

Update: Facebook us at www.facebook.com/LagunaBeachPatch Twitter us @LagunaBchPatch!

IN THE GALLERIES

Arts, Business, Opinion

Discovering America at the JoAnne Artman Gallery

America Martin, that is, and her spirited paintings.
By [Ryan Wirick](#) | [Email the author](#) | March 15, 2011

Recommend 21 Tweet 2 Email Print Comment

Drawing inspiration from cubism, fauvism, and minimalism—from the colors of Paul Gauguin and Milton Avery, to the shapes of sculptor Thomas Houseago, to the line of Egon Schiele—Colombian-American fine artist America Martin paints in a style and voice all her own, redefining the term "melting pot." Infused in her work are elements from a multitude of art movements, ideologies and philosophies, all synergistically working together to create dreamy, spirited, emotionally honest and charged depictions of lives being lived.

You can discover for yourself America Martin's work, showing through the end of March, in the JoAnne Artman Gallery's current exhibition, "They've All Come to Look for America." Named after a line from the Simon and Garfunkel classic "America," a song about two companions journeying to discover for themselves the American dream, the paintings and drawings on display showcase a broad cross-section of Martin's three favorite subjects: women and men, children, and nudes.

In Martin's experience, the search for the American dream starts with the individual's discovery of her own truth; it "means the opportunity to dream up a new and better future, for yourself, for your family, for your community—or for the country," she says. "The American dream then includes the capacity for individuals to go out and realize those dreams."

Martin first discovered her passion for art when she was 9 years old. "I bought a Vincent Van Gogh book for a quarter at a yard sale," she recalls. "It was that moment when my world flipped right side round, and I saw exactly how I could and would be able to breathe in this life. It was through and with art. That is my truth."

Her paintings capture moments of innocence, freedom, humility and passion revealed through eyes, lips, hands, bodies; movements revealed through the running and streaking of paint beneath bold lines (reminiscent of some indigenous art) on top of abstract geometric shapes, smears, and patterns of sometimes vibrant, sometimes subdued colors; the deliberate confusion of foreground and background as if to suggest a translucent quality to all materiality except some essence—some life-force illumined by Martin's "less is more" restraint—at the core of the person in the painting.

"Minimalism is the Haiku of a subject," says Martin. "It is a form broken down and distilled to its essence."

In *Aaand Safe*, two baseball players are shown with their outlines intertwined, their essences enveloped in motion, capturing the inevitable chaotic clash of energy formed when a player narrowly slides into home. Physical exertion is often shown simply with colorful circles painted over knees, elbows, and shoulders, such as in *Early Surf*, which finds the excitement of surfers running towards the water early in the morning, anticipating the glassy surface, the rush of the break, and the weightlessness of the board in the water by depicting it in outline-form, clasped beneath the surfer's arm, blending with the background.

emotionally honest and charged depictions of lives being lived.

You can discover for yourself America Martin's work, showing through the end of March, in the JoAnne Artman Gallery's current exhibition, "They've All Come to Look for America." Named after a line from the Simon and Garfunkel classic "America," a song about two companions journeying to discover for themselves the American dream, the paintings and drawings on display showcase a broad cross-section of Martin's three favorite subjects: women and men, children, and nudes.

In Martin's experience, the search for the American dream starts with the individual's discovery of her own truth; it "means the opportunity to dream up a new and better future, for yourself, for your family, for your community—or for the country," she says. "The American dream then includes the capacity for individuals to go out and realize those dreams."

Martin first discovered her passion for art when she was 9 years old. "I bought a Vincent Van Gogh book for a quarter at a yard sale," she recalls. "It was that moment when my world flipped right side round, and I saw exactly how I could and would be able to breathe in this life. It was through and with art. That is my truth."

Her paintings capture moments of innocence, freedom, humility and passion revealed through eyes, lips, hands, bodies; movements revealed through the running and streaking of paint beneath bold lines (reminiscent of some indigenous art) on top of abstract geometric shapes, smears, and patterns of sometimes vibrant, sometimes subdued colors; the deliberate confusion of foreground and background as if to suggest a translucent quality to all materiality except some essence—some life-force illumined by Martin's "less is more" restraint—at the core of the person in the painting.

"Minimalism is the Haiku of a subject," says Martin. "It is a form broken down and distilled to its essence."

In *Aaand Safe*, two baseball players are shown with their outlines intertwined, their essences enveloped in motion, capturing the inevitable chaotic clash of energy formed when a player narrowly slides into home. Physical exertion is often shown simply with colorful circles painted over knees, elbows, and shoulders, such as in *Early Surf*, which finds the excitement of surfers running towards the water early in the morning, anticipating the glassy surface, the rush of the break, and the weightlessness of the board in the water by depicting it in outline-form, clasped beneath the surfer's arm, blending with the background.

The human form is my favorite landscape, says Martin. But the joy for me is as an artist capturing the spirit of the person, for that is like catching truth in flight. It is that spirit that makes a piece of art sing."

Martin believes that at its core such a spirit is really the imprint that the artist has on her work; that whatever truths you learn about a person in a painting is ultimately some truth about the artist herself. "When a piece of art hits you," muses Martin, "it's because it's alive. It is holding a piece of the artist within it. You cannot look at art without feeling and learning something about who the artist is."

"When you listen to a piece of music such as String Quartet No. 12 by Dvorak, you can't help but feel who this person was and be moved, to the point of revelation. I believe that is the way that art must be created."

Currently based in Los Angeles, Martin spends most of her time in her studio, in an ongoing dialogue between inspiration and canvas. Although she's always looking forward to her next visit down here. "Laguna Beach seems to me like an oasis. I am always amazed at its lush and alive natural beauty. It is no wonder there is such a thriving community of artists nestled down by its blue waters."

"They've All Come to Look for America" runs through March 31 at the JoAnne Artman Gallery, 326 N. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, 949-510-5481; joanneartmangallery.com. Open Wed.-Sun., 11 a.m.-5 p.m. and on First Thursdays Art Walk.

About this column: Patch shines a spotlight on what's currently going on in Laguna Beach's myriad art galleries.

What do you think of America Martin's work? [Tell us in the comments.](#)

Email me updates about this story. Enter your email address

Recommend 21 Tweet 2 Email Print Comment

Follow comments Submit tip Comment

Other In the Galleries Articles

- [Laguna Art Museum Revives UC Irvine's Forgotten Avant-Garde Renaissance](#)
By [Ryan Wirick](#)
- [Artist of the Week: Cheyenne Walls' Photos Will Transform Your Daily Grind](#)
By [Ryan Wirick](#)
- [The Last Word on the Laguna Art Museum's Noguchi Show](#)
By [Ryan Wirick](#)
- [Galaxies, Mysteries, Soul Mates: Sandstone Gallery at 30](#)
By [Ryan Wirick](#)
- [Time Traveling Through the Laguna Art Museum \(Part Two\)](#)
By [Ryan Wirick](#)
- [Time Traveling Through the Laguna Art Museum: Abstracts, Monkeys and UFOs](#)
By [Ryan Wirick](#)

See all In the Galleries articles

Leave a comment

Fly Drives America
America 14 Nights Fly Drive Holiday
Fantastic Service & Value, Book Now
www.completenorthamerica.co.uk

Best Web Hosting of 2012
Fast & Reliable UK Web Hosting. Free
Domain & Setup, from £1.99/m!
iPage.com

GrabOne Daily Deals
Ireland's New Daily Deal Site Buy Together,
Save Together!
www.GrabOneNI.co.uk

North America
Come Aboard Our Dream Cruise, at a
Fraction of The Price! Book Today.
Cruisedeals.co.uk/North_America Sponsored Links

Advertise
Advertise on Patch and reach potential customers in your backyard and beyond. Click here for more information.
[Learn more »](#)

Volunteer
If you want to help local causes, or your cause needs local help, your next click should be right here.
[Learn more »](#)

CONGRATULATIONS! Vistaprint
You've been selected to receive

250 FREE business Cards
+ Holder now FREE was \$5.99

250 business cards + 1 business card holder

2 for 1 Deals & Discounts
Don't pay full price, use a Voucher Spend less, Enjoy it more.
Moneysupermarket.com/twoforone

Exercise Your Brain
Games You Didn't Know Existed to Fight Brain Decline and Aging.
www.lumosity.com

Coach Tours South America
Award winning tours from Milestones Expert escorted tours to S. America
milestones.com/southamerica

The Perfect Golf Swing?
New "Stacked" Swing By Top 20 Coach Adds Up To 30 Yards. Get Free Video
PerfectConnectionGolfSwing.com Sponsored Links

- SEE MORE ON PATCH
- [Laguna Dance Festival Pirouettes Into Town This Week](#)
 - [Crazy for Kinkade: Late Artist's Work Is Selling Out Everywhere](#)
 - [Sixth Annual Art Star Awards Handed Out Sunday](#)
 - [Guns and Romance Meet at Laguna Art Museum's Victor Hugo Zayas Show](#)
 - [Laguna Beach Alliance for the Arts Announces Art Star Nominees](#)

Affordable E-commerce Software

iContact #AWESOME

ONE SOLUTION FOR
Email & Social Media Marketing.

The Perfect Golf Swing?
New "Stacked" Swing By Top 20 Coach Adds Up To 30 Yards. Get Free Video
PerfectConnectionGolfSwing.com Sponsored Links

- SEE MORE ON PATCH
- [Laguna Dance Festival Pirouettes Into Town This Week](#)
 - [Crazy for Kinkade: Late Artist's Work Is Selling Out Everywhere](#)
 - [Sixth Annual Art Star Awards Handed Out Sunday](#)
 - [Guns and Romance Meet at Laguna Art Museum's Victor Hugo Zayas Show](#)
 - [Laguna Beach Alliance for the Arts Announces Art Star Nominees](#)

Affordable E-commerce Software

iContact #AWESOME

ONE SOLUTION FOR
Email & Social Media Marketing.