

Weaving the Now



Andrew Campbell
acrylic on ceramic, 2003

“The Florentine Academy under Ficino was concerned with the cultivation of "virtù", namely the individual's total development beyond all limits and the shaping of one's life into a work of art. This calls for recognition of a timing factor, namely a recognition and appreciation between the artist and the audience (especially within the same person) of the significance of the moment. This relates to the Greek term *kairos*, namely the situational context of the moment:

Kairos is an ancient Greek word that means "the right moment" or "the opportune." The two meanings of the word apparently come from two different sources. In archery, it refers to an opening, or "opportunity" or, more precisely, a long tunnel-like aperture through which the archer's arrow has to pass. Successful passage of a *kairos* requires, therefore, that the archer's arrow be fired not only accurately but with enough power for it to penetrate. The second meaning of *kairos* traces to the art of weaving. There it is "the critical time" when the weaver must draw the yarn through a gap that momentarily opens in the warp of the cloth being woven. Putting the two meanings together, one might understand *kairos* to refer to a passing instant when an opening appears which must be driven through with force if success is to be achieved.” (Eric Charles White, 1987)

Ficino, like any creative artist addresses the enigmatic challenge of interrelating the external (material) and internal (psychological) worlds. The former serves in the process of mapping the latter in ways that are vital to the coherence of inner experience in the moment. Imbued with such psychological integrity, all objects and processes in the external world take on significance for the coherence of the inner world. Ficino may well have been influenced by Nicholas de Cusa who placed high value on what he termed "enigmatic metaphors". In any case this bridge between the inner and outer world is achieved by image-making -- a curious irony to a contemporary civilization dominated by image building and spin doctors --.