

TO BE FREE

When we assume we have a free will or are free beings we are mistaken. Our individual capacities and range of possible actions roam within the perimeters set by the needs and limitations of our bodies, minds, the societies, cultures and economies we live in, the world and larger nature we are subjected to. Artists should be aware of the difference between working creatively within these given constraints and complying to artificial constraints existing only within the temporary artworld. The difference between the motivation of an artist to offer something of possible substance to the general viewer as fellow human beings with their own problems and concerns, and accommodating the art world for purely career motivations. If my work would concern socio-political, genetic, gender, environmental, capitalistic or related trendy topics or comments, as seem to be the paradigms of contemporary art, my work could be temporary fashionable but I would not be able to develop something much more humane and lasting.

The human brain and the body are capable of a broad range of thoughts and activities but still limited to what is possible within the neurological and biological capacities of our physical body. Even more so because events in our immediate environment and nature at large interact, influence and further inspire, define and limit our physical and mental activities. Living in groups, societies, cultures limit the individual freedom within the laws and social rules decided by consensus, by religion or by other authority. By acknowledging and respecting the existence and position of the Other one cannot act in full freedom. Ethics is a valuable tool for such natural and acceptable limitation of freedom, defining the limitations of what is possible and what is simply not done. The limitations to the freedom of the artist set by the economy need no explanation. An artist may have a creative vision but requires support to be allowed to realize his/her ideas.

Artistic freedom is a freedom constrained within social and economic perimeters, which is still not the same as competing with the news media for rattling the viewer with breaking-news. The professional artist needs to work both inside and outside the studio and, therefore, understands the market both as public space to exchange thoughts with others and as the place for acquiring the means for living. Though a large range of creative interpretations is possible, pragmatic limitations concerning sizes, weights, materials, durability and relevant pricing have to be taken into account. However, there are also features of the art world and art market that seem limiting, but such features are time-bound and artificial trends that one can avoid. Trends in galleries, museums, art fairs and biennials often have short lived successes, but always evoke opportunist and desperate artists to accommodate the demand and change their creativity accordingly. Explicit socio-political messages in art are simple narratives competing with the news-media and founded on an exaggeration of the uniqueness of one's own view on the world, and therefore is a fundamentally narcissistic trend. Another trend invented by the western model of the art world is that the artist should develop a simple, clearly recognizable and marketable kind of artwork, a continuous repetition of the same concept named 'signature artwork'. The resulting danger is apparent: the continuous repetition degenerates the creative expression into a boring routine allowing the artwork to become a disposable commodity.

To be free as artist means to acknowledge the Other, to acknowledge a general ethics or ethics specific to one's society, while one moves freely within social perimeters which is different from the artificial and temporary perimeters set by the art world. In context to the above in my own creativity I allow and afford myself to be free, to roam within the acceptable and natural perimeters, ignoring the artificial rules. When one studies the art market in the past 40-50 years this real freedom seems a luxury artists only rarely trust to take on.

One will undoubtedly find occasional discrepancies between subjects in my paintings and sculptures moving in the arena between figuration and abstraction. I feel the need to occasionally return to the human figure, to the human body in space, to refresh my angle on humane abstraction evoking the experience of our presence in the world as both individual and as part of the whole perceived by the unity of our body and mind. Our being in the world naturally causes the viewer to connect better to artworks that offer associations that appeal both to the mind and body of the viewer.

The consistency in my creative drive is shaped by the predominant presence of our physical being in the flux and dynamics of nothingness. I like to emancipate the individual viewer who by the interactive encounter with the presence of my artworks may sense or even become aware of his/her own physical being in the static situation of the actual and current space (the locus) immersed in the continuously changing flow of

space/time, the dynamics of eternal nothingness, an infinite space filled with streams of energies. Artworks that provide the impression of an entity, whether abstract or semi-abstract or even recognizable as human figure or any figure (for instance a tree), allow the viewer to unconsciously meet another being or, in an abstract sense, the Other. When such artworks offer sufficient complexities and contrasts of forms and colors they will attract and hold the gaze of the viewer, which creates the impression of predominant presence.

In sculpture one encounters a factual entity existing in real space/time, while in painting one encounters an entity existing in virtual space/time. In my artworks there is no other narrative than the narrative of Being, solely based on perception by the unity of mind and body. There is no clear and precise meaning which can be described in words, because the meaning of my artworks lies on the level of individual perception and is thus open to each viewer's own interpretation, association and knowledge. When we take visual perception serious the subject matter in artworks is subjected to the visual appeal.

The capacity of artworks to capture and hold the viewer's gaze long enough may allow the potential of such artworks to enhance brain-paths different from the brain-paths involved in everyday problem solving and hence afford a temporary distraction and offer a genuine experience of Being and hence of self. An experience that provides an awareness of being a unique individual in a non-individual world, which gives a sense of freedom. To acknowledge one's self is to be free.

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