

Why look at painting, what triggers the urge to approach it?

Tiina Elina Nurminen's new exhibition *Borderline* has its origins in her two year stay in Tashkent Uzbekistan. In her new paintings the artist uses silk fabrics from Uzbekistan. Sometimes the fabrics are clearly visible, and sometimes they have merged with the surface of the painting. The name of the exhibition, *Borderline*, refers to how her paintings are situated in between the figurative and non-figurative.

In Tashkent the garden became a special place to the artist. Her studio faced the garden, which meant that the world of plants became familiar to her. Nurminen has visited e.g. Claude Monet's famous garden in Giverny, but living and working in Tashkent in close proximity to a garden made her ideas of gardens more concrete. The two year stay in Uzbekistan was an important experience for the artist, and in future paintings she will approach the world outside the walls surrounding her house in Tashkent.

The motif of the new paintings is flowering plants. In art history flowers are often associated with themes of growth and blossoming but also with ideas about decay, abandon and loss. Flowers and plants are also related to ideas of beauty, finitude, materiality and temporality. The shape of the flowers in Nurminen's paintings can be either abstract or figurative.

During her stay in Uzbekistan, Nurminen became interested in materiality in a new way, and she found the local silk fabrics which she uses in various manners in the new paintings. The silk fabric, which is sometimes visible and sometimes invisible, brings material manifoldness and play with decorativeness.

When in front of Nurminen's paintings, the viewer is at the borderline of visible and invisible because some of the layers, colours and qualities, you feel rather than actually see. Painting has from its archaic origins been an art of suggestion and make-believe. The works of Tiina Elina Nurminen are encouraging us to use our senses and enter into the fields of visuality.

After seeing the *Borderline* series, it is easy to understand how diverse the themes surrounding flowers and plants can be. Nurminen succeeds in showing how floral themes can be soothing as well as passionate and violently seductive. In her paintings the sensory and the sensual meet the sublime and distant. The floral language turns into an amorous discourse which unites subject and object and makes fantasies real. Nurminen creates a painterly variant of the *Song of Songs*, where the concrete and material meet the abstract and conceptual.

The artist's paintings defy photographic reproduction because they are filled with allusions and nuances which are not visible in photography. This is caused by the pigments and other painterly details used by the artist. The same goes for artificial lighting. A miracle takes place when Nurminen switches off the lamp and lets natural light in; it is a physical experience to see the true nature of the painting reveal itself. The painting comes alive and you can see the results of Nurminen's patient work. The painting seem to breathe and radiate life.

The newest paintings by Tiina Elina Nurminen reveal the power painting has to make us look and behold. A painter is like someone who reads aloud or a guide who makes us see and understand the visual wonders of the world. This is the noble lesson of painting. This is the very reason to look at paintings, because they give us the ability to see.

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