

## **Painting his way to the light**

Text: Olle Granath

“Unlike most monochrome painting, Madhat Kakei's paintings are explosive, laden with meaning, full of joy and sorrow; permeated by a light both ruthless and conciliatory. Dipping below the seething surface, our eyes quickly discern not the one but many colors, the layers of light and dark, harmonies and contrasts, participating in giving these pictures a life of their own.”

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Underlying Madhat Kakei's paintings is darkness. With his Kurdish background, he had scarcely to seek out torment. Being a man who knows where he belongs, he returned to his roots, even though they lie in a war-torn earth.

On his return he found himself unable to carry on with the monochromes, To describe all this pain and destruction he needed to work in black and white. During his student years in Spain he learned how to depict the sufferings in his homeland. At first glance there is no obvious resemblance, but on closer inspection, he might as well have had Goya breathing down his neck.

For Madhat Kakei to shut himself off in a studio in this war-ravaged land was impossibility. As impossible as forsaking the conviction that creative art restores and heals, so he went out amid the ruins and painted as if to say: You may blow our world to smithereens, you won't stop us, we'll go on communicating and building new worlds, this must not be taken as an outburst of heroism or romanticism, simply a statement about human nature. That is why warriors lose their wars and mankind goes on, picking up the pieces and re-building, looking for light where once there was darkness. Physically, Madhat Kakei left his tormented land to work with his monochromes. The nomadic way of life seemed not to bother him, in his heart and mind he was always back home, there is light everywhere but he knew where he wanted to lead it.

Perhaps this is what the many layers surfaces is all about: the more he sees of the world, the more paint is needed to catch the one true light. Yet the unending possibilities never unnerve

him, rather it is his conviction that it is this very light that holds it all together. For no matter what he gets up to with his brushes, it is this light that catches the eye, drawing it downward into something that to all extents and purposes ought to be dead, mute matter, but isn't. On the contrary, surrounded by these works of art we find ourselves drawn into something that is in the deepest sense of the word; human.