

Illustration

GUSTAVO CHARIF
(CONTEMPORARY ARGENTINE ARTIST)

Gustavo Charif's artistic poetry allows him, through beauty and truth, to disrobe the intriguing masks of human being. To him drift his works, his words and his actions. He defines himself as agnostic, stateless, errant. Knowing him implies finding a world citizen. A being committed to man, to its culture, with a human sense of life arising from the purifying level of consciousness. Detached from imagination, his work is that of both a dreamlike and a real maker. He exerts a surreal ethic determined not to surrender to the fraud of hypocrite and dissolute societies. His work is that of a poet who understands his existence by creating a thought with forms, drifting without yielding along the grotesque heterogeneity of the worldly stage. The deep skepticism that reaches his own work is not only the sincere posture that exposes the fears in a society; it also entices the possibility of finding man in the heart. He works with poetry from its essence, exposing its masks, releasing it from spiritual exile. He reaches the being with Saint Augustine's mystique. *"God does not approach to human reason, but to the irrationality of the heart"*.

This intuition displayed by Charif from his deep universe allows visualizing what man hides with his power and interests. There is freedom in shaping its creation achieved by not fastening to concepts, geography and people. He denounces the daily imagination in which we live, seen through the cruel reality of his painting, resulting in a different language to represent what underlies in consciousness. His message arises from the purity and beauty of poetry. Gene principle of man's foundation in his conscious justification. Its expression through the artistic talent that holds his work to bring something new in the representation of reality. This concept gives a new meaning to culture. To the observation of the world of men so often disguised with the conviction to subjugate others.

Reality, nature, is enriched by artistic intuition. It allows as Paul Klee said *"to see what is not seen."* A development beyond daily vision. The artist's perception penetrates in it, to depict another dimension. It solves art with another perspective, without fraud. From the spirit to reality, which is masked, hidden, by men of power, showing a deviation from the representation that it undresses in our view, at the level of



"Tribute to what we can understand"
Oil on canvas, 31 x 23 cm, 1997

intuitive awareness, or at least in the warmth of the heart, innate heat source.

The artist's power has been, especially since Impressionism, the reconfiguration of the observable world through the vision of consciousness that lies in waking and, disengages at night. The shape, the color, the light, is diluted in its composition revealing a manifested integrity of the alchemy between reality and spirit. Between the being and its shadow.

-Gustavo, we are afraid to die as if after death we could

be afraid of being the void.

-Look George, life is a reality whose only strength is in being, in that meditation which is not muddy or contaminated. Alone with self-consciousness we cannot trade, we assume our own limits.

-I understand what you say, outwardly man is disturbed, and so the work should be a scream. Art allows channeling man's despair. It must be the cry of all who keep silent by fatigue or fear, but silent. Gustavo, must we think that existence is conflictive?

-In my situation skepticism is the limit of the consciousness that I have. To think of a country is not real, I am stateless. My whole life has been a struggle to speak from the being's depths. Detached from the indifference of man's interested logic.

-I believe that the heart never regrets because it evades reasoning. I do not want to say what I feel with words, I want to feel speechless. Not to divorce in extreme searches. My being must have the simplicity of what disappears anonymously. The foreigner lies within me. He learned that life is a drain between losses. He also learned that defeat wins if feeling is not delivered. He dwells on the eve of battle and also after the failures and defeats.

EVERYTHING IN ME MAY HAVE BEEN BEFORE THE VOID, THE DEATH, THE OBLIVION

Perhaps the challenge is found within poetry, which allows entry to all artistic expression. By reaching with it the spiritual depth we denounce its marginalization enacted by men. Upon entering the art, the link to the "rational" of an encoded, orthodox life, is lost. Poetry undresses. Art denounces the conflict. There he appears, there emerges the author away from routine. Poetry has always an interpretation, an inconsistency that leads to logical thinking. Similar to abstract art. A unit and a mystery. An insight into the underworld of consciousness. Challenge transforms suffering into work, through delirium or rationality, transferring the fears, the codes, the prisons of society that do not help in the deconstruction of knowledge but in its alienation. Perhaps the alienated can absorb more blows for his audacity. It is Antonin Artaud's message in his "Van Gogh, suicided by society". (1)

The released unconscious is a response against dogmas established by the use of reason. Art deviates from man's misery. It unveils it. Art acts as a shelter, why not alienation? Given the marginality assumed by the "different", complaint immures, it gives refuge. There, art flows freely. How does the human body's misery relate with his art, his spirit, his devotion to another being? By knowing that the soul is a product of its matter, of its organicism, this leads us to differentiate it, to understand that the essence will not even rot like meat, but that before it has stopped breathing the soul will have already escaped.



"Irrational Zebra"
Oil on canvas, 140 x 140 cm, 2004

"Life is a mask. With it man comes on stage, integrates into existence. He represents his culture. At heart it serves to tolerate permanence. Then he uses passion leading it to incentive goals. In moments of reflection, when he can escape from his performance, he understands that destiny exists in the being for the sole purpose of not being. Against this fear he consoles himself merely by mooring to the dark side of consciousness in an ancestral behavior, primitive, suitable for wild survival. Therefore knowledge did not elevate him ethically, but led him to possess more tools to defend his life at all costs for a while longer. If man has faith in a final verdict he becomes a saint, otherwise, he inclines towards art or homelessness. None of them uses existential mask. They wander through other experiences. Here artists and saints search irredeemably for eternity through themselves [the saints] or through their works [the artists]. The tramp stays alone exempt from any personal perspective or from lasting in some memory. They have undergone existential aporia. Irony is its highest expression in a demystifying concept for the eternal and deceived man that runs through the streets into the void ...". (2) Here, in this concept, we find the ideological meaning of Gustavo Charif.

Jorge C. Trainini

REFERENCES

1. Artaud, Antonin .. "Van Gogh suicided by society". Ed Argonauta, Buenos Aires, 2007.
2. Trainini, Jorge C. "The Artists' Ark ". (In press)