



Critical Analysis

"Geometric"

&

"The Tower"

Directed by

Matt Bissett-Johnson



“Geometric” and *“The Tower”* are *Matt Bissett-Johnson’s* latest animation/experimental super-short films, odes to the symmetry of change and the fluidity of perpetuity. Yes, I know; it seemingly doesn’t make much sense, but this is him.

Matt is an artist who challenges conventional narrative structures, embraces the irrational and the dreamlike, blurring the lines between reality and fantasy. And that he does with incomparable confidence.



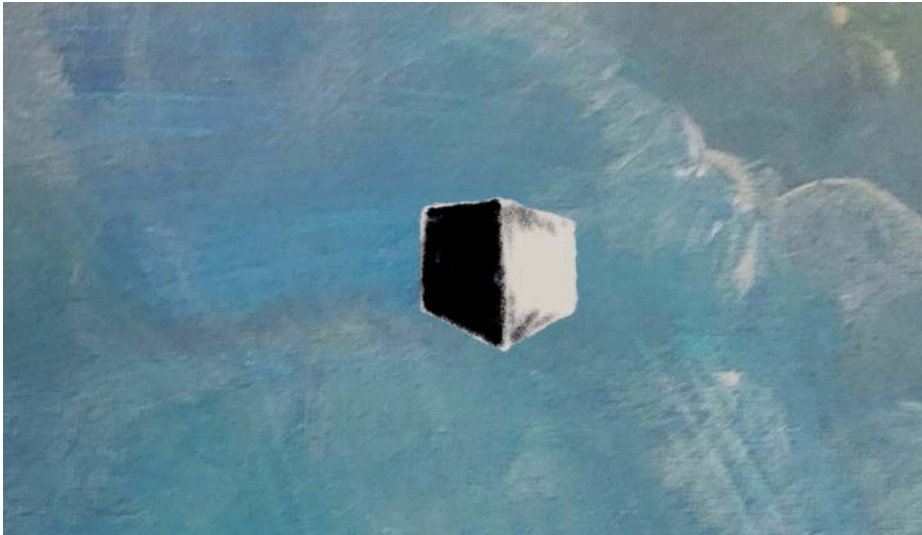
We feel that these two films mark the start of a new transformative phase in *Matt’s* creative journey, not as much regarding thematology and conceptual approach, as in style; while remaining connected to his previous works portraying recurring motifs and elements of continuity, he introduces some very interesting new canvases as the background of his “fairytales”.



Portraying beings grappling with their purpose in life, confronting their own nature and the essence of what it means to be what they are, *Matt’s* work focuses on the exploration of fundamental questions about existence, thus becoming deeply philosophical.

With his ambiguous endings that leave questions unanswered or provide open-ended conclusions and narrative structures that create a sense of confusion and disorientation, he mirrors his heroes’ struggles with their place in a chaotic and indifferent universe.

Creatures that sometimes experience an inability to form meaningful connections to each other, while other times any kind of interaction will presuppose the destruction of the other; thus creating a unique state of isolation depicted through labyrinthine settings that emphasize both distance as well as a loop-wise everydayness where all feels disconnected and in vain.



Matt's weird and humorous beings despite their bizarre nature and their extraordinary behavior seem somewhat familiar. Bearers of a transcendental quality of Being in general. Echoes of a primordial truth.

We capture the actions of these creatures in fragmented stories that precede and follow, what is implied to be, other identical stories where any deviation seems impossible. All part of a deterministic universe where the *Nietzschean* eternal recurrence is the basic principle but contrary to it, living authentically and intentionally is pointless.

As we read in various texts in his theory *Nietzsche* suggests that everything we experience, including our joys, sorrows, and choices, will recur eternally. This means that every action, every thought, and every feeling will happen again, in exactly the same way, an infinite number of times; *"The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down again and again, and you with it, speck of time"*.

The idea of eternal recurrence invites individuals to consider the weight of their choices. If you had to live your life over and over again, would you change anything? This consideration emphasizes the importance of living authentically and intentionally. *Nietzsche* uses the concept as a challenge to embrace life fully.

He encourages individuals to affirm their existence, with all its hardships and joys, rather than seeking escape or denial. The idea is that one should live in such a way that they would be willing to relive their life in exactly the same manner for eternity.

Matt Bassett-Johnson portrays a world where the exact opposite takes place. A recurring world where beings are organically incorporated, deprived of the urge to take responsibility for their empty and pointless lives. Where the significance of one's actions are ultimately of no significance.



One surely acts but within a context of a reflective mechanism. A conceptual approach, based upon a somewhat primitive behavioral pattern, but in an evolved, futuristic world. And this is one of *Matt's* most distinctive characteristics, the other being his unique style regarding technique, color palette, subject matter and composition.

But what is the impact of *Matt's* imaginative and surrealistic storytelling?

As viewers witness the consequences of choices made by these flawed creatures, they are prompted to reflect on their own values and decisions. This contemplation can lead to personal growth and a sense of redemption as they grapple with the lessons learned from the characters' involuntary struggles.

Matt's "*Geometric*" and "*The Tower*" allows for an exploration of the notion of free will within a safe artistic context. The act of engaging with his stories can be even therapeutic, allowing viewers to process the choices they made or the ones they didn't, in a reflective manner. It is an engagement that can lead to an emotional journey in search of meaning.

But although *Matt Bissett-Johnson* stands out with his work and surely cannot leave one indifferent, his attraction to "minuscule" film durations comes not without casualties, such as limited narrative development, technical limitations and insufficient context.

The time is just not enough to develop a coherent narrative arc and establish adequate context since important elements are doomed to be rushed or omitted entirely.



Furthermore, attempting to tackle complex or abstract ideas in such a short duration can lead to confusion.

Effective storytelling typically requires time to build context, develop characters, and explore themes, all of which can be challenging within such a brief format.

In conclusion; *Matt Bissett-Johnson* is a talented, focused creator with potential. An artistic voice that transcends mediocrity. His unique vision speaks of a promising future but surely not without challenges. But time is of an essence. And more time is needed.

“I have always liked people who can’t adapt themselves to life pragmatically”.
(*Andrei Tarkovsky, Sculpting in Time*)



Matt Bissett-Johnson is an Australian animator and political cartoonist. He wrote and animated for the ABC music television show, Recovery, from 1998-2000. He records all the music for his short films. He submits animations to festivals, and in 2020, 2018 and 2015 won the Stanley Award for Animator Cartoonist from the Australian Cartoonists Association.