

Interview at the studio

Claire Nédellec , Mykola Mudryk

How was the presentation of your exhibition at Espace 18 organised?

This exhibition was expected and conceived for the Temple du Goût in Nantes, a very singular space where I planned to approach the scenography in a quasi-monastic way. It seemed to me that my work could lend itself to this.

Unfortunately, the city of Nantes informed me of the closure of this place for legitimate security reasons. I had to adapt to this place proposed today by abandoning a more immersive personal desire to present my paintings accompanied by a sound montage of traditional Ukrainian instruments. This change of venue, although restrictive, has forced me to adopt a simpler approach, which I hope reflects the way I have approached this very recently completed series of paintings.

Painting and the 'figure' are omnipresent in the recent works, how do you analyse this?

I am attracted to themes of the intimate and the unknown, which I deal with by confronting the subjects in my paintings where the figurative questions the abstract and vice versa. My recent productions convey a contemporary expression via this ancient technique of egg tempera to leave the field open to new themes and scenographies. Nourished by a very important heritage of icons found in the western region of my country, I explore mythology, folklore and Byzantine Orthodox art. I work with changing 'spiritual' bodies with elusive and non-binary identities. This contributes to a poetic reconstruction of the end of time with the will to let a glimpse of an «energy» that also finds its place in my paintings.

As an artist of Ukrainian origin, is your relationship with reality, which is so disrupted at present, a source of particular inspiration?

Yes, absolutely. My beliefs, my senses, my relationship to the visible and the invisible has always been crossed by metaphysics. The war in Ukraine has confronted me with a new reality, These figures and bodies that we mentioned earlier become matter for exploration with a reading that is certainly crossed by the tragic to the point of eschatology. The powerlessness I feel in the face of this situation becomes a well from which I want to draw to create images, figures in transformation, tortured, suffering, surviving and resisting the reality of war to regain their freedom. Chromatic spaces, landscapes, minerals, gases pass through, are deposited in a way in the painting that is mine today.

How do you see your artistic career continuing?

With a certain fatality I believe in destiny. This sad news from my country reinforces the idea I had before to contribute to the knowledge of Ukrainian culture. I would like to set up artistic projects between France and Ukraine. I believe in the importance and necessity of exchanges that arise from encounters with other artists and actors of contemporary art, but also of course and above all with the public. For this I would like to work with cultural institutions and continue my way as an artist...