

For Gino, 2014

Commissioned text for [Too Much](#), Two Queens, Leicester, UK

Is there much left to say. This is how my thinking started, I suppose. I was on a coach looking out of a window at these pastoral fields, really unsure of myself. Both unsure of this text, but also after what had happened the night before, even just an hour before.

I guess I am fairly defensive of online and digital communications. This is mainly because most of my friendships have had to manifest through this, and pretty much all my relationships have come through the internet. I guess for me these have been really valid, maybe I want to describe it as finding your niche.

This man, I have probably spent more time looking at him as a photo, as a 2d representations - and not just selfies but all the associated paraphernalia that is posted - then I have actually spent looking at him physically. My gaze has brushed over his skin many times and he hasn't felt this gaze. This has slightly affected my visual memory I think, I remember people as photographs. I find it easiest when remembering someone to fix them as a photograph and to remember that. To remember them as an image, or a constitute image, stitch together many to create some kind of whole. But this isn't the truth, and I am constantly amazed when I see them in movement. I am amazed by how alive your eyes are in person. But maybe I love the photograph.

So instagram, and this is lazy theory so I apologize, but it allows people to operate as a brand. I would argue that this isn't an attempt to represent oneself, but is instead an attempt to present oneself and keep control of it. I guess this can be subversive, and the only way to continue to exist. The language of branding has become primary and universal, you read it without even thinking, and you can use and control it easily.

(;~_~;)

I just invented that on the spot

I was, and still am, attempting to use instagram to talk about myself to other people as some form of ephemera.

I used it a lot to speak to specific people, a specific person. Although these posts would be public I was hoping that he would see them. I wanted to jolt myself into his mind and to talk about my feelings without having to use language, without having to mention it. So these images weren't constructed, they were very much a part of my life, but they became mediated to represent something more than a casual snapshot. Not objectively, but to me, something more and I hoped to him something more.

When I looked at his photos I tried to see his emotional content.

Work I am interested in acts this way as well. Work that exists in a public place but has private content of being made for or to communicate with someone else. The use of art making as a form of communication with one person, as a useful place holder for emotions or arguments. Using an exhibition as a romantic gesture.

So I scroll and I scroll, and its fleshy, my nerve endings dragging along. I'm used to being flooded with dick pics, its just another image to judge, its not even about size, it's about shape or tonal quality or what is around the dick. Is it a filter or actually 35mm, if its 35mm you get it for sure, no questions asked.

Is it something to do with wanting to objectify an emotion? I don't mean to commodify it, they are all already commodified right, whole industries of shit you need to help you deal with feeling whichever emotion you are feeling. But more about wanting to make it solid, to sharpen it up, give it physical form that can be touched and really seen. See it for what it is.

It's like a meteor rock, it doesn't actually matter what the object is, all the really matters is that this object becomes a focal point for speculative thinking. But I'm not sure we are totally allowed that, I'm not sure the object is important anymore, is it? Maybe it is.

But its the virtuality of the object. I am not dismissing the importance of the physicality of rubbing glass and lube onto your skin, or feeling a stone, or standing in the presence of a lamp. But its the virtuality, the other layers, the objects projection of itself. Thats what we want to make, that virtuality of an emotion. Maybe. Perhaps. I don't want to commit to this.

But if images can be the making physical of this as well.

I guess I was going to write a text talking about parallels between ways german expressionism, and perhaps the whole expressionist movement, used images as a way to communicate feeling, and the way people do that today on the internet. Even taking reaction gifs as a representation of your interior state though an image. How it was to do with the contortion of the figures, of the application of the paint, of the very surface of the painting as much as the content that communicated that. Now its more sophisticated but its still the surface, right?



There becomes like a slight fear of opening that app. I don't want to have to see a photo they have taken, particularly not one that allows me to read them as happy.

When I think of expressing my emotions I think of linguistics, I think of pining over that word that sums up everything. But its obviously not as simple as that, as if you would ever feel one solitary sumable emotion at once. I use music a lot to think out my emotions, I become overzealous with certain lines and lyrics. I like that I can take these really generic statements and embody them, and sit inside them, stretch the over myself and over how I feel. When Beyonce released Beyonce in 2013 I had been through a big break up, and a relationship I was involved in was starting to disintegrate, and I become incredibly involved with that album. I would walk the streets of Birmingham feeling all these emotions that weren't mine at all, they were completely simulated, but I felt them, and it hurt.

If I can apply the same linguistic principles to art practice, I suppose I again become interested in a certain line of the lyrics, rather than an art object. It feels wrong to be talking about linguistics when discussing art, particularly with thoughts of german expressionism looming somewhere in this text, but this attempt to express another more raw emotion is just as mediated through its surface as communicating through language is mediated through words.

Instagram, twitter and tumblr are forms of gameplay. I am playing a game with images, with myself and with my friends. It consists of a series of in-jokes, posturing, and then sentimental moments. This makes it seem disingenuous, which is not the case at all. I suppose I am using these images to try to communicate with the people I love. The taking, selection or editing is supposed to arouse a reaction in someone, or let them know how I am feeling. In one relationship most of our contact was mediated like this, I would post images hoping that he would see these and would react and respond and understand my emotional state and needs. Or I would post something I thought would excite him, that he would laugh at, his acknowledgment of this was key, I wanted to feel his gaze on me, even if through a phone.

It's the gaze that becomes important. Is the gaze now a screen?

