

DAVID J. MARCHI: Break on Through

June 28 - October 19, 2025



Lyman Allyn Art Museum

INTRODUCTION

by Sam Quigley, Director

Perception is one of the pillars of art. It starts with the way the artist perceives the world. As the artist creates and perceives the work, how it evolves and how it is transformed is an unknowable process until it finally reflects the artist's intent. Then it is the viewer's turn, for what we see and feel is a matter of perception based on our own background and our openness to experiencing the work. After that, the perception of the work by others, perhaps your viewing mate, a published critic, or the art market writ large, may play into the mix. How you feel, how your opinion grows, whether you like or dislike the work, may all change and change again.

To me, the intermingling of these elements in the creation and appreciation of art is a fascinating process. There can be a hierarchy of experiencing art – indeed, many are dependent on its actuality – but not necessarily so. Everyone's perceptions and opinions are equally valid and meaningful to each individual. Certainly, that is the aspirational position we take when planning the content of our exhibitions. Our hope is that art appreciators of all persuasions approach our shows with openness and leave having had a moving experience.

Working with David Marchi in the production of this exhibition has been exceptionally enjoyable and rewarding for everyone involved here at the Lyman Allyn. His artistic brilliance, passion for life, and generosity of spirit is deeply appreciated. We are delighted to feature his work in our **Near::New** series of contemporary exhibitions, a series that celebrates the artists among us.

We know that Marchi's fantastic art may seem challenging or even overwhelming at first. We are confident, however, that by spending time with it – or perhaps even in a crystallized moment – the work will engage, embrace, and uplift viewers. We invite you to fascinate yourselves with all the magnificent colors, the swirling layers, the implied narratives, and the unknowable visions. Break On Through.



Earth Wave

2023

Mixed media

50 x 50 in

[< detail](#)



Break on Through

The title of my exhibit captures the essence of my creative awakening, which began in 2015 after a life-altering boating accident. That event led to a diagnosis of Acquired Savant Syndrome, an extraordinarily rare condition—only about 50 cases have been documented worldwide—that unexpectedly unlocked a powerful artistic ability within me.

This exhibition symbolizes a profound passage: breaking through trauma into clarity, purpose, and the unstoppable drive to create.

Break on Through

2025

Acrylic on canvas

70 x 140 in

[detail >](#)





Run Rabbit 1 The Wall

2020

Acrylic on canvas

70 x 58 in

Run Rabbit Run

On my first day in Berlin, I found *Kaninchenfeld*—a field of brass rabbits embedded in the pavement by artist Karla Sachse.

The artist, who lived in East Berlin, paid homage to a community of rabbits who peacefully inhabited in the “death zone,” a no-man’s-land between the barriers of the Berlin Wall, where many people were killed as they tried to escape to the west.

The guards as well as citizens from both the east and west would throw carrots over the wall to feed the rabbits.

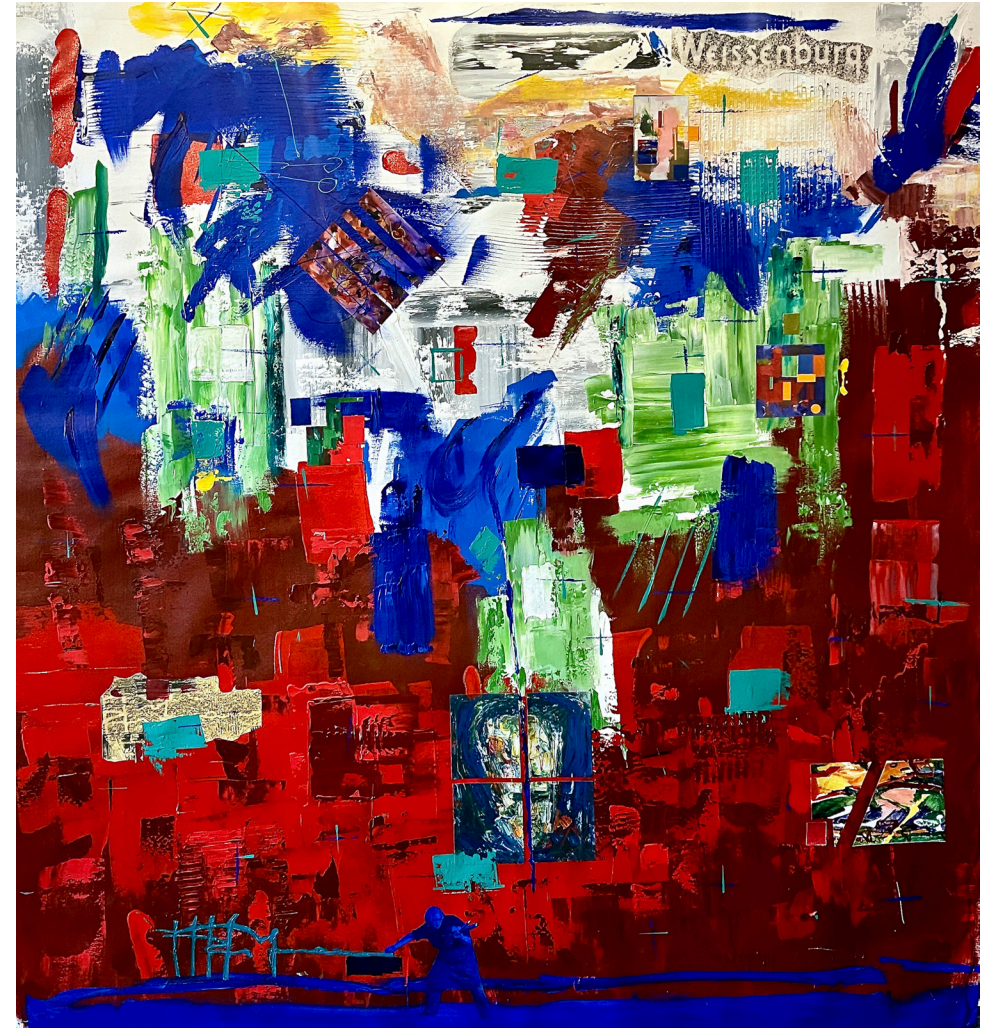
When food became scarce, the rabbits began tunneling under the wall from east to west unbothered by fear or force.

In my series, *Run Rabbit Run*, each rabbit marks a place where people successfully escaped.

By His Side

Hans Hofmann's legacy deeply inspires my work. He rests at the Snow Cemetery in Truro, near Provincetown, a place I've known since childhood.

With permission, I painted beside his grave. The piece was completed in my studio—in tribute, in conversation.



By His Side. My homage to Hans Hofmann

2022

Mixed media

55 x 50 in

DAVID J. MARCHI: Break on Through

by Tanya Pohrt, Curator

Painting with intensity and a sense of purpose, David J. Marchi produces energetic and bold abstract paintings that document his deeply personal journey of artistic transformation.

This exhibition traces Marchi's recent artistic career, exploring his ideas and processes and highlighting his various bodies of work. Layering colors, patterns, and methods of paint application, Marchi utilizes gesture, physicality, and unusual materials and methods to produce vibrant, large-scale canvases.

Remarkably, Marchi had never painted before a life-altering boating accident in 2015. During his recovery, he discovered a previously untapped artistic drive and was compelled to paint. This phenomenon, later diagnosed as Acquired Savant Syndrome, is an unusual condition, and Marchi is one of only about 50 documented cases of this syndrome worldwide. Leaving his previous profession to embrace the world of art, David followed his intuitive drive to create, often working from vivid dreams that lay out colors and structures for him to follow. As his work has matured, Marchi has studied with artists Ronnie Landfield, Larry Poons, Pat Lipski and Peter Bonner at the Art Students League of New York.

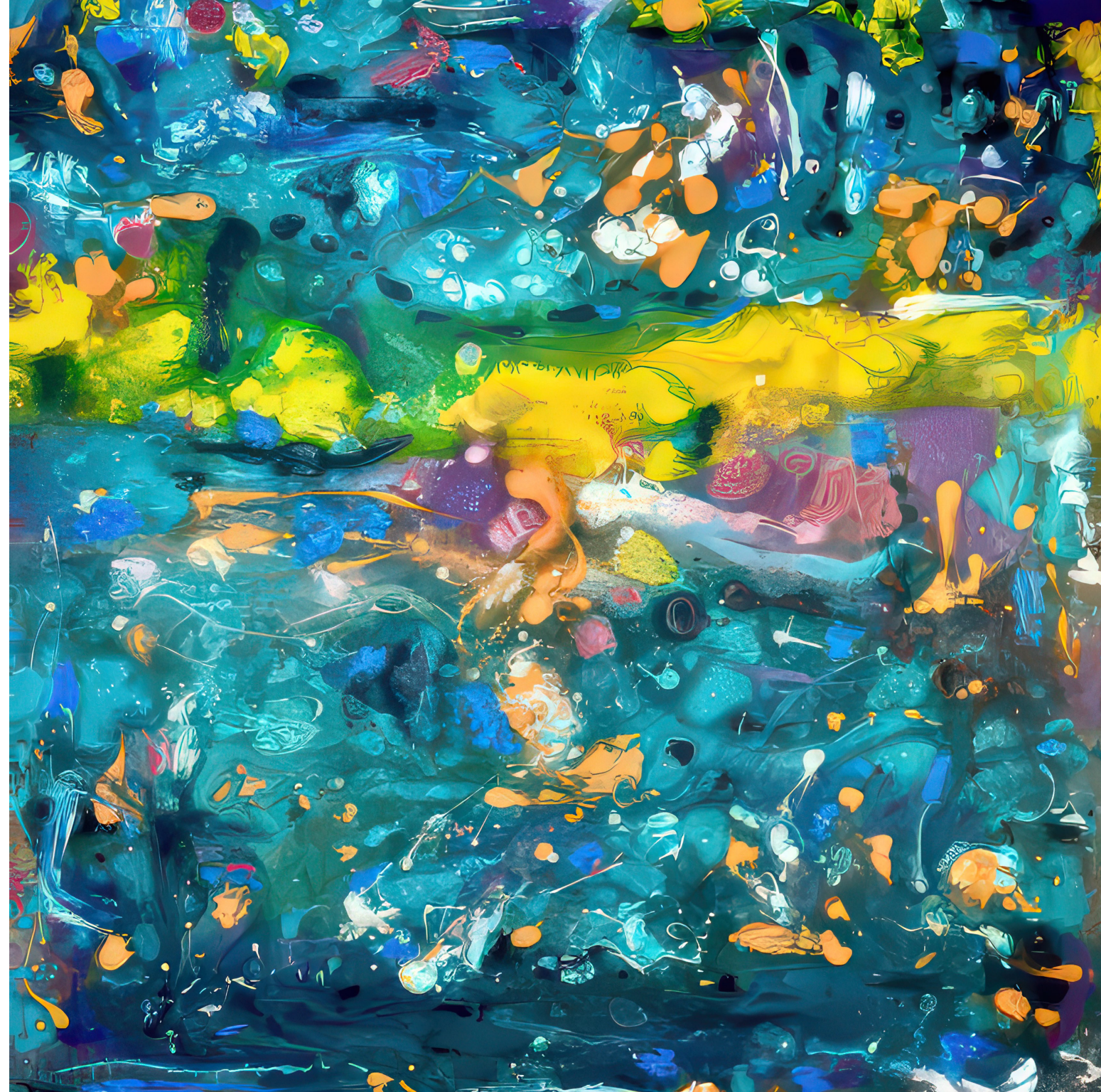
Marchi also draws on his experiences to help instruct others in art therapy, working with students with disabilities to help foster creativity and inclusion through artmaking. His experience suggests the ways that creativity lives within everyone, regardless of experience or background, serving as a reminder that art can be a profound tool for recovery, connection, and transformation.

Electric Rainforest

2025

Acrylic on canvas

70 x 70 in



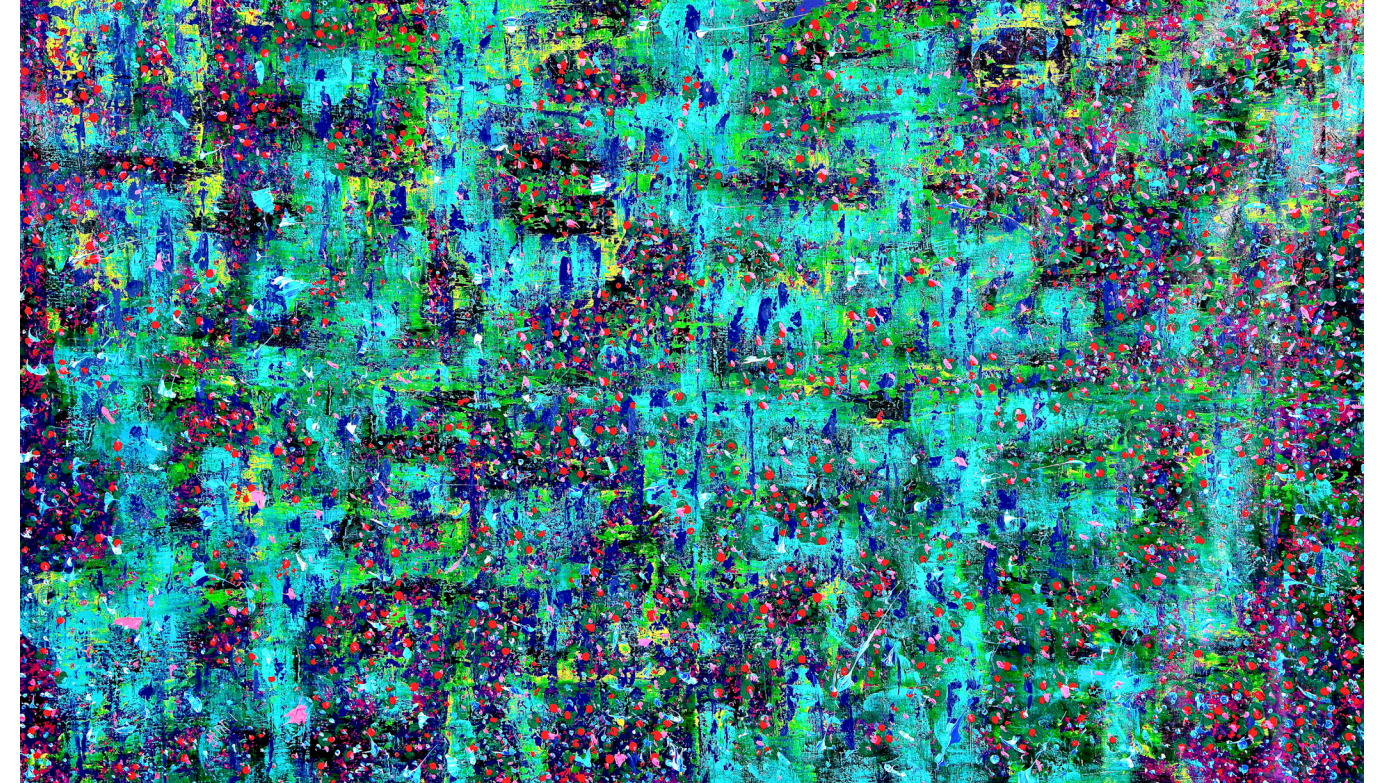


My Monet

During a visit to the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris, I was deeply moved by Monet's *Water Lily* panels. That experience inspired my own interpretation, titled *My Monet*.

Each morning as I painted, a monarch butterfly would visit—landing on the canvas attempting to sip nectar from the painted blooms.

Details above



My Monet

2019

Acrylic on canvas

48 x 70 in



Spring

2023

Acrylic on canvas

50 x 68 in

Spring

While carrying canvas and paints into a field of wildflowers at my home in Vermont, I realized I had forgotten my brushes. On impulse, I dipped a flower into the paint—and discovered possibility. Spring was created entirely using flowers from that field, each bloom becoming both inspiration and tool.

TarART

TarART draws inspiration from the tar repairs used to preserve city streets. These spontaneous lines, shaped by natural cracking and human intervention, become the foundation for each work.

Each piece is rooted in place—photographed on an iPhone, with metadata capturing the exact location of its source. The design is projected onto a wall, where the first layers are painted. The canvas is then laid on the floor for final details and texture. These paintings are not only abstract impressions, but geographic imprints of where the city and nature collide.



TarART# 13

2021

Acrylic on canvas

60 x 90 in



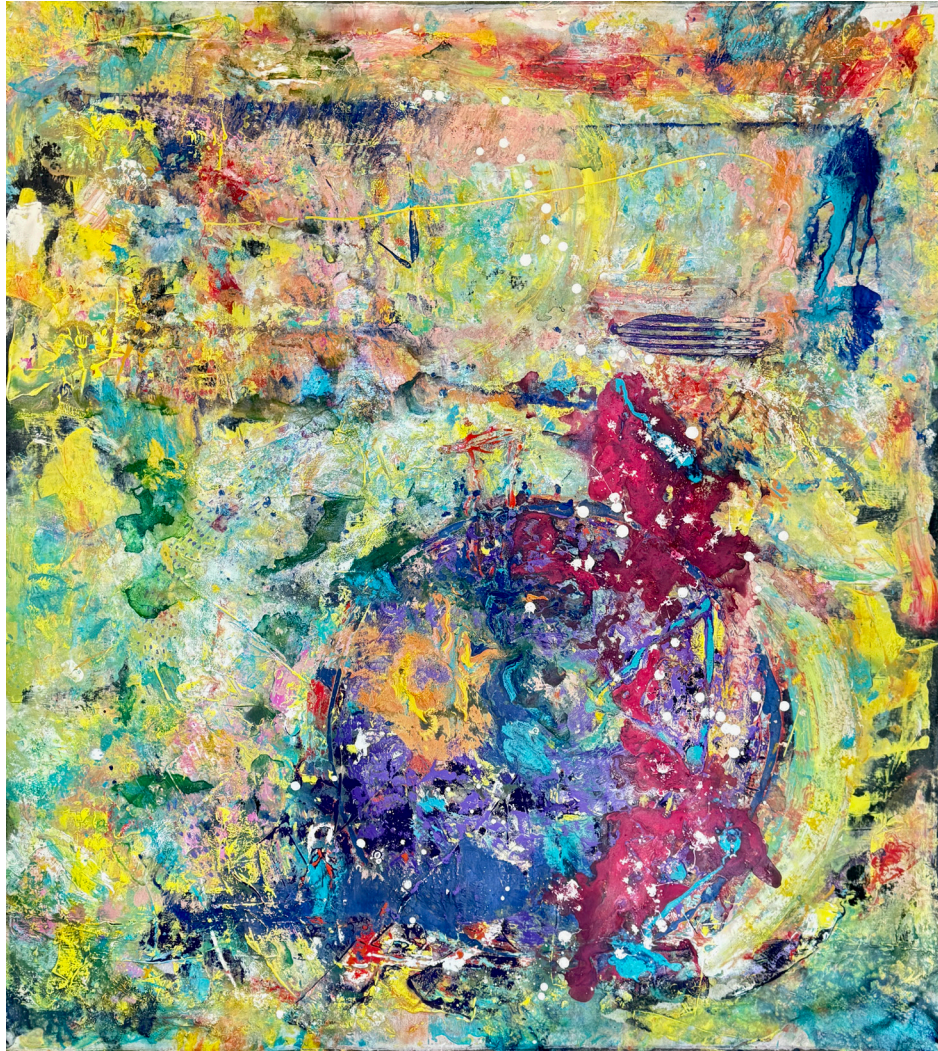
If a Tree Falls
2020
Acrylic on canvas
60 x 40 in

If a Tree Falls

Most artists experience a love-hate relationship with their work—what feels unresolved one day may reveal its truth the next.

This piece began with layers of paint, followed by a thin, nearly transparent wash of white. I thought I was done. But as I stepped back, frustration took over. In a moment of impulse, I threw a bucket of water at the canvas and walked away.

When I returned the next morning, the water had dripped and pooled in unexpected ways—washing away doubt and uncovering the finished painting beneath. What began in anger ended in revelation.



Journey to the Center of the Earth
2025
Acrylic on canvas
53 x 48 in



Into the Unknown
2024
Acrylic on canvas
70 x 70 in

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Photo Courtesy the Artist.

I am the son of an Italian immigrant mother and a father with Italian and Argentine roots. My heritage runs deep and continues to influence how I see and interpret the world.

I'm a visual abstract artist with an extraordinary origin story. My journey into painting began in an unexpected and transformative way—one that completely redefined my life and creative expression.

My work is guided by three core principles: color, texture, and pattern. I explore the contrasts within these elements, creating pieces that shift between smooth and streaked, squared and rounded, shimmering crimson and deep blue. Each painting becomes a vibrant interplay of opposites, unified on the canvas to evoke both tension and harmony.

The foundation of my creative process lies in the subconscious. Inspiration often comes from vivid dreams—fully formed visions of color and structure that serve as blueprints for my work. These dreamscapes imprint themselves in my mind and guide my hands when I begin to paint.

Before 2015, I had never painted. That year, a life-altering boating accident changed everything. During my recovery, I discovered a previously untapped creative ability—later diagnosed as Acquired Savant Syndrome, a condition so rare it has only around 50 documented cases worldwide. It was through that experience that I was propelled into the world of art.

Art critic Jerry Saltz described my piece Aqua Vita as fearless in scale, with a Cézanne-like sense of materiality and expressive flow. That recognition affirmed something I had come to understand: this work was not just healing—it was purpose.

I use my artistic success to support causes I care deeply about, including Lady Gaga's Born This Way Foundation, The Human Rights Campaign, the Lyman Allyn Art Museum and The Garde Arts Center.

Today, my work is part of private collections across the globe.

www.davidjmarchi.com

Instagram @marchiart



Above: **Water is Life**, 2024, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 120 in.

Cover: **Spring** detail, 2023, acrylic on canvas, 50 x 68 in.

Near :: New

 **Lyman Allyn**
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