

# **Nicola Barth - The Fleeting in Flow**

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I would like to begin my speech with a quote from Nicola Barth. It is a short excerpt from a text she wrote about her feelings as she makes her art.

*So I paint through the deception. Stop the wheel.*

*Focus for a while.*

*A snapshot.*

*For it is no more than a snapshot of a centring - a period of focusing made visible - a temporal and spatial detail...*

Nicola Barth seizes moments from a film that plays before her inner eye and is in constant flow. **The Fleeting in Flow**, the title of the exhibition, means a constant flow of images that she perceives, observes and records in order to divert these snapshots onto canvas or paper.

Nicola Barth continuously attempts to capture the inner world, which is of course an expression of the outer world. Her series, **Faust**, leads us along the path of her thoughts, her desires and her battle for knowledge. Like Dr. Faust's unending search for knowledge and insight. So she is searching for inner images which perhaps explain the world to her, or at least could make it a little clearer. For her, these forms seldom pause, they are constantly moving: she glimpses them as if in the light of a flashbulb and holds on tight to them. They are gone in an instant and replaced by the next ones.

Barth create works in which the viewer must look inside him- or herself. There are no clear motifs to recognise and yet associations are evoked. The eye gradually 'reads' and suddenly discovers forms that remind one of a figure, or body shapes. Over there is something like water, or they remind one of landscapes or plants. Some present nothing concrete but full of phantasy, they can 'only' be sensed and appear to be almost haptic, as if one could actually hold them in the hand - even feel them.

Movements remain as if frozen in a gesture without being still; the power of flowing lives within and seems to continue beyond the edge of the image.

For the most part, her images do not tell any definite stories, as indicated by titles such as that of the image for the invitation, **Machal Senud Get**, or **Dasi Beti Telun**. Her titles are sound impressions, they exude atmosphere and are not expected to be understood. They offer no clues for the viewer, which on the one hand provides no assistance, but on the other does not 'stand in the way'. Instead they encourage the viewer's phantasy and give complete freedom to his or her thoughts. The works stand alone but are often part of a series of snapshots, and present details from a large whole when we see them as belonging to an extensive range of images of which many, if not all, cannot be 'fixed'.

These images not only intellectually belong to a constant flow, the quality of the colour also appears to emulate this flow. Relatively fluid colours spread over the canvas or paper, brush strokes are blurred and extend the mental action of free flowing. In the same image

we see impressions, small or large areas that strongly delineate each other alongside soft transits in which new colour nuances glide over each other.

The haptic exuded by the works is enormous, even though we cannot really grasp or touch anything; we feel the flowing, the borders, the gliding into with our eyes. We have the impression that the images flow over the edge of the canvas, and that Barth only captures and presents us with a fraction of what is actually there.

*When everything is loose and in constant movement, everything reacts with everything else,  
everything finds itself constantly in a process,  
there is nothing really finished,*

*and when time and space are only fixed ideas,  
then deception and change  
are confusion and chance*

Nicola Barth formulates her works and her motivation in words herself. On reading her lines, it is clear that for she fights and wrestles with images, not because they are based on too little but on too much. Everything is in flux, flows into everything else and creates, as she says, *deception and change, confusion and chance*.

She grasps the opportunity to transfer inner impressions onto paper or canvas, and allows the viewer a glimpse into her own inner world.