



Ana Tzarev, the proprietor of the Ana Tzarev gallery, one of the most popular art galleries in New York, told us about her inspirations and art.

SILA GUVEN



FLOWERS, THE MUSIC OF THE HEART

Ana Tzarev was in Istanbul for her exhibition that took place in Santral Istanbul from November 23 until December 28 where she presented her artworks which are reminiscent of the works of the masters of post-impressionism and modernism. Tzarev's works adorn the walls of many collectors from Europe to Australia and she tells that she takes her inspiration from Hawaiian, Japanese and African cultures: "My paintings tell the stories of these cultures which are rich in tradition, customs and diversity and which have shaped civilizations throughout history. I document today's cultural heritage for future generations. Thus, they may look back to the past, to their own heritage with pride and understand the value of various cultures that have enriched the world." Tzarev follows the path of master artists like Gauguin and Van Gogh. She used to be a textile designer and traveled all around the world when she and her husband were establishing their retail chain in New Zealand. While she was collecting products from the four corners of the world, she had the opportunity to closely observe many different cultures. The artist is a great admirer of the unique artworks of these cultures and her inspiration results in these giant flowers where you feel like you can get lost in them.

Harper's Bazaar: Can you tell us about the plays of color and dimension in your works?

Ana Tzarev: Throughout my life the attractiveness of colors and the powerful feelings that create the art itself were equal for me. This form of art absorbs the spectator into a deep beauty and sensitivity.

HB: How is your relationship with your inspiration, the nature?

AT: My inspirations come from the incredibly beautiful nature that surrounds me. I love to discover new flowers every day. When I see a flower that I haven't seen before I ask it, "Who created this unmatched beauty of yours and how?" For me flowers are the universal language of love, affection, beauty and art. Wherever you were born, everybody knows the language of flowers. And this is love. We give the name of a flower to a new-born baby, we give each other flowers in our birthdays, special occasions or when we want to show our respect.

HB: What is your impression about the art circles in Istanbul?

AT: The history and culture of this city is well-known and rich.

The city is full of very powerful historical icons. Contemporary art in Turkey is progressing. The city is alive with artistic energy. It continuously improves with international exhibitions and galleries, such as Istanbul Biennale and Contemporary Istanbul.

HB: Can you tell us about the colors that you saw in Istanbul? How did the city inspire you?

AT: My visit to Istanbul was indeed very inspiring. I examined the Suleymaniye Mosque, Agia Sophia and the extraordinary pieces in Archeology Museum, admiring each one of them. I was particularly impressed by the magnificent mosaics and the reliefs of historical figures on the tombs of renowned personalities. Then, when I returned to my studio in Thailand and started work, I was painting wonderful blue flowers inspired by Islamic art and architecture which I had never painted before. Now I have so much in me of the historic beauties in your country that I'm sure they will continue to inspire me for many long years ahead.

HB: How did you decide to open your own gallery?

AT: Because of the extraordinary pressure, urge and need I feel to share my artwork. Since then there has been extraordinary support and interest for my gallery and art. I am sure that's how the beauty of my art will live forever. The gallery is so popular that at some openings more than 900 people can be pressed together shoulder to shoulder. Some even wait for an hour in the queue for me to sign the exhibition catalogue.

I am very happy that I can share my art with so many people.

HB: What about the contemporary art environment? We are living in a very fast world where anyone can become anything. Today everyone can become a fashion designer, artist, critic or photographer.

AT: I think this is part of being human. Creating is in our genes. But there are art forms, like music, which touch deep in our souls. We react to and are affected by the sensual vibration it creates. When creativity earns us a new experience it is wonderful indeed. However today we live through dangerous times where everything can be called art and loses its meaning for this reason.

HB: You say "I document today's culture for future generations so that when they look back they feel proud of the age they live in and appreciate the cultural diversity that has enriched the world." When we think of the age that we live today, do you reflect everything in your works? Are you selective?

AT: My artwork is inspired by the diversity of beauty and cultures. I visit and experience each one of these cultures.

During my travels for 50 years I saw old arts had disappeared and I wanted to document them. I painted the cultures that touched my soul, and I still do. With their colors and movements these cultures tell a story that will be lost in near future. I am inspired by the songs of the rice gatherers in Vietnam, or the Kabuki artists in Japan. For example in my last painting I painted the flowers with the naivety of a child, inspired by the Russian fairy tales of my childhood.

HB: Can you compare the contemporary art and the art of the past? What are the differences?

AT: In fact today's art circles are very similar to those in the past. During the Renaissance rich people acted as patrons of artists. Wealth supported art and helped it to continue its existence. And many times it shaped art. Today wealthy collectors and auctions still play an important role on the way art is shaped today. However, today's artists are luckier as they can express themselves better and create their own artistic language.

Tzarev tells the stories of CULTURES.



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