



## 'Ethereal Hope' reflects deeper meaning

*By Claudia Miller L'Attitudes contributor  
Motches now in Luxembourg for European exhibit*

When Marathon artist Marianne Motches stands before a blank canvas, she doesn't have an image in mind as she begins to paint. Instead, through her sculptured layering techniques, she allows ethereal figures to emerge, which often reach towards the sky in gestures of hope.

"These figures just come up and out of the painting," she said. "I do an underpainting, glazing and more than one overpainting. Through that, these images present themselves. I'm never really quite sure what I'm going to end up with."

Through an ArtReach grant from the Florida Keys Council of the Arts, 30 of these intriguing works are now on display in a show called American Women at the Europa Museum of Modern Art in Schengen, Luxembourg.

Motches was also selected to be one of the official artists at the U.S. Embassy at Luxembourg for the Abbaye de Munster reception on July 4.

Before moving to the Keys in 1996, Motches, who paints under the name M. G. Motches, taught watercolors and oils for more than 20 years. Once here, she became a professional artist and quickly gained attention for her tropical landscapes, especially palm trees. In those paintings, she uses vibrant colors and sweeping strokes to catch the organic flow of the trees.

In 2002, she decided that she was ready to open up into a more non-representational vein and began studies with abstract expressionist Joachim Loeber, who was a protégé of Edvard Munch.

"He taught me to really loosen up," she said.

After studying with Loeber for three years, she went to work under the tutelage of Matt Lamb, who has seven studios around the world and completes 1,000 paintings a year. Through his inspiration, Motches set a goal for herself to do 300 works per year.

"By producing more work, my work gets better quicker," she said. "I don't feel that any one is too important. I focus on the flow."

Lamb also exposed her to the European market, so when she received the ArtReach grant, he was able to connect her to the appropriate people. The ArtReach award is an audience development grant, which funds artists in extending their typical audience and reaching out to a new population. Motches noted that she hoped by exposing her art to the European market it would bring her to another level.



*Marathon artist Marianne Motches is currently accompanying her new works to an exhibition in Schengen, Luxembourg, aided in part by an arts council ArtReach grant.*



Her new works combine contrasting metallic and dark colors in thick layers, which give each painting an otherworldly glow. Mostly figurative, images emerge that could be horses with wings, butterflies, angels, dancers or whatever the viewer interprets them to be.

"I think there are different realms and different planes of existence, many of which we don't know about," she said. "I think that there are other beings and things out there that our brains are not aware of, and sometimes strange things come out."

She also works with collage, which adds a different kind of challenge. She explained that working with images that already have a traditional meaning can be difficult to incorporate into an abstract painting.

"People would say, 'That's a chair, and that doesn't belong there.' I try to loosen myself up and alter those preconceived notions."

Motches said she believes all art is spiritual and puts a lot of emotion into her work - both anger at the many injustices in the world and the hope that increased spirituality will create global change. Many of her figures reflect that hope in the graceful movements of reaching upwards towards something greater.

Although she still sells her popular palm tree works at the Susie Starfish Gallery in Key West, Motches has not yet shown her latest body of work. She is concerned that working with a gallery will influence the direction of her work.

"I really wanted to do the art for itself and not for anybody else," she said. "I think after I come back from Europe, I'll be ready to approach galleries about showing this work."

Motches is very involved in the community serving on the Tourist Development Council's Cultural Advisory Board, the Florida Keys Council for the Arts Advisory Board and with other organizations. She has also been the recipient of two other ArtReach grants as well as two grants from the Anne McKee Artists Fund.

Her works have been featured on the set of the "Real World" series on MTV as well as many galleries and museums throughout the Keys including the Key West Museum of Art and History. She has also been selected to participate in the Art in Public Places program for the Marathon Government Center, the Marathon airport and the Gato building.

To view more of her work, visit [www.mgmotches.com](http://www.mgmotches.com).