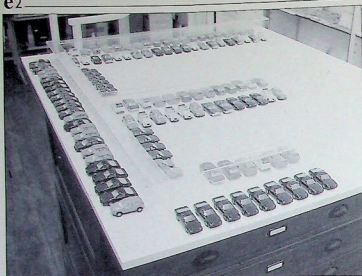


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£2

Everything
London

18



some shows

Gustav Metzger (above):
Damage, Nature and
Auto-destructive Art
at Workfortheyetodo
Photo: Donald Smith

Cover image: Steve
Rushton, The Spanish
Court Wasted Precious
Mornings. 1995-96



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Adam Gallery

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0171 582 1260
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Stephen Cockerton: Life on stilts
15 Feb - 7 Mar

Anthony D'Offay

21 Dering St, W1
0171 499 4100

Joseph Beys

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Anthony Reynolds Gallery

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DISPARATION

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Rosey Prince, Jonquil Cook, Nick Sanderson, Simon Bird,
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Barbican Centre, EC2

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Mon - Sat (except Tues) 10 - 6.45pm

Tues 10 - 5.45pm, Sun 12 - 6.45pm.

Nice space, shame about the lager

Blue Gallery

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Annabel Keatley

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Jan Clenton

26 Feb - 23 Mar

Barbage House

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50X50X50X50

50X50X50X50

This is the first project by Flexible Response External
Sites Programme and is organised by David Goldenberg &
John Roberts.

Artworks on answer phones by 50 artists
including Art & Language, Barbara Keating, Deidre McCloskey,
Bob & Roberta Smith, Tim Noble and, as they say, many more.
*50X50X50X50 is divided into two parts. The first situates
the answer machine works in electronic space, the second in
the gallery itself.

ESP has invited 50 European, American and British artists
using text, sound and music to produce works of between 10
seconds and 2 minutes in duration, to examine the restricted
space available on answer machines. It is the tension and
interference between the would-be 'openness' of one system
of distribution and the 'institutional' closure of another that
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Information line: 0181 809 4307.

Open throughout Jan 6 - 11

Also, Information and Relaxation Club.

Til 27 Jan

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Didem Unly

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0171 247 9747

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Lynna Hewett

Til 20 Jan

Diorama Arts Centre Ltd

34 Osnaburgh St, NW1

0171 916 5467

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Aishu in the East End by Nikko Michigami

Phone for dates



Everything
London

- Lottery Stress Disorder a project by Reuben G Thurnhill
- Adam Gallery Everything talks to Adam Reynolds
- Slow Steve Rushton
- Rembrandt's trick with mirrors Clive O'Mahony talks to Nigel Konstam
- The Great Art Conspiracy Horace Bogarty

- Motherandchildland John Timberlake
- Proposals: Project for the Third Millennium Steve Wheeler
- Briefs Jasmine Grindstone
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- Take the lift up to the Underground Everything talks to Plummet
- 'Suck' Lynn Hewett at the Commercial Gallery

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Reuben G Thurnhill
Lottery Stress Disorder
Photo: Simon Beasley

Everything is an independent, artist-produced magazine. It is compiled and edited by Keith Ball and Steve Rushton and produced by **everything Publications**, The Bombshelter, Spitalfields Market, 21 Steward St London E1 6AJ Tel and fax: 0171 426 0546. © everything editorial.

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The views expressed in this magazine are by and large concurrent with those held by the editors (with significant exceptions). It doesn't necessarily follow, however, that the views expressed by the contributors are those of the editors.

It must also be borne in mind, at the risk of being accused of sophistry, that the editors have minds of their own and can also agree to differ on certain points amongst themselves. Readers who own the Hotpoint V3M 200 are advised to allow the cycle to complete before retrieving their clothes. After death readers may experience themselves travelling down a long tunnel where they may be greeted by loved ones who have passed on before them. It is impossible for readers to breed smoked salmon in captivity. Your statutory rights are not effected.

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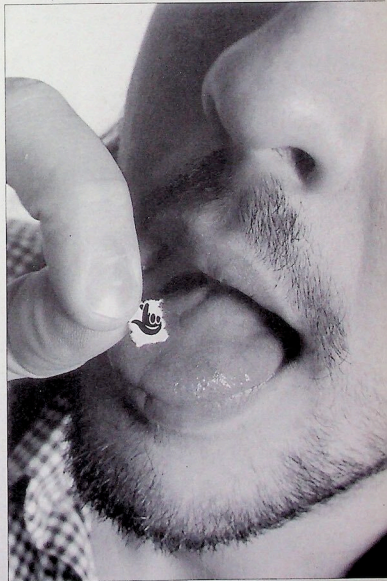
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Adam Gallery

Everything talks
to Adam Reynolds

E Your gallery has been around for ten years and therefore predates a lot of the current initiatives. Why did you start?

AR For me it was a way of coming to terms with the horror of presenting my work to galleries. My background was as an historian, so I didn't have an art school background or the contacts that derive from that, and I was very naive. The idea of taking on a shop in which I could live, work and exhibit was a very attractive one. I had a naive idea that galleries were simply places in which you showed work, and why do that in a way which would involve the probable humiliation of rejection?

E In the bar of every crap pub I go into there's a sign which reads: "Don't ask for credit as refusal will offend". Was there an element of that in it?

AR Probably. I was 24 and I'd had two years working in a studio, doing a part time art course (which I was thrown off – sort of willfully really). I had to find a logical way to make sense of it because I was not going to present as someone who was a good bet as an artist. I'd had two years working as an artist, no training. I looked weird when I walked through the front door and I knew I would be treated as a nutter – or I would get into the thing of doing work which was palatable to a side of the art world which was about making interesting, but quite safe, work.

I was claiming the right to be able to govern my self and not having to work for someone else, working as a sculptor was the way to do that.

E Why was it naive to set up your own gallery?

AR Because I didn't have a fucking clue how to do it.

E But they do say that the young are emboldened by ignorance.

AR Absolutely.

E So what were you ignorant of then that you're wise to now?

AR I think I was ignorant of the amount of work involved. Soon after I started I thought: "God, this is at least two or three years of commitment". So it was naive to think that things happen fast; we worked hard for two years and generally weren't taken very seriously. It's something of a paradox that the more relaxed I've become about it the more seriously people take it. In the early days I remember applying for grants and if you don't have a track record they would say: "Why the hell should we give you any

money?" If you are prepared to slog at it for four or five years people develop a grudging respect for what you are doing, and, to an extent, if you completely trash the money they have given you they're just buying back what they've already had.


But I think I guessed well in respect to my relationship with other artists. I thought that as an artist running a space I wouldn't be in the same relationship as someone who's living it was. (I was always clear, thank God, that I wasn't going to make my living at it). There is an essential difference between someone who is doing it as a gift to someone else, and a curator who begins to know themselves through the way they run their gallery, and to whom the gallery is the main creative outlet. The Adam Gallery has never worked like that because in the end it's not my show, and if it's terrible... somebody else wasted an opportunity. And it should be possible to do that – you might learn more from a show which doesn't work than one which does.

E You recently reorganised the way in which the gallery is run.

AR I have always run the gallery with the help of other people. Two years ago I invited a board of seven people to make a formal commitment to sharing the decisions and workload. We were all very clear that it should retain the position of somewhere which is slightly off the London art map. The atmosphere of the place is, after all, very easy going and is designed to put people at their ease; and that is the way people should approach the gallery, if they try something out and blow it, it won't be the end of their career. So the shows can be quite variable – and in the end the artist's development is more important than their audience's experience.

E One thing that strikes me is the extreme variability of many of these artist initiatives. They all seem refreshingly arbitrary. Before I started talking to people from artist-run spaces I naively subscribed to a notion that there was some sort of system...

AR There is a collective fantasy that there is an art world which is somehow controlled, and I agree with you that there isn't, but it's to do with whether you subscribe to the fantasy or not. Adam Gallery is about not subscribing to that fantasy.

Around the Adam Gallery there are about half-a-dozen artist-led enterprises many of which are more prestigious, self-conscious and very different to us. Beaconfield, for instance, is a gorgeous space and run in the right spirit. It all seems to come out of a disillusion with that whole collective fantasy. There is a sense of control within the art world which is difficult to locate the source of – in the sense that you can't be seen to do something which is embarrassing. But I don't really care if we do – if we do it for the right reasons. That's the way I think  it goes to be.

© Interview Steve Rushton 1995

"It is the brain that says I but I as other"
Deluze and Guattari.

This is the difficulty that Johnny Solo had.

The letters on the page became acrobats. They did cartwheels and played leapfrog with each other, and it was a game that the words and letters only played with him. They acted in the same way as the toys in his room – which became animated only when he was alone. The emerging spirit left them just before his parents or older brother walked in, leaving only the clue of the momentum of a mechanism winding down, the purr of a clockwork train, the imperceptible rock of the square feet of the robot that had suddenly stopped. He has experienced similar traces since the smell of smoke in an unoccupied room, a door swinging, a curtain blowing on a still night, the shadow of a friend remaining after they had left.

Sometimes the letters would disappear altogether so that he could only read the spaces in between the words, or they would slide to the bottom of the page forming an untidy pile. It frustrated Johnny that when the teacher came round they would be back in place. Because the words and letters wouldn't work for him they put Johnny into a class with children who found almost everything difficult. Everyone told them how slow they were and because they were slow they did lots of art. Some of them had funny eyes and Johnny's father had a phrase that summed up people who had this funny thing happening with their eyes, he used to say: "nobody home".

Johnny used to spend a long time looking into the mirror, trying to figure out if there was anybody home. The only two things that Johnny was good at were art and the tests with blocks and spots that the educational psychologist asked him to do. He decided pretty soon on that he was an artist. It wasn't a calculated decision that he would choose himself to be the person to be. It seemed like the only option at the time.

The more sure of himself he became and the more people praised him for the artistic things he did the more convinced he became that he was himself.

It was after his marriage broke up and the kids went to university and after he had become successful with all those exhibitions that he began to doubt again if there was anybody home or perhaps, more to the point, anybody in particular here.

This is what he reasoned, based on the few pop science books he had tried to read: "The human brain is an organ. Its activities are essentially a series of electrical charges. Together they regulate the wellbeing of the body and produce unconscious and conscious thought. The human brain gets hit with loads of different information; we have no control over what we get or don't get to find out about, and the outworking of all this activity is thought".

So it was that Johnny reasoned consciousness to be the fall out from a lot of arbitrary electrical activity. As a result of this vision he started to imagine another brain removed from his own, which was suspended like a companion star some distance from the first and that

Slow

this brain had been stripped down of all the extraneous nonsense. It was just the bits of fall out that had fallen together and that the particles of all this electrochemical garbage were attracted to each other by the gravity of opinion. This was the point at which Johnny started to doubt himself because he started to remember the class and the tests with dots and shapes and the praise for the things he'd made and he began to think he could have been somebody else. This was before the obvious struck him; he could just as easily be nobody in particular.

So the second brain followed him like Tinkerbell in Peter Pan, slightly behind his left shoulder on the periphery of his vision. It had taken the form of a sphere with no definable edge. Sometimes a thought



Mode de Voir: Goya

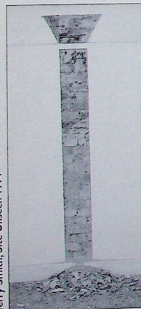
or an opinion would move in like the lightning charge on a Van der Graf generator, sometimes a thought or opinion would leave, perhaps travelling into someone else's head, sometimes dissipating. So the sphere would never complete itself or never empty itself. It would never possess particularity in the sense that Johnny himself did.

One night, alone and slightly drunk in his studio, Johnny Solo got out, some of the things he'd made and put together a kind of exhibition. He did the best with the few lights he had and it looked good. He sat down and started to think. He noticed that the more he concentrated on his work, the more he thought about his concerns and surerities, his personal collection of intentional accidents, the less active the sphere became. He reasoned, therefore, that the more he centred his attention on the things he had made the more likelihood there would be of drawing the sphere back into himself.

He's made a hatch at the base of his studio door. I collect the empty plates when I deliver his meals.

© Steve Rushton 1996

Heteronyms was at Click Street. The catalogue is published by Rear Window ISBN 0952104059. Deluze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaux* and *What is Philosophy* are available at all good book shops.



Rembrandt's trick with mirrors

Clive O'Mahoney talks to Nigel Konstam

The picture below shows a sketch by Rembrandt alongside a reconstruction of the same sketch created with models by Nigel Konstam (NK)

The models were placed against a mirror and photographed. This, along with a number of similar reconstructions (and a hundred other examples), illustrates Konstam's assertion that Rembrandt was in the habit of using mirrors to enhance the spatial, rhythmic and compositional harmony within a picture. It also underlines Konstam's belief that Rembrandt was essentially an observational painter, who would set up *Tableaux Vivants* which were studied from various



Rembrandt drawing

Rembrandt. Particularly against the findings of the Rembrandt Research Project who have contested the attribution of a great number of his paintings. What is you're struggling against?

NK Well, I wouldn't say that reassessment is unnecessary but that it's been very badly done. In fact, would like to reassess particularly his drawings, and the way in which his drawings have been dated. It's his absolutely necessary to do that.

Essentially, I'm proposing a revolution in the way these things are done because I've discovered something about his working methods which is so practical, so matter of fact, that no artist I've explained it to has denied that it could be anything other than the way he worked. Essentially, the difference between me and the Rembrandt experts is that I say that he worked exclusively from life, from groups of models that he would direct in his studio. We know that he had shelves and shelves of musical instruments, weapons, shields, &c., in fact a whole theatrical wardrobe that he used for creating the groups that he then drew and painted. The proof of it is that not only did he draw them directly from life, but that occasionally he would glance from left or right and look at the reflection of those groups in the mirror. The drawings based on the reflections are often dated towards the end of Rembrandt's life by the scholars, and the original drawing might be dated from an early part of his life. That is, the stimulus for two completely different looking drawings was in fact the same: the same group of models.

E What do you think is the status now of the Rembrandt Research Project?

NK I think they're more or less defunct. I believe I've knocked them off their perch. But I don't feel that I've won any kind of victory. I've stopped the rot as far as this reassessment, based on very pernickety, pedantic values, is concerned but, I haven't replaced it with the truth about Rembrandt. That is, that Rembrandt was varied and the variety comes from a variety of stimuli. I haven't been allowed to. I've tried to publish my work in the media but the establishment is immovable.

E Can you give me an example of where what you describe as their pedantry has led them to false conclusions?

NK The Polish Rider, I suppose most critics regard or used to regard, as a flawed masterpiece. It's so Rembrandtesque that you just cannot but accept it as a Rembrandt and yet, the horse, for instance is very peculiar indeed. It's well known that all four hooves had to be repainted by the restorer because they looked so odd (they were also damaged when it was brought). But Rembrandt needed the stimulus of life in front of him, and as Rembrandt couldn't have a walking horse in front of him he did the best he could as a kind of invention. It's not of the quality we normally associate with Rembrandt, his horses are not nearly as good as many much more minor painters. So, in this instance, we have a rider that is easily accepted as by Rembrandt, and a horse which they find very difficult to accept. I don't find any difficulty at all. The same is true of Frederick Rollin in the National Gallery, a man on a rearing horse, a very splendid portrait of a known person, and yet the horse looks like a rocking horse. It doesn't have the kind of verve that you would expect from a Reubens or a Van Dyke. It's a

very clumsy construction. I'm of the opinion that we just have to accept that Rembrandt, when he wasn't working directly from life, produced a quality of work which was very, very different; and if you can't accept that, then you are bound to end up with the incredibly small collection of paintings that the Rembrandt Research Project reduced his work to. They attribute something like 250-270 paintings to Rembrandt; which, for a man who worked for 43 years, who was extremely famous and easily recognisable, is quite absurd. He is likely to have painted 1500-2000 paintings. It's been recorded that he was devoted to his work, he stayed at home and worked very hard. Some of his work would have been done in a day or two and some he worked on for years on end and the amount of effort that went into any particular painting was immensely varied. The fact that the experts can only accept such a very small quantity as having survived is contrary to common sense. We know that in one year he produced 22 portraits. He was a very, very prolific artist. One of the things that is interesting from an artists point of view is that he didn't exercise a great amount of self criticism; he allowed himself a this huge variety of quality. He went through life starting many new things and leaving them when he himself was satisfied. He said 'the work was finished when the artist had realised his intention' - that's a very sensible dictum. The standard Dutch artist would polish every nook and cranny of his painting, it was full of very rich detail. Rembrandt was saying the opposite, it is the artist's intention that is interesting and the finished polish of the whole thing is of very minor interest - a completely different attitude to a work of art.

E What do you think of the idea that Rembrandt had a workshop?

NK I reject it. He did have a school, it is well known that he trained as many as 50 painters, some of whom turned out to be much more successful than himself in terms of getting portrait commissions and things of that kind. But, the idea of Rembrandt's workshop is very new and is based on very little evidence. This idea became necessary because, having rejected so many Rembrandt's, the experts had to find somebody else who might have painted them - so the idea of the workshop was created out of nothing, contrary to all the written evidence. The most disgraceful innovation was a chap called Isaac Judewille, who studied under Rembrandt in Leiden. Judewille was a thoroughly incompetent student, who, in fact enrolled himself in the School of Philosophy in Leiden as soon as Rembrandt left for Amsterdam. He did not need money, he had inherited a reasonable fortune from his parents. There is no reason whatsoever to think either that he needed employment or that he was capable of producing the rather wonderful early portraits that are now attributed to him. The only works that we know of his are absurdly incompetent.

E It is now accepted that the different quality of

work previously attributed to Rembrandt is a result of commissions being executed under his direction, but not by him. You refute this?

NK I do completely yes. I think it's a disgraceful result of the last twenty years of scholarship. Poor old Rembrandt has suffered appallingly from this new story that is put out. It has no basis in fact, in tradition or in the documents, and there is much more evidence against it. He did occasionally get his students to make copies of his paintings, this was normal practice and he admitted to it. For instance, when a somebody asked what he had for sale, he said he had a copy made by a student and with a few touches it could pass for a Rembrandt. That's completely straightforward, he's explaining the nature of the canvases, it was a copy of something that he had already sold, alongside many other works which were by himself. It was a rare occasion and he made no attempt to hide what was normal practice within the guild. I say you have to expect from Rembrandt a very wide variety of work.

He could spend an immense amount of time on the etching of a shell, of the highest quality of natural history draughtsmanship - a very beautiful thing; yet you find comparatively crude passages within his etchings (which are authentic beyond doubt), as well as within his drawings and paintings. All are the work of one man who has a huge range of approaches to his work. He would focus people's attention by taking a great deal of trouble in one part and, as his contemporaries said, painting with a white-wash brush in other parts; this was his method.

E Do you think that the current reassessment is a matter of fashion and rather than later be rejected?

NK I'm pretty sure it will. The fact that four out of the five members of the Rembrandt Research Project resigned to you're they could not agree as to how to proceed is more or less throwing in the sponge. Essentially the whole group started out very sensibly with Volume 1 of their reassessment; they were rather cautious; they started to get results which tied in with previous results, there were no surprises in it at all. They were getting a huge grant from the Stichting



Maquette for the drawing shown opposite. N. Konstam

The Polish Rider.



Konstam's campaign

In addition to a slim volume on the subject Konstam has produced three newspapers entitled *The Save Rembrandt Campaigner*. Their publication coincided with major exhibitions of Rembrandt's work in Berlin, Amsterdam and London. The publications were devoted to his own theories on the authenticity of Rembrandt's disputed paintings in the face of what Konstam

believes to be the distortions of Rembrandt academicians. He has thanks to the intervention of EH Combrich, published an article in the Burlington Magazine and mounted an exhibition in St Martin's in Trafalgar Square which illustrated his thesis. The revolution in Rembrandt scholarship which Konstam expected has not yet occurred and his observations have been met by a virtual silence from the academic community. His address to art historians at Harvard, despite vigorous debate following his lecture, failed to bring Konstam's arguments into a wider arena. It would seem that the academic community are reluctant to even debate the validity of Konstam's claims: "So, I haven't published any more of those newspapers, I think my next trick will be on the Internet."

(Additional notes Steve Rushton.)

Foundation. If they were to carry on in that way the question might easily have arisen why are we both trying to spend all of this money if the results are exactly what we already thought. Volume 2 was not particularly controversial. Volume 3 had a number of outrages in it, and the advanced publicity for those that have not yet been published shows that the later works are going to come in for a completely amazing reassessment, including the Polish Rider – they've found another painter for that.

● What has been the reaction to your "Save Rembrandt from the Experts" campaign?

NK The people I've been able to get to have been convinced by the evidence, it's not as though I've found Rembrandt using mirrors once or twice. I've found him using them about a hundred times. It's also clear from the works in his studio and the works of his school that there was a group of models in the studio, and that each individual student observed that group from a different point of view and, therefore, you get variety. For instance, the Dismissal of Hagar, of which there are about 25 Rembrandt drawings, and there are also student paintings that refer to the same group of models. We have an enormous amount of evidence pointing to the fact that there were

groups of live models in Rembrandt's studio which and his school worked from. But that evidence is an embarrassment to the scholarship which has built cavities in the air as a result of misinterpreting the same evidence: the iconography of the Rembrandt school is based on school facts not individual philosophising, as far as I am concerned.

● Is there a detectable difference in the work of Rembrandt from the time when he had money and the time when he didn't?

NK Yes, there's a tremendous difference. We need to redate the drawings so that it's perfectly clear that the drawings with lots of models present, milling around in his studio, obviously came from the peak of his fame in Amsterdam, and are likely to be between, shall we say, 1635 and 1648 – that's a broad span. From his old age we tend to have life drawings, life etchings, drawn from his mistress and not these Biblical set-ups. The pattern of his work changed very drastically.

● Interview Clive O'Mahoney 1995

This is an edited text. For the full transcript write to us at Everything enclosing a SAE, marking your envelope Rembrandt Conspiracy.



I never knew anybody who ever met the Lynch Pin but I heard plenty.

One time, during last knockings at the Jibby's Art Club, I heard somebody whisper that they knew someone who saw his vast shadow move slowly across the wall at a Saatchi opening. Maybe one or two operatives stepped out of line and got a visit from one of his minders. Not enough blue, too professional, too flip-pant, too cool, too emotional – do like the Lynch Pin says and your family and friends can rest assured that they won't get hit one dark night by a Cherokee van.

"He's got it sewn up," they said, sitting in his swivel chair, orchestrating the changes from his underground complex somewhere in East London, stroking the impassive head of his white cat. A closed circuit TV camera, linked to every gallery and studio, plays on a bank of screens reflecting into his kidney shaped swimming pool. Artistic boys and girls in thongs and bikinis carry larks tongues wrapped in vine leaves and cool his brow with witchhazel!

We experienced only the nuance of his influence; the silent manoeuvring on the edges of the grammar of behaviour. Things would change, like the way people talked, the way people moved, the way things were framed, who was in or out. A cloud might flatten or it might disperse into a mist depending on when and how high his surveillance helicopter was flying.

I'd been sending him tapes of my private conversations with other operatives, conducted in the small niches of London that his eyes and ears couldn't reach. The procedure was that I'd place the tapes in a litter bin in Hyde Park. Once or twice I'd look back and see a rollerblader or homeless person retrieve the package before making a bee-line for the nearest tube station. Maybe two days later I'd get a cheque. The amount always differed and always seemed to me to be arbitrary. So I became accustomed to regarding myself as a small planet circling the invisible mass of the Lynch Pin. Until, that is, yesterday, when I got the note. The instructions were clear.

I went over to the Merryweather Arms, lacing my way through the crowd of suits staring blankly at the exotic dancer, through the vague smell of their Pre-Cum afterwards and up to the bar. I asked for Stick. Stick came in from out back and I asked him right out for a Cleaning Lady. His eyes turned to slits and he whispered "Why you want a Cleaning Lady? – I always thought of you as a kind of sensitive and creative person. You know how to shoot?"

"You just pull the trigger I guess."

Stick led me into the back room and opened up the cabinet.

"I recommend the .44 Russian – with the adjustable hair trigger, it'll almost shoot itself!"

I considered a P-38 Walther, it looked pretty good, but not as compact as the Smith and Wesson. 38 Chiefs Special with a two inch barrel. I put the money down and Stick put a couple of boxes of cartridges on the table. I walked out and hailed a cab.

I cracked the Mark down as he was leaving. Matts

The Great Art Conspiracy

Gallery. I showed him the piece hidden in the lining of my overcoat and told him to get in the cab and to keep his fucking mouth shut.

The warehouse was empty. The Mark knew why he was there and he knew what the Lynch Pin wanted. I lit a Chesterfield King, I switched on the tape and told the Mark to start talking. I wanted five hundred words and I wanted it now. Ornithology has never been one of my strong points but I would guess the guy sang like a canary.

"One of the main aims of the traditional avant-garde is to resist any opinion which is defining. There is a famous Situationist dictum: "Practice must seek its theory" and there is a phrase which Peter Burger uses: "Original exemplification". The traditional avant-garde came from the young Hegelian point of view which supposed that history moved in a line towards a revolutionary moment after which the work and the deed would be combined, they inherited from Hegel the notion of supersession..."

I shot him through the foot.

"No," I said, "that's not what I want to hear."

"...The failure of the Paris 68 uprising meant that the strategy of the avant-garde needed to be reassessed which led to reinvestigations into the function and definition of power...Debord's idea of the spectacle found its nihilistic apotheosis in the mirror image of Baudrillard's simulacrum which was totalising and closed..."

I shot again, this time I got his leg. I screwed up and hit an artery. I was racing against time.

"The new model of time can be seen as moving in a circular motion, like an eddy, occasionally picking up debris from the past. The vague shades of what was a vibrant and dynamic radicalism continue to reappear in part. There is no way of knowing if it will be coopted into the spectacle, or whether it can provide new methods of annunciation which supply us with...alternatives...It's a matter of..." He pegged out.

I slapped him a couple of times but I couldn't get any more out of him. Like my kids say: "It broke".

I took the fire escape down to the street and hailed a cab. I really fucked up with the main artery thing and I didn't get the information the Lynch Pin wanted. If I didn't get the gun back to Stick by noon the next day he would send his buddies out looking for me. I was a bad risk! I decided to hold on to the gun and wait for the call from Stick or the Lynch Pin. The cab dropped Special with a two inch barrel. I put the money down and Stick put a couple of boxes of cartridges on the table. I walked out and hailed a cab. I cracked the Mark down as he was leaving. Matts

Horace Bogarty



Image: Renato Nemis

I saw a man upon the stair

I looked again

he wasn't there

He wasn't there again today

I wish to Christ he'd go away

Paris 1968

Pierre, le militaire a été
Mobilisé contre les tra-
vailleurs et les étudiants.

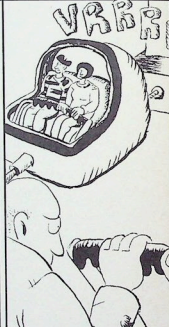


Vite ! Il n'y a pas de temps à perdre.
Allons a machine a temps



La machine
a temps

Véronique et Henri, venez
vite.
Vous voyagez à Londres
1996



Combien le monde est
bizarre
et familier.
Mais malgré l'apparence
de radicalisme, la distance
entre l'art et vie paraît
aussi large que toujours



Plus
ça change

London, Autumn 1995. Some sort of post
structuralism has won some kind of war.
Over the rain drenched bunkers of the
Southbank the flags of various things are
flying high.

In the river running through a centre of the New &
Exciting, the sliced corpse of a cow is found to have
meaning. Kritik, an androgyne in his/her thirties who
likes lots of things, discovers evidence of something
else ...

In the paper he carried under her arm, an article written
by a sheep bleated about whether something was
art or not, and if it was, whether you could like it. She
moved briskly, avoiding commitments with dapper
swerves of ambiguity and a nod to some marginal sub-
text, stepping out of the cold into the portico and purchasing
a ticket at the box office of History.

Everything undergraduate had prepared him/her for
this, yet it still hit him/her with force: the stench of Art-
Culture-Politics filling his/her nostrils like so many
library loan O.U. readers. She started to panic. This wasn't
what he/she wanted. She wanted something new, sexy and
beckoning. He/she craved the taste and texture of the
moment; the fluted serialised fluidity of post modernist
metanunciations. Night after night, py after py, she slipped
into crammed spaces, waded through conversations for
the thumping thrill of something else altogether. But here
there were no affirmatory whispers or nods of quiet
agreement – only the pedantic trace of the "curatorial". It was
1982 again, albeit wrapped in the flags of a decade later.
Come closer and I will show you fear in a handful of
old posters.

In the recesses of memory something stirred, and
through thick green panes she saw a type of critical
explanation drowning, eyes like a lecturer sick of
Maxims.

The voices around him/her were hushed, as in a cathedral.
"Of course as objects they'll always look less than the
sum of what we know about them." Someone was
whispering. "To expect anything else is to discount
the meaning endowed by history."

"Exactly," some learned friend continued. "In a sense
what's important isn't how we see it now but that, as a
practice, it was bankrupt at the time."

There was a pause and Kritik suddenly got the notion
that all three of them, s/he eavesdropping and the two
speakers, had all been struck by the same question.
How then could you begin?

S/he suddenly felt very alone. In the murk something
moved. A bare electric light flicked on. Emil Nolde,
resplendent in brown shirt, sat glazing at the arse-end
of Rodchenko's bitter privacy, smugly chomping ...

Volkhoush. He leered at Kritik and motioned toward
the greasy crumbs of his palette. "This makes me fatu-
lent," he said chewing with a jagged grin and blacked
out eyes. "I stink so bad the official Nazis won't come
near me." He burped before adding, "It gets me off the
meat hook." Around him, in crusty old frames, Nolde's
landscapes hung bleakly: the sky, the land, the blood,

Mother and child land

John Timberlake

of the soil. On some Friesland heath red buildings squated
under tumbling clouds. In another a purple
ploughed field, not yet dug with V-trenches, stretched
under bloodshot clouds.

"That's all gone now," he laughed. "My apologists blud-
dozed it and sanded it with pines."

Kritik tugged. Some distance off a half associative whis-
tled Norwegian wood.

"It doesn't matter, you're still a great artist," she said.
"Quite so," volunteered Dark Head of a Man (1910),
licking his forelock. "To have stuck it out, and still
remained decent fellows..."

He broke off as Rodchenko approached, hopping angrily
as he pulled his trousers back on. "Really!"
Rodchenko hissed as he moved in on Kritik, holding his
nose as he passed Nolde who opened his mouth to
speak. Rodchenko spun and caught Nolde off guard,
the crack of breaking jawbone resounding as the Alte
Expressionist crumpled.

The Avant Gardist thrust his face into Kritik's.
"You look tanned," Kritik gulped, "and yet your breath
is cold..."

"I can't help it," snarled Rodchenko – "it's the
Thermidor!". He paused momentarily, slowly raising
his hands to seize Kritik's collar. "You'd do well to
remember that reaction has a whole range of forms
and styles at it's disposal", he spat.
"Meaning!" choked Kritik, the fight/light of
adrenaline rising within him/her.

"Before Hitler, before the Nazis per se, the Freikorp
thugs, tooling up for street clashes with Reds in 1920,
daubed the helmets they had saved from the trenches
with swastikas. Was their brush work just incompetent
or a denial of painterly proficiency to emphasise plebeian
roots?" It was as far removed from the hard-
edged SS insignia as Blood and Honour gigs are from
the Horst-Wessel song, but it still stank.

The anger seemed to subside in him and in a muted
effervescence of rage he showed Kritik backwards
against the wall before dissolving back into the shadows.
Kritik stared after him, slowly picking himself up
and straightening her clothes. Unsteadily, she walked
back through the gallery, past a group of architects
pouring over the models and ignoring the concrete.

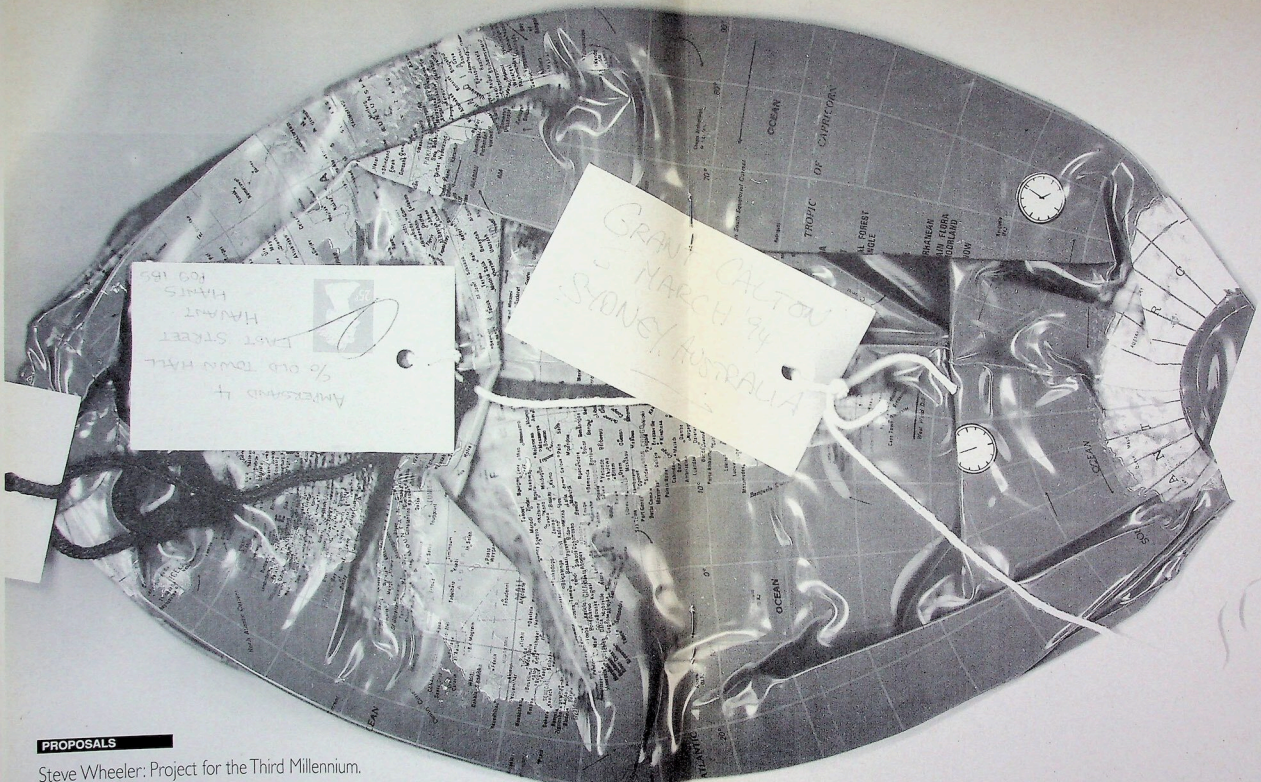
Outside in the sleeked glazier, she stared blankly off
into the blinking pea-souper. Perhaps somewhere out
there, amongst the unofficial industrial action and the
Reds strikers taking on the CRS, lay the next big
thing. More big events, waiting for big history to be
written about them. She was able to write: she could
be part of it, if she wanted. Kritik shuddered and
walked on, past freshly painted graffiti half hidden by
skate boarded shadows: "OU EST DERRIDA?"

© John Timberlake 1995



Emil Nolde, Familie, 1918

Emil Nolde is at the
Whitechapel
until 25 February.
Art and Power, at the
Hayward Gallery
until 21 January.



DELVOIT
CASTLE

PROPOSALS

Steve Wheeler: Project for the Third Millennium.

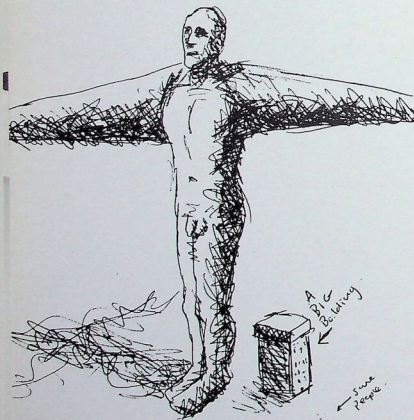
This is a proposal to create a sculpture which circumnavigates the planet. It is to be realised through the participation of people around the world, who are invited to add a piece of string (or similar material) to a single line, which, when long enough, will be stretched around the Earth. The ends of the line will be joined and the loop of string will be suspended from meteorological balloons so that it floats around the planet according to prevailing weather conditions. The success of this art work depends upon maximum participation; I would like to ask you to help in its realisation by immediately sending a piece of string to the address below. Please attach a tag or label to the string, with your name and place of posting on it, and put it in an envelope. Please tell all your friends and colleagues about the work and invite them to join in. © Steve Wheeler 1994. Project for the Third Millennium began in 1994 as part of Amersand 4 at the Havant Arts Centre, England.

Amersand 5,
City Arts Centre,
23-25 Moss Street,
Dublin 2, Ireland.

Jasmine Grindstone

The BBC are currently working on a new series called the *Great Art Adventure* in which a group of actors, pretending to be philistines, are shuttled to exhibitions all over the country. In the drama, which is given an authentic "fly on the wall" treatment, they are deprived of sleep and shown hundreds of pieces over a period of two weeks. They are also introduced to dozens of artists who are played by look-alikes.

The central role will be taken by a weighty, bluff Liverpoolian (best known to TV viewers as "Cracker's Boss", or "The Bloke Who's In Roughnecks As Well"). At the beginning of the drama he takes the position that modern art is bollocks but after two weeks he touchingly concedes: "You have to keep an open mind". The taste of the group is defined by which artist Cracker's Boss happens to get on with and whether or not he (or sometimes she) likes a laugh and can handle



a drink. There is also high drama when the bull-necked scouse locks anti-ers with old Ecoman Anthony Gormley, who is constructing a public art piece in the London Borough of Crumley. The structure is one mile long and has its own internal weather system, rather like Spear's proposed dome in Berlin or the unrealised statue of Alexander. The group turn nasty at the point at which Gormley explains that the head of the shadow will reach as far as St Paul's in the neighbouring Borough. "What about the poor sods in the flats?" they protest and start to throw pieces of grassy dirt at him. Gormley defends himself with a copy of his new monograph, shouting defiantly "you'll be in deep shit when E H Gombrich gets to hear about this".

They are more sympathetic toward a social security assessor from Weybridge who has devoted his life to making sculptures of garden gnomes. His homoerotic tableau vivant of "Gnome Karma Sutra" was a particular hit.

"Gnomes are rebellious and sexy; they don't take shit from nobody and neither do I... I've sent slides of my work to all the major Galleries in London, and even put stamps on some of the envelopes, but still I'm not regarded as a major artist by anyone other than myself and, until today, you". The group make a unanimous decision to take the whole house, brick for brick, back to Liverpool with them (including the artist's aged mother in a bath chair).

The final episode of this 24 part drama ends with the group, glassy eyed and stupefied by the vast panoply of British Contemporary Art, giving a solid recantation of their past opinions. "We've seen the error of our ways. We see now that art is good for us all, we should have more of it and it should be paid for out of the public purse. We should sequester the assets of the monarchy and build a Palace of Art in every large town and city in Britain."

The drama will be aired in September 1996 and will be followed by a programme hosted by Anna Rice in which Mancunian comedian Bernard Manning is asked to take up "The Racist, Sexist Challenge".

• Art Prize •

The nominees for the first biannual Qwik-Fitt Art Prize have been announced. I'm having trouble with the envelope; they are: Valerie Volume, Giles Compton-Binghity, Teresa Tone, Jonathan Solo.

The four nominees have constructed site specific work in the foyers of the following Qwik-Fitt outlets:
Fulham Road, London, (Volume)
Main Street, Glasgow, (Compton-Binghity)
Rainraird Avenue, Manchester, (Tone)

The Cozy Nook, St Ives, (Solo)
The works will be on display until February 21st.
On the 20 February the prize will be announced. The event will be broadcast on an art special on the Shopping Channel at 1.30am and will be hosted by Marcus Taylor MP. The announcement will be made by the members of Boyzone.

Mad for it!

Bank and the New British Art

John Roberts



Bank, *Zombie Golf*, 1995

We all thought we knew what titles of exhibitions should sound like: serious, vaguely poetic, intellectually authoritative. There would be no doubt then that we were in the presence of something significant, historically self-conscious, professionally secure. Jokes, facetiousness, face-pulling and goofiness were tolerable so long as the act of curatorship and the demands of critical categorization were not put in jeopardy.

Throughout the 90s though we have become familiar with the contra or anti-exhibition title, the title that mocks the assiduousness of theory-led curatorship. These are titles that know no decorum or circumspection, in-eyeface displays of rudeness and the plea-

sure of popular culture and speech. Unembarrassed by a lack of intellectual propriety they were avowedly anti-professional and disparaging. Those who devised the titles of recent shows such as 'Minky Manky', 'Sick', 'Gang Warfare' and 'Brilliant!' certainly don't want to be thought of as earnest and well intentioned – this is far from art for art's sake. They have spent too much time in the 80s reading Baudrillard and Virilio and getting into the critique of identity'. To organise a show today entitled 'Identity: Representation and the Dialogic' would seem as smart and vital a move as Tachism's existential gibberings did to many '70s conceptualists.

The truth is, playing dumb, shouting "ARSE!" and taking your knickers down has become an attractive move in the face of the professional institutionalisation of critical theory in art in the 1980s. The new generation of British artists have perhaps been the first to recognise this, given, I would argue, their privileged exposure to

the '80s to the systematic incorporation of contemporary art theory and philosophy into art education, particularly at post-graduate level. This has created in certain metropolitan centres (specifically London) a crucial awareness of what was needed to move art forward generationally, to take it beyond the radical expectations and conformities of the newworld critical postmodernisms emanating from New York and cultural studies departments of British Universities. A younger generation has had to find a way through these congealing radicalisms. For some this has meant the chance to free-wheel and play the idiot savant, for others the liberating turn from critical virtue has allowed them to refocus on the theory's underlying social and political realities from a more formally open position. This is why it would be mistaken to identify the new art and its lack-of-art attitudinizing with anything so simple-minded as the 'depoliticization' of art, as if this generation had latched itself gleefully to the brutal inanities of the new Lottery Culture. Despite much of the new art's unqualified regard for the voluptuous pleasures of popular culture (drug references and experiences and the arcana of tabloid TV being common denominators), it does not seek to assimilate itself to popular culture in faded admiration, as if its only ambition was an anti-intellectual release of libidinal energy. Rather, it treats the aesthetically despised categories and pleasures of the popular – the pornographic, sleazy, abject and facile – as things that are first nature and commonplace and mutually defining of subjectivity and therefore needing no intellectual introduction into art. This is not a generation of artists who in utilising the stereotypes, archetypes, signs and product-images of popular culture and mass culture, employ them as means to revivify the content of fine art. After postmodernism the bridging of the 'great divide' between popular culture and high culture is formally a dead issue.

The 'bad behaviour', the journalistic and demotic voicing in the new art, is a way of saying that, as the shared and unexceptional conditions of modern subjectivity, these categories and pleasures do not need to be incorporated into art in order to validate them. From this perspective the decisive change brought about by this work is a loss of guilt in front of popular culture, giving much of the new art an affinity with the recurring bid within the history of the avant-garde to reclaim the 'real' in the interests of the truth of experience. In this, the conceptual categories and strategies of critical postmodernism (the spectacle, simulation, the deconstruction of representation and identity) have functioned increasingly to distance artists from the pleasures and contradictions of the everyday. If all visual experience is subject to the law of 'refraction' and all representation is subject to the representation of the everyday, it is always being judged as a problem in need of a critique, rather than a site where ideology and its resistance are lived out in all their messy contingency. The critical act of deconstruction makes it difficult for artists to take the truth of their own experience seriously, for it always appears to be invented somewhere else.

There is a way of reading the new art then as a generation moving the critique of representation out of the domain of academic references and into the 'street'. By this I don't mean that artists now prefer to show in shops – although some notoriously have – but that the culture of art has come to overlap and interfuse with the forms and values of popular culture as a shared culture in unprecedented ways. It is as if art has come to occupy the position of a 'way of life' within this culture. This is why the professional critique of representation pursued by the likes of Victor Burgin, Mary Kelly and Hans Haacke, began to appear to this generation as censorious. Such moral seriousness and the intellectualisation of pleasure looked bathetic, gruesome even, the work of bodies at war with themselves despite the critique of identity. To note the links between the new art in London and the informal arrangements of the new club culture is not new, but it is none the less pertinent for all that. For what is particularly noticeable about the presentation of much of the new work is how it has set out to radically transform art's forms of attention. If in the '70s the dominant form of art's presentation was the sociological display (Haacke, Kelly), and in the 1980s the shopping mall or bank foyer (Jeff Koons, Neo-Ge), today artists have looked to a more informal aesthetic which owes something to the domestic and something to a club chill-out zone. In many instances the gallery becomes a kind of 'play area' in which the work

on the walls and floor form part of a kitschy installation or cheesy spectacle. Of course, this informal treatment of the gallery space is nothing new (Fluxus, Jonathan Boroffsky, Group Material). But in this case what counts is the maximum entertainment value, the fact that the 'private' moment of encounter with the discrete, individual artwork is disturbed, and exposed to a non-aesthetising milieu.

This club of London-based artists who have adopted one type of ambience in pursuit of their own faceless and 'anti-professional' ends has Bank. Since their large-scale spectacle 'Natural History' at Batterbridge Centre at Kings Cross in 1993, in which the group built a huge urban setting out of cardboard boxes, they have produced a series of humorous and aesthetically diffuse installations at Burbage House, Curtain Road in the East End of London.

Not to be outdone, the titles of the shows are up with the best of recent challenges: 'Wish You Were Here', 'Zombie Golf', 'The Charge Of The Light Brigade', 'Cocaine Orgasm'. Each show involved the presentation of invited artists work as part of a 'Bank Art Promotions' spectacle. The work of the artists, rather than being seen 'clean' as in a standard mode of gallery presentation become the individual elements of a unified installation, each object serving the greater conceptual unity of the installation. In the first Burbage House show, 'Wish You Were Here', this took the form of an architectural model. Dividing the gallery space on two floors into separate rooms – some of which were open plan – the gallery was transformed into a congeries of Show Rooms: a living room, conservatory, kitchenette/diner, bedroom and bathroom. Each of these spaces was built or decorated by the invited artists. Thus, the living room was covered in hand-printed wall paper by Sonia Boyce and over the front windows David Burrows (a member of Bank at the time) installed a custom-built blind depicting scenes of somnolent, suburban beauty. In the kitchenette/diner Andrew Williamson (a current member of Bank) laid out a table with the remains of a Chinese takeaway over which hung a modernist mobile made by Burrows, and the walls of the bathroom were graffitied by the Cabinet Gallery in Peckham-to-South Central-LA modern urban style. The overall effect was the unambiguous transformation of the work into real estate. Here were a group of artists exhibiting their art without qualification as property for sale, at the same as contributing to the presentation of the gallery space itself as a desirable property.

At the opening show the newly acquired Bank space was put on display for speculative financial pursuit. The language and practices of the estate agent, then transformed the andyone practice of the installation artist into that of the 'creative' interior decorator with an eye on the rich patron. The artist as design-consultant. That Boyce's wall-paper, depicting hands, had strong echoes of Warhol's Cow wall-paper, was not fortuitous in this respect. 'Wish You Were Here' was an elaborate mocking commentary on Bank's (and others) own

recently acquired status as aristocratic holders of a commercially unlet space in an up-and-coming area. Shoreditch/Liverpool Street – a process that has lain behind the upsurge of alternative spaces in the '80s and '90s in the East End of London and that has provided the material infrastructure of the new British art. In this respect 'Wish You Were Here' owed a great deal aesthetically to the dominant simulation paradigm of the '80s. By incorporating the activities of the artist into practices of the designer and estate agent the economic relationship between the artist and the market was laid bare through simulating the mechanisms of salesmanship. There is a sense, therefore, that the installation was very much a known quantity aesthetically despite the novel incorporation of photographs, paintings and objects into the designed space as disruptive social referents. This approach was expected to considerable effect in 'Natural History' where paintings of such things as the 'Pour Homme' perfume advert, Princess Diana and a Somali child and Terry Farrell's Charing Cross development, were hung from the ceiling between stacked boxes. 'Wish You Were Here' extended the simulation paradigm, even if it had no interest in its professional validation.

In the next show 'Zombie Golf', however, this model of practice was left far behind in favour of what has become their current modus operandi: the gallery installation 'as play pen' and makeshift 'set'. Transforming the whole gallery into a theatrical backdrop the artists work was given over to the dominant presence of an exoteric concept. In 'Zombie Golf' this theme took the form of an encounter between the work and a group of zombies made from plaster casts and modelled on current members of the group (Simon Bedwell, John Russell, Milly Thompson, Andrew Williamson) and their friends. Wandering vacantly and threateningly about the space in a search for "BRAINS" the art appeared under attack. This direct incorporation of a supposed intellectually suspect aspect of popular culture into the contemplative spaces of high art is of course hardly novel; Bank clearly gave a good nod in the direction of the '80s West Coast school of less-stick-to-your-favourite-things-in-the-gallery-because-that's-what-we-care-about. Mark Rothko is fine, but is David Cassidy low pendant is much nicer. But in the hands of Bank this is my sharpest kind of voice, which not only distinguishes Bank's art from this dumber-than-dumb relational but gives explicit expression to a widespread tendency in contemporary British art: the use of popular cultural forms, expressions and emblems as gestures of proletarian and philistine disaffirmation. The proletarian and philistine are not the same – which I will come to later – but nevertheless in the work of a number of young British artists in the '90s it makes a conspicuous alliance, taking the political and critical concerns of the work into a very different imaginary space to that of a good deal of contemporary American art. As Patricia Sickers has noted contentiously, but I believe with some justification, in her survey of the new British art The Brick Pack 1, one of the reasons the critical voicing is so different in the new British work in its engagement with popular culture, is that PC culture has such a strong institutional hold on the critical discourses of art in the USA; one only has to look at the Whitney programme to see how social critique has come to be identified with 'proper' – academically approved – modes of critical disarticulation.

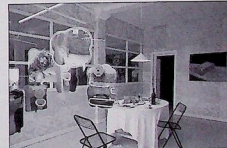
Banks use of zombies without irony signals, therefore, a very different response by a younger generation of British artists to the crisis of representation and the historical separation between the categories of art and the categories of the everyday. The zombies in 'Zombie Golf' are not aliens but the avatars of class dissidence. The philistine refusal to separate the cognitive categories of the everyday (Does this pleasure me? What function does it serve?) from the experiences of art. This, however, does not mean the zombie installation mocks the pretensions of the work on display (Dave Beech, Maria Cook, Peter Doig, Sivan Levin, Adam Chodko, Martin Creed, Matthew Higgs and John Szekszar), but that it questions its right to exist untroubled by the realities of social division which produces the separation between art and aesthetics, bodily needs and experiences. In this sense, the zombies enact the revenge of a stereotyped proletarian cognition (pure appetite: a body without subjectivity) on the deracinated body of bourgeois culture and the piety of an identity politics that has no place for the voluptuous and the transgressive. This reading finds some credence in the Zombie movies them-



Bank: Cocaine Orgasm, 1995



Bank: The Light Brigade, 1995



Bank: Wish You Were Here, 1994



Sarah Lucas, Two Fried Eggs and a Reebok. Courtesy of Saatchi Collection

selves. In George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), the first Living Dead movie, the zombies appear in their massed ranks like an awakened proletariat arisen from their historical slumbers – the worst kind of nightmare for the bourgeoisie. The anti-imperialist sub-text of the movie gives further support to this reading. Although the later Living Dead movies dissipate the anti-American aspects of the early movies, turning them into suburban thriller-chillers for suburban kids, the allegorical function of the zombie remains something unassimilable at a grubby, base-material level. This even if the later films represent the domestication of the zombie as a figure of Horror-Entertainment, the very culture of the Zombie movie continues to produce identifications of class exclusion, shaping the political reading of the sub-genre and its critical status generally.

I would argue, that all this is implied by the non-alien presence of Bank's zombies. By giving the zombies the self-image of Bank members and their friends, the zombies' monstrous subjectivity is internalised. The zombies' voice is made coextensive with that of the organisers. The effect is that the zombies share the space with the work; they may attack it but they don't want to dominate it, they are not out to destroy art but to show what remains bitterly excluded from its presence; the sensitivities and judgments of the non-specialist spectator. Yet, if we might define this absence generally as belonging to the proletariat this does not necessarily identify the phillistine with the proletariat. The working-class phillistine may be the excluded disaffirmative presence of art's professional self-ratification, but this does not mean that working-class refusal of art's ratification is the excluded truth of art. This sociological formalism is what is wrong with the post-aesthetic followers of Pierre Bourdieu who takes the truth of art to lie solely with its class exclusivity to an essentially class position but a phillistine common sense judgment is merely to substitute the non-cognitive realities of the exclusion for the cognitive problems that the realities create. The phillistine as proletariat may haunt the conditions of art's production and spectatorship, but the phillistine is also necessarily an intra and inter art voice of the excluded. For there are power relations internal to the institutions and categories of art which makes it imperative that art continually judges what passes for dominant critical taste. The phillistine, therefore, is also the voice of art's bid for critical autonomy; the voice that recognises the congealing power of dominant academic positions in the name of art's critical renewal. As such the 'phillistine' is a discursive construction which shifts position depending on what constitutes 'proper' or 'correct' aesthetic behaviour.

This is why it is class exclusive to an essentially class position but as times is forced to take up arms against those who fail to acknowledge the academization of their own radical self-image.

In these terms, it is very short sighted to talk about the anti-intellectualism of this new generation of artists just because they are not writing mountains of texts and quoting Fredric Jameson. For there is the unthinking stupidity of the phillistine who sees his or her rejection of the dominant discourses of modern art as univocally true, and the thinking stupidity of the phillistine who sees the rejection of the dominant discourses of art as a matter of ethical positioning. The latter, in my view, underscores the work of Bank and a number of other young British artists (Gavin Turk, Gillian Wearing, Dave Beech, David Burrows). Yet this is not to deny that anti-intellectualism and the celebration of inanity haven't found a sympathetic voice in the new art culture, but that in the hands of some the dumb-routines, behaving badly and cheesiness, have a specific aim: to unsettle the bureaucratic smoothness of critical postmodernism, particularly now it has become the official ideology of our wider digital culture. As the voice of not interruption's enemy. This is why the 'phillistine' can take on the voice of the intellectual as it can its ventriloquised opposite, as in the case of conceptualism in the early 70s and neo-conceptualism in the early 80s.


Is the category of the 'phillistine' then another way of talking about the positional politics of the avant-garde? At a formal level perhaps, but if some of the new art adopts a positional political politics it stakes no wider claim on the avant-garde as the bearer of advanced taste outside a common popular culture. This is why the notion of the phillistine

has a content today that distinguishes it in important ways from the art of the 70s and the 80s. As I touched on, many of the younger British artists do not appropriate the forms, emblems and themes of popular culture in order to intellectualise the popular. Unlike the American and British media art of the early 80s and the Goldsmiths generation of the late 80s, these artists see the everyday and its representations as something they inhabit and work from as a matter of course. This leaves the voice of the phillistine as oppositional but not exclusionary in its critical powers. There are two primary causes behind this: the waning of the institutional and intellectual force of Modernism, which in the 70s and 80s defined what an art of the everyday should distinguish itself from, and the transformation of popular culture itself under the political and cultural impact of the 70s and 80s into a space of radically expanded subjectivities and alternative forms. As a result what defines the attitude of the most interesting of the new British artists, particularly those working around Bank, is that art and the everyday are mutually defining components of something bigger: the ordinariness of culture. In the process there may be artists who want to assimilate themselves to a passive, post-critical view of the popular, but there are others who continue to see their assimilation to the 'ordinary' as an ethical and political challenge. This is why we shouldn't treat the widespread adoption of the pornographic, vulgar and profane in the new art as the coat-tailing of media sensationalism, but a refusal on the part of artists to feel shame about engaging in the everyday through the object. The general effect has not only been a new sensitivity to the brutalising rituals and tropes of everyday late capitalist culture, but also a greater tolerance for the profane and vulgar as forms of working-class dissidence. It has to be said this is one of the aspects of the new phillistinism that has come in for the strongest amount of criticism: namely that artists, particularly middle-class artists are slumming it for egregious effect. For example the work of Sarah Lucas, who in a well publicised work invoked the working-class slang of the playground (two fried eggs and a kebab exhibited on a table) as the basis for an unambiguous work on the gendering of subjectivity. Whatever the truth of the accusation of slumming in the case of Lucas, it nevertheless has to be said that there is a great deal of art around that does embrace the pleasures of the phillistine for effect. But there is nothing wrong with that. For whatever the class origins or critical intentions of the new British artists, there is refreshing sense that certain modes of critical decorum are being tested, even pulverised into submission. This has acted to release a new candourness about the representation of the everyday, particularly in the work of women artists.

In fact, the increased tolerance amongst women artists for the vulgar and profane is perhaps where the dissonant phillistine voice is at its strongest. Talking dirty and showing your bottom for the sheer delight

of it, has become a proletarian-phillistine reflex against 80s feminist propriety. Reinstating the word "cunt", and embracing the overtly pornographic and confessional, have become means of releasing women's sexuality from the constraints of a 'progressive eroticism' into an angry volitionalness. A good indication of this is Tracy Emin's unfasted presentation of her own sexual history, *Everybody I've Ever Slept With* 1993-1995. Today this breakdown of bodily rectitude is increasingly evident, as younger artists feel no intellectual insecurity about addressing the spectator as embodied. The title of Bank's 1995 Christmas spectacle 'Cocaine Orgasm' flags this with abandon, even if in logical terms the title is self-contradictory, and the show's Yuletide cheer was a bit low on baubles and glitter. But the spirit of bodily excess, intoxication and disordered reason is clearly implied. This is the ordinariness of culture.

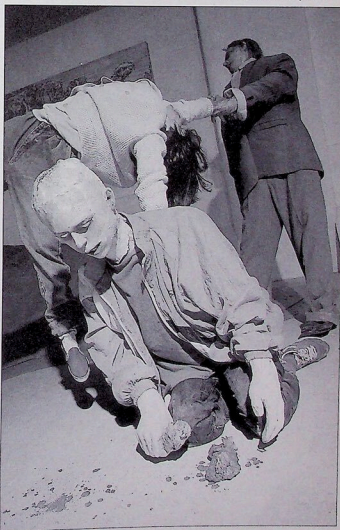
Is the new art then yet another neo-Dada disruption of art's official and academic identity in the name of the anti-aesthetic? Insofar as the new art takes a certain pride in being gratuitous and facetious this appears plausible. But the new art is not out to denounce art in the name of the 'ordinary' and everyday; this is not a rerun of the inverted snobbery of Fluxus for instance. On the contrary, what the new art reflects and participates in is what I would call the increasing popular enculturation of art: that is the incorporation of art's production and its forms of attention into a culture of art not immediately governed by professional, academic criteria of success. And this, essentially, is what people identify as the clubby nature of the new London-based art. The making of a show or event is part of an informal social network of artists who see the social relations involved in attending to art as important as its making. Much of the new work is of course finding its way into normal circuits of commercial exchange, but most of the work still continues to be produced for a localised audience. In itself there is naturally nothing virtuous in this. But it does point to what is one of the determining characteristics of the new culture: people make art and show art in contingent response to their circumstances and not out of any idealised or preordained sense of career or abstract sense of struggle. In fact it is the widespread reaction against the traditional artistic identity of self sacrifice and oppositional exclusion that underwrites the informal character of the new art's relations of production and distribution. The net effect of this is the further discrediting of the idea of the Great Artist; this is the culture of the committed but occasional artist. Thus artists move from medium to medium, voice to voice without worry. In short, what this work reveals is the increasing subsumption of art under the category of the practical. As Sean Cubitt puts it, art

today is an "accumulation of cultural acts, made by thousands", and not the embattled activity of a handful of marginals. With the popular enculturation of art, therefore, it is inevitable that a distance should open up between the new art and the theoretical strenuousness of the 80s. For in many respects what continues to have theoretical value has been sorted out from what is redundant in a process of cultural assimilation. The theory, so to speak, has been given sensual form. 

© John Roberts 1996

- 1 Patricia Sickers, *The Big Rock: Contemporary British Art, the view from abroad, Cornerhouse Communiqué No 7, Manchester, 1995.*
- 2 Sean Cubitt, *Laurie Anderson: Myth, Management and Platitudes*, in John Roberts (ed), *Art Has No History: The Making and Unmaking of Modern Art*, Verso 1994, p295.

Bank, *Zombie Golf* 1995





Sophie Rickett,
Vauxhall Bridge, 1995,
silver gelatin print,
edition of five.

Take the lift up to the underground

INTERVIEW

Plummet was set up in a flat on the 16th floor of a high rise block in Clerkenwell by artist William Shoebridge (WS). It has the pristine look of a gallery, set within a residential and urban context.

WS Initially we were just going to do one show, called Plummet, with myself and Melanie Carvalho. We got what we asked for with that one because the press release quoted Regis Debray as saying: "If you do not make any concessions to the media you condemn yourself to disappear" and what would be wrong with that? This was in response to the death of Guy Debord. Kurt Cobain took his life around the same time.

e So you were taken literally as oppositional.

WS Plummet alludes to opposition. There is currently a great nostalgia for opposition.

e Doesn't opposition become another style option?

WS It's not possible to be underground. The underground has a certain style to it. It's not possible to be that, but you have to define it as that: in order to create a legitimate centre. I don't think the label, in itself, makes it any more or less radical.

There are certain political manifestations in what we do, particularly on the personal level of taking control. But it would be pointless to set it up in extreme which would result in ghettoisation. The opposition, in so far as it exists, is now about survival and the possibility of setting up a new centre. Rather than being on the periphery of someone else's good fortune we choose to implement our own.

There can be problems with that; we may become isolated and only work within the context of this group, but I think the work is open ended enough to have some longevity and move out of this space. In that sense it's not a rigid opposition.

e So you would see your agenda as distinct from the

things that are currently going on in the East End, where again, we see people working with the idea of rebellion?

WS I think that there is a serious and coherent approach to the way in which we present our work which isn't in evidence in a lot of shows we've seen recently in London. We wanted to revisit the idea of formalism. There is a very coherent argument for serious work which isn't about flux, isn't about scattering, or this pseudo political position that one or two galleries within London seem to be playing with. We don't align ourselves with these things. I think the East End is ghettoised and I don't know if there is enough going on there which is positive. The amusing thing about Plummet is that there is an irony about the size of the space – it's far removed from a warehouse. In a sense it's a parody of a gallery which never the less can contain serious work.

To some extent Plummet is about roughing it and the location is part of the whole trip: the journey up in the lift, the contrast between the exterior and the interior and the constructed flows which makes the emulation of a gallery all the more seamless. The greater the illusion in terms of context, the more legitimate the work.

e There was recently a conference at the Tate in which various people from galleries in London (Cabinet, Hales and Adam) were asked to talk about "the gallery system"...

WS I don't like the idea of a gallery system. It suggests that there is a set of governing rules that you can somehow learn.

e This is precisely the conclusion they came to – that there isn't, in any meaningful sense, a gallery system. But, in that case, what is there?

WS I prefer to look at galleries as a series of events happening simultaneously. Some interact and some don't; some cluster into little networks, some don't. The idea that there is a governing set of rules, which is what the word "system" suggests, doesn't apply. There's a fair amount of discourse which rushes backward and forward between the spaces around here but they are not even mini systems, they're more like points of contact. Mute are trying to draw them together by making a web site with a page for each venue on the internet.

e I'd like to talk about the ambiguity which has arisen between the artist and the gallerist, and where you stand on that issue.

WS I'm constantly asked about that ambiguity and I don't feel comfortable about making too rigid a distinction. The work I'm putting together happens to be in a space which has the appearance of a gallery. But I'm not really a gallerist and I don't think I'm willing to be one. I certainly enjoy putting things together and I like setting up peculiar dialogues with different artists, (whether they are antagonistic or harmonious) but

this isn't a gallery – it's an event. It says quite a lot about the way London functions at the moment: it's impossible to put all this work on at the same time, unless of course I introduce the idea of a 'theme' or 'agenda' to a group show which the artists work towards. There are so many different agendas with the artists who come up through Plummet. It felt important to allow that to take precedence for these shows to date. I think we eventually will do a group show.

e How did the artists come together?

WS They came together naturally. But even talking about groups is a bit cheesy, it's a loose group – they hang out together. I think talking about a series of artists as a group is as problematic as talking about a series of galleries as a system. It presupposes connections and mutual agendas which don't necessarily exist.

There's a German word: "Lebendig" which means "lively". I would lay that term over us. The word avant-garde is still being banded about – which seems absurd to me – but I like the idea of a lively art – an art which is developmental.

e Looking at your work it seems to me that any two pieces are radically different from each other; almost as if they were made by a different person.

WS I feel comfortable with that. It would be pointless to do otherwise.

e I'm interested in the idea of the fictitious artist.

WS The idea of a fictitious artist is too attached to me but I am not its inventor!

There is one Plummet artist that doesn't exist – I'm not telling you who it is. There are clues but all the clues haven't shown up yet. There are all sorts of deceptions at play in Plummet but there is only one real one and that is the fictitious artist. What was once illusion is now plain old deception.

e This artist could be included in art reviews.

WS It could be the case that this artist could run as fast as the rest of us – but I wouldn't like to predict the outcome of their career.

e How many more shows here? Are you thinking of it as a long term thing?

WS I think we'll end it when we end it, when we need to end it. It'll have a short life and then we'll move on. I don't think Plummet will survive and I don't think it really needs to. To transport this parody of a gallery would be clumsy and antiquated and I have no intention of carrying that with me. That doesn't mean that I have no commitment to it, or that I don't believe in it and enjoy it, but in the long term it would start replicating itself. What defines Plummet is being added to with each show and we will continue to be defined more by what we do rather than by where we happen to be.

e Interview Steve Rushton 1995

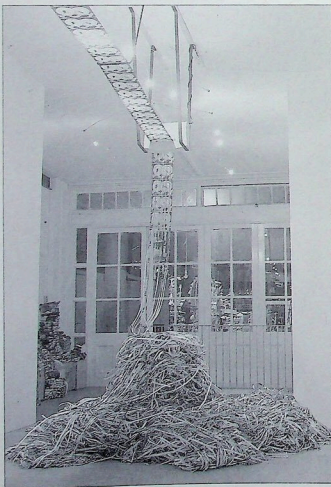
Plummet shows:

Plummet
Melanie Carvalho
William Shoebridge
Knives and Rockets
Pete Jones
Mark Waller
t'n't
Tina Keane
Tim Allen
Stream
Sophy Rickett
Carel Young
Rut Blees Luxemburg

"Suck"

Lynn Hewett at The Commercial Gallery

Lynn Hewett is at The Commercial Gallery until 20 January and at Kingsgate Gallery as part of Symbol Systems and Explicit Philosophies. Until 4 Feb



Stacked against the walls of the upper gallery and down the stairs are a large number of plates, each of them unglazed and damaged "seconds" which have been found unfit in the eyes of the manufacturer. These are wrapped in paper printed by the artist, their images are difficult to read but on closer inspection turn out to be photographs of discarded rubbish awaiting incineration or recycling. In the lower gallery a lens projects a cracked plate on to the opposite wall. If you were to look through the lens at the plate you might find yourself in the shoes of someone who repairs damaged and precious objects (the watch smith, picture restorer or dentist). Stacked around the lower gallery on a series of shelves are rolls of printed paper the contents of which are, again, withheld from us.

History: The first assembly line was not, as is generally believed, the automotive and steel industries but rather the meat packers in Chicago. Henry Ford acknowledged his debt saying: "[The idea] came in a general way from the overhead trolley that the Chicago packers used to dress beef" In this process it is impossible to disentangle the actions of assembly and dis-assembly. In order to produce meat products it is necessary to destroy a lot of cows. The meat packing system is incredibly efficient, using every conceivable part of the animal for everything from lipstick, piano keys, detergents and glue through to dog food. They have a saying in the trade: "We use everything here, except the 'Moo.'" This process finds its perfection in the methods employed by McDonalds who were the first to extend the rigorous organisation of the assembly line to a rigorous and efficient system at the point of consumption.

The pottery industry in Stoke on Trent developed due to the close proximity of both coal and clay. Its origins predate the Industrial Revolution *per se*. The first steam engine was used to pump water from mine shafts and when applied to rail presaged the easy transportation of goods from one location to another, accelerating the methods of production, distribution and consumption.

Supposition: It would be inaccurate to suggest that Hewett is overly concerned with these particular historical events, or that he is constructing some sort of blundering eco-parable (we don't need artists to tell us "We are fucking up the planet, man").

However the work certainly deals with the paradoxical relationships between production, consumption and destruction and also, to my mind more significantly, with the will to repair and the unknowable, potentially infinite space of our unfulfilled desires occupy.

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Lynn Hewett, Suck, 1995.

Entwistle
6 Cork St. WI
0171 734 6440

The Book is on the Table
Curated by James Roberts

Focal Point Gallery
Southern Central Library
Victoria Avenue
Southend-on-Sea
Essex, SS2 6EX
01702 612 621 x207
Kiss this: *St Valentines Day*
14 Feb - 30 Mar

Frith Street Gallery
60 Frith St. WI
0171 494 1550
Giuseppe Penone - New sculpture & drawings
23 Jan - 2 Mar

Gimpel Fils
30 Davies St. WI
0171 493 2488
Mon - Fri 10 - 5, Sat 10 - 1
Peter Lanyon: The Mural Studies - Gouache sketches and studies for mural commissions carried out between 1959 - 1961 in Liverpool, Birmingham and New Jersey
11 Jan - 2 Mar

Henry Moore Sculpture Trust
Dean, Clough
Halifax
01422 320 250
Tue - Sun 12 - 5
Xoone Halifax by Georg Herold
8 Dec - 31 Mar

Independent Art Space
23a Smith St. SW3
Th - Sat 10 - 4
Out of Order
1 Feb - 2 Mar

Interim Art
21 Beck Rd, E8
0171 254 9607
Fri - Sat 11 - 6
Paul Winstanley
17 Dec - 3 Feb

Kingsgate Gallery
110 - 116 Kingsgate Rd, NW6
Th - Sun 12 - 6
0171 328 7878
Symbol Systems & Explicit Philosophies,
Curated by Richard Cook
Til 4 Feb

Laure Genillard Gallery
38a Foxy St, WI
0171 426 2200
Tues - Fri 11 - 6, Sat 11 - 3
Maurizio Cattelan
7 Feb - 30 Mar

Lisson Gallery
52 - 54 Bell St, NW1
0171 724 2739
Mon - Fri 10 - 6, Sat 10 - 5
Tony Oursler
19 Jan - 24 Feb

Montage Gallery
3636 Queen Street
Derby, DE1 3DS
01332 295858
Tue - Sat 10 - 5, Sun 2 - 5

Life after Death:
an exploration of Still Life Photography
John Kinsey/Carol Hudsonjoyed
2 Feb - 17 Mar

Serpentine Gallery
Kennington Gdns, W2
0171 402 6075
Daily 10-6
Vellefats: Jana Sterek
17 Jan - 25 Feb

Southampton City Art Gallery
Northgild Civic Centre
01703 632 601
Co-operators Bond and Gillick, Ramsay Bird, Hope, Andre and Philippe, The Brothers Chapman, Alan Kane and Jeremy Deller, Langland and Bell, Lucas and Emin and Critical Discard.
19 Jan - 25 Feb

Workfortheystodo
51 Harbury Street, E1
0171 426 0579
Th - Sat 11 - 6
Gustav Metzger: Damage, Nature and Auto-destructive Art
Til 4 Feb

Whitechapel
Whitechapel High St. E1:
0171 522 7888
Emil Nolde
(See Moherandchildland, page 11)
Through Feb.

The Institution of Rot
109 Corinne Street, N4
0171 272 5816.
Feb 16.2 performance: **Nick Caundry, Adam Bohman**
March 8: **Noisiness of Bodies:** (Part of a series organised by Crow) Crow and Maria Loura-Estevo
March 29: **Heimo Lettner, Adrian Schieser, Josephine Leask**
All performances start at 8. Please book before hand as there is limited space.

The Tannery
57 Bermonsey Street, SE1
0171 394 0545
Treuer
Til 3 March

The Tate
Albert Dock, Liverpool
Susan Hiller
20 Jan - 7 Mar

White Cube
2nd floor, 44 Duke St, SW1
0171 930 5373
Fri - Sat 12 - 6 & by appt.
Clay Ketter
Til 28 Feb

Zone Gallery
83 Westgate Road
Newcastle Upon Tyne
0191 2328531
Bill Culbert
Til 31 Feb

