



ROBERTO E. ROSALES/JOURNAL

Russian-born Albuquerque artist Julia Lambricht is a painter who sometimes uses Russian iconography in her work.



COURTESY OF GALLERY HOCHO
"Blackhead Sheep," Julia Lambricht, egg tempera on panel, 2020

LOSS & LIGHT

Artist Julia Lambricht layers colors, textures and images in Symbolist-meets-Surrealist dreamscapes, creating a permanent record of impermanence



"Liana," Julia Lambricht, egg tempera on panel, 2021.

COURTESY OF GALLERY HOCHO



ROBERTO E. ROSALES/JOURNAL

Artist Julia Lambricht works on a pastel rendering.

FROM THE STUDIO



Kathleen Roberts

Editor's note: The Journal continues the once-a-month series "From the Studio" with Assistant Arts Editor Kathleen Roberts, as she takes an up-close look at an artist.

BY KATHALEEN ROBERTS
ASSISTANT ARTS EDITOR

Julia Lambricht spent 45 years waiting for her mother. Today she mines that loss through the glow of a golden yolk and brush, transforming it into art with egg tempera.

Lambricht's dream to become an artist gestated in her native Russia, where she spent most of her childhood in an orphanage. She designed Soviet New Year's and May Day posters in the orphanage, winning multiple prizes. "I met my Mom twice in my life," she said.

She still has no idea why her mother abandoned her. A middle-aged piano teacher adopted her at 10, changing her name from Larissa to Julia. The pair moved from Moscow to the Republic of Georgia near the Black Sea. It would prove an unruly match.

Longing to run away, Lambricht was pregnant and married by 16. After her divorce, she took a cosmetology course. She worked as a makeup artist with photographers, stylists and models.

Lambricht met her second husband, a New Mexico engineer, on a job in Prague. They corresponded for three years and he proposed. She moved to Albuquerque nearly 20 years ago knowing very little English.

"In Russia, we say who

Artist transforms loss, light into dreamscapes

From PAGE D1

doesn't take a risk doesn't drink champagne," Lambricht said. "I was a single mom for 10 years and I was ready for a change."

Spiritually starved in a strange land, her thoughts turned to art. She signed up for classes at the old TVI, then earned a master's in fine arts degree at the University of New Mexico. She even flew back to Moscow to study traditional icon painting, writing her dissertation on the ancient art form.

Today Lambricht shows her work at Gallery Hózhó in Albuquerque's Hotel Chaco.

Lambricht's paintings blend her immersion in historic Russian iconography with the sweeping brushstrokes of abstract expressionism. She layers colors, textures and images in Symbolist-meets-Surrealist dreamscapes, creating a permanent record of impermanence.

"I thought, 'I can't speak very well yet, so I will speak visually,'" she said.

"Liana" (2021) emerged from her Russian memories and dreams, entangled in symbolism.

The two women bookending the little girl appear pregnant, balancing fruit baskets that transform into ships atop their heads.

Lambricht owns just one photo from her childhood; she stole it from an orphanage notice board. Her mother wrote, promising to visit.

"One letter said she would take me from the orphanage by the Caspian Sea with my sister," Lambricht said. "I think she actually was a cousin. This is from my imagination of having a sister."

"I would draw things for my Mom, hoping she would see them," she added.

Lambricht compares her paintings to puzzles, calling them figurative abstractions.

"I like to think of plotting imagery together, almost like a collage," she said.

"Blackhead Sheep" (2020) contains multiple layers. The sheep balances on wheels, like a child's toy.

"It's alive and at the same time static from a dream I had vividly as a child," Lambricht said. "I was looking at this low horizontal line and there was a man and a woman and there was this sheep like an object of sacrifice."

"Sometimes I create things and I don't know the answers."

Speaking of her painting "Albina" (2021) brought her to tears. Albina was an old friend in Ukraine who was bedridden because of a car accident. She died in June. The pandemic prevented Lambricht from visiting as often as she wished. The yellow hues cascading from her body were inspired by Charlotte Perkins Gilman's story "The Yellow Wall-Paper," about the deterioration of a woman's mental health.

"We were friends for 25 years," Lambricht said. "We knew each other from my time in Moscow. Albina envisioned herself in a landscape and



ROBERTO E. ROSALES/JOURNAL

Russian-born Albuquerque artist Julia Lambricht is a painter who sometimes uses Russian iconography in her work.



ROBERTO E. ROSALES/JOURNAL

Julia Lambricht uses egg tempera in her paintings.

sunset.

"She sees possibilities and she cannot escape," Lambricht said. "She was very beautiful, like a model. Yellow symbolizes light and life and also aging and illness. For me, it was almost a healing medium."

In contrast, the tangled trees and butterscotch light beams of her diptych "Flourishing Night of Green Thoughts" (2021) captures a jungle in the moonlight, redolent of jasmine blooms.

"It's not a strategic plan," Lambricht said of her compositions. She sketches her work directly on her cotton canvas on panel.

"Sometimes it is dictated from above," she added.

"Purple Butterfly" (2021) emerged during the pandemic lockdown, when all she could see were the plants growing inside her studio.

"So many people got depressed, but I was scared," Lambricht said. "I started thinking about today and now and not so much worrying about the past. The plants are a metaphor for my life."

When she first flew into the



COURTESY OF GALLERY HÓZHÓ

"Albina," Julia Lambricht, egg tempera on panel, 2021

Albuquerque International Sunport, she was shocked by the sight of the vast desert.

She has since learned to love chile. "What I like most about New

Mexico is I loved when people were friendly to me," she said. "I was very welcomed here."