

Which 'Scream' Do You Mean?

Written by Alex Baer

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The timing is impeccable: Tonight's GOP debate is the 26th such frightful encounter; Edvard Munch's "The Scream," a portrayal of fright, is to be offered, it was said today.

This is one of our most recognizable human-made images on the planet -- the chilling figure in the foreground, hands up to head, mouth forming an elongated *O*, background swirls in blue and red.

That's our reaction to another one of these harrowing, hellish, wretched political events -- the artist's work, come to think of it now, is also about a figure, screaming. It has always been easy to form an instant, human bond with this piece of art, much more so since began this unending parade of inhuman, GOP zombie-pet-trick displays.

You have to be patient and wait until May to tender a bid on Munch's work; on the other hand, you will feel almost immediately munched and bit-on, somewhere tender, by watching the politcos' at their so-called work this very night.

Of course, to call these feces-flinging events "debates" is to continue to debase the language a bit more, further muddy the already heavily sullied and over-saturated air, and fully murder out in the open any notion of a thoughtful exchange of ideas based on merits.

It is a carny show only, all sawdust underfoot, these penny-a-dozen nitwits, dime-a-herd mental-midgets *tusslin' and wrasslin'* in a square ring -- and, making every bit as much sense as does the concept of a squared circle.

Munch's work, though, is housed in exceedingly careful conditions, being so incredibly valuable -- it might bright \$80 million or more at auction -- as it is an artist's original, one of four in total, one of two that are pastels, the only one in private hands.

In high contrast, there are four political sideshow performers tonight, and that's where the similarities end, with a number -- although a case could certainly be made these pieces of work

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here are all in private hands.

The pastel, we can all enjoy forever, as a public thrill; the dog-and-pony party is just one more tent show tonight, untainted by any whiff of doing public good, only serving self-interests, messaging those of the rich.

The pastel displays a clear message with a crackling and crisp sense of communication, leaving no doubt where it stands on the issues: It is a scream, it is terrified, it is horrified, it fears for its sanity, and it has many damn good reasons to do so, *lists available upon request*.

Sotheby's, a class act, will auction the piece in New York in May. The *mud-slinger* will be sponsored tonight by CNN and the Arizona Republican Party, two organizations more than up to the task of diving all the way down to this bottom-feeding, and bottle-fed task.

The Greedy Ol' Party's traveling creeped-out horror show reveals nothing we didn't already know: this convocation of crazed chowderheads are crazy-cream that has been somehow allowed to rise to the top of the tank, instead of settling to the bottom along with the rest of the dank residue and foul, sticky sludge.

"The Scream" has much more going for it, in terms of anticipation and expectation, right out of the chute -- wholly unlike the slated stumping and jawboning and preening antics tonight. As BBC reports: Sotheby Senior VP, Simon Shaw, said the vibrant artwork was "one of very few images which transcends art history and reaches a global consciousness." Sets a high bar of truth, that artistic absolute.

However, there will no such attempts made in absolutes or in truth-telling tonight, ladies and gentlemen, nor will any attempt be made to reach anything more vibrant or thrilling than a pallid, tepid, warmed-over, room-temperature, limp sort of consciousness by these, *um, uh, perky, bubbly, effervescent, sparkling, champagne-like presidential candidates tonight!*

Pops your cork, doesn't it, thinking of one of these tinfoil-capped, bottle-headed bozos as our chief -- doesn't it go right to your head?

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Fiasco Number 26 -- the latest fetid scent from the GOP: □ Acidic, with strong notes of deadwood, aged and soured sweat socks, with dull notes of fungi and molds long kept in the dark.

"The Scream" is from 1895 and is a refreshingly honest, fresh-aired, and instantly-accessible portrayal of life in modern times. It should be the logo art for the 99 Percent, if it could be managed. Interestingly, Munch's "Scream" comes from the age of robber barons -- could be the artist's reaction to the thugs of his own bizarre time.

Here we all are now, in our very own era of Regressive- and Repressive-Partied, nouveau robber barons aplenty, whose interests are wildly and loyally represented by this brooding and babbling badling of quackers, this clutch of odd ducks, this cruddy collection of fine-feathered friends.

Where is our own, Progressive-partied, post-modernist "scream" in response? Could it have flown the coop forever, its hopes trod-upon and dashed, way back on this road, along with Howard Dean's fiery yelp of a scream?

Here's hoping we someday find voice and speak up. Meanwhile: Maybe it's just laryngitis, or stage fright, or waiting for our voice to drop or to sweeten up some, while we practice forming with our lips the elongated O...