



The Cunning of Unreason Digital montage / SG print

Dominic Rouse

“To take a piece of paper coated with a silver gelatin and then allow light and chemicals to caress it in such a way that they leave behind an imprint of one’s soul is an exquisite joy that no amount of criticism can diminish. I do not have ambition as such, every completed piece is an ambition achieved.”

Life can be likened to a movie shown only once to a captive audience of one - a darkened room in which the level of illumination is a decision for the solitary occupant. To see the light we must first acknowledge that we are in the dark.

Were it not for the pain to be found in the wider world I might not have sought sanctuary in the confinement of my own where I discovered an endless supply of the raw materials needed to make the images I do. These photographs are the companions of my thoughts and my thoughts the products of the endless conversation with self. I do not choose to make them, they choose me to get made

and they ooze out of me like puss from a running sore descending on the world as assailants rather than benign visitors.

Art is the exploration of the human mind by the human mind, the servant of self and one can do oneself no greater service. It is not made by men and women who claim wisdom for themselves but by those in search of it and to search at all is wisdom enough. The imagination is the instrument of self-knowledge and silence is its amniotic fluid. Knowledge of oneself is the most that we can know and I claim the ascendancy of my own lies and madness over the maddening half-truths of others as the only



Above: Ladies-In-Waiting Digital montage / SG print

At Right: Under Construction Digital montage / SG print

person I am attempting to take advantage of is myself.

It is impossible in any given age not to be contemporary unless one has a time machine. I am not interested in recording what happened yesterday or today but what could happen at any time but never will. I delight in the unseen and the obscene as an appreciation of the obscene leads to a greater understanding of beauty and the exploration of the hidden self leads to a greater understanding of others.

Art has often been defined as the search for Truth and Beauty and many an artist sets out to reveal the truth but quickly discovers that there is no such thing. He is left to give his honest impression of the lies which is the closest Man has to any kind of truth. The artist who is solely interested in recording veracity will soon find himself unemployed. Perhaps my images have a potential for credibility as they are inaccurate representations of reality serving as expositions of the fallacies we have come to call "the truth". Likewise, beauty can also be measured in degrees of deceit, the greater the beauty the greater the deceit and whilst language limits our capacity to understand this, art does not.

The recent union of the photographic discipline with the painter's freedoms of expression now solemnized in the digital realm has the potential for great things. One might argue that because of the prevalence of the camera and its overuse - because every day throughout the world millions of images are made by millions of people - the ability to produce a memorable image using a camera is a far greater achievement than to do so using paints, brushes and a canvas where competitors are fewer. However, I do sometimes wish that I could paint badly as there appears to be money in it and that both Hitler and Churchill could paint a little gives some indication of the dangers of weekend artists.

Craft, it is said, is the visible edge of art and should you find yourself in the presence of work in which it is difficult to discern any craft then you will probably find that it is equally hard to discover its art. The overwhelming desire of the technological age for immediate gratification has led many artists to eschew the disciplines of hard-earned craft skills. This indiscipline in the arts has allowed the sciences and their attendant "facts" to gain the intellectual ascendancy which formerly belonged to men and



Tea Dance Digital montage / SG print

Hang'er Digital montage / SG print



women of imagination. Science offers knowledge without understanding whilst Art offers, to those who seek it, a wisdom that extends far beyond the limits of mere empirical fact.

The power of art resides in that unclear reactor which is at the core of us all and whatever he may tell you to the contrary an artist is ultimately a spectator of self because there is no subject more revealing.

Perhaps God bestows the gift of art upon those who cannot reach Him using the more conventional paths as making art is the closest one can get to Paradise without actually having to be good. The only way to make art is to ignore the possibility of profit and those who attempt to make it with an eye to financial gain rarely achieve the compromise. I would rather live in a one room hovel on the outskirts of Paradise than a luxury apartment in downtown Hell.

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