MAP

#68 A BACKGROUND OF BUTTERCUPS - REVIEW - AUGUST 2023

‘THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO EXPERIENCE THINGS BEYOND HAVING AN EXPLANATION’

Myriam Mouflih takes a walk to see Alter Altar by Jasleen Kaur at Tramway, Glasgow

Jasleen Kaur, courtesy the artist and Glasgow Life

I am walking down Darnley Street, the same road my mum and I would take to school, on the way to see your show. You spoke about ‘the geography of it’, of making an exhibition in Pollokshields, and I think of your walk to the gallery, tracing a route map in my head.

This is my third visit and my first alone. Before I see anything, I can hear music. ‘Rapper’s Delight’ by Grandmaster Flash leaking out, sound filling the space. After a few laps round the space, eyes casting over everything, I sit on the large rug in the centre of the room and listen to your voice. Before, I hadn’t quite made the connection that this was you singing and I am trying to imagine what that might feel like, resourcing energy to produce sound from the tips of your toes, energy flowing through. I imagine the vibrations of sound coming outwards from my body, instead of towards me on the carpet.

On the large rug I think of the big house on Bruce Road, of being a child sitting on rugs on top of carpet and feeling the textures with my fingers. I pull up an article on my phone as mentioned in the podcast I listened to on the way over. It is an article on mystical encounter and I am very taken by the sentiment of one of its sentences, which describes divine perception through the lens of a 14th century mystic as ‘a kind of seeing that is also a feeling and a knowing’. I mean to ask H what she thinks of the exhibition when we meet the next day, but I forget. I think I am a little shy, and maybe embarrassed too, to be writing this and not to have the words. When we speak you say ‘there are other ways to experience things beyond having an explanation of it’ and I am trying to follow this lead, trying to intuit with my body and not just my brain, to embody a feeling and a knowing.

The suspended sky above is almost polluted by the weight of what it holds. Political ideologies are represented through different flyers or items, showing the overlap between politics and religion. This overlap appears elsewhere too, in two pictures depicting acts of solidarity between different communities in different geographies. One a clear interfaith act of solidarity, another a picture of community solidarity against oppressive governmental legislation. These acts of solidarity rendered in big ways make me think of how these are visible in more everyday ways, too. Sitting in the Hidden Gardens, it is impossible not to hear the sounds and smells of the Gurdwara's langar, offering a free meal for anyone who needs it. Leaflets for community growing projects alongside mother and baby classes.

What ripples throughout the work in *Alter Altar* is the desire to build something new. We spoke about inheritance and tradition and how those are passed down to be moulded by each successive generation who takes up the mantle. Recalling wisdom from a friend, Jasleen describes tradition as 'people grappling with their present': the elements that comprise this exhibition are the outcomes of this grappling made material. Locating the political and spiritual work of building a new devotional practice within the body as a code of DNA collapses time. It is the work of those who have come before and of children who are not yet born, going backwards and forwards, always in motion.

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Myriam Mouflih is a freelance film programmer and writer based in Glasgow

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Alter Altar, Jasleen Kaur, Tramway, 31 Mar-8 Oct, 2023