**Louise-Marie Thomassin**

**Biography**

Louise-Marie was born in Quebec City, on the shores of the mighty St. Lawrence River, on the “big waterway” as it was known by the Iroquois Nation, a place where fresh river waters mix with saline-laden ocean waters, a place where light shimmers on inky blue waves, rebounding in whites and iridescent pastels.

Women artists were a role model in her young formative years. Louise-Marie learned to draw as her mother painted. A woman in her community initiated neighbourhood children to play through paint, pencil and paper. She provided an environment which nurtured and encouraged development of technique and experimentation. This safe haven would allow the emergence of certain techniques which are evident yet in Louise-Marie’s contemporary works.

The women’s movement came into full force in the 1960s. It was a period of awakening for women in the western world, a time of effervescence or decompression for women, a time of discovery and awareness. It was also a period during which the artist’s family would be redefined: her parents would separate and divorce. Louise-Marie’s life was shared between that of her parents, their two solitudes, no longer in the same city, often not in the same country ….. from Canada to Algeria, Switzerland and Senegal.

Louise-Marie’s canvasses are a testimony to these moments of rupture, but also to the presence of nurturing and resilient women from all ethnic and social groups who shared their struggles for autonomy, the ebb and flow of revolt, withdrawal, revolt. The fluid lines represent the folded veil ---- humility, modesty and mystery; water, vegetation and the lunar cycles are represented through a technique of transparency which evoke the layers of being.

Louise-Marie later attended Paul de Broeck's visual art classes in secondary school. His teaching style would encourage artists to transcend themselves, to surpass their self-imposed limits. He pressed students to develop their own sense of truth and recognize their life path, one that would be uniquely their own. Louise-Marie’s quests took her on an inward journey, one which was manifested by singular lines and colour. Studies in various mediums: clay, fabric, paint and various pigments invigorated Louise-Marie’s attention to shapes and textures.

Later in her forties, Louise-Marie, through the guidance of Louis Couture, was awakened to her need for artistic expression through paint, through the richness of pigment. Louise-Marie came to embrace her own syle.

Louise-Marie’s academic background may be considered by some to be atypical: philosophy, business administration (MBA) and visual arts. The juxtaposition or pairing of these divergent fields of study has enabled Louise-Marie to combine several complementary and indissociable dimensions which are essential for forward movement, for action. A career in economic development and then, in her father’s footsteps, a career in international development followed. Missions in Latin America and Africa nourish her perception of women's serenity, strength, solidarity and ability to reinvent their place in the world. Louise-Marie adheres to the vision of Djemila Benhabib who, in her magnificent book, Women in Spring, emphasizes that "whatever our point of departure on this planet ... the destiny of some depends on that of others." Thus, in the artist's canvases we see caravans of women, silhouettes wrapped in the folds of coloured fabrics, all marching to the same destination; women’s faces, faces which reveal hope and the promise of light.

Louise-Marie lives with her husband in Gatineau, Quebec. She is the mother of three children who have now opened their wings and are the "three most beautiful works" of her life.