

ArtintheCity Speaks to Artist Karine Roche



French painter Karine Roche combines a mixture of classicism and modernity, precision and spontaneity, excitement and stillness in her densely layered paintings. She has exhibited extensively in Europe and now comes to Dubai with a new body of work, in a solo show at Art Sawa from 12th March to 13th April, 2011. ArtintheCity spoke to Roche about her artistic practice.

AITC: Can you explain a little about your artistic process to us? Where does your inspiration come from, and how do you work out your compositions?

Karine Roche: Travels are the starting point of my work. Cities and landscapes fascinate me, human beings as well - seeing what people do with the environment is a way to discover more about them. While travelling, I take a lot of photographs and I use some of them in my work as a souvenir of the journey. I use a variety of materials to create a mixed support [or base] and painting creates the link.

The final construction comes about naturally as I progress with the work. My inspiration comes from my reality: where I live and where I travel, and all the information about lines and colors that our eyes can absorb. The challenge is in how the mind can translate all this information into painting.

AITC: You mix natural elements with the urban environment in a combination of the man made and the organic. What is it that interests you about this relationship?

KR: All paintings can be reduce as a composition of lines, straights , curves, points, plan... and it's exactly what I see in urban and organic nature.

AITC: Architecture is one of the attractions of Dubai; the city has built a reputation for forward-thinking and dynamic architectural features. Is this your first time to Dubai, and do you find the city to be an inspiration to your work?

KR: In 1995 and 2003, I spent a few days in Dubai. Globalization tries to create uniformity in architecture, “star” architects make fantastic buildings using high technology in all modern cities [these days], but it's interesting to see how it is possible for these cities to keep their own atmosphere and identity. I try to capture [this] in my works, this specific atmosphere that makes a city or a place unique, but I also give most space for imagination. Regarding Dubai, I had to use a lot of blue in these paintings because of the sky's reflection in all these glass building, which produces some fantastic blue gradients. I hope Dubai comes across in these paintings [to audiences] because it was the trigger of this series.

AITC: Your paintings are very densely layered. How do you know when a painting is finished? And is the painting process or the finished work the most important to you?

KR: “Is it finished yet, or should I continue...?” Every painter is asking himself this same question and especially nowadays because all the tradition rules of painting have been broken. Once I saw wonderful drawings by artist Michel Ange. When he first made them, they were considered as sketches and no one at that time could have imagine showing them to a public because they seem to be unfinished works... I'm most interested in the painting process. The result generally annoys me because I m not satisfied. What I feel when I'm painting doesn't result in a work as strong as I would like. I love the action of painting the construction of a picture and the questioning [process which is central to this].