

## Spiritual Beings Having a Human Experience

Mr. Pereira's work emphasizes a longing and desire of the soul for unity, fulfillment, and completion with another being stronger than itself. His work finds a focus in the dynamic of the soul's movement in and through the body, and a grasping towards something other than itself that expresses its lack. The soul is represented in his figures through the lines that run along every inch of their form, reminding one of the rings inside the bark of a tree telling the viewer, "This is how old I am, how much I have lived, and endured."

The longing of the soul evokes itself in wistful movement away from, as much as towards, the object of desire serving as its potential source of joy. The soul longs to be one not only with other humans bearing a soul, but also with Nature herself, the mainspring of all life, and so the point of origin of the soul in all things. Yet, the longing of the soul can become vented in an ambiguously violent moment, as shown in *Father and Son*, or lost in cosmic despair as in the work *Seated Figure Around a Black and White Hole*. Overall, Pereira's work has a vibrant use of color recalling the Fauvist movement, while the constant lines running throughout the figures' bodies has an uncertain character, working both to show the ground and unity of the World Spirit in all living things, as well as abstaining from forging an individual identity for each of these beings.

Familial relations, friendship, and intimacy between lovers seem to be the most typical modes through which Pereira's nameless protagonists endeavor to gain a sense of communion with the other that they are reaching for or embracing. His piece *Catch*

*Me* is reminiscent of the Romantic poet Keats's well-known "Ode on a Grecian Urn", in which the speaker grants Art the one thing humankind cannot obtain—the defeat of Time, and so power over death and decay. The verses that highlight the depth behind Pereira's piece speak of the bold lover frozen in a moment of unobtainable fulfillment of his desire by attempting to embrace and kiss his beloved. The urn's painter, however, keeps him at bay, enforcing the idea that it is the chase, and not the denouement, that burns the spirit with ecstasy.

Keeping in mind the notion and experience of "the fall" that Pereira alludes to in *Before the Fall*, he makes his audience accomplices in the journey toward that fall into knowledge. This is a descent into conscious recognition of human *metamorphosis*, revealing the haunting shadow of mortality confronting us in the guises of Time, sexuality and intercourse, and Death itself. The "fall" of the soul into the human condition illuminates the belief that all human experience issues from the motivation of the incomplete soul groping in the darkness of the material world for an end to the fragmented consciousness it suffers from in the flesh. We attempt to erase this lack through relationships, which do not last and cause further emotional chaos, thus Art, like the mystical element of religion, become the best means to temporal alleviation of the soul's terror while on Earth. The only lasting relationship the soul can have is with God, hence the soul's desire for unconditional love and fulfillment can be attained only through death, the threshold over which we must all step to reunite again in that love with God.