

Time Comes Back

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In reflecting on how Dinnerstein might have developed the idea for this triptych, I told myself that an absolute prerogative must have been a sense of welcome. *The Fulbright Triptych* is precisely about hospitality and welcoming.

This painting reflects an impelling desire to show every single thing in its own secret world, all that every artist intends to disclose about his own mystery. It is as if, at the peak of a life that has already gone by, one had to listen urgently to one's own voice. It is the tale of hope and anguish the youth carries with him as he prepares to cross the threshold into adulthood.

The resultant intensity, so evident in this work, is transmitted to the viewers, impelling them to mirror themselves ardently in this journey through their own pasts. We look directly, without intermediaries, in an all-consuming search for the absolute; we look in a process of boundless, uncompromising participation at the *Triptych* and with provocative passion back at our lives.

I feel the exact same pleasure every time I look at *The Fulbright Triptych*, because Dinnerstein, rather than flaunting culture, prefers a straightforward presentation of situations, colors, nuances, and linguistic simplicity. Those who are about to enjoy this work should not feel diminished by the magnificence of the painting. This is, perhaps, the only one in the artist's career which brings into play the gift of a love that is not predicated on anything—not language, not religion, nor ethnicity—true love does not give orders, does not ask for submission, but brings to life and restores the mutual experience of being together.

Since the artist's interpretation of that gift always presupposes the viewer's, I like to think of *The Fulbright Triptych* as a painting about desire. Where does man end and artist begin? I cannot say, because in this painting man and artist are one and the same, thanks to the painter's hypnotic style. His grasp of the spiritual and existential dimension, distilled to its precious essence somewhere between irony and pain, poses the eternal question of the meaning of beauty.

The charm of inanimate wisdom, imprinted on Dinnerstein's canvas, is enhanced by his nuanced autumnal palette and expressionistic use of colors to exalt the intimate and everyday: the wife wearing a black blouse and geometrically woven skirt; the recently born daughter portrayed nude; the table with its tools so meticulously ordered (as if to say inspiration came to him gracefully rather than roughly); the landscape outside the window, so naively powerful and tremendously evocative that it inadvertently moves one's interest away from the inside of the house. Ultimately there is Dinnerstein, quietly engrossed in himself, and as his facial expression evinces, already mature in knowledge. It is as if he is saying I am, I am here, and this is my world: share in it.

In this way, the painting brings to mind a preference for a lifestyle that's neither insular nor revolutionary, but rather embracing of the liberation that transforms pain into a forward-looking pictorial language. Simon Dinnerstein himself is bewitched by this quest, as if he were obeying the design of a "Stranger" who knows how to manufacture knowledge and fascination, arousing the pleasure of uninterrupted wonder not only in himself but also in the observer.

In *The Fulbright Triptych* everything has meaning: oddities, propriety, natural softness and harshness, human harmonies and disequilibrium. The image reveals a cosmic complexity that can unify anything, holding together the equilibrium of the enigma for each emotional phenomenon that lives within. The visual lyricism of *The Fulbright Triptych* seems to be the foundation of a world in which the viewer, upon entering, is conditioned to establish a truth or to reveal its essence; namely is forced to question or determine the meaning of our maximum perception of life on earth.

A lyricism of nuances and forms expresses eloquently the ongoing investigation concerning the secrecy of identity, time, and, naturally, of the truth of painting. Perhaps this is why looking at this work of art creates the impression of revealing measurements and reflections that are, yes, human (why not?), decisively celestial, precise details about the soul's journey on earth.

In an original *sacra famiglia* in the Christian tradition (note his wife's pose, the *religiosity* of her naked feet, her firm grasp as she displays her offering for our viewing, all elements that contribute to seal a predetermined destiny), this nativity-like scene

is set in a modern context (observe closely the pictured reproductions—Persian miniatures, family portraits, sketches, children’s drawings, letters, and various writings—that fill the walls, copies that serve as reference for new ideas), *The Fulbright Triptych* intends to extinguish each and every old light of the soul.

We may, at last, cross into a new dawn, a spirituality till now unknown. From the darkness and the hidden wounds of the instinct may at last sprout, not the stray adventure of a life that makes us feel the unreliability of the human condition, but the amazement of surrender before a spectacle of knowledge that, in other places, we would dare call the *ultimate fulfillment of poetry*.

Translated by Silvia Gilliotti & Stacy Mazzone