



COVER ARTIST: MICHAEL DIVINE



Michael Divine

Front and back cover:

***The Crucible*, acrylic on canvas, 72 x 30 in**

The Crucible was commissioned by a married couple who are collectors of my work. They asked me to create a painting of Love. This is what I came up with.

A crucible is a container within which we add various metals at extremely high heat, blending them to create a new form. Love, I think, is the great crucible. It is transformation, growth, light and dark, all at once. It is one of the great un-

definable concepts that all humans experience in some form or another in their lifetimes. There, in that space of love, we lose ourselves and can find ourselves made anew.

For me, the narrative flow of the image progresses upwards from the bottom, where two figures sit in a clearing. These two people are sort of in that first sphere of meeting. Here the first crystallization of love unfolds—opening, reflecting, and refracting.

Then, as we move outside of that sphere, we encounter a variety of other identities, faces, aspects of ourselves and aspects of the other. I think this happens in relationships: we meet each other and present our best face. It's lovely and enticing. Eventually we meet the rest of the person—their whole spectrum. We find doubts, fears, and unknowns. Sometimes, we turn away because we are that person, too. Part of the challenge a truly loving relationship poses is how to embrace the other and ourselves in our entirety. Rather than letting those revelations divide, we can create something stronger, more whole, more beautiful.

Out of the middle of that dance grows a flower, of sorts. There is a flourishing—an unfolding, rippling sensation and here we experience the fruit of our labors. We reach these crystallized archways which I think of as crowns—the royal WE in each individual. Between those crowns, are two intimately bowing spirals. As they move upwards through the painting they seem to compete with each other, now higher, now lower, but here in this space, they see eye to eye, reflections bowing to one another.

From there... from there: we are two great jewels dancing all of the colors of the rainbow flowing from one into the other and back again—the jewel mind of our hearts, breathing, expanding and contracting, passing light between one node and another, onwards and upwards, ad infinitum.

Love: it is the crucible within which we dissolve, where self dissolves with self, one with the other, and that which remains...

That which remains is best described as Love.

*

I mostly live and paint in California. In my work, I look for the most beautiful expression of the varieties of human experiences, exploring and inspired by the vast spectrum of that dance. To view more details of this painting as well as many others, I invite you to visit my website: **TenThousandVisions.com**

If you'd like to contact me, you can write me here: **Michael@TenThousandVisions.com**

Begin with the end in mind
then work backward to plan for reaching ambitious goals

—Ashawna Hailey, who left \$5.5 million to MAPS in her will

Help create a world where psychedelics are integrated into society by including MAPS in your end of life plans.

Please contact MAPS at (831) 429-6362
jade@maps.org

