

Dominic Pinney

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Structures of Anticipation

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STRUCTURES OF ANTICIPATION

Guest Editors: Yoke-Sum Wong, Karen Engle, Craig Campbell

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DOMINIC PINNEY



Night Drive

I have always anticipated nightfall. Growing up in Calgary, AB, some of my earliest memories are of watching the city transform as the sun set, staring out the window of my parents' car and seeing the urban signage turn the landscape into shimmering displays of light and glossy surfaces. The imperfect mirror of the nighttime road will be an image that sticks with me my entire life. However, the anticipation of beauty became an anticipation of dread following a collision I had while driving home one night. These feelings of dread and desire have since merged to create a hybrid sensation, a push and pull towards the night. More specifically: a push and a pull towards the night road. My fascination is grounded in the speed with which one experiences the city while driving, the way scenery can shift radically from moment to moment.

Structures of Anticipation provided the perfect opportunity to explore the urban night-time in a medium other than installation or sculpture. Using the road as my focus, I decided to drive from dusk till dawn and set up my camera in the passenger seat to record the experience. At this point I wasn't sure what imagery this would yield or what text I would create to pair with the video stills. Reviewing the footage the next day and thinking back on my experience, both the previous night and night-time commutes in general, I was taken by how much of an influence the radio has on the experience of driving. Since my collision, constant auditory stimulation has been a major coping mechanism of mine to stave off anxiety while commuting. In those moments when I feel the first stirrings of panic, I raise the volume to almost painful levels. The sound re-focuses me, or rather, unfocuses me from the fear that something terrible is about to happen. Acknowledging this, I felt the most appropriate text to pair with the video stills would be brief transcriptions of radio noise from the time of the video frame.

The series of five diptychs depict my journey from downtown Windsor out into Essex County and eventually back towards the city centre. The timing of the symposium coincided with International Goth Day (May 22nd), and so each image is paired with transcriptions from an interview with Lol Tolhurst of *The Cure* and lyrics from both Depeche Mode and Bauhaus. As the frames progress, they depict the changing light as the sun fades and I drive further and further into the county. The final images are primarily black squares, punctuated only by my headlights and the faraway flow of other cars. As I drove through the night, these unremarkable county roads lost all sense of familiarity. The radio was my only companion to stave off the growing unease as I moved beyond the safety of streetlamps and other commuters. Eventually, my anxiety won out; I sought out familiar roads to take me back towards the city.

Structures of Anticipation gave me the incentive I needed to begin exploring new mediums and new narratives. My practice has always been grounded in the urban nighttime and research focused on exploring narratives in science fiction of impending dystopian cityscapes. Refocusing this anxiety, I can see myself further explor-

ing the road and the nighttime commute in greater detail, in a way that is more grounded in the present than in predictions of the future.