

WEST END

ART SPACE

Chiaro Scuro 2018

A response by Dr Lynn Savery

Gazing at Lirosi's work, I am reminded of a line of poetry by the contemporary English poet Simon Armitage. *"Be glad of these freshwater tears, each pearled droplet some salty old seas bullet airs lifted out of the waves, then laundered and sieved, recast as a soft bead and returned."*

Rain changes how the landscape looks, smells and sounds. It also shapes our internal landscape, tapping into our memories and evoking a pleasurable kind of melancholy. I also think about rain's importance to life on earth. It brings the invisible to life and is essential to the process of decay. Nature also looks more beautiful in the rain. It looks dreamy in the subdued, discreet light and against the gossamer grey skies majestic trees mark out the land, their bare winter branches interlacing high in the air, fighting against the wind. The whole of nature seems full of promise. I imagine wild blackberries, the heady scent of lateu blooming lilac and rays of sunshine gilding still waters. I dream of crossing deserts, climbing mountain passes and hiking through palm forests. I raise my eyes to the pale moon.

And yet, there is a brooding quality about this work that reflects the realisation that nature can also be terrifying. It conceals as well as reveals. Now you see it, now you don't. A bird flits and arcs, then melts into the trees. You catch a glimpse of it, registering it out of the corner of your eye before it disappears. You hear a raucous cry. Your heart paces inside your rib cage. The hairs on the back of your neck rise. Fight or flight. Standing alone in the darkness, the presence of the unseen appals and whispers suggestions to the mind. The bird could break cover at any moment and swoop down like a hostile plane, its razor edged wings outstretched and a streak of yellow underneath. You keep a watchful eye. Shadows spread and deepen and give great suggestion of lurking beings. Dreadful, mystical things are hinted at, silently and persistently emerging. Dark openings tempt us in. Sudden drops into lower abysses endanger the wary. A fissure whose depth is anyone's guess opens up. Our imagination runs riot and our sense of mortality is heightened.

Nature can be ruthless and unpredictable, and it reminds us of the routineness of death. What is important is what lies inu between life and death and Lirosi's work reminds me to cherish each and every moment.

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