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**COPY /// understudy**  
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Rachel Lois Clapham / Emma Cocker / Sam Curtis /  
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Weeks /  
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Critical Writing Collective 2010  
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COPY is free to take away, copy and disseminate.

## **COPY /// understudy**

This issue of COPY is launched as part of The Plaza Principle, curated by Derek Horton and Chris Bloor in the partially vacant 1980s Leeds Shopping Plaza; an exhibition that aims to acknowledge the economic context in which artists are invited to occupy vacant shop units to disguise or compensate for economic decline in the nations town, city and district centres, supplementing commercial inactivity with cultural activity.

COPY proposes *understudy* as a point from which to consider, reflects and interrupt this context through a collection of art writing around the stand in - the temporary, illusory, consumed or performed; smoke and mirrors; the assessed, inquired or theorized. The works in this issue address, allude to or form tangents from these ideas and present a range of approaches to the use of the page, print and the form and nature of writing as or within practice.

*COPY is developed by Critical Writing Collective, a network and platform for art writing and critical dialogue based in the Yorkshire region.  
criticalwritingcollective.wordpress.com*

Dazzling stores that attract the shopper's gaze,  
coax them in and collect their wage.

*"There is no one who is not accosted at every moment of the day by posters, news flashes, stereotypes and summoned to take sides over each of the prefabricated trifles that conscientiously stop up all the sources of everyday creativity."*<sup>1</sup> Raoul Vaneigem.

Since the 1990's, numerous areas left abandoned by the decline in manufacturing, have been gentrified throughout the UK. The process was often generated by an influx of artists and musicians, transforming derelict warehouses into studios, exhibition and performance spaces. The regeneration of run-down areas, writes Charles Landry in *The Creative City*, accelerates once the middle-classes and planners associate themselves with cultural movements.<sup>2</sup> This stage of commercialisation only occurs once an artist has safeguarded and made a space fashionable, then others happily join, yet don't enrich the scene.<sup>3</sup> Eventually, artists may become disillusioned, as pressures on creative autonomy and increased rental fees, can force them to re-start the cycle elsewhere.

In Leeds, elsewhere can be accessed through Art In Unusual Spaces, a drive by its City Council, temporarily placing artists in vacant and centrally located shops. The Council thereby acknowledges and requires the artist's powers of regeneration, drafting them from the outskirts into the centre. Through gentrification, between this recession and the last, Leeds has been transformed into a shiny playground for credit cards, student loans, hens and stags. The artist's transfer from warehouse to shop floor, reinforces the UK's societal shift from producers to consumers, from Made in the UK to Made in insert here, as culture is now tasked to stimulate consumption over gentrification. For many artists, who assume the role of producer, spending an excessive amount of time in shopping centres, albeit in empty units, is a curious undertaking.

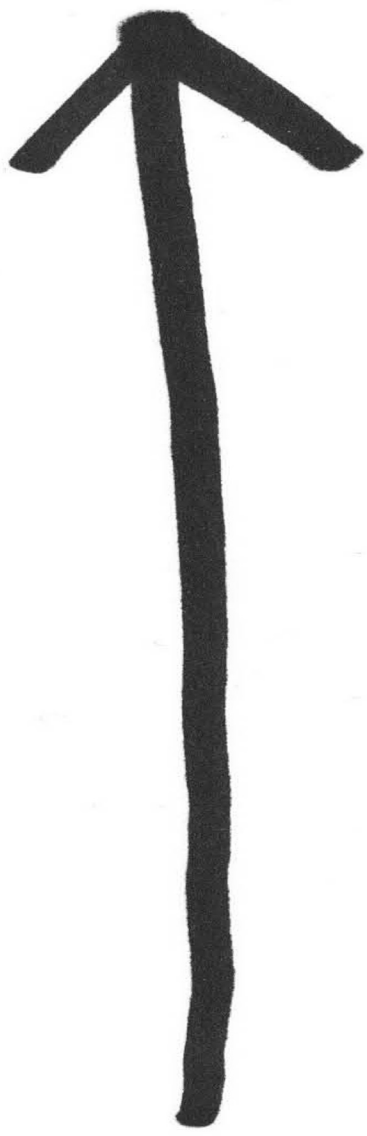
In a far corner of Leeds Shopping Plaza, lies the vacant TK Maxx store. Entering the unit for the first time, a shell of its former self, was a remarkable experience. Instead of functioning as a busy re-seller for branded goods, it was a deserted haven from the over stimulation of its surrounding streets. The space had turned from spectacle to desert island. Its emptiness, instantly evident from its stripped out fixtures and fittings, strangely felt like an explorer's delight, even though it was completely empty. The ability to wander inside a space and create fantastical visions of shows, gigs, escape and even silent reflection, felt wholly invigorating.

Urban individuality is examined by Michel De Certeau in *The Practice Of Everyday Life*, where he identifies the tactic: an individual who operates a fragmented lifestyle without institutional or consumer loyalty.<sup>4</sup> The tactician, like the artist, mingles with the metropolitan workforce and authorities, yet negotiates the city with independent thought.<sup>5</sup> On the streets, they select products and services according to their genuine

needs and desires, guided by the lived experiences of independence, rather than the collective desires of consumerism. The store-based artist, is primarily drawn to the provision of accessible space, rather than to appear at a store near you; the cultural polish intended to mask the implosion of over consumption. If the plan delivers, allowing the shiny goods to return, then the redeemers must clearout – until the regenerative powers of the artist are required once more.

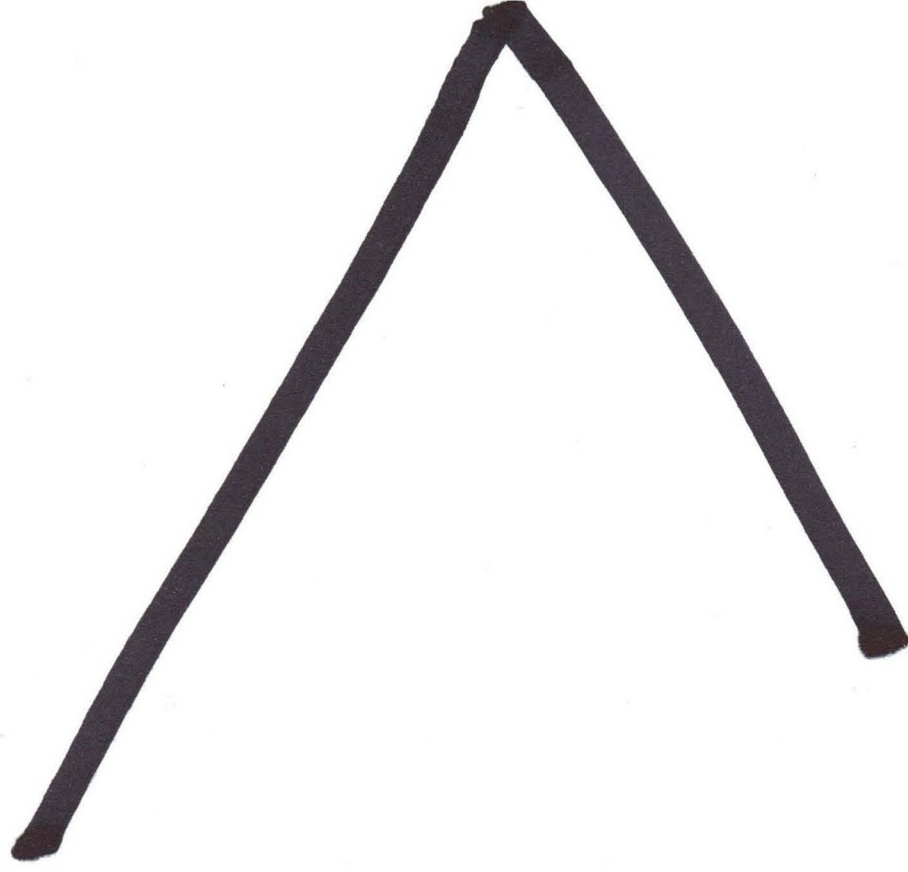
1. Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (London: Aldgate Press, 2001), p. 61. [First published in 1967].
2. Charles Landry, *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators* (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd, 2000), p.125.
3. *ibid.*
4. Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (London: University of California Press Ltd, 1988), p.xix.
5. *ibid.*





*That* and *that* and then *this* [...]; running alongside.  
(56)





There are latent decisions that have happened, without knowing. That you will miss (or) (t)hat cannot be planned for. (42)

## THE AUDIENCE IS DEAD

*(Or why I'm trying to make a hit – as an art piece)*

Do you remember Nietzsche? *God is dead.*

Do you remember Barthes? *The author is dead.*

Do you remember God? *Nietzsche, Barthes and even Mickael Jackson are dead.*

In 2000, I was living in London when my partner went mad. I fully realized it the night he obsessively asked me if I understood that millions of people were dying in Africa. I had replied that I couldn't, I just couldn't grasp it. A few days later, he hung himself. Millions of people dying in Africa, I still can't say that I understand it. That's maybe why I left for Senegal shortly after and started to think about figures. There, I got particularly impressed by how music was played: with people who were there, somehow with the musicians. The audience, big or small, was always integral to the music. This is old news of course, but when I came back to Europe - to cut a long story short- I embarked on the crazy project of wanting to write a hit as an art piece. I wanted to put in a museum a symbolic product on what I think Western cultural industries are now working on: 'the large audience', often called by extension 'the people'.

### Who is this large audience?

I'd say it's the audience consuming popular productions, but it has also become a figure, a big one, a calculation, a way to determine a group of people through its ability to adopt certain products. I don't see anything wrong with counting, but I wonder... why is it that when I look for music on the web I'm so often given *the best sales, the most viewed videos?* What is this equation *a lot = good?*

For me, a lot = good when it's a lot – for me: a lot of money, a lot of friends, a lot of space to live, a lot of happiness. A lot of money for others, it's good of course but mostly for them! Confusion of interests

has always been an extremely efficient tactic. I'm not against democratic systems (where the will of a lot = better than the will of a few), nor commercial logic (where a lot of money = good for the seller). But why should *good for the seller* be *good for me?* When sale figures become the criteria for the audience, doesn't it mean that the audience has adopted the seller's point of view? Doesn't it give you the impression of a very convenient confusion?

We end up consuming *a lot*, which is a figure. Music by numbers... an addition dressed up a song; charts, rankings (no, the first of the school class systems is not over yet) and eventually the producers' market shares... and their earnings.

### The music business is selling numbers to numbers... \*

It's revolting! How come I'm not being addressed any more! Me! Unique, unclassifiable, well read, demanding, who likes thinking, who wants to be surprised, always expecting something new and challenging? The cultural bourgeoisie is uprising and claiming its prerogative to quality goods! Am I just voicing the elite's rebellion here? Am I jealous that this 'large audience' I don't belong to, is getting what they want when I don't? Am I angry because I'm not part of the 'people'?

Ok, I admit I might have a weird taste in music... I'm elitist. I prefer listening to Public Enemy than the winner of the last music contest show. On the other hand, I ask myself: since when are 'people' as an extension the 'large audience' being taken care of and respected that much? Hmm... I wonder...

I've heard so many times, in music and television circles that 'people can't understand, it's too complicated, that's not what they want to see...'  
A few years ago, a friend played my album *Read My Lips* at a Parisian diner. There was a music producer there who said he hadn't heard anything so new in

years and he asked to meet me. In his office, he told me that he was very impressed, but he thought –or rather he knew- that people wouldn't understand it. 'Unfortunately', he told me, 'I don't produce what I like but what people like, what the market is asking for.' I remember thinking that reggae, hip hop, or house music couldn't have come out of this office, because nobody was asking for hip hop before it got out there! It made me think of a sport channel advertisement I had seen in London saying, which read: 'We know what you like: we like it too.' Do you, really?

Who can nowadays seriously go against the idea of majorities? Millions of people voted for the winner! Ultimate justification of what is being eventually produced! Don't you find it weird for example, to watch people on TV talk shows and music programs sitting on benches behind the presenters, applauding when they are told to? Next time you watch one of them try and find out how much time you spend looking at this symbolic audience clap. When future expeditions discover Western culture of the 21st century, they might say "These people had the weird habit of watching a bunch of them applaud". Maybe they'll get to some museums too, and see African masks and cartels explaining that they are performing objects used by primitive cultures to tighten human communities by defining social rules through the practice of ritualized cults. They might even make a link with televisions...and adverts for music contest shows.

No, I do not claim to unveil the big capitalist plot here. In France, one of the directors of the biggest commercial television once openly explained how he runs his business. Television has clients: announcers or publicists. And what does television sell them? I'm quoting: 'Free brain available time.' We also have radio stations that play -between adds - 'hit music only.' Music that a lot of people like - only. If you don't belong to 'a lot of people',

FABIENNE AUDEOUD



\* I'm not even talking here about the promises of wealth, the fantasies of luxury – you know... big cars, beautiful children, perfect skin, white teeth... What cultural industries sell to people is not even these desires and fantasies anymore, it's the number of people who could share them.

you can just listen to something else... fair enough. That's what I said - there is no plot and I'm not being cynical. It's an outspoken and straight forward strategy.

I spent three years as a student in what is considered to be the elite school of management in France. I'm sure marketing has evolved since then, but I'm pretty sure its principles remain the same. Marketing is about finding out your desires or getting at what might push you to buy something. The object of study is YOU. Once the marketing team has outlined what you want, who you are, who they think you are or sometimes who they would like you to be, if you were receptive enough they'd find ways to present you with yogurts as well as music albums.

EMI claim their artists have got talent. At least that's what they tell us, 'Our artists have talent', just in case you'd thought they might issue music that they don't really like that much, or don't believe was that good.

What I claim is, if you consume what producers and their marketing teams have designed for you through their study of you, **you are buying yourself.**

That's why I wanted to make a hit enter a museum.



# ABSURDLIFE: ABSURD ART

## REBECCA WEEKS

The 'absurd' artist works with an awareness that their work may be in vain and yet continues to produce. With the release of the notion that life or the world can be anything greater than that which we perceive it to be, must also come the resolve to embrace it nevertheless. A great deal of discipline and clarity of mind is necessary to maintain a sharp awareness of the 'absurd'. In saying that artists must remain constantly aware of the abstract principles of the 'absurd' is not to say that their art should try to expose the philosophical ideas that underlie 'absurd' reasoning. For the 'absurd' artist there is no such thing as hope or philosophical doctrine, and 'absurd' art should not point to either of these things. An 'absurd' artist does not hope to give answers or to offer solutions. Instead the artist tries to reflect the complexity of the world as they perceive it. For the 'absurd' artist, the particular story is ultimately all there is: there are no universal themes or meanings, there is no wider sense to be made.

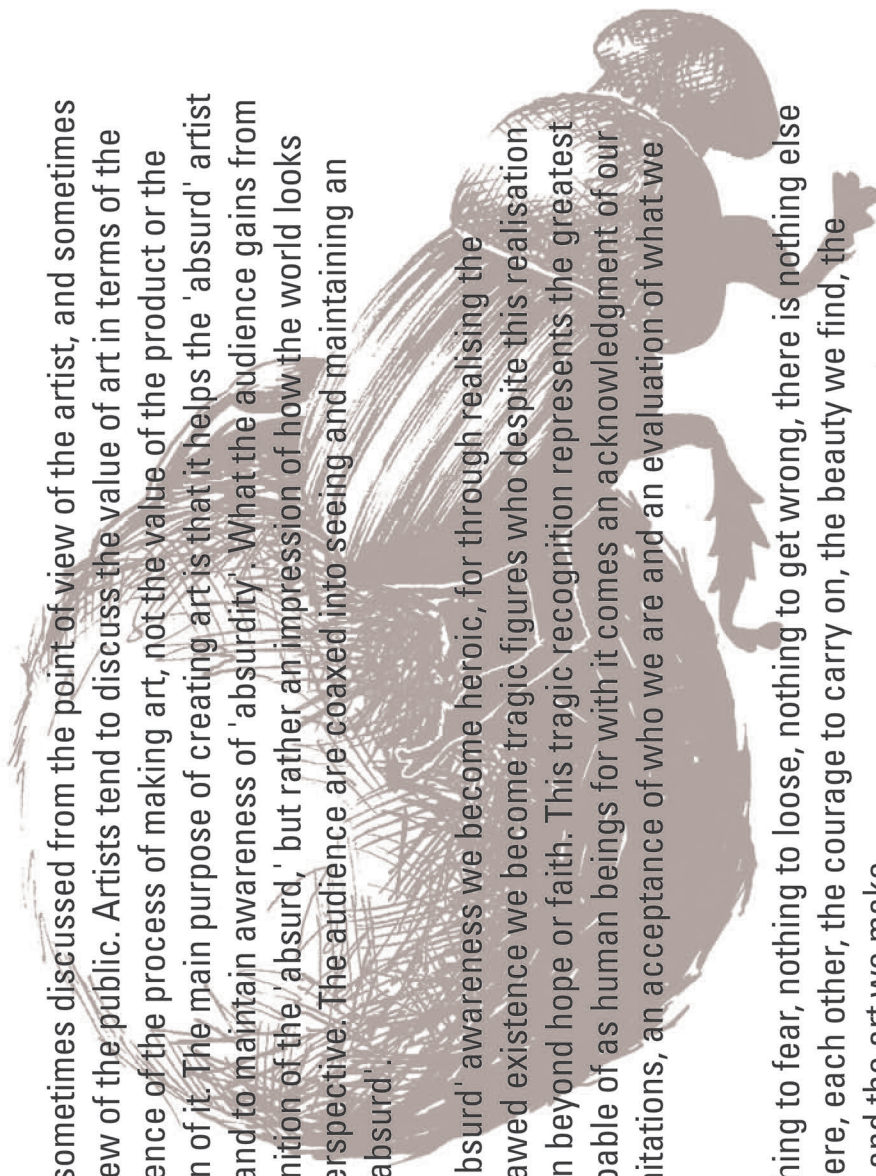
The value of art is sometimes discussed from the point of view of the artist, and sometimes from the point of view of the public. Artists tend to discuss the value of art in terms of the value of the experience of the process of making art, not the value of the product or the viewer's perception of it. The main purpose of creating art is that it helps the 'absurd' artist live in the present and to maintain awareness of 'absurdity'. What the audience gains from the art is not a definition of the 'absurd', but rather an impression of how the world looks from an 'absurd' perspective. The audience are coaxed into seeing and maintaining an awareness of the 'absurd'.

Through living in 'absurd' awareness we become heroic, for through realising the limitations of our flawed existence we become tragic figures who despite this realisation continue to function beyond hope or faith. This tragic recognition represents the greatest triumph we are capable of as human beings for with it comes an acknowledgment of our human fate, our limitations, an acceptance of who we are and an evaluation of what we are capable of.

Simply there is nothing to fear, nothing to loose, nothing to get wrong, there is nothing else but our brief time here, each other, the courage to carry on, the beauty we find, the happiness we feel, and the art we make.

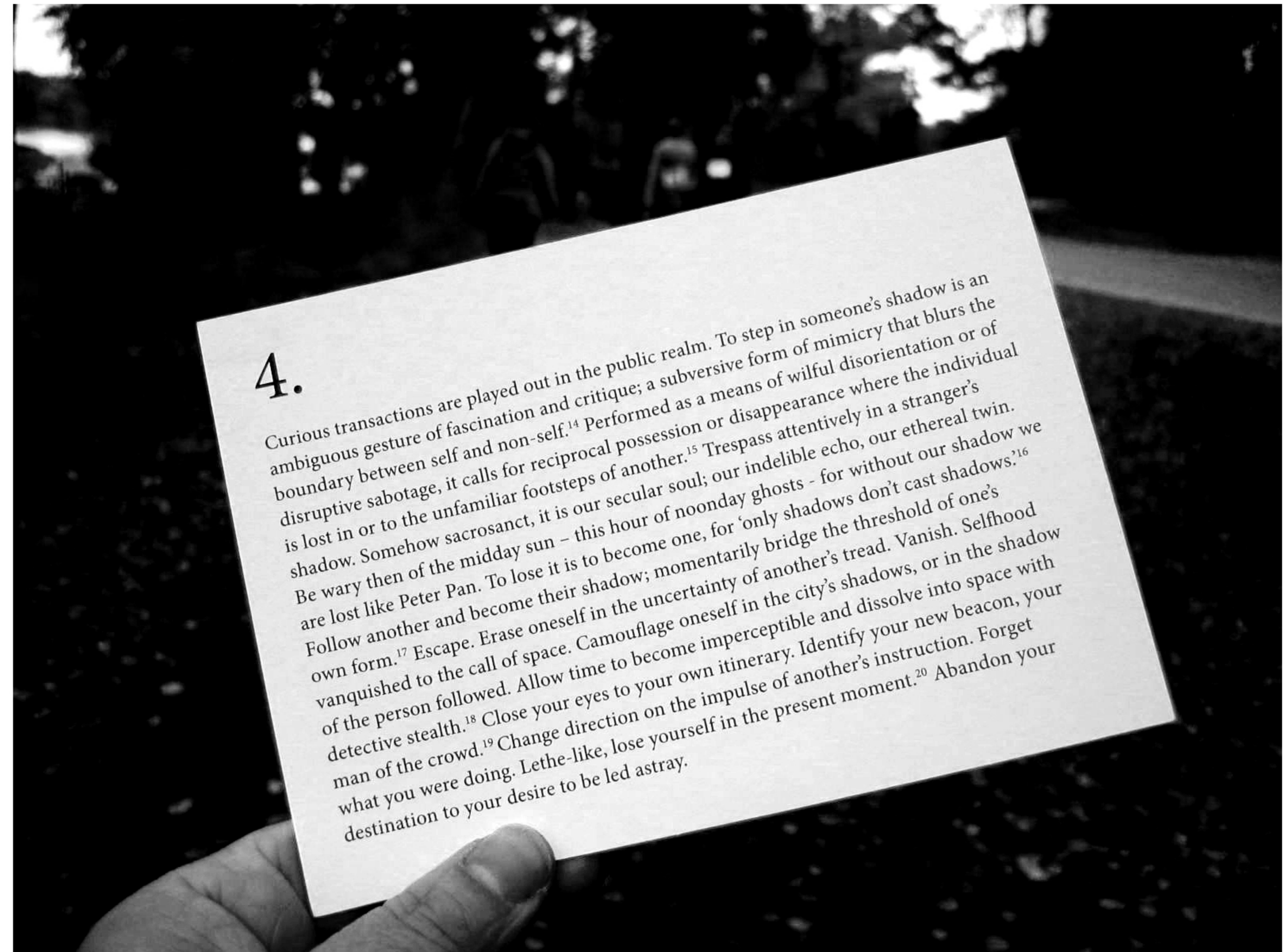
1. Camus, Albert, *The Myth of Sisyphus And Other Essays*, Vintage, (1991)

*Camus introduces the 'absurd': man's futile search for meaning, and clarity in a world devoid of God, truths and universal values. Camus encourages us to find joy in the struggle that is 'absurd' life, we must imagine ourselves like the tragic Sisyphus of Greek mythology, condemned to eternally push a boulder up a mountain and watch it roll back down, but happy.*





'Pay Attention to the Footnotes' (Postcard No.4)



4.

Curious transactions are played out in the public realm. To step in someone's shadow is an ambiguous gesture of fascination and critique; a subversive form of mimicry that blurs the boundary between self and non-self.<sup>14</sup> Performed as a means of wilful disorientation or of disruptive sabotage, it calls for reciprocal possession or disappearance where the individual is lost in or to the unfamiliar footsteps of another.<sup>15</sup> Trespass attentively in a stranger's shadow. Somehow sacrosanct, it is our secular soul; our indelible echo, our ethereal twin. Be wary then of the midday sun – this hour of noonday ghosts – for without our shadow we are lost like Peter Pan. To lose it is to become one, for 'only shadows don't cast shadows.'<sup>16</sup> Follow another and become their shadow; momentarily bridge the threshold of one's own form.<sup>17</sup> Escape. Erase oneself in the uncertainty of another's tread. Vanish. Selfhood vanquished to the call of space. Camouflage oneself in the city's shadows, or in the shadow of the person followed. Allow time to become imperceptible and dissolve into space with detective stealth.<sup>18</sup> Close your eyes to your own itinerary. Identify your new beacon, your man of the crowd.<sup>19</sup> Change direction on the impulse of another's instruction. Forget what you were doing. Lethe-like, lose yourself in the present moment.<sup>20</sup> Abandon your destination to your desire to be led astray.

# BOOM / BUST

Well to look at it now you'd never know it was all ushered in with such enthusiasm, pomp and circumstance, civic pride, etc etc. Trumpets and flags and ribbons to be cut with silken gloved fingers belonging to ladies with jewels and bells on their ankles, white horses, perhaps, for all I know. I was there but I was small. I remember looking between people's legs and making private observations about the various merits of different kinds of knees. Someone bent down and said to me: this is the future. I didn't like it, wasn't interested in the newly-smooth concrete pillars and slick glass which had replaced my playground, and besides their breath smelled of cigarette smoke and chewing gum. I retreated backwards and sat on the ground, pushing a piece of loose tarmac around and hoping that dad would find me and take me home, because I had left a spider in a jar and I wanted to see what had happened to it.

Later, when I was much taller and had had more time to replace my childish pursuits with a whole raft of much less valuable adolescent ones, I lived in a chaotic oasis of a house, all scuffed apple-green and pink wallpapers in the midst of a barren wasteland. I designated myself an Artist and spent a lot of time contemplating the beauty of the surrounding ruins. I wandered lonely as a cloud, ignored the lack of daffodils, and dyed my hair pink as a symbol of my independence. I imagine there must have been quite a number of pink-haired lonely clouds wandering in the ex-industrial wastelands in those days. How we contrived not to compromise each other's romantic solitude by our multiplicity I cannot recall. It didn't seem to be a problem.

There were a few others drifting in and out of this house but my longest-standing companions were the pigeons who lived in the top floors. I didn't think about them much, once I got used to the



scratching of their claws on the ceiling. Then I went away for a bit and did some things, this and that. In other places. For quite a while.

When I returned one day I found that the house, as a house, had gone. Only one wall remained, adjoining the building to the left and slightly behind it, which was still standing. In the sun it looked sweet, vulnerable, like a doll's house with an open front. I stood there for a while and conjured up the ghosts of its past inhabitants. I sent my pink-haired youth floating back across the broken bricks to investigate. It wouldn't cooperate but drifted aimlessly around the vanished rooms, turning over a few long gone, once treasured cassette tapes and looking under a non-existent bed for a lost neon legwarmer. I left it there and wandered over to inspect the luxury flats being constructed next door. Someone leant out of a 'sold' window to enjoy the squat-free view and I could hear his thoughts probably clearer than he could: this, oh yes, is the future. When he saw me standing in his future he went inside.

After a while a black cloud swept unnervingly quickly across the sky, low down, over the ruined house. Dozens of wings, untidy, like paper bags; ungainly, as if they'd launched themselves without a thought for their eventual destination. Then they were off, to join the pigeon diaspora, leaving just a few stragglers hanging around to shit diligently on various roofs and railings.

Perhaps the pigeons see this as an inevitable process, following the cycle of the booms and the busts rather as they follow the cycle of the seasons. For them any construction is the necessary precondition of a deconstruction; a boom period signifying a feathery rush to find the best under-bridge spaces in which to sit

out the tiresome shininess of a new-build programme, complete with avian deterrents. They know it's only a matter of time before the new-builds become old-builds, upon which they can flock through the glassless window frames to fill the vacant upper rooms. Perhaps they see this as an important role in preparing each transitional space for its new incarnation. Perhaps they believe they are instrumental in the changing of the boom to the bust to the boom.

And me? I seem to be drawn like my feathered friends to the just-over and the not-quite-begun. I have learned to speak of this as an interest in liminal space; an exploration of transience; a commitment to site-specificity. These I make my own in an attempt to maintain the illusion of my independence from the system. And then when the system has need of me to perform some sanctifying ceremony to ease the transition, the changing of the economic season, I can do so with integrity. I can do my bit to sweeten the dissolution of an institution or a space with peace of mind. I am not performing their will, justifying their actions, doing their bidding. I am a wandering cloud drawn solely by my unique artistic temperament into the vacuum of the abandoned.

But I wonder, sometimes, whether I have much more autonomy than the pigeons, or if I'm following in the ebb and flow of the booms and the busts just as haplessly, but more culpably, as they. Whether I'm not unwittingly performing someone else's paradoxical double message. Shitting on my surroundings whilst proclaiming: this is the future.





(T)here is a structure [...]; a sense of punctuation. It has memory [...]. Something (always) seeps through. (148)

## Collected Reports

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2002 - 2008

- Fellowship at Allensmore Plant Nursery
- Artist placement with The Times Newspaper call centre
- Artist in residence at the Bulls Head Inn
- Artist in residence at Lloyds Pharmacy
- Artist placement with an energy company working door-to-door on a sales team

## Fellowship at Allensmore Plant Nursery

2002

This fellowship provided me with the opportunity to map the network of social relations between workers. It was through various performative actions that I used this mapping to place myself in a more powerful position within the social hierarchy of jovial banter and of tea making duties.

My mapping of relations between Cathy, the most respected and feared member of staff known for her sharp sarcastic wit and bullying nature and Sharon, a less confident younger member, led me to an action that raised my social ranking. By observing previous tensions between them I built upon an existing issue by making jokes about Sharon's nose to Cathy in Sharon's presence, thus gaining recognition from Cathy for my ability to mock mercilessly in front of my victim. This performance action was a collage of other staff members' jokes, body language and tone of voice that I assimilated over time.

After a few of these strategic actions, I was able to spend less time making tea and more time developing a language around how to present a variety of plants to an audience.

With the guidance from a stacking and presentation expert, I created my own sculptural display using multi-layered plant stacking systems, which were to be viewed by a large audience when the nursery opened its doors to the public.

This fellowship was also an opportunity for me to explore the level of spending satisfaction that could be gained from receiving an artist's fee of £5.00 per hour. This satisfaction was then expressed through a series of interventions within the local economic sphere.

One intervention comprised of the purchasing of a sausage roll, a cream cake and a can of coke from the nearby family run bakery. The assistant reminded me that with my three choices I was participating in their lunchtime discount scheme called 'meal deal' and that I would save 45p.

I was satisfied to be supporting a local business whilst still securing a great value 'meal deal' that was both tasty and nourishing and made minimal impact on the remainder of my living expenses.

## Artist placement with The Times Newspaper call centre

2003 - 2004

The call centre's agenda was to sell subscriptions to The Times Newspaper to people who read other newspapers. My aim in this placement was to survey the characteristics, interests and language used by the various members of the public I spoke to. This was also an opportunity to map the political leanings and ideas of class associated with various newspaper titles and the socio-economic values they enforced.

My survey took the form of an incredibly complex sculpture chart built on my desk using coloured elastic bands, drawing pins, bulldog clips and post-it notes.

During calls I found that I automatically stereotyped people very quickly on their accent, their address and what newspaper they read. Quite often my assumptions were proven completely wrong and so I was constantly re-arranging the materials of my sculpture chart as each call progressed and I learnt more about the caller.

The sculpture was featured in a series of exhibition previews throughout my third week in this placement. At the end of each night the rest of the team would gather around my desk to see the sculptures progress and discuss issues around stereotyping and the advantages of keeping an open mind during a sales pitch. On the Friday night I initiated a seminar at Cosies Wine Bar on the sculptures relationship within the wider context of data protection and experimental telesales techniques with my guest speaker Tim, Head of Training and Development.

In the fourth week with pressure from the management team on me to focus less on my sculpture chart and more on selling subscriptions, I started to really engage with the people I spoke with but found a certain amount of resistance.

Whilst debating and attempting to persuade them that The Times is a great newspaper, I developed and strengthened a position from which to fight off neo-liberal and rightwing attacks whilst defending the Murdoch Enterprise, all of the time keeping hidden my own agenda and opinions.

## Artist in residence at the Bulls Head Inn

2006

Here I spent my time exploring a subservient role within the structure of a family run business and looked at the possibilities of navigating a path upwards within it as an outsider.

In response to the hectic and pressured environment, I opened up the notion of pot washing as a physical stress-release mechanism.

This led me to develop a body of work that used washing up bubbles and the various bits of food left in the sink, moulded into a series of low-relief figurative sculptures, based on the other members of staff.

My sculptural representations of staff were briefly exhibited to Terry, the kitchen porter, before being washed down the drain. Terry commented that my ability to 'wash my work away' was a courageous act of faith in my ideas.

The ephemeral nature of this work challenged the notion of permanent artwork whilst simultaneously adhering to cleanliness and hygiene policies.

After many attempts to gain a more respected position of power within the family structure I realised that it was not impossible but that now it was not a goal I wished to achieve. I concluded my investigations by deciding to take what I had already gained from the residency and by not getting entangled in the heated family politics.

## Artist in residence at Lloyds Pharmacy

2007

Here I looked at the role of the Pharmacy Assistant and the demand for sensitivity and restraint when dealing with customers' personal health problems, especially in a relatively small community. This ability to keep reactions and emotions hidden became the central theme of my time there.

Towards the end of the residency I realised two performances in the street. In them I explored through the use of body language and spoken word, my interest in the idea of a cloaking device; ways of hiding the truth underneath a layer of fiction.

The first performance took place whilst on my way to the bank with a carrier bag containing £2000 in cash. I met a group of four young heroin addicts I knew personally. My fears bubbled up but were quickly hidden as I put into practice my cloaking device idea. I strode past and acknowledged them in the usual manner.

The group was convinced by my performance so much so that they did not know it was taking place and that intrinsically, they were collaborating with me in this socially engaging artwork.

The second performance took place a week later in an alleyway, on my way from the pharmacy to a GP surgery, when I met the same group and I was carrying a large bag of mescaline. Here I had an audience of one, an old lady slowly pushing a shopping trolley laden with bags. I was so aware of her watchful eye that my performance was not so convincing and, as I walked towards the group and barked a short greeting, their suspicions turned from squinted stares to questions about my activities, where I was heading and what the bag contained. My attempt to hide my true feelings had failed; my cloak was down.

Whilst keeping an eye on my bag of mescaline and the old lady, I mumbled my way through their questions and hurried past, increasing my pace as I realised I had lost my confidence.

The group could now see through the fabricated image I was trying to present to them and I was in danger of revealing important truths about my artistic methodology.

I see the group as both collaborators and as my first hand audience, although they are oblivious to this at present. I hope that sometime in the future they become aware of and understand their involvement in my practice.

## Artists Placement with an energy company working door-to-door on a sales team

2008

Whilst talking to a variety of people on doorsteps, in the street and in their homes I developed a very malleable performance persona, moulding it and adapting it for each customer, appropriating their vocal tones, their body language and their opinions.

This appropriation was directed back towards the people I met while I was interacting with them. This is what I term 'live mirror performance'.

This technique often resulted in a more meaningful engagement with the people who were at once both my material and my audience. But occasionally it resulted in a tense situation where they became aware of my appropriating tactics and withdrew or became aggressive, as they perceived me to be insincere.

After working with other members of the team, I began to enact a critical investigation into the moral and ethical issues raised by their precarious performance techniques. Some of these techniques played on an implied social consensus on how much national pride we should have and how loyal we should be to our own nation. For example, during a price war between my British owned company and our French competitors, one team member said to a customer:

"Your neighbours here won't even buy French apples, yet you're paying them for your electricity?"

Of course he had no idea if the neighbours bought French apples or even if they were British; it was his clever and convincing performance that pushed his audience into a tight corner.

## Artists Placement with an energy company working door-to-door on a sales team

2008

Other techniques involved a complete fictionalisation of facts and events in order to confuse the already confused elderly into signing up. In one instance I was co-opted by a colleague into an improvised performance on entering an elderly lady's house. I was introduced to her under a different name and he then proceeded to remind her how I had been at her house the week before but working for a different company and had tried to get her to change supplier. Apparently now I had quit my job as they were a bad company and had raised their prices and had come to work for his company. The lady seemed to agree without doubt that this was true and recognized me from our supposed meeting.

I found it difficult to believe that his improvised performance had succeeded but she was so convinced by his manipulative skills that she signed the contract and we left with a smile on his face and a sense of guilt in my stomach.

After documenting this behaviour through photographs, sound recordings and a collection of paperwork, I tested the water by skimming over the subject with our manager. This was not well received and I realized that by exhibiting my findings to management I was showing them nothing new and therefore could affect no real change at this level. The problems here were deeply rooted.

I felt my role, as an artist, would be more productive if I carried out smaller acts of rebellion, by speaking the truth about the company to customers and by not making any sales.

## DOG MAN SEEING DOUBLE

1

Kingsway, thought Dog Man coming out of Holborn tube station, is where London feels most like Paris. It's the buildings, trees and the width of road and pavement. The correlation of these elements causes Kingsway to substitute for somewhere else. Somewhere French.

Or Hyde Park as time machine. Each time he walked in Kensington Gardens Dog Man saw, amongst the trees, Henry VIII hunting wild boar. Or Victorians drifting around the round pond. During World War I the gardens had hosted a camouflage school, so perhaps other historical periods, thought Dog Man, are still here, disguised as trees...

At Gants Hill, the central line stations felt like Brooklyn. A single Jewish cloth merchant on Brick Lane; a synagogue folded into the mosque on Fieldgate street. An oasis, also on Whitechapel's Fieldgate street, across the road from the bell foundry, worn out looking palm trees sabotaging a desert comparison.

Dog Man never experienced such resonances in the close by financial district, either its busy day or empty night and weekend streets. Its substitutions, copies, exchanges were all on the flickering screens, behind receptionists, on upper floors, to which he had no access.

Little Philippines. Little China. Little Korea. Little France. Little Italy.

2

Dog Man made himself an orbiting reading list for Whitechapel High Street: Knut Hamsun's HUNGER; Pierre Guoyotat's SOMA; Junichiro Tanizaki's Diary of a Mad Old Man; Sam Selvon's The Lonely Londoners. In the later West Indian immigrants chase pigeons for food in London's parks.

Dog Man stood outside the Spitalfields house of Gilbert and George. He had seen on ubuweb a film about their archive. The semen, the chewing gum, the dog turds. It had seemed comprehensive, but Dog Man could see new gum and dog shit everywhere, whilst G and G stayed inside, behind the shuttered windows of their tall town house.

Gilbert and George must be old now. Who will photograph all the chewing gum when they are dead? Dog Man bought two suits, and wore them both whenever he walked in the vicinity of their house. Gilbert and George could not be copied.

3

DOG MAN lurked by Whitechapel Station, where the tourists gathered for the night time walking tours. They always looked at him expectantly as he approached, so he took their money and began. This, he said, is where Jack the Ripper bought his first pair of Converse trainers...

On the radio there was a crisis. North London was standing in for East London, which had slipped towards South London. Every road sign in the city was now inaccurate. Dog Man decided to ditch the A-Z and start again using only the fliers for Pizza delivery leaflets that came through his letterbox...

Then there was Cranham, a short bus ride from the eastern end of the District Line, which, differently to Kingsway, according to Dog Man's 96 year old mum, was Paris. Dog Man asked his mum what she meant by this casual remark. She told him:

We go there for the St. Francis Hospice charity furniture shop. We sit in the bakers and it feels Parisian. Everyone says so. Don't tell anyone. We don't want it ruined. The supply of the apple turnovers is limited, even in the French capital....

4

Dog Man went to see the London Stone in Cannon Street. It was supposed to be London's heart. It was in a hole in the wall. He made offerings. A Tesco croissant. A Twix. The stone ate them noisily.

By the river in Hammersmith, Dog Man takes off shoes and socks to walk along the riverside path where it is flooded each day by the Thames. The Thames is wide and flat and it curves towards Barnes like the Amazon.

Dog Man went to Shoreditch High Street, where the financial district changes to Hoxton via an interzone of massage parlours, kebab shops, gay saunas, revue bars, wine distilleries, art supply and cycle shops.

Dog Man had never been to sea. He welcomed the growth of storage warehouses along the A12 as a chance to approximate life aboard a container ship. Dog Man hired one and christened it HMS Greyhound. He went there often, filling it only with a deck-chair and a mini-bar stocked with non-alcoholic purchases from Mags & Fags, the legendary East London news agent.

Dog Man would stop off, too, to watch the West Ham players on the Chadwell Heath training ground. Then he sat, locked up for hours in his storage bin, eyes closed in this sun bed for a (his) very particular soul.

Does this mean, Dog Man wondered, that all of Paris is reminiscent of Kingsway?

Dog Man followed no religion until he went into the bargain basement of a second hand bookshop on Charing Cross Road. Dog Man still remembered leaving his bag at the counter, coming down the steps and seeing the congregation: twelve or so old men rummaging through the shelves of recently re-stocked books.

Dog Man could see the old men in his mind like they were there now, which some of them probably were: carefully looking over each page of Whitaker's Alamanac 1973; stood reading books in the Foreign Language section, indiscriminate as to tongue.

They knew what each other would like, finding treasures in the overspill shelves and the boxes of pamphlets. They moved delicately around one another in the narrow spaces, discrete about their lives outside, the unthinkable homes where there endless purchases were stored.

In one box Dog Man had found a copy of Antonin Artaud's Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu from 1948. It was on his pile of finds at the bottom of the stairs. Dog Man growled if one of the other men eyed it too longingly.

In the basement there was no worry about how book mania might relate to the rest of one's life, if such a life existed. Dog Man was exhausted. He sat on a box of books to write on the back of his Subway receipt:

Paris 3AM. A chocolate raisin is thrown into the Nile. 5.30AM outside Stepney Green tube station in New York City. The same chocolate raisin on the floor by the ticket machines, balanced on its end.

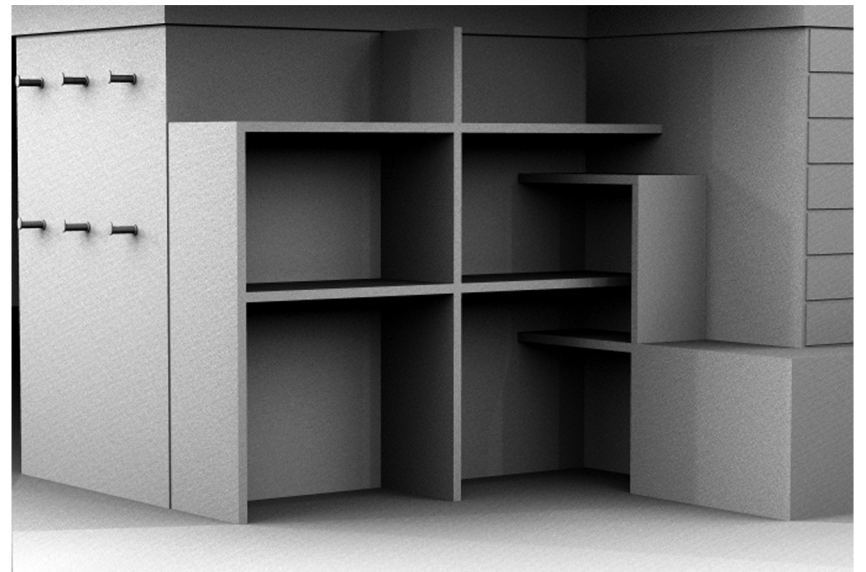
EDITOR'S NOTE: *It was in Mags & Fags that Dog Man told me the story of King Gant: his hill and his triumphal journey into London in 1225. King Gant said: In memory of me let there be a roundabout just here to smooth entry into London, particularly during rush hour. Let there be passageways under the earth for access to the tube station that can also work as pedestrian thoroughfares avoiding the busy traffic.*

*King Gant stopped off, too, at a pre-Medieval version of the Faces nightclub, which was not that dissimilar from the celebrity and premiership footballer hangout of the present day. King Gant never thought to leave throughout the subsequent eight centuries, a permanent fixture at the bar until Dog Man came, luring him to his A12 storage facility with promises of champion greyhounds.*





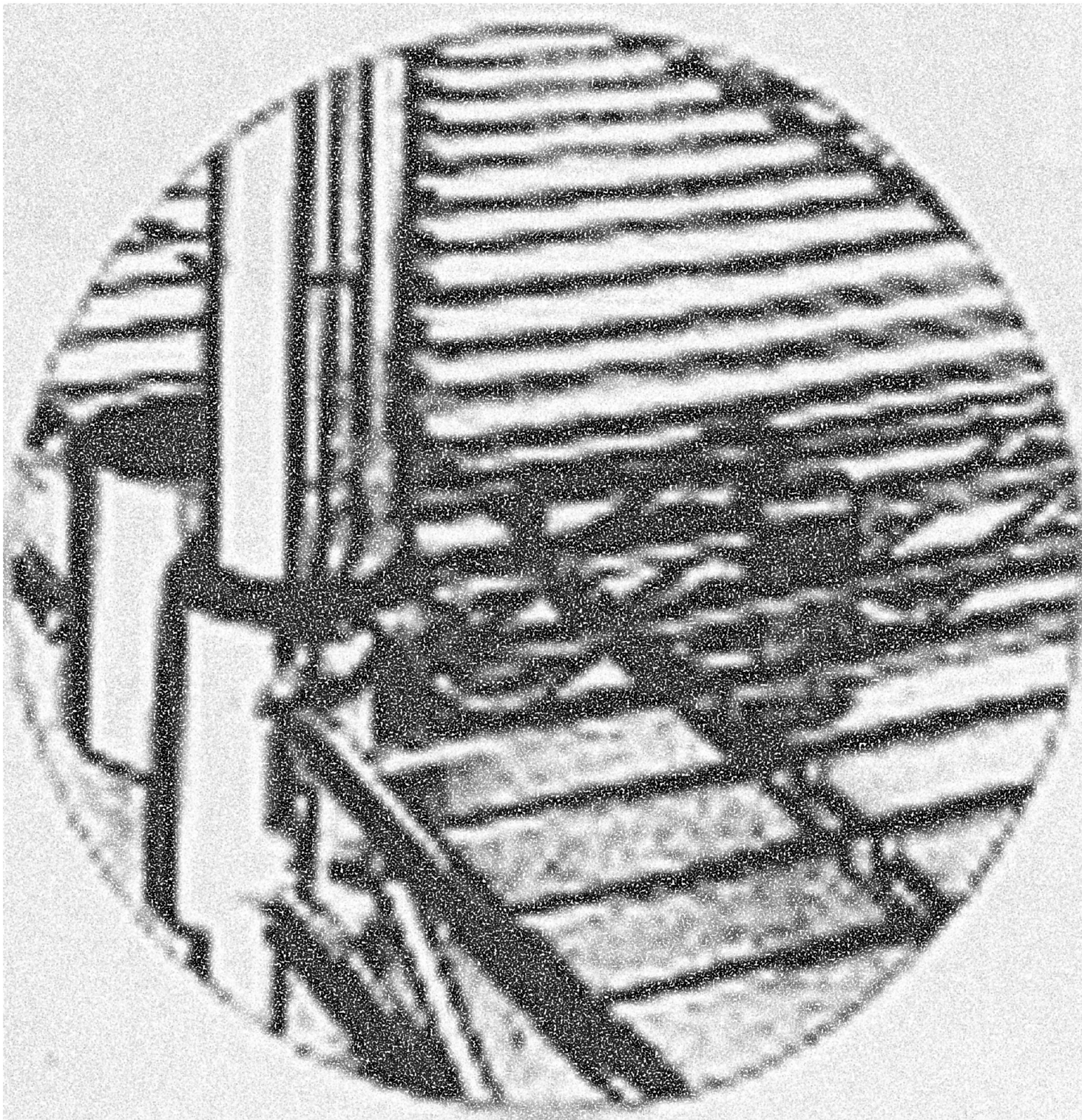
(T)he time it takes to make the work (is) condensed into  
(the time)  
it takes to perform it [...] (20)



[stage right] **arbitrary structure\***

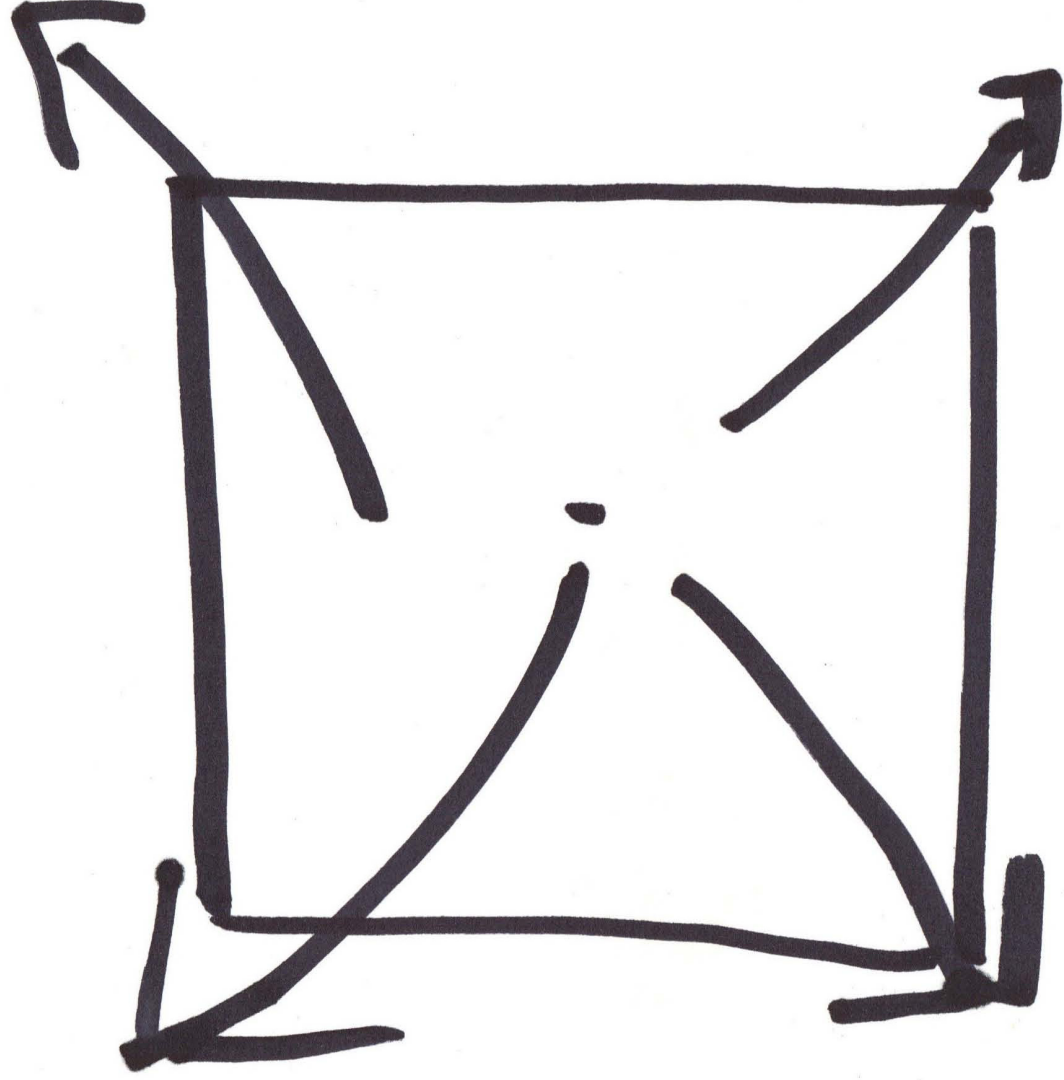
CHARLOTTE A MORGAN

COPY /// understudy



CHARLOTTE A MORGAN

COPY /// understudy



(It) is *almost* a conversation (and yet) I don't think (it is) completely dialogic. (I)t rubs up *against*, [...] (w)hich is not to say that it fails.

## COPY /// understudy

### Contributors

**Huw Andrews** is an artist based in Cardiff  
[huwandrews.com](http://huwandrews.com)

**Fabienne Audéoud** is an artist based in Paris. Working mainly in performance with video and painting her work is related to the practice and politics of music. With fellow artist John Russell, she has twenty women play the drums topless in a gallery and has been shot in a museum. Her solo work has also include de-learning to play the piano or trying to make a hit as an art piece. She is currently working on a lecture to be performed at Modern Art Oxford in November  
[fabienneaudeoud.com](http://fabienneaudeoud.com)

**David Berridge** is a writer based in London and curator of VerySmallKitchen. Dog Man, a serial investigative fiction, is currently part of Beyond the Dustheaps at The Charles Dickens Museum and NierghtravAOnWint'sIf A Teller: a book in 8 chapters and 4 dimensions, at the Gooden Gallery's 24/7 vitrine.  
[verysmallkitchen.com](http://verysmallkitchen.com)

**Emma Cocker** is a writer and lecturer in Fine Art at Nottingham Trent University. Her work explores models of practice - and subjectivity - which resist or refuse the pressure of a single or stable position by remaining wilfully unresolved. Postcard No.4 addresses the idea of following as a manifestation of copy, as the repetition of another's actions. It is taken from a larger series of postcard text-works developed in collaboration with Open City (2007 - 2010), which attempt to invite or encourage non-habitual modes of behaviour in and navigation of the public realm.  
[not-yet-there.blogspot.com](http://not-yet-there.blogspot.com)

**Rachel Lois Clapham** is a writer based in Bradford and co-director of Open Dialogues.  
[open-dialogues.blogspot.com](http://open-dialogues.blogspot.com)

*Re* – is an ongoing, iterative performance reading that presses on two writers – and two writing practices – coming together to explore process, product and performance (of text). For COPY // understudy Rachel Lois Clapham and Emma Cocker present a re-iteration of *Re* – that essays the relationship between performance/document, writing/written through the collision of textual and gestural languages. These 5 fragments or extractions are an iteration of elements ~~mis~~-remembered from the live performance. They are also duplicated in the exhibition THE DEPARTMENT OF MICRO-POETICS, London and New York, October 2010, and are offered partly as specific/ally open fragments of performance, part textual rumination on COPY, and as part of Plaza Principle's (gift) economy.

**Sam Curtis** is an artist based in London. His work applies a reflexive process to the language and social mechanisms that surround art and attempts to define that which might not be artistic practice as something worthy of our attention.  
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**Charlotte A Morgan** is an artist based in Sheffield.  
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**Flora Robertson** is an artist based in London and Leeds.  
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**Rebecca Weeks** is an artist, curator and writer based in Penzance. Her work explores the apparatus of power and offers resistance through the re-appropriation of systems and social conventions. Rebecca often works collaboratively.  
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[thewesternalliance.org.uk](http://thewesternalliance.org.uk)

**Critical Writing Collective** is a network and platform for art writing and critical dialogue based in the Yorkshire region. The collective aims to create a platform for experimental art writing, promote critical discussion around regional visual art and performance activity and support artists and writers through events, publications, projects, opportunities and an open network of contacts.

Critical Writing Collective was initiated by Leeds based writer Joanna Loveday and Sheffield based artist Charlotte A Morgan.

[criticalwritingcollective.wordpress.com](http://criticalwritingcollective.wordpress.com)

