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ISSUE # 10

Magazine

ART, CULTURE

SCIENCE & MORE.....



FREE

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Cathy Bell (editor)

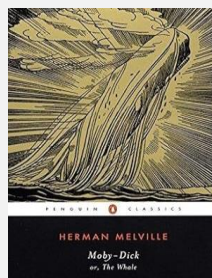
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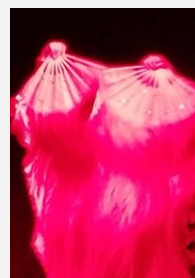
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# SICILY – THE ANCHOVY MUSEUM

*The Italian artist Edgardo Gastini has been exhibiting his paintings since 1967 when he held his first solo exhibition in Stockholm. Since then he has consistently created unique and wonderful paintings. Edgardo, who lives in Turin and sometimes in San Remo in northern Italy, recently took a trip to the island of Sicily with his wife Patrizia. While there they travelled by car across the island enjoying the beautiful scenery, taking in the many and varied cultural and historical delights the island has to offer. Their adventure culminated at The Anchovy Museum where Edgardo was invited to make a painting to add to the museum's collection.*

## Here is Edgardo's own short account of this memorable visit to the island of Sicily.

The story of our trip to Sicily between the end of September and the beginning of October, is very varied: at the end of May we booked the trip by ship from Genoa to Palermo for us and car in tow. Arriving in Palermo, we started our journey in this island that has a huge variety of differences and incredible artistic and natural surprises! From Palermo to Cefalù, then to Fiumaraarte to Castel di Tusa, here we crossed the Madonie mountains to Piazza Armerina (Roman mosaics), then south/east Caltagirone,



*Above, Edgardo at his painting.  
Right, the finished painting on  
the wall of the Anchovy Museum*



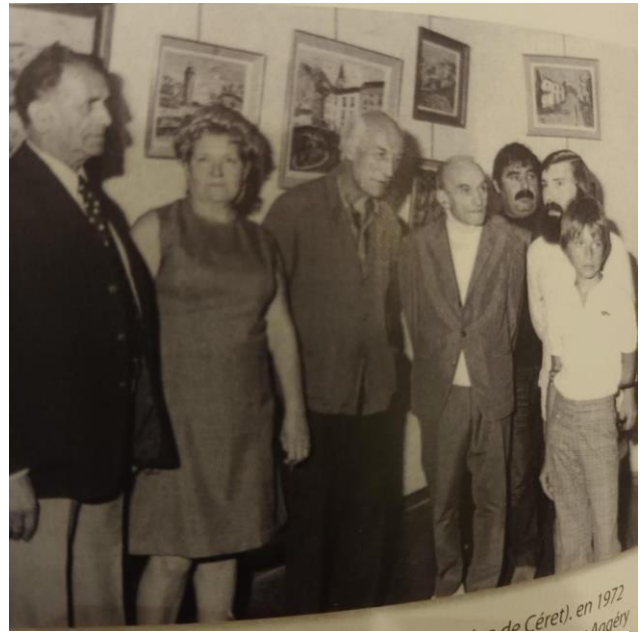
the Val di Noto (wonders of the Baroque), from here to Agrigento, Selinunte, Mazara del Vallo, Trapani, passing through the Scala dei Turchi, Zingaro nature reserve etc. etc. Up to Bagheria (near Palermo) in total 11 incredible days!

On the last day before returning to Genoa, we went to Aspra (Bagheria beach): we visited THE ANCHOVY MUSEUM (the most important of its kind in Italy) and met the President of the museum, we also met the President of the Italian Chamber of Commerce. It was an interesting and funny meeting: suddenly he started playing a guitar in the shape of a boat singing songs of Sicilian folklore..! In the museum, works by the painter R. Guttuso and equipment used by his friend and fellow countryman Giuseppe Tornatore for the film NUOVO CINEMA PARADISO, winner of the Oscar in 1989 (Golden Globe for best foreign film), it was very moving to see it again. Conversing about various artistic expressions, I told him that I was a painter myself: he was enthusiastic and asked me if, in order to honour the museum, I wanted to leave one of my paintings. For this purpose (having no canvases) he said "I will get a piece of wood detached from an old boat used for anchovy fishing, a few tubes of paints and a brush". And here I am at work, surrounded by various curious people. Finally, we exchanged warm greetings and promises to develop creative contacts. **EDGARDO GASTINI**

# LOUIS FORTUNET

Sometimes artists with great talent go without credit or recognition on a worldwide platform. This can happen for several reasons, perhaps the individual was not pushy enough or interested in self-promotion, or maybe they were in the wrong place at the wrong time. In the case of the French painter Louis Fortunet, it was probably the former reason. According to a small book dedicated to the life and career of Fortunet (*Louis Fortunet, From the Shadows to the Light* by Richard Jacques) the author explains that he “was a simple man whom was reserved by nature”. It is also true to note that the latter option was not the case since Fortunet was certainly in the right place at the right time as far as being an artist was concerned.

Born in 1904, Louis grew up in the small town of Ceret in southern France, a town well known for its artistic associations. Those years during the first half of the twentieth-century have been well documented, Ceret has been cited as the Mecca of Cubism, a place where modern movements in art first came into being. One of the artists who lived and worked in Ceret was the Russian painter Chaim Soutine and, according to the book, Fortunet had been given access to the studio of Soutine when he was a teenager. Writing in the preface of the book Alain Ribes states “I like to imagine the moment when this teenager was allowed to for the first time push open the doors of the grandmaster’s workshop”. It is believed that, because of this experience, Fortunet was immediately struck by the desire to paint which he did for the rest of his life. He was the only young artist allowed to paint in the studio, it is even suggested that he was taught to paint by Soutine himself. His sister Therese modelled for Soutine’s painting *The Girl in Red* and as a young girl in her early teens she also ran errands for the artist, young Louis and his friends were known to keep guard at Soutine’s studio door while the artist painted sides of raw meat, apparently the neighbours had been complaining about the smell.



*Louis Fortunet and his wife Geronima (left) at an exhibition in 1972 with sculptor Francis Aggery, art critic Victor Castre, artist Felip Vila and unknown man and young boy*



However, after being initiated at a young age into the world of art and painting, Fortunet became a nurse unlike his friend who helped to guard the studio door Camile Decosy who later became Director of the Beaux-Arts de Montpellier. So although Fortunet did not fully immerse himself in the art world he continued to paint all his life, during the 1950's he could be seen with his easel set up in and around the area, particularly in Ceret and the nearby coastal town of Collioure. His environment was his subject, the landscape of Vallespir, "the roofs of Ceret, villages, ponds, small ports, boats and fisherman's huts". It is clear that he was content to depict what he saw around him as his subject matter. He declared that he did not see why he should go looking for subjects when everything he had in front of him inspired him as it had inspired Picasso, Soutine, Kremenge, Marchand and Herbin. So, Fortunet continued to paint the "small stone walls and gardens, the countryside with its olive trees, cherry trees and cork oak groves"

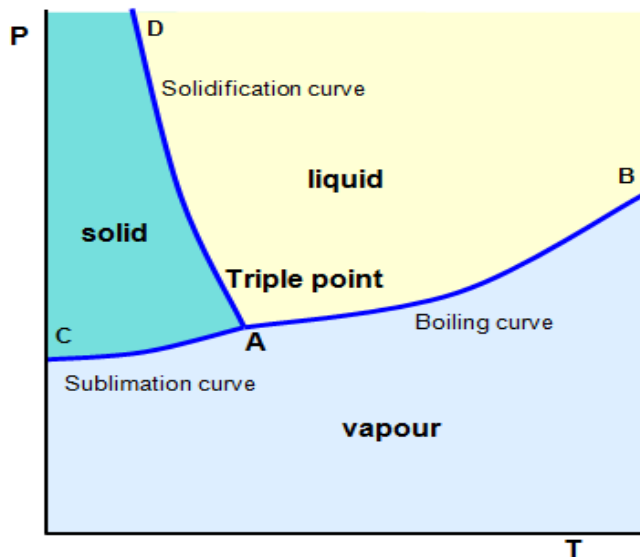


He participated in many exhibitions throughout his life, his first exhibiting experience came in 1958 when the patron of the Grand Café in Ceret Catherine Erre invited him to exhibit around forty paintings. After this Fortunet continued to exhibit in France and also abroad, he held successful exhibitions in Cannes and Germany, for example. In 2009 the Musée d'Art de Ceret exhibited four paintings by him in the exhibition *Ceret, A Century of Sublime Landscapes*. This is said to be official recognition of the painter who, on this occasion, rubbed shoulders with the greatest painters of the twentieth-century.

Yet, although not internationally known, Fortunet's memory and his legacy still resonates, some of his paintings can be found on the walls of Ceretan houses to this day. There is also a street named after him in the town, Rue Louis Fortunet. And, although he did not herald any new advances in painting he was born to paint, he was an artist rooted in his surrounding environment. To quote Richard Jacques the author of the book "Fortunet sings of his native country and sings well with accents that sound right that give his paintings a beautiful and healthy atmosphere, that smell of the soil, the true soil, the one that will never be adulterated."

# STATES OF MATTER

Most of us are familiar with the first three states of matter. Solid describes a state where particles, such as atoms and molecules, are closely bound together, resulting in high densities and definite shapes. They cannot be easily deformed but instead have a tendency to vibrate, especially when subjected to certain frequencies. The next state is liquid which a solid will move to assuming the correct temperature and pressure are applied; this happens to water above  $0^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $273.16\text{K}$ ) at a pressure of  $1\text{Atm}$ . ( $100,000\text{ Pa}$  or about  $14.7\text{ PSI}$ ). A characteristic of liquid is that it perfectly fills any vessel it is put into and that it is virtually incompressible; the latter being particularly useful in braking and steering systems in modern cars. The final stage, that we are mostly aware of, is when the liquid becomes a gas – vaporisation (condensation when the gas returns to a liquid). For water this happens at  $100^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $373.16\text{K}$ ). Of the three states, this is the lowest density state with the atoms moving about chaotically and colliding with surfaces; the forces exerted during such collisions is what we term pressure. One interesting phenomena concerning the three states described so far is that there is a point, based on temperature and pressure, where all three states may exist at the same time: this is known as the triple point. The diagram below shows the triple point for water.



*Diagram showing the triple point of water when the water can simultaneously exist as a solid, liquid and gas. A substance will only transition from solid to liquid if it has reached its melting point temperature and the pressure is above its triple point pressure.*

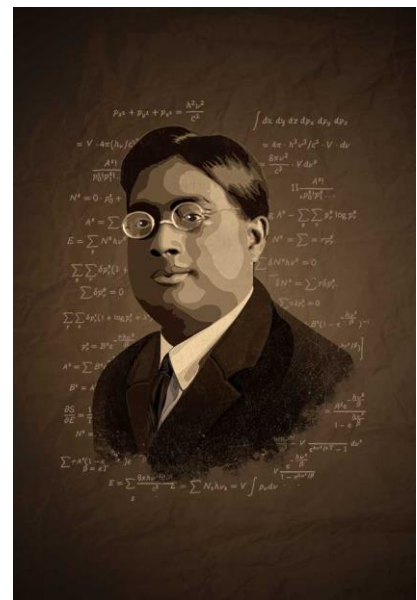
*Note: Sublimation describes the transition of a solid to gas without passing through the liquid stage.*

Plasma, often referred to as the fourth state of matter, is super-heated matter containing equal numbers of negatively and positively charged particles. Just as heating causes all other transitions, e.g. solid to liquid, then when a gas is super-heated a plasma is produced. The negatively charged particles are electrons and the positively charged particles, or ions, are the atoms where the electrons have been torn from. Remarkably, over 99% of the observable universe is made up of plasma. This includes stars, including our own sun, nebulae (dust and gas cloud in outer space due to dying or star forming activity) and aurora (a phenomena in very northern or southern Earth latitudes caused by charged particles from the Sun which are captured by the Earth's magnetic field, before being driven downward through the Earth's atmosphere where they collide with, and heat up, atoms and molecules thus giving off spectacular displays of light – the different colours produced are due to the different gases – nitrogen and oxygen – being heated). The diagram below shows the Orion Nebula, a mass of swirling plasma!



The fifth state of matter is the least known. It is called the Bose-Einstein Condensate and results when particles ( a gas of bosons) are cooled to close to absolute zero (0.01K or -273.15°C) causing them to have virtually no free energy and to clump together into a single quantum mass (all particles now having the same energy) that behaves like a single atom. A man-made state of matter, it was finally observed in 1995.

Bose-Einstein Condensates (BEC's) were first predicted by the Indian physicist Satyendra Nath Bose (right). Bose sent his theory on the statistics of sub atomic particles (photons) to Albert Einstein who thought them important enough to be published. Einstein saw that Bose's theory could equally apply to atoms as well as light. Working together, Bose and Einstein, found that atoms have to have certain discrete energies, however, they also surmised that when atoms were brought to absolute zero that they would all fall into the same energy level and become indistinguishable from each other, in effect forming a kind of single 'super-atom' mass. One interesting fact about a BEC is that it does not obey the Pauli Exclusion Principle, where matter particles cannot occupy the same quantum space. Other quantum states exhibited by BEC's include superconductivity and superfluidity.



Finally, it is unlikely that we are done with five states. Other condensates are possible, e.g. Fermionic Condensates, however, the conditions required to realise these are incredibly difficult to achieve. So, at the moment, we will stop at five states of matter. Incidentally, Dark Matter, the 'so-called' missing matter that the universe needs to stop galaxies flying apart, is not yet considered a state of matter due to its hypothetical nature.



# THE NIDDRIE WOMAN

Looming over the small West Lothian towns of Winchburgh and Broxburn lies the monumental artwork Niddrie Woman. The question is, is this art or is it just tons of waste material left over from the now defunct shale oil industry? The answer is that it is both.

In the book *Out in the Open*, which documents public art projects in West Lothian, Niddrie Woman has been side-lined, mentioned only in the introduction section. The author asks "does a work become a work of art when 'the public' recognise it as such? Regardless of the intention of the maker?"



*Artist John Latham  
pictured in 1990.*

*Photo: Courtesy of  
Murdo MacDonald*

My guess would be that the so-called 'maker', artist John Latham's intention would have been to create a piece of art no matter whether 'the public' recognised it or not.

John Latham was primarily a conceptual artist and Niddrie Woman is a conceptual piece, what he termed as a 'process sculpture'. It started in the mid-1970s when Latham was commissioned by the Scottish Development Agency to re-imagine four shale bings in a creative way, thus transforming them into a piece of art.

The project was part of what was called the Artist's Placement Group (APG) whose aim was to place an artist in an organisation with the intention of looking in a creative and imaginative way at certain things (in this case the shale bings).

The APG archive held in the Tate Gallery provides evidence of what Latham produced such as a feasibility study which is said to lack detail, it is said to be more philosophical, which is in keeping with the conceptual nature of the piece.

However, on a practical level, Latham did make studies of aerial photography of the area and this research enabled him to identify the four distinct parts of Niddrie Woman, the torso, the limb, the head and the heart.

An article written by Craig Richardson (*Waste to Monument: John Latham's Niddrie Woman Art & Environment*) reveals how difficult it is to pin the work down, it also reveals that much of it has been "hidden away as unrecognised facets within a lifetime's albeit incomplete project".

A telling section in the essay also suggests that Latham was not acting as a (local) community artist, but was more concerned to attract the attention of the international avant-garde.

Ironically, the situation is that the project has never transmitted to either the local nor the international community. One wonders, therefore, why this piece has, for the most part, disappeared; why is it not better known?



*Photo: Courtesy of Murdo MacDonald*

There seems to be an element of neglect here since, even if it were classified as part-heritage, there seems to have been no effort by the local authorities to embrace it. The fact also that the shale bings have been identified as habitats where a diversity of very rare plant species are thriving is not enough to create interest in Niddrie Woman.

This could be because it is difficult to classify a work of art that defies classification. It has been described as an 'intrinsically unclassifiable artwork'. Also, despite contemporary interest in ecology, the bings are still to be validated art historically.

However, with a bit of effort and imagination, Niddrie Woman could have become an iconic piece, it could have attracted attention from the local community and internationally given the promotion and support it deserves.

In a local authority document regarding public art, the regeneration of Winchburgh is discussed. It states that a group of artists and architects have been commissioned to create one piece of bespoke public art to act as (as they put it) a 'trail blazer'.

Did they not realise that they already had this on their doorstep in the form of Niddrie Woman? John Latham was a formidable artist. He was a pioneer of British conceptual art, he was often controversial, however, he remains an influential and inspirational figure within the international art world.

Niddrie Woman obviously meant a great deal to him since his ashes were scattered on the Heart in 2006.

This unique signature is evidence that Niddrie Woman, as a work of art, is alive and thriving even if incognito – perhaps that is what Latham would have wanted? However, considering that he put so much of himself into this piece, would it not have been a fitting gesture (and a missed opportunity) to have celebrated him in West Lothian in 2021 (the centenary of his birth)?

## To the Cape, where it all began

On my final morning in the Karoo, time stood still watching a perfect sunrise illuminate the magnificent view of vast plains and majestic mountains. A sight to behold and hard to leave however, leave I must to my final destination, Cape Town. Much to my delight, on arrival, I was gifted with a glorious sunset over the Atlantic Ocean gracing me with tranquillity, rejuvenation and inspiration ready to explore this wonderful town. Cape town is the country's oldest and 2<sup>nd</sup> largest city and is home to the seat of Parliament and across Table Bay, sits Robben Island where Nelson Mandela spent 18 of his imprisoned years and this would be my first stop in the morning.

Landing on Robben Island after a calm 10km boat trip prepared me for the short walk from the pier to the prison. Initially it looked like a normal building and it was hard to perceive what went on there until I entered and saw how small a space prisoners had to live in with such poor facilities. Conditions were harsh, food was poor, labour hard and life was spent

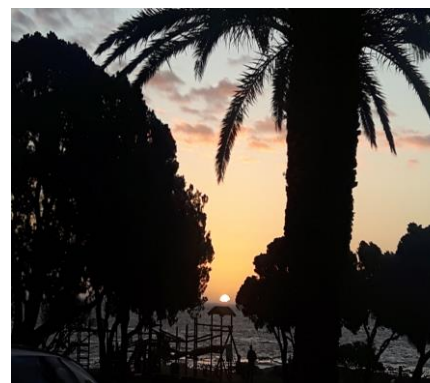
mainly in solitary confinement for politic prisoners, of which there were around 1000. Nelson Mandela was allocated Cell 5, a four-square metre space containing only 1 deep and 1 shallow plate, a spoon, small wardrobe, 2cm thick mattress, a blanket and a slop bucket. The prisoners daily routine would be to break up lime stone, hammer it into small stones and carry it from one side of the quarry to the other and back again. Latterly there was no use for the lime stone it was just to provide hard labour for the prisoners. They were not allowed to mix and the only exercise Nelson Mandela had was in his cell, running on the spot, fingertip push ups, sit ups and knee bends. They were allowed one visit per year and send and receive 1 letter every 6 months. The visit was sobering and provided a real understanding of the hardships, cruelty and pain that was endured for such a long time. A place I shall never forget.



Next stop was Table Mountain. Standing at 1087 metres and listed as one of the new 7 wonders of nature, it is thought to be one of the oldest mountains in the world. The site attracts around 4.2 million visitors a year. You can climb to the top on foot in about 3 – 4 hours or travel by cable car, which takes around 5 minutes. Either way you are provided with spectacular views across Cape Town and along the Atlantic coast. Table Mountain boasts 8,200 species of plant and is home to the Rock Hyrax, known as the Dassie. Dassies are Mostly active in the morning and evening due to their incomplete thermoregulation system. The closest living relatives they have are the African Elephant and the marine mammals manatee and dugong. You can spend days just walking around the top of the mountain exploring the plant life, the wild life and the striking views in all directions but, if you descend at sunset, you will be in for a treat.

After Table Mountain, I set off by road to where the journeys of my father sailing around the Cape sparked my interest in South Africa, The Cape of Good Hope. The drive is so pleasant with areas of natural beauty, clear blue skies, fresh air and baboons. If heading to the Cape you must stop at Simon's Town and Boulders Beach to visit the sole species of penguin on the continent. The South African penguin, distinguished by a single black band of feathers across the breast and a circle of featherless skin surrounding each eye. You can swim with these protected penguins and get close to them enjoying the shared waters and the awe-inspiring view. After a swim, try some of the local cuisine, a blend of African, European and Asian influence, such as Bunny Chow, Bobotie or Samp and Beans - mouthwatering. After lunch, enjoy the

beauty of the short drive to the Cape. Arriving at the Cape, I headed straight for the cliffs to enjoy the panoramic vista across the waters and look out from the southern points of South Africa where the warm current of the Indian Ocean meets the cold water of the Atlantic Ocean.



A cape is a headland that juts out into a large body of water and two here are Cape Point and The Cape of Good Hope. Despite their beauty, the waters are treacherous so a Lighthouse was built at the summit of Cape Point in 1859, 238 metres above sea level. Unfortunately, due to its altitude it was ineffective with mist or fog so a second lighthouse, the most powerful in the South African coast, was built in 1914 at 87 Metres high and closer to the point. The original light house was decommissioned in 1919 after the Portuguese SS Lusitania sank right on the coast. Cape Point, where the new lighthouse was built, was once believed to be the most southerly point in South Africa where the two oceans met however years later, this accolade was taken by Cape Agulhas 159 Km east south east of Cape Point.

My last stop was very emotional as this was where my journey first began, The Cape of Good hope. This major navigational land mark was originally named "Cape of Storms" in 1488 by Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Dias however, it was later changed to the Cape of Good Hope by King John II of Portugal as its discovery was a good omen that India could be reached by sea from Europe and this attracted more people to the Cape Sea route and more business. After spending several hours at the Cape, I Jubilantly walked off the cliff back to the car to return to Cape Town, with a song in my heart and a dream fulfilled with the joy of spending time learning more and sharing with the people of South Africa and enjoying its remarkable land thus adding a rich cultural layer to my life's rich tapestry. We all make journeys in life and I am content to have made part of mine, here.



**"I have tried not to falter;** I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come." **Nelson Mandela**

The end, is just the beginning. **Graham Clark**

# BOOK REVIEW

## Moby-Dick (or The Whale) by Herman Melville

Let's cut to the chase – I did not enjoy this book. Why it is described as a great American novel is beyond me. Instead, it was as interesting as reading page after page of an encyclopaedia on a subject in which you have very little or no interest in whatsoever. Constantly hoping that the excitement promised would begin with the turn of the next page, only for more of the same line after line of detailed information on different types of whales, whale boats or the intricacies of making a harpoon or other such piece of whaling equipment.

I wondered if it was only me that felt such disdain for this so-called great novel but a quick look online confirmed that many had the same opinion. One person said that it would never get published today; a sentiment I entirely agree with. Others, not to put too fine a point on it, absolutely hated it. One quite extensive poll of people who had either read the book or, as many did, gave up half way through, suggested that around 50% either thought it average or below average, with around 7% really disliking it intensely. So, it's not just me!

The language used is often difficult to follow, a mixture of Long John Silver combined with ye olde English. Fine for an 1851 Nantucketer but not today and the use of so many unfamiliar nautical terms (there is a sort of dictionary included with this copy but not all words used in the book are defined) makes understanding difficult especially when such explanations go on at great length leaving the reader with little idea what Melville is on about or why he feels the need to mention some of this in the first place. Tedious, tedious, tedious!

*"D'ye mark him, Flask?" whispered Stubb; "the chick that's in him pecks the shell. T'will soon be out."*

*"The ungracious and ungrateful dog!" cried Starbuck; he mocks and dares me with the very poor-box I filled for him not five minutes ago!" – then in his old intense whisper – "give way, greyhound! Dog to it!"*

So why is this novel considered so highly? I can only guess at the reasons. First, America was highly receptive to building an artistic culture to call its own and books that were difficult to follow but well-written were seen as having some sort of merit; after all, a simply written book and one that was more relevant to most people's every day experiences that everyone could enjoy just wouldn't do. Instead, America wanted to project something higher, something that was also purely, undiluted, and completely belonging to a single place and time and, in a way, was a declaration that America had arrived as a fully developed nation. Having said all the above, which seemed a reasonable first thought, reviews from the time of release don't bear out this argument unless, and again I'm guessing, that it took on a sort of a cult following among America's emerging intellectual community. As if to say that if you understood the narrative and all its complexity it somehow vindicated your intellectual credentials.

A second reason as to why it is so regarded is that it offers more than just a story about a whale. With Captain Ahab, there is the tale of a man obsessed by the need for revenge over a creature that he feels superior to; a judgement that he will eventually regret. There is also much philosophising among the crew who, no doubt, have time to consider much about their lives and the world in which they live during the endless hours when very little happens. These were, after all, voyages that lasted several years, the result being that many pages are given over to the thoughts, hopes and fears of the crew. Cheerfulness and despair go hand in hand at times along with reflections on faith and family. . So, is it Melville's observations about humanity that are most important and what makes this book unique and therefore, at the very least, note-worthy? Possibly, but to be honest I never found myself that interested

in any of the characters or what they had to say. Captain Ahab had the potential to be interesting, if only for his non-appearance in the first third of the book, only then to become pretty much one dimensional because of his pursuit of the whale and nothing else. A final thought here is that, if nothing else, it provides a detailed description of an industry that is now almost extinct and as such serves as an important historical document of the time.

It turns out that reviews of the novel at the time of its publication were not exactly favourable. The London Athenaeum wrote, shortly after its release in October 1851:

*“The idea of a connected and collected story has obviously visited and abandoned its writer again and again in the course of composition.”*

There was, however, a little good news, and hope, for Melville, as The London Leader wrote:

*The book is not a romance, nor a treatise on Cetology. It is something of both: a strange, wild work with the tangled overgrowth and luxuriant vegetation of American forests, not the trim orderliness of an English park. Criticism may pick many holes in this work; but no criticism will thwart its fascination.*

And so, in 1851 at least, The Whale (Moby-Dick) by Herman Melville was deemed a peculiar book of no great literary worth. Melville’s next novel fared even worse, eventually forcing Melville to give up writing and take employment as a customs official. By his death in 1891, Melville and Moby-Dick had all but been forgotten.

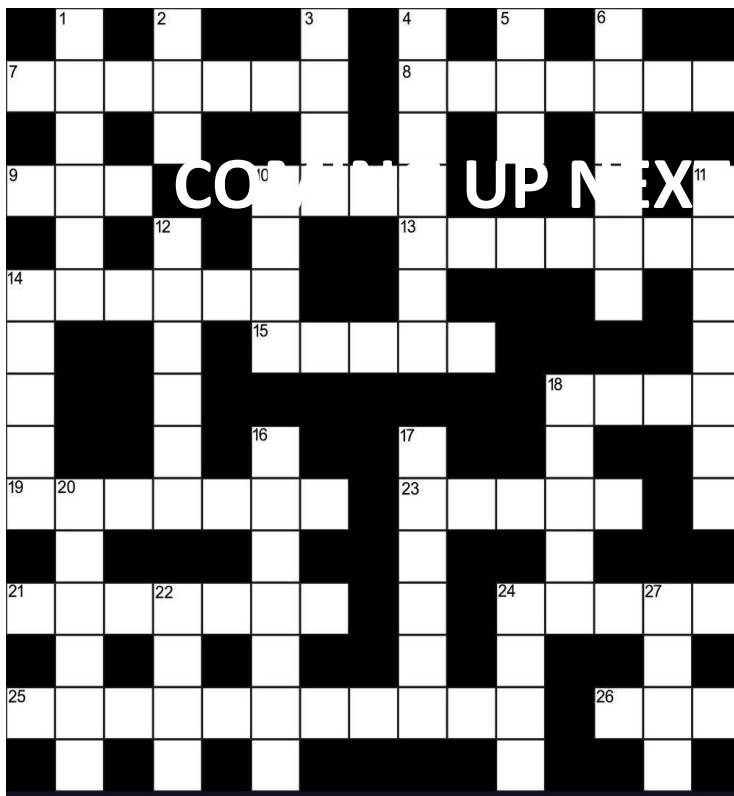
So how did Moby-Dick, or The Whale, come back into the consciousness of an entire nation to the extent that it did? The main reason, I believe, was Hollywood. A silent film in the 1920’s and another in the 1930’s did not, in themselves, have much impact except to put the story into the minds of Hollywood producers and directors and eventually one, with a big enough reputation came along in the mid-1950’s – the time many attribute to the novels re-discovery and the point where it started to become the great American novel we know today. Directed by John Huston and starring Gregory Peck, two giants of the silver-screen, the film spared no expense in creating the excitement and intrigue that the book sadly lacks, even making a modest profit for the production company. Very noticeable also, is the fact that the screenplay writer was Ray Bradbury. Was it the case that Bradbury was able to take the bones of Melville’s story and re-write the narrative in a newer, more up-to-date format, foregoing the endless ramblings of Melville in favour of something far more concise and to the point. The reality is that Huston’s skill as a director, Peck’s talent as an actor and Bradbury’s writing may be what really propelled the tale of Moby-Dick to the dizzy heights it occupies today and not the book itself.

Another novel that may owe thanks to the story of the leviathan of the sea against man is the film, Jaws. Once again, a man (Martin Shaw) in the film is obsessed with killing his nemesis and once again, as with Ahab, it ends badly. Steven Spielberg (the director of Jaws) may have liked the story of Moby-Dick, perhaps even reading it in High School, however, the 1970’s was not the time to go hunting what had become an endangered species so instead Spielberg possibly turned to something with an equally fierce-some reputation; in a way, creating an updated version of the 1851 tale.

So, there you have it! If you do want to have the experience of reading this book, or at least make up your own mind about it, here is my recommendation. Read the first 20 or so chapters (many are very short) and the last three. Do that and you just might enjoy it but do not look at the map provided at the back of the book as it gives the end away!

**Moby-Dick (The Whale) by Herman Melville 1851. This copy: Published by Penguin Classics. Pages 624.**

## BULB CROSSWORD #10 (Solutions page 19)



**Across:** 7. Discuss (obsolete?) (7)  
8. Stretching things a bit? (7) 9. Stages performance (3) 10. Find my type in assortment (4) 13. Negative effect if limping Estonian (7) 14. Dali? (6) 15. Scotland's destiny (5) 18. Branch on a diet (4)  
19. Twice yearly when all is equal (6)  
23. Is Canadian symbol enough? (5)  
21. Watery floors (7) 24. Physical education and artist makes most of musical treat (5)  
25. Get used to it! (11) 26. Boost this to feel better (3)

**Down:** 1. M. Ali's transport? (6) 2. Bemused bird (3) 3. Nothing, zilch, not a thing! (4) 4. Say without details (7) 5. Third state of matter (3) 6. Be present at (6) 11. 6-sided polygon (7) 12. Fermented vegetable dish (6) 14. A poem for electrode? (5) 16. Contraceptives (7) 17. Battle cry or royal greeting (6) 18. Spring arrival (5)

20. Satisfy thirst (6) 22. Editor or 'cloche' (Fr.) (4) 24. Interwoven cooking appliance (4) 27. Meaty Sauce (4)

COMING UP NEXT .....

AMAZING SKIES IN NORTHERN SCOTLAND

LOOSENART DIGITAL EXHIBITION

THE WEE HUB RETURNS!

SOULMATE – SHORT STORY

COMMENT – THE TURN-OFF PRIZE &

SINGALONGA PENNY



*Photographs taken around Nairn  
in Northern Scotland.*

*Photos courtesy of Andrew and  
April Grant.*



## LOOSENART POSTCARDS EXHIBITION

“POSTCARDS” is the latest digital exhibition to take place organised by Loosenart – open from 5<sup>th</sup> January until 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024. This is an international group exhibition based at the Millepiani gallery, Via Nicolo Odereo in Rome.

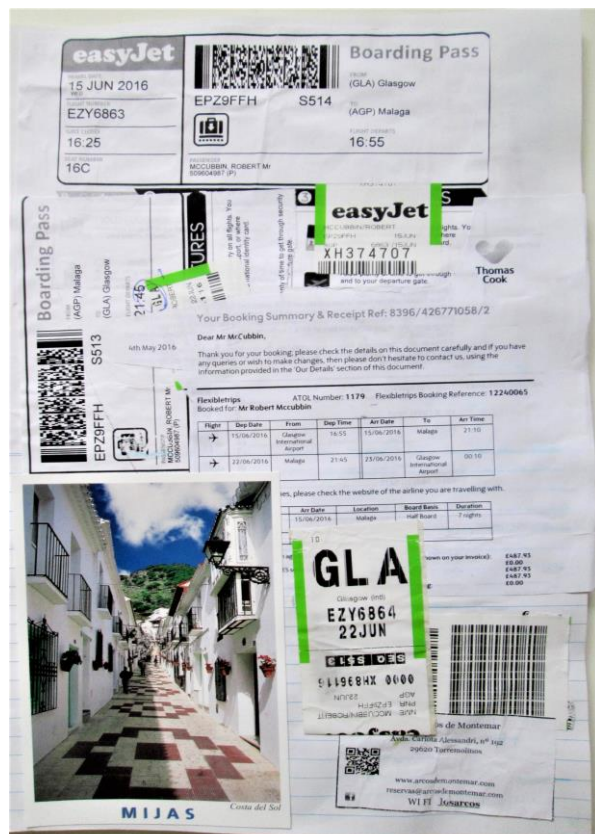
Artist Robert McCubbin’s collage will be featured from 24<sup>th</sup> January until 1<sup>st</sup> February. (pictured right)

**Themed, ' Postcards' an interpretation of their historical context and contemporary use by selected artists.**

Title: Mijas 2016 collage: This is an image from my holiday scrapbook containing travel ephemera and a postcard from the Costa del Sol, Mijas Pueblo, where I visited while on holiday. The scrapbook retains memories and associations from the time that I spent there and travel arrangements required.

**Robert McCubbin**

<https://www.loosenart.com>



## THE WEE HUB RETURNS!



*Above: One of the two new Wee Hub spaces at Ocean Terminal shopping centre in Leith, Edinburgh.*

For more information:

<https://www.facebook.com/TheWeeHub>

<https://www.livingmemory.org.uk>

As reported in BULB Magazine # 9, The Wee Hub at Ocean Terminal in Leith, Edinburgh closed its doors for the last time after a productive programme which ran for over a year. The Wee Hub had been housed in the former Debenham’s department store which was due to be demolished at the end of 2023 to make way for redevelopment.

Needless to say, this space was vast and allowed the organisers to create a lively environment where many groups and individuals could enjoy taking part in the various creative projects that developed during the time it was open. These included dance classes, art exhibitions, children’s play clubs, costume making, studio space for artists and much, much more.

As can be imaged, it was a big loss to the artistic community and the community in general. However, it is good to report that The Wee Hub has reopened, albeit on a smaller scale but every bit as vibrant and welcoming as before. The former Wagamama restaurant and the shop that was previously French Connection have been taken over providing a new home for The Wee Hub. This is great news and now the community and all visitors to the venue can look forward to the year 2024 knowing that this valuable space will provide the much-welcomed good vibes as before.

# SOULMATE

FADE IN: EXT. BALCONY, HOTEL, MEXICO CITY, EVENING MOLLY KEIR 60's , snores, stretched out in a deckchair. On a low table beside her a RINGING comes from her laptop. Molly wakes up with a start. She sits up and reaches for the laptop. She opens it up. On the screen appears a video message icon. Molly clicks on it. A young man ALBERT appears on the screen.

**ALBERT** Molly, darling.

Molly is astonished. She quickly shuts the book and puts it back on the table. She stares at it. The laptop RINGS. Molly exits the balcony and into her luxurious bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM, W HOTEL, EVENING Molly goes to the fridge and fumbles through the minibar. She pours herself a gin and tonic with shaking hands. Meanwhile out on the balcony the laptop consistently RINGS. Molly downs her drink. She heads to the balcony.

EXT. BALCONY, W HOTEL, MEXICO CITY, EVENING Molly sits in the deckchair. She lifts up the laptop and places it in her lap. She opens it. On the screen Albert smiles.

**ALBERT:** Ah, you're back dear.

**MOLLY:** It can't be you. You're..

**ALBERT:** So young. I know.

Albert rubs his face.

**ALBERT:** I can be any age in here.

Albert's face metamorphosizes into that of an old man in his 70's, liver spots. Albert puts a pair of glasses on.

**ALBERT:** That better?

**MOLLY:** Hmmm. Albert metamorphosizes back into the young man. He removes the glasses. Molly nods her head.

**MOLLY:** I miss you.

**ALBERT:** And I you.

**MOLLY:** So what's it like being, you know?

**ALBERT:** Let's not spoil our time with questions I can't answer.

**MOLLY:** But..

**ALBERT:** I recognise this balcony. Are we?

Molly nods.

**MOLLY:** Yes, it's the same room.

**ALBERT:** That was a wonderful holiday, despite everything.

Molly touches the screen tenderly with a finger.

**ALBERT:** Show me the view again

Molly gets up. She picks up the laptop and turns it to the view across Mexico City.

**ALBERT:** It's so .. Alive.

Molly slowly swipes the laptop across the view.

**ALBERT:** Stop.

Molly holds the book steady.

**ALBERT:** Back, back, for God's sake woman, back.

**MOLLY:** What?

Molly moves the laptop a few inches to the left.

**ALBERT:** Forward.

Molly moves the laptop to the right slightly.

**MOLLY:** Okay?

**ALBERT:** Isn't that the church where it happened?

**MOLLY:** I told you not to go up those steps, especially after what the doctor said. But you wouldn't listen, would you.

**ALBERT:** Could you turn me round?

Molly sits down. She places the laptop on the table and turns it facing her.

**MOLLY:** Why are you here?

**ALBERT:** Are you not pleased to see me?

**MOLLY:** Of course I am. It's just a bit disconcerting that's all.

**ALBERT:** I worry about you. I could put in a good word for you here.

**MOLLY:** There's really no need.

**ALBERT:** Have you got enough money?

**MOLLY:** Your insurance was very generous.

**ALBERT:** Well don't spend it all at once. Remember don't tip too much. You always do that, oh and ask for the tap water. Bottled water is so expensive.

Molly looks at her watch.

**ALBERT:** Oh am I keeping you?

**MOLLY:** I was going to head down to dinner.

**ALBERT:** Wonderful! I'd like to see around the old place again.

INT. TOP OF STAIRCASE, W HOTEL - EVENING Molly holds the laptop out as she tries to make her way down the stairs.

**MOLLY:** No this is dangerous. I can't see where I'm going.

**ALBERT:** Oh come on scardy cat!

INT. LIFT, W HOTEL - EVENING Molly holds the laptop out in the lift.

**ALBERT:** Keep me steady. You're shaking too much.

A YOUNG COUPLE across from her smile at Molly. Molly smiles back.

INT. CORRIDOR NEXT TO LIFT, W HOTEL - EVENING Molly comes out of the lift. She walks down the corridor towards the dining room.

**ALBERT:** Remember to ask for the special. They really rip you off in these places.

INT DINING ROOM, HOTEL - EVENING PEDRO, 20's a smart waiter at the entrance walks up to Molly.

**PEDRO:** Ah Ms Keir. Mr Rodriguez has booked your table.

The waiter holds out his arm. Molly links his arm and the waiter walks her to a table in a quiet part of the dining room. The table is decorated with sugar skulls and marigolds.

**MOLLY:** Oh they're lovely.

**PEDRO:** To celebrate the Day of the Dead.

**MOLLY:** Oh that explains it. Souls popping up everywhere.

The waiter pulls out a chair and Molly sits down. She places the laptop beside her.

**PEDRO:** Mr Rodriguez will be with you shortly. Would you like a drink?

**MOLLY:** Oh yes please Pedro.

**PEDRO:** Whiskey as usual?

Molly smiles. The waiter walks off.

**ALBERT:** He was a bit fresh! Whiskey too! Really dear, tap water is more your style. And who's this Mr Rodriguez chap?

**MOLLY:** Here he comes now.

Molly twists the laptop round. She waves at FERNANDO RODRIGUEZ, 60's handsome, who strides towards the table.

**MOLLY:** We're getting married tomorrow in that church where you had the heart attack.

Fernando arrives at the table and kisses Molly.

**ALBERT:** But you.....

Molly presses the off button.

**DAVID HUTCHISON**

## CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

**Across:** 7. Commune 8. Elastic 9. Act 10. Sort 13. Impinge 14. Artist 15. Stone 18. Twig 19. Equinox 23. Ample 21. Seabeds 24. Opera 25. Acclimatise 27. Ego  
**Down:** 1. Boxcar 2. Emu 3. Zero 4. Mention 5. Gas 6. Attend 11. Hexagon 12. Kimchi 14. Anode 16. Condoms 17. Banzai 18. Tulip 20. Quench 22. Bell 24. Oven 27. Ragu

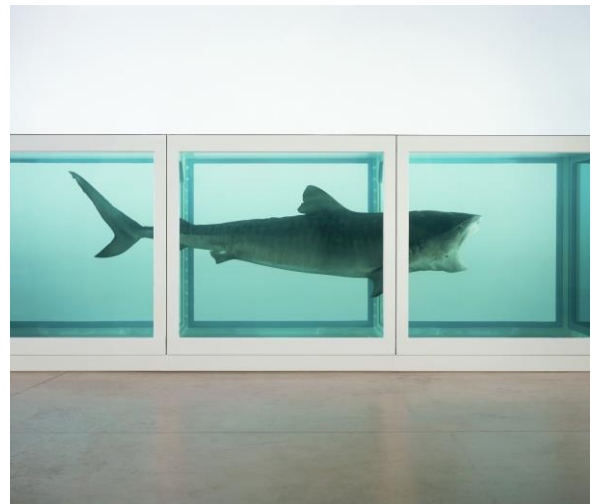
## THE TURN-OFF PRIZE

It has recently been announced that the winner of the Turner Prize 2023 is Jesse Darling a 41 year old from Oxford now living in Berlin. The Turner Prize has been going downhill over the years since the heady days when Brit Art actually meant something in the contemporary art world. To be honest, I don't follow British contemporary art much now because there is not a lot of substance to it. I have no issue with artist's creating installations, however, it seems that much of it is passe with little or no merit as art. Art students are being prompted by uninspiring teachers with not much imagination or vision to embrace this genre, it seems like a trend rather than a true reflection of the creativity of the artist. It would be fine if it was done well but the vast majority of it is of a poor standard, art schools and colleges should look into this and evaluate their teaching methods.

Getting back to the Turner Prize and Jesse Darling. Is it enough to throw some objects (large and small) together in a gallery space and declare this a representation of "broken Britain"? Most of us can see the poor state Britain is in and, several years after Brexit we don't need this pointed out to us by an artist living in Berlin. The entire shortlist is dull and uninspiring with each four artists focusing on some form of social injustice or other. Yet, the artworld seems to thrive on this tired and faded fayre pretending somehow that it is something new. They are living in a world of wishful thinking. Adrian Searle who writes for the Guardian newspaper writes about the winner of the 2023 Turner Prize in this way saying "there is a gleeful thrown-together energy to the artist's sculptures, which use faded flags, barbed wire and bunting to portray a country on the skids". Seems like he is impressed, I don't know why? On the other hand Searle has been constantly scathing about the work of the artist Damien Hirst. Writing about Hirst's spot paintings Searle claims "they are as unsatisfying as cigarettes, calming but addictive. Avoid prolonged exposure". In review after review Searle has taken aim at Hirst with the intention, it would seem, to declare that someone with his authority should take on the job of demoting Hirst's work for the sake of posterity. So easy to move on to the "next big thing" – Jesse Darling perhaps?



*Above: 2023 Turner Prize winning installation by Jesse Darling.  
Right: Damien Hirst's iconic shark installation from 1992*



Damien Hirst won the Turner Prize nearly thirty years ago in 1995, since then he has become one of the big names in international contemporary art. Critics like Searle are fickle, he is unable to stick with Hirst preferring to move on towards pastures new. This shows little understanding of art history on his part. For my part, I want to see more from artists than banal, easy option installations. I want to experience great quality art which means something deeper than social issues that are seized upon and turned into something which will be forgotten pretty quickly in terms of art history. Surely if there is going to be a Turner Prize at all the art being created needs to jump up a few levels to make the prize meaningful, otherwise don't bother.

The art of Damien Hirst has substance and relevance which will last, that is why he was a worthy Turner Prize winner in 1995. It is not just a one hit wonder like the stuff being dished out by Jesse Darling and the like. By the way, if you want to experience a creative and artful response to broken Britain, try listening to the album Merrie Land by The Good the Bad and the Queen – much better!

And, if you are interested to read my essay evaluating the early work of Damien Hirst (written in 1998) please go to our website – [www.mylastboard.com/arts-2](http://www.mylastboard.com/arts-2)

## **SING-A-LONGA PENNY**

Wannabe Prime Minister Penny Mordaunt is at it again. Perhaps she feels she needs to step up her game in her bid for top job now that Kemi Badenoch and Suella Braverman are breathing down her neck? So, having a go at Stephen Flynn MP for not singing the National Anthem at the Remembrance Sunday service is her next pathetic attempt to curry favour among the Conservative party voters who stand between her and number ten. Fair enough, she is not the only one to criticise the SNP Leader in Westminster but when Mordaunt delivers these put-downs towards the SNP it does seem to have a particularly nasty tone. It comes across as a telling-off by a superior towards an inferior type of person – i.e., a Scottish person.

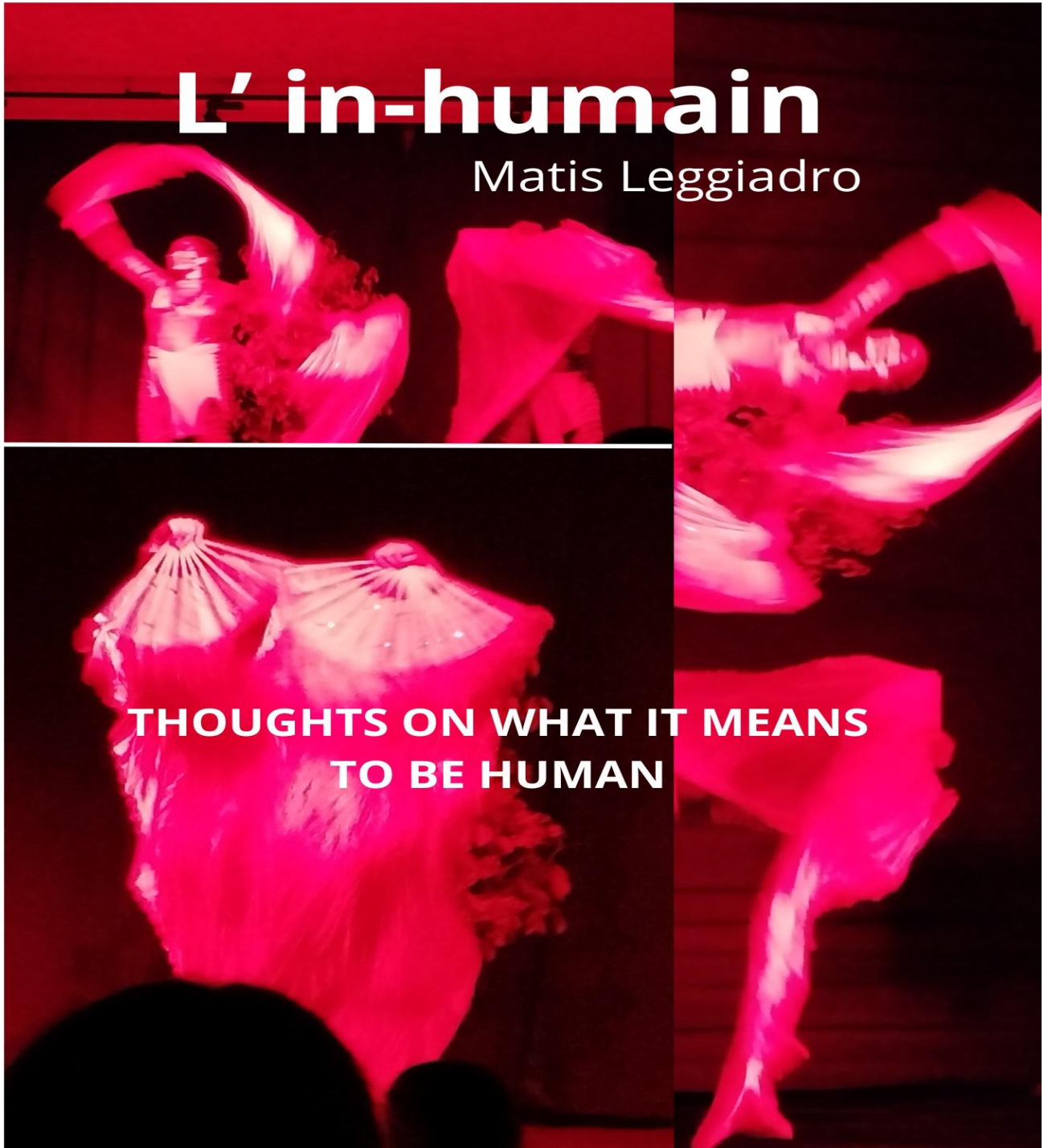
After all Penny is now an honorary member of the Royal Family since she performed that spectacular sword-carrying feat at the Coronation. She must have been beside herself with rage that her close relative (Charles) was being dissed by this unworthy (of his place in parliament) MP who refused to sing GOD SAVE THE KING. Her annoyance ran like this – she told Mr Speaker that it was a disgraceful thing that Mr Flynn should dishonour parliament (and those fallen in the war) by not joining in the singing. She said that if she behaved like that in parliament by refusing to participate in the proceedings if she was not happy at what was being said - then why would she even turn up for work? This is ludicrous, it is like trying to compare an apple with a pear. People disagree on subjects and opinions every hour of the day and manage to keep the world turning, it's called life (the apple). On the other hand, freedom to act on one's beliefs and freedom to abstain from certain aspects of life which you feel are against your beliefs is a democratic right (the pear). So, I say to Penny Mordaunt, stop trying to belittle individuals from the SNP, the SNP as a whole and the people of Scotland. It will not get you your dream job any sooner and now you are looking foolish standing up in parliament discussing this triviality. Stephen Flynn has every right not to sing the National Anthem, as a Republican, I wouldn't sing it either.

Fast forward a week or two and the Hammer of the Scots Penny is in full swing again. Armed with the statistics that Scotland has the highest number of drug deaths in Europe, she made it her business to mock plans to create drug consumption rooms where addicts can, in relative safety, use heroine thereby reducing the number of overdoses. In her rant, Mordaunt criticised the Scottish government on its record on education citing a widening attainment gap, fewer teachers, low maths scores and plummeting literacy rates. Usually in this kind of put-down of the SNP's record in government drug related deaths are mentioned as proof that the SNP are failing the people of Scotland. But no, not this time, Mordaunt omitted this because she wanted to criticise the very means by which the Scottish government is trying to address this issue.

Shamefully, she implied that Scottish schoolchildren (they) would go from a useless education in the classroom straight to a "safe and warm space to take heroin". What she didn't mention was that in the rest of the UK drug deaths have soared three-fold in less than a decade. Again, Penny's punchlines show that she is more interested in soundbites than the truth.

# L' in-humain

Matis Leggiadro



## L'(IN)HUMAIN

I have often noticed that people abuse the adjective human. It would take a lot of effort to misunderstand the basic meaning: to characterize the mammal that reason that each reader of this sentence is. However, it is rare that the adjective is used for such a purpose of characterizing the species. And if you spend a lot of time marvelling at a kitten, a goose in a park, a giraffe elsewhere, and if you spend a lot of time scaring yourself in front of a spider and saying, loud, it's a spider, few people take the time to say that their neighbour is a human.

This is, I believe, a gross error that explains the misguided use of the human adjective in inter- individual discussions and in school presentations. For if I did not know the nature of my neighbour, who is my nature.

I forget to think that his unpleasant actions, his hypocritical greetings and his rants, his agitations and his little words falsely courteous, slipped into my mailbox at night, are the result of his humanity. Thus, on this fine scale of neighbourhood depends the consideration that is made of any stranger, any crossed person, expected, studied.

I mean that if the vices of our neighbours are associated not with their human nature but with their first name or – worse – with their neighbour status, then there is erasure of the ontological reality of the stupidity of the human being and there is highlighted its 'anti-character-natural', built, due to an education. If Micheline is stupid it is because she is Micheline, it is because she is the neighbour. Here begins the devolution of the human adjective. What is human is no longer human, but what inspires human goodness. "Mark, he is very human, always with his hand on his heart."

Listen to me, I am not one of those who like to remind people that error is human. Conversely, I think that this ancient maxim bears within it the human disgrace of forgiveness for oneself: «I apologize». No, I am one of those who affirm that human beings are covered with defects by nature and that the evil of this world is the result of the nature of men. And I would like us to stop saying that a person who has given half his salary in the pleasure of others is human, by implying that not giving a piece to a homeless person is inhuman, and this while human beings die shredded in Palestine, that we root differences in China, that we must be silent everywhere, while visiting Paris we risk dying with a knife or a hammer, while everywhere abounds a tireless violent agitation, a human agitation.

I know, it is possible to oppose my vision of human behaviour. If it is said that it is society that corrupts, then naturally man is not evil. But this idea is not admissible because who are you, who am I, who is Rousseau, who is Locke, who are we to know what was the truth about human behaviour millions of years ago, before we built New-York, before we cram into our solid cities? One must have excess in oneself to be judged by so much ignorance. And this excess Rousseau had in him when he begat children to abandon them<sup>1</sup>. And Locke had it in him when he was financing the slave trade. And the deployment of his philosophy served only to justify the deployment of his own power, without generosity<sup>2</sup>. I do not have the knowledge to synthesize the possible violence of homo sapiens as it relates to Neanderthal man – and anthropologists themselves -even contradict themselves – but I can say with certainty that Palaeolithic men possessed a constructed and meaningful aesthetic language. We quickly observe the transfer of metaphysical thought in the tangible world from an iconography (cosmogony linked to astral movements reported on the reliefs of underground sanctuaries by borrowing from the animals their dynamic brightness) as well as the votive project of the passage to the afterlife (arrival of man in death by mutation). So, it seems to me that it is mediocre to establish a hierarchy of man by man. The human being has been from the beginning, in short.

Let us accept what it is to be human.

Let's stop saying that Marc is very human and that Micheline is not. **ML**

1 "Like 90% of the newborns abandoned in the eighteenth century to the Foundlings, the five Jean-Jacques Rousseau's children will probably not have passed the age of ten. » **Pauline Tanon, "Rousseau, his four truths?", Sigila 2016/2 (No 38), 147-152**

2 "John Locke's thought, elaborated at the time of the English Revolution of 1688-89, was a source of inspiration for American insurgents. Now, for Locke, the right of property is a social pact, which makes the political state pass, is to preserve these individuals and their properties; This is indeed a "possessive individualism". Freedom is therefore based on property, and those who have no ownership find themselves on the margins of the society. » **Gérard Fritz, "The Western Paradox: How Can We Proclaim Freedom and Practice Slavery? Law and Cultures, 70 | 2015, 43-64.**

**Matis Leggiadro is a preparatory student at the Lycee du Parc, Lyon. He is also an art critic and curator.**

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"LITTLE JOAN AND HER CAT SHEBA WONDER WHY THE  
MANX CAT DOES NOT HAVE A TAIL. FOLLOW THEIR  
ADVENTURES, WILL THEY DISCOVER THE TRUE STORY?"

# A TAIL TALL TALE

by David Hutchison

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