

aura

1ST FLOOR 6 march - 17 march 1996

john meade aura

the story of aura

*'It is hard to imagine the racket of the vast white sheet caught in the squall ... the huge phantom raging in the night as though dementia itself had hoisted its colours in the lugubrious chateau ... when all at once the wind seemed to tatter the clouds, and the moon, with a revealing clarity, poured sudden light on something so bizarre and so excruciating that an abrupt, violent sob choked up in Simone's throat...'*

Georges Bataille 'Story of the Eye' (1928)

aura is the story of an object.

The object resembles any number of forms. It is 'any-form,' or 'no-form.'

The object is a super-metaphor, a paradigm of a category of objects called Sculpture.

And here it is.

When we encounter aura we are positioned within a narrative. Light shines from above us onto the object. Something flutters in the gentle breeze that seems to enfold both the viewer and the object. What we witness is 'something so bizarre and so excruciating' in its lack of a noun or a proper name with which we are able to fix its being. We search for a metaphor or a memory with which to compare its existence. Or we are rendered speechless.

We might say - 'aura is the story of a sculpture' and we might also say - 'aura is the story told by an author play-acting at being an artist.'

The Artist makes an object. A Sculpture.

In making the object the Artist objectifies his personality through the medium of the object. The Artist displays the object to a Viewer. Through the object the Artist communicates the singularity of his being to the Viewer. On encountering the object the Viewer's being is enriched by the experience of the Artist's personality objectified in the object.

And the story could be summarised something like this - 'the Artist makes a Sculpture and it is presented to the Viewer.'

And Here It Is. The Sculpture (and all the Sculpture signifies.) On a pedestal.

When we encounter aura we are watching the Artist revealing himself to the Viewer.

I think about Susan Sontag fantasising about what an artist does - 'making forays into and taking up positions on the frontiers of consciousness,' his job is - 'inventing trophies of his experience,' these are - 'objects that fascinate and enthrall.'

Some people might say that aura is only art-about-art. And it is, partially, this.

This story about aura is the story about an artist - John Meade - who becomes an author and presents a story about an Artist doing what an artist does. He makes a Sculpture and presents it to a Viewer. aura is, in one sense, an autobiography.

And Here It Is on a pedestal.

This is the twist. The story is the story of an Artist watching the Viewer watching the Artist revealing himself to us 'unaware.'

From behind, as it were.

Andrew McQualter February 1996

john meade is represented in Melbourne by Sutton Gallery

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