

Annotated Bibliography

Bell, K. (1992) 'Figure Paintings 1933-45' in *Stanley Spencer*. London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2011, pp. 101-124.

This is a clear chronological account of Stanley Spencer's artistic output within the context of the artist's life and reception. The beginnings of this chapter are most useful, reflecting on Spencer's return to his beloved home town Cookham (after ten years) and his plans for an intended successor to his *Sandham Memorial Chapel* which would this time be built in Cookham. The project was termed *Church House*.

As Bell writes, Cookham was viewed by Spencer as 'Heaven itself'; the book previously records his pre-war recognition gained through the depiction of Biblical scenes interjected into its streets. *Church House*'s muraled interior would ruminate on both the domestic and religious aspects of the village's life, hoping to illustrate wholeness in Christian faith. It is described as a distraction ridden, scattered project, lacking the coherence of tighter offerings like *The Resurrection, Cookham*, 1927, yet in my interpretation it reflects Spencer's directorial ambitions to an even greater extent. Not only was Spencer continuing to use Cookham as a personal stage, but he was concerned now more than ever with creating an enduring, kaleidoscopic narrative surrounding it. The theatrical approach; choreographing Cookham; the collation of meta-narratives and the considerations to set architecture [Church House] marks Spencer as a valuable direction of inquiry.

Dexter, E. (2004) 'The Interconnectedness of All Things: Between History, Still Life and the Uncanny' in Dexter, E. and Heynen, J. (eds) *Luc Tuymans*. London: Tate Publishing.

Dexter views Tuymans as an innovator of contemporary history painting, a classical genre otherwise broadly speaking dead in the same manner as the traditional view of history. No longer can a singular narrative be stamped and sealed as historical consensus in such a world of decentralized media, and so consequently Tuymans prolific oeuvre is to be viewed holistically, says Dexter: from frames of harmless household objects to Nazi officers and gas chambers, every image is treated with the same 'indifference' reflective of this historiographical breakdown. Simultaneously this mesh of imagery is likened to the fragmentary nature of memory. Dexter then dissects her opinion of the painter's work as wholly uncanny.

While this essay's discussion of simulacra within Tuymans' paintings involving the use of newspaper/textbook photographs or dolls and other toys to stand in for people and things can be viewed as theatrical so far as such items are practically props, the holistic view of his work Dexter suggests is far more enticing for my research. Not unlike

Spencer, Tuymans has adopted a directorial position, his assorted images have become montage comparable to film. Although theatre and cinema are different, they are of the same cloth. Tuymans paintings' detached, conceptual angle also inherently cuts his art away from the real, a field I am keen to explore too.

Penwill, M. A. (2010) *It Has To Be This Way*². London: Matt's Gallery.

This novella accompanied the Lindsay Seers' Matt's Gallery exhibition of the same name, and, as this correlation suggests, they address like concerns. The text, like the show, attempts to analyse and rationalise the disappearance of Seers' alleged step-sister Christine Parkes in 2001. It is a jumble of conflicting accounts: diary entries from Christine's illusive, manipulative lover, her mother and Seers herself, each's statements remain most strikingly unevidenced. On a search of a Christine Parkes missing person report from Rome no such record aligns, and even if one did, what is to say S is real either? His writings appear so formal, revised and forthright in their manipulative tone it challenges belief.

Is M. Anthony Penwill a pseudonym? Searching his name does not provide confidence, being listed as a contributor on Seers' publications alone. Unreliable narration has long been used within literature and theatre, and alongside *Extramission* 6, her 2009 installation, Seers' here offers an excellent case study of audience misdirection in order to make a more arresting argument regarding the nature of memory. In this sense, she is especially useful to my writing in relation to the work of Tuymans.

Rough, W. (2012) 'Walter Sickert and Contemporary Drama' in Bonett, H., Holt, Y. and Mundy, J. (eds) *The Camden Town Group in Context*. Tate Research Publication. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/william-rough-walter-sickert-and-contemporary-drama-r1104370> (Accessed 20 October 2024).

Rough discusses the influence of the New Drama theatre movement of early 20th century Britain on Walter Sickert, once an actor himself. The new school vied for a modern kind of play, aiming to reflect the melancholy of working class life and feminist cases for women's social empowerment and suffrage. Painting New Drama was important as photography of theatre was generally exclusive to popular, long running shows (and even then actors were often choreographed for the picture rather than captured in situ). New Drama productions were neither of these things- Sickert's role was made activist. The social realism that therefore surrounded Sickert, Rough argues, bled into his painting.

Rough also contends that the mass media representation of theatre Sickert would also have been keen to absorb influenced him compositionally- double or more portraits involving a singular seated person were common convention in such promotional material, and this can be likewise seen in multitude of Sickert's paintings to indicate similar conflict. The author loses some integrity when he claims with authority over the artist's friend Virginia Woolf theatre as the primary influence behind *Ennui*, however this source remains an insightful, concise contextualisation of Sickert's nonetheless undeniable draw from the theatrical scene beyond simple representation, and is therefore excellent for my research on theatre's emergence within the visual arts.

Warner, M. (2018) 'Playing the Dark' in *Forms of Enchantment: Writings on Art & Artists*. London: Thames & Hudson, pp. 18-26.

These pages account for an essay on Paula Rego- one of the array of essays on affecting art that comprises this publication. Warner begins by discussing her first encounter with Rego in 1988; while an anecdote in principle might seem a vacuous inclusion, the critic focuses on the energy, play and theatrical quality of the artist's first impression, and how this is entirely measured in her artwork the same. Rego's 'studio is a theatre, where models take up roles, where masks, dummies, costumes, sets, props [...] lie heaped around her' espouses Warner.

What follows is a look into the artist's fascination with folklore and fairy tale through the case study of her *Nursery Rhymes* series of etchings (1989). Rego's images are said to host the Freudian 'unheimlich' (uncanny/unhomely), an unsettledness that flounders in the imagination of the child, her own perspective of which she religiously transmitted. Warner writes of Rego's admiration of past illustrators and caricaturists who anthropomorphised animals, and interestingly links their modest environments to Rego's grounding of the violent and fantastical with familiar, unremarkable references/settings [unheimlich returns]. The depiction of human-animal relationships found in these influences is evaluated too through the artist's *Jane Eyre* series (2002), however this is less relevant.

Warner disperses notes of Rego's dolls and dress throughout this text. Useful, not only did Rego arrange compositions with theatrical attitude, but in creating these props consciously realised her own childlike 'inner-theatre'. This awareness plays into this barrier between art and reality I am also concerned with, and Rego's lineage with the language of a separately distinct artistic field (illustration) also connects her neatly to Sickert.

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