

“I Locked the Labyrinth...” – Logic Against Cliché

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Interview with *Gela Zautashvili*

Question: Your recent paintings, even this eastern and Tantric exhibition “Labyrinth,” in my opinion belongs to, so called occult, or for you it is simply sincerity about personal precious world? There exists semi-ironic term occult that unites culture and occultism, when the oeuvre of artist is concentrated on occult ideas.

Gela Zautashvili: I am interested in this thematic only on the creative impulse level. In general, I am nourished with ideas, in art and in life. Here is adventure and game. This exhibition is honest for me. Early exhibition in Kopala gallery was brusque and that’s why it brought tension. I can’t stop on one thing. Artists, in general, tend to it. Earlier I was painting abstractions during ten years and this is absolutely new stage for me.

Question: There are many signs, symbols and contexts. Your paintings have to influence on the beholder, or they should be read actively and with attention?

Gela Zautashvili: There are paintings where you have to know canonic. For example, why goodness Kali puts her tongue out. Finally, does it have meaning whether beholder comprehends it or not. In my life this is meditative period

Question: Illustrative and pathetic depiction of ideas is “sin” for the contemporary art. May be you wanted to go out from this boring and sterile monotony of modern art?

Gela Zautashvili: I really love telling stories. I am uncommunicative in life and I do not speak it at all. I’m not going anywhere – only workshop and home. On another hand, I am not satisfied with sort of ascetic nature of modern art in material, its minimalism and reduction. I understand that’s new technologies have incredible possibilities, but I am old fashioned and I love paint and brush. I prefer this.

Question: Did you have such kind of tantric content exhibition overseas?

Gela Zautashvili: Yes I had in Vienna and going to have in India, in Delhi. I have to seriously think about this exhibition concerning India. There are canonic rules that can’t be played. I want my attitude to be tender. In India there are valuable painters, better than me and they are sold for 10 times less money than me. May be not everyone is great, but I have to bring well thought out exhibition there.

Question: How much do your artworks cost?

Gela Zautashvili: 5 thousand dollars, nearly.

Question: There are two main sharp lines in your paintings, sex and existence. There are also moments depicting human violence and frustration together with gods. You want to say that life is very confusing and bad?

Gela Zautashvili: Life is fantastically good, beautiful and lovely. You mentioned the word sex. In Khajuraho seven temples are full with reliefs of Kamasutra scenes. You can't imagine how little kids there narrate sexual histories of gods, with love and there is no even little obscenity in their narration. Here everyone lives in different dimension. Once I asked one boy how old he was and he begun to think about. Then he said, I have passport, so should be seventeen years old.

Question: The painting, where there is depicted Adam and Eve, outside women, prostitutes, sometimes with signs of fetishism or senility, seems they are outside of heaven. This is good or bad?

Gela Zautashvili: I can say that west is sloughed up to its neck in mistakes. I can't say this about east. When I say east I mean India as well as China. Besides, my artworks are simply hooligan game. If you remember this painting very well, there Eve has penis and what does it mean? Does anything mean anything? Once journalist asks Fellini – maestro, does this frame in the film mean this? And Fellini answers, what a good idea, I haven't even thought about, yes you are right, he responded.

Question: In several painting there are inscriptions of famous western brands, it means that you want west to become part of this mystical eternity?

Gela Zautashvili: Why not. Andy Warhol cut this door, when he turned familiar consumer environment into simulacrum. It is tough to enter this door. You can only approach it. I tried too.

Question: In your painting there is often depicted vagina, unlike India where mostly there is depicted phallus, lingam, in which you represent Shiva. And, generally, female energy, intuition, irrational is repressed instead of male and forced. You want to show this?

Gela Zautashvili: It is interesting what you say. But lingam is never depicted without yoni. In India women are doing yoni form circles from manure of a cow and then they put them on each other, as lingam, this cult of yoni is quite hidden.

Question: Are there painters with such kind of contents?

Gela Zautashvili: Of course. Is not it in Beuys's artworks? or in artworks of Polke or Clemente?

Question: I think that in your oeuvre it is especially underlined. Are these paintings worship of the universe or search for solutions from labyrinth?

Gela Zautashvili: Both of them. Labyrinth is also the game.

Question: And what is it at the end of labyrinth?

Gela Zautashvili: A new stage. You can't end the labyrinth.

Question: But it has the last room, is not it?

Gela Zautashvili: I locked labyrinth. And if you remember, in this painting I am standing outside of labyrinth.

Question: What is more important to be sincere or cool? It seems you risk, simply you want to stay sincere. What gives you strength to be so brave?

Gela Zautashvili: My decency. I excluded from my life promiscuity, drug abuse, drunkenness. Helena Blavatsky has said, it is necessary to properly sort objective articles to finally see - the only true world is subjective. If you are playing little bit and are sincere, it's great.

Question: From these paintings one can think that you worship promiscuity?

Gela Zautashvili: Conversely, that's why I place there faces of Dalai Lama and Buddha. Everything is logical, said Dalai Lama, when Tibet was lost and settled in India, homeland of Buddhism. I hang here the picture of Dalai Lama, together with acerbity.