

Edges **Edge**

(Towards, not about, Liam's Fleming's twelve objects in his exhibition titled *Glass in Twelve Parts*)

I do

Composed of stacks of irregularly rectangular hollow glass forms, Liam's objects evince a miraculous composure. Miraculous because he seems to have achieved the near impossible – the creation of meaningfully, energetically-harmonious couplings and threesomes. Not once but twelve times, even, do we encounter the happy absence of troublesome Power Middles, Neurotic Tops, Enervated Switches, Ambivalent Anti-Partners who might disrupt the scene, who may delimit the creative possibilities of the pulling unions of conjoined otherness.

Of course: I jest (do I?); I anthropomorphise (I do!).

Swallow (your aura)

I also state/imply the obvious, being perhaps unhelpfully clear that his sculptures wryly flirt with the complexity of connections. Yet this overstatement hopefully announces in its very redundancy how they so carefully hold (by way of dialectical potential) a series of misconnections, separations, disjointments, anti-enjambments. So perhaps it's no big code shift to say that their arhythmic rhythms shape subtle sequences of expectation and surprise (the quality of this surprise being akin to something – a hazardous thought, caviar, a certain type of dumpling - bursting in your mouth-mind as a sudden shocking intimacy announces itself in-and-to-you that you feel self-betrayingly un-in-charge-of and certain is now wildly, ostentatiously, circling your body, your aura.

Saw tooth wave is a kind of relationship

In this exhibition these dynamics are staged under/alongside the name of Philip Glass, the pianist and composer whose pieces, like Liam's, simultaneously reside in and travel along a linear patternation that constantly reach back and ahead of themselves such that repetition is always more than that, always in the service of a subtle mixing up of positions of arrival and departure. Such an approach to the sequencer's art finds a compatriot in Brancusi's *Endless Column*, 1918, with its own shape stacking proffering its formal legibility at an all-at-once level and at a compartmentalist one (the train, the carriages perhaps), that forms an aesthetic intertext shadowing, ghost-noting and occasionally wolf-noting it into an entirely new, unquantifiable entity, an entity never quite itself, an entity always about to arrive/depart. It's possible to consider that Liam's subtle dramatisation of these prior actions and artefacts of suspension is eroticised in the hoveringly deferred inner, intimate burst that manifests itself along the joins between the elements that refer to the inside-outside nature of certain kinds of delineations/organs/membranes for Irigaray, for Freud, for Guyotat, for Douglas. Liam's holding in-betweenness conjures, therefore, a frisson of abeyance; his edges edge.

Oh, ghost-Lauren wolf-Berlant

It should be left there, hanging...but I want to add that the brilliantly rendered and balanced finish of the pieces only exist in their specific relations because of Liam's command of weights and thicknesses that brings their voluptuous precarity into such relief for us and that viscosly leads our awareness of the deft interplay of opacity and translucency, colour and its confusion (and that prepare the ground for its bursting inside of you). Incautiously, or contradictorily (?), I'd also like to float around these objects the entropic quality Smithson picked up on when writing about what he dubbed the New Monuments of Judd, Morris et al, in which commercial value-rhetoric 'fell' away from their works - that were made from the very materials of those products by virtue of their blank (but not non-expressive) abstraction - and in doing so not only escaped the modernist time of continual change, but time itself. In my mind, Liam's works operate as non-blank expressive echoes of such a take on those objects, demonstrating how the de-periodising notion of entropy Smithson identified may well be a ghost/wolf-noted serialised-historical-present underpinning the emotional register of an (I won't say 'our' but I do presume it) orientation to the traumatically extruded non-moment-non-new-monumentality of what 'we' call today.

Robert Cook

Curator of Contemporary Art, Art Gallery of Western Australia