

Laura Langer
PHONE CALLS ON PAINTING

What do I know about small paintings?

Two or three people I know can make small paintings. I know that if one of the measurements of the canvas is larger than your femur, it is a medium or large painting. I just made that up. The size of a large landscape can be reduced to pocket size. They are small and they hold the big. And we understand it. Immensity can rest on a small surface.

To visit the paintings once a month and still choose to make them, take care of them, and love them, following every “small” desire is a date with the making, not with memory. Dense atmospheric conditions are created by rubbing, scratching, erasing, and applying. But you don’t need to be meticulous. Improvise. Stain. Clean. Unexplicable shame comes up in the making while fixing and cancelling. Let go. When you don’t like it, when you are not happy with it, you must wait a little bit and then it becomes ok. I can relate to that. There is rejection at the beginning, sometimes. Over time, it will change and eventually, will be integrated.

Pinocchio consumes the world through the eyes of a borrowed unfulfilled desire. He wants to be something to ease somebody else’s pain. It is not enough to only have a conscious mind to be complete, he should be able to feel to become a real human. Maybe, after all, this is his desire as well. A borrowed desire could become one’s own. He becomes a victim of his own journey, a victim of his father and the world. He is a tragic character. What makes a character tragic? He just does not take responsibility for his own mind. He exists as a wanderer, a traveller. A bit lost and clumsy. Not to feel can be dangerous for you and for others too. He has the eye of a kid, curious and following impulses, distracted and easily hypnotised by the mundane. You see in the world what you carry in your own heart.

Not long ago, a taxi driver told me that he discovered that nature gave a specific color to every single being. He learned through painting to be able to see the color of people’s souls. I didn’t ask but he told me that mine is orange. He said one has to trust that color. The taxi driver must carry all the colors in his heart.

There is a certain torment in Pinocchio’s eye. Filtered through storms, fire skies and frozen nights. Isn’t he scared? Pinocchio doesn’t feel now but he might learn to feel by seeing. I myself have never been to the Alps. Europe is so full of people, roads, houses, industries, and little towns. I imagine the Alps emptier, a rare opportunity to find nature-nature. A landscape where you might look to one side and then the other and not see any sign of humanity. A relief.

The snowdrops, I was told, are flowers that have one quite strong leaf that pierces through the snow to poke out and bloom. Early ones can appear first in November or December. A sign of things to come. A good omen, maybe, or only a reminder that the winter is just momentary, a season, and it will pass, to later come back again. There is something else waiting on the other side. Put your mind in the beauty. Dance. Those moments in life in which you are not expecting much can give you a lot. Alterations and repairs if necessary.

Mountains have two sides when the sun is out. When it is cloudy, they hide their volume and become flat, one-dimensional. Mountains are one of the most obvious frontiers to consider. He told me he has been living abroad for a while. I didn’t ask where exactly and for how long. Coming back home is a journey in itself.