

Eyewitness

It has occurred to me, as your last living critic, that to further develop your art, and to add my two cents of constructive criticism to your on-going painterly catharsis, that we must have a discussion regarding The statement, the innate communication and universal symbolic meaning conveyed by the subtle movement of the muscles surrounding the tissue of the human eye, and what the movement of such muscles signify to your viewer. Rage, pain, desire, jealousy, fear, contempt, hatred, deceit, devotion, surprise, envy, eroticism, contemplation, lust and sorrow, move the same muscles everywhere, in every human face on this planet. A simple smile needs no explanation, neither does the grimace of agony. The eye sees not itself except by reflection, and so it is with the artist, seeking to communicate with himself and thus with the viewer by painting what affects him, what disturbs him, to disturb others, keeping him from committing murder and unspeakable crimes against humanity, the act of art which frees him to continue to suffer and to express in paint, the next searing pain. A finished canvas is to be cast off like a dry cocoon, a worn out sheath of skin, wriggled out of and shed, torn off the back of a snake whose coiled shadow is memory. The body re-emerges intact, alive again and cognizant, transformed into a new creature. The canvas, that skin of expressed memory in paint, remains forever. To ratchet your art up another notch and risk the displeasure I may incur by suggesting such a blasphemous thing, I must say that your eyeballs, the ones that you paint, are poached eggs. The delicacy found in your hands, the fingernails, the taught muscles in the arms, the skin, flailed and peeled back like a screaming orange, exposed to the heart, fish-hooked and slashed with razor blades or smooth and erotic, just doesn't fit with those eyes. Those simple bulging eyes, round with surprise and sunny side up, scooped off the plate of an arkansas breakfast, belong in another painting, somebody else's painting of maybe Scrooge McDuck or Fred Flintstone. Why do you hesitate to look your subject in the eye? Quit being so fucking lazy and study the eyes of your subjects. Enclosed is a painting of a two-thousand-year-old mural from some cave in India. The three women are all expressing something different with their eyes and thus the difference tells the viewer a story. The girl in the lower left shows shocked surprise, while the girl in the upper left pines away in muteresignation for what she knows is already lost and beyond hope. The eyes of the girl on the right show a wise council and understanding, or perhaps deceit. Do you think that you can do the same with a pair of poached eggs? You who can draw a gaping bloody wound oozing with plump maggots and sickly yellow mucus, the diseased mouth of Cleopatra sucking the herpes pustules from the skin remaining on the bitter skull of alexander, should be better able to pluck out the eye which offendeth thee, or at least to pluck out that eye which offendeth me. There is always the chance that maybe i am totally and absolutely wrong, and that Jeffery dahmer actually eyes identical to those of daisy duck. He would have of course, if you had painted him.

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