

WHAG Residence January – February 2013

This is my Kimberley diary, while I am in residence at the WHAG. A rattle of venetian blinds, HOT wind flailing my hair, my right hand holding down the paper as I write and Joan Baez sings in my ears, „Every year I'm sure of a little bit less.“ I have a preference for these statements that others often see as negative, but they delight me, firstly because I hear in them that other people think and feel as I do, that there are linkages, and secondly because I'm getting to think that there is very little that we can really KNOW with certainty, and that living, serenely with uncertainty is probably the best lesson I can slowly learn. Acceptance, *Gelassenheit*.. a lovely German word, the significance of which Dr. Köberle has been teaching me over the many years of our „working“ relationship around my bones, which he keeps bringing into relationship with each other and with the rest of me.

What a boon, this room, I was writing, as Dumitru entered to greet and welcome me. He has the studio below me – a gentle, small man, with a big spirit. This place and the people in it are good to and for me. Liz picked me up with all my goods and chattels – electric fan, sheets, cloths (to try and keep this place cool) and for working – this book, more brushes, camera, nourishment. She is a darling woman. Sadly not feeling well this morning. She was “gobsmacked” on entering the studio, when she helped me carry the stuff up. The three tables with the plastic bakkies and tubes of watercolour laid out, looked, even to my eyes, a bit; very anal retentive, which is the last thing I am at the moment. Dumitru has a weak heart. One hears his breath struggling through and he smokes and can't manage to give up. We just talked about a good time to work and that both of us are early workers, but he, at the moment has little energy and lies twiddling his thumbs. Maybe we can help each other, anyway. Even just by enjoying the presence of the other. Maybe, or as Joan Baez sounds in my ears.. “and maybe not”:

Now I feel ready to make marks, let colour flow. Thank you for this place.

9th January 2013

I have hung up wet cloths in the windows, to cool the air and have the fan on, but even so it is warm, warm here in my upper room at the end of the cream stairway, with the cement stairs, that looks and feels exactly like it looked and felt when I was ten or twelve and came up here for Walter Westbrook's art lessons. My sketchbooks and watercolour blocks, orderly row of watercolour bakkies, brushes and leads await me. I was trying to work out how to do a big piece, while I am here; a collapsible big piece, made of lots of little pieces. Yesterday, while working, I was high on the movement, the marks, the colour, but on reflecting later, I didn't feel that what I had done was particularly scintillating. I must look and see how they appear to me today.

But I am here to make other marks too. Here I am. Here I go.

11th January 2013

A good day with clouds piled up in the sky in variations on white and grey. In another part of the heavens, wispy, white flakes dissolve themselves, reform and are there as ever-changing figures, then they get diffuse, get trailings and when I look again, they are gone. A dragon puffs, looking like Harry... below a swallow flies – They are so present, the swallows. Maybe it is just because I've learned about them and so, see them more consciously. With the storm brewing the other day, they flew warning bows across the sky, weaving in and out of each others' paths, hundreds of them at a time. Those who had not yet gone to rest in the reeds on DeBeer's mine with the hundreds of thousands of others – Some of whom will be wheeling over the Dahme in the European summer, maybe. At least some of

their kind.

But now the damp cloths hang, the fan is on – Mark making can proceed.

A lovely session doing watercolours – life forms, rhythms and ended with a series of drawings to "Lord of the Dance" – where the rhythms animated me to joy, and the lines of power and fun. I feel .. felt, this dance should be more Indian in its movement. At least that's what came out in the drawings. The stiff body of the Irish dance doesn't fit .. and the lines developed into Shiva-like dancers, stamping and moving the spine, hands and arms, ecstatically – Joy, to dance, to make music, to draw. OK Good day
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15th January 2013

A good morning in the cool downstairs – a new way of working with a row of laid-out pages. Good – despite interruptions.

But that was a one off as they have kids' groups there every morning– pity. Negotiated with Liz to try the upper room at the front, which has air-con, but its not as nicely isolated as the one I was in . I'll try this today. There's no water. Maybe I'll just have to be a mobile artist. I've opened the curtains and can see the students walking by to the Technical College. I've got a chair with wheels and can scoot around a bit. There's a hot wind that started up last night while I was talking to Jens-Peter . The trees are waving their branches quite strongly. Here you hear the calls and the exchanges of the team of guards. Let me put my music in my ears. And make my own space in my head – I've just checked the trelli-door and put up a notice asking not to be disturbed – Great to be cool! See if I can use the space creatively. I've been setting up and looking for the music to start me off today. At the moment, I have Nessun Dorma in my ears...but on looking out, am taken into the place I am in, here in South Africa and start to question what I am doing here. Not taking it in... going to my own place in my head – What worked yesterday , doesn't seem to be working today. Maybe an installation in this window, which is above the entrance of the gallery.. or a projection from within.. live drawing at night!!

18th January 2013

Back up in the bridge on a cloudy morning after much tumultuous rain – the telephone ringing below. Doors opening and closing – Anne arriving with a trailer. I suppose for the transport of Gutter's exhibition. The air-con on. Just thought that maybe I should video the comings and goings and speed them up.. add music.. sound.. comment –Life happening. The first thing I saw on getting to the bridge this morning, was a huge hadida swooping to land. Walking people, mainly African.. cars especially big 4x4s, rolling past, often with small white lady drivers..or big fat male drivers of various tones – A nice quiet start. Many fewer people today than on Wednesday. Is it the gray weather? (NO. Wednesday was registration day.) But it's really pleasant for pedestrians. Strange – Maybe start blogging from here. Arnie's ears against the brick path.. doing a walkabout.. cell clamped to right ear. That's something I noticed and drew on Wednesday, all the people carrying a cell in their hand.. looking at it.. tapping it.. putting it to ear. The figures only make sense in the cell-phone era – I remember seeing a young woman standing on a street corner in the East End of London, as we drove in from the ferry, years ago, and wondering what she was doing with her hand to her ear. – Made me think of van Loon's Lives and the things that people from the past wouldn't understand if suddenly transported to now – Enough writing and thinking – Let's get drawing again.

Ballad for those who walk and walking, keep life developing and thoughts flowing.

21st January 2013

Oh drawing is a good process, as is writing – Moved from a "feeling study" to the Jacaranda outside

with its few lilac blossoms left, to drawings of walking people, standing around people, on black paper ..did two tiny series to Hans der Geige on black strips left over from the cutting of the letters for the window installation. Good.

29th January 2013

I came here on Saturday, but was too early, so landed up at Bachini's in the street with the long name, that I keep practising, but don't manage to remember...Phat....N...? Maybe if I knew something about her, it would help. Anyway, a good drawing-from-above session in the tiny sketch book – really enjoyed it. Yesterday was off, as I took Fiona's car to get the air con fixed and then had a really nice meal at the Kalahari with Fiona, Judy and Mom. That went very well, with fun and laughter – So, here I am again, into just drawing, but feel the build up of not being at open-end anymore, with JP arriving, our trip planned, Mom's birthday event to plan and do – Clear that all out – now I am here – Put music in my ears and work.

30th January 2013

A cool and windy morning. I've brought the two little Dugmores in – see if that brings Mom a bit of money – Jeff Beck's Celtic long sounds of Mna Na Eireann flow along my ear channels – Aches over my left eye, jaw, neck.. Probably the electric storm last night tightened me up! I could feel the electricity and it kept rolling back, just when , at the last count it was a good few kilometers away, suddenly the lightning and thunder were THERE, together, intermingling. Harry couldn't stand it and went to a darker room – The cat yowled and the other two held out with me in the bed. I think they were of more comfort to me than I to them. My will, "Lust" to work, draw, etc is low.

31st January 2013

I've forgotten my cell at home and my ear-rings. Pity about the music, but maybe this is the chance to try working without my wonderful turn on and motor, music. I hope that I can continue working, as well as doing and having lots of loving time with JP.

Rika paid me a compliment yesterday – When I gave her a text for the workshop, she said "Not many artists can put into words, what the work is about.. or what's going to happen in a workshop." I'd say, what *could* happen.

Yes, Let's go Lizzie, work!

3rd February 2013

Jens-Peter is here – arrived safely, thank God. Now the time seems to be racing. Mom's birthday and then we go off to the Cape for 11 days – Changed music to the second piece of Hans der Geige.. Violin of life! I'll have to contact him when I get back and ask for the titles of his pieces... and maybe I could perform with him sometime. That would be good. How can I center myself and keep track? Keep the rhythm? The simple routine I've had has been good.. now there are many things that have to be done, organised and I have to think of food on a regular basis. The difficulty of keeping a number of strands going at the same time.. my work,,food.. house.. teaching..etc. It certainly seems that the best times for art work are those where I am alone.. and or services are there, as in Poland... so I don't have to think of much else and not of the happiness of others! Sketching out ideas on another pad, as I sit here – Ideas for working with drawings cut-out paper as installation, performance. So, let's draw again

These pieces of Hans der Geige are, it seems to me, about the fragility of life, it's gloriousness, it's

sadness, our inadequacy and the passingness of it all "Nichts ist unendlich, oh sehe das doch ein"
That's what I have to accept and somehow enjoy, for if it were not so, it would be static and therefore not life at all.

It seemed to me that the young man on the left was dancing, then I realised that he was telling a story to the other one. Others have now joined. It may be projection on my part, but having read of how a murder suspect was stabbed to death in his back yard, I think he might have seen it happen and is showing the others what happened. He's a very carefully dressed young man with his white shirt and grey waist coat, which he has just pulled into place after his extortions.

A telephone call as he moved from foot to foot

a few gestures

trying to explain something

and now he has gone.

Flutter of hands of girls talking

and they're gone.

Figures passing..fast...not the Kimberley amble, (which is better suited to the heat, which I know to be out there)

Unusual speed and walking as if wanting to get somewhere.