

Between photography and painting

American photographer Lynn Stern opens a retrospective of her work at the Gabarrón Foundation. The show's curator, Donald Kuspit, describes her photographs as revealing

“The threshold between the visible and the invisible.”

“While we accept painting as a metaphor, we usually expect photography to be a representation of reality; but my goal is to create photographic metaphors through abstraction.” With this explanation, Lynn Stern revealed the essence of the work that hangs on the walls of the Cristóbal Gabarrón Foundation: work that blends characteristics of photography and painting, light and space, evocation and emotion.

The American photographer thinks that “a landscape is an opening to the horizon,” and an interior scene – be it a wall or a still life – is “a vehicle for the light.” “Normally,” says Stern, “photographers are most interested in the objects that are in front of the lens. But I care more about the *de-literalized* aspect of the object, and focus equally on what is around it. It is not about denying the object but, rather, about transforming it. I believe that transformation is the essence of art,” said Stern during her visit yesterday to the Gabarrón Foundation.

Under the title “*Frozen Mystery*”, the exhibition offers a retrospective of Stern’s work, starting with her *Nudes* from the late 70’s; followed by *Interior Light* and *Extended Landscapes* from the early 80’s; *Unveilings, Forebodings* and *Whiteness* from that same decade; *Animus, Skulls* and *Dispossession* from the 90’s, which, according to Kuspit, are reminiscent of the mystic paintings of Zurbaran and Ribera; and ending with her works of the last decade, *Veiled Still Lifes, (W)Holes, Ghost Circles* and *Full Circle*. “Lynn Stern is among the most brilliant photographers in a rare tradition of twentieth century photography,” added Kuspit: “abstract photography, which was first developed in Germany and then arrived in the United States.”

According to Kuspit, “Stern transcends the photography of mere appearances” to reach a result that has “aesthetic and existential meaning, as well as an evocative and emotional power.” “In the United States, we make a clear distinction between minimalism and maximalism. Less is more”, commented the curator, who characterized Stern’s work with a quote by architect Mies Van der Rohe: “God is in the details.”

As the visitor will see for himself, and as was yesterday confirmed by Kuspit, Lynn Stern’s work establishes “bridges between painting and photography,” and moves “at a deeper level of consciousness than the verbal level” found in ‘realistic’

photography.

The skulls and the veils of Lynn Stern guide the viewer toward “the threshold between the visible and the invisible” - a place in which, despite the passing of years or the differences in the series’ subject matter, some constants emerge: “Certain key elements,” according to the photographer, such as [“a quality of indirect](#) light that seems to emanate from within like a spiritual presence.”