

For this second participation to Art au Centre, the artwork displayed by Nina Tomàs represents a kind of milestone of the evolution of her practice, the mark of a return to her roots. After reaching a point of breakdown last November, the artist aspires to come back to a more formal kind of art, less narrative and figurative, with rawer and almost « rude » compositions.

The composition here plays a key role: whether within each of the paintings or from a painting to another (increasing format) or even beyond the artwork itself. An extra filter is actually added when the artwork invades the totality of the display window, like a panel in a preexisting frame. Is it a frame in a frame? A window in a window? By fragmenting and juxtaposing plans and spaces, by playing with the proportions and by adding colors (flat tints or shaded off), shapes, motifs and different textures in her paintings, she creates effects of contrast, breakdown, emptiness and fullness, but also a harmonious and coherent whole. These elements enable her to give rhythm to her paintings and to forge links between them.

While Nina Tomàs wants to distance herself from figuration and narration, there are still some discrete signs of them. Each of the paintings that form this triptych is based on a photograph of the artist or an image she selected carefully. And if the spectator is attentive, he might notice some details of them. With her pictures, the painter tries to connect different countries and their cultures. On the left, it is possible to discern Brussels urban landscape through which she introduces a tension between organic, geometric and industrial motifs. On the right, a tarpaulin sloppily hanged over an onions stall in India inspired her to work the hang, a motif particularly interesting for the artist given its historical use by the great masters since the Renaissance, given its connection to femininity in art history and given the technique used here – oil painting, which requires patience and delicacy. At the center, an artwork by Duccio di Buoninsegna (c.1260-1319) lead her to structure the stage in two levels, traced on a textile with printed motifs that is directly stretched on the frame. This motif is reused manually at other spots of the triptych. The attention to detail and the repeated gesture show the perfectionist and almost obsessional likings of the artist, but also the spiritual and thoughtful dimension related to the creation of the painting.

Nina Tomàs' paintings don't rest on any sketch and get built progressively, by superimposition of pictorial layers. They transform over time in an uncontrolled and uncontrollable way, giving free rein to impulsiveness and unconsciousness. It is a slow process and what we have today in front of us is not a « finished product » because other levels of reading will be generated with the addition of extra panels in the future. Nina Tomàs considers her polyptych as a journey that we can follow to travel and lose ourselves in it.