



Title: Flat Time, Least Event and Huge Impulse in John Latham's 1960s Book Paintings

Abstract

British artist John Latham (1921 – 2006) challenged, parodied, and to a certain extent, revitalized Clement Greenberg's formalist definition of painting as flatness through his ritual eating of the latter's book (Still and Chew, 1966) while casting event structure, more specifically, events in time, as the principal subject of painting and visual art in general. My intention in this paper is to consider Latham's concepts of "flat time," "least event," and "huge impulse" in connection with William Shakespeare's invocation of the "Tenth Muse" in his Sonnets (1609), showing how for artists, time itself is the subject of art in respect to how nothingness, or "zero time" intermingles with Will or Impulse, to create immortal poetry and art, and hence, works that overcome the very subject out which they are made.

Keywords: Flat Time, Least Event, Huge Impulse, John Latham, Book Paintings, Tenth Muse, William Shakespeare