

ARTIST STATEMENT – SYLVAIN CHAMBERLAIN

I am an artist. I believe art is about story, and that story is a language of teaching.

Teaching; the dissemination and facilitation of knowledge, begins first with sharing of observable phenomena, followed by the development of specific languages, like mathematics, biology, fables, and pictures, to define ways and avenues of thinking about phenomena. Science has been a practice of precision in this way, just as philosophy has been based on introspection and dialog, and religion has been theatrical and fantastic. All, to me, are investigation into facets of the same questions of the human experience, although far from similar in their application.

For example, mathematics begins with a definition of numbers and their relationships. Then numbers are used to define the physical world in geometry and trigonometry. This knowledge is then built upon to further extend the language to calculus and physics and the huge considerations of the cosmos, and then leading to Quantum mechanics and theories sending us right back to the minutia of the tiniest energies constituting the physical properties of life itself.

Ultimately, the search for answers in mathematics, biology, fundamental particles and energies, have direct relationship to the study of the human mind, its support systems, genetics, chemistry, and the processes of cognition, volition, embedded epistemology, phenomenology and the origins of thought. Even the mystical and fantastic mythology and allegory of religion, though far less precise or observable, has relation to the immensity and tiny vicissitudes of human potentials. All these are aspects of one common desire to attain full grasp of the process of life itself. Life, understood as process and not phenomena. That is, phenomena as evidence of life process, but not all of “life” contained or expressed.

To come to this understanding has been given many labels as determined by the avenues of study used to arrive at this point. I submit that once arrived, it becomes obvious that all languages, or avenues, must be recognized with equal merit to have led to the awakened state of awareness precipitating it. Languages vary as do our human experience. The goal, however, can be incomprehensible and greatly obfuscated by misinformation and misguided interpretations available to less precise languages. Where mathematical language is intolerant to fanciful deviations or postulations, there is more room for consideration in dialog based reasoning, and finally, an uncontrollable amount of deviant and abhorrent propositions and “truths” proposed in religious fables and

mythologies unbound by reason, proof, or observable phenomena. Suffice it to say that the perspicacity of the individual is paramount in the endeavor for enlightenment and ultimate truths; the goal of which remains the appropriate and efficient application of this awakening to the well-directed activities and behaviours of human life in this schema. To direct our human knowledge in a way to produce life affirming behaviours and to eschew and discourage the un-affirming behaviours that diminish the inherent dignity and value of human life in the context of the larger process of life, can be the only goal of any endeavour proposing to define ultimate truths of life.

This has been the foundation of my thinking throughout my life and as I have tried to apply it, with limited successes and always determined effort, in my artistic endeavor. To the degree I succeed in creating, in a visual language, paintings or images of interlocution with the greater dialog of the questions aforementioned, I am constantly both surprised and dissatisfied, as the locus of my own enlightenment is in constant flux. This is a good thing, as it indicates my perspicacity in building greater understanding at every moment of my timeline in this life process. It is also further proof of that process in an infinite series of discrete moments constantly providing epistemological basis for the next while leaving the past and the present to disintegrate and amalgamate simultaneously. The investigation is ongoing for me as it is with life. We are always in a state of becoming, never truly at rest. I believe painting is like this.

A painting, unlike a photograph, is created over an arc of time. That arc is in constant service to the myriad thoughts and shifting ideas of the subject, content, and media of the painter and the painting. This is why the photograph of the chair is always about the chair, but the painting of the chair is always about the ideas of “chair”. So it is that my attempts in painting are to capture moments with implication. The implications are my narratives. Those narratives inform the painting as well as uphold the viewer’s gaze, an invitation to enter, belong, and mediate outcomes. In this way, the dialog comes alive with each viewer, specific and private. Special. This is the intimate language of art.

Sylvain

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