In the confusion which reigns in the worlds of the intellect and the arts, a reflection of the confusion of life itself, the first duty of any true artist or thinker is to remain faithful to his own self.

Maria Kompatsiari has made this duty a principle of her everyday life. Her basic subject matter is drawn from the natural and social arenas. From the very first she has remained indifferent to the historical character of her subjects, untouched by the possibilities of narrative and psychographic description. Instead, the world as seen through the eyes of a “child” opens up before us through her mastery of a personal style, acquired through the fullest interpretation of chromatic values and through her endeavors to impose a structural organization on the objects she paints. There can be no doubt that the post-impressionist movements, fauvism and expressionism played a major role in permitting the painter to exploit both the tonal and plastic values of colour.

For the artist, colour is one of the basic elements of things, their very essence. Without colour, there can be no things, or the things there are can have no artistic meaning. She stands among the objects around her and lets them fill her with the tremors of their chromatic vibrations. She is at a stage of composition where she immerses herself in the very centre of things.

Taking this principle as our guide, we can divide her work into two major categories. To the first belong those works in which the main subject is set off against a light-coloured backgound, while in the second category the background of the paintings is varied in colour and often presents supplementary subjects, beautifully balanced with the principal theme.

There will be delicate linear patterns, the characteristic transparent fluidity of the paint allowing them to interweave and penetrate one another. Small islands of chill tempera stand out among the warmer tones of the coloured patches and lines. Subtle lines of China ink form a landscape clad in transparent colours, endowing the composition with depth and contributing to the creation of various levels. The fluidity of the expressive means employed allows the creation of an infinite scale of tonal gradations on successive levels. At the same time the use of China ink helps the artist to render the inner details of the composition.

The above analysis is intended to show how her work concentrates and condenses all the ramifications of a system of painting which the artist has employed to evolve a totality of

coordinates. It is a conclusion in which the inner quest itself seeks to preserve a continuity. It is a position which has not only a personal, psychological sense for the artist, but also the sense of the quest for a morality which would consist in establishing the parameters of different classes, of artistic history. The artist is working to create a system board enough, and yet also specific enough, to approach reality itself.

Stavroula Mavrogeni - Art historian