

Mirrors of the Void

By Brad Evans

Mirrors hang to reveal a landscape of human devastation. But these mirrors are not simply reflective. They have no concern for the passing viewers all too fleeting curiosities. They know they outlive us. Side by side, what they offer is a visual testimony to histories of persecution. Fixed into place, they immobilize us with their dark movements. Yet walking past, it is clear they don't exist for our purpose or aesthetic pleasure. They speak to themselves. Assuming the right to project their truth back to each other, back unto the world. Having already foreseen the extinction of all human life, they never required our narcissistic presence or self-centered validations. And they have no care at all whether humans need art. These mirrors ask whether art ever needed us?

So, it commences, as always, with a misplaced sense of elation – the violating optimism. Once again, the masses are seduced by the spectacle and glory of power. Flight into the future presented as the only solution to the curse of the past. Progress, they say. Onward they march, with an intellectual army also marching in formation. History has a way of making such things appear inevitable, certain, foreclosed. Such is the grand sweep of this uncompromising force, which has the capacity to displace all that stands before it. How they learned to desire their own oppression. This is the force of nihilism and the violence of reactive minds. And so, the lines begin to appear, yet already torn. Deeper and deeper, they cut into the canvas of the earth, revealing bodies caught in the unstoppable winds of a merciless storm. Yet still they project their ambition across planes of denial. Cutting into certainty, feeling their way into existence like a liberating force already cloaked in the blood of the innocent. There is no absolving the shameful destitution. This is always their intention, always their desecrating purpose. They carry life with them on their fated journey.

But the majestic lines witnessed on their destructive flight soon turn into the most intimate voids of despair. Everybody is a victim. Everybody is complicit. Our attentions therefore shift onto another frame of reference and suffering. Into the abyss we now descend. We are consumed by the primordial waters. The river Styx was always but a tributary. The pain appears to us in the hopeless depths of subjugation, taking control over every aspect of human existence. That's why the void is a mirrored sight of anguish and madness. They who stare into the depths and see the Gorgon with his deep black eyes at the bottom of the icy pit look back with a monstrous vision. Inner demons thus return as wretched souls of prejudice and hate. Their intimate violence provides a new chapter in the brutalizing movements and flight of men. But it's a mistake to see them as victims born of the original scene. They were already there, waiting, alongside. This is why mirrors always double. Grandest historical claims are nothing without the intimate depths of passion and outrage.

But there is no tale of redemption or salvation here. The white glare of optimism proved blinding to those who already witnessed too much, and yet still persisted as if nothing had happened. And so, the tides of history returned. Absolution reigned supreme, until the end. They held their trials. They condemned as guilty many in their midst for the inhumanity they showed to fellow humans. But never did they see the mirrors for what they truly were. Maybe they didn't have the courage to see themselves truly ravaging the beauty of the world? And maybe they didn't want to see how they ultimately destroyed themselves and thus played out the most fateful of all the worldly tragedies? That was the nihilism. And so all that remained was for each soul to be captured in its fall from grace, visibly caught up in the flight from meaning and forever lost in the depths of these mirrors of the void.