



NADINE SHENKAR

LAVINIA FONTANA, ELENA GURWICH

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An acute, almost intangible female sensibility is what unites these two artists, seemingly so different...

A painter of extreme sensibility and grace, Elena Gurwich completely distances herself from her father as an artist, showing a marked preference for landscapes and still life, though she does not avoid portraits and abstract painting. The extraordinary still-lives succeed each other in a continual alternation of the intense cold spreading from the paintings with the blazing warmth typical of the Russian palette. The landscapes, which often become ingenious choreographies, show the natural elements fixed in their whirl of movements, rendered through quick, dense strokes of colour. The painting of Lavinia Fontana, daughter of the well-known painter Prospero Fontana, her realism, coupled with the skill of her technique, won her esteem and unanimous appreciation. The profound knowledge of composition and of the particular cannot eclipse the inner world unveiled by the artist, which constitutes the overriding appeal of her portraits and sensibility as a woman. Her particular inclination for portrait painting, both in her secular and religious or mythological subjects, shows detailed study of women's clothing and hairstyles. The male portraits are austere so as to highlight the characters' role and social status, whereas the female ones free themselves of this yoke and allow the artist to express her imagination, endowing each subject with subtle and quiet psychological depth.

Nadine Shenkar studied Philosophy in France and Israel and is now a Lecturer at the Bezalel Arts Academy, Jerusalem. She is a world-renowned expert of Jewish art and the Cabala.

