

Statement

“Glossolalia Inter Alia”

Formally, a great deal of my work references the aesthetic of the long European tradition of ecclesiastical decoration and polychromatic fetish-manufacture: I have a love for traditional plasticity. Geological clocks, cosmogony and creation myth were obsessive interests of mine as a child, but Inasmuch as my work is an expression of aesthetic value, I see it as having been influenced at an early date by religious imagery, and I cannot deny the power of monotheistic ultimates such as the Beatific Vision.

This concept is from the culture of raw archetypal embodiment of the Judaeo-Christian ideology, specifically from Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*. This ideology orbits what has been historicised through a theological lens by Rudolf Otto in "Das Heilige"¹ as that "non-rational, non-sensory experience ... whose primary and immediate object is outside the self". What Otto called the "Mysterium Tremendum" is related to Kant's earlier definition of the "formless object" of the Sublime². This, to Kant, is a condition from which the measure of mere beauty is posited as ultimately distinct. Schopenhauer would further expand on this "Zustand der Erhebung" ('condition of the sublime')³. Its connection with the romantic era and indeed fundamental salience for contemporary culture have been documented, and they are embodied in Lyotard's notion of the Differend⁴.

I position this object at the centre of language, as the nucleus about which culture rotates; I hold the above clear cultural utterances of the ineffable in nature to have great resonance for a contemporary, informed, contextually aware and depictive art practice.

The problem is that this transcendent, supercultural object exists beyond the roving hand of objective empirical thought and ultimately the dialectical cultural pursuit. If (as I have it) the ego can encounter this object and pass it by, affected, I cannot claim culture to be less than a large, constructed meta-machine of reflexivity: Culture is operating a kind of constrained writing in which it is always "meta-itself" at a determined level of primacy. As I see it, art seeks meaning by means of meaning in a self-containing feedback loop.

¹The Idea of the Holy, (published first in 1917 as *Das Heilige - Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* / *The Holy - On the Irrational in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational* (1923), Oxford University Press, ISBN 0-19-500210-5

² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790), Edited by Paul Guyer, translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Mathews, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant. ISBN: 0521344476

³ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Courier Dover Publications, 1969 (Published 1818 as "Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung")

⁴Jean Francois Lyotard "Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime: Kant's Critique of Judgment, §§ 23–29". Trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994 [Lessons sur l'“Analytique du sublime”: Kant, “Critique de la faculté de juger,” paragraphes 23–29. Paris: Galilée, 1991].

Being informed by this perceived aporia, my enterprise is emphatically not intentional; it is not an intellectual enterprise because it is not concerned with phenomena outside of itself. It is not separate to my morality, my passion, or my experience of the world. I am not moved by a teleological ideal.

Nor is my practice methodological: It is informed by the Duchampian critique of causality in the creative act⁵, and claims the normative forces that manipulate all art practise as its own. I see some of these forces at play in the old Nature/Author/Curator /Consumer narrative, and some are borne out by mundane (financial, political, personal) concerns, but all of them are forces this narrative exists in spite of. As a nominal agent in this play, the contradictions to me are exquisite; their irreconcilability reflective to me of the incommunicable which moves this co-operative act at a higher level of primacy.

⁵ Marcel Duchamp, from Session on the Creative Act, Convention of the American Federation of Arts, Houston, Texas, April 1957.