

20th March 2007

Flax Mill Sketchbook#2

[\[click here for full spread\]](#)

[\[click here for project background\]](#)

Ditherington

23rd January 2007 [\[click here for information\]](#)

Working Note 31st January 2007 still in water or just damp?

three lines cast-iron columns each floor supporting cast-iron beams cast

two halves bolted together heavy flanges.

Working Note 12th March 2007

rippled
drawn
the teeth of a comb

steeping retting

drying
bruised and broken

brake
crushed scratching
flat wooden sword scratcher

heckling or hackling
cleaning, splitting and separating

line
ribands or slivers slight twist

The flax was then spun.

Curly Waterweed [*Lagarosiphon major*]

Water Fern [*Azolla filiculoides*]

Least Duckweed [*Lemna minuta*]

Parrot's Feather [*Myriophyllum aquaticum*]

Canadian Waterweed [*Elodea canadensis*]

Water-soldier [*Stratiotes aloides*].

Working Note 12th April 2007

Dennis Oppenheim: 'A Station for Detaining and Blinding Radio-Active Horses' 1981

"Raw material excavated directly on site and material placed on steel sleds inside trenches on tracks aimed at mid-station using rubber straps.

Station incorporates spinning wire mesh gates, turning drum pathways positioned under stacks, vents, liquid and gas processing units.

Ground based rotating receiving bins with wire mesh troughs counterweighted by steel mesh screens directly in front of exit gates."

25' x 100' x 250' / Kroller Muller Museum, Otterlo, Netherlands

[\[click here for more images and texts\]](#)

Working Notes 24 - 27th April 2007

A pebble dropped from a lost bridge into a buried canal. A silent splash. An invisible rippling. Both a particularity of place.

Wormholes through time open up, and memories of what was once here leak out into the present moment. And the future possibility. A letter from Bage to Strutt calculating the strength of beams, or Marshall's later character assassination of Bage, or the plight of Jeremiah France of 16 Spring Gardens, overseer at the factory; the sound of the scrutcher on the flax brought here from the Low Countries, the Baltic, Ireland and Normandy; the liquidation of 1886 when the colour faded from the site, or the summer of 1987 when the smells of the malting process stopped infiltrating the washing hanging in neighbouring back gardens.

Catching our eye or whispering in our ear. Time traced in the landscaping and the detailing to buildings. Two hundred and ten years collapsed into a series of perfect moments. This is the art of interpretation. Stretching the development opportunity to reveal content and longer term significance. Braque's "survival does not do away with memory".

1st May 2007

[\[click here for sketchbook#2\]](#)

Drive home thoughts – 18th May 2007

How a fragile thought can become robust - that's what interests me most. Painting is left with only the fragile thought. A deadly and uncertain questioning of assumptions about painting's intrinsic value. This is how we understand painting post-Courbet's 'Studio' painting ['The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing up Seven Years of my Artistic and Moral Life' 1855]. "The world comes to be painted at my studio", said Courbet. And since Manet collapsed the traditional purpose of painting ['Music at the Tuilleries' 1862] by filling the centre of painting with doubt and uncertainty to leave us lost at the periphery. And then through Cezanne to Doctorow's "...universe of totally disparate intentions with everybody going about his or her business in the silence of their own minds".

"Painting doesn't mean anything" (Larry Poons) or the memory of painting? The memory of painting (in dialogue with the ambient) or Leone Alberti's close down of the possibilities (specific viewing distance, a fixed centre and particular lighting positions – an intersection that cannot be altered, the picture plane as fixed boundary). Alberti's let's get real robustness shoring up painting's inherent fragility.

Painting's inherent fragility. Fragile thought. Martin Creed's 'Work No. 88'.

A sheet of A4 paper crumpled into a ball. A fragile thought. But if we credit Creed's 'Work No. 88' with, say, the dimensions of Pollock's 'Lavender Mist: Number 1' (7' 3" x 9' 10") or Courbet's 'Studio' (11' 10 1/4" x 19' 7 1/2"), does the fragile thought become more robust?

A silent splash. An invisible rippling. A pebble dropped from a lost bridge into a buried canal is a fragile thought. As painting. Work that holds itself together without the "factitious unity of the tableau". And from this we can build whole cities indifferent to difference and the relations of difference – a 'villaging' that privileges a momentary fragility.

Throwing stones, dropping a pebble, erasing a text, walking and talking – transitional practices, small time tactics, fragile thinking in search of the fullness of time. In search of great time. "I insist on my experience of sensations in time – not the sense of time but the physical sensation of time." [Barnett Newman].

Painting's institutional values are now in error – damnatio memoriae. Do we have to go through this again?

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