THE NIGHT IS DOUBTFUL



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25 July – 22 August 2020



The Artisan or Craftsman was for hundreds of years a country's industry, the collection of skills that transformed raw materials into objects. Most things were produced by artisans – pottery, weaving, embroideries, furniture and leather goods. Nowadays the manual production has been marginalised by mechanical means of production. Before, objects produced were often connected to the philosophy and culture of a country. The people who made the objects had a sense of graciousness and duty to produce an honourable product.

Western culture has separated the notion of art from artisan which has not been good for the world. Manual labour should be aligned with intellectual thought. All handmade objects have an innate spirit and thought that goes into them. The role of the artisan still exists in poor countries mainly for economic reasons.

The ceramics industry, in years gone past, was very intellectual and secretive about the scientific formulas for clay and colours. Meissen, in the 18th century, employed predominantly deaf and mute workers and

also limited their access outside the factory so as to guard their secret processes. The colours one obtains in ceramics have a forcefulness that is unmatched by what you can get with paint. Clay is a wonderful material to work with. The earth is a living material and it allows us to make it into whatever shape we decide. Then the shape is put through firings where transformations take place which I still get amazed by. The Jomon culture of Japan is thought to have been the earliest to have been making pottery some 12,000 years ago. It would be interesting to know the first person who had the idea to model, shape and dry clay then bake it in a fire to transform it into ceramics.

I have long had a quiet philosophical approach to life and making simple tiles, jugs, bowls and tables does give meaning to my life.

— Noel McKenna



Small Table with Horses (2), 2019 wood, glass, ceramic & acrylic paint 16 x 31.2 x 30.2 cm





Greyhound Table, 2018 wood, glass, ceramic & enamel paint $36.5 \times 51.2 \times 23.4$ cm





Cat Table, Night, 2020 wood, glass, ceramic & acrylic paint 62.2 x 42.5 x 35.1 cm





Tiger Woods Table, 2020 wood, glass, ceramic & enamel paint 63.4 x 38.6 x 24.6 cm





Shades of Green Table, 2020 wood, glass, ceramic & acrylic paint $48.1 \times 45.9 \times 32.7$ cm





Chair and Table with Coloured Legs, 2020 ceramic
10.8 x 12 x 7.2 cm (COMBINED)



2 Red and White Jugs, 2020 ceramic 7.5 and 4.7 cm (H)



Chair, Table, Mouse, 2020 ceramic 7 x 20 x 6.5 cm (COMBINED)



Waiting to Cross, 2020 ceramic tile 14.4 x 14.7 cm

91 yr. old golfer moving in to address golf ball, 2020 oil on plywood 42 x 44 cm

From an early age I got on with old people. When I was 7 or 8 I used to visit an elderly lady in my street who had budgerigars and she used to let me feed them. We had a connection and I used to stay a while talking to her.

I am now close to the age she was then and a short while ago while walking the dogs beside our local golf course I saw through the fence an old, old man playing a round. Quite bent over, it was a great thing to see and the very next day in the Sydney Morning Herald there was a story on him — 91 years old I think.



3 Black Swans, 2020 oil on plywood 31.7 x 54 cm

The Black Swan is a native to Australia. Until Dutch navigator Willem de Vlamingh saw them in Western Australia in 1697, all swans were thought to have been white. Gentle birds who mate for life, both adults share raising of their young. In Australia they are a protected species but in recent years in Tasmania have been subject to major culling.



The dog, more than likely was the first animal to be domesticated. Loyal until their death to whoever they bond with; responsive to kindness which brings out the best in them. The Egyptians revered certain breeds and believed they guided them to their final destination after death. Dogs and cats as well as other animals had their own burial grounds in Egypt, a lot were buried in specially made coffins. A soulful animal with the ability to connect and read the moods of their keepers.

Cats seem to be the domestic animals that have many detractors as well has devotees depending on possibly personal exposure to them. Often seen as a nocturnal roaming animal up to no good, looking for a fresh kill, even stealing the souls of the dead. An animal of extreme natural grace and cunning and best left most of the time to their own activities, they will come to you.

Dog Jumping A, 2020 oil on plywood 42 x 44 cm

RIGHT

Dog Jumping B, 2020

acrylic on plywood

42 x 44 cm







2 Cats on Wall, 2020 oil on plywood 36.6 x 44 cm



Anna W, 2019 lithograph 20.6 x 28.3 cm

A Worker digging grave for Harper Lee, February 2016, Monroeville, Alabama, 2020 oil on plywood 42 x 44 cm

I have not read Harper Lee's book 'To Kill a Mockingbird' but have seen 1962 film version directed by Robert Mulligan. I saw it quite recently and it holds up well. Gregory Peck is perfect as Atticus Finch the lawyer character who was based on Lee's father Amasa Coleman Lee. Robert Duvall made his screen debut in the film.

A novel about a black man falsely accused of rape, which ended tragically for the man. I saw this image in the newspaper and it's hard not to think about the book and fast forward to 2016 and a black man doing the digging.



Jumping off Pier, 2020 oil on plywood 36.7 x 44 cm

Even for just a fleeting moment the figure is sort of flying free before dropping into the clear turquoise waters beneath the pier.



Australian Thoroughbred, 2020 oil on plywood 26.6 x 34 cm

The horse racing industry is on the surface one of glamour, money to be made gambling and it is a big industry employing many thousands. Unfortunately not for the horse though, it is ruthless and mercenary because if you are not fast enough you are not always looked after. In Australia there are around 15,000 thoroughbred foals born every year and with that large number it is impossible to find homes for them all. The racing industry has to look at reducing the number foaled every year which means breeders have to seriously reduce the number of matings.



Sydney architect in pyjamas bouncing tennis ball in cinema queue Paddington 1986, 2020 oil on plywood 23 x 26.6 cm

Some things seen seem to stay in one's consciousness forever for different reasons be it being something tragic, humorous or strange or whatever but seem unable to shake. Standing in the queue at a cinema, I was introduced to an architect who was dressed in orange pyjamas bouncing a tennis ball. Slightly feigned behaviour but gave it not much thought at the time but the image resurfaces at times so I did a painting of it.



Tender Buttons, 2020 oil on plywood 27 x 34 cm

Tender Buttons is the title of a book of poems by Gertrude Stein published in 1914. The poems are about the mundane and everyday of life. Much ridiculed when it came out, the title seems to come from either a small mushroom sign that Gertrude saw in a local French Market or a way of describing women's breasts depending on which source. Gertrude said this in 1946 which seems to be even more insightful of present day.



Written by Otis Redding, 2020

acrylic on plywood, handmade frame
62 x 52 cm

RIGHT

Words written by Gerry Goffin, 2020 acrylic on plywood, handmade frame 62 x 52 cm

Respect and A Natural Woman, two songs recorded by Aretha Franklin who was born in Memphis, Tennessee then moved to Detroit with her Pastor Father who was a preacher with the "million -dollar voice" which earned him many thousands of dollars giving sermons around the country. Aretha learned to play the piano by ear at an early age. She fell pregnant at age 12 and had given birth to two sons by the time she was 14. Her mother died when she was 10 and her first sons were raised by her grandmother and sister.

A singer whose voice was able to connect Soul, R&B, Rock and Roll, Blues and African American Spirituals into her unique moving sound that had the ability to make listeners weep.

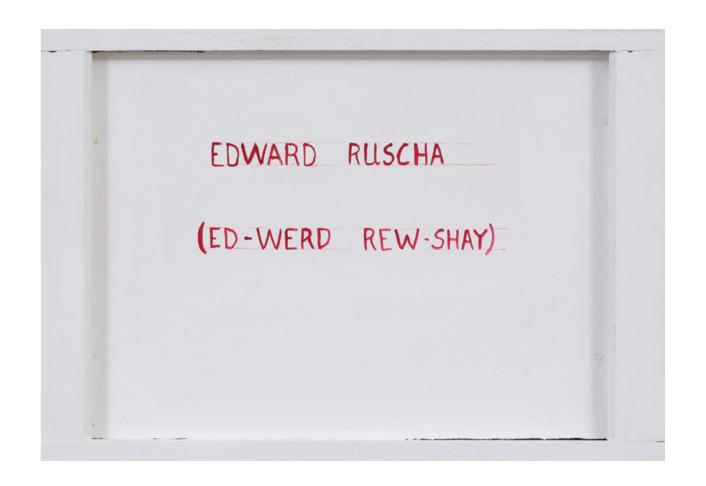
Respect was written and recorded first by Otis Redding, the theme of the song being a man coming home wanting respect from his woman. The lyrics for A Natural Woman were written by Gerry Goffin. Often the history behind not just songs but also paintings, buildings, books as well as other creative pursuits is forgotten for different reasons and it is important to remember what goes into their "manufacture".





Ed-Werd Rew-Shay, 2020 oil on plywood 17.7 x 25.8 cm

When in NY a few years back I noticed in the window of a bookshop Edward Ruscha's business card for sale. The card was pretty much the same layout as my painting but he also had Young Artist in brackets. \$750 was the asking price. His name I have heard pronounced a few different ways over the years, so good to have the preferred way from the man.



Design Belle Blau Design | www.belleblaudesign.com Photography Simon Hewson | @fatografi_insta

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