

# RIK LINA

Valkenburg - The Netherlands - 1942

RIK LINA



Germ of Illusion, 2003, acrylic paint on canvas, 100 x 75 cm. © Rik Lina. Courtesy of the artist.



Durró - Vodou Still life, 2003, acrylic paint on canvas, 100 x 80 cm. © Rik Lina. Courtesy of the artist.



Bodies Opened by Fire, 2013, acrylic, pastels, canvas, 200 x 300 cm. © Rik Lina. Courtesy of the artist.

Judging by Lina's dynamic brush technique, his bright palette and his cosmopolitan orientation as an artist, one would not easily determine that he is born and educated in

The Netherlands and that his main studio is still located in Amsterdam. He is active as a painter, a lithographer, a calligrapher, a collagist and as a promoter of automatic collective painting. He received his professional training at the Amsterdam Rietveld Academy from 1960 till 1965.

The Rietveld was in those years the sole art school in The Netherlands that had renounced to traditional academism, and that was open to avant-garde ideas; because of this, Lina had chosen the Rietveld, to find soon however that the only avant-garde taught in the school was Bauhaus: pure abstraction and constructivism. Nevertheless, Lina had the opportunity there to obtain a thorough command of pictorial and graphic techniques; his artistic orientation and esthetic choices were acquired individually. While most of his fellow students felt attracted by new tendencies of those years such as Fluxus and Pop Art, Lina found his initial inspiration rather in popular comics and science fiction fantasies, and also in the colorful imagery of the “Beat generation” and “counter culture” movements of California that had just reached Europe.

Apart from his, he was fascinated by ethnic and pre-historical art, and became a regular visitor of the rich anthropological museum in museums in Amsterdam, Leyden and Rotterdam. He liked the free brush techniques of the lyrical expressionist painters of the Cobra movement such as Karel Appel and Lucebert, who began to get recognition in the sixties. Lina felt a great affinity with their gesturing way of painting. At the same time, he studied classic Chinese and Japanese painting thanks to his interest in Zen philosophy that the “counter culture” movement had made accessible. Lina’s early work combines the spontaneous action of lyric expressionism with the calligraphic sophistication of oriental masters.

## **Surrealism, automatism and collective creation**

Monographs on the graphic and painted work of Max Ernst that appeared in the 1960s revealed to Lina an artist to whom he felt immediately congenial. Lina had not liked surrealism before; it was for him an art style associated with Salvador Dalí, and he abhorred it. As an out-and-out individualist, he was skeptic about the usefulness of organized group activities in art such as the group of the French surrealist movement. However, the spectacular visual experiments and the esthetic freedom of Ernst's paintings, frottage's and collages did inspire him more than anything else. It took several years before he could see Ernst's works in reality. The first Ernst exhibition in Holland was held in 1970 at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. Ernst's work acted as a convincing manifesto for Lina; he understood from it that surrealism is a *état d'esprit*, a free state of the mind, and not an *esprit de corps*, a disciplined group mentality. Lina's 'discovery' of the works of Latin-American surrealists Matta and Lam was brought about in the same period by exhibitions in the same Amsterdam 'Stedelijk', in 1964 and 1967 respectively. Their palette and compositions had a lasting appeal to him.

In 1968, Lina met Dutch poet Laurens Vancrevel, who had commented on articles Lina had published about Max Ernst and Zen, and they discussed the principles of surrealism at length. In 1969, Lina joined the project of the small Dutch *Brumes Blondes* group to organize an international exhibition of contemporary surrealism in The Hague, and he designed its catalogue. From that date on, Lina has participated thereupon in many Dutch and international surrealist activities and

publications. (7°)

Vancrevel, who was the Dutch correspondent of the international experimental arts movement *Phases*, which was associated with André Breton's surrealist group and animated by the poet Édouard Jaguer, did introduce Lina to Jaguer's dealers circuits. Jaguer did invite Lina to participate in the Phases exhibition in Lima, Peru, 1973, that was held in honor of the great Peruvian surrealist poet César Moro; in later years Lina took part in many other exhibitions of the Phases movement, in France, Belgium, Portugal, Sweden, Chile, Brazil.



Rik Lina - Bonaire 1976

As from his student years, Lina was an avid traveller, first to Spain, Turkey and North-African and Middle Eastern countries, and later to Latin-American countries and the Caribbean's. On Bonaire, one of the Antillean islands, Lina fell in love with the rich tropical underwater life in extended coral reefs, and he decided to paint that wonder world. He

settles there during several lengthy periods between 1975 and 2008, logging more than a thousand scuba-dives.

Through *Brumes Blondes*, Lina made contact with the Portuguese surrealists Mário Cesariny and Cruzeiro Seixas, who instantly got a high opinion of Lina's work. Cesariny wrote on Lina's paintings: "(They) may remind us indeed a little of Matta and of Lam as well – but you must look at the way he uses his colors. More than anything else, this is truly a Rik Lina in its full splendor." (1°+7°) In 1984, Lina took part in the international exhibition of surrealism and fantastic art in Lisbon, organized by Cesariny.

In 1990, he founded the international journal *Droomschaar* ("Scissors of dreams") It had contributions from Rikki Ducornet, Edouard Jaguer, Philip West, Adrien Dax, Joyce Mansour, Raul Henao, Eugenio Granell, Guy Girard, John Welson, and many more, and it published an important special issue on automatism. Together with a couple of *Droomschaar*-collaborators: the Chilean painters Jorge Leal Labrin and Fredy Flores Knistoff, the Canadian Dave Bobroske, and the Argentinean Miguel Lohlé, he created the CAPA group (Collective Automatic Painting Amsterdam), based on the surrealist principle of psychic automatism. Automatic practice in art was further developed in collective CAPA sessions during the 1990s. (2°)

Lina has formulated his personal ideas on 'living' automatism. He linked it to the working of hazard in the forces of nature:

*"In the present stage of its development, automatism needs to*

*be linked again to its roots, and these originate from nature. Automatism as an essential aspect of surrealism in art was begun as the systematic exploration of techniques, but it has lapsed gradually to repetition of some esthetical results. However, living automatism is based on a thorough research into forms and structures of the natural environment itself, in order to study the analogies and the metamorphoses in the animal and vegetal universes, and to look for surprising new connections, by which the unknown regions of our mind can be explored.”(8°)*

The Brazilian artist and poet Sergio Lima praised Lina's approach: “Because of this, he escapes from all fashions in art and thereby from ‘art for art’s sake’.”(5°)

The Argentinean art historian Silvia Valdés observed the strong resemblance between Lina and Wifredo in their practice of automatism: “What Wifredo Lam's work links to that of Rik Lina is a similar profound symbology of image and matter in their creations... The working of hazard in the act of drawing and the development of their shapes are similar with both artists; this similarity is surely due to the fact that both make use of surrealist automatism.”(6°)

Since 2007, Lina works semi-permanently in the Mondego region of Portugal, at the Atlantic coast. Together with poet Miguel de Carvalho he founded *Cabo Mondego Section of Portuguese Surrealism*, aimed at collective creation of art and poetry by means of psychic automatism. Together with other Portuguese and visiting surrealist friends this group has organized a number of successful exhibitions and public

sessions of automatic collective creation.

Lina has co-curated and organized three large international exhibitions of surrealism in Portugal: *O reverso de olhar* ('The other side of seeing') in Coimbra 2008, *A vos dos espehos* ('The voice in the mirror') in Lisbon 2008, and *Iluminações descontinuas* ('Discontinuous illuminations') in Lagoa 2009, followed in 2016 the international exhibition of surrealist collages *À luz dos castelos envidraçados* ('In the light of glazed castles') in Figueira da Foz.

Lina is a regular collaborator of many surrealist journals all over the world: from *Brumes Blondes and Droomschaar* (The Netherlands), *Phases* (France), *Punto Seguido* (Colombia), *Derrame* (Chile), *Supérieur Inconnu* (France), *Phospor* (England), *L'Humbo* (France), *Debout sur l'œuf* (Portugal), *Hydrolith and Peculiar Mormyrid* (USA), *A Phala* (Brazil), *La vertèbre et le rossignol* and *The Oystercatcher* (Canada) and more. The presence of his work in many publications and exhibitions has made him one of the most cosmopolitan names of contemporary surrealism.



DARWINS LEGACY 2010 - oil paint on linen - 140x185cm.

## **Characteristics of Lina's work**

Lina is a prolific artist who displays a remarkable variety of works: oil and acryl paintings, watercolors and gouaches, brush and pencil drawings, frottages and collages, decalcomanias and assemblages, and every other experimental technique, surrealist or not. His canvasses vary in size from very refined and detailed little canvases till huge works of over 300 cm. An essential part of his art are works on paper, that can be distinguished in all kind of free drawings in black and white and in colors, often on Tibetan or Japanese handmade paper, and on the other hand his sketch books, in many of which he has also written down between his sketches sudden ideas and poetic observations during the act of

drawing, and small essays. His masterly lithographic prints date from the 1960s and 1970s, later again beginning of 2000, when he disposed of his own professional press and of a large supply of original printing stones.

His imagery has developed from the fantastic, magical, super-natural reality in the early 1960s to the intense compositions that resulted from discovery journeys into the underwater world of the tropical coral reef sea in the 1970s and 1980s. The unexpected ravishing movements of weeds, fishes and coral, jellyfish, anemones and the many other sea creatures, and the currents below the surface of the sea, the spectacular mirroring and the distortions of visual shapes in the filtered deeps – all this was a nearly inexhaustible source of new inspiration.

Lina's scope on the underwater marvels did broaden in the 1990s to a concentrated study into the powers of nature, of suggesting by painting the dreamlike habitats in the rain forest of the Caribbean mountain jungles, the psychic processes that are being unchained while listening the rhythms of jazz or by experiencing voodoo rituals. (4°)

Next to the mainstream of his imagery, he also made many homages (sometimes hidden) to his congenial masters: Ernst, Lam, Matta, Masson, Chirico, to mention only the most prominent ones. For example, the canvas called *Heart Source, 1979*, is clearly a very Linean greeting to Matta's work; and *Maré Subita (Riptide), 2004*, is a strong Matta-like underwater vision but without any immediate model in Matta's paintings.

*Desert Rose, 1974*, is a really Ernstian fatamorgana, while the

large canvas *Free Jazz, 2007*, seems to represent a wood of motives that are neighboring Ernst's paintings of landscapes: it seems a colorful play of three lively constellations, consisting of a symbiosis of animal and vegetal forms; the light and the colors of each of those forms seem to vary rhythmically their shapes, to make a swinging musical whole with the other two constellations.

*Ariadne, 1982*, looks like a drowned labyrinth filled by reflections of Chiricoan arcades in the background; there is no Minotaur to be seen, just the specter of Ariadne, the disquieting muse, in the center of the scene; her head has the shape of a alchemical egg, a thread is wound around it; a hidden sea monster threatens to swallow it; Ariadne tries to hold her floating dreams up the shatters of a mirror.

*Vigirima, 1979*, shows magical transformations that seem to echo Wifredo Lam's creations, while *Bird Song, 1999*, has a colorful rhythm that is not unlike Lam's painted Antillian songs. The large canvas *The Anvil and the Angel, 2009*, with its mannequin-like details remind inevitably to Chirico's enigma's of melancholy, but here they turned tropical.

The Spanish art historian Miguel Corrales characterized Lina as follows: "Since a few decades, Lina deploys one of the most audacious oeuvres of contemporary art ... Lina has taken one of the most fruitful, lasting and inspired ventures ... that show the alchemic beauty of automatism, which in essence is nothing else than the return of nature's voice to our deepest self." (3°)

**Laurens Vancrevel**

**(“The International Encyclopedia of Surrealism” Bloomsbury Publishing U.K. 2019)**

## **References**

- 1°-Cesariny, Mário (1990), quote from a letter dated September 7, 1990, published in: Mario Cesariny, *Um rio à beira do rio*, Fundação Cupertino de Miranda, VN Famalicão, 2017.
- 2°-Corrales, José Miguel Pérez (2011), ‘Rik Lina’, in: Corrales, *Caleidoscopio surrealista*, LaPagina, Tenerife, 2016, 420-422.
- 3°-Corrales, José Miguel Pérez (2014), ‘Rik Lina’, in: José Miguel Pérez Corrales, *Surrealismo: El oro del tiempo*, Vol 1, LaPagina, Tenerife, 2016, 10-16.
- 4°-Corrales, José Miguel Pérez (2016), ‘Rik Lina y las texturas de la imaginación’, in: José Miguel Pérez Corrales, *Surrealismo: El oro del tiempo*, Vol 2, Archibrazo, Tenerife, 2016, 311-318.
- 5°-Lima, Sergio (2007), ‘Rik Lina para dizer automatismo’, in: *Rik Lina – Enxertos*, Debut sur l’œuf, Coimbra, 2007, 17.
- 6°-Valdés, Sylvia (2005), ‘Wifredo Lam y Rik Lina: vuelo y azar’, in: catalogue *Rik Lina, Jungla Caribeña*, Fundación Eugenio Granell, Santiago de Compostela, 2005, 9-14.
- 7°-Vancrivel, Laurens (2015), ‘The privileged domains of Rik Lina’, in: catalogue *Rik Lina – Texturas da Imaginação*, Fundação Cupertino de Miranda, VN Famalicão, 2015, 10-17.
- 8°-Rik Lina (1993) Sketchbook Saba, Dutch Caribbean

## **Illustrated monographs**

*Rik Lina – Enxertos*. Debut sur l’œuf, Coimbra, 2007. (texts by M. de Carvalho, S. Lima, A. Cruzeiro Seixas *et al.*; about Lina’s assemblages)

*Rik Lina – A bigorna e o anjo.* Debut sur l'œuf, Coimbra, 2009. (texts by M. de Carvalho, R. Lina *et al.*, about his large canvases)

*Rik Lina – Multiversum.* KadeKunst, Amsterdam, 2012. (texts by R. Lina, L. Vancrevel *et al.*, about the development of his work)

*Rik Lina – Het avontuur van tekenen.* KadeKunst, Amsterdam, 2015. (text by R. Lina, about his pen-, pencil- and brush drawings, poems by Jan Bervoets)

*Rik Lina - Paintings 1982-1989,* Arthouse Productions, Huizen, 1989. (text by L. Vancrevel, E. Jaguer *et al.*)

### **Paintings named in the text:**



***DESERT ROSE, 1972*** - tempera and oil-paint on linen - 100x150cm. (39x59 inch)



*HEART SOURCE*, 1977 - tempera and oil-paint on linen - 110x140cm. (43x55 inch)



*VIGIRIMA*, 1979 - tempera and oil-paint on linen - 116x89cm. (46x39 inch)  
(private collection Saba - Dutch Caribbean))



***ARIADNE (Homage to De Chirico), 1982*** - tempera and oil-paint on linen - 116x89cm.  
(46x39 inch)  
(private collection The Netherlands)



*BIRDSONG, 1999* - tempera and oil-paint on linen 190x250cm. ( 6x8 feet)



*MARE SUBITA (Riptide)*, 2004 - oil-paint on linen - 140x180cm. (55x72 inch)



***FREE JAZZ, 2007*** - oil-paint on linen - 190x250cm. (6x8 feet)



***THE ANVIL AND THE ANGEL, 2009*** - pastels and acrylic paint on canvas - 245x400cm. (8x13 feet)



Laurens Vancrevel & Rik Lina - Amsterdam 2017

**Paintings reproduced in the Encyclopedia:**



***DARWINS LEGACY 2010*** - oil-paint on linen - 140x185cm. (55x73 inch)



***GERM OF ILLUSION 2003*** - acrylic paint on canvas - 100x75cm. (39x29 inch)



***OUMFO - VODOU STILL-LIFE 2003*** - acrylic paint on canvas - 100x80cm. (39x32 inch)



***BODIES OPENED BY FIRE 2010*** - acrylic paint and pigments on canvas - 250x400cm.  
(8x13 feet)

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Myth is at the heart of Limbour's writing, as Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron has shown. Among other examples, the African fable *Histoire de famille* provides the proof. The magic in it is latent. But for those who open their eyes, our very world contains magical objects, like the crystal flowing, in the course of a single sentence, from the Salzburg mines to Dubuffet's paintings: "It seems to me that Dubuffet uses the human face as that small dead and black branch of which Stendhal spoke, which fell into a salt mine, weighed down with crystals, and changing its nature, and became a magical object" (2013: 1,086).

If we go back to André Breton's writings about painting in the light of those of Limbour, we will be surprised to see how much they share, meeting at a point that is simply one of poetry, a point where images arise, like the sails in Rimbaud's poem "Dawn." And in Breton's discussion of germination in Masson's paintings ("Prestige of André Masson," 1929), we gain a sense of an amazing affinity with Limbour's reflections on his friend Masson's work in the numerous texts he penned about him (see 2013: 576).

Françoise NICOL

### Further Reading

Nicol, Françoise (2014). *Georges Limbour, l'aventure critique*. Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes.

### Works by Limbour

Fiction: *L'illustre cheval blanc* (1930); *La Pie voleuse* (1930); *Contes et récits* (1935); *Les Vanilliers* (1938); *La Chasse au mérou* (1963); *Les Espagnols à Venise* (1966); *Soleils bas, suivi de poèmes, de contes et de récits 1919-1968* (1972); *Le Carnaval et les civilisés* (1986).

Writings on painting: *André Masson et son univers*, with Michel Leiris (1947); *André Masson dessins* (1951); *Tableau bon levain, à vous de cuire la pâte; L'Art brut de Jean Dubuffet* (1953); *André Beaudin* (1961); *Hayter* (1962); *Spectateur des arts: Écrits sur la peinture, 1924-1969* (2013).

### Works by Limbour in English

4 Stories, trans. Iain White. London: Atlas Press, 1995.

## RIK LINA (VALKENBURG, NETHERLANDS, 1942)

Judging by Rik Lina's dynamic brush technique, his bright palette, and his cosmopolitan orientation as an

artist, one would not easily guess that he was born and educated in the Netherlands, and that his main studio is still located in Amsterdam. He is active as a painter, a lithographer, a calligrapher, a collagist, and as a promoter of automatic collective painting. He received his professional training at the Amsterdam Rietveld Academy from 1960 till 1965; in those years the Rietveld was the only art school in the Netherlands not tied to traditional academism and was open to avant-garde ideas. This was why Lina chose the Rietveld, but he soon found that the only avant-garde taught in the school was Bauhaus: pure abstraction and constructivism. Nevertheless, the academy gave Lina the opportunity to obtain a thorough command of pictorial and graphic techniques. His artistic orientation and aesthetic choices arose from his own individual investigations. Most of his fellow students were attracted by the new tendencies of those years like Fluxus and Pop Art; Lina, however, found his initial inspiration rather in popular comics and science-fiction fantasies, and also in the colorful imagery of the Beat generation and counterculture movements of California that had just reached Europe. Apart from this, he was fascinated by ethnic and prehistoric art, and became a regular visitor to the rich anthropological collections in the Amsterdam, Leyden, and Rotterdam museums. He liked the free brush techniques of the lyrical expressionist painters of the Cobra movement such as Karel Appel and Lucebert, who were beginning to gain recognition in the 1960s. Lina felt a great affinity with their gestural way of painting. At the same time, he studied classic Chinese and Japanese painting, following up his interest in Zen philosophy that had been made accessible to him by the counterculture movement. Lina's early work combines the spontaneous action of lyric expressionism with the calligraphic sophistication of Oriental masters.

### Surrealism, Automatism, and Collective Creation

Monographs on the graphic and painted work of Max Ernst that appeared in the 1960s revealed to Lina an artist with whom he immediately felt an affinity. Lina hadn't previously liked surrealism; it was for him an art style associated with Salvador Dalí, and he abhorred it. As an out-and-out individualist, he was skeptical about the usefulness of organized group activity in art as characterized by the group of the French surrealist movement. However, the spectacular visual experiments and the aesthetic freedom of Ernst's



Rik Lina in Bonaire, 1976.  
Photographer unknown. Courtesy of the artist

paintings, *frottages*, and collages inspired him more than anything else. He wasn't able to see Ernst's works in person for several years, for the first Ernst exhibition in Holland was only held in 1970 at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. Ernst's work offered Lina a convincing program; he understood that surrealism is an *état d'esprit*, a free state of the mind, and not an *esprit de corps*, a disciplined group mentality. Lina's "discovery" of the works of Latin-American surrealists Matta and Wifredo Lam came about earlier through exhibitions in the same Amsterdam Stedelijk, in 1964 and 1967 respectively. Their palette and compositions had a lasting appeal to him.

In 1968, Lina met Dutch poet Laurens Vancrevel, who commented on articles Lina had published about Ernst and Zen, and they discussed the principles of

surrealism at length. In 1969, Lina joined the small Dutch *Brumes Blondes* group and took part in the organization of an international exhibition of contemporary surrealism in The Hague, for which he designed its catalog. Since then, Lina has participated in many Dutch and international surrealist activities and publications (Vancrevel, 2015).

Vancrevel was the Dutch correspondent of the international experimental arts movement *Phases*, which was associated with André Breton's surrealist group, and he introduced Lina to the poet Édouard Jaguer, the movement's animator. Jaguer invited Lina to participate in the *Phases* exhibition held in Lima, Peru, in 1973, held in honor of the great Peruvian surrealist poet César Moro; in later years Lina took part in many other exhibitions of the *Phases* movement, in France, Belgium, Portugal, Sweden, Chile, and Brazil.

From his student years, Lina had been an avid traveler, first to Spain, Turkey, North Africa, and the Middle East, and later to Latin-American countries and the Caribbean. He fell in love with the rich tropical underwater life in extended coral reefs off Bonaire, one of the Antillean islands, and decided to paint that wonder world. He spent several lengthy periods living there between 1975 and 2008, logging up more than a thousand scuba dives.

Vancrevel showed Lina's work to his friends, the Portuguese surrealists Mário Cesariny and Cruzeiro Seixas, who instantly formed a high opinion of his work. Cesariny sent Vancrevel a letter about Lina's paintings: "[They] may remind us indeed a little of Matta and of Lam as well—but you must look at the way he uses his colors. More than anything else, this is truly a Rik Lina in its full splendor" (Cesariny, 1990). In 1984, Lina took part in the international exhibition of surrealism and fantastic art in Lisbon, organized by Cesariny.

In 1990, he founded the international journal *Droomschaar* (Dreamscissors). It included contributions from Rikki Ducornet, Édouard Jaguer, Philip West, Adrien Dax, Joyce Mansour, Raúl Henao, Eugenio Granell, Guy Girard, John Welson, and many more, and published an important special issue on automatism. Together with a few *Droomschaar* collaborators—the Chilean painters Jorge Leal Labrin and Fredy Flores Kristoff, the Canadian Dave Bobroske, and the Argentinean Miguel Lohlé—he created the CAPA group (Collective Automatic Painting Amsterdam), based on the surrealist principle of psychic automatism. Automatic practice in art was further developed in collective CAPA sessions during the 1990s.

In the 1990s, Lina developed his personal ideas about "living" automatism; he linked it to the working out of chance in the forces of nature. In a short text written in one of his sketchbooks, he formulated this as follows:

Automatism as an essential aspect of surrealism in art was begun as the systematic exploration of techniques, but it has lapsed gradually to repetition of aesthetical results. However, living automatism is based on thorough research into the forms and structures of the natural environment itself, in order to study the analogies and the metamorphoses in the animal and vegetal universes, and to look for surprising new connections, by which the unknown regions of our mind can be explored.

Lina, 1993

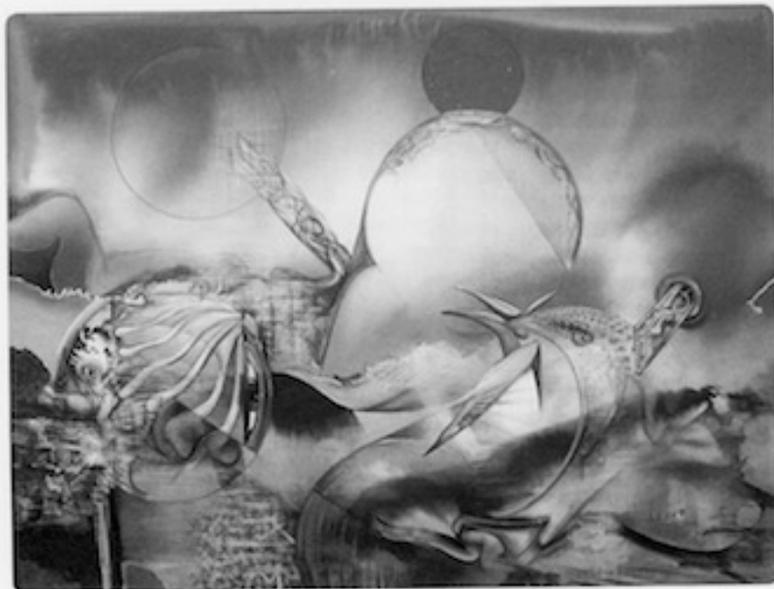
The Brazilian artist and poet Sergio Lima praised Lina's approach: "Because of this, he escapes from all fashions in art and thereby from 'art for art's sake'" (Lima, 2007: 17).

The Argentinean art historian Sylvia Valdés observed the strong resemblance between Lina and Wifredo Lam in their practice of automatism: "What links Wifredo Lam's work to that of Rik Lina is a similarly profound symbolic association of image and matter in their creations . . . The working of chance in the act of drawing and the development of their shapes are similar with both artists; this similarity is surely due to the fact that both make use of surrealist automatism" (Valdés, 2005: 33).

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Lina is a regular contributor to many surrealist journals all over the world, from *Brumes Blondes* (the Netherlands), *Phases* (France), and *Droomschaar* (the Netherlands) to



*Darwin's Legacy*, 2010, oil paint on linen, 140 x 185 cm. © Rik Lina. Courtesy of the artist.

*Derrame* (Chile), *Supérieur Inconnu* (France), *Phosphor* (England), *Debout sur l'aéuf* (Portugal), *Hydrolyth* (U.S.A.), *A Phala* (Brazil), and more. The presence of his work in many publications and exhibitions has made him one of the most cosmopolitan names in contemporary surrealism.

### Characteristics of Lina's work

Lina is a prolific artist who works in a remarkable variety of media: oil and acrylic paintings; watercolors and gouaches; brush and pencil drawings; frottages and collages; decalcomanias and assemblages; and many experimental techniques. His canvases vary in size from very refined and detailed little canvases to large works of over 400 cm. A major part of his art consists of works on paper, constituted on the one hand by all kind of free drawings in black and white and in color, often on Tibetan or Japanese handmade paper, and on the other hand by his sketchbooks, many of which contain ideas, poetic observations, and even short essays that have come to him during the act of drawing. His masterly lithographic prints date from the 1960s and 1970s, something to which he returned in 2000.

His imagery has developed from the depiction of fantastic, magical, supernatural reality in the early 1960s

to the intense compositions that resulted from journeys of discovery into the underwater world of the tropical coral reef sea in the 1970s and 1980s. The unexpected ravishing movements of weeds, fishes and coral, jelly-fish, anemones, and many other sea creatures, and the currents below the surface of the sea, the spectacular mirroring and the distortions of visual shapes in the filtered deeps—all this offered an almost inexhaustible source of fresh inspiration.

Lina's work broadened in the 1990s as his research into underwater marvels led to a more concentrated study of the powers of nature. This engendered painting redolent of dreamlike habitats in the rain forest of the Caribbean mountain jungles, whilst also depicting the psychic processes being released while listening to the rhythms of jazz or by experiencing voodoo rituals. He also made many (sometimes veiled) homages to those he regards as his congenial masters: Ernst, Lam, Matta, Masson, and de Chirico, to mention only the most prominent. For example, the canvas called *Heart Source* (1979) is clearly a very Linean salutation to Matta, and *Maré subita* (2004) is also a strongly Matta-like exploration of underwater vision, even if it has no immediate model in Matta's paintings. *Desert Rose* (1974) is a kind of Ernstian *fata morgana*, while the large canvas *Free Jazz* (2007) seems to represent motifs that

recall Ernst's paintings of landscapes: its colorful interplay of three lively constellations, consisting of a symbiosis of animal and vegetal forms, and the light and colors of each of these forms as they seem to vary their shapes rhythmically, makes a musical whole with the other two constellations.

*Ariadne*, a work from 1982, appears like a drowned labyrinth with reflections of de Chirico's arcades in the background; there is no Minotaur to be seen, just the fragmented body of Ariadne, resembling a disquieting muse, in the center of the scene. Her head has the shape of an alchemical egg, with a thread wound around it; Ariadne holds her floating dreams up to a shattered mirror.

In contrast, *Vigirima* (1979) depicts magical transformations that seem to echo Wilfredo Lam's creations, while *Bird Song* (1999) has a colorful rhythm not unlike Lam's painted Antillean songs. The large canvas *The Anvil and the Angel* (2009), with its mannequin-like details, inevitably reminds us of de Chirico's enigmas of melancholy, but here they have assumed a tropical form.

The Spanish art historian Miguel Corrales characterized Lina's work as follows: "Over several decades, Lina has created one of the most audacious oeuvres of contemporary art . . . Lina has embarked upon a very fruitful, lasting and inspired venture . . . to show the alchemical beauty of automatism, which in essence is nothing other than the return of nature's voice to our deepest self" (Corrales, 2014: 11).

Laurens VANCREVEL

### Further Reading

Corrales, José Miguel Pérez (2011). "Rik Lina." In José Miguel Pérez Corrales, *Caleidoscopio surrealista*. Tenerife: LaPagina, 420–2.

Corrales, José Miguel Pérez (2016). "Rik Lina y las texturas de la imaginación." In José Miguel Pérez Corrales, *Surrealismo: El oro del tiempo 2*: 311–18.

## ANTÓNIO MARIA LISBOA (LISBON, 1928–1953)

António Maria Lisboa was a Portuguese writer. He is proof of how surrealism would continue to inspire young minds. Not only did the movement offer Lisboa a



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