

THE ESSENCE OF THINGS

I was reading about Brancusi's interest in forms and pedestals. He sculpted pedestals that addressed notions of a point of contact between reality and the metaphysical.

In 1930 Brancusi stated that:

In bad form. . . the surfaces and planes all come to an end. They finish themselves within the mass. I think the true form ought to suggest infinity. The surfaces ought to look as though they went on forever, as though they proceeded out from the mass into some perfect and complete existence. He said that 'bad form ends'.

Ten minutes after reading this I walked out my door to go to the studio. I was faced by a red *Colourama Mug Tree*, standing high and proud on my front brick wall. One of those mug holder stand contraptions that can fit about ten mugs on it. It stood empty; its stainless steel arms outstretched, longing to feel the connection of smooth ceramic mug handles.

Was this an offering from the universe or just one of the estate tenants no longer needing a mug holder? Perhaps both. I stood transfixed and contemplated its form. Did it go on forever? Was its brick wall pedestal opening up new relationships between reality and the infinite? Did this odd looking object speak to people about a deep connection to existence? Did its form continue into eternity and act as a tool for transmission with the cosmos? All very valid questions I thought.

I am now sitting on a paint splattered blue plastic chair in front of a blank canvas. It hangs on a white wall about two metres away. I sit and contemplate its whiteness. There is a bright, white, clouded, autumnal sky shining through my filthy studio window. It feels kind of holy. An existential holy, not a praise God kind of holy. I have no idea where this painting will go or if I am to be honest why at all I will even try to take it somewhere. What am I doing?

I look around at the warzone that is my London studio. There is rubbish spread everywhere. Paint-soaked brushes, rags and rubber gloves litter the filthy floor. It's all a bit of an artist cliché. Piles of canvases taunt me with their wasted hours. Hours of waiting and thinking.

I read something the other day that stuck in my head, which I can't for the life of me remember who wrote it or where. I'm pretty sure it was Brancusi again.

'Reality is not the outer form but the idea, the essence of things'.

It was Brancusi, I just Googled it. There was an exhibition at Tate Modern, London in 2004 called *The Essence of Things*, for your interest.

I am forever looking at things and trying to decipher their essence. Not their physicality, but their metaphysicality. Their connection to space and being. How they displace and fill space and at the same time offer existential conundrums and forces beyond language.

I struggle with everything I make. Every sculptural form, every mark on every painting, every piece of writing. Nothing is simple. I feel that each thing needs to offer something greater than the last. Some kind of connection to being and existence. To my own, to that of others around me, those that have gone before and most importantly to those beyond my lifetime. Some of these things that I make will be around displacing space and offering possibilities long after me and to me that is no small consideration.

Right now, Brancusi's *Endless Column* in the small town of Târgu-Jiu, Romania, not far from the sculptor's birthplace, reaches up and pushes the sky on its way to eternity. I am here in London thinking of it. Thinking of the canvas and monument in front of me, and thinking of forever.

David Turley, 2017