

The baby island headland (Finis Terre)

4.48 am - My baby weight is dragging me down through the bed - I need to go to a fat farm.

Baby, who is also on the heavier side, kicks me in the head and turns on her axis to squirm away from the moon, only two days waning and tugging on our mattress into outer space. What kind of a neo-pagan has recurring dreams of EasyJet flights nosediving?

Is my career trajectory getting to me? At night I'm either in airports, free-falling planes, or hostile, metropolitan private views. Eternal return gathers me up and deposits me at an airport terminal in a dense pine forest somewhere in forgotten Europe.

In the waking life, I live in a bleak treeless landscape, on top of a cliff by the Celtic sea - Land's End. It is famously beautiful in its barrenness. I was depressed when I moved here, but now I'm happy, if not content. With motherhood I have forfeited the right to a violent plan B - I won't be jumping off the cliff after all. But nevertheless, according to artifacts.net I did indeed jump off a cliff in early 2015 when I moved to this place. The trajectory shows a clear nosedive.

Actually I thought that was quite a good year, it was 2016 that was so awful - but then 2016 was a bad year for everyone (except, naturally, the Brexiteers and the national fervor for ostrich politik). There were many intrusive thoughts at this time - sexual, suicidal - all rifting on a tide of inconsolable rage. I couldn't settle so my paintings were rash and impetuous and manic. I think now that this is what painting is to me - a reckoning with one's intrusive thoughts: Act / Erase / Thrash it out - start angry and sexy and violent and through a process of redactions make yourself invisible.

I don't think of my baby when I paint, I think of Matrixial space. She shifts around in her vortex and slams me in the face with both feet. Since I stopped breastfeeding my hormones are back and the gushes of love are real - I love her.

I feel like I don't even know how to feel about contemporary painting - I'm so confused since London has embraced 80s inflected figuration. I love the 80s as much as anyone but the market can make me feel so fat. Such cruelty! Big Eros with Nigel Farage levels of damage - Libido Unleashed.

Brexit is tremendously naff. Libraries are closing and we speak in neologisms with the institutional cadence of biological science lecturers rushing archly through the human reproductive organs to millennial students... I'm a neo-pagan paraconceptual painter, ok?

We have Choices. So arch so cynical.

The show in Paris was all windows. We could see rooftops and into other privacies. We made connections high up and full of Parisian light. I showed my first postpartum works - I was trying to find out how I felt and all that had emerged were images of knights and the Norman invasion. Brexit means what ?

Our trio brought even more South West into a Parisian apartment already imbued with it. We were so happy there, the baby rolled on the floor and I held her tight and slippery in the sunken bath. We loved our South Westerly hosts immediately. We ate food that tasted of manure and drank bittersweet farmyard schnapps. We were warmed through and the paintings became carapaces for real problems happening in real time. On October 14th we thought of King Harold and his eye and of conquerors and the conquered - this world, the one we live in - is after all made up of winners and losers.

But, there was solidarity and hope in this apartment with the windows. We had deeply felt conversations that revealed nuanced and impassioned opinions - our earnestness revealed. We drank the pokey syrup. Human warmth and intelligence mingled the heat of the still strong October sun through the panes of glass. Window panes and things of pain.

The paintings became absorbent and tender, they held the baby's giggles and her love, and the seagull's squawks from the Celtic sea in their thick substance of oil and pigment. The pain of the birth canal and the painful invasion of power relations and the grounds on how to fight for love and hope became manageable in this protected and generous atmosphere. Paintings bind sensations to matter, and here there was love and solidarity in the grooves.

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