

Clytie Alexander's paintings

The difference between a painter and a weaver is in degree and kind, the kind of relative freedom offered in painting and the degree of constraint, posed by the technique and material used in weaving. We are born within a thin slice of time as thin as a leaf of paper, preferably of Chinese quality and Japanese strength.

Before we realize our predicament we are already and always closer than we know to the reverse side of this thin tissue. Ever since Veronica and her cloth, an exceptional relationship can be observed between the feminine principle and the making of an image - une vraie icône.

The images of our life by which we live owe more to that association, the occupation with cloth and cloth making, weaving and weaving again as Penelope. Would we be able to acknowledge as much or as little as that? In the absence of overt figurative subject matter, the mater-

It is not down in any map:
True places never are.
Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*.

ial itself becomes the body. Paintings are among things, other things that resist naming. Vico has given us the idea that language is a fossil poetry and these paintings make us aware of these limits, the limits of our language. If we recognize the duality of the intelligible and the sensible, a view of these bodies, these paintings must be made in the light of these bodies themselves.

More profound and secret dualism is hidden in these sensible and material bodies themselves; it is a subterranean dualism between that which receives the action of the idea and that which eludes this action, painting grain, paintings as things, limited things, lie beneath the perception of things; is there not still this mad element which subsists and occurs on the reverse side of the order that the painter imposes and things receive?

This pure becoming has its peculiar relation to language.

It is as if there are two languages and two sorts of 'names', one designating the paintings as knowable pictures, the other expressing the movements and colors, resisting its own name and idea - rebel becoming, in each moment in each light once and only; as if there are two distinct dimensions internal to paintings in general - one always concealed by the other, yet indispensable for the other, subsisting under the other.

In the language of paintings as pure events, all identity disperses. Or, we could say that in the objective structure of paint marks and labors, differences are the event which move in two directions at once. Its fragments are the subject intact, it denies common sense as the assignation of fixed identities.

Limited things, paintings, resist our perception of things. Is there not still this mad element which subsists and occurs on the reverse side of the order that the perceiver perceives on

the other side, or side by side of the order that the painter imposes and things receive?

The bodies of these paintings with their physical qualities endure only a little longer than ourselves, are not things as facts, but events. They exist in time and gather together or absorb the past in which they were made into a future which is not yet. They divide and present infinitely, a way of being.

This way of being finds itself somehow at the limit, at the surface of being the nature of which is not able to change, something that no one had done before, an endless multiplicity of incorporeal being. Clytie Alexander's paintings are made of conjugations, a series of events on the surface, and in front of the canvas limits are established within a rectangular division which continue to do so, far and beyond. Everything happens at the boundary between things as they are and things as they are on canvas, things

made of pigments, of colors which have abandoned their given names. A display of events is at the surface on which Clytie Alexander reenacts Alice's adventure: her climb to the surface, her disavowal of false depth and her discovery that everything happens at the border. It is by following the border, by skirting the surface, that one passes from bodies to embodiment. Or as Hofmannsthal said: "Depth is hidden? Where? On the surface."

Yehuda E. Safran

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