

Derivations in Perspective

by

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Table of Contents

Introduction	Page 4
Placing	Page 5
The First Summer	Page 6
Summer Visitors	Page 17
Being Warm	Page 19
Just A Summer Thing	Page 22
Seasonal	Page 25
Performing	Page 27
Thinking Back On it Now	Page 28
It Just Appeals To Everyone	Page 36
What About it Do You Remember	Page 38
Remember	Page 42
How to Put On A Good Show	Page 44
The Festival	Page 46
Important for To-Night's Performance	Page 48
Monsters	Page 50

Painting	Page 52
Things That Can be in a Painting [Derivation #1]	Page 53
Untitled [Derivation #2]	Page 54
[]	Page 56
Visuals [Derivation #3]	Page 63
Under the sea, The Colors are Delightful [Derivation #4]	Page 65
On Art [Derivation #5]	Page 66
How To Look At Art [Derivation #6]	Page 68
Triptych [Derivations #7-#9]	Page 70
Derivation Sharp (#)	Page 72
The Beak- <i>An Edge Around the Rules</i>	Page 73
Mermaid Man	Page 74
An Early Work	Page 79
Notes	Page 80
On Style	Page 81
On Composition	Page 82
Staging	Page 83

These Are the Only Words in This Piece That Are Entirely My Own

Well, except the questions I ask. But even those become the words of others once I ask them. The rest of the stories all feature the words of others, and my take on them. Some of them have been arranged intentionally, others have not. These words have been presented with no particular preference given to who said them first, or to my ordering of them. This is the kind of piece to be read in not very many sittings. The stories can also be enjoyed as stories all on their own, and I hope that they are. My hope is also that they are thought of as parts of a whole, and that reading one may change a reader's opinion on another. They are connected for reasons beyond the fact that they share source material. I hope that they build and grow on each other, as one narrative.

Every Thought sends forth one Toss of the Dice.

-
Stéphane
Mallarmé

Placing

The First Summer

Brackets, from New York City, from Manhattan. Brackets has lived in New York since birth in 1995. Brackets thinks favorite City is New York City. But a close second is Tokyo. Brackets favorite season is Fall, generally enjoys cooler weather. Really loves the holidays that come with it, and has always been a fan of Halloween, and Thanksgiving for the family element. It's also just a nice feeling of beginning for them.

Where are you from?

This is already getting complicated... I mean ok, I was born Manhattan and I've lived in Brooklyn for my entire life so I guess I'm from New York City.

How Long have you lived in New York?

Twenty two years now.

Brackets like being underwater. Enjoys the sound of being underwater and the muffledness of that, and the tranquility that comes with not quite being able to see, not quite being able to hear, and knowing they can leave but also that time is limited there. Feels like they're also slightly achieving something by staying in there.

What is your favorite season?

I like the fall, but I've been thinking more and more about how I don't really like the changing seasons, like, I've been thinking lately about how my brother just went to San Diego, and if the cost of living were lower there, I would kind of want to go there to live someday, because it's seventy degrees every day, pretty much without fail, year round. And that sounds nicer than just dealing with the extremes of the winter the summer .

What's your favorite physical location to be in?.

Oh God, it's probably in a hammock, I think, yeah.

Do you want to talk about why at all?

Sure. Yeah. I mean, I'm big on comfort. And I think there's like, something about being in a hammock... that it's safe and comfortable. But it's not- it's not a safety or comfort that you create yourself. You kind of just let yourself fall into this thing that was already there, and of course at some point along the way someone made it, but you're not necessarily aware of that, as you're just experiencing the feeling of laying back in it. And I think sometimes, like, in situations where you're going out of your way to try to make yourself

comfortable, and being aware that you're trying to construct that situation that is comfortable, that is a stressful and uncomfortable thing. So when there is comfort that literally suspends your self, and drastically limits your control of your own body, but still feels safe and comfortable, like it's sort of pure comfort.

Brackets favorite summer: when they went to Costa Rica for a program exploring sea turtles in high school, and it was favorite summer because Brackets always wanted to go swim with sea turtles since they were five and saw it on Discovery Channel. Brackets has a very visceral memory of basically midwifing a turtle, catching eggs for a turtle, having a very intimate moment, laying full on the sand, in the middle of the night, just Brackets and this turtle, who is giving birth, and it made them feel really connected to the world and they never forgot it. Really shaped their summer. Everyone on that program also shared that same sentiment of love and connection to the earth, and excitement at the prospect of working with animals. Brackets was seventeen.

I haven't been to very many cities. I think I always have it in my head that my favorite city is something like Chicago, or Cleveland, or San Diego, which are all cities I've never been to; it's very easy for me to assume I would enjoy, like, the general attitude of these cities without actually having to have experienced it myself.

If Brackets could go somewhere on a summer holiday, top of their list right now is Mongolia, just because it's very accessible in the summer. Brackets has for a very long time wanted to go to Mongolia. Brackets wants hike and explore the environment because just a lot of gorgeous plains and mountains, but also because the meditation practice they are part of has a Master Unit there, which is one of the largest children's homes.. The Master Unit just does a lot of really good work with empowering these kids and allowing them to have educational opportunities they wouldn't, and still connecting it back to some of their native cultures, because some of them were orphaned right out of the steppe. Brackets has just seen pictures [of Mongolia] and always looked at them and been like, "one day I'll go there." They think a summer holiday there would be really great.

My favorite summer that I can remember was probably in my second year of being a camper at Camp Rising Sun, which was the summer of 2011, I guess.

The Camp is a program for international students who come together, and within a certain framework have to work together to basically make decisions about how camp is going to run, and it's almost like an exercise in forced horizontal organizing. And I was there. Usually, it is a once in a lifetime thing, but I was taken back as a second year camper, which is just a small group of campers every year that are sort of expected to help orient all the new people and get them feeling comfortable in the place. And you know, I guess that's what I was doing but I don't think any of that had anything to do with what made it

memorable for me. I certainly wasn't like, worrying a lot about my growth as a leader while I was there, it was it was more that I was lucky enough to be surrounded by a bunch of people that summer that made it very easy for me to just sort of freely... like, the pause is just me looking for better words than "be myself", because those are terrible words, but I think they are the things that ring truest here. You know I was, and still am, a really guarded person generally, especially when I'm first meeting people, and I think that summer was the first time where I felt like I had fully dropped that, and instantly felt comfortable, and I'm still not sure why it happened but it was a good feeling. Yeah.

I think if I could go somewhere I would want to go somewhere cool but not cold; somewhere maybe without a lot of things that I would feel obligated to see, like I'd maybe try to avoid cities, or places in general that had a lot of a lot of famous landmarks. Just because what I enjoy most about going away is still behaving as a homebody, but not at home. So, I think I'd like to just like find a physically comfortable place without a lot to do. [I'd] Take either, Yao [subject's boyfriend] or a couple of close friends along and just have a quiet, intimate, very intentional time.

Brackets loves being home, loves being in New York City, and loves seeing their father, step mom; thinks there is a certain level of comfortability and ease that comes with that. But it comes in waves, where that all suddenly, the desire to explore will overpower that love of home, and that they will go travel. Brackets loves travelling, especially alone, because they get to essentially choose what

Brackets is doing, when they're doing it, and to see things... just can't see anywhere else. And then over a few months, the desire for familiarity and ease will come back to Brackets and they'll go home. Recently, because of school, Brackets stays in New York City for at most a month. They think if had a choice in the sense that weren't committed to going back to school, would be comfortable staying here for three- to-four months. But if there wasn't anything particular, besides being in the City, to hold Brackets here, they would probably leave after that time. Brackets intends to have a job that requires travel. They would like to be a doctor in Doctors Without Borders, or in some medical field that would allow them to travel and help in more global crises. Brackets think would always return to New York, and if it were financially possible, have a home base here. Definitely would always come back. Brackets would never leave, leave.

I think I kind of prefer being at home, and part of that is total laziness, and I do often feel, like ,feeling that way, that I've been missing out on a lot of the cliché (but probably still to a certain extent genuine) benefits of travel. But, if I'm being totally honest, I like avoiding the hassle of planning to go places, and all the logistical work that has to happen. And I think I've had good travelling experiences but, like I said, I'm not sure I've ever had a travel experience where I felt I couldn't have been just as happy doing something at home.

I don't see myself being here for the rest of my life. And it's just because... for some reason... after being back from school, it's become a bit stressful, and

just, like, the atmosphere, and the attitude in the City has become a bit anxiety-inducing for me in a way that it never was before. And I'm just not sure I want to be constantly worrying about managing my anxiety for the rest of my life.

Brackets thinks New York City in the summer always gets unbearably hot, but with that comes certain specific things to look forward to. Like summer activities that are specific to New York. Like movies in Central Park, Shakespeare in the park, kayaking, picnics. Communal outdoor activities that enhance the sense of New York being a communal space for everyone without one actually having to say it.. Like in the way the subway is all year round. Brackets thinks everything is similar, but in summer, it's embellished by having more outdoor time. And in that way, allowing for more creativity to happen, in a way it can only happen in New York. Doesn't really change, just amplified. Brackets favorite part about New York City in the summer is the extended time spent outside in parks in New York City; walking around for long periods of time. The Hot Island Effect can sometimes get intolerable, but ultimately, they like being able to go for a walk around the outer edge of Manhattan, or go to a street fair and not have to time it so that Brackets can get inside before getting too cold. Probably the vast increase in tourists is what they don't like. Tourists are always there, but like they mentioned, everything's amplified in the summer, so you definitely get a higher influx. Certain events, that over the years have increased in interest, have also caused an increase in crowds, and have come to be kind of damaged by that. Brackets thinks definitely, the influx of people [what they don't like]. it's not necessarily the tourist themselves that they

mind, it's how they act, behave, impede the stream of everyone else.

It gets really hot. And people get to be angry, especially on humid days. I mean, I think as far as my experience of it goes, I think it's mostly the same, except it's hot and it's brighter out, and it's hard for me to be out and about without some kind of eye protection, and I get sunburned. I guess there are more kids around during the day, that's true too, because they're not in school. But I don't know, I think it's mostly the same for me. I mean, I guess I like all the free shit that happens in parks, that's my favorite thing. I don't like the sweatiness on humid days, and It making me uncomfortable, and people angry.

Something that happens in New York City that Brackets loves doing every summer is something called The mp3 Experiment. And think if they were telling someone about crazy, fun, communal things that happen in the summer, Brackets would say that's a really good one. Everyone puts on headphones and gets these instructions, they all play the same time, and it's an activity everyone's doing together and It's a collective secret, and it always happens in the summer. Brackets would tell someone about that as the vibe you get when you're here in the summer: that everyone's doing that thing together, and in an unspoken way, and with headphones in. Summer is always associated for Brackets with New York, with travel. For instance, has been kind of hard on them this past summer where Brackets not going to be traveling. The influence of summer in the City gets, feels, a little more like being stuck in the City in the summer. But, Brackets think if there's

a place to be stuck in the summer, would always want it to be New York City.

I mean, I feel like based on everything I've said it probably sounds like a pretty negative impression. I don't know if it's so much New York in the summer that I don't like as much as it is like, the summer in this climate in general that I do not like. I guess I would say I'm pretty indifferent to it; it's just the City, with its specific set of seasonal challenges, that just get replaced with other ones in each different season. I think I would highlight things like the struggles of the MTA, and the high cost of living, and crowds, and the really high-paced life, but I would also probably highlight the food, and the parks, and music, I think those are the things.

Brackets favorite seasons in New York are either fall or winter. Fall because they love fall, but winter because have very specific memories of the Holiday Fair, of snow in the City. Brackets lives very close to Central Park, and just seeing that covered in snow, being able to go sledding, ice skating. They love all the things that come with winter: bundling up, being warm, then getting on the subway where there's collective heat, is really nice.

I like the really early spring, because it's not really... like, not to the point where it still might be snowing, but the few weeks right after the snow has stopped, and winter weather feels officially gone, because I think that's New York is at its most comfortable, but I also think it's when New York people are at

their happiest. Summer is ahead, and the anticipation of summer is always better than summer itself. And I don't know, like, early spring is also a sexy time.

Humans don't have a mating season, but if they did, it would be early spring, I think. I mean, that only applies to New York because there are a lot of people. So it could be fun to see all of that happening in such a dense population.

Brackets thinks New York City is special to New Yorkers in a way it's not special to people who are visiting because you get the sense that with the good and bad things, with each season, everyone's not having the same experience, but experiencing it together. Even when you're alone, you're never alone. And they think that's what connects Brackets to New York City: they can be alone and not be alone.

I kind of suspect that I'd find reasons to not be wholly satisfied with any place that I was living in, but I can't deny that I'm really grateful for a lot of the people I've met and things I've seen here. And, I know this is home for you, too. I think when I talk about New York to people who aren't from here, I put a more positive spin on it, I guess in speaking, but it doesn't feel like a dishonest thing. In those moments, I actually feel more positively towards New York than I usually do, and it's like a very like transient thing that happens, and it's real. I don't know. I guess I do for several of its high points, but also with several reservations. No, I don't have anything else, only that this dug up feelings about

both that were way more negative than I realized.

Summer Visitors

I don't like summer. It's hot. It's unbearably hot. There's a communal sweatiness over the entire City. I can't walk down the street without getting covered in sweat. It makes me feel like I'm underwater. Like I'm suspended. Like I can't move. Like I can't leave. Time moves differently in the summer. Things don't happen the way that they do during the rest of the year. I feel like I don't have enough space. In the fall I can move. I feel like I can leave. I feel like I have the space to.

I don't have a favorite summer. I think that would not be the point of summer. The point of summer is that every day runs into every other day. Every summer runs into every other summer. Summer is always running into itself. I am always running into other people in the summer. I have to edge around the big groups of tourists that sweat on each other and stop me from walking at my desired pace. I don't like tourists. I don't like tourists for the same reason that I don't like summer: I don't like sweat and they all run together.

Do I like the City? Sure. All of my friends live here. My family lives here. I was born here. I was in love for the first time here. Of course, that is over now. It has been for a while. It was there one summer day, and gone one other. That's just how the City is. A face you once knew intimately just becomes one in the crowd. That's just how it is with people and with cities and with summers. But I don't hold my experience of love-now-gone as a negative about the City, or the summer, or people. All of those things have enough negative things going for them already without my own anxiety on top of it. But I still love the City. I

wouldn't want to be anywhere else as much as I would want to be here. I
wouldn't know how to be anywhere else.

The way that I don't like summer is the same way that I don't like people.
People are tourists and I am a city. All they do is get me sweaty, suspend me,
make it so I can't leave them, and then, one day, they just become other faces in
the crowd. Something to avoid when walking.

Being Warm

They were together every day in the summer. Every day they would walk up the same streets and watch tourists go by. They would watch these same tourists from their shared home, where they would retreat together during the hottest part of the day to sweat out the sun and watch tourists, and watch other, more intimate things together: like each other, like the turtles they had found in the park and kept, while it was still too hot to go outdoors. They both liked summer for this reason: having a season where it is too hot to go out for a large part of the day denied them a certain amount of control over their own bodies and they liked that. It allowed them a holiday from it.

They had shared two summers together now, and both knew that loving summer meant loving something that leaves before one could really make one's self comfortable with it, before one was ready for it to. One hot day, it could have been any hot day, as the couple looked at the turtles they had walk around in the indoor environment the two of them had constructed, one of the two of them said that it was cooler out that day that it had been in past days. The other, not wholly satisfied by this, and what it meant for the weather, lay back so that his entire body was extended, and said,

"What do you mean that it was cooler? Do you mean it was cold? Do you mean that summer is over? It can't be."

"I never said that," said the other back to him.

"Well I don't know what you mean by saying that to me."

“I was just talking about the weather to you. It doesn’t mean anything. “

“ It means that you are going to leave not too long from now, just like you do every year.”

Every year, the couple would be made into two separate parts: one and the other. In the summer, their shared home was full of life, but beginning in the fall, he would be alone. The other was travelling back to school and he would have to wait for them to return. A hard bundle of anxiety had already formed inside each of them. They were both quiet for a long time. During these periods of quiet, he would usually try to be close to his other, but this time, he was an island. Every year it was the same, Summer would come and they would spend all of the time in the world together. It just made it harder for them to part in the fall. The time they spent speaking would drop when his other spent more time on school activities.

Every year when they would part, he would get more animals, more turtles, more life, to be his friends and to share his home. There were big turtles, sea turtles, small turtles, and turtles that were out and about only at night to be with him when he was most alone. And during turtle mating season, there were always eggs. He would let them run around their home for about a month, until his other returned for a couple-day-long trip and would make him return all of them. But it would be ok, because for that period of time, it would be summer again.

The air inside felt just as humid as it did outdoors, and the two of them went outside. They lived in a City, but both preferred being indoors. When they

went outside, it was cooler, but not cold. The sun was still hot, it was still the summer, and they were still together, still sharing a communal heat.

Just A Summer Thing

I think my favorite City is New York City. But a close second is Tokyo. You know, I was, and still am, a really guarded person generally, especially when I'm first meeting people. But it's not it's not a safety or comfort. Being aware that you're trying to construct that situation that is comfortable, that is a stressful and uncomfortable thing.

I have a very visceral memory of the summer from when I was a kid. I remember being in Central Park and falling into the water, and just being underwater, and not being able to hear or see. And I just stayed there until I was taken out. It was really hot that day, but the water was really cold. The person who took me out was not part of my family. It's things like that that really enhance the sense of New York being a communal space in the summer. It's a collective secret that we are all in on.

Underwater, there's a tranquility that comes with like not quite being able to see not quite being able to hear, and knowing I can leave. I was lucky enough to be surrounded by a bunch of people that summer that made it very easy for me to just be myself. I think that summer was the first time where I instantly felt comfortable, and I'm still not sure why it happened. It is my favorite summer.

Before, In High School, the summer I saw sea turtles was my favorite summer. It's different now, of course. I haven't been to very many cities. it's very easy for me to assume I would enjoy, like, the general attitude of cities without

actually having to have experienced them myself. I feel like I'm also slightly achieving something by staying in one. I don't think the desire to explore will overpower that love of home, and that I'll go travel. I love traveling, but I love home more. I would like to go to Tokyo. I would like to go to San Diego; I would kind of want to go there to live someday, because it's like seventy degrees every day. But I still think that over a few months, the desire for familiarity and ease will come back, and I'd go home.

I think if I could go somewhere I would want to go somewhere cool. But I think I would always return to New York, and if it was financially possible, have a home here. But also, I have for a very long time wanted to go to Mongolia, and hike and explore the environment. I think that is just something that I think I would like more than it is something I would actually like. Do you want me to talk about why at all? I mean, I'm big on comfort. And while I think hiking in Mongolia would be a good way to get away from it all: the City and the people and all of that, I think it would be stressful and uncomfortable. I'm from New York City, from Manhattan. I have lived in New York since my birth. I am comfortable here.

What's my favorite physical location to be in? Somewhere comfortable, for sure. For me, that's The City. But recently, because of school, I stay in New York City for at most a month. I guess that could mean I am uncomfortable often, and I am, but I am not sure that not being in The City is why. This is getting complicated...

I like all the free shit that happens in parks in the summer, that's my

favorite thing. I don't like the sweatiness on humid days, but I don't really like anything that's uncomfortable. Sweat and heat are both uncomfortable, sticky feelings. When I feel sticky, I feel stuck. But I think if there's a place to be stuck in the summer, I would I would always want it to be New York City. It doesn't really change in the summer. I think it's mostly the same, except it's hot and it's brighter out, and it's hard for me to be out and about without some kind of eye protection, and I get sunburned. But I wouldn't change it, I like it too much the way that it is. I wouldn't say I'm indifferent to it; it's just the City, with its specific set of seasonal challenges, and I love it just that way.

Seasonal

In summer, there is a lot happening, but you can see none of the movement. In summer, you can hear all of the life but you can't feel it. In summer, the air is made of felt; that is why it is so hard to walk around. In summer, the felt muffles you, and the City, and everyone around you, and that is why you can see none of the movement and feel none of the life. In summer, moving through felt is like trying to run underwater: your entire body is being suspended. In summer, you will do the same thing every day. In summer, you will spend your summer the same way every year. In summer, the extended days will make you feel like it is day all the time. In summer, you will have experiences that you can only have during the summer.

In New York, you can go out every night of the week in the summer. In New York, you probably will not go in the water, even in the summer: the water is full of things, and those things are not turtles. In New York, you can stay in the park long into the night with everyone else in the City, the City is communal that way. In New York, you can find food and music in the parks, even at night. In New York, you will get someone else's sweat on you in the subway, and they will get your sweat on them. In New York, it is too hot in the summer. In New York, it is very crowded; you cannot be anywhere where there are no people. In New York, you can feel truly alone but you can never be truly alone.

Fall used to be my favorite season, but these days I like summer better. I think the change happened when I started to miss the heat of summer when fall came. I liked fall when I liked the cool weather and I liked having more space to myself. Now, I like summer better. Summer is warm and I need to be warm now. When there are so many people so close to each other, it is impossible to not feel warm. Fall could not keep me warm. The weather changed and I, like the seasons, changed with it.

Performing

Thinking Back on it Now

What You Remember

First memory of the Spraoi¹ was actually from when I was a very, very young child and is of this huge green monster coming out of the water, it was actually terrifying, and not really knowing what it was. And it was it was a little bit scary, but really magical as well, and the whole sea was blue. And what I'm remembering, and the whole reality of it could be completely different², and that's probably my first memory of Spraoi. And then we didn't see it for years, because we would always go away around the time of year, and so when I sort of started getting back into it again as a teenager I think that was sort of my only memory, but I didn't really have any other reference point for it.

Associated Emotions

I just think Spraoi is really magical. And it's kind of like someone's dream, or nightmare, becoming a reality. It's very visual. It's very active. It's full of kind of dark and sinister moments, and it's very theatrical. Light and fire I always associate with it as well. And just sort of, like, it's a bit of a crazy mash up of things. And there's always a story behind it as well, which I really like. They try to have a new one each year. And I think it's quite primal in a way. And a lot of raw emotions come out, especially in the performers. But, to see personal responses to it is quite exciting.

¹ An Irish Street Festival that happens in summer.

² A story you get could be completely different from what the original story was in reality, and probably is.

Fun. A little bit of fear, obviously, from the beginning, from the initial. And yeah, just fun, excitement, it's very buzzy and well, I think especially when you're performing, like when I've done the parades myself, you feel like you're part of this incredible experience³, feeling very sort of alive and it feels like you're in a festival. A festival feeling.

Kind of Performance

It is street performance. So it is all outdoors, and it's about involving the public, and everyone having access to the arts, and experiencing a visual show. Just different to the norm, really. I think what makes it different is the context in which it is. So, Waterford⁴ being quite a normal Irish town, and it likes to think of itself as a city, but it's quite small. It's so Waterford in its way, but it attracts all these incredible artists and performers, and it really just kind of makes Waterford different to other Cities. And I know that other people do it in Galway, but it just shows a really sort of creation of community. And obviously, the same people have been doing this for years, they've got such a massive following and they're sort of relentless in that they're just never going to give up, and they're always trying to improve it, to make it better, and to make it a better experience and they like to put in an element of surprise. And I think because of that, it

³ Making a story out of things other people say is to make yourself part of their experience, while also making the experience your story. I am performing as though I have had a different experience, one different from the story I am drawing from. I am performing someone else's story. I am not putting anything in that wasn't there.

⁴ Irish city where the Sproai takes place.

makes it better⁵ because it's more-and I think if you live if you like somewhere like New York, you're exposed to creative things all the time, so nothing really shocks or is surprises or interests you, unless you're seeking it, but this just appeals to everyone because there's not lots of ways you'd be seeing this unless you're going to pay for tickets to go to theater, which is not how people-people don't really do that in Waterford.

As a Participant and an Observer Of it

I went in at the costume department level because that was my main interest. And I started it on a voluntary basis, and then continued to work for them for a number of summers. And it was a really small department. There was Head of Costume, which is Claire Horne, and she's just incredible. The work that she can do... I mean, there are two hundred performers in the parade every year and she costumes them all. And is involved in the puppetry part of it as well, various masks and things that needs to be made, and face paint, and it's just, I mean, it was so great. I absolutely loved it, we were so busy, when you're in there all the time, and it was great for me in terms of learning sewing skills. And she showed me how to do pattern drafting, which I never would have done, and she let me decide on some of my own pieces for various characters. And I was also in the parade and every year that I was part, and that was incredible. That was so much fun. Because when you've worked on it, and you know the story

⁵ When I make a story out of someone else's store, I am not making it better, I am just making it different. It is an iterative process.

behind it⁶, it's only fair that you'd get to be part of it. I mean, my favorite one was called "The Oz That Was", and it was about Dorothy, and the Yellow Brick Road, but it was sort of like a twisted, warped version of it, and the costumes were fantastic. And the atmosphere from the crowd is just incredible, because, you know, I mean it was such a huge crowd, you really do get into character because it's dark, you're all dressed up, everyone is running around and you have to play your part, and you have to then get the crowd involved and get them sort of excited. It was really nice to come in on both sides, so being part of the design and also and being part of the parade as well. And I know Sarah⁷ still does it every year.

I mean, it was where I first started exploring art really. And it was just such an incredible experience for me. I just loved being part of it. I think it's really important for the community that it continues. Many people in Ireland, they should know about it, but really, you know, it's such a good place for people to learn practical skills in theater, and performance⁸, and organizing. And, I

⁶ When you know the story behind what you are making a story out of, it really makes writing your experience that you are having.

⁷ Cousin

⁸ Making a story is a performance. When I make a story, I see parts that I want in it, and I involve them. They had a different meaning, and I then I decide to make them do something else. I give a story the meaning that I want it to have. I could give the story of when I was at the Sproai. When I think about the Sproai, and what I remember of it, I think of how different it was from how Waterford usually is. This is a place that never has much to do. But for some of the days in the summer, the city is an art piece. I remember the Plague Doctors in their Dark Ages-themed masks going through the town in the dark. I remember how magical and scary it was. I was a child when I saw it, but the strength of the performance, and how taken the performers were with their performance was still important to me. I remember that you could not go through the city without seeing some sort of street performance. This is what I remember.

mean, it's a massive undertaking; the work, and the organizing that goes into it every year is really important to continue.

I haven't been home. And I was this summer, and I saw it. I didn't see the parade, actually, but I saw some of the other stuff that was happening around the town for it, and it's just very uplifting to see that it's as strong as ever.

It was massively, a massive confidence builder. I mean, I started when I was sixteen, so I was still-I was just starting to pick my subjects for my Leaving Cert and I think just knowing I wanted to get into that sort of creative environment and understanding how it works. I mean, it was so inspiring and I still think about it really positively. The biggest thing is probably the sharing of ideas, which is really valuable in design, which I went on to study, and just letting... because what I'm currently teaching is design thinking, and working together, and teamwork, and that sort of iterative process, and that was something that just naturally happened so I think I've always sort of had that as the ideal working conditions⁹, that you would be able to just have an impact on the outcome in the end.

⁹ The conditions where I make these stories are made up by me. I make up the conditions and decide how much I am going to follow them. The conditions I have when making these stories are that they will all be different but I will not put anything in that was not there. I have been following these conditions well I think.

The Difference Between Performance and Participation

I would say that I was performing as well as observing the performances¹⁰ of others, yeah. The parade is at a separate time from all the other acts, but even within the parade they have various acts. They all have different roles that they play. So there might be a band on one float. But at that point, you're really just focused on what you are doing. Maybe other people can focus on more than that, but I find if you are performing at the time, then you are going to focus¹¹ on that, really. And I think you do take it in, because it's around you, and you kind of get the vibes and the feelings from everyone else, and the excitement from it, but you don't necessarily observe in the same way you would as if you were just observing.

I always think of observing as being non-active. And although you're active in observing, you're not really contributing to it. You not really adding to it, you are just on the surface really, just sort of looking in. You're not impacting it, you're not having any effect on it. Whereas participating... I think when

¹⁰ I could also perform a story about performance. It could be what I think about performance I could make a story about the story as a place where performance happens, as a place where I am performing. I could make a story about what I think makes for a good performance. I think a good performance is one where the performers know that a performance is different every time. I think a good performance is one where the audience is participating, or is part of the performance. I think a good performance is one where the audience can see everything that is going on, but the performance still keeps its magic. I think a good performance is one that drafts its own reality and the audience just has to go with it.

¹¹ When I make a story out of other stories, I try to find one thing to focus on.

performing you're, involved and you are changing something in that environment.¹²

A Good Performance

I think I always love performances by the people look like they're enjoying themselves quite a lot. And that even if it's not necessarily enjoyment, but that they completely taken by it, that they look like they are fully absorbed by what they're doing, and almost like they're in a flow state. I mean, obviously not if it's rubbish and they're in a flow state... but I do think that has a massive impact: if the people who are performing are really passionate about it what they are doing, and that really comes across, I think that is what I tend to enjoy most.

The same people who started The Sproai are still doing it, so I feel like their goals are ever evolving, because if you're continuing to work on something it's going to constantly change, and so it's more like an iterative process where they test things, and they figure out what works and what doesn't and they concentrate on improving. They take risks,¹³ and they're not too precious about it. And some summers better than other. And they change the route¹⁴ regularly. And they've changed it from day to night and back again. They're really just trying to keep it going and make it exciting. But they're really incredible people,

¹² That is what the performance of making a story is: changing something about the environment.

¹³ I am taking a risk by making stories out of stories. They need to work as stories as well as a performance.

¹⁴ The route of the parade.

the ones who actually come up with the concepts for it. And they take everyone's ideas. They would listen to everyone's ideas.¹⁵ They were open and kind of ready for change and that's what really kept it fresh. I think in terms of their goals, they do struggle to get funding and things. It's really about bringing people to Waterford and having a really spectacular show, you know, every year, really.

Would Do Again

Oh, definitely. I think when it was the first time I decided not to do it, it was because I was going away to somewhere. Between, like, a summer in Uni, I felt like I got everything that I could have got from it at a point. I feel like if I went back now, that it would be different, but I wanted to just try and explore new places and new companies and stuff. I never got into anything to the same extent again, but I just loved being part of that environment and community. I would definitely do it again.

¹⁵ Listening to the ideas in a story is the only way to learn how to make one.

It Just Appeals To Everyone

I started *it* on a voluntary basis, and then continued to work for *it* for a number of summers. You have to play your part. That's how *it* happens. As a participant and an observer of *it*, I can say that this is the only way *it* happens. You better just get with *it*; take *it* in, because *it's* all around you. *It* is a good performance. We are all part of *it*. We are all important to *it*. *It* needs everyone to make *it* happen.

Looking back on *it* now, *it* was probably trying to show some of the aspects and culture that were valuable to *it*, and that included the Dark Ages and the bubonic plague. I cannot remember what exactly *it* had to do with the Dark Ages, but the Dark Ages were part of *it*.

The biggest thing about *it* is probably the sharing of ideas. That is very important to *it*. *It* was where I first started exploring art, really. At first, I was afraid of *it*. But I know most of the fear probably came from me being so young and being unable to understand what *it* was and what was going on.

Observing *it* and being part of *it* are completely different experiences. When you observe *it* you are part of *it* but your role in *it* is entirely different. When you are part of *it* you still observe *it*, but you don't necessarily observe in the same way you would as if you were just observing. When I was part of *it*, I absolutely loved *it*. Because when you've worked on *it*, and you know the story behind *it*, it's only fair that you'd get to be part of *it*.

I always think of observing as being non-active. And although you're active in observing, you're not really contributing to *it*. You're not really adding to *it*. I also think in some ways that *it* is there for the observer more than the performer, The observer gets to enjoy *it* most. Though *it* is truly there for everyone. Yeah definitely. But I think that *it* has a massive impact, on both the performers and the observers. And I think the performers and the observers have a massive impact on each other. if the people who are performing are really passionate about *it*, *it* impacts them and the observers more.

What About it Do You Remember?

I remember... I have no... I cannot recall.

Yes, I do remember the festival, and the parade, but that is because there was a Beaky Thing. Well, given, it was probably the first parade I saw, or one of the first. I knew what a parade was before that, but it was much darker in terms of theme and tone. It felt darker and scarier. I don't think it was appropriate for a three-to-four year old to be there.

Festivals:

- Happiness
- bright colors
- and you know nice things.
- The smell of great food
- Colorful tents
- Not scary clowns

I remember seeing a plague doctor because I called it the "Beaky thing" and it scared me greatly.

At some point I saw a plague doctor mask and I called it the beaky thing and it really scared me.

This was a four year old seeing a beaky thing, wearing all black. Pretty sure I cried.

I was an observer. I, and again, this was from, at this point, a decade and a half ago. I cannot remember... I sat and watched a parade.

I Remember

- Fear
- Absolute terror.
- Dread.
- Weird, creepy things
- Scary

It depends if the observers are actively engaged. If the participants, or the people who are in charge of the activity incorporate the observers in some way, then I'd say that they are participants. But if the observers are merely watching, and not contributing to the festivities, the main event, whatever you call it, then they're observers. Interacting with the event in some way, not just visually, but almost in a way so that you are contributing to what people are observing.

If it's able to invoke a strong emotion with you, you know, so anything that invokes strong emotions, including good music. Strong visual effects. Profound. Execution in terms of, like, if it's a play, if the play is incredibly well written, and acted right, if they can really make you feel what the characters are conveying, then it's...It's you know, a good performance.

A Good Performance:

- Invokes strong emotions
- Strong Visual Effects
- Profound

Looking back on it now, it was probably trying to show some of the aspects of-the it's from the Dark Ages right? - so the medieval era. So I think it was trying to show some of the aspects and culture that were formed during the Dark Ages and that included the bubonic plague-right, is that the bubonic plague? And the plague doctors were clearly a part of that. And they were trying to invoke the feelings that people during that time felt. And, I mean, given I was so young, yes it did succeed. Because it made me feel absolute terror and dread. So you know, there you go, successful.

Oh yeah, performances that are capable of really, you know, sticking with someone and helping them, or you know, meaningful connections, or think about things, or just you know, think about things because they were forced to feel strong emotions toward something, I think those are all valuable. In general.

I mean I cried, so I was pretty sure I wasn't having a good time. I mean, maybe afterwards my mom was able to stop me from crying, because you know mom, but it was definitely scary. Looking back on it now, I kind of look back on it fondly, because you know, I was scared of a beaky thing that I know is a plague doctor.

Kind of ironic. So I mean, I look back on it now: good experience.

Looking Back

- Remember it Fondly
- Kind of ironic
- Definitely Scary
- Good Experience

Yeah definitely. [Would do again] Partly because I can't remember, and I know most of the fear probably came from me being so young and being unable to understand what was going on.

No final thoughts say other than no, You know, three year olds probably should not look at Plague doctors, they're scary.

Remember

When she was a child, she went to many festivals. She can't remember much of them. She remembers that there was a parade. She remembers that there were performers who performed in masks. This is what she has heard other people say, anyway. When she was a child, she was afraid of festivals, they gave her nightmares, but she can't remember why. The festival in her memory does not have a strong visual effect. If she thinks about it, really, most of the memory is just what she has heard from other people. If she thinks about it, the memories she has are just dark. They could just be dreams. How does one talk about something that they can't remember?

When one can't remember, they talk about their memories the way they talk about the memories of other people. They talk about memories the way they talk about a story. A memory that is just what other people have said is your memory is just a story. If a person has memories like this, then all stories become more important. All stories could be as real as memories. All memories are just stories.

When one can't remember their memories, and instead have their memories said to them, then they are not participating in their own memory. When a memory comes from another person, but it belongs to you, then you are now just audience to your own memory. When you say you remember something but you are just saying what someone else remembers, you are performing memory.

For the girl, this meant that the reality of her memory was whatever story she was told by someone else. If she was told that she was afraid of festivals, then she was afraid, because that is how the story goes. If in the story, the performers wore masks, then this was her memory.

How To Put On a Good Show

To make a performance good, there are several things that must be done.

In no particular order:

1. A good performance involves the audience.

Even if the audience is not participating, they should be emotionally involved in the performance. If they are not, then the performance is not good.

2. A Good performance has fully absorbed performers

The performers should be completely taken by their roles for the duration of the performance. Anything else is a bad performance.

3. A Good performer should always been in character

Never should a performer be out of character while a performance is going on. If a performance is more than one day, then the performer must be that character for more than one day. If the performer is not in character then it is a bad performance.

4. The performance should always be improving

The performance should always be trying to be a better performance. A performer should not be ok with a performance that does not improve.

5. The performance should have fire

This is just what I think. If there is no fire, then the performance is not as good.

6. The performance should have its own conditions of reality

The reality in the performance does not need to be the reality in our reality. The performers and the performance should make their own conditions of reality and the audience should be taken by it. If the performance is not in a different reality then it is not a good performance.

7. The performance should have a monster

When there is one, it is just more interesting. If the story is not interesting it is because there is no monster and it is not a good performance.

8. The Performance should happen only in dreams.

If the performance is happening any where other than in a dream, then it is not in its own conditions of reality and not a good performance

The Festival

The biggest thing I remember is probably the sharing of ideas, which is really valuable. Partly because I can't remember, and I know most of the fear probably came from me being so young and being unable to understand what was going on. I can also remember colorful tents. Many people should know about it, but really, you know, it's such a good place for people to learn practical skills in theater, and performance, and organizing.

A decade and a half ago I was teaching design, thinking, working together, and teamwork. At that time I would say that I was performing. And I started it on a voluntary basis, and then continued to work for them for a number of summers. And it was a really small department. I mean, it was where I first started exploring art really. And it was just such an incredible experience for me. I remember feeling very sort of alive, and feeling like I was in a festival. It felt darker and scarier at the time than it does looking back now.

When I started working on the festival, it was completely different than teaching. It was really nice to come in on both sides, so being part of the design and also and being part of the parade as well. And having observed the festival, I knew what the design looked like. I learned that it's a massive undertaking, the work and the organizing that goes into it every year is really important to continue.

It was so inspiring and I still think about it really positively. And going to work at it was something that just naturally happened so I think I've always sort of had that as the ideal working conditions.

I am not part of it now. I work too much. I went back to teaching. But I was at it this summer, and I saw it. I didn't see the parade, actually, but I saw some of the other stuff that was happening around the town for it, and it's just very uplifting to see that it's as strong as ever.

Important for To-Night's Performance

What We Need

Two hundred performers. All of them are important for the community.

What Not to Do

You should not look at Plague doctors. They're scary.

Most Important

Understand what is going on.

Make Sure You Remember

I cannot recall.

Ideal Working Conditions

You know, nice things.

What We Do Not Want the Observer to Feel

That they are not really adding to it, or that they are just on the surface really, just sort of looking in. That they are not impacting it, not having any effect on it. We want them to feel like they are part of it.

Performance and Participation

We want observers contributing to the festivities, the main event, whatever, then they're good observers. Interacting with the event in some way, not just visually. Get them to contribute!

Is The Performance Scary?

Yes. It is scary. Performing is scary so the performance is scary. I don't think it is appropriate, for a three-to-four year old to be there.

Final Thoughts

No.

Monsters

When I was a young child, I had nightmares that the sea was full of green monsters. In my nightmares, these monsters had beaks and would open them, and let out fire and terrible calls. While a child, the monsters were only in my dreams. I knew that these monsters had no place in reality, and only had a place in that blue dream sea.

I dreamed that these monsters were performers. I would say to myself that they were just people in costumes. Just people in masks. But even though I said that to myself many, many times, it never seemed real. To me, the monsters were really monsters.

I started to paint these dreams as I saw them. I painted the sea, I painted the warped monster faces coming up from its surface. In some of these paintings, the sea was a dark, dark green, and in others it was very, very blue. Some paintings would have many monsters, so many that there was almost no sea to be seen between them. Others had only one. The monsters were all different. Some had huge beaks. Some monsters wore masks and costumes. This meant that they were just people, not really monsters. Other monsters were just monsters.

Each year I would paint different monster paintings. In one year's paintings, I painted the monsters having a parade, and going on the surface of the sea. All the monsters were monsters, but they were wearing costumes and had their faces painted for a festival. Some of the monsters were street performers. They were performing in my dreams, and I was painting them

performing in my painting. When I painted them, it was like the monsters were performing for me.

The whole reality of my nightmares could be completely different. All I remember of my monsters are my paintings of them. They are not scary as they once were. They are now just a sea blues and greens and many kinds of paint.

Painting

Things That Can Be in a Painting [Derivation #1]

- The Sea
- Boats
- Dogs
- No Dogs
- Colors
- No Colors
- Sparse Colors
- Aliens
- Skeletons
- Flags
- Dots
- Bad dreams
- Surreal images
- A car
- The Yellow Ones
- Images of Work

I spent a good deal of time just waiting, did some reading. It's unpleasant.

There's a lot of cartoon imagery, It's difficult to understand really what they're trying to show, it's either surreal or there is maybe no intention here of having a kind of a theoretical underpinning. I'm doubting, again, the things that I'm thinking.

it certainly confuses me. It's just so much. Figures that I wasn't noticing at first... there's a lot going on here and I don't know what it is... But they're really disorienting..

There's no focal point. This is almost like a bad dream that contrasts with the incredible detail. At certain points, it appears like a lot of effort was put in, but at other points, it seems accidental blunders just developed into other projects, and that is really disturbing because There is no focal point. I don't know what. I don't know what.

I hope they don't take away anything bad, I hope that they understand that it's disorienting, I really do. I really hope that they see it the way that I'm seeing this... sense of overwhelming confusion.

I usually expect for it to have some significance, to be interesting, intriguing, engaging the audience in some way. Bad performance is... bad performance is... a reiteration of the same story told over and over again. I like to see something that's got some element of truth about it. Truth is Important. I feel like that's an opinion where one can convince me of something else being true.

I've had to experience each of the somewhat distressing aspects and tried to understand why or what it means.

Sometimes, I don't know. There's a lot of things to think about.

I don't know if I can hold on to any real art right now. I also don't think that art should be explained. Worth on the experience, And that's that

[]

I Do Not Know What the Name of That Painting Is

Raft Rapture seems like the most appropriate title. It was January of 2017, towards the end of January, in, uh, Kate's house. I was visiting my friend Kate in New York City, and sleeping in her apartment. And the painting was there in the house, and *I spent a good deal of time, you know, just hanging out there, waiting* for Kate to be awake and stuff, and so I looked around, *did some reading*, looked at some paintings, and some other stuff, but I'd forgotten the painting until more recently. It was sent to my phone, so that I could remember it, and recall what it looks like, and have a good look at it

It's Pretty Horrifying and Disorienting

Yeah there's words that are written on the painting, and there are images which are-difficult to discern what's happening... It seems like at certain points, the painting is attempting, like, a pointillism, the little dot painting, but it doesn't stick with that theme for very long, and really, it just creates an effect of kind of disorienting me...flashing... kind of colors that don't really... *it's unpleasant*, I would say. Let's see, there was a reference in the painting to Mermaid Man, which I understand, is a character from SpongeBob. That's in the very center of the painting, where two figures are seen to be in some kind of an embrace. *There's a lot of cartoon imagery*, and what I'm drawn to in this painting, I suppose, most, are probably the figures, the strange cartoon-like figures in the

foreground. *It's difficult to understand really what they're trying to show, it's very...it's either surreal or there is maybe no intention here of having a kind of a theoretical underpinning, but the painting.* That's what I noticed, though I guess I do get kind of a sense- I don't know if there's much that I can say. *I'm doubting, again, the things that I'm thinking.* Alright, What's the next question?

Up in the Center, Slightly to the Left

There are some really pretty Cartoon-like drawings of either a dog with a very long face or a... I like the image of the skull with a sombrero on it , with a kind of upside down bowling pin for a body. I mean, it isn't a bad painting, I wouldn't say, but *it certainly confuses me.* I mean, it's well done, the way that the colors of the oil paint kind of melt into one another, especially in the Mermaid Man section of the painting, the lower center area. Oh wow, this is just- *it's just so much* in this painting. I thought- I keep seeing... like wow, there are smaller *figures that I wasn't noticing at first.* There's a little snail figure by the long dog head that I referred to earlier. Yeah, *there's a lot going on here and I don't know what it is* that is going on. It's difficult for me to say whether or not I feel put off, actually. So, I've been saying that I've been feeling put off by this painting but there's certainly something pleasant about it, I can't really say why. Calming colors? *But they're really disorienting.* Well there aren't calm colors either, they're fucking, there really... I don't know, they're like neon, flashing...

There is No Consistent Theme

I don't know, *there's no focal point* of this painting, and I would appreciate a certain amount of focus, I guess in paintings. Because it's difficult to understand anything that's going on, because there's no real focus here. I mean, there's a center, and there's a periphery, but I mean, I feel like this painting could just continue. *This is almost like a bad dream* that could continue. There's, I don't know, some of the figures in this painting, like the hat, and the football, up in the upper left corner, they really look very poorly drawn, and *that contrasts with the incredible detail* of like, the centerpiece. Really, *at certain points* in this painting, *it appears like a lot of effort was put into* creating a really nice piece of art, *but at other points, it seems* like they were *accidental* sort of... *blunders that just developed into other projects* that were poorly done. I'm not an artist, so I can't I can't claim to have any superior ability to do any more than this football, or this American flag hat. The question is what I don't like? I mean, so up in the center is the section called "Paradise", and, I mean it's such a little, small, like it looks like a hole... little, like a little cluster of, I want to say planets, but I know that's not really what planets look like. But I feel like there's a little cluster of planets by the heart, on top of the long dog's head, *and that is really disturbing because* there's a little section designated "Paradise" up at the top, and there's "Long Beach" down at the at the bottom left, or bottom right, and Mermaid Man in the center, "Plaque Indian" at the left... what is happening? I do not know. *There is no focal point.* I can't say what is good about... *I don't know what. I don't know what.*

I Don't Really Know What I'm Supposed to Take Away From It

And *I hope they don't take away anything bad*, you would hate to have someone look at a painting and feel bad, so I hope that they focus on the nice parts of the painting, maybe the Little Hearts. And the... Scary Death. Scary Death Sombrero Skeleton. Seems like... and the Long Dogface, little sailboats, and, in this sea of disorienting neon color, *I hope that they understand that it's a disorienting painting. I really do. I really hope that they see it the way that I'm seeing this...* kind of confusion, just *sense of overwhelming confusion* that I feel.

Nice Colors, First Off, and Then a Subject That's Thoughtful.

And *I usually expect for it to have some significance*, either to the artists, or in a metaphorical sense, or usually, it's something about visual art is visually pleasing, although it doesn't have *to be*, depending on what the intention is. I don't think that I have a whole lot of like, experience, with visual art, but I think I generally know what I like. And it's usually it's usually simplicity.

It Doesn't Have to be Something That's Pleasant for the Audience

I Don't Think

A good performance can *be* a lot of things, I think, although most performances that I attend usually are, and are *interesting, intriguing*, usually *engaging the audience in some way*, or getting them, getting the audience, to think about something that they otherwise would not have thought about. A *bad*

performance is kind of a reiteration of the same story told over and over again, or...and... without emotionally captivating the audience. Yeah. I like to see something that's got some element of truth about it. Truth is Important.

The Audience Should Be Involved in Interacting

Interacting and trying... to make, making efforts to understand what the art is about. I think maybe, maybe I think, that *I feel like, that's an opinion* that I could... that someone can convince me of something, or *where one can convince me of something else being true*, but generally, an interested audience is important for a piece of art or performance.

Openmindedness

Yeah, I think that's about all.

My Relationship to this Specific Painting

I'm an observer. It has had an impact on my life, I suppose, in that while thinking about it, *I've had to experience each of the somewhat distressing aspects of the painting, and tried to understand why* such a painting may have been created, *or what it means*. So I would say yeah, I am an observer who was interacting with the painting. What was that was the other question?

I'm an Observer, and Creator, I Guess, of Art

Yeah. I make art, and look at other art, and think about the artful aspects of everyday life, and those interact with... I don't know, it's all just a big... arts all just a big everything. *Sometimes, I don't know*, it depends how I feel about art, how I feel at a certain time, but I feel like, generally, you can consider anything that happens to you at any moment art, in some form of art, in some way. And depending on like, the subjectivities that you're taking into account, *there's a lot of things to think about* with your relationship to art.

It's Another Experience That I Have

I mean... worth. I don't know. *I don't know if...* worth, usually, like is something you'd put a dollar amount on. *I can't own some art like this right now.* I wouldn't try to buy it. I'd say, like, I would honestly, like, try to give it away if I had it. Because, just because, I can't *hold on to any real art right now*, because I'm moving around so much, and also, like, I don't really know what I would do with this. But that's just me. I don't- *I also don't think that art should be explained*, like I don't know, considered, in terms of monetary value, usually I guess. But yeah, I don't know, putting a *worth* on *the experience* of that is not really something I feel comfortable doing. *And* it doesn't really make sense for me to right now. But, *that's that.*

No

I think I've really said enough.

Visuals **[Derivation #3]**

Words

- “Mermaid Man”
- “Paradise”
- “Bracket Indian”
- “Long Beach”

Imagery

- Pointillism
- Dots
- Stripes
- Flashing
- Colors
- Neon Colors
- Sea of disorienting neon color
- Calming colors
- Colorful
- Figures
- Central figures
- Man and a woman
- Cartoon imagery

- Cartoonlike figures
- Dog with a very long face
- Long dog's head
- Long Dogface
- Skull with a sombrero
- Sombrero skeleton
- Upside down bowling pin for a body
- Snail figure
- A lot of stuff going on
- Very busy
- American Flag Hat
- Football
- A cluster of Planets
- Shaped like a heart
- Little hearts
- Little sailboats
- Detail
hole

Under the sea, The Colors are Delightful [Derivation #4]

To look at a painting is to go to a place. When we looked at that painting, we left in the car for a spontaneous day at the sea. We went to look at the little sailboats and we really hoped that the little sailboats were looking back at us. We wanted to know if they saw things the same way that we saw them. That doesn't happen very much. *Think about the artful aspects of everyday life*

The sea was a landscape. It was moving. I went in, and went under. I looked up and saw the *colors flashing*. I was in a sea of *neon color*. There were stripes of life, they flashed as they moved around in the sea. This was life that looked alien but I was the one that was alien there. A painting makes you feel like this.

Under the sea, I moved like a mermaid through the *sea of neon color*. I was the *central figure* in my own landscape. When I came up, everything looked sparse. There were figures moving that I could see, but I could not speak to them. I was looking at a new landscape. I was in a sparse room. There was a sea, but it was in a painting. The sea was in a painting and I was in a room. *I hope others enjoy the painting as much as I do.*

On Art
[Derivation #5]

it's well done, the way that the colors of the oil paint kind of melt into one another.

Generally, you can consider anything that happens to you at any moment art, in some form of art, in some way.

There's a lot of things to think about with your relationship to art.

I looked around.

I think to experience art, you need to be open and be a listener, or someone who feels, who is open to feeling, or to experiencing something.

There's a lot of stuff going on in this painting.

You can't put a price on art. Art is not something you'd put a dollar amount on.

With good art, someone can convince me of something.

Little sailboats in this sea of disorienting neon color...

I am drawn to art that is intriguing or that is a bit of a mystery I suppose, or that is speaking to something that I almost can't verbalize.

If you're talking about a performance when you're talking about art, and you're talking about a performance as being something that's live, anything can happen, you know, and if you have a bunch of dullards in your audience who are sitting there stiffly and they can't feel, or see, or appreciate what you're doing...

This painting has a lot of detail. I really hope that they see it the way that I'm seeing this.

Art should give its audience a kind of confusion, just a sense of overwhelming confusion.

Art should be something that makes me think about something in a different way, or feel deeply, something that touches me deeply in an emotional way.

How To Look at art **[Derivation #6]**

Visual art is visually pleasing, although it doesn't have to be. The audience should be involved when looking at art. This is how you look at art when you are audience to it:

- Sit still and look at a painting until your face goes long. Until your face is a Long Dogface.
- Look at the shapes in the corner. They look really look very poorly drawn to you, but this is art, it doesn't have to be visually pleasing.

[I just want you to see it the way that I'm seeing this.]

- Think of art as a way of touching like what's essential about being human.
- Art touches on the profound. Think about that while you look at art.
- Art is priceless.
- Art needs an audience that is open-minded. Art needs openmindedness.
- There are some really pretty Cartoon-like drawings. Drawings that are cartoonlike are still art.
- Try to understand why such a painting may have been created.
- Go into the sea of disorienting neon color.
- Notice all the details. Notice sailboats, notice skeletons, notice words.
- This painting could just continue. It will continue even without your audience, Art is showing part of a painting when the painting could just continue. Think about where it continues to when you look at art.
- Think about the focal point.

- Think about the consistent theme.
- Think about the figures in the painting.
- Think about color.
- Think about the artist.

Yeah, I think that's about all.

Triptych **[Derivations #7, #8, #9]**

Painting With David

David likes to paint the sea with neon colors. He thinks that if the sea were neon, there would be more mermaids.

Every day David goes out on his raft to paint the sea in neon, and hopes to see a mermaid there. He waits and waits on his raft until a mermaid appears. Looking into the mermaid's face, David says,

“Mermaid! I am the one that makes the sea neon! When I am no more, take my skull to house paint and paint with my skeleton!”

The mermaid, being someone who feels, and who is open to experiences, did this, and now paints many things yellow with pieces of David.

Paintings With People in Them

I like landscapes. I do not like paintings with people in them. I really do not like paintings with men in them. A good painting should have no people. A good performance should also have no people. The piece should be enough on its own.

I like landscapes because I knew a man named David... or maybe Robert... who just painted paintings of the sea.

This man told me one time that he didn't paint people because they always came out poorly drawn, even when they looked good. The man told me

that to paint well was to paint landscapes and dogs and planets and mermaids and other things, in nice colors. But not people. With people, whatever you painted would never be enough.

Colors

I do not like a lot of colors. I like yellow. I like sparse colors. I do not like when there are too many colors.

I knew a man once who liked too many colors. He liked neon colors. He used to paint everything in neon. All you could see in his painting were neon shapes with words in them.

I was told the man went out to sea on a raft. I was told that he waited for a mermaid but never saw a mermaid and his heart could take it.

It is better not to like colors. It is better for your heart to just like one.

I was told that his skeleton is still floating out at sea on that raft somewhere.

Derivation Sharp (#)

1 Painting is an alien

5 performance of words as

9 Imagery. Figures are painted

13 to say something about

17 the landscape and about

21 each other as well.

An Edge Around the Rules- The Beak

Between this story and the next, there is a form in the foreground over which you cannot see; a form that comes to a point. It becomes the focal point of the image and of the story. Its hard lines draw your attention. You recall the previous story, you want to go back there. The closer you look, the more contrast you start to see in the image. What was just lines and points now sticks out with incredible details. The hard outer area looked to be a dull color at first. But the longer you look, the more neon, and more disorienting the color is. The pointed form is looking out, and onto the next story now. It is moving around, like it like a boat out at sea. It cannot sit still and wait any more, and you can't either.

Mermaid Man¹⁶

I don't remember exactly¹⁷...I know that I had seen a number of David Slater's shows, and my guess is, because I recognized it, that this painting was in one of his shows. Probably within the last ten years. Definitely within the last ten years, a few years ago, was it 2014? But honestly, I remember some of his other things more precisely than I remember this; for instance, I remember the "Big Boy" one, which I really wanted to buy, but that's out in some gallery in New Mexico or San Diego somewhere, and I remember the "Matahari" one because it was so massively big. This looks like a lot of his paintings, and I don't remember precisely when I saw it first.

We left Southampton and sold our house, and I had been talking about buying and David Slater thing for years, and your dad he kept saying that it was going to negotiate the price for it, and so it came about that we were leaving the Hamptons and had an extra car, and Robert offered him a car in exchange for a painting¹⁸, and he went over to his house, and he sent a bunch of pictures of possible painting, and this was one, and there was another one, a kind of yellow one, that he also brought in, so that we could try them out. No, before this one, actually, it was a big alien head one, and the yellow one and he needed to get the yellow one back. And I like the alien one, but it wasn't what I considered to be a

¹⁶ What is the name of the painting, the painting in the living room?

¹⁷ When did you first encounter this painting?

¹⁸ How did you come to be acquainted with it in the manner that it exists now in your house?

prototypical David painting. It was an early work, and it was interesting, but it didn't have the components that I loved about David's work. So eventually, Robert returned the alien one. He started sending pictures of other ones that David was offering, and this was one that seemed almost like a prototypical David one, with the stripes, and very busy, and a lot of stuff going on, and I said yeah let's have this one, so we brought it, we tried it, and we kept it.¹⁹

There's the central figures that are shaped like a heart²⁰, it's probably a man and a woman, but with David, who knows. And it's got a lot of colors, it's got the stripes, it has so much going on. When you get up close to it, it's like a book almost. There's so much happening that it's you could look at it for years probably, and still discover something new about it. Oh gosh, I love the colors.²¹ I love the detail. I love the fact that there's so much happening. And that it's surprising, and it's busy and it's colorful, and it's open to interpretation. I actually can't think of anything I don't like²², I think it really enhances the room, it's a great conversation piece. I think it works as a piece. Plus, I like David. I think reflective of his personality. That really appeals to me.

I hope others enjoy the painting as much as I do²³, I hope they like looking at it as much as I like looking at, it I hope they find it aesthetically pleasing as well as interesting, you know, and that it provokes, that it's thought provoking and kind of inspiring, the way it is for me.

¹⁹ What about this painting draws your attention?

²⁰ What about this painting draws your attention?

²¹ what about it, if anything, do you like?

²² And what about it if anything do you not like?

²³ What do you hope other people take away from this painting if anything?

I am drawn to art that has people in it, you know, some representation of people²⁴, as opposed to abstract or landscape, which can be beautiful in their own right, but I enjoy seeing how people are relating to each other in a painting or relating to me as the observer or the onlooker. I also look for color. And this painting has a lot of detail, but a sparse painting thing could also be attractive to me. I look for something that that's intriguing or that is a bit of a mystery I suppose, or that is speaking to something that I almost can't verbalize.

I like to be entertained²⁵. I like something that's thought provoking. Something that makes me think about something in a different way, or feel deeply, something that touches me deeply in an emotional way. And that's probably true of paintings as well: something that you can relate to you in a deep sort of emotional feeling, as well as in an intellectual way. And something that's clever can be good in a performance, but if it's too clever and not artistic... I guess there's that line between just being clever and being artistic, or creative. What is it? It's almost as if it's touching that spark of creativity in you, something that you didn't expect to relate to. Unexpected. Delightful. All those things.

I think it's a very individual relationship, you know. ²⁶ I think that people are looking for something that speaks to them individually, whether it's speaking to their heart, or their head or... actually, I would say their heart more than their head, because when things get to be too obviously political... I think that people are looking to touch something that's almost universal, it's unspoken, it's where,

²⁴ What do you usually look for in good visual art?

²⁵ What do you usually look for in a good performance?

²⁶ What do you think is the audience's relationship to art? To performance?

you know, people communicate without saying anything. There's something universal. This is a place where we can all relate without speaking and I think that art gets at that somehow. This painting ²⁷, this this is something that enriches my life in a way. And I think that art is they one of the most important things that people can expose themselves to and be involved in, and think it's a way of touching what's essential about being human. I think it's more important than probably anything else: art. I think that that's maybe why humans discovered art, because it touches on the profound. It's hard to understand why it's so important to us, but it's something that expresses our soul.

Well I think you need to be able to sit still. ²⁸ And I think you need to be open and be a listener, or someone who feels, who is open to feeling, or to experiencing something. If you're talking about a performance as being something that's live, anything can happen, you know, and if you have a bunch of dullards in your audience who are sitting there stiffly and they can't feel or see or appreciate what you're doing, it impacts the performers. It doesn't allow the performance to breathe, to live, the [way it does] if you have a more receptive audience.

This painting invaluable, You know²⁹. I mean, I know we paid for it with a car, and there was something about that, something about putting value, or a monetary value on a piece of art... it is distasteful to me, because I think that it's

²⁷ What is your relationship to this painting [Mermaid man], and to art in general?

²⁸ What do you think makes one a good audience member?

²⁹ And the last question is what is this painting worth to you?

worth more. It's the same it's like having a child, like, how could you say, hey, the value of having a child is like, five million dollars, you know? That just wouldn't be expressive of how much we get from art. And it's not just this painting, if that's your question, I just think it would be good to say that art is invaluable, it's priceless, it's like that Mastercard commercial, you know, you can't put a price on it. What it gives you is almost always worth way more than what you paid for it.

An Early Work

An early work of David's is on the wall in the skeleton of a living room. There is nothing else in the room. Every other painting David has done is of mermaids, or boats, or the sea, except for this one. This painting of David's is of a car. The car is painted a neon color and the paint is not as neon as it was before.

We look at the painting. We are in the living room but we think about going into the painting, getting into the car. We get in the car and go.

We are going through a landscape of moving colors in our neon car. The landscape is made up of a sea of little dots, all different colors. To the right is the sea from David's other paintings. Some mermaids are on a raft, looking at us in a cartoonish way, but don't say or do anything. We keep going.

We are going by David's dog, which is interacting with a skeleton in a more sparse landscape. Every time the dog touches the skeleton, sparks come out from its skull.

We are in the last flashes of image before the end of the painting, but we notice that the painting just continues. So we go on and on across the landscape in our neon car until we can't see anything of the dog, or the sea, or the living room: only color.

Notes

On Style

Again, these stories were crafted by obtaining source material from interviews I conducted, two per section, and using only the words found in the source material, written to express different perspectives, viewpoints, and takes on the same topic. This constraint was strictly attended to save for the points when it is not.³⁰ The point behind this stylistic choice was not merely an exercise in constraint, but rather, as a way for me to interrogate my own perspective that I impose on a piece, especially when I use the words or thoughts of others. It is a way for accounting for the fact that my take on things is just one of many takes on things that could be possible. It is to say that it is a way, and not the only way. Most of these pieces were sculpted, not necessarily to reflect something I wanted to say specifically, but more so that I allowed to process to guide the stories in the directions they went, except in the instances when I had a specific perspective I wanted expressed.³¹ Some of these stories were developed using chance procedure. Others were not.

³⁰ Those points have been noted, such as the title “Important for To-Night’s Performance”, where “To-Night” is hyphenated in absence of the word “tonight” being available. Or as explained in Footnote 3 of “Thinking Back on it Now”.

³¹ Those points have not been noted.

On Composition

For the piece “Derivation Sharp (#)”, I took several lines of text and sonofied it. I did this by constructing a score in which each measure is one piano chord that makes up one word. The notes in the chord were chosen according to the letters in the word. Repeated letters were not reflected in the chord. The notes-to-letters translation scheme was created based on the keyboard of a piano, where the letter P in the alphabet would be about Middle C, and this score included sharps so as to include both the black and white keys and to stop the alphabet from overtaking an impossible number of octaves. The translation scheme, as I used it, is here:

A A	B A#	C B	D C	E C#	F D
G D#	H E	I F	J F#	K G	L G#
M A	N A#	O B	P C	Q C#	R D
S D#	T E	U F	V F#	W G	X G#
Y A	Z A#				

The Piece was originally titled “Derivation #” to indicate the sharps on the musical score, but was later altered.

Staging

In order to explore specifically the perspective of the “reader” these stories were recorded and played aloud in sonic space. I took over several rooms of Russell House, a notoriously haunted location, and became what haunts the house for the day.

For this installation, it was important to me that readers all get unique narrative experiences, and therefore could not expect one specific room to clearly yield one section of stories, one level of volume, or one variety of vocal processing on the stories. I constructed this by using three very different types of audio equipment to play the stories, (the in-house speakers, a set of monitors, and a broken amplifier) disguising the location of the audio sources, and by recording the tracks deliberately so that some had different levels of reverb/distortion applied to them, and some were at wildly different volumes than the other. These changes correlated to the section the stories were in, but the stories were never played in order. A listener could easily hear a story in a low tone in the room they were in, but have it interrupted by the loud buzzing of a particularly loud story playing through the broken amplifier in the adjacent room. Many different random playlists were generated containing all the audio files, to insure that no two listeners would ever have the same spatial or temporal experience.

I also offered a receptacle for readers to offer their own perspectives.

Here are some of them:

- “Placing” made me feel most alone.”
- “The speaker facing into the door sounds like it’s on the verge of tears. I don’t know if I should be overhearing it.”
- “When you spoke of summer feeling like one long day, your tone felt the same.”