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May 2020
Public Colloquium

I started this course 2 years ago to really understand why I do what I do. I am an Iranian and have been based in London for the last 16 years yet my work is very much about where I come from.

Since the start of the program, I have travelled to countries that have a big part in shaping my identity ie: Lebanon, Bosnia and Turkey and my readings are very much focused on middle eastern history and current affairs.

Subjects that drew me in years ago continue to draw me in. Patterns that I responded to years ago I continue to respond to. I begin to see that we are mostly compelled by forces that like the ocean's current are subtle and constant. The artistic evidence for the constancy of interior issues is everywhere. Van Gogh kept the same palette; authors go back to the same characters and so often composers use the similar orchestration in different works.

We tell the stories we have to tell.

That's the work that is worth doing and that's the work that I can do convincingly because it's what I absolutely care about. I think not to focus on these issues is to deny the constant in my life.

At some level all art is autobiographical after all. My brush only paints in response to my body and gesture. As Tennessee Williams observed, even works of demonstrable fiction or fantasy remain *emotionally* autobiographical. John Szarkowski once curated a show at the NY Museum of modern Art entitled Mirrors and Windows. His premise was that some artists viewed the world as if looking through a window at things happening "out there" while others view themselves as if looking in a mirror.

Either way the autobiographical vantage point is implicit.

Then if making Art is broadly accepted as being about self, then self expression can be a major reason for making works of art. Validating a sense of who I am is my driving force.

Often art is what one does **out** in the world or a work of art is something that you **do about** the world or possibly something one does **for** the world.

The need to make Art may not come solely from the need to express who I am. I have accepted this as a force but at the same time I think that there is a need to complete a relationship with something outside of myself. Making Art gives me access to what is otherwise taboo, forbidden, dangerous, seductive or all of the above. It gives me access to something I may otherwise never fully engage with. For me this engagement is the driving force.

There is a metaphor in Zen teaching saying : ‘when you start on a long journey trees are trees, water is water, and mountains are mountains. After you have gone some distance, trees are no longer trees, water no longer water, mountains no longer mountains. But after you have travelled a great distance, trees are once again trees, water once again water, mountains are once again mountains.’

At the moment I am working out the conceptual relationship between my practise and the world I see. Trees hopefully will becoming trees again soon.