

## Appearing Images – The Paintings of Sultan Acar

She started with large-format portraits, followed by series of cityscapes and in her latest works, Sultan Acar started to work abstract.

In her portraits of young female figures she cultivates a world of introspection – single figures, faces averted, seemingly unobserved and absorbed in themselves or two female figures with their heads inclined in an attitude of calm and silent understanding. From the perspective of her personal observations the painter directs the representation of the situation. The tension between the emotional and the impersonal that thereby arises is characteristic for her work. There are often enigmatic glimpses caught from behind, of hidden faces and implied gestures, with a quiet gracefulness. Shown are young female figures, often girlish, in a styling that corresponds with a simplified painting style. Serene grace, a summery yellow patterned dress, along with a piece of seemingly warm skin or a revealed shoulder, next to the sculptural hair. Inherent to many paintings is the question of what this view recognizes that remains hidden from the viewer. Sultan Acar's approach is at once simplistic and complex, it evolves around the issue of surface and figurative sign. The portraits are options for in-depth viewing as well as for interpretation. The figures are placed in a monochrome background as an undefined space. From this approach arises a fascination which lies somewhere between the expression of detachment and intimacy. Young women, the recurring visual motif, are constituted, like the emblematic figures of ancient narratives, finding their own contemporary expression in a space somewhere between desire and autonomy.

In her cityscapes Sultan Acar casts her gaze upon Istanbul, for her a young and dynamic, constantly changing metropolis. As her visual motifs she chooses the same luminous images, reflections of light, and façades of glass that one might expect to find in any metropolis, but as well more typical ones like "Lokum", Turkish delight, unfamiliar in their enlargement upon the canvas. "My goal," the artist explains, "is really no longer to illustrate something but to explain my point of view." Her starting point is no longer the selection of a subject, but rather with her own perspective which selects or omits, emphasizes or obscures, a personal, interpretive point of view which documents a profound artistic analyses. By focusing on the essential, the painter encounters confusion. In several of the paintings we find at first a central Europe, then a global Istanbul, a city beyond clichés, a metropolis whose chaotic structure exhibits its own very unique system. Thus it would seem that behind this assortative hand there is nothing more than an individual perceptive force, the insight of a painter encountering her city with rapport but also with distance, as close-up and as wide shot.

Based on a research of traditional ornaments, patterns and textures in Ottoman fabrics, Sultan Acar continues in her most recent, abstract paintings, with an approach that she discovered working the surface structures of her cityscapes. The inquiring eye of the camera, combined with the technique of blurring through digital manipulation and while painting the imprem she employs to derive new visual qualities. In these works painting alternates between pure structures of form and color and a distanced referential narrative in which the associations of the viewer grasp an edge of reality and link to the familiar. In many cases, the artist stretches beyond the alienating technique of blurring images and reduces the visual subject to a composition within which references to photographic reality are scarcely to be found.

This ambiguity between the physical and the illuinsary influences the perception of motion in paintings. Rather than notions of space and composition, elements of film-making such as focus and camera movement are called to mind. One is reminded of a video screen full of color, not limited by its given format, encouraging imagining larger dimensions. Especially the abstract paintings invite to play with the proportional relationships or with the pictorial inventions at the purely visual level. Along with the organic structures and linear patterns on the painted surface, there is also a spacial aspect to many of the works, for instance through the slant of the surface.

Structural observation and atmospheric immersion in the visual environments, whether medially transmitted or real, serve as the undertone for the spawning of blurred surfaces, soft contours, and fluid, almost veiled, motifs. It is a contemporary visual language, a close encounter between painting and photography, not least because the photographic source material has already received a "painterly" manipulation in the computer.

Here again the question arises as to the nature of the image and its representation: does the work convey content or is it merely its own, sensual surface? Subject of Sultan Acar's abstract paintings is the state somewhere between appearance and dissolution, between remembrance and oblivion. They are the result of a complex approach in which digital processing of the photographic source material induces to dissolve the borders between painting and photography. It is only a fine thread indeed that referentially links the painted image to its original forms and patterns, but it remains.

After some time when Sultan Acar had taken as her motif the intimacy of personal moments captured in private spaces, the subjects of her new paintings now clearly draw on perceptions of the public, intercultural space. It is precisely through her Turkish roots that Sultan Acar's work also becomes a portrait of a cultural language of form, one she has internalized, but perceives with a certain distance. Her artistic work is at the same time a rapprochement as well as an intermittent immersion into her cultural origins, it is an option to rediscover them in the present and translate them via the intercultural perspective of a youthful painter.

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