Celebrating 175: Helen Lundeberg, Artist Statements, circa 1950s-1970s

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We ought to stop thinking of art as a profession like other professions. The doctor, lawyer, teacher, architect follows a certain & fixed traditional pattern: licensed only when he can prove that he has had a certain amount and kind of education and training. He must be licenced. There is always a demand for his services, and he has a reasonable expectation of financial reward and prestige, dependent of course on his own intelligence, talents and personality traits. He expects to enter a competitive field, and to match his wit and skill with others in his profession.

In the field of fine arts, what do we mean by "professional artist"? Today the "artist" is self-styled; he chooses himself. He may have any kind and amount of training, or he may be "self-taught"; he needs no license to practice. He may fall, more or less, into the category of this or that school of aesthetic theory or philosophy of art, but there is no one tradition or official criterion to which he may turn, or by which he may be judged. This I do not deplore. It is the inevitable consequence of contemporary thinking, which finds human values in the art of all times and places; our concept of "art" is immensely wider and deeper than that of the artist-craftsman who worked within a set tradition. But this diversity of criteria throws the artist very much upon his own resources: he must choose his own direction. If he is sincere he can listen only to the dictates of his own creative will. The art history of the last 150 years or so is the history of the artist's rebellion against authority, and conscious struggle to find original personal expression. But what about his audience? And what can he expect in the way of appreciation and remuneration for his efforts?

The creative artist cannot afford to make any concessions to the public's taste (whatever the "public's taste" may mean- it is such an amorphous generalization that no one could literally cater to it,}

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