**We are almost there**

I was on the same spot where I was waiting everyday and took the bus that did not yet have its share of the commuting crowd at the end of the day. I sat on the seat next to the window. I must have fallen into sleep because when I opened my eyes there was nobody in the empty bus that had the lights on. None of the passengers had noticed that I was there and apparently even the bus driver had not bothered to wake me up. When I stepped out in order to understand where I was, I realized that I was somewhere that did not resemble the neighbourhoods that I passed by everyday on the same route. There was no living being except for the bushes on the abandoned clearing where the bus had parked. A feeling of silence was prevailing even among the sparse grass on the ground. I started to feel uneasy. I began to walk in order to find out where I was and to find somebody who could show me the way. After walking on the road illuminated by the moonlight for a while, I noticed a couple of eyes looking at me from afar. When I was walking towards these eyes with the hope that they would belong to somebody who might inform me, a feeling that something was going wrong overtook me. Passing through the pathways among the bushes and coming closer to the eyes ahead, I realized that there was something strange about it. When I fully approached them and realized that the eyes that I had seen from afar belonged to a mask placed on the grass, I surrendered to a creepy feeling full of loneliness and uneasiness that might be felt when touching a dead animal. Everything that I touched was dull and lifeless.

During the long and tiring walk, I was followed by flower and ivy-strewn sculptures, bodies that cannot find their heads and masks that cannot find their bodies. There were lots of questions in my mind. For example, how do we understand whether a form that we see from afar is alive or not? If it is a sculpture, do the moss, ivies and flowers that wrap around it revive it? Or do they enable it to be considered as alive? Is a creature, which is standing still and seems to be frozen but breathes, considered as alive? Is life only real when we can communicate? What are the limits of this communication; is it only what we feel?

While my mind was busy with all of these, I sat in order to have a rest next to the bushes illuminated by the moonlight. Although I was aware of the severity of the situation, the tranquility of the surroundings was oddly peaceful. Just when I began to slowly accept the situation that I was in, a jackal coming out of the cave opposite me started to walk slowly towards me. Without coming too close, it stood on its hindlegs and put out its hand. It stayed in that position for a long time. It was as if all the living beings were petrifying behind the bushes and becoming part of the composition created by nature. What I could only do was to adapt to it. One of the unique abilities that humanity can brag about was the ability to adapt, after all.

The dawn was breaking and I had already gotten used to double-headed sculptures, marble heads standing on the tree separately from their bodies and everything that looked alive but didn’t breath and didn’t show any signs of life although breathing. I was not even surprised when the dog that appeared suddenly standing on the plant-strewn staircase with no clear way out did not move although it was breathing.

The staircase was inviting me upstairs. When I climbed the stairs one by one, I found myself in front of a studio door. There was fresh paint smell coming from inside. I rang the bell and a young woman greeted me. A cat blind in one eye on the canvas standing in the corridor opening to the living room door was looking at me from next to the aloe plant. The main characters of a world that was extremely familiar to me were greeting me on the canvases in the studio.

In Aylin Zaptçıoğlu’s paintings, the ‘living ones’ posing in the form of sculptures and the sculptures looking like as if they will begin moving soon determine the starting and endpoint of the world that the artist has created. The figures each creating a composition on their own sometimes pose for the audience and sometimes play games of which rules they determine. The flowers and ivies around become part of the beings standing there for a long time. Cutting at one point the cycle that she deals with in her paintings, Zaptçıoğlu interferes in that moment and documents it secretly. On the other hand, in the scenes that have been set up by means of a wide-angle perspective, there are bushes, mountains or borders enclosed by wire fences on the surfaces creating the background. Skyscrapers that seem to appear all of a sudden or the factory in smoke in the background; and when we go from the movement towards the back, the visually calm composition slightly opens the doors of this dual world. What is going on in that tranquility is part of that partly uncanny and partly peaceful world where double-headed animals exist. This world is the utopia where the artist presents her stream of subconsciousness in an uncensored way.

Where there is the sun there is also the shadow within the natural functioning of the universe. Accordingly, the exhibition is set up on the principle of yin and yang. Although light and dark toned paintings are distinguished by their colours, the dominant melancholic atmosphere in each of them serves as a binder between the works. The paintings are, in a sense, a method of dealing with the idea of ‘losing’. The exhibition “Interrupted Cycle” in general takes off from this idea of transformation. Transformation exists in accordance with the order of the universe; man dies, the body merges with the soil, the soil becomes the plant. In Zaptçıoğlu’s paintings, we cannot distinguish whether the figures turn into plants or the plants into human beings or the human beings into animals.

Human memory also works similarly; we remember the images in an altered way. Our memory is shaped by connotations. And sometimes we do some things randomly in the moment that we live in. The actions that we automatically do without thinking eliminate the awareness in our daily acts. Such as the limbs lost in the fog in the artist’s paintings: We know that our arm exists but our body does not make its existence felt each moment, however, we feel its absence in an extremely strong way. This unconscious state frequently draws attention in Zaptçıoğlu’s painting. A figure posing in front is unaware of what’s going on behind or uninterested in extraordinary situations around it. The figures are also often disconnected from the audience. Except for the main characters alone in the center; the animals, half-animals, human beings and sculptures that provide the integrity of the painting are unaware of the existence of an audience and in an adapted position in their own nature.

There are several methods of expressing a subject in a pictorial language. You might think within concepts and proceed in a more planned way or you might follow a more expressionist method and trust your instincts. On the other hand, there’s an element in contemporary art the existence or necessity of which is not being discussed; one can call it the ‘soul’. One can describe and write about the elements such as the technical and conceptual perspective and the symbolism that makes a painting an artwork. But the soul of the painting is a more personal, intangible and indefinable element beyond all that. The transformation process of an idea into an artwork is not random; imagination and aesthetics step in. This is exactly what Zaptçıoğlu captures in the works that she creates by taking off from the concepts such as symbolism and Eastern philosophy; ‘the soul of painting’.