



“Thistle Mandala”

Watercolor on paper, colored pencil, 23k gold leaf, 23 ½” x 23 ½”

Elantu Veovode

Born 12/13/48, Two Gray Hills, NM, United States

Elantu Veovode bought her first work of art at the age of eight and began collecting art books shortly thereafter. Her mother, who was born in Russia, raised her in a variety of locales, including British Columbia, Colorado and an Indian reservation in New Mexico, with forays to such exotic locations as Alaska, NY and Montreal. Influenced by numerous family members and friends who immigrated to America as well as Native American family, she began developing her view of the world at an early age. She was home-schooled and developed a keen interest in many subjects. She began working at 17 and eventually got a degree in Slavic Linguistics from the University of Texas, but began her life’s work in the arts in 1969 under the tutelage of Inuit artist Aggeak Quakjuk, with whom she studied for two years. In 1986 she won a grant to study at Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Poland, where she focused on the topic of Pre-Christian Elements in Eastern European Folk Art. Her work is owned by many private collectors and has been displayed at the Helen Day Art Museum of Stowe, VT and Valdosta State University Library. She is the author of two books, *The Contented Poacher: Tales and Recipes from a Epicure in the Wilderness* (2003) and *Eclipse* (2011). She is presently enrolled in Art classes at Valdosta State University in order to learn techniques she has not previously mastered. Elantu donated this piece to the Valdosta State University Archives and Special Collections in 2013 after an exhibit of her work appeared in Odum Library.

Elantu draws and paints small, brightly colored works on paper because she has a limited range of vision. Legally blind, she was born with tunnel vision that allows her a small, but detailed window on the world. Although she depicts plants, animals, and angels, she is most identified with her paintings of knotwork mandalas, distinctly Celtic in design, that incorporate flowers, animals, birds, insects, musical instruments, and the Greenman into their design. They are made by first drawing the design onto the paper with India ink and allowing it to dry overnight, then applying the first layer of permanent color and allowing it to dry. Subsequent layers of colored ink are then washed over the color to create spaces. If gold leaf is going to be used, it will be added a day after the colors have dried. Finally, colored pencil or a wax transfer is added last and blended in for highlights. The final effect is stunning and mesmerizing to viewers. Her works are available as prints, limited edition gold leaf prints and paintings.

Quite likely the reason her paintings appeal is because they have deeper foundations than is apparent on the surface: “Many of Veovode’s works are based on mathematics, repeating motifs, knots based on a prime number and non-linear equations. Some of her more recent work incorporates images from physics and string theory.”

“The use of plants and animals in my designs defines my work. I begin with the zoomorphs, arranged in a pleasing mathematical relationship to one another, and then design the knotwork to complement the figures. In many cases, the knotwork is designed to describe movement associated with the animal.” (Elantu Veovode, 2013 interview)