

Painting By Numbers

Peter Hammill

It's not that complicated,
No more than a clench of fist -
She want to paint her heart out,
She want to tell it as she sees it is.
Authority condemns her,
They say to paint's a waste without a base,
Some bedrock of idea.

Painting by numbers doesn't add up,
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It's passionless bed-rest,
Work-body that's headless,
A head that's without heart -
Painting by numbers doesn't add up to art.

Her constant vows mean nothing,
Not content alone that sells -
The Market Theory beckons,
No-one remembers what the story tells;
No-one remembers passion,
We just recite the line
That art is fine and fashion costly.

Painting by numbers doesn't add up;
Safety in numbers, put your hands up
In mute surrender...
They'll break her or bend her
For the heart on her sleeve.
Painting by numbers all the modern world believes.

And the whole thing falls apart
When the movement's more important than the art;
When we're more concerned
With what's been thought than said
This is the moment when the culture's dead.

It's not that complicated,
It's simple as can be:
She want to paint her heart out,
They want a programme for the BBC
Where academic critics can talk of art that's fine
Like holy wine - the Blessed Intellectuals!

Painting by numbers, safety in numbers...
The poets from Venus assume that they've seen us -
They're quick to depart.
Painting by numbers doesn't add up to art.