

THE SENTENCE THAT IDLES

“To see what’s here, finally to look and to know you’re looking, to feel time passing, to be alive, to what is happening in the smallest registers of motion.”*

A camera advances into a dark field, a time-lapse sunrise morphing from auburn to aqua on the horizon. Cicadas, chimes.

In a forest quiet but for leaves in the breeze a tree is toppled from base of trunk; it teeters at sixty, fifty, forty-five degrees as gravity works an inevitable pull. Onto a bed of bracken, a dead crunch.

On a paper tablecloth in an emptied restaurant lies a cream page with grey rules, no text. A slight body studies horizontal lines, without a word to write.

Through white mist two figures in felt coats ride the back of a truck – keen jaws and the clunk of wheels. The track’s surrounding detritus is sealed in frost; an unthawed landscape cast monochrome.

With broad stroke and bobbing head, you follow the black lanes, length after length. Above, the large clock hand seems stuck, stopped; lapping, time does not progress.

Emitting vapours of red wine, bay and blood, the pot rests on the stove for hours. Occasionally, a vermilion bubble erupts.

A lady’s coiffed head turns to look over her shoulder; her movement slowed into several separate gestures. Her eventual about-turn becomes a stunted pirouette. Someone, invisible, is there.

A gradual letting go – neck thrown back at the end of a wave from hips to crown, a creeping flush across neck and chest: release.

The favoured perspective of sodium shifts in the bathtub; froth islands connecting, dispersing, eclipsing pink toes.

At the wooden bar since early evening, midday, or earlier – the clouds, whatever the time, a low grey - she traces the concentric grain with a long finger, then lifts bitter liquor to lips.

In a softly lit room, thirty ankles circle in the air, legs elevated, backs reclined. These unbuckled feet do not walk anywhere.

A camera advances into a wide field as the sky, which fills more than two-thirds of the frame, moves from indigo to midnight. A single star is multiplied, as more appear with adjusted eyes.

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* Don DeLillo, *Point Omega*. New York: Scribner, 2010

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Together with more than 250 international art venues, the South London Gallery celebrates the experience of looking at art slowly.

On entering Pae White's installation, each visitor is presented with a series of sentences evoking slow scenes, some of which are smooth, some of which act as stumbling blocks. Some sentences have been prompted by art or film, others are drawn from everyday life.

Some of the sentences will also be posted on Twitter throughout the day. Follow @SLG_artupdates #SlowArtDay2013 to read these.

SLG

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