The Curious Matter of Time and Space: a Conversation Between Michael Warren and Noel J. Brady

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“I have discovered an extraordinary revelation in doing what I am doing. It is connected with creative attention. As you empathise with a block of timber or a piece of stone – matter in all its density and intractability – there is a precise moment of heightened awareness so directed when a contrary sense of lightness and uplift is experienced. It comes as a shock. It is never expected. This is very mysterious”. [4]

Michael is less circumstantial than many artists about the way in which people engage with the work. “During the inaugural show in Visual, Carlow, I gave special dispensation to anyone wishing to touch and smell the large timber baulk of my “Fallen Caryatid”. Interaction with the material is a good thing.” [5] With Unbroken Line, a choreographer is arranging a contemporary dance piece to engage directly with the installation’s five scattered elements. While these unit-forms in painted steel will not exhibit the same “unerasability” as his beloved timber pieces, their assembly and layout in the context of the exhibition illustrate the need to establish a sense of place, being in a place, and engagement with the world, hallmark preoccupations and key to unlocking the cloaked sense of this and other works.

“Interplay between the controlled and the accidental that enlivens the work.”

“‘It should not be hard for you to stop sometimes and look into the stains of walls, or ashes of a fire, or clouds, or mud or like places, in which, if you consider them well, you may find really marvellous ideas.’ Leonardo da Vinci” [6]

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Michael is concerned that “one of the most unspoken aspects of contemporary culture is that our attention is being scattered over ever-greater areas largely because of modern technology, keeping us further and further from the here-and-now, diminishing our capacity to feel intractability – there is a precise moment of heightened awareness so directed when a contrary sense of lightness and uplift is experienced. It comes as a shock. It is never expected. This is very mysterious”. [6]

The contextual nature of his work echoes Greek thought about landscape. Like the Tholos at Delphi his works a datum against which the natural world is seen, compared, and brought into new relationship. In adding an observation...
about Louis Barragan’s use of delineated space, he confirmed the depth of his knowledge and understanding of architectural space. His philosophical background does however demand high degrees of clarity and precision in such discussion especially where concepts of space and place are the concern.

**Gravity**

At the heart of matter is a concern for the centre. It is this centre that generates the Boccioni and Malevich-like constructions of early years. It is the interpenetration of two or more parts explicitly, as in “Lieu de Rencontre”, or implicitly in “Sei Personaggi” and “Caryatids”, that requires a centre to hold the composition. Gravity is the central theme of this desired expression. Gravity is made known to us through weight, pressure and mass. “Sei Personaggi” and “Caryatids” exhibit these attributes in probably the most direct and uncompromising manner to-date. Within these masses, like the Ronadini Pietra by Michelangelo that he frequently visited when in Milan, is a form trying to escape the confines of the mass, trying to escape the bounds of the earth. Michael’s dream is to find a sculptural algorithm that would establish the specific gravity of a place, drawing on his knowledge and understanding of architectural space, he confirmed the depth of his knowledge and understanding of architectural space. His philosophical background does however demand high degrees of clarity and precision in such discussion especially where concepts of space and place are the concern.

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**Notes**

[1] Peter Murray, referencing Rainer Maria Rilke Light Gravity and Distance, Crawford Municipal Art Gallery, Cork 2002.
[6] A singularity is the theoretical point at the centre of a Black Hole where all matter, time and space are compressed into an indescribable mass of infinitesimal density.
[7] A symbolon is an ancient Greek tradition where an object is broken between friends which, when reunited, demonstrated their love, their friendship.