

Language and Penguins

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A questionnaire:

What do I want to believe that Lior Modan believes?

I want to believe that he (*Lior Modan*) is here, with wild rice, speaking from the bottom of his belly. And, in fact, I do. But he is doing so by way of a funny procedure of negating any direct progress – playing a music of tunings and silences - asking (first) them [the works], and (then) us, to accept flatly unreasonable terms. Our position frustrates any conclusion or sense of stability, but it nonetheless suggested we stay, care, shake hands. I am convinced that this feels to me at this moment like the only believable form of belief in a world like ours. I believe that this is what *Lior Modan* believes.

What comes to mind first that is not here in this room?

- Giacometti's Disagreeable Object of 1931
- Sylvia Bataille
- Monsieur Hulot

What might you say is the relationship between language and bodies in *Lior Modan's* new works?

This question gets to the heart of things but there is no one answer – no single organ, no privileged view. The body IS the imperfect body, the imprinted body, the sweaty body, the cold body, the faux body, the frozen-breaded body, the callous body, the sensitive body, the celestial body, and so on. Language is itself embodied, grandiloquent, deflated, matter of fact, romantic, robotic, a title, a fact, a fib, a highway, an exit, and so on.

Language (in its remainder from body) -- crosses distances between, but also and more so is behind distance; inside; underneath.

For example, if one were to insist on speaking with meaning without saying words, or with all-new-wrong-words, and persisted in keeping doing this until many things could be understood.

Is there something else to this sense making/sense feeling relationship?

There is. *Lior Modan* is asking these bodies to store memory without having “cerebellum” to store them in. There is violence to this; imprinting, inscribing, scarring; a dumbness also, with choosing such dumb vessels; but a sweetness in trusting them as carriers, like stuffed monkeys invested with feeling.

Are language and the body both foils in the case of *Lior Modan's* new works?

Yes. And, also, sort of yes.

For?

For the activity of being-and-thinking-and-feeling around other things and in your own head; for being a minded body; for thinking beyond that body at least in attempt; for remembering that body as it has inhabited other bodies over time; for contemplating opening it out into relationship to other bodies in this time.

Also?

Also a foil for the activity “painting” and the object “painting”

How so?

Look at the paintings of *Lior Modan*.

Are these objects in fact paintings? Is this how we should call them?

It’s a stretch.

What name would be better?

IMPERFECT PAINTING. (Probably not.) Matter Cinema. (No.) Waxy Meat Balloons. (Hardly.) Grand Craft. (Nah.) Corpus. . . Minor . . . next.

If these paintings were party guests would they all make the effort?

No.

The lunar-grey one is particularly recalcitrant and hasn’t really spoken to anyone.

The “skin/pattern/allover“ *sporting-picnic* works are chatty, youthful, vigorous, and good at not thinking about death. [All-in-all good couch sitting partygoers.]

The others?? They are in the kitchen; introverted and philosophical.

As a collection, *Lior Modan’s* efforts are less like a party and more like family or a school class picture, or a large beauty salon clientele.

Does *Lior Modan’s* working have a Mother and a Father?

Yes, and it is much closer to it’s Mother. Its Father left home when it was young and didn’t visit often; had no “way” with children. The *working* grew up with this distance; this regard. It has then been fashioned of the skills left home (sans Papa) which were most, if not all of them.

How does one write about works that are themselves contradictory, self-canceling, elusive, unstable?

Let us say that there is a history of art that is like the history of breeding dogs – kennels of propositions, Narratives-of-Refined-Traits-Carried-Forward. Yet, as we always know there are other dogs, and other-other dogs within these dogs, and other dogs still, etc, etc.

Do these other outcomes (dogs) rely on the persistent insistence and non-servile survival of regressive genes?

Yes, absolutely.