# Painter Edith Suchodrew Navigates the Starry Cosmos

Although computer art is a relatively new art form that often tends to attract aesthetic neophytes with technological rather than fine arts backgrounds, Edith Suchodrew, an artist born in Latvia, who has lived and worked in Germany since 1991, also has a long and distinguished history as a painter in more traditional media.

Trained at the Latvian Academy of Arts, Suchodrew has exhibited her oils, watercolors, and graphic works throughout Europe, winning numerous prizes and prestigious awards. Along with "symphonic" landscapes, she is known for her portraits and figurative allegories on tragic and humanistic themes.

Suchodrew refers to her new pieces as "computergraphic paintings," and indeed they possess a chromatic richness and a fluidity that is far more painterly than one is used to encountering in digital art. For Suchodrew, the computer appears to be a tool for extending her imagistic capabilities rather than a departure from her previous work, judging from the compositions on permanent view in the year-round salon exhibition at World Fine Art Gallery, 511 West 25th Street, in Chelsea.

Computergraphic Painting

Pressed to pinpoint Suchodrew's expressive pedigree, one would have to cite Symbolism as a primary source of inspiration. The sinuous linearity and the swelling sensuality of her forms harks back to Art Nouveau, and the Byzantine spirit is also present in her compositions, with their intricate arcs and circular rhythms. At the same time, her computer graphics suggest secular mandalas, with their optically hypnotic shapes and electric colors.
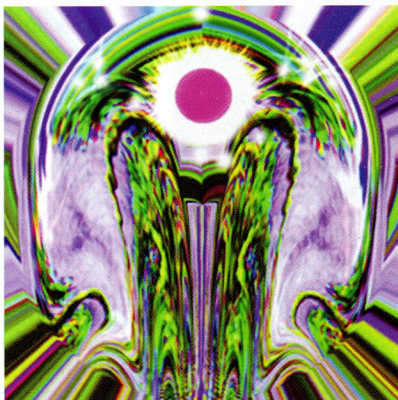
The very title of the series that Suchodrew calls "Birth of the World" indicates the breadth of the artist's ambition and her aesthetic vision is equal to her theme. For the series suggests the primal origins of abstraction itself in the early 1900s when Kandinsky, Mondrian, and other pioneers of nonobjective painting, inspired by their newfound interest in mysticism and the occult, sought to find new forms to express the theretofore inexpressible.

Suchodrew picks up the thread of that tradition, and with the tools of state of the art technology at her disposal, brings new light and life to it via the starry cosmos that glows within the computer screen. Indeed, she locates that mysterious juncture at which science and magic meet in her luminous graphics, with their glowing auras contained by formal configurations hinting at the patterns and structures underlying the visible world.

In "Birth of the World I," for example, the central form appears to be a stylized star composed of pure white light and contained within a formal netting of overlapping lines, suggesting the contractions of a geometric womb. Admittedly, an such interpretations of an abstract composition is bound to be subjective; yet there is a literalness to this image that cries out to be recognized, and this is further supported by the explicitness of the title.

Other works in the series, such as "Birth of the World II" and "Birth of the World III" are similarly evocative, suggesting a metaphysical and spiritual synthesis of form and color, the former with three white forms that glow like votive candles against a dawn-blue ground; the latter with yet another variation on the starburst pattern —albeit here with the linear elements dispersing as though the "net" has given way to an irrepressible force. In this series and in other recent computergraphic paintings with subtle figurative and floral allusions appearing among cosmically suggestive chromatic patterns, Edith Suchodrew reaches an exciting new plateau in her ongoing aesthetic journey.   —Maurice Taplinger