

The Magic Gate - Artist Question List

Artist: Anastasiya Parvanova

Landscape paintings

1. [Element] Was there any specific time (e.g., day vs. night) that you wanted to portray in your landscape paintings?
Both paintings are thought of as two different moments of time happening directly, one after the other. I call them twins. I was imagining the same place but seen in two different blinks of the eye, and I could not measure if the time with my eyes closed was very short or extremely long; both are true for me.
2. [Process] There are multiple layers of various subject matters in your landscape paintings. Did you have any order in mind (which layer to paint first) or was it rather a spontaneous process? Is there any reason behind those steps?
I started by rapidly sketching the entire, premeditated composition as I had it in my mind, drawing just the base on the canvas of what I would later unveil or pull forward.
The second part consisted of layering mixtures of highly diluted acrylic colors and spray, which is a very unpredictable phase and not easy to control.
From then on, the surprising elements, which appeared after the diluted paint dried, I started “following” and “listening to” the color composition of the painting.
3. [Methodology] When you depict different scenes of natural landscape in your painting, do you paint purely out of your imagination and memory or do you refer to a physical, pictorial image? How does your approach and methodology reflect your perception and idea about the natural landscape?
In the case of Plasma & Vortex my approach started with a memory and a strong feeling of where I felt the necessity to arrive at. I continued by making many sketches, trying to grasp pieces of this feeling, of what was in my mind.
That was the first step to arrive at this landscape.
Later on, when I felt I had the base and a clear idea, I made a collection of images which might have proven useful. I stored some photographs I had made, notes, sketches and music. I was often going back to those “external inputs”, weaving them together with the very first approach.

I catch myself often having the need of an exit into my painting towards a landscape. Vast open spaces where I can “walk” with my imagination and observe or assist different kinds of events.
4. [Color] There is a distinctive usage of primary colors, complementary colors, resulting in high chroma in your paintings. Is there any intention behind applying these colors in terms of ambience, meaning, visual effects, or any other context?
The colors are only intuitive.

Star Child, 2022

5. [Element] Is there any symbolic meaning behind the objects portrayed in the painting (e.g, tent, snail in the tent, drawings on the wall, window with open

curtains, etc.)

The **drawings on the wall** are reproductions of my own and my brother's drawings as kids.

The **tent** takes me to somewhere ancient and sacred. We can find the use of tents since the antiquity of man. The name "tent" comes from a Latin verb "tendere", which means "to wait" - to take care. Waiting means "receiving the other". And the cure is giving life the chance to restart, giving us the chance to get back up.

The **snail** comes from the album cover of the music I was listening to while painting this piece, the song it called "miu" by Martina Herlop.

The **hand** appearing out of a box is from a dream of mine.

The **window**, as a device, always revealed and is always put in relation with the **curtain**. Seeing and hiding. Open and close. It is a device where luminosity works and relates it to the act of knowing things.

(The etymology of the word to see = Lat. Videre - pp. visus - from the Indo-European root vid- which reveals.)

Vision is also always an act of knowing. Through "seeing", we know.

The act of seeing is a profound act. It is never just the act of looking at something. A profound act that also sees what is not seen. Seeing into the depths, revealing a further surface. To interpret. The cognitive act is internal to art and the cognitive aspect is linked to seeing, showing and knowing.

Art has a knowledge that is enigmatic, it is not definitive. There's always a suspended condition that allows different interpretations. It is also a world that sometimes enters like the Karst River which enters the earth and then re-emerges. It is a very mobile and unstable dimension of knowledge, but very powerful because when it emerges it is like a re-flowering, like a reopening that generates a new intention on the image, a new gaze.

The moon as a ceiling.

And so on..

1. [Process] Could you please share what were the sources of inspiration (e.g., childhood memories/ photos/ written texts/ conversation/ personal thoughts, etc.) for this painting?

The room is a representation of my room as a child.

Most of the objects of this painting are connected to an invented character I wrote about in my thesis, one of the character's names is "ЇЖ" (written in Cyrillic, it sounds as "izh", it doesn't have a meaning in Bulgarian, it's just a sound).

The thesis is about an imaginary museum called *The Memories from the Future*

Museum. In the first chapter the reader/"visitor" is accompanied through an exhibition called "Forms of existence", and in one room there're preserved memories from human existence with the name ЫЖ, kept in the archive of the museum called "fluidity of the whole". Many memories show some of ЫЖ's first encounters with painting, beginning with "Memories from the shining childhood", from where this painting was inspired.

2. [Message] Is there any specific feeling you hope to generate within the viewers through this painting?

I don't think so. Probably I would hope them to take a look inside for a while.

3. [Message] Knowing that this is your self-portrait, what does this painting mean to you? Is there any particular period of time in your life that you were reflecting on throughout the process? How does this painting reflect your identity as a child in the past and as your current self?

Since I was a child, my mother, who is also a painter, provided me with large jars (which seemed giant to me) of tempera colors, many brushes, papers, pencils and canvases. Together with my brother and my friends we used to paint. Anywhere, at home, while traveling or in the garden sitting on a blanket, surrounded by materials as if building a protective magic circle around us. I remember that the colors gave me an irresistible pleasure. Yellow and red, for example, filled me with delight. It was as if I ate them with my eyes. They dried in the sun slowly and lost some of their powerful saturation.

My mother decorated the whole room of my brother and mine with our drawings. So, to me the room seemed all lit up, it was a place where there were many small windows to other places. The drawings were radiant, we looked at them carefully and told each other stories starting from the drawings; I drowned in the beauty of the colors.

Stratosphere flower, 2021

4. [Element] 'Flower' is quite a symbolic figure in many cultures. Is there any meaning you implied in this piece, especially in relation to 'stratosphere'?

In the drawing, the plant represents a paradigm of thought that grows slowly, crosses different layers, different eras and generations. It's a portrait of the form of a thought, of the activity of the mind.

As the plant grows, it changes from the world around it and the world it carries within itself. Inside its seed, in its origin, two little humans guide the plant in balance through the different layers of the atmosphere.

The first stratospheric flower I did was one for the little book "Portals" I published in 2021 with "**bruno**" publishing house and graphic studio. I was imagining how thought grows and passes through the atmosphere of the Earth towards the cosmos.

Later I found this note from a book and it matched well with my perception:

"<< Vegetables – writes Charles Bonnet – are planted in the air, more or less as planted in the earth>>: the atmosphere, more than the soil, is their first environment, their world [...] The world it is not an autonomous and independent entity of life, the world is the fluid nature of every environment: climate, atmosphere. It envelops and penetrates us but we are barely aware of it. [...] We do not inhabit the earth. Through the atmosphere, we inhabit the air. We are immersed in it just like fish in the sea. And what we call respiration is nothing but the farming of the atmosphere. [...] To live, to experience or to be-in-the-world also means letting everything pass through us. [...] If the world is in all its beings, then every being is capable of radically transforming the world. Universal mixing embodies the fact that the world is constantly exposed to the transformation wrought by its components." *

* Emanuele Coccia, "The Life of Plants: A Metaphysics of Mixture" p.60,64,80,91,94

5. [Element] The stems and flower petals reminded me of the image of heart and blood vessels. Was this part of your idea in this work?

Yes, it is. Maybe, in a way, it's a reminder for me that when I'm lost and confused in a sea of possibilities, some help might come from being led by the feeling of lightness of my heart.

6. [Methodology] Is there any intention behind your choice of medium and color in this artwork?

I think there isn't conscious reasoning in this case.

7. [Context] I found the drawing on the window in your work *Star Child* (2022) highly resembles this drawing. Was this your plan?

Yes, I want to develop more the flower and study it through different images.

Double Portal Entrances. 2021

8. [Element] Was there any reference for the two facial figures in the drawing?

Yes, they are from an actual door\portal I saw in south Italy. Along the whole door there were these stylized representations of trees and two people, plus the facial figures who served as door handles.

For my artistic development and in my memory this portal will remain unforgettable and crucial. It seemed as a living organism to me.

In my art practice, portals can be passed through unnoticed, so that we are entering a new and different place without realizing it.

The structure of a Portal is both inside and outside an area at the same time, it plays the role of a threshold. The portal is at the same time the end and the beginning of something, it is an opening that connects two spaces or worlds. One could say that it is a kind of space for transformation and change.

9. [Narrative] Does the direction of their gaze hold any significant meaning in terms of the narrative of this artwork?

I haven't thought about it.

10. [Element] How did you come up with the form/ structure and presentation (e.g., tilted angle) of the subject in the drawing?

I have been fascinated by the double-slit experiment, which demonstrates the wave-

particle duality of matter.

In the experiment only if a detector is turned on you find two bands, otherwise with the detector turned off, you get the waveform with many vertical bands.

The electron beam normally behaves like a wave, but if something interferes, like a measuring instrument, the probability wave collapses and behaves like a particle.

I have watched different representations of this experiment and it naturally entered into my drawing since the door was stylized by similar “electron beams”.