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DEEP DIVE #2

Your Laptop Would Make a Firm Cushion, Your Phone a Great Coaster

by Josh Wilson

In a magazine interview with the artist Simon Dybbroe Møeller, he responds to a question by stating that he often thinks about all the the urine and excrement deliquesced from the toilets in the world; the gallons and gallons of wee and poo beneath the asphalt, silently snaking beneath our busy feet. He likes to think about this because it's what actually happens, he says. It's the unseen product of our organs, our shame.

But I'm too tired to think about that, I'm often too tired to think about stuff like that at the best of times. I step away from the toilet and wash my hands. I look in the mirror, at the bags under my eyes - they surely weren't that dark last week - they're getting darker every evening that passes. Before I turn the bathroom light off I feel a familiar spectre pressing against me, they turn and breathe an unending condensation against the mirror, before the trace disappears. I make some cheese on toast. I sit on the couch and eat it. I pick up a pen and draw a naive rendering of a poo with the artist Simon Dybbroe Moeller's face on it. I brush my teeth. I go to bed.

The next day I couldn't stop thinking about the prior evenings experience, and later something John Berger said: 'It seems to me, and it has always seemed to me, that the dead, are present. We live with the dead. This is something that, in our instant

culture and in a large part of the world, is ignored - dismissed totally. But living with the dead is the first thing that distinguishes man as a species. It is perhaps what makes man human'.

But John Berger was no mystic. He understood that to be alive was to necessarily use one's memory, to partake in relationships and create acts of consummation; yet he was aware that when we died, we live on through the memories of others, and thus the dead are inextricably within the perceptions of their successors. Perhaps today, representations render such spectres even more explicit, and the visited have no need to activate the memory of the visitor, but simply ingest a virtual presence. It is of course difficult to understand what has been lost, what has been gained, but the case still stands: the dead *are* with us.

If this is so then history is not only present but inescapable, and more than ever. And if all of what has gone before is present then we have not a linearity of time, but that previous 'order' of chronology has in fact been annulled. Is it the notion of timelessness that John is alluding to here? John - who speaks to me directly - who reads a poem with the kind of cadences and intonations that could only be accumulated over a lifetime of thought - who looks me in the eye - who speaks lucidly - from beyond the grave.

But it turns out John was wrong I think, none of this is true. Time is not homogenous. Time is slow to those who can afford to stretch it. Time is fast to those who cannot buy it. And in terms of space also: the world is very small to some people and it is very large to others. It is very small to the person who has everything. It is very large to those who have nothing. Those who have everything are silent, slippery, visible, moving, they view others as opportunities. Those who have nothing are loud, erratic, static, stuck, they view others as fellow alienated consolers. The person who has everything tastes the world as sugar. The person who has nothing hears the world as a whisper, is already a ghost to the many. Whilst thinking and muttering this distracted conjecture, I turn back to look at John who wears the knowing smile of a mentor; he whispers something I find to be unintelligible.

I shut down my laptop. I look at my hands. Once again I go back to the bathroom to look in the mirror, at the bags under my eyes - yes, they surely weren't that dark last week - but, yes, I do think they're getting darker every evening that passes. Before I turn the bathroom light off I feel the spectre again, pressing hard against me, he or she turns and breathes against the mirror, the water vapour vanishes, an image appears.

Josh Wilson (b. 1991, Wirral) is an artist currently based on the Wirral who writes and assembles videos, performances and installations; and is often commissioned to write on photographs, films and exhibitions. His aim is to render the boundary between theoretical analysis and artistic expression so that they may be increasingly indistinct. He has had essays published on the photographer Dan Holdsworth, filmmaker Sini Pelkki and artist-curator duo Sam Watson and Eleanor Wright. He reviews regularly for This Is Tomorrow and Corridor8, and instigates projects such as film screenings, performances, artist talks, sound walks, and reading tours with the collective 'Musée Imaginaire'. He is currently undertaking an interview project with artists and writers including Nadia Hebson, Nicola Dale and Peter Manson with a view to online and printed publication.

The institutions he has undertaken projects with include Jerwood Space (London), Drop City (Newcastle), Resonance FM (London), Tate Britain (London), SENTINAL (Birmingham), A3 project Space (Birmingham), The Northern Charter (Newcastle) and Fall Out Factory (Liverpool).

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Deep Dive is a piece of writing released in response to each IKO exhibition. It acts as a platform for early career writers encouraging creative and unconventional approaches to art writing. Unlike the general press release, Deep Dive is a chance to ruminate on something specific and aims to continue conversations and thoughts catalyzed by the exhibition.