

Taking it Personally

It is often argued that the modern condition was defined by a de-sensitivity to the world.

Assuming the story thus far being that a dramatic shift of industrialism breaks the long thread of discourse and ideology, where culture and ritual had been directly linked to actual daily events, the seasons the phenomena of the world, of community. From here the projects of avant gardism and radical regression which dominate cultural spheres during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, whilst apparently diametrically opposed are united in the desire to reconnect for a union of life and experience.

Against this backdrop Michelle Hamer's apparently myopic works stand aside. Neither sign nor symptom of rupture/alienation, so much as too much connection. Hamer is unique in not wanting to be the subject of her own works. She is like Oliver Sacks's man who mistakes his wife for a hat. She is not disconnected. Her world is not obscured, coded, hidden so much as it is lurid and vivid. Everywhere she looks there are signs and they are personal.

Fatigue Kills an obvious reference to the disabling Chronic Fatigue Syndrome that has sidelined her from mainstream for the last few years. **Slow Down.** That's what she needs to do to regain her health. **Don't Fool Yourself**, well that's the truth. **'Wipe out Five'** = the five years that she has suffered, that is also about her.

But it does not stop here; this is not Barbara Kruger truisms. Even between the flicks Hamer can read the signs, **your... ill.** She is ill. Here a text book deconstruction that Derrida may appreciate, we may ask what else it is already that we don't recognise. For Hamer in **kill** there is a premonition: **ill.**

The laborious tapestries are testament to this truth. If they were to represent one thing it would be time. Duration, the time taken to make them. The time taken for her to have a thought. The time for the sign to make a mistake, to change the message, that one's life could go wrong. The time she has wasted in **RECOVERY**. The time where they don't represent one thing. So much as all things.

She is incredulous. Time is her medium, it is her content. The effort to retain a thought has a physical dimension. The medium in some ways imitates that of the analogue display boards. Which are she recognises like her body like her brain; faulty. Unreliable, capable of giving of mixed messages.

What about the CT scans well they are about her. The weather, the cyclone that threatens; well she is in Broome. The commercial news station is reporting it, she is watching it, the whole thing gets confusing, pull out the tapestry mat. How do we feel about this? How does she feel? while its news to us it is her reality. She is Silas Marner, the Basket weaver; she is Adolf Loos's woodcutter. One of Duchamp's brides.

At the core is the project of recognition, the almost impossible reconciliation object and subject of life and art of language and meaning.

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