

WHAT IS GAY ART?

An Interview

with artist Robert Blanchon

Continued

live, but we want to talk about living. So gay people (artists), as well as African-Americans or Latino-Americans or Asian-Americans, and women artists especially, make art to this prescribed program because they think representation, visibility, identity, etc. is necessary. I wonder though, at what point it's good for you? Or in the world you live in as an artist? And then I wonder what part is your subscription - you have to do this - you don't really have much choice. If you want a career in this business this is the product you push. And that feels sad to me if that's the limitation. I don't think it's because there isn't really good work being made by gay artists who make work about his or her identities. That makes perfect sense to me. It's the issue that's theirs or what they feel. It's the issues that they know as their emotional past and future.

Anthony: Do you think artists really feel they have to follow this set program?

Blanchon: Your right - it's one of the 'have to's' of the artworld in order to find success. It's like in the (19)70's when women artists were finally coming to the forefront of the (art) community. Women's art like "Womenhouse" in Los Angeles had many criticisms against the work because

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some of it wasn't good. It's art. That's why we make it, so we can talk about it. It's all a bit superficial but in that way it's beautiful. But you end up also with people saying "art by women is too narrative or it's too much about ritual". So think about where we've come from from the early ages of modernism. We've gone through various stages of feminism, which I don't think is over - I hate when people say that - to ending up with people finally getting a stage to talk about themselves, and they get stuff like, "it's too narrative". What's that about?

Anthony: A matter of identity I imagine - which is probably the reason so many gay artists make gay art.

Blanchon: But they don't - they just make art.

Anthony: But where does that need come from to make what is perceived as gay art? Or art about being gay?

Blanchon: Well why do artists make art about anything? Because it's something that they have a penchant for, it's something they are committed to. It's part of the rest of your life as an artist. The life of an artist, I think, is 3% artmaking and 97% being a human being. And I suspect if you're a fag or a dyke you have issues about being a fag or a dyke, but do you need to make that a vehicle for your work. It's almost too obvious. A good