

## MICHELLE SAKHAI: Painting in the Present

Michelle Sakhai is on a journey of healing and transformation. Her soul's evolution is reflected in her artistic evolution. Her abstract paintings feature specks of gold and silver leaf and a calming sense of artistic flow. Michelle believes that art is a force of healing.

Sakhai reflected on the foundation of her work, where it all began. Michelle started as a plein air painter, setting up an easel in front of a landscape and painting it just as she saw it; a form of art much different from the non-objective pieces she creates today.

"I really wanted to get an art education abroad; especially with plein air painting, the light and landscape are crucial. It was amazing to me, to discover that when I went to France and painted there, and then looked at the paintings of Monet and Pissarro, I could see that the light was truly that way."

She studied art in Italy, south of France, Normandy, and Barcelona. Her world travels started at age two, with family trips to Japan in the summer.

Sakhai's mother is Japanese, and her father is Persian. Growing up, Michelle and her brother would visit their grandparent's hometown in Japan. Kashiwazaki is a tiny beach village with vast mountains along the Black Sea. The family would spend their summers sailing, going to Japanese school and soaking up the Japanese culture.

"I have beautiful memories of Japan...The local town bell rings each day and everyone goes home to have supper. It is a charming village where everybody knows everybody."

Sakhai is quick to say that her mixed heritage and her world travels have expanded her creative vision, as well as awakened her soul.

"It was important for our parents to show me and my brother the world and expose us to other cultures. I am grateful for those unique opportunities."

Michelle has visited twenty-eight countries. A sampling of her world travels includes Israel, Peru, Australia, Thailand, Canada and Denmark. Her most current adventure was July of this year sailing along the Mediterranean Sea.

Michelle's rich background continues to feed her soul and nurture her as an artist:

"I never thought I would be an abstract artist. Once I started learning about spirituality and healing, my art dramatically shifted and I began being guided from within. The muse became internal and I started working from the inside-out."

She works with oil paints and adds silver, copper, and gold leafing in a majority of her paintings. The paintings range in size from one to ten feet. Her work can be seen on her website: [michellesakhai.com](http://michellesakhai.com).

Sakhai's consistency with her chosen materials and her brush strokes define her style and make her art recognizable. Viewing her work promotes peace and self-reflection. Her style is solid, yet always evolving.

"I am evolving and so my art evolves as well. My art reflects and communicates my soul's evolution."

Michelle doesn't plan each painting. She focuses on where she is emotionally and spiritually in the moment and allows her inner life guide her work.

"Emotional Transformation and spiritual expansion are the gifts the artist stands to receive from the process of painting. When I begin a painting, I just let whatever is coming through me guide me to the next mark. It's very fluid. One stroke leads to the next, and then I decide what colors to use, what to layer. The whole thing just flows."

"I become the observer of myself. I've discovered while painting, that I am more consciously connected to my emotions. I paint with intent and watch the flow of emotions within me and coming through me and on to the canvas. I believe that art is a way of channeling peace and healing."

"I believe and trust in the energy of the creative spirit as a healing force on the earth. My mission is to convey the message of healing through my art, my speaking engagements, and the teaching of Transformative Art."

"When teaching I may begin by sharing bits of my life; something personal. My hope is to guide others to open up within themselves, if they are ready. I keep in mind that spiritual work is individual. One has to choose to heal and awaken. Yet there is nothing to fear. It's very liberating when you start practicing new concepts because you start owning everything in your life and consciously living in your authentic power."

Sakhai is a certified Reiki Master. She is also a certified Primordial Sound Meditation Instructor through the Chopra Center.

"I believe everything is energy."

Sakhai has created her own signature by unifying her art and her spiritual path. Others have been touched by what she has learned and shared.

"Once I started to go deeper into spirituality and healing, that is when my art transformed. It was a transformation of me and in turn, my art. It happened simultaneously. I'm touched and feel grateful when people say that they feel peaceful when looking at my paintings.

Art is a way of channeling peace... Art awakens my soul and allows my soul to speak."