

we know this is impossible). In the space of her poetics, they contain stored energy, without any interface able to receive it. The language has been chopped out of the sender-receiver loop. Now they are segmented and spread across this wide wood floor, with one just against the floor-to-ceiling window. However, their positioning actually seems to elevate the floor and, with the standing *Gum Drags*, gives the feeling of walking across a hollow stage. I mean this exactly in the opposite way from the old Friedlan “theatricality.” The works here do not demand any “complicity” from their viewers, and their size and shape proclaim no authority nor any “seriousness” to the viewer. I am speaking only about the specific conditions of this one room, and its effect of giving these works (and my feet) a particular *lightness*.

The high windows make some moments of viewing these works ones in which I also feel viewed. Inevitably, I bend down in an absurd way and do all kinds of silly-looking things just to be able to see the details of these intricately woven cables. But as soon as I look outside, feeling caught in that moment, I exit, either stage left or stage right.

Maybe, like me, you’re drawn to the sounds occasionally emitting from stage left. Entering the room, before I see any of the frequency meters or generators or wires or anything else inside, I hear an almost unbearably high sound. As the frequency constantly rises and falls, my disorientation from the high pitch relaxes and intensifies, over and over. The reason: through some strange and rare biological fluke, the range of pitch I am capable of perceiving is much higher than that which most adults can hear. Basically, I have the hearing of a prepubescent child or a cat, so the tone generators that Canell (in collaboration with Robin Watkins) uses touch on the painful cat-level pitches, but only for brief moments. Staying in this room, watching the tiny wires on the wall rise and fall, scratching at my own pain threshold, was a personally willful masochistic experience—one that I joyfully repeated on each visit to the exhibition, each time staying as long as I could physically bear.

Rapturous yet depleted, I walk back across the large room and through to stage right. Here, some soothing elements, where the analytic vs. gooey synaptic aspects are condensed, and given three small rooms to try various configurations. In the first room there is a single irregularly-shaped piece of a large floor tile with a shiny film going almost to the edge, leaving a maybe 1cm border all around. On one wall is a small grid of computer chips, and opposite them a tiny artificial half slice of cucumber. Stepping into the larger back room, the slightly broken grid from the wall of the first room spills onto the floor (but really the opposite of spilling). Here floor tiles like the one in the first room form a broken grid, each with its own shiny film and dry

perimeter. The more time I spend in this room, the more complicated the mystery of how this all stays together becomes. At first I imagine each tile is coated in resin until that border. But that’s too simple. I notice the tiniest, barely perceptible movement on the surface. The materials list includes only three items: stone tiles, water, hydrophobic coating. I come closer, draw a breath, and blow on the sculpture. The surface ripples with the speed of real water. I notice the opposite corner has already evaporated. And the tile is not stone, but ceramic printed with a stone-like pattern. What’s this coating then? How is the hydrophobic effect strong enough to support such a high meniscus rising from the edge? For a while, a rumination on the arrest of capillary action went out to the artificial cucumbers, how the false representation of that exact process is the dead ringer of their imitation of life.

Finally, the end of the exhibition (or what should be the beginning). There, the descriptive wall text, a plexi box holding printed exhibition guides, and an entrance to a room with a black curtain being blown slightly by a wind coming from the darkened room on the other side. From the description, inside is a video of a “colossal leopard slug” which immediately activates my lifelong irrational fear of most invertebrates (including their representation, or even their mere mention). I don’t remember if, on my first visit, I even dared to take a glimpse of the room. Only on the third, after I was sure I would be writing this review, did I work out a plan to be able to watch the parts of this video that wouldn’t inflict some psychic trauma. On this visit, I brought a “guide” who let me know when the giant slug made its appearance, and when it was ok to look. The parts of the video I do watch are mesmerizing, a slow zoom out on a “dragon hole,” a massive square aperture on a giant luxury apartment block in Telegraph Bay in Hong Kong. Here was the destination of the undersea telegraph cables similar to the ones presented in the adjacent large room. The resolution of the video is so high and the geometry of the composition so precise that it hovers between abstraction and meticulously rendered realism. After three such sequences, the camera goes down to the lower level, where some hexagonal algae-stained planters hold a tiny bamboo plant rustling in the wind blowing from the upper left. So, the dragon’s breath has affected the only visible living organism in this system.

Next come the parts unwatchable to me, when the slimy muscular mass slowly travels along some type of electrical switchboard. The system is very soon to be overwhelmed by “life force”: the slug’s mucus. And even by the suggestion of what is to come, I am overwhelmed by psychic anomalies, immediately panic, and must leave the room. It is no longer safe to enter again. Every sign of life has coalesced into total affect, jamming any possibility of analysis.

Le Grand Beguinage

Jannis Marwitz

It’s been a few years since my first visit to Le Grand Beguinage, on which I discovered Theodoor van Loon’s paintings, but it almost certainly coincided with my arrival in Brussels in 2015. There, like in many other Flemish cities, a new form of Christian cohabitation developed around the 12th century, the so-called Beguinages or Beguine houses, which enabled women a self-determined life in structures of their own making. Different from monasteries, these houses and institutions weren’t subject to the Church, assets weren’t collected, no vows had to be made, and it was easy to quit, for example to get married.

Many of the Beguine houses flourished. At the beginning of the 17th century, the Brussels Beguine convent comprised a whole neighborhood of houses, workshops, gardens and the church Le Grand Beguinage at its center.

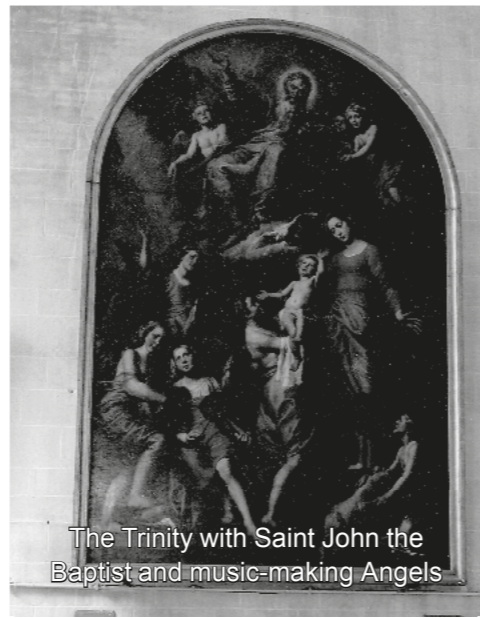
Putting my encounter with Theodoor van Loon’s pictures into words emanates from a certain urgency that has been building up over three years. However, as is so often the case, it’s been external circumstances that, stronger than any inner urgency, have led me to realize this. A big monographic exhibition of van Loon’s work is planned for this autumn at BOZAR in Brussels,



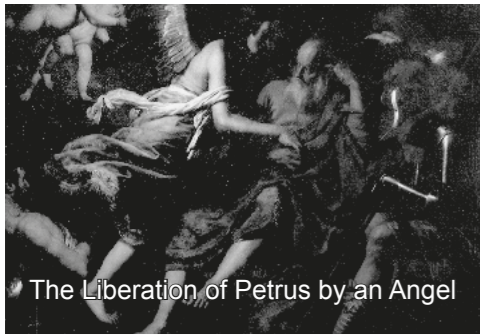
Coronation of Saint Ursula



The Adoration of the Magi



The Trinity with Saint John the Baptist and music-making Angels



The Liberation of Petrus by an Angel



Our Lady of Pity



Mary's Annunciation

which will be the first public examination of his *oeuvre*. For this occasion, four paintings otherwise located in Le Grand Beguinage have been extracted and restored. But then, through another door, the wind of time is blowing. In the not too distant future, the church will cease its liturgic service and be resurrected as an arts center or something along those lines – in any case, whether van Loon's paintings will be able to resume their traditional place remains to be seen.

Born around 1582 in Erkelenz in the Rhineland, Theodoor van Loon became a respected and frequently commissioned painter in Brussels during his lifetime, but slid into obscurity post-mortem. Yet it is his achievement, after two prolonged visits to Rome, to have brought the style of early Italian baroque, which was to become so formative in the 17th century, to the southern Netherlands very early on. True to the influence of Carravaggio, Barocci, Carracci and Domenichino, he created a very particular view onto the subjects to be treated, with a special execution of materiality. The six paintings in Le Grand Beguinage are probably the largest assembly of van Loon's work in one place. Originally called *l'Église Saint-Jean-Baptist au Béguinage à Bruxelles*, this church was thoroughly renovated just before the installation of van Loon's pictures at the beginning of the 17th century. After Calvinist rule in the southern Netherlands (1579 – 1585), the church, which had been built during the Gothic period, lay in ruins, before it was then rebuilt step by step and newly clad in Baroque style. In 1622, van Loon's altarpiece *Mary's Ascension to Heaven* (today located in the *Musée Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique*) was consecrated; In 1626, one of his side altars, *The Coronation of Saint Ursula*, followed. More paintings were to come: *Mary's Annunciation*, *The Adoration of the Magi*, *Our Lady of Pity*, *The Trinity with Saint John the Baptist and music-making Angels* as well as *The Liberation of Petrus by an Angel*.

In the right flank of the church, light falls from a side window onto the Annunciation scene.

It's a moot point whether the picture has always hung there or may even have been painted specifically for this location. What's astonishing, however, is that it almost seems as if actual light

blends with painted light. A step delimits the picture's realm to the here and now. Painted in brown-grey ochre, it provides the pedestal – so frequently evidenced in van Loon's pictures – for an “alternative” spatial design of bodies, draperies and light. The room beyond (is there one, anyway?) disappears in darkness interrupted only by a hole in the clouds through which the Holy Ghost glides in in the form of a dove. The stark light that illuminates Mary and Gabriel creates an almost abstract color range of red, blue and orange hues that demark themselves from the darkness. As little as we get to know of the spatial situation, van Loon nonetheless offers us two hands to get our bearings: Gabriel's right hand points out the Holy Ghost to Mary, showing us the space diagonal. And then there's Mary's left hand touching the imaginary space which both connects us with and divides us from the picture. Between these two hands lies the hemline, the seam that both binds the two pieces of canvas and marks the center of the picture.

In a purpose-built, stony architectural altar construction of black and white marble lies *The Coronation of Saint Ursula* framed in gold. Allusions to a ruined building cover large parts of the background. On the right, dark trees obstruct the view of the horizon, which shines through only at one point, almost unnoticeably. The painter doesn't show us where we are, but could this ruin be a reference to Le Grand Beguinage as it lay in shatters not too long before the time of painting?

At the bottom right, Ursula stretches herself out towards baby Jesus sitting in Mary's lap. A red brocade interwoven with gold threads covers her body. It runs viscously to the ground, as if to express Ursula's efforts to push into other regions of the painting. (The red mantle in *The Adoration of the Magi* is rendered in a similarly heavy manner.) Jesus is sitting on the edge of Mary's leg so as to crown the diadem-adorned head of the

English princess with a plain laurel wreath. Indeed, he's bent over so far forward that Mary has difficulty keeping her balance. As she steadies herself with her left arm, gripping the edge of her throne, she yet stoically and serenely observes the ritual playing out before her eyes.

The accompanying Saints follow the proceedings, enraptured, to the left, Saint Barbara and Saint Cecile. Two angels, gliding in above their heads, hold their attributes, the tower and the organ, aloft in their hands. To the right, Saint Catherine of Alexandria. The circle is completed by an astonished Joseph, who presents a lily, and by an angel that copies his posture with a palm branch. The baroque S-shaped composition concludes with the four winged angels' heads at the upper edge of the painting. Only the two angels playing with an arrow in the picture's foreground seem not to notice the holy scene taking place – their attention is wholly focused on Saint Ursula's instrument of torture.

Only over time does one realize the remarkable composition of this picture. It's not so much the arrangement of the people, which is modelled on the *Sacra Conversazione*, but their selection that stands out. With the exception of Joseph – except for the children and angels – only women stand before us.

In a similar fashion, this can be seen at the erstwhile main altar, which is no longer located in Le Grand Beguinage. In the foreground, there's a group of three women. While all the disciples and saints are arranged behind Mary's grave, it's almost as though they provide a pure link between the group and Mary ascending in a cloud. Once again, van Loon's full artistry to create a room out of people, light and shade, is on display here. Against the grain, light falls onto Mary, brushes John the Baptist, and is caught by the group of three women.

In all likelihood, these pictures can thus only have been painted for this place. On similar pictures in any other church, we would find a mixed, more likely male-dominated audience in the lower part. In the other pictures located in the church, the arrangement may not be as striking as it is in these two, but even in them we find selections of people that would suggest that they've been commissioned by the Beguines (*Pieta* and *Annunciation*). From their cooperation with the painter van Loon sprang a constellation of pictures that, while remaining closely connected to the Christian iconography, offer in their interpretation something special and self-determined, just like the community life of the Beguines itself.

Wreal Wrappers Wrinkle

Kevin Gallagher

The first thing I ever tried to compose music on was Fruity Loops. Fruity Loops was a computer program with a simple interface that combined step-based sequencing with pattern-based arrangements – the perfect fit for any teenage tenderfoot trying to get their beat game in order. In a nutshell, you would choose sounds you like from a library, insert them into the dashboard and turn them on or off along a segmented timeline.

This timeline would be set to a tempo which would continuously loop, thus allowing your beat to bump. You could easily adjust the BPM (Beats Per Minute) to create something akin to an R&B beat (Aaliyah's *One in a Million* clocks in at 61 bpm) or speed it way up to 160 bpm if Jungle or Drum & Bass was your vibe. My novice hip-hop tracks usually clocked in at somewhere in the 90-100 bpm range.

At rest, the human heart beats at an average rate of 60-90 beats per minute. In a similar state, dogs' hearts beat between 60-160, depending on size, and cats between 130-220 (perfect for Gabber). A hummingbird heart rate can reach 1,260 bpm. (How do you dance to that?) Expectant parents have been known to say the fetal heart rate sounds like the galloping of a horse.

Tempo is more basic than rhythm; it's closer to the pace of how one experiences life, rather than the flavor in which one experiences it. But tempo can also change. While relaxing on the sofa eating chips, you might be at 73 bpm (synchronous to Justin Timberlake's *Cry Me A River*), but while riding an *omafets* through Rotterdam's Maas Tunnel, your bpm might jump up to 132 (69 Boyz's *Tootsee Roll*).



Audiobooks are usually between 150-160 words per minute, which is the rate at which humans 'comfortably' hear and vocalize words. Steve Woodmore, who is currently listed in the Guinness World Records as the fastest speaker in the world, clocked in at 637 words per minute. In fact, Woodmore recently said he's been purposefully trying to slow down the speed of his speech so he can have normal conversations with others. Woodmore's speech surpasses the comprehensible abilities of humans, but would a hummingbird still get bored in a conversation at 600 wpm?

This brings up something else about tempo: it's hidden. And when Woodmore speaks at four times the normal speed, this internal mechanism is unclocked.

Gregg Bordowitz once said that all artworks have a kind of hidden pulse, like a beating drum, and that accessing the work has to do with tuning ourselves to that tempo. I love this idea because it shifts relation from a cognitive level to an embodied one. It's a bodily understanding, pulsing together.

The parasympathetic nervous system controls some of our bodies' unconscious actions when at rest, such as digestion, salivation, lacrimation (tears). Deep primal response mechanisms. Interestingly, parasympathetic sensitivity can vary. In about four percent of the population, the parasympathetic nervous system has been shown to *overreact*, causing individuals to faint. This reaction is most commonly caused by the sight of blood, but it can also be triggered by the sound of another's heartbeat. The audible pulsations produce an empathic response so intense you can confuse your heart with someone else's.

*He felt like
his heart was trying
to match
her beat
and
he couldn't catch his breath.*