

# *The Color of Our Steps*

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To those who see beyond facts,  
sayings, and form.

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## *MOTIVATION*

I paint human faces, and I have decided to write about my motivation in order to nourish it and maintain it alive. My painting must be a consequence of living in this world. I can not ignore what affects me, although I know I can forget it. I can not forget what occurs to others in the measure that I know them, although I know I can come to not understanding them. I try to understand. I try not to forget.

I lack a descriptive memory and for this reason I paint expressions. For this reason as well, *The Color of our Steps* is not an account of facts, but an essence. When I started to paint, I feared the lack of memory for details. Simply by observing expressions, I have acquired a memory of the required way to structure a human face. Now, in contrast to the past, I fear an excess of memory because I feel motivated to paint peoples' expressions, and I know that controlling the form stimulates and evokes descriptive features. Nevertheless, granted by something eternal, even if I might repeat an expression when faced with resemblance, I relegate to the model the original, the authentic, the unique facial feature which I have faith for.

Looking through a prism that doesn't capture details, I have seen the world go around and around, and people, countries and traditions fall apart; I have seen that human beings, ever since their original primitive form, create new systems of happy life. I have understood that beyond the eyes of a blind there must be a clear world, and that something that will eventually emerge through history exists in each of us.

I knew that solely the face of the blind achieved on a canvas could represent a paradigm for a clear conscience. The smoky lenses and yesterday's walking stick would not explain much today. Without previous explanation, they could even reflect the image of a seer. I don't ignore that the caudal on which a blind relies carries endurable interests within. They can even be projected beyond the mere effigy; but I am not the proper painter to express it. A different motivation triggers me and I deny the shuffling of concepts in my paintings. Understand that my decision is absolutely personal. I'm not trying to set a standard, for someone will achieve endurable messages by shuffling concepts.

Art, science and craftsmanship linked to man, have been and are still themes that leave a testimony of space and time in history; but I am only trying to capture the expression that is kept alive after many histories. Everything is a means of expression just as a face is. Everything is coordinated, shuffled, contrasted, loose; it all achieves the message when interpreted by an artist.

The painter has an undefined sky before him, it is a matter of confining oneself. I respect scientific creation, which improves our existence on earth. Science is perfected day by day. This triumph makes me smile before the caricaturesque spectacle of yesterday' s things applied to the man of always. In this way I applaud the essence of science, which advances at each instant.

No, I don' t know how to explain on canvas things that could put a person in ridicule. My interest is to sublimate that person; but I want to explain such things and I realize that I can indeed write them; for when I say a piece of newspaper, tomorrow it will no longer be the paper painted today; it will still be a paper that periodically publishes news.

Before the evident fact that I used to have less memory in the past and that now I structure the form of expressions better, I don' t discard the possibility of someday expressing in painting the compendium of things that structure today' s motivation. Nevertheless, I am sure that I must not acquire this faculty through descriptive memory alone. I am not interested in details that distract attention. I want to work with and for the man of always.

I am devoted to human faces because I consider that humankind encloses the enigma of eternity by synthesizing the objective of creation, and I see the form of the expression of this enigma in others, that' s why I paint people one by one. If a different light were to come, I would also explain it, hopefully more briefly. Today, if I had painted the first story of *The Color of Our Steps* without the physical presence of "General Bum Bum", I would have had to write much more to narrate his painting to you. Hopefully, some day I will encounter him face to face, paint him, achieve it and we can then forget about this book, since to me the essence of art is in expressing the enduring.

## **GENERAL BUM BUM**

*Little birds sing the same way on trees,  
in front of a big room, or before the  
doorsteps of a kitchen with no hearth.*

*Little birds sing,  
Children play.*

The cry for revolution knotted the throat of those who read it on the newspapers.

Walls became glass.

They shouted the news with more sounding headings each time, while a child free of freedom folded the newspaper and made a general' s hat to play war.

General Bum Bum went to war.

Where is your home, General Bum Bum?

- On the pages of a book (ram pataplum).

What is it about?

- It has no title (ram pataplum). It' s on the white pages (plam).

Firm, General Bum Bum! Take this flower; place it between the sheets of a book with white pages. After some time, when you are older, look at it and you will see what its sap will have drawn.

- Painter, where are you going?

To war.

- Take me along.

You are in it already, General Bum Bum.

- Teach me how to paint.

You know already. Try it. There is clean paper on the white pages.

He galloped through days of sun and of shadow looking for a book with white pages.

General Bum Bum, why are you wearing a general' s hat with an old flower on it?

- This is not a general's hat. It's a dirty piece of paper; look, I learned how to read "REVOLUTION". The dry flower is a flower.

He threw the paper in a puddle formed by the first autumn rains. Snow and winds passed by, and spring suns returned. A piece of paper with no letters was sitting there, where there used to be a puddle. Pressed against it, a dry flower could be noted.

Child, where is your mother?

- On the pages of a book.

What's its title?

- It has no title; it's on the white pages.

Who put her there?

- A clean hand did. Painter, show me your hands.

Look, they are dirty.

- No, they are not dirty they are painted. Did you know that I couldn't find any book with white pages? The flower you gave me dried out in a puddle next to this piece of paper that used to have letters. Time erased them. Take it, I give it to you. If you know where the book I couldn't find is, then place it between its white pages.

The sheet of newspaper erased by time and dampness had acquired a great texture. Interwoven with it was the dried flower. It served as the background for a human face that was painted with the extraordinary subtlety offered by the sensible sipping color of flower sap. The only casual thing was this background. The face was worked with security, strength, and it expressed a conscious, brave and sensitive woman.

The painter and the child dedicated their days to painting with the shades of prairies, skies and the atmosphere. They performed their work on those sheets of books that were erased by time.

They all had the print of a flower.

## **VENTURA THE BLIND**

*The hunter looks through the sight of a rifle.*

*He sees the person that put the pigeons in the city park.*

He had been through so many rains, warmth, suns, winds, noise, music, birds' songs, night silences, contacts with wood, with metal, with bed sheets, and nostalgias of kisses by looking only at the stars in the sky of his eyelids after rubbing them, that Ventura the blind can no longer even see the dreams in his sleep.

He imagines seeing with eyes in all of his pores, all of his members, all of his senses, all of his feelings.

He is covered with dried sheets in the city' s central square. He doesn' t have one eye. He bursts in tears. He cries waterfalls from all of the holes of his being.

Look at this man, how he' s sweating.

- Can' t you see I' m crying? I' m crying! You don' t know how to see that you are not seeing. Those who look can' t see! Look, look everyone, I was crying! I wasn' t sweating. You can' t see. Ventura the blind can see.

He stopped rubbing his eyelids, he no longer needed their stars, and he could see the dreams in his sleep and even dream awake. He could see everything, he simply could not look.

Blind Ventura, where were you?

- Seeing.

But, you can' t see.

- What are you painting?

A roofless house under the blue sky.

- No, you are painting a house that once had a roof under the blue sky.

Wow, Blind Ventura, you can see.

- Of course I can.

When did you start looking?

- No master painter, I can' t look, but I see.

I want to paint you.

- What are your paintings like?

The breezes that you feel are gray, a crepuscular gray. The earth' s crackling, an ochre path. The whisper of the air is green, from green leaves moved by the wind. The horizon is almost as the color of your sight; the night is falling. Our steps...our steps. What color do you, Blind Ventura, see our steps?

- I see that they are the opposite color to my sight.

"His painting was a product of seeing, he reached those who saw and helped those who could look, to see".

## *PAREDES THE MUTE*

*Ants are brown insects directed by our boot;  
we take a fancy to decide on their existence*

*If we observe their labor, it becomes harder to  
crush them.*

Pigeons in the square break the branches of the enormous tree and land at the bootblack' s foot where cuddling, they seek breadcrumbs leftover from the sandwiches that the mute had bidden to evens and odds.

There are three deaf-mutes and a mute in the line of polishers. Paredes the Mute can hear, but he doesn' t know how to read or write. He makes drawings on the air and works to the rhythm of a pendulum that marks calm hours.

Now there is shine, now black cloth.

The bootblack' s box is a step that can be reached in a stride. Paredes has decorated his with such mastery that painters are his best clients.

- I will make you a portrait that the most demanding critique will say "it' s about to speak".

The laughing confused the pigeons, which took flight, gurgling.

Slow, rhythmical, the mute' s movements broke the silence.

Without touching it, his hands modeled the shape of the shoe.

- A clean shoe is soft.

His head drew a No.

- There is nothing like old shoes.

To the rhythm of windshield Noes, languished, he rubbed a tear until it turned into polish.

After the stroke of "it' s done", distance was marked by the steps of the lit up shoes.

On a winter working day, the mute cleaned boots to the rhythm of a pendulum that reminded him of sad hours.

There was another painting on his box. There was a shoe so clean that it reflected a human face.

- You have painted those eyes very well. Did you know that eyes are the mirrors of the soul?

The black cloth bridled at once.

The shrilling lifted the flight of all the pigeons in the square, which made drawings on the sky as they flew.

The hands of Paredes the Mute held a shining shoe at the height of the painter' s eyes.

The master painter could see his reflection on the mirror formed by the polish.

- Shoes are like their owners...**SHOES ARE THE MIRRORS OF THE SOUL!**

It all shifted to the deepness of silence.

All throats became empty.

Paredes the Mute and the painter had spoken with the same voice.

## ***AIRO THE EMIGRANT***

*After the thunderstorm, everyone looks at the sun.*

*People say: Oh God thanks for the sun!*

*The sun says: Oh God thanks for the thunderstorm.*

The horizon at Bandu is firm. Its line is not a fusion of water and sky forming an indefinite color when vanishing. It is a line that imposes respect. It defines the presence of an exuberant nature; trees are not erased by distance: the horizon is green.

Bandu is on a river shore.

Its vigorous waters, as if over flown from ignored oceans in which they boiled life, mould, caress, impregnate, stain the border of the earth with a tanned skin color.

It is such a wide river that to the south of Bandu, the horizon completely loses its hope-green color at sunset. Then, the lively waters rest as they paint and unpaint de shore' s rime with each of their deep breaths.

Airo was painting Gaima.

Gaima was looking at the sun.

The sun sets where the caudal begins to appear. In the middle of its surrender, the river' s mirror reflects a complete image. The light of the sunset is abandoned in the course of the river.

Airo, you painted my face.

I painted Bandu, Gaima. You too, are Bandu.

The stars of the night make drawings on the river; water refreshes the air. The heat from two suns incubates sap.

The caudal walks from west to east. The sun rises from where the caudal that carries almost all the river waters vanishes. After looking at the stars, the mirror water stays and reflects the first lights of dawn. In the middle of its appearance, the sun is now shining completely and the river accommodates to its image.

During the day, the water mirror carries the reflection of the sun over almost all of the river waters.

Gaima, you gave me gold; it shines.

Not everything that shines is gold, Airo.

The piece of gold shined on the mirror of the glass. The eyes received light from the two oval-shaped holes. The face was hidden behind the shadow of the mask. Airo flew away.

Like the rider who forged frontiers under a single sky, he flew away on a roaring white horse.

United, the horizons formed a circle of a hope-green color. From great heights, east to west, the trajectory of the sun embraced a new world.

East and west approached one another.

After a final roar, he landed.

A horizon ahead. The sun was setting.

With a deep breath, the river painted and unpainted the shores with rime.

Airo, did you crop?

Partly; I am coming for more seeds, Gaima.

Gold?

No, sun. The river took half of it away.

In Bandu, there is a race that walks with the sun over the course of the river.

Airo painted Gaima.

Gaima looked at the sky.

## ***PROFESSOR ECHO***

*An endless chain is like water, mirror to the river.*

*The closer you look into it, the further you see.*

Professor, can we inherit wealth?

- Yes.

Fortunately, Professor Echo steps on solid ground. His house is kept soft and smooth by the fragrance of a garden that makes up colors.

This solace is surrounded by the art of always and the comfort granted by the creation of the moment.

It holds no secrets; everything that you look at can be seen and what you listen to can be heard.

As the others, he spends his free time in being surrounded by the most beautiful, the subtlest and the most valuable.

Houses are distinguishable among each other, because a particular intention characterizes each one of them; from Professor Echo' s house, the stars can be seen much better.

In the classroom, the professor' s words are not lost in the air. He emits them and recollects them with a deep breath.

He doesn' t speak of darkness; his voice, like thunder' s echo, only announces the thunderstorm.

"Human beings are moved by an end within endless chains.

On earth, human beings create.

Because of this, our conscience has faith in a supreme being.

Conscience gets strength from employing time available properly.

If we don' t take advantage of the movement of the earth, we will clash and will have to start over again.

We will always have opportunities. The one granted by experience, the one granted by us to experience and the one conscience has provided us with."

- Professor, are we slaves of our conscience?

"No, we are free to structure our freedom. The echo of our conscience' s voice is our path. With our time, we must acquire that which nourishes our conscience.

Although it is true that we multiply ourselves, now in an alarming way, it is also true that solutions are divided due to a lack of a more conscious worry."

The more we look into the endless chain, the sooner we will see the creator conscience.

Accordingly, our movement will provide us with a better life and the proper defense against those who want to submit the human being to the only aim of fulfilling their own beings."

- Professor, can the truth we are seeking be found in modern war?

"Truth is faith. We must seek the authentic human being. War is not good, that' s why modern defense is necessary.

The person who creates goes beyond a cast, a civilization.

That person needs to be defensive against those who only work for their lineage.

We must not solely look here, below, while the heat from the heavenly bodies is keeping us warm."

- Professor, then, the human being only has two paths: to prepare for a good death on earth or to conquer space?

Human beings only have one path. To prepare to live well in eternity, and if we hesitate, waste time, set obstacles, lie to others and to ourselves, while we are faced to the reality of the skies showing our eyes the possibility of a better life for our fellow creatures, then it means that we are still in the beginning.

If we are not capable of understanding what it is to live well, we won' t know about dying well.

Life is not conformism; it is sacrifice, effort.

We must not vegetate; we must wear ourselves out.

The creator conscience is fortified only by living."

- Professor Echo, this was supposed to be a painting class.

Isn' t painting living...isn' t painting living...isn' t painting living."

## ***WORK, THE KEY TO THE CONSCIOUS HUMAN BEING***

To work is to live in function of the labor that each person intimately chooses.

It is to reunite a series of experiences through observation, analysis and study which can result useful for the body and soul of our fellow men and women when performed with the ABC of technique.

Any profession, art, or employ, when corresponding to our vocation, is humanized and it results useful for the others.

It is necessary to learn to observe and to feel as a painter from any angle.

To me, the so-called inspiration is to think with our conscience.

I try to define intention through my own impulse, let' s say the gymnastics that makes conscience jump to the hand is what helps me. In this way I add letters to the ABC of technique. When conscience is more objective, the hand becomes more able.

The so-called improvisation of industrial mechanics particularly draws my attention; being able to substitute a mechanical part with a coupling activating the machine that was stopped due to the lack of a spare tire, this proves that mechanics works even before and after tightening the lock nuts properly.

Creation is crucial in all fields. The world is anxious, awaiting and needy of conscious creations.

Art, which is man' s solace, must contain messages that orient the creator conscience. It must reflect and sublimate integrity of everything that the human being can reach, in order no to conform ourselves to vegetate, recreated in tradition.

This is why I advocate all those who create something and those who investigate the possible truths and the acceptance of the most insignificant creative idea. Accordingly, I am in total disagreement with those who being incapable of creation, ignore, set obstacles, seek merchandising systems to impose a habitual lamp with which to replace the light of achievement.

Painters, artists in general, must explain their motivation in the same way that inventors display their plans and show their mathematical deductions.

For this reason I keep telling you that I try to paint with my conscience, expressions of the faces of my fellow humans, motivated by the certainty that we have been created for a good purpose and thus we are born with a clear soul.

I want to extract the good things that living has left in each person until the moment, and in this way stimulate the goodness and optimism in those who see it.

In contrast, direct, sublimated, and if it' s unavoidable, I want to explain through the feelings of those who pose and of my own, that the path to integrity for the human being lies in working consciously.

Our matter is only strong, great and in harmony when conscience is thinking.

## *EXPRESSING EXPRESSION*

Every human face) is a consequence of the sincere ultimate attitude that we take towards the others, represented in gestures that are marked as a consequence of repeating them.

According to the environment, education and the human being, people take different attitudes faced to the same experience, which is translated into the predominance of the gesture that determines expression.

The conventional form of a face, doesn' t make people beautiful or ugly; with the same roman profile, we can paint a pleasing person and a unpleasant one. We have seen singularly beautiful people with disproportional parts in their faces. If we were static mannequins, without life, we could catalogue beauty in particular proportions, but luckily we aren' t.

We can' t measure beauty in proportions, but in expression. Each part of our being lives with us, detecting and marking like the needle of a cardiogram does on paper.

Those of us who have studied anatomy and drawn on gypsum, are astonished by the harmony of essentially anti-anatomical beings when faced to the first human faces.

Portrait becomes painting when we use proportions to determine expression; this is why we can' t be interested in details; a scar may be a consequence of tragedy, but it doesn' t reveal any moral about the event that caused it. The true cicatrice is explained in a gesture.

The analysis of determining gestures takes us to elaborate the painting using the technique and colors that imprint the character of the portrayed. The satisfaction represented by having captured the positive side of the human being makes me a portrait painter.

## *EXPRESSING EMOTION*

Much is said about emotional beings. To me, emotion is movement, mimic.

If I captured expression and not emotion, my painting would determine a character, not a person.

The way of walking, of sitting, of acting, takes us to identify people that we can't see so well due to distance.

The rhythm of a human body structures form. Even only painting the face, we can determine the total emotiveness of a person in those parts where movements begin or terminate.

Each particle of our being is in movement, it reacts to emotion, and it is reflected even in the most passive of persons.

I don't intend to paint a person in a moment of emotion; I want to show the degree of emotiveness that a particular person has.

I consider that once emotion has been achieved, if observing the painting leads us to imagine the movement that a model who has posed for twelve hours would do if we suddenly scratched the canvas.

Every portrait painter who wants to paint a portrait is bothered by the comment "it's about to speak!"; personally, I would be flattered by the comment of "it's about to walk!" when I have only painted a face.

## *EXPRESSING INSTINCT*

We can't conceive a rational being without instinct. We can talk about persons, and even touch them, but instinct makes people reject or accept you, love you or hate you, love you and reject you at the same time, and accept you and hate you at the same time.

To me, instinct is at the margin of any reasoning, but is tangible.

I have noted the reflection of instinct in the nose, in the quality of skin, in hair, and more than in gesture, in the expertly dissimulated grimace.

Instinct produced the cast, it determines a being, but it doesn't complete a human being.

## *EXPRESSING CONSCIENCE*

Conscience gives the final touch to the human being. It selects our acts and rejects whatever isn' t love.

Personally, I see it reflected in the eyes.

I always start my paintings with looks.

Looking is reciprocal; when we see that our look is being looked at, our conscience is left naked.

It' s like saying ~~that~~ we love remaining indifferent; we know that the kiss will unmask our lie.

A kiss can be avoided, but looks are more difficult. Eyes reflect.

If conscience reflects bad things, eyes can not possibly be evil. They can be shy, or untrusting, they can irradiate nostalgia for goodness.

For this I affirm that there are no bad human beings; painting them from reality is impossible, it is necessary to invent them with the resentment of a defined badness.

Painting eyes delights me. It is to put my self in contact with the creator.

For a reason it has always been said that eyes are the mirrors of the soul and after having painting much, I affirm that even in the cruelest look, there is nostalgia of goodness.

## *CONCLUSIONS*

Badness is antihuman and anti-aesthetic. It is harmful for the individual, it is a disease, a madness that requires therapy. The rational being eliminates it through conscience as culture, experience and instinct show that person the way to integrity.

Bad people make up a minority in a healthy minded society. For this reason in this world good ones will always win in the long run. In the long run, there is more goodness, because it is better.

The only way to be able to express myself through the art of painting is by working with my conscience.

The human face is to me expression, emotion, instinct and conscience.

Expression shows me a character receiving emotions from the instinctive being possessed by a creator conscience that rejects the antihuman in favor of its own integrity.

This makes us meritorious of being captured one by one.

Listening and looking strengthen hope and faith.

Today, when horizons of the sea no longer hide continents, I have faith that we will look further into the skies to carry out new hopes.

The creator conscience goes beyond its lineage and discovers worlds of bonanza.

This is why I paint with and for my fellow humans; I want to look at the stars with them.