

Yury Kharchenko

With his twelve wall-sized paintings in the cycle "The 12 tribes of Israel" the artist Yury Kharchenko opens up uncharted terrain to the art of painting and at the same time consciously refers to an heroic tradition of non-representational painting, which originated in the U.S.A. in the 1940s. The painters of that tradition - in particular Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb - wanted to find their specific identity in a sharp separation from European painting, especially Surrealism, as well as in the invention of a visual language which aimed not to portray, but rather to set free form and colour in order to charge their works with spiritual power. They did so with huge aspirations and equally huge formats. This tradition was heroic because it did not allow itself to be discouraged by the disillusionment caused by the social and historical experiences of the 20th Century with its disasters was not discouraged and believed unswervingly in the integrity of a transcendental form of painting which stood for mental and social freedom.

Yury Kharchenko's works can make one forget that such a thing as pop art and post modernism ever existed. His pictures are completely free of cynicism, and there is nothing second-hand about them. His painting is not that of an epigone. They focus on the formal and emotional possibilities of painting. They are both non-representational - pure visual phenomena like sounds - and representational - simple shapes such as the houses, which form the backbone of the cycle, or as the silhouettes of figures hidden in the thickets and scrub of the dark lattice structure of these pictorial spaces. Yury Kharchenko's paintings are delightful in their texture and their sense of color, stimulating the senses and arousing strong feelings in the viewer.

Kharchenko refers to his Jewish roots - particularly the tension between religion and philosophy- in order to give structure to his paintings. His ambivalent attitude towards the subject-matter might explain this, however that is not the key to the success of these works. They already have enough depth and power of conviction as pure forms in their own right. His paintings hold their own even without the viewer having knowledge of the branched and fascinating details of Jewish spiritual history. A decisive quality of these paintings is their individuality, which makes it seem logical that Kharchenko has given them the names of brothers. Their archaic quality shows itself in the reliance on the energy personified in each painting.

Kharchenko's painting relies on a general human spiritual force that has always existed. With his sophisticated and refined style Kharchenko demonstrates that art brings with it its own time and that it will not age as long as it is valid. That is what these paintings aim to achieve, and that creates hope.

<http://www.yury-kharchenko.com>

CV

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