

Temporality; The Poetics of Time and Space

30 October – 24 November 2012

'What is time? If nobody asks me, I know; but if I were desirous to explain it to one that should ask me, plainly I know not.'
- *Saint Augustine*, Bishop, Latin Philosopher and Theologian. 354 AD.

'Space and time are the framework within which the mind is constrained to construct its experience of reality.'
- *Immanuel Kant*, Philosopher. 1788.

'So far as physics is concerned, time's arrow is a property of entropy alone.'
- *Sir Arthur Eddington*, Astrophysicist and Philosopher. 1928.

'The distinction between the past, present and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion.'
- *Albert Einstein*, Theoretical Physicist. 1921.

And then I moved into the mystic, 2009, a photographic print by JOHN BODIN, depicts a stretch of road as it snakes across a desolate landscape into the misty ether. Charged with psychic and metaphoric possibility, it channels a poignant sense of the infinite. As the road unravels before us, our imaginations are held hostage to the plethora of possibilities that might exist in the great beyond.

'*The road is life.*' wrote Beat generation poet and novelist Jack Kerouac in his seminal text, *On the Road*, 1957.ⁱ Yet the road is also analogous of time, and as we appear to traverse across distance through our fleeting memories of the past and into a future unknown, we are ultimately bound up in a series of present moments – everything else is imperceptible. There is only 'the now'.

There is a Japanese quote relating to the notion of Wabi-Sabi that states 'everything is either devolving toward or evolving from nothingness'.ⁱⁱ If the road is hurtling towards nothingness, *And then I moved into the mystic* metaphorically illustrates the linear conception of time's arrow, and the universe's propensity towards entropy.ⁱⁱⁱ Either way, as we transition across the landscape our passage is delineated by a series of signposts or milestones that allow us to chart our progress, that bind us to a particular trajectory, that illuminate the fact that we are moving.

In *Pastoral Passages #9*, 2012, Finnish photographer ONERVA UTRIAINEN captures the poetry of motion. Shot from a car window whilst journeying across rural Victoria, horizontal streaks in an array of verdant greens and earthy brown hues extend across the picture plane. Time is conveyed as a continuum, never static but in constant flux, as if produced by the singular gesture of an omnipotent screenprinter.

EBONY ADDINSALL's blown glass forms from her *Hardly Seen; Only Felt* series elucidate the ephemeral nature of time as a series of intervals or transient moments. These works are produced to be experienced in a sequential arrangement in order to evoke notions of connectivity. Her episodic use of pattern and rhythm that flows through each composite part, conjures up allusions to tonal structures in music. Similarly, her linear forms resemble a kind of graphic notation. These aspects are evident in both *Untitled Moment*, 2012 and *Limitless*, 2012.

Absence, silence and breath are denoted by the signifying presence of each vessel as it both encapsulates and delineates the perimeters between positive and negative space. With a nod to the artistic strategies of the Minimalists, the materiality of these forms appear to simultaneously respond to, and amplify, their architectural surrounds.

In *Bye-the-bye*, 2009, KATE HENDRY's wall sculpture from her *Metronomic Balance* series, the artist draws on temporal measurement systems that enable human constructions of mechanical time. Employing repetitive spokes, arcs and curvilinear orbs, these works stylistically reference the design vernacular of the Art Deco movement, combined with an approach that resembles that of the Futurists.

Akin to a three-dimensional line drawing produced in steel, this work elicits a sense of metronomic movement or the swing of a pendulum. There is also the inference of concentric motion such as compass direction and clockwork, or on a greater scale, planetary orbits around the sun. HENDRY comments on the way in which constructs of time shape and define our lives, delimiting one moment from the next and ostensibly allowing us to order, control and have dominion over our realities.

By contrast, TED LINCOLN's *Relativity of Speed*, 2012, pervades a contemplative, elusive quality that is achieved through employing chance and accident as an artistic strategy. This is combined with a hybrid of eastern painterly techniques and western contemporary materials and the work is executed in a monochromatic palette with Sumi ink on epoxy-glazed rice paper.

Referencing Einstein's theories on the curvature of space-time and its relationship to the gravitational pull of mass, LINCOLN's overall compositional approach and glossy seductive surface, enables a sense of continuity for this diptych to extend into space beyond the perimeters of its pictorial frame. This is further enhanced by the interjection of the golden horizontal line as a formal compositional element.

The interlocking matrix in SARA FREEMAN's *Veil #4*, 2010, could be understood as representative of the interwoven nature of space-time with the potentiality for a synchronous past, present and future. Alternatively, it could analogize the vast complexity of quantum mechanics and the probability for parallel universes to exist simultaneously. Employing age old materials such as organic saponified wax and egg tempera, FREEMAN's linear webs are also influenced by Chinese and Vedic philosophies that express an 'infinite net that makes up the ground of all being'.^{iv}

In *Far Away*, 2012, JESSI WONG's ethereal wood block printing process conveys an abstracted vision of a landscape that appears suspended in a timeless spacelessness. Diaphanous clouds hover and punctuate a dark, uninhabited mountainous form. Shifting and oscillating, the clouds protrude and recede in accordance with their varying layers of transparency and opacity. This sense of fluidity is reinforced by the architecture of the support with its undulating rolls of rice paper aligned in a parallel series and encased in Perspex.

For the artist, this work pervades a persistent sense of disquiet that relates to humanity's impact on the planet. If we are standing on the precipice of environmental annihilation in tempo with the ticking clock of doomsday – *Far Away* appears as a barren deforested wasteland. A post apocalyptic vision of a possible future: the end of time as we are able to perceive it.

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i Kerouac, J. *On the Road*. New York: New American Library, 1957.

ii Koren, L. *Wabi – sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets & Philosophers*. Berkley California: Stone Bridge Press, 1994.

iii Eddington, A. S. *The Nature of the Physical World*. New York: The Macmillan company; Cambridge, Eng: The University press, 1928.

iv Excerpt from artist's statement.