

The artist does not define the world; the world belongs to the artist.

Andrei Tarkovsky

Vyaçeslav Ivanov once said “A symbol... becomes a true symbol when something that is mysterious, that cannot be talked about with language or expressed in words, is said or touched upon. A symbol is multi-faceted and has many meanings, but its deep meaning is always shrouded in darkness. It has an organic structure like a crystal. It can even be said to be like a monad (the first substance), which is what separates it from a multi-layered, complex allegory, parable or analogy. It is impossible to grasp symbols, and they cannot be repeated in words”. Artistic structures with symbolic contents are variable by nature, and provide the possibility for countless completely different analyses. In this way, art takes on the role of a meta-language, and becomes a flawless communication channel. Like intellectual thought, art has followed a clear development of laws. What are decisive here are the world’s views, ethics and intellectual goals.

When we wish to speak about Süleyman Saim Tekcan’s painting, it is quite a reasonable method to first explore the world of the horse symbol. This is because for an artist who clearly uses the horse figure as a symbol and repeats this symbolism throughout various channels and structures, the horse is in fact that first substance in the crystal structure. The structure he has attempted to create on the canvas, using this image, is that of monumentalism. The monumental structure the artist has attempted to establish here in two dimensions is a factor common to all of his works.

In the 1980’s, the debates and searches for identity that began with modernism caused artists producing work in these regions to return to traditional sources. In the cultural arena the universality-locality debate was one reason that Süleyman Saim Tekcan, who presumably felt the influence of his Circassian roots, chose among all of the different possible codes to focus on the symbol of the horse. When we consider the roots and history it carries with it, we can see that the horse image has been envisioned together with all of its links and connections. But Tekcan uses the horse symbol not just an aesthetic object, he has also attempted to depict the reality behind this ancient symbol.

All of Süleyman Saim Tekcan’s works are related to bindings to the earth, roots, tradition, culture and the concept of belonging to a particular human and intellectual environment. He has taken codes from the past, analyzed them and brought them to a Western platform. We find layer upon layer of influence from Anatolian civilizations, Ottoman calligraphy and miniature traditions. By using signatures, tablets, seals, manuscripts and gravestones from the Ottoman period, he has entered the realm of archeology. He was influenced by the fact that calligraphy was an important part of traditional life. The fluidity and rhythm of the calligraphic lines supports and fosters the horse symbol.

When it comes to Süleyman Saim Tekcan today, we can find hints of icons among the transparent layers in the artist’s paintings, Anatolian calligraphic figures, Mehmed Siyahkalem’s cinematic constructs and a type of monumentalism specific to modernity. The goal of art transcends the artist’s intentions. It is the forking paths that enrich us, that we seek out and pursue. The fiction ends, and like the fate of the horse in Tarkovsky’s powerful symbolism, imagination meets real life.

We should note at this point that Tekcan is also an art educator, museum curator, and an excellent teacher. In addition to being Turkey’s most knowledgeable artist on the topic of printmaking, he is an artist who constantly seeks new methods and carries out research developing experimental workshop systems and technologies. He holds the position of our country’s most prominent user of lithography as an artistic medium.

Perhaps in the end the magic of art should not be found in the creation of art itself, but of life. What Heidegger meant by “constructing the world”... All true works of art make it possible for us to imagine a time before the first day of the world, for life is richer than imagination.

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