

A Revolutionary Personality Fights for Styles, Forms, Words and Ideals...

Fore word:

First of all, I have to say that this article is an expression of respect to Süleyman Saim Tekcan, who has a reformist identity and who deserve this respect fully as the artist, art educator, private museum founder. Maybe it can be said that it is a delayed duty of loyalty.

If I submit that some relationship positions became much more valuable and important than ever in this day and time while the grounds of all the real relationships, all the things that truly matter are suffering from erosion, are battered and disappearing; do I exaggerate?

No, no I do not think that I exaggerate at all. That's why I believe the necessity of exigent declaration of this respect and duty of loyalty to every historical, reformist identities who have this kind of real value; and first I do what is necessary: Good thing you exist and fortunately you are still standing in this collapse period!

Nowadays everything is living so fast and like junk food, so I think we can't even notice the goodness of the real one between this greed monster/chaos which can be seen everywhere. I wonder if I should call it as not "living" but "exhausting ex parte"?

Isn't it something worthy of commendation not to collapse between this much chaos without becoming dirty, while remaining honored and honest; and to succeed all the ideas and visions against all obstacles? Isn't it necessary for us to realize the one which is valuable truly, to become aware of this kind of cultural bouncing, to fly right about what is being deserved and to show the refinement which is important? But unfortunately , apart from this being spared with jealousy, all the other humanistic longings are being wasted under so much dust of this actual disorder.

Süleyman Saim Tekcan a significant artist who has an individual place in our art history, as well as he is a significant art educator whose personality, methods and substances should scrutinize; besides he is my master. But as a matter of course he is also master of a lot of people, artists and art educators in art space. I don't know the others, but today he is also my close friend whom I consult when I am against a wall and most importantly he is my dear fellow that I can deeply feel his friendship. He is a modern person and a competent art/culture man whom I can trust with peace of mind in this age/atmosphere without appreciation.

Perhaps, it can be thought that it is not necessary to mention such a personal sense in such an article about art. Actually, I disagree with this overrated intellectual coldness, this apprehension of unwholesome non-life exclusiveness. I think that in this exterminator globalization age, the enlightened, contemporary artist, art and ideas has been snatched away from life, reality, sincerity by degrees; moreover, their insides are being converted to hollow plastics.

We met with Süleyman Saim Tekcan when he came to Istanbul Training Institute Painting Department –where I was having education as a student between the years 1968-1971- as a teacher. He had just come back to Turkey from Germany where he went temporarily. He was young. He was handsome. He was all out excited, decided and ambitious. He had come to Turkey with new ideas, knowledge and experiences from Germany's richer art environment. He was competent in his field, he was conscious, confident, dreamy and full of energy.

As is also understood later, there was a process whic Turkey was moving on to a deep chaos politically. The 1968 rebellion started in France and in a short time it spreaded to whole Europe and then it came to Turkey with ideals relating to such a subject country deprived of freedoms and it afflicted all of the educational establishments with students and teachers. We, as the students, had started to discuss everything about the whole world, our country, our dreams, philosophy, Marxism, art etc... We were

creating great dreams from everything, everywhere, every culture for our country and for humanity. We were trying to spread our fully independent and democratic Turkey demand to whole country, to people. As if our hearts and our minds had double/triple energy. We had wanted to break down the world's order and reestablish it again. We had wanted the whole future with our energy on foot and always ready to march. And it is interesting that we could direct the same passion and energy to literature and art too. We were joining in every exhibition –which were very limited- and we were not hesitating over discussion with the artists of those exhibitions. We were reading every written source, especially the political magazines and books and we were sharing them with our friends. In the meantime we were reading the significant young poets of our age and as we read them, we were gingering up ourselves and becoming rough. Özkan Mert says We Will Build Up Everthing (1969), Süreyya Berfe One Day Its Time Will Come (1969), İsmet Özel Yes Rebellion (1969), Ataol Behramoğlu One Day Absolutely; and they were whiffle their fancies to our wide open hearts, ears.

We were boarding students and our dorms were in the schoolyard. When we went out, we could enter the school after police search. There were always gunshots at nights in Kadikoy, Fikirtepe where we were staying. The buildings we were staying were raked in the small hours by some people we never know who they were. And then the police were raiding our dorms and searching us with a harassingly manner, and the raids were becoming oppression.

Süleyman Saim Tekcan had turned his country in the midst of this political chaos and crisis in 1970s. All educational establishments were in a deep political sensitivity and dispute. And because of that he was trying to give something to us, to these fire cube students with passion. He were walking with a wind of change in workshops, school corridors, the yard of the school and he were spreading this wind to every work he did and his enviroment extremely.

He was also a famous movie actor a with lot of fans of that era. But whereas he is very loving and good friend to us. He had an extraordinary modest, humble and hard-working personality. At that time we did not know anything more than the wood and linoleum printing techniques, and we have learned the original printing, lithographic, screen prints, and etching from him . We've done a lot of experimentation and joint efforts. We've issued an anti-fascist magazine with the serigraphy technique he taught us in a very short time that I still care. Also we were not abstaining from entering political discussions with him. He also had never hesitated it. He was always insightful, calm, knowledgeable and graceful. He always tried to face us with a large tolerance and sympathy. He always acted as accountable intellectual, a reformist teacher who has not avoided to take social, cultural loads.

On the other hand, he had never confine himself with the lessons; he were always trying us to work up creative collections by bringing master artists to workshops and school's conference hall. I remember that we met with famous movie directors Metin Erksan and Halit Refiğ by virtue of him.

His this manner of pushful and creative teaching, friendship and fellowship has never changed in following years. Conversely, it proceeded with improving despite our formal teacher-student relationship has ended. Süleyman Saim Tekcan has a significant place nationwide between the teacher identities who really tries to continue his relationship with all the students in a certain extent . He is a passionate dreamer as well as he is a mature, decided and organized work builder; as well as he is a museum curator, histiry founder and he is a well disciplined and hardworking art worker. He is such a dreamer, work builder and worker that he is also a real creator of art and culture.

Initial word:

In such countries like Turkey, in every period, the reformist identity, the entellektual who has not break his connection with life and praxis, scientist and artist had always shoulder a lot of responsibilities. This historical, social and humanistic mission is unfortunately still going on. Besides, it is now not a nationwide but a worldwide obligation. Because the world's two out of three is left with no choice but fighting, resisting for their national existence which so-called seem to assets cover by the United Nations. They are struggle for their own nation identities, honour, languages, words, forms. Certainly this kind of struggle is much more vital and urgent for the countries like us. Because the turkish society is tracking its real, creative character, its dreams over two hundred years. And there are artists and entellektuals in the

center of this, such as all the creative and transformative theories and praxises. They try to establish the national/social spiritual/cultural identity on one hand, and they try to create their own personal, original ways on the other hand. And for this, they have to create new words, styles, forms. And Süleyman Saim Tekcan is one of the leading rare artist identities who occupies himself with this attitude.

So, in this context, how should we appreciate what he wants to do with the culture, his art thought and his art if we look him as an artist?

First of all, I have to refer to a quotation for this.

French play script writer, actor, director and poet Antonin Artaud's one-page movie script outline "Two Nations on the Borders of Mongolia" has a paragraph which is very striking to me:

“(..) For a diplomat, how an area of discussion! / Race of children nations /

And the words that we have. / These Mongols / These Tatars / These Afghans

Do you believe that they are fighting for mines, for cities?

It would be a mistaken/ It is the words, they are fighting for... “

Artaud, was among the founders of the school of surrealism with Andre Breton and Louis Aragon. I wonder why he points that crucial determining about a war in the border of Mongolia where is so far away from France where he lives. We are here face to face with a typical humanistic, social, universal point of view of a European intellectual to the conflict that erupted in Asia after the First World War. These poetic expressions which are ready to be perceived as a thought form in this image can be seen as a responsible attitude to his age and humanity. This is an attitude which is both diplomatic, both philosophical as well as remarkable in the context of art, avant-garde and revolutionary. Because this manner of Artaud is a brave determination, humanistic objection in earlier 20th century when capitalism leaves its Enlightenment identity and transforms itself to an exterminator imperialism and when the resistances and freedom struggles against it comes to a certain degree. Here, lets recall the essay of the poet entitled "Van Gogh: The Man Suicided by Society". As we know, in this essay Artaud puts forward that Vincent Van Gogh suicided by the capitalist society by the attack against his personal, spiritual identity or antithetical artistic personality. Of course this is not a legal argument but just a philosophical, critical determination and suggestion.

On the other hand, this battle/war has come out because of "the problem of the new format bottomed on more style than form and its being expressed" as we can see the same in the surrealist art comprehension; namely it has come out because of a word/language/form/style with a deep meaning/content which is belong to a nation. Actually, the thing that makes the nation a nation is nothing but a word, form, style and language battle that creates the culture which is its necessary character, and beyond this enables the nation's recurrence by transforming forever. So, in a way, the nations which are not in a process of language production, expression movement/transformation begin to fall off first, and then fade away. Just like the artist's -who lives the same stoppage- being choked up and fading away or dying by freezing...

If we handle this subject in this context we can say that the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in early 20th century is actually the collapse of the words, contents, styles and forms which were not able to be a remedy to the new age and conditions. So it is, willingly or unwillingly, an essential and irrepresible historical end. And the Republic can be defined as creating the new words, styles and forms that can be replies to this collapse because of the submission of independence and modernization. And the contemporary art in our days is actually nothing takes shape context free –conscious or unconscious-.

But especially with 1990s, contemporary art in whole world, including Turkey, was subjected to delaceration. The movement of modernization, which has started with French Revolution in world (industrial revolution/modernism) and Republic in Turkey, arrived to a fork in the road -because of the known political and cultural reasons-. From the beginning, some artists in modern/contemporary art, just like the spiritual, ideologic, cultural fields, moved to "actual art". The others choosed to continue to product words, styles, forms for Rebutic that they can not find any state support, with the same

passion and with themselves only, just like the desperate unrequited lovers. But they were alienated and marginalized by the global system even in their own motherland because of their disobedience.

Main word:

It is obvious: With a historical outlook, Süleyman Saim Tekcan becomes prominent as an outstanding and resistance fighter identity between the names marginalized -considering the all opposite perspectives-. He came to his current location with his faithful and persistent efforts, with the support of the community –not the state- despite everything and he settled in a steady manner, just like the all other similar resistance fighters. This is certainly an important criterion, and the source of life, for a real artist and it is a historical piers should be underlined.

Ideologically speaking, all this happened is a tragic fact of destruction. Because there is a deep chasm between the word, ideology, style and form produced in the art field today and appearing user object. How will this come to a disastrous result is the most basic and crucial question today and the answer will appear much more closely in the coming years.

I think that the identity of Süleyman Saim Tekcan needs to be re-defined completely via this plane/ meaning and in this context it needs to be placed a new intellectual ground. Beside his intellectual, builder/revolutionary educator personality, his being a museum founder and newfangledness; his artist attitude has also important data. IT can be seen easily if it is examined the main coordinates of the war he fights for the words, shapes and forms a bit more quitable and carefully.

No matter what nation, we always face similar formations, especially at the lower layers of the cultural process of nation-building . Artists or similar culture builders apply to spiritual and visual excavations belong to the cultural layers of the geography primarily. They proceed to re-locate and re-state what they find in the eyes of a new era. This effort, results in re-defination of discovered and then the conversion of the establishment of a new form/word.

From this context the geography of Anatolia has a rich historical heritage. In fact this historical heritage named as Anatolian Civilization is the history of different cultures' forms and words accumulated. Of course, all this accumulation offers the similar rich and usable resources to the art creators in all kind of art, including contemporary art. But for a real artist, the situation is much more exciting and historical. Because this accumulation is encoded both in front of the artist and in his/her inner depths and this reflects to him/her as a much more rich, creative, provocative sensory possibilities. The artist realizes that these culture forms are also the products of his/her own individual spiritual history while he/she walks through this rich multi-layered culture forms. And because of this reason, he/she feels the contribution of humanitarian connection/complementation by completing his/her own soul inevitably.

Tekcan is one of the very few artists who realized these resources in time and sufficiently; created a distinctive, modern alphabet sprouting from what he realized. He is a road worker follows up the tracks of the previous generation like Nurullah Berk, Turgut Zaimoğlu and his countryman Bedri Rahmi Eyünoğlu. From this aspect, we can say that he is also a follower of intellectual/visual memories of the first Republican painters' who participated in "Homeland Pictures" project. But the main point to emphasize here is Tekcan's standing on the cultural forms in the base/main layers under the view more than the vital/visual reality of this subject geography and then , his testing to establish a chain of new and contemporary forms.

Just like the artists in Homeland Project in the first years of Republic, his local topical figurative works (Anatolian women/people figures) which he practiced based from the authentic culture of his bourne Trabzon/Black Sea carry him necessarily the original whole, Anatolian civilizations series. He names of the works in this period as Turkish diversification, Civilization mixture, Reference to Hittites and this is the sign of where he is going to as an enlightened/intellectual/master worker artist. And the very narrow minded critiques telling that it is a manner of nationalism, conservatism, closeness are going to the floor from the start by his deep, reformist, realistic point fo view to Europe and world art. His series he worked in the 1980s, entitled Respect to Rembrandt are the exact utilization from the West just as it

should be. The artist reflects the light-shadow which belongs to western painting with the color of sepia that is essentially the traditional color of the paint which is used for gravure technique, by abstracting and transforming it, to his paintings/unique presses as a new linguistic reality. We can only talk about the direct transfusion of technique, material and knowledge from western art tradition and even adding new, unique values to source of this transfusion of humanity accumulation; but we can not talk about copying language/form/culture which can be seen in such countries like Turkey frequently.

Isn't this what it really should be already?

I want to underline another important fact here now, based on this context. As it is known, the idea of benefiting the arts or any kind of cultural tradition, the idea of re-production both in Turkey and other countries with similar culture, intellectual circles, always has been the subject of fierce debate. When it is mentioned often, this is often a conservative thinker of the art tradition of arguments only on its own nation, culture and geography seem to limit the pro. Necessarily the same attitude exists that culture is also the founder of the artists. But if there is a real creativity, artistic discovery is to be it isn't enough to mention only of a tradition of the discovery of the identity of the nation performs; but the discipline of a special nation with a tradition of art beyond the art historical, linguistic legacy of tradition in a professional should be mentioned too. This buildup is of course including the identities of nation but maybe we can read them without them and we should perceived much more comprehensive field of traditional knowledge. The accumulation of the large and rich tradition which we called as Western art, is just such a broad and common humanistic accumulation. The real artist never hesitate to use the historical traditional but he/she never gives up his/her own culture, geography, age he/she lives. In fact, it is not necessary to give up.

Süleyman Saim Tekcan is a right minded and real artist who knows to use these two traditions (nation tradition and art tradition) by making them interlocking each other with a contemporary skill. For these reasons, on the one hand he forms his own territory and on the other hand he references the expressions of the tradition of Western art history without hanging up. Therefore, his deep looking at his country's nature, lands, culture and life, again in 1980s, should be evaluated in this context. This period works presented with the main title Inventions from nature, are the expression of his concentration of the deep and original abstraction sense/quest.

Speaking of the abstract let's ask a question by opening a parenthesis here: Are those expressions of the artists which are not passed over in a sense and defined the as formal phenomenon, really "abstract"?

The series of influential monumental studies Tekcan began in the 1990s entitled Horses, Horsemen, Lines (canvas, prints, relief, bronze sculpture, etc.) should be appreciated in the same contexts. Mainly in the Ottoman culture (tughras, miniatures, etc.). founded on the basis of references to contemporary forms of cultural heritage is composed of the same geography.

At the same globalist winds blowing in the face of the Turkish art of many artists on changing attitudes contrary to the destructive effects of the wind; Tekcan does not break off the Anatolian cultures with succumbing to the global non-art, language, religion, bigotry and we see that he develops the manufacturer relations with more faith and stubbornly.

Tekcan's last period works idols series consists the results of his working experience and deepening in this line. These studies are mainly composed of large-sized canvases and Hittite (Eti) in origin, there are references to the traditional idols, as well as the heir of the same culture; these are senses of the new form of the contemporary artist. This three-dimensional forms on the surface of the canvas again, on the one hand the traditional basket weave through aesthetics as established by a new synthesis. Unobtrusively into a lot of the artist's previous work, these studies form the attitude of more concern is focused on dealing with the surface. This attitude of influence comes from the artist's traditional, historical forms.

It is known that the idols of Anatolian civilizations, especially Hittites between the semi-divine, and outstanding examples of cultural heritage remains. Formally, the size of a hand, even exceeding the size of this semi-Shamanist idols as a great divine semantic/iconic represent a force. Enough already

with the mystical and the abstract forms of the divine contents abstracted icons were deformed. On the one hand carrying the idol of the people believed to protect from evil spirits on the other hand, unifying spiritual ceremonies of a function of social sin.

Let's highlight that both the individual, and society, have a similar effect on the art and let's think about the forms of contemporary art drive the evils away and re-formatting-to-date by refreshing the human spirit. From this context of contemporary artists in a sense a personal, social idols builder could argue that it is all right. So in the end the artist is a creator of idols. If it is a task of today's artists past civilizations, the age of cultural images, the positions where the new intellectual/artistic/cultural civilization contents/forms by creating an additional task of intervening in the era of humanitarian, artistic, ideological; isn't it to suggest solutions? Tekcan attempt to propose new solutions to these interventions so he is a charismatic performer in his own exclusive way. All the historical idols of contemporary idols are such as the semi-abstract and symbolic like Tekcan's. These are the images of this era. Events in the sensory, intellectual, cultural forms.

In my estimation, this real, long, reformist, fighter and stubborn way will continue to create a glitter halo around the name of Süleyman Saim Tekcan with much more permanent values.

Last word:

Let's go back to the Artaud's striking text again:

"The power of the meaning / The altitude of the quality

You play a game. There are ten meanings hiding in every sentence, every words, even in any intonation. Add similar intonations to these, take accounts of every possibilities, you will see what the result will be."

For explaining what can I trying to tell about Tekcan, we can do something like this:

Let's replace the words sentence, word and intonation in the text of Artaud with style, form, line, plane, texture etc. and read the text again: "You build a painterly, visual world. There are tens of thousands meanings hiding in every style and form, every line, plane and texture. Add similar deeds before them and possibly after them, to these, take accounts of every meaning possibilities, you will guess what the result will be in the future."

Apart from other aspects, it is much more easy to understand what Süleyman Saim Tekcan is doing actually if we think in this text's context. In other words, just like the Artaud's description and like the all real artists, Tekcan is fighting cutthroat for for the possible new world , the real and original true art/culture based on the contents/styles/forms/images/, artistic values as an artist and in fact as an printing master, teacher or museum founder too. Any motion in his artistic arena can not handled haphazardly, by breaking off his artistic self war from his well disciplined disobedience despite what it associates in appearance.

As we know the real artist identity sets up his/her own original art language, form and words while he/she is becoming different with transformation of his/her internal sensations and special interest to working knowledge of etiquette, and the insistence. I don't know if is there another way to do this. But the nations, societies and cultures in the same independent way to keep track of why, what grounds conservatism/closeness into the treated as exceedingly is matter that is so difficult to understand. Isn't it the best way of really passionate, creative and tenacious pursuit of identities to go to their rebellious and fiery passion? Tekcan is suc an identity against all appear misleading of the orders at work .

But there is specialty of Tekcan that have to be underlined, this makes him much more valuable and privileged between the other Turkish artists. Because he is is completely aware of what he is doing and this makes his artistic charisma historical. Because of this exclusive right in the works of antithetical/stubborn character that we commonly hear in the field of art as essential, and only learned never used in a general form of styles/forms/words war, he walks over a war remarked by Artaud. Many artists in Turkey are not fighting enough for the nations, and their own unique forms/styles because they are not living for them unfortunately. This is a read-market semi-intellectual, lazy, confused, given the fact

that attitudes and values to correspond to what will be seen more clearly. Because of the artists not fighting for forms/styles/words, these concepts necessarily inherent to the subjective universal, national, contemporary humanity, that is subjective in a sense, a sense of divinity. So for that, unfortunately, as if there is a musical instrument in their hands and they can not play it right, they only waved them right and left haphazardly.

There is a back side of each humanistic deed (art, ethics, culture, ideology, etc.) that puts itself to the deeper and in fact raising itself while doing it. Which interferes with the expression of each artist's life during the actual operation of the rear face encounters that inevitably the work of art to appear at this point, begins to find identity. Creativity is essentially what is called in, but during the match actually takes place or wildered artist encountered hence do not notice it because her own historically fail.

Let's remember: Ancient/classical era philosopher Platon had determined that the poets and artists in that period were interesting in only the appearance of the reality, not the reality itself. After that, he had mentioned the real artists and told that they are the ones who give life to a new reality. So, in a way, real artists are the ones who increase the consciousness of the era they are living in and widen the degree. In another description, contemporary creativity (including Ancient history), formed in that period of human consciousness and sensibility of man to feel his presence felt with a new form, a configuration consisting of no more than a transformation expression. But here's the real creativity and the creativity of the difference between a superficial aestheticism carefully drawn on the surface it should be called. Because here is mainly based on the creativity from the very beginning that something new entity to gain the undisputed acceptance of the process.

Let's think like Platon and tell: "First you will start with this world's beauties! At the time, you will raise to the supreme beauty step by step! From a beautiful body to another, from the second to all beautiful bodies... Then from the beautiful bodies to beautiful works, from beautiful works to beautiful information, then from beautiful information to a certain knowledge! And this knowledge is nothing but getting to know the true essence of beauty."

So you will look a reality before the world, then will you look after a chain to the other realities. Then their inner depths, forms, essences, meanings, contexts, between the visible/invisible, and their relations will take in head and you will become tired, you gonna work. Then you will build up a new sense of reality/knowledge form. This is none other than the real sense of contemporary art.

Of course the art work is based on a similar comings and goings with intentions and a chain of interferences. That is a work of art and the work is relatively limited in the process of formation, as well as the artist's primary dealer set up on top of a much larger forms of identity over time genres/forms/styles and so on put is generated. Every true artist does not want similar ways, but no differences in the formation, and the depths of realities results reveal a different and original. I already thought, originality, authenticity in art, but by everyone in a kind of screeching dialed in so easily, but impregnable to the main value of this.

Including making art only, artist builds up new forms/styles despite what he/she is intending. So-consciously or unconsciously- to create a new language or a language which is composed of attempts to insert a new ring. During this study, like the artist's intuition or thinking of wearing it on his head every technical matter, a mysterious game of each set of materials to work with. This game is basically a time-ever-after just a manifestation of the artist's own system, changes to the original. Moreover, this formation is no longer after that point, the rest of the other elements of art to express this moment and makes them part of the game. Already the artist's themes, images, materials, techniques and so on are according to the original re-factor of the situation begins to take shape tools.

Süleyman Saim Tekcan's personal art history as an artist is in fact the history of this formatting also and it is original... So, in a way, Tekcan is a conscious and determined artist, a rare intellectual and a successful teacher and art institution founder who is capable of realizing what he is facing in art's back, mysterious kitchen/workshop.

In our days, if only the art struggle that walks through only money, place and -even for a moment-celebratedness or certain power, could concentrate on words, styles, forms, ideas, contents, meanings, images and the necessities of these. It is just a wish of course but here, I'll underline the fact that Süleyman Saim Tekcan is one of the rare artists who have succeeded this. Already now, note that he is struggling for senses, ideas, contents, styles, forms, corporations for 50 years to the real art history.