

The Meridian paintings (2008)

An introduction

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The *Meridian* paintings are the product of a long, meditative moment in front of one of the *Dimensional* pieces, or rather one section of it: the left-hand side, where the three constitutive tones happened to be in the order of mid-light-mid-dark, the first three of equal width and the last extending across the central space.

Such meditative moments are a constant, both in my own practice and in the time I spend contemplating other artists' work. The metaphorical, existential implications of such moments do not entirely escape me, of course, but in the moment itself my concentration is on the visual detail, the information as it were, as to proportion, fineness of distinction, tonal variation, on the incidental and the accidental, on all that can, or may, be 'read' there.

The moment of birth, as it were, of the *Meridian* paintings was the point at which I began speculating as to the possibility, and the probable outcome, of continuing the relationship of tones as a series of alternating bands across the entire space of the painting, rather than, as in the *Dimensional* pieces, the bands solely constituting the notional border.

Of course, the questions, as to how and why, then posed themselves. In the first case, the answer was to alternate three bands of different widths, or intervals as I came to call them; while as to their order, or sequence, rather than predetermine or pattern them, to resort to chance, and throw a dice to determine them. The answer in the second case, I left to see what transpired from the first experiment, or model, as I prefer to call them.

The intervals form an irregular pattern, or transverse rhythm, of vertical planes, in themselves constituting a play of lines and spaces, their random arrangement setting up echoes, or symmetries, and cross-rhythms. The tones are also determined according to a random, though in their case more limited procedure: that is, under the rule that no tone may be set against itself—otherwise, of course, the order and very existence of the intervals would be destroyed.

The rhythm set up by the original arrangement of intervals is now both complicated and disrupted by the introduction of the three different tonal values. There are the same possibilities of echo and

cross-rhythm, however the tones add both depth effects and an indefiniteness as to the actual number of tones—that is, the value of any one shifts in relation to its neighbouring tone/tones—and an indefiniteness as their own individual value.

It is this indefiniteness, or rather, this openness, and the lack—pre-existent in the random arrangement of the intervals, and elaborated in the addition of tone—of a centre or a stabilising order, that originally prompted the title and is the guarantee of an ultimately unlocatable position in relation to the paintings.

Meridians are artificial constructions, imaginary lines mapping points of location, or connection, in the course of negotiating a world—critical points where relationships and their accompanying uncertainties manifest themselves: that is, points of encounter.

In remaining open, the Meridian paintings represent a space, a constructed space, indicative—rather than prescriptive or descriptive—of something that may or may not happen in front of them: that is, of an encounter.

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