

Culture / Diary (19th March 2013 - 24 Mar 2013)

FRAGMENTS OF TIME



Fragments of Time (Solo Show by Junko O'Neill)

In Japan they have a concept called 'Ma', a word which roughly translated means 'gap' or 'space' but which in reality expresses a way of viewing the world. It is a philosophy: an aesthetic sense of detachment that sees time and space as interdependent forms. For the Japanese blank space is the eternity through which time – and the various transient things it carries – flows. Unlike the West, which considers space as negative, they see it as the interval which defines the whole: "that little bit between each note – silences which give the form," said Issac Stern.

We have no word for this; they have an entire genre, from which one particularly notable artist is coming to GV Art next month: Junko O'Neill. Born in Tokyo and trained in art at Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton, O' Neill's exhibition 'Dissolved' has already been shortlisted for the Celeste Prize in 2011, and can be seen at Debut Contemporary in Notting Hill. She is a child of Ma: a consummate artist whose abstract work eliminates all the unnecessary elements in order to express the idea and whose figurative work explores the concept by using a figure in rear view as a vehicle to draw the viewer in and sense the transience.

Suddenly we feel as the person in the painting would feel: mortal, and at the mercy of time and space. "I don't consider my figurative painting that of a figure," says O'Neill. "My primary interest is the space itself" – something no visitor of Fragments of Time will deny. As the great graphic artist Alan Fletcher once said, "Space is substance. Cézanne painted and modelled space. Giacometti sculpted by "taking the fat off space"... [that] in the West we have neither word nor term [is a] serious omission." From 14 March, Fragments of Time will go some way toward filling that hole.

Fragments of Time
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