

DOMINIK
MERSCH
GALLERY

a prevailing sense of disquiet



watchful, slip cast ceramic and timber, 2018

gary deirmendjian

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general statement

once a believer, I now rest my faith in uncertainty.

there's been a lifelong personal struggle towards a firming appreciation of our oneness as a single species, and of our extreme smallness in the context of a vast, humming and indifferent universe. the understanding that ours is a momentary existence on a speck of dust adrift in boundless space, has gained considerable density.

the tension between the felt sublime of this base truth and the many ways in which we are ushered away from knowing it fully, is somehow the surge underlying the expression ... in all its forms.

the core interest lies in the tidal mechanisms of social conditioning and one's place in the given oceans of unquestioned attitudes and mass acceptance.

the expression in turn continues to find inspiration in the ever enduring and conquering individuals of any time and place, who have pushed through and come to see beyond the assumed certainties ...

gary deirmendjian

Dear Reader,

“...a poet? A[n unhappy] man who conceals profound anguish in his heart, but whose lips are so fashioned that when sighs and groans pass over them they sound like beautiful music.”

Soren Kierkegaard Either/Or, Vol 1 Diapsalmata para 1

.Regarding Gary, I could leave it at that ...

Kierkegaard's introductory essay to his 1843 debut publication Either/Or, pretty much sums up *my reflection* of Gary. The very first line immediately came to mind when thinking about what I might write. In rereading Diapsalmata, I could easily piece together numerous quotes that would far better articulate my particular memory/feeling for Gary ... there are many questions and observations Kierkegaard airs here that are so Gaz to me.

.I feel like I am writing an obituary.

Such is the new normalcy that comes with a *technological social ease of distance*. Our physical connection severed, intent maintains a thread.

(as ... we are 10,000 miles apart, maybe 7-8 years since eyeballed, but have maintained conversation/collaborated via the given various social media platforms ...)

.Gary is a sculptor, I, a painter ...

yet we would/could both unequivocally denounce these categories in practice or defence. Any truth in that difference might be better understood as 'a visceral response to objects' versus a 'a visceral response to images'.

Gary has a way of surfing opportunity, creating a poetic response, often dark, melancholic, but not without hope. Gary invites us, not to see his work, but to join him down the proverbial hole for rabbits, a path into corners dark and light, an alley, a tunnel, a dead end, visiting spaces unknown to the day to day, or maybe well known. This has always been a part of his work, even in his earliest sandstone monoliths ... it is less about looking at them and more about wandering in and around them.

.What darkness.

This 'prevailing sense of disquiet', like 'the Bristol hum' (look it up), is the sort of thing that amplifies/is amplified by certain people. Being a spectrum type observation. At one end there would be those who have no idea what is being engaged with, then most will have some sort of memory/relationship with, then there are those with whom it is most loud or prevalent. At the extreme end it maybe that we are sent mad. This disquiet we all have in varying degrees, via a mixture of education and circumstance. But the two experiences we all have in common is the pain of birth and the pain of death. What happens between these is unique for each of us. I know from talks with Gary, his young life in Soviet

Armenia was interesting to say the very least, and in no way similar to my somewhat white anglo *Australian* upbringing. And then to land in Australia?? ... I can't imagine ... well maybe a little bit.

.Man who fell.

To cut my words short, Gary (the alien) is in the perfect position to comment on this disruption, this unease, this disquiet. This Australia (if there is such a thing), is as clear an embodiment of an evolving 'disquiet' as, well, anywhere. Generally speaking, we nativists (those born to, but not necessarily indigenous to a country) are arguably, I believe, are the last to hear it; I will presume, because evidently are ... the last to divulge it. I dare say because we are masked by privileged histories more often than not. For immigrants, and perhaps their offspring, and on ... the disquiet is much louder, therefore far more pressing. Perhaps because there is less of a mask around one's presence ... in an otherwise consciously cloaked environment of settlement.

When one permanently disregards their sense of place for another, there is a kind of trench coat of nakedness you inherit, that makes for a heightened degree of sensitivity to the smells, the sound, the politics of a newly acquired environment.

There are and have been many visual artists in Australia that overtly speak sociopolitically through their work. And then there are those committed to a more personal/emotional output. But so very very few are able to communicate through their work about *this* common diasporic unease, emotively, without appearing political. I believe Gary is one of these few.

.Is-is.

Is this the job of the poet, to clarify that which most of us are unclear about, through song (so to speak) allow the truth of our digression, our mismanagement, to be dismantled, uprooted ... balmed???

I get a lot of satisfaction in Gary's output ... it's sincere to the bone, restrained, subtle, threaded with wit and humour, imbued with pathos and melancholy, and, and, and always a strand of light ... this is where Gary's work succeeds for me ... even saves ...

.and so, again...

"And people flock about the poet and say to him: do sing again; Which means, would that new sufferings tormented your soul, and: would that your lips stayed fashioned as before, for your cries would only terrify us, but your music is delightful."

Soren Kierkegaard Either/Or, Vol 1 Diapsalmata para 1

John H. Adair

+air; UK; 08.18