

ESCAPE FROM BIOGRAPHY

“I write of melancholy by being busy to avoid melancholy”

-- Robert Burton

Genealogy is at the centre of it all, if you ask me. But rather than a genealogy of Erdem Taşdelen's family history, it is a genealogy of his own evolution, who he is now and his former selves, and their modes of desire.

Erdem Taşdelen was born in Ankara, Turkey. He is presently in his late twenties. When he was a child his family moved about in Europe, and so he was never quite rooted in a specific location. He came to Canada as a young man. He attended Emily Carr University of Art and Design, and after his time as a student he has remained in Vancouver.

He is a passionate romantic whose humors are at times imbalanced a little on the side of the melancholic. In fact, his passions sometimes outweigh his reason; the effects of this on his personality are charming, though the effects on his subjectivity appear mildly torturous. His awareness of gender and sexuality is developed; he finds books seductive.

Presently, he and I are in the process of having conversations about time. We slowly discuss how time's passage allows for the accumulation of meaning. We drop and pick up threads together about how this relates to a procedure of working as an artist. I imagine that time's unfolding is present in work as a symbolic order or meaning that is made through the almost casual allowance of objects, memories, thoughts, punctuation marks, loves, and loss to pile up.

We also speak with some frequency about broken hearts; lack; what we are looking for. Desire again. Is that what art is, the choices we make about what we desire to see? He told me once that art is what he decides is art. If this is so, and I'm sure it is true for him, does that mean that the will to make art is itself also made of the experiences we've had? Or is it our longing? Both of these can build up to put a point onto a base, spreading presence outward.

Places and forms are also to be mined in the service of decision: Bern, Ankara, Bonn, Istanbul, Vancouver. The bottom of the hour glass. The couch. The Internet.

Where else? What about the places of the mind?

Erdem is a reader: his organized piles of books contribute to a deep valley of information inside of which he swims. The waters are refreshing, but

once in a while things get a little turgid. Some days it's just a single line over and over again in a hundred different contexts. We often talk about the same things over and over. In a playful way, we find paths around the overt seriousness of our mutual consideration of the future and our misgivings about the nature of what lies ahead. I am regularly drawn back to converse with Erdem on these topics: his intelligence and humour draws many people to him. His cheeky behaviour is a drastic contrast to any simultaneous depressions.

Sometimes after we converse, I am more aware that time extends both forward and backward. I often ask questions like: can we reach back through time to comfort past selves, or can we only reach in space toward (away from) one another?

Despite my reluctance to invoke his presence, I believe this work both depicts a version of him and presents an exorcism of his desire. Somehow, like some outmoded magician artist, this man manages to instill a sense of his own route for thinking within a series of objects through their careful selection, arrangement, isolation or gathering. It makes both he and I uncomfortable to anthropomorphize, but I could understand the work better for seeing glimpses of his past selves, and knowing that these objects existed in some form alongside them.

In the removal of his current presence from the image, the object, and the unfolding and disappearing narrative, the artist asks us to take his place in the work. Thinking about ourselves, we carry on with these mementos that he is now free to shed.

These instances of yesterday's desires have become the shed skin all of our past selves.

Allison Collins