


 EPOCH
Arts & Style

MICHELLE ROSS

Rejuvenating Our Modern Society Through Traditional Arts

Violinist and composer Michelle Ross at Salmagundi Club in Manhattan on Jan. 30.

By Catherine Yang | Epoch Times Staff

NEW YORK—Classical violinist and composer Michelle Ross works surrounded by paintings, as the only musician among a group of visual artists.

When she composes, she does so as a resident artist in the Eleventh Street Arts gallery, adjacent to a workspace shared by painters and sculptors who have broken from the norm by creating representational art in the traditional style.

“There’s a sense of almost an electric energy, with everyone working together and trying to lift each other up,” Ross said of the connecting Grand Central Atelier (GCA), the art school that owns the gallery and focuses on training in the classical tradition.

To her, this place “feels like an oasis.”

It was a relief to find so many contemporary artists who are looking to the past and dedicating their lives to perfecting their craft, to attaining something ideal, just as classical musicians have done by playing Bach for hundreds of years.

“We’re all modern, contemporary, living, breathing artists,” she said, but “to acknowledge that this is classical in the sense of the tradition and the amount of depth that goes into learning the craft and being able to communicate with it, ... [with the camaraderie], we have this constant reminder of how and why what we do is relevant.”

These artistic traditions provide a depth crucial to humanity, she added.

“I think people now really, really crave substance, whether we know it or not,” she said. “People want something with depth. We’re

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really craving it as a society.”

Technology has made things easy for us, but without being aware of this, we let habits take over instincts and function in a way that is unnatural and not what humans really want to be, she said. Communication becomes distilled, detached, or passive.

“I remember when I first got an iPhone, I was very conscious of all those strange moments—‘oh, I’m texting, but am I really talking to this person?’—but now that consciousness has gotten smaller and smaller, and I just accept it now,” she said.

Traditional arts, on the other hand, demand something from you—emotional honesty, engagement as a listener or viewer, or dedication to your craft as an artist. Once you’ve been opened up and have encountered that depth, you’re primed to reconnect with the world and others in a way you weren’t before, she said. “[You see] a new perspective, or it’ll capture your imagination and unlock this whole world that’s out there, and it can really transform you.”

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