

Light Pricks:

In the Studio : Clare Thornton

Karst, Plymouth 05.07.17

:whispers & kicks an incomplete line

In the Studio

Is it March, spring, winter, autumn, twilight, noon
Told in this distant sound of cuckoo clocks?
Sunday it is – five lilies in a swoon
Decay against your wall, aggressive flocks
Of alley-starlings aggravate a mood.
The rain drops pensively. 'If one could paint,
Combine the abstract with a certain rude
Individual form, knot passion with restraint ...
If one could use the murk that fills a brain,
Undo old symbols and beget again
Fresh meaning on dead emblem ... ' so one lies
Here timeless, while the lilies' withering skin
Attests the hours, and rain sweeps from the skies;
The bird sits on the chimney, looking in.

Nancy Cunard, 1923

Is this England? Hot, still
breeze off the Sound
bright light filtering
through thick polythene
and a daylight fill,

*the middle
of twenty
seventeen.*

1. Cloth [animal] / Sew

A [shammy] bag,
with a square [] hole
run-down-centre,
top to bottom.
Fields of soft yellow leather,
pristine and immaculately stitched,
envelop a naked pole
four by four - PAR -
six loops for dangling,

in delicate blue-grey,

between dense materiality
and disembodied abstraction.

P o l e s

A p a r t

Beckett writes [Whoroscope] for
Cunard's £10 competition for the
best poem on the subject of time,
summer 1930. He had just read
Adrian Baillet's life of Descartes.

*[They don't know what the master of them that do did,
that the nose is touched by the kiss of all foul and sweet air,
and the drums, and the throne of the faecal inlet,
and the eyes by its zig-zags.]*

A stair, well
a bolstered baluster.
An invitation to stroke;
not punch.
Cushiony doughnuts of goat
hide | conceal
immensely pleasing.
Some are tempted to have a feel,

slide on fresh ones
skin to skin.
chamois bangle buffers
sometime weapons

"Just bracelet work, Miss Janet"

no birds aggravate
none look in

In fact, Nancy was overlooked
on most occasions
by virtually everyone.

Over lunch, you
have the grace
to enquire after
my anosmia, and
suggest a hypnotic
cure. My schnoz
returns the kiss
of neither sweet
nor foul, though
I, too, am a
curious, nosey
person. Only
coffee. And the
products of my
inner spaces,
no longer foul,
but in a weird
transmutational
solipsis, as of
that same fragrant
bean. Like the
whale's grey amber
[a peculiar odour
that is at once
sweet, earthy,
marine, and
animalic], but
only pour me.

*Cunard appears as a sharp, angled woman, up to her elbows in African
ivory bracelets. Her pose is somewhere between alluring and defensive,
and her side profile directs us towards an unknowable spectator just
outside the fra*

me. It could be. you, it could be. me.

i want
to hold,
TIGHT
to bury
a r m
to oter.

*She round about
seeks Robin out,
to slap it in his oter.*

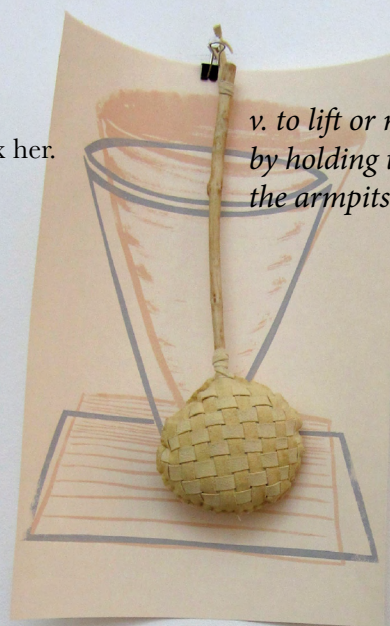
He pulls it out
and aims a clout
but never will he box her.

2. Clay [earth] / Pour / Press / Bash / Draw

glittering shell
a haloed carapace
stands guard
below and above
the everyday,
beckons gleamilly.

Awaiting occupation
I cleave to ma's dug
A lidded plastic bucket
Slip-full, silly.

*v. to lift or move a person
by holding them under
the armpits (Irish)*



Tipping it out, right quick

*[Thus the Meavy has been impounded at Burrator to supply Plymouth...
but serves no more the Dragon's Leat]*

3. Paper [plant] / Draw | Chamois [animal] / Weave | Cloth [earth] / Drape (volume)

invert a cone a vase
remove an earthly pink void
from blue grey lineaments.
Place upon a striped mat
conceal the join with a woven ladle,
a coracle.

Wait for rain and/or flowers.

Cut a goodly length
From a bolt of
thermoplastic

silky material of
indeterminate colour
[dust + flesh + bronze]
Fold, clip, hang.

Withdraw
[the light will work it out]

4. Paper [plant] / Paint / Collage / Print / Dance

The quality in the creation of expression the quality in a composition that makes it go dead just after it has been made is very troublesome.

have at the vertical & veer to 5.



A river's mouth

*And there, in a thunderstorm, he had rolled in mud,
the sensitivity of his skin exquisitely enhanced
by the electricity of the atmosphere.*

We are drenched past the point of total soakiness.
We dream of the possibilities
of visionary awakening, through enhanced senses.

*[The cleanly electrix went right up my tube
(Now I have something to tell my plumber)]*

The fragility of process and materials and myself are quite unpredictable. In the process of making, materials assert themselves, roundly, whereas design is quite sharp and spiky. I can't communicate with only one material. I'm a curious, nosey person. Outlining your intent... is... it.



5. Clay [earth] / Extrude

long, doobla
long loop of guts,
half-formed knots
a petrified snake
pokes its grey nose
over the precipice.

pale pink, shiny and clean
on the outside
striations suggest extrusion
a softness forced
through a hard hole
heavy dangler holding

and dropping

tube births a tube.

Now straightened by experience
brainwashed by Heatwork. Yet
impressionability, vulnerability
remain. The clay is double.
An engine of the body's desire.

Showing off hiding from
the particular opacity of she
who shows herself
through the act of hiding
The slowest curtain closing, ever.

Over [Night]

My Body Draped in Nox
so I could give you
the last gift owed to / react-text
react-text: 165 death.
Why must we speak to silent ashes,
assemble trivial remnants
of a lost presence?

In fact, Nancy was overlooked
on most occasions
by virtually everyone.

Well, She had her own moral
code, which I like; hated crassness,
vulgarity, or swearing.

Her walk also enchanted, the
head... held... high
with its short fair hair,
and one foot placed
exactly in front of the other,
not with mannequin languor,
but spontaneously, briskly, boldly,
skimming the pavement.
Never in her life, I believe,
was she frightened of anything.

Struggling with poetry
Loving Gertie Stein,
at in the moment, but
The active nowness of it
is immensely pleasing
She rolled the words around
Looping a circularity
on your tongue
Constant passings
Will flow forth

[changing tense 3 times]

From [return to 4]

6. Clay [earth] / Model / Turn

she "slid the heavy African ivory bracelets off her wrists and asked us to look after them. She looked sadly at her wrist when they were off. She would have felt less denuded had she stripped off her clothes." The bracelets remained hidden for a long time in Sylvia's staircase cupboard.

the artist exhibits both *the urgent need to communicate* and *the still more urgent need not to be found*, while, underneath our *inescapable vulnerabilities* work at a cellular, as well as a social, level.



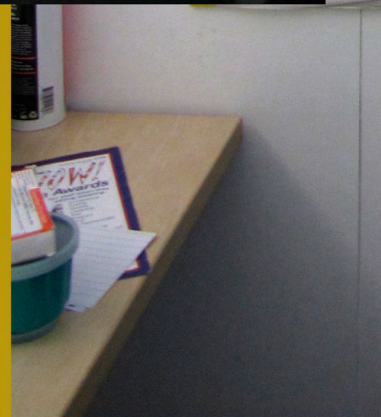
I like turning – when you put the thing on the wheel and use the wee tool.

A lazy perfectionist –
If I'm not careful, I can become too careful.
A unifying palette – must be disrupted with mess.
You wouldn't want to perfect something,
maybe just correct it, control its unruly droopiness.
Power through The Thresholds of Embarrassment
with the joy of the perennial beginner,
accepting the generosity of those
prepared to share their top nuggets.

...for this reason each student should make or obtain a turning tool to suit her own style. The tool should be made from a strip of metal, thick enough to prevent quivering under the strain of use.

How to structure? Time and space fight for control. Past time is made of memories and words [and things]. Space is made of things and words [and memories]. Reading through the notes of a rich, enjoyable day of conversation, themes repeat and interweave. Remaking the space from memory and photographs suggests a structure that takes the side of things. Themes repeat and interweave. I follow in the footsteps of your research, veering, elsewhere, here and there...

Things teeter on the edge of collapse.
Folding and falling, Failing and fainting.



5. Clay [earth] / Extrude [once more]

Fountain | God

A gutty and intestinal piece
made from plumbing
abandonned and oozing

for Doctor WC

Williams

c'est la vie

Elsa and Rose

partners in

scat ol orgy

and *objet d'art*

fixed in a FLEXIBLE

TENDERNESS WEB

for Philly and [the Bennor Anti-Syphon Globe Trap!]

IMMACULATE HEART COLLEGE ART DEPARTMENT RULES

- Rule 1** FIND A PLACE YOU TRUST AND THEN TRY TRUSTING IT FOR A WHILE.
Rule 2 GENERAL DUTIES OF A STUDENT: PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR TEACHER. PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR FELLOW STUDENTS.
Rule 3 GENERAL DUTIES OF A TEACHER: PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR STUDENTS.
Rule 4 CONSIDER EVERYTHING AN EXPERIMENT.
Rule 5 BE SELF-DISCIPLINED. THIS MEANS FINDING SOMEONE WISE OR SMART AND CHOOSING TO FOLLOW THEM.
Rule 6 TO BE DISCIPLINED IS TO FOLLOW IN A GOOD WAY. TO BE SELF-DISCIPLINED IS TO FOLLOW IN A BETTER WAY.
Rule 7 NOTHING IS A MISTAKE. THERE'S NO WIN AND NO FAIL. THERE'S ONLY MAKE.
Rule 8 THE ONLY RULE IS WORK.
Rule 9 IF YOU WORK IT WILL LEAD TO SOMETHING. IT'S THE PEOPLE WHO DO ALL OF THE WORK ALL THE TIME WHO EVENTUALLY CRICH ON TO THINGS.
Rule 10 DON'T TRY TO CREATE AND ANALYSE AT THE SAME TIME. THEY'RE DIFFERENT PROCESSES.
Rule 11 BE HAPPY WHENEVER YOU CAN MANAGE IT. ENJOY YOURSELF. IT'S LIGHTER THAN YOU THINK.
Rule 12 "WE'RE BREAKING ALL OF THE RULES, EVEN OUR OWN RULES, AND HOW DO WE DO THAT? BY LEAVING PLENTY OF ROOM FOR X QUANTITIES." JOHN CAGE
HELPFUL HINTS: ALWAYS BE AROUND. COME OR GO TO EVERYTHING ALWAYS. GO TO CLASSES. READ ANYTHING YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON. LOOK AT THINGS CAREFULLY. OFTEN SAVE EVERYTHING IT MIGHT COME IN HANDY LATER.
THERE SHOULD BE WORKS EVERY WEEK

Luxe, Calm & Hirquitallency

poised on an axis of paradox, absence and presence its poles, erect a gnomon on her horizontal dyal, the messy and potentially compromising aspects of her or his sexuality and other biographical vicissitudes.

the dominant model of avant-gardism, one that "is predicated on the erasure of the subjectivity of the artist — — from the artistic encounter"

*pockets of experience
that must be courted*

*delicate cobwebbery
and obfuscation. poles
of dense materiality
and disembodied abstractions
increasingly unbounded
and ultimately 'disappeared'.*

obliquely

*Like the heavenly tube
through which the earth flies*

Making something puts you immediately into a heightened relationship with space. Space is made up of materials. Wood, concrete, plastic, ceramic, metal, etc. And air. Air, as Eduardo Chillida said, is a fast material. Making is an intimate engagement with some materials within the totality of the materials that make a space. This engagement involves an ordering, to a greater or lesser degree, of the materials that make the space. Following the OOologists, we might say that a space is an object, made up of other objects. Making encourages you to subscribe to its own value system. What is kept; what is reclaimed, recycled, discarded?

*In the evenings they took their guitars down to the rocks of the Sound
& there she sate, singing to the sea & the moon till late...*

Note on the text and sources

The text is constructed from a set of notes made over a day in and around Clare Thornton's studio at Karst, Plymouth. Clare and I talked about her research for *Materials of Resistance*, her various collaborators and works in progress, mostly those visible in the studio. I took photographs of these works – a snapshot of an artist's process – and they became building blocks, along with the words.

A goodly number of the words and phrases I have used are Clare's own – her vitality comes across in a vivid and often humorous use of language. I have also used writing on, and the writings of, Nancy Cunard and Elsa von Freytag Loringhoven – two key influences on Clare's practice in the lead up to the exhibition. I knew little or nothing of these remarkable women before our collaboration, but enjoyed researching them myself and discovering their connections to Samuel Beckett and Marcel Duchamp, amongst others.

As a low tack adherent to Kenneth Goldsmith's 'uncreative writing' and Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism, I'm happy to borrow, appropriate, steal, in the service of discovery and the generation of a polyvocal document. The voices that appear are those of:

Clare Thornton, 2017 (throughout).

Nancy Cunard, 'In The Studio' [1923] in Sandeep Parmar (ed.), *Nancy Cunard: Selected Poems*, 2016. [Cunard wanted to conceal all poems written before 1925, bar three: "I will NOT be represented by them."]

Amelia Jones, 'Eros, That's Life, or the Baroness' Penis' in *Making Mischief: Dada Invades New York*, 1996.

Samuel Beckett, from 'Whoroscope' [first published by Cunard's The Hours Press, 1930].

Wikipedia, 'Ambergris' page.

Henry Crowder, as reported by Janet Flanner, in Anne Chisholm, 'Nancy Cunard: Queen of the Jazz Age', *Guardian*, 2011.

Lois G Gordon, *Nancy Cunard: Heiress, Muse, Political Idealist*, 2007.

Sandeep Parmar (ed.), *Introduction to Nancy Cunard: Selected Poems*, 2016.

Green's Dictionary of Slang, 2010.

Traditional, Scottish, from 'Jenny Nettles'.

Mr E. A. Edmonds, *British Regional Geology: South-West England*, 4th Edition, 1975.

Gertrude Stein, 'Composition as Explanation', 1926.

Neil Roberts, *A Lucid Dreamer: The Life of Peter Redgrove*, 2012.

Peter Redgrove, 'To the Water-Psychiatrist' [1985] in *Peter Redgrove: Collected Poems*, 2012.
Raymond Mortimer, in Anne Chisolm, *Nancy Cunard: A Biography*, 1979.

Anne Carson, 'Nox', 2009.

Sylvia Townsend Warner in Lois G Gordon, 2007.

D. W. Winnicott 'Communicating and Not Communicating Leading to a Study of Certain Opposites', 1963.

Siddhartha Mukherjee on 'Desert Island Disks', *Radio 4*, 06.10.17.

J. A. F. Divine and G. Blachford, Pottery Craft, 1939 ['Turning'].

Marcel Duchamp in Michel Sanouillet & Elmer Pterson (eds.) The Essential Writings of Marcel Duchamp, 1975.

EvFL in Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven papers, Series III, Box 1, Folder 10: Aphrodite Chants to Mars, undated [1913 – 1927], University of Maryland.

Amelia Jones, 1996.

Sir Thomas Urquhart, Eksykbalaaron (The Jewel), 1652.

Meghan O'Rourke, 'The Unfolding: Anne Carson's "Nox"', in The New Yorker, July 2010.

missjane, 'Six Degrees of Sir Thomas Urquhart' blog, 2012.

Peter Redgrove, 'The Laundromat as Prayer-Wheel' [1981] in Peter Redgrove: Collected Poems, 2012.

Edward Lear and Jenny Uglow in Jenny Uglow, Mr. Lear: A Life of Art and Nonsense, 2017.

Conor Wilson, 2017.