

eugenia a. burgo

seen by **Jean-Claude Freymond-Guth**

A glimpse into the worlds of painter Eugenia A. Burgo

It was a cold and rainy winter's day when I first set foot in Eugenia A. Burgo's studio on the ground floor of an old converted farmhouse, located unobtrusively on a steep slope overlooking Lake Zurich. I was immediately enveloped by a pleasant smell of oil colours and varnish – "a cave," flashed through my mind.

Friends had told me about Eugenia A. Burgo and her paintings; I was familiar with some texts on her work and had talked to her briefly on the phone. By now I was extremely curious to find out more about these paintings, brimful with colour, sensuous and somehow mysterious, and about their creator.

Eugenia A. Burgo led me through her large, many-cornered studio as if I were an old friend back from a long journey. It was alive with family photos, objects of everyday life mixed with objects collected from all over the world, innumerable paint brushes and spots of paint on the floor and walls. Again and again, my eyes remained transfixed on the canvasses with their intensive colours, beguiling play of light and shade, and an almost erotic sensuousness. These pictures seemed to encompass the intimacy and warmth that the whole room exuded.

Seen factually, they are enlarged, to a certain degree realistic excerpts from nature: anemones and hydrangeas, sweetcorn and figs, blown up to formats of 3 to 4 square meters. Yet the subtle definition of light and shade, unobtrusively enhancing the vivacity of the colours, turns the effect into the opposite. The pictures tell of a distant, mysterious world beyond the sphere of the tangible and definable.

In this demi-world between traditional nature motives and colour expression, Eugenia A. Burgo's paintings open up a seemingly endless interpretative spectrum, inviting viewers to delve into the depths of the pictures again and again.

Clouds were hanging over Lake Zurich, visible through the old windows. Inside, there was a warmth radiating from Eugenia A. Burgo's world encapsulated in her art. My eyes fell on a bowl full of what seemed like precious stones. They were, in fact, pieces of glass, polished smooth by the waters of rivers and oceans, which Eugenia had collected and was planning to use as the topic of her next project. Their simple and seemingly coincidental beauty reflected the characteristics of Eugenia A. Burgo's pictures: witnesses of an unfathomable world full of marvels, with each new approach revealing new aspects.

Through such objects, so it still seems to me weeks later, Eugenia A. Burgo tells stories that are at once very personal and universal. Stories set in a borderland between the tangible and the intangible, between experience and imagination, the explicable and the inexplicable. In her pictures, she turns the wonders of the natural world, their forms and colours, almost imperceptibly into expressions and reflections of her inner life and perception, without ever revealing herself entirely. Strange organic forms, or else stones given shape and sheen by water, tell of a beauty in life that is so often overlooked, to be found in what is, literally, by the way. They contain the message of transience and change. But they also tell a story of closeness and intimacy, heart-felt and sensual. Eugenia A. Burgo as I got to know her on that winter's day seems to embody numerous women at once: original, self-assured artist, experienced cosmopolitan, loving mother, dedicated wife, and a loyal, attentive friend to so many other artists. And she glides effortlessly from one role to the other with a personality that is as nuanced as her art.

In the stillness and concentration of her refuge, her different worlds are merged to a whole on canvas. Through her pictures they find a fresh outlet, allowing mysterious, tantalizing glimpses of their origin and lingering in the mind long after the room has been left behind.