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PETER DRESSEL

Josette Urso

Born and raised in Florida, Josette Urso grew up in a family that was very interested in art." Her mother is a painter and her father is a mathematician who taught himself how to play classical guitar.

Urso draws, paints and creates collages. She has a B.F.A. in drawing and an M.F.A. in painting from the University of South Florida. She has worked full time as an artist since the mid 1980s, and moved to New York City in 1988 after visiting there several times. "I instantly connected to the pace of the city," she says.

She works directly in response to her immediate environment, but is more concerned with the sensation or spirit of a place than with its look. Urso's approach is intuitive and non-linear. While her drawings are more literal, her paintings teeter on the edge of representation and abstraction.

Travel plays an important role in her work — she finds inspiration in unfamiliar situations and a sense of the unknown — and she feels that working from observation is very important. Having something to respond to makes the painting much more interesting, she explains.

Urso has had numerous grants and residencies and has shown widely in the United States and abroad in galleries, public institutions, and museums, including the New York Public Library and the Bronx Museum for the Arts. On April 28, she will become Maitland Art Center's (MAC) first Artist in Residence in more than 50 years. MAC is reinventing the program, in the tradition of its early days and in concert with the vision of its founder, André Smith. On May 8, Urso will give a lecture about her work, and on May 11 she will lead a *plein air* workshop from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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