

Into Windows

WINTER, 2015

Harry H. Cornelius

Explorations of the Spaces Between

Winter, 2015

By Harry H. Cornelius

In this body of work, our eyes enter *Into Windows* but do not seek to pass beyond. This restraint is not only born of a reluctance to invade privacies. It is not simply imposed by curtailed off, painted over and boarded up views. It also issues from a philosophical reticence to posit a realm beyond, aware as we are that windows in art also frame a longstanding spiritual discourse. In the tradition, in Vermeer or Frederich for example, the view through the window is inside looking out. In looking out, the artist often projects an inner world onto the outer. Our view is reversed. We stand outside and look in. We are essentially outsiders, even to ourselves.

Windows of interest are not those elegantly designed and manicured frames through which we seek to present our best faces to the world or through which we stake claim to prestigious views. Such windows are overladen with artifice. They are transparently false fronts.

Windows of interest are situated where no one is meant to look, that bear the scars of time and experience and unwittingly reveal idiosyncrasies of human endeavour. They are often found off the beaten path in the back alleys and laneways of our aging urban centres.

What can we see from this outside perspective? We see a middle world that is *neither here*, where we stand. *Nor there*, deep in the interior, beyond grates and glazing. What goes on inside, what goes on well beyond the panes, is simply unknowable from our vantage.

Rather than becoming downcast at the prospect of such unknowability, and rather than passing by these immured and tattered presences as mundanities and embarrassments unworthy of notice, we can rejoice in the richness of what lies actually before us.

We can attend to what is here and now: delighting in the overlapping rhythms of protective layerings... deciphering the Delphic scrims of marks streaked and dotted across their surfaces... exploring curious contents stuffed into sills' compacted spaces... soaking up the inner luminosity and reflected light that washes through the panes. Such ordinary beauty can be nourishing.

Grids of mesh, iron bar, chain link and reinforcement wire are not just blockading orders we may strain to see past and that hold us back corporeally. Rather, they are things to see in-and-of-themselves. They often create a structural logic – a compositional order – that verges on music, that absorbs disorder and sustains equilibrium.

The grid itself implies an order that extends far beyond the window's frame, perhaps infinitely so. As such, it helps transform these carved out precincts into complete middle worlds in themselves.

The images in this body of work are thus conceived of as landscape studies of the space that lies between, a space that – with a little effort and an adjusted perspective – we can happily occupy.

Harry H. Cornelius

PHOTO-BASED ART

M 416 737 8496
harryhcornelius@gmail.com
harryhcornelius.com

616 Indian Road
Toronto ON M6P 2C6
Canada