



HOSPITALFIELD

The Pamphlet Series

SUMMER RESIDENCY 2015

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SHARKIST

Conal's Fish Eye

Conal landed three thrashing fish onto the catamaran deck. Pulling the hook through the mouth of the third, the hook caught and pulled the mackerel's eyeball clear out, leaving a seeping bloody hole. The fish continued to jump and spasm in the plastic box of catch, his eye socket weeping onto the other firm, now dead, tiger striped bodies. The eyeball, however, remained on the hook and Conal cast it back out to sea, perhaps hoping it might provide bait for another fish but more so because he found the ripping out of the eyeball grotesque. He wanted it to disappear. Reeling in some time later the eyeball remained - a gelatinous spot with warped pupil still staring up at him. Summoning a little courage he picked it off the hook and flung it into the sea. A seagull swooped and devoured the tiny speck and others flocked to the spot with hungry murderous eyes and dinosaur craws. "That seems even worse" said Conal with a shudder. "Sky Burial" said another.

Bell Rock Lighthouse

The speedboat slowed to a halt as it approached the lighthouse, 20 feet away. "Right now, we are just about four feet from the rock itself" the captain shouted over the wind and all aboard peered into the sea below. It was a great black creature, a whale or shark perhaps, but near the interlocking granite base of the lighthouse it transformed into a rock island, slick with sea. The passengers became lively, the rough 11 mile journey had not been conducive to conversation. Everyone had kept their attention on the sea and horizon, waiting expectantly for the lighthouse. The main event. Now people laughed and chatted as they wiped sea spray from red faces and retrieved cameras from bags and inner pockets. The captain began his touristic spiel, timeline for the adults, accidents and horror stories for the children, architectural specifics for the ex-engineer taking his wife on the trip as part of their anniversary weekend. The domestic arrangements on the lighthouse were intriguing. The apartment inside the lighthouse had been lived in as late as 1988 and you could imagine the room left just as it was, a kettle on the stove, a can of beans in the cupboard. The passengers listened as the grey wave carpet moved unendingly around them. The first set of eyes appeared only two feet from the boat. Shining black eyes set into an equally black head, the only part of a body visible above the water's surface. The gaze was intense, curious. It watched. Very still in the water. A moment later, another head, another pair of eyes, appeared next to it. Then another, further away this time. Black heads and sets of eyes emerging from the water one after the other. "Oh" said the captain with a laugh "the seals have come to join us" But the boat was now silent. These we're not like seals. These were not seals. Each adult and each child stared out from the boat as the large black disc eyes of the Umibōzu stared back in.

Madonna and Child with St. Lucia

Dating from around the 15th/16th Century, the painting of the Madonna with Child and Santa Lucia, the Patron Saint of the Blind is the oldest painting in Hospitalfield's collection but remains of unknown provenance. Hanging in the anteroom of the Picture Gallery, somewhat hidden behind a door, the painting depicts the Madonna doting on her chubby gilt haired child while St Lucia, or Saint Lucy, lurks in the background. Her gaze alone looks out from beyond the painting to the viewer. In her hands she carries a delicate tray on which we see two eyeballs focused a little to the right as to penetrate both the viewer's eyes and the back of the Madonna's shawl. It is unclear whether this a threat or warning - but the disembodied eyes render this painting a surrealist nightmare. Saint Lucy, or Lucia (meaning 'Light'), is known throughout the USA and Europe (especially Scandinavia) as the Patron Saint of the Blind and her feast day is celebrated on December 13th. She had a rocky life. Deciding to commit herself to god and remain a virgin at a relatively young age scuppered her mother's plans to marry her off to a rich pagan. She decided to take her mother to the tomb of another famous Christian and virgin, Saint Agatha, and it was there that she apparently saw a vision of the Saint and a long-standing illness of her mother's was cured. With her mother now converted, Lucy was free, but her jilted future pagan husband was less impressed and denounced Lucy to the local Roman Governor. After refusing to pray to his gods as penance she was sentenced to a life of enforced prostitution and/or death. It depends which version of the story you read. In various version's she was burned alive (but walked away unscathed), stabbed through the neck and finally, and where her famous patronage comes from, had her eyes gouged out. These were later, apparently, healed by god. She is mostly depicted with her own eyes intact and an offering of a new eyes on a dish for other unfortunates.

Cover Image: Umibozu (Dry etching), Philip M (2014)