

Christopher Newberry's images present us with a paradox. This paradox is contained in the fact that they exist in the liminal area of being one thing and another at the same time. In this case, abstract organisation of colour and form morph seamlessly into perfectly representational aspects of the material world. Our brains sense one aspect, then drift to the other without being able to make the blend of the two. This dual image engages our brains on different levels. On the representational side it provokes personal memories, associations and links to our broader existence. The other strand seems to move us towards a sense of underlying Platonic forms. This double take knocks us off guard. It gives our perceptions a puzzle which it cannot ever solve. In this way, as is the effect of some Japanese koan phrases, it silences the chatter which continually drones on in our conscious minds. It allows a broader, inclusive and perhaps more compassionate experience of the world.

There is another aspect of these images which gives them their startling punch. They use what is known as the 'supernormal sign stimuli'. This is where we are presented with an image which offers more than is available in nature. The idea is based on research by the naturalist N. Tinbergen. In the making of works of art this technique is a constant, from subtle exaggerations in colour to wild caricature. In Newberry's pictures all aspects of the image are enhanced, from heightened colours to exaggerated symmetry to sharpened horizons and outlines.

All of this leads to an art which can transform our emotional perception of the material world. We come away subtly different people to those we were before these encounters and see the world from a new and enlivening perspective. And that is how it should be.

Garry Kennard
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Platonic Views, Composition 82



Platonic Views, Composition 23 I

REVIEW

Garry Kennard is an artist and writer, director of Art and Mind. He has exhibited in London, Oxford, Cambridge and Winchester. He had a retrospective exhibition at GV Art in London in 2013. He has lectured at the Conway Hall, London; Clare Hall, Cambridge University, and at the BA Science conference at Exeter University. His essay 'The Uses of Paradox' was published by the University of Florida's 'Institute for the Psychological Study of the Arts'. His essay 'Art and Mind' was published in 'The Journal of Neuroscience' 2007.



Garry Kennard, Self Portrait, 1998