

Enrique Pardo

A Painting Biography

Fine Arts studies, Chelsea, London. Late 1960s.

Fine Arts Studies at Chelsea School of Art, London. Manresa Road, at the heart of rocking Chelsea. Why London? Because Paris (where I mostly lived and studied) was total chaos around 1968, especially the Ecole de Beaux Arts. For me, it was New York or London. I wanted to remain in Europe, so it was London, and I was lucky to get into the school I wanted.

Little art history, no psychology.

Lectures were not valued by the mostly anarchic student spirit of the time so I did not get the intellectual and academic education I was also after. And strictly no psychology. The context was a luxury surrogate microcosm of the art world. There was a pop studio, a colour-field abstract studio, and an incipient conceptual studio: the trends of the time. Very nice teachers, all good painters, but mostly too shy to be approached! One had to go looking for them in the corridors. Or join them at the pub - which was not my thing.

Why Jasper Johns and not Robert Rauschenberg?

I wrote my diploma essay on the American painter Jasper Johns, titled "A Didactic Mannerist", under the guidance of one of the two excellent Art History tutors, whose names I do not remember, unfortunately. Only two or three lectures a year that I remember! Today I would say I chose Johns because I did not have the tools to write about Robert Rauschenberg - especially the implications of his gay coming-out: what it meant in terms of painterly, ironical and decorative intelligence, and in terms of an open approach to (non)-narrative figuration. Johns, who was Rauschenberg's companion for some years, was much easier to analyse through a "structural linguistic" approach with its caustic Duchampian approach. The psychological implications - I mean a deep cultural approach - of the feminist, gay and camp studies had not yet impacted university education.

Teaching at Goldsmith College, London. Meeting Roy Hart.

I was offered two teaching jobs at the graduation exhibition, one at the Stoke-on-Trent School of Art: unforgettable excursions into the heart of coal-mining England, totally exotic for a Peruvian-born, French-educated young artist. Lots of stories to tell. The other job was at Goldsmith College in South London, where the new director, Jon Thompson (whose memory I salute here - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jon_Thompson), brought in a group of young artists. Goldsmith became for quite some years the most sought-after art school in London. The most interesting students were getting involved in performance art. At 25 or so I had an enviable position to envisage an artistic career. But it was too soon and the loneliness of painting was a dangerous path

for me, which is why I made quite a reasoned-out decision to go for therapy - and I mean not so much personal ("I'll be an introverted alcoholic at thirty") but cultural – or call it an educational therapy on psychological thinking and cultural studies. I also met Roy Hart at the time and the persons around him. After three or four years I stopped painting and teaching fine arts - and went into performance apprenticeship. My art students killed me: one of them said I looked like Bamby on ice!

From painting to theatre: 1973 to 2010, over 30 years.

I did not miss painting - and transferred most of what it entailed for me to theatre. Roy Hart was a great guru-mentor - precisely in what I would call visionary psychology. After his death in 1975 I started research into choreographic theatre and voice performance, creating Pantheatre around 1980, which I now codirect with my life-companion Linda Wise. I barely kept in touch with the visual arts world. I noticed with amusement that the millennialist conceptual "end of painting" had turned into a massive renewal of figuration, and I would glance at it sometimes - especially at German and Italian new expressionism. I also noticed how much freedom post-modernism had brought about, though I never took much to its Duchampian over-salted irony. And so from 1973 to around 2010. Well over thirty years!

James Hillman – a fourth education. 1980.

Actually, not quite: I met James Hillman around 1980 and was lucky to become a friend of his and meet the circle of thinkers around him. Here, I was culturally at home, with what I still consider the greatest and deepest perspective on the Western psyche and its cultural history. Psychology, at last, in its broadest implications! This was something like my fourth education - and for some years all my friends were 'archetypalists' (and mostly American) and therapists! Rafael Lopez-Pedraza, Nor Hall, Paul Kugler, Charles Boer (a mythology scholar), Thomas Moore, Patricia Berry, and many others.

2005: back to painting – collage.

It was retouching a performance poster of friends around 2005 that made me start making collages again. My art school application portfolio actually did have quite a few collages which had impressed the examiners... I will try posting some of them on this site. To put it very briefly: when I tried to draw or paint a face and then came across one by Titian or Picasso, I would simply dump my sketch. Collage - photography - allowed me to bypass this 'complex' and go for what I call "Cubism as in Cuba".

See 2014 article in Brooklyn Rail art journal : <http://www.brooklynrail.org/2014/06/criticspage/cubist-as-in-cuba>
See, for Pantheatre : www.pantheatre.com

updated 01/07/2015

Biography also on www.pantheatre.com/pdf/1-enriquepardo-paintings-biography.pdf