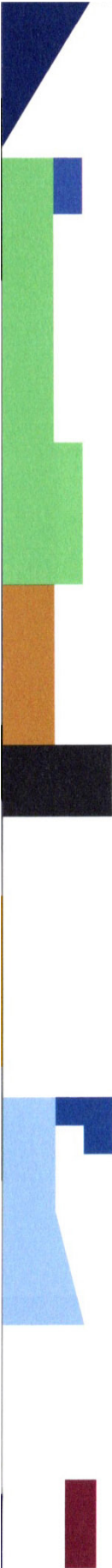


SCRIPT & POSTSCRIPT

ELI BORNOWSKY & JENNIFER CANE

(transcribed texts, emails, and conversations)





J CÉSAR AIRA HAS A “WOULD-YOU-RATHER” STORY OUT NOW
about “Being Picasso or owning a Picasso.” Hands
down I would definitely rather own one. How
about you?

E I would rather be Picasso, but mostly in the sense of
invention. Think of all that pictorial invention. Not
much time has passed and already we don’t believe
in artistic invention anymore.

E DOES THE GALLERY OWN ANY ROBERT BATEMAN?

J No, but plenty of pretty solid copycats.

E Proposal and counter proposal. Counter proposal
is realism. Nature realism. With a 1.5 in between
1. Paintings 1.5 Sketches 2. Nature Realism (read
Canadian Conservative).

J Covering the whole spectrum, as in a rainbow from
left to right?

E More like points in a field rather than a spectrum. A
three-dimensional spectrum.

J I see.
Here are some title words
Scripting a score
Scores and scripts
Medium levity
Additional notations
And so on

E Yes and more and more. A point is interesting on its own I suppose as a singularity; one thing. And to be sure with points there is no point to get. Except that when looking closely at the point, it is revealed to be an entire vast world unto itself and composed of many new points.

E I'M REALLY ENJOYING THINKING THROUGH THE MATERIALS of this book.

J This book is very much about being a book. The body that holds the body, text and image. So many papers could say a different thing.

E Fingers

J Yes, and also the naming of the papers. An after-thought?


E Like house paint?

J Yes, like those names. Not as considered as ships or horses.

E Not like pigments. Lapis. Cobalt. Naples. Sienna. But also Aubergine. Amaranth. Cerulean.

J You beat me to Cerulean. And then there's Vermillion. Elegant words.

E Pigments are material. Researching now on the computer but the colours are just mixtures of screen light. Every colour the same material on the screen.



J Light is a problem when it comes to the raw material. At least the colour on this page (the page of this book) is considered. And the handling, the fingers on the page.

E What is new, what is popular, and what is perfect. I want what is perfect. Perfection, when you think about it, is an outrage. Who would dare to be perfect?

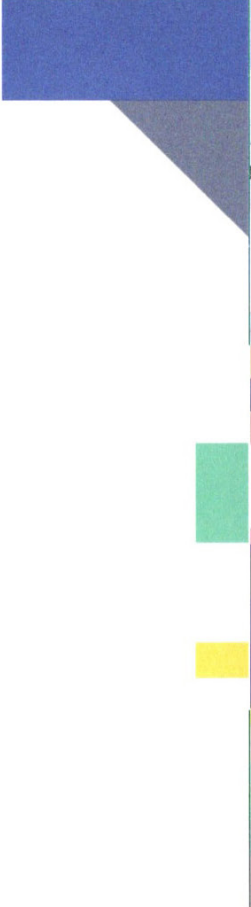
J There is comedy in the audacity.

E Artists get to try perfection.
And freedom.
And every time I say that there is total resistance.
Ha Ha Ha

J Maybe trying on the impossible is too frightening for some. But the grandiose gesture is enjoyable. And besides, it's funny.

E It's where I'm at. Perhaps what I mean to ask is: "What is forbidden up in the air?" According to Saint Paul, what he heard "up there" he wasn't allowed, or wasn't able (it's ambiguous) to repeat! When you experience Truth, you have nothing to say about it. Or, rather, the otherworldly is a goal, but it doesn't discount our regular, earthly experiences. But it's not forbidden up in the air, it's only forbidden down here on the ground.


Like the humans in the garden who received the knowledge of good and evil. Suddenly their



pure nakedness is revealed to be vulgar. The tension between sacred and profane is complex and important for my thoughts on pleasure and transcendence.

J I have been looking for the term — *Docta Ignorantia*: intentionally remaining ignorant or unknowing in order to understand mystical concepts; against striving directly towards divinity. Old school art historian Erwin Panofsky, when writing of Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*, wrote that he would have to refrain from comment, quoting a German Renaissance scholar, who found the final section of a mystical treatise too obscure to be translated; "This, too high for my wit/ I prefer to omit." Unspeakable. Unmentionable. Are we touching on the language of angels here? (Who would dare to try to speak that language?)

E I can hardly speak English let alone the language of angels. Flying, on the other hand is something I've become quite good at. Of course I also tie myself down with fear and despair. Art and the mystical overlap occasionally in the unspeakable. I know, for example, what art is, but if I told you what it was, I would vanish. (It can be very frustrating too: knowing what art is, knowing what needs to be done, but being unable to achieve it.) On the other hand, art and the spiritual can be completely different categories.



J SOMETHING YOU WERE SAYING AT THE LAST STUDIO VISIT keeps knocking around in my head — doubling as a ‘way in’ to looking. When I was looking back and forth at your paired paintings, which are so close but not identical, I thought the same thing, that they help us to look longer and more intently. They are much easier to stay with because they are two. They are not exactly the same. (Sorry to call you a terrible forger, it was sort of funny though!) I am used to dealing with print editions, which are exactly equal. They are individual. I am curious about these pairs — do they need each other to sustain their individual function? Again you said, “we don’t believe in this kind of painting anymore.” It’s true.

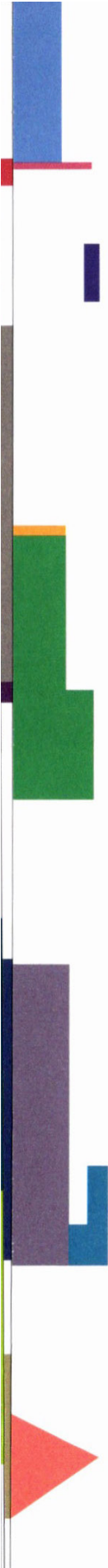
E It’s amazing how the basic urge to compare and contrast is so strong. The doubled paintings encourage that kind of looking. On a perceptual level I find that very interesting, even entertaining. However, the double also plays a game with the autonomy of art. Rather than confirming the critique of the singular aura of painting and authorship, it reasserts authorship through repetition, by authoring twice. Where we have learned to be suspicious of the possibility of a singular experience with a singular painting, the double reasserts that possibility. It’s a good trick I think: simultaneously autonomous and networked. It’s an oscillator.

But I am trying not to overidentify with the double. In the case of this book the double is most interesting in relation to sequence. The double acts like a repetition in a rhythm of images.

In fact, we originally conceptualized our conversation here as ping-pong but we overlooked the fact that if my work was playing ping-pong there would have to be many more players than two. Ping-pang-bing-bang-bong-boing perhaps.

J You're right, this dialogue doesn't feel like ping-pong. Besides, we keep adding and subtracting. You erased the first part and it all works better now. Then I re-shuffled the order. What we have is something more like an equation or concept drawing. It's a falsified transcript. I keep on thinking of your work in terms of accent and punctuation — marking the distinction between parts, signalling different rhythms and tones. Not so much of music but of speech; the diacritic marks as well as pausing and pacing. Do you see how I would see those things?

E Other artists and poets have recognized the sentence quality of my work, but for me it is the contrapuntal that is of great interest. Glenn Gould's radio documentaries with multiple interviewees speaking at the same time are foundational. The multiplicity of independent lines of speech invite the listener to move his or her attention freely within the cacophony.



I wonder what a sentence of my work would say? It might not say anything, because the real issue is more generic: the diagram. Whether sentence, or geometry, or musical score, my work moves back and forth between the black and white space of the diagram to the sensual material space of the picture.

J THE GALLERY OWNS A SUITE OF YOUR PRINTS (SLEEP 1, 2, 3, 4).
What was the feeling like when you made prints?

E Andrea Pinheiro helped me print them at Malaspina Printmakers. I saw them in a dream and asked her to help me materialize them. My vision of the four prints was perfect, except for one, which was completely off; my dream was mistaken on the third print, which I fixed at the last minute with a new plate. That was when I knew for certain that intuition in art could be rigorous, that there were perfectly viable forces at play but for which no deduction could ever touch.

I realized that continuity does not exist in the present. Movement exists, even teleportation is happening all the time, but continuity is understood only through faith in a bigger picture.

J Do you feel that intuition can be induced, or called upon? What I am thinking about is the 'spiritual nature' of someone like Mark Tobey. I was looking into his 'white writing' recently, and thinking about

mysticism, and how it must be easier to make art like that with a spiritual, or at least metaphysical foundation.

E It seems some artists have considered intuition as a divine gift. Another artist, like Richard Tuttle, treats intuition rigorously but in a more secular fashion. I am in the middle. I think everything is a divine gift, and that intuition is a common human experience that is often overshadowed by a preference for things that can be explained. Making art is painfully difficult and we are tempted to look for solid ground to help us along: expression, concepts, politics, history, critical this and that. When I work, relief comes from knowing that it's all already there, while intuition relieves the awful pressure to be clever. You can't be clever taking a path that doesn't exist when the goal is to set something apart. Our world is full of things that work together perfectly, successfully achieving mediocrity. Setting apart is about triumph and discordance.

