



Richard Maitland's paintings, on display during the month of April at Gallerie Imaginarium, draw from his unusual background of having lived around the world and having worked as a dancer and actor. Maitland mixes elements of realism and the fantastical for a unique vision that evokes nostalgia, often with tinges of both melancholy and humor.



Surreal life

Richard Maitland dips into his past to create magical, fantastical works that mix anxiety and glee in the strangest ways

BY CHLOË WINEGAR-GARRETT

Richard Maitland is the perfect example of someone combining a love for the fluidity of acting and dancing with the materialistic quality of two- and three-dimensional art. He is a successful international artist who seems to have done it all when it comes to the creative arts, seamlessly combining exciting imaginative concepts with actual experiences into a unique art style that is haunting, beautiful and thought-provoking.

A retrospective of Maitland's art will be exhibited at Gallerie Imaginarium, a downtown venue unique enough to match Maitland's aesthetic. In an interview with *Local IQ*, he described his style of art as a form of entertainment.

"My work is kind of spooky, not really irreverent, and I use a sense of humor when talking about politics or religion," Maitland explained. "I know what I like and what bores me, but what bores me doesn't bore a lot of other people. I have tried a little of everything as an artist, painting on eggs to large canvases, but my things are kind of melancholy and nostalgic. I've lived in the past my whole life."

Maitland's work is difficult to categorize in specific art terms. On first reaction, it seems to have a magical and fantastical quality, although he shies away from the vague term "surrealism." On second observation, however, his paintings and sculptures stir up individual memories and experiences in a way that words cannot

Richard Maitland: In Retrospective

5p, Fri., Apr. 6
Gallerie Imaginarium
301D Central NW, 505.286.9500
Free
gallerieimaginarium.com

seem to describe, mixing anxiety and glee in the strangest way. It is like thinking of an old memory that is incredibly sad because it has passed but is still wonderful because it was a better time.

Maitland has an unusual background, having lived in places across the world and experiencing many different cultures and art forms. He began his performing arts career as a child dancer and eventually began performing on Broadway. Eventually, he moved to New Mexico and owned a gallery in Santa Fe. He even lived in India for a period of time, which is when he started painting and had his first, pivotal one-man show.

It is appropriate that his work take the stage at Gallerie Imaginarium, which opened last August. John Panitz, gallery owner, set up his gallery in a way that may seem unusual compared to other art venues in New Mexico.

"I never wanted a gallery that looked like all the others," he explained. "I think a gallery should be a stage where artwork is represented, where they come for the artwork but enjoy the gallery. There are incredible columns from the set of *True Blood* and the walls are not pure white."

Maitland's work in Gallerie Imaginarium fits nicely with the other artists featured, including Patrick Carr, David Zaintz and George Howard Hayes III. Each artist has a unique voice and point of view that comes together to create a different world that is enlightening and frightening, beautiful and extraordinary. A gallery like this provokes new ideas within the viewer and pushes the limits of how New Mexican art is perceived.

In consideration of the future, Maitland does not know what will come next, but remains optimistic all the same.

"At the age of 86, this may be my last show. There is a heck of a lot of work involved, getting the work ready and bringing them to the venue," he said. "It is a celebration, this retrospective. I remember that my debut as a child dancer was in 1934 of the same month, so it's a simultaneous celebration."

Come out and visit this stunning gallery, and join in the celebration of Maitland's fascinating life by exploring his artwork.