The Lasting World: Simon Dinnerstein and The Fulbright Triptych

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“The little-known masterpiece of 19th-century art was begun by the young house-wife in a cottage in Gainsborough in 1740 and completed in her lifetime. Besides, three years later, the painting became the subject of an essay by E. A. C. C. and was shown at the Royal Academy. The essayist and the painter, in the same period, met in the studio, which was then the only studio that could be found in the history of British art and its people.”

Roberta Smith, Art Critic, The New York Times
"This work, more than any other modern American painting, represents a dramatic homage to individual things. It presents to the viewer a veritable 'language of objects.' The three figures lead our eye into the center, and from there our gaze radiates outward, taking in the vast quantity of elements that comprise the essence of this scene. There is an almost musical quality to this painting; each object becoming the equivalent of a note in a vast symphonic score.

This painting is also a homage to looking, an encyclopedic concretization of scopic intensity. There is a plethora of individual square and rectangular shapes throughout the composition which we initially perceive as a vast series of punctuations of its space. Yet we soon become aware that most of them are postcards or photographic reproductions of works of art (many of them well known). They are famous paintings and sculptures in museums from Munich to the Metropolitan, each of them holding a special place in the aesthetic hierarchy of the artist. We are reminded of a wall of a museum, or, as André Malraux would have described it, a museum without walls."

"Look at The Fullbright Triptych for a minute and the mind begins to fill in the blanks, sketch lines between data points, assemble a story out of pigment and air. Is this about Judaism and Germany? Is this about family and work? Is this about learning to paint and learning to be a father? Ten million brushstrokes of color touch three huge canvases, and we see a woman's eyes, a pair of windows, a baby's cheeks. Two dimensions become three. A table surges into the room, loaded with tools, waiting for you to come and pick one up.

The best paintings are like dreams. They convince you they are real, they fold you into their worlds, and then they hold you there. Only then, when you're anchored in the moment-by-moment detail of an experience, when your eyes have extended across the room, when the copper plate is shimmering in front of your hands, can you let yourself reach out into the space between brain and image, into the great mystery of what it means to be viewer and printmaker, reader and writer, listener and singer. That's where our brains find meaning in the world. That's where art exists."