

Thoughts on paper cats

The paper sculptures that I create are the fruit of slow patient work, tearing, folding, stroking and gluing of soft material that responds to the sensuous touch of the hand.

My conceptual approach is not Platonic and does not attempt to express abstract ideas, but an existentialist approach that seeks to give expression to the truth within the existential reality.

Animals, like humans, are individual creatures: vulnerable, ephemeral, and perishable, just like thin paper. Each of the paper animals has its unique character and expression, and, like us, is subject to the precarious nature of existence.

Animals are vulnerable due to the fact that they are controlled by the cycles and laws of nature and they cannot speak and act in a world dominated by humans. Moreover, they are part of an innocent rural world that is being obliterated by global economics and industrialized society. Yet they have their own power of survival, and even the paper animals are not destroyed by falling or by blows. Animals are part of nature. They have emotions and primal sensuality, and as such they represent the feminine or subconscious element, as opposed to the conscious masculine element in the psyche.

Paper itself has an organic source and although it is weak, flexible and not very durable, it has a long history. Since the ancient Egyptian papyrus, paper has preserved the products of human culture. People drew on it and wrote on it in order to express themselves, communicate, and perpetuate their ideas. And despite all the changes that have occurred, it is still an integral part of human life. We read a book or a newspaper, touch the paper, smell it, and even get into bed with it.

As raw material for sculpture, simple newsprint enabled me to express nuances, lights and shadows, and layers upon layers like the reality of life that is composed of layer upon layer of transitory fragments.

This work of tearing the paper, gluing it and giving it shape recalls the cyclic nature of life – cycles of destruction and recreation, birth and death, and then rebirth.

I specifically chose cats because they are small animals that are at the mercy of humans beings, and in this sense they can represent every dominated and mute social minority.

Cats are part of the local scene. Stepping out of the house into the yard or street in Tel Aviv we come across cats living their lives among the garbage bins; homeless creatures in a crowded urban environment. Cats, with all their short-lived sensuality and instinctive urges, live in the shadow of destruction and annihilation. And so it is with the paper cats. The scraps of paper emphasize annihilation as an essential part of their existence. The absence of color is a kind of void, but also a possibility or a beginning.

According to the Freudian description of the two classes of instincts, we can distinguish between two sets of urges: one includes the sexual urges, or Eros, whose aim is to preserve life.

The other set of urges – the death instinct – is represented by sadism and destructiveness. Its aim is to decompose organic life and return it to a condition of lifelessness. The aspiration for death is present in life itself, and the two urges are active in every living organism. In Derrida's terms, destruction, or the power of deconstruction, always co-exists with construction.

In the course of my work on cats, tearing paper and gluing it, the "tearing" (symbol of death) and the expression of the destructive element became more and more dominant. Cats and human civilization live with their death.

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