

## The long-haul paintings of Goxwa

Scraped, scratched, furrowed... Goxwa's paintings carry within themselves the stigmata of their own corporeality. We are drawn into them in part because of her astute choice of subject and in part because of the very nature of her paintings. Perhaps even more so. Goxwa has a tight repertoire of subjects, infused with references to the paintings of the old masters that she admires so much as well as fueled from the experience of her own personal journey, from Malta, where she was born and raised to Paris where she now lives.

Looking at her choice of subjects, it can be said that Goxwa's paintings are undoubtedly classic: flowers in full bloom, others sitting in their vase, fruits quietly waiting in their bowl, dancers whose arabesques float on the surface of the canvas, languid princesses stretched out on their divan, palace facades with their lintels, pilasters and metopes catching the last rays of twilight... The term of syncretism aptly describes her paintings: drawing from the visions of Claude Lorrain's imaginary ports as much as from Canaletto's vedute, they are also reminiscent of the Fayoum portraits and Rodin's lascivious watercolours. Those viewers familiar with Caravaggio's chiaroscuro as well as the thunderous and foreboding lights often found in Giorgione's paintings will be standing on familiar ground here. It might just be that this convergence of diverse yet pertinent influences is the result of Goxwa's origins. As a small island halfway between Europe and Africa, Malta has always been a much coveted asset by all the Mediterranean civilisations. Yet, traversed through the ages by many cultures, Malta has nonetheless managed to retain both its insular identity. Both unique and richly evocative, Goxwa's paintings have certainly grown from this.

The background of her paintings are worked with a mixture of wax and coloured pigments, very much like a never ending palimpsest. One of their main appeals undoubtedly lies in their distinctive organic matt effect, brought on by the skin of wax. It is only after this background is finished, pulsating with coloured veins, furrowed by her palette knives, that Goxwa knows what the subject of the painting will be. This preparatory time, this liminal space as it were, is needed before she can delve inside the painting. It has been said that the first canvasses used by the Venetian painters were in fact scraps of sailcloth from the vessels sailing in the lagoon. Goxwa in her own way perpetuates this story, as beautiful as it is probably apocryphal. In the intimacy of her Paris studio, she conjures up the necessary wind that blows her canvas, nudging it towards its final destination. For after all, isn't the painter's toil akin to the navigator's: bringing his painting safely into port ?