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Artweek.LA

Tim Braden: Agence de Voyage



Can one comprehend a place through shared accounts or documentation? Conversely are one's impressions upon encountering an unfamiliar locale accurate or projected, fictionalized or empirical? Braden explores these questions and more, like a travel agent playing exquisite corpse. His tangential impressions of countries such as Cambodia, Russia, and Brazil, depict scenes that span domestic scenes and utopian architecture, candid moments and touristic attempts at journalistic documentation.

rough painting and sculpture Braden extracts a patinated nostalgia. The paintings' sanded surfaces peel away the lucidity of their photographic references, inverted exposures that endeavor

to transform images into objects. Braden has long been preoccupied with the act of looking and the way in which it influences one's relationship to a moment or place. Through sustained meditation *Agence de Voyage* pensively narrows the gap between primary and secondary sources. Braden's paintings eschew Henri Cartier-Bresson's decisive moment in favor of scenes that suggest narratives beyond the frame, trading the iconic for the enigmatic.

Tim Braden (born 1975) is an artist based in London. He studied at the Ruskin, Oxford and the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions include *Paleis van Decoratie*, Galerie Juliette Jongma, Amsterdam, NL, *The Possessed* (curated by Dorothee Dupuis), HLM, Marseille, FR, *Jorge Americano*, Ludlow 38, New York, US and *Weekend in Valmouth*, (curated by Bruce Haines), Ancient and Modern, London UK.

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Booth Installation view, Tim Braden with Bruce Haines at Frieze, 2015.

Tim Braden talks to Traction Magazine about 'Ultramarine' his solo exhibition at Bruce Haines Mayfair, where he presents a new body of work comprising acrylic and oil still lifes on the walls alongside an abstract wool rug on the floor of the gallery.

Firstly, for readers who haven't seen your show at Bruce Haines, can you tell us a little about it?

The show is about my heroes and influences. The gallery space is pretty tiny, so I split the show into two parts, one in the gallery and simultaneously a counterpart solo show at Frieze.

The title comes from 'Ultramarine' a painting of a selection of the books that I keep in my studio laid out on a table top. To namecheck - Edvard Munch, Kees Van Dongen, Sonia Delaunay, Oscar Fischinger and many others all make an appearance. As a painting it is a conventional still life but the scale and variety of different references and material depicted presented an interesting challenge.

A small painting shows a detail of Matisse's grand studio in a hotel in Nice with the grid of coloured paper that he had pinned to the wall as a reference.

Another large painting, 'Roberto', shows the Brazilian landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx working on his designs, colourful abstracted shapes. Originally a successful painter, Burle Marx became one of the most influential landscape architects of the 20th century, often working in collaboration with the architect Oscar Niemeyer, he helped wean Brazilians on their taste for

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European flora and encouraged native planting in intense colours and elaborate organic shapes and patterns. His way of treating the landscape as a huge canvas is very inspiring.

You are showing canvases alongside a hand-knotted wool rug. What is the relationship between these two bodies of work?

Well, I wouldn't describe them as two bodies of work. I always work in a variety of media and usually show them alongside each other. The rug is the first object that I have not made myself, so is something of a departure in that sense.

When I first tried to make abstract paintings a few years ago, I decided to think of the canvas as a textile or rug design and borrowing the logic of that world to shape the compositions and choices. I love the logic of design and the way it is linked to production - a privilege being an artist is to be able to participate in both those stages.

This year I decided to complete the process and started a collaboration with the Rug Company to develop the Abstract paintings into rugs. The Rugs play with the translation of medium, the transformation from brushed on washes of painted colour into hand knotted areas of coloured wool - colours appear overlaid, to suggest the dynamism of the painted brushstroke.

The rug in the exhibition, 'Mis Amigas Las Flores', is the first of these collaborations - there are more designs in production. They take five months to produce so I can't wait to see how the next ones turn out.

These abstract experiments have changed the way I think about composition, and in newer 'figurative' work I am treating design as more important than any realistic depiction.

You describe your practice as 'weaving through connections between seemingly disparate ideas'. How do you negotiate this route?

When I went to art school it was made clear that for a painter the only real decision to make was whether to be an abstract or figurative one - you had to be in one camp or the other. Design and 'applied art' were frowned upon for some reason, and forbidden subject matter.

As a result I take pleasure in marking out as diverse a practice as possible - simultaneously moving between abstract and figurative painting, designing wooden toys, signs, drawing, making lights, sculpting and watering my plants - usually all in the course of a single day.

I make work about whatever is stimulating me at the time - and try to keep the subject as broad as possible - what tends to happen when it comes to presenting work as an exhibition is that I can then pull different pieces together that have a strong connection. This allows me to have a little distance - more like curating a show by various different artists.

My only rule is to work on subject matter that inspires me and my only aim is to try to transmit some of that wonder to the viewer.

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The title of your exhibition 'Ultramarine' comes from novel of the same name by Malcolm Lowry - the cover of which appears in your painting 'Ultramarine'. How has this book influenced you?

I sometimes use imagery inspired by novels as the starting point for paintings, in 'Ultramarine' the books are the subject itself.

I read a lot of novels and through them find myself daily in unexpected places and situations. I'm sure this must bleed into my work, but I'm not always sure how... One thing I take from literature is the sense of trying to establish a plausible and evocative sense of place.

I am often amazed going back to a favourite book that has stayed in my imagination for years, at how spare the actual descriptive writing might be.

I have always been fascinated by books about voyages and travels, and the idea of armchair traveling - I have a collection of extraordinary travelogues about imaginary countries and peoples, there was a vogue for this in the Victorian Era. Flaubert wrote in a letter to a friend, "I spend my evenings sitting by the fire reading hunting tigers" - the best description I know of the power of the written word to stimulate the imagination.

Lowry's Ultramarine has a double resonance for me as this edition has a painting on the cover by Raoul Dufy, it has been moving around my studio for years propped up like a postcard. Dufy who I have loved since my early teens was as a prolific textile designer and ceramicist as well as painter, and his paintings were often dismissed as decorative - what a compliment!

What is coming up next for you?

Solo shows at Ryan Lee Gallery, New York and another in Milan early next year; more rugs and filling up my empty studio...

'Ultramarine' opened on 8 October and runs until 13 November. For more information, visit <http://brucehaines.com>. Find out more about Tim Braden's work at <http://timbraden.co.uk>.

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Tim Braden, Agence de Voyage, Ambach and Rice Gallery

If the travel bug hasn't bitten you yet, the artworks of a British artist certainly, undoubtedly will make you want to pack your bags and see the world. Read on to go on a dreamy, nostalgic trip with some beautiful painted travel scenes a er the jump!

If only I could, I would have gone to the recently concluded first solo exhibit of British artist Tim Braden in Ambach and Rice Gallery in Los Angeles. Aptly called "Agence de Voyage" or "Travel Agency," the exhibit showcased some of his beautiful paintings of idyllic travels, which I'm pretty sure travel bugs like me will delight in seeing.

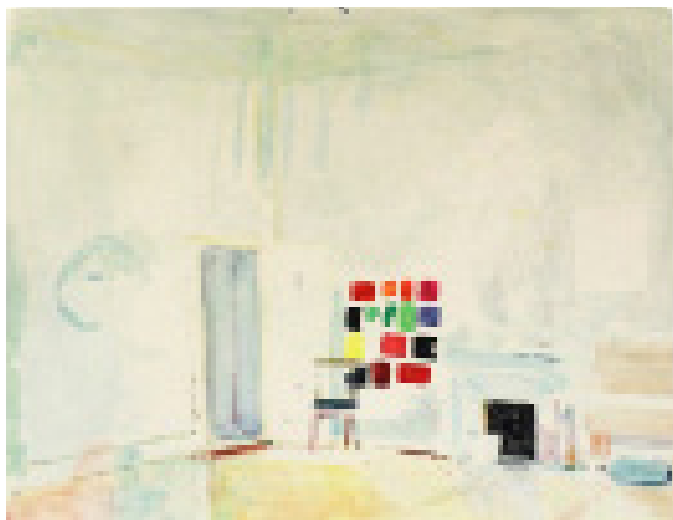
Tim draws inspiration from his friends' travel snaps, rendering landmarks, people out and about, and typical outdoor scenes in nostalgic and dreamy hues. His technique follows the "show, don't tell" adage, making viewers realize what they're missing at when they're not out traveling instead of transporting them to a certain place. If these paintings don't fill you with an intense longing to travel, I'm not sure what else will!

Joy Celine Asto

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ARTATTACK



Tim Braden, Villa, Oil on panel, 2014 | Courtesy Bruce Haines Mayfair

I recently read that the works were a snapshot of your artistic practice, what you describe as ‘weaving through connections between seemingly disparate ideas’ – how important is it to be able to explore a variety of ideas and influences?

All the books in the paintings are things I have had around for ages and have been massively influential on the way I work. Images that I think are beautiful and relate to each other. Yes, the exhibition is kind of a reflection of my whole practice, from rugs to sculptures, to printmaking, influences by other artists and figures like Roberto Burle Marx the Brazilian landscape architect. The works are shamelessly decorative on a massive scale; when I went to art school you were always told that an artist and a decorative artist were set apart – that the latter was mere craft, a sort of lesser art form – which is completely the opposite – I mean any decent artist loves all those kind of things! I often choose a style that reflects the subject matter and happily bounce back to various mediums from oil on canvas to wool.

But then there is another whole side of my work which will be at Frieze which

is a much softer palette, evocative of light, you sort of need a bigger space around three times the size of this – this is almost a referential show in a way. It just made sense in here and then

the work at Frieze will be big abstract paintings which are based on details of other paintings, big beach paintings, very big evocative shapes which were also designs for rugs – so there is an overlap.

The exhibition is comprised of several large and medium-scale still lifes executed in acrylic and oil, presented alongside a hand-knotted abstract wool rug laid on the floor in the centre of the gallery – how do the paintings relate to the hand-knotted centre-piece?

What I like about materials is every material has its own rules. You want to push it but you also want to allow the restrictions of the medium to affect the work, the restriction forces you to become creative to try and solve the problem, so turning a painting into a rug was a really important one. I spent four months working out every single knot. The rug forces you to change the

way you make a painting because normally it's on the wall – it has to go that way up, but with a rug it kind of has to work from every angle and so the rules are all very different and that has come back into my paintings again and affected the way that I think of the surface of a painting as this all over thing.

- Harry Dougal, Oct. 13, 2015

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frieze



Tim Braden, *Heyerdahl*, 2007, Acrylic on hardboard and found map, 85x123cm

*Galerie Juliette Jongma, Amsterdam,
the Netherlands*

Childhood nostalgia that became a popular theme in much 1990's art hasn't yet disappeared—shows are still rife with winsome drawings, cuddly toys and ironic references to pop-culture detritus from the 1970's and 80's. Consider, for example, contemporary art's recent embracing of mainstream heavy metal; music that once alarmed parents and politicians has since become lite fare, with artists such as Steven Shearer and Jonathan Meese trotting out Iron Maiden or Judas Priest as more of a punch-line than an icon (unlike, say, the genuinely scary, church-burning metal favored by Banks Violette). But Tim Braden pushes the nostalgia clock back even further, re-imagining a genteel 1950s' boyhood consumed by daydreams of adventure, exploration, and treasure hunting.

The show's title—'I spend my evenings sitting but the residue hunting tigers'—is a quote from a letter by Gustave Flaubert, in which the writer describes how the mind can be transported by reading; here we can assume that this power also extends to listening to the 1950s' radio plays that form the sonic backdrop to the installation, as well as to looking at exotic maps and photographs. Like Flaubert's search for 'le mot juste,' Braden looks for the signature details that will most effectively portray a given place, emotion or memory. Flaubert's work often mixed the Romantic with the realist, and Braden's images and sculptures likewise blend the wistful

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imaginary with the actually lived. This elision is presented in Braden's latest installation in the form of a wilfully anachronistic pining for a bygone age that he never could have experienced first-hand (he was born in 1975), when Boy Scout pastimes like pinewood derby races, matinée serials and stories of propeller planes hunting for alligators were still the rage, Indiana Jones seems the most convenient role model here: a professor by day who enjoys a parallel life as an action-adventurer, evading the tedium of daily life.

The installation has been set up to resemble an old classroom, with a vintage pupil's desk resting on exotic Eastern carpets, surrounded by a small library of adventure books and toy-like sculptures including the frame of a small boat (*Wooden Boat*, all works 2007) or a tennis-ball model of our solar system (*Planetarium*). On the walls hang visual quotes that reinforce the same atmosphere: watercolour paintings that depict the animals an adventuresome boy might come across in the woods, saturated classroom maps of the world and images of mid-century futurist icons such as Brussels' 1958 Atomium.

Apocryphal memories merge with real ones in a soft blur of nostalgia, and the tentativeness of memory is reflected in the formal tools Braden employs; many of the two-dimensional works mix acrylic, chalk and charcoal on surfaces such as paper, posters and chalkboards, leaning heavily on muted and sun-bleached greens and browns, implying not only that they are mutable, but also that they have been exposed to extreme weather over a period of decades. Braden's adventure world is a necessarily vicarious one, consistently mediated by books or diagrams or by his own fading memories. Layered mediation is common to almost all the works, for example *Alpinist*, a painting of a photograph of a film set featuring arctic hikers. The distinctions between original and retrofitted recollections blur, suggesting that perhaps the imagined adventure is just as valid as the lived one. And this often-invoked contrast between real and fake (of which previous group shows have deigned Braden's work a current exemplar) becomes a false dichotomy; we are constantly insinuating our present-day selves into our stored memories, a mix of real and imagined that recent scientific research has confirmed. Memory is indeed much more pliable than previously believed, and in a process called reconsolidation, the brain recreates the memory of a specific event in a new context every time that memory is recollected. And the more frequently you recall a specific memory, the more susceptible it is to being resculpted by the current stimuli surrounding your mind's eye; as Harvard psychiatrist Roger K. Pitman has put it: "When you recall something, you don't recall what originally happened; you recall what you recalled the last time you recalled it." Remembrances, it would seem, are as plastic as dreams, and even memories that you were born too late for can be reconstructed after the fact.

This allows Braden to mine a relatively untapped well of cultural references, in welcome contrast to the necrophilic rehashing of irono-kitsch from the 1970s and '8s that largely rules the roost today.

Douglas Heingartner

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COOL HUNTING



British artist Tim Braden's first solo show evokes the dreamy spirit of travel

Tim Braden's first solo show at Ambach and Rice gallery in LA is like a dreamy, nostalgic trip to somewhere that's always sunny. Aptly named "Agence de Voyage" or "Travel Agency," the British artist uses friends' snapshots to create paintings as a sort of casual anthropological study.

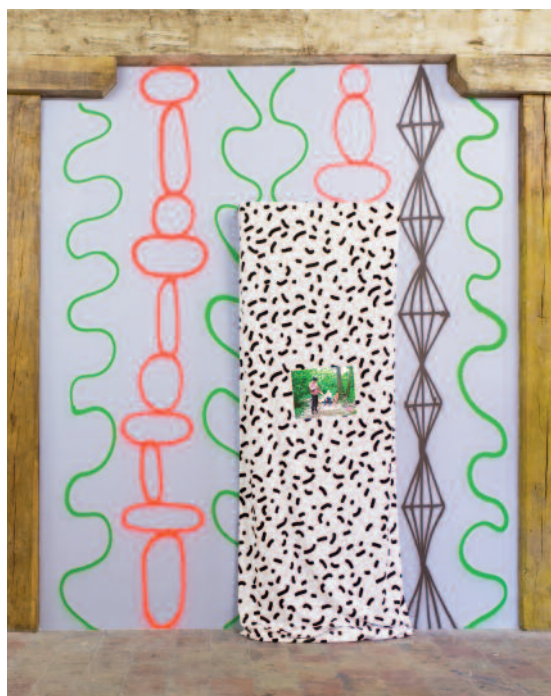
The locations in Braden's paintings are familiar but elusive. The work creates an intense longing for travel, rather than directly transporting the viewer to a real place. By tightly cropping or inverting the perspective of his images, and then sanding the surfaces to peel away the sharpness and clarity of paintings, Braden conjures up the feeling of a holiday. While these may be vague impressions of countries such as Cambodia, Russia and Brazil, they make us want to go any place we can bury our toes in the sand and let go. "Agence de Voyage" runs to 13 October 2012 at Ambach and Rice.

- Jonah Sampson, Sept. 25, 2012

LES POSSÉDÉ(E)S

tentative de déloger les fantômes du passé, d'interpeller des savoir-faire qui refont surface comme des exercices d'apprentissage de la plastique de l'art, ramenant une superposition de déjà-vus. C'est évident dans le travail de Fabrice Samyn. Il réutilise d'anciennes toiles, des portraits classiques dont il éclaire certaines parties des visages en enlevant le vernis. Avec son tableau, *The médium is the message*, il tente de percevoir (*percer ce voir*) de traverser la peinture. Le portrait devient tableau pour ce qu'il est, un véhicule passéiste ou l'austérité fascinante de l'aura est substituée par des cercles de lumière qui maquillent le passé.

Dans sa forme singulière, l'artiste confère au médium l'esprit qui l'anime, il tente de retrouver la mystique du monde liée à son moi et aux autres. La peinture *album photo (camel)*, de Tim Braden retrace l'épiphanie d'une scène de la vie quotidienne. Il représente une situation où la tête des personnages est coupée. Le corps pictural est offert, nous sommes en présence d'une image éphémère à consommer le temps de fumer une cigarette. *Ce n'est pas tant ce que l'on y voit qui importe* dit Mac Luhan *mais que ce que l'on voit*, au delà de la forme. Analia Saban travaille sur la perception, elle déconstruit / détruit «la belle image» photographique. L'intervention *océan-scape* témoigne d'un combat sur l'image, d'une perte de frontière, d'une recherche de nouveaux repères, comme si le sujet s'évanouissait avec la médiatisation. Dans cette même optique, Cécile Dauchez intervient sur des objets trouvés ou des matériaux industriels qu'elle transforme en outil de création. Son œuvre *Blonde* est réalisée sur une plaque de polystyrène et ce sont les coulées de white spirith qui creusent les sillons du champ pictural. Le médium ne contient en lui même aucun message sauf quand il est utilisé ou perçu comme un prolongement de nous-mêmes dans notre vie ; c'est ce que semble insinuer l'étrange installation vidéo *The troublemakers* de Jocelyn Villemont. De prime abord la facture renvoie à un assemblage de signes proche d'une esthétique *street art*. La vidéo montre deux adolescents dans un sous bois qui argumentent autour d'un gourdin trouvé sur les lieux. Celui-ci devient prétexte à la préhistoire de l'objet. Avec ce décalage, l'artiste se place du côté de l'ironie puisque *la mise en valeur d'un objet peut laisser supposer que l'on désire en plonger un autre dans*



Jocelyn Villemont, *The Troublemakers*, 2012, Vidéo, dessin mural et textile imprimé, Courtesy de l'artiste Photographie jc.lett

l'ombre comme le souligne Jean Yves Jouanais dans son livre *l'Idiotie*. L'artiste confère à l'objet une portée à la fois sociologique, psychologique et philosophique.

Par le biais de cette exposition Dorothée Dupuis refait la genèse, de son engagement, de son implication et de sa présence à Triangle. La commissaire rassemble une nouvelle génération d'artistes, ouvre un espace critique et pose un constat sur la nature transgressive de l'art. La mise en exposition reste pourtant très sobre, les pièces prennent place discrètement dans l'espace, elles ne réfèrent ni à dieu ni au diable mais à l'histoire de l'art, à ces actes *représentionnels* qui marquent l'histoire et sa propre histoire.

M.D.

Les possédé(e)s avec :
Tim Braden, Sophie Bueno-Boutellier,
Cécile Dauchez, Guillaume Gattier, Theo
Michael, Lidwine Prolonge, Fabrice Samyn,
Analia Saban, Jocelyn Villemont

Une exposition de Triangle
du 3 mai au 2 juin
à galerie Hors-les-Murs
20 rue Saint Antoine
Marseille 2^{ème}

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MOUSSE

“The Possessed” at Triangle France, Marseille
March 26–2012



Tim Braden, Studio, 2010. Courtesy Tim Braden

“The Possessed” proposes to observe the work of art as the place of negotiation between two dissenting voices, that of the world and the artist, through the allegory of the Medium. The Medium, person «able to perceive the messages of the spirits of the dead,» achieves the feat of speaking for the other, at least as long as he convinces his audience of so. But as he faces the difficulty of transcribing the most humbly as possible those alien voices, he paradoxically starts standing as an author, driving apart from his simple role of servant.

The question is then not so much whether the Medium tells the truth, than to understand by what means and what strategies he is implementing his speech. The chimera of an objective artistic truth was generally dismissed in the 60's: from then, art rather seeks to report

the increasing complexity of our subjectivities, opposed to a once unique world order. The artist asserts her/himself as a kind of conveyor of experiences, and whose virtuosity only can tell from her/his position as an impostor or a demiurge, like a medium particularly possessed by the spirits that visit him/her.

In the show are chosen artworks that reflect on this author and servant paradox: the word of the artist plays hide and seek with what she/he claims for. Heirs to a centuries-old art history (Analia Saban, Leo Michael), observers of Civilization (Jocelyn Villemont, Tim Braden), critic spokespersons of secret societies (Lidwine Prolonge, Guillaume Gattier) agnostic mystics (Sophie Bueno-Boutellier, Fabrice Samyn), or technologic ones (Cécile Dauchez)... the artists, like if they were possessed, often talk for something or someone else; and they always have the last word. When culminates this mediumistic schizophrenia, and the artist manages to combine subjectivity and universal truth until they can't part anymore, a work of art has the power to silence for a moment the clamor of our differences. (*Dorothée Dupuis*)

Featured artists – Tim Braden, Sophie Bueno-Boutellier, Cécile Dauchez, Guillaume Gattier, Leo Michael, Lidwine Prolonge, Fabrice Samyn, Analia Saban, Jocelyn Villemont

at Triangle France, Marseille
from May 3rd to June 2nd 2012

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ARTFORUM

“*Les Possédé(e)s*”

05.14.12

AUTHOR: CHRIS SHARP

05.03.12-06.02.12 *Triangle France*

The conceit of this motley group show is pretty elusive: to present works that may or may not transmit their authors' intentions, of which said authors, incidentally, may or may not themselves be aware (hence the title: “*Les Possédé(e)s*”). While this could potentially designate a particularly coy genus of neo-Conceptualism, in which, say, yet another receipt necessitates an elaborate explanation in order to be fathomed as a work of art, it does not. Rather, the curator of this show, Dorothee Dupuis, is interested in the irrational underpinnings of the art on display and the high ratio of interpretability that such underpinnings might yield. Given that the irrational is generally *persona non grata* in the hyperanalytical, concept-heavy French context, any embrace thereof is liable to seem novel, even radical, and therefore refreshing—even if their terms are not exactly radical, as in Jocelyn Villemont's *The Troublemakers*, 2011. More of a metareflection on interpretability than an irruption of the irrational, this video installation depicts two adolescent skateboarders as they philosophically speculate with risible precocity on the nature and significance of a primitive-looking baseball bat. In contrast, the logic behind the inclusion of certain works, such as Tim Braden's relatively straightforward, bright and washed-out figurative paintings, remains, at least for this writer, obscure, while the surrealistic wood and rope sculptures of Sophie Bueno-Boutellier, who is known to traipse in the mystical, seem a bit more at home in gray area sketched out here. Cécile Dauchez's winsomely delicate photocopy prints, whose colorful surfaces have been manipulated into lyrically abstract unintelligibility, feel more willful in their rejection of intention. All that said, if the exhibition seems to occasionally and wistfully overdetermine the alleged ambiguity of its content, it nevertheless makes a compelling argument for what could be inelegantly characterized as the WTF factor—of which indeed, a certain baseline amount, even at the risk of incoherence, is indispensable to any artmaking enterprise.