

SATURATION POINT

'Temporal Objects'

May 31st - June 21st

Ian Boutell

The Saturation Point salon has changed out of lockdown necessity, as have our practices, although, with much more time to consider this invitation, I have had no access to my studio. Time increased and space diminished.

'What's it all about?' as Michael Caine asked his screen persona Alfie. He didn't really have an answer. And does anyone now?

I admire, and envy, those who can maintain their trajectory in these times. Thankfully, health workers and carers can and have. Thank you.

But if you cannot, you have to find a way to do something; anything.

So, I've found a way to do something small, a little diptych; it's like a small iceberg of memories, ruminations, false, possibly fake thoughts, blind alleys and twittens (there is a twitten to the back of our cottage and our neighbours'), pathways and interconnections. In self-isolation discovering connections without looking for or immediately recognising them. It has just occurred to me as I write this that it has been akin to Martin Creed's 'Thinking, Not Thinking'.

More often not thinking, but when thinking my mind covers a number of different strands; not a series, not a sequence but simultaneous overlapping's derived from walking, reading, TV and Facebook.

This is how my time has been used in lockdown, a lot of confusion and a little creativity, pressing and playing videos and games on screen.

Pause/play.

FACEBOOK

Takes up too much time but that doesn't stop me. Trump memes are my weakness, I am not alone, Jerry Saltz posts something every day and responds to his regular 5000+ likes and comments. Trump's daily press conferences are as fake as his own fake-news insults to journalists, but redeemed by unconscious humour, which cannot be said of the man himself.

But there is much else to see, and the extreme scales of cosmology and quantum physics consume and warp my time.

Pause/play

GOOGLE

An extension of my Facebook searching, Googling time, temporality, how long is the present, what is the shortest time, what is the longest, quantum physics, Einstein, black holes, multiverses what has this got to do with this project. stop wasting time. don't you realise you probably have less time left than the others. Get back to the art, to the origins of abstract painting before abstract became abstracted, critics, Clive Bell, Roger Fry, then I get distracted to Charleston, Bertrand Russell, beauty, mathematics.

Ahh!! Mathematics, 'the strong relation between mathematical and artistic beauty', Clive Bell wrote in *Art* (1914). Bertrand Russell in *Mysticism and Logic* (1917) wrote that 'mathematics, rightly viewed, possesses not only truth but supreme beautythe sense of being more than Man'.

But get back to the subject, time.

Time is not real, it is not a physical substance, it is not an object it is a construct against which change may be gauged, decay, growth, speed.

Pause/play

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Not specifically an observation of the flagrant abuse of isolation by our modern witchfinder-general Dominic Cummings and his trip to Durham during the pandemic, but about how preconceived plans and trajectories are disrupted. Googling, I have returned to *One Thousand Plateaus* by Deleuze and Guattari. Not all of it, but the 20-page introduction, Rhizome.

With crude oversimplification I take it to mean that everything is connected laterally not linearly, that events do not unfold progressively one step at a time with modernist refinement but that whole interconnections and relationships alter. There is an inclination to create smooth space just as water flows, erodes and moves material, finding fissures and new channels in which to operate. It is thus an active metaphor of the middle ground where most comings and goings happen. There is no start nor ending.

Pause/play

I find this optimistic, but I am not a philosopher, nor for that matter a mathematician, but all this information access is possible courtesy of the largest human-created rhizomic structure/mesh, the internet.

Pause/play

READING

Reading is old-style Googling. In the last two months I have read *Mariner, A Voyage with Samuel Taylor Coleridge* by Malcolm Guite, *On Chapel Sands* by Laura Cumming (no relation to Dom) and parts of *Vagueness* by Timothy Williamson.

Quite coincidentally, or maybe not, they all have the characteristics of rhizomic structures of multiple complex connections. Samuel Taylor Coleridge was a poet/philosopher/anti-slavery campaigner/civil servant, later an opium addict. In the *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, one of the three great poems that Coleridge wrote in 1797 Guite makes connections to Coleridge's prodigiously wide range of knowledge of science, philosophy, of the early industrialisation of England, to Thomas Wedgwood, his early patron, the development of English Romanticism with Wordsworth and his eventual accommodation with laudanum. A tangled web of temporality. *On Chapel Sands* by Laura Cumming, the Observer art critic, tells of a kidnap of a child, her mother, and the web of silence that cloaked a whole community to deny her mother the truth of her birth and family.

Vagueness is noticeably clear about its subject, the imprecision of meaning, language, and understanding.

What is the reason for their appearance here?

I have connections, admittedly quite tenuous, to all three books. My English teacher at school introduced me to poetry, initially to Coleridge and Wordsworth and made me the school librarian where I could read many of the classics whilst waiting for pupils to select their books after school.

On Chapel Sands is close to my own story in essence, if not the exact detail.

These were memories, some happy, but mostly of loss, re-triggered by reading and reinforced by the continuous lockdown news of destruction, of wasted lives, daily on our screens.

Pause.

And *vagueness* is self-explanatory, isn't it!

Play.

WABI SABI

The acceptance of transience and imperfection.

Out walking on the South Downs, I collected some rusty sheet metal from a farm. Love its weathered patina and wondered whether I could use it. The finish that I seek usually in my paintings and constructions, of smooth, shiny, perfect hi-gloss Perspex is diametrically opposite to the qualities of this rusty sheet metal, but this material seemed to be perfect, because of its imperfection.

Imperfect. Impermanent, incomplete. Time worn. Decayed.

Wabi Sabi is Zen. Zen is about catching the moment, catching that shortest fleeting moment of time before it becomes the past.

I thought that all that Googling would come in useful sometime.

Pause.

IAN BOUTELL

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