

## Ivo David : An Italian-American Painter In New Jersey

Ivo David is a well-known painter living in Union, New Jersey, with his beloved wife Nancy. He came from the province of Benevento, Italy, and has displayed a lifelong dedication to the indomitable spirit of human creativity.

Naturally, it is the paintings themselves which give a true glimpse of David's figurative art—fusionism.

In order to understand this artistic movement founded by Ivo David in 1956 and promoted by him throughout his lifetime, it is necessary to know that his art went through different stages—classicism, romanticism, cubism, fauvism, expressionism, impressionism, metaphysicism, surrealism—and retained the best aspects and techniques of each of them. Now in his mature period, David *"is taking a stock of his experiences and following a particular style of his own which is not mere overlaying one upon the other of the various styles he used in the past, but rather an intermingling fusion of all of them according to a measure and internal order of his own"* (Franco Gentilini). See his rendition of *"Diane after the bath"*, *"The first steps"*, *"George Bernard Shaw"*, *"Giuseppe Verdi"*, *"Beethoven"*. Besides an assimilation of Dali, Carrà and Maffei, our New Jersey artist demonstrates his extensive knowledge and understanding of great artists such as Signorelli, Rembrandt, Kandinsky, Martin, Masaccio and Botticelli (only to mention a few).

His inspiration has been nature, mythology, the *Divine Comedy*, New York, his native land, and the most important works of the Renaissance. At the root of his fusionism there is true reality, the life he has lived, but with conscientious care, it is superbly transfigured by his brush so that each of his characters, objects, landscapes, and figures assumes a personality of its own yet at the same time retaining a quality which is statistically symbolic, metaphoric, fabulous, metaphysical, biblical, and mythical. Luminous effects of light and shadow, the ambiguous atmosphere of different forms which arouse a sense of anguish, symbolize the very uncertainty which is rooted in present-day man, his cruelty, his fears, his sorrow, his solitude, his striving toward self-defense, (see *"Van Gogh"*, *"Caronte"*, *"Sancho Panza"*, *"The Newspaper Man"*, *"Self-portrait"*, *"Farinata"*, *"Count Ugolino"*, *"Minos"*, *"Paolo and Francesca"*, *"Christ's Deposition"*). All the multiform aspects of the unconscious are portrayed with foresight to demonstrate the ultimate dangers of present-day contradictions, to invoke, through the medium of greater human solidarity, a more requisite and definite respect for life and for the dignity of mankind (Gianni Dova).

These artistic qualities, humanistic concerns and philosophical ideologies reveal that Ivo David is a master painter, exuberant artist, devoted family man, and a sincere person dedicated to the welfare of his fellowman and our society. Intrigued with Nature's creation, he is truly interested in the painting of the most important Dantean episodes contained in the *Divine Comedy* because of his profound concern with man's struggle in life. His art reflects the conflict man has within himself, with others and with his environment. Ivo David is also interested in portraying mythological and biblical episodes in which his fusionism becomes ascensional art toward religious eschatology and transcendental reality. His message conveys the need for communication among people, for expressing feelings and ideas, and for human aspirations for a sublime goal greater than life. His honest confrontation with difficult subjects is a clear revelation that his artistic genius functions in perfect harmony with poetic imagination and philosophical-idealistic doctrine.

Although he is generally recognized as having founded, anticipated and influenced Fusionism, his early experience already revealed a profound knowledge of the works of Magritte, Dali, Tanguy, Koch, Blake, Chagall, Gauguin, Van Gogh, De Chirico, Delvaux, Ernst (and in poetry, Breton and Apollinaire, Elvard and Aragon). His philosophical ideology finds its roots in the ethics of Vico, Kant, Hegel, Croce, Gentile on the side of idealism, for the search of the self-consciousness and the aspiration toward a metaphysical world.

Realism, positivism, atheism, nihilism are foreign to his ideology and do not figure in his paintings. This is why he does not subscribe to writers such as Sartre, Schopenhauer, Kirkegaard and Nietzsche; their philosophy embraces the concept that the traditional values and beliefs are unfounded and existence is senseless and useless.

Ivo David primarily adheres to traditional viewpoints, to religious beliefs and to family values, even though his art displays a surrealistic composition incorporating modern poetry within his fusionistic concepts. In structure and in distribution of space, David's work of the third period approaches that of the architectural character of Matisse, Koch, Blake, Guttuso, Modigliani. Picasso's cubism influenced him minimally, whereas Dali and the illusionist surrealism were his first inspiration.

David's painting can also be defined as *"proto-surrealism"* because its chromatic strength is totally modernist, formal in its content, historically consonant with our time. It seems that his *"Manifesto of the Fusionism"* (1956) has often been overlooked, even though many other painters are using this technique (within their own style), ignoring that the true founder of the movement was Ivo David. Now is the time to recognize the true founder of Fusionism and to propagate this great historical manifest around the world.

David's style has emancipated gradually, yet always remaining faithful to the fusionistic principles expressed in his manifest. His role in the development of modernism is based on three major achievements: his invention of an enigmatic dream imagery, his classical inspiration, and his assimilation of the formal advances of abstraction into his perspectival, figurative, fusionistic painting. It is precisely the combination of these three ingredients that brings about the unsettling, hallucinated impact of his art on the viewer. His particular fusionistic style is not isolated from the mainstream modern art and indicates the essential rapport with the painting of our time, as well as a further development of Surrealism.

Ivo David's fusionism is intended to reveal the metaphysical aspects of reality without denying the existing reality and the social-moral values attached to it ( LA FOLLIA DI NEW YORK : LUGLIO-AGOSTO 1989 )