

L C R C

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It is a landscape without distinguishing features - it offers you shelter, it is marginally plastic and with some effort can be excavated, shifting sheet metal and piles of refuse to create pockets and depressions where life can continue. The light here filters through dirty glass panes that are reinforced through their composition with crisscrossed steel wire: an anti theft precaution more than a century old and still effective. Almost every pane has been smashed and flowered with bright cracks like crystal but not one has fallen away from the soft lead setting that secures it to the brick.

We work in a diffuse and communal space, an environment that is supportive but often transient. Sometimes this space encompasses whole cities; more often it grows up around a show or a conversation that develops over years. Almost everything I know about painting I learnt from spending four or five years watching L work but in some sense we have very little to say to one another about art. Our production happens in the spaces around shows and projects, and the things that we are able to teach each other are more often the pure applied life things that come from spending empty time with people that you love.

Before I left the city I had my future read by C (this is against my strictly Marxist upbringing). The future they saw was dramatic and violent; terrorism, mugging, sex, sickness, writing, a litany, a cascade of violence, of bodies, everything pushed in close and made rough. C seems stretched, thin, anxious. They laugh it off when I in my ignorance start to speak of Jewish demons, the Qliphoth of inverted Kabbalah, trees of death and degradation. I am still obsessed by demons, by infection, by bringing bodies to contagion, by contagion as practice, putrefaction, bodies scraped together, their limbs arranged and rearranged into legible series, shifting positions, shifting their significance, new limbs, serpent phalluses, the heads of dogs, lions and hyenas, 'not by their faces but by the positions of their limbs shall you recognise them'. I am obsessed by this image of brutal pragmatism, of a pure exteriority divorced from a recognisable subject.

I wonder often what tools an artist has to remake themselves in this image. Only rarely do we carve a space or impress a surface.

Back outside the players are standing in clusters getting ready for the final battle. There are at least a thousand of them. You pull every strap tight and make sure that the rigid plates sit close to the curve of the body. The materials of construction trace out the class spread of the players here - from suits of steel chainmail down to foam core plates carved out to ape gilt metalwork. It is night and the grass at Princes Park is lit up fluorescent green beneath stadium spotlights - at this size the machines are noticeably municipal/suburban and less obviously allied to pageantry or epic nationalism - perfect replicas though, simply scaled down from State Games version to domestic Sunday barbecues.

I will miss C but during our final meeting I find that I cannot really speak to them. I am moving to a continent in a state of crisis. I know only slightly more about Europe than I do about LA - my entire system of reference is a series of Marxist cliches that were out of date by the end of the eighties, but that I still use to order my speech because I have nothing better to use, and because to be cut off from communicating is something I fear intensely. This is something that me and R were able to speak together about, each ranging round and round like big cats neither willing to teach or open to kindness except in moments of true shared clarity, of which I remember only two. C was right about terrorism - the first thing I hear when I emerge from Heathrow's grubby interior is that a bomb has gone off on the tube and that ISIS has claimed responsibility.

Watching R work has also taught me about spatial sensitivity. Her tools are commonplace but she uses them with an extreme specificity. Bordering, composition, laborious analogue processes; a programme inherited and then put to use disciplining what would otherwise be a basically nihilist space cracked completely open. The air is clear. R is both articulate *and* lucid, unlike most of my Modern sources (Pasolini, Bataille, Kristeva, Marechera, whose company she keeps) whose lucidity precludes articulation, mangles language, renders all communication as a scream. I love her production for this trait above all others.

The battles themselves are deeply ambiguous; the movement is a complicated flow of crowds that obviously recognise one another somehow but who from a surveying perspective are basically interchangeable; there are no immediately visible markers, access here would be via immersion over long periods of time in the scene - a felt sense for the micro signifiers of each gang grouping; all of the bodies move laterally across a field which is lit up white and crystal clear (the air is cold). The lights that ring the park are each haloed in the glassy night air. The press of bodies flowers open, they break into running charges and complicated manoeuvres, turn aside and coalesce again around friends, flags or leaders. Bodies fall down and lie still. Sometimes they are revived by teammates and rise to fight again but often they lie face down and forgotten until it is time again, until the DMs blow their horns all at once and they rise and the press disperses back out into their clans again, around the periphery again, laughing and flushed with adrenalin. After we finish filming we walk back through the crowds, curious outsiders. I remember thinking that they looked like they'd just cum, all together, sparkling eyes and parted lips and heavy breathing, even the ones that had died.

C says that we move under big lights.

C lists her taxonomies of spaces and of the things that she finds there. Her spaces have no borders, no systems of reference.

In C's installs there is only a point that moves - no ground, no walls; an ambiguous and borderline Romantic landscape of mist, drag, sea, lights. The ground is also this space - deserts and shantytowns: 'the ends of the earth'. The point moves extremely fast; it could be an eye or a lens, could be a machine (plane)(every inch of the surface is a light sensor). The spaces are not delineated by architecture; there are only two elements, light and wind. The wind is how you recognise the space and the light is how you bound it. The eye/lens that C uses to record her images is a truly cyborg assemblage, as described by Puar and Butler: a hermetically sealed and inhuman body with its own sovereign organs, sexualities and desires. The only thing that we have in common with this figure is that we also are also able to see, and so can track the progress of its fragmenting arc.

The only correct writing for Cs space is a list of things that the eye/lens encounters on its trajectory (we had a shared moment of shocked laughter discovering this after long, exhausting experimentation). The eye/lens is only a sensing membrane. Everything that it encounters is completely full, saturated, and so there is no delineation or hierarchy in the lists. No plot, no characters. They appear in no particular order - everything encountered is both open and full.