

***Deepwater Horizon* correspondence**

Email correspondence with someone (I can't remember who!) in relation to *Deepwater Horizon*, sometime in 2010.

EMAIL 1

Two holes in the ground.

Just to be precise, the lower screen is not just solid red. It's an animation of a pulsing red circle which almost fills the screen and teeters on the brink of perceptibility. I wanted it to be momentarily visible and then not, so that (careful) viewers questioned whether it was really there or not.

The upper screen is a NAMA location - the flooded foundations of an apartment block. I passed it every day on the bus and I could see over the hoardings because I was sitting on the top deck. The sense of enclosure in the situation is something of interest - the fact that it's surrounded on all sides by a kind of 'business as usual' scenario. And of course, it's a place that presents a very particular sense of time. The hardware presents a kind of technological timeline in that there's an LCD screen sitting on top of a CRT.

EMAIL 2

I suppose one thing that interests me is the relationship between the present (more specifically the 'now') and history; how one gets slowly transmuted into the other (via things like 'the just past') and how history bleeds (or is bled) back into the present (or the 'now') in various subconscious and conscious ways. Obviously, someone like Sean Lynch has a practice that makes frequent use of a conscious re-presentation or re-injection of marginal or forgotten historical material into the present. To some extent, *Deepwater Horizon* is the inverse of that - an acknowledgement that we are living through a time when the tectonic plates of Irish society are shifting with unprecedented force and at an unprecedented rate, and a kind of marker/enigma that (almost) exists to be discovered in retrospect. So the piece directly references the outcomes, both local and global, of the processes which are driving those changes, but is also an attempt to create something like the monolith in 2001 :)

The video piece is edited - a series of shots from different perspectives. There are close-ups of weeds, of debris floating in the 'lake', insect life etc, as well as the wider shots I sent you. The surrounding buildings are visible only as reflections in the water. I'm very interested in Michelangelo Antonioni's trilogy (*L'Avventura*, *La Notte* and *L'Eclisse*) of movies from the early sixties and especially the film that followed it/them, *The Red Desert*. (If you haven't seen them, you should check them out. There's a lot of Euro art-house stuff about tumultuous relationships, but the way he deals with the landscape is mind-blowing.) They were made, partially, in response to Italy's economic 'miracle' of the fifties which completely transformed the landscape and Italian society, and they seem to me to be a pretty apposite point of reference for the state of things here, now. So I'm not sure how legible it is, but the video element was somewhat influenced by *The Red Desert*. The piece I've just shot in Fingal (*INTERZONE*) owes something to these films too.

As for the idea of history as a series of defined episodes, I obviously don't buy into that. One of the interesting things about growing older is being around to witness the simplification of the slippery complexity of things I have personally experienced and the reduction (erosion?) of that complexity in order to allow those situations/experiences to be recorded, represented and processed (owned). I'd like to think that the work I make, acknowledges that complexity somehow and doesn't short-change it.

One idea that I find useful in this context is that of sampling i.e. the process by which a continuous (or analogue) signal is converted into a digital signal by taking a series of snapshots (samples) of it at regular intervals. It's a bit Kubler-ish - thinking of experience (subjective or otherwise) as the signal (a flow) which is being 'sampled' in various ways - reduced to a series of snapshots e.g. opinions, reports, articles, images, interviews (the material of the archive, basically). And then the idea of an artistic practice as something which rearranges these fragments (samples) or uses them as material for the production of things or situations which attempt to produce or suggest an alternative perspective or reading of things, rather than attempting to construct or re-construct the period or moment represented by 'the sample(s)'. I acknowledge that assembling a history (as you do) is an act of production but I guess I'm trying to propose a different set of processes or desires at work in artistic production.

As for *the how*, I was speaking to a friend, a painter called Mairead O'hEocha about studios - I was looking for one at the time. She mentioned where hers was and it turned out to be near these flooded foundations. I mentioned my interest in them to her, and she said that she thought that her landlord owned the plot of land. I followed it up with her, and it turned out she was right. So, after a brief introduction, the guy just unlocked the hoardings for me one Summer morning and left me in there on my own until I got as much footage as I wanted. We had a funny conversation where he told me that they had a name for the concrete ledge which overlooks the 'lake'- they called it 'the beach'. Seriously bleak sense of humour. Pretty Ballardian, appropriately enough!

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