

“Which window does the artist open in the boundless space of the Universe? Where does he take us and what secrets does he share? Is he leading us into metaphysical depths or returning us to the real world? Which emotions does he bring on us – which hidden or visible layers of human existence does he touch?” these questions logically emerge while dealing with art.

Thus, Zaza Berdzneshevili's works are also answers to these questions on: indivisible union of the Universe and the human being, natural coexistence of sorrow and joy, inevitability of dreams... The answer to the question that concerns the most delicate depths of our existence and brings us back to the Origin.

Therefore, seemingly ordinary things, scenes or actions always get mystical air. According to the painter, every action is permeated with something important, symbolizes some feeling or is an embodied sign of some emotion. His basilicas are a touch with eternity. They are a symbol of remorse caused by the loss of the natural epoch of the Universe. It is not only the iconographic symbol of faith but has also an enchanting charm of the eternal pier. Most of Zaza Berdzenishvili's pictures bear attributes of the night: the moon, symbol of the night, is his star. The night, which is a carrier of mystery, is the main realm of activities of his characters. However, in Zaza Berdzenishvili's paintings, the night darkness is colourful – “it's sunny night,” which contains all colours and shades from white to black and yet, it's the night with all its feeling and mood, a colourful night – emerald and golden, orange and blue, with endless gradation of the colour... and white basilicas and figures: people with wings, white horses, clowns and objects, as if float in the silence of the night, in the deliberately ambiguous space. The artist sometimes looks at them from above: from remoteness of the sky the buildings with crosses are lost somewhere below, at the invisible junction of the sky and the earth; and sometimes, with disturbing splendor, he erects a temple in front of us, with a white, monumental outline along the entire length of the painting. The basilica theme introduced into the Georgian painting by Zaza Berdzenishvili is repeated from painting to painting and brings association of the oldest traditional cosmogonic mythologem: the sky and the earth and their connecting temple – the universal model of the Universe. In paintings entireness of the Universe is logically completed by the star in the sky and figures of people or animals. With each painting the artist personally bids farewell to the epoch where everything – the sky and the earth, stars, people, animals and plants, is the equal part of one, whole natural universe. Each picture reflects the sorrow caused by the loss of this universe and in each of them Zaza Berdzenishvili reconstructs this universe, shows its superiority. However, this is not a romantic reference – the time of glorious stories is over, so these are more postmodernist metanarratives, semiotic signs, more messages than narrative. These are interpretive discussions, expansion of one main “text,” for which the artist has invented his own alphabet, system of signs and icons elevated to the category of symbols through simplification and conventionalism, and represent a modern modification of ancient archetypes: a man-bird, with a glance upwards to heaven and wing-like hands, resembling mythic Icarus and indicating to loneliness of the man in the world and his unaccomplished dreams. Zaza Berdzenishvili introduces his own system of imagology to Georgian painting. These images are in fact colour ideogrammes which are distanced from their original meaning. These ideogrammes create a “text,” which often repeats but the painting “model” changes and as a result, the same story gets totally different emotional intonation. The artist masters and uses the colour to express the entire range of feelings and reaches amazing effect not only with oil but with pens, gouache and pastel works which leave the impression of multilayer painting. Everywhere the colour has glitter of precious stones. Revealing full potential of gradation of the colour and reaching harmony through contrast is the advantage of the artist's style. His extremely subtle painting offers an original version of estheticism and decorativeness. He uses the language of colours that is possessed only by true painters.

Zaza Berdzenishvili started his activities in 1980s. The generation of the 80s was at the verge of the old and new worlds and during this crisis period managed to create a new epoch in the Georgian Art. Against the background of common nihilism, when terrible events took place destructing traditional, spiritual landmarks in people's consciousness, the generation of the 80s created new, postmodernist culture. This generation introduced into the Georgian Culture a new type of sensitive cognitive thinking, its own system of signs and artistic images, method of semantic coding. Zaza Berdzenishvili belongs to this generation but differs from it as well. His works are specific response to the reality: more crisis

there is in the surrounding world, the more peaceful and harmonious is his world accompanied with dramatism. Thus, in the dehumanized world his way is humanism. In the huge space of the mankind's existence, the artists feelings represent conscious or unconscious pain of the human being, because each of his paintings brings us back to the "earth, night dwelling of pain." The mood of every picture causes deep remorse and sorrow, even when the theme is not sad. Why? The answer to this question lies so deep in the depth of wonderful colours and mysterious silence, that the viewer has to stare long at the picture not only to see but feel and fully share the mysterious feeling that emits with marvelous colourfulness from every painting."

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