



26 July. 2014.

Promises, promises

SHANE McCARTHY

'Tangled Hierarchies'

Studio 4, Temple Bar Gallery + Studios, Dublin

24 July – 2 August, 12 noon – 4 pm daily or by appointment (closed Sundays)



SHANE McCarty's 'Tangled Hierarchies', Studio 4. TBG+S, Dublin, 25.7.2014., photo: James Merrigan.

In 2011 Shane McCarthy's digital drawings first came to light in a discreet studio located somewhere in Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design & Technology. Immediately noticed by the gimlet-eyes of mother's tankstation, the articulation of McCarthy's work since has been dressed by white cube and art fair. By no means was this a bad turn of events (as proven by his exquisite first solo show in the gallery in 2013¹), just different from the ramshackle installation for his degree show that promised more of the same. What has become clear over the last 3 years is, McCarthy's work is all about The Promise.

Even though the emailed press release for 'Tangled Hierarchies' initially frustrated with its opaque 'notation' rather than an explanation that had the decency of a beginning or a middle or even an end, it was with hot feet that I made my way to McCarthy's Studio 4 project in Temple Bar Gallery + Studios, Dublin. I was expecting misaligned timber shelving. Trip wire power cords. Bad lighting. The artist as invigilator. I got all the above and much more ad hoc improvisation and natural occurrences than the imagination can possibly forecast.

On entering McCarthy's studio the artist immediately apologised for the bright sunshine overexposing the two

pulsating projections that sun bathed on the studio walls. Contrary to McCarthy's misgivings towards the environmental conditions yesterday, it was the actual bright sunlight invading the studio space that steered his digital drawings away from theatre into a network of revelatory distraction and digression.

Ghost neon signatures breath light in shallow gasps on the walls of McCarthy's studio. One spells out 'IMMANENCE'², the other an abstract, skeletal squiggle that plumps up into a metallic pink clef, a quaver, a pretzel. (With regard to the latter, "Jeff Koons" tripped off McCarthy's tongue in conversation later. My response: "nothing wrong with a bit of Koons"). I took out my phone and took a panoramic shot of the unfolding *mise-en-scène*. FYI: when photographed with a normal shutter speed McCarthy's digital drawings capture as vibrating Day-Glo; out of reach in more ways than one.

Plonked on a metal bench, an analogue T.V. plays an info-dump of video clips found online that lean towards (among other things) philosophical 'whys?' and scientific 'hows?'. Also placed upon the bench the short notation of the press-release beeps up into a treatise. Even with the Temple Bar crowds and buskers clamouring outside, T.V. and treatise yammering inside, my attention keeps being drawn to the insidious silence of McCarthy's digital drawings. My obvious 'neon' referencing to Bruce Nauman with regard to McCarthy's previous work in the gallery was erased. Replaced by John Cage, Michael Snow, or nobody.

The wide orbit of background material that informs Shane McCarthy's compressed and evasive digital drawings are necessary building blocks, atoms, strings, theory. In the end, these exterior elements collapse and disappear into the work proper. What remains, like the gravitational collapse of a star, is a black hole of multi-dimensional traces. Signature traces of luxurious objects that make promises on one hand and renege with the other.

Through August 2.

Notes

1 Read 'Liquid Fire's Promise', my review of Shane McCarthy's first solo show at mother's tankstation, Dublin. [<http://www.billionjournal.com/time/65.html>]

2 Read the brilliant Christian Kerslake for an analysis of the slippery term 'immanence' via Gilles Deleuze: [<http://www.after1968.org/app/webroot/uploads/kerslake-paper%281%29.pdf>]

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