

Vast plains of human things. Mad Magazine in Grecian Tragedy. A spaghetti mouthed alien whose eyes plead in supplication. (To whom does the alien submit application of her soul?)

Tapola's painting: amidst miasmas of cultural runoff and vast landfills of stuff. As far as the eye can see, stuff. People. Characters. Surveys of a cultural landscape. The way the Hudson River painters may have once surveyed the American West, now peppered with all the trash we would volunteer to keep our highways scenic, separate. The Hudson River painters omitted your cousin Jack's trash burn, he with no need for the museum's paintings of his yard. Tapola carefully paints back a more realistic natural world with Jack as a bard weeping in respect for his landscape's cultural majesty, wearing the crown bestowed him: dubious Jockeys.

I think Tapola likes these characters at the same time he may not agree with their, admittedly, stratospheric levels of buffoonery. If I had to hazard a guess, Tapola paints people and characters who may present challenge or even affront to his personal limits on hospitality, camaraderie. There is a pleasure in testing our welcome and fond sense of democracy we might share in "our fellow man."<sup>1</sup> The high ideals of a peopled culture forced to confront the indignities of those people actually showing up. I'm talking art crowds. It would be a mistake to think that this is mockery of some low ideals, claiming it's "beneath us."

Because these creatures are our neighbors, our sisters, the people who run our museums. These are the people who teach your child math and at night eat boogers, enjoy "pro" wrestling. But what is the difference in the man whose personal couch fantasy is pro-wrestling versus Relation Aesthetics? People are idiots generally. Neanderthals with a more convincing flag. And they rise to power. Have statues of themselves erected. And 400 years later we awake to find Columbus's cultural cache questionable and pretend this is old and new at the same time. Amended by press release. We apologize on behalf of our citizenry for the exposure of an erection we did not ask if they wanted to see. OOPS in all caps; OOPS in red, white and blue.

100% doomed: A first mate wearing the face of someone who has just been told by the man at the wheel nothing reassuring. The helmsman unphased, possibly horny. This is a metaphor for everything.

Tapola's world feels like the scraps of culture we will eventually find peeled from the bottom of shoes, a mix of tabloid, comix and just raw news. Indistinguishable at this point. This is our landfill, these are the surveys of humanity, less dumpsters than the hoarding of "cultural wealth." Roman statuary and crop circles. It isn't trash but it might all be garbage.<sup>2</sup> The painter forms an institutional critique, says: "Here's your world of creativity, your catalog of objects, your arks of culture – here is the world of your imagination – how well it has been protected – a universe in a globe, painted on a Tuesday, jettisoned into the bin. The painter conjures a museum at will, sweeps it into the canyon, casts it to the dump."

—Tony Sunder

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<sup>1</sup> The language of Democracy itself is often found corrupted or challenged in the various forms of the word "free" and "freedom" ("Freedumb" as cudgel). As well as the utopic banners and art heraldry reigning in whatever new form of cultural hoo-ra, generally alongside a "free lecture." "Welcome assholes." The relational aesthetic of someone pooping their pants.

<sup>2</sup> It's imprecise to call them landfills. (There's garbage and there's *garbage*) A grid for discerning garbage: Spielberg garbage versus John Waters versus Michael Bay versus *Boyhood*.