

Theta

Tony Chrenka & Jason Hirata

Plot

November 12 - December 18, 2021

According to Pliny the Elder¹, the art of painting began when someone outlined their lover's shadow on the wall before their departure for battle. In Pliny's myth, painting originates with the narrativization of loss: it is invented as a means of dealing with the event of departure and the risk that some changes are permanent. Ironically, the representation preempts the dreaded absence as it traces what the body blocks, it's shadow, the space behind its image. Why trace the shadow and not the lover themselves?

A sequence of events that accounts for some change over time is one definition of the word "plot". Narrative, on the other hand, might be thought of as how one deals with the threat and promise of that change². Jason thinks about some art as plot-driven and other art as more narrative-driven. That doesn't mean there is a legible story—just that the artist (or audience) approaches experience from a more or less cynical point of view. Plot-driven art might admit that it's only an outline, that it can't express all of the aspects of interiority which accompany the vicissitudes of time. Jason's silhouettes of himself do not narrativize loss but plot growth. In them, he has gained four inches from his actual height... Tony's drawings are more narrative to my mind, or more about the way plot and narrative move towards each other at any moment, trying to reconcile. You create narrative too, as you move from one artwork to the next. The plot can be as simple as walking around the show and leaving.

Jason Hirata (b. 1986, Seattle, WA) lives and works in Princeton, NJ. Hirata was included in the inaugural group exhibition at Artists Space's Cortlandt Alley reopening in 2019, and has had solo presentations at Fanta-MLN, Milan (2021); 80WSE Gallery, New York (2020); Svetlana, New York (2019); Veronica Project Space, Seattle (2019); Kunstverein Nuremberg (2019); and Henry Art Gallery, Seattle (2016). Hirata has recently exhibited in group presentations at Château Shatto, Los Angeles (2021), Fall River MoCA, Fall River, MA (2021); Kai Matsumiya, New York (2019); Callicoon Fine Arts, New York (2019), and Christian Andersen, Copenhagen (2019).

Tony Chrenka (b.1992, Minneapolis, MN) lives and works in New York. Chrenka's recent exhibitions include solo presentations at La Kaje, Brooklyn (2019); Interim, San Francisco (2017); Littman Gallery, Portland (2016); and Keenan's Room, Los Angeles (2016), as well as group shows at Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York (2021); Hello Dust, Bergen, NO (2018), and Ben's Books, Brooklyn (2017).

¹ The 1st century Roman philosopher, general, and originator of the encyclopedia who died in 79 AD while trying to rescue his friends, via boat, from the volcanic destruction of Pompei

² Antin, David. "The Beggar and the King." Radical Coherency. University of Chicago Press, p. 258.