

A WOMEN'S THING

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Artist and Poet Véronique TERRIEUX on Chasing Shadows and Using Ink to Paint Silence

by Yassana Croizat-Glazer

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Paris-based artist and poet Véronique TERRIEUX grew up in Le Gréal in the countryside of South-Western France, the natural beauty of which made a deep impression on her. After years of working in oil painting, TERRIEUX made the transition to ink on paper, often enhanced with colored pencil. For the artist, this medium has proven better suited to capturing her pictorial universe, in which reign silent, distilled landscapes evocative of the world in its original state and which provide the viewer with a contemplative escape. TERRIEUX has participated in numerous exhibitions and salons, including the yearly Salon International de Estampe et du Dessin with Galerie Grillon (Paris: Grand Palais, 2011–2017).

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Yassana Croizat-Glazer: After working for many years in oil paint on canvas, you made the switch to working in

ink on paper, and now more recently, colored pencils.

Why this transition?

Véronique TERRIEUX:

Learning traditional oil painting techniques is an exercise in patience and rigor given the extent of the daily preparations involved, as well as the slow drying time of the successive paint layers. After having practiced oil painting for nearly a decade, a highly anticipated visit to an exhibition of Sumi-e works at the Muse de la marine gave me the desire to explore ink wash painting. That's what I've been doing ever since. Working with ink provides me with greater immediacy and more spontaneity but also the fluidity and lightness I had been missing. I introduced color in a later step, having chosen colored pencil since it's a medium that works well for generating light effects from a background of ink on paper. Learning how to create an oil glaze enabled me to understand the essence of color, how it is borne from interactions with light through superimposed layers and the effects of transparency. Little by little, these elements that create intensity and depth in oil integrated my current creative process grounded in ink wash painting and its nuanced gray washes.

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exists, the present, which is in rhythm with our breath and heartbeat.

Yassana Croizat-Glazer: Your work so often presents visions of a nebulous natural world that you've described as existing on the edge of day and night. What is the meaning of that liminal space for you?

Véronique TERRIEUX:

Having a harmonious relationship with nature and all living enables us to have a harmonious relationship with our inner selves. It's what I'm looking for in those particular moments that are dawn and dusk, which are to me mysterious and at times even hypnotic. These fleeting moments between day and night which are conducive to opening up our senses—where we can let ourselves feel and be carried by the cycle of life—seem to me to be the reflection of a natural movement of coming and going that allows us to feel alive. To experience the harmony of this space between dusk and dawn places me back into the only time that really exists, the present, which is in rhythm with our breath and heartbeat. It reminds me also that the color we see is only the quality of light reflected by the surface of an object according to a visual impression. It is this singular light, which is indeed a bit nebulous, that touches and inspires me, and that provides the soft, slightly desaturated colors I wish to recreate in my work.

I don't deliberately seek to erase human presence but rather to quiet parasitic noises, to chase the shadows that overwhelm our modern life by trying to paint a form of silence. The world as it should be—at least, how I picture it—perhaps retrieves its place in my landscapes.

Yassana Croizat-Glazer: You grew up in Le Grizel near Brive-la-Gaillarde, an area of South-Western France rich in natural beauty and archeological significance. How did your childhood experiences of this particular nature help shape your artistic personality?

Véronique TERRIEUX:

The landscape I grew up with did much to shape my artistic path. The region is beautiful, with its hills punctuated by forests and small villages that give a harmonious impression. It's a place rich in telluric vibrations, where underground limestone cavities have yielded numerous wall paintings and other important archeological discoveries, and even the smallest of villages bears traces of history. Growing up, I particularly loved really windy days, the feeling of rough earth and its smell, the light on the old stones of buildings, and the emotions connected to the changing of seasons. These memories and feelings, certainly sublimated by time, still envelope me in the soft reverie

they sparked within me then. They make me experience the happiness of rediscovery and continue to inspire me, as well as nurture the poetic aspects of my work.

Yassana Croizat-Glazer: Your images appear devoid of human presence. What is the significance of that absence?

Véronique TERRIEUX:

Each of us is responsible for our actions and thoughts and must live with the consequences, both at an individual and collective level, since we are all interdependent. We cannot continue to wreck the earth that nourishes us without a negative backlash. We have a duty to go beyond our personal human interests to take action for the global community. This may be why I like to paint timeless landscapes that harken back to an origin when humanity had not yet made an imprint. I like to evoke an elsewhere in which it would be possible to settle, a place of freedom in which to live serenely, to dream, to contemplate, to breathe.... I don't deliberately seek to erase human presence but rather to quiet parasitic noises, to chase the shadows that overwhelm our modern life by trying to paint a form of silence. The world as it should be—at least, how I picture it—perhaps retrieves its place in my landscapes.

Yassana Croizat-Glazer: You are a poet as well as an artist. Do your words and images inform each other and if so, how?

Véronique TERRIEUX:

At one moment in my life, I became interested in exploring the psyche, and I developed the need to write, to lay down words about what I was feeling. I then started writing anything that came to me: dreams, thoughts, poetic texts, dialogues with both the visible and the invisible. As I began to paint in earnest, I gathered certain poems into collections, which were later featured in my exhibitions since they quite obviously resonated with my pictorial research—and in fact, that's still the case for the texts I write today.

The simultaneous action of writing and painting encourages me to reveal more about myself. The symbolic, hidden character of things fascinates me, and this aspect, which is present in both of my artistic practices, paves the way for freedom of interpretation. The power of both arts lies in enabling the viewer or reader to project their vision and to analyze the work according to their own identity and their own history.



By

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