

Celestial Hunger

By Maria Valverde

Presented by The Chester Municipal Heritage Society

Information

- Set of 4 paintings, and 1 “cover”
- Paintings by Maria Valverde
- Must be sold as a set, they cannot be sold separately
- \$50 000

For More information regarding the paintings, their subject matter, and the artist, refer to the following link:

<https://billiemag.ca/the-fragility-of-life-maria-valverdes-celestial-hunger/>

“The Fragility of Life: Maria Valverde’s Celestial Hunger” By Elissa Barnard, 2023

The following quotes are taken from this article.

Information

“These brilliant, narrative paintings, full of gold leaf and the primary colours of the manuscripts, tell the story of a crumbling society in graphic images of tiny figures and familiar Halifax locations. The paintings also feature Gothic-style texts of pandemic terms such as CERB, the New Normal and Nova Scotia premier Stephen McNeil’s famous phrase, “Stay the Blazes Home.” Valverde’s alter ego, a Spanish/Nova Scotian character called the Maritime Senorita, is in the marginalia helping the afflicted. *Celestial Hunger* grew out of Valverde’s experience as a housekeeper in the Q.E. II’s Halifax Infirmary emergency department. She was transferred there just before COVID-19 hit in March 2020.”

“Each painting in *Celestial Hunger* is set in a different season and at a different time of day, except for *The Plague* which covers 24 hours representing back-to-back shifts at the hospital.”

“Valverde, now 56, was diagnosed with stage four lung cancer in 2021”

“Her paintings are intentionally colourful and playful. She paints in a folk-art narrative manner and a lush, painterly style full of swooping, organic lines.” (Barnard, 2023)

Cover

- Mixed media on Canvas
- 2023

“Each painting has an ornate gold frame; Valverde contrasts the wealth inherent in illuminated manuscripts with the poverty she displays in her imagery. She uses gold leaf and Dollar Store paint, which also refers to the pandemic trend of people making crafts at home. The book’s giant gleaming cover (“It protects the pages as we protect each other.”) is a mix of rusted metal, rugged wood, blood red paint and numerous faux jewels.”
(Barnard, 2023)

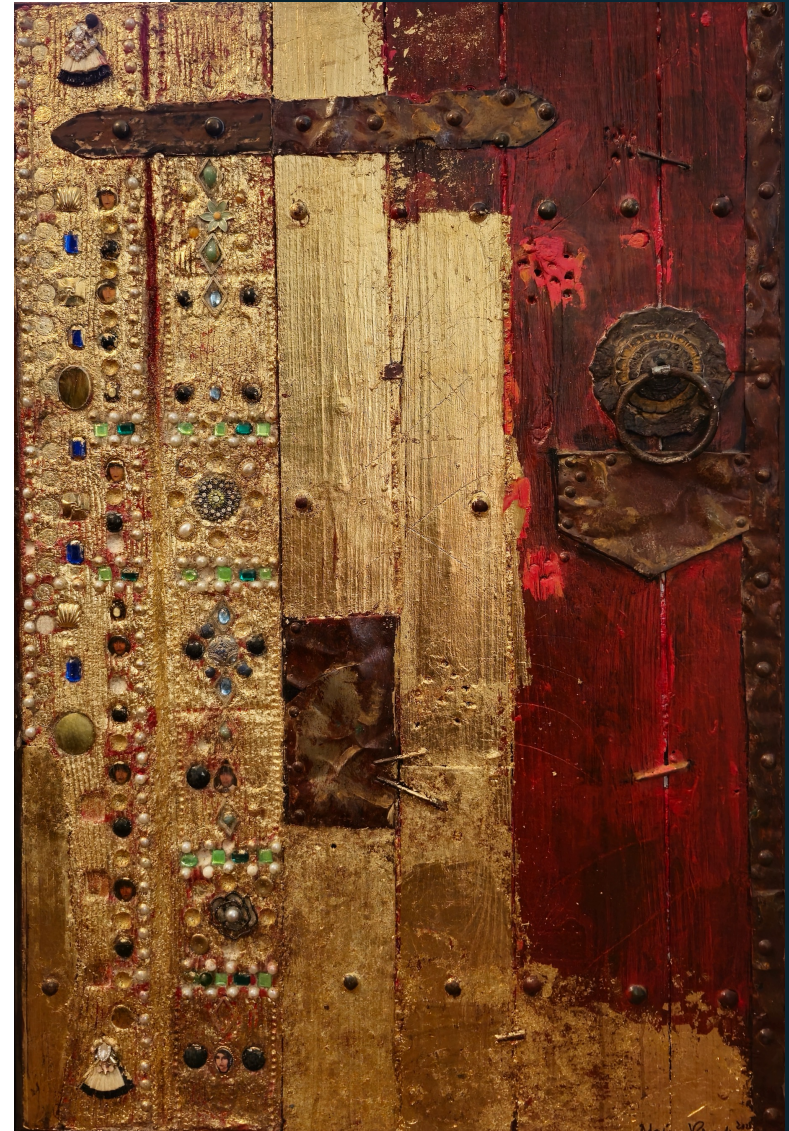


Photo
by
Ruah
Hoeg

The Famine (Spring, Sunset)

- Mixed media on canvas, 40 x 30 inches
- 2023

“...in *The Famine* Valverde paints her lungs, framed by an arch of colourful homeless tents looking like stained glass.” (Barnard, 2023)

Additionally, in the middle panel, there are words commonly used among people throughout COVID-19 and the greater pandemic.



Photo
by
Ruah
Hoeg

The Plague (Summer, 24 Hours)

- Mixed media on canvas, 40 x 30 inches
- 2023

“The Plague which covers 24 hours representing back-to-back shifts at the hospital. Valverde paints herself in all her PPE, cleaning an emergency trauma room. In a lower section the Maritime Seniorita holds a white body bag containing a person who died of COVID-19. She is “embracing” the deceased and she, herself, is supported by two angels with scars where their breasts should be. They represent Tina and Caryn, two women with breast cancer whom Valverde met in a chat room and who supported and amazed her. “I didn’t have breast cancer but our fears were similar.”” (Barnard, 2023)



Photo
by
Ruah
Hoeg

The Fall of the Empire (Winter, Night)

- Mixed media on canvas, 40 x 30 inches
- 2023

“The Fall of the Empire is about the collapse of the middle class and is set on Halifax’s Robie Street on a snowy night with a bleak, cloud-studded sky, and a full moon...Robin Hood flour referring to Robin Hood stealing from the rich to give to the poor and to ongoing grain shortages caused by the pandemic and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. An Esso station advertises gas for the outrageous price of \$2.17. In an arched segment a woman with a black eye, a victim of domestic abuse...This painting shows, she says “what can happen to society when it crumbles.”” (Barnard, 2023)



Photo
by
Ruah
Hoeg

The Climate Change (Fall, Sunrise)

- Mixed media on canvas, 40 x 30 inches
- 2023

“Valverde celebrates the natural world in images of the daffodils from Dartmouth’s Daffodil Garden for Cancer Survivors, the lupins in the hospital garden where she took her breaks and the trees at Point Pleasant Park in *The Climate Change*. This painting, which includes a container ship and floating containers, depicts sunrise after a violent storm and is meant to evoke “that state of calm and hope after a traumatic event such as a hurricane, or being told you qualify for a new cancer drug.”” (Barnard, 2023)



Photo
by
Ruah
Hoeg