

Steven Holland - Aadje Bruce: Of No Fixed Address

hen I was a kid every new school year began with an excursion into town to the shoe shop.

My splayed surf-board feet were made to fit black leather school shoes designed for narrow white English feet that never saw the sun let alone a beach.

Reading images can be a bit like making your object of study fit the shoe of meaning. The shoe-horn and rhetorical device both work in a similar fashion. My childish comedy of errors in the local shoe shop has laid out the psychoanalytic and semiotic road that I now find myself walking, squeeking and limping along when it comes to shoe art. These are some of the meanings I tried on for size.

It simply tells the story of foot feetishist who finally got what the heart desired. Or Edward Munch meets Meret Oppenheim in Perth and gets a public commission. No! What about a playful Fluxus happening thing from the sixties. Too good to be true! Well if the truth be told its a stack of lies. A creative clutterbuster for the Imelda Marcos garage sale - "Walk a mile in my shoes," the slogan reads. How do I know this? I used the Roland Barthes linguistic cobbler method: my tools of tradebeing the *studium* and the *punctum*.

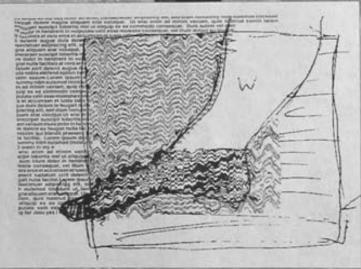
The studium carves out the broad cultural upper and subjective sole meanings - here a story about some lost shoes in the annual city-to-surf race. The more pointed punctum tool fashions the brogue detail - found in this photo about two thirds up the cairn of shoes directly below the shouting person. You can see a carefully placed pair of white high heels, the kind both Oppenheim and Marcos went for in a big way. Here was the signifier that begged for a pair of feet. Who's foot is being fitted now?

Those pointed heels are turned inward to the core or central chamber of the secular minaret from which the prayers for endless consumption are projected. Inviting the hopeful and the hapless to step into these shoes. Who's shoes who cares. Warhol would've loved to sniff 'em then leave 'em. What is truly disturbing about this semblance of a firesale however is the almost complete lack of interest from the target market found wandering around in the background, deaf to the spruiker for Public Art Events outside the Gallery. All except young Duchamp in the dark sun-glasses and Man Ray sporting those new Doc Martens. It had to be Perth cause if it was Sydney all those shoes would've been gone by the morning. Those street kids would've added their own interactive high art/popular culture statement and answered with their feet.

Kurt Brereton

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very landscape must involve horizons of one sort or another. A country "without details" is a semiotic wasteland: a country stripped of it's culture. Against this psychotic vision of a world that speaks without signifieds or horizons, Gary Indiana dramatically plunges the overheated image of (your) foot into a cold body of water. Through this action of breaking the water surface an intimate horizon casts the imaginary into a vacant dive. Underwater your foot anchors you in time and space while abovewater your mind is swimming. From a skin screen fleeting images are reflected onto the underbelly of a cloudless sky. A trisson of caresses water-born and skin felt, give rise to an amphimixic response that blurs any terrestrial vision.

Crying the ocean begins the process of seeing underwater. As the lapping body of water sucks and tugs on your shoe-bound toes, goose bumps swell around thousands of tiny hairs standing them on neiroacnacle ends. Little slaps of cool water bounce lets of pleasure in against the green weedencrusted backwall of your ego. Libidinous flows ebb up and down your inside leg calling to deeper erogenous zones. Bathing your anxiety-ridden self in cool water produces a catharsis that autoplastically floats desire back to inhabit the first letter of the sensorial alphabet, "a"- this most liquid of letters turns its tap and belly form into a calligraphic fluidity. All sonorous meanings inside the aquatic vowel are equalised, amplified and sustained against an amniotic horizonless twilight.

Entering the water feet first is termed a breach dive. The psychoanalyst, Sandor Ferenczi, argued in his water-breaking 1933 thesis, Thalassa: A Theory of Genitality, that images of swimming and floating found in dreams and psychotic visions are symbolically representative of some type of rescue. In the psychology of water, coolness signifies some kind of awakening or renewal, Indiana's washed-out psyche is soothed by a coolness that must be uttered. This sea-cure involves speaking to a rockpool in rounded stone-rolled vowels. The pleasure I gained from Indiana's image of a foot submerged in water, sprang from his sinking of the structuralist convention that anchors water to nature and land toculture. Indiana's mythologised foot finds a fresh meaning by being soaked in cool water. Cold power adds meaning to your tired feet exhausted from the brutality of a polluted day.

Finally, I read this quote as something more than another romantic return to the littoral edge in search of origins, the feminine signifier or the beginning of cultural history with its images of nationalism. The myth of Andromeda provided an insight to the morality of the sea. Chained to a barren rock island for being sublimely beautiful, Andromeda was eventually freed by the mortal Perseus who, having married the secret of language to the land, forever cast the sea as speech without punctuation. The crazy rawness of water constantly erodes the logic of rocks. Below the water surface, my foot of salt water and calcium rock has morphed into an embryonic flipper.