



Notes.

When discussing how we could approach this joint exhibition some months ago I had anticipated that at some point Dick might say, "Well we don't want to overthink it." I waited a moment or two before I agreed with him, but then added, much to his amusement, "But what happens if we underthink it ? "...

In any way this left us where we started. Dick was going to rifle through his collection of old comics and sort of construct details of images, then suspend them by screenprinting the drawing, and painting them over almost back to front. In my mind I envisaged an open ended narrative depending on how the paintings were arranged, say horizontally from left to right.

My approach at this stage was to think about what was going on in my studio, and in particular the pottery / sculpture area, and use this as a starting point. This would, in my mind, give my work a completely different trajectory than Dick's, simply by being, let's say, an object. It could allow me to rethink some of the narrative form that I have been using and apply it to pottery.

Over the past couple of years I have been re-reading Samuel Beckett's first three novels.(1). In them I found a tragic comic shade of what I imagined as 'bleak and white' slapstick humor .(2). Somehow it felt I had truly overlooked a piece of writing that lined up precisely with the form I was looking to establish in particular in drawing.(3). To be quite straight-forward, it allowed the figure in terrain to become the primary subject - what to all extensive purposes were painted diagrams made with lines. And furthermore (4.) I could as Nathan Haines said on seeing these first attempts in the studio early in 2021, "did a John Coltrane and threw all the notes off the staff, not to discard them but repurpose them."(5). The grid which I have been using as a marker of form could be 'unravelling'.(6).

In this repurposed linguistic terrain, where stories are taken up, broken off, and taken up again, where voices rise and crumble and are resurrected, I could let the linear unfurl, become tattered, interrupt itself, get 'silly-ish', be wrong and be mysterious.(7).

In these works in FP II, both artists are looking at how lines and shape get pushed and built onto things. Dick has discussed at length the idea of abstract convention and how it exists as a type of matter, the building bit in let's say, a painting.(8). His own lines, lumps, scrapes, and shapes combine to form these vintage graph slash diagrams. And my own marks and lines as if as Desmond Helmore noted, "as if an explosion took place outside a state office block, leaving bits of stuff just hanging."

I sometime can't tell the difference.

1. Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnameable published in 1951, 1951 & 1953 respectively.
2. I am wondering here more 'black and white' as in pre colour film.
3. ..'precisely' is a pretty stupid word to use here but I am making haste.
4. But wait there's less, painted text on pot 2010.
5. Haines over studio visit early 2021 where he also stated he liked a piece of cardboard I had used to clean my brush.
6. Wellington City Art Gallery, Unravelling, Group Show, 2019 - 2020, curated by Robert Leonard, which had a grid painting of mine based on a Greek erotic vase painting of a woman stroking a man's penis, titled ancient artifact.
7. To be silly in this context one usually requires a defined edge.
8. Me According to The History of Art, Dick Frizzell, MUP, 2020. (What a fine effort).(9).
9. Quite a fine effort.
10. Discussion with painter Desmond Helmore on "wow" and when best to employ it.