

Why Painting.

My father, who is also an artist, used to say to me that however long one may live, an artist can never exhaust all the possibilities inherent in painting. It is a lifetime's work. My teacher used to say that being an artist is the best thing one can choose to be in this life. It was these two men, whom I trust and admire and whose opinions I greatly respect, who influenced my decision to become a painter.

I do not believe that painting is an old fashioned medium. It is not running dry in our high tech, high speed age and it is certainly not dead. Saying that is tantamount to saying that the human race is dead. I see a striking similarity between the colourful variety of possibilities offered by painting, which I consider to be a true reflection of life created by man. Painting is an eloquent, complex and beautiful creation of the human race. Through painting we come frighteningly close to the essence of creativity. Being a painter, therefore, not only offers great excitement, but also great responsibility.

The process of making a painting is in itself a voyage of discovery. It demands full commitment and there is no forgiveness for mistakes, lies or lack of dedication. Like a barometer, painting reflects the shock waves of one's emotional life, with all its anxieties, beauty, ugliness, joy, melancholy and sadness. I want my paintings to achieve the intensity of emotion and the clarity of expression that is the mark of a great poem. As the words serve to mediate between the poet and the reader who responds in a highly personal way, so I aim to transform the medium of paint into a new reality which the viewer can enter, become personally involved with and respond to, with love or hate, and leave having been affected in the same way that I am as the painter. In this way I believe that the artist and the viewer are able to communicate and in some ways become one and the same.

I use intense colours and varied organic shapes to achieve an optical sense of depth while also responding to the flatness of the canvas. The canvas holds together highly complex combinations of lines and shapes, clusters of light and darkness, form and no-form, stillness and motion, sound and silence, all put together in the clearest and strongest possible way. It is a harmony emerged from contradiction, calm coming from anxiety, simplicity created by complexity.

My paintings are not narrative, not are they specific in their cultural references, as I do not want to narrow the imaginative possibilities of the work that I am making. I respond to many influences, visual – musical and literal – reference material from which I am able to create my paintings, but these do not obscure my main aim which is to create a truly free, unrestricted composition. I want the paintings to shine through the mass of all of these influences, through the history of layers of paint on the canvas, through the sequence of created and obliterated images and forms, through the months of doubt and searching for a solution. In the end, I want all these things to be present in the painting, to make it in one way ‘heavy’ or ‘intense’ but at the same time to achieve the sensation of lightness and unrestricted energy within the painting.

I want my paintings to embody the conflicts and connections between the natural elements – water, fire, air and earth. The paint itself becomes an organic element, flows like running water, becomes light and transparent like air, fierce like fire or dense like earth. I want the gesture of my paintbrush to be charged with highly condensed energy that is coming from the emotional and visual power of the personal experience of nature, creating the sensation of unity with nature and, at the same time, the sense of being the small and detached element within it.

I paint because I find it is the only way to make sense of the world around me. And I love doing it too. I have painted for almost 20 years now, five of which were spent studying figurative drawing and painting. In the last five years I feel that my painting has become grounded and so I have achieved another stepping stone in the long process of learning.

Passion, Grace and Fire is the culmination of many years of hard work, but is also the beginning of everything I hope to achieve in my painting in the future. I know there is an eternity in front of me and, for me, that is a very exciting prospect.

Varvara Shavrova
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