

Interview – Saffronart

Q. The nostalgia which characterizes your work must have a significance which goes beyond mere sentiment.

I feel that the kind of life that you have lived during your childhood when your mental makeup was being built is something which is crucial, which you tend to carry wherever you go. When I moved to a bigger city I found it important to recollect of that past to be able to cope with the present. The past is what you are and the past is what makes you see the present.

Q. The present must be as potent in the changes that it brings into your life and work. What could replace that concern with the past?

When you are on your own, the protection which one came from is no more there to fall back on. There is a discontinuity, a breaking up of things. So you try to find a certain unity - my work still deals with the same issues, but I try to find a way of understanding that breakdown.

Q. In your present work, the violence is more overt. Would you like to comment on that?

My work never ever dealt with the actual. I always try to find a way around it, to arrive at something which is just barely touched upon. I dealt with aspects which were unsettling, but I have shied away from addressing these issues in a direct manner, there was a hesitation to deal with that trauma. So now perhaps it is possible that my work is changing and I am acquiring the courage to deal with things more directly.

Q. You have earlier mentioned Bonnard, Balthus and Beckmann as important references. Who are the painters who interest you now?

If you look at the work of any of these artists you find that Bonnard is an exception. There is a certain kind of classical order to them, a certain preoccupation with what is considered as an ideal arrangement. But when it comes to Bonnard, he finds a way of breaking that system to arrive at something which is totally different. I am interested in painters like Guston, even if his work doesn't relate directly with mine. He has been able to re-invent the language to incorporate various kinds of disorder.

Q. Could you say something about your work as a teacher?

I have always been interested in looking at and analyzing other artists' work. I suppose that teaching is related to that frame of mind. By teaching you not only give away things, you acquire a lot of things by the interaction with students. I might not be able to spend as much time in the studio as I would like to, but looking back at the last ten years I feel that perhaps I have gained much more than I have lost.