

Neo-Cubism

The preoccupation with geometric images and planes along with the "Cubism" label caused me to stop short of a more meaningful understanding of Cubism. That is until I began to see Cubism as a way of perceiving reality. What if our brains really do interpret faces and features from different angles and can integrate these images with non-linear memories to create visual perception?

I decided to research what was being said about Cubism when Picasso and Braque were first exploring fragmenting perspective. The seminal Cubists were talking to friends and critics about what they called "essential reality" and the "4th dimension". (See Apollinaire, Gelizes and Metzinger, Kahnweiler and Carl Einstein) They spoke of a new essential reality that fused successive appearances in to a single image reconstituted in time - an image that we comprehend from a polyfocal perspective.

The 4th dimension is time and "reconstituted in time", for me, means the merging and assembly of old and new mental and visual images which we then understand as perception.

Essential reality was described as an unarguable physical presence. Something in the painting causes you to experience it in way that is more than simply observing an image of a physical subject. If traditional perspective was illusion, how could they describe a world beyond mere illusion? Today neuroscientists are studying and substantiating this notion that the cubists intuitively understood.

Picasso, Braque and their contemporaries and then later Bacon and Hockney and others were all utilizing time. How does that work? Well if I meet you on the street, I continually store memories of you and I continually reference these along with prior memories during the course of our encounter. I don't see a snapshot of you - I perceive a wave of non-linear images and memories.

Recently the neuro-scientific notion of duplex vision, that is separate visual pathways for perception and action from the eyes to the brain, got me wondering if these pathways could ever be out of sync. How would this affect our perception? Just the idea that any of this could be possible motivates me to artistically explore the concept. So now I frequently create differing facial planes and features that are just slightly out of alignment. I try to paint what it might be like if my duplex vision was out of sync or if

half remembered memories, after images and prior experiences affected my perception. Maybe an unstable face that at any moment can never exist – where time and history are compressed, best portrays reality - what the cubists called essential reality.

I am exploring this reality using cubist tools with a more naturalistic style. For instance, I like to mix profile and frontal views and slightly alter the facial patterns relative to the line work. Can I cause your perception to shift or oscillate so that you interpret the art in a new or different way each time you experience it? This might involve changes in visual perception or emotional response such as a shift from realistic to abstract, fear to sadness, highlight to mid-tone, color shifts from bronze to green or movement caused by composition, line, value or color.

My objective is to elicit a reality that is more than a simple image and to provoke you into creating and then re-creating it. For me the essence of art is in the exploration of fundamental issues of our time. I explore intolerance, discrimination, addiction and violence with its victims, witnesses and survivors. This is the larger conversation; the wider dialog that I want to be part of. To this end I look for those creative tools that best allow me to address these issues.