

Frieze

Questionnaire: Glenn Brown

19 December 2017

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Q: What should change?

A: 'At the Moment, Britain's slow car crash into Brexit.'



Hendrik Goltzius, *Pietà*, 1596.
Courtesy: National Gallery of Art,
Washington, D.C.

What images keep you company in the space where you work?

I have a huge collection of art books in the studio and am surrounded by images of other artists' work. A small etching – Hendrik Goltzius's *Pietà* (1596) – hangs on my wall to remind me how beautiful art has to be in order to capture one's soul.

What was the first piece of art that really mattered to you?

When I was about 14, my brother Colin gave me Gert Schiff's *Images of Horror and Fantasy* (1978). It's a catalogue for an exhibition that took place at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York, in 1977. I liked everything in it – Francis Bacon, Max Ernst, Henry Fuseli, Alfred Kubin.

What is your favourite title of an artwork?

They Slipped the Surly Bonds of Earth and Touched the Face of God. It's the title for a painting after Rembrandt that I am just finishing which depicts the artist as a wicked laughing clown. The title is a quote from a speech by Ronald Reagan when he addressed the nation after the Challenger space shuttle disaster.

What do you wish you knew?

I like learning something for the first time, especially when it is something that has evaded my knowledge for a long time; something that cannot be fully comprehended, only touched upon in moments of mental clarity. I sometimes think I understand quantum physics, but I probably don't.

What should stay the same?

Nothing.

What could you imagine doing if you didn't do what you do?

The prospect of not being a painter or artist of some sort is unthinkable.

What music are you listening to?

I just bought Arcade Fire's album *Everything Now* (2017) but I am also listening to Claudio Monteverdi's opera *L'Orfeo* (1607).

What are you reading?

Hari Kunzru's *Gods Without Men* (2011).

What do you like the look of?

Though I am very much in love with early baroque architecture, my current fascination is brutalism.

What is art for?

Pure entertainment. If it isn't entertaining, then it isn't educational or enlightening.

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