

# COMPOUND

Daniel Pasteiner

Open until 18 Nov, Thur-Sun 12-6pm

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Friday 26<sup>th</sup> Late opening until 10 pm. Screening: SOLARIS, Tarkovsky, 1973. 8pm



'Enter Compound' reads the sign, and through the gallery entrance a small aperture opens up into a black glass enclosure, a walled array of solar panels, in two concentric rings, between them a rectilinear path perambulates around a glossy black core. The panels modular form, and hi-tech silver pinstripe, generates semi-transparent morées of refraction gleaming on the glass and steel. The space is dark, gradually our eyes adjust to the low level illumination. The ambience is punctuated by the churning of a motorized search light, which spins through a series of rotations like a machine in a world of its own. Some of the panels are sprayed with alpha waves pulsing along the walls, Matisse like, others signed in the scrambled imbroglio of a street artists' name tag. Two dummy cctv cameras hint at a tacit surveillance.

It feels and looks like a cross between recent images released by google of the data-centres at the heart of the internet, some buried deep in the ground, feeding giant tentacles lining the ocean beds, reaching out into every home; and at the same time like a derelict low tech recreation of virtuality, as in the now extinct Laser Quest game of the 90's. As a child Pasteiner lived above of one of these virtual/reality laser war-game parks. In Compound we enter the future dereliction of today's technology – the panels donated by ENN solar have been decommissioned due to some tiny flaw, put beyond use they become screens for projections on the alchemical mystique of the sun and photosynthesis, turning sunlight into biopower, with the creation of new life forms, Dr Frankenstein-like, a matrix more vegetal than humanoid, feeding some primal short-circuit, the symbolic order as a parasitic machine or the redundant glowing embers of an evolutionary dead end, its light travelling for millions of years after its extinction.

Pasteiner eschews a single conceptual language, allowing for the remainders to escape through the cracks, literally: through gaps in the solar panel array, we glimpse spaces beyond, as in Borges' labyrinth; Tyco tracks spinning in mud; 'The Radiant City', the words a chimera, always out of reach; twinkling of fiberoptic trees, dendrites pulsing in the air above a dismal toy town light box at the end of a narrow chamber; swarms of bundled glowing cables. The roving Cyclopean quatrefoil search-light in its enclosure.

" I had made my way through a dark maze, but it was the bright City of the Immortals that terrified and repelled me. ...the impression of endlessness, the sensation of oppressiveness and horror, the sensation of complex irrationality... A maze is a house built purposely to confuse men; its architecture, prodigal in symmetries, is made to serve that purpose. In the palace that I imperfectly explored, the architecture had *no* purpose. There were corridors that led nowhere, unreachably opened onto monk like cells or empty shafts... arriving nowhere... *This City*, I thought, *is so horrific that its mere existence, the mere fact of its having endured — even in the middle of a secret desert— pollutes the past and the future and somehow compromises the stars.*' Jorge Luis Borges. *The Immortals*, 1947.

At the heart of this heartless world, in the centre of every labyrinth, there is a Minotaur waiting. In this case maybe the ghost of the big other of our global information age, or his comic stand-in, here coyly represented as the Dr Who-like robot, complete with cape, wheelie technoplith and single Cyclopean roving eye. Scanning for the prisoners of this multiverse, blind, implacable, and like all oracles, speaking only in riddles.