

## MY OTHER ART

By Michael Andriaccio

From birth, I had the great fortune to be exposed to music and art. They were the air that I breathed. I was the youngest in a musical family. My parents were both accomplished musicians and my older sister, Diane, studied piano for many years. I would sit on the floor under our grand piano as my mother would coach my sister on the keyboard, preparing her for her lessons. I chose my lineage well! My grandfather's name was Michelangelo Andriaccio, and my father was Angelo Andriaccio—a truly gifted musician who played the vibes for a stint with Tommy Dorsey.

My mother sent me to the renowned Albright Knox Art Gallery for art lessons when I was seven—I loved drawing and painting. Until I had to make a choice for college, music and art were neck and neck. I chose music with Art History as a minor and from the ages of 20 to 63, I had not had a second to touch a brush. Functioning as a visual artist was something that I truly missed, but the duo career with my incredibly gifted wife and musical partner, Joanne Castellani, was in full steam, which kept us constantly on the road, with total focus on the guitar duo.

In music and in visual art, I have always been a classicist. Form, structure, and discipline were my cornerstones for creativity and expression. The Italian baroque masters were my mentors. I hesitate to describe my work, as labels are always imposed after the fact. I see most of life's images as classically composed structures of balance and symmetry,

forever beckoning to the human form. The guitar is as close to the human form as one can get, and to play it, one must embrace it.

My reading material was quite eclectic, but I kept going back to the notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci, Leonard Bernstein's *The Unanswered Question: Six Talks at Harvard*, Stravinsky's *The Poetics of Music*, and writings of Paul Hindemith. The correlation of music and art was ever-present in these tomes, and the fortunate, personal work Joanne and I experienced with the likes of Morton Feldman, Lejaren Hiller, and Aaron Copland kept us abreast of the dynamic art world of the early '70s as it spilled into the world of music (Mark Rothko, Andy Warhol, et al.).

Then, in 2013, Joanne and I took a real vacation and spent two weeks in Paris. That's all it took to bring me back to the canvass... the Orsay, the Rodin... Paris itself!!!!

Color is the icing on the cake—the expression of light, from black nothingness to the white that embodies all color. Everything in between is a specific tool that has a purpose and a place.





### Persephone Escapes

This is my masterwork. My obsession with the Italian renaissance and my inseparable connection to the guitar made this painting requisite. We all see and hear the guitar externally, but for me a world has always existed deep within that box. In this image, it's the underworld dominated by Pluto, who abducted Persephone. Persephone was the daughter of Zeus, the latter depicted here by my youthful rendition of a Da Vinci figure, looking down upon the escape of my Berniniesque Persephone from that underworld. The fingerboard is the ladder leading from the sound hole—Persephone's only passage to freedom—*la scala* that harkens to the distant landscapes of Italian renaissance painting and architecture.





### Ghostly Consort

This work brought me back to classic antiquity and is a minimal representation of my early exposure to classic forms, structure, color, and my propensity to express them in some artistic context, be it musical or visual. The image is an instrumental and social statement, an allusion to the timeless sociality of music and ensemble playing. For me, creativity is the natural release of life's requisite structure and discipline in all art forms... and life in general (suggested reading: Igor Stravinsky, *The Poetics of Music*).



### Crying with Laughter

I have always been obsessed with the congruity of the human form and the instruments that have emanated from it. As light in nature as this work is, it is a representation of my incredible life with my duo partner and soul mate, Joanne Castellani...two players who become one joyful instrument. I envisioned two torsos, two guitars and sound holes, two eyes, and one nose. What could be better than two guitars, two torsos, one laughing face and a colorful synthesis that looks at you...and plays WITH you?





### Two Guitar Sunset

I do not regard this piece as a component of my “art” output. I painted this as a decor piece for a tropical vacation property. It’s what I call my “Box Store Accent Series.” Mundane as it may be, it is still personal (two guitars) and speaks to my seminal affinity for the guitar and the notion that the sound hole of the instrument is the radiant source for all of life’s good things that project out to the universe.



### Sacromonte: La Flamenca

Andalucía...the guitar, the human form, so analogous, so inseparable...where else can you find the communion of music, dance, song, life's tribulations, life's jubilation, color and folklore, than in the hills above Granada, called Sacromonte? I could not resist the sympathetic kinesis of the guitar and the dancer in their reflexive movements expressed in the colors I so vividly recall.



