

OTTO ROGERS: ARTIST STATEMENT

The works here displayed at the 2018 Toronto Art Fair came about as I approached and passed my eightieth year. In all that time I chanced upon a host of discoveries, each in its way a delight to the human heart.

Where the images came from and what their true meaning is remains unknown; compositions become potent enigmas without the full consciousness of their maker. It may seem like a contradiction that as structural clarity evolves the mystery of meaning deepens. I have realized that when pictorial unity is achieved a spirited 'confirmation' is present. The spiritual nature of that confirmation transcends the material/physical aspect of the work: we can understand perfection of form and expressive beauty of material, but the spirit is not confined to the material; hence, any confirmation simply brings the tantalizing mystery to the fore, giving a taste of that 'placeless place'.

Even such a small brush with this unknown world is enough to intoxicate the artist's soul and urge the continuous pursuit of this elusive goal! Such has been my journey through all these years--simply driven to drink from that cup just once more and in the process inspire others to drink, to be uplifted, to experience in a painting something beyond the prison of self and the acceptance of the ordinary as our lot in life.

The subject raised here is not a simple one. Engaging a set of pictorial elements necessitates balance and emphasis. Finding this balance within essential complexity is elusive; clearly the principle is 'unity through diversity'. In achieving this unity two realities are of prime importance; one of a material nature and one that transcends the concrete. The first is relationships within the scheme and the second is the sense of space created by those relationships. Creating a composition where everything is superseded by the spacial experience constitutes 'high art'. The spiritual content of artistic language in any culture is experienced in the spacial mystery binding together a multitude of affect. The same holds true for the high relief sculptures on view. I was inspired to bring to the sculpture the spacial relationships found in the paintings and combine this illusionistic space with actual space.

In the painting titled 'Rising Dawn Light' the form on the left and the one on the right set up a relationship, a conversation in time and space, one that depends on the invisible content of the space between. Eastern philosophy suggests that the space between things is the breath of God. Further, sacred literature informs us that if the love of God were to be suspended the whole physical universe would collapse. The comment above is itself a material composition but I hope you will grasp the hidden meaning in the space between words and sentences.

-Otto Rogers, 2018.