



Absence and Solitude

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ABSENCE AND SOLITUDE

Caz Rodwell

30 June - 22 July 2007

The Sequel was provoked by two separate accounts of perverse sexual excess: one actual, the other fictional. I was repulsed and horribly fascinated by the first, and intrigued and disturbed by the confronting poetics of the second.

The latter, *Histoire de L'Oeil*, Georges Bataille's short pornographic novel, contains an outline of its unpublished sequel and an appended essay, *Coincidences*. A surrealist writer and philosopher, Bataille's transgressive, erotic narrative charts the journey of its characters through a fragmented dark world of violence and escalating sexual excess. Its poetic 'unreality' has its roots in the dark psychic wounding and guilt of Bataille's childhood that is uncompromisingly described in *Coincidences*.

The central figure and agent provocateur is the wayward Simone, who, with her co-conspirators at the end of *Histoire*, comes not to a sticky comeuppance, but a black, comedic and ridiculous escape that contravenes the norms of 'good' and 'bad' and sets her up for further adventures. However her eventual fate involves a far more weighty issue - the resolution of Bataille's own *need for loss* through invocation and exorcism.

Outline of a Sequel to *Story of the Eye*

After fifteen years of more and more serious debauchery, Simone ends up in a torture camp. But by mistake; descriptions of torture, tears, imbecility of unhappiness, Simone at the threshold of a conversion, exhorted by a cadaverous woman, one more in the series of devotees of the Church of Seville. She is now thirty-five. Beautiful when entering the camp, but old age is gradually taking over, irremediable. Beautiful scene with female torturer and the devotee; the devotee and Simone are beaten to death, Simone escapes temptation. She dies as though making love, but in the purity (chaste) and the imbecility of death: fever and agony transfigure her. The torturer strikes her, she is indifferent to the blows, indifferent to the words of the devotee, lost in the labour of agony. It is by no means an erotic joy, it is far more than that. But with no result. Nor is it masochistic, and, profoundly, this exaltation is beyond any imagining; it surpasses everything. However it's basis is solitude and absence.

Georges Bataille (from the fourth edition, *Story of the Eye*, 1967). Published by the Penguin Group, London.

My original intention was to obliquely mirror the spirit of this text, but I found a more recent 'real' event segueing into its structure.

Rather than confining himself to the imaginings of fantasy, a Sydney finance broker crashed through the boundaries of normal desire and acted on his obsession. This true transgression resulted in the sexual defilement, torment and death

of a large number of rabbits obtained as detached commodities from pet shops via his credit card. Their pathetic little corpses were thrown into an alleyway next to the city office where his vices were entertained. Drugs were responsible, his lawyer suggested: Ice-Schmice, say I.

The vileness of a perverse deed committed gives neither the catharsis of absolution nor the peace of solitude; the *need for loss*, of the self and its accompanying nightmares, instead becomes a fevered quest for more and worse. It is salutary that through the extreme nature of his writing, Bataille achieves a form of resolution (the sequel needs only to be an outline) and escapes the abyss; the Rabbit Fucker topples into it.



BIOGRAPHY

Caz Rodwell was born Hobart in 1947. She has worked variously as an art teacher, community artist and interior decorator, both locally and overseas, drawing particular influence from time spent working in Mexico.

She completed the honours year of her BFA at UTAS School of Art in 2006 and was selected to participate in Hatched at PICA in April 2007.

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EXHIBITION

This publication accompanies the exhibition *Absence and Solitude* at CAST, 30 June - 22 July 2007

THE WORK

The Sequel (detail) 2007
Mixed media, dimensions variable

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CAST

Contemporary Art Services Tasmania
27 Tasma Street
North Hobart Tasmania 7000 Australia
T + 61 3 6233 2681
F + 61 3 6233 2682
www.castgallery.org



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