

Withdrawal Symptoms

Neil Puryear poured himself another shot of brandy. Although brandy was good for sore throats he vowed that this would be his last shot before calling it a night.

Neil had been driving around the city during the afternoon and noticed that Taylor and Townshend G gallery had closed down. This wasn't merely a COVID-related shut down but rather a permanent closing. Presumably all the artists had been informed of the owners' serious decision/ Maybe even the other artist who Taylor and Townshend had cut loose recently? What was her name.....Janet...no Jessica Warren.

Or were the artists not informed of the sudden closing? There wasn't any art on the walls but this could have been because the gallery was in-between scheduled exhibitions. Neil didn't know what the dealer and artist percentage was. What had Scott told him so many years ago.....sixty to forty? Fifty fifty? He felt slightly sorry for any artists who were counting on upcoming shows, but not that sorry.

The art world had always seemed like an elitist racket. Only a tiny percentage of practicing artists made a living from their art and talent didn't play any role in the scheme of it all. Neil looked at reproductions of what was hot in the art world and thought most of it was crap. He was amused by the latest trend of Non Fungible Token or NFT art. Was this some off-line black market scam? Anarchists who bypassed traditional systems interested him, except here there was some guy named Beeple selling for a fortune at Christie's...one of the art world's biggest auctions. Like, how legitimate and respectable could anybody get.

Neil didn't like painting or sculpture very much anyway. Music and theatre he had more time for. They were live...they didn't exist without the audience. Well, maybe not all music. His brother Scott had been a fan of what was called ambient music...meant to be wallpaper rather than a theatrical performance. Scott actually bought into this pseudo-intellectual crap. No wonder he became so depressed.

Taylor and Townshend closing so soon after his brother's death did look suspicious, whether or not it was a red herring. Neil guessed that the two partners were skint and that they may have had to make a sudden decision, whether or not the artists were informed before the closing letter was installed on the gallery's front door.

He wondered where the two partners had relocated to. Surely they had maxed out their credit cards and traveled somewhere overseas, even despite the current travel restrictions. They could chill out in some hotel in a faraway land, fucking each other silly while going on coke binges. Such a pair of stupid men...the eighties had now been over for four decades and they hadn't read the writing on the wall.

Neil hoped that girl neighbour of Scott's and her landlord weren't going to contact him... asking what he knew about the gallery's demise. He wanted nothing further to do with those two fools.