

Livia Mosanu's Paintings Capture an Imaginative Ocean Teeming with Motion

April 29, 2018

by Pat Rogers

There's something compelling about the way seafoam gracefully swirls and curls of water bob atop deepened greens and blue depths of ocean waters in paintings made by Livia Mosanu. Her art captives in a similar way as staring across seemingly boundless oceans and stretching lakes can hypnotize and transport the viewer and give flight to the imagination.

Conjuring the sensation of visually engaging with the ocean is what inspires Mosanu to make paintings that combine her love of imaginative compositions with her training as a contemporary realist received at the Academy of Fine Arts in New York. Drawing upon both results in paintings that appear as if they capture actual moments of teeming oceans but are, in fact, constructed composition that combine memory with the sensations of being upon adjacent to the ocean's surface.

The inventive contribution to her paintings isn't readily apparent because of the utter realism her compositions conjure. While examining Mosanu's paintings of teeming waters in her "Ocean" Series, it's easy to imagine she spends hours topside on a boat, looking upon the ever-in-motion surface waters of the Atlantic Ocean. Or, perhaps, even beachside with a telephoto lens aimed at faraway spots to capture turmoil in the distance.

"I'm trying to capture a feeling instead of a realistic likeness," Mosanu said.



“Ocean Composition #2” by Livia Mosanu, 2015. Oil on shellacked Arches watercolor paper, 70 x 45 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Truth be told, just as much time is spent imagining ocean dramas and coaxing compositions in oil from her basement studio at Mana Contemporary in New Jersey as she spends looking for the perfect moment to capture for inspiration with a camera. Once the paint brush is in her hand, it becomes more about making a great painting that capturing in realism detail the exacting actions of the waves and the foam and the array of colors that add depth, realism and interest to her paintings.

This Sunday (April 29, 2018) is one of two annual Open Studio events where visitors can wander freely on the multi-floor building that houses hundreds of artist studios and exhibit spaces with the former factory building. The Open House takes place from 1 to 7 p.m. and Mosanu can be found in Studio B66. The next Open Studio Event will take place in October 2018. Mosanu’s studio is also open by appointment.

Her work is currently on view in Princeton, NJ at [ArtSpace Studios](#) and at [Panepinto Galleries](#) in Jersey City for “Through the Eyes of an Artist.” The Closing Reception for the group show is Tuesday, May 1, 2018 from 6 to 9 p.m. Looking toward the future, Mosanu’s art and her Ocean Series will be the subject of a two-person show at Taplin Gallery at the Paul Robeson Center for the Arts in Princeton, NJ in June 2019.



“Ocean Composition #7” by Livia Mosanu, 2016. Oil on linen, 63 x 45 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Mosanu is truly an artist who is emerging. Born in Bucharest, Romania in 1980, her family moved to the United States shortly after the fall of the communist regime. Livia received a BS in Computer Science and a BA in Studio Art from University of Minnesota in 2002. After college, she worked in the Information Technology industry in Minneapolis MN while continuing to make art.

After moving to New Jersey, she decided to develop her talent by studying classic techniques of art making. For Mosanu, there was no better place than the New York Academy of Art. She was accepted into the rigorous program and studied there from 2013 to 2015.



“Ocean Composition #6 (Transience)” by Livia Mosanu, 2016. Oil on linen, 63 x 45 x 1.5 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

After graduation, Mosanu continued to make contemporary realism paintings, including still life paintings inspired by life as a mother of a toddler. In select works, toys are the featured objects in unexpected paintings capturing a slice of life that is contemporary in both composition and color choices.

Still, the call of the ocean and open waters remained strong. While at the NY Academy, Mosanu

began moving to combine abstraction with realism in paintings that portray the ocean. In the last few years, she has continued working on her Ocean Series and has created a body of work that reveals her strength as a colorist and as a painter in general.

“I’m inspired the water on the East Coast,” Mosanu said. “The grays and greens and the blue reflecting from the sky are compelling. I use the realist to get inspired and have the artistic freedom to use the full potential of color.”



“Ocean Composition #3” by Livia Mosanu, 2015. Oil on shellacked Arches watercolor paper, 70 x 45 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Mosanu has now turned her entire focus to her “Ocean” Series. For her show next year, she intends to create an installation of her paintings so viewers can have the sensation of being surrounded by moving water without the constraints of horizon lines or elements that would place the water’s

surface into a landscape or seascape. This Sunday's Open Studio will be the first presentation of the series in her studio without the presence of her still life or drawings.

With every painting, Mosanu delves deeper into her imagination to coax paintings that make use of realism techniques but are increasingly abstract, she said. Photographs are still a part of her process but there are more used as initial guides in the early stages with paintings unfolding as memory, atmosphere and intuition combine in the making of a painting with depth and interest that also intrigues and evokes emotion.

"I'm growing as an artist through this series," Mosanu said. "There are 12 in total. They take a while to make because of the layers and the composition. I learn so much from each piece."



"Ocean Composition #12" by Livia Mosanu, 2018. Oil on linen, 40 x 29 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Continuing, she connected the growing sense of freedom she feels as an artist to combine her early artmaking with where she is as an artist today. She's also starting to make larger paintings to explore the difference scale can make and the way size can influence her work.

"I have more and more freedom to work from the image and my instincts," she said. "I painted by instinct before the training and now I'm combining the training. I went to learn techniques and the information I needed to make paintings as accurate and realist as possible. I know that I can do this, and it's given me the freedom and confidence to explore instances experienced in paint."



"Ocean Composition #1" by Livia Mosanu, 2015. Oil on shellacked Arches watercolor paper, 70 x 45 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Livia Mosanu's art has been exhibited in New York City at [Flowers Gallery](#), at the New York Academy of Art, in a group show of 25 contemporary realists in Long Island City as well as in various galleries and pop ups in New Jersey including Art Lines Galleries in Hackensack, NJ and Panepinto Galleries in Jersey City, NY. In 2016, Mosanu won Best Fine Art in Hamptons Art Hub's "[Inspired by Water](#)" Competition for her painting Ocean Composition 2 (The Last Wave), 2015. The artwork was selected by Kathryn Markel of Kathryn Markel Fine Art in Chelsea.



Livia Mosanu in her studio. Photo by Pat Rogers.



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BASIC FACTS: Paintings in Livia Mosanu’s Ocean Series can be viewed on April 29, 2018 from 1 to 7 p.m. during Mana Contemporary’s Spring Open Studios or by appointment. Mana Contemporary is located at 888 Newark Avenue, Jersey City, NJ 07306. For details, visit www.manacontemporary.com.

Livia Mosanu’s “Ocean Series” can also be viewed online at her website by visiting www.liviamosanu.com.

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