

**Featured Artist  
Grace Marquez**





Artist Grace Marquez explores the fascinating underwater realm in paintings based on scuba diving experiences. See more of her portfolio on her [website](#).



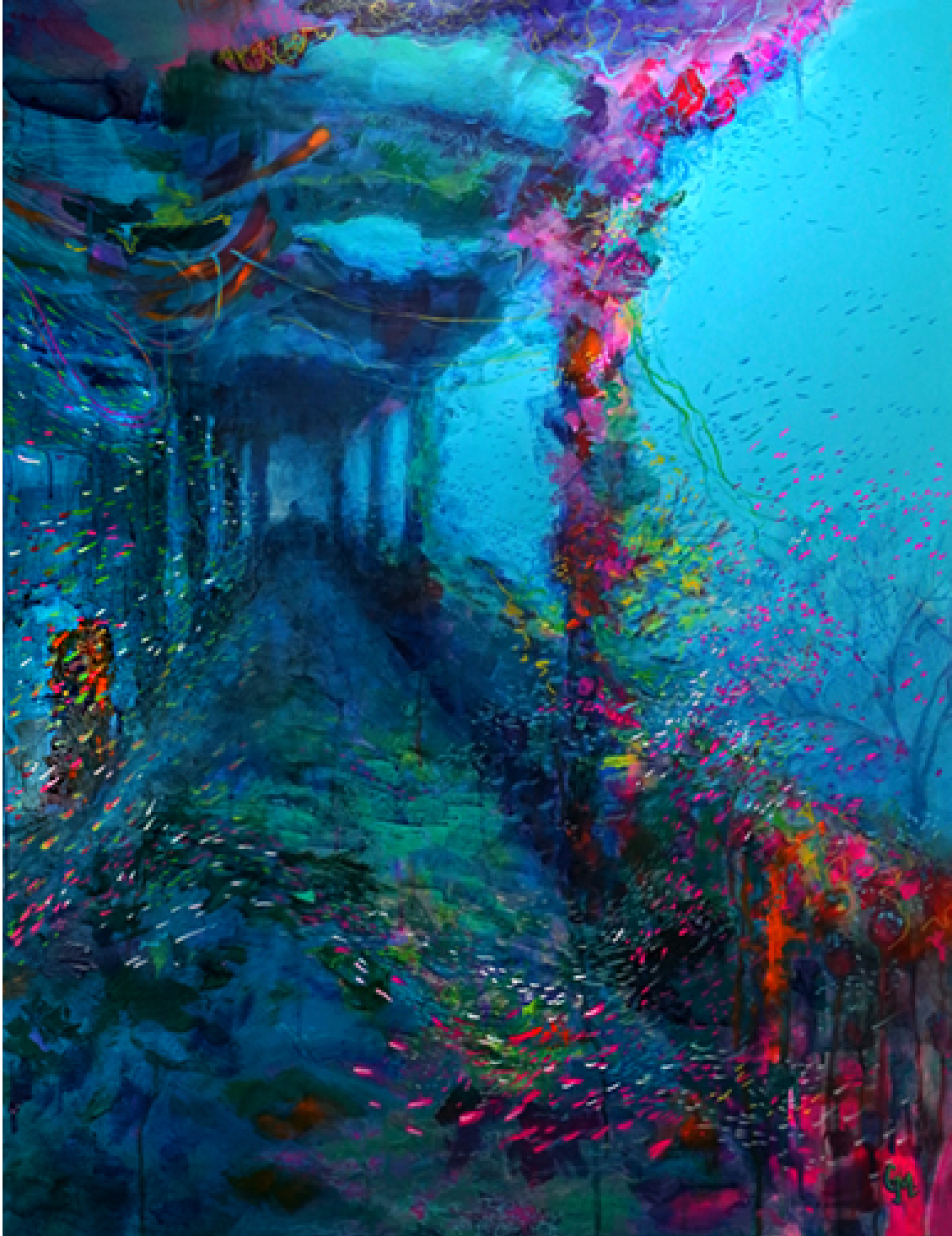
"Descending" acrylic on paper mounted on canvas, 11" x 14"

I was born on a tiny island dubbed the "heart" of the Philippines. I still consider myself an island girl of sorts, though I grew up living on the Great Lakes in Ontario, Canada. I've always painted or drawn since I was very young and pursued that in my education with a Bachelor of Fine arts. I dreamed of being an artist.



"Afterlife: Swept Away" acrylic on canvas, 30" x 24"

But life took a different turn, and I forgot about that dream. It wasn't until much later after building a career in design for marketing, advertising, and tech that I woke up and realized that if I didn't take my shot at it, I would regret it for the rest of my life. So, I left my successful career of 20+ years to pursue my art because I just couldn't ignore that nagging voice anymore.



"Reclamation: Fujikawa Maru" acrylic on cradled wood panel, 30" x 40"

So here I am now, painting my other love—the water world. As an avid scuba diver, it wasn't until I started painting the underwater world that my art started to take on more meaning for me.





"The Playground" acrylic on canvas, 24" x 48"

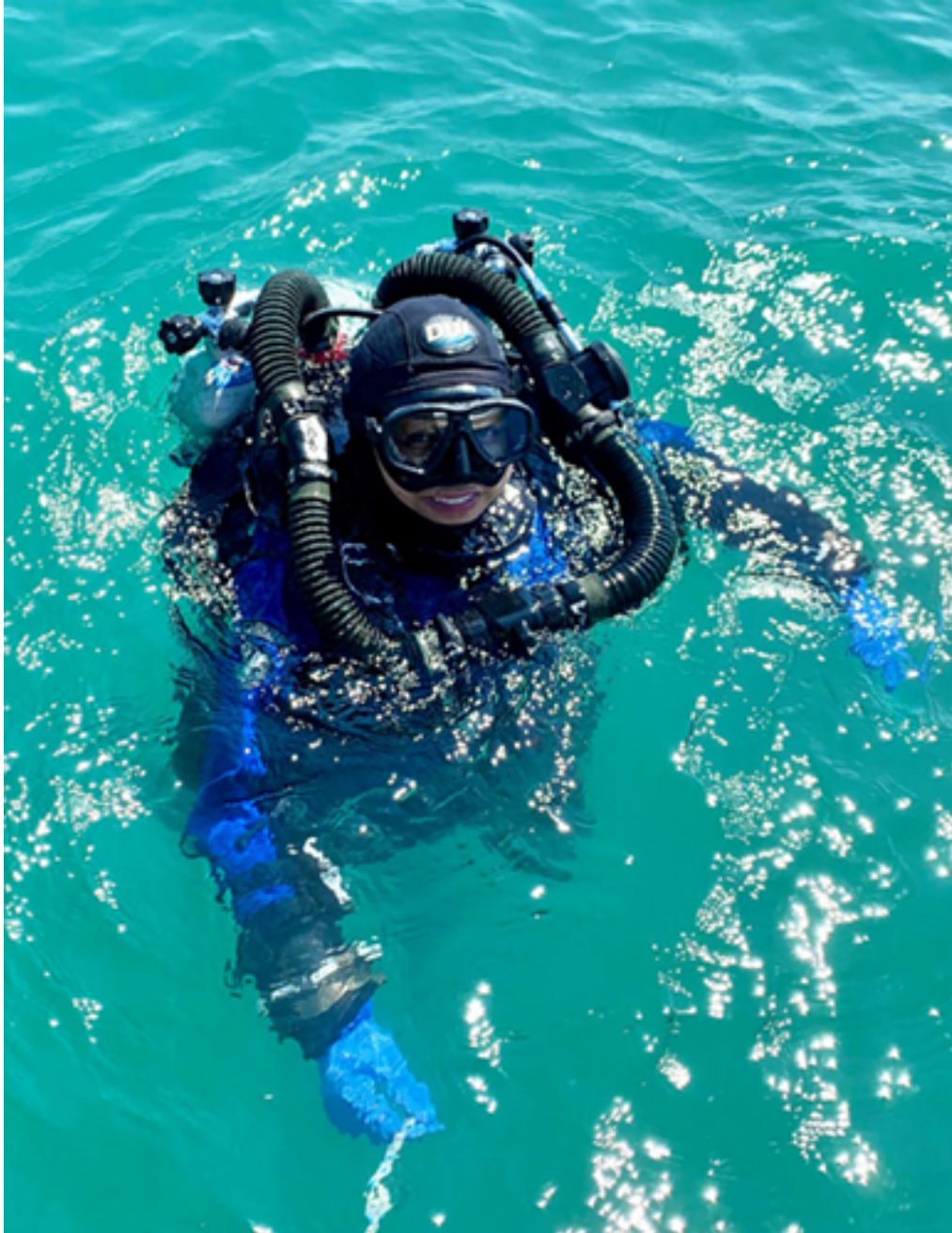


"Promenade on the Nippo Maru" acrylic on canvas, 24" x 18"

I paint the underwater world to share the childlike sense of discovery and wonder I experience on each scuba dive. It's not about capturing realism or accuracy but the impressions of light, movement and colour. I'm in awe of this parallel world beneath the water that most people have never really experienced. I want to share what beauty there is in our world.

I've learned much about the water world because I get curious about what it is I'm looking at. *Why is it that shape? What gives it that colour? How does it feed? Where does it grow? When did that happen?* I've learned more about world history, geology, ecology, biology, engineering, evolution and more, by just getting curious about the world underwater.





Artist Grace Marquez scuba diving

Being underwater is the only place where I feel 100% present in body, mind and spirit. I'm not distracted by anything happening in the world above the waterline. Instead, I'm fascinated by the metamorphosis and reclamation that happens underwater with water shaping, moving and growing life.



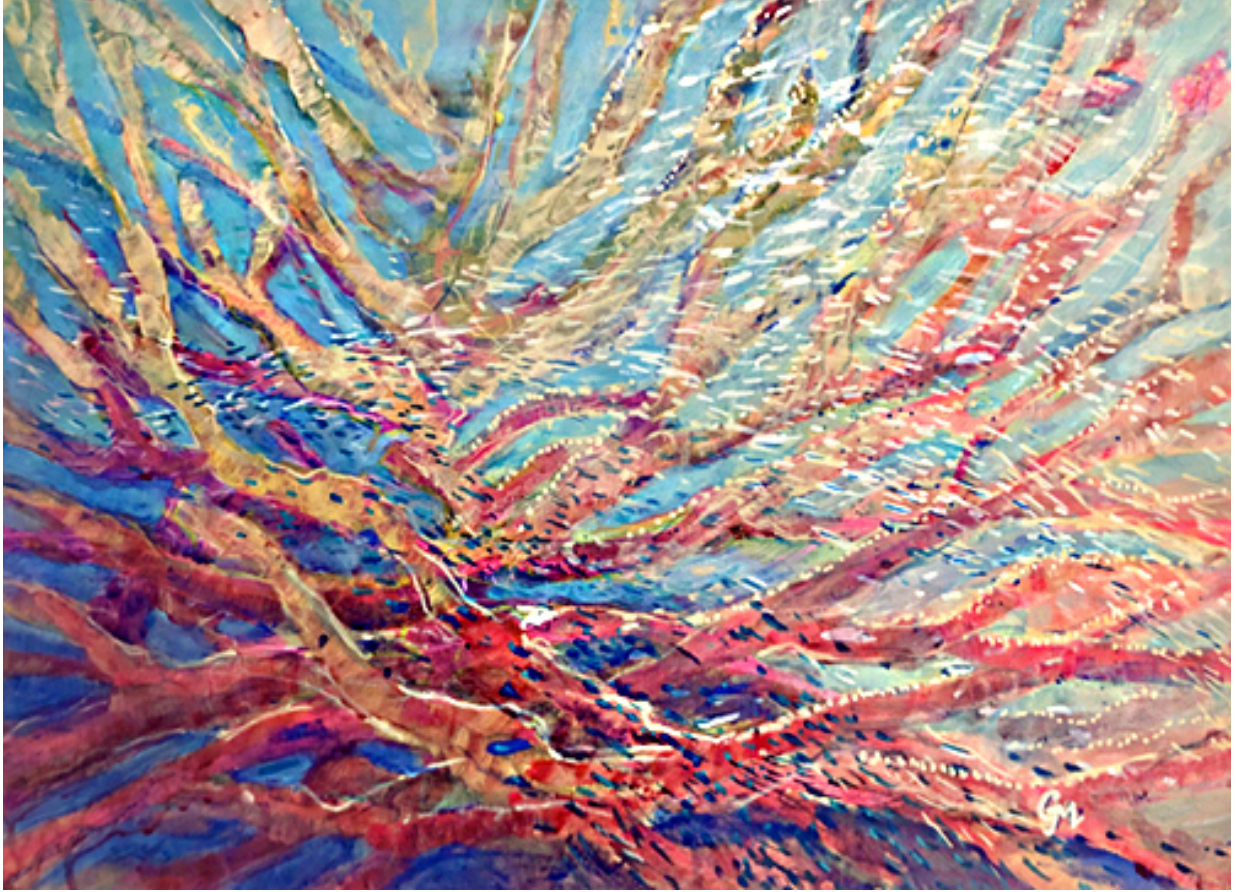
"The Ice Tunnel" acrylic on canvas, 14" x 11"

It's an ongoing cycle of life and death underwater that continues with or without our presence. Our presence may slow it down, but mother nature always wins. I love the adventure to be found underwater.

For me, the process of painting what I experience underwater is a way for me to stay connected to it. I love it when non-divers have questions about it, because it's in that curiosity that we as a species connect to our world and grow. If my art can help people see how special our world really is, and walk away feeling more connected and alive, then that's a win!



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"Burning Bush" acrylic on paper mounted on cradled wood, 24" x 18"

*Grace Marquez invites you to follow on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).*