

“COLOURED GLASS DESTROYS HATRED”*

[our attempts to synthesise nature...]

1. The G——— was a prismatic glass dome built by Bruno Taut, at the Cologne Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition in 1914, financed by the association of the German glass industry. The structure was a brightest polychromatic highlight of the show, and was constructed using concrete inlaid with coloured glass plates on the facade that acted as mirrors. The architect described his little temple of beauty as:

“...reflections of light whose colours began at the base with a dark blue and rose up through moss green and golden yellow to culminate at the top in a luminous pale yellow...”

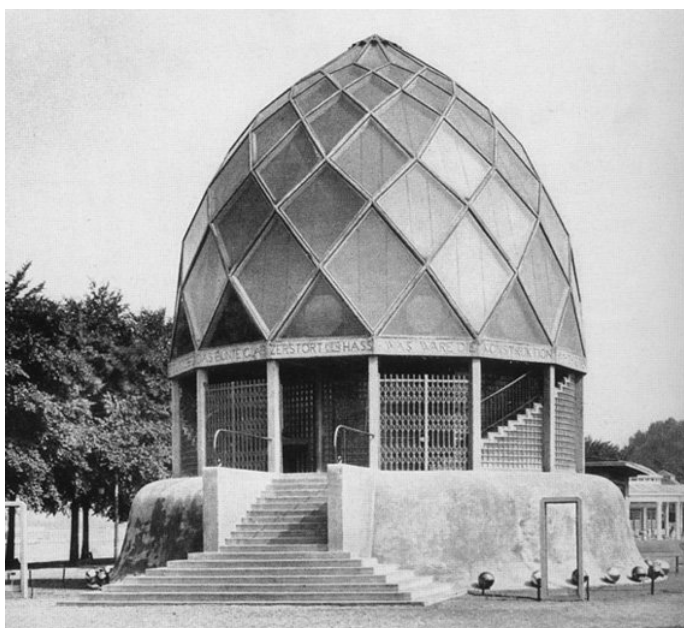
Taut's G——— was his masterpiece, constructed in an age of German Expressionism, before the outbreak of war. The building was destroyed soon after the exhibition, and only black and white photographs remain, so we can only imagine its illuminated facade...

It was a pineapple-shaped multi-faceted polygonal designed rhombic structure, with a 14-sided base constructed of glass. There were also glass-treaded metal staircases inside that led to the upper projection room, which showed a fantastical kaleidoscope of colours; the interiors had prisms producing coloured rays from the sunshine outside. Between both staircases was a seven-tiered cascading waterfall with underwater lighting.

And all of this had the effect of stepping inside a large crystal producing the most wonderful variety of colours!

But also, the frieze of the G——— was engraved with aphoristic poems of glass written by the anarcho-socialist Paul Scheerbart:

*“Coloured glass destroys hatred.”



*“Without a glass palace, life is a conviction.”

2. Because of the story's often macabre and frightening content, J———, an otherwise popular children's novel written in Britain in 1961, has become a regular target of the censors. It is number 56 on the American Library Association's top 100 list of most frequently challenged books.

James Henry Trotter, the book's protagonist, is a young orphan boy who is forced into an abusive care home after his parents are killed by a rhinoceros (escaped from London Zoo in Regents Park). He wants nothing more than to have friends and playmates, but he is all alone.

One summer afternoon, when James is crying in the bushes, an unknown and mercurial wizard hands him a tiny bag of glowing-green magic crystals, promising that they will bring happiness if dissolved in water and drank! But on the way back to the house, James trips up and spills them everywhere, onto the peach tree outside... which begins to blossom, and indeed one of the fruits grows to the size of a large house. He journeys into this gigantic magical peach where he comes across characters including:

* the Glow-worm – an incessantly sleepy character, she doesn't speak often and is slow to move. Rather she quietly hangs from the ceiling, providing lighting for the interior of the fruit in the form of a bright green bioluminescence.

* the Earthworm – consumed by a bleak and pessimistic outlook, endlessly paranoid and besieged by an extreme phobia of birds - although being an Earthworm, this phobia is not unfounded. He often imagines that things are worse than they really are.

* The Ladybug – who has been haunted all her life by the fear that her house was on fire and her children dead.

Days later, the peach is drifting in the ocean.

Many days later, it is floating through the sky, tied by silken threads to hundreds of seagulls. That night, thousands of feet in the air, the giant peach floats through mountain-like moonlit clouds. There James sees a group of magical ghost-like figures living within the clouds, controlling the weather. As these “Cloud-Men” gather up the cumulonimbus in their hands, forming hailstones and snowballs to throw down upon the world below, the great flying peach smashes through an unfinished rainbow that they were preparing for dawn, infuriating them even further, and they attack...

3. To live in rainbows, to inhabit a peach, to step inside a crystal, to construct a new reality.

[by Dean Kissick on the occasion of the exhibition by Samuel Nias at the two Jonnys' project space.]