



Blood on the Floor

When i started with Blood, i wanted to make out of Rothko and Bacon something that is radically different.

Of course i was first and foremost concerned with the way paint is applied.

I looked at Velazquez, Goya, the glossy black behind the heads: all classical painters do that, - to pull the image off the flat background.

But the most important thing i learned from Velazquez is to paint with a sense of economy, reducing the brushstrokes to a minimum.

And to work in a Velazquezian way had a profound implication for my attitude: the only way to work economically and quickly was to think in advance of what i was going to do. I thought for a long time before laying the glass on the porcelain canvas.

And from Goya i learned to wed my forms with air with the matter of glass; i had learned from Goya the lesson to paint with literally nothing. The technical imagination is the same.

I took a great deal from Rothko: the same pictorial problems. The forms never reach the edge of the canvas, they hover in front of the ground.

But many of the formal problems are comparable, the question of the tonal relations of the colours, the tension between the flattening of the image space and the illusion of depth, the relation of the size of the picture to the size of the viewer.

Bacon looked long and hard at Rothko. His Blood on Pavement is a late Rothko. Take away the stain of blood and that is what is left.

Blood 1 and 2 are such translucent citations that one feels that i have made them as a joke, in order to tell the viewer 'Look, this is radically new'.

It could be a Rothko, a Bacon, but as you can see i am a Ten Have. Of course my pictorial language is in many ways completely different, but we seem to be coming at the same thing from opposite sides.

For me, 17th century, 18th century, 19th century, it's all the same. Only the stakes had dramatically altered.

I only want those methods to work for me in a very different way to that in which they have worked before. I'm trying to make out of them something that is radically different to what those techniques have made before.

For me there are 5 questions:
How is it made? Why? Does it work? Is it done before? Is it better?

To nail down the thing i'm after: the violence of reality, incarnated in matter. The violence of matter.

Notes:

Mark Rothko, Untitled, 1969.

Francis Bacon, Blood on Pavement, 1988.