

MELAINE CHRISTENSEN

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Daring to live in the present moment, to play, to sense, to laugh, and to devote oneself are abilities that create the backdrop for Melaine Christensen's perception of life. And this is reflected in her paintings, which are somewhere between the abstract and something recognizable. Nature with its various colors and configurations is the paramount inspiration, and by sensing the power of nature and by studying its configurations, Melaine is able to give us a very precise experience of the place she paints. One does not need to know the actual landscape or place of the motif. It is the mood, the sensations, the range of colors, and the composition that are essential.

First, it was her job as a midwife that brought Melaine out in the world, and the desire to go abroad and to meet other people has not subsided. Through journeys, senses are sharpened and, at the same time, great inspiration and understanding for other cultures appear. Even though Melaine was forced to paint her paintings concealed from the authorities in Afghanistan, where paints and material were smuggled in, her paintings are not bleak. No, Melaine wants to show us the beauty of the country and the great contrasts in light and shadow. With her soulful vibrating sense of color, she paints houses and minarets with powdery mauve and pink colors, or she shows us the desert sand where we, in the background, can barely make out the outlines of houses, or are they mirages?

Trees are existential to Melaine, and she almost perceives them as living beings. Especially cypresses that reach for the sky as slender pillars, and ancient olive trees like the ones we see in Southern Europe that have connected

generations for centuries fascinates her. However, after a stay in India, palm trees have joined the others in warm and violet colors. For years, she has worked with these trunks that are usually leafless. With roots deep into the ground, they reach for the sky like ladders, and connects the earth with the sky above. 'Trees Do Grow to the Sky' is the title of a series of paintings from which Melaine wishes us to realize that we must believe in ourselves and engage in things we are passionate about.

Even though Melaine has traveled much, her home in the midst of scenic Døllerup Bakker is important to her as well. Here she has her studio; however, in the summertime her inspiration is the distinctive and beautiful nature of Læsø. Especially the lines that appear when the sun shines on the shallow water, or the lines that appear when the tide slowly falls again. This gives Melaine many associations and brings about bonds and cohesion for her. And these lines are applied to the human body as well.

You rarely find persons in Melaine's beautiful paintings. Nature is such a great source of inspiration that she needs nothing else. However, human beings are also of interest to Melaine, and this can be seen in her fine croquis drawings based on live models – often sketched in only a few minutes.

Grethe Hagensen

Writer at Kunstavisen (Danish art paper)

- *Left: Croquis, 43*63 cm, charcoal, 2012*
- *Right: 'Sense of Intercinncctedness', 110*110 cm, acrylic paint and oil paint, 2012*

