

Twelve Ten

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Bullet Hell

curated by David Mitchell

November 17th - January 12th, 2023

Opening November 17th, 6PM - 9PM

Gallery Hours: Weds - Sat, 1PM - 6PM

They march you up with a paper target on your chest and a blindfold, so you can't see the five men in a line, all aiming down sights. Lockstep heels make a metronome of the firing squad, the click-click-click pilot light chatter as the flames ignite. Telltale signs of an impending thunderous volley, a rhythmic firestorm, a manmade bullet hell aimed at your heart. The real trick of it is that those men all get to be blameless instruments of the system, the anonymous agents of a machine beyond your comprehension or control.

Let's go back. Let's keep going.

You're at the crime scene. The evidence is overwhelming—pornographic even in its excess. It points everywhere. It's like that old Agatha Christie yarn, the one set on the train: everyone is culpable, no one is innocent. The "signal to noise ratio" isn't even a relevant metric. The raw volume of information available and produced at all times is a pulsating, white hot noise cranked beyond any perceivable scale, an event horizon both sublime and profane. There are functionally infinite points of data which can rearrange into an infinite-times-infinite number of interpretations, every framework viable but none necessary. The deluge of possibilities are dizzying, blinding, paralyzing and nothing at all.

Let's go back. Let's keep going.

You got on the case when you first noticed an odd bit of graffiti scribbled on the wall by some punk – was it a musical instrument of some kind? A horn? Maybe that, maybe not, maybe a circle with a line, maybe a pendulum, maybe nothing at all. It spilled out from there, contaminating everything you saw. A maddening apophenia or a real conspiracy? Repetition, the mass proliferation of information, is itself the gesture to interpret. Sedimentation of small fragments is one strategy to extract meaning, like divination through tea leaves. Looking at the temporary alignments and patterns that emerge from the system is like glimpsing the cosmic plan written across the sky in a constellation. Numerological poetry in the infinite digits of pi.

Let's go back. Let's keep going.

It was before this whole mess. You were innocent, just another cog in the machine when they marched the prisoner in front of you. You didn't know if your gun held the live bullet, or just a blank. Right before you pulled the trigger, you heard the prisoner whisper: "The world is being engulfed in truth."