

MYTHS OF PROGRESS AND THE IRRATIONAL IN ART

Firstly, the creative is the irrational. The creative force *per se* is irrational and as such is fundamentally ungraspable by theory. One can only come at it through participation. So the viewer participates in the creative act and this is its revolutionary power. Not political revolutionary power although this might well be an energetic offshoot of the creative event. The painting itself, the object with the flat surface, is a site of a battle, a debate, a polemic. The basis of all context is polemic. Desire begins and ends with the human and the human is a contingency. When we evaluate a painting we must understand its necessity. The irrational has painting as its domain and the irrational is necessary. Progress depends upon the point of view of the observer. Progress cannot be observed up close but rather from afar. Art is many things, one of which is a mirror. Art is an observer and a silent witness. On the battlefield of the painting opposing forces engage. The irrational against the rational, the empirical against the metaphysical to produce history or a sense of progress. Art is a vision of the human (and the divine) intellect and as such is the key to understanding the human condition for it is provocative and a call to arms.

I work through the visual vernacular (*qua* the history of art up until now) to posit an experience. The experience is not only an event that has happened to the artist but also one that is happening to the viewer. I universalize and de-contextualize my own experience and even reverse its meaning. Whatever experience means to me can mean the opposite to the viewer. So my work is about the multiplication of meaning under the banner of the image robbed of all meaning. This is the irrational. In fact the image is just an image. It comes out of personal experience but has no meaning *per se*. Meaning is given to it by its context and the polemic it generates. As such it is an irrational invitation to give up all search for meaning and merely see the image floating there. The

image is logos before the first act of creation and long before cogitation. Words are spoken but the image speaks no words, tells no story. The viewer is drawn into this vortex of meaninglessness. That is the irrational. The irrational is necessary. Necessity is progress. The epistemology of progress is the product of time and time is irrational. All movements are circular and lead nowhere. My paintings do not go anywhere and have no history. They are born fully formed like gods. Hegel's dialectic of opposing forces is borne out on the arena of the canvas and true to his theory creates the illusion of progress otherwise known as history. The challenge for the viewer then is to see beyond this illusion and find the quality of life in these pictures. This is another purpose of art – to posit the problem with no solution. The problem with no solution is called 'seeing'.