

MIMI MATTE

LEFT BUT NOT LEAVING



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Cover Page, **Couple Contemplating Eggs**, oil on canvas, 36" x 48"
Previous Page, **In the Window**, oil on canvas, 36" x 48"
This Page, above, **Family Ties**, oil on canvas, 36" x 42"

This Page, above, **Morning**, oil on canvas, 30" x 30"
Following Page, **Cat in a Landscape**, oil on canvas, 34" x 42"

MIMI MATTE 1929 – 2012

Born in Regina, Saskatchewan, in 1929, Madeleine Rachelle (Mimi) Matte began drawing and painting at an early age.

One of three children, Mimi moved with her family from the prairies to Ottawa in 1945, where her father, Gideon, was employed as private secretary by then Prime Minister, Mackenzie King.

Mimi showed early artistic promise in school and graduated from high school at the age of 16. She then enrolled in the art program at Ottawa Technical High School where she learned commercial art skills.

Mimi went on to McGill University where she earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and met her future husband, James M. Packham. After a few years she moved with her husband and two children, in 1964, to Toronto where Mimi continued with commercial art on a part-time basis, but she also worked as a portrait painter.



This Page, above, **Deceit**, oil on canvas, 36" x 48"
Following Page 1, **Waiting**, oil on canvas, 30" x 30"
Following Page 2, **Mother Figure**, oil on canvas, 36" x 36"

In the early 1970s, Mimi began experimenting with a new style: figurative works, almost-portrait style, featuring slyly comic figures in slightly absurd settings. This fresh vision, not to mention her skill as a painter - then working in acrylic, sometimes with cotton fabric swatches giving depth and texture - was impressive to critics and collectors and it wasn't long before she was invited to show at galleries in both Toronto and Montreal in 1974.

The Art Gallery of Ontario chose one of her works to feature in 1975. After her first solo show in 1978 at the University of Toronto's Hart House she began a showing her work across Canada for over 22 years.



Describing herself as a “skeptical observer,” during the next few decades, Mimi had shows in various locations around North America; such as Sarasota, Buffalo, Regina, Vancouver and Ottawa.

In the mid-80s, Mimi fought a battle with Hodgkin’s disease, which caused a two year painting hiatus while she received chemotherapy. It also caused her return to oil painting after years of using acrylics; as she blamed the acrylic paints for the cancer.



Mimi’s work can be found in the corporate collections of Imperial Oil Canada, Shell Oil Canada, Ingram & Shriver (New York), Wood Gundy, Westin Hotels, Granite Club, Toronto French Schools, Brock University, and many others. Her awards include Ontario Society of Artists (1974) and the Aviva Art Auction first prize (1975).

In 2006, Mimi’s work was reinvigorated by an invitation to join a new gallery home in Toronto where she enjoyed several one-person shows until a serious illness in 2010, which prevented her from painting.



This Page, above, **Ghost**, oil on canvas, 48" x 48"
Following Page, **Pedestal**, oil on canvas, 36" x 44"

Always emotional about her work, but ambivalent about promoting it, she regularly threatened to quit painting, but nonetheless continued to produce great, quirky, large format works right up until she was forced to stop, which she did with great regret. In October of 2012, a month after her 83rd birthday, Mimi died in Toronto.



MIMI MATTE
SOME GREAT QUOTATIONS ABOUT HER ART OVER THE YEARS

"One of Canada's most talented artists. Irrepressible and witting – charming, funny and devastating."

The Toronto Star, 1974

"Mimi Matte's paintings at the Shayne Gallery are as welcome as an ice cream cone on a warm summer day"

The Suburban (Montreal), 2000

"Matte makes a personal statement about peoples' emotions in a way that is sometimes hilarious, often surreal, always compelling."

Impetus Magazine (Financial Post), 1975

"Matte refuses to present idealized images of female beauty, preferring instead to show women as they really are - double chins, tummy bulges and all."

Regina Leader Post, 1990

"So the monumentality of mundanity fills her work, but hers is not a mean or bitter vision. Instead, her work pokes fun at human foibles, it gently (and sometimes not so gently) suggests our ideals of success, romance, property, home and family keep us from waking to enjoy real life."

Art Voices South, 1980

"The artist is clinical. Her eye is a scalpel cutting through the facades, the roles, the mores, the social games, and the whole human comedy with something akin to glee. I have a fleeting, terrifying thought: how would she paint me?"

Glitter Magazine, 1975

"What is this reality? Is it, as some maintain a brutal attack on inflated social pretensions, the nuclear family and male machismo? Or is it, as (Matte) prefers to think, a gently humorous and compassionate appraisal of the fragile vestiges of human dignity in a threatening world?"

Buffalo Courier-Express, 1978

"In this first solo show, drawings and paintings with collage elements, she tells the plain truth with wit and grace about the illusions we're all finding it harder to live with. Matte's people, unshapely, sly, frightened, complacent, smug, and uniformly self-deceiving, are vehicles for a running commentary on our self-imposed blindness"

The Globe & Mail, 1975

"If Matte's works recall the stylish figures painted by Botero, they are referring specifically to upbeat, uptown America...There is a luminosity in these recent oil paintings, a quality that was previously dulled with a matte treatment of autumn colours."

The Globe & Mail, 1987

"Like figures in the paintings of Magritte or the cartoons of Charles Addams...their destinies are in the control of the artist alone which may be all that needs to be said about this strange body of work."

The Globe & Mail, 1978



This Page, above, **Late – Early Lunch**, oil on canvas, 36” x 36”

The work of Mimi Matte is represented by Rodrigues Contemporary. Please call them if you have any questions about the work.

“I for one am fascinated by her art and would love that she was still around to create today – especially in the world we now live in.” *Deb Usher*

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