

UPDATED INTERPRETATIONS INSPIRE AT MICHELLE SAKHAI'S THE ARCANAS SERIES

*By: Taylor Hunsberger
Published September 21, 2019*



Michelle in front of The Arcana paintings.

This week I sat down with New York City artist Michelle Sakhai to speak with her about her new exhibit, *The Arcana Series: Interpretations of the Tarot*, which opened on September 6th at the Madelyn Jordon Fine Art Gallery in Scarsdale, NY.

There was a clear peacefulness that radiated throughout her home, complete with a few of her own paintings. The atmosphere of the space was intentional, much like her artistic practice: it creates a sense of positive energy and movement.

Michelle sat down with me and pulled out a deck of tarot cards, specifically the Rider-Waite deck, which her Arcana Series is based on. She laid out the major cards and I asked her about her objective behind painting the cards and how she went about each one.

"I came to this Arcana series: Interpretations of the Tarot, organically without initially planning to paint the Major Arcana cards, but painting one, led to painting all 22," says Michelle.

"I learned to read Tarot about 10 years ago, and have been using it for guidance ever since. I based this series off of the Rider-Waite Tarot deck, but with an abstract interpretation, carrying over some of the significant symbols, with a focus on the overall energy of each card."

"This series is called Major Arcana: because the Major Arcana cards are the

foundation of the Tarot deck and they represent energy that is outside our personalities, such as the deep cyclical forces in nature, life lessons, karmic influences, and guidance for our souls: spiritual evolution and journey into enlightenment."

Michelle says that her intention behind translating The Major Arcana Tarot Cards into her own vision, was to both connect the viewer back to the higher power, bringing healing and peace to our experience.

This series is personal to her because of each painting's ability to reflect her own inner process with each card. She described the process as fully living each card: she experienced all of the emotional, physical, and energetic energy that came with each one during their creation.

Michelle then offers up the example of The Lovers card, traditionally drawn with a man and a woman, symbolizing Adam and Eve. She explains that the card is not simply a representation of a man and a woman, but it is depicting the masculine and feminine energies that we all have within us.

Michelle's interpretation of the The Lovers features her signature gold leafing with a swirl pattern, cool tones featured on the left side, warm tones featured on the right side.

"This is the union of the masculine and feminine energy within ourselves coming together," says Michelle, "The Lovers merge all parts of self and trusts the partnership within ourselves and with others. It reminds us that we are whole, and to practice self-love; be passionate, and connect to our heart's desire."

The process for the remainder of the cards was very similar: Michelle incorporated elements found on the original cards into her own interpretations. In Temperance XIV, she carries over the water imagery from the Rider-Waite card and depicts it as the central energy of her painting. The blue oils against the background of the silver metal leaf give off a feeling as described by Michelle as "moderation, staying calm, and having patience."

Other standout works from the collection include Wheel of Fortune X, which includes cyclical strokes that depict the "greater forces that are outside human control;" The Moon XVIII, which features a brilliant display of color contrast between dark blues and soft pastels over a silver metal leaf, creating a lunar-ful landscape that is both eye-catching and contemplative; and The Sun XIX, which is featured in the main window of the gallery as the silver, gold, and copper leaf and warm hues catch the light of the Scarsdale sun herself.

Michelle's work truly captures the essence and guidance provided by tarot. She hopes that viewers get to have their own unique experience with each painting; one that evokes a story and finds connection from the art to the self. She views herself as a spiritual person and finds great value in accepting each moment as a healing journey, something that she wants to bring to life in The Arcana Series.

The Arcana Series: Interpretations of the Tarot is open from September 6 - October 19, 2019 at the Madelyn Jordon Fine Art gallery at 37 Popham Road, Scarsdale, NY.

More information on the show can be found at www.madelynjordonfineart.com or at www.michellesakhai.com.