*Not I- not any one else, can travel that road for you,*

*you must travel it for yourself.*

*It is not far- it is within reach*

*Perhaps you have been on it since you were born,*

*and did not know.*

*Perhaps it is everywhere, on water and on land.*

from: Leaves of grass (1855)

  Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

Taking a walk through Kaat Van Doren’s extensive body of work, is like

 exploring a deep forest. Here is mystery, light shining through the tree-tops,

it is alive and breathing, there is beauty ànd decay.

Here is acceptance, that not everything is perfect,

and an ability to create something different, out of this imperfection,

           to make a new and living object of beauty..

She remains faithful to her earlier work: refined and meticulous studies and paintings

of landscapes, showing the odd man-made building in a deserted field.

These are reminiscent of her countryside youth,

  and mystifying a world that passed us by.

An unremarkable cow-shed makes us think of an abandonned temple-complex..

Another aspect of her early work are portraits of friends in different situations,

they are like distorted photographs, unrecognizable enlargements of daily life.

They are about co-existence, the co-inciding of people, they tell us something about the smallness of everyday life, and about being together, and loneliness.

These images are taken out of their context, blown-up, beyond recognition..

Some smaller works, where she pierced the paper with needles,

following the contours of persons, seem like preliminary studies of her later work,

manipulating, tormenting and making holes in paper and canvas, with different tools.

Researching and exploring her subjects further, using different techniques,

  to summon shade and shadows, going through sunlight and darkness,

applying layers of minerals and pigments,the blackest inks and whitest paints,

 we see a new world emerging in her recent works.

Introspect, organical, vegetal inspiration, mysterious pools, lonely wells,

like long-lost places, where old gods were worshipped in pre-historic times..

There are associations with the previous works, and variations and nuances, but always

questioning light, shadow and colour: sometimes pale, then dark and strong again,

 like the ever-changing shadows and colours of a tree, reflecting itself in a lake.

   These are “images of the floating world”,

   the translation of the Japanese word “ukiyo-é , which is used to indicate the famous

   wood-cut prints by artists like Hokusai and Hiroshige.

This is taking the obvious beauty of Monet’s waterlilies the proverbial step further,

   showing us what lies beneath, not unlike going under the surface of human relations,

   often showing a very different picture when you get closer..

Again perforations of the paper or canvas appear, now sometimes painted or printed,

often enlarged.

They are an uncomprehensive language of their own, like a hieroglyphic code,

a kind of reversed braille. They deviate and disturb, cast shadows, make us look

in a different way. They make us see behind and through the paper or canvas,

 suspect the back of things, of another world behind..

They also bring a certain lightness to the work,

  and make us understand the vulnerability of the canvas or the paper, of life, maybe..?

They make things float, like on water, on air..

 We try to see beyond the hole, the circle,

the place where past, present and future eternally meet.

In her collages, paper is shredded and ripped, in other cases it is carefully folded,

delicate like a Chinese fan,

sometimes her paintings are reminiscent of Japanese screens.

The search is never ending..

There is photographical work, graphics, drawings looking like photographs, photogaphs becoming etchings,  linocuttings, who speak to us, scratched and

carved like medieval Flemish woodcuts,

we see mirroring images of landscapes and reflections of leaves in the snow,

 waterplants, grasses, branches are moving,

                                     almost like touching unexploited areas in our minds..

*You are also asking me questions, and I hear you;*

*I answer that I cannot answer-you must find out for yourself.*

from : Leaves of grass (1855)

by: Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

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