BOZLU ART PROJECT

Bozlu Art Project Mongeri Building

19 Mayıs Mah. Dr. Şevket Bey Sok.
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MEHMET UYGUN

The Garden of Earthly Delights

21 March-27 April 2019

Bozlu Art Project Mongeri Building

You are but a dream, a dream in the pitch black night, a dream in broad daylight, a dream neither here nor there…

M.U.

Creating a world of his own with the fantastic figures and vibrant colours that have become his trademark, Mehmet Uygun will have on display small-size preliminary examples of his new project he describes as "an animal encyclopaedia of sorts" at the Bozlu Art Project Mongeri Building between the 21th of March and 27th of April. Taking the metaphor of a "garden" regarding the past, present and future as his point of departure, the artist proposes alternative ways of perceiving this world of ours, in which mankind, busy destroying his natural habitat along with himself, allows nothing and nobody the right to live but himself.

Taking its name from Hieronymus Bosch's (1450-1516) famous triptych containing his depictions of **"heaven and hell"**, the exhibition stands as an artist's attempt at looking at the same conceptual dichotomy almost five centuries later from the vantage point of the present. Is it that the **"dream garden**" on which these paintings characterized by pattern and colour are based provides hope for the future with the extraordinary diversity of plants and animals it contains and its vivid colours, or does it, on the contrary, embody a dystopic scenario and representation of already long-lost nature with the erotic associations it evokes reminiscent of worldly delights that create in the viewer an uncanny sense of being followed, and with its figures half-human and half metamorphosing into beast?

Bringing to mind the watercolour depictions of nature in 19th century Europe, which served to record the diversity of species thus enabling us to see those that have by now become extinct, these paintings are the first examples of an **"encyclopaedia of species"** springing into existence in Mehmet Uygun's dream garden, and, as such, are unlike any living being we know. The artist describes his starting point as follows: "In my most recent paintings I again took inspiration from my human, animal and plant brothers and sisters. As always, I transitioned from the world we share into my own world. I transformed human into beast and beast into human. I adorned them with plants. As a painter caught

up in the midst of a sea of colour and form, I also wished to demonstrate the sheer force of lines… As I mould them into all sorts of shapes and forms, they give me news from the past and future. While I bring them into light in my paintings, they show me the truth…" The **"garden"** on which he focuses represents both a state of being embedded in nature, communing with other living beings, and one of alienation from it.

This metaphor of a **"garden"** is as much the portrayal of a new world the artist has created for himself, as it is a refuge for plants and animals trying to find a place for themselves in our day, when nature is but a fast-consumed commodity… In them, there is no background, no place. The void between the lines invites the viewer to complete the painting themselves, as if a reminder of what they have done to themselves, to nature and other living beings, of what they have lost, and of what they have failed to even imagine…

Mehmet Uygun

Born in Elazığ in 1964, Mehmet Uygun graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts at Marmara University with a major in Painting in 1989. Then completing his graduate studies in arts in the same university's Institute of Social Sciences in 1991, the artist worked as research assistant at the Anadolu University Faculty of Fine Arts from 1991 to 1993. Later, in 1993-1994, he continued his artistic career in New York and took part in certain exhibitions here. From 1995 to 2004 he worked as research assistant in the Painting Department at Marmara University's Faculty of Fine Arts. He received his Proficiency in Art from the Marmara University Institute of Social Sciences in 1998. Sharing with viewers his own original fairy-tale-world figures in a manner devoid of time and place within a veritable cavalcade of colours, Mehmet Uygun is known for his works depicting fantastic worlds. Numerous catalogues and books on the artist have been published since 1991 up to present, and interviews with him as well as his articles have featured in a variety of papers and journals. Holding many personal exhibits both nationally and internationally in addition to participating in countless group exhibits, the artist currently lives and works in his studio in Zekeriyaköy, Istanbul.

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