a strongly cohesive composition.

Do you have art showings, and if so what are they typically like: Each of my exhibits has taken on a life of its own, according to the pieces in the show, the flavor of the venue, the people attending. I cannot generalize. I have deeply enjoyed every single one. I appreciate every opportunity to exhibit my artworks, share them with others, and hear feedback from viewers.

My 2007 show at the Morris Graves Museum of Art in California holds a special place in my heart. The attendees at the opening were especially warm and receptive. People of all ages and from varied backgrounds took the time to ask interested questions and give me thoughtful comments. I was still happily conversing while the janitor was mopping the floor for the night.

Do you have a certain set of clothes you make art in: No.

What has been the most frustrating part of being an artist? Technological frustrations come with the territory of being a digital artist.

My image files can be upwards of 500 megabytes, and my processes often push the envelope of the capabilities of my hardware and software. My computer crashes with great regularity, frequently taking with it hours of work. On my best days, I try to view a crash as an opportunity to rethink my recent painting session and improve upon it the second time around; on all the other days, a crash makes me want to heave the computer off the balcony.

An especially challenging aspect of my work is getting the colors right in my final print, because inks on canvas look different than colors on a computer monitor. Even with a calibrated monitor and sophisticated conversion software, my first print of an image usually has a hue that is off-kilter or a gradation that has been lost. Blues and cyans tend to be especially fickle with my current system. Often I need to test and discard a number of prints, each time making adjustments to the computer file, before I am satisfied with the result.

What is your favorite sandwich of all time: In Ipanema in 1972 in a little cafe, I had a sandwich with ham, sliced asparagus, and an amazing cheese sauce on freshly baked black bread. It will live in history.

Has this year brought about any changes in your work, and if so what are they: That is an interesting question, because I recently had a reason to view a group of my 2009 pieces next to some that were a couple of years old. I was quite taken aback at the contrast. Although I had considered all of my art to reflect a spirit of faith and optimism, the older pieces revealed a subtle undercurrent of moodiness when set against the more recent images. The newer pieces were so much more upbeat.

Who is your favorite artist alive or dead: Gustav Klimt

What is the most moving piece of artwork that you have seen in person: I spent a college semester in Florence, Italy, and I was mesmerized by the relief sculptures on the bronze doors of the Baptistery. Supposedly, Michelangelo called the doors "The Gates of Paradise." I passed them every single day, and never failed to get drawn in. More than once, those doors made me late to class.

Do you have any animals, and what do they think of your work: My stuffed dog Pegasus is among my most ardent admirers.

Do you have any upcoming exhibitions you would like to share with us: "Virtuous Realities: New Digital Paintings by Chalda Maloff" 02/02/10-02/26/10 at the Jung Center of Houston, 5200 Montrose Blvd.

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