

Magda Moskwa

encapsulates the body as merely the “receptacle” for the spirit.

However, she deals with this topic throughout her whole painting career.

Figures, portraits, hands, the minute details of corporeality, such as cutaneous abrasions, bruises and sores on the palms of the characters represented on Magda Moskwa’s paintings create her unique painting style.

Poignant.

Her early student paintings from the 1990s have become templates for all her subsequent painting figures. The artist’s paintings represent human Rites of passage, revealing the imprint of the passage of time on bodies and faces left by hardship, wandering, toil and unknown tragedies. These paintings reflect the history of art dating back to reliquary and the iconography of martyrs.

The artist’s early inspiration can be discerned from her first contact with the aesthetics of sacred art, i.e. religious sculpture, painting and architecture.

It was the first decisive sensuous experience. The stigmata, which will never disappear, were always preceded by a dramatic end of life and the suffering of dying (torture and crimes committed against the martyrs of the faith). The painter refers to specific works, such as “Flaying of Sisamnes” by Gerard David or “Martyrdom of St. Erasmus” by Dirk Bouts.

Throughout her artistic output, both the portraits and the clothing sculptures show a broken continuity, either of the epidermis or of the unity of the complexion of the character’s face. A fragment of a finger, drops of blood, an ear in the corner of the painting, or hand on canvas leaving a red trail seem to be moving away from the rest of the body. Also clothing sculptures bear stamps of the cracks, fissures, open wounds, crooked shapes, cutting, ripping and tearing.

In contrast to these traumatic stigmata, one element remains constant: a hieratic human figure, with an aura of indomitableness and peace, with battered hands folded in the lap, resembling the gesture of presenting the insignia. Physically tortured hands appear emancipated, as a fully-fledged art theme on a separate series of paintings.

Stigmata of the painting

Now Magda Moskwa uses chalk ground on the previously sculptured board instead of the stretcher bar. All this is more susceptible to painterly intentions and gestures, building up to intimate physical wholeness, flesh and blood of the painting. Each element of the preparation process is the author’s original idea. New spatial dimension of the painting creates an object, another technique seems to be working. The holes in the canvas, once clogged with plugs, can be looked through some other time.

The painting technique chosen by the artist secures the unity of the work.

The polished up paintings with finishing touches are in fact like made of icing... after a while you’ll see that this was just an impression given by the skin. And from underneath the smooth surface of the painting, one can see some delicate veins.

Moskwa’s earlier portraits were focused predominantly on women’s images, so real that they seemed not of this world.

Magda Moskwa had left all these characters behind her.

She concluded that she will present the universe of the body as the essence of the bravado of contrasts between smoothness and gaping holes, filed surface and hair and nails.

New works represent the literally crossing to the other side of the painting. Sometimes they are stopped halfway through by membranes, plugs, or an obstacle.

The artist, while creating, examines the painting meticulously, literally interweaves the subject matter and the fabric of a painting, sealing up channels connecting it to the outside world. The artist creates painting performances free of figures and portraits, while offering the entire reservoir of suggestions and references to the physicality of the body.

The game is played between illusion and literality. After all, for the artist, crossing to the other side of the canvas equals reaching the deepest truth of the work.

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