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Rudolph Otto Pozzatti

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2 - Oils
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approx.	22 x 32	"The Heads" ✓
"	26 x 38	"Votive Candles" ✓
"	24 x 46	"Still Life" ✓

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Charles M. Aman

Chairman of Committee

Alden F. Hegrew

Head of Fine Arts Dept.

Date

22 August 1950

ART AND SOCIETY

by

Rudolph Otto Fossatti

B.F.A., University of Colorado, 1948

Department of

Fine Arts

Rudolph Otto Fossatti

July 7, August 1950

July 7, August 1950

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate
School of the University of Colorado in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree

Master of Fine Arts

Department of Fine Arts

1950

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1950

Pozzatti, Rudolph Otto (M.F.A., Arts Painting)

Art and Society

Thesis directed by Instructor Charles M. Arman

In view of contemporary standards and values, art and society
at present have **This Thesis for the M.F.A. degree, by** understanding
can evolve. Though **Rudolph Otto Pozzatti** accepted the work
of its contemporary **has been approved for the** furnished their artists
with sufficient impulse **Department of** continue progressively a
search for new pictorial **Fine Arts** expression.

I personally believe that **by** society should stop and re-
examine its relationship to contemporary art. The various segments
of society must realize that this is their art, created during their
particular time. Alden F. Megraw that the artist
must continue his growth in Charles M. Arman regardless of rejection
or acceptance.

Date 7 August 1950

This abstract of about 100 words is approved as to form and content.
I recommend its publication.

Signed Charles M. Arman
Instructor in charge of thesis

Pozzatti, Rudolph Otto (M.F.A., Art: Painting)

Art and Society

Thesis directed by Instructor Charles M. Annan

In view of contemporary standards and values, art and society at present have no common basis from which a mutual understanding can evolve. Though no era has ever completely accepted the work of its contemporary artists, past societies furnished their artisans with sufficient impetus and support to continue progressively a search for new pictorial terms of expression.

I personally believe that our society should stop and re-examine its relationship to contemporary art. The various segments of society must realize that this is their art, created during their particular time and more significant albeit alarming, that the artist must continue his progress in sincere fashion regardless of rejection or acceptance.

This abstract of about 100 words is approved as to form and content. I recommend its publication.

Signed

Charles M. Annan
Instructor in charge of thesis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER PAGE

I. ART AND SOCIETY of the 1

The contemporary artist discovers himself practically divorced from his society, the same society which should be in tune with his manner of expression and be his greatest supporter. Art has played a dominant role in all the cultures of man's existence here on earth. Every culture has established its own standards or values of life as they live it which we may call this particular culture's conception of "reality." In the same respect different periods have had different values and standards and therefore a different conception of "reality." In the record of past cultures, art as an integral part of society reached tremendous proportions and added greatly to man's personal desires for a richer and fuller life. Past records indicate that major rifts and rebellions against long-established customs and traditions have occurred, but no disagreement and difference of opinion has reached the expense of our present day situation.

Undoubtedly there have been many causes for this division of actual understanding and appreciation between art and society. The mechanistic, materialistic and scientific residue left by the Industrial Revolution has played a major role in this dissociation, as has the ever-present "cultural lag." Perhaps every society has

ART AND SOCIETY

Our entire society is lacking a unity of purpose and understanding, and this is especially prevalent in the relation of the arts to society. The contemporary artist discovers himself practically divorced from his society, the same society which should be in tune with his manner of expression and be his greatest supporter. Art has played a dominant role in all the cultures of man's existence here on earth. Every culture has established its own standards or values of life as they live it which we may call this particular culture's conception of "reality." In the same respect different periods have had different values and standards and therefore a different conception of "reality." In the record of past cultures, art as an integral part of society reached tremendous proportions and added greatly to man's personal desires for a richer and fuller life. Past records indicate that major rifts and rebellions against long-established customs and traditions have occurred, but no disagreement and difference of opinion has reached the expanse of our present day situation.

Undoubtedly there have been many causes for this division of mutual understanding and appreciation between art and society. The mechanistic, materialistic and scientific residue left by the Industrial Revolution has played a major role in this disassociation, as has the ever-present "cultural lag." Perhaps every society has

had a "cultural lag" to some degree, but none could be as prominent as what exists today, for the majority still persists in living according to standards and values set by past cultures that are long-since dead.

The stream of contemporary art is filled with innumerable individual interpretations which, as yet, have not jelled into a definite direction or unity of concept. A period such as ours which is one of chaos and uncertainty always brings forth a rash of experimentation, new ideas, speculation into the abstract, self-expression, progressiveness and introspection. Somehow in this fury of experimentation and general upheaval the artist has left his public lolling in the ideology and philosophy of the past. The development in contemporary painting has been solely a development of the artist independent of the public, for the public as a whole has not grown with the new concept of thought which in essence is the direct opposite of the objective and naturalistic conception of the majority of our society. The twentieth century shows a complete overthrow of representational motif and a rediscovery of the free imaginative scope of art. All inhibitions have been cast aside, and there has been a thorough re-examination of all art forms and means of expression which have gone before us. To this can be added the array of experimentation and production by such a man as Pablo Picasso who has left no stone unturned in an attempt to investigate all the possibilities of contemporary expression. It is useless for our age to attempt expression and manner of living

according to past standards. Our problem is to discover a new way, one which will be synonymous with the twentieth century not the nineteenth.

What the artist knows is that his very individualistic means of expressing his own personal emotions are rather restricted when dealing with the masses. He can only hope to reach a small group and in turn hope again that the very few that he did reach will be able to convey this impression to a much larger group. Because the world no longer has a collective spiritual and emotional character the artist must resort to certain types of restricted elements of expression to convey his idea. Artists are restricted in the sense that there are no universal symbols they can use to reach the whole of mankind. If they are intent on reaching the public they must choose elements of expression which at least in part will find acceptance and understanding in their public and which in turn will not destroy the power and impact of their created visions.

There also arises a serious duality concerning the artist's freedom of expression and the problem of his existence. The artist to all intents and purposes desires to create and express according to his own emotional and aesthetic feelings, yet there is the problem of securing a livelihood in a materialistic world which has reduced all efforts and labors to a cash basis. More recently we have observed what may prove to be the solution for the artist intent on following the dictates of his own mind in regard to his artistic expressions. The solution seems to lie in the excellent positions

on school, college and university staffs which provide a very adequate means of support and give the artist a reasonable amount of time to follow his own pursuits in the art field; however, there may be some type of danger arising from this situation. Would it be possible for one to become bogged down with an excessive amount of instructing so as to sap artistic inspiration and desire to continue painting? I think not. Of all the situations that exist today for the artist, I personally believe that the artist-instructor relationship would be most acceptable. This solution would not apply for all, but in my brief experience thus far the mutual exchange of ideas and concepts of thought and expression which are a natural part of instructing are quite beneficial and enriching. Different individuals need different solutions before the very act of living actually enhances the progress of their chosen profession. Separate solutions must be found by the individual artist himself. In choosing his place in the pattern of society the artist must pick the position which will be most beneficial and most rewarding in experience and which will add to the enrichment and strength of his conviction. Many artists have perished under dogmatic systems and vanity and ignorance on the part of the public; yet in spite of the systems there have been great artists and great art.

It is agreed that art has always been a definite part of all established cultures, but what is lacking is that art today has not found a more basic acceptance within our society. Art in essence is not patterned for a select few. If it is ever to mean anything to

the contemporary society for which it is created it must find greater acceptance and understanding. Art begins to have great importance in a society when the artist's message begins to influence people in their thoughts, actions and feelings. To date art in America is definitely not an integral part of our society's makeup. It is but a mere afterthought finding hardly any space for existence in our fast and many-faceted life. In the same respect that the artist as a person is a part of society so then his work must be considered in the same light as are all other arts and all other results of man's endeavor. Unfortunately this is not so.

It is interesting to note how much painting suffers by being a visual art. When a painting is exhibited the entire canvas comes under simultaneous observation. Line, color, form, area and design although not given the same deliberation are seen at once. The perception of time in painting is difficult to discern, for to the majority of observers it has no tangible beginning or end. Literature affords a definite perception of time related in narrative sequence, whereas painting relies on line, color, form, area and design for its entire expression including perception of time. Music is accompanied by program notes as in the field of the opera and even down to record albums, which afford an understanding for the listener when a written explanation accompanies the music. Painting therefore which cannot possibly rely on a narrative description or explanation immediately becomes less acceptable. Very little

living. However, one thing is important is that millions of people

attempt is made on the part of the observer to investigate any further into what may be the artist's intent transposed in the terms of paint. The artist must find some degree of support and acceptance on the part of his public if any amalgamation of thought and feeling between art and society is to take place. Patronage is lacking as a major factor in bolstering the artist in our day. The artist can no longer look for patronage to the Church, the monarchy or a cultured aristocracy of wealth as in the past. In our day very little has been done to replace these patrons and the understanding public that was a part of their particular time. Some financial aid and stirring of interest could develop from government subsidies involving mural projects and other forms of artistic works which would help bring contemporary art closer to the masses and provide financial assistance to the artist.

We see in past cultures that the artist was a very definite and integral part of his society. There was a totality of experience and understanding of the aesthetic impulse upon which all good art is based. Coming down to the present day, the artist has been driven in upon himself. He has changed from the socially useful being he once was to a creature without any particular function in what should be a very organic society needing all forms of living to enrich its existence. Most of this has come about due to the fact that the artist no longer has an audience—that is an audience interested in what he has to say and one which will provide him a living. However, one thing important is that millions of people

when given the opportunity respond to the appeal and exhibition of art in its various forms. They are at least willing to look but still reluctant to buy. Perhaps this is a good starting point from which something else will develop.

Being a very interested participant in this problem of art and society, I believe it is deserving of all the attention and thought that we can give it. The majority of artists are not neurotic introverts intent on personal self-expression to the exclusion of all society. Sincerity is a component of all good art though it may be a mirror reflecting the image of our society in all its corruptness and insecurity. This disassociation of art and society is an old problem and sooner or later will affect everyone who attempts to seek expression in the field of fine arts. The artist is realizing the situation and is becoming more sympathetic. However, he cannot give ground completely for fear of watering down his intent, concept and message to where it becomes trite and lacks any type of meaning or importance. Society as a whole has not responded, but in segments it is making attempts. Aside from national shows and exhibitions, we have evidence here in our own state where annual exhibitions at Denver, Central City, and Canon City are beginning to take on real importance with enough prizes and public interest to grant sufficient inspiration to the artist.

With the number of people who are slowly becoming conscious of the importance of art to society this problem in its major form should be partially solved in the not too distant future. A glance

at the works of art which have survived through the ages and what is slowly manifesting itself into our own contemporary exhibitions, indicates somewhat of a shift to a more basic and more sincere type of representation. The flash of purely abstract and non-objective art, though a necessary step in experimentation and development, has diminished in proportion. In conjunction with our ever-changing, chaotic and shifting world, the artist and society seem to be searching for or perhaps approaching a more reserved and more solid yet vigorous form of plastic expression.

The same terms which apply for any case of disagreement are applicable to this situation. On one side the artist in all sincerity must strive to create what he thinks is right. Disregarding everything else he cannot go contrary to his own nature or temperament. But in creating works of art there should be some attempt to reach our society. All good artists whose works have endured the test of time have been concerned with the human element. There should be no trickery or attempt to beguile or mislead the onlooker or so purposely fashion one's work so as to make it incomprehensible. The preceding statement does not imply that there should not be experimentation with mediums. The medium is merely the "means" by which the artist works, and what he is concerned with is the "end" or the finished product, for this is what comes before the public and what is actually judged as being a part of our society. Our public is composed of many differing streams of consciousness and many differing concepts of reality.

To communicate with such a diversified public is impossible. The remaining job of accepting and trying to comprehend is left to society. The same sense of conscious sincerity that is demanded of the artist must be asked of the layman as he goes about his task of receiving the work of the artist. He will either accept or reject, for it is doubtful whether any society ever accepted everything created by its artists. However if the work is sincerely created and in tune with contemporary society, a greater majority of it will find acceptance with an aroused and sympathetic public. An interested public will be well aware of what is created for them and in return their acceptance will furnish greater impetus to the artist.

From these seeds of sincerity, mutual understanding and honest acceptance or rejection in the light of contemporary values, larger things can grow which will unite man and the arts and give a much broader and more universal meaning to life.

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