

World is Suddener Than we Fancy it

Ingrid Lyons © 2015

Paint is dragged, daubed, pulled and pushed across the canvas. Often the materials strain to veil the surface and activity from layers beneath begin to permeate. There are intervals of fluidity where one layer completely obscures the history of preceding layers, rendering them illegible. A prevailing murkiness is counteracted by rifts of color that announce themselves in a staccato like manner, starting and stopping, echoing though apparently disparate and disconnected.

There is a duality whereby we can at once witness the defiance of the painted medium against layers beneath and its pliable willingness to merge succinctly with other painted gestures, indicating the search for structure or a kind of sequence. The passing of time is demonstrated and we can observe the development of a tempo that none-the-less retains evidence of awkward or stubborn trajectories that went before. They were not dead ends though, but suggestions of how things could have been.

Diana Copperwhite's paintings, situated in an art historical context, strive to articulate contemporary concerns and thus they must generate a vocabulary of their own-drawing on what has gone before in order to generate a response. They are reminiscent of paintings made by the abstract expressionists-abstract but also expressive or emotional in their effect. They incorporate traditional tropes such as portraiture and interior though these subjects are expanded upon, removing characteristic detail to convey a more generalised experience. She has developed a language that contributes to the language of paint and so her work is concerned with the development of painting as a visual language.

Content and form is veiled and obscured. Some of the paintings imply the presence of a screen or a window suggesting that various realities are contained within the one surface, adding a certain depth to the paintings. Images within images are deciphered through varying approaches to the medium of paint, changes in surface texture and

tone represent scene shifts. There is a concern with the handling of fragments, how information is distorted, shrouded or eclipsed by other information. The canvases are worked anticipating a level of fluidity and integration on the surface. The work reveals itself to be a product of materiality and physicality that pursues a kind of weight or balance.

Copperwhite's paintings follow a logic of their own, they are recycled and they grow out of one another by remaining susceptible to the materiality of paint. She often interjects with obstacles that she brings to bare on the paintings in a way that encourages them to define their autonomy. This approach allows for accidents to happen yet these accidents are staged purposefully to allow the paintings to escape from her grasp. In this regard they have a character and vibrancy that evidence the pursuit of an epiphany, whereby the painting surprises the artist as often as the artist exacts change upon the painting. She is a painter who is fully taken up with the act of painting and the materiality of paint.

A latent interest in physics also defines the work, more specifically the speed of light in vacuum as a universal physical constant. The paintings express an interest in light, in colour and in the interlude between what the observer looks at and what is being observed. The speed of light as a concept suggests that by the time you see something, it's not what you are looking at anymore, as though a buffer zone exists between the physical and the optical. This phenomenon represents a slippage, or a space in between that can't be accessed and denial of access to such a space prompts the imagination into vistas that are exponentially larger than any possible truth. Perhaps this proposed space does not exist at all. The pursuit of such a place engenders possibilities, and these possibilities diminish through discovery. This example is analogous to all human attempts in grasping at truth.

It is a sentiment that also permeates Louis Mac Neice's 1935 poem entitled *Snow*, which begins 'The room was suddenly rich and the great bay-window was spawning snow and pink roses against it'. Throughout the poem MacNeice's understanding of the seen and the unseen manifests itself in the strong sense of physical presence as well

as an intense vision of the intangible. He insists that 'World is suddener than we fancy it' implying simultaneously that the world is mediated through layers of perception but in all actuality, is more imminent than this.

Snow is a poem with a profound duality in its detailed observations of the physical world, which also invoke what lies beyond it. He arrives at an epiphany through sensory engagement with a tangerine, its pips, the fire and the sight of the roses pressed against the widow, 'On the tongue on the eyes on the ears in the palms of one's hands' he unites sensory experience with a meditation on the intangible. There is a moment when the extent of the gap between real and ideal is approached causing the poet to announce 'there is more than glass between the snow and the huge roses'.

This is also true of Copperwhite's paintings, made in such a way that incorporates both physical action and sensory experience they invite us to consider that which eludes us in our surroundings.