

A GENTLE MAN (PART II) (1975-2029)

A TOURING EXHIBITION BY BECKY BEASLEY

This touring exhibition is a pastoral interior landscape with a gallery-sized pale green linoleum floor artwork including a series of inset hand-cut linoleum lakes silhouettes and a décor that transforms the length of the gallery into an environment.

Around the lakes, adjustable 'kissing' or 'conversation' benches - designed by the artist - provide a place to sit. What a relief it is to sit down! Artist Roni Horn wrote that rivers are for moving along, where lakes are for sitting beside.

Beasley's small ceramic works sit discreetly on a series of 'lakes' tables which mirror the floor designs. Pastel pink linen curtains swirl slowly in circles

on rails formed in the shapes of the letters, H, S and P, an acronym for Highly Sensitive Person. Elongated oak picture-shelves, on which groups of existing and new photographic works lean, frame the lengths of the gallery.

The exhibition includes a four-part video portrait of an imaginary figure – a merging of the intersecting lives of American novelist and short-story writer, Bernard Malamud, and the artist's father. The work explores milestones in life - work, family, chosen family and dying- across four discreet chapters.

So, what is a figure? What is it to figure something? To figure something out? To wonder, do I figure at all? And, if, so, how do I figure and who decides ?

THE EXHIBITION & PROGRAMME WILL EVOLVE OVER TIME ACROSS THREE VENUES
TOURING: QUAD, DERBY (SPRING 2026), BLUECOAT, LIVERPOOL
(AUTUMN 2026), JOHN HANSARD GALLERY, SOUTHAMPTON (SPRING 2027)

CLEARING

A clearing is an open space in a forest, especially one cleared for cultivation. The model of the clearing is useful for creating a space for oneself but also, in doing so, defining the clearing's boundaries. Thus, the space cleared is open and free, but also concentrated and supportive of the new work contained.

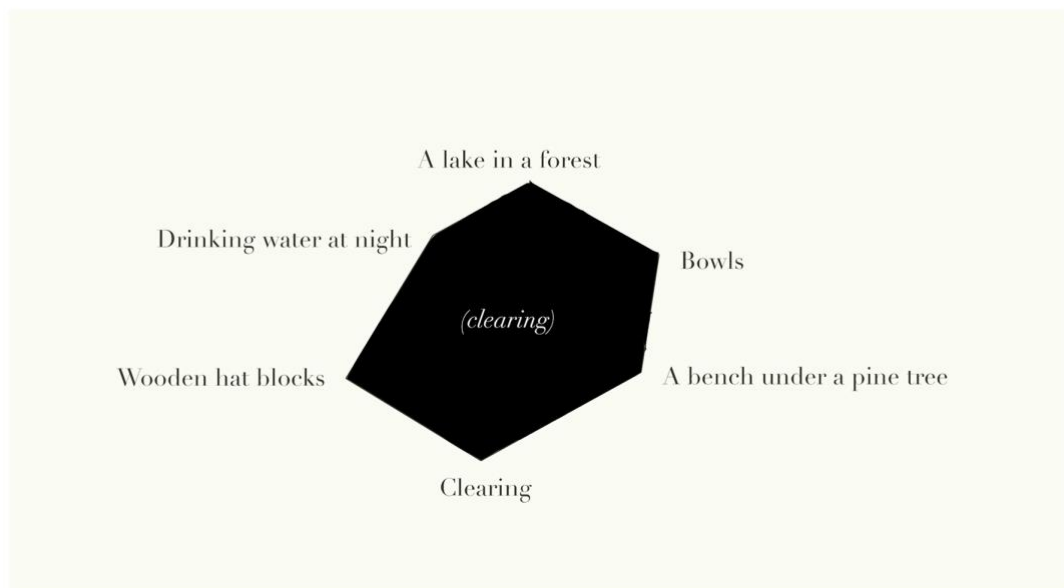
Georges Perec said that he wrote his novel, "Things", to fill the blank space created, so to speak, by the juxtaposition of four works of importance to him: Roland Barthes', "Mythologies"; Gustave Flaubert's, "Sentimental Education"; Paul Nizan's, "La Conspiration"; and an account of life in the concentration camps, Robert Antelme's, "L'Espèce Humaine".

Here is my diagram of Perec's clearing:



This modelling of a clearing for the work to come is a practice I have been using for a long time now and I have also shared this method in my teaching,

Right: the first quotes model I sketched for the clearing I wanted to work within for this exhibition. **Below:** a later version as I began to get a feeling for the object and spatial aspects I wanted to explore.



CLEARING

“Madame Bovary, c’est moi.” 2

“When? You say. I answer you: -
When I have circumscribed my
sphere.”¹

“I am a man...Not may-
be a first-rate man. I’m
perfectly willing to admit
that I may be in fact a
kind of second-rate or
imitation man, a
Pretend-a-him.”⁶

“The right to opacity: because
you have the right to be obscure,
first to yourself. The right to
opacity is not the right to isola-
tion. It is a right to relation with-
in the abyss of our differences.”⁵

1 The Notebooks of **Joseph Joubert**, (1800)

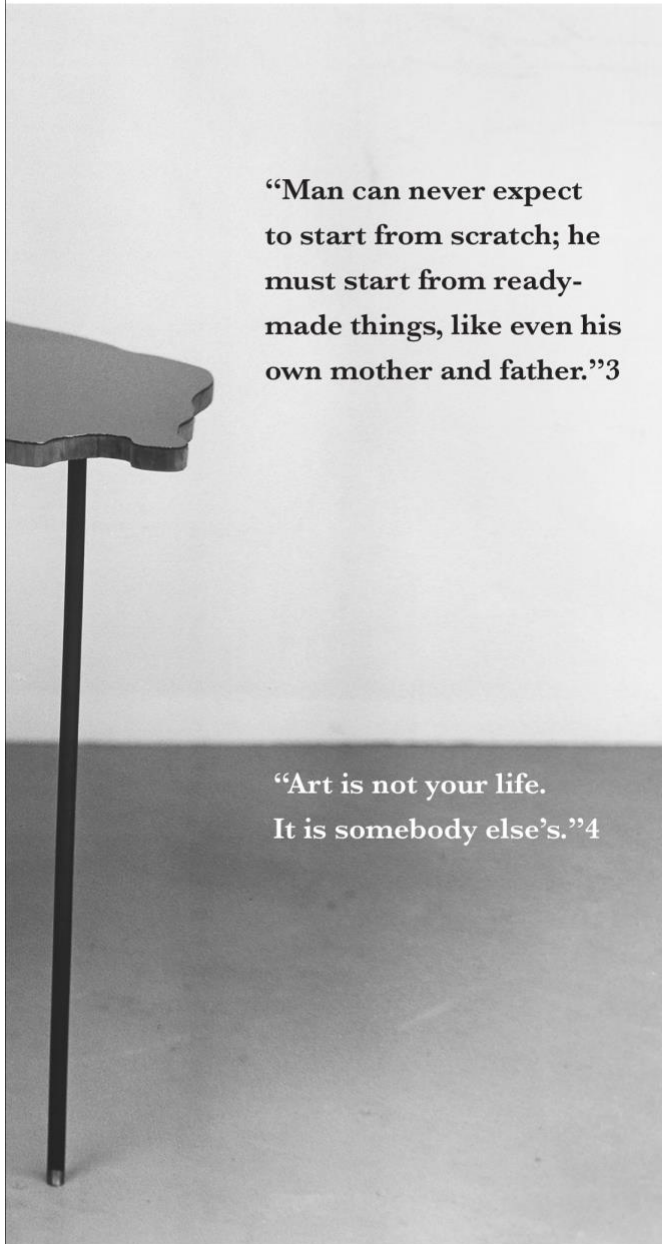
2 **Gustave Flaubert** (1857)

3 **Marcel Duchamp**, interviewed by Katherine Kuh,
“The Artist’s Voice: Talks with Seventeen Modern Artists” (1962)

4 **Frank O’Hara**, Art Chro
you: Frank O’Hara and th

5 **Édouard Glissant**, “Poe

6 **Ursula Le Guin**, Introdu

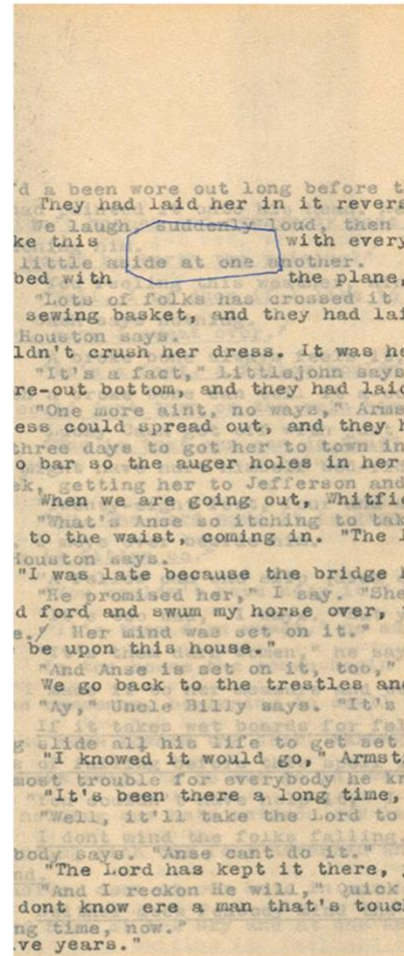


“Man can never expect to start from scratch; he must start from ready-made things, like even his own mother and father.”³

“Art is not your life. It is somebody else’s.”⁴

...nicles (1975) Cited from Sullivan, R. D. (2020). ‘Not
e poetics of ‘Personism.’ Textual Practice, 34(3),
ics of Relation” (1990) (1997 English translation)
cing Myself (1992)

CLEARING



Above is a special detail from William Faulkner’s typed manuscript for his novel, “As I Lay Dying” showing his hand-drawn coffin diagram.

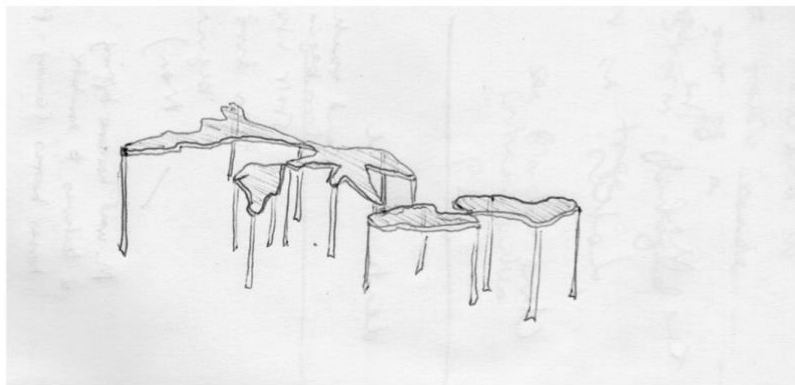
William Faulkner Foundation Collection, 1918-1959, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections, University of Virginia Library.

SILHOUETTES



Above left are my first silhouette drawings of the The Great Lakes. **Above right** is the rare silhouette of American poet, Emily Dickinson, made in 1845 by Charles Temple. Dickinson was fourteen at the time. (Courtesy of Amherst College Archives & Special Collections). Silhouettes, or “shades”, were a popular and inexpensive portrait format in the 18th and 19th century. As photography became more common in the mid 19th century, silhouettes fell out of fashion.

Below left is the silhouette of American novelist, William Faulkner. **Below right** are my drawings of the Greak Lakes tables. The Great Lakes of North America - Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, Ontario- are the world's largest freshwater system by area, holding 21% of the planet's surface fresh water.



CODA

WILLIAM FAULKNER (1897 – 1962) was an American writer. He is best known for his novels and short stories set in the fictional Mississippi county, Yoknapatawpha County. Faulkner is one of the most celebrated writers of American literature, often considered the greatest writer of Southern literature: “ I made it on the bevel”

ÉDOUARD GLISSANT (1928-2011) was a Martinican poet, novelist, philosopher, and literary critic widely known for his significant contributions to postcolonial theory and Caribbean literature. He is best known for developing the concepts of “Poetics of Relation”, “Creolization”, and the “Right to Opacity”: “Because you have the right to be obscure, first to yourself.”

FRANK O'HARA (1926–1966) was an American writer, poet, and art critic who served as a curator at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City. He was a leading figure of the New York School of poets, an informal group of artists and writers known for their spontaneous, personal, and conversational style that blurred the lines between high art and everyday life.

BERNARD MALAMUD (1914-1986) was an American novelist and short-story writer, widely recognized as one of the most important Jewish American authors of the 20th century. He is known for making parables out of Jewish immigrant life, exploring themes of suffering, dignity, and compassion.

LINOLEUM was invented in 1855 by Englishman Frederick Walton. He coined the name linoleum from the Latin, *linum*, which means flax, and *oleum*, which means oil. It is made by oxidizing linseed oil to form a thick mixture which is cooled and mixed with pine resin and wood flour to form sheets on a jute backing. Forbo's linoleum, Marmoleum, is made from 97% natural raw materials, 72% of which are renewable and will grow back within 10 years. Marmoleum is 100% biodegradable.

NATURAL GLAZE generally refers to a glass-like coating on pottery made from organic, locally sourced materials like plant ash, clay, and minerals, creating unique, sustainable finishes by harnessing nature's minerals.

BAYARD typeface by Tré Seals of Vocal Type. Every typeface emerges from careful research into historical artifacts. <https://www.vocaltype.co/>





Fig.

A landscape-format black and white photograph of a pair of ripe figs hanging from a branch under the canopy of a fig tree. It is late summer, when figs ripen and the leaves are in full bloom. We are under the canopy looking up slightly at the low hanging fruit.

The image is very tonal, all shades of grey, the only white being light dappling the edge of a leaf and touching the side of one of the figs.

The photograph is cropped quite tightly so only about half a dozen fig leaves fill the frame. The hanging figs are just to the left of centre in the middle of the image. Only the figs and three leaves close to them are in focus.

Beyond, the other leaves are very softly rendered, their shapes a mid-grey against the lighter grey of the spaces between them.

TO MAKE YOUR OWN FOLDING PAMPHLET, CUT OUT EACH OF THE 8 PAGES ABOVE ON THE BLACK LINES AND THEN SELOTAPE THEN TOGETHER INTO TWO SETS OF FOUR PAGES LIKE THIS IMAGE BELOW AND THEN FINALLY, GLUE THEM TOGETHER BACK-TO-BACK AND FOLD. FROM BB

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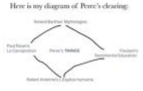
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How is my diagram of Perce's clearing:



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Right: the first process model I devised for the clearing I wanted to work with in this exhibition. Below is later version as I began to get a feeling for the object and spatial aspects I wanted to explore.



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"Madame Bovary, c'est moi." 2

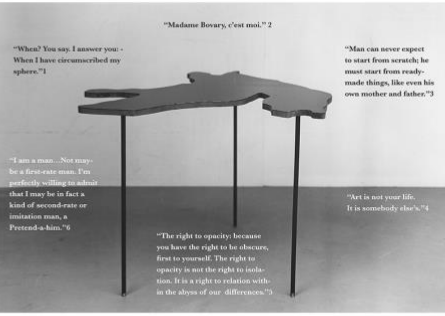
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"I am a man... Not maybe a fervent man. I'm perfectly willing to admit that I may be in fact a kind of second-rate or imitation man, a Pretend-a-him." 6

"The right to opacity because you have the right to be obscure, first to yourself. The right to opacity is not the right to invisibility. It is a right to relation with-in the abyss of our differences." 5

"Man can never expect to start from scratch he must start from ready-made things, like even his own mother and father." 3

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1 The Notebooks of Joseph Joubert, (1808)
2 Gustave Flaubert (1827)
3 Roland Barthes, interviewed by Katherine Koh, The Artist's Voice: Talks with Seventeen Modern Artists (1962)
4 Frank O'Hara, An Obituary (1973) Cited from Sullivan, R. D. (2020), 'New York: Frank O'Hara and the poetics of Promiscuity', Donald Proulx, 343;
5 Edward Gleason, 'Poetry of Religion' (1950) (1995 English translation);
6 Ursula Le Guin, Involution Myth (1992)

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