

Painter reflects on 30 years of tenderness with late husband

By DANIELLE RIVERA

When Linda Touby lost Basil Gogos — her husband of 30 years — in September 2017, she had already stopped painting. The New York City-based artist fractured her wrist in March and hadn't yet regained her rhythm. After Gogos died from an accident at age 88, it took another month or two for Touby to return to the studio.

"In the beginning, it was all tears," she said. "[But] it wasn't all unhappy tears ... because there was the remembrance of ... wonderful days, wonderful years together."

Gogos was a revered illustrator, known for his portraits of movie monsters like Bela Lugosi's Dracula and Boris Karloff's Frankenstein monster. Born in Alexandria, Egypt to parents of Greek descent, he and Touby met four years before they were married, and spent the next three decades sharing their love of travel, music and art.

"Art has always been my savior, my whole life," Touby said. "It's always been there for me."

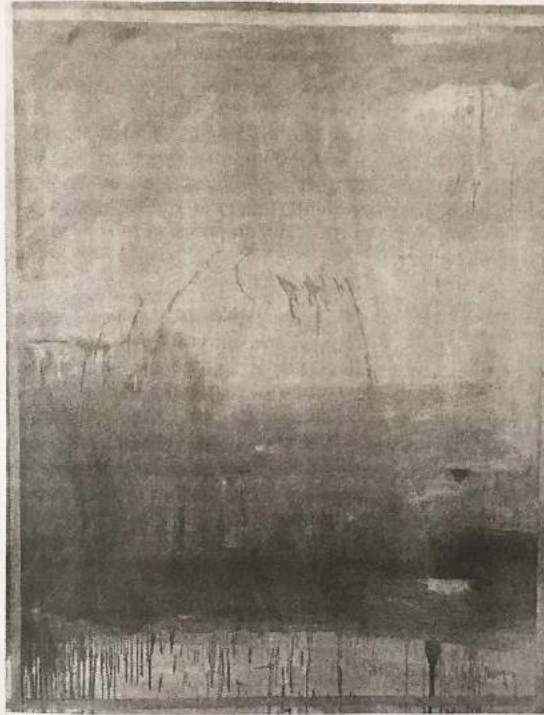
Inspired by their life together, her new collection of paintings "Je T'aime" will premiere at Madelyn Jordan Fine Art with an opening reception Feb. 1, 6 to 8 p.m. The exhibit will be on display through March 9.

"Je T'aime," which means "I love you" in French, is a dedication to Touby's late husband, with whom she often exchanged those words. "Everything about us together was perfect," she said. "We could fight perfectly; we could make up perfectly. ... We could paint next to each other."

One of the pair's frequent disagreements, particularly early in their relationship, centered around great artists. He loved Peter Paul Rubens; she loved Titian Vecelli. Over time, each grew to appreciate the other's taste. Their incomparable rapport made 30 years together feel "too short," Touby said.

While the artist — whose own career spans more than 30 years — is still adding pieces to the collection, 12 works of oil and wax on canvas have been selected and mounted at the Scarsdale gallery. The exhibit plays heavily with texture, reminiscent of the architecture at the Noguchi Museum in Astoria, where Touby was influenced by the outdoor garden and marble sculptures.

Since her husband's death, Touby often frequents muse-



PHOTOS COURTESY LINDA TOUBY

"Je T'aime 1" 2018, oil on canvas, 60 x 48 in. Right, Linda Touby with her late husband Basil Gogos in 2009.

ums on weekends with friends and enjoys dining out. Still, she's usually in her Hell's Kitchen studio every day.

In the early days after her husband's death, Touby filled the space with romance songs from across the decades, "mostly the music he and I loved to listen to," she said. "I would play it all day, over and over."



"I feel very whole. I feel like [Gogos] is part of it somehow."

— LINDA TOUBY

She experimented with "drippy," textured layering of paint and wax to achieve more nuanced tones beneath the surface. As she healed, the works evolved, infusing more color and vibrancy.

"At the beginning, life seemed a little less colorful without him," Touby explained, "but it [isn't] ... because I have my own life, too, and I have the things I enjoy doing."

Now, she said she is excited to debut her works and hopes they resonate in diverse and personal ways. "I feel very whole," Touby said. "I feel like ... [Gogos] is handing it to me and saying, 'Here my love, keep going.'"

The gallery is located at 37 Popham Road. Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. For more information, visit madelynjordonfineart.com or call 723-8738.