

~~We have been talking composition in the first term to some extent, I have shown you as much as I could think of, and how much of it has taken roots, or has had time to sink in, I can not even guess, but I don't see it anyhow as yet. Therefore it seems necessary to insist upon it again.~~

What is an image, a truthful image, what is a plastic value, what makes a painting real and that means meaningful. We usually do recognize such paintings and reject the others. But it might be well to become conscious of what makes them so.

That what we try to do is called "ART", and with good reason, it means something well-done, a something parallel to nature, let's call it nature in its abstract essence a reality without the pains of reality, created for our enjoyment and enlightenment or both at the same time. Hence the constant study of nature and our research into what goes into the making of nature. We seem to understand and to respond to this artificially created symbolical counterpart of nature.

The essence of the rhythm of life is behold in our only creative act, if we can call the procreation of our species actually a creative act; in the act of love-making, or if we want to extend it to the whole cycle of life and death, the timing of this rhythm is set. I am inclined to take this activity and its pattern as the root of any productivity in art, and this in its most simple and direct state. This is not new since Freud; his contribution consist of the development from this basic concept of all the psychological complications derived from it.

What follows may seem not only very primitive but simply blunt. Let's take one by one the consecutive phases involved in and leading to the act of love-making.

Challenge - appetite - desire - activity - peak of activity - satisfaction.

The conclusion of satisfaction of the original appetite will give us the illusion of having met and answered the challenge. As the challenge stays always greater than we are, we will have to start this process over and over again, untill by exhaustion or any other crippling cause we become immune to the challenge.

I beleive that any composition in Art, if this is poetry, or music or the visual arts if satisfactory as a work of art has to follow the same rhythmic pattern. This may range from the most vulgar to the most spriritualized or transcendental manifestation.

I am of course not talking about the pictorial rendering of love-scenes or the sexual act, but of what makes the composition work, whatever the subjectmatter may be, and to make this clear I will start out with some samples in music.

Venus and Mars by Titoutto.

Baptism of Christ - Piero

What is visual thinking?
The artist can understand through his eyes. He has not have to know what he sees.
Knowledge in the scientific way

As music is in spite of its highly abstract method the most physically engaging art it seems to me to provide the most obvious demonstration of my argument . It is practically impossible to make music some way or another one can not dance to ,unless it is no music anymore ,and there is of course plenty of it ,just as we have plenty of bad painting and poetry.

To start with a most coarse and vulgar sample I remind you of the "Rêves d'amour " by Franz Liszt. It is close to obscenity and you can about imagine the romantic figure of Liszt with long hair and long robes practically raping the piano before a flabbergasted and spellbound audience of mostly ladies. Nevertheless it is well-made cleverly and brilliantly so ,hence the success it could carry away in the victorian period .

As a next sample I refer to the piano and violin sonata by Beethoven ,the famous Kreutzner Sonata ,on which a novel by Tolstoi is based ,in which he attempts to prove that it was immoral music , stirring up the passions by its inflammatory qualities ,exiting to sexual violence . We are in this sonata on a very high level of art ,genius and sophistication , but the physical impact of the composition and its themes is undeniable .

After a most mysterious and intriguing prelude ,Beethoven who never lingers too long goes to work at a fast step,and the first presto introduction shows clearly that he has made up his mind and means business. Beethoven can be incredibly impatient . Working up to the climax and the finale of the first part is quite some labor and an interlude of playful rest is required . When you start a sonata with so much vigor and exaltation it seems nearly a wonder that one can reach still above this state , but Beethoven manages with excitement and jubilation . To invent a second theme closely related to the first one and being able to keep up the tension ,as a matter of fact , enhancing the tension and concluding with a sort of exalted hallelujah is the work of a giant and genius .

When we compare this to the much less fulgorant and exuberant nature of Haydn we find a perfect classical sample of the same compository rules and equally so in the more versatile and inventive work of Mozart. How well Mozart was professionally aware of this is proven by his "musical joke " a work in which he committed all the faults and compositional errors possible : wrong proportion of introduction and first theme , wrong endings of phrases, wrong modulations , wrong rhythm changes , wrong tempo changes , wrong accents and even false notes. I will let you hear now the finales of Mozart and Haydn in which in each instance the themes are developped by repetition and variation and culminate by a technical artifice in the final satisfaction required after this tremendous build-up.

I want to stop one moment at the mystic poetry of San Juan de la Cruz ,which I have mentioned in previous lectures. I will read to you some of his mystic love poems "Non jamais je ne me perdrai" "My beloved, the mountains" .

In his own words he had to come down some steps ,and poetry was the closest method, to communicate anything of his conversation in mystical hallucinations ,a conversation which had no words or sounds or signs , a conversation of "pure spirit " to pure spirit". It is of course not enough to have the inspiration ,he had to be able to handle and twist his language in a mysterious and artful way to convey any of his experiences with the "absolute ". So art is involved ,artifice if you want and listen to the rhythm ,the repetition ,and the variations .

Rhythm according to the dictionary reads as follows: periodic variation ,or regular alternation of strong and weak stress ,regular recurrence of emphasis or accent according to a particular scheme or pattern - (hexameter) , but rhythm is more than that ,just listen to it .

Piano Text

Next lets see it .

Both in music and in poetry the building and the development of the composition happens in time .

The image which stands still has to be swallowed at once as a whole ,and digested in pieces. Therefor they are entirely different from the images we get in the movies or the images the camera can give us , (from our standpoint the only thing wrong with a movie is that it moves) , and thus a different set of compositional rules has to be applied ,but basically they respond to the same rhythmic pattern.

When you are confronted in a show with the sight of 50 or more paintings at once you will unconsciously make your first choice and most of the time this choice will prove to be lasting. It is not the subject matter nor the colour or the the form or size, but most certainly the quality of the organization .The full impact of the overall image ,its construction has to be striking and convincing. This impression can of course wear out if not sustained. (compare Poliakoff and Arp). Then it becomes a question of feeding my eye at the right moment and at the right place with what it has been made to expect. Thus time (the speed of my travelling eye)and space are involved. This is a spatial question of timing. Do I have too much space ,my eye will be lost, and lose interest , do I give too much or too early ,my eye will be confused and distracted , and will stumble ,if at all, to the place where it has to be lead. We are not enough aware of the enormous activity the eye goes through in looking at a picture . This is a constant traveling at the highest speed. In my opinion it wishes to follow the same rhythmic pulse as a natural physical functioning under the pressure of excitement .

Why do I become tired of looking at a picture ,or do I decide that I have seen it ,
(but I know I will have to come back to it over and over again) .? While I have
accomplished the cycle of interest ; challenge ,appetite ,desire ,activity,peak ,
and satisfaction . From the moment I have made an error in the painting I will be
left with dissatisfaction ,disappointment ,if not outright annoyance .

Lets verify if this argument holds up.

Analysis of : Hugo van der Goes

Michel Angelo

Giorgione

Tizian

Tintoretto

Gauguin

Picasso

Ernst

Death of Mary.

Story of Esther in the Sistine ceiling.

The tempest.

Bacchanale .

Calvary in the scuola San Rocco .

Ou allons nous -

Guernica .

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We might argue that in the case of the surrealist unconscious and uncontrolled
happening of the images these rules would not apply, but we will find that indeed
this basic rhythm is a law of nature ,and that this law is unavoidable when a work
of art has to become the man-created parallel of nature . Therefor our training has
to be directed in such a way that we become constantly ,as by second nature ,
conscious of its works . That is why we study nature .

unimportant