

Sonja Kalb Critical Analysis

Sonja Kalb's entrancing opuses have the relentless capability to offer the viewer the illusion of utter transportation to realms of mysterious oceanic depths or ethereal journeys traversing a cosmos of thought and expression. Kalb's abstract creations truly reflect her sincere affinity with the natural world, through which she shares an erudite understanding of the environment that she presents with resounding aplomb. Indeed, this phenomenal artist was awarded the accolade of 'Best Abstract Artwork' at the Chianciano Biennale hosted at the Chianciano Art Museum, yet it is clear that Kalb's academic understanding of her medium profoundly investigates an abundance of historical references that contribute to an overwhelming sophistication visible in each artistic conception. The monumental dimensions of much of the work combined with exquisite execution and sense of timeless mastery confirms Kalb as a considerable 21st Century talent.

Kalb's graceful representations of subtle light and gentle movement within the biosphere of her artistic identity rival that of Ivan Aivazovsky, each artist obtaining the astounding ability to cast an authentic touch of light across their stunning compositions. Indeed, in 'Early Morning', the hazy mist appears tangibly resolute in the sky immortalising the intrinsic sensorial experience of the cold dewy morning depicted. Certainly, it is this luminescence that Kalb achieves that vehemently connects the viewer so unreservedly to each piece; Kalb coalesces nature's pure, unabated beauty and her innovative Abstract Expressionist approach with an eloquent ease thus gifting each individual viewer with their own personal landscape that possesses an understanding of the harmonious balance in which the limitless diversities of the natural forces coexist within. As the eye traverses the canvas, the spectator is inclined to escape the present day as they are radically enthralled and consumed by the dexterous complexities of the artist's approach to her medium. In this respect, cerebral connections can be detected between the philosophical proclivities of Kalb and Franz Kline, particularly when considering the avant garde application of paint and the impassioned gesture that can be found in the oeuvre of each artist.

Perfervid tones saturate Kalb's canvas; her intense hues suggest a visual curiosity towards the Fauvists, which is visible in her symbolic and evocative use of colour that conjures thoughts of Kees van Dongen. Upon a deep analysis, Kalb's choice of palette draws further parallels with Expressionist artists Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Chaim Soutine and Mark Rothko, whose intensity of colour also provokes an intuitive and primordial response from the viewer. The infatuating textures and hues in 'Blue Sky Emotion' undeniably reflect Kalb's mirrored cognitive approach to the Expressionists as the joyous connotations of a summers day are heralded with bold presence and simultaneous delicate nuance.

Kalb's poignant and emotive works reflect a distinct influence from the German Expressionist group Die Brücke, particularly when considering Emil Nolde who shares Kalb's insatiable predilection for an emblematic use of oil to create an inherent aura of Mother Nature's glorious creations. 'Ocean World (Diptych)' remarkably reveals a trove containing the vivacious mysteries of life swimming below the surface of the water through an elegant translation of her fundamental outlook. In this instance, Kalb's abstracted forms contain a tender attitude, as seen in Franz Marc's depictions of nature, and enable the viewer to envisage their own interpretation of the landscape evoked.

When observing 'Rainforest,' it is possible to detect conceptual ideals that align with the Tachisme movement and Serge Poliakoff, particularly when considering the intrepid application of medium that Kalb ventures upon. Further comparisons can be made with Arshile Gorky and Karel Appel through their aligned implementation of line and colour that harbours cardinal and inexpugnable emotion; a captivating curiosity is provoked in the viewer, who is beguiled by the composition and inspired to wander through the densely populated jungle portrayed in order to uncover the hidden narratives within its terrain.

Kalb's academic approach towards her creativity is reflected in the masterful manipulation of her materials that seem to layer hues thereby chronicling the journey of the artist's synergy with her work. The textures created at times even correlate with the philosophies of the Dada movement; each subsequent stratum at once masks and reveals an integral aspect of the narrative contained within the artwork and thereby provides tangible links with Kurt Schwitters. This mesmerising technique is exemplified in 'Glacier' and 'Sensations', where each layer unveils an element of rich history and thereupon develops a fervent intrigue in the viewer.

Kalb's astonishing ability to skilfully conceive significantly large and museum worthy compositions with such graceful impact firmly demonstrates her supreme creative talent. The artist's ebullient personality radiates through every subtle motion in her oeuvre and conveys her connate perspective to the viewer with exquisite serenity and eloquence.



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