

M O B I L I T Y

1. Turn on the TV or tune in to whatever audio/visual medium is beckoning and it's as natural as getting out of bed. Putting on the news is like putting on your shoes; we don't even think about it. We immerse ourselves naturally into the socially agreed world of signs and signifiers, far away from lived experience without a thought. This of course is common knowledge. We don't withdraw from the synthesised - as though we are *missing* something - we bathe in it. We happily tune out our senses when we tune in. You think we are looking and hearing? Not likely. We don't look, we *read* and we don't hear, we *decipher*. Of course we do. Socially, it is up to the brain to make sense of what we sense - otherwise sound and sightings would just wash over us like a warm shower. We decode the rabble of media info coming at us through a screen of social signifiers: words, images, signs, symbols and sounds that conceptually stand in for actual events.

Berthot / Centi / Clough / Kapoor / Kngwarreye

2. There are many now who still maintain the theory that 'nature' is human invention. We all know what is meant by this, but it may be more accurate to say that we invent concepts for nature rather than the condition itself. The problem is, it is impossible to grasp that the matter-world does not *belong* to us, impossible to 'acknowledge' that there may be a larger picture, larger than the socially arranged culture-world we live in. Why is this? Well as soon as one tries to finger the actual presence of a condition that gave rise to human consciousness in the first place - which maintains us still - we extinguish it. If we apply the critical distancing of objectivity in order to better know it, we simply convert it back into yet another concept. The point is, that anything independent of our constructed environment cannot be articulated - perhaps that's what independence really means. But it could be argued that we have another mode of recognition apart from our intellectual systems of interpretation; we have our sentience. Intellectuality and sensing things (as all living things do), is the human entity's dual interface with the world.

Marden / McKeever / O'Donnell / Petyarre / Scully

3. One of the interesting things about computer-based art is its ability to create the illusion of movement. But there is a kind of art which is not about movement but mobility. Mobility comes from the mind's potential to operate outside the programmed certainties of *the message*; technology's inevitable message. This art may speak of a kind of experience that is not pre-empted by the world's program managers. So, while a considerable amount of media-derived art concentrates on the politics of the everyday (and lucky for us that it does) another kind might address something as basic as our own sentience. While some art interrogates the assorted mannerisms of the society it stems from, there is another practice which presents a different kind of visual field, one that cannot be read like a webpage. Instead, this 'visual field' simply bears direct evidence of the human subject as an inseparable element of a specific time, culture and place. This art does not want to overturn or subvert anything even if it provides a kind of material

Yin for virtuality's *Yang*. In many respects, the materials and the process of making is also the subject of the work. But rather than 'mastering the medium', artists who work in this way are trying to form a kind of alliance with materiality and their practice develops out of that alliance. In the end, the work celebrates the phenomena of a specific social individual interacting in the world of material substances and the forces that animate it. This art observes the essential, mutually inclusive relation between culture, body and world.

Sanpitak / Tjapaltjarri / Vongpoothorn / Watson / Winters

4. The significance of this 'essential relation' is embedded in the work's layers, in the residual evidence of the body's affinity with matter. But of course that's not all there is to be found here. There are always 'figurative' elements - but not the kind that turn up in textbooks. Being unnamed, these elements test the limits of language and meaning and in ways which may not be possible using the conservative text-based processes of our constructed world. Essentially, it is because this work is body-centred both in production and in reception that it can provide a source of mobility away from the media's message and away from our regulatory infotech systems. Of course this has nothing to do with transcendence, it is far too materialist for that. Lyotard (remember him) says, "A thought sees repeating in its water the formation of eddies that surprise it. Little arrangements of colours bloom and fade. Thought gets lost here and yet suspects, in these buds, the recurrence of a secret activity that is its own, although it doesn't recognise any possession of it." It is possible that the critical phenomena of our own sentience is being overlooked as active ground which may have more relevance than we imagine into a pre-packed, technocentric future. And it is feasible that, in a short while, a careful investigation of this subject might turn out to be more socially and politically crucial than many others.

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