

The Fusionism of Ivo David

Poetic Chromaticism to Capture the Transcendental

THEORY OF FUSIONISM

Ivo David, born in San Leucio del Sannio (Benevento) in 1934, spent his childhood at San Nicola Manfredi where his father had an art studio. Encouraged to follow the father's footsteps, he attended the Academy of Fine Arts in Naples, where he perfected his own artistic philosophy at the school where artistic leaders such as Renato Bordone, Gustavo Lo Russo and Phillip Tintoretto were trained.

In 1956, he declared and defined his **Manifesto of Fusionism** which he shared with very few of his friends. On account of his inventive and original thought, he based his pictorial depictions on his creative intuition.

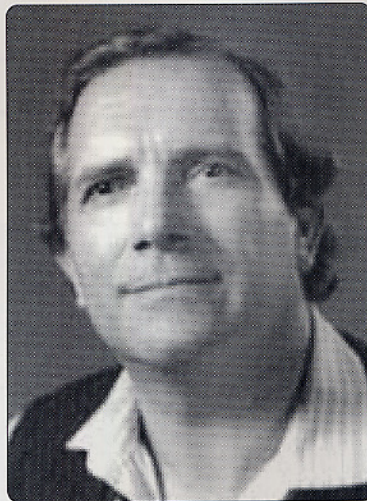
In 1962, prior to immigrating to the USA, Ivo David dedicated himself to teaching and working in scenography at the San Carlo Theatre in Naples, without however abandoning his artistic inclinations and achievements. At that time, he also participated in many exhibitions both in his Campania and in Paris.

In 1964, he exhibited for the first time in the United States at the Crespi Gallery in New York City. Other exhibitions followed, not only in the State of New York but also in New Jersey where he established his permanent residence in the city of Union.

Besides teaching art, he has collaborated with many magazines, especially with **La Follia di New York** and **Il Ponte Italo-Americano**.

Ivo David's pictorial identity takes on character and qualities from his initial artistic intuition and invention: Fusionism. Fusionism is not an eclectic theory, but rather a careful and elaborate desire for mingling chromatic resources inspired from the examination and study of centuries of tried and true techniques and metaphoric images which allowed Ivo to pursue impellent ideals of freedom and truth. He attempts to understand the human condition and the social environment through his perception of the eschatological dimension and the profound tension to overcome the contingent.

Departing from a description of the real world which he often expresses through vibrant and impulsive colors, Ivo David points at emerging the transcendental dimension which is kept in custody by the reality. He enjoys producing together apparently contrasting dimensions with the goal of perceiving their points of encounter



and coexistence. In his paintings, dream and reality, surreal and biological, modern and classic, sacred and profane, are never far apart nor separated.

FREEDOM WITH REASON

For Ivo David, art is almost above the real, and life itself becomes almost absurd, and as the poet Jorge Luis Borges said: "*a metaphor of the literature*". Without the color of the art, for the Italian-American painter, life would risk merging into the common mediocrity, would lose the stimulus, the horizon and its transcendental dimension.

The artist's research not only aims at discovering new forms and innovative color intermingling, but above all it pursues "*freedom with reason*", immerses itself in the interpretation of the universe and daily living. David's Fusionism is meant to be a hymn to freedom, a vigorous stimulus to praise idealism steering toward the human oneiric dimension.

Ideal and real, classic and modern, dream and reason are summoned to create an artistic fusion through the evocative power of chromatic devices traced by the artist from Benevento. His images, subjects frequently suffer somatic contorsions which the artist needs to express the suffering of the human condition and, at the same time, to glorify the joy of life or the magic unattainability of landscapes and natural elements.

Reality becomes decomposed in its primordial elements to eventually be recomposed and transposed into a more ample oneiric dimension till it reaches spaces able of expanding this "*aiuola*" as

Dante wrote "*che ci fa tanto feroci*" and more favorably adapt to place the humanistic aspirations and artistic pursuits to universal levels.

In admiring Ivo's figurative strength and the expression of colors, the ability to compose his inventions of *chiaroscuro*, the vital and dynamic expressions of his characters, the powerful and harmonious energy of light and shadow, we can easily understand his source of intuition and points of reference: Rembrandt, Chagall, Gauguin, Dalí, De Chirico, Guttuso and, in a very obvious and unmistakable way, Van Gogh, these have been Ivo's masters. From these artists the Italian-American painter, has assimilated the traditional purity of lines, the conscious and careful theatrical movements, the ability to develop and utilize in a sober and precise way the wonderful variety of colors he employs.

FAVORITE SUBJECTS

It is transparently evident that our Italian-American artist, Ivo David, discovers his inspiring references in the sacred books and in the most important works of our Italian literature. "*In my works*" says David, "*the sacred really enjoys an ample space. The Bible offers numerous subjects, and I could not resist to their appeal. Especially those of the Gospel. Therefore, I painted The Good Samaritan, The Crucifixion, The Deposition from the Cross, The Pious Women, The Cireneus. The religious subjects form the soul of my art.*"

Not by chance, in fact, Ivo David concentrated his attention on the **Divine Comedy**, and, in particular, on the main religious characters present in Dante's masterpiece. Thanks to Dante, our painter has studied conscientiously the most expert literary critics (Croce, Gentile, De Sanctis, Paratore, Momigliano) in order to find the way to reach a meeting with God and man—our neighborhood—image of the Creator.

In Ivo's Dantean characters, David works with ethic-philosophical themes—through brush strokes and impulsive and passionate colors—incorporated in the Florentine poet's subjects. Poetry impresses in Ivo David's painting a chromatic character which is powerful, icastic and, at the same time, dramatic.

—Germano Bertin
tr. by Orazio Tanelli
(from *Il Messaggero di sant'Antonio*, 3/01)