

SCOTT KING

FINISH THE WORK THAT YOU'VE STARTED

2ND JUNE – 8TH JULY

IN 2003, WHEN TIMES WERE HARD, SCOTT KING SENT A PLEA TO HIS FATHER, DAVE. 'DAVE HELP ME' SCOTT PROCLAIMED. UNTIL QUITE RECENTLY, DAVE K SEEMED TO BE FEARLESS; A STEADY INFLUENCE WHOM SCOTT RELIED HEAVILY ON. BUT NOW DAVE'S GETTING OLDER AND HE'S BEGINNING TO APPEAR VULNERABLE AND EVEN NERVOUS: ONCE A RECKLESS DRIVER, DAVE NOW PANICS AT THE SLIGHTEST WRONG TURN, SO SCOTT'S TURNED TO THE GHOST OF MARTIN K FOR SUPPORT INSTEAD. *MARTIN HILF MIR!* (ALL WORKS 2012) IS THE NEW MANTRA. INSCRIBED IN A POWERFULLY PRE-MODERN GOTHIC FONT ON AN ALLEN RUPPERSBERG-ESQUE HIPPIE TIE-DYE FADE OR GROUND, THE INCONGRUOUS ELEMENTS OF SCOTT'S PRINT DELIVER A WISH TO MARTIN TO BEAM DOWN AND INJECT HIM WITH THE ESSENCE OF HIS VISIONARY POWER AND INTUITIVE SENSIBILITY. 'BEAM IN ON ME BABY, AND WE'LL BEAM TOGETHER, I KNOW WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN TOGETHER', SCOTT APPEARS TO SHOUT UP AT THE DEAD GERMAN ARTIST, WITH A GRUFF VAN VLIET-LIKE OR BRILLEAUX-INSPIRED BLUES-INFLECTED PRAYER. IT'S TRUE THAT SCOTT EMPATHISES WITH MARTIN K'S ALCOHOL-FUELLED CONFIDENCE AND HOW NEGLECTED HE'D BEEN BY THE INTERNATIONAL ART WORLD WHEN HE WAS ALIVE.

NEVERTHELESS, DAVE K'S FADED POWER IS STILL EVIDENT IN OTHER NEW WORKS. *A HISTORY OF MUSIC (POWER STATION DAD)* IS ALL THE PROOF WE NEED. REFERENCING SCOTT'S FIRST FORAYS INTO BUYING RECORDS, NAMELY AT GOOLE'S WOOLWORTHS, AS WELL AS THE FACT THAT DAVE LIKED THE ROLLING STONES' FIRST THREE L.P.'S – THE PERIOD BEFORE 'THE BAND WENT WEIRD' ACCORDING TO DAVE – THIS TRIPTYCH OF ORIGINAL RECORDS FROM THE FAMILY COLLECTION, TIES DESIGN, CULTURAL HISTORY AND SCOTT'S PERSONAL RECOLLECTION OF HIS DAD DANCING IN THE KITCHEN AS A YOUNG MAN, TO CREATE A FORM OF POPULAR EMOTIONAL CONCEPTUALISM. *A HISTORY OF MUSIC (AFTER KEN'S ACCIDENT)* AND *A HISTORY OF MUSIC (TRUE FAITH)* TAKE THIS THEME FURTHER. THE FIRST WORK PAIRS DOWN A TRAUMATIC RELATIONSHIP TO ITS ESSENCE: A PRALINE DENSITY OF LOSS AND BETRAYAL THROUGH THE POIGNANT AND DISTURBING POWER OF BARRY MANILOW'S *GREATEST HITS*. THE SECOND EXPANDS OUR PROPENSITY TO PERSONALISE MUSIC AND CULTURE WITH DISTRESSING MEMORIES OF OUR PAST, INTO A LONGER RUMINATION ON THE DESIGNER PETER SAVILLE, AND ONE OF SCOTT'S HEROES, THE MOTORCYCLIST MARCO SIMONCELLI. IN THIS WORK WE SEE A DANCE OF DEATH (SIMONCELLI LOST HIS LIFE IN A RACING ACCIDENT IN 2011), FAILURE, AMBITION AND REDEMPTION, AGAIN KNITTED INTO A HIGHLY EMOTIVE NARRATIVE. WITH AMBITION REMAINING THE THEME, *IDEOLOGY AND THE MASS MEDIA (I WAS SEDUCED, NOT ABUSED)* PUSHES THE ALL-PERVADING WOOLMARK EMBLEM THROUGH A SIMILARLY NAKED PRAGMATISM. PRODUCED IN 1964, THIS LOGO'S AUTHOR IS HOTLY DEBATED; SOME EXPERTS THINK THAT IT MAY HAVE BEEN MADE BY THE ITALIAN GRAPHIC ARTIST FRANCO GRIGNANI USING THE PSEUDONYM FRANCESCO SAROGLIA. SCOTT'S WORK IS A HOMAGE TO THIS MYSTERY, THE OVERLOOKED BEAUTY OF A DESIGN CLASSIC AS WELL AS AN ODE TO STUDYING GRAPHICS AT REGIONAL ART SCHOOLS IN THE LATE 1980S AND EARLY 1990S: THE PRETENCE OF GAINING A PROFESSION, COMBINED WITH A DESIRE FOR THE NO-DESIGN OF CONCEPTUAL ART.

IF ANYTHING, SCOTT'S WORKS ARE ALL DISCOMFITED AND GAUCHE COMPOSITES, BASTARD AGGREGATIONS BETWEEN TWO DISJUNCTIVE ELEMENTS THAT SOMEHOW MAKE SENSE. EACH OPENS UP A FREE SPACE OF INTERPRETATION IN THE SAME VEIN AS MARTIN K'S RUNNING JOKES, SUCH AS *MODEL INTERCONTI* (1987) – A COFFEE TABLE MADE FROM A GERHARD RICHTER MONOCHROME – AND *DISCO BOMB* (1989), A MIRROR-BALL WITH A WIG AS A PORTRAIT. WE CAN SEE THIS CLEARLY IN SCOTT'S RECENT MAQUETTES FOR PERMANENT PUBLIC ARTWORKS OR BUILDINGS. TAKE *THE ARTIST SHOULD NEVER CONTEMPLATE MAKING A WORK OF ART THAT IS ABOUT SOMETHING; A SUCCESSFUL WORK OF ART CAN ONLY EVER BE ABOUT NOTHING. THE ARTIST'S COMPLETE NEGATION OF INTENT THUS CREATING A REFLECTIVE SURFACE INTO WHICH THE CRITIC, CURATOR OR COLLECTOR CAN GAZE AND SEE ONLY HIMSELF – SOL LEWITT, PARAGRAPHS ON CONCEPTUAL ART, 1967*, FOR EXAMPLE. IN ESSENCE, THE WORK'S A BUST OF VLADIMIR LENIN WITH A MIRRORED CUBE FOR THE RUSSIAN MARXIST REVOLUTIONARY'S HEAD. AS A FIGURATIVE MONUMENT AND A HIGH MODERNIST SCULPTURE, THE WORK, WITH ITS LENGTHY TITLE – A FABRICATED QUOTE THAT POINTS TOWARDS BOTH RIDICULE OF AND ADORATION FOR THE CONCEPTUAL ARTIST SOL LEWITT – COUPLES FORMAL CONCEPTUALISM WITH THE MACHINE OF THE ART WORLD AND ADVERTISING, TO PRESENT THE

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TRANSFORMATIVE POSSIBILITY OF PUBLIC ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN LATE CAPITALISM AS A FALLACY. ALL IS MYSTICAL NARCISSISM, POLITICALLY LOADED AND MEDIA-LED. EVERYTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE, INCOMPATIBLE AND FIRMLY BASED ON IMAGE.

A SECOND HIGHLY SUGGESTIVE TONGUE-TIED COMPOSITE IS *LONG LIVE DEATH*, IN WHICH ANTONY GORMLEY'S *ANGEL OF THE NORTH* IS GRAFTED ONTO NELSON'S COLUMN TO PLAY PROVOCATIVELY WITH BRIAN SEWELL'S OPINION THAT THE GATESHEAD SCULPTURE IS A FASCIST MONUMENT. THIS RIFF ON REGIONAL REGENERATION AND PATRONISING GIGANTISM BRINGS A SYMBOL OF TOP DOWN DECISION-MAKING AND BOGUS LOCAL PRIDE TO THE POPULACE OF CENTRAL LONDON, AND INVADES A PLACE INHABITED BY THOSE SAME PEOPLE WHO INITIALLY DESTROYED REGIONAL TOWNS, AND ARE NOW TRYING TO REBUILD THEM WITH CULTURALLY IMPOTENT SCULPTURE A LA GORMLEY AND KAPOOR. IN TURN, A NEW SERIES *A BALLOON FOR BRITAIN* MOVES ON FROM AN EARLIER PROJECT ENTITLED *A BETTER BRITAIN*, WHICH PREVIOUSLY INVOLVED STUPENDOUSLY IDIOTIC IDEAS TO IMPROVE THE UK AFTER IMAGINING TAKING CONTROL OF THE COUNTRY'S INTERNAL BUDGET. THIS INCLUDED A SCHEME TO BUILD A MOTORWAY WITH NO BENDS OR ROUNDABOUTS CALLED 'MOTORHEAD 76', WHICH WOULD FOLLOW THE ROUTE OF AN EARLY MOTORHEAD TOUR (EVERYTHING IN THE WAY OF M76 WOULD BE BULLDOZED) AND A TWO-HUNDRED FOOT TALL STATUE OF BRIAN MAY ON TOP OF BUCKINGHAM PALACE TO COMMEMORATE THE GUITARISTS SEMINAL 2002 'PARTY AT THE PALACE' GIG. (ONE REJECTED PROPOSAL WAS 'WESTWORLD' IN GLOUCESTER; AN ANTI-MURDER AND ANTI-RAPE EDUCATIONAL ATTRACTION BASED ON THE SERIAL KILLER FRED WEST'S LIFE). IN HIS NEW WORK, SCOTT DWELLS FURTHER ON THE POLITICS OF REGENERATION, ARCHITECTURE AND CONTEMPORARY ART BY ILLUSTRATING AN IDEA TO IMPROVE EACH OF BRITAIN'S TEN POOREST TOWNS, INCLUDING CAERPHILLY, DUNDEE, HULL, KNOWSLEY, MIDDLESBOROUGH, NOTTINGHAM AND SUNDERLAND. IN EVERY IMAGE A HUGE COLOURED BALLOON HANGS OVER A ROUGH, PIXELATED XEROX-STYLE LANDSCAPE. EACH MUNICIPALITY IS REDUCED TO A TRACE OF ITS ALREADY DEPRIVED SELF – HULL BECOMES BANAL SATELLITE NOTHINGNESS, SUNDERLAND A SITUATIONIST-STYLE 'BOREDOM' OR 'NOWHERE' DESTINATION – WHILE EVERY BALLOON HOLDS THE STARK COLOUR TREATMENT REDOLENT OF CORPORATE ADVERTISING. IN THESE WORKS, PUBLIC ART BECOMES SYNTHETIC AND HOLLOW, THE DAFT OPTIMISM OR PLASTIC REDEMPTION OF EACH SCULPTURE A DELIBERATE NO-DESIGN REPRESENTATION OF ATTEMPTED THEME-PARK GENTRIFICATION.

IN *THE SAME THING TWICE*, SCOTT TAKES THE ROUGHLY HEWN TEXT 'JOSEPH KOSUTH RUINED MY LIFE' TO REFER BACK TO COOL CONCEPTUAL ART, AS HE HAS DONE WITH HIS BALLOONS THAT PROVIDE A NOD TOWARDS THE ART OF JOHN BALDESSARI, OR LENIN'S MIRROR CUBE HEAD, WHICH POINTS TOWARDS THE WORK OF ROBERT MORRIS. SCOTT'S AWARE THAT THIS IS ALL VERY 'MAN-HEAVY' – ITALIAN DESIGNERS, MALE CON ARTISTS – BUT THAT'S OKAY. AS WE KNOW, DAVE K'S NOT AVAILABLE, SO SCOTT'S LOOKING ELSEWHERE FOR HEROES, TRYING TO MATCH CONCEPTUAL ART OBJECTIVELY WITH HIS OWN SUBJECTIVITY AND EMOTIONAL HISTORY. IN A SIMILAR WAY THAT THE THREE AMERICAN ARTISTS MENTIONED ABOVE HAVE INFLUENCED HIM, SCOTT LIKES THE PARALLEL EFFECT THE US HAS HAD ON BRITISH MUSICAL ACTS LIKE DR FEELGOOD (US BLUES), JOY DIVISION (THE DOORS) AND DEXYS MIDNIGHT RUNNERS (AMERICAN SOUL), AS WELL AS THE ART OF THE AFOREMENTIONED PETER SAVILLE, WHOSE DESIGNS FOR JOY DIVISION CONTAINED A MYSTERIOUS ELEMENT BEFORE INFORMATION OPENED UP VIA THE INTERNET IN THE 1990s.

NOW EVERYONE'S GOT A JOY DIVISION T-SHIRT, AND TIMES HAVE CHANGED. WE'RE IN A PERIOD OF EXTREME POLITICS AND EXTREME FASHION: EACH ELIMINATES THE OTHER. TO ACKNOWLEDGE THIS, WE'RE GIVEN *MARXIST DISCO CANCELLED*, A CHUNK OF IDEALIST GRIEF, A FASHIONABLE LEFTIST EVENT GONE WRONG, A PIECE OF INFINITELY RECUPERATED POLITICS. THIS FICTIONAL STYLISED GHOST OF A LETTERPRESS POSTER IMAGINES THE MISERY OF 1978 AT SHEFFIELD UNIVERSITY AND THE BRUTALIST BUILDING IN WHICH THE PARTY MIGHT HAVE TAKEN PLACE. POSTERS, OF COURSE, ALWAYS ADVERTISE A FUTURE EVENT. IN MUCH THE SAME WAY AS THE 'UTOPIAN GLIMPSE' THAT THE MARXIST THEORIST THEODOR ADORNO SPOKE OF, WHICH PROPOSED THAT SUCCESSFUL MODERN ARTWORKS PROVIDE A WINDOW ONTO A TRANSFORMED SOCIAL AND POLITICAL REALITY – A REALITY THAT ISN'T POSSIBLE IN THE IRREDEEMABLE PRESENT – *MARXIST DISCO CANCELLED*'S STRIPPED DOWN GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION GOES BEYOND ADORNO'S PREMISE BY COLLIDING FASHION AND POLITICS IN 2012 TO ADVERTISE AN EVENT THAT WAS MEANT TO HAPPEN NEARLY THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, BUT WHICH PROVED SO UNPOPULAR IT WAS CANCELLED IN ADVANCE. IN FACT, THE DISCO COULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED BECAUSE THE STORY IS FICTIONAL. THIS WORK ENCAPSULATES SCOTT'S WHOLE PREMISE; HIS DOUBLE NEGATIVE, SELF-DEFEATING WORKS EMIT A MELANCHOLY THAT IS BOTH PROFOUND AND INCREDIBLE. YET STRANGELY, WE'RE LEFT WITH A SENSE OF HOPE, THAT SOMEHOW WE'RE BEING TOLD THE TRUTH ABOUT OUR WORLD.

ANDREW HUNT