

Landscape Expressions

A dialogue with the Soul through Landscapes

Since her last exhibition in 2011 Rachel Galea matured immensely in the way she uses colours in her paintings. Today the artist employs a rougher texture with impasto paint rather than with a smooth surface. Her paintings pass through different levels of transformation. She bravely captures and expands on the visual aspect of what exists in front of her turning imagery into rhythmic dashes of colour and movement on deep textured surfaces. The elements of nature are the starting point for these paintings. The artist uses through her memory and sensation of particular moments and reflects on her surrounding environment leaving spontaneity to lead the process of creation. One could say that the artist is an expressionist working with an inner language of lines, forms and colour. Her colourful vibrant palette and brushstrokes on canvas become the link between matter and spirit.

When one looks at Galea's paintings, one becomes aware of the change from the flat surface of the canvas into the three dimensionality of the landscape. The sublime aspect of her landscapes is found in those places that fill us with wonder by their unique characteristics, such as *Fields of Gold* (Xewkija from Sannat), *Citadel from Kercem*, *Xaghra from Marsalforn* and others. Sparse grassland, vegetation, rocky valleys, cloud-filled skies and dark blue rough seas that evoke nature's beauty make the viewers reflect on the mysterious aspect of the places. These are the places that Galea frequents, explores and paints during her free time in Gozo. She successfully developed her mature artistic sensitivity to the sublime. The artist's response to the landscape is a vital part of her esthetic.

In this series of scenes mostly taken from where she now lives, we find a sort of dramatic intensity and dynamic tension of varied atmospheric conditions. Although her work is guided by a strong awareness of the formal qualities in painting: line, shape, colour and form, besides she believes that intention should be absent from painting in order to achieve the most spontaneous result. Her landscapes become also a visual reference to the self.

Rachel Galea's landscapes are actually an interaction of the constant development which arises from the various layers of colour and light, concept and reality, and metamorphosis of nature. Her aim is not to set the subject into a reflective state of enlightenment where a

presence can only be found and forgetting about the self but the presence of her paintings evolves from the process and created by the open meaning of the scene. The secret of Rachel Galea's paintings have their roots in the oscillation between diverse poles, creating a state of mind where the adventure of exploring the coloured layers becomes a discovery of the self.

Dr. Louis Laganà