



**that all I'd seen would be left untranslated**





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PADRAIG REGAN

**Installation #5**  
**(Notes Toward a Painting Which Does**  
**Not Exist but Which I Desire to See So I**  
**Have Had to Invent It)**

*to be read in any order*

On Gaps

In one work by Gerard Dillon, whose title has slipped my mind  
& seems unfindable online (so let's suggest it's called *Easel*  
& *Moon-Man with a Pair of Harlequin's Legs*)

the thin & chequered legs of a clown rise  
like lupins from the bottom of the frame — how strange —  
& this implies his face is somewhere else, as though the floor

he stood on was a trap door through which he's slipped  
out of the canvas, which is to say escaped the painter's attempt  
to hold him in. It need not be as obvious as this.

The same work could be done by a curling edge of paper  
where something cut & glued displays its tendency to come  
unstuck, or a blurry rash of pixels where two photos were combined.

If I want to understand how things are held in images  
I must consider how they might slip out, or prove resistant  
to holding. I'll give one more example: look closely at Caravaggio's

*Supper at Emmaus*, & you'll see that one man's hands are the same size  
despite his arms reaching from the back of the room to the front,  
as though his anatomy was a protest against the space he's been  
forced into.





## On Colour

*The Golden Age* it's called, this 7 by 12-foot expanse of colour doing what colour does, which is to say mixing, losing the meaning of itself in contact with an other.

It's like holding a magnet to the side of a cathode ray TV to watch the screen freak out & buckle; or pointing a video camera at a display of the image it captures to view contorted ghosts.

Morris Louis made this painting by diluting Magna resin paint in turpentine & letting it fall down the canvas — his hand encouraging more than controlling where it falls.

The colour that results is brown, or maybe bronze; a gauzy & striated curtain near the middle where oranges & pinks are allowed to rise not quite to the surface, but just beneath it.

At either side, this bronze achieves a measure of solidity, becomes a dense & sticky fond of paint that almost, never quite, conceals the weave of fabric underneath — but underneath is not quite right.

The paint is in, not on, the surface; the surface & the paint are a single layer despite the hundreds of laminations. & along the top, each pigment is given a few inches to itself.





## On Containment

I want a painting that makes a show of its containment, that reduces containment to a form, a gesture — transparent & repeatable.  
I want this because I want to understand containment;

because, for once, I have the blinds open at 10pm  
& all along the street other people have their blinds open,  
& without the tactful, reflecting daylight on the windows

each window becomes a vitrine of sorts, a boring diorama.  
John Berger writes that Francis Bacon's pictures are horrific  
because the rooms he holds his figures in are made of glass.

& so the figures in a triptych must perform their suffering  
not just for us, the viewers, but for each other.  
They are utterly without privacy, but each is alone

inside its isometric tank. I could, of course, turn off the lights  
to stop my windows betraying me, but then I'd lose my place  
in this exchange of seeing & being seen. Berger also writes

that anything Bacon paints that is not the human form  
is illustrated without particular attention, & it occurs to me  
I stopped reading this book I'm staring at some time ago.





## On Material

Why must it be a painting? Why not a sculpture, or better yet, this set of silver bowls arranged ten by ten in a grid, & each too small to hold much else

than a mean measure of gin? These too have a surface full of interest, see how the enamel sometimes cracks, sometimes feathers, & sometimes pools in thick & almost jellied clots?

& look! there is the break in the pattern that stops the pattern's regularity from becoming oppressive or mundane: one bowl, upended and unglazed, has been unable to uphold

its own weight, & so collapsed like an incompetent dessert. This one is proof these bowls were only ever meant for show — test pieces to demonstrate what enamel will do

in a concave form. Or convex in the case of these three bowls presented upside down, enclosing nothing but a mound of dark equal in size to their withheld interiors.

So why not this? Well, I need to see what's lost when a third dimension finds itself crashed on a flat plane, when a flat plane struggles to overcome its flatness.





## On Framing

Because a 'table' (& it is always a table, isn't it?)  
can be haunted by recollections as privately as 'pain' or 'quiddity'  
language can never truly be concrete. But to make this point

I've had to sand away the table's roughness, paint over its grain.  
It seems I can't escape the idea of wood.  
So I begin to think about texture, about the textures of wood &  
glass;

how glass involves me, faintly, in itself; how wood does not  
unless it's treated with a coat of gloss. In that room, lit  
to seem almost subaquatic, where Rothko's Seagram Murals hang,

the tops of the pictures are angled slightly away from the wall,  
which doesn't stop the yellow from the light bulbs smearing  
itself over the upper halves of the canvases. I notice how

the oblongs of maroon imposed onto — or carved out from —  
the black grounds look vaguely human-sized, as though each one  
could make a narrow, but acceptable, bed. I wonder what

would happen if there was a rim of wood between the canvas  
& the wall, an intervening pane of glass for a thin copy of my face  
to skate across? It would, I think, be much too literal.



### On Abstraction

When I drew the sun, I drew him wearing sunglasses.  
I drew him with a smile, open-mouthed & toothy. Look!  
he is as amused by this redundancy as I am.

Then, when I drew the sun, I drew him in the image of a boy  
named Blake, or the boy that Donatello cast, improbably, in bronze  
as David; a twink yes, but one who knows how to top.

& then I looked at the sun & I couldn't draw any more.  
I realised that the geometry I put my faith in was inapplicable;  
that a circle is in no way commensurate with sweat

on my forehead, down my back, in all the acute angles  
of knees & elbows; that there is no graphical equivalent I know  
that could convey the discomfort that twists a path down

my spine as I try to find the right groove in this tree  
that I can lock myself into & sit for a while & look up  
to see the contrast between the green leaves' greener undersides

& the blue sky, the flat bulk of it. I gave up, went home,  
& enjoyed a lemon sorbet, happy in thought that all I'd seen  
would be left untranslated. It was a very good sorbet.





EMMA MUST

**Shale Spindle Whorl**  
*i.m. Ken Saro-Wiwa*

I'll  
hook you  
& draw this out  
attach a bundle of fleece  
to the top & spin the shaft  
I'll show you how to hold it all  
the spindle will provide  
the tension  
we'll  
circle back  
to the Isle of Purbeck  
pick up a slab of Kimmeridge shale  
a blocky blackstone with thin white veins  
foul-smelling sulphurous when burnt  
once there were plans to light  
the streets of Paris  
with its gas  
free  
your right hand  
& spin again hold the fleece  
firmly between thumb & index finger  
pulling slightly to put the twist in the yarn  
work this material lightweight  
yet strong enough to turn  
on an Iron Age lathe  
to fashion  
amulets  
the  
discoid  
cores of which  
discarded on the beach  
their centres punched  
with small square holes  
were muddled up  
with coins  
so  
'coal money'  
not to be confused  
with ammonites conspicuous





in the shales near Washing Ledge  
their pirouette of chambers sometimes  
filled with pyrite or the original  
aragonite of the shell  
simply preserved  
you've  
done a length  
it's time to wind it on  
to drop the spindle break  
it off the hook & tie a knot  
run the thread up twist it round  
hold everything in place  
return the fleece &  
start spinning  
again  
&  
if it  
should  
accidentally  
drop to join back on  
your separate piece of you  
spread out the fibres hold them  
between finger & thumb  
& spin once more  
but make sure  
there's  
a  
good  
bit of tension  
a lot of twists put in  
so you can fully draw it out  
let this object settle into the circle of itself  
laminated slightly domed 30mm in diameter  
with a small central perforation  
as befits its age feel  
the weight  
of  
the world  
swinging further out  
now as it takes a darker turn  
& we are back in the flaming fields  
of the Niger Delta where pipes  
are spilling Ogoni oil &  
you can see him  
hanging





STEPHEN SEXTON

## No Known Relation

*William A. Barnett:* The famous painter and sculptor, Amedeo Modigliani, was born in Livorno, Italy, in 1884 and died in Paris in 1920. Was he related to your family?

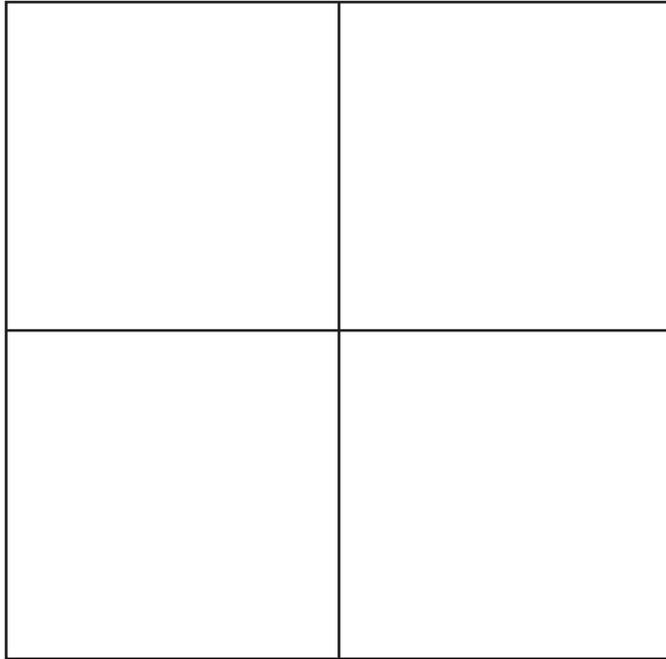
*Modigliani:* There is no known relation.

Our remaining task is to show how the interaction of the four basic blocks produces a series of results which are anti-classic, including the crucial result. I propose to develop my argument in graphical form relying on a construction known as the four quadrant analysis. It is a bit cumbersome but in my view very helpful for a solid understanding of the argument. The four quadrants are needed to accommodate the four variables of the model. The four variables are measured along the four semi-axes that extend outward from the origin, as shown in the graph.

Thus X

is measured along the vertical axis extending upward from the origin; r is measured along the horizontal axis, extending right-ward from the origin; and similarly I and S are measured along the remaining two semi-axes. As a result we end up with four quadrants that on the graph are labelled, counter clockwise I to IV.





I

### THE BASIC MODEL

*In what follows we refer to the version of the model incorporating this weaker assumption as the 'generalised' form.*

Brumberg and I were thrilled to discover that, by combining our basic model with some information derived from experience and introspection about the nature of the typical life cycle of income and of tastes, one could readily derive a number of interesting implications, some which were obviously consistent with the facts, though they threw new light on them, while others were novel and testable.

This assumption has been chosen not because we think it is realistic but only because it eliminates the necessity of showing a separate curve in our figure.





The slope and intercept of this curve  
will thus depend  
on the elasticity of expectations.

One finding has to do with  
elasticity of consumption:  
income on the one hand  
and age on the other,  
to which reference  
has been made earlier.

It can be shown that the slope of  $\bar{c}(y)$   
should tend to fall, and its intercept to rise,  
with age, unless,  
on the average, the elasticity  
of income expectations is extremely low,  
say, in the neighbourhood of zero.  
For, according to our model,  
age does not enter in a linear fashion

As to the effect of the life cycle  
on the composition of the "portfolio",  
one might expect that during the period  
of family formation people  
will put most of their savings into durables.  
Inasmuch as this model has been shown elsewhere  
to be equally consistent with the major findings  
of a time-series analysis, we seem to be near  
the ultimate goal of a unified, and yet simple,  
theory of the consumption function.

This implication of our model clearly  
forms the basis for a crucial experiment;  
this experiment has not been carried out  
as such, although we look forward to its  
being performed in the near future by  
anyone having the resources and interest.  
Nevertheless, the brief sketch presented  
should be sufficient.





## II

### AMIGO

I said what's he doing to this woman  
as above I read my favourite chapter  
from your last publication  
*Collected Papers of Modigliani*  
(though they have misprinted your name)  
for its largesse  
putting the *libre* in library,  
putting the *livre* in library,  
learning plenty of the artist's art;  
I said I'll study the book and figure  
how this curve means what, amigo  
what's the name of the depicted;  
the provenance of the African masks,  
initials in the curls of hair, amigo  
but for all the exposition of models and lines  
I learn little from your book of painting, amigo—  
they mention Livorno only once.

Alas I sit the book against my wall  
its white split head, its slip and belly band unwrapt,  
its lovely boring spine unseen, amigo  
it says no more about this woman, nothing  
of what she's paid for her likeness  
do you remember C.B. the painter-surgeon  
tickling the canvas, as they say,  
while his soldier-models rancid with infection  
wiggled in the theatre? What's it worth, amigo?  
and furthermore you've gained such success  
with that patron saint of artists, economics,  
who knew your talent for pennilessness  
would one day land you the Nobel Prize?

Yours,





### III

#### DEAR FRIEND

I pour myself out to you  
and to affirm myself to myself.  
I am the prey of great powers  
that surge forth and then disintegrate.

But I should like my life to be  
as an opulently abundant river  
flowing over the land with joy.  
I shall not speak of Rome.

I would like to tell you what  
are the new weapons with which  
I take up more the joys of battle.  
I shall not speak of Rome.

As I speak to you Rome is not outside  
but inside me, like a terrible jewel  
set upon its seven hills,  
as upon seven imperious ideas.

Capri whose name alone  
would evoke in my mind  
a tumult of images  
of beauty and antique sensuality

appears to me essentially  
a symbol of springtime.  
In the classical beauty  
of this landscape there is  
an omnipresent and indefinable  
feeling of voluptuousness.  
And even (despite the English invading  
with their Baekdekers) a glittering

and venomous flower emerging from the sea.  
So much for poetry.  
Imagine besides in the countryside  
by moonlight with a Norwegian girl...





I don't exactly know when  
I shall be in Venice;  
Venice, head of Medusa  
with countless blue serpents,

sea green immense eye  
in which the soul is lost.  
I shall let you know.  
I should like to visit it with you.

Yours,

A.M.

p.s. the following errors are egregious!

IV

#### ERRATA

“expand” should read “contract”  
“quite insignificant” should read “quite significant”  
“casually” should read “causally”  
“seriously biased as a result of” should read “contaminated by”

“larger” should read “smaller”  
“very close to unity” should read “very close to minus 1”  
“2/3” should read “3/2”  
“0.67” should read “0.31”

“average” should read “averge”  
“it” should read “saving”  
“effect” should read “affect”  
“as long as” should read “even if”

“who” should read “whom”  
“deviation” should read “deviations”  
“carrying on” should read “carrying out”  
“assumption” should read “assumptions”





“they that both” should read “they show that both”  
“quietened” should read “quieted”  
“margin of errors” should read “margins of error”  
“till” should read “until”

“to the banking” should read “with the banking”  
“or” should read “for”  
“putty-putty mod the optimalityel” should read “putty-putty model  
the optimality”  
“Amadeo Modigliani” should read “Franco Modigliani”.





CAITLIN NEWBY

## Sixteen Glances

*after Amedeo Modigliani's Female Nude (1916)*

1. The first time you see her, you're in a public place and can't get a good look at her. She's visible only from the neck up and even there, on the far side of the road, you do not want to stare. But you can see that she is his—even from there, even from the neck up.
2. When asked what school or style his paintings belonged to, Modigliani replied they were 'Modiglianis'.
3. Swan necks and apricot flesh; pubic hair; full, rosy breasts; the outline of a nose and almond eyes which are so often closed or blank—just a daub of brown or blue which gives to them a haunted, knowing look.
4. There is nowhere in the gallery to sit comfortably for a long while and study the line of her nose, the angle of her chin, her waist, the brushstrokes of her breasts and hips that look so much like fingerprints. You find you are okay with this because it's difficult to look at her. You think she was not made for you and that you cannot be the one to look.
5. 'Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus, she turns herself into an object—and most particularly an object of vision: a sight.' (John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*).
6. Hearing yourself described by the person you love is mostly terrifying because it means you have been looked at—have been considered and determined by the object of your own desiring glance. The words you hear say nothing more than that you too are an object, one to be rejected or desired.
7. You read about the male gaze in Western art and come across the concept of the glance: 'a furtive or sideways look [...] which shifts to conceal its own existence'. You close the book. You know, or think you know, what the term really means: a female way of seeing.
8. You do not return to the gallery.





9. Still, you imagine her. You touch your collarbone, your waist, your cheek. Secretly, you want to be the woman in the painting.
10. This calls forth the subject of shame.
11. Shame has been associated with female nakedness since Ancient Greece. In the 4th century BCE, Praxiteles of Athens sculpted the first life-size depiction of a nude woman: the Aphrodite of Knidos, or Venus Pudica, which shows the goddess naked, one hand reaching for a towel while the other covers her pubis.
12. Next, Eve, who, with Adam, became aware of their nakedness as a result of eating the apple and was blamed and punished for their transgression. Berger notes that in the Renaissance, the medieval tradition of the narrative sequence of their fall was replaced by a depiction of the moment of their shame. They cover themselves with fig leaves because 'their shame is not so much in relation to one another as to the spectator'.
13. Modigliani's nude refuses all narrative contexts. She is neither an oriental slave nor a whore. Nor is she a Venus Pudica, whose name comes from the Latin pudicus, in English pudic, meaning, among other things, 'that has a sense of shame'.
14. And though her eyes are closed, she is aware that she is (always) being looked at.
15. To be the woman in the painting is to be the object of a gaze. This is, of course, inevitable. Yet she is not ashamed—rather, she seems to glow with pleasure. There is an honesty in her exposure, a willingness to be seen regardless of the judgement of male eyes.
16. It is this kind of nakedness that terrifies—one you can only glance at.





## About the Contributors

**Padraig Regan** is the author of two poetry pamphlets: *Who Seemed Alive & Altogether Real* (Emma Press, 2017) and *Delicious* (Lifeboat, 2016). In 2015, they were the recipient of an Eric Gregory Award.

**Emma Must** lives in Belfast. Her debut poetry pamphlet, *Notes on the Use of the Austrian Scythe*, won the Templar Portfolio Award and was published by Templar in 2015. Her work is included in both *New Poets from the North of Ireland* (Blackstaff, 2016) and *The Best New British and Irish Poets 2017* (Eyewear). In spring 2018, Emma's poem 'Belfast Pastoral' was performed during the Freedom of the City of Belfast events for Kenneth Branagh, George Mitchell and Bill Clinton. She is currently completing her first and second poetry collections.

**Stephen Sexton** lives in Belfast where he teaches at the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry. Poems have appeared in *Granta*, *Poetry London*, and *Best British Poetry 2015*. His pamphlet, *Oils*, published by The Emma Press in 2014, was the Poetry Book Society's Winter Pamphlet Choice. He was the winner of the 2016 National Poetry Competition and the recipient of an ACES award from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. He received an Eric Gregory Award in 2018. A first book will be published by Penguin in 2019.

**Caitlin Newby** was born in Los Angeles. She has poems and translations published and forthcoming from *Ambit*, *gorse*, *Oxford Poetry*, and *Poetry Ireland Review*. She is the poetry editor of *The Tangerine*, a magazine of new writing based in Belfast.

**The Seamus Heaney Centre at Queen's** has been home to some of the UK and Ireland's foremost poets, novelists, scriptwriters and critics, since it was established in 2003. Building on a literary heritage at Queen's that stretches back to the 1960s Belfast Group, the Centre is dedicated to excellence and innovation in creative writing and poetry criticism.

**The Courtauld Institute of Art** was founded in 1932 by Samuel Courtauld, the chairman of Courtaulds Ltd from 1921-46. Between 1926-30 he amassed a huge collection of Impressionist art, including works by Van Gogh, Manet, Cézanne, Monet, Gauguin, and Renoir, which he donated to the Institute and Gallery. The Courtauld's Amedeo Modigliani painting *Female Nude* (c.1916) is currently on loan to The Ulster Museum.

### **The Ulster Museum and NMNI Collection**

National Museums NI's art collections at the Ulster Museum include fine and applied art (decorative art) of national and international significance. We hold more than 15,000 historical and contemporary artworks. This includes painting, sculpture, works on paper, glass, ceramics, silver and metalwork, jewellery, furniture, costume, and textiles.



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