



ELIOTS FACE

SPECTACLE
MICHAELMAS - LENT
2021-22

ELIOTS
FACE



Enter the three Co-Editors of Eliot's Face. Joe - tall, with a sometimes-noted similarity to Mick Jagger, devastatingly handsome and the writer of his own description; Millie - the personification of a hard-boiled Art Historian mixed with a silver-haired celestial being in a trench coat; and Grace - a soft-boiled, fringed, dead ringer for the Girl With the Pearl Earring... if she were from Sunderland.

Joe: So this is the editor's note. How's everyone doing?

Millie: Excellent

J: Yes...What's everyone enjoyed about this edition?

(Silence)

M: *(Sarcastically)* I guess working with you guys

All: *(Not sarcastically)* Awh

J: That was very sweet. Mine was doing stuff on my own

Grace: *(With spite)* You would say that though

J: What about you, Grace?

G: Me? I've quite enjoyed - on a more, sort of, serious note - I've enjoyed seeing the different ways people have interpreted our theme.

J + M: *(Enthused)* Mmmm

G: I thought it was quite an insight into-

J: *(Interrupting)* Yeah

G: -the complexities of the meaning of 'Spectacle'

M: Mm...

G: Yeah

J: I quite enjoyed that there was a lot of work to do with Nature - lots of descriptions of nature - which I think is quite... It's telling that when you say to someone "do something about Spectacle" and then Nature comes back... it's quite nice, isn't it?

M: *(in a manner which suggests she is dreaming of a lost time)* I suppose it always comes back to nature...

(Laughter which subsides to a profound moment of reflection)

J: *(to M, solemnly)* It does. Do you have anything, to use Grace's word, serious to add now that we've all said something serious?

M: Hm I was hoping to just... fly under the radar - jump off your serious quotes

J: Ah. Oh well.

Thus ends the editors' note

Make sure to look out for various of this new edition's new additions, including a our 'Spotlight Features' in which each of us editors makes a ham-fisted attempt at commenting on a favourite piece of submitted work; our introductory essay on how our magazine tastes; new QR code links to video and audio submissions; and a return of 'Eliot's Ears' where we recommend a few albums for your aural titillation and pleasure.



The essential deed of art determines the process whereby the form becomes a work. That which confronts me is fulfilled through the encounter through which it enters into the world of things in order to remain incessantly effective, incessantly It--:but also infinitely able to become again a You, enchanting and inspiring. It becomes “incarnate”: out of the flood of spaceless and timeless presence it rises to the shore of continued existence.

Martin Buber

Dear Reader, before we begin to devour our forty-or-so-course meal of art, poetry, painting, prose, and photography (as well as some symphonic pudding), I would like to begin with a short toast; a grace, if you will. I shan't patronise you by explaining the above quote from Martin Buber (besides, I don't understand it myself), but I would like to draw your attention, O' Reader my heart, to what I believe is its core message. A message which, although not directly spoken in the text (we all know how important subtext is) is key to understanding both art in general, and humanity itself. What you are about to read, ingest, digest, and, in turn, excrete over the following pages, Reader my love, is flesh. You will be tasting the flesh of the artist, the very substance of their being. This is not a vegetarian meal. For you see, naive Reader, art is carnal. It is the sacrifice of the artist. They sacrifice themselves for the pleasure and betterment of others (you), and without this sacrifice, no art would be made. Where here you see a poem, and there you see a painting, look further and see the blood of their creator smeared upon the pages.

This is not to say that this is a harmful process. Not in the least, Reader my life. Far from it. Like the sacrifices of old - be they in the Temple, on Golgotha, or from the Veda - they allow us to tap into the vivacious river that is life itself. Without it, we would not truly know. I may have some understanding of a person, but I know an artist. Perhaps not entirely (indeed, to know a person entirely is an impossible and fruitless endeavour), but surely to know an artist even a little, means more than to understand them a lot? And without a true knowledge of what it is to be a person, where would we be and how might we relate to each other? This I cannot say for I do not know, and do not wish to. And neither would you, Reader divine. Nonetheless, it is the sacrifice of art which allows us to live, for it, itself, is the living sacrifice of those who prepared it.

But let us move beyond this to a further conclusion. Does not the artist themselves point to something more? Not just the artist, but all beings who live? To turn, once more to Buber, we realise that in observing (by which I do not mean examining, thinking, acting, essaying or anything more than simply looking), we may realise 'what this waiting, peering, "stretching of the neck" of the creature means [... B]ut look, these beings live around you, and no matter which one you approach you always reach Being.' In seeing and looking (or better, experiencing), we may come to know the entirety of Being through the smallest part of its whole. It is this action, I believe, which the artist mimics in their creation and sacrifice of a part of the whole of themselves.

So, whilst this magazine is but ink on paper (and at times, lights upon a screen), it is, before anything else, a living thing; it squirms, aches, teems, wriggles, and breathes with the life of the artist inside. So, Reader my old and faithful friend, in consuming this art, you consume Life. Both the life of the artist themselves and the Life of Being. Are you ready to begin to experience? Perhaps you already have. At any rate, turn the page, sense the life of the artist in your hands, eat and feel the warmth in your throat, belly, heart. The sustaining Force of Being.

But time runs quick, Reader my eternal companion, for I see the waiter coming with the first of the literary entrées. So drink up your wine and let us fill our hearts...

The Cézannes on display at the Musée d'Orsay in July 2021

The Cézanne reds and blues and greens exchange their play
And interweave their varied frequencies,
where weft and woof of notes and tones display
an orchestrated tapestry of harmonies.

Mahogany browns, chestnut red, rosy-white,
such sober, true and warming colours render
the apt and requisite pitch of maturing pleasure,
bequeathing harvest-ripe festivals of life.

And lo ! Behold such wax-like fruit to seize and taste,
A porcelain mug that glimmers, navy glows,
arrays of ochre, yellow, red that paste
hands from fingers firmly clasped in folded rows.

Lemons, peaches, onions, apples, pears - shallots
Pitchers, bottles - (corked), with fruit bowls, coffee pots,
objects, everyday motifs we thought we knew :
those rickety kitchen tables set with glistening cloths
composed of dazzling folds of white and woven linen
from colours lilac, green, carnation, dawn-pale blue.

On canvas, one on one is often more than two,
Such subterfuges serve as beauty's primer
As green besides a yellow beckons blue,
while lit by backdrops grey - the River Seine in winter.

A bottle, glass, a massive forehead – all are bred
From green, black, blue, ochre, red,
While cups of porcelain white, close up, dissolve
to yellow, pear or cedar green, blue or mauve.

Such colour symphonies do hum autumnal tone
enchancing soul and heart, the seeing eye,
In ways subliming questions how and why,
That leave us more than reconciled – unalone !

*This poem hopes to enable people to find their way into a painting so that they
can get a lot more out of it.*

Blake McIrney



Portrait of Alice in a Patterned Interior

Tabitha Blackburn

Photons and Accidents

Light is a temporary phenomenon.
For the first 400,000 years of the universe,
We had no light at all,
With too much heat for photons to interact with matter.
We had no stars for 200 million years.
And before this universe returns to inertia,
It will be dark again.

It is when I look at you that I am most convinced of this;
Your skin is a tinted reflection of cascading explosions at thousands of degrees.
You are windswept smiling captured in the side effects of glinting hydrogen,
And you shout of thunder and mumble of patience.
When I see your face I can understand why whole galaxies of old had to die
To seed the empty skies with the kind of particles
Required to make that.

Because we have been a long time coming,
And we are so unlikely that it may well be a mistake we exist.
If there is a God,
He made peace with waiting nearly 14 billion years before he could meet you.

We are borrowed carbon
Traveling thousands of miles an hour
Around a sea of fire,
And I can't stop looking at you.

So, what do you say.
I don't know what you need just yet
But right now, I hope,
Someone to keep darkness at bay with
Living so hard we continue to defy chemistry and statistical common sense.

There is gravity here
And I know when I look at you
There will be light wherever we collide.

Shaun Vickers

An ode to mess.

Why am I so messy? There are clothes strewn all over my floor.

My bed is unmade and there are unwashed mugs on my desk.

Paradoxically, I am both disturbed and relieved.

To be more specific, I don't care enough and yet curious to why my room is like this.

Could it be any better? I suppose it could be far worse.

Who I am? My father hoards. My mother cleans the house before any visitors come.

A mixture of pride and shame.

I don't really tidy my room for anyone, I just apologise.

"Sorry about the mess". I am not responsible for the mess.

It is just a lodger in my room. It has not paid its rent and won't leave.

I could try tidy it, but I don't even know where to begin.

My room is not that messy. The clothes will get picked up and washed eventually.

I will sleep in my bed. I will wash the mugs when I fancy a cuppa.

Is that okay? I am probably unhinged. Most likely.

You know what, I am going to go to the library and ignore this.

I have work to do.

Lily Olliver

Lighting Candles

The fires we light are but shadows that stretch
in meek mockery of their origin:
the unconsuming flame that burnt before
Moses and kept the temple alight when
Earth's crude materials couldn't suffice.
Our fires can only feign eternity;
the wax will always run its course and the
oil will always need replenishing.
But we continue to light our fires
in reaching for an origin we are
necessarily occluded – but never
cut off – from, that comes down to meet us
when our crude faculties cannot suffice.

Nathan Brooks



Untitled

*An endeavour sparked and guided by found materials.
An exercise in friendship, trust, collaboration, the art of gentleness
and preservation.
A meditation on making a home, colour fields, oscillating valleys,
the heavenly ascent (seven steps short).*

Ari Chan and Reuben Jenkins





Left: image of industry: Whitstable, Kent, 2021
 Right: all sea foods! : Whitstable, Kent, 2021

Lewis Westwood-Flood



Halloween inspired digital art

Anonymous

Every body was a target

The lightning struck every three seconds, first
a flash, then a dagger. The dog was yapping
at your feet. Every now and then, the sky
gained depth. I was honing in on something
wonderful—the outline of your nose, the blues
of your eyes and the black of your iris. The city
grew in size, became something dystopian
and ready. Every body was a target. We
were thirty-two flights high, and I brought
the poppers for the show. It felt like
a parody on courage. Let's race to see
who burns first. I suddenly felt like etching
my nails deep into your back, just to anchor
into something, but something very special.
I marvel at the softness of your back,
what dagger it would take to roughen it.
When lighting struck, I ooh'ed and ah'ed
like a child. When you laid me down
on the bed, I was silent. Still, the dog
outside the door yapping. Still, my body
bracing for something big and bang
and all of a sudden.

*There was an insane lightning show in New York City this summer, a bout of heat
lighting. I tried to dial in on the craziness of that moment.*

Pri



Pandemic Self-Portrait

I painted myself with a mask dangling tentatively; maybe to be taken off, maybe put back on. The pandemic now constantly feels almost over, about to resurge. I wanted to paint hopeful uncertainty.

Benjamin Sobel

THERE AND BACK

This year has left a void inside my heart;
I fill it, in vain, with nature and art.
I hold onto imaginary friends
With whom I know I need not make amends.

But now with you I've stood against the rain,
For ended now has Isolation's reign.
Now we can travel back in histories,
Dive into strata full of mysteries.

Now fin'ly I can see beyond the clouds,
See our own galaxy, away from crowds,
And see all the stars I have never seen
In colours like crystals of tourmaline.

Perhaps with all this my heart could be filled
Before my happiness is again killed.

Xuefei Wu

Tired Clock Face

I am not myself -
You chant maniacally in a language I don't find humorous,
A useless gadget of antiquity,
Sounding and measuring my softest memory.
It makes me feel surreal -
You render me self-reflexive:
A hardening mirror, an unclean surface,
I point at her eagerness, furiously.
She doesn't know how to speak, her eyes are blotted out,
She's lost her pours - she is no longer receptive.
And you're lying together you're cuddling you're
Cradling and it's a garden of entangled weeds and matted, old hair.

Imogen



Interior with Alice and Circles

Tabitha Blackburn

An interruption

You can't concentrate like this.
(Sigh and look up.)
The one next to you is already staring Eyes dark, distracted.
The sound of pen on desk, rolling, falling
- waiting - softly landing,
Echoes against smoke-frosted windows,

A faint drip of plaster on carpet continues.
Row upon row of ancient shelves wait dimly
To be cast equally in the orange glow
Which is making it so difficult to read.

A light is slouching into the library
Singeing its way up cracked spines
And yellow pages.

Beneath the ember sky
All has crumbled
And is reflected on your watch.
Flame eating glass.

It's a pattern you saw once
In a painting, somewhere.
Flame eating canvas.

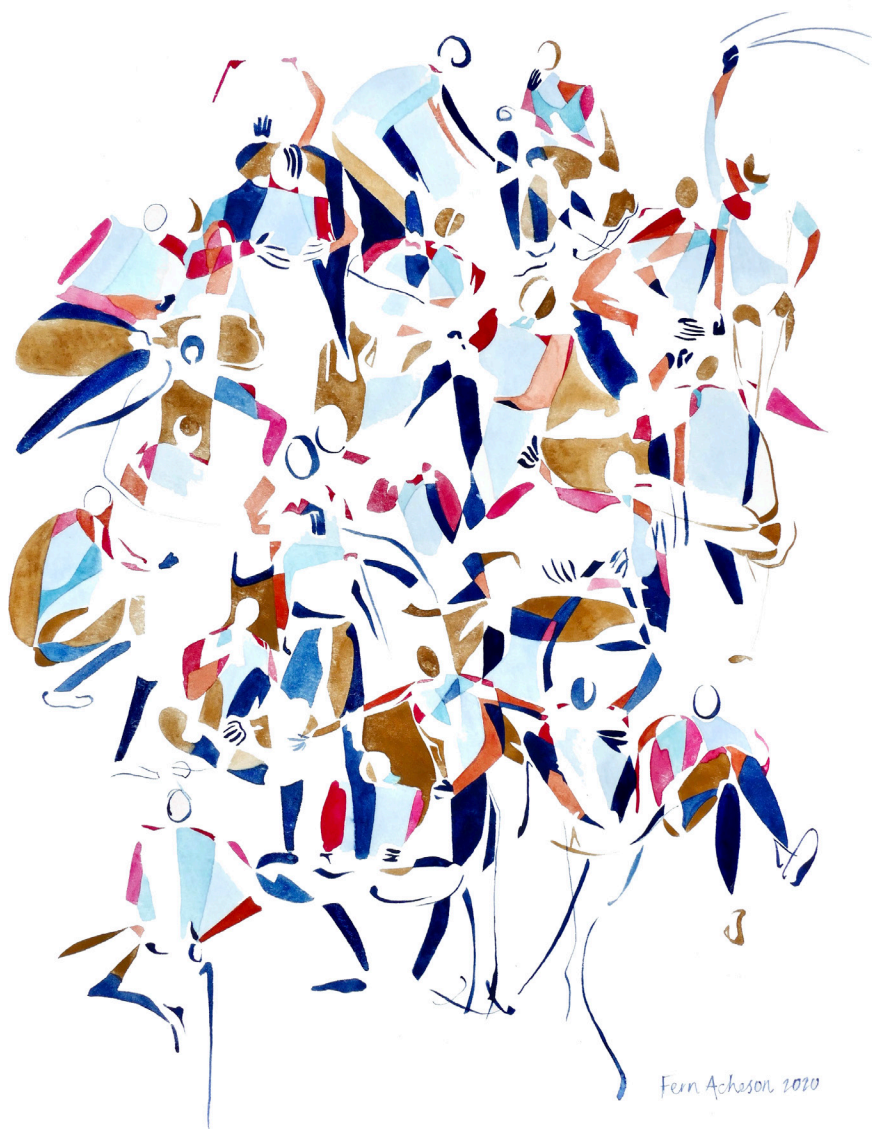
What's the time?
Hard to tell.
(Go back to your books.)
You will not be disturbed again.

Harvey Brown

Co-Editor Joe's Pick

Poetry, to me, has in the past been relatively unappealing. I enjoyed limericks and Dr Seuss books, but anything above that I couldn't get on board with. Indeed, if it didn't rhyme, I didn't class it as poetry - luckily though, this one does. It was only really when I came to study Shakespeare that I realised why people like poems - or at least, I found my way of liking poems. I discovered that a poem takes our mundane everyday language (eg. 'I wish I could grow a longer moustache' or 'You have an ant in your hair') and turns it into

magic (eg. 'Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow') - expressing thought and emotion in the most complex and artful way possible through language. However, often writers and critics alike pay little attention to the presentation of their work - it is but words on paper and can therefore be reproduced in different anthologies and formatted to the compiler's liking. Not so here. The presentation becomes an integral part of the work, with the visual quality being equally as important as the literary. The quirky font combined with the printed letters juxtaposes sharply the insidious content of the poem; the layers of production which are all open to display highlight the continual creative process which the poem underlines; the Rorschach-esque coffee(?) stain illustrates the psychological aspect of performance which underlines the text as well as the mess that lies behind performance. Indeed, if I were a more pretentious and/or experienced editor, I would be inclined to say that the fact that we have here various layers of text and illustration makes us as readers question which elements are the 'Pan-Am smile' of performance, and which are the inner workings beneath - but I'm not, so I won't. It is these elements which strike me as blending two of the most emotive art forms - visual and literary. Suffice to say, however, I enjoy this poem.





Beach Study 1 + 2

My paintings are inspired by my observations of people in public spaces such as beaches and parks. Each painting is compilation of figures in a certain moment and alludes to the positive and negative spaces made by the body.

Fern Acheson

Asleep On a Train

I dreamt about you
From Home to Land's End;
Shimmers left along the shoreline.

I wrote this as a kind of reimagining or reconstitution of Ezra Pound's 'In a Station Of The Metro'. His poem is about snapshots of different faces in a crowd; I wanted to make all these images about one person instead of a group. My relationships with people often involve me moving from one image of them to another as I get to know them better, and I wanted to suggest some kind of convergence or collision between these fleeting images of a person, a series of dreams, and the glimmers you see on the surface of the ocean as you go past it

Lyle Cross



Kamile 1 + 2
Joe Smith



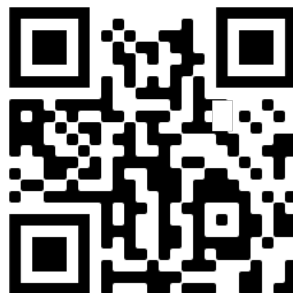
The Spectacular Everyday

Ottoline Martin



QR Code: Tiny glass theatre.

*A fountain with a glass wall
creates a tiny theatrical moment;
a continuous curtain of water
partially conceals the actors,
coins tossed into the fountain. But
who is the star here - the curtain
of water? The coins? The glass
screen that separates the two?*



FOREHEAD

For Richard

Not quite scalp, and not quite face. Something more like the wings
of a theatre – a stage for things prepared, not yet enacted.

Or perhaps more like a field, seen from a great distance, where
the clouds' shadows pass, but I can only guess what you are thinking.

But that's not what a forehead is – it's just a place
where things are gleaned by those who have the practice –

a mother, whose inexpert hands assume the art
of checking for a fever, or your cocked tilt of knowing disbelief –

the strands of hair that cling when you come back from a run –
you see, your brow suggests more than it shows.

To think you'll never see it with your own two eyes,
only glimpsed in mirrors, in the sides of glassy buildings

while you fluff your hair, roll your cuffs and carry on.
I envy you a lot of things, but I cannot envy this –

I am far too glad of your forehead, that it's mine to look upon,
glad, also, sometimes, of its inscrutability.

Alistair Smith



Geese

Sameer Aggarwal



Left: Eve and Flora, Right: No. 125

All sentimental pieces created over the summer of friends, for friends, or of my surroundings in my childhood village.

Sophie Beckingham





Down by the River

Sophie Beckingham

Co-Editor Millie's Pick

It is a common remark, when standing before a painting, to say 'it feels like I'm there.' A comment on the immersive nature of the artwork, all too linked to the naturalism of the rendition. Despite the abstraction of the forms here, it feels like I'm there. There is a sense of comfort in the abstract nature of the painting, my imagination filling in the rest of the bridge, crumbling stone crushed by green just tipping into autumnal yellows and deep ochres. Water reflects beneath the trees, distorting branches and leaves. The brush strokes invite you to construct your own view, to build the rest of the bridge in your mind's eye, to draw yourself into the image in every way. Yes, I think the power of this work lay in the brushstrokes. The dynamism, the energy- Sophie's movement is visceral and raw and almost within touch. A moment has been wrestled into the canvas, held tight by the acrylic paint. And yet there is a stillness and a serenity to the work, perhaps a result of this immersive nature. So well executed is the brush work that it feels like I'm not only part of the scene but present at its rendering, stood on the cold morning that it was painted, dew still on the grass. And so, I am intrigued by this painting, by the energy and the serenity, but most of all in its ability to embrace the viewer into its painterly world.



Reflections in Ely Cathedral

Mark G

Reflections

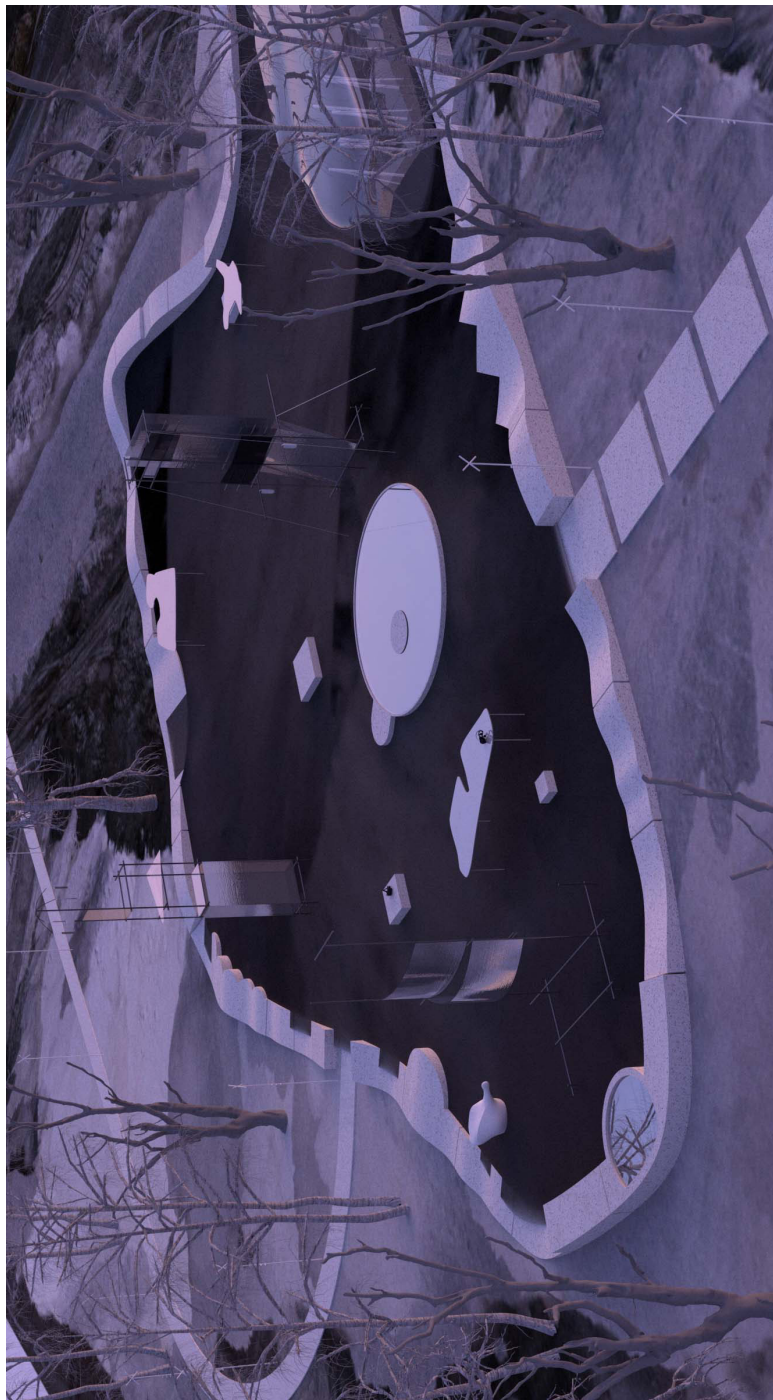
The mirror reflects calmly back
The indomitable serenity I present it,
And if time should stop,
Here, surrounding me,
I would not weep.
In the recesses of every brain are cravings for
Attention.

But if time should stop
So that all eyes might draw to me,
A hundred angles casting me in stone
And, like threatened prey, forcing stillness,
I would weep.
Weep for my own incompetence at self,
Weep for my reclusive spectacle.

This is a much cracked mirror,
Light dances from the pretty shards
In rainbows and monochrome
To reflect the most hidden of secrets,
Nothing is safe at the right angle,
Nothing is hidden to the right level of brokenness.
Like glitter a world may become clear.

Eyes are mirrors,
Not much changes between them.
Pretty greens, deep blues, transparent browns
May hold different memories, experiences,
But past that I merely reflect you.
And I would weep for it –
Weep for the bitter dependence on reflection.

Jolyon Chamberlain



Norrboten's Ore Sanctuary

This image is an extract from my ongoing design thesis which seeks to explore how architecture can engage with the challenges of urban obsolescence, displacement and belonging faced by the settlements of Norrbotten, a region in the northernmost part of Sweden.

Grey Grierson

Disassociation #07

I'm sweating buckets.
I can feel every pore in my body
Extrude my personality out of me
In a damp haze in an Oxfam.

(I wouldn't be surprised if thin pin
Pricks of blood begin poking through
My shirt).

A friend in Sainsbury's. I think he has no idea
I left my body at home. Supo in 5 at Sidney
and I say: mine are at my college: like we both don't
Go Churchill: or that I don't have one in 15 minutes.

I'm clutching two bottles of smoothie
In my fingers like they're justifications
For something.
When I pay I look suspiciously to my right
At the man that's not there.

I'm amazed I remembered
Not to drop my earphones on the floor.

[Those monks are real, right?]

The tide of life hasn't swept me over yet.
I'm still clinging to the tugboat.

I hear everything
And understand nothing.

These ripples, these crescendos,
These cars and these people
And these lives and everything else

They are like a tsunami of noise

And my head is noisy too,
Quiet only sometimes.

Sometimes I dissociate, sometimes at really bad times. I wrote this poem while I was dissociating (I hope it can describe that vibe), walking through the city to get back to Churchill (a long walk!). And I have to be careful not to get hit by cars, not to bump into people. I probably look like I'm on something. Eventually I was fine; supo ironed me out. It's a bit clunky but I can't change it too much. I wrote it when my brain had unplugged itself a little bit. Part of the fun!

Jack W Heath

So much beautiful time

I am stroking the bottom of the barrel, sticky jam and sour honey are stuck to my tongue and lips and the pages of my imagination. I read and read and read until the pressed work will eventually become formative and widen the four walls, expansive. But for now, I am a size too small, the fresh scabs on my knees are accidental, dirty, and healing and my hair ties like a noose around my hips, caressing me, keeping me young. The monarch in the cavity is alive and well, her wings stretch wide, fragile, but firm, directing my hands to branches and leaf handles. They do not break when they are trodden on, I do not chew on my fatness, there are no broken clasps. I look down to insects on the hair of my legs and the swell of my belly, I am full, I have lapped up the dew of summer and am satiated. I do not fear hunger, I am not indebted to winter, I am pouring jelly through the gaps in my teeth and transporting frogs to basins. I knit yarn together with unblemished fingers and march through playgrounds, hardy, fierce and entirely unafraid. I cut my hair and bleach my favourite dress and then wear clips and the sodden fabric for weeks - mistakes are frequent, fixable, and fickle. I collect fossils, marbles, stamps, cards, sequential hobbies that will ebb and flow, becoming slack and lean. Constellations are only as big as the stars plastered on my ceiling, my knowledge does not move further than my mouth, my hands are the right size. My hands are exactly the right size.

Renée Eshel

Spectating Spectacles

“Linda, pass me my spectacles!”
shouts the man in the café.
“We need to get our bill ASAP
Or we’ll miss my cousin’s play.”

The wife looks up embarrassed
at the loudness of her spouse.
She breathes a sigh and tells him
that he left them in the house.

“The service here is awful”
grunts the man audibly aloud.
Sipping on his wine as the waiter
welcomes an arriving crowd.

“But really there is no one
who can come and serve me now?!”
They must know I’m important
And we need to leave somehow!”

People are now staring
As he seeks to start a fight.
His theatrical announcements put him
Straight in the spotlight.

But so intent is he on the play
and the exchange of food for wealth,
He does not even realise
He’s become the spectacle himself.

Nadya Miryanova

Sword in the Stone

I made this sculpture to remind me of home, inspired by the sword in the stone from Arthurian legend. My dad makes sculptures and taught me how to weld. During the first lockdown I went back home but came back to Cambridge early to continue work. Over that period, I got very homesick, so the next time I was home I made this sculpture, a twin of one I'd already made and fixed in a rock by the river. I brought the new twin to Cambridge and positioned it within the grounds at Jesus. It helped me feel more connected to home over the past year, and now I go to visit it when I feel homesick. The sword is made from blunt blades from a farm mower and has marks from years of cutting the wildflower meadows. The stone it's fixed in, now covered in leaves, came from the river next to where its twin is. Perhaps one day someone else will find it and wonder what its story is.

Anonymous



Splinter

You shift yourself into
My shed of butterfly skin,
Rippling ruffled from an
Unaccustomed touch,
Hurried run the married waves,
Shooting pus and
Glimmering blisters
Surfing the wound,
A ground for you
To bury yourself in.
Red is red, bit white is whiter
Jarring pale skin
Against toasted flesh,
Tombing scars among the fresh;
Little gasps of pain
Throttling muscles ,
Whinging to wine your taunt body
Softly out of silk -
Pain succumbed to pleasure
Upon returning to minted air,
Only then could I
Milk meaning from
What heaviness went before.
The splinter
We spend our whole lives taking out

Taken from the Anthology 'Tyrannosaurus'

ty.ran.o.sau.rus.

Etymology: from Greek, turannos (tyrant) and saurus (lizard).

A tyrant, a tyranny of competing voices, thoughts, ideas and reflections.

What happens under an architecture of tyrannical words?

Deliah Dennett



Sunrise from Window

Emily Boarer

Bat Hour

Indigo expanse taut and heavy on the horizon –

The air is charged and sparks bright-sharp

And pregnant clouds that swell with thunder billow on the violet sea.

Quick punctuate with shadow flash, childish play at finger snap all

Helter-skelter and cartwheels – English really does not do them justice –

These are hollow bones and dry leaves,

Leather thin leather skin feather fling bug-munching sky-spin,

Borne upon the night-time light, a kind of leaf light let-me-go light, reckless and unbound –

Caterwauling of the silent kind, a thousand milliseconds in the eye,

An afterimage silhouette in the sky negative of wam moonlight, truly a sight

To behold, but not to hold, flit through your fingers just the brush of almost-and-gone

Maddi Jackson

Being Twelve

When, in music class, we were meant to be learning piano, the boys instead decided to guess the girls' bra sizes and rank their breasts.

Emerging from the practice room, they spectacularly announced their judgement to the room at large – I'd finished second place.

'You know he only dated you because of your tits, right?', one of them whispered as we made our way back to the desks.

'And dumped me because I was frigid? Yeah, I know'.

I glanced over at a group of girls huddled together on the right-hand side of the classroom. Only yesterday had I googled the meaning of 'slut'.

*

Ten minutes later, I excused myself to go to the toilet, took a few paracetamol and gave in to the cramps. Rifling through my blazer pockets, I found a pad and changed myself. I had lied about being on my period since December. And only ever went to change myself during lesson

time – break-time was too risky, the sound of an opening wrapper too obvious (unless a hand-dryer was roaring above the noise). I always kept period pads hidden in my pockets now and never left my blazer unattended.

*

Because, during break-time about a month ago, a couple of boys had rifled through the girls' bags, looking for sanitary products.

They'd enjoyed exposing the people whose bags had contained the incriminating articles. And it was

considered an excellent joke by the whole form.

Later that day, the girls discussed the boys' findings, railing against the injustice of the violation though they'd laughed it off before.

The two girls whose sanitary products had been found sat apart on the other side of the classroom.

Eventually, we went back to that lesson's work. It was Physics. The task: to calculate our weight (mass x

gravitational field strength) – after glimpsing my neighbours' answer, I hurriedly scratched out my own and rewrote the calculation with a figure 10kg lighter.

*

Before returning to class, I took a moment to readjust my sports-bra in the toilet cubicle. I'd hooked it onto the tightest possible setting and the chest-band was gnawing at my skin. I scratched at the rawness and ran my fingers over the red indentation marks. I walked back into lesson. Took my seat at the front of the classroom. He smiled at me.

*

Four years later I sit in a counsellor's office, diagnosed with anorexia and suffering from amenorrhea. Why? Because I couldn't stand making a spectacle of myself any longer.

Niamh Bradshaw

A FEW TIPS FOR GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

Farewells don't keep in the fridge, they spoil
and grow new promises of mould.

You can freeze your sorrow overnight, if you like,
only know that the texture is never quite the same.

In the war, my grandmother would keep the husks
of old regrets and darn socks with them in winter,

and even when rationing was over, her shelves
were always stocked with glass jars,
the bitter pickles of unrequited love.

I've tried to recreate her recipe using poetry and salt
but have since been forced to concede
that heartache is best taken fresh,

or, alternatively, slung on the compost heap
to see what else may come of it.

Alastair Smith

17/01/21- A January Afternoon

Golden light like gossamer threads
Entangle and knot as they pour through the window –
Watch how the flecks dance on the wall and spread,
Bathing my hands in the sunflower glow.
Would that I could dissolve into the chiffon haze,
For I am in the mood to melt and disappear:
As if spiralling steam consumed by the heat
Escapes and disperses into the warm air.
Tell me, where you are does it shine like this too?
Does it drip syrupy through your room and stick to the walls,
Or do grey fingers of mist stifle the yellow hue?
This is a light not crisp – but creamy, inspiring drowsiness
Slowly squeezing time through an hourglass as you sit careless.
I try to drown in the sunlight, but it is fleeting, gone by four
Yet seemingly eternal; molten gold will sing through my window once more.

C Patel



Sunset Silhouette

We get some spectacular sunsets here in Cambridgeshire. This photo was taken in a field near where I live, and the hay had just been harvested. My daughter hopped up onto a haystack to get a better look and I saw a great photo opportunity.

Rachael Huntley

A Social Spectacle

A girl of thirteen years
receives her first mobile phone.
She starts the process simply enough
by setting its ringtone.

She marvels at the speed with which
she can search for what she wants.
She sends her friends text messages
And waits for their response.

Then come along ideas
about the apps she'd heard about.
People call them "social media"
and go on them when in doubt.

So starts the social spectacle
as she signs onto each site,
Fashioning a fresh facade
To be seen in her best light.

She dresses up in filters,
Edits photos from long ago,
She posts them up on Instagram
To animate her show.

But in a while, this boundless game
is too much for her own good.
She deletes the apps and locks her phone
To avoid being misunderstood.

But swiftly she returns to check
As she can't stop what she's begun,
Because these days, that's just the way
The media circus is run.

Nadya Miryanova



'A Deeper Magic Still'

Picking flowers this summer, I imagined how cool it would be if they were to grow out of someone in a Surrealist dreamy vision. I used lino to carve out the design, and layers of ink.

Bernie Carter



A New Perspective

I wanted to challenge – to spectacularise – the way that faces – a classic painting subject – are depicted and viewed in art, providing a new perspective by reshuffling the facial features and painting not on a canvas but a found object.

Ella Curry

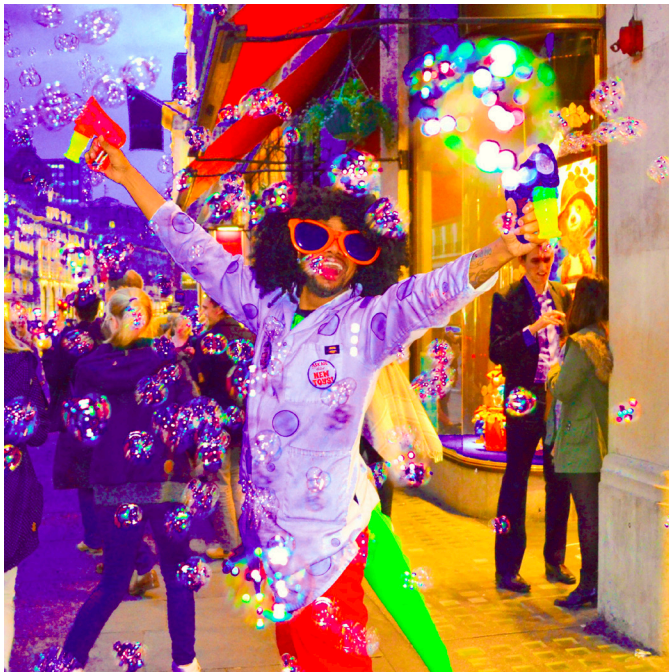
Playing Pretend

Almost twenty but still only thirteen,
Playing pretend at being Someone.
Lips crimson red and eyelids sunny yellow,
Laces up big boots with nails painted green,
Ready to perform.

Shirts too big, jumpers too bright,
Settle on her bones like an itchy skin.
What is this if not the uniform
Of a clown?

Almost twenty but still only thirteen,
Still wishing she was someone
Or maybe just comfortable

Anonymous



Purple Bubbles

This is the photo that sparked my love for photography. Before this day, I'd never seen a 30 year old man blowing bubbles so much.

Sahil

Co-Editor Grace's Spotlight

Since I'm a linguist, it's usually wordy pieces that capture my imagination. But this photo is somehow the most linguistically rich submission for me. Everything about it is euphoric, ecstatic, caustically real; there is a movement to its stillness that weaves a lyricism into the smile of the bubbler blower and the floating of the bubbles. It is a moment suspended in time like a bubble suspended in air, so perfect and fragile you don't dare touch it, yet so abundant and overflowing that we feel it could never be spoiled. I get the impression that the scene itself is taking place inside a bubble, and each bubble is a gleeful little disco-lighted city in itself; a snow globe of jellybean joy. This photo, for me, strikes at the core of the spectacle of pure and shameless creation. Each bubble blown is a new technicolour world, quite literally breathed into life as easily as it is dissipated at a touch. It captures the spectacle of pure creation - the delicacy and yet persistence of imagination, and the simple human joy it induces.

E L I O T ' S E A R S



Joe's Pick

If spectacle is what you're looking for, Natacha Atlas' 1995 album *Diaspora* is the place to go. Its scope is grand and

cinematic, being reminiscent of *Lawrence of Arabia*, and the recent *Dune*. It is dark and oppressive and yet exciting and intriguing. Atlas' haunting and powerful vocals cut above the self-termed 'cha'abi moderne' musical backing, lending mystic sensibilities to her style of maghrebain hip-hop electronica. It's perfect for study-backing, a walk through the city, or a good groove. Stand out tracks are *Diaspora*, *Iskanderia*, and *Feres*.



Millie's Pick

I think the spectacular nature of Tangerine Dream's *Force Majeure* (Remastered 2018 version) is clear from the very beginning,

more specifically the 18 minutes and 20 seconds that constitute the first song of the same title. Sitting somewhere between the 1977 soundtrack for the film '*Suspiria*' and Air's 1988 album *Moon Safari*, these songs are formed of an eclectic combination of space age synthetic sounds and what can only be described as gothic, supernatural twists. You are taken on a journey not only through the album but through each song, the constant shifts in tone drawing you through vastly different scenes. Overall, complex and confusing but guaranteed to take you on an adventure.



Grace's Pick

Amidst the to-and-fro of student life, an album that never fails to pull me back to an appreciation of the simple yet

unfathomable spectacle of being in the world is Sigur Rós' 2005 album *Takk...* (which is Icelandic for 'thanks'). This album is a cinematic dreamscape of cosmic romance, the weakening of frost under winter morning sunlight, the warmth of a friend's hand, and the smell on a jumper after bonfire night. I recommend listening either outside or with your eyes closed, and letting the ecstatic horns, the vocals on the verge of joyful tears, the wide-eyed waves of sound tease out the simple beauty of whatever is in your surroundings or your mind. You somehow don't have to understand a word of the lyrics to feel spoken to. All-in-all, this is an album that speaks to the spectacle of human communication - of sharing in the common awe of simply being here. My favourite track is *Hoppípola*, which literally means 'jumping in puddles' - can you get any lovelier than that?

Shifting Sands


Most of Marc's adult life has been dedicated to creating and developing a thriving tour operating business to some of the most wonderful and obscure parts of the world. The COVID pandemic has devastated the business, but, at the same time has provided an extraordinary opportunity to write and perform this symphony. Prior to this, Marc hadn't written a note in his life and he feels strongly that it represents what can be achieved with the right degree of tenacity and the right teacher to guide and encourage. Today's premiere is the result of this collaboration.

Shifting Sands draws on a wide range of classical influences including Mozart (Confutatis from the Requiem), Stravinsky (The Rite of Spring), Musorgsky (Night on a Bare Mountain), Rimsky-Korsakov (Scheherazade), Holst (Mars and Mercury), Dukas (the Sorcerer's Apprentice), Prokofiev (Montagues and Capulets from Romeo and Juliet) as well as popular influences such as John Williams (Star Wars), Pink Floyd (The Wall), King Crimson (Moonchild), and film music such as Midnight Express, Gladiator and Lawrence of Arabia.

The music is shaped by Marc's life-long passion for travel and exploration and has a filmic feel which has been inspired by some of the world's most dramatic landscapes; from the shifting sands of Arabia to the endless plains of the Serengeti, from the wild steppes of Asia to the rainforests of Central and South America. This is a classical symphony for the new millennium, howling back in rage at the powers of creation as the dust settles after the pandemic.



Marc Harris



C o n t r i b u t o r s

Blake McInney, Tabitha Blackburn, Shaun Vickers, Lily Olliver, Nathan Brooks, Ari Chan, Reuben Jenkins, Lewis Westwood-Flood, Pri, Benjamin Sobel, Xufei Wu, Imogen, Harvey Brown, Lily Chaundy, Fern Acheson, Lyle Cross, Joe Smith, Ottoline Martin, Alistair Smith, Sameer Aggarwal, So-

phie Beckingham,
Mark G, Jolyon
Chamberlain,
Grey Grierson,
Jack W Heath,
Renee Eshel,
Nadya Miry-
anova, Deliah
Dennett, Emily
Boarer, Maddi
Jackson, Niamh
Bradshaw, C Pa-
tel, Rachael Hunt-
ley, Bernie Carter, Ella
Curry, Sahil, Marc Harris