

Cenedella turns the tables on Mammon

Palmer Poroner

Many artists respect primitive art and some return to it in their work. This does not excuse them, however, for being primitive in promoting their art, positively illiterate to the point of frustrating their friends. A few rise beyond this and understand the modern world of marketing. Robert Cenedella is one of these. With his studio a few short blocks above Wall Street, he has gathered some of its commercial knowledge by osmosis.

Art, he reasons, once it is produced, is an art product, property, to be bought and sold like any property. He proceeds in a logical step by step manner, creating a corporation, evaluating a work of art, viz. "2001 A Stock Odyssey" (The "Painting") and issuing shares on the work as investment. He has all the official forms, all the legal steps. His art success till now justifies these steps (having work in notable collections, long time instructor at the Art Students League, considerable bibliography...). Therefore, Contemporary Art Shares, Inc., Marketing Consultants for Artists, of 17 Laight Street, makes a "private offering of Units, each Unit consisting of one Limited Edition Serigraph, entitled "2001 A Stock Odyssey" etc...

Of course, as with any artist, this whole procedure is a metaphor. Robert Cenedella, with a painting that is itself a commentary on modern times, is delivering by this process a witty diatribe on our society today. His summary of the situation in art is that there are no regulations, which means there is no standard. Therefore, the truly 'licensed' artist is at a disadvantage, since everything is 'art.' Contrary to others who make this commodity, the real artist needs time to do his work.

Cenedella's art is an act of rebellion and satire, a conceptual foray into the arena of marketing. This shows how the artist who creates true art can come up with an idea, the reverse of what one expects in the commercial world. He asserts that art today is a commodity and that is why he treats it as such. His action is intended to literalize the situation, so that artists and others understand what he intends. Cenedella is critical of the fact that well known galleries concentrate on publicizing themselves and not their artists, and he wishes to turn the tables on them. He believes that an outsider, such as the artist, can handle such matters as investing in his major work because there are no regulations that specify who is licensed to sell the work.

If an auction house goes to an insurer to insure a



Robert Cenedella, "2001 A Space Odyssey"

Van Gogh at fifty-four million dollars, why can't he use the same insurer to insure "2001 A Space Odyssey?" Cenedella does just that.