

Exposition “Insiders’ Memories” Karien Deroo, Aporia gallery Brussels, October 21- November 10, 2017.

Karien Deroo is a mid-career artist (°1963) working and living in Sint-Laureins.

Portrait and landscape painting in oil is at the center of her work. The canvases show figures frozen in space and contemplate in an uncertain emotional condition. A movement is clearly visible but remains unclear where the figures are situated or where they are going to. We can hardly read their intentions but we can feel an uneasiness from each brush stroke. Deroo is painting the inner condition of the portrayed individual as a photograph or film still. The mind's status, the mind's I from the subject matter is of interest to Deroo. She is drawing with paint and as a result, the painting becomes a drawing. Deroo is interested in picturing the inner field as a mental landscape.

Karien Deroo uses a power- and colorful palette and combines unexpected colors to accentuate details and to add to the subject's inner meaning. The same applies to the differences in painting styles which are sensibly or approximately applied. These reflect the energy emerging or from the (un)conscious moods of the depicted figures. It gives the paintings either a lively or a vigorous expression – a dimension the spectator cannot neglect and is forced to absorb. This alternation in usage of styles is not only a characteristic in the oeuvre of Karien Deroo but it is proof of the quality of the artistic work.

The same applies for the different dimensions of canvases she paints. The same subject matter depicted in various formats and colors provides different spectator's experiences. Karien Deroo also switches from one painting style into another; from a tender almost static style she flows into a dynamic and expressionist style. This happens often in a single painting and gives full expression and depth to the character to the painted figures. In her works the play of colors, execution and formats comes together and the act of painting becomes drawing again. The easy way in which Deroo paints (draws) is convincing as to the level of liveliness and spontaneity of the resulting painting. Here too we discover a strong quality of a talented painter able to translate her impressions with regard to landscapes and people in a full scale variety.

The only painting missing so far is a self-portrait.

Bart Roefmans, Brussels, 10 September, 2017.