



SECULAR SURFACE

SURFING THE NATIONS

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Secular Surface

Surfing The Nations

An artproject by Kristoffer Svenberg

There's no limit in how God will use surfing to evangelize the world.

– Tom Bauer, Surfing The Nations Leader

Arugam Bay – Sri Lanka

- Brother Kristoffer, would you kindly pray...

The local pastor is about to give me a subject to pray for. The man is from Sri Lanka and speaks an American English with Sri Lankan accent. He has previously been employed as an engineer in the US for several years and then returned to his home country. He explains that he has returned to share the religion of miracles. We are in the small coastal fishing village of Arugam Bay in Southeast Sri Lanka. A place where tourism has increased in recent years and small simple hotels with associated restaurants have blossomed a little here and there. But this is not a holiday resort in a large scale. Maybe that it will become that in the future, but there are no guarantees. The tsunami disaster was a severe blow here in 2004, and also civil war has kept tourists away for several years. But something that strengthens this places' role as a tourist destination is the coastline with ocean waves. Nowadays Arugam Bay is a well-known surf spot for wave surfers from many different parts of the world.

The pastor says my name to give me something to pray for. This is how it goes during our prayer meetings:

...would you kindly pray for all the people in this village that immaterial of their religious differences, past all the differences that all of them would believe on Jesus Christ and bend their knees and confess the Lord as their saviour so that they will come to our church.

After a long silence with many conflicting thoughts in my head, I begin to pray. I'm confused with my role. What do I play? Who am I? What do our actions mean here? In a slightly dizzy mode and an insecure tone:

I want to pray for the citizens here in Arugam Bay... that they will find the right and precious way...

It is a nervous moment for me when the pastor translates and speaks in Tamil. Then silence.

I continue:

...that will develop their community and their lives,... so that this will be a loving and growing community. Amen.

The pastor translates these words, and his helper speaks out loud and powerful: *Amen! Amen!! Hallelujah!*

The helper, a man aged 25-30, who sometimes holds ceremonies and worship-meetings, and then takes the role of a pastor, is now serving as a support. He sings words like amen and hallelujah in a way as if he almost is in trance. The prayer meeting is designed as a full worship ceremony and goes on in a changing but ecstatic pace. The language is constantly and fluidly changing between Tamil and English.

In rare quiet parts of the ceremony you can hear the surrounding sounds from crickets and birds that I don't know the names of. A slight breeze goes through the palm-trees. It's June and it's hot weather at dusk. There's not enough light anymore for us to see the magnificent sea view from the height where we're at. We've placed ourselves outside of a Lankan family house. Family members, interested neighbours and other people from the village are gathered for the

ceremony. The house is very simple but phenomenally well located. If the village is further developed and exploited as a tourist resort, this site will be highly prioritized for commercial investors. The local houses will then easily be moved away through demolition.

Some of the locals are active in the ceremony; while others mostly seem to stay in order to just view our gathering in curious manners. It's hard to know what they really think about our privileged Christian group who have travelled from remote parts of the world. We work and are volunteers for the missionary organization Surfing The Nations. Something that makes Surfing The Nations special and different is how the organization uses wave surfing as a tool to spread the message of Jesus Christ.

Surfing The Nations is all about mobilizing Christian surfers to go into all the world and preach the gospel. We're believe in that we can go to places that no other missionaries has gone before because there some of the most remotest places that surfers will go. - Tom Bauer , Surfing The Nations founder.

Background

For several years I have focused on wave surf culture as a subject to research with regard of representation issues considering political structure. I think that it's primarily by how surfing has a strong ability to naturalize its own culture that makes it something culturally and politically effective. The less political you feel, the more political you are, is something that I usually say. With that expression I would like to refer to how standards and norms in everyday life affect us the most. And it is also about the construction of ideals and idealization. The wave surf culture travels the world and has obvious connections to market liberalism. And the surf culture is put in a praised and idealized position in the contemporary as a male norm culture.

The tourist role, in a more general term, is not as idealized anymore. Instead you should be an individual of affiliation or dedication for a more specific purpose. It's considered better to travel with a mission and a certain connection. Wave surfing and yoga, for example, are included here as something spiritual, physical and personal developing. But those activities do primarily benefit you individually and they are part of an individualistic social structure. This is something that is being rewritten and hidden in commercials with formulas of higher purposes.

Since surfing is succeeding very well in appearing as an apolitical movement, and being focused that way normally, is somewhat evidence for how power structures are being hidden. I see this as an interesting subject to problematize, and then also the surfer missionary as an example and research subject. An artist role, the artist as someone working in the public social field, is also highlighted through this project. What is the artist's position in the context? What are the similarities and differences between the different roles?

Colleen McGloin from Australia wrote a PHD thesis published in 2005 with the title: *Surfing Nation(s) – Surfing Country(s)*. I want to mark that the title is not connected to the organisation *Surfing The Nations*. The dissertation provides a genealogy of the relationship between surfing, the nation, and white masculinity in Australian culture. She argue that, despite its historical connections to countercultural and subcultural expression, surfing has emerged as a cultural formation which, in multiple ways, contributes to and sustains dominant conceptions of national identity. And she is also writing about surfculture as freely moving between both being mainstream culture and counter culture at the same time.

The reason for my work as a missionary for *Surfing The Nations* is that I see it as a performance work part of my art practice. I am very unfair in a lot of ways, and dishonest. I am critical of my own behaviour. And I am critical of the organisation. There is nobody in place who knows about my intentions. My role could possibly be described in other ways than an artist. I'm there as a surfer. I'm there as a missionary. I'm there as an anthropologist. I'm there as a tourist. I'm there as a journalist. At the same time none of these roles are true.

I perform the actions of a surfing missionary. And I am also in the same problematic situation as other tourists in the area. I go up into a subculture and my way of behaving can be seen as an anthropologist's fieldwork, or as a digging journalist. But I'm not in the first place looking for something like a revealing journalistic scoop. From a larger perspective I represent something that exists to the same extent even without me in place. This is not something temporary. This is not a travel. This is an ongoing structure.

Skype – The other

- *So, I'm excited. I'm excited as you're coming. And to... go down and work with you and, surf and have fun and see what God will do, you know. Just in us and through us and all that, so, it's gonna be a good time.*

- *Sounds amazing.* I answer Niklas.

Niklas continue: - *It is. It has been so far. I mean I've been there, I don't know, six years or seven years, six or seven years I can't remember, six years I think it is, and it keeps getting better and better.*

- *Yeah, I was on my way asking that, how has it been changing in Sri Lanka after the tsunami. Like..* I ask.

- *Ahh, well that's a good question.... I think... that they have definitely got a little bit greedier. Maybe. Because they got so much stuff.*

- *ok?...* I express somewhat doubtful.

Niklas takes over immediately again: - *So. You know a lot of things were given for free. Soo,... they are still kind of in that mood.*

This is an excerpt from a conversation that took place via skype just some days before we went to Sri Lanka. During the conversation I sit in a basement in a villa, where I at the moment live collectively with friends in Mälärhöjden in Stockholm. Niklas Eriksson, who will be our leader in Sri Lanka, is sitting by a computer at Surfing The Nations Headquarters in Oahu, Hawaii.

Tom Bauer and Cindy Bauer founded the organization Surfing The Nations in 1997. Niklas Eriksson and his younger brother Stefan Eriksson were very important people during Surfing The Nations early years and startup period. The early involvement by the two Swedish brothers, who could be described by the term “exile swedes”, are the link that has led to Swedish overrepresentation with many volunteers and ministry workers over the years.

With some kind of awareness and connection to how the situation is problematic, I think Niklas immediately should have tried to correct the statement he gave in the skype discussion about greed. But he merely continues to speak as if things are certain and a matter of fact. The people in Sri Lanka have become greedier because they have got so much for free.

Application Process, Ideological Conviction

In order to get into the organization and to do missionary work for them, I need to go through an application process. The application form requires that I define and formulate my religious perception. I construct a religious Christian belief for my role in the project. That is part of the project score. It is like a role play game. In addition, I need signatures and references to certificate how I am as a person, and as proof of my Christian faith. It should be from an employer, or other professional relationship, as well as a family member and a priest. Most overwhelming and difficult was to meet a priest this way.

I go to the church in Onsala, south of Gothenburg, where I grew up. I'm there with a purpose, a mission, and I explain to the priest about Surfing The Nations and how I want to work for them.

The priest is a man who has done baptism, funerals and marriage ceremonies through many, many years in the village area. Despite my mediocre and poor connection with Christian religion and the church, this is a priest I respect. I'm sitting there now and feel a bit disrespectful while talking to him. I feel disrespectful in the way that I am concealing my real purpose and my role.

We have a rather long conversation and talk about this and that. Since the pastor and I have some common friends and

acquaintances from earlier in Onsala, we go into some talk about old times and what people are doing nowadays. We also talk about photography as an interest we share. The priest says that it is ok for him to certify my serious attitude about my will to do ministry work. But I can't fully read what he thinks when I'm telling him about Surfing The Nations. It's possible that he is a bit critical because of what he hear about them. But as a friendly manner he talks and makes comparisons with the major international organization Youth With A Mission that he has experience of. His son has traveled and worked for them.

Surfing The Nations founder Tom Bauer and Cindy Bauer have previously worked as leaders of Youth With A Mission's section in Hawaii. There is a text posted on the site www.culthelp.info (Cult awareness and information library) where Tom & Cindy Bauer are accused of abusing and utilizing their spiritual leadership within YWAM. The text also describes how they used the organizations money for their own purposes in an unauthorized forbidden way.

When I'm leaving the church and the area I feel a bit bestial. I write bestial (a beast) here with a link to how artists work with a context in real life, and then symbolically cannibalize on it to talk about something else. It's a consumption of meaning, consumption of the environment and the people in order to be used as a representation. A violence that is close to hand within photographic and recording techniques. During our fairly personal conversation I had placed a sound recorder switched on in a textile bag. Did I lie to this priest, I ask myself then? The priest who even may have baptized me exactly on this spot in Onsala.

Honesty is honored within Christianity. You shall be true to yourself and you must be true to God. Within surf culture it is important to be genuine and authentic. You are supposed to do things for real. Otherwise you're just a poser.

Religion in the age of digital reproduction

During my first year as a Master student in Fine Art at Konstfack in Stockholm, 2007-2008, many discussions were raised about making art that had social connection and was socially engaged. It was then about political art and often the artist as a critical researcher or political activist. We talked about addressing or involving the audience and finding ways to reach out with our work. What I want to do through this project is to get involved in one of Surfing the Nations so-called Outreaches. Don't get me wrong, but STN's ways of doing missionary work do not differ that much from how some contemporary artists, or sometime even institutions, perform their outreach practice.

The term outreach, to reach out, was also mentioned countless times by professors and teachers at Konstfack. Creating art worth spreading and sharing as information. This was discussed in terms of criticality, impact and performative affect.

When I think back, I remember how a lot of discussions were about digital networks, and then mainly about the internet as an infrastructure. We were a dozen students at the International Master's Program with Marysia Lewandowska and Måns Wrangé as main professors. The fact that the Internet is a strong factor that has changed the world of today is clear and tangible. Similarly, through an ongoing process, it's part of how society is being influenced, governed and changed. The Internet is so integrated in our infrastructure today that we no longer distinguish its culture from society at large. Within art, the term Post Internet was coined by Marisa Olson in 2008. With that term, she wanted to name art's position in a time when the Internet has become an obvious part of our society. Art, as well as our perspectives, is influenced by the global network, regardless of whether the works are digital, made for online viewing or not.

In 1936, Walter Benjamin wrote the classic and often referenced text *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Boris Groys has more recent written *Religion in the age of digital reproduction* (2009). The philosopher and the artist Groys writes, among other things, that religion and conspiracy theories are two things that really benefit from the Internet and the network community. He believes that the spread and rise of these has increased significantly with our digitized era. Religion is facing a renaissance through digital social media. New forms of religion and religiosity are being developed.

The Internet in its structure benefits private, unconditional and sovereign freedom before scientific, conditional, institutional freedom, or sharing of legitimized viewpoints and perspectives. It is the unconditional and not proven information that can more easily and without resistance spread through the Internet. I also want to point out that this goes on in the market-liberal economy. It is information that in a superficial way fits easier within different situations,

this is because it's not regulated and therefore becomes more fast-formulated. It becomes competitive in spite of its major shortcomings, and Groys' declares it as survival of the fittest in accordance with a Darwinist perspective. It finds favorable positions, diversity of positions, precisely through how it is not anchored and thus can move unlimitedly.

This is information that's not confirmed by sources or theoretical anchoring. And it is information that then exerts influence on our perception and experience of reality. Although the Internet is of a global structure and is public, the network do somehow get us into our own bubbles of information in ways that can be devastating. The information we choose to spread and encounter is the information we confirm ourselves in.

Through the Internet we can find the forums and contexts where our own worldview is confirmed and declared as we like. Media researchers today agree that the number of people who are actively looking for legitimized news and social information is increasing, but at the same time, the group of individuals who actively avoid social information increasing even more. Making choices to avoid legitimized information has never been as easy as it is today. The network community has created a society environment where we can move around with our own images of the world without having to face different views or subject to any real confrontation.

Somehow it was by going through information and doing research on the Internet I started to work on this project. My background as an artist has a certain focus on image and photography. The Internet reinforces the role of image and video media for this organization's activities. Through my actions, I want to influence a flow of information in media. In a way, I could work on this project solely on the basis of archival material and things that I can find in the so-called digital cloud. But for several reasons, complexity and more dimensions, I choose to participate in the organization's practice. It is also about bringing those actions into a symbolic reading and as representation. It's about moving my body and myself out of a secured position. I uncertain the reading of who I am and my role in this project. In that way I challenge myself and my role as an artist.

On site in Sri Lanka, within our group, computers were as present as the Bible. With the decentralized but searchable structure of Internet computers were an important source for presenting images and videos that could attract people and connect them to STN and Christianity. Those computers were also tools for collecting video recordings and footage from the cameras we were carrying with us everywhere we went.

Renovation

We get to hear from Niklas and Kristin that we are about to paint and renovate the village's hairdressing salon. The salon is very small but centrally located in Arugam Bay. What we are about to do is explained as extensive aid work. After an internal meeting in our compounds, we go to the barber to tell him about our plans.

Niklas talks to the hairdresser in an educating manner and tone. We listen behind him almost like supervision in the small room. The discussion is mostly, or almost extensively a monologue. The words get outspoken from Niklas in a slightly superior jargon. But he is also adapting the words to a kind of made up slang English for someone who isn't so good at the language. Niklas is seeking for approval while explaining in sweeping gestures about what we are about to do in the barbershop.

It goes on in a way that resembles how a seller tries to convince a potential customer. The technique is based on excluding other possible alternatives.

*- Just think about it, you know, cause what we wanna do, we wanna paint inside and fix.
Paint outside, paint the door, paint everything. Says Niklas and continues.*

(...)

*- You know in America they sell shampoo and wax and
I know here different I know.
But we make shelves.*

*The stereo we put in the back so you can't see.
Everything very nice looking, clean. And we wanna paint, everything new, new curtains.
Paint this, paint everything really, really nice.*

It's ok for you or?

Since it's not the hairdresser himself who owns the place, the decision requires the involvement of more people. But Niklas, and our group, are determined and have already decided. Within the group we have got told by Niklas and Kristin that we are going to do something very good, a good deed, and something that will affect the community in the right way. We are going to spread a positive message in the village.

Niklas to the hairdresser again:

*- We wanna help to fix, but, we need to know.
We need to, we look in the shelves, see how much money.
How much money cost.
We will see, cause we have very little money.
Not much money this year, so not much money.
But we wanna start with the painting.*

The hairdresser is someone that many people from the village visit regularly. And the plan is that the hairdresser's customers will see how the place has been painted and redone. Then stories will be told in the village about our group. People will also see us from the street. It's going to be obvious for everyone who passes that we are working in the room. At first there is a curtain in the large window facing towards the street, but we take it down.

One of Surfing the Nations many taglines, for example used in their videos, is: *Be the change you want to see in the world*. This is explained as a Mahatma Gandhi quotation. It's an incorrect quote that has become viral on the internet. I don't know exactly where it originates and how it began to spread. What Ghandi really said that gave rise to this is: *We but mirror the world. All the tendencies present in the outer world are to be found in the world of our body. If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change.*

Ghandi expressed something that is somewhat more complex, humble, listening to the environment and self-reflective criticism. It is about thinking of your own role and changing yourself, rather than focusing on changing the world through your deeds and your role. In how we act in Sri Lanka it is the surrounding place that's supposed to change according to us.

In proportion to the size of the hairdressing salon, we are way too many on site working. The small room is full of our bodies in action. We begin our work by emptying the salon on things. For example, there is a large amount and variety of posters on the walls:

- Is it ok to tear these down? Kristin is asking Niklas.

- Yes. Niklas answers frankly.

We tear down the posters from the walls, an act that makes them crumpled and torn apart. What these pictures mean or are of value to the hairdresser is nothing we really take into account. He might have collected those for years. Posters that soon will lie in a pile on the floor.

At a rather late stage of the process, when we have already decided the colors to paint, Kristin asks while the hairdresser is in the room, if Niklas knows how the hairdresser actually wants it.

- Ask him. Niklas reply very card.

At this point I think I've got some understanding of how Niklas thinks. As a prejudice and pretext from me I think that Niklas doesn't expect the hairdresser to answer something clearly. That is also an argument, from his side, about why we should control and decide the design.

- What colors do you want in here? - Do you like green? Kristin says to the hairdresser. Green is the color we've already chosen, but the barber doesn't know this yet. The hairdresser shakes his head and express something far out with his eyes.

- Do you like orange?

He does not answer and Kristin continues.

- Black? Black everywhere?

- Black? No! Says the hairdresser.

When Kristin then asks about the hairdresser's favorite color, he points up at one of the walls and says blue. The cerise cold blue color in which the room is already painted is his favorite color. It's a pleasant tone in a place with a sunny, warm and hot climate.

Like I mentioned before, the argument raised about why we should paint in a different color is because the hairdresser doesn't have a strong opinion. He doesn't know what he wants, according to STN. We know good taste, and that is part of what we bring as our positive message. With scrapers we slowly scratch away the blue color from the walls. There is no air conditioning in the room and we are not used to work in this heat. Sweat pours down our bodies while we work and many of the men in our group are dressed in surf-shorts and no top. This in contrast to some of the locals around the barbershop that are dressed in traditional Muslim all covering clothing.

After a while I'm told to stop scraping the paint off the walls. We are going to skip this step and paint directly on top of the old paint-surface. This is an approach that every painter knows will lead to a bad quality. A way of cheating that doesn't get the paint attached very well to the wall and will make it likely to fall off in a near future. At first, during the process of scraping, I protest and want to continue the work until it's done. But I give up when Niklas explains that we won't have enough time to complete. In a few days, a surf contest will begin as part of the international surfing tour. We don't have time to finish in the barbershop since we are aiming to attend the beach during that and spread the word about Surfing The Nations. People from STN will also be judging the pre heats in the contest. Those heats are possibilities for locals to get wild cards in to the real competition. We fill up the worst holes in the room with putty knives before we start painting with a lime green color.

We are then standing in a green room. A green-room within wave surfing is when you are in a good surf position inside a barreling wave. A reference in movie making is green rooms or green screens that are used to film things, or people, so that the motive can be edited in to any other visual context or background. The green used in the barbershop is very alike the green color used in film studios. A green room is also what you find backstage of a theatre.

We also build a very simple wall in the room and put up simple self-made shelves. Once the room is painted completely green, we also add straight horizontal brown-orange and white stripes. Those get painted across all the walls in the room. The brown-orange stripes wide, and the white ones narrower. If you compare with the free organic style from earlier with a lot of colorful posters on the walls, it is now possible to resemble the room more as a normative Ikea interior. But the room is quite a bit more exaggerated than the ones appearing in the IKEA catalogs. The stripes that now goes through all the walls define the room in a very dominant way. It's like a conceptually already set room and becomes a closed body.

The stripes can be linked to sports culture. They look like typical sportswear patterns, that for example appear on t-shirts, polo shirts, or sport pants etc. And a reference through us in the room is that it looks like something connected to wave surf culture. Such as minimalist painted landscapes, sea horizons and sunsets. But the stripes and the contrast in colors also resemble borders in a sport playing field, such as a field for soccer, tennis, basketball and so on.

It is also noticeable how the pattern on the walls resembles the style of modernism painting, and then a lot of modern abstract paintings in especially the late modernism era. Radical modernist art that provoked the Nazis in the 1930s. The Nazis adapted art they did not like as degenerated art and they persecuted designated artists. Artists that had to flee from the Nazis. After World War II, in late modernism, a lot of paintings were done with monochrome paint fields. Painting would then, within the dominant discourse that was pronounced through art criticism and theory, preferably only be surface and paint. Artists who were abstract expressionists and formalists were busy searching for the essence of the medium. At the same time, the artists often had magnificent existential or spiritual motives for their works. Those at the time radical but aesthetically rather simple works of color fields, became very popular within the art scene in the 40s and 50s. It has been read historically, among other things, as a search for projection surfaces of a bright future after a devastating horrible and traumatizing world war. Today, it's possible to see similar abstract aesthetics as something very common in commercial contexts, and as a pattern in modern contemporary architecture.

How those abstract color fields as aesthetic expression in the current society, are read as something apolitical, is something I think is part of what makes them very popular. But monochrome painting and abstract expressionism in the 50s and 60s also had a role in the Cold War. The CIA funded abstract expressionism and marketed American art to place the United States as a culturally free country. This was done without the artists active participation or knowledge. They became somehow part of a propaganda machine. What matters for the CIA's choice of art genre to support economically, were that the content of the abstract expressionism paintings themselves were of no significant political narrative at the time.

Regardless of where the aesthetic originates from, or how it is charged with meaning, those stripes are now placed in this room. And within our group it's said that this aesthetic will make a difference and lead to a change. Through my actions it's being connected with a socially embedded art project. It becomes something to read as a representation and to be interpreted and examined symbolically. It is us who bring up stories and say our meanings. We are directing. What is then almost bluntly clear is that the pattern of the walls is the same color scheme as for Surfing The Nations headquarters in Hawaii. And the same goes for a large hand-painted Surfing The Nations sign at the organization's enclosed area here in Arugam Bay.

On the glass window, which is the wall facing the street, the name of the hairdressing salon is written, as well as other information. It is written both in Latin letters and in Tamil script. It's done by the local artist in colorful ornamental figures. Tamil language is the oldest language still existing today that's widely spoken. This language has its origin 3000 years before Christ. We are cleaning and scraping away each part of those letters and words, carefully, piece by piece.

The village's artist and designer, who has painted those letters, is saying that he wants to do the job with a new sign and a new design. But Niklas and Kristin have decided that a girl from France will do the job. I never meet her, but the intended person apparently works as an illustrator and a designer in her home country. The job here is probably something Surfing The Nations won't pay anything for. They will explain the contribution as a kind of voluntary aid work.

The local artist in the village doesn't give up and he keep on trying to get the assignment. Then Niklas asks him to bring along a portfolio of what he's done before. The question is a bit rude since a portfolio is not something to take for granted in this situation. The works he has done are placed in public around in the village of Arugam Bay. Niklas sound snobbish like a blasé person in the art industry when an unknown artist wants to show his works. A bit later the artist brings with him an old satellite dish. He explains that he can make a spectacular sign of it to put on the ridge of the building. The artist tries this to show example of his creativity without a traditional portfolio.

The letters erased from the window aren't getting replaced in any way during the stay of Surfing The Nations team in Arugam Bay. The window remains an empty and clear see-through glass screen.

When I initially arrive in Sri Lanka, and for the first time meet the group from *Surfing The Nations* at the Airport in Colombo, I wear a silver crucifix in a thin silver chain around my neck. It's a jewelry I received as a gift from my classmates at Konstfack when I turned 30 years old. The reason was this project. They wanted me to remember them, and that I should think of art through this crucifix, instead of God and religion. However, they were worried that I would disappear in to *Surfing The Nations* organization, when I had decided to take a break from studying at the art university for this.

Later, on site in Sri Lanka, I was told by others in *Surfing The Nations* to remove the crucifix from my neck. It was because a crucifix could make it more difficult to meet the locals and be seen friendly.

From the beginning, before we changed anything in the room, it was very organic in the aesthetics with posters hanging here and there, covering parts of the walls. When we considered ourselves finished with the work, a few days later, the room look more defined and closed in concept. When I later show a video from our work in the hairdressing salon, it is a common response from the audience that they get a bad feeling in their gut. What was done there in Sri Lanka can be seen as a kind of abuse by design as medium.

In the book *Don't waste your life*, that I found in the organization's small Christian library in Arugam Bay, I read a criticism of postmodernism. A fundamentalist Christian book that was popular to read within the group. John Piper, who wrote the book, quotes the author C.S Lewis in a part where he is trying to explain why he thinks postmodernism is the wrong way to go:

You can't go on "seeing through" things forever. The whole point of seeing through something is to see something

through it. It is good that the window should be transparent, because the street or garden beyond it is opaque. How if you saw through the garden too? It is no use trying to "see through" first principles. If you see through everything, then everything is transparent. But a wholly transparent world is an invisible world. To "see through" all things is the same as not to see.

Ideas about taste as true values were common in our group. Our group were convinced that objectively it looked much better in the hairdressing salon after we repainted it. Something that people who have been audience for my video rarely, or never, agrees with. I have never heard anyone say: Wow! The Barbershop became really nice! Instead I have heard expressions of uneasiness and unpleasant feelings. To understand the uneasy feeling and why, I think a deconstruction of the context is required here. In this context I read the use of the C.S. Lewis quote as a simplification. A logic that is not at all transferable like this to a criticism of how postmodernism has been, and are, deconstructing truths and values. Deconstructing something doesn't mean that it ceases to exist, or stops being meaningful. Instead, theoretical deconstructions help to make understandable what you see and why you understand it in a certain way. The world is out there and it is opaque in a lot of senses.



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