

## About transparency and light

**M**elek Mazici (born 1956) has in a certain sense returned to her roots. She graduated from Istanbul Academy of arts as a fine artist, but since the 1980s has become known in Finland chiefly as a graphic artist - in fact, it was as a graphic artist that she graduated from the Finnish Academy of Fine Art.

Mazici is fascinated by the problem of transparency. She explored this in her earlier graphic work, but with her current technique – acrylic and water – she achieves more direct and rapid results while utilising a process which has a greater impact on the picture at the time of its creation.

Mazici's visual world has always been organic, and now she herself is entering a more organic relationship with the birth of a picture. "The picture and I work together," she says of her technique. And nor is her painting technique orthodox: she lays her paintings flat and uses water in abundance, so that the subsequent drying takes the process in its own direction - often determining the painting's direction only as it is actually created. The process does not involve run-offs; there are none. Instead it creates transparency while embedding light in the work. In the art works static forms are traces of their dynamic birth – it is as if a river had left its channel and appeared in light, a different sort of light.

Mazici also uses light skilfully: direct light, backlight and side-light bring to the work their own depth and permeability, so that the organic form emerging from the subconscious opens out through a translucent apparent object. As the philosopher of art Susan Langer has stated, in a successful work its transparent illusory reality, its "glass" is so clear, that the observer's attention is compelled to focus on the sensation of the internal aspect of life which the work expresses. Thus the viewer too can link to that organic process: there is no separate symbol or individual mark which would indicate any direction in particular or give interpre-

tative instructions and which might thus aid the viewer to move to some feeling or state. At its best an art work is the direct display of feeling.

Mazici's technique emphasises this directness. She does not make sketches but works directly on the canvas knowing at the outset only the colour from which she will start. Nor does she plan during the process. Her possible interpretation begins only when the subconscious has done its work.

In Mazici's work can be discerned not only colour and light, but a visual universe and through it her own themes, which generally move on different interfaces. The artist herself recognises in her work a delicate feminist dimension, but places power and strength at the opposite pole, which brings into the picture another source of tension. One interface on offer is the eternal artistic pair of binary opposites, abstract and figurative. From this one may find a route into a hypnagogic state: the interface between sleep and wakefulness. Most of us are familiar with the visual world born on the edge of sleep, defying rational explanation. But Mazici knows when she begins that one of her main aims is always beauty.

*Otso Kantokorpi, trans Richard Powell*