

EXTRACT: RACHEL CATTLE

Do they look so much like puppets then? Automata?

Perhaps, on second thoughts, it could be more to do with their movements than with their expressions.

Why?

Because they move absolutely in unison. Their gestures are only consistent in that they are undertaken with perfect timing and are shaped by all rather than followed on from one. Only in their rhythm and the abstract nature of their movements would they strike a variety of notes, discordant notes. There would be no leader upon whose movements the others depend and yet the movements themselves would not have the appearance of a dance, certainly not of a dance rehearsed, more like the manifestation of a single, simple instinct, as of a tight herd, or more like a murmuration of starlings. Honed, naturally, as one body.

Is there no music? No sound?

Only their thoughts. 'She makes drawings', they say, the voice thoughts, 'they're stranger, rough, brightly coloured. I can't remember now' they say, 'it's hard to separate out what's hers and what's mine, it was years ago - my fear of flying, of the Angels, she was living there, she imagined films that she couldn't afford to see, created her own scene from posters, yesterday's newspapers and scraps that formed a continuous stream, an oozing, almost breaking with improvised intensity.'

Do all the voices speak?

Yes, but all as one. 'Now I'm listening more attentively', they say, 'resisting prompts and just flicking my eyes across them, seeing which small, unobtrusive gestures spring to life. At one point my head is entirely immersed and my arms move like paddles through thick, viscose liquid, actually inside my body, images flow through me, my eyes combine into

new patterns made from colours and shapes, I'm part of the machine, disrupting and completing its circuits, amplified, ringing clean and resonant, shakers tied around my legs, barefoot, my voice transforming into stifled shouts, a murmured re-composition, she's a human cry, the birds carry her. No-one talks about the Angels, or my fear of flying, even in the crematorium there was a cross, it was too difficult to take down, not that we suffered black eyes, not literally, but the feel of those images, the grainy colour, how we made ourselves up to mirror the faces on our bedroom walls, I always looked too young. I'm still too young.'

And after the voices, do the movements still continue?