

FROELICK GALLERY

Rick Bartow

Tears and Rain, October 2006

Fire filled marks scratched across an unmapped terrain just like John of the Cross, blind to everything but the direction home. I create because I can't do otherwise, I've tried. Like Jonah of old I attempted to evade my job and nearly died because of it. Like Noah I have a job that makes little rational sense to me—contemporary art!

I cannot explain the urge to create. I usually apologize for it as it robs me of normalcy. I'm uncomfortable with it as it's a bit like living in front of a mirror. I'm uncomfortable without it as I'm nothing without my mirror. I live in a theatre of the absurd where action is everything in a play without a script. I must tell you that I did everything I could to avoid this gift, even this writing, but I cannot expect someone else to do it as I can barely do it myself.

There are days when the studio or shop are my sanctuaries, there are days that they are sources of mental illness: anger, cursing, chairs kicked over/glass broken, paper torn and ripped; no tears come, only anger beyond the obvious. Then quiet jazz plays, Ute sings—a calm, a tide rip—a place between opposing currents. The marks begin like fish darting into the baits culminating in a frenzy with expanses of darkness and light. Negative spaces appear where one can rest as I do after the struggle and failure. The fear of the big failure subsides and while recalling the struggles the image resolves so that to my right eye and left eye it seems whole. I continue to look, adding and subtracting small but intense details until the flood subsides two to three days later. In two or three weeks I look again and then I am done. I am me once more; stupidly scared, confused, overbearing, self-centered. Only in the creation of images and sculpture that casts shadows am I allowed the grace that I tend to believe others take for granted daily. And in making those fire filled marks, blind like John of the Cross I can find my way home through the darkness with my eyes closed.