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TANER CEYLAN: ART IS ATTEMPTED TO BEING UPROOTED FROM ALL THE ASPECTS OF LIFE.

Ilker Cihan Biner



The painter Frenhofer from Balzac's Unknown Masterpiece tried to create something on his canvas something that would not merely be an artwork for ten years. Frenhofer erased art with art, and strived to create the living reality of his thought and imagination with his painting "Swimmers." He says to his guests, " it is not a painting that I made, but an emotion, a passion!"

The reason I referred to Balzac's novel is that Taner Ceylan's artworks turned into an emotion just like Frenhofer's. To cut a long story short, we hosted artist Taner Ceylan at our "sapgir" pages this week. We talked about his personal and artistic journey.

In an essay, Georges Bataille writes; “The painter is condemned to please. By no means can he transform a painting into an object of aversion.” Do you feel like someone who is condemned to please?

Oscar Wilde says, “Art is useless.” The adventure he draws after creating the painting is his own. Every time he exhibits, he redefines himself. I hold myself to account for the things I go through in front of the canvas. When I paint, I have a life that flows out of our daily lives. I come into being in the world I build and form, and that’s my choice. That’s why I am recognized as the “super antisocial” in the eyes of others, and I find social life tedious and tiresome. But me, spending my day in front of the canvas, is tedious and tiresome for others. The painting that transpires becomes a life form that emerges as a result of a transaction by making it. Considering that I was discharged from the university because of my painting “Taner Taner,” I surely don’t please everyone.



The day Van Gogh died, a letter was found in his pocket that said; “Well, my work to me, I risk my life on it, and my reason has half foundered.” What connection do you make between your artistic production and your personal life?

As I said above, this is a way of life. In this field, you can live in your own biosphere. Van Gogh could do it with the help and support of his brother Theo, and I can do it because I can sell my paintings. Although, when you detach yourself from your daily life reason can blur gradually; but that’s the nature of it. You can’t create a compelling artwork otherwise. This is a luxury, especially today, and I know that; and I am willing to get lost here...

We are living in an age where the audience or the collector can effuse into the “art,” and restrain it within the high place of aesthetics. You are an artist that’s in high demand and very favored. Does this situation affect your artistic production?

You are very optimistic. Correct, we are in a period that the viewer and the collector can effuse into “art,” but it doesn’t mean that they understand aesthetics and act accordingly; exceptions for every

rule, of course. Late Turkish art was blown up and presented as an investment instrument, and this trade and interest carried out with names rather than content. Aesthetic taste and acclaim is not something that comes easy, or can be learned from a book; it is something that has to be a part of one's life and it's a process that takes years. For instance, to listen to Wagner and admiring it took years of my life, and its added value to my life is one of a kind. We have to utter the words 'high art' at this point, and not confuse it with popular art. We can't equate Francis Bacon or Jenny Saville with Jeff Koons or Damien Hirst, nor can we evaluate them in the same market, just like we can't with Pina Bausch, for example. The interest in me has its ups and downs. Don't forget that I lost my job, got death threats, lived for months with guards assigned to me, and then the next day I was declared the most expensive living painter of the country; and today, I found myself in New York just because I painted what I wanted. A whole lot happens around me and occurs externally. I didn't take part emotionally, and I keep painting in my little studio as I did for years. My only goal is to keep the factors that retain me from my painting process out of my life.

In Turkey, art has mostly not breached the limits of social campaign. For example, the mainstream media headlined you as "Taner Ceylan, the star of Turkish painting who carries away collectors," or "the great success of the Turkish painter." Can we explain art solely by national-cultural factors?

Of course we can't, and it seems like it's not likely to get out of social mobilization. That's because art is perceived as a negative value factor rather than an added value. October 10 is Leyla Gencer's birthday; but look at the local media, and compare it to the international. As we all know, art is attempted to being uprooted from all aspects of life nowadays. The mainstream media does not formalize art; they are in pursuit of big headlines and the large masses. We should take this naturally. You do make the headlines if you are a figure that involves a bunch of flashy titles, like exhibiting in a New York gallery or being the most expensive living artist in the country; but none of their concern is to explain the art itself. For example, the headlines from the Art Newspaper or the Huffington Post are more reliable in that sense. Some media tools present you with certain factoids or polish and gloss your name after overpassing some boundaries; who knows they won't call me "the so-and-so painter of New York," or "the so-and-so painter of American art"?