

Phantom

Premise Statement

Jane Boyer ©2015

This isn't a ghost story.

It's a story of latency and the polyphonic narrative that is each of us.

“Directed toward its object, a [self] enters a dialogically agitated and tense environment of alien [selves], evaluations and accents, is woven into their complex interrelationships, merges with some, recoils from others, intersects with yet a third group: and all this may in an essential manner shape the [self], may leave a trace in all its semantic layers, may complicate its expression and influence its entire stylistic profile.”

Mikhail Bakhtin¹

This modification of a modified translation of a quote by Bakhtin says so much about the self, even though the quote is really about words in a polyphonic narrative and not selves. The message is clear on how words (and selves) interact, mingle, transform and are transformed by other groups of words/selves; all in a process which leaves a trace of meanings embedded in layers of further meaning causing disruptions and complications in expression and style. However, beyond the message in the quote, it is itself a transmutation of meaning. It is a written expression of a mental thought, a verbal construct presented in written form, a translation from one language to another - languages of countries, (America and Russia) which have been and are still engaged in political and military tensions. Further, it is a modified quote, stipulated as such by the author of the paper where this quote originates², modified even further by my exchanging the words *word* for *self*. It transforms yet again by being used to illustrate the philosophical thesis of this visual art exhibition, rather than in some literary discourse for which it was intended. I'm making a point with this quote...

These are the kinds of translations we go through as selves, along with the translations of understanding in the communications we engage with daily. We use this multiplicity of meaning to manoeuvre through situations, using the polyphonic narrative, the multiple voices that have influenced and formed us, to convey ourselves. This conveyance is a simulacrum of the self, a transient image of who we are, what has influenced us, and how we make use of it, displayed in an instant of repeated multiplicity. “The simulacrum...is at once removed from and infinitely proximate to its point of origin; as such, it is essentially displaced, elsewhere than itself³...the simulacrum is...the object of a struggle between image and language and the problematic site of their ultimate convergence.”⁴

Polyphonic narrative is the simulacrum; it is the *phantom*.

The artworks in this exhibition exemplify this idea of the *phantom*. They explore latency; making visible what is invisible, while uncovering some of their own polyphony, which has passed through layers of translations. These works have also been put through a further transmutation, revealing latent potential in their meaning. Their titles have been used to form this cento poem...

Phantom

*Views, Versions,
At the Moment of Being Seen, a
Cropped: Remainder, a
Centre Fold*

*(those bombs keep dropping)
How I Learned to Stop Worrying:
Nothing is Forever, Forever is Nothing,
(those bombs keep dropping)*

*69125: multiple codes in simultaneous places,
are, is, was, am.
A Conference...
Ever Drifting Uncertainty, becomes a Fall Line:
Indeterminacy with no other setting than itself.*

¹ Bakhtin, Mixail (Bakhtin, Mikhail) [1934/35] 1981, Discourse in the Novel, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 259–422.

² Shepherd, D., 2013, Dialogism, *the living handbook of narratology*, [online] eds. P. Hühn et al, Hamburg: Hamburg University. Found at: <http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/article/dialogism> [accessed: 18 Oct 2015].

³ Durham, S., 1998, *Phantom Communities*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 17.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 19.