

## THE FIST

Why is a man's hand cast in stone? Arrested in motion, the fist is suspended between subject and object on the terms of its materiality, but that tells us nothing more than that it's more than its materiality, as we all might be. Severed from a come-from and with nowhere to land, it's working hard to tell us it's out here on its own while knowing that we know it doesn't mean it. It's in the room and serious but only if you are. It wears the ring as costume even if it's genuine, which it's not only. James was given the ring by his dad who was given it by his dad. He does not wear it, but he has kept it safe. The fist could also be grasping. It could also be, in its tightness, holding on. Which is funny because it's lost its arm and legs, and you have to wonder what it's holding on for, though it does, in its way, have a head. It has Victoria's head, popped out and worn and obvious, like Marilyn Monroe. If there's a flight given in sovereignty, if agency is freedom because it's a capacity for flight, then your objects are the limits of your reach. Does the flailing subject arrive with the searching hand, or are we left behind? What you've got is whatever you can get your hand to. What you are is what has you. The fist is resting, even if it really is about to do what it might be. As such, at rest, still it is, in its way, on the move. It's in flight from its embodiment but it is bodily. It's in flight from subjectivity but it bears its sovereign almost like a joke. But then again, it's not a joke, and no one is playing. It's come to fuck you up, or it's come to fuck you. Either way the ring, not the fist, is what makes what could be fun unkind.

Without the ring it would be different. It would be, for one, anonymous-ish. It would slip in and out like a breeze, and mean more easily. What strikes me is that the thumbnail is manicured unprofessionally and a little clumsily. And the wrist is a little limp. There's a mark on the index finger, like a scar. Is it the man's or the cast's? 'Man'/'hand'/'cast'. Rock (marble dust + resin) cast in the role of man-hand in the James William Murray show. Another way to think about it would be in terms of getting paid. Because it's a coin even though it's a coin you're not supposed to use. You'd be hard pressed to do so, though you could with enough intermediation and savvy. Whatever the coin has to give, it's out of sync with the world it's in, where spending money is otherwise so easy, though whether its world is just foregone or still-to-come is as yet uncertain. Carrying all this latent value around is just more work, in a way, for the bearer. The wearer. More work even if it's true that it is easy. Thinking about getting paid is eventually thinking about work. Thinking about work ought to be thinking about getting paid, but it mostly isn't. Work that is unpaid: James's shitty manicure. Et cetera. The cuticle has been cut away but it has been insufficiently moisturised and it looks painful. He's neatly cut the dead skin away and cut into what will bleed, and it's bled. This is on the thumb – his (its) left-hand thumb. Whose pain? My pain? James's pain?

Why has he cast his fist with a sovereign ring? The sovereign ring is an identity-thing which operates by way of a stale state-thing, and symbolises, now, mostly, what that state has failed. It is a firm class-thing, the subtleties of its being so are entirely dependent not on the way you wear it but on who wears it. It's all abbreviations, short-hands haunted by handouts. *Council House and Violence* is a two-item list to describe a culture characterised chiefly by a pattern, a knock-off print. Imprint: the application

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of pressure not to make something move but to change it, to mark it and, in marking it, claim it. The impression of the man is his inheritance. We are what we have been and what has been pressed on us, as we've tried to flee. Not on the way you wear it but on who wears it – where they wear it, what wears them, what is allowed to be abstract, what's a style and what's an artwork and what is just your life no one else would like to live. Though there are those who'd like to watch. Just your life and how your people have lived: which the work is coming from: the work's condition of intermediate coming-from is what scores its adjustment style to its present state of expectancy and bristling and featherlight self-defence, it's ambivalence about disclosure. Something even if nothing in the fist, which is grasping, bearing something through a space it can't bear. The fist holds out for a secret that even if it did what it might be doing or what it looks like it's doing wouldn't be extracted or shared or transmitted because it can't unfurl without its body it is far from. What's it got in there, in its grip? Are the other nails so butchered? What's it hiding (what is hidden)?

The coin is bullion, not meant to be spent, meant to be kept safe. Wearing the ring isn't spending the coin, it's asking that it go unspent and that it means something in the meantime. It's jewellery, it's sentimental, and its job is to be beautiful by yoking what it's loved for to a beyond that is longed for in the ordinary which so rarely yields its fruit. Does it have something to do with dignity in being a worker and getting paid? Does it have something to do with access to dormant capital as what sleeps in the walls of the ex-council house as violence, where the wide-awake and nail-biting live and worry? Does it have something to do with the affectation of rest? Gay leisure? Queer pleasure? Up to no good out in public with a Victorian's loose change, the fist is not ashamed. Not who I am – this is just how I get paid. This is work. There is work to be done. The ring is fat, it's deep – mounted on the finger, it's riding high. Chest out shoulders back. It's facilitating a holding back from whatever it's going to have to land on. A withdrawal of something harder to deny (more intimate). James no way wears this ring on the regular. But also, it is his ring. Queer is a holding-on and a severance – a severed fist.

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