

# Artist Maryam Alakbarli's Unlimited Appeal

Maryam Alakbarli, a talented French painter with Down syndrome, makes her Miami Art Week debut at AQUA Miami art fair which returns to the AQUA Hotel at Collins Avenue for its 13<sup>th</sup> year today. What sets this fair apart from the rest is the fact that the hotel empties each room of its décor and transforms them into carefully designed showrooms for 52 galleries to exhibit their artists' work until December 10<sup>th</sup>.

The Paris-based Alakbarli's work, which includes drawings, acrylics and oil on canvas, are featured at the BP Project gallery booth. The 26-year old artist was born in Baku, Azerbaijan, and since childhood, her parents and friends encouraged her to express herself, first by music and singing, then art. After studying art in Baku and then in Moscow, she took classes at Arts Déco and Beaux-Arts in Paris.

Since 2010, Maryam's works have been featured in 27 shows in 13 countries. Her first sale came in October 2016 and since then she has sold 24 paintings, often to celebrity collectors, including John Travolta, Steven Soderbergh, Juliette Binoche and Michael Douglas. She's a natural in the spotlight and has been featured on multiple France TV News segments. Actress Juliette Binoche has said, "If some talk of art as therapy for Maryam, I would say it is she who is healing us. Maryam is a young artist of great promise."

Gerard Depardieu, also a respected French art collector, purchased "*Composition 12*", an acrylic on canvas, for \$20,000 in November 2017. Moved by her work, he and placed her canvas between a Sam Francis and a Picasso in his living room.

The artist is 95% non-verbal, and expresses herself with difficulty, except through her painting. Not every piece she starts will be “finished” but she usually spends an hour or two on a canvas while others may take her several days. Her technique, colors, and emotions are constantly changing depending on what surrounds her.

Her studio in Paris is near the Luxembourg Gardens and she often finds inspiration for new pieces. She also visits museums and can stay in front of a Monet, a Van Gough or a Picasso for hours; the great masters fascinate her.

It’s an emotional experience to witness collectors being seduced by Maryam’s paintings without knowing the artist has Down syndrome. Viewers continue to be fascinated by her work once they find out. Her artwork is not “simple” and is not “understood” by all. Annabel de Boysson, of the team that accompanies Maryam and helps spread the word about her work, recalls that in the last hour of the CONTEXT New York art fair, two men were struck by two canvases of Maryam’s. “One of them had such a strong emotion that he almost cried,” Annabel says. The two had spent their budget for the fair but once they learned about Maryam’s story, they immediately bought both paintings.



