Unstill Life

Alan McGowan

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"(Heraclitus believed that) Existence as we know it is in such a state of flux that at any given moment one could not describe the nature of any object, because, by the time it was described, it would have changed again and become slightly different."

Erik Wiergardt, ***The Book of Doubt***

"Try again. Fail again. Fail better"

Samuel Beckett, ***Worstward Ho***

Unstill Life

Figure Paintings, Drawings and Writing

Alan McGowan

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1. UNRECOGNISE

To see the familiar as if for the first time. To unrecognise things. To escape the habits of seeing in which we normally clothe things. To not understand things, not know how they "work" or how I could use them. To give up their names and their categories. To be simply amazed by them. To let them be themselves rather than what I want them to be. To let them go.

To not know that a chair can be sat on. Or whether it is expensive or cheap, or that I can buy or sell it. Not know if it will make me look stylish or unfashionable, or that it is even a chair. To not know if a celebrity has sat on it. To not know its name, or if it is a thing. To not have to confirm it, or have it confirm me.

To know there is a presence there. That it travels through space and time as I do. That it glows, or glowers, and reflects light and casts shadows and changes constantly, as I do, though perhaps in a different rhythm, and that we will both pass away.

2. FIRST

Everything comes first from a feeling, that might be called a kind of doubt.

A suspicion that things may not be what they seem, might be more unstable, less clear cut and reliable. A kind of seperatedness. That things may or may not turn out in one way or another and that the idea of a plan, a meaning, correctness, might be wishful thinking, a kind of reassuring fiction.

That the world is more fluid than my conception of it.

That the encounter with this doubt creates a kind of space, a terrain that could be explored. That it could be pursued through drawing, and that it would affect the kind of drawings one might do.

OIL

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Publications

By Alan McGowan

The Language of the Body; Figure Drawings in Four Chapters, Saturation, 2012. ISBN 978-0-9572428-0-7
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