

From Station to Station — In the Order of Signs

by Lucy Newman Cleeve

Introduction

Stations of the Cross brings together fourteen video works by Mark Dean that reinterpret the medieval tradition of spiritual pilgrimage through contemplation of the path Jesus walked to Calvary on the day of his crucifixion. The videos are not literal depictions of this journey. They rely upon Dean's trademark appropriation of film and video footage and music, to introduce visual and aural puns that generate and interrogate meaning within the work, setting up disputations between the different elements being sampled. Although the work is carefully constructed, the reverberations created by placing potent symbols side by side are myriad. The work is projected in sequence onto the circular Henry Moore altar at St Stephen Walbrook throughout the night on Easter Eve, interspersed with readings and space for meditation. Participants are invited to stay for the duration but remain free to come and go, as part of a vigil culminating in a performance of *A Prelude to Being Here* by two dancers from Lizzi Kew Ross & Co and an optional dawn Eucharist.

Here Comes The Sony is a twelve-screen video and sound work, installed for the first time under the dome of St Paul's Cathedral during Eastertide. It reinterprets the less definitive tradition of the *Stations of the Resurrection*, which emerged to encourage meditation on the resurrection appearances of Jesus recorded in the New Testament. *Being Here*, devised by choreographer Lizzi Kew Ross and the dancers, is performed on the stage formed by the circular placement of television monitors under the dome. Five dancers emerge from the shadows around the edge of the stage and start to navigate the space, sometimes individually and sometimes in groups of far-off and nervous proximity. The on-lookers find themselves within the action of these movements. While not enacting the narratives, the dance performance is an interpretation of the moment, producing a sense of a shared journey and progression through time and space and enabling the audience to curate the tension and distance between the installation and their own responses.

The architecture and historical relationship between St Stephen Walbrook and St Paul's Cathedral, both designed by Christopher Wren, provide an interpretive framework for *Stations of the Cross* and *Stations of the Resurrection*, which is calibrated by their liturgical context. The mises-en-scène of the installations and performances contribute further to the meaning generated within and between the video, sound and movement material. Wren designed his churches to be 'auditoriums' in which everyone present could see, hear and feel themselves part of the congregation. *The Stations* function in a similar way to the mystery plays, providing a contemporary re-interpretation of the story of Easter. The audience is an integral part of each event that, like the *Visitatio Sepulchri* liturgical dramas from the 10th — 11th centuries, are firmly placed in particular contexts and intended to involve the whole community. The audience is invited on an epistemic journey in which their own presence becomes an exegetical component of the work.

The genesis of this project was a collaborative exchange between artist, choreographer and curator about the potential for translation between the languages of contemporary art, dance and religion. The present curatorial task, that is to *write* the collaboration and to make sense of the layers of meaning generated by different elements of the work, is a daunting one — not least because, through the process, we are still defining the questions and reaching for that translation. If we have concluded anything, it is not so much that the ideas are *ineffable* (in the sense that they are incapable of being expressed in words and symbols) but rather that truth is carried in a particular form. The order and conventions of one discipline cannot simply be mapped onto another. Whilst we may have acquired shorthand for communicating about the work, there are no shortcuts to communicating the work. Knowing *about* something is not the same thing as *knowing* something. So, whilst the following essay suggests an interpretive framework and attempts to elucidate some of the references contained in the videos and dance, it is no substitute for first hand experience and response.

A Theological Architecture for Interpretation

The current building of St Stephen Walbrook replaces a medieval predecessor that was destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666. Similarly, St Paul's Cathedral, consecrated in 1697, is the fifth church to have been built on the same site. It replaced Old St Paul's, also destroyed in the Great Fire. The dome of St Stephen Walbrook, designed in 1672, is based on Wren's original design for St Paul's and is centred over a square of twelve Corinthian columns. The final design for the cathedral dome evolved considerably over the next 30 years to arrive at what we see today, but still serves as a visual reminder of the concept Wren had experimented with at St Stephen. The spaces beneath the domes become the stages on which *The Stations* are installed and performed, and the curvilinear relationship between them — according to which one church is the prototype for the other, but in a reflexive way, so that it is not clear which one was imagined first — becomes symbolic of the relationship between Jesus' pre-crucifixion and post-resurrection body.

This analogy is amplified by the presence of the Henry Moore altar beneath the dome at St Stephen Walbrook with a corresponding absence beneath the dome of St Paul's. When St Stephen was restored in the 1970s the 17th century placement of the altar, requiring the priest to stand with his back to the people, did not express the congregation's understanding of God as immanent in the world, and they commissioned Henry Moore to carve a new altar to be placed centrally. A large circular table, 8ft across and weighing several tons, was cut from marble. Undulating contours were carved into its sides that, along with its pitted surface, give the appearance of a rock formation — an allusion to the Dome of the Rock, a shrine to where Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son, Isaac, which prefigures the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. This rock-like appearance is also evocative of the stone that covered the entrance to Jesus' tomb and which was rolled away on Easter morning to reveal His missing body.

The *Stations of the Cross* are projected onto this altar, a decision that could be construed as provocative,

arrogant or even sacrilegious: to degrade an object of 'high-art', consecrated for use as an altar to the status of a 'screen' on which to project work by a contemporary artist. Yet, in this context the altar becomes a generator of meaning of equivalent weight to the elements of sound and image being sampled, and a crucible in which layers of meaning are compounded, burnt and refined, as the artist offers his work as a kind of sacrifice. Just as the dome of the rock is a politically and religiously contentious site, so the Henry Moore altar was initially considered controversial, and objections to its installation were heard by the Court of Ecclesiastical Cases Reserved.

The central placement of the altar requires the dancers to occupy the spaces around the edge. They are absent throughout most of the event, only appearing as the final video, an extract from *Here Comes the Sony*, is projected. Unlike most of the video *Stations of the Cross*, this final work is not figurative — at least not in a literal sense — although it could be interpreted as a visual allusion to the communion wafer or 'host' that represents Jesus' body in the Eucharist. In St Paul's Cathedral, the staging is inverted and the dancers perform *Being Here* in the central space under the dome, whilst *Here Comes the Sony* is played on monitors placed around the edge. The monitors appear almost like a clock face, suggesting the passage of time that has elapsed between the death and resurrection of Jesus, or perhaps marking out the subjective, epistemological or ontological boundaries of human experience. The dancers regularly perforate this boundary, moving out beyond the stage and the audience, before returning to the centre and reconnecting in different configurations. They appear to be playing with notions of immanence and transcendence, perhaps describing God's impact on humanity through the incarnation of Jesus or the way in which human beings strive to overcome our subjective boundaries to achieve connection with each other.

This staging, and the placement and treatment of the figure or *the body* and its relationship to the audience, raise questions about who or what they represent and where to place them within the Easter narratives. In Christian theology, the term *Body of Christ* has several

different meanings. It refers to Jesus' words over the bread at the Last Supper that 'this is my body'¹, repeated whenever the Eucharist is celebrated. It also refers to the Apostle Paul's description of the Christian Church² or it can be used to describe Jesus' physical body. However, within the work there is a tacit acknowledgement that 'cinematic codes create a gaze, a world and an object'³ and Dean and Kew Ross play with these codes and the conventions of *mise-en-scène* to ensure that identification of the 'object' — or indeed the 'subject' as present in the audience or 'congregation' — with a particular narrative character is only ever fleeting and never fixed. Rather than re-telling the stories, the work explores the paradoxical themes and emotions contained within them, including presence and absence, innocence and guilt, hope and fear, commitment and betrayal, connection and loss, joy and grief.

Dean and Kew Ross both reference a wide range of source material, an understanding of which contributes to the interpretation of the work. It is unlikely that any single member of the audience will be familiar with all of these references and yet the work can be accessed on an instinctive, almost pre-cognitive level as it recruits and converts our imaginations. The truth of the work is carried in its form; in the unique affect generated by isolating and treating a sound or video clip, in the articulation of a limb or in the time it takes for a dancer to complete a prescribed gesture. It is a truth that resists the 'heresy of paraphrase'⁴; it is not mimetic and it cannot be reduced.

Dean often appropriates a few frames of footage of a single figure which are then slowed down, reversed, looped or otherwise altered so that the figure appears to be still, apart from small barely perceptible gestures such as the blink of an eye or the movement of a hand, which are amplified through their repetition. Sometimes the figure is juxtaposed over a shifting landscape, or a landscape through which movement is implied. Kew Ross uses a similar device whereby small gestures by the dancers are amplified through pacing and repetition and longer passages of movement are looped. All the time, the landscape produced by the image and sound

1. Luke 22:19 — 20

2. 1 Corinthians 12:12 — 14 / Ephesians 4:1 — 16

3. Laura Mulvey, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, *Screen*, vol. 16, (Autumn 1975), pp 6 — 18

4. Cleanth Brooks, 'The Heresy of Paraphrase', *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry*, Mariner Books (Jun. 1956)

emanating from the television monitors or the video projection is shifting. Kew Ross cites TS Eliot's *Four Quartets* as a reference for the work:

*At the still point of the turning world.
Neither flesh nor fleshless;
Neither from nor towards; at the still
point, there the dance is,
But neither arrest nor movement.
And do not call it fixity,
Where past and future are gathered.
Neither movement from nor towards,
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for
the point, the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is
only the dance.⁵*

The video work and dance both reference this still point and within the framework that has been described, the moment 'where past and future are gathered' is located in the death and resurrection of Jesus. This becomes the axis on which our histories tilt.

There is a strong theological tradition reflecting on the sacramental nature of art. Writing about this in *Epoch and Artist*, the Catholic artist and poet David Jones quotes Maurice de la Taille that on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday's victim 'placed Himself in the order of signs.' Dean was ordained to the Anglican priesthood in 2011 and at his request *Stations of the Cross* culminates in the celebration of the Eucharist. In breaking the bread, Dean places himself 'in the order of signs'. This may be understood as an affirmation of the sacramental role of art and of the artist; or as drawing attention to the way in which particular artistic forms function like liturgies through their appeal to our imaginations. It also raises the question of whether the vigil constitutes a performance or a service, involving an audience or a congregation.

Dean's presence in his role as both priest and artist draws attention to the lived experience that every collaborator in this project brings to the work. During the season of its making, one of us stood vigil by the

bedside of their child as they underwent open-heart surgery; another nursed a parent who suffered a major stroke; one of us gave birth and cared for young children; another worked with those bereaved by suicide. The *matter* of human experience — life and death, hope and fear, joy and despair, energy and exhaustion — is a component part of the work, every bit as important as the dialectic between its content and its context. The themes contained in the Easter narratives are themes we currently inhabit and this work has emerged *in spite* of and *because* of them.

Stations of the Cross

Station I — Jesus is condemned to death
The Royal Road

A clip of Julie Andrews as the novice Maria from the opening scenes of *The Sound of Music* (1965) is layered over an extract from *Psycho* (1960). The looped clip of Andrews taking a single breath is so short that she appears as a still figure set against a background of clear blue sky, her chin lifted and head raised as she stares straight ahead. Her hand brushes against her skirt as it flaps gently in the wind; her chest rises and lips press shut as she breathes in; she blinks. The blue of the sky and the innocence suggested by Maria's religious vocation is in contrast with the footage from *Psycho*, which cuts in and out to reveal the view through a car windscreen driving along a highway at nightfall. To begin with, it is daytime and the road is clear, but with each subsequent fade in, the on-coming traffic gets heavier and vehicle headlamps are switched on as the light disappears. Rain starts to fall, obscuring the view through the windscreen so that only the glare of the lights can be seen, before the windscreen wipers are switched on. They swing backwards and forwards, dividing time like the arm of a metronome in sync with the soundtrack which has been slowly building in intensity from the upbeat and harmonic opening bars to the urgent strumming and distorted guitar in the middle section of Ingenting's *Re:re:re*. The action of the wipers is directly aligned with Andrews' figure,

slicing through her body in a way suggestive of the Grim Reaper's scythe, and in this context indicative of the violent death to which Jesus is condemned. Towards the end of the work, the car arrives at Bates Motel. This is where Marion Crane (Janet Leigh) is murdered by Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins) after he has assumed the identity of his own mother Norma. The film is based on Robert Bloch's novel of the same name and both the novel and the film explain that Norman suffered years of emotional abuse by his mother, which accounts for him becoming 'psycho'.

Andrews has long been considered an icon of the LGBT community and film theorists have drawn attention to her subversive portrayal of female roles (the nun, the nanny) normally seen as passive. Hitchcock's treatment of women, both on screen and off-screen is contested. Throughout the *Stations of the Cross*, Dean's portrayal of women is significant: the majority of the figures represented are female and he returns frequently to the archetype of nun, suffering screen siren, abandoned lover or child, and to themes of gender and sexual identity. He acknowledges that he does not seek to make images of God (although if he did, then why not as female or transgender?), but to represent personhood; that is, the experience of being a person in a world where there is a God. Rather than explicitly identifying Maria with the person of Jesus, this work could be understood as an acknowledgment of the suffering experienced by women at the hands of men, or the LGBT community at the hands of the 'mother' church. These fragile identities are visually empowered through their re-framing and re-presentation, and their juxtaposition with Jesus' suffering and death points to the redemptive power of the cross as well as the presence of God in the midst of human suffering.

Station II — Jesus carries his cross *The Sparrow*

Original footage (shot by the artist) of a bird trapped within an airport lobby is set against the Irish folk ballad *As I Roved Out*, recorded by Planxty in 1975. As Christy

Moore starts singing, the bird launches into flight, but is restricted by the large glass windows of the atrium. The astragals form a cross. The bird drops to the floor and hops forward to rest at the base of this 'cross', all the time shifting in and out of focus. The sense of confinement is in contrast with the space beyond where aeroplanes are assumed to be taking off and landing.

The song lyrics speak of the regrets of a man who jilts his true love in favour of 'the lassie with the land'. This may be understood as a reference to Judas' betrayal of Jesus, or to Simon Peter denying Jesus three times the night after his arrest. Either way, the viewer is placed in the position of the betrayer: in the song, the singer looks over and spies his true love 'under yon willow tree', in this context an oblique reference to Jesus carrying his cross; the slipping focus of the camera and the exhaustion of the bird a metaphor for his failing physical strength. The image also reverberates with Jesus' words to his disciples, 'Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care... So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.'⁶ In this passage in Matthew's Gospel, he also predicts, 'Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child.'⁷

Station III — Jesus falls the first time *The End of Alice*

The end of Wim Wenders' *Alice in the Cities* (1974), comprising a close up shot of a young girl (Yella Rottländer) sitting inside a train carriage, an ascending aerial landscape view, and a scrolling credit sequence, is cut in three, timeshifted, looped and superimposed on itself. When the credits reach the end, the whole scene is repeated with the footage reversed. The film's soundtrack theme is similarly timeshifted and layered.

In the film, the child Alice has been abandoned by her mother; in this context perhaps a reference to Jesus' own feelings of abandonment by God the Father. The slowed down footage of Alice blinking makes her appear drowsy, as if she is falling asleep or more literally 'falling'. She is the still point within a chaotic world

6. Matthew 10:29 — 31

7. Matthew 10:21

and through the final establishing shot we are given a privileged view of seeing this world from a distance. The rolling credits reveal who the director is — who is ‘in control’ — and the work could perhaps be understood as presenting the death of Jesus within the framework of a broader divine plan. The inclusion of a film’s closing credit sequence is a device that Dean returns to in each of the three *Stations* in which Jesus falls, used each time to different effect.

Station IV — Jesus meets his mother
My Mum (V2-Sensitive)

The image is an extract from *The Birds* (1963), depicting Melanie Daniels (Tippi Hedren) visiting Bodega Bay to warn the school they may be in danger. The treatment of the figure, including the amplification of small gestures, is similar to the earlier *Stations* — a device perhaps mimicking and subverting Hitchcock’s own voyeuristic framing and filming of women. Dean has replaced all of the footage of the birds with cut-away shots of a black screen, indicating that the menace here is not the birds.

The sound track combines *Berlin* by Lou Reed (1976) with the introduction to *Memory of a Free Festival* by David Bowie (1969) mixed with *Sensitive* by the Field Mice (1989). The Field Mice lyrics, ‘We all need to feel safe, then that’s taken away, sometimes I want to return’, suggest a child’s yearning to return to the safety of its mother’s arms. Later in the track they sing, ‘You do risk being crucified, crucified by those you are unlike,’ in this context clearly intended as a reference to Jesus’ death. The layering of the different musical tracks produces a discordant affect of heightened tension and foreboding. This is reinforced by Hitchcock’s (or is it Dean’s?) editing: after each cut away shot, the camera moves in closer to Hedren’s face, augmenting her rising panic.

My Mum (V2-Sensitive) had a life before *Stations of the Cross*, and precedes many of the other works, making us question its inclusion here. Is Dean commenting on his own relationship to his late mother? Is there something in what we know of Hedren’s off-screen

treatment and alleged abuse by Hitchcock that is significant? Writing in *Art Forum*, Rachel Withers comments on Dean’s appropriation of an image of Tippi Hedren in an earlier work, observing that she ‘becomes a surrogate for the artist in a nuanced and moving moment of crossgender identification.’⁸ This particular work may invite us to imagine ourselves in the role of Jesus and of Mary, in the child separated from its mother, and in the mother fearful for the loss of her child.

Station V — Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross
Golden Rehearsal

The theme of abandoned child is picked up again in *Golden Rehearsal*, which appropriates a clip from John Cassavetes film *Gloria* (1980), in which a young boy’s family is killed by the mob. Their neighbor Gloria becomes his reluctant guardian and the pair go on the run in New York. In this extract, Gloria is shown carrying the small boy on her shoulder as he sleeps — a direct allusion to Simon of Cyrene carrying Jesus’ Cross. The footage is looped and layered multiple times, so that it becomes increasingly illegible.

The sound track is from the Beatles’ *Get Back* sessions recorded live at Twickenham Studios in 1969, shortly before the band broke up. Members of the band can be heard joking and laughing while Paul McCartney rehearses his new composition *Golden Slumbers*, in which the lines ‘Once there was a way to get back homeward’ and ‘I will sing a lullaby’ assume great poignancy. At the very end, McCartney sings the first line of *Carry That Weight*: ‘Boy, you gotta carry that weight a long time’.

Images of death, abandonment, fear and loss combined with protectiveness, tenderness and support run through this work. The lyrics suggest sleep (or death?) as a way to get back homeward (to heaven?), and reference both the physical weight of the cross as well as the weight of the sins that Jesus bears on the cross. The camera stays zoomed in on Gloria’s face, so that she appears almost still, although it is clear that she is actually moving nervously through a busy cityscape. Similarly, the audio track focuses on McCartney’s playing,

even through it is clear that there is lots of activity going on around him. Once again, Dean seems to be drawing attention to a still point in the turning world.

Station VI — Veronica wipes the face of Jesus
The Veil of Veronica (offset Halo)

This work appropriates a short extract from *This Gun for Hire* (1942) directed by Frank Tuttle and starring Veronica Lake. Dean has slowed down, overlaid and offset two identical layers of the same scene that portrays Veronica Lake's character performing a magic trick with a large fan made of feathers. The soundtrack to the work is provided by the 1997 single *Halo* by the band Texas. Dean has EQ'd the sound to remove the vocals (although their echo remains), the guitars and the drums, thereby bringing the harmonic undertones of the orchestration to the surface. The resulting work has a mesmeric quality that is heavy with allusion. At times, the feathered fan produces a veil that obscures the figure of Veronica Lake, but which also connotes angelic wings. The pseudonymous title of the work alludes to the 1st century Saint Veronica who, according to legend, offered Jesus her veil to wipe his forehead. Jesus accepted her offering and, after using the veil, handed it back to Veronica with the image of his face miraculously impressed upon it. In some medieval traditions, effigies of the face of Christ are referred to as 'Veronicas'.

These religious allusions are extended by the title and lyrics (albeit removed) of the audio track *Halo*, which also refer to the destructive lure of super-stardom and seem to echo the life of Veronica Lake, who was burnt by her own success and struggled with mental illness and alcoholism after the decline of her acting career. She veils or removes herself from the frame, as if to leave or transcend the external world, perhaps another oblique prefiguring of Jesus' death or a comment on its efficacy. The faith of Saint Veronica is juxtaposed with the uncertainty and demise of the worldly Veronica, maybe a tacit acknowledgment of our human longing for proof of something higher than our own being in which to believe. And the image of the face of Christ left

imprinted on the veil of Veronica questions the proofs upon which we base our knowledge of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Projected back onto the Henry Moore altar, a material symbol of God's presence, these themes of immanence and transcendence, faith and doubt are amplified.

Station VII — Jesus falls the second time
A Minor Place

This work is constructed from a series of asynchronous loops from *Wendy and Lucy* by Kelly Reichardt, in which Michelle Williams (also known for her portrayal of the ultimate tragic screen siren, Marilyn Monroe) depicts a young woman whose life is progressively derailed through ill-fortune and dire economic decisions, resulting in separation from her beloved dog Lucy. She is shown sitting still and huddled, with her head covered so that her appearance becomes that of an androgynous homeless beggar. A moving camera shot through a forest is superimposed over the top of this, perhaps symbolic of the unconscious realm or impending threat, and the film credits 'directed by Kelly Reichardt' appear fleetingly in reverse. The drone like music, remixed from the film's Will Oldham soundtrack, augments the darkness in the work and provides its title, which is borrowed from another Oldham song *A Minor Place* (1999).

Again, Dean uses the film's credits as a device to reflect on Jesus falling. We are still given the privilege of knowing who is in control, but with the credits reversed, it is less clear. There is a sense in which perspective (of the victim and the viewer) is being lost as the Good Friday narrative draws closer to its climax and Jesus falls the second time.

Station VIII — Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
Daughters of Jerusalem

This work appropriates footage from the closing sequence of the Israeli film *Karov La Bayit (Close To Home)* (2005) directed by Vardit Bilu and Dalia Hager.

The film focuses on two 18-year-old Israeli girls who are thrown together as they are assigned to a patrol in Jerusalem as part of their compulsory military service. Their job is to stop Palestinian passersby, to ask for their identity cards, and to write down their details on special forms. The sampled clip follows an altercation that has gone wrong, resulting in a Palestinian man being beaten up and possibly killed. The women are shown riding two-up on a motorbike, with the camera cropped in close on their faces and the footage slowed down. The speed of the original footage is apparent from the blurred landscape moving behind them creating the impression of still figures locked in a bewildering and disorienting world. The women's faces look, in the same instant, guilty, defiant and numb as they start to realise they have become witnesses to a murder.

The image is in dialogue with the soundtrack — a remix of *Lovely Rita* by the Beatles in which the words 'Lovely Rita meter maid' are repeated over and over again. This track was presumably selected on account of the lyric 'In her cap she looked much older, and a bag across her shoulder, made her look like a military man,' although this particular lyric is not included in the sampled extract.

The compassionate view of the two young women is complicated by their status as border guards in a contested territory. Historically, the 'daughters of Jerusalem' may be identified with a sorority of women who offered narcotic drinks to condemned men as an act of charity to ease the pain of their deaths. It was this 'wine mixed with myrrh (or gall)' that Jesus refused to drink on his way to be crucified.

Station IX — Jesus falls the third time
In Freundschaft

In Freundschaft or 'In friendship' combines sound from the beginning and image from the end of Wim Wenders' film *The American Friend* (1977), based on two novels by Patricia Highsmith, *Ripley Underground* and *Ripley's Game*. In the film, picture framer Jonathan Zimmerman (Bruno Ganz) believes that he is critically

ill, and is coerced into becoming a hitman in order to provide for his wife and child. The audio from the beginning of the film depicts a conversation between Tom Ripley (Dennis Hopper) and a painter discussing a forged art deal. The footage at the end shows Zimmerman lying dead in a car next to his wife Marianne (Liza Kreuzer). The scene is watched over by the (supposedly dead) painter who walks away from the camera as the end credits start to roll. The image and sound are looped, layered and time-shifted three times in reference to Jesus falling, becoming increasingly incoherent and disconcerting in the process. Whereas in previous works the credits have provided some sense of order, perhaps even implying a divine plan, here they become illegible through their repetition.

This is perhaps the darkest and certainly the most opaque of Dean's *Stations of the Cross*. The audio begins with the sound of a train whistling and a man singing to himself, 'God knows I have been doing some low down travelling' with tense music playing in the background. Distorted snippets of the conversation including, 'I think this is serious', 'I've been waiting for you' and references to dirty money art deals pop out, amplifying the sense of threat.

In Freundschaft refers back to two earlier works included in Dean's first solo show at City Racing in 1996: *Nothing To Fear* (*The American Friend* +-12) and *I'm Confused* (*The American Friend* +-50%). It is also the title of a 1977 work by Stockhausen, in which the four parameters of pitch, duration, dynamics, and timbre are all determined by a musical formula, the basic form of which is presented at the outset of the work. In returning to *The American Friend* as source material, Dean continues to experiment with its formal parameters in ways informed by serial and minimal composers and the borrowed title of the work seems to flag this up.

Station X — Jesus is stripped of his garments
God is Not Mocked

This work appropriates the opening sequence from Kenneth Anger's 6-minute film *Puce Moment* (1949),

which begins with the film credits before cutting to a close up shot of vividly coloured flapper dresses being danced off a clothes rack to music.

In the context of the *Stations*, the removal of the dresses from the rack is an allusion to Jesus being stripped of his garments. Dean has looped and layered the footage, then overlaid it with a purple filter in reference to the title of Anger's film and perhaps also to the 'royal crown of thorns placed on Jesus' head at this point in the narrative. The soundtrack appropriates a lyric from Neil Young's *Cowgirl in the Sand*, 'Purple words on a grey background', which is repeated over and over again and points attention back to Anger's title and to the opening credits, in particular the pun in his name. 'Anger' could be understood as a comment on the attitude of the perpetrators who strip Jesus or, along with Dean's title, *God is not Mocked* (a reference to Galatians 6:7), a riposte to Kenneth Anger's own occult appropriation of Judeo-Christian imagery in his later works.

Station XI — Jesus is nailed to the cross
My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?

This title references the last words Jesus spoke on the cross before he died, themselves appropriated from Psalm 22. At this moment in the narrative, Dean resists incorporating a figure, to signal his avoidance of representing the death of God. Instead, he appropriates the title sequence of *Sauve Qui Peut (La Vie)* aka *Slow Motion* aka *Every Man For Himself* (1980), by Jean Luc Godard. The puns in the text 'Un film compose par Jean Luc Godard, Sauve Qui Peut (La Vie), Copyright 1979 Sonimage' are explicit, referencing God in the director's name and the image of the Son in the copyright notice, which is flagrantly flouted.

The credits roll over a vast expanse of cloud filled sky, suggestive of Jesus' view from the cross, and a visual reference back to the composition of the first *Station*, indicating that Jesus' death sentence has now been executed. The soundtrack is a short looped extract from *Love Don't Live Here Anymore* by Rose Royce, which includes a rising and falling string section layered over a

repetitive synthetic beat, producing in this context the effect of a nail being hammered into wood.

Station XII — Jesus dies on the cross
The Christmas Tree

Jesus' death is perhaps the hardest point in the narrative to depict visually. Again Dean resists figuration and offers up a silent video loop of footage from the start of a drag race. Modern drag races are started electronically by a system known as a Christmas Tree, consisting of a column of seven lights for each lane, as well as a set of light beams across the track itself. Dean has overlaid and offset the same clip using a difference filter, so that where the two images are the same, the image appears dark; only the variation between the two layers is illuminated revealing a changing light-sequence of the Christmas Tree and the speeding cars. The Christmas Tree introduces a deliberate pun for the Cross of Christ, placing it at the centre of the action, and the moments of darkness created by the difference filter allude to the darkness that came over the whole land when Jesus died.⁹

Whereas in most of the preceding video *Stations*, Dean has used footage shot through a moving camera that remains focused on a still central figure, in this work he inverts the construct, making use of footage from a locked camera shot of a subject moving at speed. Is Dean suggesting that Jesus' death inverts the world-order as we know it; that the 'still point' which, until recently was acted upon by the 'turning-world', now undergoes a change in state and starts to exert its own influence upon that same world?

Station XIII — Jesus is taken down from the cross
The Bearer

In this work, Dean superimposes a photograph of Sister Andreina, Mother Superior at the Augustinian Monastery of Saint Rita of Cascia, over footage from Leni Riefenstahl's Nazi propaganda film, *Olympia* (1938). Sister Andreina is shown holding an ex-voto made

9. Mark 15:33 — 34

by Yves Klein that was left at the monastery during a pilgrimage to Cascia. Saint Rita is known as the patron saint of lost causes, and was a favorite object of Klein's devotion and ritualistic interest.

The footage from *Olympia* depicts athletes diving from a springboard with arms outstretched, generating a direct visual allusion to Klein's *Leap into the Void* photograph, and to the crucifixion. A progression of pink, blue and gold filters are applied to the video, in reference to the pigments Klein placed in his ex-voto, and also corresponding to the red and amber colours of the Christmas Tree lights in the preceding work. This visual correspondence, taken together with the fact that *The Christmas Tree* and *The Bearer* are the only two silent *Stations*, suggests that they are to be considered together. If *The Christmas Tree* suggests a change in world order achieved through the crucifixion, then a microcosm of this transformation is revealed in the events that followed the making of Klein's *Leap into the Void* photograph. In a strange coincidence, the house outside Paris that he leapt from in making this work was later demolished to make way for a church dedicated to Saint Rita. An action performed 'in the order of signs' is completed through the transformation of the physical world order.

Station XIV — Jesus is laid in the tomb *Cartoon Burial*

In *Cartoon Burial*, Dean layers Raphael's study for the *Pala Baglione* (also known as *The Deposition* or *The Entombment*) over a Googlemaps image of Jerusalem. For the first time, the work is explicitly located in a real person, in a specific place, at a precise moment in history. The sound track is provided by *Come Down To Us* by South London sound-collagist Burial.

The image is originally unclear. A close up of human limbs is faintly discernible, which becomes clearer as the drawing gradually descends within the frame. The audio track begins with the sample of a woman's voice saying, 'Excuse me, I'm lost' and then builds through layer upon layer of multi-textured samples, including voice snippets repeating phrases such as 'You are not alone' and, 'Don't

be afraid to step into the unknown'. The initial illegibility of the image becomes clearer as the work progresses as if to answer the vocal snippets asking, 'Who are you? Why did you come to me?' In some sections, the track sounds almost like contemporary worship music.

The Burial track ends with an extract from a speech by transgender filmmaker Lana Wachowski: 'Without examples, without models I began to believe voices in my head, that I am a freak, that I am broken, that there is something wrong with me, that I will never be lovable. Years later, I find the courage to admit that I am transgender, and that does not mean that I am unlovable... This world that we imagine in this room might be used to gain access to other rooms, other worlds, previously unimaginable.' Its inclusion here could be understood as a political statement addressing current debates within the church over the role of gay clergy, and its treatment of the LGBT community, or a simple statement of inclusion addressed to those 'in this room' — that is, the viewers of the *Stations of the Cross*.

Stations of the Resurrection

Twelve monitors are placed on top of their flight cases in a large circle underneath the dome of St Paul's. Each of them transmits the same circular image, produced by filming through the back of a translucent Sony lens cap, so that the logo remains visible in reverse. The soundtrack is fleetingly recognisable as the guitar riff from the opening bars to *Here Comes the Sun* by the Beatles, although the original track has been progressively extended so no two loops are the same duration. The circular images rotate at different speeds, in sync to the soundtrack, changing hue as they cycle through the colour spectrum. As the music builds, the particular melody of *Here Comes The Sun* is obscured, although never quite lost, as the sounds merge to create the effect of a peal of Easter bells.

The twelve screens correspond to Jesus' resurrection appearances in the New Testament and the sampled music from *Here Comes the Sun* by the Beatles is a deliberate pun referencing the coming of The Son,

which is further reinforced by the retention of the reversed Sony logo. The visual effect produced by the light emanating from each of the monitors is reminiscent of a light shining through a stained glass window. This, and the image, shot through a lens-cap, can be interpreted as an eschatological metaphor that corresponds to Paul's description of a resurrection life that is, at the same time, both realized and not yet realized; present now and yet still in the future: 'For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.'¹⁰

The partial 'blindness' caused by filming through a lens cap, and which restricts our full comprehension of the Son, as spelt out by the reversed Sony logo, co-exists with the acclamation of faith, 'Here Comes the Son'. The New Testament looks towards a historical future, towards the redemption of the whole world, but from the angle of the fallen world and its history, that can only be expressed apocalyptically. *Stations of the Cross* and *Stations of the Resurrection* invite discourse about the Christian journey of faith in which the church approaches Good Friday with the prior knowledge of the Resurrection: it lives with the knowledge that the victory has been won, and yet acknowledges that human beings still encounter the pain of death, darkness and separation in this life. In the meantime, the church is nourished by the sacraments and in particular the Eucharist — and reminded of its justification and salvation through observance of Lent and the celebration of Easter — through re-living the Via Crucis and the Via Lucis.

Being Here

Stations of the Cross and *Stations of the Resurrection* are linked by performances of Lizzi Kew Ross & Co's new work, *Being Here*. The movement material focuses on the repeated withdrawal and reconnection of the dancers to generate a physical metaphor of presence and absence, connection and loss. One by one, dancers enter the stage marked out by the placement of monitors beneath the dome of St Paul's. Tentatively, they begin to sense and explore one another's presence and the

physical parameters of the space. Each dancer is carried or supported by the others in turn. They fold and unfold around each other. It is not clear who is acting on whom. A single action can be interpreted in different ways — sometimes as dragging down and sometimes as pulling up; sometimes as helping and sometimes as hindering.

The dance is an exercise in *being here* and different nuances of *being* and ways of *being present* emerge: sensing, seeing and feeling; being on your own with others; connecting with others. The dancers create analogous shapes which are repeated in ways that suggest a series of yogic asana directed towards physical and mindful 'presence', emphasizing the attentiveness required to track and take note of the body's inclination. They come together to form tableaux which are visually reminiscent of Käthe Kollwitz' drawings and sculptures. Human bodies melt together, limbs draped over limbs, in the act of protecting, comforting and carrying each other. It is not clear where one body starts and another ends or whether it is one body or many that is being implied. Narrative fragments emerge: a dancer is lifted by the others, her horizontal body rotated in a movement reminiscent of the hands of a clock, augmenting the metaphor of the stage as a clock face.

The dynamics of each of the sections change and develop, giving a strong rhythmic sensation and series of kinetic connections throughout the work. In one particular phrase, the dancers rock backwards and forwards together in gentle undulating waves that correspond to the contours of the Henry Moore altar at St Stephen Walbrook, drawing attention to the absence of an altar under the dome of St Paul's whilst at the same time becoming a metaphor of presence.

The work was developed in tandem with, not in reference to, Dean's videos but when considered together, there are some striking correspondences. In one climactic moment, a dancer stands on the shoulders of another, staring out into space. Her stance and her appearance resemble that of Maria in *The Royal Road*, and when she falls back with her arms outstretched, her gesture resonates with images from *The Bearer*, reinforcing the allusion to the crucifixion. This inter-textual reading becomes a part of the work in this particular context.

10. 1 Corinthians 13:12

Kew Ross is quick to point out the central role of the dancers in devising the work: it is both the shared conversation between the dancers and their input into the movement material that create what it becomes. She provided them with reference points, including the Resurrection narratives, and a range of poems and images to respond to. These included TS Eliot's *Four Quartets*; *The Answer* and *Kneeling* by RS Thomas; and *Meeting Point* by Louis MacNeice. A common theme in these poems is the suspension and malleability of time, ways of knowing, and the elusiveness of answers.

Visual stimuli included Gericault's *Raft of the Medusa*, in which desperate figures reach their arms out towards a potential source of salvation, hidden beyond the frame of the painting; Veronese's *The Wedding at Cana*, in which the still, central figure of Jesus stares directly back at the viewer, whilst surrounded by a mass of activity and people engaged in conversation; Caravaggio's *Supper at Emmaus*, in which Jesus is present at the centre, but unknown and unrecognized by those around him; and *The Opening* by Paul Nash, which has an abstract sense of layers to work through.

Kew Ross also provided the example of a particular form of contemplation advocated by Ignatius of Loyola, in which people imagine themselves as different characters within the resurrection accounts, vividly composing the place in their minds. She used this choreographically as a way of thinking about the spatial tension between the dancers, the architecture, the audience and the video work.

Here Comes The Sony was sometimes installed in the studio while the work was being devised, and *Being Here* is held and framed by the shifting light and sound of the installation and the placement of the monitors. Depending on where they are, throughout the performance the rich colours of the dancers' costumes physically align and connect with the constantly changing hue of the discs on the individual screens, in ways that cannot be predicted, producing a kaleidoscopic effect.

The personality of the dancers — as choreographed, performed, and costumed — remains essential to the work. *Here Comes The Sony* references Modernist

abstraction in painting, which was generically concerned with spirituality in art, but the present work is committed to a personal Name, formally through the device of the Son(y) logo, and contextually through its presentation in the Cathedral at Eastertide. Similarly, *Being Here* is formally abstract in that it does not seek to represent the Resurrection, but it is narrative in the sense that it is specifically dealing with the Christian account of the resurrection of the body (or bodies) as opposed to notions of idealised spirit.

The performance of the dance then becomes the answer to the question that we are still trying to define and translate:

*Not darkness but twilight
In which even the best
of minds must make its way
now. And slowly the questions
occur, vague but formidable
for all that. We pass our hands
over their surface like blind
men feeling for the mechanism
that will swing them aside. They
yield, but only to re-form
as new problems; and one
does not even do that
but towers immovable
before us.
Is there no way
of other thought of answering
its challenge? There is an anticipation
of it to the point of
dying. There have been times
when, after long on my knees
in a cold chancel, a stone has rolled
from my mind, and I have looked
in and seen the old questions lie
folded and in a place
by themselves, like the piled
graveclothes of love's risen body.*

— *The Answer*, RS Thomas