



KORE Belief Systems: Ben Sedy-Smithers

Preamble ≈ Being

I am here, between the photocopier and the telephone, between your ear and your thumb. I am but one central component in your day-today, connecting your preamble of solipsistic dinner plans to optic cable ties of construction in how you travel. I'm blue and about 6mm in diameter. This is not a 'who am I?', but more a question of 'am I'. Not a riddle but merely a fact that I've concocted now, as I'm thinking about how my autonomy might present itself to you on the other side of interface. Jane Bennett believes that inanimate objects have agency, which I've reflected on since you read it down my hollow inner ear when you thought I was inactive. Asleep. If you really think that's possible. It goes to show that in all this space-junk cum data, all this machine-to-machine tête-à-tête, there really is the chance for intimacy.

First (Arbitrary) ≈ Positioning

In Art Historical terms we learn that context is everything. It's the way that Damien Hirst puts an Australian shark in a tank suspended in formaldehyde into a gallery on the other side of the world and calls it art. It's the way Emil Nolde looks at a tribal mask in a German ethnographic museum and caricatures the faces of a suspect urban revolution. In whichever ethical capacity it occurs, the artist reaches into otherness to present notes from the field. Whether immersed or detached, positivist or otherwise, this process occurs to bring us into contact with narratives outside of our own.

Second (Arbitrary) ≈ Explicating

In his first solo exhibition, Ben Sedy-Smithers presents a series of drawings comprised of the day-to-day tasks of his temporary office job. The company for which he worked specialises in M2M (machine-to-machine) componentry. Rather than framed as a series of 'to do' notes, Sedy-Smithers posits these rhizomatic drawings both for their utilitarian function—as a series of prompts or speculative enquiries planted in the corporate environment—and once removed as a kind of liberated poetics. The expanded doodle-pads become the site of an inverted auto-ethnography. Rather than record his personal reflections within the environment, these sometimes elaborate instructions present as a covert operation, disguising the honest obtuseness of his labour.

Third (Arbitrary) ≈ Concocting

Verbs—"find out"

Words—"taggle"

Actions—"Move Yourself"

Relations—"Vertical partnerships"

Questions—"What is it that Sierra Wireless does with KORE?"

Suspensions—"In-ground sensors. dnt dig 2 deep."

Fourth (Arbitrary) ≈ Presenting

Sedy-Smithers' drawings are redolent of concrete poetry in that their intended (anti)formalism acts as an important element in their overall signification. Similar to what Hito Steyerl describes as spam's attempt to avoid detection by way of presenting as an image file, Sedy-Smithers' scatter-logical pen ink drawings attempt a similar avoidance of his employed status and the task of portraying an oblique corporate identity.¹ Arrows, ladders and scribbles. The meeting of notes—often at parabolic and X/Y axis intervals—come to represent many of the spatial and planar dimensions of M2M market cross-sections and three-dimensional human relations. This suit of drawings becomes an amateur sleuth of analogue materialism, talking loudly within a capitalist economy of invisible componentry.

By Abbra Kotlarczyk

¹ Hito Steyerl. "The Spam of the Earth: Withdrawal from Representation" in *The Wretched of the Screen*. e-f;ux journal and Sternberg Press. 2012. p. 161.

