

THE LUMINOUS PAINTINGS OF THIS RENOWNED INTERNATIONAL ARTIST
REVEAL RICH LAYERS OF EVOCATIVE STORYTELLING

IRMA CAVAT



The Japanese Basket 2000 60"x 60" oil on canvas

“IRMA CAVAT LOOKS AT THINGS, THE PROFUSION OF SMALL, common, perishable, fragile, transient things. She has the power to transform single things as a bee is transformed in amber. But her real lust is for profusion, and that she celebrates as a prism celebrates light, by breaking and scattering it to make it new . . . Every painting tells us that hers is a genius the world must reckon with. . . .”

John Ciardi, in the Foreword of the *Irma Cavat* catalog
for the Kennedy Galleries, New York, N.Y., 1984

IRMA CAVAT WAS BORN IN NEW York City, and her artistic talent was evident from an early age. She enrolled in children's classes at the Brooklyn Museum and studied there later as an adult. While still a high school student in Brooklyn, she received a medal for fine draftsmanship, and was later awarded a scholarship to Pratt Institute.



She would remain there for 34 years, retiring in 1999; she continues to reside in Santa Barbara.

Her goal in painting, Cavat believes, is to deeply engage viewers with each of the images before them. "I am trying to get someone to stay in front of a painting for as long as possible," she says. "I want them to really look at each one."

As a working artist, Cavat's imagination was initially kindled by sculpture, and for several years she studied and worked with José de Creeft and Alexander Archipenko in New York City. When she had mastered both chisel and brush, she began to travel extensively, living for a time in Haiti, where she executed a thirty-foot mural celebrating Haitian life for a government building in Port-au-Prince. On returning to New York, Cavat associated with a growing circle of noted American abstract expressionists, including Willem de Kooning, and began to focus exclusively on her painting. A prestigious Yaddo Fellowship in painting was awarded to her by the Trask Foundation.

The 1950s found Cavat traveling frequently again, this time to Spain, France, Germany, and Italy. The Galerie Huit in Paris was the site of her first solo show, which was attended by Pablo Picasso. His reaction to Cavat's interpretation of his native Spain was enthusiastic, and the Parisian reviews of the show echoed his accolades. Cavat went on to spend nine years in Rome, where she was twice awarded Fulbright grants, and it was a highly fruitful period in her artistic development.

On returning to the United States, Cavat accepted a position as a faculty member in the art department at UC Santa Barbara.

In his Cavat catalog foreword, John Ciardi invites gallery visitors to surround themselves with her lucid paintings as well. He writes, "Stand back in the total play of light her work makes when it fills a room. You will find yourself at the celebration of an idea, the rather sizable idea of sensing what it is to be alive when a master talent illuminates the act of being."



Balance 1997 40" x 50" oil on canvas

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Galerie Huit, Paris
 American Embassy, Rome
 St. Paul's, Rome
 Main Street Gallery, Chicago
 Werbe Galleries, Detroit
 Forsythe Gallery, Ann Arbor
 Galleria Scorpio, Rome
 Galleria Piazza di Spagna, Rome
 Arwin Galleries, Detroit
 Santa Barbara Museum of Art
 Phoenix Art Museum
 Feingarten Gallery, Los Angeles
 Forum, Ventura

COLLECTIONS (partial list)

Albion College, Michigan
 Glendale College, Phoenix, Arizona
 The Bishop Vogeley, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
 Gertrude Berg and Nettie Rosenstein, New York
 John Ciardi, New Jersey
 Gardner Peabody, Boston
 Rod Steiger, Mr. and Mrs. Irving Stone, Beverly Hills
 Judge and Mrs. Joseph Lodge, Cynthia Wood, Santa Barbara
 Clare Booth Luce, the Zellerbach Collection, San Francisco

M. Sandoz, Switzerland
 F. Echavarria, Bogota, Columbia
 The Johnson Collection, London
 Laurence Fleischman, Detroit

AWARDS

Yaddo Fellowship, Saratoga Springs, New York
 New York University Scholarship to the Art School
 Fulbright Grant
 Renewal of Fulbright Grant

The Patty Look Lewis Gallery affords a comprehensive view of Santa Barbara's seminal artists of the last fifty years, and is the exclusive representative of the estates of celebrated artists William Dole, Channing Peake, and Selden Spaulding. Exhibitions focus on these and other established artists such as Irma Cavat, whose paintings are on view from August 7-30. Patty Look Lewis's own contemporary pastels are also shown in the gallery.

**Patty
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