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MA FINE ART EXHIBITION





# THE TREMOR OF TIME

## CRAIG STAFF

WRITING IN 1766, THE GERMAN PHILOSOPHER GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING FAMOUSLY ASSERTED THAT WHEREAS PAINTING WAS AN ART OF SPACE, LITERATURE WAS TO BE CONSIDERED AN ART OF TIME. TODAY, LESSING'S ATTEMPT TO CODIFY ART ACCORDING TO A SET OF "FIRST PRINCIPLES" SEEMS, AT BEST, ILL-FITTING, GIVEN THE FACT THAT CONTEMPORARY ART, OR AT THE VERY LEAST ASPECTS THEREIN SEEKS TO FOREGROUND TIME BOTH WITH REGARD TO ITS PRODUCTION AND WITH REGARD TO THE OSTENSIBLE MEANINGS IT ENGENDERS.

[1]

WHILST IT WOULD BE ERRONEOUS TO CONFER ONTO SEVENFOLD A UNIFYING THEME FOR THE SIMPLE REASON THAT IN AN EXHIBITION SUCH AS THIS THERE IS (FORTUNATELY) NO UNITY OF MEANING, EVEN A CURSORY GLANCE, (ALTHOUGH OF COURSE WE WOULD HOPE THAT YOUR ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WORK WILL FAR EXCEED THIS), REVEALS A SERIES OF FASCINATING CONNECTIONS WITH CHRONOLOGY, TENSE AND TIME.

TO THIS END, THE WORK OF TIME, AND EQUALLY THE TIME OF THE WORK OFFERS, AT THE VERY LEAST, AN INTERPRETIVE LENS WHEREBY THE WORK OF THE SEVEN ARTISTS THAT COLLECTIVELY FALL WITHIN SEVENFOLD'S PURVIEW MIGHT BE CONSIDERED.

RATHER THAN BEING COMMENSURABLE WITH POSTMODERNISM'S ARCH JXTAPOSITION OF DISPARATE ELEMENTS, REDDEDIYORUZ BY FATMA UMMANEL WORKS OUTWARDS FROM THE BASIC ADMISSION THAT TIME IS MULTIFARIOUS, EQUIVOCAL AND RESOUNDINGLY



NON-LINEAR, SEEKING TO ADDRESS SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF CYPRUS'S HISTORY, UMMANEL'S PALIMPSEST-LIKE LAYERING OF IMAGERY IS TESTIMONY TO THE FACT THAT THE EFFECTS OF THE ISLAND'S INVASION BY TURKEY IN 1974 ARE CLEARLY STILL BEING FELT.

IF UMMANEL'S LARGE-SCALE CANVAS, AND EQUALLY HER SMALLER PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKS ARE ORGANISED AROUND THE FELT ECHOES OF A PAST THAT ALTHOUGH SHARED, HAVE PERHAPS BEEN REMEMBERED DIFFERENTLY, THEN RUBY SATCHELL'S WORK FOREGROUNDS A MORE INDIVIDUALISED AND FOR THAT MATTER IDIOSYNCRATIC RESPONSE TO THE FELT AND SEEMINGLY INCIDENTAL ECHOES OR REMAINS OF WHAT WAS ONCE PRESENT. IN THIS RESPECT, HER PRINTS OF THE OVERLOOKED AND THE QUOTIDIAN ARE SUGGESTIVE OF A PREOCCUPATION WITH WHAT MICHEL FOUCAULT, APROPOS THE LITERATURE OF MAURICE BLANCHOT IDENTIFIED AS THE "GRAY TONES OF EVERYDAY LIFE AND THE ANONYMOUS." [2]

ALTHOUGH EQUALLY BOUND UP WITH QUESTIONS OF THE EVERYDAY, IN ONE SENSE THE DRAWINGS OF RUTH BODDINGTON HAVE THE MOST OVERT OR EXPLICIT CONNECTION WITH TIME. THIS IS BORNE OUT OF HER DECISION TO MAKE AN OBSERVATIONAL DRAWING EACH DAY, AT A SPECIFIED TIME, OF WHAT SHE COULD SEE, SEEN INDIVIDUALLY, THEY FUNCTION AS DISCRETE RESPONSES TO A MOMENT THAT THE DRAWING ATTEMPTS TO CAPTURE BEFORE TIME MOVES INEXORABLY ON. SEEN COLLECTIVELY, AND CERTAINLY WITH RESPECT TO

THEIR DISPLAY, THEY SPATIALISE TIME TO THE EXTENT WHEREIN THE WORK CAN BE SEEN AS AN AGGREGATE, AT ONCE ARBITRARY AND PARTICULAR, OF LIVED EXPERIENCE.

THE RENDERING VISIBLE OR REGISTRATION OF ENERGY BEFORE IT BECOMES ENTROPICALLY DISPERSED, TOGETHER WITH THE TIME OF PRODUCTION IT ENTAILS IS ALSO A CONCERN OF ELIZABETH TOMOS. DIRECTLY KEYED INTO PRINTMAKING AS A PHYSICALLY REPETITIVE ACTIVITY, THE CONDITIONS OF VISIBILITY OF TOMOS'S LIVE WORK ARE SUCH THAT PRINTMAKING'S REGIMENTATION AND SUBSEQUENT REGISTRATION OF ARTISTIC LABOUR BECOMES INDEXICALLY EXPOSED.

FOLDED INTO OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT IN SOME WAY, SHAPE OR FORM TIME IS WRITTEN INTO THE WORK IS THE FACT THAT WHAT UNDERGIRDS ALL OF THE ARTISTS BRIEFLY CONSIDERED THUS FAR IS THE CONNECTION TO OR RELATIONSHIP WITH REPETITION; PRACTICE, IN THIS SENSE CAN BE SEEN AS AN ITERATIVE, ONGOING AND RESPONSIVE ENQUIRY.[3] CERTAINLY THIS IS THE CASE WITH NICOLA HOLLOWAY'S LARGE-SCALE WALL DRAWING WHICH, OVER THE TIME WITHIN WHICH THE ITERATIVE MARKS HAVE SLOWLY ACCRUED UPON AND ACROSS THE WALL'S SURFACE, FORM HAS BEEN FOUND AS MUCH AS MADE.

AN INTERESTING POINT OF CONTRAST WITH HOLLOWAY'S WALL DRAWING ARE THE WORKS ON PAPER BY JENNA WILKINSON. KEY AGAIN HERE IS REPETITION AND THE



ACCUMULATION OF MARKS THAT HAVE BECOME INTUITIVELY INSCRIBED. HOWEVER, UNLIKE THE DRAWING OF HOLLOWAY THAT IN ONE SENSE RESPONDS DIRECTLY TO ASPECTS OF THE ROOM'S ARCHITECTURE, WILKINSON'S DRAWINGS FUNCTION AS A SELF-REGULATING AND FOR THAT MATTER SOMEWHAT OPTICALLY DIZZYING SYSTEM THAT IS NOT NECESSARILY BEHOLDEN TO EXTERNAL REFERENCES OR PHENOMENA.

ON ONE LEVEL. WHAT CONNECTS WILKINSON'S PRACTICE AND THE INSTALLATION BY ELAINE ELCOAT ARE QUESTIONS AND APPROACHES THAT CENTRE UPON GESTURE AND THE POSSIBILITIES SUGGESTED BY THAT TERM THEREIN. ONLY GESTURE HERE, AT LEAST WITH RESPECT TO THE PROVENANCE OF ELCOAT'S WORK, WHILST REPETITIVE, IS NOT AGGREGATIVE BUT RATHER IS THAT WHICH SUBTRACTS AND WORKS TO ERASE OR DIMINISH. NEVERTHELESS, AND BEYOND THE AFFINITIES THE SITE-BASED WORK HAS WITH BOTH GESTURE AND REPETITION, THE PIECE ALSO BECOMES IMBRICATED WITH TOMOS'S OWN LIVE WORK TO THE EXTENT WHEREIN BOTH SEEK TO REGISTER OR TO INDEX PRODUCTION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, EVEN IF IT IS ONLY DONE SO VESTIGIALY.

EVIDENTLY THEN, WHILST SEVENFOLD EXCEEDS OR IS RESISTANT TO THE SYSTEM OF FIRST PRINCIPLES AS APPLIED, IN THIS CONTEXT, BY LESSING, THE WORK THAT GOES TO MAKE UP THE EXHIBITION, ALBEIT IN DIFFERING WAYS, ENTAILS THE PATEFACTION OR WHAT

ROLAND BARTHES SPOKE OF, WITH RESPECT TO THE WORK OF CY TWOMBLY, AS BEING THE "TREMOR OF TIME." [4]

- DR CRAIG STAFF, MA FINE ART COURSE LEADER, SEPTEMBER 2016

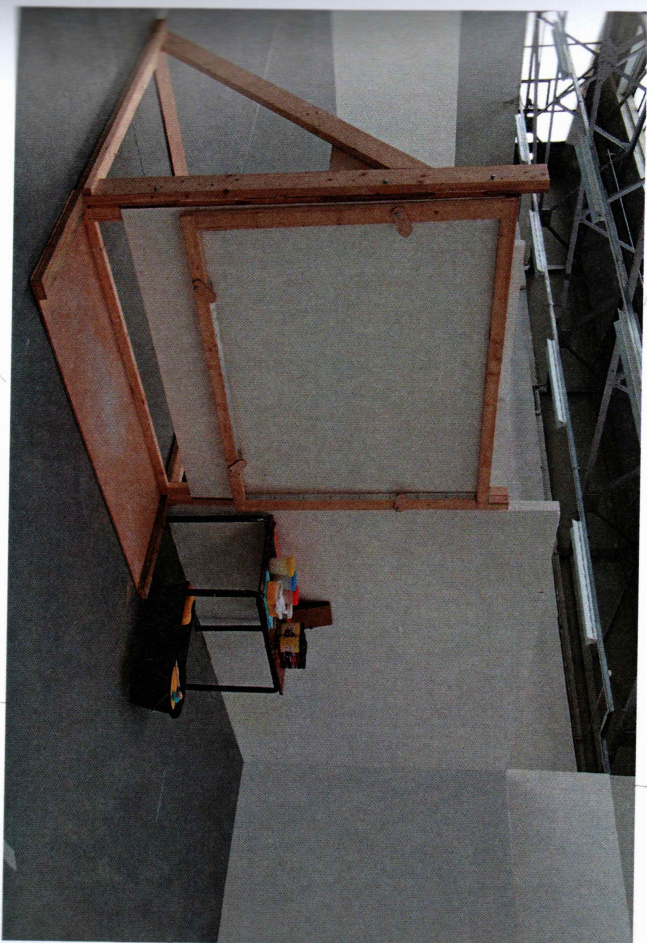
[1] W. J. T. MITCHELL, "THE POLITICS OF GENRE: SPACE AND TIME IN LESSING'S LAOCOON," REPRESENTATIONS, NO. 6, SPRING 1984, P. 98.

[2] JAMES MILLER, THE PASSION OF MICHEL FOUCAULT, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.: HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2000, P. 155.

[3] REPETITION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF ARTISTIC PRACTICE FINDS AS ITS EQUIVALENT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF ARTISTIC RESEARCH IF WE ARE TO FOLLOW KATHLEEN VAUGHAN'S UNDERSTANDING THAT "[E]TYMOLOGICALLY, RESEARCH IS - AS POET AND SCHOLAR RISHMA DNLOP REMINDS US - A RE-SEARCH, A RE-CHERCHE, A LOOKING AGAIN AT AND FOR FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS..." KATHLEEN VAUGHAN, "MARIPOSA: THE STORY OF NEW WORK OF RESEARCH/CREATION, TAKING SHAPE, TAKING FLIGHT," IN PRACTICE-LED RESEARCH, RESEARCH-LED PRACTICE IN THE CREATIVE ARTS, HAZEL SMITH AND ROGER DEAN (EDS), EDINBURGH: EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2009 P. 167.

[4] "...IT SCRATCHES OUT FROM IDLENESS, AS IF IT WERE A MATTER OF MAKING TIME ITSELF VISIBLE, THE TREMOR OF TIME." ROLAND BARTHES, "CY TWOMBLY WORKS ON PAPER, THE RESPONSIBILITY OF FORMS, TRANSLATED BY RICHARD HOWARD, BERKELEY AND LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS, 1991, P. 164.

ELIZABETH TOMOS





"AFTER HAVING TRACED A GESTURE,  
THE HAND TENDS TO RETURN BY A  
SHORTER PATH" [...]"[THIS WOULD  
LEAD ONE TO SAY THAT CREATION IS  
(THE SENSE OF) TOUCH OR THE STROKE  
OF BEING-IN-THE-WORLD. "

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STANFORD, CALIFORNIA: STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, PP.20-22.

