



Q&A

IN DECIPHERING THE
HARMACIST'S
RESCRIPTION FOR LIP-READING
PUPPETS

Q&A

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The book also contains a project by the Quay Brothers on the front and back inside covers.

Ron Magliozzi

THE MANIC DEPARTMENT STORE

*New
Perspectives on the
Quay Brothers*

Sometimes it shocks us how few references people have to the literature and music that has driven us . . . It makes us feel elitist by default, which is not what we intend. We would rather our films were treated like department stores—admittedly manic department stores—in which one can take a lift to whatever level one wants.

THE QUAY BROTHERS, 1986¹

It is gratifying to report, right at the start, that the reputed inaccessibility of the Quay Brothers' work is a myth. The challenge of deciphering meaning and narrative in the roughly thirty theatrical shorts and two features that the filmmakers have produced since 1979 is real indeed, a characteristic of their work that they adopted on principle when they were still students. Interpreters of their stop-motion puppet films, such as the defining *Street of Crocodiles* (1986), have described them as alchemists, with the mystifying ability to turn the “degraded reality” of discarded doll parts, screws, string, and metal filings into profoundly expressive characters, and as metaphysicians, whose choreography of objects and camera movement in space is key to understanding their uncanny sense of being. And as Surrealists—although the twins disclaim the label—who stage playful, perplexing, life-and-death scenarios within wondrous, handmade sets and across dreamlike landscapes. The Quay Brothers themselves, valuing their independence from the culture of commercial cinema, identify most comfortably with those alienated from their age, like the writers Bruno Schulz, Robert Walser, and Franz Kafka, whom they have favored in their work, and with genuinely obsessive personalities like Emma Hauck and Adolf Wölfl, who created from behind hospital and prison walls.

To the degree that they have controlled others' access to the full record of their creative lives, including fifteen years working primarily as graphic illustrators, the Quay Brothers have further confounded understanding of their work. A double self-portrait as gnomish Mennonites may be a clue to the spirit of play that motivates them, as might the multiple ways in which the identical twins Stephen and Timothy have signed their work: Brothers Quay, Gebr. Quaij, Stiofáin Valtair MacAae. Or for that matter, their studio name, KonincK, chosen for its typographical symmetry from the label of a Belgian beer. As much as they welcome scholarly analysis, for some time they resisted full disclosure by spreading the fanciful report that all their early films before *Nocturna Artificialia: Those Who Desire Without End* (1979) had been lost.² Such strategies have served to maintain the privacy that has nourished the solipsistic nature of their collaborative practice—working alone together nearly every day—for over forty years. They have also effectively limited the revealing connections that might be made between their personal history and the various mediums and genres in which they've worked.

As illustrators, stage designers, and filmmakers in a range of genres, the Quays have penetrated many fields of visual expression for a number of different audiences, from avant-garde cinema and opera to publication art and television advertising. Looking at their artistic endeavors as a whole, in the context of fresh biographical information and new evidence of their creativity, provides insight into the roots of their imagination and illuminates a number of essential Quay themes and motifs.

The Quay Brothers were born in 1947 in Norristown, Pennsylvania, a borough fifteen miles northwest of Philadelphia on the Schuylkill River. Once a manufacturing center for “tacks, wire, screws, boilers, bolts, silos, tanks, iron, hosiery, knitting machines, underwear, shirts, lumber and milling machinery,” by the 1950s it was no longer an industrial hub but remained the center of social life for the surrounding rural area.³ Their father was a first-class machinist; their mother—to whom the twins bear an uncanny physical resemblance—was a homemaker with a talent for figure skating. Tall, sound of body, and agile, the twins considered sports as a life option. *In the Mist* (c. 1969), one of their amateur films, is a revealing self-portrait of the athletic teenagers, in oversized paper masks, performing a series of comic running and cycling stunts on grass and in a vacant tennis court. A celebration of their “twin-ness,” it displays some of the avant-garde imagery that appears in later work: the flat, cut-out paper face they give their composer doll in *Leoš Janáček: Intimate Excursions* (1983), the vacant, surreal landscape that introduces *In Absentia* (2000), and the mystifying, rootless trees that suggest the sleep-induced fairy-tale world of *The Comb [From the Museums of Sleep]* (1990).

One influence on the brothers' choice of art over sport may be found in their exposure to the thriving culture of the local flea markets: suburban “cabinets of curiosity” stocked with the kind of dusty, decaying objects redolent with textures, the call to touch, and secret past lives that would become the stuff of their films. Later, on Portobello Road in London, they encountered a similar milieu: “you find these dolls' heads in a market . . . you live with these things . . . you dream yourself into them.”⁴ They described their search for artistic inspiration in similar terms: “At worst we think of ourselves as rummaging for lost or obscure footnotes in half-forgotten alleys of music and literature.”⁵

The twins' “facility for drawing”⁶ was encouraged by their family. At home, snowy pastoral landscapes of a red barn at different distances were hung side by side, coincidentally suggesting a cinema tracking shot. Stark countryside landscapes dotted with trees appeared commonly in their youthful drawings, often with elements of telling human interest, as in *Bicycle Course for Aspiring Amputees* (1969) and *Fantasy-Penalty for Missed Goal* (c.1968). The Quays later remarked that the only “residue” of life in Pennsylvania to affect their work was “the forest and the animals.”⁷ But it was their art teacher's introduction to illustrator and naturalist Rudolf Freund (1915–1969), who lived twenty miles away in Collegeville, Pennsylvania, that transformed the twins' sense of the world and art.⁸ Renowned for his *Scientific American* covers and his art for Time-Life, Freund had been thinking of a school for illustrators on his farm.⁹ He allowed the twins to observe him at his easel and to study what they described as “the kingdom of animals and insects” in his library.¹⁰ The ecological subtext in a number of the Quays' films may be traced to Freund's influence, as some of his assignments, such as the *Scientific American* cover illustrations *Mouse in a Metabolism Cage* (November 1956) and *Chicken Factory* (July 1966), called for the illustration of darker themes. The twins were impressed by Freund's meticulous anatomical research and the luminescent detail in his lifelike art. Having watched him working on the *Scientific American* cover image *Ecological Chemistry* (fig. 1, February 1969), a painting of a blue jay choosing between identical living and dead butterflies, they later described the experience as “one of those crucial revelatory moments when something painted was so powerfully tactile.”¹¹ Their experiences with Freund fathered many of the twins' aesthetic principles and provided a model for their consuming work ethic. Expressing the depth of their respect years later, they favorably compared “the care, the patience, the craftsmanship and caliber” of Freund's scientific illustration to the “serious illustration” of “Bonnard, Dulac, Redon, Rackham etc.”¹²

In 1965, at the age of eighteen, the Quay Brothers began seven years of study to become illustrators, graduating from the Philadelphia College of Art (PCA) in 1969 and London's Royal College of Art (RCA) in 1972. During this period, two fateful encounters introduced them to the visual language and European subjects they would quickly adopt, and to the medium of film they would



Fig. 1 Rudolf Freund. "Ecological Chemistry" (Blue Jay and Butterflies), cover for *Scientific American*, February 1969. U.S.A. 11 1/2 x 8 3/8" (29.2 x 21.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Fig. 2 Roman Cieslewicz (French, born Poland, 1930–1996). *Katastrofa*. 1961. Poland. Film poster, 33 1/8 x 23 3/16" (84.1 x 58.9 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York



Fig. 3 *Watermark*. Joseph Brodsky. c. 1983–1984. UK. Collage, 11 x 7 3/4" (27.9 x 19.7 cm). QBFZ Collection



eventually take up. It wasn't simply the radical design of the Polish posters that they came upon by chance in an exhibition at the PCA, or the posters' revelation of a foreign world of European opera, drama, music, and cinema that irresistibly attracted them—it was the fact that the posters spoke so freely of their subjects, as if consuming them.¹³ The grotesque, surreal, lyrical, and witty work of Roman Cieślęwicz (1930–1996), Wojciech Fangor (1922–), Jan Lenica (1928–2001), Franciszek Starowieyski (1930–2009), Henryk Tomaszewski (1914–2005), Wojciech Zamecznik (1923–), and Bronislaw Zelek (1935–) was illustration art with the courage to be strange and ambiguous. If one compares the cityscape motif in Cieślęwicz's poster *Katastrofa* (fig. 2, 1961) to the Quays' *Duet Emmo* album cover (1983) and to their art for Joseph Brodsky's *Watermark* (fig. 3, c. 1983–84), the influence is apparent; it may also be detected in the maps and visual textures of *Street of Crocodiles*. The Quays' first professional job came shortly after, in their last year at the PCA: the design of an album cover for American rock band Blood, Sweat & Tears in 1968. Already committed to the Polish poster aesthetic, they submitted a collage of the group standing headless in a field. To their chagrin, Columbia Records responded by "pasting" heads onto their illustration.

Compounding the impact of the Polish avant-garde, the cinema further matured the Quays' aesthetic. They credit Luis Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) as the first film to seriously impress them,¹⁴ as attested by a drawing from their RCA days, which pictures male torsos tattooed with the words *Un Chien Andalou* and *L'Age d'or*, the title of a second Buñuel film (1930). However, it is the experimental shorts of Walerian Borowczyk (1923–2006) and Jan Lenica, which the Quays describe as "animation at its most intense, mysterious and metaphoric,"¹⁵ that most explicitly point the way to the films they would make themselves.¹⁶ The mix of collage, stop-motion, live-action, and trick effects combined with eroticism and weighty subjects would become a Quay signature. The stop-motion reassembly of exploded household items in Borowczyk's *Renaissance* (1963) speaks to the Quays' fascination with the drama of real objects. In his Holocaust allegory *Jeux des Anges* (1964), camera movement and sound impart meaning to drawings of dismemberment. *Une Collection Particulière* (1973), Borowczyk's study of nineteenth-century pornographic devices, is a model for the Quays' museum

documentaries *The Phantom Museum* (2003), *Inventorium of Traces* (2009), and *Through the Weeping Glass* (2011).¹⁷ With *Goto L'île d'Amour*, a 1971 collage titled after Borowczyk's first feature, they visualized an extended narrative for the film.¹⁸ As they explained the influence in 1973: "We both draw too much from cinema and pretend that when we are illustrating, we are really animating—composing films with musique [sic] only back into still pictures."¹⁹

In an RCA student publication to which the Quays contributed—along with illustrators Eduardo Paolozzi, Andrzej Klimowski, and Stewart Mackinnon, who eventually made films as well—the effect of the group's exposure to avant-garde image-making was stated defiantly by Mackinnon: "true expression conceals what it exhibits . . . an image, an allegory, a form disguising what it means to reveal, has more meaning than the enlightenment brought about by words or their analysis."²⁰ The Quays' student films demonstrated their commitment to this manifesto. Each is a tragic allegory, shy of narrative clarity, with enticing hints at twin-ness and veiled autobiography. *Der Loop Der Loop* (1971), *Il Duetto* (1971), *Palais en Flammes* (1972), and an uncompleted de Sade project were clearly the work of illustrators: paper cut-out animation based on ideas begun as drawings. When the Quays made them, illustration was still the career they were set to pursue.

Returning to the United States in 1973, they described a range of simmering influences, ". . . from *Alice in Wonderland* to Kafka's *In Der Strafkolonie* to Rudolf Freund's scientific illustrations for Time-Life. From a film version of Knut Hamsun's *Hunger* to the music of Debussy's for Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande*; from Nino Rota's film music for Fellini to Giovanni Fusco's . . . for Antonioni and Maurice Jarre's . . . for Franju. From the self-portraits of Ensor, Bonnard and van Gogh to the autobiographies of Truffaut, Céline, Vigo, Skolimowski. From Resnais' *Nuit et Brouillard* to Marker's *La Jetée*. From de Sade, to Kraft-Ebbing to Buñuel."²¹ But over the next six years in Philadelphia and Amsterdam their illustration work was sporadic and unfulfilling: filler for the *New York Times* music review; a black drawing titled "*I Am an Epileptic*" for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*; book covers for suspense and science-fiction novels; and suitably gothic drawings on surgery and cattle mutilation for Hugh Hefner's men's magazines.²² Their most prestigious work

in the United States was for the Anthony Burgess novel *A Clockwork Testament or Enderby's End* (1975), a dozen black-and-white drawings of the title character in stages of disintegration. Illustrator Andrzej Klimowski remarked sympathetically that "[this] series of portraits . . . will always remain distant . . . can only remain impenetrable despite all signs of introspection."²³ The Quays' most sustained work as illustrators was the series of covers done for the Dutch and British editions of authors Louis-Ferdinand Céline and Italo Calvino, featuring variations of the figurative "extinct anatomies" and *noir* graphics that would surface most expressively in their films.

Disappointments aside, throughout this period the twins experimented with graphics and nurtured their growing enthusiasm for avant-garde drama and music through hypothetical designs for posters, books, and record albums. This "fictitious" work included gymnastic autoerotica for *Mishima* (c. 1971), tortured anatomy studies for *Ul Abnormalna* (c. 1981–82), and several *Enzyklopedie der Modernen Kriminalistik* credited to obscure nineteenth-century criminologists; faux theater posters for the work of German-language playwrights, such as Thomas Bernhard's *Der Ignorant und der Wahnsinnige* (c. 1981–82), Peter Handke's *Kaspar* (n.d.), Friedrich Dürrenmatt's *Die Physiker* (c. 1981–82), and Hartmut Lange's *Der Hundsprozess* (n.d.), in which dog heads are attached to decapitated bodies. They also made a *Portrait of Composer Gesualdo* (c. 1976), known for his highly expressive sacred music and for having murdered his adulterous wife and her lover in 1590. In 1981, two years into their professional filmmaking career, the twins were still identified primarily as graphic artists, appearing in the "Radical Illustrators" issue of the British *Illustrators* magazine, among a fellowship of others whose styles, from Sue Coe's neo-expressionism to Terry Dowling's anticommmercial proto-punk, reflected various degrees of militancy against the mainstream.²⁴

Whatever militancy the Quays felt, they expressed their frustrations most profoundly in private, at the easel, with illustration "reserved in deep shadow (the works . . . we put ourselves into)."²⁵ In a series of more than a dozen pieces called *The Black Drawings* (c. 1970s) they defined the visual palette of their future films, creating an *ur-text* that they would return to as well in opera and ballet settings such as those for *Mazepa* (1991)

and *The Sandman* (2000). Titled with obscure references to French wine, electro-shock, sports, Holocaust history, Kafka, Céline,²⁶ and their own travels in Europe, the drawings are *noir* set pieces, each with the requisite blend of angst, sex, and violence; they read like crime scenes glimpsed from a passing tram. The earliest puppet films, *Nocturna Artificialia* and the Kafka adaptation *Ein Brudermord* (1980), created with producer Keith Griffiths, come directly from the drawings.²⁷ The influence is still strong in the brothers' *film noir* reading of Stanislaw Lem's *Maska* (2010). The black may derive from illustration—the intaglio technique that the twins had always admired²⁸—but the figurative use of suspended gestures and “privileged point of view” is cinematic.²⁹ The Black Drawings mark the point at which the twins were ready to step away from illustration and begin to identify themselves as the poets of gesture and alienation they would remain in every medium they touched.

In the 1980s graphic art became a sidebar as the Quays gradually turned to filmmaking fulltime, but they brought to the moving image significant visual motifs initially explored on paper. The elegant line and lettering of calligraphy is an enduring element in their work, from their business cards and book and album covers to the wrought-iron calligraphy of their studio logo, their posters, and the credit sequences in their films. It is celebrated in *The Calligrapher* (1991), memorialized in *In Absentia*,³⁰ and figures significantly in the design of their sets for *The Cabinet of Jan Švankmajer* (1984), *This Unnameable Little Broom* (1985), *Rehearsals for Extinct Anatomies* (1987), and the music video *Long Way Down* (1992).³¹ Calligraphy's lyrical, sweeping gesture and elegant symmetry map movement across the page, *musicalizing* space, the way the movement of the camera, lighting, objects, and performers are used in the Quays' films. The notion of calligraphy extends to the choreographic quality of their films, which, like music, often serves as an “unwritten scenario” of gestures. No wonder their ballet films *Duet* (1999), a return to the theme of twin-ness, and *The Sandman* (2000), which revisits the expressionism of *The Comb*, are so masterful. Recognizing this motivating principle is essential to appreciating their films, be it the choreographed decapitation of the hero in *Street of Crocodiles* or the uncanny *pas de deux* of mannequin and rabbit in *Stille Nacht II: Are We Still Married?* (1992).

Scholars have noted the connection between the themes of “interior and exterior space” and “closure and exploration” in the Quays' films; these motifs are present in their two-dimensional work as well.³² Rural landscapes are the subject of many of their early paintings (*The Painted Bird*, 1967), albums (*Blood, Sweat & Tears*, 1968; *Mozart Violin Concerto No. 2*, c. 1973), and books (the Calvino series), as well as the more theatrically inclined Black Drawings. Here, as in films like *In Absentia* and *The Comb*, these are ill-defined places, without sunshine—closer to the existential “dust-breeding” ground of Duchamp and Man Ray's *Élevage de Poussière* than the bright edgy landscapes of Tanguy or Dalí.³³ Complementing the Quays' depictions of exteriors, a number of early drawings—including one titled *Kafka's The Dream* (1970)—feature views from inside, with glimpses out through open doorways and windows. What on paper resemble static stage settings on film become claustrophobic interiors, where inscrutable dramas play out. The beloved Pennsylvania woods become metaphorical furniture—reduced to fetishized pine cones and wood grain in *Stille Nacht III: Tales from Vienna Woods* (1992) and the commercial *Wonderwood* (2010)—or moved indoors, as the forest invades the composer's room in *Leoš Janáček: Intimate Excursions*. The troubled explorations that occur through rooms and streets in *Street of Crocodiles* and *Rehearsals for Extinct Anatomies* are allegories for the chaos of the human condition. Quay protagonists exist inside hermetic, unstable spaces, each with a secret history, populated with the fertile refuse of flea markets. Outside, there may be a landscape of dream (*The Comb*) or a view of the void (*This Unnameable Little Broom*).

In recent years the Quays have replicated their visionary rooms for gallery display as the boxes of *Dormitorium* (2006) and a peephole installation, *Coffin of a Servant's Journey* (2007).³⁴ Again, they adapted their challenging aesthetic to a new medium, as they have previously done for classical and avant-garde drama, opera, ballet, site-specific performance, cinema, commercial television, and music video.³⁵ In the process, they have added to the surprising variety of options available to viewers willing to enter the Quay Brothers' “department store” and open themselves to uncertainty and the experience of strange new perspectives.

NOTES

1 Chris Petit, “Picked-up Pieces,” interview with the Quay Brothers, *Monthly Film Bulletin* 53 no. 629 (June 1986):164–65. Note that in virtually all interviews with the Quays, including this one, quotes are attributed to both brothers rather than either one individually.

2 Hammond, Paul, “In Quay Animation,” *Afterimage* 13 (Autumn 1987):66–67.

3 “Norristown, Pennsylvania.” Wikipedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norristown,_Pennsylvania. In the 1940s, Norristown had a population of roughly 40,000; it is now approximately 32,000.

4 Kim Newman, “The doll's house,” interview, *City Limits* (September 25, 1986):n.p. Museum of Modern Art, Film Study Center clipping file, Quay Brothers. In the interview for this London magazine, the Quays misidentified the Portobello Road market as Finchley Road, an error they corrected in an email to the author on February 23, 2012.

5 Chris Petit, “Picked-Up Pieces.”

6 “The Quay Brothers' Perifere Blik” [Peripheral Vision], on-camera interview for the television program *Ziggurat*, BRTN (Belgian Television), July 1996.

7 Teddy Jamieson, “Ten Questions for the Brothers Quay,” *Herald Scotland* June 22, 2010. <http://www.heraldsotland.com/arts-ents/edinburgh-film-festival/ten-questions-for-the-brothers-quay-1.1036524>

8 Freund lived in Collegeville until an aneurism caused his sudden death at 54, shortly after the Quays entered the Royal Academy of Art. Freund illustrated more than thirty books and nature guides, including the Time Inc. Life Nature Library series, and created eighteen *Scientific American* covers from 1954 to 1969. A frequent contributor to *Life* magazine, his “Mythical Monsters” illustrations in the April 23, 1951, issue suggest that he would have been successful as a fantasy illustrator. As a naturalist, he was one of the first to explore the Galápagos Islands and later, with his wife Susan, the jungles of Suriname in South America in 1961, returning with specimens now held by the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History.

9 Email to the author from Susan Freund Borden, November 7, 2011.

10 Email from the Quay Brothers to Sandy Borden, November 5, 2011.

11 *Ibid.*

12 Quay Brothers, “The Quay Twins in America,” ARK 51, Royal College of Art, London (Summer 1973):n.p. Italics in original.

13 *Polish Poster Art*, presented April 1–27, 1967, at the Philadelphia College of Art.

14 Jamieson, “Ten Questions,” *Herald Scotland*.

15 Julian Petley, “Puppet masters,” interview, *The Guardian* (London), September 25, 1986. Museum of Modern Art, Film Study Center clipping file, Quay Brothers.

16 The Quay Brothers are often paired with Czech Surrealist Jan Švankmajer, the subject of the 1984 documentary *The Cabinet of Jan Švankmajer*, to which they contributed an animation sequence that was later excerpted as a stand-alone short film of the same title. But the Quays discredit Švankmajer's direct influence in this period because they had not as yet encountered his work. Instead, the Quays much admired the Borowczyk-Lenica collaboration *Dom* (1958) and Lenica's *Labyrinth* (1961), and also acknowledge the influence of Soviet animator Yuri Norstein.

17 The Quays' music-box device *Lacrimi Christi*, created for their feature film *The Piano Tuner of Earthquakes* (2005) and included in the touring exhibition of their film decors that began in 2006, is an unspoken tribute to the flycatcher contraption that Borowczyk designed as a prop for his 1969 feature film, *Goto L'île d'Amour*.

18 Daniel Bird, “The Ghost of Goto: Walerian Borowczyk Remembered,” *Vertigo*, 3:1 (Spring 2006): 57–59.

19 Quay Brothers, “The Quay Twins in America.”

20 Stewart Mackinnon, “Manifesto,” ARK 51, Royal College of Art (1973):n.p.

21 Quay Brothers, “The Quay Twins in America.”

22 “The Night Surgeon, fiction by Robert Chatain,” *Playboy* 20: 11 (November 1973):96–97; “On the Trail of the Night Surgeons by Ed Sanders,” *Oui* 6: 5 (May 1977):78–79.

23 “The Work of Stephen and Timothy Quaij,” unidentified Soviet film publication, c. 1986. Museum of Modern Art, Film Study Center clipping file, Quay Brothers.

24 “Koninck, Londyn: The Brothers Quay,” *Illustrators* (U.K.) 38 (1981), edited by George Snow and Robert Mason. Also featured in the issue: Edward Bell, Georgeanne Deen, Catherine Denvir, Blair Drawson, Robert Ellis, Carolyn Gowdy, Anne Howeson, Rod Judkins, Andrzej Klimowski, Stewart Mackinnon, Shinro Ohtake, Ian Pollock, Liz Pyle, Sol Robbins, Christine Roche, and Jake Tilson.

25 Quay Brothers, “The Quay Twins in America.”

26 Especially provocative are the sinister references to Céline's anti-Semitic texts, *Bagatelles pour un Massacre* (1937) and *L'Ecole des Cadavres* (1938).

27 British-born Keith Griffiths (1947–) met the Quays at the Royal College of Art in London, where he was studying film. He soon became a close friend, traveling companion, and in 1979 co-founder of their Koninck Studios. As an executive at the British Film Institute Production Board in the early 1980s, he was instrumental in the Quays' transition from illustration to film, and eventually shepherded most of their best-known work to the screen.

28 “We've always liked . . . the intaglio technique because you work out of the black, you make things come from the black instead of creating the black.” “The Quay Brothers' Perifere Blik.” Intaglio is a printmaking technique in which black ink completely covers an engraved or etched printing plate before being wiped away to reveal the outlines of the artist's drawing beneath.

29 “The Quay Brothers' Perifere Blik.”

30 It was the manic calligraphic quality of Emma Hauck's letters that inspired the Quays to create this portrait of psychosis.

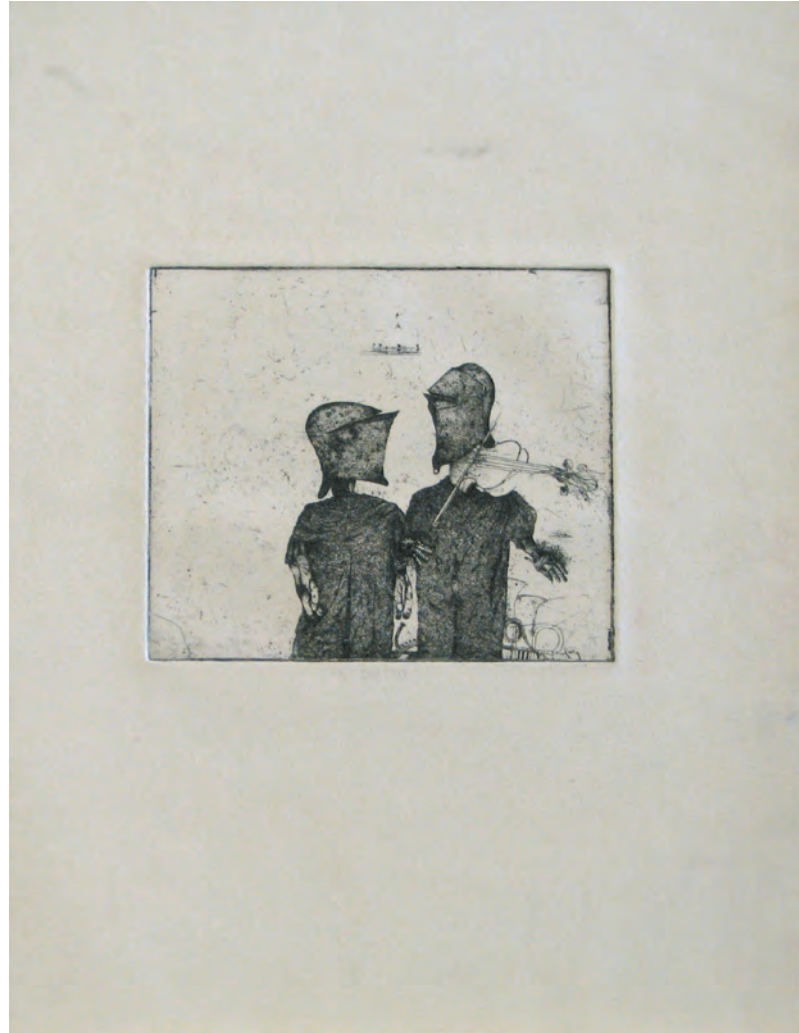
31 The Quays have repurposed the miniature decors from their films as gallery exhibition pieces, which have toured since 2006 as the *Dormitorium*. The complete title of *This Unnameable Little Broom* is *Little Songs of the Chief Officer of Hunar Louse, or This Unnameable Little Broom, being a Largely Disguised Reduction of the Epic of Gilgamesh*.

32 See Suzanne H. Buchan, “A Metaphysics of Space: The Quay Brothers' Atmospheric Cosmogonies” in Lois Weinthal, ed., *Toward a New Interior: An Anthology of Interior Design Theory* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2011), 527–45; Jordi Costa, “The Quay Brothers, Explorers of Limbos,” in the catalogue for the 2001 Sitges International Film Festival, Sitges, Spain, 43–47.

33 An otherworldly Dadaist collaboration by Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp, *Élevage de Poussière* (1920) is the photographic record of the layer of dust that accumulated on Duchamp's sculpture *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* (*The Large Glass*) (1915–23) over several months in 1920.

34 The number of boxes in *Dormitorium* has varied with each installation, ranging up to two dozen.

35 The Quays' genre parodies for beer, snack food, and weed-killer reveal a sense of humor that they deny having, as well as their secret life as film buffs. Although commercials traditionally call for artistic compromise, the field has employed the talent of such esteemed filmmakers as Oscar Fischinger, Len Lye, and Alexandre Alexeieff and Claire Parker, whose work bears comparison to the Quays'.

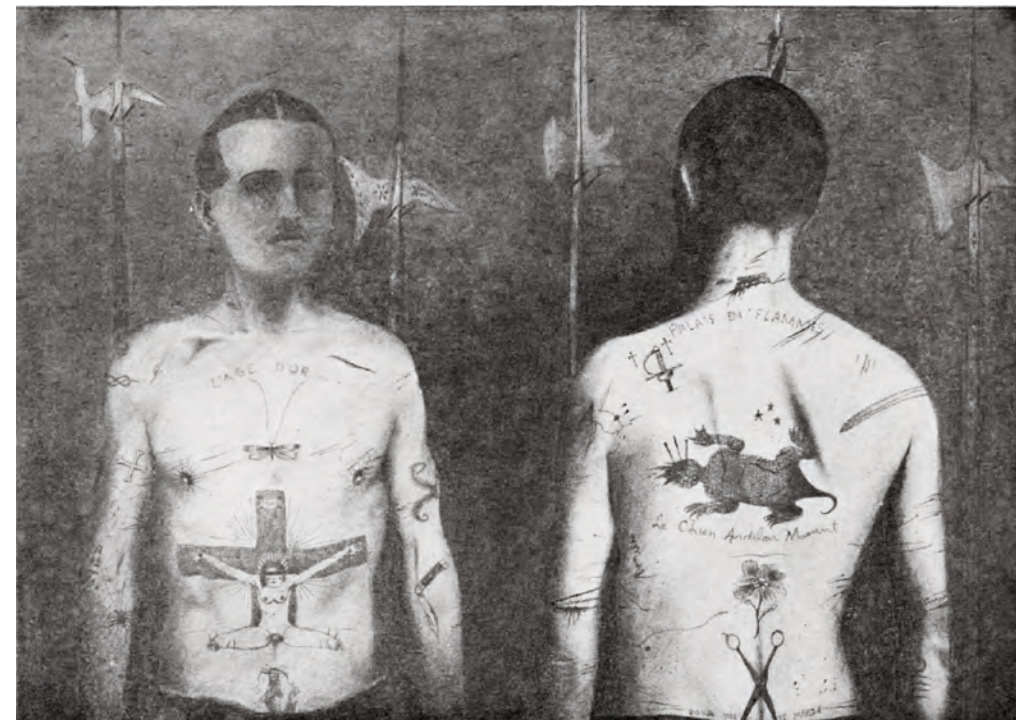


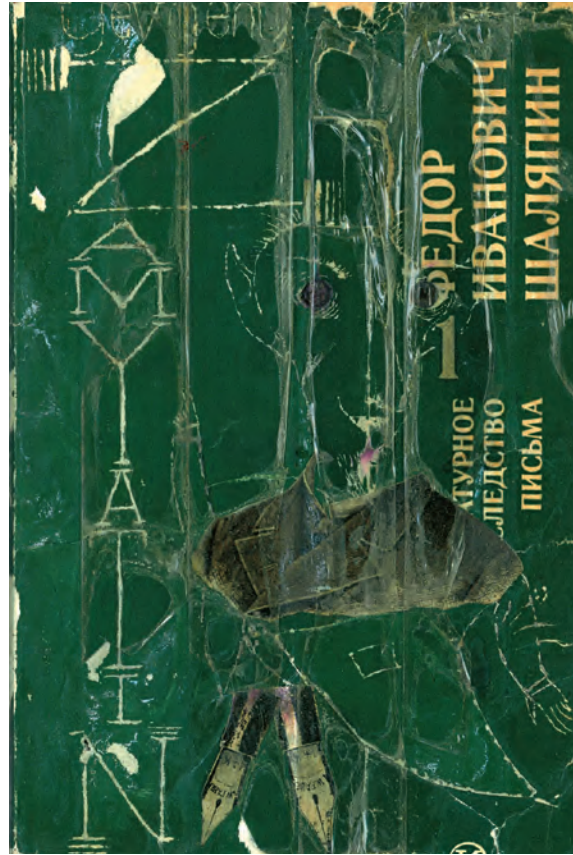
1. *Il Duetto*. 1970. UK. Etching, 15 3/4 x 11 1/4" (40 x 28.6 cm). QBFZ Collection

3. *Self-Portrait as Mennonites*. 1995. UK. Photographic print, 12 x 9" (30.5 x 22.9 cm). QBFZ Collection



2. *Untitled (Tattooed Men)*. c. 1970s. UK. Photolithograph, 9 3/4 x 11" (24.8 x 27.9 cm). Lydia Hunn Collection





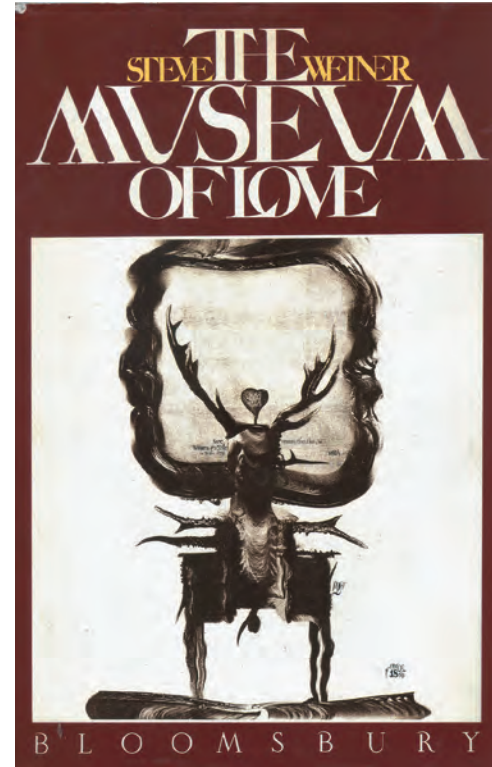
10. Book cover for *Zamyatin*. c. 2000. UK. Collage photo offset, 8 × 5" (20.3 × 12.7 cm). QBFZ Collection



12. *Serenato in Vano Love Duets*. c. 1971–72. UK. Pen and ink on paper, 10 × 7 1/2" (25.4 × 19.1 cm). QBFZ Collection

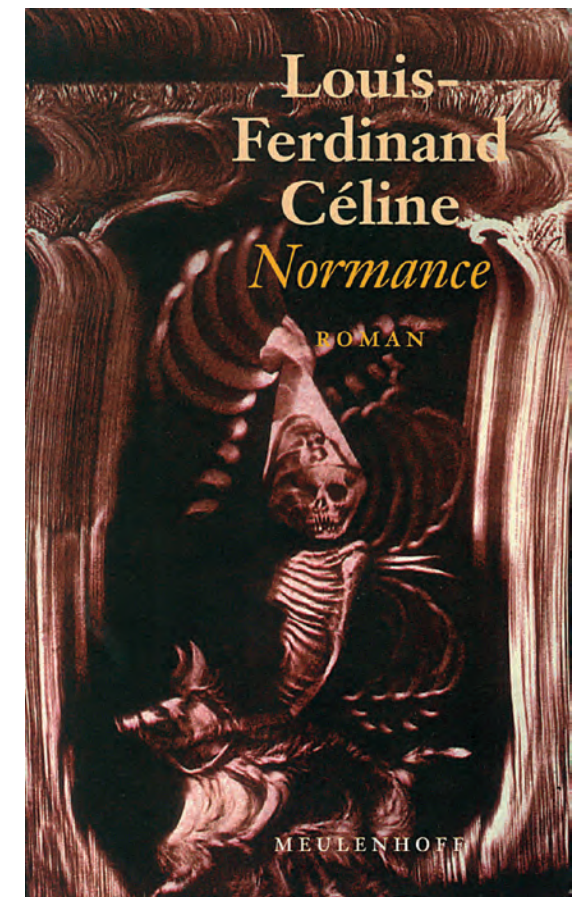
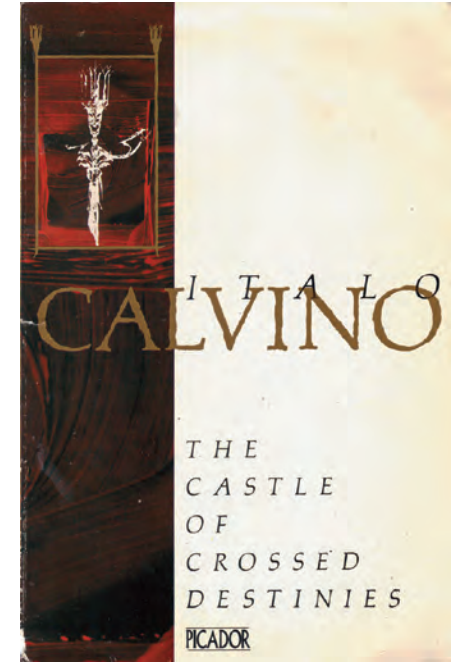


11. *Hundsproceß*. Hartmut Lange. c. 1980. UK. Acrylic paint and typography, 13 1/2 × 9 3/4" (34.3 × 24.8 cm). QBFZ Collection



13. Book cover for *The Museum of Love*. Steve Weiner. 1993. UK. Photo offset, 9 1/2 × 6 3/4" (24.1 × 17.1 cm). QBFZ Collection

15. Book cover for *The Castle of Crossed Destinies*. Italo Calvino. 1978. UK. Photo offset, 7 3/4 × 5" (19.7 × 12.7 cm). QBFZ Collection



14. Book cover for *Normance*. Louis-Ferdinand Céline. 1994. UK. Photo offset, 8 × 5" (20.3 × 12.7 cm). QBFZ Collection



28. Set design for *A Flea in Her Ear*. 1989. Old Vic, London. Courtesy Keith Griffiths

26. Set design for *The Love for Three Oranges*. 1988. Opera North, Leeds/English National Opera, London. Courtesy Keith Griffiths

27. Set design for *Mazzepa*. 1991. Nederlands Opera, Amsterdam/Bregenz Festival, Bregenz, Austria. Photograph Quay Brothers

37. *In Absentia*. 2000. UK. Film: 35mm,
black-and-white, sound, 19 minutes



38. *Stille Nacht II: Are We Still Married?* 1992.
UK. Film: 35mm, color, sound, 3 minutes



39. *They Think They're Alone*, decor for the film *Rehearsals for Extinct Anatomies*. 1987. UK. Wood, fabric, glass, metal, 30 11/16 x 24 7/16 x 26 3/4" (78 x 62 x 68 cm). Photograph Robert Barker, Cornell University

40. *The Alchemist of Prague*, decor for the film *The Cabinet of Jan Svankmajer*. 1984. UK. Wood, fabric, glass, and metal, 37 x 29 1/8 x 29 1/8" (94 x 74 x 74 cm). Photograph Robert Barker, Cornell University

41. *Tailor's Shop*, decor for the film *Street of Crocodiles*. 1986. UK. Wood, glass, plaster, and fabric, 35 7/16 x 26 x 30 5/16" (90 x 66 x 77 cm). Photograph Robert Barker, Cornell University

42. *Grand Box*, decor for the film *Street of Crocodiles*. 1986. UK. Wood, glass, plaster, and fabric, 55 1/8 x 37 3/8 x 41 3/4" (140 x 95 x 106 cm). Photograph Robert Barker, Cornell University



The Metamorphosis. France, 2012. Digital video. Based on a short story by Franz Kafka. For Cité de la Musique, Paris.

Through the Weeping Glass: On the Consolations of Life Everlasting (Limbos & Afterbreezes in the Mütter Museum). USA, 2011. Digital video. For The College of Physicians of Philadelphia.

Bartók Béla: Sonata for Solo Violin. UK, 2011. Digital video. For Chetham's School of Music, Manchester.

Maska. Poland, 2010. Digital video. Based on a short story by Stanisław Lem.

Inventorium of Traces – Jan Potocki at Castle Łańcut. Poland, 2009. Digital video.

Stille Nacht V: Starman, second version. UK, c. 2008–2010. Digital video. Music video with Sabisha.

Muslingauze. UK, c. 2008–2010. Digital video. Music video for DJ. Spooky.

Ubu Roi. UK, 2008. Digital video. Music video projections, series of fifteen, in collaboration with the band Pere Ubu.

Eurydice, She So Beloved. UK, 2007. Digital video. Ballet film with choreographer Kim Brandstrup for Opera North and The Capture Company.

Alice in Not So Wonderland. UK, 2007. Digital video. For Live Earth.

Bruno Schulz, Fragments & Scenes - Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass. UK, 2006. Digital video. Pilot for feature film.

The Piano Tuner of Earthquakes. Germany/UK/France, 2005. 35mm. Feature film.

The Phantom Museum: Random Forays into the Vaults of Sir Henry Wellcome's Medical Collection. UK, 2003. 35mm. For the Wellcome Trust.

Songs for Dead Children. UK, 2003. Digital video. Collaboration with Steve Martland for the Tate Modern.

Frida (animation sequence). USA/Canada/Mexico, 2002. For the feature-film biography of Frida Kahlo directed by Julie Taymor.

Stille Nacht V: Dog Door. UK, 2001. Digital video. Music video for Sparklehorse.

In Absentia. UK 2000. 35mm.

The Sandman. UK, 2000. Super 16mm. Ballet film choreographed by Will Tuckett.

Duet - Variations for the Convalescence of 'A.' UK, 1999. Super 16mm. Ballet film choreographed by Will Tuckett.

Black Soul Choir. USA, 1996. 35mm/16mm/digital video. Music video for 16 Horsepower, co-directed with David Eugene Edwards.

The Summit. UK, 1995. Mini-DV. In collaboration with performance artists Ralf Ralf.

Institute Benjamenta, or This Dream People Call Human Life. UK/Japan/Germany, 1995. 35mm. Feature film.

Stille Nacht IV: Can't Go Wrong Without You. UK, 1993. 35mm. Music video for His Name is Alive.

Stille Nacht III: Tales from Vienna Woods. UK, 1992. 35mm.

Long Way Down (Look What the Cat Drug In). UK/USA, 1992. 35mm. Music video for Michael Penn.

Stille Nacht II: Are We Still Married? UK, 1992. 35mm. Music video for His Name is Alive.

The Calligrapher, Parts I, II, III. UK, 1991. 35mm.

De Artificiali Perspectiva, or Anamorphosis. UK, 1991. 35mm. Documentary.

The Comb [From the Museums of Sleep]. UK, 1990. 35mm.

Ex Voto. UK/USA, 1989. 35mm.

Stille Nacht: Dramolet. UK/USA, 1988. 35mm. MTV Art Break.

Rehearsals for Extinct Anatomies. UK, 1987. 35mm.

Sledge Hammer. UK, 1986. 35mm. Animated sequences for the Peter Gabriel music video.

Street of Crocodiles. UK, 1986. 35mm.

Little Songs of the Chief Officer of Hunar Louse, or This Unnameable Little Broom, being a Largely Disguised Reduction of the Epic of Gilgamesh. UK, 1985. 16mm.

The Cabinet of Jan Švankmajer. UK, 1984. 16mm.

Leoš Janáček: Intimate Excursions. UK, 1983. 16mm. Documentary.

Igor, The Paris Years Chez Pleyel. UK, 1982. 16mm. Documentary about Igor Stravinsky.

The Eternal Day of Michel De Ghelderode, 1898-1962. UK, 1981. 16mm. Documentary.

Ein Brudermord. UK, 1980. 16mm.

Punch and Judy: Tragical Comedy or Comical Tragedy. UK, 1980. 16mm. Co-directed with Keith Griffiths. Documentary.

The Falls. UK, 1980. The Quay Brothers appear as fictional characters in the Peter Greenaway film.

Nocturna Artificialia: Those Who Desire Without End. UK, 1979. 16mm.

INSTALLATIONS

Coffin of a Servant's Journey. Optical box. 2007, Belsay Hall, Northumberland.

Eurydice, She So Beloved. Optical box. 2007, Leeds Art Gallery, Leeds.

Dormitorium. Decors. 2006, Holland Festival, Amsterdam and touring.

Loplop's Nest. Optical box. 1997, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

STUDENT FILMS

Untitled (travel films). c. 1970s. 8mm.

Frequenzen, Detonation, Stille. USA, c. 1975-76. 16mm.

Venable Lewellyn's Last Waltz. UK, c. 1972. 16mm. Live action.

Palais en Flammes. UK, 1972. 16mm. Paper animation.

Il Duetto. UK, 1971. 16mm. Paper animation.

Der Loop Der Loop. UK, 1971. 16mm. Paper animation.

Pohadka (Fairy Tale). USA/UK, c. 1968-69. 16mm. Paper animation.

Golgotha. USA/UK, c. 1968-69. 16mm. Paper animation.

In the Mist (How Strange Was My Love, Fantasie Part I). USA, c. 1969. 16mm. Live action.

Muskrat. USA, c. 1967-68. 16mm. Live action.

COMMERCIAL SPOTS

Wonderwood. 2010. Comme des Garçons.

Kinoteka, 1st Polish Filmfestival ident. 2009. Polish Institute, London.

Mistletoe Kisses, Galaxy. 2007. Mars, Inc.

NHL, Laundromat. 2001. Fox Sports.

NHL, Library. 2001. Fox Sports.

Magnets. 2001. Chili's.

Rice Krispies Treats - Float. 2000. Kellogg's.

Pitney Chairs. 1999. Pitney.

Northern Rock. 1999. Northern Rock.

Mars Celebration. 1998. Mars, Inc.

Fox and Crow. 1998. Badoit.

Lion and Zebra. 1998. Badoit.

Weed Families. 1998. Roundup.

Weeds. 1998. Roundup.

Doritos idents. 1997. Frito-Lay.

The Wooden Box That Collapses (title sequence). 1997. The End.

Locketts Metallica. 1996. Mars, Inc.

Swallow. 1996. Murphy's Irish Stout.

Warriors. 1996. Murphy's Irish Stout.

Brainfreeze. 1995. 7-Eleven Slurpee.

Blue Cross. 1995. Blue Cross Blue Shield Association.

Dolls. 1994. The Partnership for a Drug Free America.

Trees. 1993. Coca-Cola.

Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme (title sequence). 1993. The End.

Fun Touch. 1989. Nikon.

Zenith. 1988. MTV.

MTV ident. 1988. MTV.

BF ident. 1998. British Film Institute.

Skips. 1988. K.P. Skips.

Dulux. 1987. Dulux.

Walkers Crisps. 1986. Walkers.

Honeywell. 1986. Honeywell Computers.

STAGE AND SITE-SPECIFIC PROJECTS

Overworlds & Underworlds. A Leeds Canvas initiative for the 2012 Cultural Olympiad, Leeds. 2012.

I looked back when I reached halfway. 2011. Collaboration with violinist Alina Ibragimova on Béla Bartók's *Sonata for Violin* (1944), Chetham's School of Music/Manchester International Festival, Manchester; Wilton's Music Hall, London.

Bring Me the Head of Ubu Roi. 2008. Projections for Pere Ubu. Queen Elizabeth Hall, London.

Paul Bunyan. 2007. By Benjamin Britten, directed by Nicholas Broadhurst. Theater am Kornmarkt Bregenz/Theater Luzern.

Pinocchio. 2006. By Martin Ward, choreographed and directed by Will Tuckett. Royal Opera House, London.

The Cricket Recovers. 2005. By Richard Ayres, directed by Nicholas Broadhurst. Aldeburgh Festival, Suffolk, and Almeida Opera, London.

The Anatomy of a Storyteller. 2004. Ballet by Kim Brandstrup. Royal Opera House, London.

Death and Resurrection. 2003. By J. S. Bach and Steve Martland, conducted by Sir John Eliot Gardner, Steve Martland. Four short films illustrating Martland's *Street Songs*. Tate Modern and St. Paul's Cathedral, London.

The Wind in the Willows. 2002. Ballet by Will Tuckett. Royal Opera House, London.

The Love For Three Oranges. 1988. By Sergei Prokofiev, directed by Richard Jones. Opera North, Leeds/English National Opera, London.

Queen of Spades. 2001. Ballet by Kim Brandstrup. Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, Montreal.

Baa-Laamsfest. 1999. By Olga Neuwirth, directed by Nicholas Broadhurst. Wiener Festwochen, Vienna.

The Chairs. 1997. By Eugène Ionesco, directed by Simon McBurney. Theatre de Complicité and Royal Court, London and John Golden Theater, New York.

Cupid & Psyche. 1997. Ballet by Kim Brandstrup. Royal Danish Ballet, Copenhagen.

The Hour We Knew Nothing of Each Other. 1996. By Peter Handke. Theater ballet directed by Kim Brandstrup. Malmo Dramatiska Theatre, Sweden.

A Midsummer Night's Dream. 1996. By William Shakespeare, directed by Jonathan Miller. Almeida Theatre, London.

Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme. 1992. By Molière, directed by Richard Jones. Royal National Theatre, London

Mazeppa. 1991. By Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, directed by Richard Jones. Bregenz Festival/Nederlands Opera

A Flea in Her Ear. 1989. By Georges Feydeau, directed by Richard Jones. Old Vic, London.

Dybbuk. 1988. Ballet by Kim Brandstrup. The Place, London.

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Buchan, Suzanne. *The Quay Brothers: Into a Metaphysical Playroom.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

Goodeve, Thyrza Nichols. "Dream Team: Thyrza Nichols Goodeve Talks with the Brothers Quay." *Artforum* 34: 8 (April 1996): 82–85, 118, 126.

Habib, André. "Through a Glass Darkly – Interview with the Quay Brothers." *Senses of Cinema* no. 61 (2002). Available online at www.sensesofcinema.com/2002/feature-articles/quay/.

Kitson, Claire. *British Animation: The Channel 4 Factor.* London: Parliament Hill Publishing, 2008.

Klein, Norman M. *The Vatican to Vegas: A History of Special Effects.* New York: The New Press, 2004.

Kleinman, Kent. "Interview with Stephen and Timothy Quay: To Those Who Desire Without End," in *After Taste: Expanded Practice in Interior Design*, ed. Kent Kleinman, Joanna Merwood-Salisbury, and Lois Weinthal. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2011.

Le Fanu, Mark. "Modernism, Eccentricism: The Austere Art of Atelier Koninck." *Sight and Sound*, no. 53 (1984): 135–38.

Miller, Tyrus. "Cut Out from Last Year's Moldering Newspapers: Bruno Schulz and the Brothers Quay on *The Street of Crocodiles*," in *Screening the City*, ed. Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice. London: Verso, 2003.

Quay Brothers. "Ten Unproduced Scenarios." *Conjunctions*, no. 46 (2006): 347–97.

Waisnis, Edward, ed. *Dormitorium: An Exhibition of Film Decors by the Quay Brothers.* Philadelphia: The University of the Arts, 2009.

Weiner, Steve. "The Quay Brothers' *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and the 'metaphysics of obscenity,'" in *A Reader in Animation Studies*, ed. Jayne Pilling. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1998.

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