

A Reckless Use of Electricity Hatcham Gallery October 2018

The manipulation of time — fractured, layered, circular — ties together much of the work. So does a desire to achieve the physical presence of art objects, but without their fixed materiality. Here the materials of note are narrative, spoken words and images moving and still, as well as experience filtered through the framework of science and philosophy.

Always More than One reaches to all four corners, feeling stretched and a little barren. But move around, and it comes quietly to life. Short sound pieces trickle from speakers around the space (Every Man His Own Lygeti). It's austere but in a way intimate, relying on broken and imperfect technologies.

It challenges the idea that movement is simple displacement in space, knowable only in terms of changing physical stuff.

Exploring the relation between sensation and thought through the prisms of dance, cinema, art, and new media, movement is intense and incipient. It creates relational intervals out of which displacements take form.

I am reminded of the Pynchon short story The Secret Integration (one of the texts in Finnegans Anatomy) in which metaphors are coaxed out of mathematical concepts. For example, he notes that the vertical lines often drawn on the graph during integration operations (to represent the Riemann sum) appear to be like prison bars...prison bars which become infinitely close, preventing any chance of escape. As $\Delta v / \Delta t$ approach zero... to what limits can we hope to cleave time? Obviously beyond the performance of a Carousel projector. But if you blink quickly you freeze -- 'choose' -- the product of the dancer's movement; the fifty-fifty probability collapses into a single integer.

Dancers of a more cerebral orientation assert that sophisticated choreographic practices work to develop with a body-in-movement, rather than simply stabilizing that body into patterns of displacement. Which leads not-that-torturously to Bergson's idea of duration: every so often, I try to grasp Bergson's concept of multiplicity. No luck yet, but I've found it in Deleuze and Guattari and others (Whitehead?) so it seems worth banging away at. The Carousel piece is a bang, which is more definitive than a jerk or a jolt.

In order to define consciousness and therefore freedom, Bergson differentiates between time and space. He defines the immediate data of consciousness as being temporal -- the duration. Here, there is no strict juxtaposition of events; therefore there is no mechanistic causality. It is in the duration that we can speak of the experience of freedom. Hume points out that we can't justifiably assume causality -- we can't for example say that 'the glass smashed because it fell'. All we can say is 'the glass fell. The glass smashed'. It's the between-spaces, and what humans make of them, which is of interest in my work. Scientists shrug and ignore him as a casuist. *E pur si muove*, and all that, which was considered as a title but rejected on the grounds that it's pretentious.

It's refreshing to look backwards in time, away from perfection of pixel towards the instability of grain, of the delta-plus of changing film frames between a light source and a lens, radically distinct from an Olympics of pixels.

Compositions, or creations, are made by making decisions and ordering elements. But no complete authority can be claimed as the creator is entrapped by the tools in use. Three computers create by ordering elements, using the algorithm written as a tool. They make a silent hymn to human achievement. This is a sort of intelligence, but it's far from consciousness. For the first time, we can decouple intelligence and subjective awareness; so what price the latter?

In the era of big data, the tech giants will be able to "know" more about the individual than s/he does, by reading utterances and watching habits – one hands this stuff over willy-nilly, and so do billions of others. The algorithm, backed by unfathomable quantities of information and processing power, will be able to make choices better than I can – health care, politics, even who to marry. I, however, am more clued-up about how a car works than about my own being. Whenever I try to focus on the state within my skin I just can't. My attention buggers off for a pint of cider and a Woodbine as soon as I turn my head away. I can't tell you even in simple terms what my body is doing on a more than banal level. Some insist that meditation is a way of dealing with this. I tried TM, ages ago (150 quid and some flowers for a Sanskrit word which, it turns out, means 'peace'. Thanks, George Harrison) but I just fell asleep. So if I need a defence against Google, the only one I can think of is *to know myself much better*. Will there still need to be a human interloper, a hand that moves gently around the body coaxing tone and timbre? Or will the silicon substrate be allowed to mix the information streams according to a mathematics too complex for a normal brain?

Are humans facing something worse than exploitation; *irrelevance*?

.