In the world of art this is certainly the Philosophic Age. Every spatter of paint must have its metaphysical alibi. Never have so many $64 words been used to describe so little! Much of this is entertaining - some of it, perhaps, profound.

But let's face it.

But must the painter make all these elaborate excuses for himself? Is his work going to stand or fall on these a posteriori rationalizations and theory-spinnings? I doubt it. Just look back - read the declarations of intention and evaluation left by painters whose work we still admire today. How many are illuminating - or even seem apropos? The life - the quality we enjoy - is in the work itself; we may verbalize about it in quite different terms than its author.

I see this contemporary tendency to excessive, and often obscure, verbalization about art as a symptom of the doubts and feelings of insecurity engendered by our time's unprecedented lack of generally accepted criteria. For the creative artist the only possible solution today is the personal solution. We are free to choose; there is no "one way" - in art, or anything else, for that matter. The truth is - real freedom is a terrifying thing, and it is plain that many artists are searching desperately for a new dogma, a new once-and-for-all answer to all the questions.

Now that our planet has grown so small, human time so short, "one world" a common conception, surely it follows that no kind of art that has ever engaged human creativeness can be wholly without interest, and that the "academy" - any academy - is of fugitive value.

It seems to me nonsense to say that a creative painter must be fanatical.

(over)
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