

STANISLAUS RAPOTEC

Born in Trieste, 1913, died in Sydney in 1997

Employment –

Education: studied economics at the University of Zagreb (1933-1939). Career began at the Bank of Yugoslavia. An interest in Byzantine Masters and architectural forms led to studies in art history.

After migrating to Adelaide, South Australia in 1948, he committed to a career as an artist

Training- no formal training in painting but began painting in the Middle East, in the war years, where the landscape inspired him.(p. 131)

Prizes

Archibald Prize, 1960, for 'Mea Culpa'

Blake Prize for Religious Art, 1961, for ' 'Meditating on Good Friday'

Why paint?

To express yourself and your experience of life is important. Rap experiences in the war years, intelligence missions, witnessing the effects of war on refugees and border crossings (523, A&Aust)

Sympathy for the ravaged landscape which was witnessed on his travels in the Middle East during the war years, then the similar SA landscape.

Inspiration-

Byzantine Masters, Greek Mythology, architectural styles and the Middle East.

Abstract Expressionism, a form of action painting that expresses a state of mind through form with hardly the intervention of the hand

Artistic Style or Artist that inspired:

-swept up by the verve and excitement and exploratory urge which animated all artists of the time. They were trying to break away from the common style and discovered one that was expressive, abundant and at the same time fulfilling to the artist himself.

Inspiration was drawn from the local artists working and exhibiting at the time, Jacqueline Hicks, Jeffrey Smart, Ivor Francis Horace Trenerry, Geoffrey Dutton Max Harris and was particularly impressed with the work of Hans Heysen.(522 A&A)

Medium-

Paint on solid wooden panels requiring much preparation, application of paint with grand gestures.

Process/ Style-

-J.C. noted of R. work – displays emotional suffering, tension and conflict, with dark shadows being broken through with shining, bright light, showing a stretching toward redemption(J. Cassab 58, A&A)

According to J.C. R ' meditated about a painting for weeks. The act of painting required a great deal of preparation before a sudden, frenetic release and completion in one go.(John Olsen describes R. painting method as a spontaneous Zen moment, even working over paintings.(Judy Cassab, p. 58Art and Australia, 1970)

Laurie Thomas recalls R work as fast and direct and expressive conveying, in the words of T.S. Elliot, 'finding an objective correlative to states of mind and feeling(Art and Australia,1970), but one that has formal structure and makes an objective statement.

Evolution-

-Upon arriving in Australia. around 1955, Rapotec's paintings were very orderly, controlled depicting the arid landscapes which he had a sympathetic attraction to. Reference to physical surroundings was abandoned for pictures executed on a large scale which convey a mood or emotion. Subject matter was widened and palette extended.

Drama and passion are conveyed by personally invented shapes which show the inner experience in an imaginative and symbolic way. Invented symbols were also used to represent the drama of ancient Greek mythological gods

The influence of Abstract Expressionism, in 1958-9, resulted in dark, turbulent but liberating modes of expression, which did not lose the sense of order.

In an interview with Laurie Thomas, Rapotec commented on the development and inspiration of his artwork and the change in his art..... 'Expression in art depends heavily on change. Change happens naturally in everyday life . the process of change is logical and spontaneous. Years of experience, tragedies and joyful events struggle to be heard in artistic form. According to Rapotec. To grow as an artist, a wide range of experiences is needed, then struggling performing, experimenting and then being willing to expose oneself to the full brunt of criticism (p.131 Art and Australia, Sept.1970)

'For a work to materialize, there needs to be a strong desire to express oneself. Then knowledge of technique and artistic principles is needed, the ability to handle forms and order. With age, experiences mellow and soften and the impact shows in the work in brightened and softened artistic works without losing force.(131 A&A Sept 1970)

References-

ART and AUSTRALIA, September, 1970

ART and AUSTRALIA, Quarterly Journal. Volume 35 Number 1, Published in Aust.
Printed in Singapore, Fine Arts Press 1997