

Nature as an Enigma

When one delves deeper into the artistic work of Morela Avilán there are not many paths to follow. This happens because the artist's work is so strong and vigorous (we will mention later the intense color of her palette) that it does not allow many choices, except, without a doubt, the option she offers in a convincing manner. I use the word "delve" to give a prominence to the predominant sense of depth in her paintings. Her paintings propose an internalization which needs to be penetrated as in the case of an appearance of an intricate forest which might cause some fear before entering but which insistently invites us to a new adventure, reminding us that we have to move forward and assume a bold attitude.

And the image of the forest, or perhaps a jungle, is not accidental in this appreciation of pieces by Avilán, since one of her concerns—or maybe the only true one, as she confesses—is nature in its primitive and pure state. "My problem" she says "is to deal with nature in my paintings not as a reflection but rather as an enigma." Thence, the strength—I could say the almost violence—of her coloring that immediately and without the interceding of another idea, transfers us to the currents of abstract expressionism. The complexity and sensuality of the composition—where pure colors struggle to spread out and take control of the space—creates an atmosphere whose sense is a mystery. "By the way" Avilán says, "one of the painters I've learned much from is Willem de Kooning." But, unlike the American painter—who, at least in his later work, had a tendency to total abstraction—Avilán additionally attempts to introduce the human figure, or a trace of it, in a primitive state by means of her energetic brushstrokes. She makes them not in a shy manner as an earnest student would do but rather with the impetuosity of a self-assured, mature artist.

But what she calls the sense of nature is still dominant. Thus, her paintings attempt to enclose those images within the always limited surface of the canvas, as if by the mere fact of enclosing them within the exactitude of the contour, she could project the feeling of astonishment that nature provokes in her conscience. Greens, yellows, blues, reds and magentas, vibrant in their

tonal variety, are, in some way, the focus of the struggle she captures on her canvas. This is a battle the artist wins thanks to the control she exerts on her work. Those colors, with their force, could be applied with a certain disarray but, it must not be forgotten, that even if such a “disarray” is apparent, it is constructive. Such as happens to the masters of abstract expressionism, disarray can be inherent to the composition, an essential resource of the arrangement which ultimately constitutes the necessary order of the matter distributed with precision in the painting. It is a demand the artist sets for herself, the starting point toward which her work is directed, not as a reflection of the world, but rather as a mystery.

The starting and ending point, nature—those forests, highlands, bushes, and traces of a view of a wild and bucolic world—creates the question on which Avilán’s work turns. An extremely sensual atmosphere—created by those views of thick vegetation—sometimes inhabited by magical creatures, such as in the legends of the vegetable world—is then strongly projected and grabs the spectator’s attention.

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