

## **I am the Single Work Artist**

**By Hassan Sharif**

“I would like my pictures to look as if a human being had passed between them, like a snail, leaving a trail of the human presence and memory trace of past events, as the snail leaves its slime. I think the whole process of this sort of elliptical form is dependent on the execution of detail and how shapes are remade or put slightly out of focus to bring in their memory traces.”

*Francis Bacon, Interview, 1963*

Some figures who took interest in my works believe that I go repeating or remaking my substances as well as shapes to be produced.

In order to clarify matters, I should like to say that were repeated in terms of substances and shapes but not in terms of same time.

If we isolate a single work containing “scraps of paper mixed with gum and shaped in form of discs”, each one of these discs differs in terms of thickness, diameter as well as weight and if we examine each disc comparing it to another one, we discover a difference in the time of making each disc and that it is impossible to create two discs at a time, a second using same material. And if we suppose that time to be one second therefore each piece or disc has its proper or own second. I like remaking that an artist continues to repeat reproducing same work is a healthy thing. So there is no rule in art forbidding an artist to stay in his corner. An artist stays or sits in his own corner or angle, we call art corner and he continues to reproduce same work through his life. There can be no two works by the same artist; this is impossible. All works by an artist no matter a drawing in black ink, an oil painting or a sculpture or any made or installed object, all were one work. Let an artist sit in his own corner and wrap a string on a hard cloth...you discover that he is overwhelms himself in his remakes and this is not in itself not denied to an artist...he wraps a quantity of that string on Sunday and a bigger quantity on Wednesday or Thursday...we can not call this repeating or remaking this is because days were not same. For example, I dislike to make balls or discs of paper scraps on Mondays and Fridays and this goes back to my childhood, I used to see a man leaving his house on every morning walking in the direction of the market place in a strange way...he used to advance 10 or 15 steps towards the market and retreats again but one or two steps towards his house...and thus he continues till he reaches the market place, and he used to do this again when he comes back home. He used to do this except on Mondays and Fridays...He entertained a belief that reaching the market was impossible, this is why he stayed Fridays and Mondays at home...and used not to leave his house for fear of not reaching that place.

“I am an artist who connects his paintings to each other by using nails”, this was an expression or sentence by “Kurt Schwitters” from Hanover City in Germany who lived in the period 1887-1948.

Kurt Schwitters succeeded in producing his monumental artwork called “pillars of Schwitters” or “Merz”; and the last name was borrowed from “Commerzbank” that is

“Commercial Bank”. It contains a big quantity of cigarette boxes, old newspapers, cardboard paper and so on using his street collected objects, he built his first pillar to be built in his room in the period 1920-1929 till his room was full and he was obliged to move to second floor of same building. He stretched his pillar to second floor of same building and he continued his work on it up to the time he was expelled from Germany by the Nazi regime and he destroyed his first pillar. Schwitters built his second pillar in Norway but the time when the Nazi had invaded Norway, he moved to England where he built his third pillar and for a 3<sup>rd</sup> time. After his death and the year 1948 his third pillar has been transported to New Castle where it is preserved till now. This is how Kurt Schwitters concentrated his effort on one work throughout his life; this is in spite of the fact that he used to move from one town to another and in spite having his pillar destroyed.

Concentration on doing a reproduced single artwork for an artist is seen as a significant step and even if it is a trivial work...and by the way there isn't any trivial thing in this life, all things, objects are trivial and non-trivial at the same time. The Chemist who sits in his laboratory in front of lots of magical solutions and objects and he spends whole life to mix various strange solutions for the of reaching a certain result, and ultimately he comes to a conclusion that he has discovered a new poison with a pleasant smell and he puts an end to his life by testing his pleasant smelling new poison.

This is the concentration of a chemist. As for the artist's it is totally different. This is because the latter doesn't have affair to solutions but with an enchanting magical imagination and a special changing mood; the artist's obsession in turn differs from the one of a blacksmith because he doesn't alter the nature of metals. The artist doesn't handle neither copper nor gold nor solutions, he has affair with magic that has no tools.

“The learned man does not stand on the shoulders of those who have no shoulders, and the learned artist does not stand on the shoulders of the disabled...and the clowns. You clowns-folk were just as a smoke cloud swimming in a false dawn, You were just idiots who count the hairs of a donkey one by one...the real artist is not a smoke cloud, but thunder...thunderstorm producing lightening and it continues to journey over mountain peaks” These words were of Paul Gauguin when he was confronted by a strong wave of criticism addressed by critics and artists of his time. By expressing the above words Gauguin had succeeded in mocking or ironising those who couldn't understand the meaning of his works, and he used to nickname them as clowns, handicapped and stupid. He used to know very well of their deficient imagination. He threw them pieces of bones and he left away. He left to the imaginary fabulous islands of “Tahiti” with the intention of staying in his own corner and to create his ever-fascinating works. Gauguin sat in his corner in a café, he ordered coffee and water...The Café had been very crowded with people six persons sit on one side...gossiping, four or five persons sitting to a table playing cards...two sitting playing another game and one client sitting beside them watching the process of that game.

Three whole hours have passed after having had more than 3 cups of coffee...so he stayed there lonely!! The Shepherd is always lonely or solitary...as for the flocks they fear loneliness”. A remark: when I told a friend this story, he said: (A man can never be alone)

and he narrated to me the tale of a shephard: “A shephard can never be lonely, either he has a young boy to help him or keeps some dogs for guarding purposes; or trains a big sheep usually a big male and hang a bell to its neck thus it turns in to an assistant shephard”. Paul Gauguin wrote in a letter to a friend stating “The Tahitian women does not leave her house and walk alone at night, she fears ghosts and the Tahitian ghosts do not go out in the evenings because they fear ladies flocks”. The paintings of Gauguin were ghosts that fear no flocks; his paintings were a flock that does not fear ghosts. Paul Gauguin sat in his corner had his cup of coffee. As for Marcel Duchamp he reached his corner when he practiced or made his enchanting Love with a lover. Thus sat Marcel Duchamp in his corner of imagination and forced the virgin to undress herself. Sitting in a corner is penetrating into a non-existing tissue; a corner for Duchamp is a transparent tissue, a skin piece covering a French window = a French widow, French Air = Fresh air. As for the rest of thing they are equal to the back of a spoon. (for more about Marcel Duchamp refer to “Alkaleej” February 1986).

It is not necessary to sit between two glass pieces, as did Marcel Duchamp for fixing a corner position. To some a corner is possible even in the deep of the ocean. Thus had been the fate for a man who spent his life as a teacher who teaches the secrets of a Chinese old game, till he grew aged or old and by then he decided to abandon the game and leave the school where he used to teach in. He joined another house to teach a mischievous boy. One-day teacher and young pupil went into one of natural scenery places and they stopped facing a river. The boy said to his teacher: “I can swim across this river”. In a few seconds the boy threw himself into the water of the river and started to swim in order to reach the other bank of the river and he called to his teacher: Oh you old teacher...why don't you throw yourself like me and swim so as to reach...the old man has accepted what his mischievous pupil has told him to do, and suddenly he sunk into deep waters.

**Al Bayan**  
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**Translated by Dr. Hassan El-Rayah**