

PRESS RELEASE

Le désespoir du peintre – Maki Na Kamura at the JIRI SVESTKA GALLERY

/Prague, 10th September, 2008/ **The Prague Gallery Jiri Svestka will present works by the Japanese paintress Maki Na Kamura from 10th September till 18th October, 2008. The exhibition title – “Le désespoir du peintre” – expresses the “painter’s despair” and, at the same time, the great challenge of capturing the reality and of facing the doubts whether the experienced and felt reality could be captured and depicted.**

Fascination by the nature, world of dreams and fantasies, places between poetry and drama. The new paintings by the Japanese paintress Maki Na Kamura create fantastic landscapes of dreams between elegiac beauty and sinister menace. Her painting retrospects to the long tradition of mystical landscapes in both European and Asian art.

The fundament of her paintings, which mostly have horizontal formats, is formed by the tone of the chalky white canvass colour. On it greys and browns mix with more prominent tones of purple, green or yellow. Strong dilution of the paints creates a watercolour-like frail impression. Tacking is painted over by cover lines and strong colours clash with each other in sharp contrast. They are guided by contradictions such as “here” and “there”, “future” and “past”, towards the synthesis creating the “new”.

In a way similar to that creating the formal tension by the techniques used, a contentual tension is created between the observer and the space. Deliberately, the artist leaves the spatial status ambiguous. Nothing seems to be set or definite. Not just the colours - but also objects, time and space seem like they exist in an unremitting flow. *“It is my secret desire to drag the observer inside the painting; to even make him/her feel like they had been dragged in and they got lost inside it. In my opinion, this is what a good painting should be. Two worlds: hell and heaven. Up and down. Idyll and civilisation. Yesterday and today. The monarch and the masses. Life and death. And there we are, somewhere in between...”*

Like the book *Jitterbug Perfume* by the missionary of the American alternative culture Tom Robbins, the inspiration for Maki Na Kamura are the Eastern religions and philosophies –Taoism and Buddhism. *“His faith and philosophy are close to my heart... But it is nobody’s business... In any case, I am a non-believer... I am a non-believer to this world, yet as a painter, I am obliged to create faith and I believe I am able to do so.”*

The paintings, however, also refer to the ink drawing “Adonis Tod” by Francesco Albani and to the canvass “La printemps” by Jean Francois Millet from the d’Orsay Museum’s collection in Paris. Apparently side role is played by other characters and objects, such as a lion, rainbow, tree or a ruin. *“The inspiration falls from the sky and I just open my umbrella.”*

Maki Na Kamura is playing with memories and with the visual memory of the history of art. When looking at her home, the Japanese Osaka, one may understand the watercolour lightness and ornamental beauty of her works also as a synthesis of the Western and Eastern culture. *“The motive of a horse in motion and of the changing horizon suggests permanent transition, a shift from one place to another, just like the viewer analogically gets to know the personality of Maki*

Na Kamura between two significant cultures. This is also demonstrated in the paintings themselves – as if painted in fast gestures, yet in European composition, in line with modern Western standards,” comments Petr Vaňous, art critic and co-author of the catalogue prepared for the exhibition, the work of the Japanese artist.

Maki Na Kamura was born in the year of the Dog in the Japanese city of Osaka. She left her home Japan in 1994. She studied in both the West and East of the art world; she is currently living between Berlin and Düsseldorf. *“For the moment, German is my language, my pictorial language is European and I can caligraph it very well.”*

Maki Na Kamura

Le désespoir du peintre

10. 09. – 18. 10. 2008

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