

Inner Necessity

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I purchased my copy of *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* by Kandinsky in 1965 in San Francisco when I was a student at the San Francisco Art Institute. I have now been painting, drawing, and making sculpture 48 years. I am 75 years old.

Perception is a spiritual necessity, a spiritual path. "Inner necessity, generates beauty, which springs from the soul." (Kandinsky)

My particular path is Rinzai Zen Buddhism, I took my lay monk vows in 2006. I am Kongo Hitsu Kaku Shin (diamond brush awakened heart).

These statements of Kandinsky's as a painter are seemingly standing alone in 20th century art as totally sincere and they're backed up with a lifetime of being true to its origins in his art. It parallels Brancusi's statement that "Things are not difficult to make, what is difficult is to put ourselves in condition (or a state) to make them," and the difficulty of getting to this point of view. Brancusi also stated "It is pure joy that I give you."

Kandinsky said, more or less, "that is beautiful which is produced by inner necessity, which springs from the soul." He also said and wrote, "To each spiritual epoch corresponds a new spiritual content, which that epoch expresses by forms that are new, unexpected, surprising and in this way aggressive."

A story goes that Kandinsky saw abstract art for the first time when upon returning to his studio one early evening he saw one of his Blue Rider paintings, turned upside down on his easel, turned by a cleaning lady. He saw the pure forms for what they suggested.

"It is clear, therefore, that the inner spirit of art uses external form of any particular period as a stepping-stone to further development." (Kandinsky)

The following texts I'd like to discuss within this symposium in terms of the spiritual in art in the 20th/21st Century. These are amongst the most crucial publications and museum shows in my view: Art and Design published *Art Meets Science and Spirituality* in 1990. This parallels Maurice Tuchman's show and catalog, *The Spiritual in Art, Abstract Painting, 1890-1985* and the Senior Curator at the Guggenheim Museum, Alexandra Munroe's, *The Third Mind-American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860-1989* at The Guggenheim Museum, in which my work was included.

The following are further specific Kandinsky quotations from *The Spiritual in Art* which leap out at me:

“He must watch his own inner life and harken to the demands of his particular age.”

“Every artist, as a servant of art, has to help the cause of art.”

“But raising marble is evidence that number of men have reached the point where the one they would now honor formerly stood alone.”

“In every painting a whole life is mysteriously enclosed, a whole life of tortures, doubts, of hours of enthusiasm and inspiration.”

I look forward to the dialogue for this conference very much.