



RAGNA BRUNO

COURTHOUSE GALLERY  
FINEART

# RAGNA BRUNO

JULY 12 – AUGUST 6, 2021

## **Between Worlds**

Essay by Katherine Wilkes



*Blue Moon*, 2021, mixed media, 13 x 15 inches

FRONT AND BACK COVER *Floating on Grey*, detail, 2021, oil on board, 40 x 30 inches

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*Written Matter*, 2021, oil on board, 40 x 30 inches



*Submerged Dreams*, 2021, oil on canvas, 48 x 48 inches



# RAGNA BRUNO BETWEEN WORLDS

by Katherine Wilkes

*In “Between Worlds” we are pulled into a psychological journey. No longer feeling the familiarity of the known, we enter the various rooms of the mind, the heart, and the soul. Like Orpheus we pass from one plane into another and become disoriented as our scene morphs. In this strange era of uncertainty, stillness, and restructuring, Ragna Bruno is an oracle. As we gaze into her work, Bruno’s channeled experience validates our own, and we are delighted at the chance for respite.*

A cacophony of textures, organic shapes, subtle frenetic gestures, and contrastingly dense and ethereal planes confront the viewer. All this is balanced in a refined palette of lavish neutrals, earth tones, and deep blues. Bruno’s work evokes the mystery and complexity of fine perfume. One can smell the magnitude of the divinely selected ingredients, but cannot quite put one’s finger on what they are, or how someone could have possibly

come to mixing them together. Upon encountering its fragrant abstract bouquet, one carries on mystified for hours, days... moved to deep contemplation.

In chromatic hues of melancholic blue, the realm of music, emotion, and dreams fills various dimensions of her canvas with nuance. Thoughts, visions, apparitions, and structure emerge from the depths. Bruno’s lifetime immersed in the classical music world spills into this newest series. While



*Expansion*, 2020, oil on canvas, 48 x 48 inches



*Blue Music*, 2021, oil on board, 10 x 8 inches

painting in her studio, in Hancock Point, Maine, Bruno listens to favorites like Schubert, Bach, and Schumann. She has heard the music so many times she knows every note. When asked how her relationship to the music translates into her art, Bruno lifts her arms into the air and proclaims, “The energy and emotion of the music is like a wave that washes over my being! It moves something around in me that comes out.” In the diminutive painting *Wave*, a melodious crescendo of orchestral sound, an ocean swell, or perhaps some kind of powerful feeling peaks. Or all of the above! In the companion piece *Blue Music*, the faintest suggestion of a musical staff surfaces from a blue abyss, upon which dances kinetic energy.

The dream motif is boldly expressed in *Submerged Dreams*. An underwater vivid cerulean collides with opaque black, suspending celestial orbs, where dreams form and struggle to be remembered. Jungian dream analysis, an interest of Bruno’s, posits that our subconscious creates dreams to process our experiences through a symbolic language. Symbolically, the

subconscious mind is analogous to the deep expansive ocean that covers most of our planet and hides foreign worlds below, which no one will ever see, or fully know. Bruno’s strategic use of blue conveys this subconscious dream world where we explore and discover unknown wonders. Dreaming the Image magically depicts symbols condensing from an ethereal, revelatory dust cloud.

*Expansion* bursts vibrantly in all directions like a newly awakened being or a cosmic event. White-hot energy disperses from a benevolent pink, glowing force field. Another motif emerges: Time and Space. As of late, they have converged upon humanity, restricting freedom and movement, and expanding each individual’s awareness of how they are used. In her eighth decade Bruno speaks of a growing awareness of how long her life may yet be, and how long it has been. The Rothko-esque Veils of Time layers the subjective nature of time thickly with emotion, moving the viewer to study one’s own present, past, and future.



*Wave*, 2021, oil on board, 10 x 8 inches



*Floating on Grey*, 2021, oil on board, 40 x 30 inches



*Dreaming the Image*, 2021, oil on canvas, 48 x 48 inches



“Between Worlds” elucidates the intriguing global communication phenomenon. Knowledge, opinion and banter surf our airwaves in a frenzied discourse, challenging our notions of reality. Normally, Bruno draws inspiration from visiting the museums of her native Spain, but the past eighteen months she has spent more time talking with friends and being visited by collectors and her extended circle.

She plays with facets of word in the paintings *Script* and *Written Matter*. The concept merges in the sculpture *Conversation*, composed of scriptures, handmade papers, and intriguing phrases like “the Master of Unknowing.” This spherical collage embodies the global patchwork of the many voices collectively transmuting our shared world. The circle motif evokes the universal and the cyclical, manifesting at one time as a *Blue Moon* (the moon being an ancient marker of time), and then again

as *Thoughts* bubbling up from the darkness into the yellow light of awareness.

Uncharacteristic of Bruno’s prior work is a marked use of black, which adds a heightened visual drama. This mirrors the feelings of danger she and many have experienced during the pandemic. The darker hues add a grounding resonance that anchors the work like the pervading darkness that underpins a time fraught with unknowns. An ominous dusky earthen plane forebodes in her mood-laden piece *Landscape*.

Ultimately, Ragna Bruno’s “Between Worlds” is a symbolic dreamscape synthesis of a transformative period in history. Within her dreamscape, we find a gentle caress of the subjective human experience of this change. The world of the past is falling away, and the one we are creating together struggles to be realized. Spellbound, we move in the liminal space between.

KATHERINE WILKES is an artist and musician living in Venice, California, where she maintains a studio.



*Conversation I*, 2021, handmade papers and scriptures, 82 inches



*Script*, 2021, oil on board, 40 x 30 inches



*Impromptu*, 2021, oil on board, 40 x 30 inches





*Totem*, 2021, oil on canvas, 48 x 48 inches



*Veils of Time*, 2021, oil on board, 40 x 30 inches



*Yellow Light*, 2021, oil on board, 40 x 30 inches



*Thoughts*, 2021, oil on canvas, 48 x 48 inches



*Deep Space*, 2021, oil on board, 10 x 8 inches



*Reclining Figure*, 2021, oil on board, 10 x 8 inches





*Landscape, oil on board, 10 x 8 inches*



*Spring, 2021, oil on board, 10 x 8 inches*



*Trees*, 2021, oil on board, 8 x 10 inches



*Figure*, 2021, oil on board, 13 x 9 inches

# RAGNA BRUNO



Ragna Bruno was born in Madrid, Spain, the daughter of a German father, and a Swedish mother. She was raised in a multilingual family and is fluent in Spanish, German, English, and French. Throughout her early life, Bruno studied dance, music, and art in Madrid, Switzerland, and London. Her father was a poet and businessman, who came from a long line of artists and architects; her mother, a sculptor who spoke six languages. Their friends were artists and musicians, and Bruno grew up immersed in the arts at home and at school. From the age of fourteen until she went to study abroad, Bruno made it a point to visit the Prado Museum everyday, walking a half hour each way.

Bruno travelled extensively in Europe, Central and South America, and India. She owned an antique store in Madrid, and cofounded BERMÚSICA, an international concert management company based in Madrid with its own concert series, “Orchestras of the World.”

Bruno came to the U.S. in 1975 to marry Werner Torkanowsky, a world renowned conductor. The couple moved to Hancock, Maine, in 1977. Here Bruno was able to pursue her passion for art and committed to being a full-time artist. Bruno continues to live and maintain a studio in Hancock, and visits Spain frequently to see family and friends.

## ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS

Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Ellsworth, Maine 2013, '15, '17, '19, '21  
She-Bear Gallery, Portland, Maine 2014  
Husson College, Bangor, Maine 2006  
Between the Muse Gallery, Rockland, Maine 1997  
Leighton Gallery, Blue Hill, Maine 1984–2011

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Ellsworth, Maine 2012–2021  
New York Institute Of Technology, New York, New York 2011, '12  
International Drawing Project DINA-4 in Malaga, Spain 2011  
Aarhus Gallery, “White Show,” Belfast, Maine 2011  
Aarhus Gallery, “Grid Works,” Belfast, Maine 2010  
Maine Art Scene Virtual Show 2010, '12, '13  
Blue Hill Library, Summer Show, Blue Hill, Maine 2009, '11  
Courthouse Gallery Fine Art, Small Works, Ellsworth, Maine 2007  
Wheaton College, “Eros Logos,” Norton, Massachusetts 2006  
Blue Hill, Bristol, Rhode Island 2005  
Deborah Davis Fine Art Gallery, Hudson, New York 2004  
McPherson College of Art, Catalog Award 1991  
Mountain Arts, Sugarloaf, Maine 1988  
Pleiades Gallery, Soho, New York 1988  
Leighton Gallery, Blue Hill, Maine 1988  
Union of Maine Visual Artists, College of the Atlantic, Bar Harbor, Maine  
Chautauqua Exhibition of American Art

## PUBLICATIONS

Daniel Kany. *Maine Sunday Telegram*, July 2013  
“The 60 Most Collectible Artist In Maine,” *Maine Home + Design*, April 2010  
Jakimides, Annaliese. “The Canvas,” *Maine Home + Design*, September, 2010

## PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Poetry Festival, collaboration with poet Cate Marvin, Belfast, 2017  
Owner of an antique gallery in Madrid, Spain,  
specializing in antique museum quality frames  
Co-founder of IBERMÚSICA, an international concert management  
with its own concert series “Orchestras of the World”

## EDUCATION

Studied Music and Dance, Madrid Conservatory, Madrid, Spain  
Art History and Languages, Lausanne, Switzerland, and London, England  
Life Drawing at Escuela de San Fernando, Madrid, Spain  
Clay Sculpture with Squidge Davis  
Printing with Fran Merritt, Haystack School of Crafts, Deer Isle, Maine





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