

I & A COVER STORY

Malibu resident balances career and painting

Daniela Schweitzer says her life is '50 percent medicine, 50 percent art'

ASHLEIGH FRYER, Editor

When it comes to finding muses for her art, Malibu resident Daniela Schweitzer doesn't look far.

"When I moved to Malibu, I spent a good six years just painting the beach," Schweitzer said. "And when my daughter began dancing, I found myself inspired to paint abstractions of the movements of the body. My paintings often come from the ordinary stories I see in photographs. When I take a photograph I see a vision I want to paint."

Schweitzer — although trained classically throughout her childhood and into her early adult life in her home country of Argentina — considers herself an abstract painter, "inspired to deconstruct real every day stories," she said.

Even in her professional life as a doctor specializing in clinical genetics at the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles, Schweitzer sees her real world experiences reflected in her art.

"I work in the craniofacial clinic, and we see a lot of children with multiple facial or body malformations — we figure out how best to care for them," Schweitzer said. "Although I was trained to paint faces very well, I choose not to put faces on my paintings. I've seen so many variations of faces.



Pictured is Daniela Schweitzer's abstract painting, "Coming Out of the Swimming Pool." PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Instead, I paint them as abstractions."

Although these days Schweitzer's work is abstract, that wasn't always the case. She attended classical ateliers — small art studios where students learn from a principal master — from the age of 6, learning painting techniques and the foundations of classical art. Through the ateliers, she dabbled in all mediums, from pastels and sculptures to painting and sketching.

"My parents' home in Argentina is still packed

with art," Schweitzer said. "Art has always been in my life. And in all these decades, I've gone through many explorations of painting, changing my subject matter and style all the time. It wasn't until later in life that I wanted to get into modern contemporary."

Schweitzer said her experiences in the ateliers are part of what motivates her to be prolific in her work, as well — a mindset which has led to her works being featured in more than 11 exhibitions throughout Los

Angeles.

Schweitzer's drive to remain dedicated to her art was even apparent as she pursued her career in medicine at University of Buenos Aires — eventually earning a scholarship to do her residency in pediatrics at UCLA Medical Center.

When she began her life in Los Angeles in 1995, after marrying her American husband, Schweitzer found a new atelier to inspire her in her new surroundings. It was her teacher there, artist Scott Yeskel, that mo-



Pictured are two of Daniela Schweitzer's paintings hanging at the Essentia Showroom in Santa Monica as part of the "Local Inspiration" exhibition.

tivated her to pursue her specific form of painting and the incorporation of figures, shadow and light into her abstractions.

"It's all about simplifying what I see before me, whether it's a photo or a live human subject," Schweitzer said. "From every teacher, I've gained new ideas and a new approach."

In addition to the influence of her teachers, Schweitzer said her inspirations come from a combination of sources — from classicists like Manet and Matisse, to the more modern Bay Area Figurative Movement. Evidence of those influences can be seen at the Essentia Showroom in Santa Monica, where more than 20 of Schweitzer's paintings will be on display until Feb. 28 as part of their "Local Inspiration" exhibition.

Having lived in Malibu since 1997, Schweitzer is a member of the Malibu Artist Association, Malibu Artists Unite and the

Malibu High School Arts Angels. Her work will be featured in the Malibu Artist Association member's exhibition, "Aspects of Light," from Feb. 21-March 21 at the Schomburg Gallery, Bergamot Station in Santa Monica.

With a full schedule of current and future exhibitions, as well as her medical work at the Children's Hospital, Schweitzer says her life is "50 percent medicine and 50 percent art."

And through it all, she said, the two disciplines are not as contradictory as they may seem.

"I've always known I wanted to be a doctor, but I couldn't live without painting," Schweitzer said. "I've found a wonderful balance where the passion that I have for people and the act of caring for them can come together with my creativity and be transferred to the canvas."

For more information, visit www.danielaschweitzerfineart.com.