

Giving Back Beauty
By Joyce Martin
Fort Worth, Texas

I CAN best be described as an emerging artist. For now, I create folded paintings that are three-dimensional and emerge and recede from a flat plane. This series of works began because I was trying to teach myself how to make a paper lantern using *origami* folding techniques. The end result was not a lantern but a series of mountains and valleys with highs and lows rhythmically undulating across the white paper. My whole life was captured in that single piece of folded paper. I don't now why, but I knew I wanted to paint that surface.

Many influences have shaped my artwork into what it is today. Reared primarily in the Southwest, I feel an affinity with the art of the American Indian. I think that textiles, rugs and tapestries have all played their part, and I believe they are valuable sources of original art work, often overlooked. Most important, the evocative beauty of nature has held me enthralled for many years. I love the textures and contrasts of tree bark after a shower when freckles of celadon moss and ochre lichen suddenly take center stage, spotlighted against bark, transformed into black velvet canyons by the rain. And what could be more beautiful than the autumnal splendor of a maple tree gloriously ablaze with myriad shades of red? There is so much in the world that delights me, inspires me and that sparks ideas for my art. Rather than trying to duplicate the perfection of nature's beauty in my work, I try to suggest an emotion and hint at a memory. Often I am caught up in the process of experimentation and discovery, enjoying the feel of the medium and the evolution of the product. I have painted in most of the mediums available, but presently favor soft pastels and dry pigment over other painting vehicles.

Since joining this practice, there has been a subtle shift in the way I view myself as an artist. I used to say, "I want to be an artist." Now, without effort, I can say, "I am an artist," and I understand that I have actually been an artist all my life. I can reflect the beauty contained in the depths of my being, just as a pool gives up its images to the eye willing to see beyond the surface. Each time I create a piece of art, I feel as if my soul is laid bare for the universe to see. By creating I am able to give back, in appreciation, some of the beauty that sustained me for so long. Having my slides returned, unaccepted, does not drop me into the depths of despair. I no longer feel the need to compare my work with that of other artists. I am content to paint as I see fit, confident that my style is as valid as any other. Only my attitude is different.

"The Real Aspect of the Gohonzon" that contains the message "Never seek the Gohonzon outside yourself" has been an important guidance. Another quote that has helped me greatly is: "The mirror of the Lotus Sutra reflects not only our physical form but our inner being as well. Furthermore, the sutra reflects with complete clarity one's past karma and its future effect." When I first read these words, they didn't mean a great deal, but I have slowly come to the understanding that I must look inside, study and chant, to find happiness and peace. Polishing my mirror does not just mean to clean the surface but to see clearly as well.

Title: Joyce Martin: Giving Back Beauty

Subject: Living Buddhism 12/97 v.1 n.12 p.48 LB9712p48 Fort Worth, Texas

Author: Joyce Martin

Keywords: Artists Back Beauty Career Experiences Expressions Fort Gallery Giving Joyce Martin Texas
Worth

Since October 1996, I have illustrated two children's books, had paintings accepted into three juried art shows and been selected as one of the winners of an Award of Excellence in the 1997 6th Annual Manhattan Arts International Competiton. If the beauty that I create with my art can touch another person's heart, then surely that must be a step for kosen-rufu. □

Title: Joyce Martin: Giving Back Beauty
Subject: Living Buddhism 12/97 v.1 n.12 p.48 LB9712p48 Fort Worth, Texas
Author: Joyce Martin
Keywords: Artists Back Beauty Career Experiences Expressions Fort Gallery Giving Joyce Martin Texas
Worth