



SIDELINE DIARY

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For those of us (e.g. me) unversed in classical languages, puerile wordplay is ready at hand. A puerile query: are athletics and aesthetics akin? Let's have a peek...

Two etymology apps regard the respective roots as prize (athletic) and perception (aesthetic). Isn't art a prize, per se? And ostensibly a prize of perception? Are athletics an axiom of perception? Let's turn to the exhibition...

01:04-31:46

- Walking into the exhibition I sensed scent-memory of school gym.
- And later at my keyboard, that subtle miasma of (over-)chlorinated swimming pool.
- Followed by mnemonic squeak of sneakers on the hardwood (presumably dampened by oil paint).
- Followed by a perfect cool spout for a mostly-parched mouth, courtesy of a pretty-ugly water fountain (its graphite likeness [courtesy Adam McEwen] appeals to eye and eyed-tactile not touching the tongue).
- On to indistinct apathetic multi-memory of golf course.

- Then to antipathetic memory of dew and cut grass defiling my schoolbound sneakers; and then to sympathetic memory of sledding down snowpacked fairways.
- Less sensory but not short on memory is tennis perennially shaming me.
- Could I conclude with an uncouth comment on conspicuous absence?
- Yes. But let's end on an erstwhile endnote: a chance child's painting in the exhibition gift shop, *Portrait of a Once-Gap-Toothed Demigod*.

36:19-44:24

- Form might be considered conspicuous anti-absence, not [and never] to be confused with the brutal, inscrutable, indescribable condition of presence.
- As presence, athletics nourish various biological appetites. Aesthetics nourish appetites as well, perhaps less various. Neither speak to form without naming form.
- If aesthetics is a category best known for beauty, there's undoubtedly an aesthetic [formal?] cult within the [formal?] cult of athletics (perhaps this speaks to the axiom[atic] mentioned above).
- This relationship isn't neatly inverted. Aesthetics as field of study often forgets feats (and follies) of locomotion—even as optical and auditory faculties are well-served by them.

- Is form a faculty? Arguably, spuriously, absolutely.
- Furthermore, form is always poised to provide—it just needs a primed and/or piqued eye to endow it. Form-hunt for fitness (art-swoon for sport).
- Thus the record, the purported form, the purported norm.
- And so—and yet—blent in daily eternity: we the species, we the forms of ourselves formalizing selves, however formlessly.
- Enough of this you say?
- Let's get serious: game rhymes with shame, name, and fame—and came.
- Past or present, athletic rituals are consummately civilized. The art of appreciating art is perhaps too civilized, a false advocate (objects and images social surrogates) for the proper station of humanity, i.e. the embrace of *animate* presence.
- Of course *anima* means soul and that's often thought to be bereft of body.
- So let's move on to moving pictures...

Halftime

There's an old film about young John Donne poking about inns, bins, dins, and sins, haplessly seeking the most majestic of the Muses. Soused in Saturn, he peers from his garret window: Behold,

a sublunary sublime of muddied men menacing a—he squints to discern it—leather sphere. If this be celestial motion, he cogitates, perhaps that poignant poesy I poorly pursued, the “raging respite in relentless ruin,” is here more truthfully revealed. So Donne breaks his contract with Calliope and joins the league of proto-rugby. He later becomes an eminent theologian, after which he retires to the Ft. Myers area to focus on his golf game.

Second half

Undonne, there’s nothing true under the sun...

Art but begs to outwrite the spheres’ awesome might while it helps us to steer our terrestrial here—that prism of dear, fear, far, never-near. Again it’s the game, all ever the same, and the game clock crescendos, i.e. asks who’s to blame: *Is it time erased by evasive space or that time erases evasive spaces?* These asynchronous axes that motor our minds, asking form to opine: *How to what gain and who which person could?* Illusion’s retort: *Let’s quash quaint personhood.* Perhaps sanest to say: *would that would that would.* It’s good that age isn’t without its enchantments.

So back to the old and into the nude...

Extra time

Gymnos = no clothes; gymnasium the place to be nakedly athletic together. I can't recall being naked in gym class (and surely not the locker room), but I'm semi-certain youth moves about in senseless suites of sweat. All the while adults depart the rugged present for the simplicities, the base joys, of the past.

Shootout

Past presently, with future foreclosed,

The Sideliner™

Shout out

To all ye brave sculptors (brave designers included). May form never be the pure norm.

Sideline Diary written by Darren Bader
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Raquel Cayre and Ariel Ashe for Raisonné NY.

06:04–07:31:2025