

Past to Future*

Luise Vormittag, 2016

It is midday. The sun is out. I am on Granary Square and run into a friend. 'Do you want to come to a magazine launch party later on?' he asks. I point to a vertical structure in the middle distance. 'See that thing?' I ask, 'I don't know what it is, but I am going to the private view tonight.'

Now it is evening. Again I am crossing Granary Square. I'm a little late for [Paddy Molloy's](#) talk and I'm rushing. In my peripheral vision I notice the structure transformed. It is alive with moving, overlapping imagery, projected onto three layered screens. There are people walking, upside down.

Clocks. Clouds. Architectural details.

I arrive at the House of Illustration. I try to balance wine, pen and notebook, unsuccessfully. As Molloy begins to speak I capitulate and give up on the wine.

He is talking about the Kings Cross Monument, erected in 1830 and spectacularly unpopular. It contained a camera obscura and a statue of George IV, hand on hip, gaily perched on top. Apparently the whole thing lasted a meager four years. I try to picture the ephemeral images this camera

'I'm remixing the city.' Paddy Molloy's Crossing Time, 2016



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might have projected inside the monument. Impermanent, fleeting, contingent. 19th century passers-by, rushing, like I did just a minute ago? Daguerre wasn't quite ready in 1830, so there wasn't yet a way to capture these elusive projections.

Meanwhile Molloy is talking about scouring the area for architectural details and drawing them in ink. We see a mysterious old door, half open. A CCTV camera. Columns. 'I will continue to produce illustrations and feed them into the piece,' he tells us. 'I'm remixing the city.'

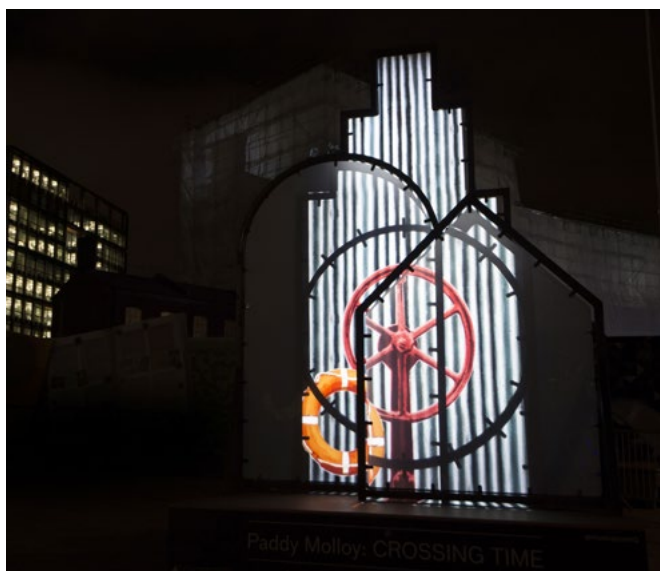
I say my good-byes and step outside. *Crossing Time* stands hypnotic and luminous against the night sky. The people are walking upside down, because that is how the camera obscura would have captured them. I imagine the piece as a repository for the fleeting images of a rapidly transforming city. I think about the ability of illustration to convey the texture and flavor of a place, to tell stories with a lightness of touch, to suggest, rather than declare. I half-remember a talk by Werner Herzog years ago. 'Facts create norms. Truth illumination.' I quarter-remember *Liquid City* by Marc Atkins and Ian Sinclair.

I am sitting at my desk finishing this piece, thinking of synonyms for dreamlike, hypnotic, spellbinding. What's that word that starts with 'o', the one I struggle to pronounce? I google it. That's it. Oneiric.

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paddymolloy.co.uk
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*Above: more images of Paddy Molloy's Crossing Time, 13th February to 10th March 2016 in Granary Square, London
Photographs by Paul Grover*