

A Perversion Of Art - Barbara Kay  
National Post  
May 13, 2009

Dear Editor,

I have difficulty with Barbara Kay's interpretation of Francis Bacon's art form. If her definition of what is art is truly what she says it is then art really has nothing to say other than to be neat, polite, and reflective of what is "acceptable".

Art is no such thing. I must admit that Bacon's work is reflective of his thoughts and feelings and yet I must also adhere to the premise that he is also reflecting that which is in our society. Now, we can say that at the time of his creations the world was not as badly "screwed up" as it is today but as artist are wont to do, he was announcing to the world where he and all of us were heading - before it was obvious. That is what art does. Art is not set out to be pretty and ignored or at worst deemed rejected and stomped upon by neo-conservative jock boots.

The concept of success must also be defined where Ms Kay interests it as being the result of adulation and coronation by the masses. This could not be further from the truth. Actually the so-called artists referred to by Ms Kay fit into the societal mode we are presently in. WE gorge ourselves on so-called reality tv programs - programs reminiscent of the once prolific itinerant fairs which displayed "freaks" in their side-shows. This too was reflective of the times but those were less hypocritical times . Today we pretend at a renewal in the areas of mores and religion and yet afternoon television gives us some pretty raunchy fair for those children who are home from school between 3 and 10pm. But no one seems to mind. We scream at the horrors of the internet world and yet the home computer is often in our children's unsupervised bedrooms. .. We scream for more and more compensation in lieu of fighting for satisfaction in our work force. Rtgis is the world we live in and if Bacon was and his art is sado-masichistic , then we must accept that one cannot live without the other. . . And we are a very masochistic society hellbent on being the heroic victim that we purport is an example for our suggestive children.

But then I must remind myself that Ms Kay's article is not so much informative as it is reflective of her personal opinions and biases in the presentation of reality as reality actually (though sadly) is. As with much of journalism today, opinion pieces vie with actual fact seeking and reporting pieces and the lines separating them get blurrier by the day. This is why fear mongering and yellow journalism and gossip columns thrive. They work on our emotions and adrenalin and fears and anxieties rather than on our reflections and analytical thoughts.