



Day Meditation Dream at Night

SURFACE TREATMENT

What: *Meditations* by Wilma Langhamer
Where: Beyond Arts Gallery, 114 North A Street, Harlingen
When: Through Dec. 24. Hours are Wed-Fri: 1pm-5pm,
Sat: 10am -5pm
Contact: (956) 230-2859

The Mythical Feminine

Fans of Wilma Langhamer's Romantic Realism style are in for a treat with her recent exhibition at Beyond Arts Gallery. Meant to evoke a meditative state of consciousness, *Meditations* offers work that is recognizably at the core of her artistic identity. The body of work on display reflects her ruminations about life and could well be an autobiographical journey.

On a grander scale, Langhamer's paintings express a merger of the feminine archetype and the mythical feminine. Her female figures while still part of the natural emergence are yet unaffected by the industrial/modern world. There is a fragile weightlessness to these women. Even the ones who blossom with life are presented as complete isolated beings.

Doves, trees, hearts, and keys are strategic symbols in the paintings and offer thoughtful viewing guidance. The painting, "Invitation to Freedom 2," positions a dove fluttering near the heart of a young woman. "I incorporate the symbol of the dove into my work to represent the spirit of peace, which is something that is very scarce in these times," stated Langhamer. "The freedom is outside and the dove comes into the area that we have created; we're trying to break out." The expression on the woman's face expresses meditative concentration as she attempts to project into the freedom beyond her rectangular self-imposed enclosure. This is a painting for the viewer to forget the unpleasant complexities of 2016 and escape into, a grasp for peace itself. "The Key to Light" speaks of the personal power of the individual to discover a life path. In

Langhamer's lexicon, the key represents life, and life is a learning experience. It can open spiritual doors. One morning as Langhamer was on a walking meditation at a Buddhist retreat in Colorado a few years ago, she noticed that the mountains were still black although the sky was already illuminated. "It inspired this painting," she explained. "He handed us the key, God or Buddha or whomever; it doesn't matter. We all have the key if we use it." Another painting, "Invitation to My Walk," also came from the key paintings as they related to the meditation walks. The red boot speaks of walking with life and peace. Langhamer says she enjoys a walking meditation to turn her thoughts from boring to a more positive peace of mind.

As a self-taught painter, her content comes from deep within, and some of it is openly autobiographical. Her paintings of violins recreate the nostalgia of her childhood when she played the violin. "My Violin with Candle Light" honors that memory. The six candles, which have a personal symbolism for the artist, frame the memory of the violin as a ritual of youth. The dark background adds a dramatic importance to the perception.

Visiting the *Meditations* exhibit may momentarily replace the daily hassles of the outside world with a feeling of lightness and calm. It works for the artist. "I'm the happiest when I paint," she concluded.

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