

A Journey in to the Depths

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Introduction:

Despite of the wide differences or controversy over the definitions for the terms art and artist, some people define it as a researcher...others as a spokesman concerned with social causes but society might agree to a definition to the term artist as “ A female in a permanent state of pregnancy or gesticulations”, such a state might result in to various outcomes in terms of form and contest. Moreover it might face many an abortion attempt. Again one could tell that the artist lives in a state of continued resistance to abortion attempts he encounter; such a resistance contains in itself necessary “genes” for a new birth condition.

As the artist is a man above all, he co-exists with such pregnancies or gesticulations in accordance with his Ego or Self Structure, its divergences e.g. his beliefs, principles and his past life experiences including his desires, psychological, social and material needs, in other words, the sum up of his psychological make-up (Artist’s Psychology)

So the ultimate shape of the artist’s production offered due to a certain birth condition takes place only as a direct outcome the psychological ingredients determinant of the mode in which the artist expresses that conditions outcomes...

This explains why the artist selects specific schools or modes for expression, and he might alter (change) such modes or approaches from time to time, all in accordance with his personal convictions, his timely reactions, he might make resort to caricature for a while or move to the use of the abstract or symbols in another occasion...this should not be taken as uncertainty or a state of weightlessness, it is the contrary as it indicates clearly the extent of the artist’s maturity and the continuity of the birth condition as well as his deep awareness of that complicated phrase called “Self Formed Psychology”.

From here it is deemed necessary on evaluating or discussing of any artist’s career or experience to recognize the following items and answer questions such as:

1. **Art Culture:** That is to say, the extent of the artist’s awareness of the theoretical background as well as the varied art schools (movements).
2. **Self Conviction:** i.e. in the sense whether the artist is fully convinced with the style he is using and the extent of his background knowledge or he simply uses such a style as an act of imitation and adherence to tradition?
3. **(The) ideology of the artist:** It comprises all his beliefs, his vision of reality, as a whole so be it the social, cultural, economic or political reality.

Due to the answers for the above questions one could tell the position of artist and in turn evaluate his experience regardless of our personal convictions whether endorsing or opposing it. We don't have to undertake evaluation of an artwork on such grounds or a personal attitude.

Seen the above, we expose in following lines one of the newest and oldest of art schools i.e. what we term *abstract school*.

Abstract Art and the Artist:

A certain Fine Art author demonstrates as to how art is linked to the socio-economic and cultural conditions reminding us at the same time that the destruction of the Renaissance and its traditions by the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century in Europe was an expression of the destruction of hierarchical structure nourishing and supporting production relations introduced by the Renaissance. Thus the Art Revolution has preceded the Social Revolution; the latter has overthrown the mentioned relations, the Art Revolution unlike the social one stood incapable of introducing a substitute for replacing the ancient economic regime. So, we could label the last seventy years of the history of art as a critical crisis phase where the concept or notion of the ancient is overthrown but no new system or new art awareness is maintained.

In the Arab World scene, all admit the fact that we started to accept the Western Civilization by collecting and imitating many of its political, social and industrial models or aspects. Even its social ways have fascinated us and what is amazing is the quest of the impressionists and their successors to learn how to handle plastic art devices and elements used in oriental, Islamic, Japanese and Chinese paintings... At the same time Arab Fine Art Academies were engaged in teaching the Western Art Version of pictorial and this practice is still solid here borrowing basic rules for learning Fine Art such as proportions in drawing, shade and light...and so on. This way many a viewer might deem abstract art or an abstract work as “non-sense” or incomprehensible lines and that the concerned artist resorts intentionally to complications or complex ideas simply with intention of making a show. Some might go straight claiming Abstract Art as bankrupt and void but the concrete reality is opposite to all the above statement, the allegations are sound proof of the bankrupt thought of its advocator and his incapacity to accept the new challenges imposed by abstract artworks.

An abstract artwork consists in lines, colour spaces or geometrical figures (shapes) built and arranged by the artist as a substitute for the conventional traditional art forms; In fact, the abstract artist does not usually present his work to us in its conventional image but “ he embarks on a destruction work with the ultimate purpose for reconstruction” i.e. decomposing the form in its basic components, leaning to us as viewers the task of reconstructing its parts ; this is quite visible in the works of “Georges Braque and “Picasso” representative of cubism and well before that comes the work of Cezanne; they have altered the form of a woman or a male or a harp as part of the subject from different angles and his treatment of that form as an independent subject.

Therefore the abstract artwork has adopted a jargon of its own to be read or deciphered in a new way, it has developed a new meaning (sense) i.e. the artist in the abstract tradition started to go deep journeying in his inner world meditating the form well in advance before coping with it that is penetrating deep in that world... The world of meditations. In this way he gained a stronger faith in the importance of his work, as it is no more regarded as pure forms; it is an integral part of him, so he advocates it with great enthusiasm.

We encounter again this new trend in other schools e.g. Futurism, Constructivism, Bauhaus, New Plastic Art etc, where the creative treatment for science subjects the chief goal even the unique target for art in the definition of the structuralists.

Concepts and Pioneers in Abstract Art:

An artwork according to the Cubist understanding consists in the act of executing an integrated project by the artist, a project with a beginning and an end; he starts by analyzing form into its basic parts, that is dividing it into small parts, then he undertakes the installation or construction task but such a construction is going to assume the character of a new one. Therefore, the Cubist artwork is to a great extent rendered an independent work compared with the original subject e.g. the harp, the table...etc

In February 1912 Guillaume Apollinaire published his famous essays in which he boasted the idea of the plain artwork...i.e. absolute abstract style and the autumn of the same year appeared the works of R.Delaunay, Frantisek Kupka, Francis Picabia and Fernand Leger whose works came to be known as "Elitist" or "Futurist". The Soviet female artist (Liubov Popova 1889 – 1924) is another example for absolute abstract style very much reflected in the titles of her works e.g. "Composing an outline Drawing" she reached a stage to call her works as "untitled" all avoiding the subject while focusing on the content that is the form be it a square, a rectangle, or a triangle etc.

The famous work of Malevich is quite enough to illustrate the above concept, in fact, he created in the year 1915 a work consisting in a black rectangular shape on a white background; it was entitled " quadrilateral shape", he didn't wish to call a square or a rectangle as if saying that the concerned shape has 4 angles so it is quadrilateral leaving aside the task of interpretation to us allowing you to visualize it in the way you see it a square, or a rectangle. In this way the artwork takes an unspecific form.

Abstract style Artist and other Sciences and Arts:

The concerned artist depends when building his artwork on a variety of sciences and arts. E.g. Mathematics, Musicology, philosophy, Psychology, Aesthetics as well as other sciences, as he is very much concerned with the use of such subjects (sciences) that would enable him to create a meaningful work provoking us to appreciate it.

Abstract Artist and Mathematics:

The use of Mathematics in drawing is an extremely old phenomenon; it goes back to the 5th and 6th centuries B.C. When followers of Pythagoras attempted to link numbers with shapes, e.g. the numbers (1, 3, 6, 10, 15...) He called them triangular numbers because the points could be arranged in a triangular form. The Greek used these numbers in measuring works “ The Golden Section”, Moreover, Mathematics is known and used in ancient civilizations of the world such as the Indian and Muslim, civilizations, the latter used it in Arabic Calligraphy, Ornamentation drawings and architecture..etc.

The new uses of Mathematics in the Modern World differ enormously from its uses in the past. And at the beginning of the 20th century the concerned artist (abstract) has succeeded in making a link between forms (shapes) analysis and Mathematics by creating simple arithmetic relations or more complicated mathematical equations. From here stems and originates “ Systematic Art” on a model resembling to the use of mathematics for alphabetical letters not merely for the sake of using them but for specific purposes.

Among the reputed artists known for their use of numbers “ Sol Lewitt” who built his works in a handsome and well patterned way based on the simple numbers 1,2,3,4; Mario Merz is another artist, he used Fibonacci system that is based on multiplication operation.

Abstract Artist and Music:

Music has played a prominent role in the career of the artist enabling him to express his inner world as well as the inner world of his own society. And as for the 20th Century abstract art creators he visions music through the musical note fascinated with the act of repetition therefore the way he manipulates it resembles to the way he manipulates geometrical forms and arithmetical numbers. The chief area where music is used by the abstract artist is the pigment (colour) and the constant state of movement symbolized by the musical note.

It also should be remarked that this solid and intimate relation between abstract style and music is very marked through a list of names of participants in both areas e.g. “Schoenberg”, a musician who presented attractive artworks and “Kandinsky”, an artist as well as Oscar Kokoschka who wrote plays short stories, verse as well as works on music.

Kandinsky, for example, compared each single basic colour with a particular sound of music, the yellow for example likens to the drum sound and so on... Kandinsky concentrated on the 7th and the 8th century popular music, mainly the full voicing as some sort of musical minimization (pit manuscript) performed by the musician seeking building continuity in the musical note- “Kupka”, an artist, made a similar experiment to the one of “Bach”; he executed what he termed the “dynamic work” or “abstract collage”

He treated it musically causing the collage work to move and disseminate in front of the eyes of the viewers meanwhile a musical group played a symphony of Bach.

The Abstract Style Artist and Colours

Cezanne gave art a new definition elevating it to a more profound level in nature. He analyzed form structure components in terms of colour and he understood that Cohesion and Grandeur in painting depends largely on the dissemination of a measuring concept that demands persistence from the part of the artist. Also he divides the outside world's form into adjacent or microscopic colour areas creating harmony between adjacent colour sectors.

As for "Ostwald", he undertakes a number of chemical experiments and he publishes his theories in the year 1916 on his book "Primary Colours", his theories came to be considered as a basis for study by some Dutch artists leading to the birth of the "style" school. Among its pioneers were Van Doesburg and Mondrian. Going back to Ostwald, he divided colour degrees into 24 building his theories on four primary colours – Red, Yellow, Blue and Green. Although Green is a result of mixing Blue and Yellow, two primary colours, has Ostwald considered as an independent colour.

Kandinsky, undertakes during his presence in the Banhaus the task of handling Geometrical shape as square, rectangle and Circle to "1000" individuals, chiefly schoolboys from " Weimar", Germany. He asked each to assign a colour for each shape, a primary colour – Red, Yellow or Blue. He reached a conclusion that the rectangle is Yellow, the square is red, and the circle is Blue.

Conclusion:

We have endeavoured so far to cast light on abstract style and the figure of the abstract artist who appears to be enveloped with obscurity from the outside; it is because he penetrates deep into the inner world of pictures (images) and shapes delivering them to the outside. We can summarize the above arguments as follows:

- Abstract Art is not just non-sense art; it is an art of its own depending on established scientific rules.
- The figure of the abstract artist is not a bankrupt artist as do many believe; in fact, he possesses a high degree of artistic consciousness and transparency indispensable for building any abstract artwork.
- Abstract Art borrows its theoretical bases from other sciences and arts such as Mathematics, Music, Philosophy, and Psychology; and we have to indicate here that the main reason behind the objections made by the many to abstract art and abstract artwork rises from an inferiority complex and inability to confront with reality... thus the abstract artwork highlights or presents a big challenge to the viewer... It doesn't produce easy

answers to his question marks or interrogations; but it poses to him more new challenging questions...therefore it dares to challenge him and asks for an explanation...Man by his nature refuses challenge except when he chooses it (by his own choice). He used to the Easy and Simple, where knowledge is presented to him in a silver –plate and the artworks becomes an open book...As for the abstract work it is no more than closed-book and the viewer is exhorted to open it... go quickly over its pages then start reading it... it demands curiousness of the viewer which is so indispensable to the act of creation.

All what an abstract artist wants from a viewer is to stand in front of it meditating it...questioning, puzzled...suggesting some interpretations of his own...dialoguing with the artwork...then with artist himself. Therefore the abstract artwork is an act of challenge and dialogue...and going out into the depths.

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