

Nina Tomàs
Logiques du flou
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The paintings of Nina Tomàs touch upon numerous subjects (ecological, economic, informational and nervous systems; singular lives – her own but especially those of others, the people she encounters on her travels or her relatives; local, global and hybrid identities . . .) and dimensions, namely, the material dimension (both through the ecosystems she represents and by exploring the materiality of her representations and treating her supports as three-dimensional volumes with a front and a back) and the oneiric dimension. Indeed, the role of dreams, or dream-work,* animates her works in their modes of composition based on the association of figures, time and heterogeneous spaces.

Although her paintings are not the result of collages properly speaking, all of them gradually establish a complex narrative, invariably tinged with abstraction, based on fragments of images and recurring motifs, which are removed from their original context and re-assembled to form empirical and critical relationships. With each connection or relation between these elements, new meanings and interpretations are created (such as the displacement of the western gaze on Indian Muslim women in *Petit creux*). A vast mental space opens up for the beholder, who in turn accepts the task of translating these semantic arrangements. The signs are drawn and painted with painstaking care, as though vying to sharpen the spectators' senses (as the magnifying glass in *Chercheuse de fil* seems to suggest), allowing them to see more clearly, to make out a detail, an element that would enable them to unravel the mystery each painting ultimately represents.

These internal arrangements are reinforced by two further levels of spatial, visual, tactile and mental complexity. The first of these concerns the arrangement of the small-format works as diptychs in or around corners, complemented by dialogues between small paintings on the walls and others, with abstract decorative motifs, arranged in volumes on the floor. The second is the visual disruption caused by the painterly reproduction of the fabric of textile motifs (*Extinction, Ascenseur spirituel*). Finally, the artist's recent exploration of the tondo – a circular format conducive to the reversal of the flow of semantic relationships between the depicted signs and to the loss of traditional points of reference (up/down/left/right) – enhances the feeling of disruption and mystery and thus heightens the viewer's visual and mental experience.

A singular and complex sense of poetry radiates from the resulting works, which explore the possible relations of analogy and meaning between disparate symbolic systems by conjoining archaic dream-work with the contemporary flow of images, their dissemination (as underlined by the tablet-like format of certain paintings), connections and enigmas.

Tristan Trémeau

* Dream-work (*Traumarbeit*) is the operation by which, according to Freud, latent dream thoughts can be transformed into manifest content of a dream as it presents itself to the dreamer.

Tristan Trémeau is an art historian and critic. A professor at ARBA-ESA in Brussels and at ESAD TALM-Tours, he has curated numerous exhibitions in museums and art centres. He has regularly contributed to specialist magazines (*Artpress, Art 21, L'art meme*, a.o.) and exhibition catalogues (*Wim Delvoye, Mudam Luxembourg, 2016; Radenko Milak: University of Disasters, Venice Biennale, 2017; a.o.*) since the mid-1990s.