

Disorderly Pronouncements

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The moment I wake up in Cairo, I know that I'm here because of the way the sparrows greet the morning light. Their songs harmonise with the call to prayer as the rhythm of rush hour traffic intensifies and wanes behind green French shutters baked pastel by the summer sun.

I know that I'm no longer in London because my father's Arabic texts are strewn around the house – along with his notes and etchings on white lined paper, stained by the dust filtering through the gaps in the fly screen. My childhood home greets me with subtle pronouncements that are close enough to radiate a warm familiarity, distant enough to elude the mundane.

In the spaces between closeness and distance, between arrivals and departures, diasporas play host to innumerable rhythms, textures and symbols that survive transitions between one place and the next. Perceptions that tether us to landscapes, lives lived elsewhere and distinct visual languages. Mohammad Barrangi and Andrew Pierre Hart's site-specific installations experiment with such pronouncements by examining the relationship between the imprints places leave on our consciousness, and the ways we mark the places we move through.

Barrangi selects symbols, colours and textures that travel with him to produce dream-like landscapes inspired by his memories and the aesthetics of his native Iran. His installation, **The Mystical Creatures of Eden**, is constituted by five mural-scale works that blur the boundaries between imagination and lived reality to produce a series of biomythologies bridging the artist's experiences with Persian folktales.

I'm speaking here about the fantastical creatures with the bodies of animals and the heads of women who inspire him. One being Fawzia, queen of Iran during the 1940s, sitting on a Zebra and donning a bird mask in reference to a Sufi poem named *The Conference of the Birds*.

Each piece is produced digitally then reverse transferred onto canvas by hand. Barrangi takes time to reintroduce himself to his works by soaking and peeling off paper to reveal softened colours, a cracked veneer and faded finish. Like old family artifacts, photos and heirlooms, he imperfects the original version of the work through the irreversibility of human touch.

Where Barrangi's installation can be read as a testimony to an individual experience of diaspora, Andrew Pierre Hart assembles fragments from collective memory by listening intently to the conversations between Brixton's structures and its Afro-Caribbean inhabitants.

Hart's installation, '**genre pain -ting ; An Ode to Brixton**', captures Brixton's varying registers, tones and inflections by creating deconstructed versions of local scenes. The barbershop, the house party, the record store and the food market are all evoked using small elements to represent the whole. Hart combines the buzzing of hair clippers, the texture of leather and the reflection of light off of mirrored tiles to activate collective memory through shared sensations and visual harmonies. By removing almost all the layers from each scene, he invites viewers to observe the many subtle ways a place can speak, acknowledge presence, and, in his words: "confirm you on first encounter and go on to shape you in some irreversible way".

Each of Hart's paintings reflects the ways Brixton has formed him: **'Ode – a playlist to Brixton'** invites viewers to listen to a curated selection of music that either refers to, is inspired by, or soundtracks life in Brixton as Hart experiences it; **'Brixtonians'** reminds us of the diversity within diasporic communities; **'Mums'**, pluralised purposefully, pays homage to community elders and the safe spaces they create; and **'This is a dedication...'** honours the creative and transformative power of sound.

Experimentations with sound are a constant in 'Genre pain-ting', and in Hart's work more generally. **'Sonic Ordering – Brixton Responsive'**, a moving image piece projected onto the back wall of the gallery illustrates his critical focus on sound as a linguistic category. During a conversation with Hart, he generously explained how movement can be understood as the physical manifestation of sound, whether it's heard or felt. The notion that sound can be as tangible as bricks and mortar is a reminder to listen to the unique ways different spaces invite us to converse with them.

There's a disorder to Barrangi and Hart's work, a disavowal of category and genre. Both gesture at their diasporic identities through multiplicity, through an assemblage of seemingly disparate objects, patterns and symbols to produce, as Sarah Schulman writes, "an authentic representation of the complex whole".