

Lucio Pozzi
8 APHORISMS

1. THE BIG BANG

I want to re-visualize visual art. I wish for words to remain parallel to- but disengaged from the visual event. Recently the visual has become dependent on the verbal. A work of visual art today seems to need explanations to exist.

I have been wondering why this has come to be. The reason, I feel, is nostalgia for consensus about the purpose of art, a consensus that no longer is possible. Art was obvious in the societies of old. It was necessary. It was fulfilling tasks that were agreed upon by everyone.

When Modernity, with the advent of the Renaissance, exploded the hierarchies that supported art in the past, what was assumed to be certain became uncertain.

2. SURROGATES

In response to the Big Bang, art people desperately scrambled to search for referential structures that could replace the lost foundations of the past. Art history became a cacophony of concurrent contradictory proposals.

Surrogate standards were proposed from left and right. Each was submitted as the single exclusive foundation for a new consensus in the arts. These surrogate standards came under the guise of verbal explanations, manifestos, captions, taking the place of that which before had been obvious.

The mistake was to assume that consensus is still a necessary condition for artistic discourse.

3. THE NEW

The strongest surrogate standard of recent times was the concept of progress in the arts. Like an addictive poison it is the surrogate standard that many of us still rally to, again and again. We hang on to it as if it were a last raft before we drown and instead it makes us sink deeper and deeper into a bureaucratic quagmire. Bereft of arguments to validate our preferences many of us qualify or disqualify a work of art by determining whether it is new or not.

Concern for newness blinds us to the inherent characteristics of the single artwork. Several of the formulaic tenets that hamper an open creativity in the field of art derive from the prison of the new.

Concern for newness causes us to shift attention from our feelings to matters that belong in the field of packaging more than in the field of visual substance. The package becomes more important than what it contains. An artist is encouraged to think her or his art in terms of how it shall be promoted rather than of how emotions and intellect weave into its substance.

Concern for novelty reduces the time frame an artist works within to that of a short-lived commentary, consumed and tossed away in a hurry. It prevents a long view capable of engaging the deeper potentialities of existence, the mystery of life and death, the surprise and panic of discovery.

4. VALUE

I understood early that I wished to avoid reliance on surrogate gauges for art but I also found no reliable standards shared by the community at large. I found only infinite options.

It became clear to me that after the Big Bang it is impossible to assume that we may rely on any shared criteria of validation and evaluation in the arts. Value has become as uncertain as art itself.

5. CREATIVE MISUNDERSTANDING

If there is no common purpose and no judgement is possible, there is no community of intent and no communication in the arts.

Then what is there? In the arts that are not applied to utilitarian purposes, instead of communication there is flexible and revisable exchange, instead of judgement there is opinion, instead of conclusion there is open dialogue.

Author and viewer are linked not by agreement but by creative misunderstanding. Neither party submits to the dictates of the other.

6. MY RESPONSE

I understood that I must develop my own independent referential structure – one that absorbs the history before me, one that engages in dialogue with the present but also one that does not take for granted any of the assumptions that could choke me.

7. SITUATION SPECIFICITY

I found that I could rely on nothing else but the specific conditions, every time different, of the single events I create. The materials, the processes, the concepts I work with are not to be put at the service of goals that are outside their substance. Rather, they are the quarry from which I draw the ingredients I make things with. My main quarry is the language of painting.

No general rules apply. Everything I put together, I call it a situation, even a painting on canvas. This approach allows me to follow the silver thread of my imagination without prejudice.

Multiple symbolic connotations inevitably fall into every situation without my having to pre-select them intentionally.

8. SPECIALIZATION

I cast a critical look upon Novelty, Originality, Consistency, Style. I consider these to have become, in many instances, in many people's minds, mere packaging devices for short-term marketing – yet another surrogate standard.

I know that I, like anyone else, anyhow cannot avoid marking my endeavors with the imprint of my mental and physical calligraphy and that of my time and place. As people who follow my work have confirmed, my art possesses a precise and recognizable "style", but my style neither depends on a formula nor on a brand strategy. I have tried, for my art, to delay the inevitable product recognition, even name recognition, which will eventually be brought about by its dissemination.

As much as possible, I want the single pieces of my art to speak for themselves. I loathe the cult of personality in art. I feel that when artists are praised for having "found their own", that's an insult to their probing mind.

For as long as possible, I would like a person entering a room to say: "How interesting that piece is, who made it?" rather than: "That is a typical work by Lucio Pozzi".