

Artist has plenty of contrasts



MARIA EUGENIA TUSQUETS, the young Catalan artist, who has just inaugurated her exhibition at the Grifescoda Art Gallery.

WITH MANY of her paintings in the background of the Grifescoda Art Gallery, the young Catalan artist, Maria Eugenia Tusquets, who has just inaugurated her exhibition, is in very interesting contrast to her work.

Maria Eugenia has several styles — expressionist, figurative, and one which is curiously reminiscent of Fauvist School in France.

With her long blonde hair and intense eyes, she has both a far-away look and a present awareness of her life and art. At the same time, she was full of imagination, enthusiasm, and an exhilarating joie-de-vivre.

As I looked at her figures and landscapes, I was struck by her simplicity, realism, and profundity. I was intrigued, most of all, by her figures of nomadic Berbers and Arabs against a desert landscape.

«Figures are far more expressive against a landscape,» the artist reflected. «I was especially fascinated by the natives during my travels in Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon, and Israel.

«These lands are totally different from anything I have ever known. In these people, there is sadness, conformity, and fatalism — to which we are not accustomed in the Occidental world.

«Everything about them is different — their language, music, dances, costumes. They have been able to keep their language, despite wars, conquests and revolutions, throughout the centuries. And their language is the language of our own St Augustine, who wrote his famous City of God in the fourth century.»

—Where did you find the Berber nomads in your pictures?

«In southern Morocco on the fringe of the Sahara. Most of them are very poor, but they are very proud, independent people, and the original inhabitants of North Africa.»

—Where did you study?

«At the Escuela Massana de Barcelona, with Agustín Rfo, the well-known painter.»

—How long have you been painting?

«Professionally, three years, in individual and collective exhibitions. I began to paint ten years ago. Ever since I was a child, I wanted to be a painter.

«For me, incidentally, everything is based upon colour rather than form. I am much more interested in colour than form.

«At the moment, I am painting abstracts, and I find that in these paintings without form, I am able to express many original ideas. This is quite an experience.»

—How do you find Majorcan painters?

«Admirable. The Majorcan school is famous, and their use of colour is remarkable.»

—What do you paint when you're not travelling, Maria Eugenia?

«More dreamlike and imaginative pictures. But of course, I prefer to travel when I can. Wasn't it a great French writer who declared that one learned more abroad in a single day than ten years at home?

«I agree completely, and every time I travel, I am so inspired and make so many sketches that I have ideas for years to come!

«But I am still evolving, as you can see. To me, painting is an expression of character, and when I find such faces as these Berbers, I am so happy!

«As for the others, between figures and landscapes, there is plenty of room for all kinds of expression. I've travelled widely over Europe and the Mediterranean, and keep making sketches for future paintings.

«Please don't look for unity in my work! But you will find that I am always serious, dedicated, and an artist who puts everything into her painting.»