

international
artist

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ODILE RICHER

FINALIST

in International Artist magazine's

Art Prize Challenge No. 98
PEOPLE & FIGURES

for a work entitled

La Promesse

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Vincent Miller

Vincent W. Miller
CEO/Publisher





Odile Richer Quebec, Canada, *La Promesse*, oil, 36 x 36" (91 x 91 cm)

Finalist

My Inspiration

I always prepare my work several months, sometimes even a year, in advance. My ideas accumulate and “complexify” as time passes. I often say that a painting’s work is the fruit borne of extended meditation. First, I borrowed my father-in-law’s mallard (which he’d hunted) for an eventual project. I hesitated for a while, wondering what mood a picture composed of ducks could have. In my head, the idea of depicting them was cheerful and elegant. I love stark, tense atmospheres, so I was in unknown territory. Given my museology training, I take inspiration from my clothing collection and the simple act of accumulating objects, of collecting. It’s as if, with this painting, I wanted to fulfill a promise to my father-in-law by honoring his duck.

My Design Strategy

I enjoy delving into the world of fashion—

especially that of renowned photographer Tim Walker—and classical painting to get inspiration for my compositions. This is how I discovered Leda and the Swan from Greek mythology, a theme explored by many famous artists. The myth says that Zeus transformed himself into a swan to seduce Leda. Children, often represented as eggs, resulted from the union, hence the egg on the small table. To convey the intimate aspect of the tale, I placed a wing on the model’s leg, as a sort of wink. Her white dress and angelic appearance, with the long, golden hair, accentuate the pureness and softness of the scene. I like the benevolence of the image, as conveyed by her soft gaze.

My Working Process

Having only one duck and wanting to create a cabinet of curiosities—like montage, I rented the other mounted specimens from a museum. For me, it’s always beneficial to

visit places at once familiar, cherished and intriguing. In holding the ducks aloft but close, I intended a light, warm atmosphere. For the background, I chose a rich, elegant weave of colors corresponding to the subjects, particularly the plumages (with emphasis on the iridescent blue). We then decided on a pose recalling the contours of the backdrop’s floral motif. Lastly, I picked a square format to accentuate the arrangement of “flying” ducks and to highlight the diagonals created by their wings when set off against the model’s reclined body. Completion took about three months of full-time work.

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G. Rehberger didn't end a long stroke until "satisfaction." — Harley Brown