

GARY SMITH

~~55~~  
56

THE LINE OF REASONING BEHIND THE ATTACK ON THE PRACTICES OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART CAN BE APPLIED TO A MORE FAR REACHING AND LOGICAL TARGET: THE ART SCHOOLS. SINCE ARTISTS AND CURATORS (ART HISTORIANS) ARE USUALLY EDUCATED IN THE SAME SCHOOLS; AND THE ART ESTABLISHMENT BEING WHAT IT IS POLITICALLY; WE <sup>Generally</sup> ALWAYS HAVE THE SITUATION OF AN OLDER GENERATION OF ART HISTORIANS COMMENTING ON THE ART OF YOUNGER ARTISTS. THIS TELESCOPING SOCIAL PROBLEM OF THE GENERATION GAP IS USED POLITICALLY BY THE ART ESTABLISHMENT TO RETAIN CONTROL OF THE SCENE. AT THE SAME TIME, IT PROVIDES A DUBIOUS SOURCE OF AGGRAVATION THAT ARTISTS CAN REBEL AGAINST. WHEN AN ARTIST HAS REACHED A CERTAIN LEVEL OF REBELLION AND HAS SHOCKED ENOUGH PEOPLE, HE IS ADOPTED INTO THE ESTABLISHMENT WITH MUCH PUBLICITY LAUDING HIS COURAGEOUS AVANT GARDENESS TO BE ASSIMILATED AND FORGOTTEN WITHIN A FEW MONTHS. ONLY THOSE ARTISTS EXTREMELY AWARE OF THE FAST PACED SCENE CHANGES CAN HOPE TO STAY IN THE SPOTLIGHT FOR LONG, AND EVEN THEY EVENTUALLY APPEAR TO BE SELL-OUTS.

I WAS ONCE TOLD BY A PAINTER THAT IF YOU MAKE A GRAB FOR THE SPOTLIGHT YOU HAD BETTER MAKE SURE YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY IN CASE YOU GET IT. THIS IS IN TOTAL ERROR. ~~THATS A LOT OF BUBBLES~~, BECAUSE THE SPOTLIGHT MEANS THAT SOME CRITIC OR CURATOR THINKS YOU'LL BE IN FASHION AND PLUGS YOUR WORK. SUCCESS DEPENDS SOLELY ON HOW LONG YOU CAN CAPTIVATE THAT CRITIC'S TASTE.

JUST AS THE ART SCENE IS RUN BY A COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENT DESIGNED FOR THE WEALTHY NOBLES OF THE WORLD, SO ARE THE ART SCHOOLS UNDER STRONG OUTSIDE CONTROLS.

THE SCHOOLS HAVE DESERTED ART IN MASSE AND HAVE BEGUN TO DEVOTE MOST OF THEIR EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH DOMINATE COMMERCIAL <sup>ART</sup> AND DESIGN IMAGES FOR THEMSELVES. THIS IS KEEPING IN LINE WITH FEDERAL AID PROGRAMS TO SCHOOLS OFFERING TRADE SKILLS THAT CAN PROVIDE JOBS FOR STUDENTS. MANY SCHOOLS HAVE COME TO DEPEND ON THIS MONEY FOR CONTINUED OPERATION. A FINE ARTIST IN THEIR MIDST IS AN

133

(2)

ENIGMA TO THEM; A SOURCE OF DISRUPTIVE AGITATION, A POTENTIAL TROUBLE MAKER. THEY, IN THEIR LIMITED UNDERSTANDING, CANNOT CONCEIVE WHY ANYONE WOULD WANT TO "SUFFER" WITH THEIR ART WHEN THEY COULD BE LINNING THEIR POCKETS.

WHILE THE ARTIST IS BOUND ON BOTH SIDES BY THIS MORAL CONSTIPATION, HE STILL MUST CREATE HIS ART, AND HE STILL MUST EDUCATE HIMSELF. I OFFER THREE GENERAL STEPS TO TAKE TO BEGIN THE TRANSITION INTO THE FUTURE OF ART:

(I)

ARTISTS MUST WITHDRAW TOTALLY FROM GALLERY AND MUSEUM AFFILIATIONS AND BEGIN TO SET UP SECONDARY METHODS OF DEALING WITH ~~THEIR~~ ART.

(II)

BEGIN TO BREAK DOWN THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION PRACTICED IN THE SCHOOLS AND CONSTRUCT NEW PLACES OF EDUCATION FOR ARTISTS. IT SHOULD BE A PLACE WHERE ALL ARTISTS ARE TEACHERS AND ALL TEACHERS ARE STUDENTS, A PLACE OF EXCHANGE, NOT GIVE AND TAKE, OF DOING NOT TELLING. IT SHOULD BE A PLACE OF COMMUNICATION NOT A SCHOOL.

(III)

ATTEMPT TO REDISTRIBUTE THE CULTURE AND GET IT OUT OF THE POPULATION CENTERS SO THAT EACH ARTIST IS FREE TO BE HIS OWN CENTER OF CULTURE AND HIS OWN SOURCE OF VALUES.

IN CONCLUSION: AMERICAN ART IS STILL VERY MUCH A REGIONAL THING--- SO MUCH SO, THAT ARTISTS HAVE TO RELEARN AND REDIRECT THEIR ART WHEN THEY CHANGE CULTURE OR POPULATION CENTERS. IT IS OUR GREAT FAILURE THAT WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO GIVE EVERY MAN A KNOWLEDGE OF HIS CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THIS CENTURY OF MASS COMMUNICATION. IT IS TIME NOW TO BEGIN USING THE ESTABLISHMENT AND THE MEDIA FOR OUR PURPOSE AND TO STOP THEIR USING OF US FOR GAIN. ~~1968 STOP~~  
~~PLANNING THEIR GAMES AND GET SERIOUS FOR A CHANGE, SOMEBODY HAS TO DO THIS.~~

134

~~SMITH~~