



Dina Zakman`s Illusion of Illusoriness

We live under the cover of signs and in denial of reality.

~ Jean Baudrillard

Today, our life can be compared to Plato's cave in its modern incarnation: a cave of "big data", propaganda and hype, when the shadow is indistinguishable from reality, and the illusion can be mistaken with the truth. Surprisingly, this concept turns out to be relevant as an image of the existence of humanity, in general, and each of us, in particular. We are prisoners sitting in a cave and seeing only shadows dancing on the stone walls.

Dina Zakman, a multimedia artist from Latvia, creates her own "Plato's cave" with her art. By constructing her fantasy worlds, she plays her own game, in which she borrows the expression of beauty, harmony and completeness of being from tradition of symbolic art, and she takes the idea of "simulation" from modern philosophy of art. As a result, she manages to provoke a feeling of illusion and evoke reflection in the observer.

Manifesting her research of the illusory nature of the surrounding world, the artist uses stereotypes that are being purposely questioned by her in order to invite the viewer to a dialogue about his place in the world and the way we perceive and interpret the surrounding reality.

Dina Zakman masterfully works with duality, which becomes a symbol that connects her artistic world with reality. By creating her micromodel of the world populated by imaginary creatures, she uses the cosmotheoanthropocentricity of the symbol and the technocentricity of the simulacrum: at first glance, her paintings, due to the seemingly flat image, can be deceptively perceived as a product of digital space, existing outside of time and space, outside the future and the past. At the same time, the artist perfectly understands the laws of symbol formation: they are based on the experience of previous generations, on the world cultural heritage; they are epic and even archaic, and therefore endless.

So, behind the images of unusual creatures we see much more: Dina creates mythologies that, with their illustrative style and surreal fantasy world introduce an element

of childish naivety and faith into a fairy tale, on the one hand, and on the other, they hint at the apocalyptic phantasmagoria of our existence.

Working within the conceptual framework of metamodernism, the artist uses an interdisciplinary approach in his artistic practice. Her art turns out to be imbued with references, quotations to recent or ancient heritage, where she plays with the stability of the culture of quotation and the instability of the modern message.

Various genres and materials help her convey the variability and ambiguity of our existence. In painting, graphics, sculpture, and other means of expression, **Dina Zakman** reflects the fluidity of our existence, its ambiguity, characterized by a lack of certainty, stability. The blurring of boundaries, their overcoming, the destruction of any integrity and isolation, fill her artistic world with motion.

Two-dimensionality of oriental art and the playfulness of images make her art even metaphysical. This is not a surprise: this kind of transformation of life through the means of art was characteristic of the aesthetics of symbolism. Moreover, her works seem to invite us to remember the unique style of Joan Miró and his figures, similar to incoherent children's drawings, vaguely similar to real objects.

Trying to satisfy our insatiable demand for reality and for this reason carefully looking into details, we insensibly immerse inside her fantastic worlds, where every stroke on the canvas, every shade, every combination of colors has its own meaning, and the large formats only add to the hypnotic effect.

To paraphrase David Joselit, **Dina Zakman's** art is not ready-made ideas, it is a mythological context. When a viewer gets into it, he can feel the great shudder of life and create new meanings, expanding this context. Thus, her art forms a unique synthesis of knowledge and becomes a stimulus for reflection, dialogue and interaction with the surrounding reality.

Julia Sysalova

Curator, critic - member of the International Association of Art Critics

Vice President of the Institute of Mediterranean Culture