

The Symbolic Review of the Concept of War in the Works of Iranian Artist: Ali Akbar Sadeghi

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Abstract

By examining the history of world art, it can be expressed that art was not conducted between different ethnic groups only through cultural exchanges. And sometimes common aspects can be found among the artworks which have been the same among all nations. This suggests that the human is a treasure of symbols and images in which the traces of all human races can be seen during different periods of time. Carl Gustav Jung called this belief as “archetype” which is manifested in various symbolic forms. According to this theory, we can cite the many artists not only to express their own ethnic and national values to create their work but also studied the human subjects which are at a collective unconscious. They moved beyond the boundaries of their land. Ali Akbar Sadeghi is an Iranian contemporary painter. He maintained the tradition of painting in his country and used universal symbols in his works. The most important of these symbols is the symbols of war. This article suggests the hypothesis that Ali Akbar Sadeghi knows the world as a place for interference and conflicts and used the tools and symbols of war in his works in order to express the permanent war in the world. The results of this paper states that these symbols have emerged during the periods of his art activities in different ways, shapes and forms in order to convey the concepts and individual contrast with the environment. The method of this study is descriptive- analytical and data collection method was performed through interviews with the artist and library studies.

Keywords: Ali Akbar Sadeghi, painting, symbol of war, archetype

1. Introduction

Motifs carved on the wall paintings, stamps, metals and potteries in the ancient Iran approve the history of painting and the presence of visual signs rich in culture and art of the Iranian ethnic groups. The existing documents show that the tumultuous art of painting in Iran has passed a different process compared with the art of painting in Europe. This art survived after the arrival of Islam in Iran under the influence of the Manichaeism period, the Byzantine art and Chinese art. Fairy tales, poems, and religious and heroic narrations were illustrated in the form of book art in schools such as Baghdad, Tabriz and Herat which resulted in the creation of non-recurring works in the field of visual arts in Iran. The Iranian painting obtained a unique identity and position in the world of art. But this great art declined from the late Safavid era with the arrival of foreign artists to the Safavid court and the infatuation of the Iranian artists to imitate the western works. With the decline of painting during the reign of the Safavids, the school of Isfahan painting began and continued until the Qajar era. During the Qajar era, coffee shop painting became popular after Tazieh painting and was welcomed by the people and artists of that time. The origin of this art was the tradition of story reading, requiem and Tazieh Khani in Iran which dates back to the centuries ago before the establishment of coffee shops and teahouses. In the late Qajar and early Pahlavi era, simultaneous with the Iranian Constitutional Movement, coffee shop painting culminated. Over time, and with the emergence of a new wave of interaction between modernism and the art of Iranian nationalism, once again this type of painting was well received by the Iranian artists especially the artists of Saqakhaneh school; the school which made our artists to take benefit of visual heritage and Iranian art in creating their works. Ontological native looks, the arrival of the Iranians' archetypes and symbols in the field of Persian visual arts, confirmed the emergence of a new era in Persian painting art. Symbol is a universal language and perhaps it can be said that symbol can act more than a universal language because it is understandable to all human beings. And since it arises from human soul, it has a common theme in ethnic and collective unconscious.

According to the theory of (archetypes) from Carl Gustav Jung, the Swiss psychoanalyst, it can be said that sometimes the artist not only expresses his country's identity and culture, but also his language becomes the language of humanity. He discussed the human issues which have been with humans from the beginning of creation and the link between arts and symbols can be observed by studying the artistic and cultural heritage of every ethnic group. Among the Iranian artists, Ali Akbar Sadeghi is an artist who has been loyal to the Persian art in his works and the traces of Persian painting and coffee shop painting can be found in his works. But he moved beyond the nationality area by a universal look. And in the study of his works it can be said that he is not a landscape artist or an artist who illustrates the pains in his community. His language is the language of all time and the language of humanity. He entered the realm of philosophy and many questions lie in his works. These questions have been always with human. His questions are not about the minor and everyday life issues, but are about the world totality, what life is, beauty, time, oppression, injustice, struggle, power, freedom and prominent of all war.

The research question which led to this article is: what is the symbol of war in the works of Ali Akbar Sadeghi? Three important factors were evaluated in the carried out studies. 1) The content and thematic study of the works of Ali Akbar Sadeghi. 2) The study of the status of symbols in archetypes and its effect in the works of Ali Akbar Sadeghi. 3) The study of the symbols of war in the works of the artist.

1.1 Research Background

In recent years, several studies have been done on the symbols and archetypes. The book (Dictionary of Symbols) by Jean Chevalier and Alain Gerber, (man and his symbols) by Carl Carl Gustav Jung and (Dictionary of Symbols) by Juan Eduardo Cirlot have been published in Iran. The book (masterpieces of Persian painting) that was published in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Tehran in the spring of 1384 on the occasion of the exhibition of Masterpieces of Persian painting, (Selected Works of Ali Akbar Sadeghi) by Javad Mojabi and Noorodin ZarrinKelk, (Alef Ba) by Nader Ebrahimi and the book (child and image) by Jamal al-Akrami are among the resources that were used in this article.

1.2 The Artistic Personality of Ali Akbar Sadeghi

Among the contemporary Iranian artists, we have many personalities of artists with different ideals who mainly focused on the implementation of different styles from abstract to realism over several decades. Among these artists, Ali Akbar Sadeghi (born in Tehran in 1937) has special surrealist characteristics combined with his dynamic and creative identity that have given a unique charm to his work. He began his artistic activity officially in 1948 with his arrival to the Faculty of Fine Arts of Tehran University and learned watercolor techniques under the supervision of the Oak Hayraptyan and in 1959 he found a special style of vitray art in which the Iranian identity was evident.

One of the most multi-faceted characteristics of Sadeghi was his multi-dimensional activities in the creation of artworks. So that making movies and animated cartoons are for the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults can be observed in his artistic career. There are also promotional graphic and illustrating books for children in his works for which he has received numerous awards in domestic and foreign festivals while his main focus in the last two decades has been solely on painting. He cannot imagine a world without painting and is one of the artists who know his reason for being painter as his love and interest in creating artworks to explore and experience new things. Art In his view is the first spark that occurs in the brain of an artist. In fact, art is the creativity that should be in the works of an artist. The rest parts of art include the art foundations and industry. In the study of his works, the effect of painting art and coffee shop painting is quite evident. He was acquainted with this art when he was a child and stood in front of places like the butcher and coffee shop with walls decorated with coffee shop painting. At an early age, coffee shop painting to enters him into a world that was not too familiar with and did not know it, but these works brought him much joy (interview with the artist). Coffee shop painting is a style of Persian painting that has a narrative mode with martial, religious and festive themes; the art which emerged with the Constitutional Movement in the late Qajar and early Pahlavi era and culminated and finally left its influence on later generations. Ali Akbar Sadeghi believes that those atmospheres did not leave him yet and their strange memories were refreshing to him. He is an artist who used the Persian painting with all his philosophical aspects; the art that could affect the Iranian artist since the past era to the modern times. Iranian painters observed the arterials in the world but they also did not represent their observations and illustrated their mind reaction to the subject intuitively. Ali Akbar Sadeghi used the Persian painting directly in creating his works especially his illustrations by taking advantage of flat colors and simplifying the Persian miniatures. The books Pahlevane Pahlevanan (the hero of heroes), Abdolrazzaghe Pahlevan (the hero Abdolrazzagh), Gordafarid, and Piroozi (victory) that were the orders of the Institute for the

Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults and were illustrated by him confirm this fact. But his work does not end here. He passes the painting forms and reaches the essence of Persian painting and this discovery saves him from form imitations and duplications (Mojabi & Zarrinkelk, 1998, p. 21). He is a surrealist artist and many Iranian art critics compared him with Salvador Dali the Spanish painter. But it must be said that both of them maintain the classical painting style to which they have become accustomed and based upon it, they form a foundation for their paintings and come to portraying a surreal world or the surrealism. Sadeghi believes that he had a look at Dali's world in the beginning of his imaginary works. He learned visual saturation from Dali and the mixed world of Hieronymus Bush and Peter Progol. But he soon recognized his own style and dealt with it (ibid., p. 27). Ali Akbar Sadeghi said in an interview: Salvador Dali paints based on his thoughts which are rooted in European culture and I am an Iranian artist and the basic concepts of my works are Persian culture and mysticism. Perhaps the similarity between my works and Dali is in creating surreal atmospheres and undoubtedly my surreal movement differs from Dali's surreal. There is a tendency in Iranian art community which considers surreal for the West but if we look closely and carefully we will see that surreal has a special status in Persian painting and most miniatures are surreal. Surreal painting is not just thinking of painting, but is thinking about the beliefs, the world and the realities that we cannot see. He is one of the artists who has thought more than the others about the world and the feedback on this thinking is evident in his works.

In this part of the article, the works of Ali Akbar Sadeghi are analyzed. In general, his works can be analyzed from two perspectives of form (external structure) and content (internal structure).

1.3 The Study of the External Structure

Ali Akbar Sadeghi with a full mastery in painting is able to build whatever he thinks about. And this skill is the result of half a century of continuous work in different fields of visual arts. He took advantage of certain features to deal with the external structure of the artwork which includes the composition of color and form. These features are as follows:

1.3.1 Focus-Oriented Composition

An important feature of Sadeghi's works is the use of focus-oriented composition, so that the main theme of the painting is placed at the center. However, he deals with the background of his works as much as the focus and centrality of the work. Maintaining the harmony of imported elements in his work is another characteristic of his works. This fact is the result of his great experiences. In examining the colors of his works, one thing is worth noting that the works created by him have a high color variation and he has used the color element with a great power. More than one color dominates in a majority of his works. Dark blue, golden, silver and orange are more than the other colors. The colors used in the works are skillfully radiant. Colors are not dead in the works of Ali Akbar Sadeghi but are flowing and alive.

1.3.2 The Plurality of Image Elements

Many of the works by Ali Akbar Sadeghi look saturated and are full of various visual elements. Perhaps in some cases it can be said that the presence of these elements were not necessary in terms of composition, color and volume harmony. But this kind of his works were created based on the personal desire and willingness of the painter. His full master on this type of composition, color richness and proportionality has led to an integrated unity and multiplicity in his works.

1.4 Content and Context Feature

1.4.1 Manichaeic Conflict

According to Mani (the painter prophet of the ancient Iran) the world is artifact composed of two old principles: one is brightness and the other is darkness. They are eternal and have always existed together with full equality such as the equality of man and his shadow. Good and evil, darkness and brightness have always been together. Ali Akbar Sadeghi considers the world as an opportunity for the conflicts between good and evil (Interview with the artist). He sees day against night, water against soil, and flower against stone. In the Manichean world full of evil, the light of salvation glimmers slightly and the painter does not consider the dominance of any one of these two forces as absolute and this due to his doubt to the judgment of the mind and finally sees love as the solution (Ibid., p. 25).

1.4.2 The Creation of Inversion

The inversion state of forms and elements is a feature of his works. Any inversion in its essence denies the authenticity and is a type of being away from its originality. He takes refuge to dream and inversion with incredulity to history and according to this painter the world is captured by this inversion. Inversion is one of the

most active intellectual structures of Ali Akbar Sadeghi as if this painter has been hung from the heaven during a half of his life (Ebrahimi, 1992, p. 17). He sees inversion and contradictions in the world but does not give up. However, he puts the inversions in the world before the eyes of every viewer and makes them to judge.

1.4.3 Epic Legends

Epic stories and fairy tales are a collection of folklore traditions and culture which have a narrative and oral state and are transmitted from generation to generation. Thus, the expression of this kind of literary fiction reflects the social and cultural life of people which shows the attitudes, behavior, thought, and in some cases their aspirations. It can be expressed that epic is a kind of descriptive poetry based on the description of athletic practices, masculinities, ethnic or individual prides and dignities to include different aspects of their lives. Epic speaks about the time when a nation achieved civilization. It also talks about the wars that happened for independence and the expulsion or defeat the enemy or obtaining reputation and welfare. Epic is the war of human to establish life (Safa, 1984, p. 67). According to the above definition and the study of the works by Ali Akbar Sadeghi, especially in 1986-1997 the fascination and interest of this artist can be clearly seen in illustrating the epic and war-themed works. In this regard he stated: (I made the heroes and their worlds as an excuse talk about my world at this time. To talk about human.). He pointed to the story of Cain and Abel and said: what a pity that the tyrant man still kills his innocent brother. I do not take refuge to the history in order to describe these abuses; the history which is all lie and sometimes I summon the future to the present time to make everything immersed in timelessness. And yesterday and tomorrow are integrated and the human that has repeated his moves and behaviors throughout his life emerges in my screen apart from nationality, geography and his native features. I discuss the human at a timeless period to deal with the depth of his disaster without any judgment (Mojabi & Zarrinkelk, 1998, p. 15). He is a painter who owes a collective unconscious and his companions are his heroes and epics. Mythological heroes are partially or wholly the symbolic reflection of ourselves in a period of human lives (Chevalier & Gerber, 1998, p. 62). He, like all the surrealists in the world, puts the rational ways aside and uses symbols, memories and dreams to reach this unconscious.

2. The Status of Symbols in Archetypes

Human, with his tendency to symbolism, has changed most of his forms, myths, and even beliefs into a symbol and used them in art. Symbol can be a rational link between all human groups. In other words, symbol can reach a profound sense of its dimensions which is understanding different subjects among different nationalities. Carl Gustav Jung, the Swiss psychoanalyst, developed his theory of archetypes in the book (man and his symbols) spoke a lot about it. Archetypes, characters and symbols are internal structures that were identified and addressed in symbols, roles and patterns of different cultures. Archetypes are the images taken from the collective unconscious which manifest in various symbolic forms. These archetypes are the unconscious heritage of the ancestors, who had existed before our birth, and we are born into a collective unconscious and the images we create, in many cases, are the reproduction of these archetypes (Irani, 2011, p. 136). Jung extended his view about dream although the dream includes mental and personal images that have a mythological and symbolic theme and some kind of a universal dimension. He clearly states about the collective unconscious that in analyzing the human psyche the traces of symbolic and mythical elements can be found which are present in the collective unconscious of the person. In his view, as the human has changed in terms of biology during his life, the structure of the soul has also changed. He knows these changes as post-historical and unconscious changes and states that the observation of symbols and myths common in various human civilizations has originated from this fact. For this reason, the modern human has inherited the mental structure of his ancestors. At the completion of what was said, it can be deduced that the works of Sadeghi are certainly the result of his thoughts; the thoughts which can be universal and the result of struggling with himself and in some cases the externalization of hidden layers of the artist can also be imagined. By examining the symbols in the works of Ali Akbar Sadeghi and many painters in the world, it can be realized that common symbols with the same concepts have been used by artists in painting. Apple, water and tree are three repetitive elements in painting art.

3. Apple

Apple has been one of the interesting topics for the painters in the world. Apple is the symbol of beauty, seduction, elegance, health and knowledge. From the mythical-religious perspective, apple is the counterpart of wheat. Apple changes the human lifestyle fundamentally and in some cases is the human motive to commit sin (Ebrahimi, 1992, p. 17). It represents the totality and is the symbol of material wishes or giving up against the material demands (Sarlo, 2009, p. 507). Apple includes a wide variety of implications. It is the symbol of change and novelty and the tool of knowledge. It is sometimes the fruit of life or the fruit of the tree of good and bad recognition (Chevalier & Gerber, 2009, p. 700). But this element moves beyond in the works of Sadeghi and

includes much philosophical concepts in terms of work subject. As Eric Newton in the book “the meaning of beauty” writes: Mr. Sadeghi has taken very high steps in the recreation of apple, made sense of it and thus enhanced the human culture.

4. Water

Water is the symbol of light, hope, purity, refinement, and life not only among the Iranians, but also in the global culture. It is one of the four cold elements of life and is also a symbol of intuition, unconscious and the creator of fertility. Ali Akbar Sadeghi considers water full of life but not as a dominant element. Water, the symbol of hope and vitality, is present at the corner of the works of Sadeghi despite the conflicts in his works and this is the life expectancy that exists in human nature.

5. Tree

Trees have influenced in the religious beliefs and rituals of people in the world since the past and aura of sanctity has surrounded it in many cultures and civilizations. Tree is one of the most basic traditional symbols and in most cases does not have gender. Within the meaning of symbolism, tree implies the cosmic life ranging from continuity, growth and reproduction processes. Tree means the endless life, thus it is equal to the symbol of immortality (Sarilo, 2009, p. 387). In Iranian culture, like many other nations, special power and holiness for some plants and trees. Trees have been always respected to humans. The ancient primitive man of the past time and the ancient primitive man of the present time believe that trees have soul like animals and people (Spring, 2005, p. 43). Tree is a symbol of life after death, resurrection and life endurance to human ancestors and the symbol of endurance and abundance was sacred due to the revitalization and evolution rule.

Everything we have referred to as a symbol of archetypes has been manifested in the field of art since a long time ago and the school of surrealism has been a suitable context for this presence among the schools of painting. But sometimes, the artist goes beyond the realm of dreams and with his knowledge, worldview and philosophy chooses the symbols that are associated with him for years and these symbols become lasting in the depth of the artist's soul which causes a particular philosophy in his art of painting. Ali Akbar Sadeghi is as a successful Iranian artist in using symbols with a totally universal concept and sometimes it can be claimed that a symbol has reached to a very personal concept in his mind; a concept in which his worldview is evident.

6. The Symbol of War in the Works of Ali Akbar Sadeghi

Every war is focused on fight against darkness or good versus evil. Gannon specifically emphasizes that war only attempts to transform the plurality to unity and disorder into order (Sarilo, 2009, p. 290), but in the thoughts of Sadeghi, oppression and war have been always in the world. A group fights for values and a group fights against the human values. And in a deeper sense, this war occurs between human with himself. Humans used war as an instrument of aggression, sometimes to protect and defend human moral values. But the nature of war has always been alive in the world. He chooses the symbols that are associated with him more than forty years in order to express the war and these symbols help him to express all the contradictions and conflicts in the world.

7. Warrior Men

Fighters are the symbol of ancestors or in other words the symbol of hidden forces within the human characters that are prepared to assist the conscious mind. These fighters sometimes show the sense of a value and sometimes show the sense of a counter-value. Angry warriors dressed in the ancient Iranian warriors and even the face of a painter is the most well-known elements of painting in Sadeghi's paintings. Some of them stood against oppression and some of them cause oppression. Many of his paintings are a place where injustice and justice can be seen together and it may be said that this is a battle between the forces of good and evil in the universe. His men are often the warriors from historical dynasties, myths or symbol of different powers in different ages; A warrior, a fighter, or maybe a march person. This person is usually a symbol of tyranny, violence and war, aggression and apathy. This is a part of human as the overall concept in our world and in the world of Ali Akbar Sadeghi; the violent person who has a tendency to cruelty and oppression (Ebrahimi, 1992, p. 18). Ali Akbar Sadeghi considers the origin of invasion from the dictator mind of human as the forgiveness and kindness. According to this expression, it should be noted that in many of his works the armored men are not the symbol of tyranny and oppression because sometimes the best people are forced to be armed, use spears, and fight in order to defend themselves and human values so that this kind of war is a form of defense. He believes that oppression has been always in the world but we should not give up. The receptor human plants and fosters the receptivity and digs it into his heart like a dagger (Ibid., p. 10).

8. Horse

Horse is the symbol of speed, nobility and originality and is another recurring symbol or visual structures in his works. In Sadeghi's thoughts, horse has the same concept that is interpreted in epic and myth. Horse is mount, vehicle and container and so its fate is inseparable from the fate of human (Chevalier & Gerber, 2009, p. 136). Horse means power, going forward, marching, leaving behind, jump, and being companion in his paintings. Sometimes horse becomes a symbol in the hands of the painter to go ahead and march towards the goal. It is a powerful movement that had been cut from the present and moves forward. But sometimes he shows horse in a state of stillness and inactivity, as if it cannot move any longer and the power of movement has been taken away from it. Ali Akbar Sadeghi believes that horses are the permanent helpers of human and they have been together in all historical events; in war, peace, legend, and in normal life. Thus, they have a common fate and in most of Sadeghi's works, the horse and its rider ride and stop it together. This is how the belief of Sadeghi about this noble and loyal animal enters the area of the canvas.

Military equipment (sword, helmet, bow and arrow, shield).

9. Sword

Sword is the symbol of military status and power because it is able to accelerate or shorten life. It is the symbol of warfare and in some cases is a symbol for war within the inner self. Sword has many meanings across cultures and is the symbol of lightning, fire and sun. Light and luminosity has been attributed to sword and the adjectives like bright and shining are used for its blade (Chevalier & Gerber, 2009, p. 88). This means of war is sometimes the only means to solve a military crisis and reach the goal. It is the symbol of truth and justice. But with all these meanings, this means has a latent violence within itself. Sword can be a symbol for spiritual evolution due to the destruction of body (Sarlo, 2009, p. 531).

10. Helmet

According to Jung theory, helmet implies whatever is going on in the mind because it covers the head. In the symbolism of heraldry, helmet is a sign of lofty thoughts. Inevitably and very close relationship between helmet and head is a great importance in linking these two symbols (Ibid., p. 628). Head is generally the symbol of activity, governance and command. On the other hand, it is the symbol of soul manifestation in comparison with matter manifestation (Chevalier & Gerber, 2009, p. 562). Head is mainly the place of life power within us and is considered the most powerful body part. Although helmet is a means of war, it is a means of defense in order to cover the ideas and thoughts going on in the mind. It also protects the most important part of body which is head.

11. Bow and Arrow

Bow is one of the war means which is considered a royal weapon in most cultures; the weapon of a warrior. It has the same identification and nature of its owner and if the arrows thrown by incompetent rulers towards the sky, it will return to the same person in the shape of a lightning. Arrow is the symbol of knowledge and awareness and bow is the symbol of removing the dark power. Its second function is to maintain order in the universe so that bow is both a war means and a weapon to ward off evil forces (Chevalier & Gerber, 2009, p. 601). In Islamic and Buddhist thoughts, when bow is considered the same as God, its arrow will destroy the evil and ignorance. Sometimes bow means tension; a tension from which our desires come out. But in this case the aim is the spiritual perfection and the desire for unity with God (Ibid., p. 603).

12. Shield

Shield is the symbol of a passive, defensive and supportive weapon. Shield, with its circle shape, is considered a symbol of the world. In many cultures, it is a symbol of the world as if it is carried by a warrior. It is a supportive means and the symbol of female power, although in some cultures it is the symbol of male power or a hero (Mitt, 2009, p. 95). The fact that military armors were usually designed with marked shields adds another meaning to this symbol and it can be interpreted that the warriors defend themselves by showing their identity and the motives of this identity (Sarlo, 2009, p. 469).

The symbolic analysis of the works of Ali Akbar Sadeghi.

This section examines five works of Sadeghi with the theme of battle and conflict in which the symbolic concepts were used.



Figure 1. Ali Akbar Sadeghi, function, oil painting on canvas 75/5*60

13. Function

Figure 1 named as “function” is in the size of 75/5*60 and was painted using oil painting on canvas in 1985. In this work, we see a man whose head and neck has been replaced by a sword and he is holding a flower in his stone hands. The atmosphere in this figure is dark and in the horizon, sunset. The interpretation of this work shows that the sword is the symbol of warlike thoughts and the drop of blood that is dripping from the sword shows that the person has killed many people. He has discarded the head which is the symbol of thinking and has chosen the sword. In fact, it is a choice between thinking and killing. His stone hands show the apathy and the lack of understanding the flower in his hand. Rose has been considered by humans more than other flowers and is the symbol of love and purity. Rose is the symbol of youth, birth, success, perfection and support (Mitt, 2009, p. 55). But in this work, Ali Akbar Sadeghi turns the rose into a symbol for hypocrisy because it is held by the stone hands of a human. The work represents a man who has forgotten his divine nature and has nourished its evil and satanic aspect (Interview with the artist).



Figure 2. Ali Akbar Sadeghi, problem, oil painting on canvas, 76*61

14. Problem

Figure 2 is a work by Sadeghi named as “problem” in the size of 76*61 that was painted with the technique of oil on canvas in 1997. The atmosphere of this work is divided into two parts. In the lower part of the work we see a desert and an old horse that cannot walk. The shadow on the ground is the shadow of a warrior. On the right, we see a cut log which has the shadow of a full tree. The dominant atmosphere in the lower part is the sunset and in the upper part we see blue horses that kick the warriors. The rebellion of horses against humans is the most issue which is considered more than anything else. The old horse in the painting recalls its youth and ride and the cut tree which has a strong shadow in the mind of the horse makes it to think why it did not rebel against people and made no revolution against all oppression. Horse knows that its status depends on un-free labor by people and not rebelling (Interview with the artist). The red background behind the horse is the sunset that shows its end. This painting has been created in such a way to show the revolt and rebellion of horses against humans is quite legitimate. And their blue and white color is the sign of freedom that is the desire and wish of horse. But now everything is about to end as a non-happened wish and revolution.

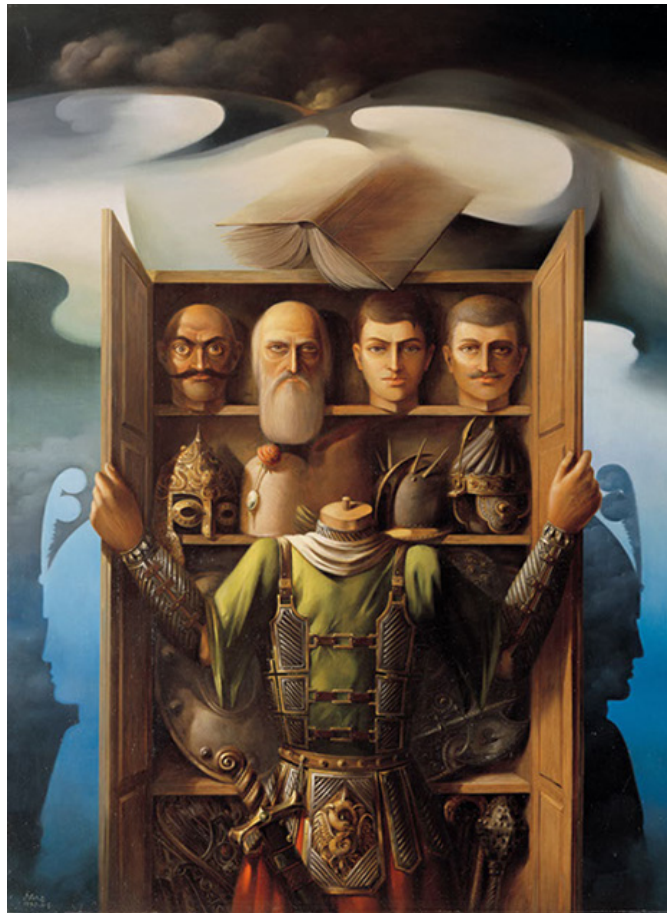


Figure 3. Ali Akbar Sadeghi, vector, oil painting on canvas, 80*110

15. Vector

This work named as “vector” in the size of 80*110 was painted with the technique of oil on canvas in 1990. In this work, we see a warrior with no head standing in front of a closet and back to the viewer. In the first shelf of cabinets, we see four heads and in the lower shelf we see four helmets. Means of war are in the lower shelf and a book is falling over the closet. In two sides of the work, we have two shadows: one of them is the white shadow of a man in the darkness and the other one is the dark shadow of a man in the light. This work clearly states a kind of choice. But this time, this choice is not lawful and fair. The painter depicts a man who changes his character in terms of time requirements and time (interview with the artist) and shows a helmet for each head that is inserted just under the head. Now, the man needs the helmet after selecting the head which is the symbol of his new identity and character. And he selects helmet and means of war after selecting the head and the reversal of the book shows the negligence of science, ethics and law. Two facts are evident in this work: the violation of law and selection. The shadows around the closet show that sometimes a clear identity can be found in the dark and sometimes a dark identity can be found in the light. Thus, human is often encountered with the issue of selection during his life.



Figure 4. Ali Akbar Sadeghi, line, oil painting on canvas, 75/5*60

16. Line

This work was painted in the size of 75/5*60 with the technique of oil on canvas in 1987. In this work, we see a warrior sitting on a wooden horse and there is paper in front of him. There are trees and part of the sea and nature behind the paper. He takes the sword on then paper earnestly and with work clothes, sword and wooden horse behaves as if he is doing a significant and important job. This work shows the attitude of a person who has illusion and fantasy. He is an imaginary hero (Interview with the artist). He is immersed in his delusions in such a way that takes his sword on a piece of paper which shows the futility of his job. He knows that paper so large that resorts to sword in order to pass it. In other words, he is at war with nothing and is the only victor in the battle field. He wants to tear the paper and get the world behind it but he cannot achieve it because the trees, the sea and whatever behind the paper is going up and this climb represents a kind of instability in whatever goes on in the mind of human (See Figure 4).



Figure 5. Ali Akbar Sadeghi, center, oil painting on canvas 105*65

17. Center

This work was painted in the size of 105*65 with the technique of oil on canvas in 1991. The first thing in this work that attracts the attention of the viewer is a man, dressed in blue, with his bow sitting on a white horse and is targeting an apple in the sky and a part of apple is hidden under the fabric. We can see the throng of people upside down behind the man. The work depicts a man who has been once a hunter and has hunted everything and the people on each other are evidence of this fact. He is a person who left his last character and identity and his blue dress confirms his sincerity and also his white horse represents his peacefulness. He has bow and arrow in his hand and is targeting love and spirituality (Interview with the artist). Red apple in the sky is a symbol of love. He has come to hunt love that is in the form of an apple under the fabric and the fabric in this work is a symbol of protecting spirituality (See Figure 5).

Sadeghi is the narrator of the contemporary world that is full of contradictions. He has depicted a kind of philosopher-oriented thinking with the symbols used in his works. With a glance at his works, it can be found that he thinks philosophically and pays attention to the depth and ambiguities of life. His personal thought and look around humanity makes the infrastructure for using the recurring symbols in his works. Certainly it can be said if each canvas of Ali Akbar Sadeghi with all the symbols in it is considered like a book, his philosophy cannot be recognized and understood by reading it. But several of the artist's works should be read. Perhaps at first glance, violence and bitterness is evident in his works but he is not really a despair and pessimistic painter and has always talked about giving up against the oppression in the world.

18. Conclusion

The surveys conducted about the works of Ali Akbar Sadeghi showed that he is an artist looking for the truth in the world and in this investigation; numerous questions have come to his mind. He has proposed the questions in his mind and portrayed them on the canvas to transfer this research onto the mind of audience and make him to understand the world from his perspective. Sadeghi uses the visual structures like words in order to raise questions about the totality of the world. War and human conflict are his favorite subjects. The following results have been achieved in the study of his works: 1) In the external structure of the works, the use of focus-oriented composition, maintaining the harmony of elements in the work, and in some of the canvases, a plurality of components of the work can be observed. In the content and thematic analysis of the work, Manichaeism conflict and thinking, using epic legends with issues of war were considered more than anything else. He was under the influence of Persian painting and coffee shop painting and used the global symbols to achieve personal and surreal spaces. He is an Iranian surreal artist who evaluated the human subjects in terms of image by preserving the artistic traditions of his country and moved towards a global culture. In reading the works of Ali Akbar Sadeghi, the traces of symbolic and mythical elements are clearly visible. According to Jung's theory, these

elements are present in the collective unconscious of each individual and observing the common symbols and myths between different human civilizations originated from this fact which is called archetypes. The most important issue raised in the works of Ali Akbar Sadeghi for more than twenty years is the subject of war. He sees the world as a place for interferences and conflicts and a permanent war has been established between good and evil, being and not being, darkness and light, injustice and justice since the beginning of the creation of human. But he denies giving up against this war. He uses visual structures and global symbols to express the universe conflicts and the recurring symbols are male warriors, horses and their war equipments. He utilizes the symbolic meanings of war equipments and with his own worldview deals with this global dilemma that is understandable to all human societies. Symbols of war emerged in a variety of forms and signs during the different periods of the artist's work. The presence of these forms is the result of direct association with the perception of inner feelings and his personal conflict with the environment and observations. It led to the fact that the artist should achieve personal symbols that have been with him for years in order to express his images.

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