

*"And I'm tired, I'm so tired
Of a lot of people in a lot of high places"*¹

Robbie Fraser is a dreamer.

In an era where the parties of the global left have resigned themselves to pandering to a mythological centre in an effort to convince liars and crooks, they aren't so bad, reality bites.

The Centre Always Drifts To The Right, as is its wont.

There is no middle ground, there never was.

Funny how the post leftist drifts to the safe shores of conservatism, the status quo. A fundamental lack of ambition haunts them. When they close their eyes, they don't dream.

Who hurt you?

Neoliberalism, late capitalism, accelerationism, dirtbag left, proud boys, alt right, blah blah blah.

Thesis, antithesis, synthesis.

*"And I don't know what I'm scared of or what I even enjoy"*²

Mark Fisher. Lol.

HARK!

En masse we are burnt out, jaded, ironic, post sincerity. The empire struck back, through technocracy and the wild west empire building of the internet our dreams have been conquered.

*"They're selling postcards of the hanging,
They're painting the passports brown"*³

What then is the role of art?

Twirling a brush around a canvas, what's the value in it?

To come back to painting amidst all of this may seem like a Kaczynski like luddism, an affectation even.

And yet...

Fraser's work is generally free of representation but it isn't merely ornamental. A fundamental thorniness rears its head in works like *Wield*. Here we are presented for the first and only time in the show with a literal weapon, a call to arms. Previous writing on Fraser's work have drawn allusions to science fiction, while there may be allusions to be drawn to the realm of fiction it is this writer's opinion that these are as Tony Conrad might put it, *completely in the present*. Who needs science fiction when we've got the 24-hour news cycle and social media? Axl was right when he said they took it all from us, dammit.

*"I can't imagine image anymore."*⁴

As Michael Morley observed, we live in a world where great artists' depictions of suffering are rendered inert by the news camera's lens. Online we are mediating images of abject degradation in all its forms, the photographic image of suffering is forever etched into this century's eyelids.

In being non-representational painting offers us a respite from the literal.

¹ Spacemen 3, *Revolution*, Playing With Fire, Bomp, 1990.

² Manic Street Preachers, *Yes*, The Holy Bible, Epic, 1994.

³ Dylan, Bob, *Desolation Row*, Highway 61 Revisited, Columbia, 1965.

⁴ Morley, Michael, *After The War*, Sumer, 2024.

It is a thing, but like, it isn't.
A chance to reassess the rules of engagement.
Hard on Drugs/Soft on Drugs.

*"Rise, black amps tear the sky.
Feedback will free your mind and set you free"⁵*

Like various altered states, painting distorts and sometimes irreparably changes how we look at ourselves and the structures that bind us. Laing sure did love his knots.
He's no mere formalist, although you will find pretty pictures buried in the Fraser Cannon.
Legalise it.
"Meaning should not be a function of illusion – works do not effect meaning but instead generate it"⁶
Use your illusion.

Promethean Block Chain.

*"Well they got mansions,
Think we should rob them"⁷*

Gordon Walters NFTs. Lol.
Does it hurt when I do this?
A painting is not an answer.

Real Eyes Realise Real Lies.

Robbie makes it look easy.
It's not mark making, it's painting.
"Context please."

A painting is not a picture.
Fraser would argue that his paintings are representational of abstraction, I'll take his word for it.
What do you get if you put Roger Waters, Tupac and dear friend Dylan Scott in a room?
Sorry, there are no easy answers.
The subtext to this body of work is that the centre will not hold, the lie of appealing to left and right is a self-negating snake that will eventually eat its own tail. Although down, we aren't out. We will survive the next news cycle.
They want us to give up.
*So damn easy to cave in,
Man kills everything.⁸*
In this sense these paintings operate as what the Spacemen 3 might call a *Dreamweapon⁹*, a call to arms.
A weapon to wield against the easy charms of cynicism and pessimism, the centre, with its lack of conviction. Yuck.

Crooked Argent, Shallow Depths.

Complacency breeds inertia.
Reshaping and reconfiguring colour and form.

⁵ Electric Wizard, *Dopethrone*, Dopethrone, Rise Above, 2000.

⁶ Pg 12, Nixon, John, *Minimal Art*, John Nixon EPW, ACCA, 2004.

⁷ Good Charlotte, *Lifestyles of The Rich & The Famous*, The Young & The Hopeless, Epic, 2004.

⁸ Manic Street Preachers, *Faster*, The Holy Bible, Epic, 1994.

⁹ Spacemen 3, *Dreamweapon: An Evening of Contemporary Sitar Music*, Fierce, 1990.

Difference & Repetition on public transport.
Colour theory? No thanks. I'm good.
How shallow the depths of the reactionary.

Descending Stereopsis.

A loud Yankee piece for our American times. *As the Veneer of Democracy Starts to Fade*¹⁰, indeed. Reaganomics, fascism, Richard Nixon vs John Nixon, neoliberalism, semiotics, symbolic exchange, Superman vs Muhammed Ali, The Beatles, those dead French guys.

Borrowed Dreams of Hippie Scum

Never trust a hippie.

Composition, decomposition, entropy, decay.

He's wrestling with the 20th century in the 21st century like the rest of us.

Mulch.

"Teenage angst has paid off well

*Now I'm bored & old"*¹¹

Like a seagull cannibalizing a KFC chicken wing, that's bad.

Orchid's Warning.

"The threads of global fabric are untied

*The role of the western free world is in decline"*¹²

And here we are back with Robbie, the dreamer.

There's never been a better time to be a dreamer, it's all up for grabs and it sure couldn't get much worse.

Let the empire fall, the museums burn, the ink run dry, the empirical knowledge of the past be forgotten.

Let's not and say we did.

"But what does it all mean?" You tell me, man.

P Wits, February 2025

¹⁰ Mark Stewart, *As The Veneer of Democracy Starts To Fade*, Mute, 1985.

¹¹ Nirvana, *Serve The Servants*, In Utero, Geffen, 1993.

¹² Carcass, *Keep on Rotting in The Free World*, Swansong, Earache, 1996.