

Irving Marcus

Irving Marcus's current paintings trace their lineage back at least as far as the twentieth century's great mythopoetic fabulist Marc Chagall. Rather than Chagall's mining of his Hassidic roots, Marcus brings in characters from his own imagination, or from world cultures, such as a work, *Brothel*, that extends 19th century Japanese Hokusai-style wood block prints into his odd realm where not only figures but space itself is somehow attenuated.

Marcus's intense colors are the glue that holds his figures and their world together. His palette harkens back to such modernist masters as Matisse, Ensor and the Fauves. In a 1993 interview Marcus said that his works are "about people. There's no story. They're just people occupying the same space." Almost twenty years later Marcus's eccentric and mannered figures are still sharing the same picture oblivious to each other, simultaneously inviting and resisting narrative impositions. Yet for the artist, coloration is the source of his ambition: balancing the juxtapositions of light and dark, light shades and dark shades, along the borderline of figuration and abstraction.

