

Vinko Šaina

Landscape seems to be the destiny of Istrian painters. Almost every painter I know tried out this prestigious category of painting, and even those artists who visit Istria inevitably seek to paint its landscape. It is sure that this Terra Magica carries within itself an invisible energy, a concentrated field of energy forces which come to the surface in miraculous natural forms that under the reflex of the specific celestial colour palate weave the most exciting visual story the Earth can tell. White, grey or red, Istria is equal in its differences and its natural expression which grows or quietens with the changing of the seasons, sunrises and sunsets, rain and sun... hour after hour.

It goes without saying that this kind of landscape cannot leave any painter uninspired, regardless of his or her vocation, and the same landscape ended up being an inspiration even to Labin's painter Vinko Šaina. The landscape is a constant in his painting and has been that almost since the beginning of his artistic journey, or for more than thirty years. In Šaina's case this discipline is a starting point for numerous experiments and artistic exploration which the author systematically conducted in his immensely rich artistic oeuvre. As the Istrian landscape is constantly changing, so are the paintings of Vinko Šaina. In the beginning his works were strongly structured canvases painted in layers where the texture of the land was the main factor and subject of the abstract composition. The firmness gradually gave way to fluidity, and clear forms slowly lost their contours. At one point, the landscape rose above the Istrian land and started its long cosmic journey during which it will keep flowing while meeting new worlds full of mystery and mysticism. In this series Vinko introduces the geometric symbol as a strong counterpoint and a point of reference of the permanent movement of the composition, as well as an undefined symbol that will additionally emphasise the mystic atmosphere. This is most often a triangle, a triangle as the character of the geometric shape of a pyramid but also as the schematic symbol of the pyramids in Giza which Vinko saw in 1993 from the edge of the Earth's crust, enshrouded in a desert storm raging beneath the layers of the atmosphere and radiating an unimaginable magical power. This triangle is a complex reading of a whole series of symbols which are incorporated into the Egyptian pyramids, the Jewish desert epics, the mysterious Bermuda Triangle and the expanse of outer space. Analogies with Clark and Kubrick's *Odyssey* are more than obvious. This is a world which has not been explored and which is undeniably attractive. The meaning of man in this unexplored world is surely important, but minuscule in relation to the power of nature and greatness of space, where we do not yet know what is being held in store for us. As a result, the author places his painting in the cosmic context whose infiniteness is recognised as the equivalent of his own artistic exploration, but also as fertile soil for the strict questioning of the artistic laws mentioned earlier.

The recognisable expressionism of Vinko's gestures placed in the context of a fluid composition will slowly lose its original strength and decisiveness and will melt into the extremely suggestive colours dictating the necessary dynamism that will transform Vinko's art, now freed of any symbols, into a permanent kinetic movement. Blue and yellow become the basic colours of Vinko's new series, and this spectrum will form the basis of a miraculous and inventive colouristic improvisation which will primarily speak of the author's subtle, extremely refined feeling for colour, which becomes the main means of construction in his composition. When looking at Šaina's new paintings, it is impossible to escape the association with romantic and expressionist paintings, that is with William Turner, Caspar David Friedrich or Vincent Van Gogh, because it is the *Odyssey* which Šaina is offering and which takes us to unknown galaxies that has a romantic charge of unique journeys and exploration of the unknown, which necessarily brings with it inner and outer expressivity. As a result, the gestures and colours as the constructors of the composition are expressive and the general feeling offers a romantic atmosphere. It is not the one known in the 19th century; this one belongs to the future. However, in the paintings of Vinko Šaina which resonate with the vastness and mystery of space, Istria, as a lasting microcosmos, has never been forgotten or abandoned. In their space mission, Vinko Šaina's paintings carry with them the colours and vibrations of the land of Istria.

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