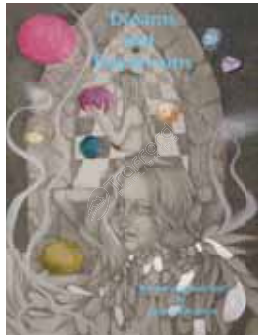


# Imagine: The Watercolor World of Alayne Abrahams

Imagine an oeuvre somewhere between that of the 19th century British visionary William Blake and our greatest contemporary master of the picture book, Maurice Sendak, and you may have some idea of the art of Alayne Abrahams. For like Blake's "Songs of Innocence and Experience" and Sendak's "The Night Kitchen," Abrahams' exquisitely illustrated book "Dreams and Daydreams" holds appeal for all ages, since it can be seen and read on several levels at once.



Cloaked in the cadences of nursery rhymes and enlivened by visual allusions ranging from the Pre-Raphaelites and Arthur Rackham to Maxfield Parrish, Art Nouveau, and psychedelic poster design, Abrahams' synthesis of words and images defies easy classification. One might venture an oxymoronic notion and call her a "wholesome Symbolist," if not for the fact that her skillfully executed watercolors are too complexly layered with meanings, both bright and dark, to be saddled with so simplistic a qualifier.

For surely a winged wisp of post-adolescent girl in a sleeveless top and a thong, kneeling with a brush to paint a garland of violet flowers around a Botticelli-like face, juxtaposed with the lines "Two fairies (did you see) / Dove straight into a tree / And slept until the morning dew / Awoke them, wet and gooey" lends itself to a variety of interpretations. And what of the "The Renaissance man," a languorous longhaired youth with only a cloth draped over his loins, who looks like Jim Morrison of The Doors on the nod, as he "leaned on some stars in the sky" and "dreamed a sweet dream / Filled with visions of cream / Piled high on top of his coffee so hot / That the steam curled his lips back in glee"? And then there are kneeling winged nymphets and blissful faces enveloped in psychedelic swirls and illuminated with the poem, "Two women stared into the eyes / Of each other with guile and surprise / The fairies looked up / While the angel looked down / And they all dreamt of tea, scones and pies!"

Innocence and experience indeed! For like Sendak, Alayne Abrahams refuses to insult youthful intelligence with the lie that childhood is a garden without serpents, even while including doggerel to delight her very youngest readers, such as: "The monkey he heaved with a big sigh / As the fairy dripped paint in his eye / Oh my, she exclaimed / How clumsy and lame / But this paint will no doubt soon dry."

In her independent watercolors and prints, Abraham's pictures speak eloquently for themselves, as seen in two tributes to artistic predecessors: In "Ode to Burne Jones," a Pre-Raphaelite angel piper flutes ornate loops of abstract rainbow hues; in "Musings on Mucha," fragmented faces and full figures, inspired by those of the great Czech-born Paris painter and poster designer, are embellished with flowing Art Nouveau arabesques.

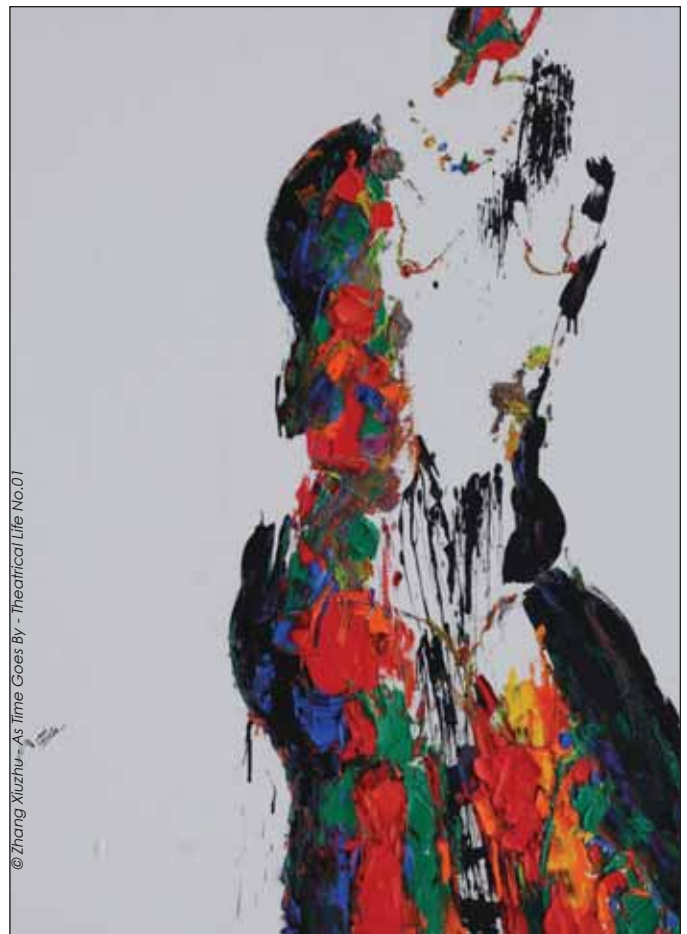


"Ode to Burne Jones"

Other works, including "Goddesses of Light," "Summer," and "Renaissance" encompass a host of mythological and art historical visions, from fairies, angels, and putti to The Three Graces and Botticelli's Venus. Taking as her artistic credo, Albert Einstein's statement that "imagination embraces the entire world and all there will ever be to know and understand," Alayne Abrahams melds them all in her luminous watercolor world of dreams and daydreams.

— Ed McCormack

"Dreams and Daydreams" available through Amazon.com or Trafford.com. Alayne Abrahams' paintings can be viewed on her website: [alayneabrahams.com](http://alayneabrahams.com)



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October 29 - November 19, 2010

Reception: Thursday, November 04, 2010 6-8 pm

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