

BlackBook

Tim Youd's 'Drawings of Paintings' Are Great Literature Turned Visual Art

Posted on May 24, 2019 by BlackBook



If you happen to be in the general vicinity of Yuma, Arizona between now and May 30th, and are looking for something to intrigue (and possibly startle), you may want to detour to the [Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area](#). There you'll find artist Tim Youd under a tent in the intense pre-summer heat, typing Cormac McCarthy's 352-page novel *Blood Meridian or The Evening Redness of the West*, first published in 1985 but set in the mid-nineteenth century West. And he'll be hammering away on an ancient typewriter, not a computer.

There is logic to this masochistic madness. This artwork is part of series Youd calls *100 Novels*, and *Blood Meridian* is number 62. For each, he selects a major literary work, which he then types using the exact same typewriter the author used, a project that takes weeks and that Youd considers a performance.

As significant, the performance is always public, taking place in a significant location from the novel itself. To wit, one of the most violent and unforgettable scenes in *Blood Meridian* is one where a rope ferry crosses the Colorado River and the protagonist's gang massacres the Yuma Indians.

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Youd's performance does result in the creation of a tangible art object. He inserts two pieces of paper into his typewriter, one on top of the other, and he types the entire novel on these two sheets. The top sheet, of course, ends up quite blackened, and in many places torn, resulting in typing on the bottom sheet, which also is filled with typing indentations. Youd then mounts and frames the two sheets side-by-side as a finished product. Clearly, chance plays an enormous role in determining this art, and the work can certainly be described as highly conceptual.

If you cannot make it to Yuma, you'll be able to see the sheets from that performance at the [Museum of Contemporary Art](#), Tucson in the fall of 2020. In addition, the exhibition will include paintings and drawings by Youd.

More immediate, you can currently see Youd's drawings at the [there-there](#) gallery in Los Angeles. The colored pencil and graphite works on paper replicate Youd's *Typewriter Ribbon Paintings*, which he first showed at the New Orleans Museum of Art in 2015. The drawings replicate the stacking of used typewriter ribbons which constituted the "paintings."

Tim Youd, *Drawings of a Painting*, is on show until June 30 at the [there-there](#) gallery, 4859 Fountain Avenue, Los Angeles

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