

Paintings that dive into the depths of the mind

Soili Talja is known for her abstract paintings, the scale and materials of which have varied over the years, but which form a language that remains recognizable as hers. In all her works the use of "line", online, has an important role and it is as individual as any individual handwriting in character.

After the large-format dark works on paper, Talja has recently been showing works on light painted canvas. In them the white surfaces settle upon the underlying colour, and the white online line is as light as in old symbolic landscape paintings.

Talja's works have an evident kinship with the Symbolist movement, even though they are abstract in style. Ethereal features, like those typical in symbolism, are some of the aesthetic characteristics of her work. They also refer to the pictorial language, characters and solutions that are found in a catalogue of religious illustrations.

In Talja's new paintings the colour palette has a spring-like luminosity as if in a garden emerging from under the snow. In some of the works the deep dark shades form a contrast, which, however, is no longer represented by shades of black, but are based on colours such as spruce green and the blue of the night sky. The composition is uplifting, where the white lines lift the forms upwards, forming a mental representation of abstract, upwardly reaching human images.

Talja's abstract paintings are inspired by different motifs from Goddess cultures. In them one can see echoes of Indian aesthetics, Byzantine art and the Virgin Mary attributes such as the blue mantle or a white lily. Talja builds her symbolist and abstract world under the wings of goddesses, as well as drawing an outline which is unashamedly feminine.

Indeed the outline "line" is often in the starring role in her works. It curves and is alive on coloured surfaces. At its best, landing on the surface as if a string, which at its effortlessness makes it almost invisible. It is part of the composition, built as a wiry contrast upon the picturesque surfaces and layers of brush work.

Although the line is partly loose and Interpretively feminine, it is not of outwardly decorative art, hence the works are not lacy or otherwise decorative. Rather, the paintings have evident echoes of expressionism and strong intuition. One might like to classify them as Informalism due to the pure clean visual interpretation, but with a tone of symbolism which would make this interpretation somewhat thin. But, it is more interesting to find in them a narrative side, and just allow oneself to be surrendered and carried away by that.

Veikko Halmetoja

Soili Talja studied fine arts in painting and sculpture in the years 1983-88. Her works have, in recent years, been seen for example, in Pori, Tuusula, Joensuu and Orimattila Art museums as well as Art Finlayson summer exhibition. Her works are in numerous collections including, such as Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma's collections, the Espoo Museum of Modern Art, Saastamoinen collections and the Finnish State collections.