

Afaf Zreik in “Beirut Octet”.. Before the painting

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It is neither flattering nor flattering to say that Afaf Zureik (https://www.alaraby.co.uk/culture/%D8%B9%D9%81%D8%A7%D9%81-%D8%B2%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%82-%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D9%82%D8%AA-%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%B4%D9%83%D9%91%D9%84%D9%87) (1948), which is displayed in the “Saleh Barakat Gallery” in Beirut. She is the daughter of Constantine Zureik, who is known as a thinker, academic, and theorist of national Arabism. I can only mention this kinship, which surprised me, without building anything on it. Afaf is Afaf alone and her exhibition, as well as her English texts opposite paintings

(https://www.alaraby.co.uk/culture/%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%85-%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D8%B7%D8%A8%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AA-

%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%AB%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%A9)I did not read it due to my lack of English. I say that this does not pertain to Constantine Zurayk, except to the extent that it pertains to others who often do not bear, as Afaf herself does, Arab names.

A number of Zurayk’s paintings, and perhaps all of them, lead us to return to the Russian Kazimir Malevich, in his white painting in which white is born from white, white dominates, and is even unique to it. There is more than one painting in Zurayk’s exhibition that has been attributed to, or at least recalled, this Malevich painting, and it is like it an anti-art or anti-painting. In the exhibition there are paintings in which white is born from light gray, without contrasting with its whiteness. Rather, we feel that the white with him is undulating in secret, undulating in the silence of the painting, without that being anything but its fidgeting and movement, and without it being anything but depth. for white (https://www.alaraby.co.uk/culture/%22%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%82%22-%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B2%D9%91%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%88%D8%AD%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%A8%D8%AB%D9%82-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%82%D8%B5)holding him.

(from gallery)

This white board will not always remain white. But we feel regarding the other paintings that were made of faded lines and faded smears as well, black or green, blue and brown. We feel that what we noticed in the painting of whiteness is almost, in a way, the model and style of the exhibition. There is something else, something, that is generated from the colored smears, from the colors sprinkled on the plate or wiped on it, something with which the same color does not remain. It is, in all paintings, color extremes or color haze. It is not black, or green, or blue, or brown, or pink, it is just that, it is and it is not, these are passing, fleeting, or wavy colors in the painting.

She is also in a state of breathing and fidgeting, as if by that she is hiding, covering, or affirming something else. The painting is like this, with its spots, smears, and lines. It is, as we see it, only the moment of its birth. It is such a work that is still being realized, still being formed, and we encounter it at one of its times, but rather at a stage of its formation that precedes the painting, or goes beyond it. That is, what we see encloses the painting, or promises it. What we see is a station in the midst of the composition of the painting, but this is how he indicates it, conceals it as much as he announces it, covers it as much as he makes it known.



Nevertheless, the painting is still, in its invisibility, more like it is wrestling with itself, more like turning on itself, antagonizing itself and disavowing itself. In this way, she is desperate of herself. It also despairs of art, even preaches a desperate art, an art in reverse. It is a counter art, rather it is almost a denial of art, or another definition of it. It is like this color, stains and lines, without being anything but blasphemy once more art, color and lines.

(from gallery)

If we wanted to find a subject for Afaf Zureik's painting, and talking regarding the subject here is nothing more than blasphemy and stigmatization of the painting, if we wanted to assume a subject, and this is only an assumption, we would say that it is space. What Afaf Zurayk is doing is promising, or instructing, a precedent for art, a precedent for painting. What she paints is almost art itself, her painting says that it is absolutely color, and absolute line. That is, its subject, if it has a subject, is art itself.

Therefore, in front of this puzzle, we cannot see Afaf Zurayk's painting, except for what the painting lacks or what it looks forward to and assumes. The painting is thus what is behind it and what is in front of it. It is almost the idea of the painting and perhaps its theory. It may be seen in relation to the English text that corresponds to it. However, Saleh Barakat says that he is the one who hung the texts in front of the paintings. This means that this budget is not Afaf Zureik's job, but Barakat's intervention. This immediately means that Barakat is a partner in the exhibition, and we can only see his organic and foundational involvement in it. This calls for another reading that parallels between the drawn painting and the written painting. This brings us to another field... to another reading.

The exhibition "Beirut Octet" opened on the eleventh of January, and will continue until the twenty-sixth of February.

* My Lebanese poet

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