

In Bogdan Ablohzy's *The Other* at BALENO, first you encounter his feminine brother, a work titled *Mon Frère Féminin*. It is a lone outlier in a show that unfolds into three rooms, with most of the works grouped or composed of pairs. Encased in its frame are gemstones and glass beads rolling freely as if they have spilled off the desk of a masked or transformed boy slumped over his worktable. He seems lost in a dream or overcome by some drug, his face has become a bird head, a spider hangs above. The work is notably symbolic, a trait none of the other pieces in the show share. To the left off the hall, a set of mannequins (children) in masks contemplate each other; or is one merely a reflection? Their hands are ceramic mutations, they've got fingers for flowers, sorry I meant flowers as fingers. If they touched it would be petal to petal. The masks are florally garnished too but really the blooms seep or sink into plastic transparencies drooping in flat glass-like baroque curlicues and snarls. The mannequins, stand-ins, stage a mirror stage at the beginning of the exhibition.

The other is a possibility. It always means something else. It can be stretched like a gap. It can be a reflection of the self. Gottfried Leibniz imagines the soul as a *monad*, a self-contained unity, in which the outer world is the result only of an inner conception. Think of a house without doors and windows. Gilles Deleuze reflects on Leibniz' thoughts, elaborating them from the baroque to postmodern time. Deleuze thinks of the soul as a fold in which parts of the world are folded-in, that creates this interiority (a very abstract representation). Masks are folds themselves. Behind the mask expressions (of feelings) become hidden, need to be unfolded before perceived. The theatrical pair, draped too in large black blouses with ruffled collars, are framed on both walls by sets of long horizontal slats. The thin paintings depict, if it is appropriate to say, folds of curtains, or maybe hazy sound waves, or possibly a portal as if seen through a long peephole in a club door. These two sets (these four, these two) also look like the strange space-time place Matthew McConaughey falls into at the climax of Christopher Nolan's *Interstellar*. McConaughey, called Coop (co-op), falls into what is referred to as the tesseract. The tesseract is visualised as an endlessly forking hall with walls made of the backsides of bookshelves. In the movie the word describes a three dimensional construct of a four dimensional understanding of space time. It is a construction of time made out of light and space. It allows the physical navigation of time. This could also serve as a definition for painting. The paintings, like the infinite bookshelf, are partial portals - another world can be glimpsed but not accessed (yet). Think dimensionally either way.

In the following two rooms, there are two photos and two more paintings. Here the echoing aspect of the show becomes clear. The photo works underline a specificity of time limits. *Inversions - Apocalyptic Still life*, 2020 is a set of noisy photographic fields with a background like the landscape of a microchip. *Inversions - 9 seconds, 12 seconds, 4.3 seconds*, 2020 is a quartet of closeups of globules or maybe grapes. According to the theory of relativity, space and time are a consistent four-dimensional entity. Space-time folds are areas in which space-time has become unstable or discontinuous. You can say space-time folds together in certain or specific places. You could (fancifully) imagine this folding of space-time in relation to different media. Film is the succession of frames. Painting is an overlay of time in one frame. Part of painting's special relationship to time is its ability to store a great amount of it in one physical instance. Pointillism, historically, draws into contrast photography's insistence on one exact moment with painting's multiplicity of times, its accumulation of attention. The paintings in the show are an escalation of time accelerating in lines and points, pointillism even. Two to four again, *Frieze - Untitled*, 2021 the largest work in the show and most significant, seems to stretch itself across time. A fine galaxy of nineteenth century French greens and blues is distracted or abstracted

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roughly into a dense grid of pale blue checkers which appears painted but is actually a very low relief. Space is flattened into a shadow.

The text that accompanies the show opens first with a quote from Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Wanderer and His Shadow*. The wanderer hears his shadow speak but does not believe it, his shadow reassures himself not to worry. The text that follows oscillates frenetically between inventory and observation. The echo speaks like a phantom coming before the utterance and confusing us if I am speaking. Elsewhere Nietzsche writes: "A spoken conversation transformed into writing and read out loud is like a painting with all the wrong perspectives: Everything is too long or too short." Everything in the show is foreshortened or elongated and all the portals are unavailable. There are no mirrors, but every object replicates itself in double. The genre the show most closely imitates is auto fiction, a method of situating oneself among references, theories, and current events that produces a fictional subject, a reflection. The gravity of this local relativity is the author. He bends spacetime with his attention. Here we are stuck physically in the fold of the book. Turning the endless pages of some past, stuck in the future, endless notations fold like doors into a labyrinth of continuities in a lifelong novel, that like life and unlike literature or film, never resolves.

Make me a *monad* – multiplicity in a unit.

by Graham and Leonie

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