

## PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS OF MARINA MARZA AND NATALIE ZAROVNAYA

"Acting", "theater", "carnival", "clownery" - such general notions and definitions relating to the fine arts were habitual in the 70-ies and 80-ies of the XX century almost over the entire territory of the Soviet Union of those times. A sizable part of young artists who did not want to have anything in common with the official ideology and the so-called "art of socialist realism" preferred to enter the outwardly limited, but inwardly infinite world of fantasy, the world of historic and cultural associations, including the special kind of "laughter culture", considering that there was, in native and world culture, a great multitude of examples of such escapes and distractions.

Marina King (she used the pen-name "Marza") acquired her acting space and formed the carnival aesthetics exactly during the above-mentioned 70-ies and 80-ies, when she started her expositions in the halls of the Moscow city committee of graphic artists on Malaya Gruzinskaya street and in non-official exhibitions in private apartments. Later, when dealing with various techniques and materials in paintings and graphic arts, she never leaves her once discovered acting space, and fills this space, year after year, with permanent theatrical characters and symbols. Her range of carnival lyrics is rather wide, considering their specifics and determination. This is why Marina's heroes have an aptitude of jokes and gaiety, they can lament and suffer being true to the will and mood of their creator. Considering solely the composition, many of her canvasses and sheets seem to be boundless. Actors, musicians, clowns, angels and other characters, either wearing masks or not, certainly have no reason to suffer from compositional claustrophobia. Their movements, that is processions, flights, whirling, feasts, etc., can be, if so desired, developed in the horizontal and vertical directions, or along a circle, or in any other possible manner. Their liberty can be explained, apart of other reasons, also by that they take place beyond time and occur irrespective of any concrete place. Actually we face some neutral theatrical stage, with conditional symbols of earth and sky, with a minimum of theatrical properties, that is as if an absolutely free metaphor space.

The coloring of Marza's canvasses features great diversity as well. It can be foggy and gloom, or very bright and transparent - lit up by a romantic moon or blazing sun. The base of all her constructions, whether graphics or paintings, is undoubtedly a free improvised drawing. All over the years the artist always reverts to the ancient technical triumvirate - paper, brush and Indian ink, always producing an effect never inferior to any complex print or fine art.

Natalie Zarovnaya creates in a completely different manner, predominantly some formal search. Her creations over the last decades - a great many graphic series, all carry the signs of masterly technique, of experiments in texture and plastics. Her abstract compositions certify once again that the observed and imaginary, the real and fantastic worlds are not separated by an impermeable wall. Even when pursuing particularly formal tasks, she rested, either consciously or subconsciously, upon the multiformity of the surrounding life. When her impressions were natural and organic, her hands created musically delicate etchings and lithographs, monotypes and collages. Her paintings also reflect the dramatic foundations of existence, expressed specifically in the strained contrasting alternation of great masses of black and white, in expressive movements of the tool, limited only by the size of paper or other material.

The space of creations of Natalie Zarovnaya is a micro- and macrocosmos simultaneously, because she discovers an infinite variety of forms and colors in everything - in a small stone or a tree leaf, as well as in a boundless lake, vast snow covered fields and the limitless chasm of the sky above them. This direct response of the artist to the pulsations of life is the reason of the constant renovation and development of her creations.

Lately, we all witness her urge towards unmasking not only the multilayer structure of that or other scene, but also to some laconic symbol or sign, towards geometric definiteness and rhythmic precision.

The figurative romantic lyrics of Marina Marza and the abstract experimental plastics of Natalie Zarovnaya, although seeming to contrast one another, are nevertheless able to form an original expositive field so attracting to both specialists and amateurs in traditional and modern art.

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