

SLIVKA

Tony wants to say something.

ROSENTHAL

David started something about the lineage of sculpture, the backgrounds of present-day sculpture. Maybe we could go on from there. I'd like to hear some comments by members of the panel and those in the room on what they feel about present-day sculpture.

PAVIA

One person hasn't spoken. Rosati, you've been keeping a deep silence.

ROSATI

I don't like history; that's why I've been keeping quiet. This is when we should exchange ideas; that's what I'd rather do. And frankly, I haven't any definite ideas about sculpture. If I had, I'd quit making it. I'm still searching.

I honestly believe that every man has a problem; I refer to it as a problem. He has a point of departure, but that point of departure is not what makes his work important. What really makes it important is the personality he's been able to project into his work . . . the total personality. I don't care if he started with Cubism, if he's a Surrealist; it doesn't make any difference as long as a personality is there when I look at his work. I think we ought to discuss these personalities and the recordings of these personalities much more than whether or not it's Surrealism. We sound like Surrealism was a bad thing. What difference does it make if beautiful artists came out of it? Be grateful for it. We don't want all talents the same. Some people like salty food, some don't.

And this business of going back—talking about Brancusi, he did that, he did this and other men did that—I think the American artist made art what it is just because he was not

involved with going back. He really became involved with himself. And he took that premise, do you know in how many different ways? Look at Kline, de Kooning, Pollock, Baziotés, Rothko. Look at how many different ways! No two approaches were the same. This is the important thing in American art, more than anything else. The personality had the possibility to be supreme; and when you're looking at these men's work you're in their presence. That is what's important in American art.

PAVIA

I agree with you very much, Rosati, because I think the Spontaneous is close to personality. A person expresses personality if his decisions are spontaneous—the decisions in front of his sculpture or painting, second to second and minute to minute. His personality comes out then as much as a breath comes out.

Design is further away from the personality. And I just want to throw this in—I think European sculpture is involved in Design, and that American sculpture is slowly evolving away from Design and arriving closer to the Spontaneous.

ROSATI

When you use the word “design,” are you talking about it in the sense of putting whatever you're doing in the highest order that is possible?

PAVIA

No. Design is having a format.

ROSATI

Or is Design a way of doing a thing? To me, being spontaneous in sculpture is pretty difficult, physically difficult, except when working with clay.

KADISH

I don't think that's so in sculpture any more than in painting. After all, a painter still has to open the door to his studio,

stretch his canvas, size it, get his tube of paint and squeeze it out. . . . That's no different from opening a can of clay and pulling it out.

ROSATI

You can keep spontaneity alive a lot longer on a canvas than when you pick up a hammer and chisel.

KADISH

Other words could be used here, words like conscious state.

ROSATI

And in that conscious state you have a plan by which you are going to determine the result. That's the kind of thing we're not involved in.

There are other states when the work actually takes over, when you stand as a handmaiden to the work; then the work dictates what you are going to do rather than you dictating.

PAVIA

Are you talking about media?

KADISH

I'm not talking about media; I'm saying that sometimes you don't understand your end results.

ROSATI

What I'm trying to do is clarify the word "spontaneity."

PAVIA

How do you mean, spontaneity?

ROSATI

Well, you don't mean spontaneity in time exactly, not how long it takes to do it. You mean, spontaneity in relation to the work.

PAVIA

No, I mean decision: the Existentialist idea of a decision a minute, minute to minute. You can become aware of your decision-making just as Proust taught you to be aware of your

subconscious. As you make a decision each minute you drain out your personality. That's what I mean by Spontaneous.

I agree with Rosati. Many of us agree that personality is one of the big things that made American art—not Surrealism and not all those ideas of writers. We had ideas from Europe, warped and torn, but we never got them straight. We were on our own, just like those pioneers out West, and we developed . . .

Pollock was the first who developed this personal decision-making; he just got involved. I think I felt it from him first. For a while he became Surrealistic, with those spiders and eyes then I couldn't feel his personality. But when he made pure decisions—he wanted a line to go this way and then that way—then I started to feel his personality.

This is purely mine, but I want to connect it up with what Kadish said. Sculptors are gradually freeing themselves from media. (Painters never had the curse of media as do the sculptors.) Slowly we're getting out of it, we're able to breathe more within it.

FERBER

But didn't Rubens or Rembrandt make spontaneous decisions as they carried their work forward?

PAVIA

That was within a framework.

FERBER

Don't you think—what Jimmy was talking about—the personalities of the masters, are the exact reasons why we like their work? Their personalities are expressed.

Certainly, within a framework. Framework is a good word to bring up, because the difference between American art and European art if one is going to be made is that we no longer want to make objects as the European artists do. We aren't making things which were recognizable as art in the old sense.

We have developed something which is peculiarly American . . . And not primitive; it has nothing to do with the Old West, a lack of knowledge of painting or the history of art. (All of us are well grounded in that and we can't destroy it.) Also not in a spontaneous fashion, but in a well-considered fashion. It is something which no longer resembles the art of the past; the lack of resemblance is not due to more motor cars and more telephones in America—we wanted to make things which no longer resembled works of art in the old sense, consciously or unconsciously.

PAVIA

You mean, they deliberately didn't want it to look like old art?

FERBER

I say consciously or unconsciously.

ROSATI

But don't you think that could just as easily have come about because the American artist had a need? They weren't deliberately saying, "We don't want to be like so-and-so."

There was just a tremendous need to do what they did. The men who really made it weren't against Brancusi, or anti-Matisse; they were just for what they were doing. There's a great passion in each one of their works, a complete dedication. (I hate that word, it's very cliché, but, you can feel it.)

FERBER

To say American artists are dedicated are dangerous words. It makes European artists . . .

ROSATI

I said I didn't like to use it.

FERBER

Amateurish, you know. They are also dedicated. Dedication and passion are common to all true artists.