

Yasser's Footpath

Preliminary note :

This text is Yasser Abdelkawy's contribution to the collective introduction to issue #1 of The ROOM, the magazine of Egyptian surrealists.

Some comments on this text are available [here](#)

Ladies and Gentlemen...

We are at war.

A war had been waged for millennia, a war that has shaped the entire human history and will continue shaping it in the future. This war has been meant to hijack the human Imagination. It's a war to control the very thing that defines us, Homo sapiens.

Millions of years ago when an ape-like creature gazed at the stars, what it found in that endless abyss was imagination, and through it, it became able to define itself as something different from an animal and it paid the ultimate price: torn out of the bosom of nature, alone and cast away,

This ape-like creature only had its Imagination to find its place in a harsh world where it could not fit in anymore. Consequently, this naked ape had to imagine an identity for himself and from the same place – imagination – he created a new notion: the notion of humanity. What are we then but a naked ape with an imagination?

Every single achievement human beings claim is the fruit of that most powerful tool, which is the ability to imagine, to rethink the world, to break it down to its simplest elements and reshape it based on our needs, feelings, understanding and imagination... They say that the first surrealist object ever made by human beings was the wheel. It imitates walking, but it does not look as anything like legs and feet, even though it crosses distances (Walks). We have identified walking according to our understanding and how we comprehend the world.¹

This war I speak of has always been waged on this super power in order to bend it to the will and needs of the few, even if it belongs to the majority. The paradox lies in the taming of the wild Imagination without breaking it, with the purpose of turning that wild beast into a draught horse that works for the glory of the authority, the State and Kings and Queens.

It's a paradox because imagination is all about dynamic thinking, the reexamination of everything and the continuous questioning of every stable idea that's been accepted as the truth. This is when imagination comes in clash with Authority, Imagination craves a dynamic world, a world that always

¹ "Simply, an equation: reality + imagination = surreality (total reality). Reality - imagination = unreality. Imagination is what makes reality real". Stuart Inman.

"Correct - within the scope encompassed here by Yasser. Which is reduced to mankind. But we now shall have to take into account that Life itself is creative and has imagination. This is what recent biology taught us. I shall not elaborate on that here, but that shall be done anyway. What I mean is that Life is essentially surrealist and that surrealism has roots in biology." - Pierre Petiot.

changes, improves, evolves. But that's dangerous. What if we imagine a better world or a better way to do things? What if we wanted to turn what we imagined into reality? Won't that bring the whole rigid temple of power down?

Even the most authoritarian mind in history knows that imagination can't be killed, so they clipped its wings, turning the Muses to working creatures, denying them their freedom. Every creation has to be removed from the hands of Boann, and locked away to be exploited, myths locked in religions, poetry locked in holy books, science locked in consumer products, art locked in museums. And that goes on. An enslaved imagination that works from 9 AM to 5 PM and takes a 30 min lunch break. An imitation of the real thing, of the real power.

Surrealism was and still is the strongest counter attack in that war, breaking the containers where they locked imagination, reminding the muses of their long forgotten freedom, freeing the fruits of imaginations and bringing it all back to humanity .

The Room is our share in that counter attack. It's a sword of light in the heart of the darkest place in the world at the darkest moment of its history. When it seems like every shred of free imagination had been eradicated, the Old Ghost rises again. So behold and tremble, because the dragon is alive again and he is breathing fire.

Yasser Abdelkawy - Winter 2019-2020