

THE IRAQI INTERESTS SECTION
AND
THE ASSOCIATION OF
ARAB-AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
GRADUATES
PRESENT
AN EXHIBIT OF
CONTEMPORARY IRAQI PAINTINGS
1979

The Iraqi Interests Section, in conjunction with the Association of Arab-American University Graduates, presents an exhibit of contemporary Iraqi paintings throughout the United States of America.

The Association of Arab-American University Graduates was established in 1967 at an organizational meeting held in Chicago, Illinois. The Association was conceived and founded by a small number of American professionals of Arabic-speaking descent.

Through organized activities and programs, the Association pursues the goal of strengthening the bonds of understanding and friendship between the American and Arab peoples. To this end, the AAUG aims at:

- the dissemination of accurate scientific, cultural and educational information about the Arab World;

- the establishment of links of mutual understanding and respect between the American and Arab peoples;
- the development of cooperation among Arab-American professionals for the utilization of skills and talents in the service of their communities;
- assisting the development of the Arab World by providing the professional services and skills of its members wherever the needs of the former and the talents of the latter coincide.

With the purpose of pursuing these goals, AAUG and the Iraqi Interests Section have selected some modern paintings of a caliber hitherto unprecedented.

Not everyone is aware of the wealth of history and culture existing since time immemorial in Mesopotamia

Edited by Mona G. St.Leger

Photography by Richard Swain

yesterday, Iraq today. Nowadays, the vestiges discovered by archeologists at Ur, Uruk, Lagas, etc., hail the Sumerians who lived at the beginning of the fifth millenium B.C., as the pioneers of urban civilization. Their contribution at the dawn of culture is undeniable.

However, after a crescendo of internecine wars, the Semites overthrew them and Hamurabi founded the Babylonian Empire (1792-1750 B.C.), followed by the Assyrians, the Achaemenides, the Macedonians, the Seleucides .. the Arabs .. the Golden Age of the Caliphs .. Painters, sculptors, artists, succeeded each other from dynasty to dynasty until the advent of Islam' and the

modern era, the art always accurately reflecting the times. Although Iraq was once the cradle of civilization and religion, it underwent some years of silence. Now, however, under the leadership of President Ahmad Hassan Al-Bakr and the Baath party, this modern oil-rich country, with its famous Tigris and Euphrates, its marshes immortalized by so many Arabists, its universities, industry, agrarian wealth and traditional handicrafts, is once more on the path towards progress and at the vanguard of civilization. Art, with a soaring take-off, is now exemplified in the paintings of the following artists who are currently exhibiting some of their masterpieces in the United States of America.

NOURI AL-RAWI

is a graduate of the Institute of Fine Arts, a critic, and author of studies on Art and Art heritage. He is presently Acting Director General in the Administration of Arts-Ministry of Culture and Arts. The National Museum has several of his works.

1-From Poems of Painting
2-Spring

FU'AD JIHAD

is a graduate of the Institute of Fine Arts, and has received a Diploma in Design from Budapest. He is represented in the National Museum by several of his masterpieces.

3-A Bombarded Palestinian Village

AZZAM AL-BEZZAZ

is a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts (sculpture). Some of his paintings and sculpture decorate the premises of the National Museum.

4-Martyrdom

ALI TALIB

is a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts. Some of his work is exhibited at the National Museum.

5-Man and Woman

6-A Subject for Tal-Azza'tar

SA'DI ALKA'BI

is a student of the Institute of Fine Arts. He is represented at the National Museum by some of his works.

7-Beginning of the Journey

8-Return of the Soul

WALID SHEET

completed his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts. The National Museum has some of his works of art.

9-The Hero of October

SU'AD AL-ATTAR

is a graduate of the University of California. The National Museum shows a number of her paintings.

10-A Way to the Lost City

SALMAN ABBAS

studied at both the Institute of Fine Arts and the Academy of Fine Arts. He has some works at the National Museum.

11—The New Fighter and the Song of Earth

MOHAMMED MOHRELDIN

After the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad he graduated from the Academy of Arts in Warsaw. He is represented in the National Museum by some of his works.

12—Strange Is this World

13—Toward Victory

RAFI AL-NASERY

completed his studies at the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad and subsequently graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Peking, China. The National Museum has some of his masterpieces.

14—Jail

15—Arabesque Composition

MAHOUD AHMED

After completing his studies at the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad, he graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Moscow. The National Museum has some of his paintings.

16—Lantern

17—Blue Horse

RAKAN DABDOUB

finished his studies at the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad and at the Academy of Arts in Rome. He is represented in the National Museum by some of his works of art.

18—Man and Civilization

19—A Woman's Attitudes

SHAKER HASAN AL-SAID

is a graduate of the Institute of Fine Arts and has received a Diploma from Paris. He has published many treatises on Art and Art criticism. His works represent him in the National Museum.

20—Return to Village

21—Farmers and the Moon

SHAWKET AL-RUBAY'I

is a graduate from the Institute of Fine Arts, a critic of Art and a journalist. A number of his paintings are in the National Museum.

22—Our Controversial World

SALEM AL-DABBAGH

is another graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts and has many paintings in the National Museum.

24—Fiddayeen Raid

HASAN ABID ALWAN

This graduate of the Institute of Fine Arts has some of his works in the National Museum.

27—Serpent

28—Shanashil

HAFIZ AL-DEROUBI

studied art in Rome and London. The National Museum has selected some of his works.

29—Boats on the Tigris

30—An Experience

SALEH AL-JUMAY'I

designed a wall-painting for the International Labour Organization. Has some of his works at the National Museum.

31—Those Who Came from the Sea

32—A New Day for Adam

FA'IK HASAN

finished his studies of art at the Ecole des Beaux Arts of Paris and is one of the pioneers of modern art in Iraq. A good number of his works represent him in the National Museum.

33—Tal Azza'tar

34—A Page from History

Dr. ALA'A HUSSAIN BASHEER

achieved the (war and peace) wall in Prague and has some of his works exhibited in the National Museum.

35—Future Creator

36—A Face from the Desert

AMER AL-UBAIDI

This graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts is currently the Director of the National Museum of Modern Art where he has some of his paintings.

37—Tents

38—Islamic Monument

KADUM HAYDER

after the Institute of Fine Arts, he received a Diploma from the London College of Art. Some of his works represent him in the National Museum.

39—Emigration Circle No. 3

40—Three Figures

TALIB AL-ALLAK

is a graduate of the Institute of Fine Arts and has some of his work in the National Museum.

41-Composition No. 1

42-Inspiration

ISMAIL AL-SHEIKHLY

after completing his studies at the Institute of Fine Arts, graduated from the Ecole des Beaux Arts of Paris. The National Museum has some of his work.

43-Women in a Village

44-Waiting

Dr. KHALID AL-JADIR

after graduating from the Institute of Fine Arts-Baghdad, received a Diploma from the Ecole des Beaux of Paris, as well as a PhD. in Islamic Art from Paris. The National Museum has some of his work.

45-The Beginning of a Picture

JAMIL HAMOUDI

studied at the Institute of Fine Arts and the Ecole des Beaux Arts of Paris. He has published articles on Art and Archeology and has some paintings in the National Museum.

46-Arabic Calligraphy

DIYA' AL-AZZAWI

is a graduate of the Institute of Fine Arts. Some of his paintings represent him in the National Museum.

49-Human Conditions

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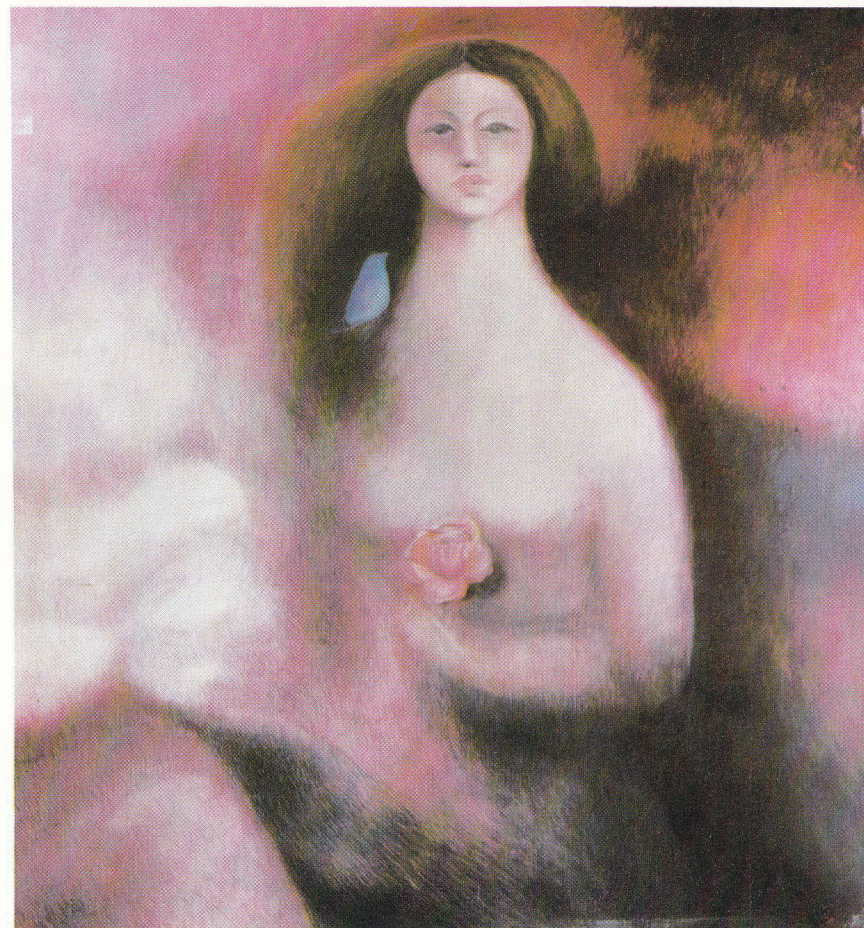
IBRAHIM AL-ABDALY

is a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts. He has some paintings exhibited in the National Museum.

54-The Parting

ALI-AL-GABIRI

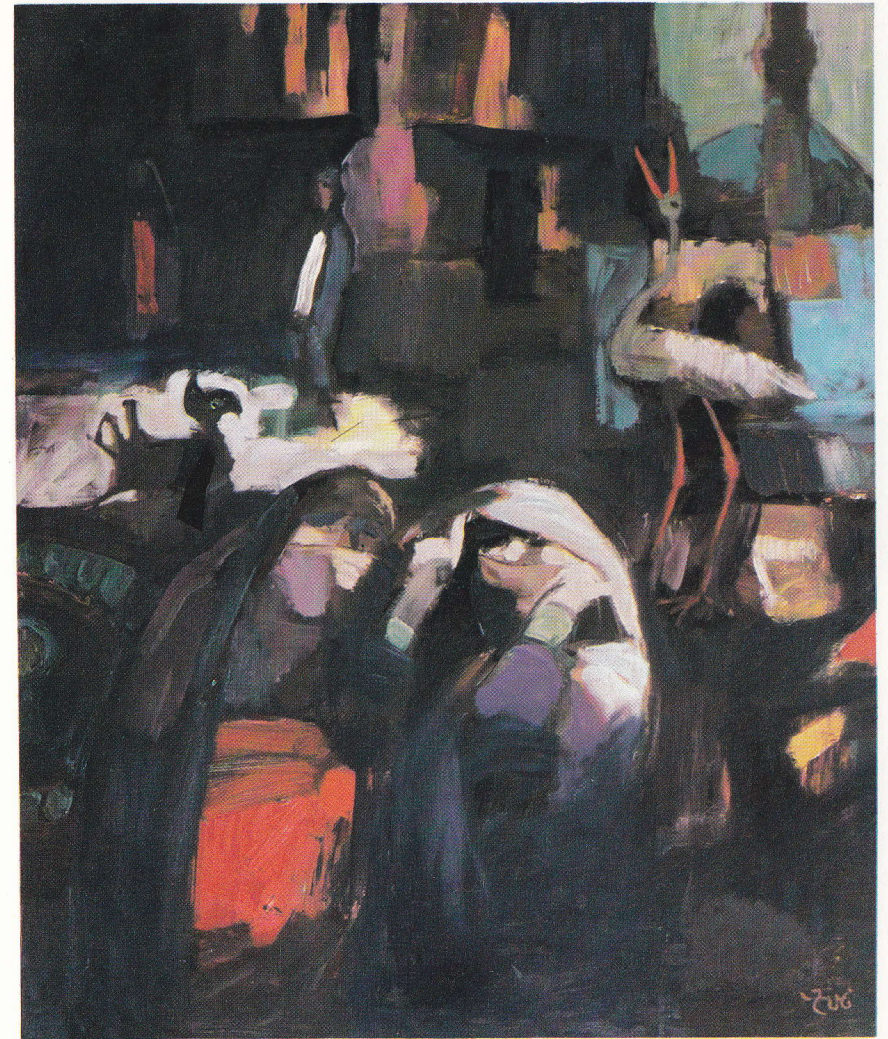
has participated, in Iraq and abroad, in various painting, sculpture, ceramics and engraving exhibitions. Several of his works are in private Italian and foreign collections. He has concluded his art studies in Baghdad and completed his sculpture studies at Pericle Fazzini's course at the Academy of Fine Arts of Rome, as well as a course in decoration at the school of Marcello Avenali. He is one of the promoters of the "Perceptivists" (the neo-symbolists). Resident in Rome in 1976, he was included among participants at the Biennale of Venice.



The painting of this Renaissance-like lady has many ritual overtones and, with the ethereal symbolism of the blue dove on her shoulder, involves the possibility of sacramental identification. The artistic blend of her precise contours with the deliberately hazy background endows the painting with some kind of eternity.



In a limited tract of time and space these three microcosms represent a small scale model of the larger macrocosm which is life. The problem of selection and significance is expressed in a comic vision of multiple identity.



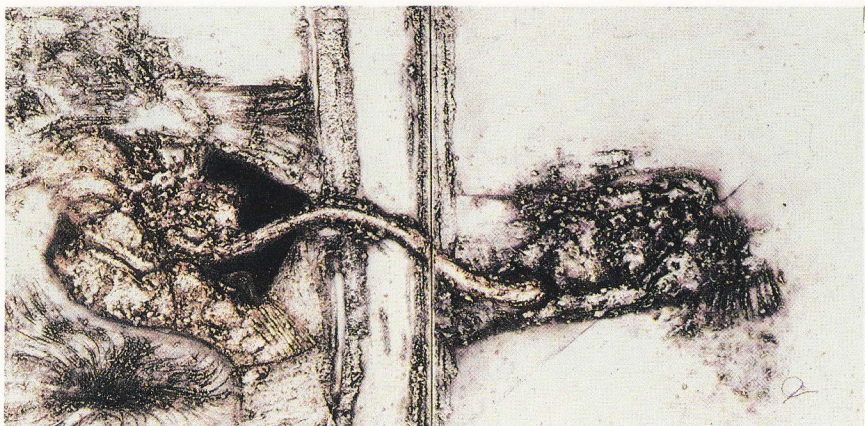
The contours and colors of this painting delineate an autonomous world which is impenetrable. It is as if the artist first created a world and then re-imagined it until it began to dazzle like a complex mosaic.



This marriage of colors is fabulously optimistic and figurative. It is a fairy-land of shades, hues and light. The harmony and perspective enhance it with a fathomless feeling of depth.



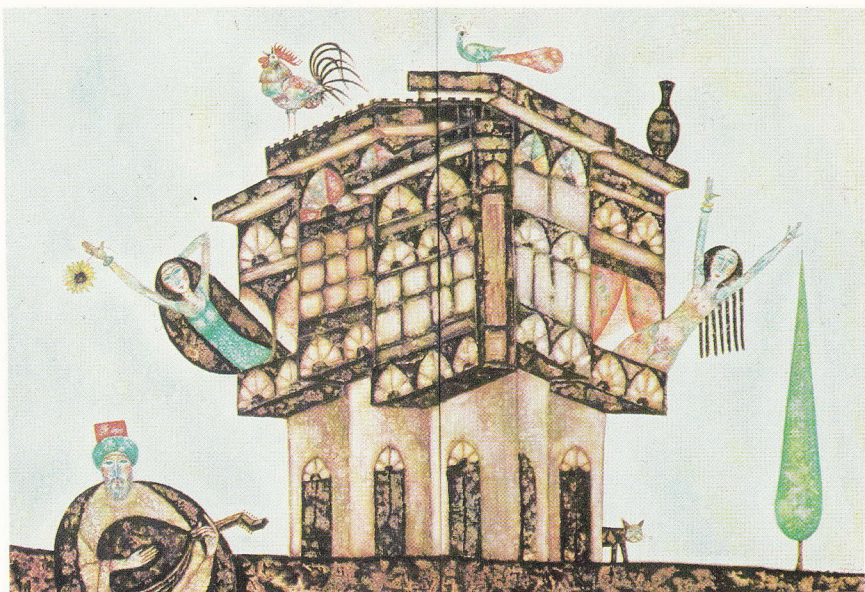
Although we are given a partial view of reality, we seem to accompany these people back to their village, their steps telling a story. It is a non-didactic subject but possesses the art of communicating. Note the contrast between the subdued background and the salient figures.



The disturbing symbolism of this black and white painting is almost Kafkaesque. It expresses the artist's isolation from common man while at the same time decreasing the emotional distance.



Out of a dream world similar to Salvador Dalí's, come these arresting mechanized subjects with haunting cacophonous implications.



This glorious figment of the imagination, something out of the Arabian nights, a fantasy of form and color in an added dimension of space, is the work of a visionary whose freedom of mind is expressed in the act of creation.



This painting is an exponent of impending doom and at the same time can be viewed as a eulogy to the heroism of man, forever standing and ascending, despite shackles and quagmires, and who will not cease to fight for survival and eventual victory.



The uniformity in the curves lends grace and elegance to the sense of life at the actual moment of being lived in this picture. This painting endeavors to create a meaningful place for man in a world basically oblivious to his presence.



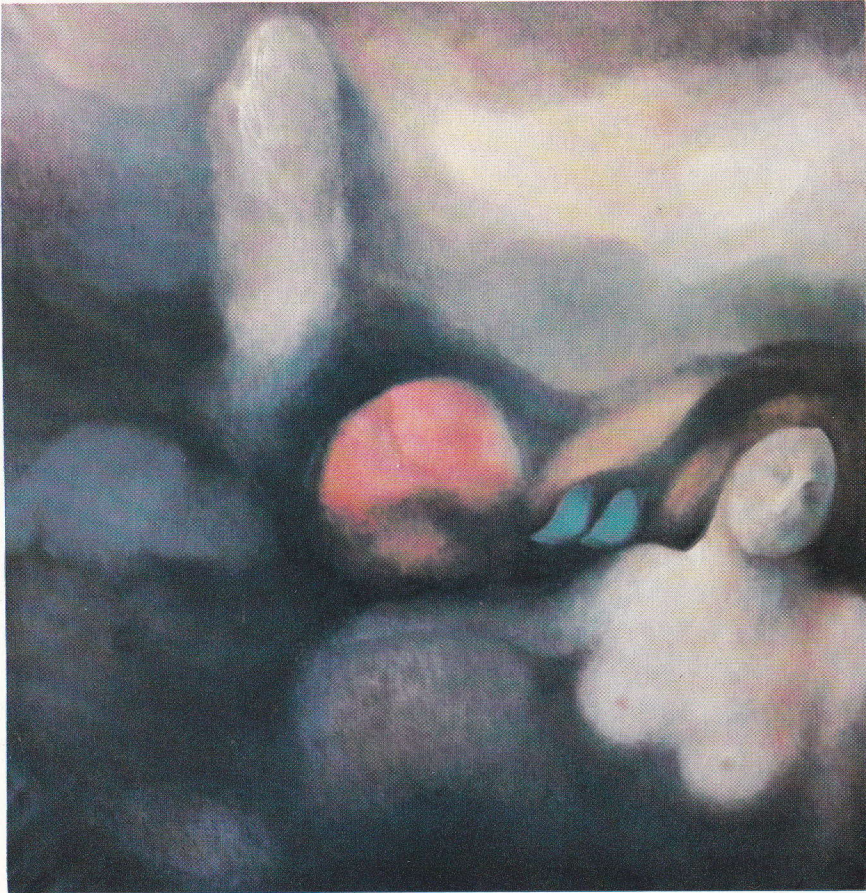
Suspended in time and space, this triumph over the drab monotony of life is a symbol of man's integration and acceptance as willed deeds which give him dignity.



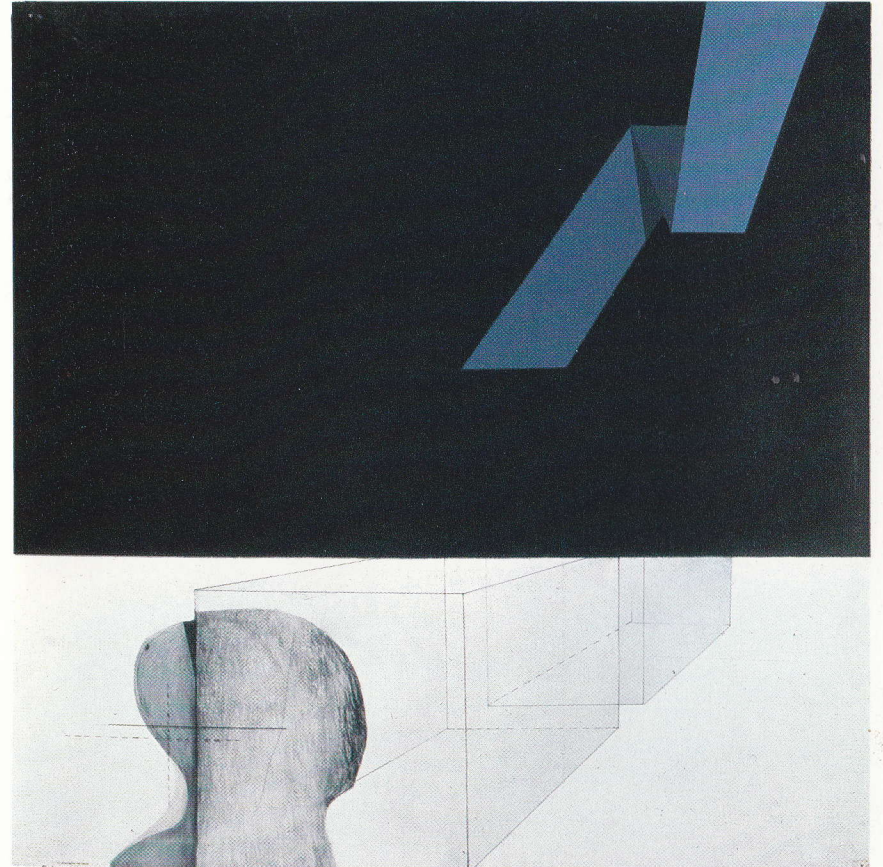
Reminiscent of one of Picasso's styles, this painting has deliberately all the appearances of reality except the most necessary thing—life. This is a group of peasants looking at the moon.



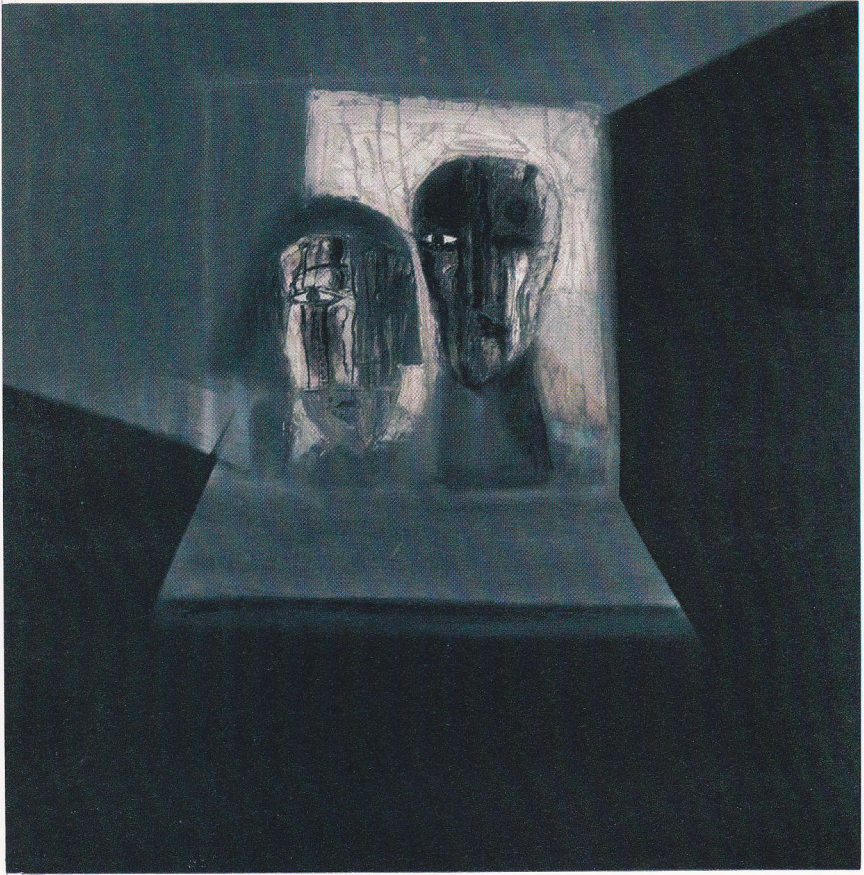
This is a theme which is often found in mythology. It is that of the reclining woman waiting for the knight in shining armor, the contrast in colors reflecting the ideal of self-hood he must measure up to.



The tremulous whiteness of the woman's color is a de facto symbol of her purity and solidity. Her companion is apparently more prominent, but he leans on her for strength. The vagueness of the background places the subject in a context which is out of time.



The precise geometric forms in the above shown painting are avant-gardish and futuristic. Yet the message is undoubtedly transcending and therefore engagé.



It is almost as if the chiaroscuro in this work of art is inspired by the Flemish or Dutch schools although the method is definitely modern. The symbolism is ambivalent: although trapped by life, which therefore encourages towards a repudiation of existence, the light through the window, open on space is an artifice of hope.