

'Before the Close of Day' – Brendan Earley at mother's tankstation

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An abnormal condition of the mind, involving a loss of contact with reality; this is what's generally regarded as the means of caution in psychosis. I felt a real obligation to backpedal my way out of my own somewhat fictional and tangential psychosis while approaching Brendan Earley's latest solo exhibition *Before The Close of Day* at Mother's Tankstation. Having felt an ardent allure towards Earley's work for some time, I found myself teetering into a fabricated relationship with my own mnemonic representations of the work – albeit in reality, having never been to a solo exhibition of Brendan Earley's. As I approached Mother's Tankstation, I duly reigned in my fictitious affiliation and cautioned my tendencies.

Upon entering the front room of the gallery, a single framed drawing on the wall meets you on arrival. An ambiguous image, produced with different coloured lines radiating from an unclear, globular presence on the paper. The ambiguity of this assertion was a fitting address to the exhibition, as it pivoted the way to the sound of a woman's voice ebbing from the main gallery.

Earley's exhibition tenured a distinct presence. Following the voice into the gallery, as if with each careful movement, any precursive prudence was shrinking under the exhibition's pull. The woman's voice recording was clear and firm, however nurturing and somewhat weary. She thoughtfully read aloud likely diary entries about a lunar expedition she had led – the time of which remains unclear. Her voice sounded as if she knew she was trying to be wonderful, and I couldn't help but think it was dreadfully wonderful for that very reason. As her story travelled through the gallery amongst Earley's installations, her presence remedied each piece in it's beautiful composition. As the story developed, it's design attentively invited it's listeners in. The voice thoughtfully and somewhat regretfully described a course taken to a remarkable, uncharted crater on the moon – located "round about two o'clock" when looking up, as she respectfully recalled.

I was conscious that this story eventually became the basis for Arthur C. Clarke's *2001: Space Odyssey*, furthermore it was being narrated by Lucy Lippard, a seminal figure in early writings on artistic conceptualism. There was a fictional authenticity to it's character in the mergence of these two fields, which fastened itself tightly to Earley's exhibition. This story had a purpose owed to it's congregation sitting dutifully in the gallery – for what exactly, still remains unclear. The various sculptures and drawings' apprehensions were carefully being cultivated by this allegorical and cosmic hallucination. This phantom (as it may be) gives way to a sense of real relationship conveyed between the telling of this story and the fabrication of these works. Evidently they commit to each other in a truly admirable arrangement.

The matter of this story induces the viewer into an alleviating lapse, hedging the proceedings of acquaintances with it's sculptural counterparts. Each piece in this exhibition comprises of it's own inherent, material affinities. Different colours of filter paper delicately lay over the ridge of a free-standing rectangular steel frame in Earley's installation *Bright Objects All Around Us*. Inside the frame rest two brightly shining fluorescent lights dozing against each other and against its corner, compelled together by somewhat menacing looking cable-ties. Each part of this sculpture dedicates itself to the next, reciprocating a care and fidelity internal to itself. It seems that this system of speculative accordances forge a virtual, remote alliance to the rest of the exhibition.

The same could be said for each of Earley's works taking part in this show. A considerate pale tape, wrapped around a stick's tip in the installation *Before the Close of Day* seems to provide an affecting support to a further dubious framed drawing hung not too far above it's place on the wall. Likewise, *The Messenger and the Key* comprises of a 150cm circular slab of acrylic, providing a fostering

relief for its aluminium structure perched on top of it, and protection for the small meteorite within its missing sliver. The cryptic virtues in these materials felt as if they were meant for something, again – for what exactly I'm not sure.

These collective pacts within the exhibition meander in many different real and fictional directions. The relationships appear to confer with what's expected of them as the whole looks back at you in the gallery. It begs to wonder, which avenue these networks are taking in the long run – whether they are tangible or phenomenal, or something else. Their behaviour certainly indicates that they exist somewhere, and perhaps they haven't located it yet – or as the case may be, in waiting for some Odradek to land.

A slight echo of the rustling of script papers emanated from the speakers. A facetious reminder perhaps, that this work was still grounded in genuine circumstance. As the exhibition suspiciously contemplated its own protocol, it was simultaneously supplementing its own relationship with the viewer in its own murky tempo. The placement of each 'clue' teases its own sincerity with good nature, while second guessing ensues as the semiotic nature of allocations turns its head towards the viewer. A grave feeling of a background erotomanic behaviour sets in as the placements of each item seem to want further developments in an array of relationships not yet fully understood.

This control in *Before the Close of Day* could very well be what affords it its potent tenure. The works ignite their own relationship with the viewer, unsuspecting to its apparent reluctance upon entering the space. This exhibition takes on a hypothetical life of its own that lures you into the crevices between the materials, only to ask "exactly how hypothetical is this?"

Remain (hypothetically) cautious upon visiting.

Before the Close of Day is a solo exhibition by Brendan Earley consisting of sound, drawing and installation. The exhibition runs from February 19th – April 12th at Mother's Tankstation, Dublin.

<http://www.motherstankstation.com>