

The Empirical Front
The Revolution will not be Abstract

The Revolution will not cling to the surface of a painting like a doona stuffed with Theory-laden obscurity afraid to wake up to the fact that people want into the picture plain.

The material qualities of paint, process and colour fields will no longer seem so damn relevant because the people will be in the street looking for a brighter day.

While your serpent church of abstraction is speaking art-latin to a dwindling congregation we will be screaming the vernacular from the corners.

We will paint the muscles of truth that will turn this world to a better outcome.

Things that are pure don't regenerate. Pure abstraction is an ideological cul-de-sac like a pure-bred dog that can win Krufts but needs six operations on its distorted skull to help it breathe. We are the healthy mongrels that are ready for the work of mauling your sickly poodle of pure abstraction to death.

You abstract dinosaurs have had the 'mike' too long and me and Dee Snyder ain't gonna take it anymore and if you don't get that reference pop your crocs on Dad and start walking because what follows does not concern you.

We are The Empirical Front and we ain't scared of purpose and we don't shit our pants in front of a clear and single meaning. We don't hide behind fog words like 'relational aesthetics' or 'non-logocentric vision'. We have no interest in 'opening up the dialogue of meanings' because we're frightened of looking stupid or irrelevant if we state one. We come from a generation that saw one 'Transformers' movie and said "Fighting robots and super-loud noises! Two more please, Mr Bruckheimer, and be quick about it!". We clearly aren't afeared of looking stupid. Perhaps our work is stupid today and irrelevant tomorrow but at least we would have stated a position and you have to be somewhere today to get somewhere tomorrow. Abstract painting is about being nowhere and everywhere which is fine for zen monks listening out for the fall of trees but we would rather be painting Mr Miyagi's fence today so we can take down the Cobra Kai tomorrow. The galleries aren't going to like our work, it won't make millions or be sent to Venice to the collective yawns of the dealer-whales but when my kid asks me what I did when my generation was called I am going to be able to look him in the eye and say "I answered in the fucking affirmative, son".

The Empirical Front stands with Hume in that we believe the overarching purpose of art is Phatic exchange. There is a term the military use in radio communications – 'locstat'. It is an abbreviation of 'location' and 'status' and when requested it is typically answered with a coded grid reference and a brief report on the section's health and other information that may affect their fighting capability – short of water, ammunition etc. Such a report helps a military force co-ordinate its actions. Beauty serves a similar purpose for humanity; aesthetic judgments properly made are our 'locstats'. They help people orientate

themselves to one another and co-ordinate our actions. Contemporary art, for the most part, is no longer sending co-ordinates and a status report down the line but are instead describing the medium into the medium. Art has ceased to assist in the defining or explaining of ourselves to others and has thus diminished in cultural relevance. This diminishing cultural relevance goes some way to show that 'Beauty' has a direct correlation to our current worldview or the enlarging of it. We as humans need to exchange phatic information or 'locstats' if only to know there is some one else in the lifeboat. If we deny ourselves the obvious social benefits of discussing beauty clearly we stagnate as a species.

Take Kyra Henley for example, with these montages she is telling you where she is. In "This is how we do it" we see a woman at once praising and ridiculing the cavalier bravado of being a manly-man, the sexy stupidity of owning a penis and thinking that you're awesome because of it. The dated palette, physical fitness instruction, victory fists and assured stares into the future while wearing a nice turtle-neck. This is man and he is faintly ridiculous. With 'Elixirs of life' we have ancient symbols of life and its' extinguishing. The final boat ride across a fire-strewn body of water carries the phoenix-rabbit of ancient 'eostre'. Again she is talking about being in between two extremes – death & rebirth, sunrise & sunset. Finally, with ' Planet Holiday' and 'Mt Foie Gras' she states her position between the lust for the ease of wealth and her simultaneous disgust at its' acquirement. The broad cold palettes of both are disturbed by small rashes of colour – "I want it but I am in no way fooled by it".

In conclusion, we leave one last message to those still labouring under the delusion that there is still life in the flogged horse of abstraction-

Long after the earth has risen up and swallowed your bones and all that is left of you is matching a couch somewhere in Vaucluse we will still be lugging Sisyphean art-rocks up the hill to the windmill of existence like 'Boxer'. Despite your thoughts on the matter this generation will not go out in a whimper of snide tweets and adorable cat GIFs. We are banging out with a defiant skyward Breakfast Club fist pump so take your floppy abstract-penises and go sit in the kitchen.

We are The Empirical Front and we have arrived.

Brigadier (commanding) Steve Latimer
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