



la petite mort

Dai Lowe is a Boston-born* Sassenach from Nottingham, who has lived in Manchester, York, Warwick, London and Cádiz but is settled (for now) in Auld Reekie.

A self-confessed dilettante (or, as we say in Scotland, 'waster'), he is a sporadic 'Sunday painter' or even 'Sunday conceptualist', who also dabbles in writing, web-design and anything else to fill the time. More often he sits in coffee shops and annoys the other customers. He hopes soon to graduate to lurching drunkenly down streets, yelling obscenities at lampposts.

Currently he is thinking about working on at least three books, not to mention a card game and a range of stationery items. He probably won't though.

As a spin-off from a (conceptual) performance project to buy 30 Victoria St in as many towns as possible, he is eating lunches at an Edinburgh restaurant with that address. New lunch companions are always welcome, rich widows especially so.

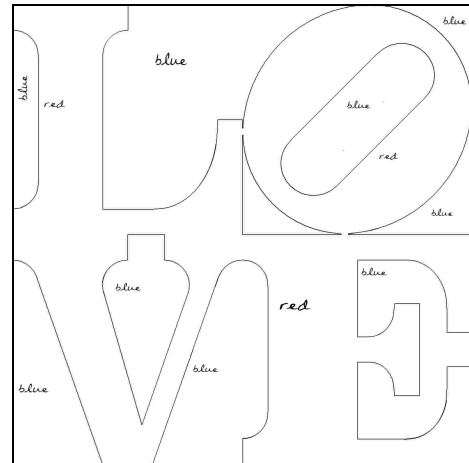
His childrens' masterpiece, *Little Mr Poonlop's 7th Holiday*, is available free online at www.poonlop.com and other stuff of his can be found at www.lucidity.ltd.uk

He can be contacted by those wanting portraits, figure studies or lunch at dailowe@hotmail.com

*Lincolnshire, of course

(finished paintings may not match designs exactly)

LOVE VARIATIONS



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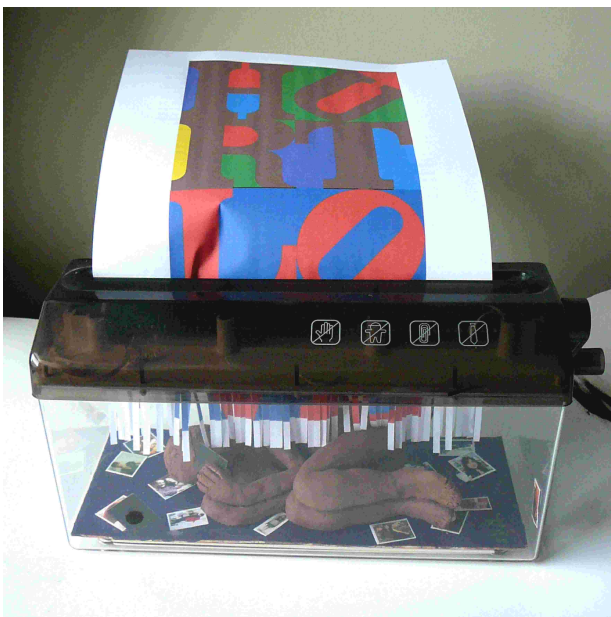
Variations
on the LOVE paintings
of Robert Indiana
by
Dai Lowe

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Randolph Gallery
3 Dundas St, Edinburgh

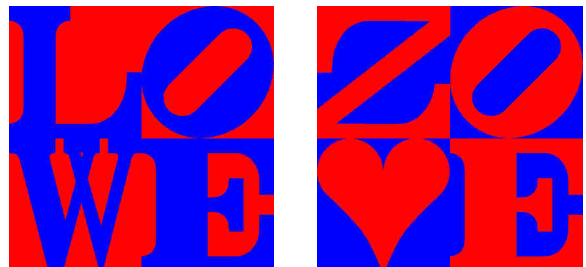
August 2008

to Zoe ...



Shreddie No 7: Because You're Worth It
(paper shredder, clay self portrait, photographs, text)

A Guy can still Dream?



Variations on love?

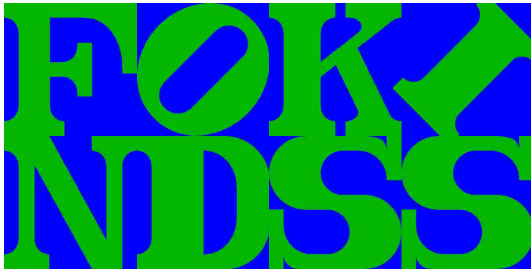
Is it still valid to write of love in a cynical, loveless, postmodern, posthistorical world? Was it ever?

Our vision of love, its significance, its permanence, its desirability even, shifts over time, so one can at least analyse it endlessly, comment on it. The only constant is change and change is constantly fuel for endless blether.

But surely it has all been said, repeatedly, from antiquity to the end of now?

The poems, the novels, the paintings, the popsongs echo down the ages: falling in love again, what's love got to do with it, what becomes of the broken-hearted, if this ain't love ...

And, in what friends assure the lovelorn is a sea full of fish, a beach strewn with available pebbles, where lovers are thought of like buses, not because they all come at once but because there'll always be another one along in a minute; is true devotion, even to those who have left, who utterly reject ones love, just a self-indulgent affectation? I hope not.




Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
 Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!
 Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
 Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.
Rabbie Burns




opening of show, Randolph Gallery, Edinburgh, 1/8/8



Tema con Variazioni

Back in the 1970s I discovered the  pics of Robert Indiana.





My name being  and being a natural-born parodist, it seemed obvious to decorate my portfolio with a pastiche of this iconic image.

In 2005 I moved to Edinburgh to be with , celestial nymph, Frida to my Diego, Sedley to my Dobbin, light of my life, fire of my loins and all that sort of rot. And in the Red Door Gallery on Victoria Street, I found a fragile perspex badge with a blast from my past ~ which in turn triggered an ever-snowballing series of ideas for paintings.

What matter that circumstances tore us apart?

A  is rarely, if ever found; , as Mr Crisp observed, is important because you *give* it, and maybe, sometimes, 'moving on' is a mistake, tantamount to running away from ones own soul. Hence my ongoing works, dedicated to dedication, loyal to loyalty, in love with love and totally committed to rank stupidity ~ and my jointly-japanese signature of DaiZo ~ 大ぞ. Yes, my heart is eternally spoken for ~ my body, on the other hand, is a complete tart.

As to the present show, even though Indiana himself

has worked with  and , I  these variations (which are only a part of the projected set, based on many hours alone with a dictionary) move the idea away from its Pop Art aesthetic, wonderful though that is, and shine a more post-modern light on the use of text in painting. Extending the evocative power of the abstract form of the letters ~ and the spaces between them ~ as well as that of the words chosen, might, I hope, affect the way they relate to the central concept ~ and the way in which this is shaped by the 'baggage' each viewer brings with them to the gallery. Will this, in turn, make us look in a fresh way at Indiana's original, celebratory works ~ and even rethink our attitude to the four letter word at the centre of it all, that all-encompassing idea which, even for a miserable nihilist git like me, gives a fleeting illusion of meaning to this vale of tears we call  ?

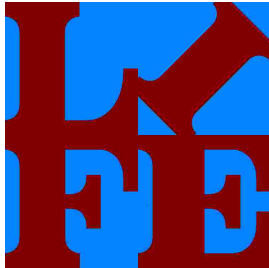
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[stop press: apparently Indiana is now painting HOPE as a response to Barack Obama's nomination. (a) God help us! and (b) I got there first, Bob!]

Progression?



A crowd is not company,
and faces are but a
gallery of pictures, and
talk just a tinkling cymbal
where there is not love.
Francis Bacon



and where there's life ...



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celestial nymph (detail)
(pencil drawing, 2004)

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I am currently working on an idea which would hopefully involve the spectator in an adventure with their own self-image, taking its inspiration from J S Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, in which the simple *Aria* is played at the end exactly as it was at the beginning ~ and yet sounds different as a result of the musical journey. In my installation (*Our Bodies, Ourselves? Body of Evidence? Body Darma?*) the spectator, naked but safely alone, will stand in front of a plain mirror before travelling through a series of rooms, in which they experience their own body in different ways ~ visual, tactile, distorted, playful (there has to be a bouncy castle in there!) ~ finally returning to the plain mirror and, just possibly, a different response to what they see there.

These thoughts, among others have awakened an interest in Variation Theory. Is there such a thing? Well, it sounds better than 'Plagiarism Practice' anyway. Nobody tuts at Beethoven for using Mozart or Diabelli; no one slags off Rachmaninov, Lutoslawski or even Lloyd Webber for pinching a tune from Paganini; but what of *hommages*, variations ~ or rip-offs ~ in the other arts?

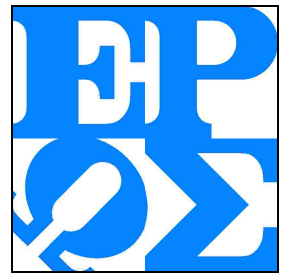
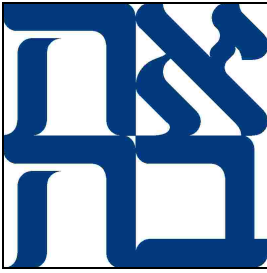
Variations on well-known themes can evoke ideas that extend out from the original work in all directions and which can in turn make us see the familiar material with new eyes ~ and what is art for if not for that? (Well, loads of other stuff but that's not important here). Edinburgh photographer Michael Wildmann has recently been showing his snaps of women of many lands emulating Rodin's *Crouching Nude*, in Scottish settings of their own choice, redolent with personal significance, bringing new depth to the idea of place and at the same time opening up new associations for the original sculpture.

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(Hebrew, Spanish, Ukrainian)

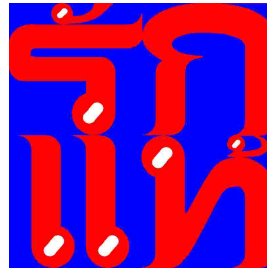
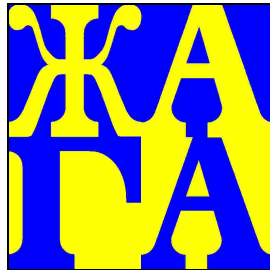
Languages of Love

(Greek, Swahili, Thai)



Anything you do is true
as long as you believe it;
And anything you say is play
and that's how you should treat it.
And everyone is high, until
there's something makes them low
That's when you should stay,
that's not the time to go:
That's when you should stay
and let your love just flow ...

Kevin Ayers



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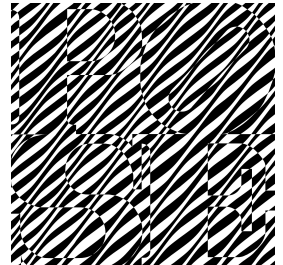
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Aspects of Love?



Love Keeps Breaking
(hand-printed silk tie, broken badges)

You must learn not to value
love because it is required. It
makes no difference whether
it is returned. Your love is of
value to you because you
give it. It's as though you
gave me a present merely
because you thought I'd give
you one in return. This simply
won't do. ...



... If you have love to give, you
give it and you give it where it is
needed, but never, *never* ask
for anything in return. Once
you've got that into your head,
the idea of your heart being
broken will disappear

Quentin Crisp

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