

The Perfect Distance in Martina Roberts' Paintings

In Martina Roberts' paintings, I like to pause and reflect in the wind and water. The wind has always been seen as an impalpable force of breath, the voice of heaven. On the other hand, water recalls a metamorphic flow of forms, a rebirth that knows to distill all content and all feelings.

These two symbolic elements involve a vitality and profound sense of things to which Martina seems to relate, through metaphor and momentum, when measured with the epiphanies of the world.

In her recent years of expressive research, Martina has managed to thoughtfully channel the chimerical delusions of a restless and temperamental painting, which was already tensely emerging in her student years in the Academy.

Now the day wraps her in sensual, lyrical works, like a poetic journey that elevates space, shapes and colours to unfold an interior vision, a perfect distance between the basic elements and words of a story that only her hands know how to reveal.

Martina feels beauty born in objects and surfaces that reverberate in a subtle light, in which the slightest transparencies and imperceptible details dazzle the eyes. In this light, the small crystal glasses and containers purchased at a flea market precipitate the memory of those who have possessed them before, establishing a silent dialogue that is fed by the mystery of existence.

Her paintings become suspended, sometimes by lightness and fervour, sometimes by precision or stretching of boundaries. They are capable of going beyond the paradigm of the image and burning their own content through any aestheticized figure.

Judging by the results of her most recent compositions, it is not surprising that Martina has chosen to express herself through digital techniques, revising some of her pictorial texts in an unprecedented alchemy that does not diminish their sensible potential. It is a double-edged work, felt by virtue of an origin in which Martina lands naturally, informing us of her ability to unite new spaces with new experiences of visual knowledge.

Giovanni Blanco

Translated by Adriana Onita

"The vase is/has been a symbol of wealth in different cultures.
The vessel is one of the first items created by humans."

Martina Roberts' work is not born of an aesthetic-philosophical consciousness, but rather of the will to penetrate the mysterious depths of the soul. Roberts' works want to be born in the light of the world because they are necessary for their time; they are far from the consciousness of the environment, but at the same time near to its events.

The unity of a visible and an invisible reality is a contradiction par excellence. However, the language of art has sometimes found this long-desired unity, and *The Journey* may be further proof that this encounter is possible in painting.

Crystal, glass, ceramics – they materialize with slender, suggested brushstrokes, sensitive lines that give prominence to the light and blur meaning in a language that seeks a fusion between the fleeting and the eternal moments of celebration, ceremony and ancestral rites. One wonders, for example, if the work that speaks of the transfiguration of Virginia Woolf is in constant movement, or is an intimate event in each viewer. *The Journey* suggests this not as a theoretical discussion, but as an experience that makes us face the deception of chronology.

With great clarity, Jorge Luis Borges asserted that "whoever falls into a river, descends into the Ganges" and that "he who plays with a dagger foretells the death of Caesar." Martina Roberts similarly evokes water, its primordial essence; but also poison, death. We remember nightmares from which fears, ghosts, and primeval allegorical spaces emerge: a woman, a forest, a pack of wolves, thirst. Ancient people populated forests with fugitive nymphs, projecting through these corporeal forms the silhouettes of their own emotions; maybe they also dreamed of expressing the unity of the visible and the invisible.

The containers and spaces in the work of Martina Roberts are often the sum of our possible actions.

Cecilia Etcheverry

Translated by Adriana Onita

The exhibition hall of the *Ajuntament Vell de Calp* is proudly located in an open sea town, which has been a millennial witness to ancient crossings and encounters, making Calp a place of intercultural dialogue. Its journey throughout history has resulted in a heritage that is our duty to protect by boosting its international presence and facilitating partnerships with contemporary culture.

Our commitment to contemporary art is but another way to express this openness to the world and new creative trends. In this context, we express our delight to exhibit the work of a British artist based in Italy, Martina Roberts (Torbay, UK 1970).

Under the suggestive title *The Journey*, Roberts invites us to enter a genuine spiritual journey that seems to start in the numinous forests of childhood. Facing a siege of wolves, a woman defines her figure and stands out as the bright light who will guide our steps through a voyage, an adventure of personal growth filled with images that remind us of our own inventory of existential iconography.

The female figure in this exhibition expands its repertoire with symbolic connections between the womb, the most vital container, and the numerous vessels that unravel throughout her work. It seems, therefore, that we face the pictorial journey of an artist who explores her inner world to uncover biographical treasures that allow her to move from the darkness of childhood to full maturity.

While expressing solidarity in her journey, the plasticity of Roberts' work changes with each scene, but maintains a figurative register sensitive to the atmospheric changes in each interior room, with its unique moods and peculiar movements. In every space there is a palpable anxiety about revealing the depth of being or proposing painting not only as a plastic art, but as a form of knowing.

Since journeys have been, since the dawn of time, a way to open up to new lands and experiences, we would like to thank Martina Roberts for giving us the opportunity to continue opening horizons and spaces of knowledge within an exhibition space that is vocationally current, contemporary and open.

María Amparo González Martínez Director of the Art Museum *Ajuntament Vell de Calp*