

GARAGE DAYS

I am writing this in the last few days of 2016. There is that feeling of another year passing and trying to reflect or dwell on the past and my life streaming by. Yeah, this is one of those moments. I thought I better fit in one last hurrah to see out the year and make it seem and feel like it was more productive than perhaps it actually was.

Comfort. Home or the feeling of home. That's what this is all about. Being content and maybe finding peace or harmony in life. Harmony sounds a bit awkward doesn't it? A bit too new age, incense burning chakras kind of thing. Hey, if that's your kind of thing that's fine with me. It just isn't where I find myself at the moment. Maybe later in life I might retreat to a forest cabin to drink chai tea and meditate. Actually it's funny I said that because I recently tried this amazing chai latte which is fucking unbelievable and I may already be converted.

At the moment I feel ok with life. I feel ok with art and painting. Forever questioning it of course but that's all part of the fun. Lately my paintings have found something. An imbalance and disturbing quality yet at the same time an order or calmness. I like when there is something jarring or disruptive in the space pulling or pushing the depth. Something that sends you back around the scene or surface for more and slowly draws you into the object beyond surface, beyond paint. To somewhere else. Beyond here and now. My marks are quick but overly considered and there is always the goal of confusing space and surface, image and object, materiality and metaphysicality.

I feel quite content lately. Content with most things. My day job is ok. Yes unfortunately I still have to have one of those, but it's ok. Art is ok. My relationship is ok. I get to have some fun times whenever I like really. Things are good. But in the back of my mind there is always the end. The thought that all this stuff will end one day.

That means I won't get to wake up and put on my favourite album....

- I can't decide what that is at the moment – maybe between Josh T Pearson's *Last of the Country Gentlemen*, Nick Cave's *Skeleton Tree* or Dirty Beaches *Badlands*, all of which yes are quite sombre, dark or broody albums. Hey I am getting old, don't judge me. Also been listening to Bowie's *Black Star* a lot lately, which is super. There are way too many to choose a favourite. I always thought favourite things are stupid.

When its all over, I won't get to open the back door to my garden and have a morning coffee in my pants with my new friends the birds.

- I have just got to know my birds in my garden. I have some big fat wood pigeons. At the time we met I was reading the history of Australian painting so I named them Tom and Fred after some iconic Australian painters. I have a pair of robins that come every day. I have named them Sterling and Ruby. Sterling is much thinner. Ruby favours her left leg always lifting the right when she hops. Robins don't live very long. Apparently only one in four reach their first birthday.

And here I am complaining about being hard done by and that one day my life, already forty times longer than a robin, will end and I won't get to stay up late at night reading countless books of life adventurers now long gone and artists and philosophers woeing their existential woes. The everyday stuff I love so much. Just being. All this life stuff will amount to fuck all. There will be a stack of paintings and some words from me saying things like this very text. Saying how life was ok, life was weird. Saying how none of it really mattered. You just live and yes, just die.

Believe what you want about afterlives and being saved and going to sacred kingdoms to sit beside loved ones. Eternity makes no sense to me. If I was allowed to have this life for eternity I would be happy. If I could paint these surfaces forever I would happily do so. I feel eternity in each painting. A connection to tomorrow through a mark made today. If I must go, I do like the idea of living beyond through these things. These marks and stains. This is my connection to earthly things, to heavenly states, to history, to now and beyond. All these words and marks can be used against me, but I don't mind. At least I'm saying and doing something. It still happened and I changed the world and history in some small way. *I woz ere.*

Another year down. 2016 over. I have been working on some new paintings in the garage while visiting family in Australia. I didn't have my usual oil paints or canvas with me and thought I would just set up a kind of makeshift Macgyver studio and use whatever I could find to make some records of life.

Beer cartons and paper, motor oil, shoe water-proofer, two stroke engine oil, carpet stain remover, ornament sealer, fungicide, watercolours, a bit of acrylic, nail polish, chrome spray, enamel house paint. Anything at hand that would make a mark, a stain, a record of life.

Is this it?

I dedicate these words and works to my friends the robins. Thanks for sharing your precious time with me.

David Turley, 2016