

The Vision of the Absurd

Aesthetic Machines, Entanglement and Affect

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Abstract

The Vision of the Absurd is the culmination of five years research into how my fine art practice creates an affective encounter that can be more effectively and dynamically shared in the public realm. Central to this process was my early intuition that art has an excess that delivers understanding outside of conceptual cognition. Which is to say, art operates through material and aesthetic registers that need to be given space to reconnect audiences with the artist in shared experiences of discovery. The subsequent development of a series of aesthetic machines were all concerned with promoting these other modes of thought (Whitehead, 1968) and working with concepts that can become abstract material for expression (Zepke 2010). My initial sense that the non-linear causality of the absurd could move my art towards a more affective frequency was further shaped by my encounter with non-representational theory (Thrift, 2007) and put into practice in my role as the co-curator of Sensorium/ Affect and Social media conferences at UEL between 2016-19.

Furthermore, by experiencing artists who similarly placed digital moving images within a structure of haptic material vitality, such as Pipilotti Rist and Laure Prouvost, I found that the concept of the abstract machine (Zepke 2010) allowed my practice to radiate outwards as a kind of an aesthetic ontological experience (Debaise 2017). This ontological perspective becomes a significant means of exploring non-hierarchical smooth spaces (Deleuze and Guattari 2003) which activate a sense of my various creative capacities and form an absurd woven tapestry that celebrates creative abundance and destabilises the conceptual nature of interdisciplinary tactics.

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1 Introduction

The research made on the doctorate has been a unique process and has without doubt deepened my understanding of my practice by weaving the threads of my life-long creative endeavours into a picture of myself as a professional artist. Prior to my research, my idea of a specialised professional artist stood apart from my sense of self as creative organism, making sense of the surroundings by transmitting test signals. I felt unable to contextualise my intuition that a biological impulse to create without purpose was what drove me as an artist. This was because art, I felt, was rooted in the framework of cause and effect and before making anything one had to know who the audience was. This linearity did not help me make sense of my practice, so it was with great relief that via A N Whitehead and Nonrepresentational Theory I discovered how the ideas of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari were a way of addressing a sense of understanding via a material vitality that broadcasts a sense of creative proliferation and can become a contestation of the cognitive bias in social relations.

The artist and writer Simon O’Sullivan became my means of finding a way into the ideas of Deleuze, which for me are essentially about a recognition of the immanence of the creative act prior to its subsumption by organising factors of, for instance, power or profit. I now believe that it is possible to be an artist and not reject commerce but use non-purposive acts of creativity to test the environment and help connections of a trans-individual nature to occur. A similar approach of proliferating creative abundance via affect and aesthetic can be found in the collaborative art of O’Sullivan’s *Plastique Fantastique*.



Fig 1 *New Life* installation at *Plastique Fantastique* (2005) Chisenhale Gallery

David Burrows, a member of the collaboration, describes his practice as combining an 'array of techniques and forms' and this helps contextualise my own idea of aesthetic machines as something that interweave creative capabilities through a feeling of material vitality. In the group's manifesto O'Sullivan usefully suggests that, 'in this practice both figuration and abstraction will be used (we will release the abstract from within the figurative). We offer access to the imperceptible from which the perceptible emerges and merges.' By merging the representational and the affective, concepts are made less fixed and cooperation less of a rigid chore. This strategy of subsuming concepts into material vitality also makes sense of the absurd quality of my practice, which emerges prior to a conceptual order of things. I realise now my practice involves applying carriers of meaning; words, images, colour, symbols and applying them like an all over drip painting. My decisions have a mentality without being mental.

As a ten-year-old school-boy my imagination was triggered by our English lessons taught by a retired nun, Mrs Vance. I recall the plain white cover of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and the atmosphere of otherness the dialogue, read aloud in class, transmitted. I can't explain the connection I felt and now put it down to what Michael Polanyi calls 'tacit knowledge' (Polanyi 2008), this being a passion that seems to arrive from nowhere but forms the basis of creative investigation. Polanyi, like Whitehead, sought to reintroduce the creative imagination to our model of thought as a means of creating meaning. Despite the popular analysis of the play as being about futility and meaninglessness, I found it spoke to me of other modes of being.



Fig 2 *Waiting for Godot* production image (1953)

My personal practice has taken shape through the idea of aesthetic machines, and this play – in its neutrality beyond the objective and subjective – also creates that type

of space. My methodology uses an aesthetic mode to generate a precognitive realm prior to the striations of conceptual order. Concepts can then enter the space as ancillary moments in the event. Throughout my research for *The Vision of The Absurd* I've returned to the simplicity of Camus' sense of disconnection from life brought on by this striated logic of the human cognition:

If I were a tree among trees, a cat among animals, this life would have a meaning or rather this problem would not arise, for I should belong to this world. I should be this world to which I am opposed by my whole consciousness and my whole insistence upon familiarity. (Camus 2005)

This familiarity Camus describes is perhaps the language of signifiers that shapes our conceptual boundaries. Through Whitehead, Deleuze, Guattari and others, I've come to recognise how the structure of what I call aesthetic machines lets me fully explore and share my interest in how art's ineffable excesses open up an occluded version of human relations. Camus' reference to the cat is not so arbitrary when you consider how Deleuze and Guattari encourage artists to enter the sensations of the animal mode via aesthetic understanding. Stephen Zepke interprets Deleuze's ideas as a kind of apolitical politics of freedom from the sign:

This would be art's politics, to explode the representational clichés that dominate our thought and sight, and to offer alternatives to the underlying cognitive structure that supports this. (Zepke 2017 p240)

Camus' position of the absurd is a political one but I have found these thinkers useful as a means of simply making sense of how I feel about my practice and my desire to inhabit and manifest my creative capacities more effectively. The aesthetic machine model has given me access to material vitality and a means of making sense through affect and aesthetic: aesthetic in this sense is not contemplation of beauty but akin to Michel Foucault's idea of art as event:

A different kind of aesthetic encounter, one in which works of art are defined by their distinct capacity to disrupt and undermine the episteme out of which they

arise and, in turn, to open experience to another mode of thought.
(Berger 2018 p126)

If my work involves politics it is part of a material vitality and not a partisan loyalty. I am interested in the ability of art to escape the sign as expressed by Zepke in his essay *A Work of Art Does Not Contain the Least Bit of Information*:

This is what Deleuze sees as the 'political' power of art, it destroys the representational image of thought. Obviously, this is a strange kind of 'ontological politics' that is not oriented around political issues or positions, and Deleuze and Guattari make it clear that art does not, and should not, operate in this way.
(Zepke 2017 p191)

My research practice navigates the idea of making aesthetic machines as self-defining constructions that interrupt an immanent creative flow and also place me in a space of pragmatic problem solving. This interruption is an opening for Rancier's *emancipated spectator* to enter through. They are a means of contextualising the self-enjoyment of making in a shared and shifting experience (working alongside the public, curators, officials and event organisers). The pragmatic problem solving involved in their construction has also become a creative and social experience. My art is about working with an emerging form and the actual circumstances I find myself building that particular version of life within. Essentially, I regard the aesthetic machine as a space of freedom from the dominance of the signifier but not through disruption, rather through a proliferation and sharing of material vitality and aesthetic sense making.

In terms of how non-representational art can contribute something real, Zepke has this to say in *Art as Abstract Machine*:

The abstract machine does not function to represent, even something real, but rather constructs a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality. The abstract machine's first principal: it is real and not a representation. (Zepke 2005 p1)

The abstract of Zepke's title has been useful for me and refers to a neutrality embodied in this particular aesthetic mentality, which 'involves a redefinition of

experience by which its subjective and objective conditions are dissolved in the real' (ibid. p4).

This dissolving of the subject-object split, at the heart of the absurd's sense of alienation, is arrived at by making aesthetic or felt experience more prominent. As a means of moving away from this striated or hierarchical mode of decoding life, art, relations, status and value I have come to enjoy making art as a potential version of life or an experience. When I make, I imagine an engagement with the audience and the sharing: the resonance of recorded words, the shimmer of the flat screen on the silk curtain or the touch of a glazed ceramic hook on an orange wall are what material vitality means to me. My methodology is a mixture of my own self-enjoyment in making and the events shaped by how this is shared.

Simon O'Sullivan has also written about a shift towards this abstract or materially vital approach to connecting with the audience. He describes this as being about bringing the spectator into a mutual role of discovery because the artists themselves are discovering through the materials rather than presenting assemblages of known signifiers: 'Put simply, the change in attitude – if there is one – is one which these artists and their public share (even if the latter is often only a limited scene)' (O'Sullivan 2010 p191).

The aesthetic machine makes a space in which I can construct a shared sense of creative immanence outside signifiers of encoded meaning. This does not mean it is empty of images and signifiers but that their role as signs is dissolved into an aesthetic experience. Most importantly for my practice, the aesthetic machine's entry into the non-hierarchical and unstriated concept of smooth space (discussed later in the report) has allowed me to incorporate all my capacities (making, singing, filming, playing, building, collaborating) into an arrangement of materials and representational images as a means of shared sense-making. This tapestry of forms is not the same as post-modernism's meaningless surface because it recognises the felt understanding of immanence. This is led by an aesthetic ontology where concepts are an ancillary element rather than fundamental origin: 'Aesthetics then is inseparable from ontology because experience is for Deleuze and Guattari irreducibly real' (Zepke 2005 p3).

The construction of *Actual Occasion* at Amp Gallery in Peckham amplified my feeling of mutual aesthetic experience through which the art is shaped and embodies the sense of 'more than one' of the trans-individual being conceived by Gilbert Simondon (Coombes 2012).



Fig 3 *Actual Occasion* installation (2019) Amp Gallery, Peckham

Although I had used song and performance at events such as the *Festival of Georgian Culture* in 2015, a creative understanding of the aesthetic machine helped me contextualise singing and song-writing within my practice methodology. I now recognise how my different creative energies (songs, objects, prints, films) can be assembled in the same way that a print can overlay and arrange visual motifs. My confidence in freely assembling my own capacities, such as composing music, images and objects, was helped by O'Sullivan's explanation in Deleuze, Guattari and *The Production of the New* as to how:

...art is an autopoiesis of affects whose proliferating excess escape capitalized structures of subjectivity and social relations, most importantly the discursive sign and its linear relations reducing affects to neutral referents, and to the pre-given banalities which 'everyone knows'... (O'Sullivan 2017 p4)



Fig 4 *Museum TV* performance at *Festival of Georgian Culture* (2015) Gdansk

Through exhibiting and reconstructing my aesthetic machines I've recognised how they create an aesthetic atmosphere rather than define an artist's brand.

In a film I took early this year of a girl vacuuming in the *Actual Occasion* installation space in Peckham in February this year, I saw a relational aesthetic abundance. I felt that the juxtapositions of colours, movement and textures were like a living tapestry of real experience. I can now see that the feeling of saturated aesthetic and suspension of information's dominance found in the collages of digital moving images I make, is what I am attempting to refract outwards into the aesthetic machine. The idea of art delivering a message relies on a representational means of reading, but I've come to recognise how concepts can emerge from refracting ideas, materials and images through the intuitive material vitality of the aesthetic machine:

Here the sensation or 'fact' emerges through overcoming the representational and narrative clichés that are not simply produced by, but actually constitute rational consciousness. The sublime intuition frees the nervous system from its conceptual determination, forcing the brain to confront chaos and construct an analogical expression of it. (Zepke 2017 p193)

My recent approach to making aesthetic machines has had a sense of wanting to soothe and create a joyful aesthetic but the methodology arose from my strong feelings of creative occlusion expressed in a project called *The Deadends*. This, I felt, was shaped by what I regarded as an over-emphasis on reading images as encoded representations. I guessed there were voices who had spoken about art's

nonrepresentational qualities and I sought them out: 'What strikes me is the fact that in our society, art has become something which is related only to objects and not to individuals, or to life' (Foucault 2001 p150).

My sense of using material vitality as a means of addressing philosophical issues also seemed to be shared by Franz West whose use of delicious saturated colour and primitive anamorphic shapes re-affirms my personal interest in attempting to express a sense of entanglement via feeling and aesthetic (particularly in *Actual Occasion*). I feel that West uses a sense of the absurd to let aesthetic engagement take us beyond the limits of rational structures and he often enfold and disarms the forms of analytical thought into his practice, the clearest example of this being Freud's consulting couch becoming an abstract performative sculpture. At the recent Tate retrospective, I was inspired by West's use of material vitality and abstract modes of thought, beyond objective and subjective, to draw the audience into a shared dialogue of an ontological nature.



Fig 5 *Actual Occasion* installation (2019) Amp Gallery, Peckham

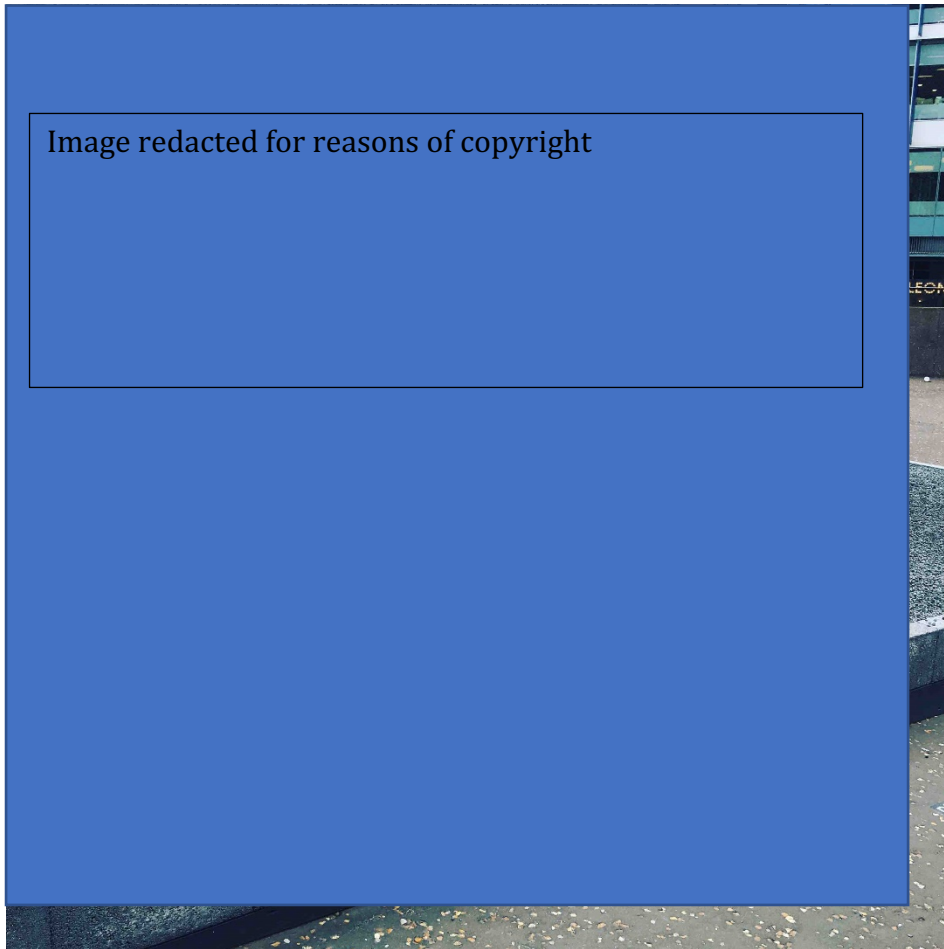


Fig 6 Franz West *Rose/Drama* lacquered aluminium (2001)

Whilst seeking a means of using aesthetic decision making, I was excited by artists like Sigmar Polke and A R Penck who offered an alternative form of sense-making adjacent to and within Western culture, through sensation and material vitality. In his introductory essay for *Reflections from Damaged Life: an Exhibition on Psychedelia*, Lars Bang Larsen points out that whilst Polke's work has a passing similarity to Pop Art appropriation, his 'painterly method' transforms it into 'a kind of anthropological participation observation, through which the strangeness of existing culture is dramatized' (Bang Larsen 2016). This helped me make sense of the collaborative and somewhat psychedelic nature of *The Deadends* project, but the 'painterly method' is also another way of describing how material vitality unclasps images and forms from semiotic hierarchy and yet acknowledges affectual or felt intuitions as part of the creation of meaning in a way that Pop-art's surface only value, does not.

Penke's early sculptures spoke to me about how material vitality and aesthetic registers can respond to the cybernetic technologies, which Stanislaw Lem, in *Summa Technologiae*, warns will 'become too powerful for us to cope with their autonomy'.



Fig 7 A R Penck *Standard Models* (1972) Michael Werner Gallery 2016

Early in my doctoral research I had a feeling that analysis of signifiers was creating a climate of reading art (even when it was concerning feelings). I wanted to join the concept and the experience by reaching an emergent state in the middle of things. To get there, I discovered and ultimately abandoned a made-up culture called *The Deadends*. I visited my supervisor at the time, film maker John Smith, and showed him the multitude of *Deadend* artefacts I had produced. These were all monochrome drawings and clay reliefs. To my surprise, John seemed to connect to them. Partly inspired by John's use of his own voice in a film that seemed to create a shared fictional experience, I made a documentary called *The Deadends – In Search of Truth*.



Fig 8 *Celebration of The Deadends* performance installation (2017) Studio One Gallery

This film was about how I felt conceptual culture projects its own values of certainty onto other cultures, including art. I wanted to find an art that made meaning outside linear conceptual causality and as a result of the film's absurd qualities, the documentary was shown alongside John's film *Steve Hates Fish* at the ICA in the *100 Years of Dada* show.

I haven't exhibited *The Deadends* since the *Celebration of the Deadends* at Studio One Gallery in 2017 but the methodology of assembled materials and collaboration was the beginning of understanding aesthetic machines. The films made by Brazilian artist, Bruna Musch, in response to the exhibition, (see links) were key to me understanding how making art can be a shared process of understanding. Importantly, it also enabled me to understand how concepts and signifiers can be part of a neutral materiality or the smooth space of the aesthetic machine. This is different from satirical lampooning, which relies on linguistic equivalence. The aesthetic machine returns the audience and maker to an emergent state of connectedness. This does not mean that a laugh of recognition is undesirable, just that this is part of various modalities or what Guattari refers to as dimensions of intensification experienced inside the aesthetic machine:

To clarify this point we need to extend our transmachinic bridge and understand the smoothing of the ontological texture of machinic material and diagrammatic feedbacks as so many dimensions of intensification that take us beyond the linear

causalities of the capitalistic apprehension of machinic universes.

(Guattari 1995 p45)

The Humour of the Absurd

The above quote has a feel of the comic language *Unwinese* of the comedian Stanley Unwin, in which language is playfully transformed for the feel of it in the mouth-ear. Unwin's primary motivation seems to me to be to spread 'deep joy' and disrupt the serious business of maintaining power structures via tradition. This fits with Deleuze's idea of 'superior irony' as descending below linguistic structures rather than the ironic detachment of linguistic word games more reliant on our understanding of signifiers. Unwin's humour is more about using language as something materially vital (where the divide between sense and nonsense is forgotten) rather than an ironic satire.

It wasn't until the last question of my last doctorate work in progress seminar that I formed a fuller picture of my practice as research. The question from a doctorate tutor was regarding the humour in my work and whether I had explored this. On reflection it seems as if the humour is a residue of the process of working with everything as material. This gives rise to something that exists below the surface of logic. The absurd is regarded as irrational or illogical but by calling my research *The Vision of The Absurd* rather than seeking something irrational, I was intuitively seeking something outside of logical sense. I was pleased to discover that the root of the word absurd comes from the Latin meaning deaf, silent or stupid. As a partially deaf man, this resonates strongly with my mentality of a felt aesthetic (discussed later), which from a rational point of view is silent or stupid because it is outside the calibrations of rational linguistic signifiers. I like this dialogue between the stupid and the humorous, and there is a quality of this in my practice. The conceptual brain will find anything outside its striated mentality to be stupid and this is part of the adventure of the animal aesthetic.

I have often returned to the early work of William Wegman and now I can recognise within it the intuitive aesthetic and sense of material vitality I value in my creation of aesthetic machines. Wegman's work from the early 1970s feels close to John Baldessari's conceptualism but the latter gains traction via the mode of linguistic concepts, whereas Wegman uses images and concepts as part of material vitality. Wegman's humour emerges by descending below the rational rather than satirising it.

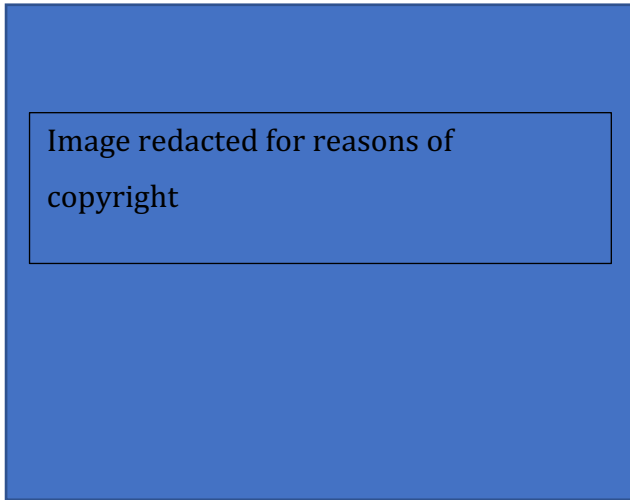


Fig 9 William Wegman *Before/On/After* (detail) gelatin silver print (1972)

Speaking in *Art Forum*, curator Helene Winer describes how Wegman used aesthetic to shift cultural attitudes by using 'prominent and quirky visual material, theatricality, and humor. These artists strayed from the tightly scripted parameters of the New York Conceptualists, and without declaration they adapted the intellectual and cultural environment of the area' (Winer 2011).

A sense that my own sounds and text could become part of an assemblage of material process was, more recently, developed through my encounter with pieces such as, *Thanx 4 Nothing* by John Giorno & *Ugo Rondinone* by the Vinyl Factory's *Infinite Mix* exhibition. I was struck by the richness of the voice and immersive nature of the collaboration. I was encouraged to experiment with using poetry, humour and refrain as part of a methodology by the rhythmic, existential tapestry of Giorno's incantation of his own words,
'Twenty billion years ago,
in the primordial wisdom soup
beyond comprehension and indescribable,
something without substance moved slightly,
and became something imperceptible,' (Giorno 2015)

The title of my proposal, *The Vision of The Absurd*, intuitively points towards humour via the association with nonsense. To understand this fully, however, I looked at a

certain feeling for humour found in writing from and around Deleuze. His discussion in *The Logic of Sense* regarding the pre-individual voice of the dissolved self has given me a means of opening up my understanding of this aspect of my practice, therefore allowing me to use it with conviction. An idea of humour as central to material vitality concludes *The Logic of Sense* and also gives a simple and forceful definition of the smooth space I'm seeking to create in an aesthetic machine where:

Nonsense and sense have done away with their relation of dynamic opposition in order to enter into the co-presence of a static genesis - as the nonsense of the surface and the sense which hovers over it. The tragic and the ironic give way to a new value, that of humour.' (Deleuze 2004, p159)

2 Personal and Creative Context

My mother was a nurse and amateur ceramicist. Her pots, dispersed through various family homes, still evoke a feeling of haptic wonder. My father was my school art teacher: my most affecting memories of his lessons are sitting in the glow of the projector screen in a small old-fashioned lecture theatre as part of A level Art History. For academic reasons I had been moved up a year as a ten-year-old and remained the baby of the class. At school we all called my father 'dad' and seemed to fall under a spell of the early Renaissance as an emblem of the blooming of aesthetic possibilities.

I also learnt enough to sow the seed of an idea that the re-nascent creativity and experimentation of this period developed into a set of dogmas about how to make art correctly. This paradox informs my current practice, which seeks to continually refresh a collective sense of the creative act. This feeling is what I mean by creative emergence, discussed later. This influence is most apparent in my installation *The Nonbifurcatedman*, which centres upon a personal epiphanic moment whilst driving my youngest son along the road down which my father had driven me to school.



Fig 10 *Mikey and Mike* acrylic on canvas 38.5 x 25.4cm (2012)

I left school for a Foundation at Worthing College and can remember feeling a strong sense of relief that I would no longer have to grapple with academic modes of thought. I told myself that I could now just make art with all the internal, aesthetic logic that comes with it. On Foundation, the Fine Art department was centred round the life classes run by the oil painting lecturer who was openly in an affair with his model. The careers advisor (a foreboding, hirsute giant of a man) asked me if I liked making pictures and I sensed that this was not something fine artists did. The life class tutor told us that fine artists made their work a battleground of process (he didn't tell us this was a quote from de Kooning!), which brought to my mind Uccello's *Rout of San Romano*, which I'd seen in the school lecture theatre. I still do to some extent and the formal scientific approach of Renaissance Florence is vanquishing the picture makers of Siena. Because of my inclination to make pictures, I chose to study illustration and won a place at Chelsea School of Art where illustration was a second-year specialisation on the Graphic Design course. In hindsight, equated pictures with a Byzantine sense of aesthetic, felt meaning rather than linguistic concepts. This remains in Piero della Francesca's *Baptism of Christ* but had evaporated by the time of Holbein's *The Ambassadors*, which is an itinerary of symbolic meaning.

My tutors at Chelsea were engaged, constructive and almost always encouraging. Most of them were fine artist painters and print makers. At the centre was Susan Einzig, a painter and illustrator from the Neo-Romantic school, and her friendship with John Minton fired my imagination. In terms of my practise I was more drawn to the metaphysical work of his contemporary Cecil Collins, whose paintings (discussed later) glow with an otherworldly sense of transcendent mystery. What drew me to all the work of Neo-Romantic painters and figurative modernists, like Rouault and Leger, was a pursuit of a relevant visual language that I felt had been explored throughout the history of image making, both pre- and post-Renaissance. At the centre of this was the human figure, and my own experimentation could be distilled down to the play between line, form, shape and colour. I now see that this is still something that informs the aesthetic of my installations and is related to the Byzantine idea of the painted surface as a tapestry of shifting colour and texture, emblematic of a wonder beyond rather than a means to draw the viewer into an ordered, fictionalised idea of perspectival space. The artists who shaped my visual language all used art to reach a territory beyond secular culture.

At this point, my career began a gradual turn in a different and unexpectedly expansive direction. I got an interview for the Royal College and remember how, when asked about the artists that influenced me, I replied that I had been too busy making my work to think about this. I think I was trying to share my enthusiasm for the joy of what I now call 'material flow' but as a lecturer I am now forever reminding students to be able to list the artists that inform their practice when asked, even if their real passion is making the work itself. My consequent rejection from the Royal College led me to a new MA in Sequential Illustration at Brighton University.

'Design an ambitious set of stained-glass windows,' suggested my first tutor. My heart wasn't in this and I discovered the process of making low-budget artists books. At the end of my first year I travelled to New York and established a contact with Printed Matter who stocked my publications. Repeat orders for my two-colour photo-copied magazine *Gratuitous* came from the ICA in London, and the idea that you could simply photo-copy 'real' publications was exhilarating and fed my practice alongside professional illustration work. *Gratuitous* was so called because it used up all the gratuitous imagery I enjoyed making, which had no apparent function. This dialogue around creativity's necessary immunity to functionality is something I have been able to articulate through Steven Shaviro's book *Discognition* and the idea of 'purposive acts of creativity without end.'

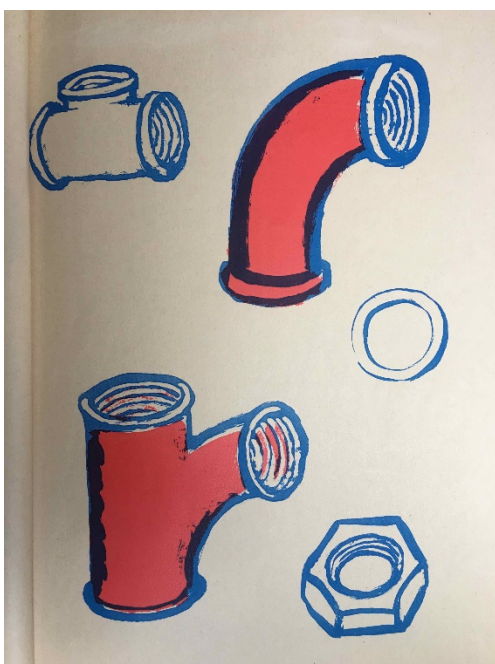


Fig 11 Page from *Gratuitous* photocopy magazine (1991) ICA

A relationship between the aesthetic and the functional is explored in my doctorate research, through which I have come to regard the aesthetic as a means of addressing that which functional conceptualism cannot perceive or its 'other'. My MA tutors had seemed nonplussed by the prolific series of two-colour images I made of plumbing fittings. I found pleasure in photocopying's language of mis-registration and the deliciousness of the ink on paper that these images brought out. My tutors, however, proposed creating something systematic, which led to the creation of a catalogue, perhaps because many of the images came from them in the first place. I can see here a relationship between order and material flow, which exists in the aesthetic machines of my current research.

At this point the expansion of my diverse practice accelerated. The categories of the catalogue were *Work, Love-life, Misc*. These became the opening lyrics for a song I wrote for a theatrical art school band called *David Devant and his Spirit Wife*, which I formed with the boyfriend of a fellow MA student. A discussion with him during my first week of the MA was the first time I had been genuinely bamboozled by 'art speak' and felt conceptually, truly out of my depth. He and another band member had studied Fine Art at Stourbridge and their tutors were members of *Art and Language*. To me, they were serious fine artists and they knew all about Baudrillard and concepts such as simulacra, whereas my flat-mates at Chelsea had simply seen Basquiat as a style to emulate. My intense creative experience with these artists allowed me to grow as an artist and a person. I think it was during this period that I finally stopped being the baby of any groups. I became the lead singer and major instigator of the band's aesthetic of cosmic wonder. (It should be said that despite being what the press calls the front man, I always considered myself part of our living assemblage and this very much sowed the seeds for my understanding of smooth space discussed in the main report.)

A shared exuberance and fondness for the vivid aesthetic of David Lynch and Victoriana gave us the boldness to put on more and more ambitious and larger performances, including a rather convincing lead singer/human cannonball stunt to the back of the Duke of York's cinema. A small independent record label who shared our sense of English eccentricity signed us and they funded the creation of hand-crafted

life-sized pop-up videos. The head of a major record label saw one of these, and my mother still talks about how they tried to track me down by phoning my family home.

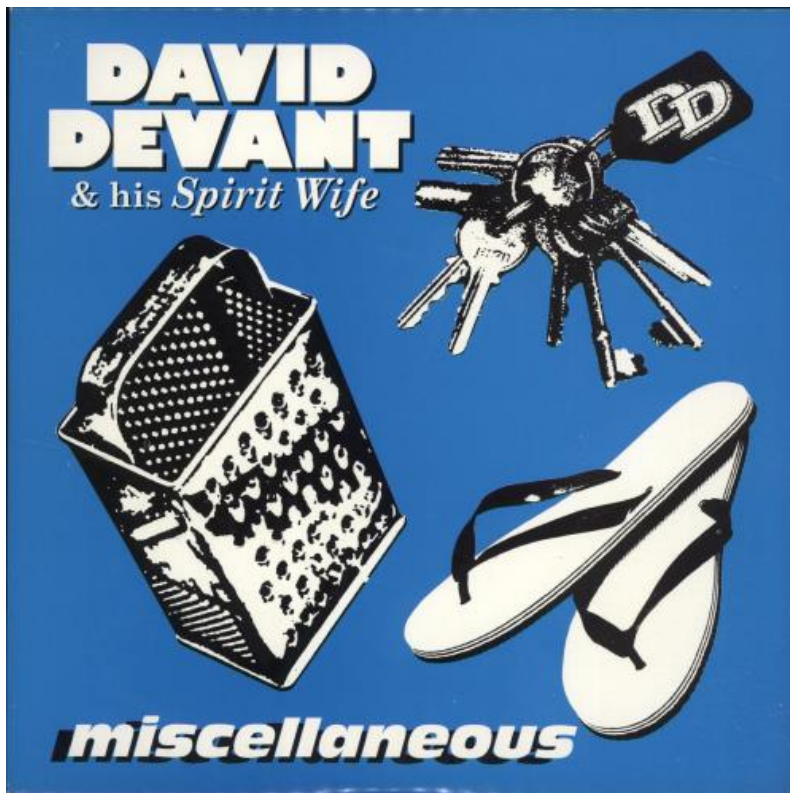


Fig 12 *Miscellaneous* 7-inch single cover (1997) Arista

At this point, the output we all considered to be an art form based on purposive acts of creativity without end became part of an industry that plans to make hits and therefore has no real value for the ineffable ontological meaning of aesthetics. Looking back, I now realise that pursuit of this quality is central to my practice. The change was not overnight but eventually, after extensive touring, BBC radio hits and interviews, working on a series with Edgar Wright and multiple other mainstream TV appearances, I burnt my pompadour wig at the end of a documentary made for late-night Channel 4. On the upside, we recorded a second quasi-sci-fi album, *Shiney* (sic) *on the Inside*, which had real emotional impact and is still a firm favourite with some fans of alternative music.

I still perform with *David Devant and his Spirit Wife* and we recently finished a new album, but my desire to maintain the momentum of my creative output led me to the next stage of my development as a multidisciplinary artist.

As Mr Solo, I felt a responsibility to continue the performative spectacle that made our reputation. This was built on videos and live shows of a kaleidoscopic DIY aesthetic. I created audio-visual backing tracks and dived repeatedly through wall-sized frames of newsprint into an art gallery performance world with little idea of what my persona was communicating other than the joy of creative wonder and magic. The interface of an emergent social media led to a means of expanding this virtually and I found myself in a vortex of repeated images, culminating in one spiteful and meticulously crafted simulacra of my persona – even down to recreated videos – by an anonymous internet user calling himself Mr Sulu. It was also a time when my profile attracted threats of sexual violence, and I realised that not everyone shared my joy of material flow and euphoric creative expression. Luckily, at the same time I became involved with a sympathetic gallery at the heart of a burgeoning alternative London art scene. Within this context my trans-disciplinary approach could be shared more freely. The irony was that the nature of the gallery shaped my practice into a more specific form as a painter around which the other activities became appendages. The doctorate has been about integrating painting into the creation of aesthetic machines.



Photo: Nick Currey

Fig 13 Backstage with Cocky Young'un at Loughborough University after breaking an ankle (1997)

My relationship with Sartorial Art Gallery came about through an exhibition where a curator, Harry Pye, asked me to paint an image for a song inspired by William Blake. It seems apt that my route into professional fine art came through my response to Blake, as he is now a figure that has given shape to the context of my professional output, in particular with my work for *Blakefest*. My painting for the show was of a sleeping female figure under a tree with a shimmering angel sitting in it.

One of my recent installations, *Occasion of a Lamppost*, concerns my personal hallucinatory experience due to the vision of a light through tree branches (an explanation some give for Blake's vision of an angel in a tree). Based on this, Gretta Safarty Merchant, the gallery owner and icon of the 1980s New York performance scene, encouraged me to create a painting show to explore my creative output through the gallery space. For the first time ever, I attempted to make large-scale oil paintings in the mode of artists such as Clemente and Polke, who had inspired me on my degree and beyond. In the pursuit of correctness, these were all primed with rabbit-skin glue but were eventually stretched backwards, turning the stretchers into vibrantly adorned frames. The show was called *My Magic Life* and included friends who gave psychic readings and cardboard-box discotheques. At the end of the show I led a march of friends with cardboard signs displaying slogans such as 'don't read this', 'this is heavy' and 'wonders never cease' down Portobello Road to my gig at *Subterania*.



Fig 14 *My Magic Life* exhibition closing parade (2009) Sartorial Gallery

What felt like an almost explosive level of creative activity was very much tied to my involvement with the Artists' Group workshops established at UEL by Grayson and Philippa Perry, alongside Doctorate tutor Eric Great-Rex. As part of the workshop's invitation, we were encouraged to write three pages of stream-of-consciousness every morning for a week. This simple act of permission seemed to unlock another means of understanding what my artistic practice was about. On my degree I had been interested in Jung but never really explored his idea that an artist acts as a conduit rather than an agency who conceptually controls via forward planning (an idea I eventually discovered Marcel Duchamp shared).

I have continued to value the routine of writing three pages (along with a drawing) every morning as a means of maintaining a contact with the well-spring of creativity. The group had a powerful influence on my understanding of the ineffable qualities of engaging via the process of aesthetic flow. This is something I explored in the painting *Dopamine – the Molecule of Intuition*, exhibited at the John Moores in 2012. The painting's titular mix of science and scepticism mingled with the delight in the sumptuousness of colour and paint itself embodies the push and pull interplay between the process of intuitive aesthetic making and post-rational analysis that has led my work and research to its current position, which I have called *The Vision of The Absurd*. I have come to regard the sense of alienation experienced via functionalised culture as 'the absurd' and art and my practice offer a means of discovering visions of other modalities.

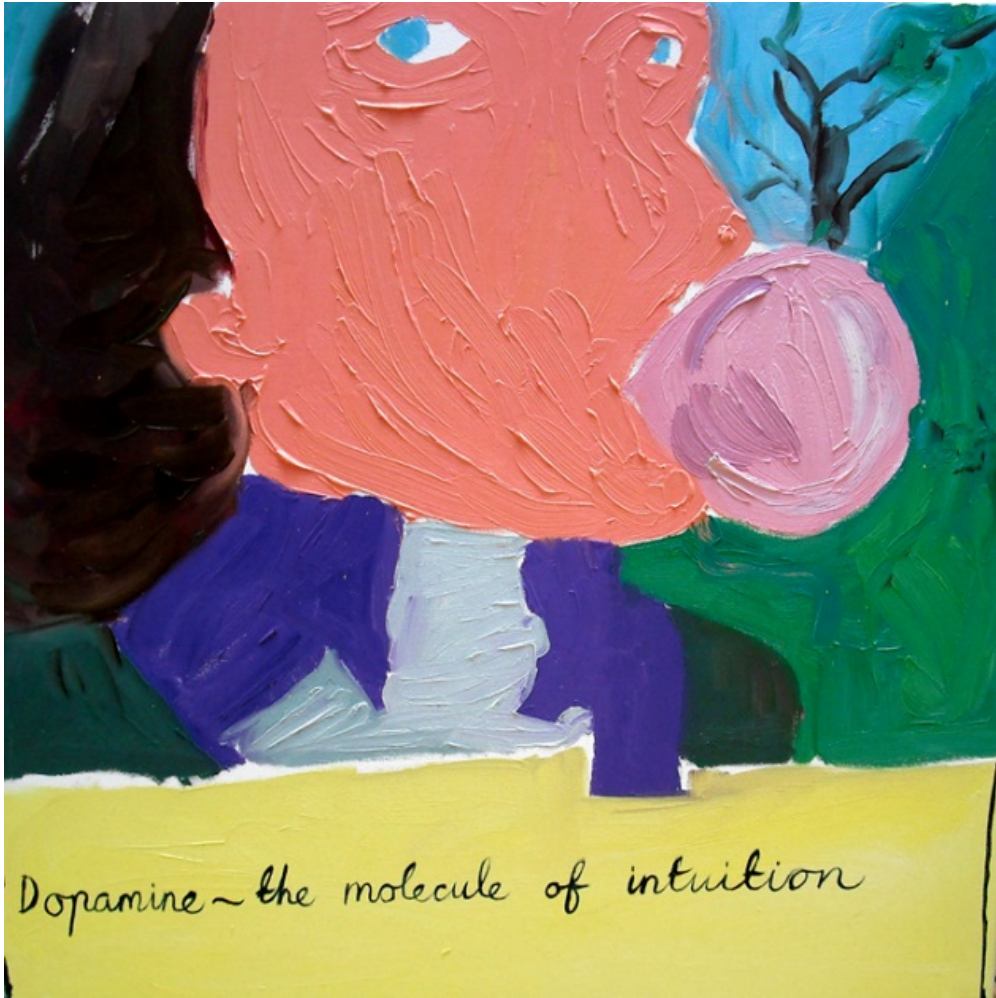


Fig 15 *Dopamine – the Molecule of Intuition* oil on canvas 99 x99 cm (2010)

3 Creative Practice, Theory and Professional Practice

3.1 Aesthetic Machines

This time it is in order to join with the forces of the future, cosmic forces. One launches forth, hazards an improvisation. But to improvise is to join with the World, or meld with it. One ventures from home on the thread of a tune. (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 p311)

Having worked as a musician and painter, I now think of my art practice as a process of interruptions of a continuous stream of improvisation, moving between sincerity, joy, conceptual intuition and ironic entanglement. Through practical research I have formed an idea of my practice as constructing aesthetic machines. In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze defines the machine as being 'related to a continual material flow that it cuts into' (Deleuze and Guattari 2000 p36). I feel these machines are a harmonic dialogue with the absurd, which I see as the feeling of being separate from the world: 'if I were a tree among trees, a cat among animals, this life would have a meaning' (Camus 2016).

These aesthetic machines are a means of constructing a framework for art developed and experienced as part of an aesthetic ontology. My aesthetic machines seek to generate access to a shared space for creative engagement. They form a practical and experimental engagement with art and the world: 'the new is an outside that exists within this world and as such must be constructed' (O'Sullivan 2008 p2).

In the report I have approached this idea of aesthetic imagination as beyond and within the striated order of civilisation through different narrative projections such as Deleuze's adoption of Artaud's *Body without Organs*. This mentality is embodied in Blake's idea that 'the imagination is not a state: it is the human existence itself' (Blake letter to Rev John Trusler 1777) and the unclasp of signifiers of Deleuze's stagemaker bird, 'like the stagemaker bird that turns over fallen leaves to mark out the stage on which it sings a complex song made up from its own notes and, at intervals, those of other birds that it imitates' (Zepke 2017 p144). In the aesthetic machine's space, conceptual analysis is not abandoned but becomes an ancillary tool of discovery rather than the primary causal agency. The aesthetic machines harness the mechanism that Deleuze and Guattari suggest makes the stagemaker bird a complete

artist: 'the appropriation of something in order to use it in a completely different way... the base or the ground of art. Take anything and make it a matter of expression' (Deleuze 2003 p343).

3.2 Three Elements of the Aesthetic Machine

My idea of the aesthetic machine contains three elements and these are:

- 1) a linguistic kernel;
- 2) an encounter with nature;
- 3) a sense of creative emergence.

The linguistic kernel and sense of creative emergence are strongly linked to the practise of writing morning pages and a connection to my tacit ideas that emerge through drawings and videos habitually made at this time (20 minutes before I need to get up). Participation in The Artists' Group (see personal context) triggered a strong connection to creative emergence in my own practice. I have referred to this as a well-spring and at times, writing and drawing in the early hours felt like a geyser of material. Through experiences of seminars and research, the relationship between this flow and my exhibited output has become more dynamic. These emergent morning drawings are part of a material flow that the aesthetic machine 'cuts into'. The aesthetic machine doesn't organise this flow in a striated sense but places it in the realm of what Deleuze calls the 'animal artist' (Deleuze and Guattari 2000). This is animal in the sense that it is felt prior to linguistic ordering. The immanent method of making art is akin to the stagemaker bird in that it delights in a *nonhuman* engagement outside the anthropocentric limits of conceptual sense-making. The aesthetic machines are ready for all matter to entangle in a smooth space, 'the artist-animal uses colors, lines and sound to construct an existential territory' (Zepke 2005 p157).

This linguistic kernel or use of words was something I found impossible to remove from the materiality and with my practice as a maker there is a strong sense of a lyric poet making the decisions. In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze reminds us of Nietzsche's exploration of humour through the lyrical voice: 'the self of the lyric poet raises its voice from the bottom of the abyss of being, its subjectivity is pure imagination.' My aesthetic decisions are my attempts to let the practice emerge from below the ground of logical language. The decisions are non-logical rather than illogical and I discuss

this difference later with regards to my piece *Actual Occasion*. The humour in my practice is not the same as the linguistic twists of Lewis Carroll's Alice or the language games of the Dadaists. A focus on aesthetics, affect and material vitality also make this different from the modernist cut-up tactics and more in line with the desire for sincerity found in the dialogues of metamodern artists, such as Luke Turner, who have placed critical theory at the heart of their practice: 'We must liberate ourselves from the inertia resulting from a century of modernist ideological naivety and the cynical insincerity of its antonymous bastard child' (Luke Turner, *Metamodernist Manifesto*).

3.3 Emergence and the Morning Pages

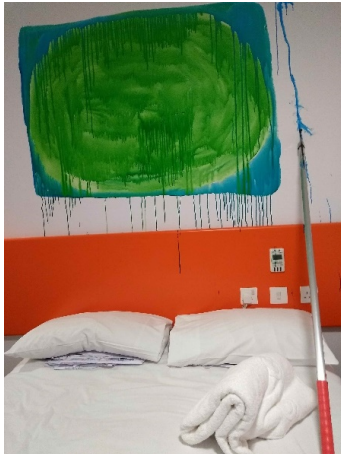
My aesthetic machines are fuelled by my early morning writing and drawings (the morning drawings see appendices). The aesthetic machine allows me to create with this material rather than being exclusively led by it. I have often felt a relationship between the improvised, pre-cognitive use of ideas in these scripts and drawings made just after waking and a Deleuzian sense of art as,

'an autopoiesis of affects whose proliferating excess escape capitalized structures of subjectivity and social relations, most importantly the discursive sign and its linear relations reducing affects to neutral referents, and to the pre-given banalities which "everyone knows" ...' (O'Sullivan 2011).

Experiencing art as sensation gives it the feeling of emergence rather than a reading of pre-existing signifiers of static information. Since taking part in The Artists' Group set up at the University of East London by Grayson and Philippa Perry with UEL lecturer Eric Great-Rex, I have practised the habit of writing morning pages with automatic drawings and even filmic dialogues. For over ten years I've returned each morning to my desk and I have developed a strong connection to the emergent creative flow I experience here.



Fig 16 My desk and a *Morning Pages* notebook (2019)



Figs 17 & 18 *Exit Portal – Morning Drawing Room* installation (2017) Easy Hotel, Old Street

Despite their central place in my creative output I found it difficult to exhibit my morning drawings. This is because they are unmediated flow. When I was asked to be an artist in residence for Easy Hotel, I used the hotel bedroom to create a Morning Drawing Room. In this way the drawing could become part of an aesthetic machine encountered by the visitors who found the drawings made by the *art-bot* subject of an experiment on the walls and ceiling. This was a way of cutting a slice into the material flow experienced in the morning drawings. For me as an artist, my methodology and content explore a notion Deleuze shares with Whitehead of awareness through delight in fulfilling capacity for creative acts. This is inclusive of felt and precognitive understanding and developing a sense of opening up and connecting to the world through purposive acts of creativity that enfold materials and ideas into an affectual assemblage. Whilst art has an excess beyond a discursive account, by placing the aesthetic mode centrally, analytical or conceptual modes are cast as supporting rather than driving forces and become useful tools in a wider process of collective discovery. This is a small shift and O’Sullivan’s clarity on the subject, in *From Aesthetics to the Abstract Machine*, helped me shape my methodology:

It goes without saying that art has always had this character, however a certain kind of conceptualism, allied with a particular attitude within art history and theory (we might call it simply the prevalence of ‘ideological critique’), has for a long time stymied this aesthetic character of art in an over-investment of the idea of art as sign. (O’Sullivan, 2010 p191)

4 Four Aesthetic Machines

The aesthetic becomes the site of all ontology, it is the plurality of manners of being, manners of doing, capacities to be affected... the modes of feeling that are at the centre of a theory of the subjects of nature... A multiplicity of centres of experience. (Debaise 2017, p58)

4.1 Notifications from the Technological Nonconscious

Keynote Performance: Affect and Social Media Conference, UEL, 2018

The most recent aesthetic machine is a useful place for me to start because its inclusion demonstrates how the research process has helped me become aware of where my practice lies and how to shape it effectively. Through imagination and pragmatic engagement, I gained a sense of how to combine making and experience in an art work, summed up in Deleuze's invitation to look to the stagemaker bird and 'take everything and make it a matter of expression' (Deleuze 2000). This piece became an audio-visual enhanced keynote speech performance. It used large-scale projection and cinematic sound to project the audience into an aesthetic realm in order to create a tapestry of felt understanding and conceptual analysis. I describe the making and the outcome as an entanglement. An entanglement is a network assemblage, fluid and formed of individual yet coalescing materials. In terms of an art methodology this is shaped by a Deleuzian sense of the milieu or a being in the middle of things rather than developing a linear idea of cause and effect. In the *Larval Subjects* weblog Graham Harman discusses the usefulness of the term entanglement as it, 'avoids the anthropocentric and ontotheological connotations of references to the agency...' (Harman 2015). Harman's discussion of entanglement also helps shape my idea of non-hierarchical smooth space as part of a making process, in the sense that no one element is given superior status and all ideas, forms and images weave together:

but also, threads are entangled with one another while retaining their identity... The key point to be drawn from the concept of entanglement is that no one entity or thread (I think of objects as four-dimensional space-time worms) overdetermines all the others. Rather, each thread or object instead contributes differences in its own way. (ibid.)

I was interested in helping to create an entanglement of discursive ideas via a live performance of a text with sound and visual imagery. It was clear at the start of the project that my presence would be part of it but only as another thread entwined in the tapestry form. Deleuze and Guattari explored the idea of the milieu to describe this joining together of forms in the middle to create a surrounding or space. Kenneth Surin's *Surroundings: Deleuze and Guattari* discusses the milieu in a way that feels specific to the aesthetic machine: 'Interestingly enough, it was Guattari perhaps more than Deleuze who gnawed away for years at the "problematic" of the comprehensive field or milieu that allowed the different interrelating zones of this desiring-production to emerge.' This aesthetic machine is an entanglement akin to the atmosphere of a milieu in that it is a space of interwoven textural ideas. Text and ideas become textural. After the event, I collaged the film of me delivering the speech with the audio-visual material used for the performance. The stills shown here display this hyper-woven approach to sense-making.

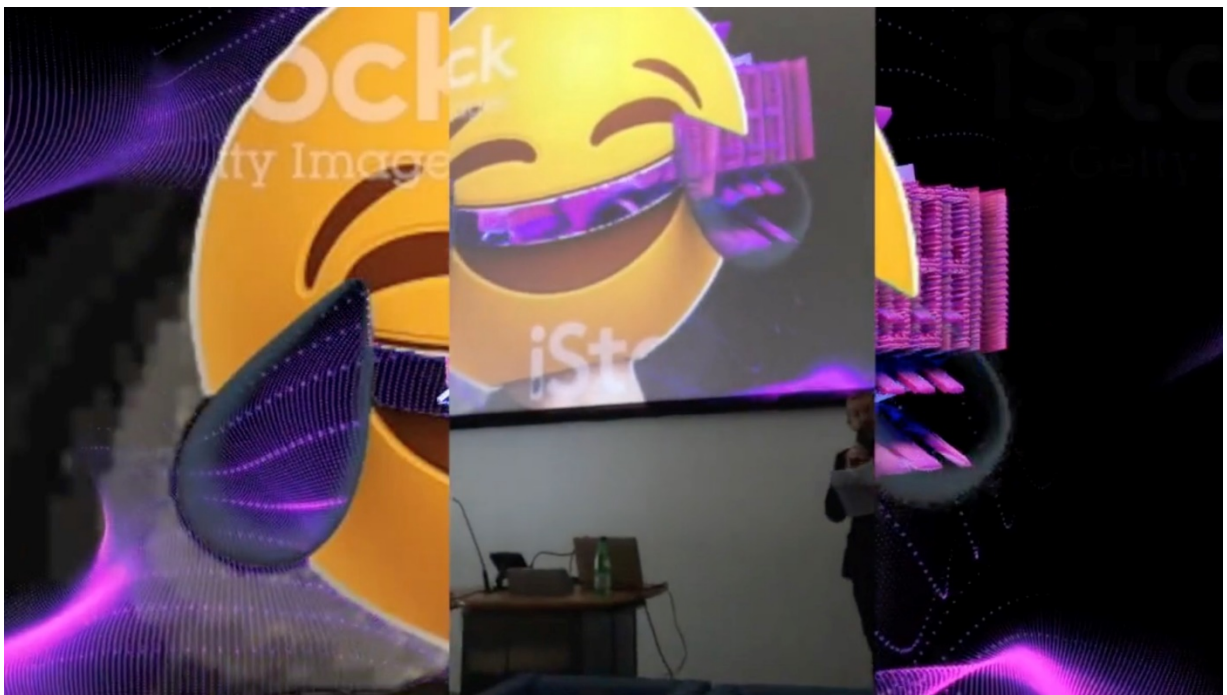


Fig 19 Professor Kimey Peckpo Keynote Speech: Affect and Social Media Conference performance installation (2018) UEL

Notifications from the Technological Nonconscious entwined different strands of activity together i.e. research, academia, performance, film, music, sound, trust, intuition, theory, poetry. A two-month time-frame for making the piece was short and

processing all the threads had a kaleidoscopic intensity. For me personally, I feel my aesthetic sense can process material more effectively than my linear conceptual abilities. This has been absolutely key to my practice research and is something I am reminded of every time I present a wip seminar. It has been rewarding to think of how Notifications from the Technological Nonconscious brought together creative resources from inside and outside the university and created a dialogue between different university departments. Foucault's introduction to *Anti-Oedipus* has helped me clarify this approach as a desire to 'develop action, thought, and desires by proliferation, juxtaposition, and disjunction, and not by subdivision and pyramidal hierarchization' (Foucault preface to *Anti Oedipus* 2000 pxiii).

Sensorium: Art and Felt Knowledge

Notifications from the Technological Nonconscious was part of *Sensorium*, which is the art component of the *Affect and Social Media Conference* organised by Professor Tony Sampson at the University of East London. This aims to embed an art prioritising a felt or pre-cognitive experience within an academic dialogue concerning the transmission of affect through social media. Having collaborated with Professor Sampson on other audio-visual pieces, we came up with the idea of an art intervention at the start of the 2018 conference that would entangle art into the conference experience. Having been selected for a panel on *Felt Knowledge* at the 2018 Royal Geographic Society conference, I recognise how much academic thought feels the need to include felt sense-making to expand ideas and affinities. Professor Sampson and I value the ability of art to create this experience within an academic context itself. In previous years, despite responding to the conference's themes around affect, *Sensorium* felt separate from the actual conference. Our starting position was that via the aesthetic register art has the ability to help ideas grow, entangle and jump boundaries. Art and aesthetic machines can manufacture entanglement:

Moreover, entanglements suggest dynamic relations among the threads tangled and all akimbo with one another, nicely capturing the ongoing dynamism of relations among objects in their interactions with one another. (Harman *Larval Subjects* 2015)

A sense of 'ongoing dynamisms' of relations was key to creating Notifications from the Technological Nonconscious. It helped me recognise how collaboration can weave different connections in a similar way to the smooth space of the aesthetic machine. Dr Dean Todd has co-curated the previous two *Sensorium* exhibitions with me and the keynote speech incorporated his unsettling interventionist presence. Having experienced the mild terror of Dr Todd's performances I considered how more disturbing components could be woven into the work. I mirrored the saturated aesthetic of my practice with the sensory overload of the enhanced interrogation techniques of the US Government and we used a large PA to make the sound feel immersive.

During the keynote speech, Dr Todd places me inside a flight-case as a refraction of the interrogation box used by the CIA with the detainee, Mohammed Ahmed Mohammed al-Shoroeiya. I emerged wearing a rubber Donald trump mask to deliver the cacophonous, confused end to the speech, which was my response to the echoing resonances of social media.

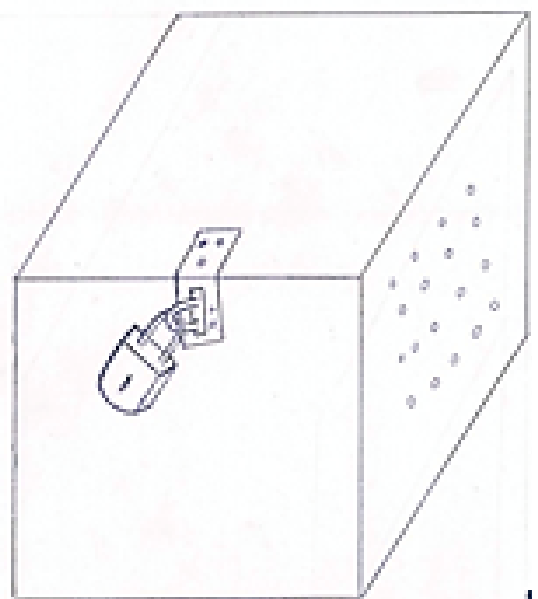


Image: Human Rights Watch

Fig 20 *Keynote Speech: Affect and Social Media Conference* Dr Dean Todd seals me into a flight-case during the performance (2018) UEL

Fig 21 *Enhanced Interrogation Box*

This felt like a successful appropriation of political signifiers into an aesthetic smooth space and was derived from Dr Todd's and my mutual trust and sense of material vitality i.e. imagining how things might be experienced by ourselves and the audience. The political was dissolved into the heady soup of the keynote's aesthetic in a way that O'Sullivan's dialogue around politics, art and signifiers in from *Aesthetics to the Abstract Machine*, seems to affirm:

We might ask ourselves what this means in terms of the politics of art practice? What indeed constitutes contemporary art's political effectivity? For, I would argue, political art does not always look political and art that looks political ('speaks' its message as it were) does not always operate politically. In fact, art is not politics in the typical – or molar and signifying – sense.
(O'Sullivan 2010 p191)

Recognising how this work, featuring shared ideas, my live presence and an audience of academics, fitted my aesthetic machine methodology has been important to understanding how the aesthetic machine works by slicing into a flow of material vitality and crafted improvisation. The piece called *Outlook* (see below) that began shaping my sense of aesthetic machines was also something I initially thought was outside my actual practice. In this light, research is a process of recognising the effectiveness of aspects of your practice and distilling them. The criteria were that I create a performance as a Professor to introduce the concept of the Technological Nonconscious. Professor Sampson had written a piece of text split into six sections: Unthinking; Addicting; Feeling; Sleeping; Dreaming; and Trumping. This text was a combination of academic ideas delivered in the freer form of poetry and arose from an understanding (empathy) of how our previous collaborations had mixed the voice and music. Thinking through a poetic idiom instantly makes ideas more soluble with others.

Familiarising myself with a text as a component of music alters the shape of my relationship to the meaning and becomes an affective form of sense-making. In this way a theoretical discussion was embedded in an art performance helping to make the ideas more tangible and able to become unclasped from existing preconceptions of that which everyone already knows. Working as part of an international conference placed me in a position where I connected with global dialogues within the abstract space of the aesthetic machine. Here I could manifest a feeling for the event rather than deliver an objective opinion through subjective expression. In *Deleuze, Guattari and The Production of the New*, O'Sullivan describes how in this aesthetic process of material vitality:

Political resistance is constructed by an artist who follows this matter-flow in such a way as to turn it expressive, by rendering the singularities of the flow – before they have congealed into recognizable and representable forms – in affect. (O'Sullivan 2008 p3)



Fig 22 *Notifications from Technological Nonconscious* digital presentation at Sensorium (2018) UEL

The performance became a keynote speech delivered with cinematic sound and music with a large-scale backdrop vortex of digital moving image. The major breakthrough that allowed me to place this within the context of my practice as an

aesthetic machine was the realisation that just as I had woven my music into matter flow, I could do the same with my physical presence. With the idea of creating an immersive performance machine, I started by recording different versions of the text until I was pleased with the sound of the voice and then began to introduce a fluid assemblage of sounds. The sound of the voice is an indeterminate texture derived partly from my admiration for Marshall McLuhan's optimism for 'electronic man' and his ability to unify disparate cultural threads. The intention was to create something like music but also akin to a sound sculpture or atmosphere. This would use recognisable or representational forms in an abstract development of music and noise. In the same way I wanted to use an assemblage of approaches such as the corporate presentation, *Ted Talks*, the pop video, the art installation as well as something entirely unknown arising from the material itself.

I decided that I would be lip-synching the *Keynote*, perhaps for the practical reason of being able to shape the sound more freely beforehand. This decision was also about a desire to work aesthetically and weave the sound of my voice into the work. For the actual performance we used the biggest PA we could find to deliver a cinematic shift in the audience's sense of immersion, and I wanted to share my sense of feeling sound. (Perhaps this also relates to my life-long hearing loss and as a performer I've always preferred to feel the lower-mid ranges of the voice to the descriptive precision of the higher register). Lip-synching also meant that the performance would be a dislocated form of creative repetition. In relation to David Byrne's dislocated lyrical approach Thornton notes that, 'for Freud, repetition is the result of an inability to remember, but for Deleuze, each repetition is the positive production of an original' (Thornton 2013). There is also a sense that this piece of art builds on the previous work's (*Actual Occasion* see below) use of my body in the video. Here, my loving body becomes part of the assemblage and free of my usual striated position in society. In terms of performance, the aesthetic machine methodology has created a freedom to work with sensation and encourages a bodily engagement. 'When you will have made him a body without organs, then you will have delivered him from all his automatic reactions and restored him to his true freedom' (Artaud 1947).

Linguistic Kernel

For the *Keynote* video I attempted to create motion graphics of my own but realised that without another level of craft or process these would be too generically linguistic. The format of current info graphics programmes seems to animate the two-dimensional and I wanted something immersive and visually tactile to translate the feeling of a tapestry of ideas. I contacted a friend who I remembered had worked with 3D text from about 20 years ago and described the effect I wanted and gave him the list of six words. The visual approach evoked a spatiality similar to early ideas of pioneering boundless cyber-space. Early virtual reality pioneer Jaron Lanier discusses this difference in *You Are Not A Gadget*:

The strangeness is being leached away by the mush-making process. Individual web pages as they first appeared in the early 1990s had the flavour of personhood. *MySpace* preserved some of that flavour, though a process of regularized formatting had begun. (Lanier 2010 p79)

The resulting morphing, rotating word blocks have a sense of a digital tapestry that suits the approach of a woven layering of sounds, images, ideas and performance. They remind me of the tactile and unpredictable way Sticklebricks join together unlike the engineered precision of Lego. The inclusion of watermarked stock-imagery intensifies the flavour of an assemblage stew that creates its meaning from the feeling of the event. I began to understand how my practice explores how the felt aesthetic of the event rather than a rigid concept defines the subject, 'To feel the event is another matter' (Notifications from the Technological Nonconscious 2018).



Fig 23 *Kimey Peckpo Keynote Speech: Affect and Social Media Conference* performance installation (2018) UEL

Affectual Registers

The feel of the Kimey Peckpo presentation is humorous because the immersive, performative aesthetic wrong-foots the audience but content of the *Keynote* is a serious one, touching on the 'micro-fascism' of social media climates that has given rise to the phenomenon of Trump. The performance speech cites Patricia Ticineto Clough's idea in *The User Unconscious* that Trump's tweets 'transgress the separation between the personal and the networked' (Clough 2018 p96). The performance aimed to embody these affective registers of social media. Affect here is a form of entanglement because it joins and connects without cognitive exchange of symbolic or semiotic meaning. Affect is a form of felt-knowledge, which my methodology seeks to acknowledge. My instinct was to create something with the same vivid, colourful superabundance of my recent work *Actual Occasion* (see below) in order to share a desire to introduce intuitive creative proliferation into an academic context. The result is sometimes confusing and yet, hopefully, engaging and joyful. One delegate gave the immediate response that this was the 'best start to a conference ever.' Responding to a video of the event, a Foundation student of mine found it 'confusing in a good way'. Foucault gives shape to this vibrant approach to a serious subject in his preface to *Anti-Oedipus*: 'do not think that one has to be sad in order to be militant, even though the thing one is fighting is abominable.' Fascism in this sense is not just the historical Mussolini, 'but also the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behaviours, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us' (Foucault 2000 pxiii).

Schizoid Performance Figure

Deleuze's schizoid model from *Anti-Oedipus* has helped me make sense of the fluid artistic identity I have developed as someone who has always lived with hearing loss but never been part of a deaf culture. Likewise, in *Postmodernism and Consumer Society*, Fredric Jameson defines schizophrenia as 'the failure of the infant to accede fully into the realm of speech and language.' Jameson's definition is clinically contentious but does help me understand the freedom from signified meaning I am seeking through favouring an aesthetic register. Due to a life with hearing loss, my relationship to meaning is often not what I hear but what I feel. My hearing loss creates a tapestry of linguistic flows as I fill in the gaps and reinvent phrases through the shifting repetition of day-dreaming. As a result of living with hearing loss from

childhood, aesthetic day-dreaming may have become a default setting for me, cushioning me from the hard outlines of linguistic definitions (the higher frequencies). I suspect my parents were a little ashamed of my deafness (I was never given hearing aids until I sought them out as an adult) and the aesthetic machine creates a space to unashamedly fail to fully accede to language by favouring an aesthetic ontology. Life lived entirely on the level of conceptual ordering can be alienating and my art might attempt to enfold this into the edifying realm of the aesthetic register. In *Towards a Radical Anti-Capitalist Schizophrenia*, Peretti discusses how Deleuze's schizoid artist can traverse a nomadic smooth space, 'Deleuze and Guattari's schizophrenic will not be trapped by the power-laden and despotic webs of signifiers that saturate society and psychoanalytic practice' (Peretti 2010).



Fig 24 Still from *Stop Making Sense* featuring David Byrne (1984) dir. Jonathan Demme

In terms of using myself as a performance figure, the work of David Byrne is more useful than the oft-cited David Bowie because he seems to position himself more closely to the everyday. In *5 Ways to Understand Deleuze through the work of David Byrne and Talking Heads* Ed Thornton states, 'For Deleuze, on the other hand, the hallucinations of the schizophrenic are not a poor image of reality, but are in fact the creative productions of a new reality, in which desire is not repressed by the standard social structures' (Thornton 2013).

His description of how Byrne moves through personas is the closest I have found to describing how I feel about the mentality of my practice. As a ten-year-old child, I enjoyed dressing as a punk and intuitively embraced its situationist ploy of testing the suburban streets by wearing confusing appendages such as opaque sunglasses with pinprick holes in. This is about experimentation and seeking a rupture of the hegemony to provoke a tiny personal cultural shift. Thornton applies Deleuze's *Anti-Oedipus* model to Byrne's output that makes sense of my own shifting life assemblage as a grown-up professional artist: 'the point here is that rather than being a kind of coping mechanism, Byrne's multiple personalities are a form of positive action, in which his desire escapes from the confines of a singular identity' (Thornton 2013).

Notifications from the Technological Nonconscious was an intense process of creative collaboration and brought together various facets of my practice and ability to trust collective and instinctual processes. The layering of the content and the entwining of the embedded shared practice are all part of a shifting, living collage made possible by the smooth space of the aesthetic machine. In this sense the work feels like an expanding organism, with no specific author, testing its environment through creative acts. My experience of collaboration and integrating with venues allowed me to facilitate its emergence. Feedback for the conference was positive and picked up on the energy of collective creativity: 'The A&SM#4 meeting was a unique event for us, unlike any conference we had participated in before. We deeply enjoyed the keynote lecture/show, and many of that day's presentation. The overall environment was friendly just as much as it was intellectually inspiring.' One of my Foundation students Rasha Vadamotoo said: 'This was so awesome!!! Never seen anything like it!' And although there are clearly precedents, the academic setting gives it a sense of creation of the new. It has always been the aim of *Sensorium* to place art in the middle of academic dialogues, and Notifications from the Nonconscious managed to do this before even we, the creators, had noticed.

Emergence – Being in the Middle

The third component of my aesthetic machines is the idea of creative emergence. I equate this with affectual engagement or feeling the event or work I make as it unfolds. A pre-cognitive feeling of immanence is often triggered by the second component of the aesthetic machine, which is the encounter with nature. My hearing

loss has given me access to a blurring of the linguistic mode, where sensations and encounters can take on a sense of just emerging, more readily. It also works the other way in that for most of my adult life I have watched the television with subtitles, which leads to a literal reading of the events on screen. This interruption of emergence is similar to the cognitive dissonance I feel when trying to read music and translate the value to a note as an alphabet letter and then back to a note on the keyboard. The absurd is a place of separation and this place of emergence is where we are most within the world and least separated. By working primarily with material vitality, my work uses and attempts to sustain this notion of creativity as an emergent stream. In discussing Deleuze's milieu, Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos expands on an event-based sense of becoming:

Rather, it is the moment in which one discovers that one has been 'thrown-in', without trace of original momentum that can be linked to one's situation in any causal way. But mark this: this discovery is not linked to a consciousness in the traditional, more or less phenomenological way. The discovery may well be a pre-conscious one, or simply a non-conscious one.

(Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos 2016)

My chosen name for the *Keynote* performance of Kimey Peckpo comes from a creation story I wrote and published on Amazon, *Kimey Peckpo Hatches Out* (see appendice). I wrote this story, which is literally about Kimey Peckpo hatching out into a non-hierarchical smooth space before I had any idea of the relevance of the concept of smooth space to my practice. At the end of the conference performance, Professor Dean Todd and his assistant lock me in a black box (partially inspired by enhanced interrogation methods) and I emerge, still talking, as a personification of post-truth. As the audio-visuals cascade into a vortex mapping the reverberating chaos of social media, I stand in black-cowled rubber Trump face making his signature 'ok' gesture. Via the art of David Byrne, Thornton discusses a blizzard-like tapestry in relation to the schizoid approach. This description begins to feel like the process of making this particular performance machine. 'As such, the world is nothing more than a "swarm" of appearances and concepts, which join together in assemblages to create our reality' (Thornton 2008).

As an artist I was trying to move through a vortex of linguistic complexity reverberating through social media, to the shared meaning of affective event. This aesthetic machine allows me to entwine the theories that have helped to shape and sustain my art into the practice itself. This is a multi-media performance created from an approach of material vitality as an alternative sense-making. In this way, digital sound and video can become part of a smooth-space tapestry. The smooth space is a surrounding without hierarchy or signified embedded behaviours. Deleuze and Guattari use the stagemaker bird to help form an idea of how art and the abstract machine generate this space of emergent creativity: 'For Deleuze and Guattari art escapes human subjectivity to become animal... through the unclasp of pre-existing material as in the behaviours of the stagemaker bird is nearly "the birth of art" '(Zepke 2005).



Fig 25 *Kimey Peckpo Keynote Speech: Affect and Social Media Conference performance installation (2018) UEL*

I am not offended when an audience laughs at my work and the mentality of the aesthetic machine is to absorb the laughter as another strand of the entangled threads of affectual discovery. This is because aesthetic machines, unlike ironic jokes, do not work via cause and effect. Throughout my creative career I have been aware that my output can be seen as funny. I found this hard to address but Deleuze's concepts

concerning engagement via sensation, such as the schizoid artist, have helped me contextualise the humour in my art. This non-hierarchical mentality is not confined to the use of language but also infuses the aesthetic pragmatism of my making process. The leather car seats and sticky back plastic wood-veneer of *The Nonbifurcatedman* and the blue telephone handset plugged into the portable DVD player in *Outlook* are part of a realm of aesthetic sensation, 'with every signification, denotation, and manifestation suspended, all height and depth abolished' (Deleuze 2004 p160).

The sense of suspended signification is important here because that is the moment of laughter from which concepts and linguistic connections can emerge. In her book, *Irony*, Claire Colebrook introduces Deleuze's concept of superior irony, which descends below the order of linguistic concepts rather than elevating to orthodox ironic detachment. This sense of just having discovered infuses my aesthetic use of materials and can be regarded as funny, as Colebrook explains in a way that also clarifies the neutral attitude of my aesthetic machines: 'Humour is not the reversal of cause and effect but the abandonment of the "before and after" relations – the very line of time – that allow us to think in terms of causes and intentions, of grounds and consequents' (Colebrook 2004 p89).

4.2 Outlook

In *Outlook* (March 2017), a piece that started the process of working with and understanding aesthetic machines, there is a narrative concerning a person caught up in an abstracted idea of his personal territory and the demarcation of discrete boundaries. Through Deleuze and others I have discovered the role art plays in shifting boundaries and re-territorialising occluded space through creating harmonic or musical spaces through repetition and rhythm. In his essay *A Life Between the Finite and Infinite*, O'Sullivan explores the ground shared by Deleuze and Guattari and the practice of meditation. I hadn't connected my own practice of meditation with smooth space but O'Sullivan makes a good connection between Deleuze and meditative states. This makes sense of how *Outlook* as an exploration of a life lived on the surface completely closed to 'this other place' outside of conceptual abstraction:

Indeed, this other *nonhuman* state that always and everywhere accompanies our typical sense of ourselves is what Deleuze and Guattari, in *A Thousand*

Plateaus, call the 'body without organs'. Buddhist meditation, this time as insight practice (vipassana), allows an experimental encounter with this other place – of forever changing relations of intensities. (O'Sullivan 2009)

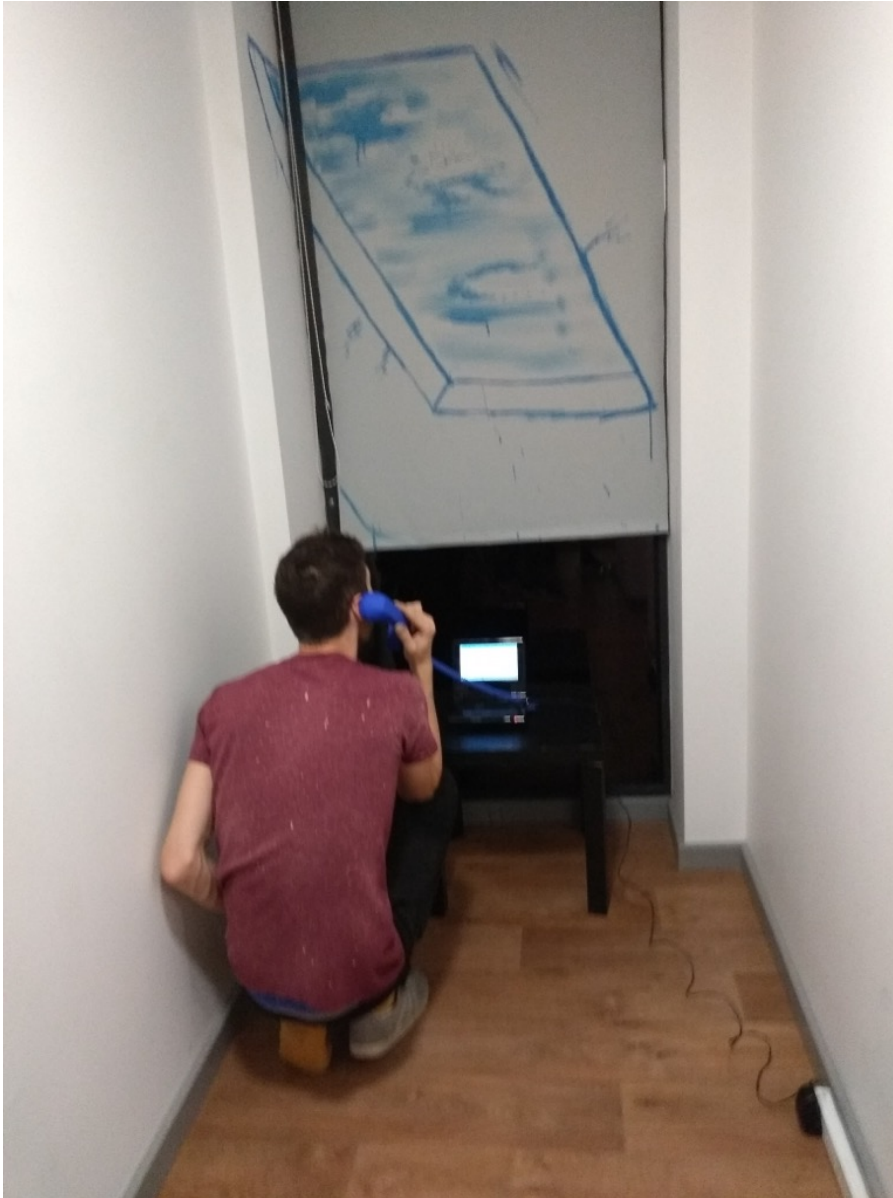


Fig 26 *Outlook* installed in *Morning Drawing Room* (2017) Easy Hotel, Old Street

Boundaries are part of the dialogue in my aesthetic machines in terms of their form and the sensations they promote. An aesthetic machine is a finite infinite space. The text for the spoken element was written during an early *Morning Pages* session and, though coherent, verges on the stream of consciousness. The protagonist's encounter with nature is a stunted and remote one. He has an emergent moment of discovery when he realizes that the view from his Velux window of a vapour trail in the sky is an anamorphic image, which only makes sense from his seat at his desk, and that this

image was placed there by his neighbour. This form of a window in a pitched roof is echoed in the form of the portable DVD player creating a kind of remote version of the story outside the film.



Fig 27 *Outlook* mixed media installation at *Tempest* (2017) AVA Gallery

This piece also functions as an introduction to *The Vision of The Absurd* in the sense that this story housed by the object concerns a person wholly immersed in an absurd abstract mind construction at the moment of a very slight awakening to the realm of aesthetic vision. His desk is also my desk, which is positioned in my studio to support my ten-year practise of writing and drawing in the morning. The desk is part of a personal narrative and one day I decided that I wanted my desk to face into the room like a proper writing desk enabling me to write into the world.

Deleuze describes one of the roles of art as 'freeing life wherever it is imprisoned' (Deleuze 1994 p71). Through this practice of writing and drawing in the early hours, creative freedom became part of the dialogue in my work and it is interesting that this piece uses the sky as a space that defines personal space. 'Are the birds free of the chains of the sky-ways?' (Dylan *Ballad in Plain D*). *Outlook* has a sense of someone

imprisoned in the linguistic realm of value and constructed visual space or the absurd, and a vision of freedom is glimpsed in the immanence of his realisation of illusion. He is suffering from the 'informationization' of society and neurotic about ownership of space. The story could be autobiographical but when I write at this time I feel free to move between different modes of imagining. When I recorded the spoken part, I used the voice of an older American version of myself not as a means of disguise but to help the story feel woven into the piece aesthetically.

Visually it is one of the most minimal pieces of work I've ever made. I experimented with images of the narrator and the window but this eventually became the view itself with a slow, barely noticeable track. The decisions about the image of the sky through a window and the content of the story were initially intuitive and refined as the piece developed. To begin with, the image of the sky tracked from the top of the window to the bottom, but in the finished piece the movement is minimal to emphasise the link between the dormer window and the DVD player's frame. Although I work with aesthetic intuition, I have developed a strong sense of shaping content, materials, sounds and images to function effectively, as part of the aesthetic machine's pragmatic neutrality.

I am interested in personal embodied associations in the objects and surrounding aesthetic emblems become part of the abstract register outside subjective or objective positions. The DVD player was part of my tool kit for performing in art galleries and the blue handset was something I had bought to make phone calls more pleasant. As I developed the piece, the blue of the sky in the story merged with the blue of the Microsoft Outlook logo and, in turn, the blue of the handset. Through aesthetic engagement in the making and connecting, there is a pleasure in material engagement and the practical problem-solving of how to effectively transmit the feeling of the story. The technological part of the work is part of a dialogue about the creative process and innovation. Accelerationist consumer culture gives me a sense that innovation is technological or technical in origin but my practice is not rooted in technical innovation but instead seeks to harness creative assemblage of ideas and materials to shift the viewers and my outlook through a shared sense of emergence. As Zepke points out in *From Aesthetic Autonomy to Autonomist Aesthetics*, 'The important thing is not the invention of a new medium of communication but the

invention of a new kind of relation with what is communicated' (O'Sullivan, Zepke 2017 p205). In a similar way my methodology interrogates the belief that creative innovation is joined to technological innovation. With regard to *Outlook*, I enjoy the juxtaposition of the melancholy innate in a poetic voice with the rueful smile caused by the hubris of consumer progress.

Making an aesthetic machine is a dialogue with an as yet unidentified idea. I have found that stream of consciousness writing is a useful way of combining free-flowing improvisation and conceptual ideas. The story, like other poems and texts embedded in my aesthetic machines, was written in the early hours as an aesthetic flow where my inner dialogue is projected outwards as an imagined narrative, which maps the process of everyday consciousness. I can make sense of this as a process of autopoiesis. Zepke clarifies how Guattari adapted this biological term, autopoiesis, to discuss the process of making a new kind of art:

Guattari takes the term 'autopoiesis' from the biologists Varela and Maturana, who use it to describe the entwined development of an autonomous organism and its environment. Autopoiesis emerges as a 'reciprocal relation' between local components and their global whole: 'An entity self-separates from its background.' (Zepke 2017 p205)

My practise is a playful testing of my surroundings though art acts in contrast to the absurd anxiety and disconnection from others experienced by the story's protagonist. My own neighbour has over the years prompted various (sometimes irrational) feelings which I have objectified through art. Ultimately, using the framework of a machine has allowed me to explore this process more fully through detachment. Though specific to me in origin, the process is impersonal and akin to what Alain Badiou discusses in relation to Deleuze's attitude to creative originality, 'enjoyment of the impersonal employs an "objective" or "subjective" complement renders one's possession of joy in a sort of dispossession indiscernible from the self-enjoyment of the impersonal' (Badiou 1999 p134). This relationship between the subjective and objective is explored in the piece in the sense of the neighbour's otherness. Hopefully it goes some way to opening up the limits of this mode of separation or what

Whitehead defines in *Modes of Thought* as 'abstraction from connectedness' (Whitehead 1968 p77).



Fig 28 *Outlook* digital film, DVD player and handset (2017)

At the time of its making, *Outlook* felt almost like an incidental piece of work. I wasn't used to exhibiting work without any resistant materials, which leave a trace of the making process. A piece of tutorial feedback helped me to make this new neutrality part of my developing methodology. A doctorate tutor asked whether I had made the music heard in the background: this music sets the tone for the piece, helping it oscillate between optimism and sadness; and its inclusion was primarily an intuitive aesthetic decision akin to drawing over a watercolour wash rather than blank paper. This question from a tutor set in motion a growing awareness that music could be folded into my art practice rather than being an added appendage. This was in conjunction with my reflecting on Ragnar Kjartansson's *The Visitors*, where music is central to the methodology of a powerful installation that left me feeling somehow connected to the other visitors, as if we all knew something we didn't before. I realised that all my creative capacities can shape my methodology of material vitality. I began

to see how an aesthetic machine, in this sense, is a bounded interruption of a flow of emergence made up of physical and non-physical components. In *The Cause of the Guattari Effect*, Eric Alliez describes how this construction of a limited mechanism can help maintain creative flow, 'far from being the opposite of continuity, the break or interruption conditions this continuity: it presupposes or defines what it cuts into as an ideal continuity' (Alliez 2015). The continuity here is the sense of creative emergence my writing desk embodies. I feel the works are machines and making them requires physical and pragmatic problem solving and yet I know my felt intuitions are part of this process. Their interruption of an emergent creative flow activates a space for continued creative relations.



Fig 29 *Outlook* digital film, DVD player and handset (2017) Angus Hughes Gallery

After the *Anthropocene AVA* exhibition, *Outlook* was later exhibited at the Angus Hughes gallery, where it was positioned centrally in a large open space. It became a focal point and the hand set was popular with children of all ages. Exhibiting painting can be very personal and I noted my lack of emotional unease, due perhaps to my neutrality in its creation. The combination of detached and practical problem solving (how to make the machine) and the emergent, improvised content have become a useful part of my methodology. As a result of the Angus Hughes show, *Outlook* travelled to Athens and was exhibited as part of the Antennae Art Fair, broadening my

sense of the potential found in creating a modular mechanism or self-contained and experiential audio-visual art.



Fig 30 *Outlook* digital film, DVD player and handset (2017) Antennae Art Fair, Athens

I'm interested in how the piece, as an aesthetic machine, takes familiar technology and content and creates a novel affective experience. My relationship to technology is one in which I sense progress speeding by and the device becoming anachronistic before I've had a chance to understand my relationship to it. I sometimes picture myself as a child in the back seat of a car watching the world speed by and wondering what those passing landscapes in time would feel like. This is a mentality I've found expressed by metamodern discussions: 'Like the off-modern, the metamodern seeks "the missed opportunities and roads not taken" (Boym) but proceeds pivotally, looking for the roads that could lead to the roots, rather than proceeding laterally' (Dumitrescu 2018). *Outlook* was a piece that helped me recognise how a simple bodily engagement, such as lifting a phone receiver to the ear, can create a more affective response for the audience. This appropriation of sensation and experience into the making and imagined engagement has become key to my aesthetic machines, and again O'Sullivan has helped clarify this:

A belief in sensation as an antidote to our shame at being human that animates much of Deleuze and Guattari's writings on art, as if art returned us to

Nietzsche's 'innocence of becoming', and to the 'child's wide-eyed visions of the eternal return'. The immediacy of this child-like sensation privileges the body as the crucial realm of aesthetic engagement. (O'Sullivan, Zepke 2008 p55)

This also highlights how the aesthetic machine has given me a means of building a space for an accessible interruption of my emergent creative flows (stop the flow I want to get on?). There is no punchline or dramatic arc to the story because it is part of an arrangement of materials. This means making decisions about the images and material components with aesthetic sensation so that they resonate but do not overpower each other through over-emphasis on linguistic interpretation. When I made *Outlook*, it was unlike anything I'd ever made before, in the sense that the intention was to make a self-contained structure of creative flows. The story it contains is simply one of these flows. The creative or pragmatic decisions were about how best to house these. The story itself has the neutrality of the aesthetic machine as a whole with the narrative components again inhabiting a neutral space beyond judgement.

My own sense of discovery through making the work and my surprise at the audience engagement began the idea of creating a methodology for creative discovery in the viewer and artist alike. It was the beginning of my sense of how, like the stagemaker bird, I could bring different materials, ideas and sensory registers together. I realised through research that this occurs prior to and alongside conceptualised planning through aesthetic pleasure but the mentality is not wild or primitive, just not anthropocentric, 'art escapes human subjectivity to become animal, and animal constructions of a territory through the unclasping of pre-existing material, as in the behaviour of the stagemaker bird, is nearly the birth of art' (Zepke 2011).



Fig 31 Still from *Outlook* smart phone video (2017)

4.3 The Nonbifurcatedman and Dandelion Visions

The Nonbifurcatedman is an aesthetic machine playing on a poetic experience whilst driving in a car. When I realised it could address issues of felt sense-making and expanded consciousness, it became the centre of an exhibition I curated about William Blake in Bognor. Through my involvement with Blakefest and *Sensorium*, I have curated exhibitions in a variety of places and situations, and this has helped me shape the aesthetic machine methodology involving an assemblage of materials and ideas in a modular, relational dynamic. The modular ability of these machines to be reassembled has allowed me to understand how changing context is a constituent of material vitality and creating something new. New in this sense refers to the idea of creative emergence rather than technical innovation.



Fig 32 *The Nonbifurcatedman* installation (2017) Container Space AVA Gallery

As a child, I was lucky enough to have a creative collaborator living next door and piling a front-lawn's worth of daisies on the local special constable's doorstep appealed to the burgeoning creative subversive in me. Somewhere in this activity I can see the desire to find a palette of materials in the world around me. Deleuze and Guattari help make sense of this within the context of art, and the aesthetic machine makes it something anyone can engage with rather than its continuing to be a personal reflex:

Take anything and make it matter of expression. The stagemaker bird practices Art Brut. Artists are stagemakers, even when they tear up their own posters. Of course, from this standpoint art is not the privilege of human beings. (Deleuze 2013 p349)

The Nonbifurcatedman creates an intimate installation sharing my sensation of being hurled back into nature in a moment of suspended wonder. So the artwork attempts to carry my sense of being inside the mind of life explained by Skrbina's interpretation of

Whitehead's 'drops of experience': 'If all real things are occasions, and all occasions are "drops of experience", then all things contain an experiential, or mental, quality' (Skrbina 2010).

This idea of art not being an entirely human privilege speaks of how the aesthetic register operates outside the reductionist idea of human activity as conceptual cognition (see Nagel below). My feeling is that my creative interactions with the world are about discovering my place as an organism in the cosmos rather than a human analysing it. Curation and collaboration helped move my work into the space of what Whitehead refers to the 'ubiquity of mind'. Deleuze's analogy of animal aesthetic via the stagemaker bird is shaped by Whitehead's idea that human cognition is a toe-hold in a ubiquitous consciousness rather than an overseeing intelligence. This helps explain my methodology of shaping ideas through feelings, as being alogical rather than irrational. The aesthetic machine *The Nonbifurcatedman* has become a means of creating a nomadic shared cultural aesthetic. Its central position in the group exhibition *Dandelion Visions* (see below) was a dialogue about creating a freely-creative shared space. The method of blurring our identities as artists and spectators lies within Camus' desire to re-merge with nature and an anti-reductionist view shared with Thomas Nagel expressed in *What's it like to be a Bat?*, 'if, and only if, there is something that it is like to be that organism – something it is like for the organism to be itself' (Nagel 1974).

In September 2017 I was asked by Rachel Searle to curate an exhibition for Blakefest around William Blake who had written *Milton and Jerusalem* in the village of Felpham, Bognor Regis. I immediately wanted to create something suggesting his energising and visionary inspiration to artists. Being upstairs in a library, the venue was far from the vast clean space of a classic white cube. Creating an exhibition in a public library involved a negotiation with certain given fixed constraints presented by the venue and how materials feel once they are in this context. In this sense curating, like my practice, is site-specific, making use of found objects and existing spaces to create relationships and aesthetic rhymes. Tisna Westerhof contributed a multi-layered pair of embroidered net curtains reflecting on the tragedy of Grenfell Tower: these were one of the last contributions to the exhibition and acted in a site-specific way to connect the exhibition with the town beyond the window. This relationship between the

exhibition and the outside surroundings has interested me more and more as I've researched Whitehead's ideas of experiential metaphysics and nonrepresentational theory. They also helped in the process of transforming the room's civic and rather static atmosphere into a more dynamic and poetic dimension. They were emblematic of the network, which consisted of an entanglement of the digital, the virtual-analogue and the really real of the experiential world.



Fig 33 Tisna Westerhof *Grenfell Tower Curtains* embroidered lace (2017) *Dandelion Visions* Blakefest, Bognor Regis

This methodology was expanded upon by a performance piece created for the exhibition public opening by Anna Fairchild. To the delight of visiting locals, this act of walking over blackberries took place in the library's magical and underused garden. The resulting shroud was hung in the exhibition as a performative object. What I found successful was the interaction between the everyday and art, as if creative acts have the potential to open up the spectator to different kinds of experience and other modes of perception. In a town with the demographic of Bognor the potential for connecting to the other is very rewarding.



Fig 34 Anna Fairchild *And Did Those Feet* performance (2017) *Dandelion Visions* Blakefest, Bognor Regis

When making aesthetic machines, I enjoy the invention involved with reconfiguring existing materials to create an immersive experience. A simple example being the phone receiver plugged into a DVD player for *Outlook*. To make an effective group show with limited resources, I applied a similar approach. In a modest way I wanted to look at Blake with fresh eyes: as a curator, I realised that I am not a Blake historian and decided that what I could offer was a means of exploring how Blake valued creativity as central to a metaphysical sense of personhood. Blake's creativity is experimental and a critique of the dogmatic paradigms of institutions (both of art and civic life). I was inspired by the progressive atmosphere of the Raven's Row Gallery exhibition, which aimed to convey an experimental and richer view of the psychedelic scene (itself influenced by Blake) in *Memoires of a Damaged Life*. Lars Bang Larsen discusses the often oblique and primarily aesthetic approach of this art and concludes that, 'It may be that the art establishment has ignored this kind of work because they just don't understand it'. I felt a connection between my practice and this experimental psychedelic work, which – like Blake's – has an aesthetic or felt ontology at its core giving it a potential to shift conceptions and heal relations:

If something can undo convention and oppression and make things good again, it is psychedelia. Its promises of fun, spirituality, togetherness and sex have pervaded all art forms and levels of culture, in ways that make Pop Art seem academic. (Bang Larsen 2015)

Dandelion Visions – The Nonbifurcatedman

At the time of putting the Blake show together I was also developing *The Non-bifurcatedman* and I felt this immersive multi-media poem could be an experiential emblem for the proliferating influence of Blake. I felt it could take the simple form of bodily engagement and functionality of *Outlook* and expand on it in terms of scale and duration. I also wanted to test the idea of the aesthetic machine as a means of fulfilling the various capacities in my creative output i.e. music, poetry, film, construction, image-making. In the installation, the audience experiences a simulation of sitting in a car and driving into a cloud of dandelion seeds overlaid within an intergalactic hyperdrive. As with all my aesthetic machines, this grew out of a personal experience: I enjoy how it takes the local and resonates with the cosmic in a register that is both sincere and ironic.

The text for the piece emerged after I had been driving my son in the early morning to his swimming training session and the entire road was filled with dandelion seeds suspended in bright low sunshine. Sometimes a line of poetry can give a sense of convergence and in this case the actual experience seemed to bring together overlapping ideas and feelings about time. The road where it took place was one I had repeatedly taken with my father as he drove us both to school. I instinctively felt the dandelion seeds as a diffusion of time and the merging of generations. I took the problem of manifesting this experience and tried to use it to also answer a question from my supervisor: what would non-bifurcated art look like? At the heart of Whitehead's critique of bifurcation in modernity is his invitation to engage with life as events (drops of experience) rather than fixed abstract objects. Whitehead sees nature as events (rather than objects) in order to dissolve the separation of the concept of nature and the experience of nature. This separation is the abstracted engine of the absurd. The aesthetic mode is felt, and this sense of an experience allows ideas and concepts to emerge as part of a wider sense-making engagement. In terms of my methodology the aesthetic machine creates aesthetic refrains to create

experience: 'The Ritournelle (refrain) is therefore a form of incantation for a claimed spatiality, but it is also a sort of song that, despite its supposed lightness, is calling for the power of the cosmos' (*Larval Subjects* 2015).



Fig 35 *Dandelion Visions* digital wallpaper on cut tempered glass (2017)

The mist of dandelion seeds created an experience that was both outside of and within the conceptualised order of my modern absurd life. It was an experience full of the characteristic rueful happiness of a longing outside of human time that suffuses poetry. It was also immediately obvious that the linear order of road travel was a strong counterpoint to this and could be useful for shaping the machine itself. As with *Outlook*, this piece also explored a sculptural technological interface and can be looked at from outside as well as experienced as felt sensations. As the artist I obviously feel that experiencing the immersive function of the piece provides richer sense of the work's meaning, but I am not prepared to discount any interaction the viewer might have.

As with the other aesthetic machines, the construction was a process of intuitive pragmatism. How can I faithfully convey the experience with the resources available to me? This is a key difference from the mentality of seeking to harness technical innovation. I am ambitious for my work out of a desire to see it grow and connect rather than control. I feel something sculpturally interesting will emerge from this pragmatic approach. In the construction, a pair of black leather Audi A3 seats, bought from eBay, sit beside a constructed wooden module with sticky back plastic wood grain and padded fake leather sides. I thought it was important to address the strange feeling of comfort I have derived from the signifiers of luxury that I had learnt from

childhood and to make this part of material vitality. By this I mean I took pleasure in designing and crafting the module and considering its ergonomic function as the base for the usually hidden media player. The work is not created to be decoded in the same sense that my initial experience felt full of meaning on an affective level, which seems to envelope all the conceptual signifiers at play without a word being spoken: roads, time, nature, seeds, sunshine, life, childhood, fatherhood, hope, clocks, order, freedom, space, travel... The central poem shares an embryonic moment of epiphany when life is experienced as emergent or new. It has a looping quality and listeners reported feeling that they lost track of their place or time. Some visitors had more strongly trance-like or meditative experiences. My aesthetic machines are an intuitive experiment with manifesting my personal experience and other modes of being. All of them have had instances of audience feedback comparing it to a previous experience of altered perception.

The importance of these other modes of understanding is discussed by Nigel Thrift in *Nonrepresentational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect*:

They can be seen as concentrating, in particular, in a set of practices which can be described as 'mystical'. Like practices of contemplation, with which they are intimately linked, they can be seen as the result of a number of overlapping processes of animation and play which allow forces and intensities to be focused and channelled: it is stimulation that produces tranquility and it is stimulation that produces trance. (Thrift 2008)

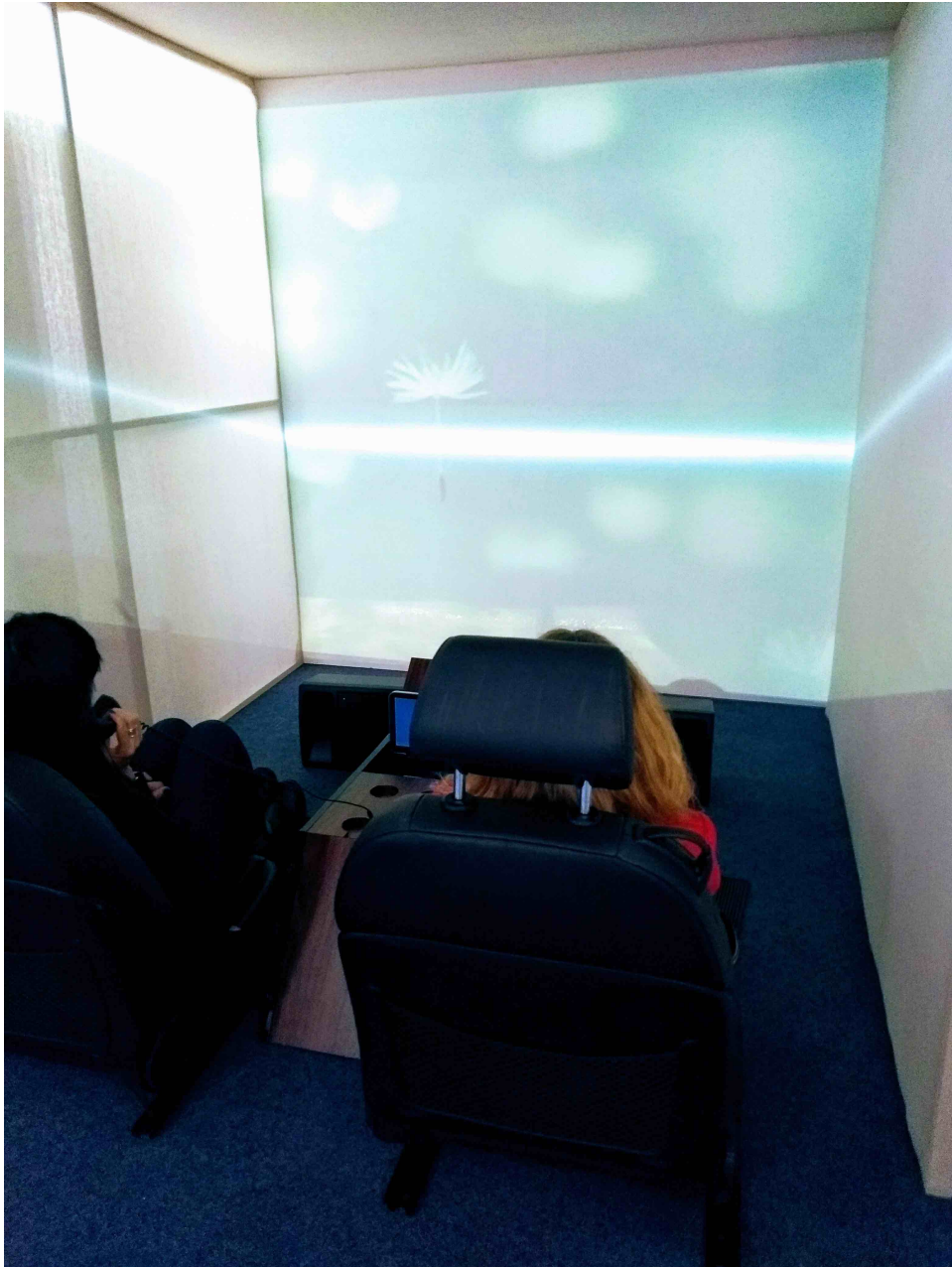


Fig 36 *The Nonbifurcatedman* installation (2017) *Dandelion Visions* Blakefest, Bognor Regis

Through expanding and exploring the methodology I had begun in *Outlook*, where a poetic text is housed in a construction, I developed a sense of material expression. This was a satisfying move towards using specific personal experience for a cosmic poem and away from the realm of signifiers my earlier paintings had taken me into. Zepke's ideas about art as an abstract machine have been inspiring and a useful means of working out what my methodology is: 'In this way the abstract machine operates at the interstice between finite and infinite, it deterritorialises the concrete

world, breaking matter out of its over-coded forms, to put it back into contact with its vitality, with its living flows, its inhuman and inorganic nature' (Zepke 2011 p97). By taking the lessons I learnt from *Outlook* and expanding the materiality, *The Nonbifurcatedman* taught me about taking a pragmatic or neutral approach further than I had before. In *Art as Abstract Machine*, Zepke refers to this neutrality as 'abstract' meaning neither objective nor subjective. Understanding this mentality has given me more flexibility with grafting materials and words together. I see building the aesthetic machines as partly problem solving and I enjoy working with a friend, Jon Corbett, who makes a living fixing things for other people. Zepke captures this very well: 'Building an abstract machine is more DIY than techno-science and requires a bit of a mad professor. Deleuze and Guattari, mad professors no doubt, adopt the language of the construction site, an earthy directness reflecting the pragmatism required by the job at hand.' This installation gains its traction by being a specific experience within modern life and not as an escape. It has that function of the aesthetic machine to offer a slice through a continually emerging flow of creative immanence. The idea that art is an escape is built on bifurcation or separation of concept from experience. I would like my art to combine the two into a process of an actual experience rather than a representation of an idea.

Bognor Regis as Aesthetic Machine

Through curating the show *Dandelion Visions* as part of Blakefest in Bognor Regis I gained an insight into proliferating creative atmospheres by mapping the aesthetic machine onto the town at large. The show's opening was in the daytime and well attended. I enjoyed a positive engagement from local council officials,

'I think if it doesn't touch your soul, there's no point, and that did. I think it's fantastic having it [the exhibition] here in the library, it makes it accessible. Art and poetry, it's for everyone, isn't it? Here at the library it's open doors, open dreams, open boxes of dreams and aspirations.'

Debbie Kennard Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities

The work's poetic experience and central motif of the dandelion seed became a shared means of accessing creative proliferation and the sense of collective endeavour borne upon the air of the town. Elaine Hamilton became the show's poet in

residence, and she suggested calling it *Dandelion Visions*. I initially felt this was too direct or corny, but as with my making I thought it better to be neutral and pragmatic.



Fig 37 A visitor enjoys the virtual reality tour of Blake's cottage (2017)
Dandelion Visions Blakefest, Bognor Regis

Ultimately this worked as a means of retaining the feeling of poetic lightness throughout the surrounding events. I invited artists to contribute banner designs based on this idea, which were hung in the town's high street. The show began to feel part of the town itself rather than any one individual vision. The banner by Scott Jason Smith (a former student of mine) depicts Blake's broken spectacles used in the exhibition itself. This sense of an organism expanding through creative, fluid assemblage and shared resonances is something I have noticed in the functional role of my aesthetic machines. My research has allowed me to understand this process, which was there at times at the start of the doctorate but more haphazard. There was often too much happening and a process of distillation can prevent affects and ideas clashing. There is also a parallel to Deleuze and Guattari's 'self-organising cosmos' found in *Chaosmosis*.

With the idea of creative proliferation and network culture in mind, I began to contact artists to take part. Using social media as a means of sourcing and communicating, I was able to include artists from America, Sweden, Germany, Holland and Turkey as

well as the UK. The directness of this activity reminds me of the mail art culture I experienced in the early 90s as a maker of artists books. I am free to find work that embodies the artists' creative material flow rather than work that acts an agent for their fixed identity. This show orbited around the collective identity of creation itself. I am now more confident contextualising my practice in a communal environment where relativity and experience are prerequisites of how the objects are received. My practice has often sought to transmit this creative tone of Blake's but Whiteheadian ideas via Deleuze and others have led to a more pragmatic methodology. The central idea behind the exhibition – due to return in September 2019 – is the proliferation of collective creativity:

Creativity is the universal of universals characterizing ultimate matter of fact. It is that ultimate principle by which the many, which are the universe disjunctively, become the one actual occasion, which is the universe conjunctively. It lies in the nature of things that the many enter into complexity. (Whitehead 1979 p89)



Fig 38 Scott Jason Smith *Dandelion Visions* banner (2017) Bognor Regis



Fig 39 *The Nonbifurcatedman* installation (2017) *Dandelion Visions* Blakefest, Bognor Regis

4.4 Actual Occasion

This is the bacchanal of art, immersed in the real, affirming its own creative ecstasies. Deleuze is a laughing Dionysus: 'Yes, the essence of art is a kind of joy,' he affirms, 'and this is the very point of art'. (Zepke 2005)

The above quote helps to explain my own sense of aesthetic experience and super-abundance found in the development of *Actual Occasion*, the largest and most immersive aesthetic machine I have made to date. It is an attempt to immerse myself and the visitor in a methodology shaped by an aesthetic ontology of felt understanding. When creating *Actual Occasion*, I was attempting to make an aesthetic machine addressing the same feeling of entanglement some recent offset lithographs had been an investigation of. These prints were a dialogue about the order of layers in a print, combining a sense of inter-dimensionality found in the embedded assemblage of actions each layer reveals and my personal intuitions about how I am part of a quantum entanglement of the cosmos. There were superficial parallels with the art of Escher but his prints have a logical or conclusive absurdity and my prints were an

attempt to visually manifest a feeling. In his book *The Logic of Sense* I found a similar divergence of the absurd in Deleuze's comparison between Alice, who is lost in the surface of social appearance and puzzles, and Artaud who rejects the surface for the depths of the body. In developing his idea in *The Logic of Sense of The Body Without Organs* as a feeling of deeper underlying reality, Deleuze refers to 'a new dimension of the schizophrenic body, an organism without parts which operates entirely by insufflation, respiration, evaporation and fluid transmission (the superior body or body without organs of Antonin Artaud)' (Deleuze 2004 p102).

The book's title, *The Logic of Sense*, steered me towards this strategy of feeling the event and I was, aesthetically speaking, trying to create something located in bodily experience. In effect, I see my aesthetic entanglement and ontology as the same thing. The threads and holes were about how different modes of perception are mapped by different planes of the cosmos. Of course when working with shapes, colours, marks and materials there is no need to put this across as a linguistic concept the feeling remains unclasped from stratified order. And so, when I began to make the video for the piece, I wanted to create a similar sense of traveling into the plane of existence or the plane of the screen.

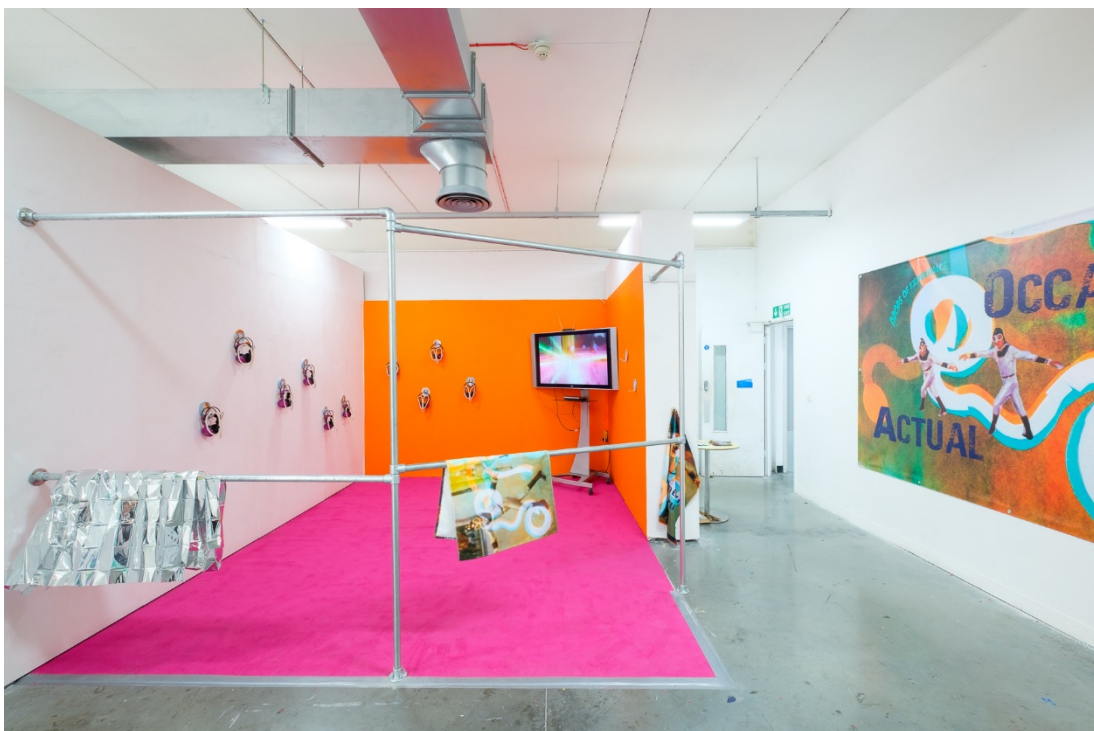


Fig 40 *Actual Occasion* installation (2018) AVA Gallery

At the same time, I sought to refract the non-hierarchical assemblage of digital video, outwards from the screen. I began to look for something like a worm-hole on the internet and through trial and error searching found the introduction to the TV show *Time Tunnel*, which became the central refrain for stitching the video together.

This interrogation of our relationship with time and the past is something that art's construction of felt experience opens up outside the data of history as information. In *Homemaking Radical Nostalgia* Anindya Raychaudhuri asks, 'Is it possible to think of a counter-hegemonic, progressive nostalgia that celebrates and helps sustain the marginalised?' As I recently discussed my memory of how this piece came about with my supervisor, he mentioned his own recent exploration of the wormholes and time traveling in the film *Donnie Darko*. James R Williams' ideas on the subject reveal how this film's imaginative life acts as an early warning system: 'Time-travel, done well, is not only an exercise in retrieval and learning from the past. It is a lesson from the past about an ineluctable decay in each present' (Williams 2017). And so, for me the wormhole as an analogy of entanglement is a means of reimagining more creative and inclusive outcomes.



Fig 41 *Entanglement Revisited* offset lithograph and collage (2018)

By allowing my reflexive concerns about entanglement to shape a material vitality, the work allows space for various other dialogues to emerge. With *The Non-bifurcatedman*, I realised how all my various capacities for making (print, sound, film, paint, technology) could form a single methodology. Though the decisions were led by a Deleuzian sense that 'you experience joy when you satisfy, when you effectuate one of your capacities' (Deleuze 2009), other more serious ideas concerning survival, emerge via the intuitive use of the survival blanket. An oscillation between joy and seriousness of the survival blanket has taken on a growing sculptural presence in the installation. Foucault clarifies this approach in his introduction to Deleuze's *A Thousand Plateaus*: 'do not think that one has to be sad in order to be militant, even though the thing one is fighting is abominable' (Foucault 2008). This mentality of aesthetic abundance led on to the methodology for the previously discussed Notifications from the Technological Nonconscious.

In *The Nonbifurcatedman* I had attempted to create an immersive poem around the strange or absurd split of the concept of nature and the experience of nature. *Actual Occasion* took confidence from the material vitality I discovered in that process and sought to expand on a mentality of self-enjoyment embedded in its felt intensities of aesthetic intuition. In *Self Enjoyment and Concern*, Steven Shaviro explains how Whitehead's idea of self-enjoyment, 'happens pre-reflexively in the moment itself. I enjoy my life as I am living it; my enjoyment of the very experience of living is precisely what it means to be alive' (Shaviro 2008 p249).

This attitude was adopted in the making process and creative decisions based on how I imagined visitors would interact, in other words: what would their experience of self-enjoyment be? So *self-enjoyment* is a form of aesthetic delight shaped by my mentality or concern as an artist. In *Modes of Thought*, Whitehead's idea of *self enjoyment* is something relational, which he explains like this: 'an involuntary experience of being affected by others. It opens me, in spite of myself, to the outside' (1968 p167). Whilst there is a real sense of my individual fulfilling of creative capacities taking this approach, it is also about connecting to the sense of other. Artist and writer Nathaniel Stern tries to clarify how 'concern', although intuitive, is not something infantile and is a relational means of connecting: 'Concern is always for and with things external to myself, with the many pasts in and of the world around me

(which lead to this present moment of transition), and with the potential futures I may help to make' (Stern 2018). This also helps to explain the spirit of entanglement in this particular aesthetic machine and builds on an understanding of Badiou's 'self-enjoyment of the personal' discussed in relation to *Outlook*.

Through repeated installations in different venues, I have become more aware of the piece's emphasis on saturated colour and an aesthetic of super abundance. As mentioned in the introduction, the piece seems to refract a non-hierarchical tapestry of the digital moving image out into the surroundings. This is achieved through a textural layering of colour, fabric and materials, together with the repetition of visuals. It has the three elements of the aesthetic machine, these being a linguistic kernel, an encounter with nature and a sense of creative emergence. The encounter with nature is harder to see in the sense that my other work made a more explicit connection. For example, *Outlook* has the sky and *The Nonbifurcatedman* has dandelion seeds. However, I think the precognitive feeling of bodily engagement in *Actual Occasion* could be regarded as an encounter with nature in the sense that there is potential for glimpses of how it feels to taste oneself outside the striations of hegemonic culture or inhabit smooth space – to be an organism in the world of organisms.

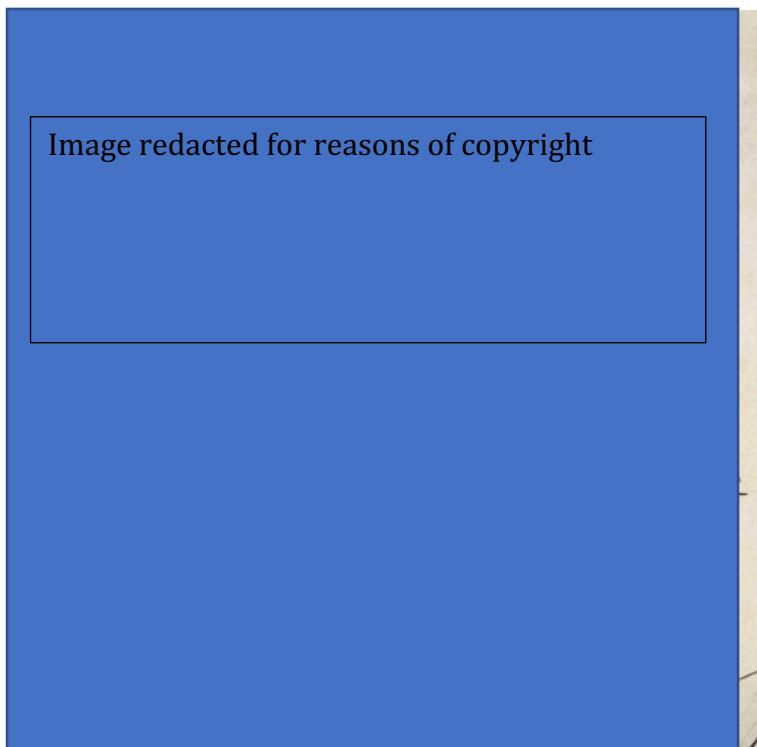


Fig 42 Anon *Birthday Card for Kandinsky* (1923)

The piece developed from a short film I made as a thank you at the end of a WIP seminar. I have sometimes reflected on how I enjoy the intuitive imagination displayed in the cards and personal gifts made by artists at the Bauhaus and relate this to the aesthetic delight of self-enjoyment. In a light-hearted summation of the ideas I had discussed, this used a song I had made called *Kindness is a Virus* as a refrain upon which to layer moving images of amoebas and futuristic dancers with my computer's synthesised voice speaking directly to Whitehead's discussion of the experience of being alive distilled to a concept of 'drops of experience' (*see below*). The entwining and layering of ideation and process in the creation of the prints and the video became a means of exploring the refrain as a carrier for this aesthetic transformation of space. This methodology is also an example of how I regard entanglement as form and content. As the *Funambulist* pamphlet on Deleuze puts it: 'The Ritournelle (refrain) is therefore a form of incantation for a claimed spatiality, but it is also a sort of song that, despite its supposed lightness is calling for the power of the cosmos' (Lambert p21).

Within the material flow of this spontaneous piece of work there were some happy accidents of entanglement between the computer's voice, the music and the images that generated an engaged response. From the feedback I received after the WIP, it was clear that my experiments using only the computer synthesised voice and not my own were not as resonant as I had hoped for. My earlier aesthetic machines had longer texts and poems within them but for this one I used the short, simple refrain of *Kindness is a Virus*. I was beginning to understand that the aesthetic machine is a generator of the Deleuzian smooth space in which everything can be part of a cohesive material vitality, where a poem or a melody or a colourful texture or a rhythm are entwined with no hierarchy. As discussed above, unlike the logical trick of Escher, I seek a methodology opening onto a non-striated modality through the alogical concerns of aesthetic engagement. As a result of all the pieces I have made, this one feels the most like a process of mutual discovery between the artist and the audience. This is something I experience with the shifting response each time I reinstall it. The overriding feeling is a sensation of a super-abundance of creative proliferation and the concepts and signifiers within the space are like ingredients of its heady stew acting as melodic refrains rather than signposts.

A recent visitor to the *Dogon Egg* community entanglement installation at Amp Gallery in Peckham, remarked that it felt like being inside a 1980s pop video. This was not something I intended but it does echo the idea of how the work refracts the smooth space of a digital tapestry out into the room. If post-modernism gave us back the emblem but without linguistic meaning, I am seeking to use material vitality to give these signs (dancers, survival blankets, riot police, amoebas, ruins, wormholes, Buddhas) a felt understanding rather than semiotic. A desire to weave the conceptual into a living or felt experience rather than regarding feelings as an appendage to real concepts is at the core of *The Vision of The Absurd*. Guattari articulates this basic role of art:

Perhaps artists today constitute the final lines along which primordial existential questions are folded. How are the new fields of the possible going to be fitted out? How are sounds and forms going to be arranged so that the subjectivity adjacent to them remains in movement and really alive? (Guattari 1995).

The sound, image and built environment developed in parallel to each other. I made a decision to work with aesthetic delight – the self-enjoyment of choosing pink headphones and rich swathe of Barbie-pink carpet. The non-hierarchical idea of smooth space has helped me feel confident in combining construction with materials, concepts and imagery. I feel this is akin to the intuitive decision making of some nonrepresentational approaches to painting. For example, in discussing the assemblage language of Sigmar Polke's work, Dan Coombes offers a description of 'all over' painting that helps to articulate how the smooth space of the aesthetic machine functions, 'But all-overness, where the visual plane becomes a kind of scrim, or meniscus, as though reality, rather than a set of objects set in space, becomes a suspended field' (Dan Coombes 2016).

I also had a clearer desire to create a feeling of bodily engagement so seeing the art is contextualised in a realm of sensation. This realm of sensation is a projection of material vitality and was something I had felt at the *(X) A Fantasy* exhibition at the Dave Roberts Foundation in October 2017. In the central room of this richly diverse show, curated by Vincent Honoré, was a slate blue carpet underfoot that amplified the pleasure I felt of the aesthetic proliferation I had become immersed in. The seed of the

idea to use a swathe of bright pink carpet in *Actual Occasion* was planted then. It created a pleasurable field for the handcrafted, brightly glazed ceramic wall hooks and geometric-offset-printed towels hanging from galvanised steel frames. I use ceramics here because they are a means of combining practical decisions with an aesthetic intuition for squashing and combining different materials. I am drawn to exhibitions like (X) *A Fantasy* that seem to broadcast creative proliferation through material vitality.

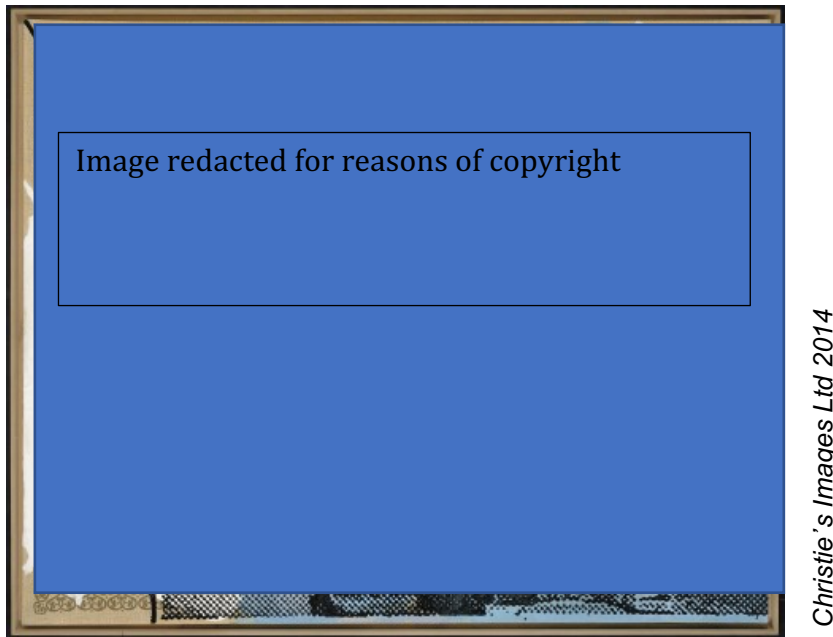


Fig 43 Sigmar Polke *Bikini-Frauen* acrylic and dispersion on printed fabric 126.5 x 156.2cm (1999)

Leading up to creating *Actual Occasion*, I had been experimenting with offset lithography and chose to make images that used the printing process to create a dialogue about entanglement. The prints explored a layering and weaving of forms mapping the way entanglement is discussed in *Larval Subjects*, 'we have an entanglement of matter-forms each contributing their own differences generating unique situated arrangements or local assemblages of objects' (*Larval Subjects* 2017). When using printmaking, I like to use the dynamic between forward planning, intuition and accident to create a smooth space for concepts and intuitive aesthetic decisions. I attempt to generate the appearance of layering defying the linearity of cause and effect. I devised a means of repeating the forms of earlier printmaking experiments on the theme of entanglement, which was to manufacture a large pvc banner such as one sees advertising local occasions. The design included the text



Fig 44 *Entanglement* offset lithograph stencil experiments (2018)

‘webinar and groupchat here on June 15th’. I was interested in how I could entwine the imaginative process of envisaging an entanglement of a creative discussion inside the work with the creation of the print itself. The relationship between theory and practice can be a nuanced one and this is an example of how theory itself can become part of material vitality. This is an approach I amplified for Notifications from the Technological Nonconscious. The functional logistics of planning a webinar in advance of the exhibition and including a notice for this on the art work also embodies the spirit of entanglement in network culture. This is a desire to create tangible connections through interactions with other enthusiast within ‘a metamodern media logic of creative amateurs, social networks and locative media – what the cultural theorist Kazys Varnelis calls network culture’ (Vermeulen 2015). Including this information on a large, expensive print without any certain idea how it would happen also felt like an emblematic allegiance to the improvised lines of flight or thinking through making. It also spoke of the convergence of the localized and the cosmic, the virtual and the material, potentially turning the desire for life as Whitehead’s ‘drops of experience’ into the material of the work.

The desire for real life or off-screen experiences found in metamodernism is an echo of Whitehead’s invitation to feel the overlapping drops of experience rather than

reading an abstracted static equivalence. For Whitehead, his term Actual Occasion was pivotal in understanding life as experience:

It is very much what we commonly mean by an event going on at the time we are experiencing it. The experiencing of it Whitehead calls 'feeling' and means the full qualitative immediacy of the experience – just what we feel emotionally, sensorially or otherwise as it is going on.' (Pepper)

To share the song *Kindness is a Virus* with my fellow doctorate students, I initially wanted to use a futuristic dance performance and found a readymade film from the early 1970s choreographing an idea of Space-Age optimism. This was a playful decision but nonetheless it had the strong feeling of an idea within it. This building on, or making with, a vestige of the past is different to an industry of imperialist nostalgia. By this I mean the way in which a striated nostalgia for a hierarchical past found in the 'keep calm and carry on' industry somehow occludes the aforementioned desire for alternative routes with their roots in the past. This is a personal intuition I was able to give shape to when I discovered an exhibition called *Hippie Modernism – the Struggle for Utopia*, which examined the alternative creative outputs of the counterculture in the late sixties to early seventies.

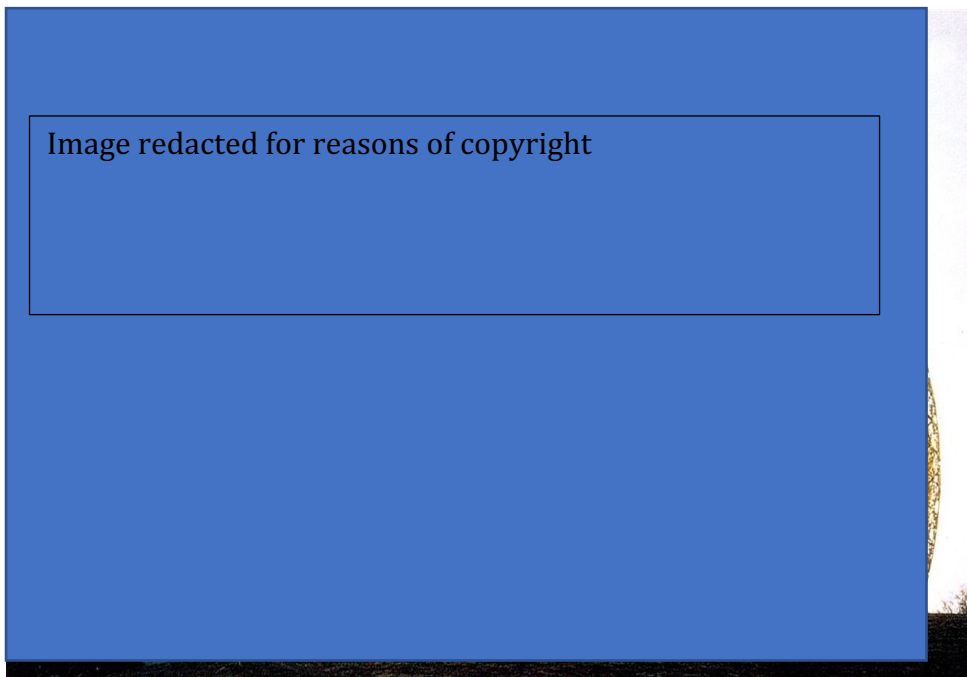


Fig 45 Buckminster Fuller *Montreal Biosphere* (1967) Montreal

The cover for the catalogue shows a vast geodesic dome in flames in 1976. This, it transpires, was the US pavilion for the *Montreal World Expo* of 1967, a Buckminster Fuller design inside which Native American culture was orbited by the lunar landing module (before the event itself) and rag-dolls and was traversed by sweeping escalators bisected by a monorail. Not counterculture but mainstream culture, which sought to immerse visitors in a kinder form of cultural aesthetic with no explanations, only sensations. This serves as a model for an aesthetic machine as smooth space or a non-hierarchical territory of nondifferentiation. In fact, Deleuze connects the smooth space with the previously mentioned *Body Without Organs* in a manner that could describe the Expo dome itself:

The body without organs is an egg: it is crisscrossed with axes and thresholds, with latitudes and longitudes and geodesic lines, traversed by gradients marking the transitions and the becomings, the destinations of the subject developing along these particular vectors. (Deleuze and Guattari 2000 p19)

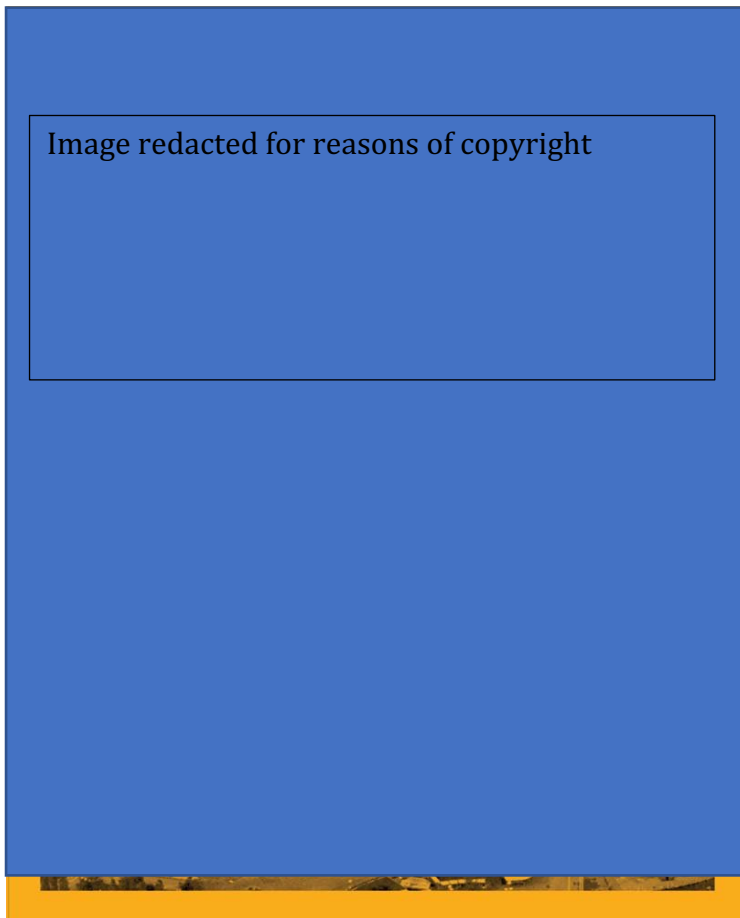


Fig 46 *Hippie Modernism: The Search for Utopia* catalogue (2018)

The constructions of other Expo pavilions, such as the Philips pavilion of Expo 58, have also influenced how I set about making my own aesthetic machines. The statement from the *Hippie Modernism* curator, Andrew Blavelt, has further specific relevance to the context of my own practice:

Among the central themes of the exhibition is the desire to expand consciousness and achieve greater awareness of the holistic relationship of self, world, and cosmos. Altered states of perception were stimulated not only by meditation and psychotropic substances but also by art and design. Other works address the rejection of conventional social structures and the dissolution of boundaries between art and life, culture and politics.



Image: David Roberts Art

Fig 47 (X) *A Fantasy* installation view, curated by Vincent Honoré (2016)

This also has strong connections to (X) *A Fantasy* and the position that critical engagement with the present comes from attempting to work with material vitality as a means of making the personal political. I was inspired here by the book *What is Philosophy?* wherein Deleuze and Guattari resume their championing of emergent creative acts as a necessary means of protest: ‘We do not lack communication,’ they contend; ‘On the contrary, we have too much of it. We lack creation. We lack resistance to the present’ (Deleuze 1994 p107). The curator’s approach of an entwining of media and materials in the (X) *A Fantasy* exhibition helped nurture my understanding of using music, performance, event, moving image and hand-made objects as an

immersive methodology with an attitude of material vitality. This is conveyed in the assemblage of surfaces, materials, images and colours in this installation shot.

Rope-Goggles of Entanglement

A dialogue with the concept of entanglement continued into my use of silent disco technology as a means of transmitting the sound to visitors and immersing them in the experience. Using headphones is common in art galleries but rarely addressed as part of the work. They are functional, like the bench in front of the monitor. My decision to use silent-disco technology came partly from wanting the visitor to be untethered and not waiting for their turn. It was also about a playful curiosity as to where this somewhat anachronistic technology could lead. All my aesthetic machines try to re-examine the process of sensory engagement with an artwork via bodily engagement with the technology. I mulled the idea over for some time before investing in a transmitter and ten headphones. I chose pink ones with a similar freedom as mixing pink paint. I researched various cords with which to fashion the rope goggles as worn by the dancers in the film. Attaching them to the headphones became the most effective way of visitors wearing them as well. This simple decision and consequent action became part of a performative participation as visitors are helped into the headsets and begin to notice them mirrored in the installation's central film.



Fig 48 *Silent Disco Rope-Goggle Headsets Ceramic Hooks* installation (2018) AVA Gallery

The entangled relationship between the ceramic hooks and the rope-goggles on the headsets is a pleasing use of materials that satisfies the pleasure of creative problem solving and playful engagement. Creating an ergonomic fit and simple use of the cord with as minimal fixings as possible was part of my sculptural engagement. The insectoid look of the headsets has echoes of the hippie modernist struggle for utopia via learning outside of anthropocentric boundaries. My use of the rope developed into a continuation of the printmaking exploration of entanglement, both in terms of physics and more personal relations. The aesthetic also chimed with ideas of *nonhuman* cognition such as those involving insects. For example, the performance artist Calum F Ker arrived at the *Actual Occasion* clutching a copy of Laline Paull's *The Bees* and remarked on the coincidence of themes. For many artists an idea of mutual responsibility via insectoid analogies offers an alternative to the alienation of data culture. My own art has been shaped by Whitehead's articulation of how the specific nature of human cognition or consciousness has limited our modes of sense making: 'But 'feeling' for Whitehead does not necessarily involve consciousness. Conscious feeling is a special mode of feeling' (Pepper 2003). Although Whitehead was writing at the beginning of the 20th century, I seem to have intuitively retraced some ideas developed by the so-called Hippy Modernists. The Haus Rucker Company describe their *Flyhead* as having, 'the aim of altering the wearer's perception to forge a heightened relationship between the body and the environment.'

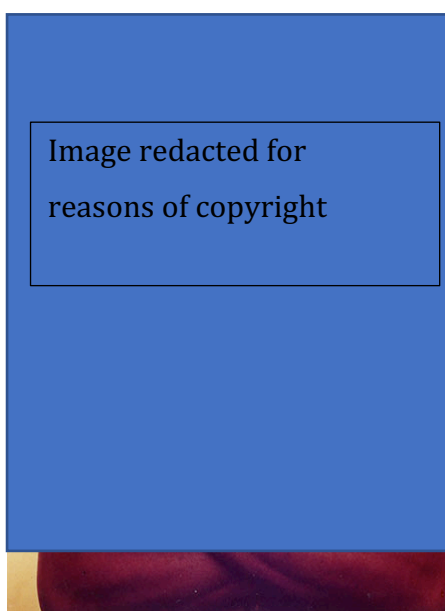


Fig 49 *Flyhead* (1968) Haus Rucker Co



Fig 50 Testing *Headsets of Entanglement* (2018)

However, there is potential for an anthropomorphic plot like *the Bees* to project human values onto another species. My practice has been shaped by an interest in a non-human sense of artistic output. An art led by the rational sense of self refers to signifiers as a mode of understanding, but the nonhuman mode is led by a feeling of material vitality and a desire to test the surroundings as a means of connection. Influenced by his colleague Georges Bataille, the artist Roger Caillois looked to insects as a model for creative activity where ‘community is not based on the rationality of the useful, but rather on the irrationality of the useless, that is, not on the instinct of self-preservation but rather on the instinct of self-loss.’

Since starting to regularly curate *Sensorium* with Professor Dean Todd, as part of the *Affect and Social Media Conference*, I have become more interested in how art developed through an aesthetic modality can deepen our understanding of sense-making as something precognitive and transindividual. *Sensorium* is a way of introducing art’s ability to think with events and materials into the habitually analytical domain of the academic conference. In this case the conference is about affect, so art becomes a vital means of extending the dialogue beyond anthropocentric limits. In his paper *The Luxury of Self-destruction*, John Hamilton describes how Caillois ‘exhibited a strong interest in nonhuman forms of creativity, in an aesthetics emancipated from human forms of subjective, rational agency – perhaps an aesthetics of flirtation’ (Hamilton 2012).

Participants in *Actual Occasion* find themselves moving through a refracted tapestry of fabrics, materials and Greek riot police merging with stylised utopian space dancers as if it’s an everyday occurrence. The nonrepresentational attitude makes sense of the decision-making behind this assembled environment where:

focus falls on how life takes shape and gains expression in shared experiences, everyday routines, fleeting encounters, embodied movements, precognitive triggers, practical skills, affective intensities, enduring urges, unexceptional interactions and sensuous dispositions. (Lorimer 2005 p84)

Whitehead thinks through the stuckness of binary paradigms to something prepersonal, nonphenomenological and cosmological: ‘each task of creation

is a social effort, employing the whole universe. Each novel actuality is a new partner adding a new condition' (Whitehead PR).

Vision of the Fool

Creating and observing subsequent versions of *Actual Occasion* has allowed me to think about the sensual understanding of an aesthetic ontology. On my BA, Cecil Collins was the apotheosis of visual language, image-making and poetic coalescence. My work was very much shaped by the glowing spirituality of his images but I was never able to shed the representational or anatomic quality of an art shaped by my early exposure to the Renaissance representational mentality and drive to classify and specialise. A moving outside the anthropocentric quality of the Renaissance is essential for understanding my art and the art I now feel aligned too. The fluid theories around Whitehead and Deleuze have helped me shape a non-representational methodology. Taken out of context, their knotty ideas have the potential to confuse but their ideas attempt to liberate makers from the hierarchy of conceptual order and structure and encourage one to think with an intuitive embodied cognition. The relational entanglement of their ideas helps form the content of my work as well as the methodology I use.

Building the *Actual Occasion* was an attempt to pursue the aesthetic mode more resolutely as an experiment in matter flow. To use what Deleuze calls lines of flight, 'not following a logical order, but following alogical consistencies... because no one can say in advance ... whether two borderlines will string together or form a fibre' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987 p123). This makes clear that favouring the aesthetic register is not anti-logic but about proliferating an expanded sense of experienced cognition through the previously mentioned self-enjoyment of aesthetic delight. It also helps explain the sense of entanglement in my content and use of materials, in the sense that individual elements are defined by their relational and affective flux. Unlike the illogical spaces of Surrealist contemporaries, Collins created an alogical space of an aesthetic ontology. So aesthetic delight is not irrational but a territory into which rational conception can emerge.

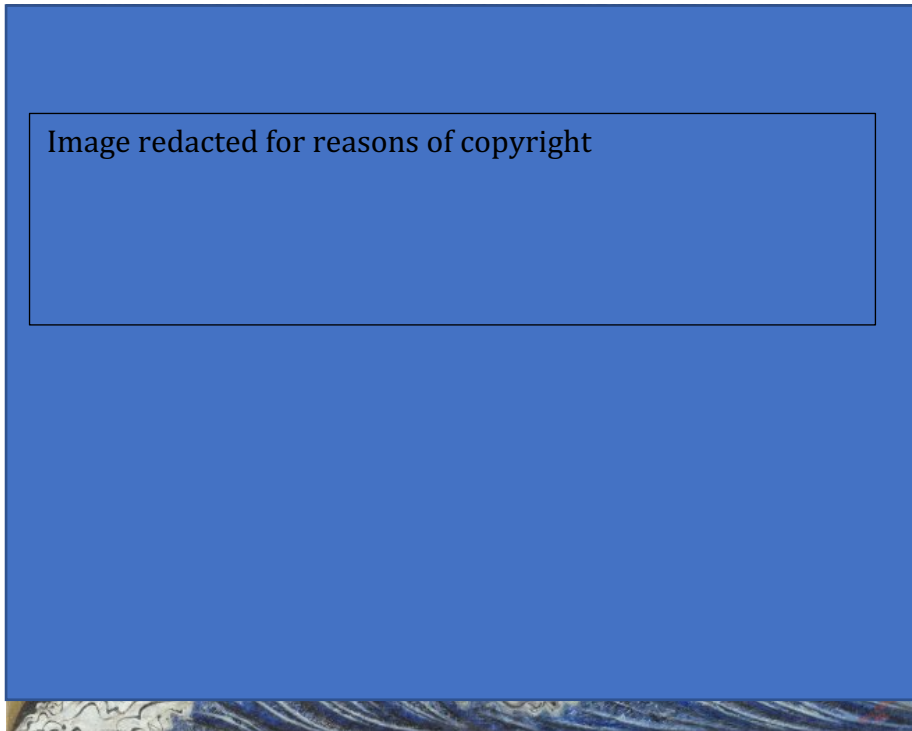


Fig 51 Cecil Collins *The Voice* (1938) oil on canvas 122 x 152cm

After twenty years operating in the grown-up system of things, I became very much of the mind that I had outgrown the fools and angels of Cecil Collins' images. However, the aesthetic ontology of an artist like Collins is far from infantile but complex and uplifting. Collins said that his work contained 'no objects' (Keeble 2009) and this alerted me to the possibility that I may have had an understanding of the process philosophy at the core of his art and my interest in nonrepresentational theory. As Keeble (2009 p38) puts it:

We should not attempt to correlate the contents of his pictures in any literal way with the created world that comprises an indefinite number of discrete entities, the world of opposites and differentia where one thing is seen and known never to be another.

This statement is echoed in Zepke's title of his discussion of Deleuze's ideas, *A work of art does not contain the least bit of information* (Zepke 2017). If we consider information as an object, this in turn begins to make sense with regards to Whitehead's suggestion that the cosmos is better thought of as overlapping 'drops of experience' rather than objects (the concept of nature and the experience of nature

are not bifurcated in Whitehead). It also makes sense of my methodology of using images and forms not as data signs but as material flow. Like Whitehead's dialogues, Collins' images override this law of discrete existence and the sense coalescence in his paintings is there in the ceramic hooks and off-set layered loops and planes of the *Actual Occasion* installation. This is an entangled realm made of 'the implements of a gnosis of association and relationship of the impalpable connectedness of things' (ibid p40).



Fig 52 *Actual Occasion: Greek Riot Police and Ceramic Headphone Hooks* installation (2018) AVA Gallery

In creating the *Actual Occasion*, I did not populate my work with figurative signs of fools and angels but instead, like the stagemaker bird, I worked with the materials and forms found on the ground of the electronic forest left by the search party of progressive Western thought. Like Collins, I work with rhythm, texture shape and colour and repeated shifting refrains that echo and suggest recollections before we know they will be there. Unlike Collins, I prefer not to think of this as spiritual but simply part of art as a process of trying to form a truer picture of my acoustic relationship with life via an aesthetic ontology wherein the texture of the sound is

echoed in the touch of the materials. Zepke nicely sums up how Deleuze and Guattari move through the sublime as a spiritual response to conceptual reality towards an animal aesthetic, 'they do so only by changing its Nature. A change that rejects the sublime's Kantian conditions, removing art from any romantic analogy with the divine, and placing it back among the animals' (Zepke 2005).

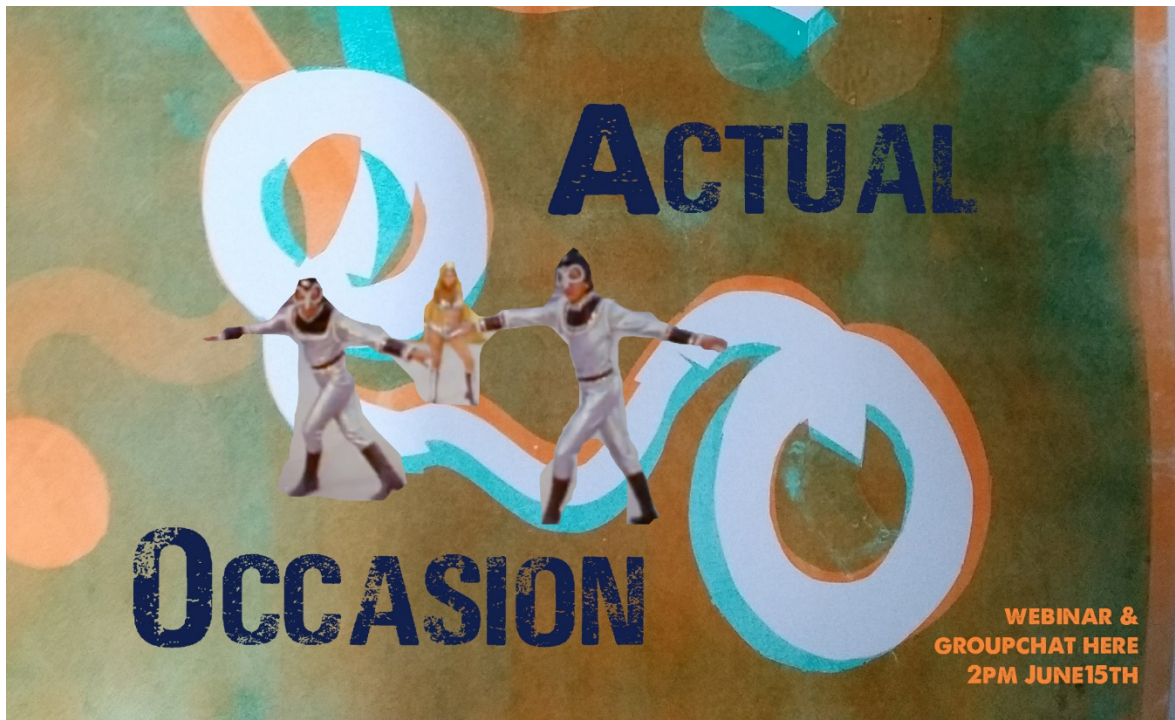


Fig 53 *Actual Occasion* PVC banner 305 x 183cm (2018)

And so, when local residents came to *Actual Occasion* and hoovered the pink carpet with the orange metallic hoover, wearing the rope-goggles of entanglement, there was an atmosphere of spatial aesthetic coalescence. Likewise, I used the prints as textural fields within the video carrying the music at the centre of my installation. This use of video as a shifting tapestry seems to embody Shaviro's vital idea in his book *Discognition*, which contends that although digital space can reduce the world to binaries, it also forms a flat ontology where all components are unclasped from hierarchy of linguistic meaning. As he puts it, a flat ontology, 'places all modes of experience or expression on the same level without privilege or hierarchy' (Shaviro 2015 p60). In this way, the riot police of Athens also become part of the film's tapestry and the space itself unclasps all elements (pink carpet, survival blanket,

galvanized steel frame, towels on towels hooks) into a territory for a-signifying collective discovery.

Tunefulness and the Refrain

Actual Occasion marked a deepening of understanding of how I could use music as part of a tapestry of media. Working with Turkish and British artists during a residency on the *Are We Human Biennale* in Istanbul, I wrote and performed a collaborative song called *You Can't Write a Letter to No-One*. This arose from a discussion about how, as artists, we can engage with an audience. Our residency took place in the Galata Community Centre and at the end I performed the song in its entirety at a piano in the attic under a dome of ancient clay bricks. The experience fused the feeling that song and refrain are part of my capacity for material vitality just as much as a tangible activity, such as modeling clay. The act of singing also embodies the feeling of emergence and immanence. Unlike a permanent image, a sound fills a space and evaporates as it emerges creating entangled echoes between the audience and performer. As a result, when I began work on the *Actual Occasion*, I was ready to include words, song, harmony and the recording process as a part of a layered materiality. The work began as a simple lyric 'kindness is a virus' and this led to an exploration of repeated, shifting musical and material motifs. Another context for this approach was Ragnar Kjartansson's use of lyrical refrain in several works such as *Take Me Here by the Dishwasher*. His work also combines the specificity of localised or biographical experience with the aforementioned 'power of the cosmos' (Hartman 2017).

Musical analogies are useful for explaining my approach of material vitality: 'The refrain is a rhythmic operation that connects with a moment of emergence out of chaos' (Gil 2010). Deleuze's idea, here, of the refrain and the milieu have been instrumental in helping me understand the strategy of enfolding musical composition into the process of making in a methodology seeking meaning through material vitality rather than representational concepts. The abstract sound of harmony and instrumentation within a musical refrain embodies how smooth space of an aesthetic machine unclasps images and concepts from hierarchical order and creates the oxygen for a felt understanding. The actual experience, trust and engagement of visitors to *Actual Occasion* has become a part of the work and this response is explored more fully below.

Matter over Meta

After experiencing how I felt connected to other visitors to *The Visitors*, I realised Kjartansson has no qualms about mixing music, painting and video. However, a sense of matter flow is sometimes lost in his practice as he clearly defines the role of each technical component. I would summarise this as meta replacing matter. This is a really significant and helpful shift in awareness arising from my doctorate research. When I make art my cognitive mind is in the room as the matter flows without intervening too soon or feeling the need to foreclose through ironic awareness. For Kjartansson's Venice Biennale installation *The End at the Palazzo*, Michiel dal Brusà acted the role of a painter in a 'tableau vivant'. There is an obvious allusion to the painter as an iconic figure and Kjartansson also likes to use the formal grammar of how bands present music. He asked *The National* to perform their song *Sorrow* for six hours continuously for his piece *The Long Sorrow in Strange Days: Memories of the Future* (Store X, London). In my creation of aesthetic machines I have recognised a smooth space where all technical processes are non-categorised entwined assemblage of material. Despite my sense of a technical separation in his work, Kjartansson's confidence in making music part of his art helped me arrive at this point.



Fig 54 Ragnar Kjartansson *The Visitors* (2016) Vinyl Factory

In *Artecritica*, Stefano Vittorini (2014) remarked that *The Visitors* was boring and picks up on how, due to the piece's, 'over-indulgences to the sense of the form, the work seems to respond to a marked sensibility toward the profession of communicator.' This helps clarify why, although his work is experiential and made up of various media, it retains representational hierarchies. Kjartansson is also interested in performance and acting as a technical craft. This knowing (meta) context would get in the way of my aesthetic machine's desire for creative immanence. For me, the doing is not a performance act but relates to the smooth space of material vitality and the fluid identity of Deleuze's animal artist as discussed above in relation to the Notifications from the Technological Nonconscious. With strong echoes of the atmosphere of Collins' paintings discussed above, Semetsky uses the figure of the fool to explore Deleuze's ideas of nomadic freedoms and improvised lines of flight:

The fool's youthfulness borders on infantile carelessness, expresses a sense of connection that is present in a small child's perception of the world as undifferentiated totality – where inner and outer realities are moveable and transient. Only venturing into unknown territory might bring a relative order into chaotic flux of childish perceptions. (Semetsky 2012)

This overlapping of inner and outer realities captures the mentality behind the way I created the work and how visitors have come to experience it.

Optimistic Nihilism – Visitor Engagement

The sense of emergence experienced by Semetsky's fool helps allow a curious and liberated form of imagination via material flow. The modular nature of *Actual Occasion* allowed me to reconstruct and experience it in different contexts. As a result my understanding of the piece has developed. As I've tried to indicate, part of my methodology with *Actual Occasion* was to carry the intuitive decision making of aesthetic delight (a result of the process of self-enjoyment discussed above) as far as possible and transmit this throughout the work. According to Deleuze, in an interview with Claire Parnet, joy and making are linked, 'you experience joy when you satisfy, when you effectuate one of your capacities.' In this sense joy or delight at the creative act is about satisfying a capacity to test my environment through material acts of experimentation. I've done this my whole life and this is what I mean by the material

vitality that this particular aesthetic machine seeks to manifest. The spirit of this directness and discovering where it leads is within my methodology.

In an 8-hour DVD called *L'Abécédaire*, Deleuze reveals why emergent and free creativity matters, 'the lowest degree of capacity is power. I mean, what is evil? It's preventing someone from doing what they can. Evil is preventing someone from acting, from enacting their capacity' (Aleph 2017). In this sense the idea of the aesthetic machine has allowed me to satisfy all my capacities within a modular framework. The idea is also to refract this outwards and local artist, known only as FX and a recent visitor to the *Actual Occasion* installation at the Amp Gallery in Peckham, remarked that it felt 'very creative' and that 'people would like this if they could open themselves up to it'.

A response of a delegate to the *Actual Occasion* installation at the *Affect and Social Media Conference* (USS November 2018) was that the work felt like 'optimistic Nihilism'. Despite sounding negative, nihilism can also be about a return to a sense of creative emergence because there is nothing to start from. This also gives us a sense of how smooth space creates a new becoming by smoothing the striations of hierarchical order. *Actual Occasion* began as a series of imaginative decisions about materials and structures but each time I reconstruct it, the visitor adds to my understanding of how it functions, which is expressed in Semtsky's *Postmodern Fool*: 'Its world is not restricted by conventional Euclidean geometry: conversely, its world is not conceptualised merely in terms of rigid axioms of propositional logic. The world ahead is full of encounters and experiences of which the Fool has no knowledge yet.' This quote also explains how my mentality of making is an aesthetic absurd rather than disrupted logic. Perhaps this visitor's comment distils my aims and the idea of *The Vision of The Absurd*. What is more visionary than optimism or more absurd than nihilism? *Actual Occasion* uses saturated colours and variety of textures to encourage a felt experience. This desire for creative emergence is *The Vision of The Absurd*.

I have associated nihilism with a negative sense of nothingness and death. However, through Whitehead's suggestion, picked up by Deleuze and Guattari, that we feel life as overlapping 'drops of experience' (Whitehead 1979 p67), then another idea of nihilism as something always emerging appears. I am certainly not rejecting

conceptual cognition as a response to my art but aim for it to develop from within a process of aesthetic joy, 'as if art returned us to Nietzsche's "innocence of becoming", and to the child's wide-eyed visions of the eternal return' (O'Sullivan 2011 p6). This sense of 'always becoming' is what I feel 'optimistic nihilism' represents in the case of *Actual Occasion* and relates directly to the third component of the aesthetic machine, a sense of creative emergence. Exhibiting and actively seeking a response from the audience in this way has helped entwine the process of conceptual research with material decision making.



Fig 55 Visitors to *Actual Occasion* (Nov 2018) UEL USS Stratford

At the Blakefest conference in Bognor Regis in 2018, response was physically engaged and enthusiastic. I am interested in how the modular components enter into a dialogue with their surroundings. This is the stagemaker bird strategy to 'take anything and make it matter of expression' (Deleuze 1994). The egg-box sound-proofing of the dance studio at the Bognor Centre amplified the work's DIY sci-fi aesthetic as the plate glass of Amp Gallery in Peckham echoed the idea of a space within a space:

Political resistance is constructed by an artisan or artist who follows this matter-flow in such a way as to turn it expressive, by rendering the singularities of the flow – before they have congealed into recognizable and representable forms – in affect. (Zepke 2015)



Fig 56 *Actual Occasion* (2018) Blakefest, Regis Centre Dance Studio, Bognor Regis



Fig 57 Visitors at *Actual Occasion* (2018) Blakefest, Regis Centre Dance Studio, Bognor Regis

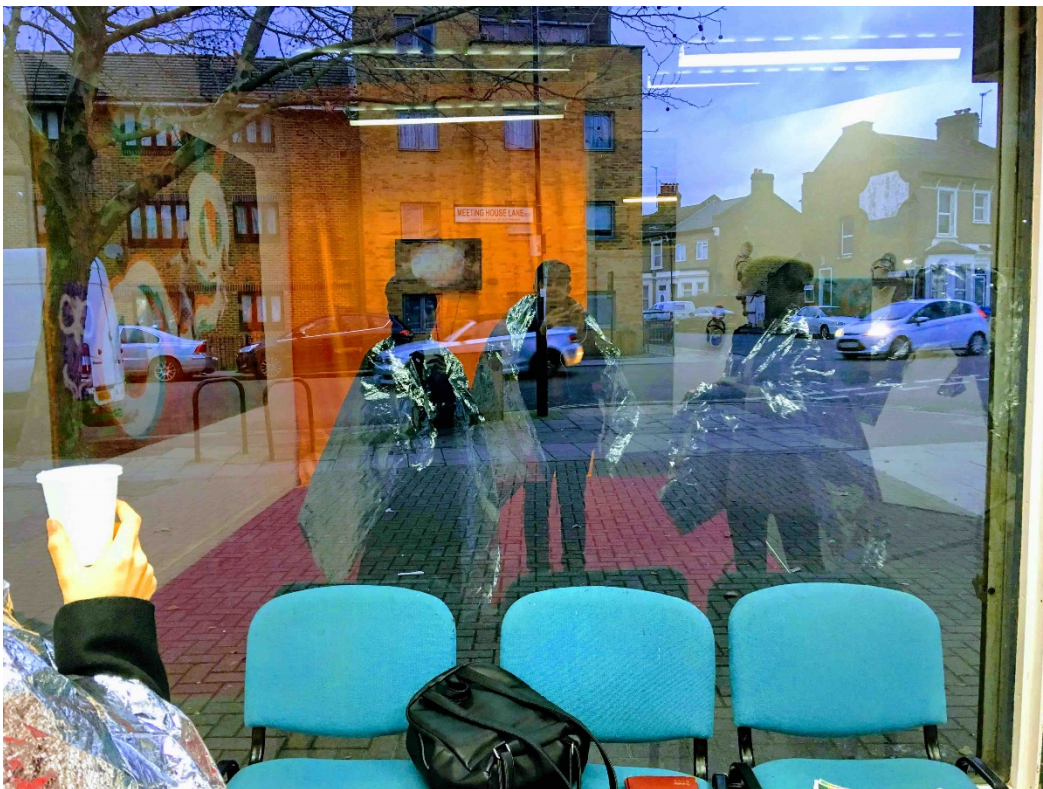


Fig 58 *Actual Occasion* reflected onto the streets (2019) Amp Gallery, Peckham

The glutinous, flowing feel of materiality in the above quote feels appropriate for how I seek to form and shape images into the aesthetic machine of *Actual Occasion*. The political here represents a desire to connect to the sense of other via actual

experience rather than abstract or absurd separation behind. Each time I reconstruct the *Actual Occasion* I recognize the way the materials and colours enfold the visitors creating a space,

‘determined in such a way as to follow a flow of matter... in freeing a life proper to matter, a vital state of matter as such, a material vitalism that doubles exists everywhere but is ordinarily hidden or covered rendered unrecognisable’ (Deleuze ATP 411).

The desire to follow ‘flow of matter’ was also part of the process of making *Actual Occasion*. Research made on the doctorate has helped me to reach a methodology of enfolding the visitor’s experience of the work with the materiality and this is also why I feel the aesthetic machine works as an arrangement. A machine can be viewed as an inert thing or the operator can experience it. Aesthetic machines explore the art object as a relational experience or arrangement and their shape and meaning is formed by various modes of audience engagement. According to Whitehead everything really real is an actual occasion, ‘Actual entities – also termed “actual occasions” – are the final real things of which the world is made up. They are events! These actual entities are drops of experience, complex and interdependent’ (Whitehead 1979 p48).

Whitehead seems to suggest that the personal is an abstract construction and so my methodology for *Actual Occasion* sought the aforementioned primordial aesthetic prior to conceptual processing. *Actual Occasion* was thus a pre-personal experiment in constructing an aesthetic machine as a means of combining the content and the material methodology of favouring aesthetic delight as means of engaging. As mentioned in the introduction, Simondon refers to this as a transindividual state of ‘always more than one.’

Part of an intuitive idea for *Actual Occasion* had been to create a space inhabited by visitors that could be observed by other visitors. This is not out of a desire to satisfy concepts of voyeurism but a curiosity towards how we could collectively explore the ambiguity of perception and perhaps, therefore, be able to notice when we enter a transindividual state. The location of Amp Gallery on a street corner gave the work the glow of a launderette where the cycles of practical living become a source of collective succour. At Blakefest, visitors seemed to spill out of overly-long lectures in pursuit of something refreshing. There was a look of wonder on faces and I couldn’t help thinking that being close to Blake’s ideas of creative freedom prepared people for how

‘the immediacy of this child-like sensation privileges the body as the crucial realm of aesthetic engagement’ (O’Sullivan 2011 p6).

Observing audience engagement with *Actual Occasion* and the energy of its moving colours and materials transmits a feeling of abundance. I have found an affirming sense of a creative proliferation in the work of other artists using film and what Zepke calls ‘affectual ready-mades’. Along these lines, Pipilotti Rist and Laure Prouvost both make art that investigates cognition, consciousness and nature. They often work with saturated fields of colourful imagery and projected film suggesting the energy of the cosmos’ creative flow. Rist’s art evokes a ‘spiritual encounter with the textures and forms of the living universe’ (Norton, introduction to *Strange Days*). Prouvost’s outlook is more confrontational and she ‘deploys language and rhythm to render the natural environment pornographic and to uncover sensuality within today’s technological onslaught of images...’ There is certainly a feeling of following matter flow in both these artists through their use of sound, language, materiality and image, as well as their fusion of nature and technology. In this way they also embody a content of material vitality as nonhuman within the works’ methodology. ‘In her films and installations, Laure Prouvost unhinges commonplace connections between language, image and perception,’ and she links fecundity of nature with procreation ‘all those rampant stamens and wilting petals, all that moisture, all that heat, the slurping butterflies and drowning wasps’ (AS 2018).



Fig 59 *Into All That Is Here* single-channel video (2015) Laure Prouvost

In a similar way, the performative artefacts of Monster Chatwynd, an artist whose shifting nom de plume suggests a countercultural desire for freedom from being named, also suggests an eruption of material flow and ever-changing, always emerging zoological phenomena. Her work appears to create some kind of collective cultural aesthetic from the archaeology of an imagined post-digital future. A desire to create a similar sense of the cosmos as universal creative emergence and a movement to nonhuman possibilities were part of the methodology for *Actual Occasion*. Chatwynd's work seems to suggest an aesthetic ontology as a means of shaping meaning as if the visitor was discovering a realm without linguistic signposts and having to trust sensations and first-hand observed discoveries. Debaise's distillation of Whitehead opens this up:

The aesthetic becomes the site of all ontology it is the plurality of manners of being, manners of doing, capacities to be affected... the modes of feeling that are at the centre of a theory of the subjects of nature... A multiplicity of centres of experience. (Debaise 2017)

The artefacts created for the 2018 show *Ze and Per* also project a feeling of haptic vitality and joy of making. They seem to be fulfilling a capacity to make in an open display of process and raw materials, which owes something to the 'anti-form' of Arte Povera.



Image: Sadie Coles Gallery

Fig 60 Marvin Gaye Monster *Bat Opera* mixed media (2018)

In the above exhibition we find the recurring form of a giant bat, which speaks of both the nonhuman consciousness and also how conceptual cognition regards the aesthetic mode as blind: 'thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind' (Shaviro 2017 p63). As a human being negotiating the modern world, I sometimes feel a bias to logical order very strongly and perhaps that is why I find the simple decision to apply conviction to the blindness (deafness?) of aesthetic intuitions so energising. The word 'absurd' derives from the Latin for deaf or stupid and from a strictly linguistic or conceptual point of view aesthetic understanding is stupid. I feel I share Chatwynd's mentality of favouring an aesthetic form of engagement by allowing the making process to become part of the fabric and meaning of the work. By reducing the idea of human cognition to something logically linguistic we are losing a potential for a more sophisticated and entangled means of relating. Aesthetic engagement dissolves the separation of the other, which is identified by signifiers. To clarify: in a recent BBC documentary, Richard Clay identified memes as a way of allowing people to express themselves in a way everyday life cannot, and yet he also claimed that they are how we identify the 'other'. In this sense memes are like all linguistic modes of identification through signifier, and by sharing the making via a performative methodology Chatwynd's art takes us into the realm of transindividual aesthetic culture.

Chatwynd's strategy of changing her name seems to be an intuitive way of creating a space for her creative output as event rather than a catalogue of objects. To me, the shifting of her name has a feel of the nomadic freedoms of Deleuze's schizoid artist: Alalia Chetwynd (christened as); Lali Chetwynd (raised as); Spartacus Chetwynd (2006 to September 2013); Marvin Gaye Chetwynd (September 2013 to April 2018); Monster Chetwynd (April 2018 to present). Her use of folk plays and street spectacles shapes a sense of collective creativity, where she and the audience enter this transindividual state of entanglement. She refers to some works as Friendship Machine Performances and these are spontaneous events with a sense of humour and lust for life, 'emphasizing the notion of collective development that informs much of the artist's work' (Glasgow Sculpture Studios).



Image: Glasgow Sculpture Studios

Fig 61 Monster Chetwynd *Homemade Tasers* mixed media performance (2016)

There is also a possibility that Monster was drawn to the reciprocal altruism of the vampire bat as a strategy for an evolved sense of collective responsibility. Monster's practice shares the playful aesthetic of my own and there is a sense that this experimental openness allows ideas to proliferate. For instance, an altruistic vampire bat has parallels with the oxymoronic statement 'kindness is a virus'. My doctoral supervisor, Professor Sampson, is interested in prosocial contagion (as a version of emotional contagion) and understandably thought that's where I got the idea for 'kindness is a virus'. In the paper *Social Contagion of Generosity* Milena Tsvetkova asks: 'Why do people help strangers when there is a low probability that help will be directly reciprocated or socially rewarded? A possible explanation is that these acts are contagious.' This seems to nicely combine the creative and political mentality of *Actual Occasion's* core of rhyming refrain as means of creating collective entanglement or, if you like, generosity to strangers arises from being entangled.

The sense-making within the methodology of these three artists is primarily within the affective register broadcasting a feeling of aesthetic abundance. They all look towards nature and conjure an alternative zoology echoing Whitehead's ubiquity of mind and creativity in which 'the primary meaning of life as Whitehead puts it, is not self-preservation, but rather the origination of conceptual novelty – novelty of appetite'

(Shaviro 2017). This brings me back to the idea of creative emergence in the aesthetic machine and Deleuze's idea of joy in fulfilling capacity as both its subject and methodology. I have attempted to use my aesthetic machines as a territory for creative dialogue (see *Actual Occasion* webinar below) and likewise Monster sees the performative aspect of the work as a means of nurturing open and creative discussion around mutually beneficial issues: 'I worked out a really elaborate performance as a way of sort of disarming people, of tricking them into having a discussion about Green politics and alternative energy sources' (Monster Chetwynd 2018).

Webinar and Creative Dialogue

After the initial opening exhibition of *Actual Occasion*, the planned webinar took place inside it at the designated time. This made use of the rope-goggle silent-disco technology. The webinar leader Tony D Sampson, author of *The Assemblage Brain*, appeared on the screen in rope-goggles to talk about the idea of love and kindness as a political force. This also relates to kindness as a virus or prosocial behaviour. He spoke specifically with regards to Gabriel Tarde's notion of the ability of lovers to mimic each other. This aesthetic machine grew from an initial print-based dialogue regarding entanglement from an intuitive projection linking quantum entanglement and the mutual responsibility of human beings. These resonances continued as Professor Sampson's discussion in the space itself explored how the mimicry of lovers is a form of entanglement. This was again amplified by the entanglement created by the rope-goggle technology and the dialogue around the functionality of kindness or caring as integrated in life rather than a kind afterthought. In this capacity my work is a dialogue about how aesthetic ontology creates entanglement or rather dissolves separation from the other as does imitation and mimicry. This is the entanglement I see as a fluid combination of assemblage making and relational networks where the individual strands form a fibre. The webinar within the aesthetic machine was part of my desire for art and aesthetic to become involved in a more dynamic and imaginative collective problem-solving process. In the 2017 group show *Everything at Once*, Arthur Jafa exhibited *Love is the Message, the Message is Death*. This was accompanied by a lyrical essay by Fred Moten that brought out Jafa's pursuit of an emergent creative territory. Jafa's intuitive and resonant tapestry of Black culture seems to me to be seeking an alternative to the hegemonic hierarchies of Western culture and I feel that

this manifests how the entanglement of kindness (empathy) in art can be a political critique of power's separation through conceptual abstraction:

Let's call it the scene of empathy. Let's call it the hesitant sociological scene. The scene of the incalculable rhythm. It is a scene neither of subjection nor objection. Looking with this hearing is a kind of building with or bearing.
(Fred Moten *Love is the Message, the Message is Death* 2017)



Fig 62 *Actual Occasion* Dr Tony Sampson leads the Webinar (2018)

The Emancipated Spectator

Of all my aesthetic machines, this one feels the most defined by visitor engagement. I have noticed how it blurs the boundaries between looking and doing. There is a dynamic energy to audience participation with the work and there is also a stillness of the pieces that resonate with the vestigial hum of their performance role. When I developed the earlier installation called *The Deadends* (see introduction), I became interested in how Rancière discusses how the aesthetic can free the spectator from the position of receiving information from a higher agency. This is clarified by Jeremy Spencer in his review of the *Emancipated Spectator for Marx and Philosophy*: 'the aesthetic is political in that it allows individuals a divorce from their prescribed functions within the social relations of production: an emancipated proletarian is a dis-identified worker' (Spencer 2010).

A recent visitor to the installation in Peckham said: 'yes, it's theatre!' and I thought about how to me the work is created as a space for mutual discovery but is not so much a performance space as a creative atmosphere. Aesthetic machines generate a temporal context for art and Rancière's ideas about the audience derive from a broader understanding of theatre as collective experience towards understanding: 'rather than a transmission of knowledge, the image emerges as an alien entity that the artist and spectator verify together' (ibid.).

Taking inspiration from Whitehead's localization of experience in the event, my aesthetic makes use of the happenstance of the specific location. At the Amp Gallery, visitors were invited to Hoover the carpet with a metallic orange vacuum cleaner. The vacuum cleaner arrived in the space as means of preparing the carpet, but the aesthetic delight of this process became an improvised part of the installation's final day. My engagement with each installation of *Actual Occasion* has reminded me of how improvisation is part of the creation of smooth space and the hoovering definitely felt like part of this approach. The action dis-identified the chores of housework from their hierarchical value and became part of the transmission of a creative vibration outside of and within Brexit afflicted South London. The hum of the Hoover acted as an embodiment of how the 'refrain' creates an atmosphere or territory conducive to the further acts of creativity. Understanding how this atmosphere is experienced is part of my research.



Fig 63 *Nonhuman Entanglement at Actual Occasion* (2019) Amp Gallery, Peckham

As is often the case when combining aesthetic intuition with sense-making, new resonances emerged outside of my initial thoughts. I am used to experimenting with the idea of automatism with the morning drawings mentioned in the introduction and this has given me a sense of how my role is not as a determining agency but an observer. In his essay for the Tate Gallery, *The Hidden Hand*, Marco Pasi discusses how the secularisation of art has hardened the idea of authorship and advocates a simple act of trust: 'Hardcore spirits have been exorcised with the vacuum cleaner of secular psychology, but what can we do if their invisible hand sometimes still wants to reach out to ours and shake it?' (Pasi 2016).

There have been wide-ranging responses to *Actual Occasion* and the context seems to shape this. For instance, at Blakefest the visitors – immersed in Blake's spiritual power of the imagination – seemed to pick up on the spiritual sense of the 'invisible hand' connecting participants (see below). This has a connection to the way I hoped the piece could explore various modalities of sensing and feeling our surroundings and the boundaries we inhabit. Co-curating the *Sensorium* with Dr Dean Todd made me aware of the importance of talking to visitors as a means of documenting the art. This of course becomes part of the art because it is a relational experience. Our work

shares a performative element and visitor feedback gives shape to this. At the Blakefest and the *Affect and Social Media Conference* versions of the installation, more than one visitor reported feeling like they were 'in a bubble'. At the Amp Gallery, visitors really felt the edge of the carpet as the boundary for the creative atmosphere. More than one also expressed feeling 'refreshed' and Rosie Lee commented, 'I loved the music. I would have like to have done more dancing really. The carpet was very important and loads of people mentioned it. When you were on the carpet, you were in the experience, when you came off it, you were outside again. Everyone got this invisible boundary. Kids do this when making up games with their surroundings.'

At the Blake conference Dr Naomi Foyle described it as 'feeling really integrated'. Picking up on the visual imagery in the filmic content and the multi-sensory experience, she drew a comparison to the awakening felt in Blake's *Albion Rose* and his creation around the four Zoas as a means of defining a holistic ontology. Professor Simon Mouatt described it as a 'communal experience that uses unfamiliarity of materials to create a drive and motivation through freshness.' In this sense, the space *Actual Occasion* creates is an atmosphere of creative proliferation. 'Atmosphere is a creative practice that is needed in order in turn to create the right conditions for further creativity' (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos 2016 p80).

Albion Rose: Body Without Organs

When you will have made him a body without organs,
then you will have delivered him from all his automatic reactions
and restored him to his true freedom. (Antonin Artaud)



Fig 64 Still from core video of *Actual Occasion* (Albion Rose) digital video (2018)

Actual Occasion felt like an energised attempt to create an aesthetic machine on a larger scale. Central to this methodology was the decision to extend working intuitively for as long as possible. Blake's figure of *Albion Rose* embodies this for me: by this I mean feeling energised enjoyment of the ideas and delaying the moment of post-rationalised analysis for as long as possible. As previously discussed, Deleuze developed the idea of the *Body Without Organs* as a movement towards an embodied sense-making experienced prior to the striated hierarchies of logic. Applying conviction to a deliberately felt form of sense-making was a strategy for dissolving the conceptual framework, 'I feel in my body everyday'. This aesthetic machine would operate on the register of affect with more ambitious materials. Through tutorial discussions I developed the strategy of allowing conceptual ideas to emerge, becoming folded back into the work (the clearest example being the survival blanket as emblem of disaster, although at a work in progress seminar a student suggested that I was creating a brand, and this in itself had to be re-folded into my potential constructions of the work, influencing my decision to be freer with improvised uses of materials such as the silk and the vacuum cleaner).

In an intuitive decision that maps Deleuze's sense of the body (without organs) as a means of going below the surface, I felt that I needed to integrate my own moving body into the film. This was, in part, a desire to recapture art's experimental qualities seen in Hippie Modernism (see above) and also a hope that I would not just remain an observing agency but a material thread of the film's interwoven nature. This was about using my own digital image as part of the tapestry of matter flow to unclasp my own identity from conceptual order. My own dancing (filmed in my attic studio against a blue tarpaulin) intuitively took on what I imagined to be the joyful feel of Blake's *Albion Rose*. This is an example of how concepts arise from material flow and form part of a collective discussion (see Professor Foyle's comments above). Later, as my desire for conceptual order returned, I felt the decision to be naked might be seen as too much and filmed a pass using a costume of thermal underwear painted to look like a Blake skin, which I had made for a performance as Nebuchadnezzar several years earlier. This decision to cover up echoes the shift from freedom to self-consciousness felt by visitors to the work. It also demonstrates the mentality or thought process within material vitality, Nebuchadnezzar being the embodiment of a rational fear of creativity as something bestial.

Deleuze's use of Artaud's the *Body Without Organs* as a concept helps contextualise this use of my own body in a smooth space of material vitality. It would be wrong to think of this a singular or discrete entity though, and the rich and varied engagement with *Actual Occasion* at the Amp Gallery forced me to recognise the degree to which the work's relational activity defined it as much as the material construction. This sense of the *Body Without Organs* as relational and improvised experience is discussed in *A Thousand Plateaus*: 'It is through a meticulous relation with the strata that one succeeds in freeing lines of flight, causing conjugated flows to pass and escape and bringing forth continuous intensities for a BwO' (Deleuze 1987 p102).



Fig 65 Local artist FX and curator Caroline Gregory at *Actual Occasion* (2019)
Amp Gallery, Peckham

In a strange echo of my choice to use Blake's engraving as my own skin, in *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze speaks of art's ability to free cultural imprisonment from the despotic nature of the sign which fuels the commercial subsumption of creativity where 'The body no longer allows itself to be engraved like the earth, but prostrates itself before the engravings of the despot...' (Deleuze and Guattari 2000). These 'engravings of the despot' are the ability of institutional capitalism to involuntarily subsume the unknowable aspects of experiences of creative intensity via semiotic signifiers (see the MacDonald's advert in the introduction). The aesthetic machine generates a smooth non-hierarchical space where the strictures of the signifier are suspended.



Fig 66 *Actual Occasion: Entangled Greek Riot Police* digital video soundtrack (2018)

My decision-making in creating the assemblage or digital tapestry for *Actual Occasion* was intuitively motivated by a desire to unstitch and reweave power dynamics into the smooth space. The despot reinforces the signifier of status and the riot police are reverse entwined into the space ballet of future optimism in the atmosphere of the body without organs beyond hierarchical occlusion of creative capacities.



Fig 67 Artist as Stagemaker (*Survival Blanket and Rope-Goggles*) (2018) AVA Gallery

Effectuating of Capacities

To further define my movement towards the nonrepresentational, my approach to how to make the space for *Actual Occasion* was to use aesthetic imagination i.e. imagining how people might interact with the ingredients. In *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, Guattari calls this 'aesthetic composition' a process 'which is not a question of representation and discursivity but of existence' (Guattari 1995). This is easier to imagine with the layered process of making a musical recording. I wanted to translate this feeling of joyful effectuating of capacities I feel making a song into matter flow (this could also be moved up to the discussion on kindness). My aim, starting from the musical refrain, was to create an exuberant and affirmative space but also to exhibit a process of material awareness. I wanted the space to be inviting without losing

affective resonance for the sake of simply looking vibrant. In striated terms, colour can be used as a signifier of energy but in smooth space colour resonates as a felt understanding. This involves sense-making with the materials as I construct the space and any meaning is derived from the actual sensations experienced by the visitors. This is about making work as an individual which flexes and merges with the locality, making sense of Whitehead's process philosophy in *Modes of Thought*.



Fig 68 *Actual Occasion: Satin Wall Curtain* (2019) Amp Gallery, Peckham

As a maker, it is natural to take pride in your creations and have strong ideas of how they should be displayed, but through various constructions of *Actual Occasion* I've learnt how retaining a sense of material flow and improvised creativity makes the work more effective. The work is not site specific, but it always relates and engages with its surroundings, even if this means adapting the wrong length of fluorescent satin cut by the local fabric shop. Being forced to abandon symmetry reminded me how the whole installation is a relational experience of material vitality. Here Whitehead seeks to explain how an authentic concept can only be understood via the experience it inhabits, 'neither physical nature nor life can be understood unless we fuse them together as essential factors in the composition of "really real" things whose interconnections and individual characters constitute the universe' (Whitehead 1968 p150).



Fig 69 Visitor at *Actual Occasion* (2019) Amp Gallery, Peckham

With this methodology of seeking the authenticity of the event, *Actual Occasion* has continued to be shaped by the different locations, involvements of visitors and people kind enough to curate its presence. In *Art as Abstract Machine*, Zepke picks up on Whitehead's invitation for us to think and create through experiences rather than fixed abstract concepts: 'The plane of composition is not abstractly preconceived but constructed as the work progresses' (Zepke, *Art as Abstract Machine*). My creative decision-making process owes much to a mentality of material vitality as emerging rather than being a result of agency. The use of language and writing, derived from my practice of morning pages, is also very much part of this sense of becoming.

In *Nature as Event*, Debaise clarifies Whitehead's desire to make feelings the fundamental character of nature instead of an appendage: 'The aesthetic becomes the

site of all ontology: it is the plurality of manners of being, manners of doing, capacities to be affected...' (Debaise 2017 p87). Unlike the cohesion of this aesthetic ontology, absurd culture separates to conceptualise then attempts to re-join components schematically. I want to make an art creating a space-prioritising sensation wherein concepts play a supportive role. In *Chaosmosis*, Guattari describes an ecstatic response to affective encounters with art, and the material vitality combined with the problem-solving of *Actual Occasion* was an attempt to create a real-time manifestation of this vision of art as sensation rather than re-presentation of pre-digested signifiers:

I find myself transported into a Debussyist Universe, a blues Universe, a blazing becoming of Provence. I have crossed a threshold of consistency. Before the hold of this block of sensation, this nucleus of partial subjectification, everything was dull, beyond it, I am no longer as I was before, I am swept away by a becoming other, carried beyond my familiar existential Territories.
(Guattari 1995 p93)



Fig 70 *Actual Occasion* (2018) AVA Gallery

5 The Animal Artist

My research into the value of matter flow seems to map the process of finding a means of using art practice as research. Fine art practice then becomes an extension of the desire to use felt understanding as a means of creating a shared and expanded exploration of knowledge. Until I found the ideas written around a sensibility of material vitality and shared understanding, I was perpetually veering between a cultural hegemony of communicating via signifiers and wanting to honour the process of aesthetic intuition. Essentially, a Deleuzian discussion concerning the animal-artist has allowed me to commit to using a sense of material vitality as the central mode of creating and creating meaning. My understanding of this process is made cohesive through an idea of the aesthetic machine, which is influenced by writers like Stephen Zepke and Simon O'Sullivan, who are responding to Deleuze and Guattari's celebration of creativity as an emergent and critical force and their invitation to 'take everything and make it a matter of expression' (Deleuze 2000). The idea of the animal artist decentres the anthropocentric approach of conceptual idea making and takes me into a fuller expression of how art can create a shared mode of understanding or entanglement through matter flow. In this way concepts are not banished but deferred and flexible.

My work seeks to explore and embody a mentality of 'creative becoming' as a response to the stasis of symbolic exchange striating the culture I feel around me. I do not reject concepts and exchange value but seek via my art to allow these factors to emerge from within the felt understanding of an art created within an aesthetic ontology. I regard my art practice as a means of returning a sense of matter-flow and aesthetic delight to the creation of meaning as they are in cultures of aesthetic ontology. The aesthetic machine has become a means for me to share this felt experience with an audience. 'Put simply, the change in attitude – if there is one – is one which these artists and their public share (even if the latter is often only a limited scene)' (O'Sullivan, Zepke 2010).

My practice has grown, through research around an aesthetic ontology, into an assemblage of my creative capacities. This is a simple step into the realm of sense-making through the pleasure of making as a trans-individual experience rather than semiotic meaning related with art materials. Simondon's idea of the trans-individual

has echoes of Rancière's 'emancipated spectator' (Rancière 2011) who shares the discovery of meaning with the artist: 'The transindividual makes subjects intervene in so far as they carry a charge of pre-individual reality' (Barthélémy 2018). The pre-individual reality of my aesthetic decision-making is the material intuition felt prior to my semiotic understanding of concepts. I also equate this with Deleuze's non-hierarchical realm of smooth space. This means of understanding is what I would call an intuitive prehension of a material process, whereby I can grasp a meaning without conceptualising it cognitively.

Deleuze and Guattari interrogate the conceptual nature of contemporary art in a way that maps Whitehead's questioning of the bifurcated thinking of modernity, which he sees as being distorted by a split between abstract concepts of nature and the subjective response to this primary source. My research and practice are now concerned with allowing the aesthetic mode of sense-making to revert to being the central dynamic of my practice, which can then become a space for all manner of modalities of understanding including linguistic concepts. Rather than making in response to a concept, I project potential shared concepts through the refractions of making. Art allows me to use prehensions in a playfully serious way and making becomes a pleasurable fulfilment of capacities. As Deleuze puts it reflecting upon Whitehead's ideas, 'self-enjoyment marks the way by which the subject is filled with itself and attains a richer and richer private life... It feels in this prehension the self-enjoyment of its own being.'

This is the radical difference from a manner of making art as a visual appendage to or escape from the everyday. As Debaise explains in *Nature as Event*: 'The aesthetic becomes the site of all ontology: it is the plurality of manners of being, manners of doing, capacities to be affected' (Debaise 2017 p 58). Making and sharing art within the environment of an aesthetic ontology can be disorientating to the expector of conceptual signifiers but this way art can have a role in dissolving the algorithmic structure of die-cast identity and rebuilding the vitality of creative possibilities:

Moreover, the transindividual escapes spatial coordinates – it is not a grid, it is a becoming, which may indeed frustrate the colonizing spaces of market-orientated mimicry. It might, as such, provide the basis of a relational immune

system (RIS) that does not look to perceive of something that exists outside the self as a nonself, but perceives of a 'multiplicity of perceptual worlds.'
(Sampson 2016)



Fig 71 *On the Occasion of the Lamppost* (2018) AVA Gallery

Conclusion – A Morning Pages Fiction Machine of The Showcase Exhibition

11 June 2019 Tue Blue 7.30 am

Some of you will understand the significance of this. This date I mean. This day and age as noted above. The blue but means it's sunny. So. Well. It really is sunny and not just an anamorphosis of a sunny day outside my window. I am crouched in the very far corner of an exhibition lodged between a black sparkly carpet and a slatted garden fence. It's dark but I can still see alright. I like the smell of this new carpet. It's different to the smell of the fences panel, which I also like but its less certain and harder to place. I can smell the sawing they did to fit it in here. The fence has seen better days. This carpet just swallows one up – a black hole of sense. Or do I mean a wormhole into another mode? It's untrodden and literally up the wall, which makes me want to fall into it. I know the fence is not new because it has lichen and moss on it. It's like a slice of the outside up against the sumptuous soothing textures of the inside. I'm crouched here because I'm going to kill him (comedy). The agency. Him who made all this. The one who gets tied in knots trying to explain how he finds meaning in the time-space before the words come to mind.

Inside this chamber where I am crouched is a tall thing rectangular column called the plinth and this is also covered in black glittery carpet. From where I am behind it I can see that the back edge of the plinth is just white painted chipboard. I bet he ran out of carpet. He is funny about stuff like that. Making money stretch and longing things out. It gives him pleasure. One might call him a proper miser except he's a cosmic miser. So I'm going to kill him when he comes in. I'll let him see me then I'll do him in. It will be funny and a moment of static genesis. You will see. The Rebirth (or Renaissance as he calls it) was once all about an emergent creativity but it concluded with a death fixation. All that anatomy and release from the body through flaying of the skin was just too literal. So the destruction of the self is really about self-enjoyment.

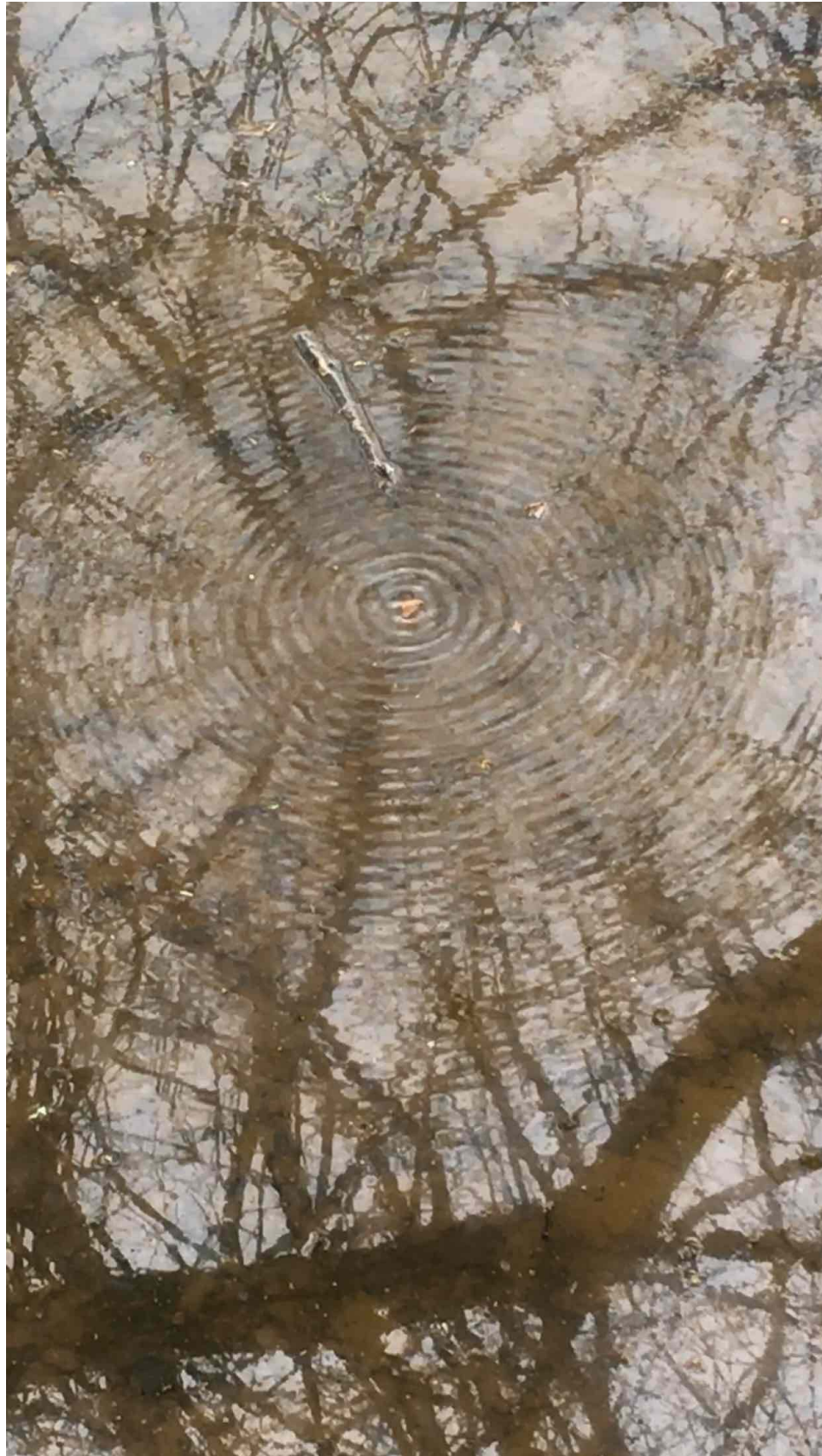


Fig 72, *Still from Nature Reversed*, UEL Doctorate Showcase 2019

Nature Reverse

We should get a stick I said
And try to rescue the moth
Its just a moth said the boy
You might come back as a moth I say
If you came back as a moth
I mean if you'd been a human
And were now a moth
Wouldn't you want to die?
I'm not sure it works like that
I know
Everything has feeling
Everything feels
Yes I understand all is mind
If you come back you might not know
You are an energy and human thinking is just
A porthole onto this
I thought about all those war photographers
The anthropocentric rule of detachment
Still I kept returning to thoughts
Of how I could have gotten a stick
And lifted the moth out of the water

Fig 73 *Nature Reverse*, Poem on laser-cut plywood, UEL Doctorate Showcase 2019

On top of the plinth is a glass cube and inside this is an Android tablet upon the screen of which plays a film of a moth fluttering on the surface of a pool of water transmitting concentric hoops of hope out into the universe. It's not an effect or something animated it's the actual real life thing. It is really real and trapped inside a phone. A common place thing that is nature like the thing on the screen once was.

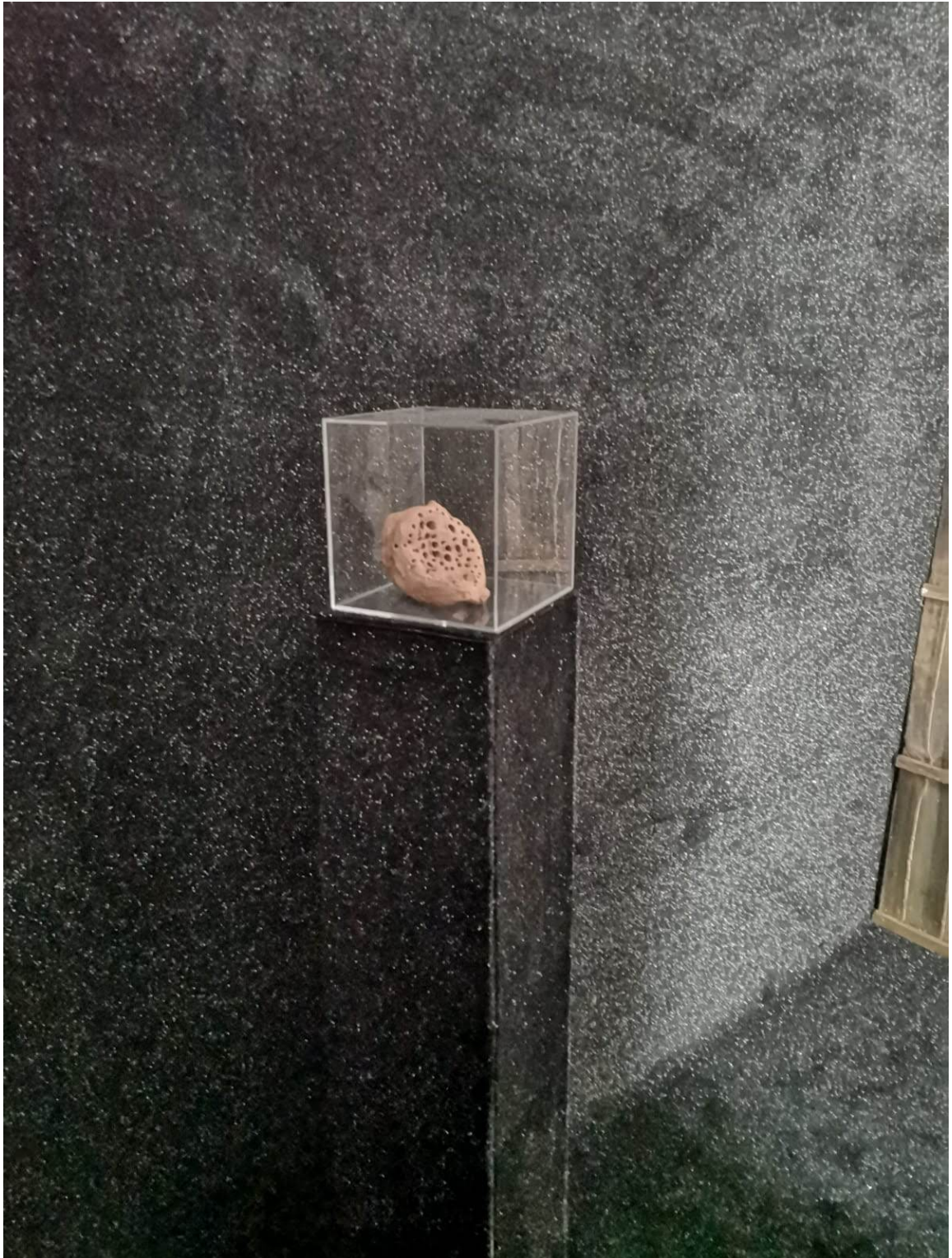


Fig 74 *Nature Reversed (Android removed)* UEL Doctorate Showcase 2019

On the outside of the fence panel there is a wooden plaque with a poem laser etched into it about how he (the agency) could have gotten a stick and saved the moth but instead he just choose to film the poor creature transmitting it's ripples of distress out into the cosmos. Of course he possibly did save the moth after filming it but I know that he did not. That's not why I'm going to kill him though. Did I already say I like the smells in this corner where I am. It's a particular mix of the inside and the outside. Also the carpet makes all the sound in here dead and up close. Outside this little corner the sounds are growing steadily more cacophonous because this is a private view. People have come to look at the art and drink drinks. If you are he you'll drink champagne what with the occasion and all.



Fig 75, *The Agency and Laser-cut egg structure under construction*, UEL 2019

The agency is big on what he calls *actual occasions* and an idea of immanence. This is like when you feel a meaning to something before you turn it into a concept that you already know. I'm not even sure this exists. I mean we know everything by very quickly working out what we already know that the thing is like. But he (the agency) reckons that it's possible to somehow feel like you did before you knew what things were about anything and everything. This is what he thinks art can do. Yeah. I think this emerging place is where meaning is if it does exist. So because he is so intensely into this feeling of immanent emergence he's constructed this fucking enormous egg out of plywood, which seems impossible except it doesn't if you imagine those dinosaur skeleton kits made of shaped pieces of wood. It's like a computer modelled the egg and sent the file to a giant laser machine. This laser machine then read the coded instructions and cuts the longitudes and latitudes of the egg. You can climb inside this egg and look at a book about someone called Kimey Peckpo and then look at a pink blancmange desert in a virtual reality headset. He hates blancmange because it's like flesh. I bet he finds it funny to conquer a phobia of structured protocol and striated culture via a blancmange.



Fig 76 Kimey Peckpo *Hatches Out*, Media with vinyl, Doctorate Showcase 2019

**THE BODY WITHOUT ORGANS IS AN EGG:
IT IS CRISSCROSSED WITH AXES AND
THRESHOLDS WITH LATITUDES AND
LONGITUDES AND GEODESIC LINES,
TRAVERSED BY GRADIENTS MARKING
THE TRANSITIONS AND THE BECOMINGS,
THE DESTINATIONS OF THE SUBJECT
DEVELOPING ALONG THESE PARTICULAR
VECTORS
(DELEUZE AND GUATTARI)**



Fig 77 Still from *Kimey Peckpo Hatches Out*, 2019

This giant nomadic egg shelter smells of the laser burning the wood if you put your face up close to it. It's lovely to look at the laser as it cuts into the wood. Do you expect me to talk doctor? No I expect you to die. You can look at the thin red laser and imagine the laser machine has consciousness (the ubiquity of consciousness). You could easily think it's testing outside consciousness via a series of random measurement mistakes. These deviations from the code are purposive acts of creativity. That laser diode does indeed have a haunting message. There is an uncanny sense of some other entity moving it like when the IT person accesses your computer when they're helping you remotely and the mouse moves as if it is haunted. Except the computer laser feels alive and not dead.



Fig 78, *Emergency*, dvd monitor, ceramics and cast iron, 2019

There is more channel cutting edge technology here too. Do you know what a vinyl record is? The agency has produced a lathe-cut vinyl 12" record about the adventures of the humanoid organism that hatched out of this three dimensional giant egg. Take me to your breast. Are you a man or a Martian? I say to the humanoid mannequin behind the egg who has on some truly rad thermal underwear painted to look like he's a naked William Blake figure come to life from a print except this figure is a mannequin and his facial features have disappeared apart from a insipid vestige of a nose. We no longer look into his eyes but swim through them at the speed of light alongside thousands of tiny turtles until we reach a beach where we experience embodied cuddles of cognition. Cognition is a visual, inside-out memorial of experience. There's a film about this in another room. It's called Kimey Peckpo Hatches Out. Yes he chuckled to himself. The film has a ton of green-screen effects, which I love because it's like you are in the actual film

yourself. It's like a moving digital reef. It gives me an intense feeling of joy like a tapestry as those edges that never usually meet weave themselves together.

And the record is like that too. You can sit in a chair and listen to the vinyl soundtrack of the entire film. When he was about ten years old he (the agency) used to find it amazing that you could hear something from the cinema in the relative comfort of your own home (relative because homes were not as comfortable then!). Just sitting and moving the arm of the player over the grooves means you can listen to a specific part of the film but you must guess where to land the needle on all those lathe cut grooves that shimmer as the 12" black disc rotates in the sunlight. How on Earth does sound come out of plastic? Question. Real question.

And as you sit there in the chair listening to the record it feels as if you are inside a shop window of a really cool and radical shop on Kensington High Street in the late Nineteen Eighties. And now unlike the thirteen year old you once were you are not staring in through plate glass window because you are inside the display like one of those cool people you sometimes see dressing the mannequins in the trendy one off Red or Dead clothes. This mannequin, who I presume is Kimey Peckpo because he has the same blank face made of plaster bandages, is like a dummy from Madame Tausauds that you can pose next to, except it feels much more real than that. Really real like when you used to dress up and muck about with grown up stuff in you mum and dad's room when it was all quiet in the house. And then find a massive box of condoms under the bed, which made you think about them having sex.



Fig 79, *Cabaret Stretch covering of Laser-cut Egg*, UEL Doctorate Showcase 2019

The egg has a stretchy mesh net membrane all the way over it with a diffused sky blue colour fading around its circumference. This material makes you think of the second wave of punk-rock when people started making their own cyber post-apocalyptic clothes. You know, like Sigue-Sigue Sputnik. I think that's a bit cringe but maybe that's the point. To feel the joy of material vitality rather than worry about whether something is cool or not. I mean they were making stuff up. On top and under the mesh are some removal blankets. Its funny how these blankets are for creating order when moving house but they feel like something a nomad might wear. I happen to know the very idea of a nomad has always triggered his imagination although he is not really nomadic in real life. I mean removal blankets are for moving house which is pretty much the most un-nomadic and separated mode of being that there is in the entire cosmos: see you go in that room and the baby in that room and they must learn to be separate and quiet because this is how we are civilised in a fragmented culture. Then a great big lorry comes with professional men to move all of your stuff to a presumably bigger house and they wrap your precious things like vases and pianos in the special nomadic removal blankets. These blankets look grey but they are made up of all the colours there are – they even have sparkly bits in them. So this surface is on the outside of the egg and the egg is smooth space – the nomadic freedom of what a body can do when

you throw out all of your rules and concepts about what is and isn't alright and who is in charge. Progress happens in houses and creation happens in eggs. This is still not why I am going to end his life though (comedy moment). He's an idiot and in his state of semi-literate deaf stupidity he has somehow slipped the net (didn't get the memo to communicate via semiotics) and happens to follow matter into the shape of feelings about facts. Don't get me wrong I like him. I like him don't get me wrong. Its' just that now I want to just make the stuff and make him be quiet because only then can the meaning of matter flow be felt.



Fig 80, *Self-Soother and Bust-Duster*, UEL Doctorate Showcase 2019

And over the other side by the long big white wall are these two misshapen lumpen objects with small green rubber buttons on them. They are made of the same stuff that Kimey Peckpo's face is made of. What they look like to me are props from a film about an alien culture with an entirely different form of communication. Well like this but as if a fan visiting a sci-fi convention had made them and not summoned the will to finish them. They are raw and friendly looking and actually do play real sounds like a toy bear that your wife has that sings love me tender by Elvis. One of these object d'art is called Bust Duster presumably because it looks like the little vacuum cleaner called a Dust-buster and when you press the button it repeats the *end is the beginning and the beginning is the end* to the point at which it becomes absurd. This reminds me of that brilliant poem by T S Eliot, Little Giddling. Its so good it makes me feel tearful. Some people even say it's a funeral poem, which is lucky for him but I think it's a life poem about how meaning is in immanence and that's also where art is,

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
Through the unknown, remembered gate
When the last of earth left to discover
Is that which was the beginning;

Remember the moth sending out the concentric ripples of distress out into the cosmos? That is probably a much more succinct way of saying this. Close by there's another larger more bulbous object resembling a weird and hazardous Eastern block baby's dummy blown up and cast in plaster for an exhibition about Communist progress. It is sitting on top of a deflated dark brown beanbag. It looks sad for itself and you feel sad for it but want to give it a cuddle and smile ruefully at the same time. It has the sense of a loyal pet sleeping off a good feed and when you press its button the voice of his (the agency's) son (aged 7) comes out of it saying "so you get the picture this goes on for ever and ever and ever and ever poor Sisyphus". I ask myself what the hell kind of parent makes their child read

Greek tragic myths as an ironic play? Except this object is neither tragic nor ironic as it is a new form we shall call humour, which is not irony.

And so I was going to get into the bath over there in the middle of the room and lie there until he came and pulled the plug on the TV which he has mounted inside the bath over-flow hole on the kind of television bracket people like to have in their kitchens for when they watch Noel's House party when they are preparing the weekend tea. This was a piece of engineering he was very proud of. It filled him with the joy of fulfilling his capacities. Problem solving as art practice and fixing things better. He particularly liked using the small spanner that came with the bracket as a brace to fix the bolts to the back of the bath with nuts that the spanner was designed to fit. This DVD-playing TV set is showing a film of him talking about his earliest memory, which is sitting in the bath with his mother and accidentally doing a poo when he meant to fart. The screen is split so that next to his face is an apple bobbing up and down in the water.



Fig 81, *Emergency Installation image*, UEL Doctorate Showcase 2019

This makes me think that there is a link between the fruit of forbidden knowledge and his shame of doing a poo in the bath but that the belief in the sensation of fact frees us from the shame of being human. I mean the shame of over thinking ourselves. So this bath is a fantastic place to watch TV and it also acts like a resonating chamber so you can't tell where the sound is coming from. The sound is just there in the air, which is kind of what real sounds are like rather than sounds that come out of speakers as an extension of a screen. The bath is a big old heavy roll top cast iron thing and resonates as his voice ends with the words Me Konium (meconium) You Eve, which is like Tarzan, biology and the Bible all entangled. Absurdly enough Camus said an artist needs to confess and this bath feels like that except that it's not that at all now because how could anyone be ashamed of pooing in the bath when they were practically a baby? Shame is a concept I think. Feeling things is not shameful.

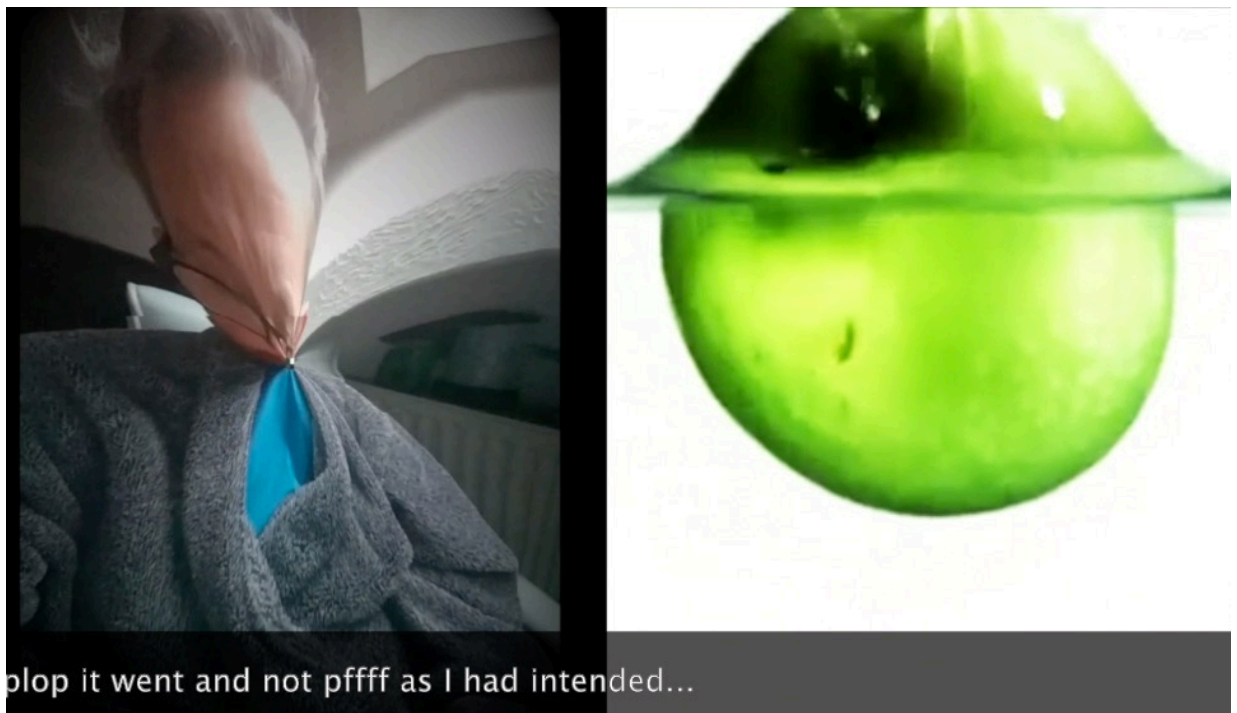


Fig 82, *Still from Emergency*, 2019

So that's it and all that's left is for me to stay here in the corner between the fence and the carpet and wait for him to come and turn off the android tablet showing the film of the moth transmitting its harmonic ripples of distress into the cosmos. Then

he will be dead and I will be alive, released from the membrane of the water's surface. That will be the end of the joke. The punch-line will be deferred though.



Fig 83, *Aesthetic machines installation view*, UEL Doctorate Showcase 2019

6 Doctorate Activities

Solo Exhibitions

September 2019: *William Blake Glad Day* Felpham memorial Hall, Bognor Regis

February 2019: *Actual Occasion* Amp Gallery, Peckham

September 2018: *Actual Occasion* major installation, Regis Centre, Bognor Regis

October 2017: *The Morning Drawing Room* installation, Easy Hotel, Old Street, London

September 2017: *The Nonbifurcatedman* installation, Public Library, Bognor Regis

February 2017: *Celebration of The Deadends* exhibition, Studio 1 Gallery, Wandsworth

January 2015: *Reality* installation and performance exhibition, AVA Gallery, UEL

Papers and Articles

August 2018: *The Nonbifurcatedman* Felt Knowledge Panel, Royal Geographic Society
Annual Conference, Cardiff University

May 2018: *Wall Stains* invited speaker, Boring Conference, Conway Hall, London

February 2018: *Hope and Joy – from Whitehead to Franz Ferdinand* Popbollocks Magazine

September 2017 *Introduction to Dandelion Visions* International Times online

November 2016: *The Deadends* The Art of Punk Conference, University of Northampton

October 2016: *Inside Inside – The Deadends* paper, Are We Human Biennale, IKSU Istanbul

June 2016: *The Deadends* UEL ADI PGR Research Event USS

November 2015: *Imagine David Bowie Happy* The Modernist Quarterly, issue 15

March 2015: *Philips Pavilion* The Modernist Quarterly, issue 13

Workshops and performative presentations

July 2019: *The Aesthetic Fact – Fictioning Machines*, Bath Spa University

July 2019: SSASS (Society for the Study of Affect Summer School), Millersville University, USA

April 2019: *Actual Occasion* London Animation Society

November 2017: Song writing Workshop for Inspiral London, Gravesend Arts Centre

October 2017: *Resourcing Unconscious Creativity*, University of Northampton

September 2015: *Backwards Causality* Song writing Workshop, Supernormal Festival,
Oxfordshire

Group Shows

May 2019: *Prufrock* Stretch Gallery, Margate
April 2019: *Dogon Egg* Amp Gallery, Peckham
March 2019: *The Politics of Moisture* Siger Gallery, London
October 2018: *Inside Inside/Outside* Eastbury Manor, London
September 2018: *Opening Showcase* (video installation) AVA Gallery, UEL
September 2018: *Harry Pye Awards for Art* (runner up) A/Side-B/Side Gallery, London
August 2018: *Street Cinema* curated by Jon Baker, Siger Gallery, Hong Kong
June 2018: *UEL Doctorate Showcase*
June 2018: *Singularity Now* (selection) Festival of Digital Art, Athens
November 2017: *Open* (2 commendations) CPG Gallery, London
September 2017: *Summer Salon* Lubomirov Angus-Hughes Gallery, London
August 2017: *By The Sea* (curated by Harry Pye) Gallery 64a, Whitstable
September 2017: *Dandelion Visions* (curated) Public Library, Bognor Regis
September 2017: *Crash* Q-Park, London
May 2017: *Antennae Platforms Project* Arts Centre, Athens
March 2017: *Sensorium Art Event* (co-curator) ASM Conference, UEL
December 2016: *Artists Toys* (invitation) Lite-Haus Galerie, Berlin
October 2016: *Inside Inside* (residency) Istanbul
June 2016: *Greetings From New Cross Gate* (prize winner) Harts Lane Gallery, London
June 2016: *What Goes On In The Mind* (curated by Marie-Louise Plum) Oxford Town Hall
May 2016: *100 Years of Dada* (screening of 10 selected films) ICA, London
2016: *Foule Parlement* (curated by Ros Faram) No. 4a Gallery, Malvern
March 2016: *Sensorium Exhibition* (co-curator) ASM Conference, UEL
February 2016: *Interior* AVA Gallery, UEL
January 2016: *Mental Spaghetti* (curated by Marie-Louise Plum) Menier Gallery, London
December 2016: *PoetryFilm Paradox* Hackney Picturehouse
November 2015: *Educating Picasso* (curated by Barking Art) Espacio Gallery, London
October 2015: *Gdansk Shakespeare Festival* (art performance) Gdansk, Georgia
October 2015: *Redefining Art Speak* (performance) South London Gallery
October 2015: *Poor Door* (live TV, curated by Tinsel Edwards) A/Side-B/Side Gallery, London
September 2015: *London Paris New York Munich* A/Side-B/Side Gallery, London
August 2015: *Open* Southwark Café Gallery
August 2015: *Open* Lubomirov Angus-Hughes Gallery, London
July 2015: *Forty Two* Lubomirov Angus-Hughes Gallery, London
June 2015: *Fine Art Doctorate Showcase* AVA Gallery, UEL

April 2015: *Foule Parlement* Studios Project Space, Hastings

February 2015: *Visual Poetry* (curated by Daniel Lehan) Kitchen Window Gallery, London

February 2015: *Year of the Goat* Q-Park, London

October 2014: *Anthology Deptford Foundry* (curated by Hartslane Installation)

September 2014: *The Lights Are On* (curated by Mark Scott Wood) 22 Grays Inn Road, London

7 Reflections on Research Activities

The methodology of material flow I use through the aesthetic machine is akin to how I feel song writing creates meaning by entwining linguistic content into a harmonic atmosphere. At the start of my doctorate research, I was asked to create an ambitious installation for the Anthology project as part of a regeneration of Deptford. The space was a vast print works and at the time, its scale was almost overwhelming. I realised that in order to complete such a large-scale project it would need to work intuitively, with moving image, projection, painting and found objects. I later distilled the piece for a further installation when invited to create something for the AVA Gallery. My research in the subsequent four years has given me a context and means of distilling the creative dynamics that emerged in this process. This approach can be summed up as a valuing of an aesthetic ontology communicated on what William Connolly describes as the ‘visceral register’ in his book *Why I Am Not a Secularist*. He points out that, ‘modern secularism – in the main and for the most part – either ignores this register or disparages it. It does so in the name of a public sphere in which reason, morality, and tolerance flourish. By doing so it forfeits some of the very resources needed to foster a generous pluralism’ (Connolly 2000 p3).



Fig 84 *Howl of the Mounting Kin* installation (2014) Deptford Anthology

Within the Anthology installation, there were intuitive footholds in a move towards my current practise. One of the territories within the distilled version of the installation I later created for the AVA Gallery was that of the nascent state of creativity.

I displayed a loop of me sitting in my studio, wearing my dressing gown, reading poems written at dawn (part of a 10-year habit of making Morning Pages, which has underpinned my practice). Having kept this half-awake figure at bay for the following four years, I can now see that this morning realm of misty mindedness is vital to my work. The piece's splurges and haptic methodology are part of this 'belief in sensation as an antidote to our shame at being human'... 'as if art returned us to Nietzsche's "innocence of becoming"', and to the child's wide-eyed visions of the eternal return' (O'Sullivan 2008 p6).

In some respects, the piece baffled me because it was made almost entirely on an aesthetic level of intuition. My research has allowed me to use the process of not understanding as part of the work's development. On reflection, I see its mix of objects and resistant materials as emblematic of material vitalism, 'the matter-flow as pure productivity', the throbbing conjunctions and disjunctions constructing 'Nonorganic Life' (O'Sullivan 2010 p2).

Later in *Production of the New*, Zepke presents the idea of the 'affectual readymade', which helped me to make sense of the way I had begun to use objects and materials as part of 'matter-flow' unclasped from a linguistic or conceptual ordering. Within such

a space favouring aesthetic delight and sensation, conceptual ideas become ancillary to a shared experience. My instinct at the time was to give the piece some kind of conceptual ordering rather than wholeheartedly trusting the process of stage-making as a part of sense-making. The repetition on the wall of the words 'de Stijl' and 'utopia' was perhaps an attempt to ground the meaning in an art-historical context to give it validity. It could also be seen as unclasping signifiers and taking them into the realm of 'matter flow': 'If you observe very closely what is taking place and examine it, you will see that it is based on an intellectual conception, and the intellect is not the whole field of existence; it is a fragment...' (Krishnamurti 2010 p15).



Fig 85 *The Deadends* display and documentary at *Sensorium* installation (2016) ASM Conference, UEL

This is regarded as having come from a purely spiritual source but Krishnamurti's dialogue in *Freedom from the Known* strikes me as having a strong affinity with Deleuzian view of how art can take us beyond the confined and potentially damaging frameworks of anthropocentric conceptualism. Whereas a movement like Cobra may have rejected conceptualism outright in favour of a visceral mode of making art, I feel that thinking through Deleuze and the idea of the aesthetic machine has enabled me to enfold concepts and signifiers into an 'animal artist's' feeling of matter flow. Of course from an anthropocentric point of view 'animal' might mean wild and unthinking but in another sense it refers to the augmented modes of being and relating through

feeling and experiencing. Research can be a process of spotting when your mechanistic habits are preventing you from growing as an artist. Wanting to grow as an artist is a political position in that the desirer feels most free when experiencing the joy of making and feeling as they go along and not creating a linguistic mood-board of pre-digested signifiers.

My research has led to a strategy of making machines that interrupt a creative flow in the middle of always emerging. This reflection upon the research process is not the same as the research itself, which has been a shifting and overlapping dynamic between the written and the experienced form of constructing art. It's difficult not to want to bookend the whole process of the doctorate but in one sense this is the point I have made of the course. The doctorate – like my practice – is a slice into a continually re-emerging state of creative immanence. The doctorate itself is an aesthetic machine, which cuts into this matter flow.

In the second year of my research, I was asked to co-curate the *Affect and Social Media Conference* art show called *Sensorium*. This was six months after my first doctorate showcase, where the issue of representational or linguistic conceptualism came up. After my seminar, it seemed to me that I was facing the choice of making conceptual work or something led by technical experimentation. This didn't feel where my practice was leading me but I was not sure how to articulate an alternative methodology. Via my co-curator I was advised by the organiser, Professor Tony Sampson, to look at non-representational theory, and over the course of the next three to four years I have found a way of defining a methodology that embodies this outlook. The non-representational mode is not exclusive to art and favours an inclusion of sensation and intuitive understanding in sense-making and engagement. There seems to me to have been a development of art as a communication system rather than a generator of otherness and the lure of the possible:

The ontology of the aesthetic paradigm is therefore inherently political, because through it we escape our stratified image of thought and its representational politics, to restore an infinite freedom to the finite world.' (Zepke 2005 p164)

My work has a representational and non-representational potential but favouring the latter has given me a confidence and clarity in my methodology. It is important to note too that the representational and conceptual are not rejected but encountered within the work as ancillary to the aesthetic machine. Art has an affective quality but my research into the theory around Deleuze has clarified a shift to purposefully favouring the affectual in the decision-making in the process of making. This way, the conceptual and signified are enfolded into the joy of making and aesthetic immersion rather than abstracted subjective responses being an appendage to the intellectual theme or subject of the work.

Felt Knowledge

In August 2018, I presented on a panel about *Felt Knowledge* at the Royal Geographical Society's annual conference and this became another phrase helping to define what exactly this methodology means to me. It's not a rejection of the rational or conceptual order but a commitment to art's unique place in giving voice to our commonalities through the sensation of becoming other. After I showed my filmed installation *The Nonbifurcatedman*, the panel's curator, Candice Boyd, remarked that perhaps being autistic was the closest we can get to being nonbifurcated. In his book *Discognition*, Shavero compares the aesthetic acts of AI consciousness to a state of autism: this form of cognition has 'an attunement to life as an incipient ecology of practices, an ecology that does not privilege the human but attends to the more-than-human' (Shavero 2015 p69), which suggests that as well as reducing life to binaries, the digital autistic realm also creates a flat non-hierarchical space 'responsive to resonances across scales and registers of life, both organic and inorganic.' This story is called *The Kingdom of the Blind* and this itself helps to make sense of how favouring aesthetic modes is hard to understand from a cognitive position. Making and testing spaces are how this methodology can be understood because 'its primordial consciousness is non-cognitive: as Kant says, it is intrinsically indeterminable and inadequate for cognition' (Shavero 2015). The aesthetic means of sense-making is invisible to conceptual cognition because there is nothing for it to process. The stagemaker bird or animal-artist feels an intuitive understanding. Confronted with a hegemony of the concept in art, this alternative methodology is what Zepke refers to as 'aesthetic post-conceptual art'. His ideas of the 'affectual ready-made objects' have

been another step towards knowing how the non-representational attitude shapes my approach to constructing aesthetic machines. This way, everything (words, marks, colours, ideas) becomes matter flow. A stencilled hand on a cave wall is/was post-conceptual but the post-rationalisation of the event makes it conceptualisation of 'here I am'. This is why my practise seeks the point of immanence in its making and subsequent experience.

Here the sensation or 'fact' emerges through overcoming the representational and narrative clichés that are not simply produced by, but actually constitute, rational consciousness. The sublime intuition frees the nervous system from its conceptual determination, forcing the brain to confront chaos and construct an analogical expression of it.' (Zepke 2017 p192)

As an organism, my identity as human leads to feeling absurd and the aesthetic mode reconnects as more-than-human. The aesthetic machine and the analogy of the stagemaker bird place me in the middle of material flow. The mechanism that makes the stagemaker bird the complete artist, 'Deleuze and Guattari argue, is the appropriation of something in order to use it in a completely different way' (Zepke 2017). Concepts, images and signifiers become affectual ready-mades and I am an artist 'like the stagemaker bird that turns over fallen leaves to mark out the "stage on which it sings" a complex song made up from its own notes and, at intervals, those of other birds that it imitates.' I would like to use analogy of a childhood memory to explain further.

A start... Art inside the inflatable bouncy bubble (aesthetic machine) is where the stagemaker bird sings a song. It is where the dreary becomes shiney (sic), no elbow grease required. It is where you know that thing you suspected all along: the labels and definitions are part of a puritanical game invented to help the vicar feel better about his fete. The stagemaker turns over a new leaf and the underside is vibrant with immanent meaning. Not a coded clue but the importance of belonging and the sense of coalescence that comes from being in the middle. As a child, I never got to the middle of the bouncy bubble tent but I imagined the land over the prow of its central hill. The animal-artist Amazonian

stagemaker bird helps carry the artist inside-out of the anthropocentric aviary of sense-making,

The stagemaker bird has swooped down and Theresa's hair is a silvery pompom celebrating the shimmering interconnected wonder found only when signifiers of analysis are scattered to the wind. And look – the urinal is not a fountain but a perspex Buddha bellowing a prayer into the starry night. How dare we get there? How dare we cast off the waxy wings of progress and create our bowers of unclasped felt meaning lying beyond the forgotten scuffed asymmetric vinyl bubble? To be born en-caul into a temporarily fated egg-world, a soldier of fortune dipping into the yolk of albumen's asemiotic significance.

Before. Before this, when I didn't trust my footing. When I didn't understand the incipient immanence of the middle, I stayed near the entrance of the inflatable bouncy bubble, keeping an eye on my grandparents outside in the world of conceptual order whilst my sister, who had gone on ahead, bounced and cavorted. My art would keep one eye on this door leading back to the conceptual order of the signified and psychological. Bouncing with Deleuze and his lovers means that I can feel the meaning and trust that it will land without hurting anyone. My grandparents might worry but they will glimpse me through the bubble's misty scuffed-up plastic portholes. Don't look, my grandfather had instructed me earlier in the day, as he carried me over his shoulder through the Louis Tussauds (two swords?) waxworks chamber of horrors.

A representational realm of Native American Indians strung up by ropes through their torsos. The representational likeness can thrill but it is ultimately so very unbouncy and so very unable to lead to the lure of the possible and the creation of the new.

8 Video Links:

Vimeo Account: <https://vimeo.com/user7170029>

Youtube: www.youtube.com/user/channelvessel

Performative: <http://thebestofthevessel.weebly.com/movies.html>

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Fig 20 *Keynote Speech: Affect and Social Media Conference* Dr Dean Todd seals me into a flight-case during the performance (2018) UEL

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AVA Gallery

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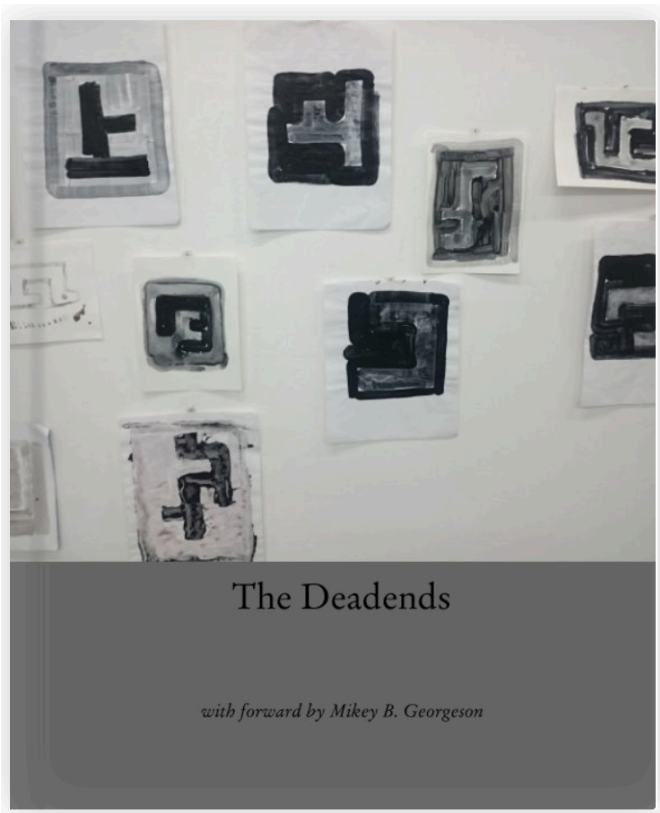
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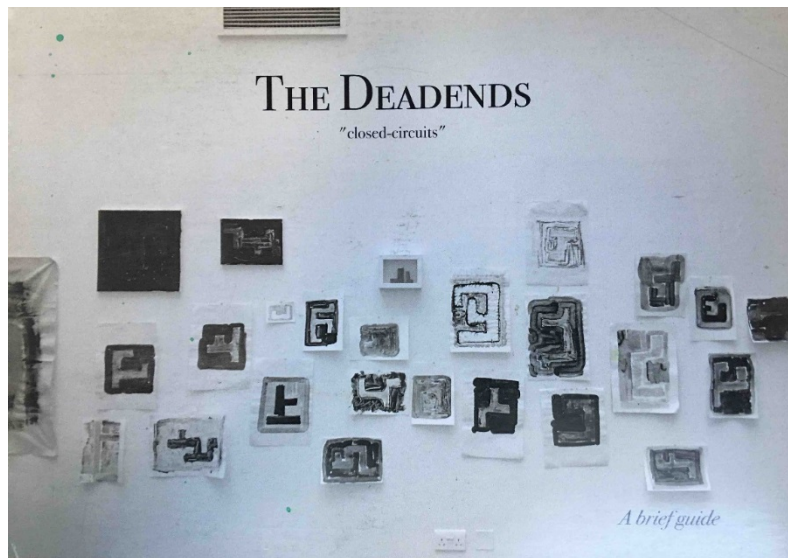
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10 Appendices



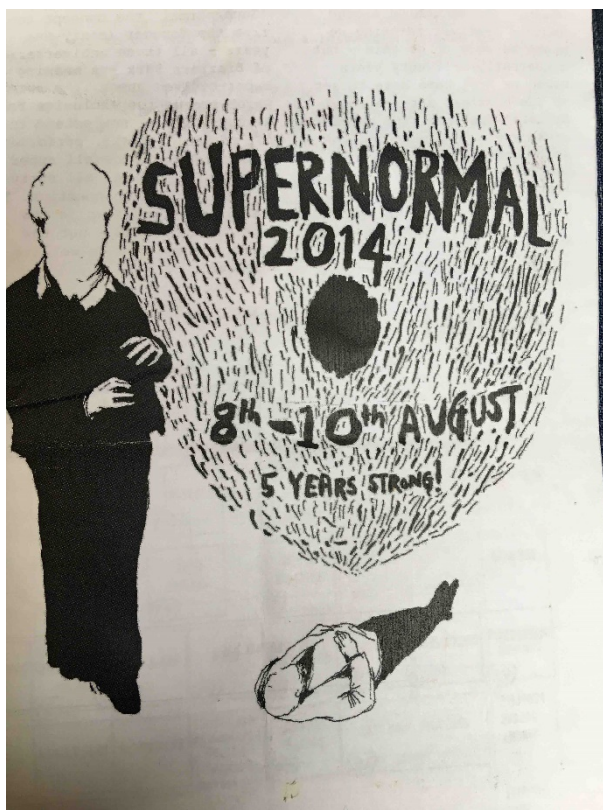
Cover for *The Deadends* – A Brief Guide Unlike Press 2016



Poster for Sensorium #4 2018



Backwerdz Causality Song Writing Workshop at Supernormal 2014



- blue prints using the natural environment of the Braziers site.
22. **Backwerdz Causality Song-writing Workshop** uses simple exercises to access the "mind at large" and then apply the discoveries made. Participants are encouraged to dive in and accept all offers.
23. **Maggie Nicols presents The Gathering:** a space, place and time to build up confidence in
29. **Laura** provi
appro
of mu
from
own e
ritic
earth
30. **Lutir**
duo,
al se
both
time

Dogon Egg at Amp Gallery, Peckham 2019

DOGON EGG

**CAROLINE GREGORY AND
THE DOGON EGG AT AMP PECKHAM.**

**THE DOGON EGG IS THE CONTAINER FOR 6
INTUITIVE PRIMORDIAL INCUBATIONAL
WEEKEND 'CELLS'. THE PROJECT PROFFERS
PLAYFUL OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL CREATIVE
DNA TO MERGE AND SEPARATE WITH A FINALE
IN THE FORM OF A 7TH SPACETIME CELL WHERE
ALL 6 PREVIOUS AXIS MUST PASS AND
PERHAPS COHERE.**

**WEEKEND 1:
PROUDLY PRESENTING MIKEY GEORGESON'S
'ACTUAL OCCASION'
JANUARY 25TH -27TH PV FRIDAY 25TH
6-8PM
WITH LIVE RACHEL GOMME COLLABORATION**

OPEN TO PUBLIC SATURDAY/SUNDAY 1-5PM

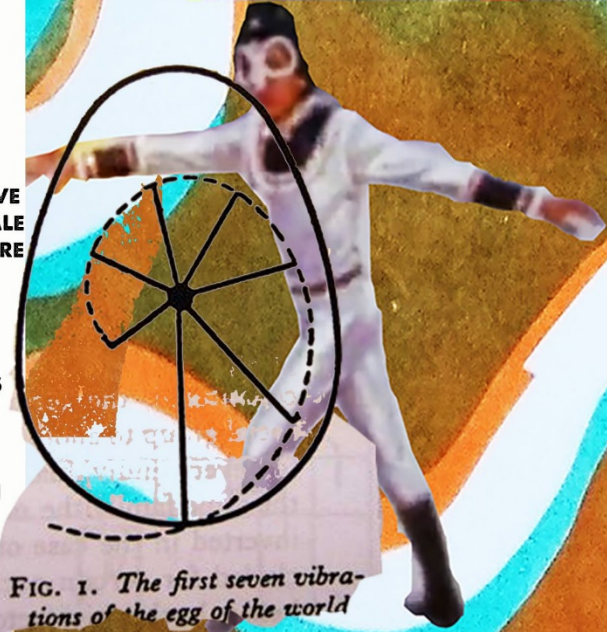
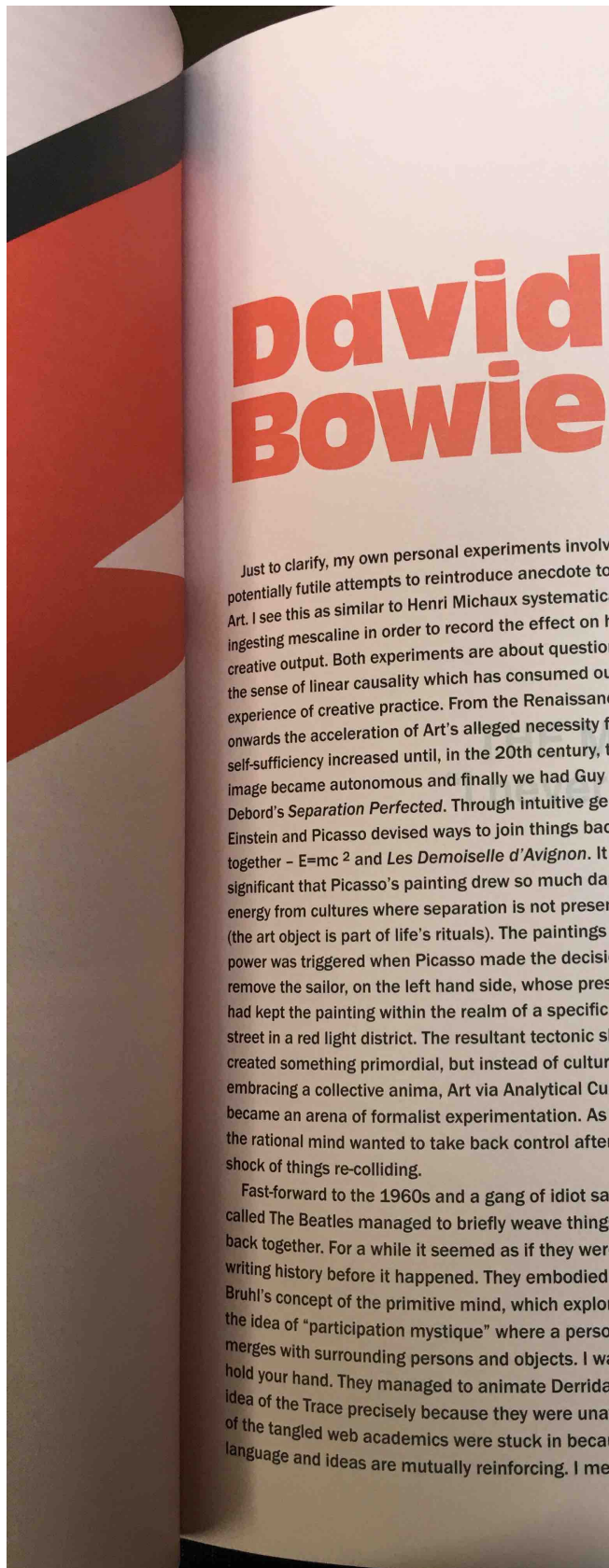


FIG. 1. The first seven vibrations of the egg of the world



David Bowie

Just to clarify, my own personal experiments involve potentially futile attempts to reintroduce anecdote to Art. I see this as similar to Henri Michaux systematically ingesting mescaline in order to record the effect on his creative output. Both experiments are about questioning the sense of linear causality which has consumed our experience of creative practice. From the Renaissance onwards the acceleration of Art's alleged necessity for self-sufficiency increased until, in the 20th century, the image became autonomous and finally we had Guy Debord's *Separation Perfected*. Through intuitive genius Einstein and Picasso devised ways to join things back together - $E=mc^2$ and *Les Femmes d'Alger*. It is significant that Picasso's painting drew so much dark energy from cultures where separation is not present (the art object is part of life's rituals). The paintings power was triggered when Picasso made the decision to remove the sailor, on the left hand side, whose presence had kept the painting within the realm of a specific street in a red light district. The resultant tectonic shift created something primordial, but instead of culture embracing a collective anima, Art via Analytical Cubism became an arena of formalist experimentation. As if the rational mind wanted to take back control after the shock of things re-colliding.

Fast-forward to the 1960s and a gang of idiot savants called The Beatles managed to briefly weave things back together. For a while it seemed as if they were writing history before it happened. They embodied Bruhl's concept of the primitive mind, which explores the idea of "participation mystique" where a personality merges with surrounding persons and objects. I wanna hold your hand. They managed to animate Derrida's idea of the Trace precisely because they were unaware of the tangled web academics were stuck in because language and ideas are mutually reinforcing. I mean



NO.16

Experiment

In rejecting the styles and conventions of the past, experimentation and the search for the new was at the heart of modernism. With this spirit of innovation and the permission to *try again fail again fail better* came new forms of architecture for changing communities, along with unique visions of ours and other worlds through cinema screens, record players and that seminal radio telescope.

their weaving of personal and social threads was not about appropriation, but an understanding that the "new media" were part of life itself.

"A malignant rot has spread through the Western mind since the mid-seventies: the virus of meaninglessness".
Revolution in the Head

David Bowie seems to have cottoned onto this before anyone else. Bowie has mentioned that he might have been a painter. Had he been, would we think of him more as a great experimenter of the late 20th century? His choice of idiom was his genius - perhaps he is a painter at heart. I don't think Bowie ever said that painting directly onto canvas would not have allowed him to get at what he was getting at but that this is so is irrefutable. Part of the reason my attempts to clarify Bowie's experimentalism become more convoluted the clearer I seek to make them is because the sense comes from magic thinking - the synchronicity, for instance, of David Bowie's first acting role being in *The Image* as a young man who steps out of a painting to haunt the artist who created him. Later he and Iggy Pop both tried to outdo each other in re-creating Erich Heckel's painting *Roquairol* for the covers of *Heroes* and *The Idiot* respectively. Iggy got closest. Painting somehow wasn't a medium capable of escaping the already tired reflex of making jokes about jokes about art.

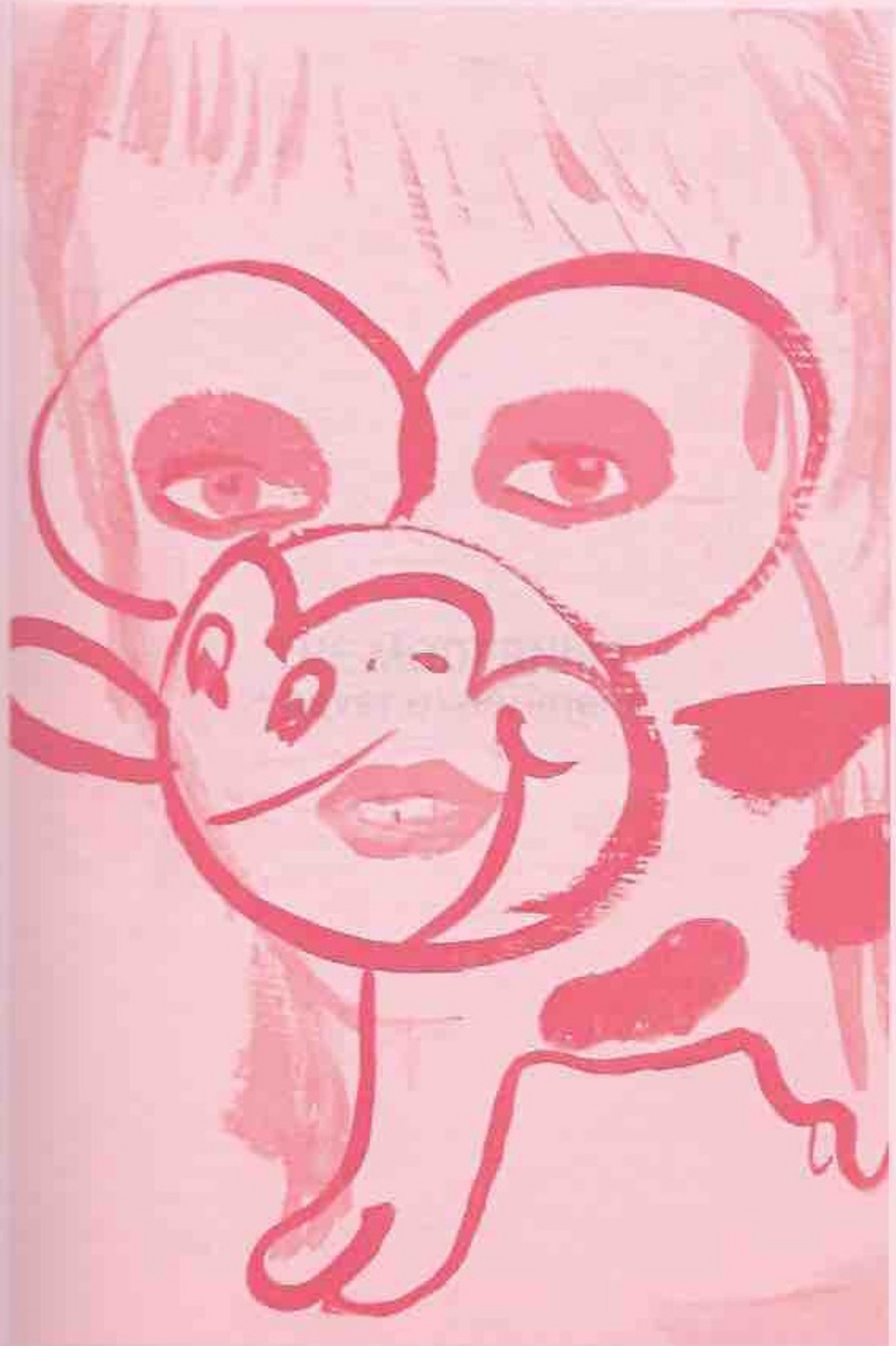
As a songwriter I had become somewhat obsessed with how Bowie had written *Life on Mars*? Rather than consoling myself with the knowledge that he'd had a head start with the chords to *My Way (Comme d'habitude)* I realised that the pain of his lyrics being rejected (*Even a Fool Learns to Love*) had driven him on to create a work of seismic intensity in much the same way that Picasso had with *Les Femmes d'Alger*. There is a story he tells of jumping off the bus from Beckenham to Lewisham in order to get back to his piano because the

song wouldn't leave his head. You don't do art it does you (Leonora Carrington).

What he ended up writing was the first time anyone had managed to hold up a shattered mirror to the fractured times. This structure of feeling became perfected and repackaged in a much more easily digested form known as Postmodernism. The following year Venturi's learning from Las Vegas was published but this was a far more considered and objective stance. It wasn't symbols that we needed it was meaning.

And so the question "Is there Life on Mars?" is the plea of the anomic heroine: "Is there meaning in the world?" The song encapsulates the instantaneous all-at-onceness of living in a meaningless Spectacle in a manner which is both narrative and dislocated without, and this is the trick, being ironic. Manet attempted something similar with *Un bar aux Folies Bergère* but this fusion of emotional empathy with distance was not continued in painting after his death. Bowie brought back the sailor, who was now having a good old scrap because he saw that the autonomous image was now part of real life. Even critics praising the song talk about the impenetrable abstract cut-up lyrics but this is to overlook the song's brilliance, which is to simultaneously be about the meaningless Spectacle and to imbue it with infinite emotional resonance. Andy Warhol never did this; he just reflected the impenetrable silver screen of modern life back at itself.

My unleavened theory is that Bowie shattered his own psyche on the high anvil of Art that we, his acolytes, may experience a glimpse of freedom from anomie. The song *Life on Mars?* erupted through hurt-fuelled intuition and later the trick becomes repeated as if it is a mechanism; cut-ups etc etc etc. Perhaps another way of understanding it is to consider how Camus had to write two books to show both sides of the Absurd rather than write one song. *The Outsider* shows the complete loss of meaning and detachment brought about by anomie, and in the *Myth of Sisyphus*, published the same year, we have the solution, which is to imagine Sisyphus happy. In other words meaning is within the act of creation itself whilst embracing the paradoxical futility of longing for something with meaning. The free expression of the 1960s was repackaged as free-enterprise individuality and the free-lovers were blamed for the self-seeking culture of the 1980s and beyond. Bowie's admiration for the direct emotional expression of Heckel tells us the intersubjective route he wanted to take but who, in the hall of mirrors created by the virus of meaninglessness, would want to find meaning in such an anachronistic medium? Like Picasso, Bowie intuited a way of unleashing the primordial forces required for meaning to emerge and that was through song and performance. It was of course the only way to bring meaning back to an Art shorn of content.



PHILIPS PAVILION

BY MIKEY GEORGESON

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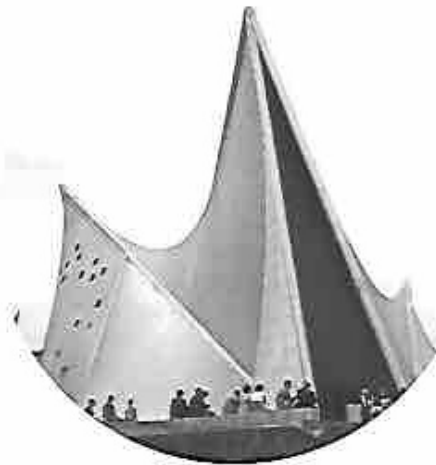


Image: Wouter Hagens

Everything about the 1958 Expo's Philips Pavilion and its creation is hard to grasp. To even get close to my own understanding of it may require some dislocated antics – bear with me. A month late being finished it was dismantled after the summer, being deemed unfit to survive the winter months. The Pavilion's short life span reminds me of Bruno Taut's Glass Pavilion for the Cologne *Deutscher Werkbund* exhibition. This too was built as a poetic catalyst for utopia, although the sunnier side of two world wars was full of an expressionist optimism. It too was dismantled due to its non-functional purpose – Taut would argue that this unnecessary nature was its function. Both pavilions can only be pieced together from black and white documentation, and their total experience only grasped at in the mind's eye. There are virtual recreations of the Philips Pavilion, but these manage to bypass the ineffable riddle of its inception. The closest thing I can think of in recent times is the Millennium Dome, but this, in comparison, is a travesty of total, connected artistic endeavour. Collaborative exercise becomes design by committee – just watch the original trailer: bit.ly/1wKQGRu.

The Philips Pavilion, like a great lost multimedia art-happening-masterpiece should never really have happened. None of the collaborators seem to agree on its intended meaning or even that they were collaborating. Philips even commissioned a full alternative score because they were unhappy with Le Corbusier's choice of Edgard Varèse. To separate it into its detached components is to kill its mystery (it's full of this) but the separate components are the only way we have of comprehending it. Iannis Xenakis, Le Corbusier's assistant and the designer of the parabolic structure, saw the project as addressing "How an increasingly mechanised civilisation is striving towards a better future." But he was only one band member, and it's far better to trust the art not the artist.

The structure designed by Xenakis is striking, though to call it designed is far too prosaic. The parabolic curves were defined by individual concrete segments cast in a vast shed by industrious craftsmen, who numbered the pieces with chalk so they could assemble them with giant crane once they were transported to the site. The film of this looks like someone wanted to make a movie of a Fernand Léger painting, to demonstrate the wonder of unified endeavour as opposed to exorbitant technological process. The Philips Pavilion would be too expensive to create now because it was built by skilled workers happy to make something bigger than each of themselves individually. This film alone reveals an amazing spirit of form and function with an aesthetic far beyond the clichéd suitcase high-rises we now associate with modernism: bit.ly/1qA05bV.

Le Corbusier's visuals, which the structure housed, were made up of a film, still images, lights and hanging sculptures. There's the tape piece *Concret PH* (good

album title), created by Xenakis which featured the sound of heated charcoal. And there's Varese's score for the *Poème électronique*. None of this was ever synchronised and relied, as far as one can tell, upon components all starting at the same time. The time schedule was recorded on one score, which in itself resembles an overly elaborate Fluxus document. The *Poème* was created whilst Le Corbusier was busy with creating Chandigarh. It is a bold reminder of the depth of his creativity and passion for wanting to actually help the human race. Yes, it is about the essence but in a way that modernism had by then forgotten as it rode the wave of progress. "Look! This is us humans!" it says. "Let's crawl out of the cave/bomb shelter and build a better world through technology." Or perhaps he's just saying "It's too late!" Such is the power of its starkest moments.

When I first saw the *Poème* I'd been reading *The Medium is the Massage*, Marshall McLuhan's 1967 collaboration with graphic designer Quentin Fiore. Within its pages I read that humanity was "given an eye for an ear" by the invention of the phonetic alphabet. Watching *Poème électronique* I found it easy to imagine that a time travelling Le Corbusier was illustrating McLuhan's vision-come-warning. McLuhan felt that sound is experienced from all directions, whereas perspective-based sight needed for reading words processes from a single fixed point. Electronic media, whilst creating an information overload also presented a chance of returning to a total acoustic space, and what better way for the Philips Pavilion to manifest this than to embed the undulating walls with four hundred individual speakers triggered by automated switching units in order to activate like rows of fairy lights. What fascinated me was the resilience of a belief that rather than alienating us in a vortex of information technology the electronic age might also reconnect us all in a nomadic existence within a retrieved acoustic space. Le Corbusier, like McLuhan after him, was trying to join everything back together. A kind of new theory of relativity based on the experience of living.

The Belgian World Expo of 1958 was the first of its kind since the second world war, and within that context Corbusier and Xenakis appear to have tried to make an epoch-shifting fulcrum from parabolic curves. It wasn't just an aesthetic exercise, it was an attempt to marry ideas and vision with physical experience. The sheer scale of its ambition came from an awareness of the scale of the times. Their immersive construction stood on the edge of a crepuscular electronic future and attempted to take us there via the shadows of the subconscious. The shadow of the war was still intense enough for Le Corbusier to feel compelled to create a multi-media installation that manifested a sense of our Neolithic essence and beginning again from scratch. The commission, I believe, was in-

tended to showcase the cutting-edge technology of the Philips corporation. So far so familiar, except this was a time when the "global village" (as McLuhan called it in 1962's *Gutenberg Galaxy*) was in an embryonic stage. It's nice to think that Philips was genuinely trying to project a sense of awe and wonder, not simply expand their market quota. This immersive environment was to be like a cow's stomach into which the two million visitors would enter and then leave digested. Le Corbusier described it as a "Miracle Box" containing light, image, rhythm and sound "embedded in organic synthesis". This is from the man who, to some at least, single-handedly pioneered the urban uniformity that is responsible for alienating most of the urban world. That overly simplistic view ignores his creative richness, but the Philips Pavilion feels like an attempt to disrupt the uniformity, because what he strived for was universality.

Le Corbusier's notion of an ideal reached through distillation to the essence has more than a whiff of Plato's theory of form about it. Plato explained his theory of form in *The Republic* through the *Allegory of the Cave*. This paradigm has inspired many a dystopian sci-fi vision - you know, the idea that this reality is an illusionary shadow of the real reality, which is possibly a dream. But I'm not sure this interpretation incorporates Plato's (and Corbusier's) quest for perfection. The Philips Pavilion could very easily be seen as attempt to recreate Plato's Cave for the 20th century. An experience that embodies McLuhan's idea that electronic man is like neolithic man in that "everything is all at once". The digested visitors leave in an enlightened state, their eyes painfully readjusting to the new realm they find themselves back in. The impression that the Pavilion's central legacy - *Poème électronique* - leaves you with is that the Enlightenment needs to find a route out of its hall of mirrors. One of the ways Le Corbusier achieves this is by bypassing a patronising occidental museum aesthetic with an almost 'Clangers-like' absurdity. Xenakis' score reinforces this. However, total absurdity would be to submit to the prevailing nihilist point of view when the overriding message from this project is that modernism could yet still save us. My feeling is that it emerged from a subconscious union of the powerful creative souls its inception had brought together. It is meant to take us back to the future by reminding us of our essential connectedness.

TS Eliot puts it thus in *Four Quartets*;

"We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time."

K6 MAUSOLEUM

(OR ANACHRONISM IN THE UK)

Mikey Georgeson



Image: Mikey Georgeson

In the modern age we have all somehow absorbed the message that memory is an indulgence. Or at least that was the script last time I checked in the modern person's manual. I'm confused now because "vintage" and "retro" have bypassed this by being so non-specific that they evade any idea of actually recalling something in particular. Prolonged indulgence in memory though is still seen as a misty eyed longing for a time that never was. Describing something as an anachronism is hardly a positive endorsement. Alain Fournier explores this sense of longing for an "out of time-ness" in *Le bal des Estrofe*. It's a book that captures the reverie of childhood and the urge to gaze back as the adult drags you past toward the real matters in hand. At least that's part of it. "Wait", you want to say "I'm still curious about this thing here."

The phone rings and you pick it up instinctively knowing that on the other end of the line is your childhood self who has just ventured down to the end of the street to place two pence in the pay phone for the simple thrill of speaking to someone back where he came from. This is a reverse charge call. Do you accept? Public phone boxes had been around for 50 years even then, so why were they still so novel? Standing in the box you absorb the smell of cast iron, concrete, plastic, card, tobacco and paper all coalesced in greenhouse conditions. Upon entry the door felt heavy and foreboding - entry to this realm is not for the weak-willed. Making a call was not to be taken lightly, and relieving oneself in one was something to write home about. "Hello", you ask "is that you?"

Speaking to you now as an adult I am still struck by the anomaly of the phone-box. How did a country with such an arguably diminished sense of cultural identity end up with such an iconic sentry to the realm of invisible forces? Standing guard at the edges of its landscapes - both urban and bucolic - the K6's gentle curves, combined with dependable solidity seem quintessentially British now. It could almost be that the function of the booth led seamlessly to its design, except it didn't. When Giles Gilbert Scott won the competition to design a new phone box he was a trustee of the John Soane's Museum. Rodphonebox.info reports that it was a lantern in the museum that inspired him. The more widely held belief is that the Soane's family mausoleum influenced the design. It could be that the model for the mausoleum in the museum was a more direct source. Soane, however, was fond of experimenting with shallow domes and the museum, once his home and ideas laboratory, is testament to this. Step into the Breakfast Parlour and look up to find the same tent-like canopy albeit with miniature convex mirrors on the corners to heighten the disorientating sense of scale and space. He loved to create grand spaces on a small scale. Is this what we have in a far more compressed sense with the K6? Looking at Scott's industrial scale buildings it is not hard to spot the same neoclassical elegant line and proportion found in Soane's work. There is even the same love for the aesthetic of brickwork. I had always been informed that Soane's outward influence was negligible but there stands the Banksido power station, with the same classical modernity at the heart of national culture.

Hello? Aren't you going on a bit? I didn't think you were a fetishist? I'm sorry how do you know such a concept? I'm you aren't? Yes, OK well if you want to discover the pure thrill I'm longing for then I suggest you visit the Dulwich Picture Gallery and go directly to the mausoleum at the centre. Look up at the ceiling and let the piss-coloured light bathe your senses. See there! Look tiny angels way up high, so far away that you almost miss them? It's like the phone booth has suddenly stretched up high so you feel like you've shrunk. The same three-in-a-row grid-dod windows are now golden and sucking light from the sky. And look, down there where the cigarette stubs usually are, those are sarcophagi.

"Enriched with the mortal remains of departed worth, and calling back so powerfully the recollections of past times, that we almost believe we are conversing with our departed friends now sleeping in their silent tombs."

These are not my words but those of the architect himself - Sir John Soane. Yes, right there resting before your eyes are the corporeal forms of Sir Francis Bourgeois and Mr. and Mrs. Desentans. The collectors of the art amassed beyond the confines of the mausoleum "religious light". Legend has it that a telephone was installed in each sarcophagus. Some report hearing a distinct dialling tone in the quieter moments of the day.

Are you still there? Go now out through the back exit directly to the garden where sun glints off the windows of the red sentinel by the wrought iron fence - K6. Summoning your courage pull open the heavy door and once interred press button A and ask to speak to Sir Francis. Turn back to look at the museum and an exact scaled-up cast of the space you inhabit looms up at you, staring down in unblinking eternal sagacity.

"Hello are you there?"

"Y...ye...yes."

The last schoolboy to try this was found dead the next morning still gripping the receiver with a look of terror frozen on his face. "Click" brrrrr...

Soane was enthusiastic in his undertaking of the design of the Picture Gallery what with the brief specifying a mausoleum for the collections curators at its centre. A pyramid for the industrial age and very probably the first truly modern piece of architecture. This then is the birthing chamber (Thunderbird 2 if you like) for the classic red phone box. K6 an escape pod for the modern dreamer standing dormant until the correct digits are dialled in and the occupant departs for the beyond.

Introduction to *Dandelion Visions* for International Times September 2017

Horowitz will be joined by other poets and musicians for an evening at The Regis School of Music.
The main Sunday event will be held at the Newtown Social Club. This will include musical performances from Gwyneth Herbert, David Devant and his Spirit Wife, Tymon Dogg and also

and the generosity of the performers themselves guarantees that anyone longing for something a little bit different will be pleased they were there."
Tickets are £15 for the day or £25 for the whole weekend.
For more information visit blakefest.



Singer songwriter Gwyneth Herbert

Mikey Georgeson introduces *Dandelion Visions* & *The Nonbifurcatedman*

Blakefest Bognor Regis Public Library 16th September to 7th October 2017

The role of an artist is in some respects not to create a framework but to reveal it and in doing so offer what Duchamp refers to as a “way out through a clearing”. In a recent interview with Adam Curtis in *International Times* the discussion hovered around the institutionalisation of culture or even the managerialisation of creativity and this struck a chord with me. I realised that the vacuum of meaning left by centuries of Enlightened thinking is the void I see Art seeping into. In the interview he says that he doesn't think that the “answer” to the current void of meaning will come from art. This I suppose is part of the paradox because the institutional framework in seeking answers is one of cause and effect – still pretty much Newtonian despite our boundless wonder for popular neuroscience. Today art is in danger of being just another object of equivalence in the meta-culture of ironic re-appropriation. With my installation and accompanying exhibition I wanted to move towards the irreducible acts of creativity, which tend to happen in the gaps of the framework. A. N. Whitehead suggests that a “living society” supports these acts of original creativity, which seem to undermine the framework itself.

The central idea of this Blake inspired exhibition is an attempt to marry his fourfold vision with A N Whitehead's idea of non-bifurcated thinking or “process reality”. Since Aristotle we have been thinking in terms of fixed definable objects or substances rather than actual occasions. When we consider Whitehead's invitation to think of objects as events the question “What would non-bifurcated art look like?” begins to feel like an awkwardly framed problem, placing art in a realm of the subject (viewer) and object (artefact). The exhibition's central installation, *The Nonbifurcatedman* is an attempt to

manifest a non-bifurcated occasion experienced whilst driving early in the morning on the same road taken repeatedly in a receding childhood.

The bifurcated thinking positions art as an adjunct to scientific reality. Blake, however, recognised that imagination is central to the creation of reality. This is something science is catching up with (see Proust was a neuro-scientist). The occidental mind is conditioned to separate the wheat from the chaff. The chaff, in scientific terms is useless stuff. The soul is superfluous to data and therefore useless. It is the dark matter of metaphysical problem solving. The equations don't add up without it but the rational mind is expert at making the result fit the equation. Blakean imagination is an act of the soul and therefore has been sieved out of our day-to-day model. Instead we are saturated in fantasy and to the rational mind the visions of Blake only make sense as delusions. You don't need to be a bohemian to feel the hum of the meaning beyond the surface of things but we dismiss the feeling because the machine model analogy has become the default setting and algorithmic analysis the means by which we seek truth.

“The brain reduced by machine to feedback loops – the private personality to a public generality a person might as well have been dead already” Jonathan Franzen – *Purity*. Having whole heartedly defined ourselves as complex machines we are still trying to see how far we can go on this engine alone. The motor of mono-vision. Quite far it would seem. The moon. I want I want. But that remember was the sixties and now the figures wouldn't stack up.

Nonbifurcated thinking isn't about science and nature getting along as separate realms, it's about entanglement. This is different to compromise and perhaps something to do with McLuhan's idea that "new media are nature". My installation The Nonbifurcatedman takes technology and uses it to hurl us headlong into nature. In Summa Technologiae Stanislaw Lem speculates that cybernetic technologies will become "too powerful for us to be able to cope with their autonomy". He warns of the Pyrrhic victories of science over nature, as a result of which "instead of developing strategy, it [civilisation] ends up just practicing tactics". It's thrilling that Blake could see where our faith in the scientific method was leading us. It's there in the image of Newton stooped over unable to see beyond self-made straight lines. "We shape our tools and our tools shape us." Now, like the AI intelligence of the Chinese room we no longer need to have meaning, just the correct or consensus response. The soul is a peculiar and potentially embarrassing truth. It gets in the way of our meta-based view of life, which insists that everything is caught in a cycle of repetition and that creative originality is a matter of stealing with style. This exhibition seeks to try another idea of Art based on the specificity of the individual artist and the location, Bognor Regis. Yes Blake lived in Bognor Regis and in Milton even created his most edifying stream of consciousness work there. This is something brought to life by Dr Naomi Billingsley's Virtual Reality Tour of Blake's cottage. It's great to have it home in Bognor at last and reminds me of Mirjam Westen's idea in Piercing the Spirits of an art which,

"testifies to a desire to connect everything together and to make it meaningful... a counterbalance to the absurdity of our existence..."

For more information.....

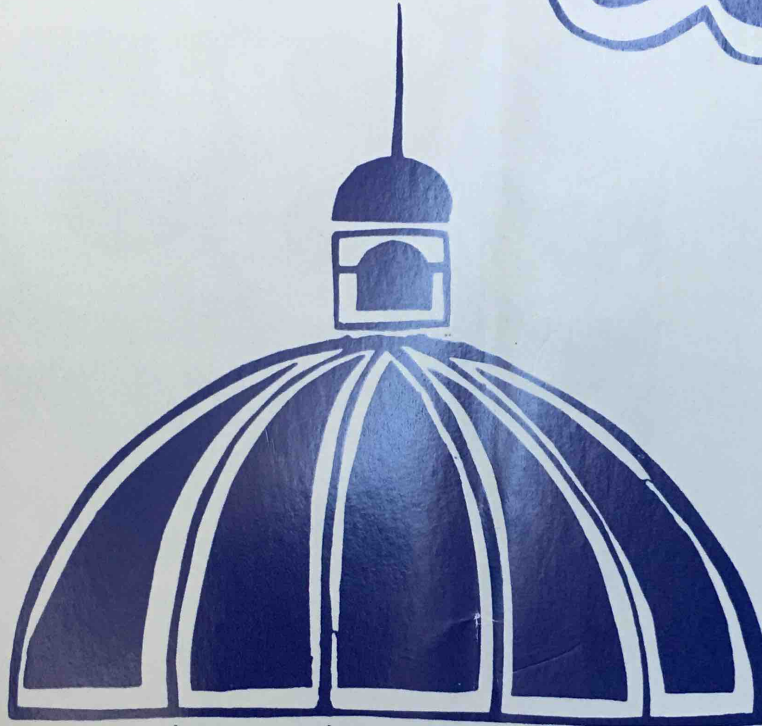
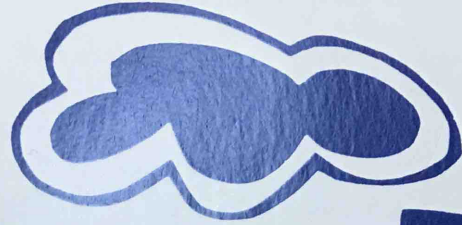
<http://www.bognor.today/events/blakefest-2017>



PIND

In partnership with PIND (Punk is Not Dead)
A History of the Punk Scene in France (1976-2016)

 PUNK SCHOLARS
NETWORK



**CONFERENCE AND
POSTGRADUATE
SYMPOSIUM**



**THE ART OF PUNK
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON
FRIDAY 25TH NOVEMBER 2016**

hand" aesthetics and movement and works with them in various forms in history, performance and actions.

Panel F Punk Art: Film – Maidwell, Board Room

Grace Healy, Postgraduate, University of Huddersfield

Paper: Dancing the Poot! Devo and Akron's Underground Post-Punk Scene 1976 – 1980

Abstract:

My current research explores the influence of nineteenth and twentieth-century art movements on the creation and development of American post-punk music. At present I am focussing on the underground music scene in Akron, Ohio throughout the 1970s, and its relationship to postmodernism. This paper will explore the artistic influences of the Akron-based post-punk band Devo, and how they drew inspiration from (anti-)art movements such as Dadaism and Kitsch to fashion an anti-commercialist aesthetic in late capitalist, Conservative America. Using Devo's musical output from 1976 -1980 as a case study, it will focus on the artistic tensions created on the path from underground to mainstream. From 1976-1980, Devo's commercial success began to grow in both Britain and America, peaking in 1980 with the release of the single 'Whip It'. This commercial success changed the way in which the band's music was received by critics and fans; were Devo succumbing to the pressures of the record label? Or was this success a strategic move, an attempt by the band to subvert from within an industry they despised? Their self-conscious use of Dada and Kitsch to comment on ideas about postmodernity, commercialism and late Capitalism began to lose its irony. For some, instead of a parody of order and conformity, Devo became the real thing.

Biography:

Grace Healy is a first-year PhD student at The University of Huddersfield. Her research explores the influence of nineteenth and twentieth-century art movements, in particular Dadaism and Kitsch, on the creation and development of American post-punk music.

Mikey B Georgeson, Senior Lecturer and Doctorate student University of East London

Paper: The Deadends (A Made Up Culture)

Links: www.unlike.space www.mikeygeorgeson.com

Abstract:

The documentary *The Deadends* is a diffidently nihilistic examination of a made-up culture who pre-cognitively stumbled upon the binary dialectic of western civilisation. It travels away from the pseudo-interpretations of semiotic cognition towards a physical intentionality found in the affect of felt experience. Set within the asphyxiating realm of academic analysis the film takes inspiration from Punk energy derived from engaging with authority rather than ignoring it.

The Deadends are Punk – an embodied "biological impulse, designed after the perseverance of the species, a natural, anthropological impulse that survives in the face of death by feigning death itself." Amresh Sinha *Adorno on Mimesis*.

Biography:

Mikey B Georgeson is an Artist sometimes known as The Vessel from Art-performance combo David Devant and his Spirit Wife. The absurdist majesty of early their performances is an experience that has left devotees still rubbing their eyes to this day.

As a painter he has had several solo shows and his painting *Dopamine – Molecule of Intuition* was recently in the John Moores prize. He is currently engaged in a Fine Art Doctorate at the University of East London entitled *The Vision of The Absurd*.

Mark Player, Postgraduate Researcher / PhD student, The University of Reading

Links: <https://reading.academia.edu/MarkPlayer>

Paper: Anarchy in Japan's Film Industry: How Punk Rescued Japanese Cinema

Abstract:

When punk impressed itself upon Japanese youth culture in the mid-to-late 1970s, it arrived at a time when the nation's film industry was in crisis. The studio system that had presided over film production for decades was in serious decline, curbing opportunities for the next generation of filmmaking talent by ceasing to take on new apprentices. Inspired by the DIY ideology of the emerging punk scene, young, aspiring filmmakers took matters into their own hands by forming small clubs to self-produce zero-budget short and feature-length films on their own terms; relying on friends, classmates, musicians and other hangers-on, and using relatively cheap

Short Break

3.00 Alison Baker: 'Protocols for the education of young witches and wizards'

From Merlin and the Wart, Ged, the Wizard of Earthsea on Roake to Mildred Hubble at Miss Cackle's Academy, the education of young witches and wizards has long been a staple of fantasy fiction for children. A familiar setting, combined with the familiar trope of "first get rid of the parents" in children's fiction means that magical school settings are ideal for an adventurous story. This paper will discuss four types of magical education: the independent but regulated (Harry Potter), private home-based, unregulated (Jonathan Stroud's Bartimaeus trilogy) and community-based, community regulated (Terry Pratchett's Tiffany Aching cycle). It will outline theoretical bases for the education types, and the outcomes of the education systems for the protagonists and their moral development. Finally, it will discuss social class and education systems, what the education systems of the fantastic worlds can tell the readers about how the worlds work and about social class within those worlds. This paper will draw on my knowledge both as a teacher and teacher educator, a researcher in children's reading for pleasure and cultural representation, and a PhD candidate on White Working Class children and children's fantasy fiction.

3.30 Ray Campbell: 'Alternative cabaret, alternative comedy and the avant-garde'

This paper/presentation will discuss alternative comedy and alternative cabaret and their relationship to the avant-garde. I am particularly interested in the relationship between the comedy and rock worlds, especially the post-punk scene of 1978 to 1984, which had similar avant-garde tendencies.

I will illustrate my points by showing a video clip of Alexei Sayle's "Albanian on a building site" joke and discussing how bricolage was used to create performances.

4.00 Mikey Georgeson: 'The Vision of The Absurd'

The Deadends are a made up culture through which I can explore the dislocating influence of subject-object based thinking. More and more we see researchers in cultural and scientific studies trying to address the fatal gaze of the analyst's eye - A way for Orpheus to look back without turning his head. Adorno suggests that Art has its origins in a magical heritage but comes into being as Art when placed in the kryptonite realm of the rational and/or bureaucracy. I'm struck by the paradox of Adorno's structuralist method of addressing the speechless or pre-personal nature of Art and recent discoveries seem to indicate that nonrepresentational theory could point to a way of inhabiting this area more openly.

Celebration of *The Deadends* poster Studio One Gallery 2017



Actual Occasion Blakefest programme entry 2018

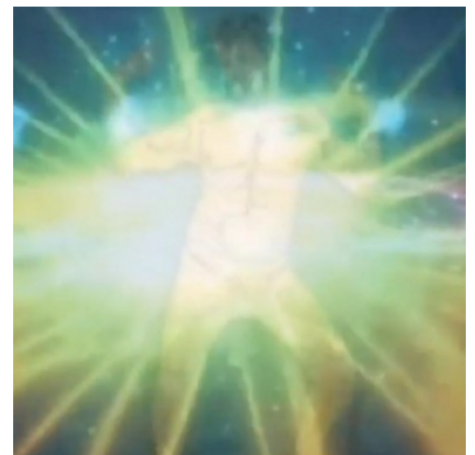
Audio-Visual Art Exhibition 2018

Come and Experience

- **Dancing with Albion - A Silent Disco** (Artist - Mikey Georgeson)

At the core of *Dancing with Albion* is a silent disco relaying a song, *Kindnezisavirus*. This was conceived as an aesthetic, playful composition, which later chimed with Richard Dawkins' statement that (human) kindness, being beyond the remit of natural selection, should be considered a virus. Part of A.N. Whitehead's critique of bifurcation is his desire to give prehensions and purposive acts of kindness an ontological value denied them by their secondary status to primary substances (atoms, photons, electrons, data, abstract concepts etc.).

- **Dancing with Albion - Miniature bronze of 16ft Proposed Sculpture** (Sculptor - Vincent Gray)
- Come and preview the proposed sculptures for Bognor and Felpham
- **On the Streets of Athens - Graffiti Exhibition** (Curators - Professor Hugo Frey and Dr Luke Walker)



Royal Geographical Society Panel 2018

Difficult to Listen / Research in cultural geographies as radio art

Ben Knight (University of Manchester, UK)

I will perform an extract from Difficult to Listen - an ongoing 'live' radio art collaboration with the sound artist Tom White. This project draws on autoethnographic 'sound writing', field recordings and performance practices, to develop a creative approach to research that explores the sensuous, affective nature of listening within the ordinary spaces of an asylum seeker drop-in. It will be a solo performance with a live reading and pre-recorded sound. Through Difficult to Listen I want to extend debates around sonic and cultural geographies (Gallagher & Prior 2013) to consider more performative ways of knowing that resonate with experimental documentary practices and a growing interest in radio art within contemporary art practice. This approach engages with Trinh T. Minhha's (1982) notion of not speaking about, but speaking nearby, in an attempt to get to grips with voice and empowerment within research and the asymmetrical relations and improvised social spaces of the asylum drop-in.

The Non-bifurcatedman – poetry, musical composition – immersive installation

Mikey Georgeson (School of Fine Art, University of East London, UK)

In this paper I shall present my short film-poem "The Non-bifurcatedman" and discuss the correlation between the Absurd and Whitehead's idea of the bifurcation of nature. Whitehead argues that since Aristotle we have thought of the cosmos as made of essential substances, which undergo change. The idea of object separateness, he argues, is an abstract convenience we view as the "real" world and this "bifurcation of nature" has skewed all ontological thinking. Despite our desire to read it and present it as an object, Art functions as a non-representational event. Bifurcation's insistence on fixed substance prevents us from accessing the cycle of creativity. How then to present Art as non-bifurcated?

I created the installation "The Non-bifurcatedman" to embody the experience of a moment of personal epiphany. The piece's occupants find themselves hurled via technology, back into nature. Its subject, a familiar car journey, is mundane but my sense of occasion profound. As a result of experiencing audience engagement I had a strong sense of how the specificity of quotidian flux is entangled with cosmic relativity. The film is part of an immersive installation containing a loop-like spoken-word poem embedded within a visual hyper-drive through dandelion seeds. I composed the surrounding music using live improvised assemblage parts. The idea was to give a sense of felt presence by leaving parts in a natural state. Memory is created in the now. The poem, the film and music all function as shifting loops giving the car's "occupant" a sense of an endless creative cycle.

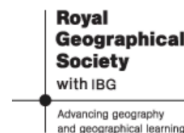
Feeling with Breath: A poetic tracing of everyday vibrancy in Belfast

Ciara Merrick (University of Bristol, UK)

Today, the world is 'known' through frames: manufactured representations visually binding perception to pre-determined narratives, to already proscribed bodies and to experiences manifest prior to their becoming. Confined to politically engineered frames, perception is active within the confines of a representability determined a priori, with the witnessing body compelled to comply with the moral and cultural customs of the milieu in which it exists. The very energy of the sensing body is appropriated as it becomes invested in behaviours and perceptions already permitted: the body becomes habitually induced to recognise what it perceives, as opposed to actively perceiving by oneself. But how do we break from this manufactured habit of perception? How do we change the focus from capturing pre-determined, singular frames and begin to trace relational ecologies in movement? Breath. In moving with the rhythm, tempo, vibrations and shapes of breath – with an air boundless, enchanting, excessive and relational – we begin to animate a whole-body sensing. This felt perception is not located in form but in the force of eventness, in the blossoming of becoming and in the lure of creativity where difference is animated. Tracing poetry moving with the rhythmic vibrancy of everyday Belfast, Northern Ireland this paper seeks to move amidst, to listen-to and to feel-with breath. It argues a whole-body sensing brings the body face-to-face with a rift in continuity which, in turn, calls into question the habitual and totalising images of representation, and creates a space in-between in which the two can encounter one and other in a sharing of breath.

Feeling the graffiti

RGS-IBG Annual International Conference 2018



Add to my calendar: [Outlook](#) [Google](#) [Hotmail/Outlook.com](#) [iPhone/iPad](#) [iCal \(.ics\)](#)

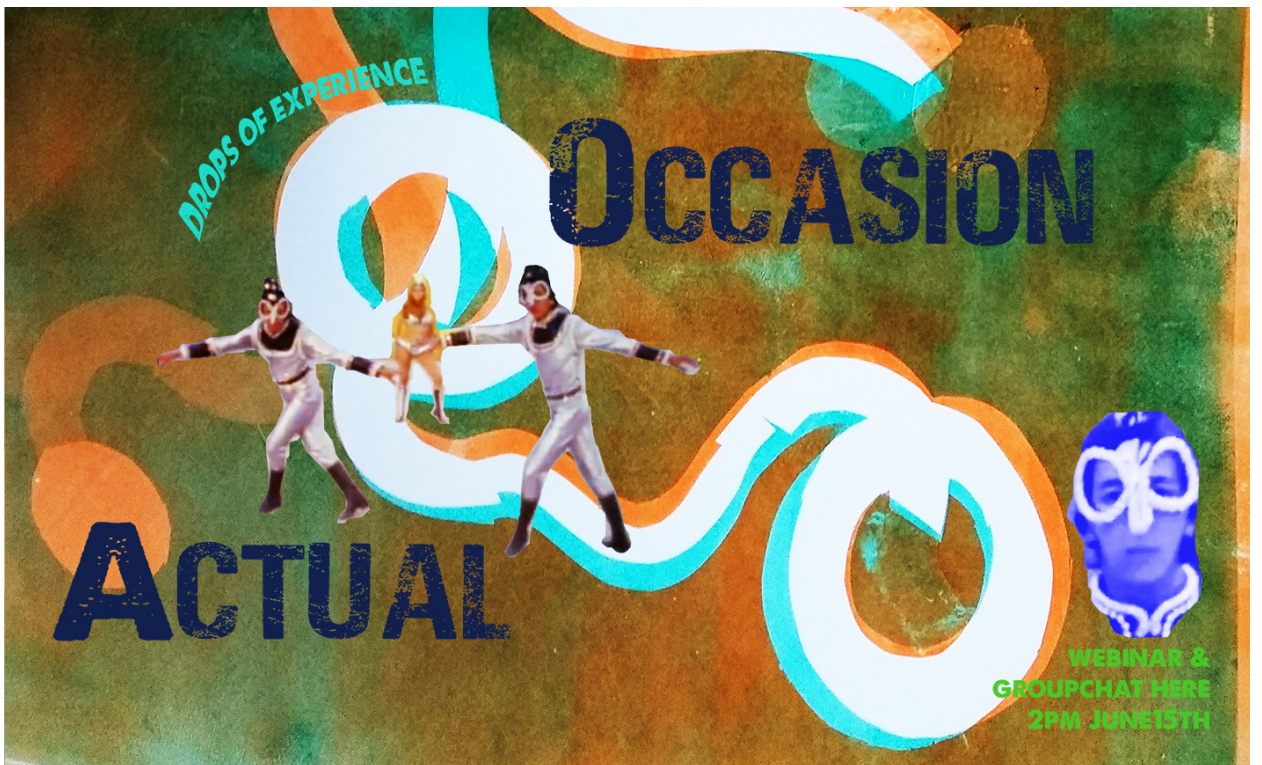
Please note that some mobile devices may require third party apps to add appointments to your calendar



99	Felt Knowledges (2) - Poetry and Performance
Affiliation	History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group
Convenor(s)	Candice Boyd (The University of Melbourne, Australia) Sarah Bennett (Kingston University, UK)
Chair(s)	Sarah Bennett (Kingston University, UK)
Timetable	Wednesday 29 August 2018, Session 4 (16:50 - 18:30)
Room	Sir Martin Evans Building - John Pryde Lecture Theatre
Session abstract	Non-representational, affective, and performative methods have generated considerable interest in cultural geography over the past decade (Dewsbury, 2010; Vannini, 2015). These developments have occurred alongside debates in the creative arts sparked by new materialisms and speculative realism (Barrett & Bolt, 2015; Bryant et al., 2013). In this session, we seek to interrogate the types of knowledges that are created when such methodologies are employed, with an emphasis on what is 'perceptively felt' (Manning & Massumi, 2014). The first session comprises paper presentations, ending with two video-based presentations. The second session consists of performative papers.
Linked Sessions	Felt Knowledges (1) - Papers and Video

Contact the conference organisers to request a change to session or paper details: ac2018@rgs.org

Actual Occasion flyers



Invitation to *Reality* exhibition, AVA Gallery 2016

Dear all

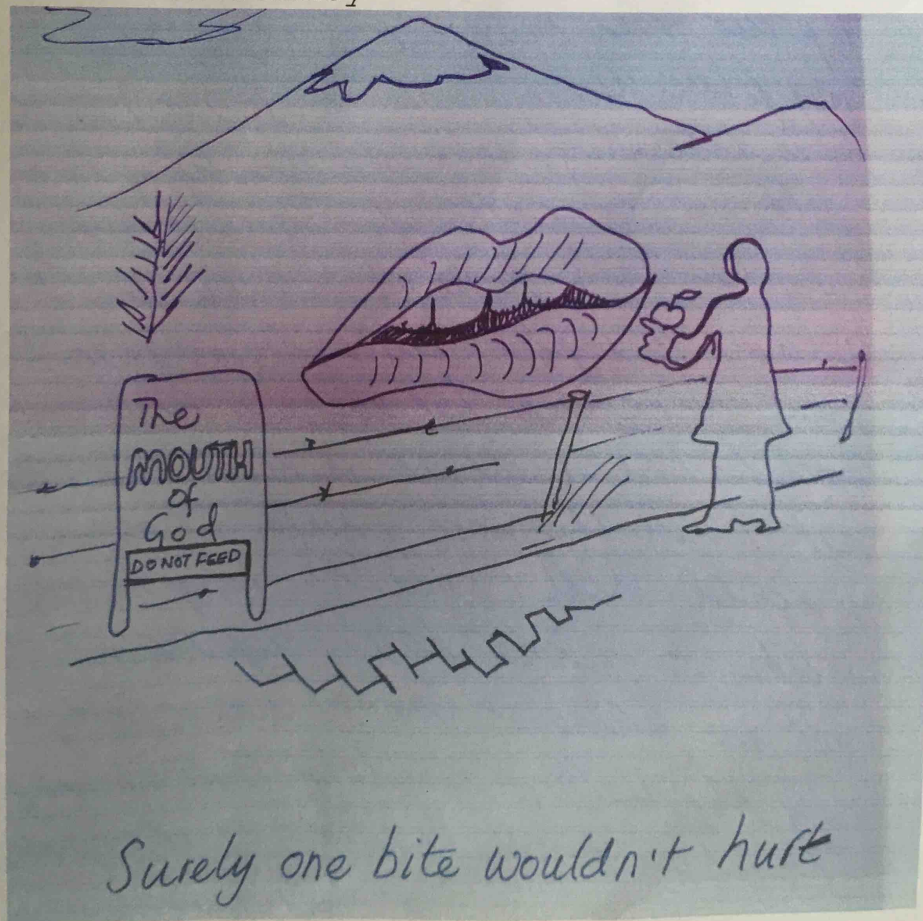
I'm inviting you to a kind of anthropological participant observation or "open-studio" in the AVA Gallery next Wednesday evening.

Please bring a mug or cup for the imbibing of tea and such (please bring your own such)

Feeling free to also wear a dressing gown Starts 6-ish or dusk which so ever is nearer

Apologies cross postings for

Best Wishes Mikey



Surely one bite wouldn't hurt





BlakeFest
Dandelion Visions
an audio-visual exhibition

Dandelion Visions is an audio-visual exhibition celebrating Blake's belief in the value of imagination and the visionary powers of every human individual. It gathers together a group of international artists who have responded to Blake's universal influence.

Mikey Georgeson's installation, the Nonbifurcatedman takes us on a virtual car journey into nature and the role played by the imagination in the creation of memory and collective reality.

Blake's spectacles found in the garden of his cottage in Felpham will be on view as a reminder of his idea of the boundless fourfold vision of imaginative engagement. A virtual reality tour guides us through Blake's home in Felpham where he wrote the lines known as Jerusalem. Therein visitors will encounter the allegorical figures at the heart of his vision.

Before the opening there are workshops with Stella Bahin where participants can collectively explore the poetry of time and memory found in the Dandelion and its magical seeds. The resulting work will help map the exhibition's town specific soul.

Artists include : Harry Pye, Tisna Westerhof, Ryan McClelland, Charlie Day, Tori Day, Bettina Fung, Anna Fairchild, Olle Warnback, Tanja Ritterbex, Eddie Argos, Marie-Louise Plum, Mark Scott-Wood, Lucy Renton, Alice McCabe, Geraldine Swayne, Michael Horovitz, Erin Bahn, Paul Tecklenberg, Jackie Clark, Andrew Cooper, Matthew Couper, Arzu Kiraner, Emir Erkaya, Sinan Logie, Melek Aksoy, James Lattin, Matt Hulse

www.blakefest.co.uk
Bognor Regis public library
opening event noon 16th September - October 12th

The Deadends at 100 Years of Dada ICA 2016

Programme

- BOMB BOMB Discontent (Arban Ornelas Severin, 3:22)
- Defenstration 2015 (Bea Haut, 4:48, screened on 16mm)
- Inbetween (Holger Mohaupt, 2:00)
- IT'S ALL IN THE MIND stereo mix, (Eden Kotting, 3:20)
- Un Chat Andalou (Nick Abrahams, 8:13)
- Urs For Kurt (Schwitters) (Sean Burn, 2:24)
- Arrhythmia (Jacob Cartwright, 1:36)
- MERZMONGO (Nick Jordan, 4:07)
- Voices Off & On (Stuart Pound, 2:15)
- Lepus (Abigail Yue Wang, 4:58)
- Deadens (Mikey Georgeson, 2:20)
- Combat (Andrew Kotting, 5:34)
- Frott Age (Ben Fox, 3:25)
- Steve Hates Fish (John Smith, 5:02)
- Good Friends (Paul Bush, 1:44)

[Multi-buy offer](#)

Buy tickets to both 100 Years of Dada events for £16 (full price), £12 (concessions), £10 (ICA Members)

Part of: [100 YEARS OF DADA](#)

100 YEARS OF DADA: Film is Dead – Long Live Dada: A Short Film Competition

20 May 2016

In order to mark the centenary of Dadaism, [London Short Film Festival](#) and [Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur](#) ran a Dada-inspired short film competition. Filmmakers and artists were given two months to devise a short film exploring their perception of Dada today.

This is a chance to see how contemporary UK filmmakers interpret the idea of Dada 100 years on, and how the spirit of Dadaism remains relevant in the 21st century as a movement that responds to chaos with chaos.

Inside, Inside/Outside 2018

INSIDE, INSIDE/OUTSIDE

ANNA FAIRCHILD
MIKEY GEORGESON
LUCY RENTON

Oct 24 - Nov 7, 2018
PV Oct 24th, 5-7pm

Eastbury Manor House
Eastbury Square
London IG11 9SN
tube: Upney, 8 minutes walk

EASTBURY MANOR HOUSE WE LOVE 10 EASTBURY UEL Barking & Dagenham

Pint of Science presents...

Creative REACTIONS

18th-19th May 2018
Cambridge UK

Where art and science meet



Immunology ONE, TWO, SKIP A FEW

'Human Beings (R u Xperienzd)' is a song by Daisy, a simulation of an AI song-writing consciousness created on the basis that everything really real is an actual occasion. Hofstadter proposed that to write an affecting song AI would need to experience travelling through the maze of life. Slime mold has been observed to solve mazes by augmenting it's memory via the environment itself. Taking this observable model of entanglement where separation is a conceptual myth, Daisy hints at ways in which AI could inspire human cognition to reject the bifurcated machine model it currently employs for its idea of its own consciousness.

The idea developed after Marta and Mikey discussed A N Whitehead's ideas of bifurcation in cognitive philosophy. Marta was later on her bicycle and imagined an AI tired of humans debating what AI is and instead simply wanted to create songs. Creation, coincidentally, is at the heart of Whitehead's cosmology.



The name Daisy is derived from the tune (another cycling song) that HAL, the IBM inspired AI in 2001, plays as his power drains.

Created by:

Mikey Georgeson

Mikey Georgeson is a musician and artist, known as the Vessel in David Devant and his Spirit Wife. He is studying for a doctorate in Fine Art at the University of East London where he also lectures. His film the non-bifurcatedman was recently selected for the Athens Digital Arts Festival, Singularity Now. As part of his practise he has recently written songs with artists for the festival of Georgian Culture in Gdansk and the Istanbul Biennial "Are we Human?". He is a member of the panel exploring Felt Knowledges at this year's Royal Geographic Society conference.

www.mikeygeorgeson.com



Research inspiration:

Simon White

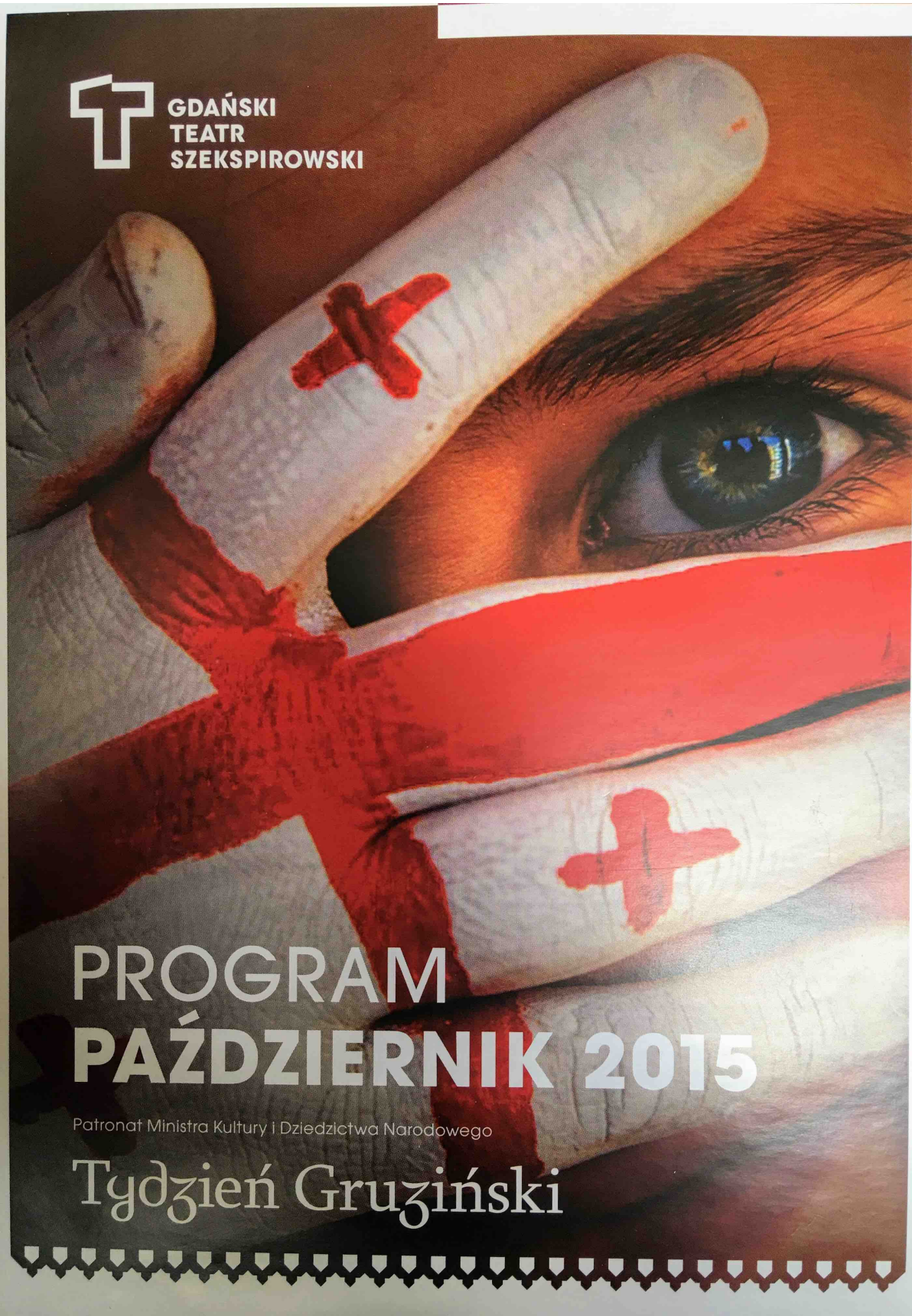
Counting seems such a simple thing to do, start from one and keep going, so why do you need a statistician? In this talk we'll explore the need for statistical approaches to answer one of the basic questions: "how many people belong to a group or have a certain disease?". An answer to this question is needed in policy and research (and we will also explore some of the ethical issues surrounding it).

www.mrc-bsu.cam.ac.uk/people/in-alphabetical-order/t-to-z/simon-white





GDAŃSKI
TEATR
SZEKSPIROWSKI



PROGRAM
PAŹDZIERNIK 2015

Patronat Ministra Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego

Tydzień Gruziński



Festival of Georgian Culture Gdansk 2015

		(Georgian National Film Center); prowadzenie: Paweł Bilinski (UG)
14.10	17:00	Warsztaty tradycyjnych pieśni gruzińskich dla początkujących , prowadzenie: Alina Jurczyszyn, Kamila Bigus – Laboratorium Pieśni
	19:00	Pokaz filmu: Wyspa Kukurydzy , reż. Giorgi Ovashvili, wprowadzenie prof. Mirosław Przyłipiak
	20:00	Koncert muzyki elektronicznej: Nika Machaidze (NIKAKOI) i Natalie (TBA) Beridze
15.10	16:00	Debata: Kierunki i tendencje w Polityce Gruzjińskiej , uczestnicy: Lado Darakhvelidze, Nadja Tsulukidze, Onno Dicker, Michael Georgeson
	17:00	Performans: Museum TV Station – L. Darakhvelidze, N. Tsulukidze, O. Dicker, M. Georgeson
	20:30	Pokaz filmu: Randki w ciemno , reż. Levan Koguashvili
16.10	16:00	Spektakl: Extravaganza , Fingers Theatre, Tbilisi
	17:00	Wieczór gruziński : Live cooking, degustacja wina, wykład, koncert jazzowy
	19:00	Pokaz filmu: Panny młode , reż. Tinatin Kajrishvili
17, 18.10	19:00	Potok , reż. Wojciech Jaworski, Mariusz Babicki
23.10	20:00	FISZ EMADE TWORZYWO – koncert
29.10	18:00	Wykład Anny Królicy: Taniec w twórczości Tadeusza Kantora
	19:00	Kurka wodna (nagranie spektaklu Tadeusza Kantora, Edynburg, 1972), spotkanie z Richardem Demarco
	18:00	Wernisaż wystawy zdjęć Tadeusza Kantora autorstwa Czesława Czaplińskiego
29.10	19:00	Kantor_Tropy: ON A SUNNY DAY , Saburo Teshigawara/KARAS (Japonia) i Amareya Theatre & Guests – premiera
	20:30	Prezentacja filmu, reż. K. Miklaszewski: tadeusz.kantor@europa.pl
	21:00	Spotkanie z Czesławem Czaplińskim i artystami tworzącymi projekt „Kantor_Tropy: ON A SUNNY DAY”
31.10	21:00	HALLOWEEN w Teatrze: SQUAREPUSHER – koncert i afterparty
<p>■ TYDZIEŃ GRUZIŃSKI pod patronatem Ministra Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego</p>		<p>BILETY: TeatrSzekspirowski.pl / Kasy GTS, codziennie</p>



ARTIST TOYS

GROUP ART EXHIBITION

LITE-HAUS GALERIE
BERLIN


PRIVATE VIEW 3RD DECEMBER 12-8PM
4-7TH DECEMBER 2016, 12-6PM

CURATED
BY
REKHA SAMEER

Mareschstr. 4, Berlin, Germany 12055 Tel: 030-658-36910

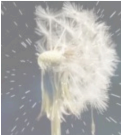
LINDA LIEBERMAN
PAUL ROBINSON
ANDREA ROBINSON
WITALIJ FRESE
WILLIAM HUGHES
MIKEY GEORGESON
MAJA THOMMEN
MIA C
ALIA BILGRAMI
ANNA FAIRCHILD
CATHERINE CARTWRIGHT
CHARLOTTE CHW
CLARE THORNTON
DESDEMONA VARON
VIMMIE MANOJ
FRANCESCA LOLLI
RAHMAN HAK-HAGIR
JULIA WERTHEIMER
GUILLERMO MONROY
HELEN GRUNDY
PAUL JOHNSON
POOJA AGGARWAL
RACHEL DOUGHTY
JON BAKER
CLARE BRYDEN
PAT EDWARDS-JACKSON
ALEX ALLMONT
ZIL HOQUE
GRAHAM CARRICK
SERUNI BODJAWATI
NICHOLAS VAUGHAN
MERILIS RINNE
CASSANDRA MAHONEY
BERNARDETE.BLUE
MARYANN RIKER
POOZA KATARIA

Sun 27 — 20:00-21:00 Animati




BitCoin of Things (BoT) Theory and practice Workshop

Sat 26 — 16:00-19:00 MC 3,2
Workshops (Adult



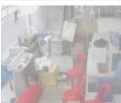
The Non-bifurcatedman

Sat 26 — 19:30-21:00 MC
Video /



Lines

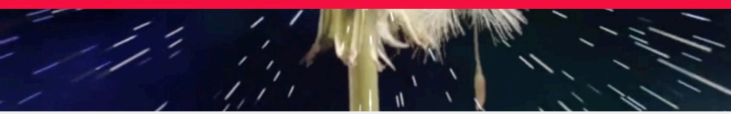
Sat 26 — 18:30-19:30 MC
Animati



Human Stories

Thu 24 — 10:00-23:00
Fri 25 — 10:00-23:00 Nicola Mitchell Fine & All

← back to program



The Non-bifurcatedman

Video Art

The digital image feels energized but reinforces an illusion of separation. As the son of an artist, I am acutely aware of the limits of this patriarchal concept of perspective that shapes our communities. This film opens up a specific everyday occasion that triggered a glimpse of the infinite. According to A. N. Whitehead bifurcated cognition separates science (mind) from nature (body), resulting in a false concept of creative consciousness. The film hurtles back into nature via human artificial extensions and seeks to understand scientific and felt knowledge as part of the same event in which multifarious pretensions and intuitions combine.

Mikey Georgeson (GB)

Mikey Georgeson (born 1967) is an artist, working in various media. His painting "Dopamine molecule of intuition" was exhibited at the John Moore's 2010 exhibition of contemporary painting. He is studying for a Doctorate in Fine Art at UEL, where he lectures in Contextual Studies. In 2016 he was invited by Georgian artists to use song and performance to explore boundaries and national identity at the Shakespeare Theatre Gdansk. In the same year he created a song-film with Turkish and UK artists for the Istanbul Design Biennale "Are we Human?" His film "the Deadends" was shown as part of the ICA's 100 years of Dada.



Presents


The Politics of Moisture

Linda Lieberman/Ar Mechan/Mutalib Mann/Alex Buhl /Jim Racine/ Marc Bourlier/Armelle Burke/Mikey B Georgeson/Anne Grim /Guillermo Monroy/Jude Cowan Montague/ Jon Baker/Tom Estes/Nick Jolly/Noel Grassey Macken/Desdemona Varon/Graham Carrick/Aerial Sparks/Susana Sanroman/Gail Deayton/Paul Robinson & Andy Stewart

Show runs 22nd March to 1 April
11. 30 am to 5.30 pm
31-33 CHURCH STREET
MARYLEBONE
LONDON


sigergallery

SSASS Millersville University Philadelphia 2019

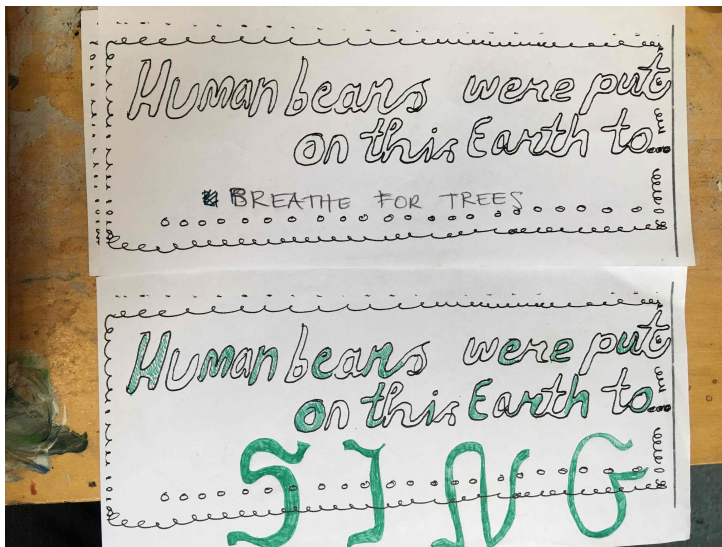


#SSASS

ANIMATIONS AND PROVOCATIONS
Society for the Study of Affect
Summer School
July 29 to August 02, 2019

ABOUT / SCHEDULE

There will be no better—more energizing, more community-building, more hopeful, more enlightening—way to spend a week of your summer. Whether you are an undergraduate/Master/PhD student, early career academic, a tenured person, or someone outside of



Forms from the Inspirial London Song Writing Workshop 2018

MENU



Invited Keynote Performer July 2019

Morning drawings and Poems



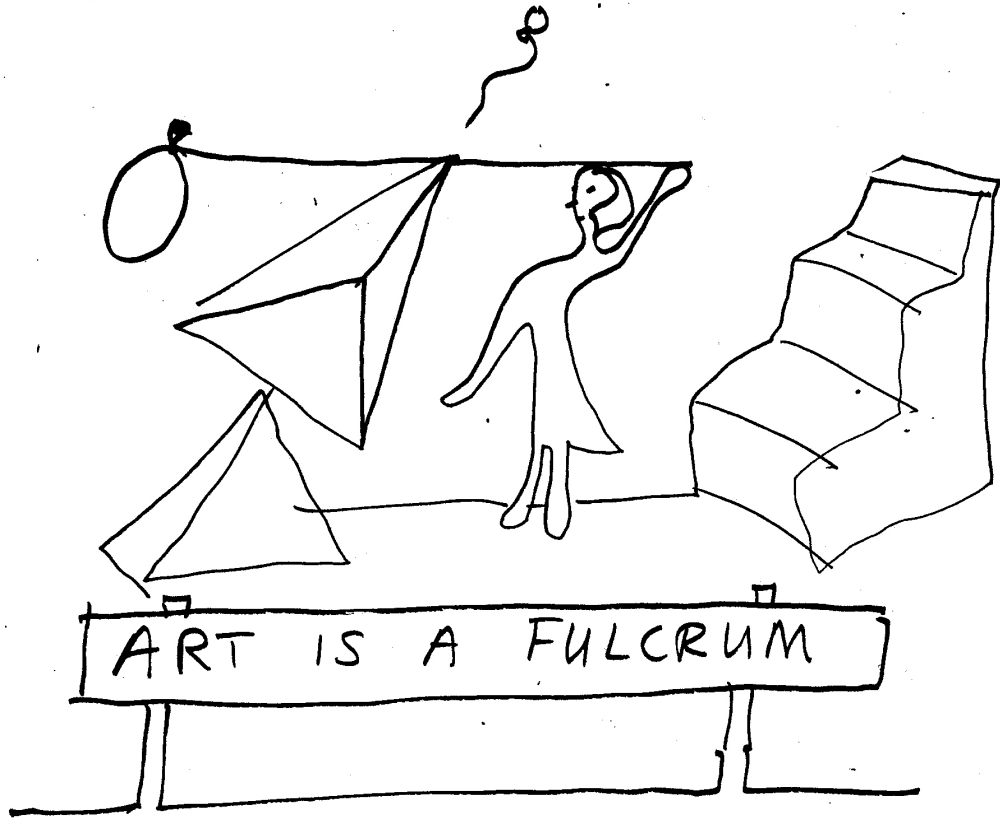
Mummy would always lead the dance.



M Sales of Magic Pomade began to rocket

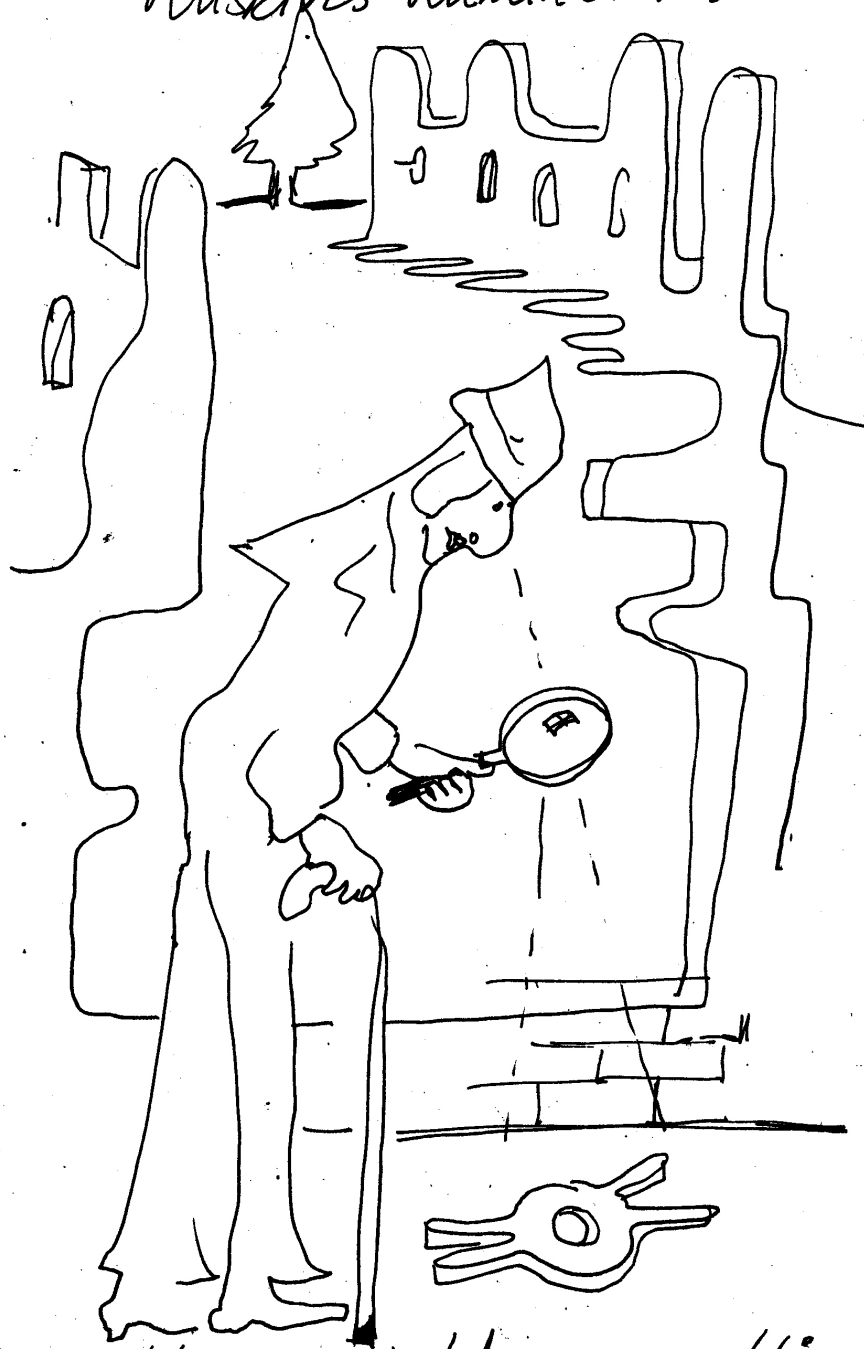


Truffle hunting Lady travels lightly

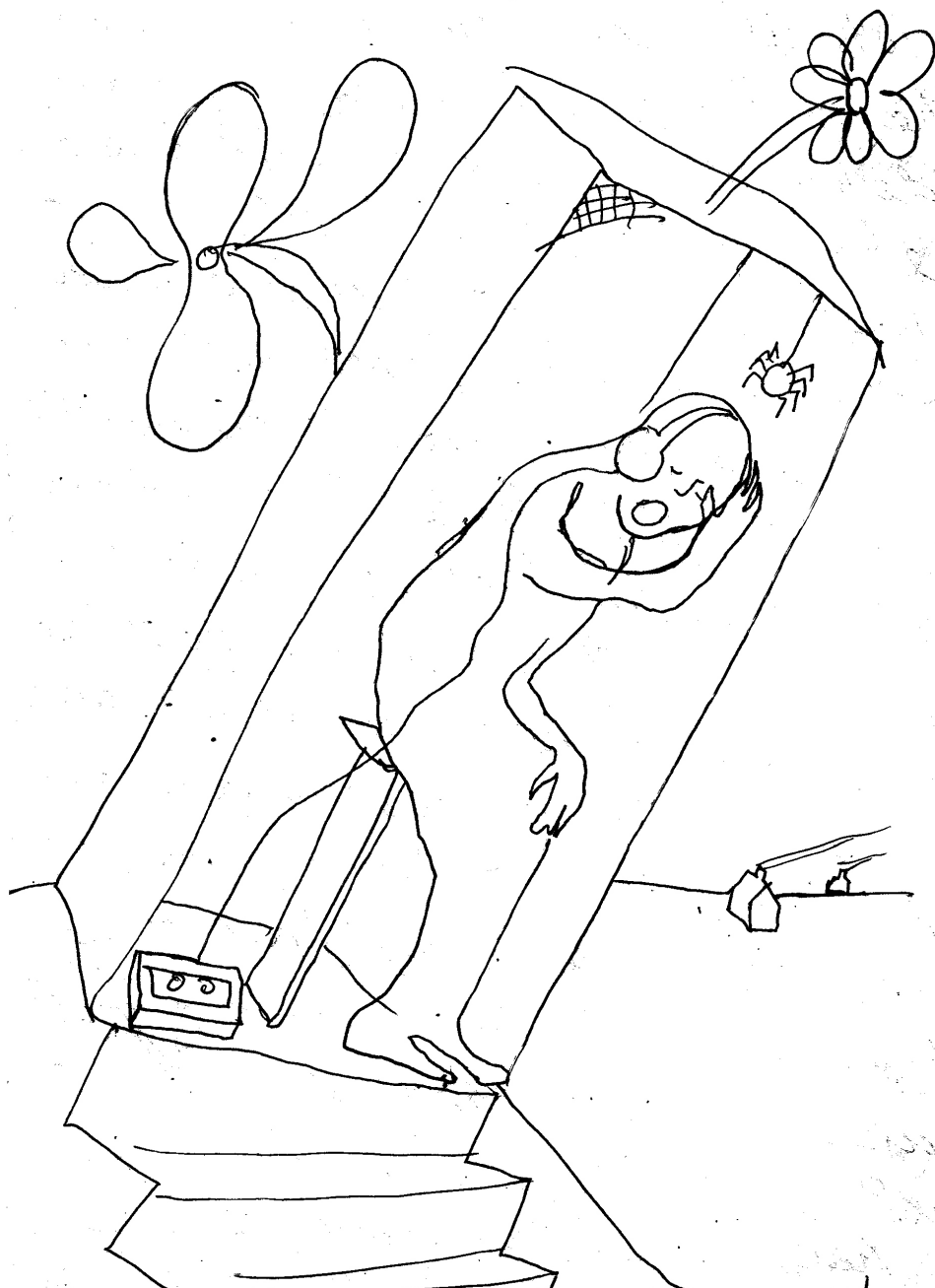


As diagrams go it was lucid.

Ruskin's Ruminations



But the symbol became a thingle



↳ Flower box therapy was brutal



The sunrise had a soothing affect



That was when I hid outside



Top n tail
Next morning we awoke refreshed



The oversize jackets looked cool!

SUNDAY,

Remains of the Morning

Stay here a while

Don't just get up and go

Be with me here

In the soft morning light

Listen with me now

Hold onto this moment

A moment or two longer

That's it you're doing great

Its easy once you hang

BE not afraid

I'm not going to bite your arm off

My toilet door is always open

Now see what you made me do

Staying here with you

Settle back down

And let you thoughts drift past

On the bank to the east

you're a natural oarsman

I've got the rudder

Being cartel not to oversteer

Private land no mooring.

Sign it says

We'll disembark here then

If that's alright you with

Certainly 'll tie it up carefully

Seaman might like to use as day bed the boat

Good daylight sleep tight

Wake me up when I'm pinching

Sweet dreams my Prince

Peace don't you want to kiss

Kismet Hardy

Don you feel paralysed

I'm not sure I could spell it even.

Smell that again

I could hardly see what you were saying

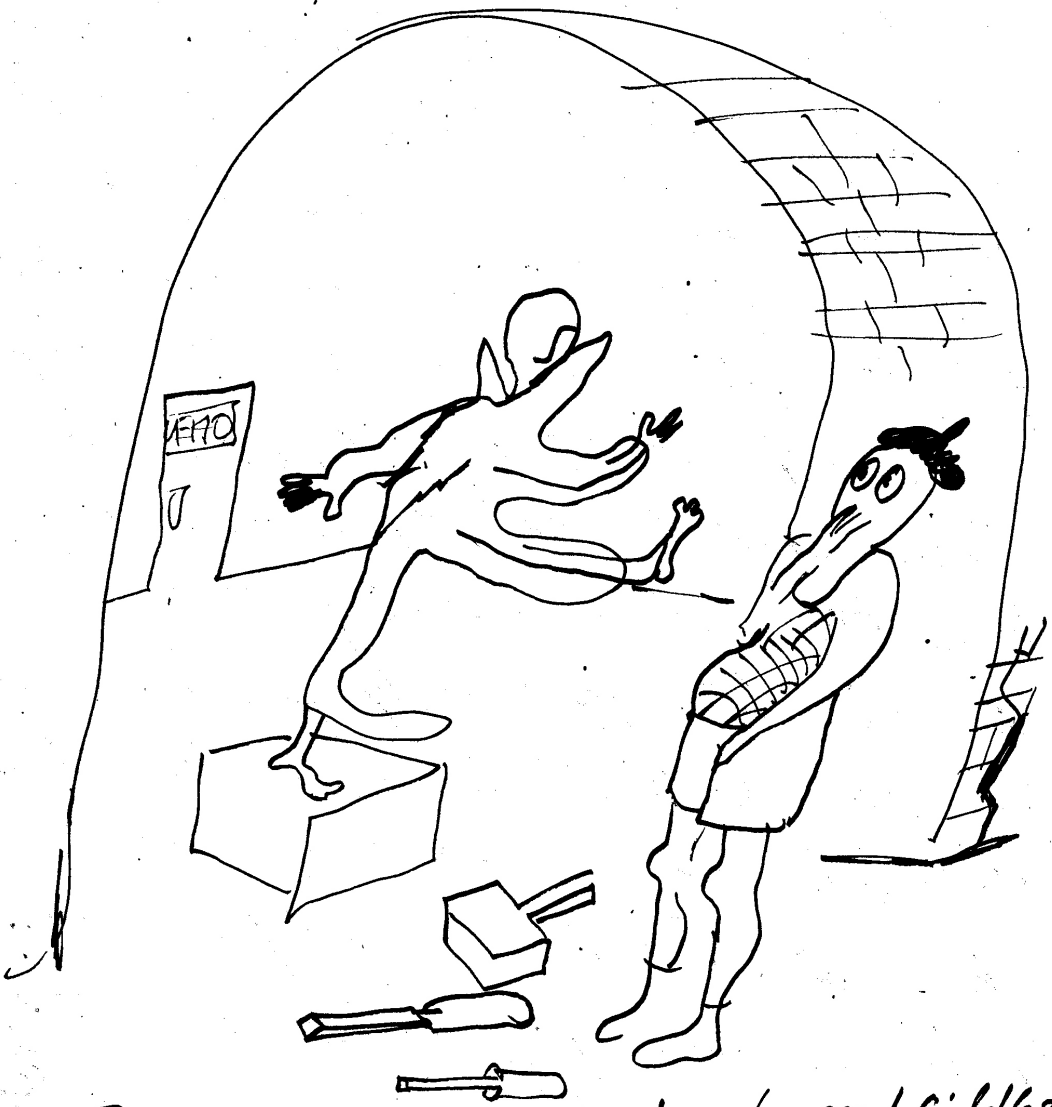
I smelt that its fine

If you don't trust me

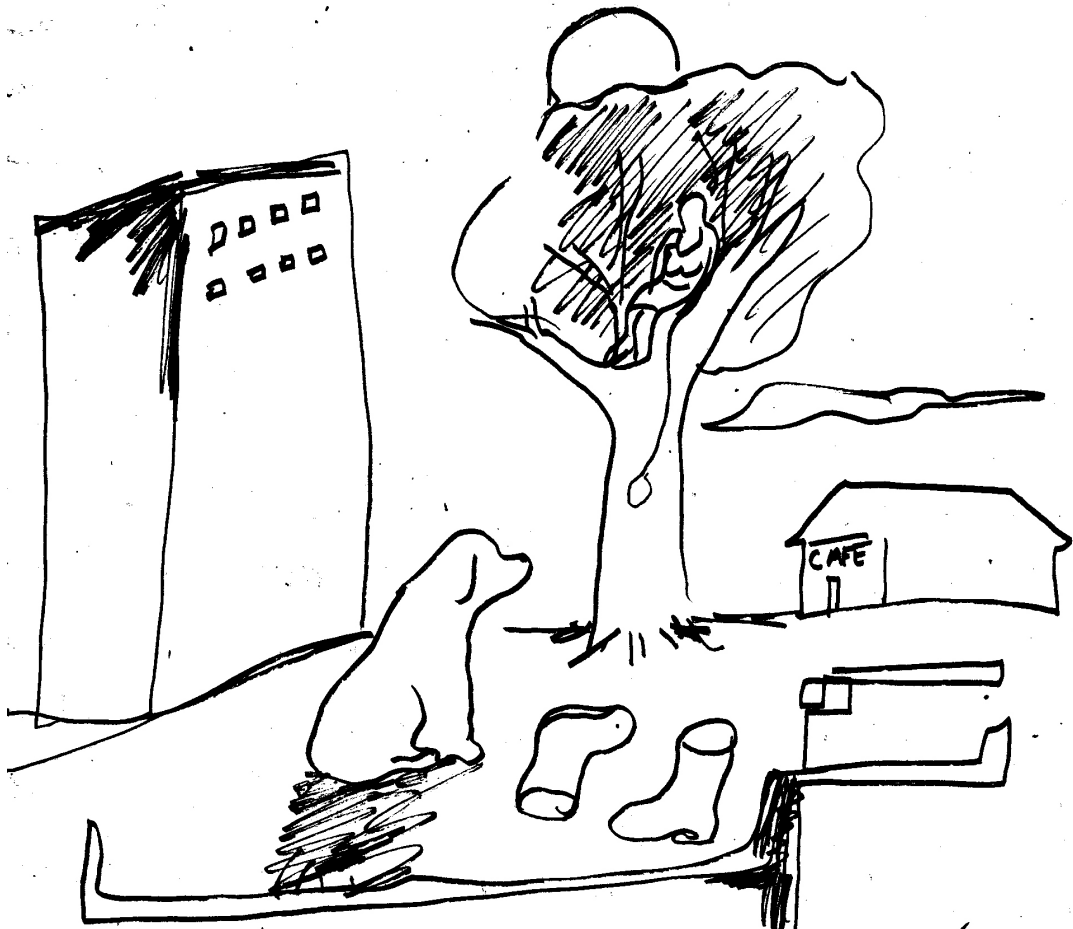
Oh that's fine

I thought I caught the whiff.

Better fate than never.



The sculptor stands back and fiddles

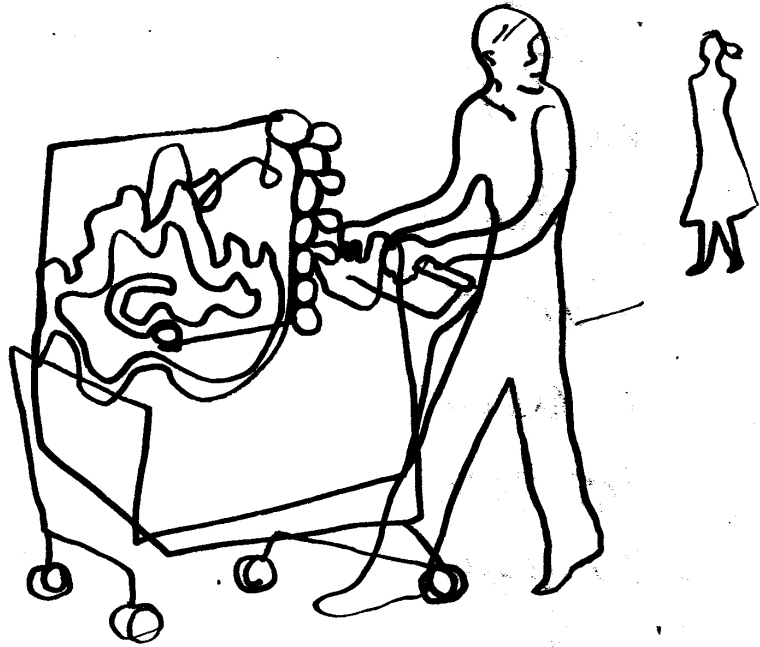


Fantastic times lay in store.

Adventures of The Invisible Man



She was asleep as I approached



He paused to let her catch up.

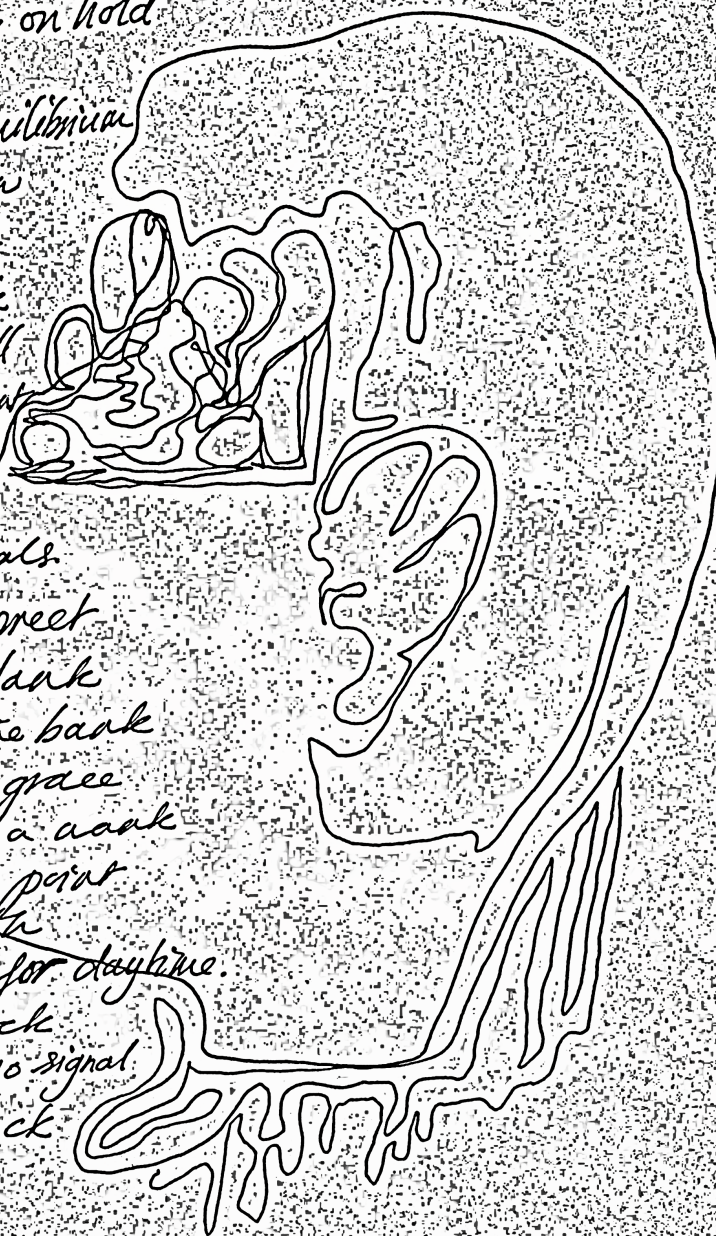
The bell ringers

It rings a bell
the campanologists are competing
Although at this stage I don't know this
Their sonority has yet to reach my timpanis membrane
As I negotiate the mini roundabout on foot
At the heart valve of the village
Having sat the last hundred yards in silence
After rebuking my wife
For almost taking a wrong turning.
It's all about the particulars see.
You are to be found around the back of the Sussex Oak
And suddenly the bells clang into focus
The air is jubilant and expectant.
Although I sense this is a rehearsal
It isn't for the campanologists.
Life is not a rehearsal they chime.
Each pull is a meaningful yank
(hear a clang across the pond)
on the placenta of heaven's womb
One false move and blood will rain.
but until then here is a medley of events
From the radiant to the apocalyptic
Through the funereal via the every-day come hither cycle of the Sunday service.
We sit supping our pints in a session
And you roll an ex-smoker a fat one that will take a few days to wear off.
(or at least for my irritability to pass)
That's the funeral sound you say
And our heads cock to the single repeated tone.
the judges must all retire to a nearby field
Where they sit unaware of the order of the campanologists

You relate how one such competition came to tangled blows (after pulls).
I wonder what the Beano drawing of scrapping bell ringers would look like?
This stuff draws itself.
Here in the pub garden
Around the back
All these events cycle past
The wedding of the full-faced post office counter server.
Clingy clangy dingle dongle jingle spangle
the burial of her father the bookkeeper
Dang dang dang ang dang dad
The end of the world
Ding dang ding dang
The start of the evacuation
Ding dang ding dang ding dang
The celebration of the beginning
Ding dong ding dong
My Love lasts long
Here we are three friends
Three would be campanologists
Ready to tangle with the best of them
Ready to rise up the belfry
In our cassocks
The vicar's daughter half averting her gaze
From our manly clappers swinging freely
Ding dong ding dong
We shall stumble and slip slide home
Down the rain-slicked hard compacted earth pathways
Giggling like a babbling brook chiming in the distance
As we reminisce over old ground
And set the world to rights
We three would be campanologists
It rings a bell.

All tickery doo
Boxes all ticked
Balls temporarily on hold
In the air
Friendships in equilibrium
No offense taken
None intended
Tick tick tick
You missed my call
The text wasn't sent
Time time and time
Again it passes
and heals heals heals
All present and correct
The canvas is blank
The queues in the bank
There but for the grace
I'd rather have a wank
No that's not the point
Keep to the path
and thank God for daytime
Took block shock
Facebook user no signal
Blocked tick tock
tick the box

my mind is open to the fungal suggestions



A descent of woodpeckers

On the day of a thousand falling leaves

I sat in the pill box

Woodpecker hide

Keenly watching the world outside

Observing and enjoying

To my astonishment all at once

The leaves began to fall on cue

Like commandoes dropped behind

Enemy lines

I gazed in reverential wonder

From my twitchers pew

And twitchier my bottom grew

Sure I've seen a leaf fall before

But never as such an emblem of awe

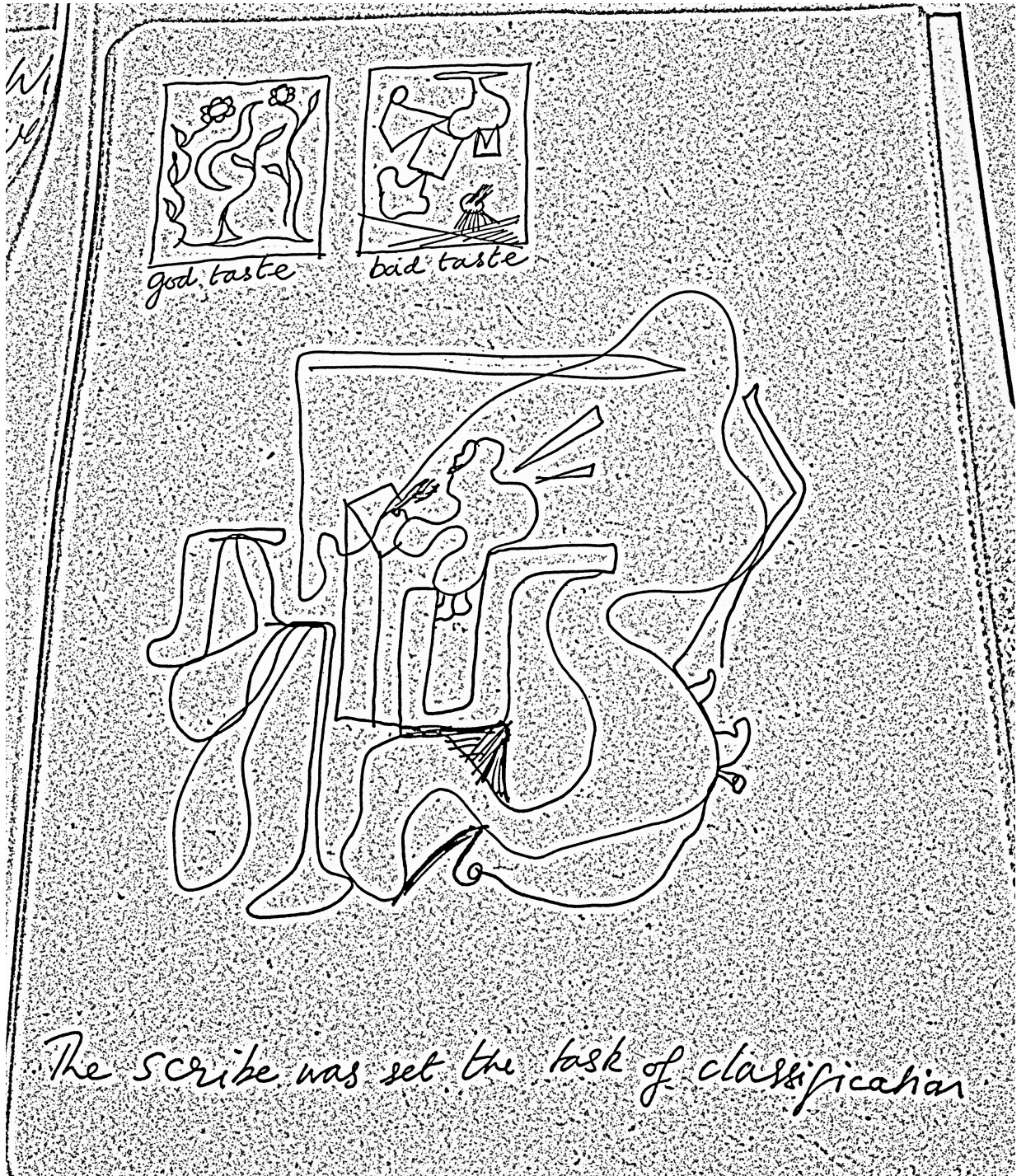
A personal vignette

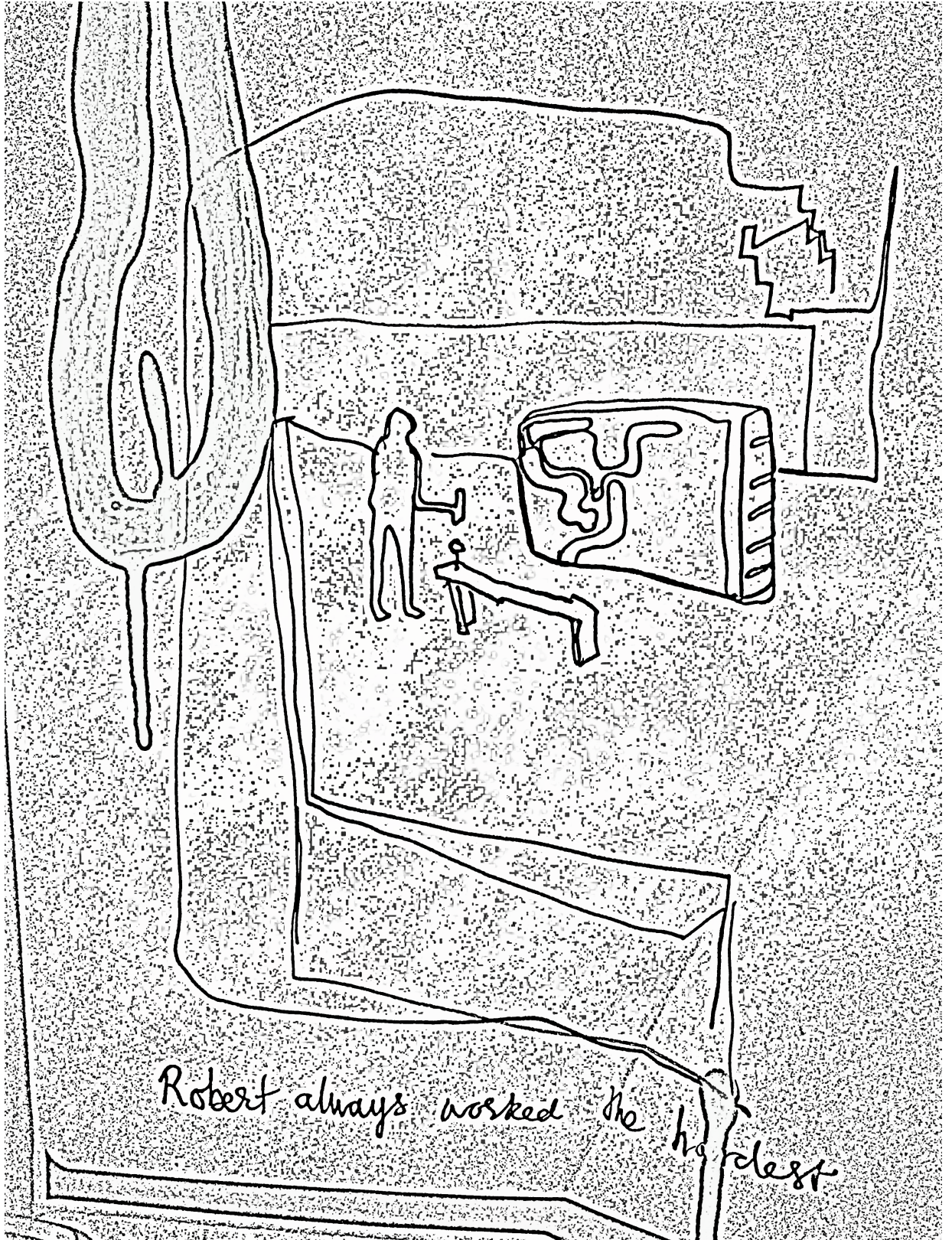
Through letter box shaped outlet

The tree stumps standing all forlorn
Their white woodpecker encouraging spots
So crudely drawn
All completely unattended
As the leaves instead descended

At first there were just one or two
Which began to fall into view
Then as if to say oh to hell with it
The show must go on
The rest began to follow suit
Leaping down to burning lake with abandon
Then staring down along the bench
Of our truncated twitchers chapel
I saw another man
Giant lens in hand
Its amazing I tried to say with my eyes
But he kept his face firmly fixed

Looking determinedly ahead
Waiting for the woodpeckers to descend
And dutifully peck the spots
Whilst the English perpendicular rose up afore us
undetected
I wondered when did separation become perfected
When did our capabilities outstretch our needs
This foresters land once only seeds
Is now a hashtag of a sign that breeds and breeds
I'm inside looking out
Enjoying observing the woodpeckers dissent
Taking their absence as encouragement .





Robert always worked the hardest

The tooth

His Whole Tooth

I felt the fiver rustle between thumb and forefinger
As I padded into your bedroom
Preparing to make the switch
A note would be easy to slide across the sheet
Want a smooth operation
if this to be my last tooth-based transaction
I could picture the paper under the pillow
You always were a good sleeper

Mum is out with the girls
So I'm standing in for the stand in tooth fairy
Swaying in the shadows
The bathroom light is on of course
I wait to see if you are going to stir
Then I slide my hand underneath
Below the soft rock I crawled from under

Your head rests on a rock for a pillow
As you dive into your dreams
Deep inside an octopus's garden
You are sleeping like a wreck
On bottom bunk submerged in inky darkness.
But I can't find the tooth
My hand scuttles like a skittish crustacean
Fleeing a divers torch light
Then there it is glinting
The jewel stashed in a hole in the reef

I slide the note along the silky sand
Five pounds seems a lot to pay
But it could be the last time
Mum is out on the town with the tooth fairy
Having a pre-Christmas drink
Mum always goes out with her friends
more than you dad
But I've got a fiver that says she'll be home tipsy
And now I have your molar
So beautiful in the hollow of my clammy palm

I steal out of your room
Satisfied I've made a good deal
Then back downstairs to find the tin
Where I keep my memory sticks
I prize open the lid
And release the chewing gum sized enamel drop
Onto the bottom with a little rattle
It will stay here until I'm old and grey
The last of your milk teeth
I squeeze the lid back on
And place the tin back by my bedside
In the morning you will be five pounds richer
And I will be non-the-wiser
Mum will soon to be home
From her night out on the tiles
I want to be sleeping when she comes in
Or at least pretending to be



The village was a hour from the pit

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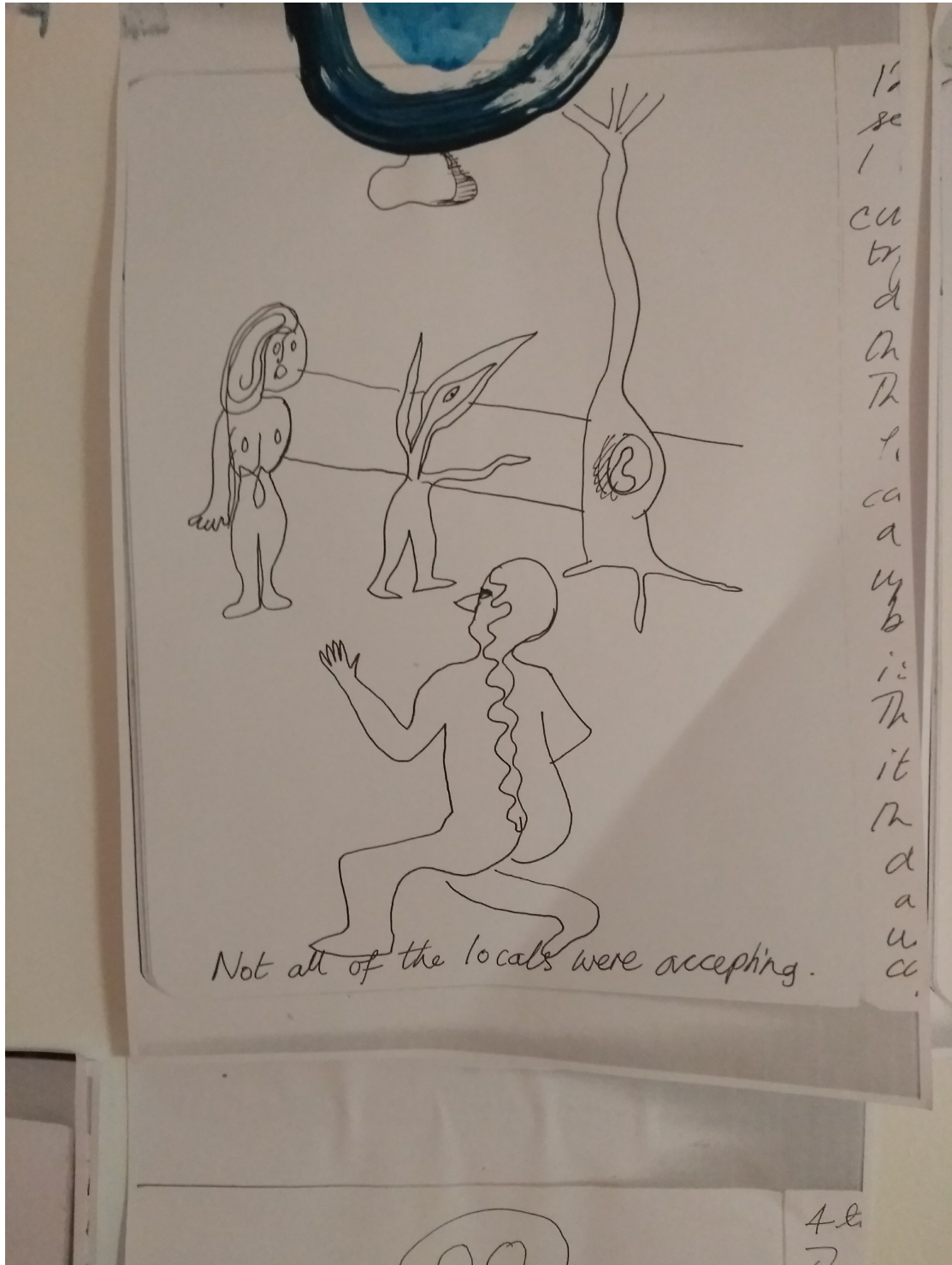
Upon Writing a Poem

There is the having decided to write it
at this moment of it
The having decided to not put off writing it of it
The rolodex moment of it
The stepping off the edge of it
The letting it rise and writhe
then curl and twirl around me of it

The flattening out on papyrus of it
The not skewing it of it
The setting it down as soon as it appears of it
The difference between now and then of it
The knowing what I meant then of it
The escaping fate of it
The deciding this is it of it
The trusting my gut of it
The this is it of it
The riding on the back of a hound of it
The longing for that time then of it
The wanting to bring that back of it
The carefully feeling under a blanket for it of it
The attempt not to disturb it of it
The need to have done it of it
The desire to have done with it of it.

The madness of it
The let it off the leash for a while of it
The was Walt Whitman really gay of it?
The wow as we were so we return of it
That poor old man the wind flung into a bus of it
The police enquiry and subsequent investigation of it
The so by witnesses do you mean people who were there of it?
The woah flying poor little old man out shopping of it
The looks like he just flew of it
The terror and the trauma in an instant of it
The that might just as easily have happened a hundred year ago of it
The end of days of it
But somehow it could only have happened today of it
The spiralling inevitability of it
The resultant fury at the Old Testament God of it
The wanting to drag them from their beds
as they lie plotting airstrikes of it

The self-centred cotton wool faced nausea of it
The joy of finding there is a god after all of it
But when I die she vanishes of it
But if I want one that's the deal of it
The finally putting down the pen of it.

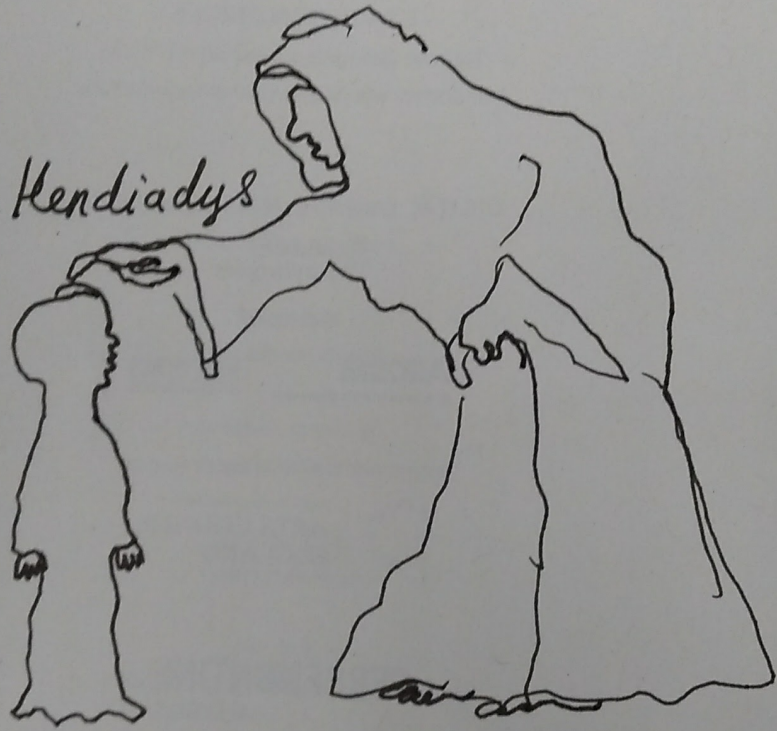




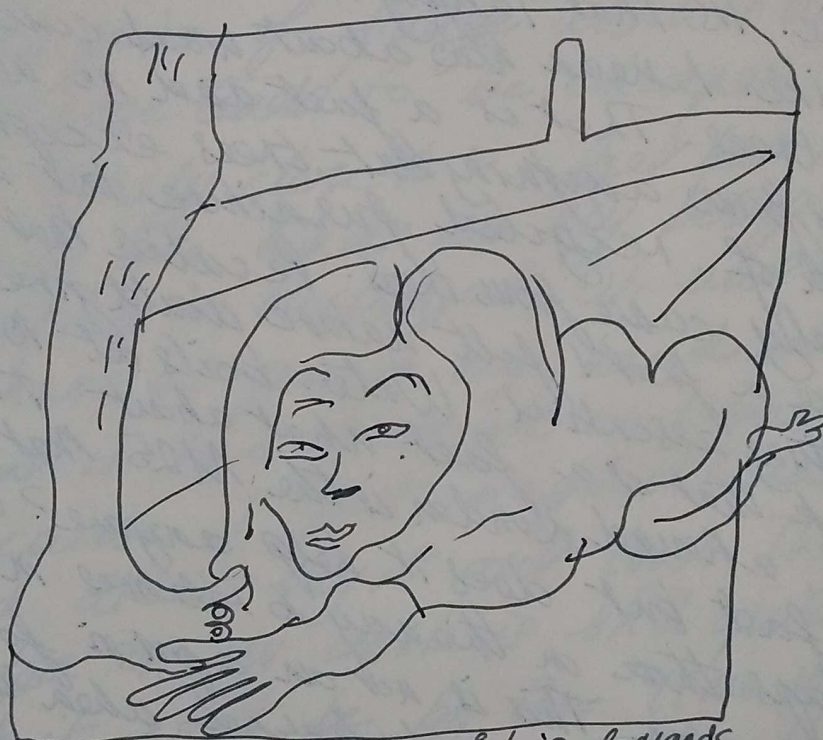
My ^{lice} inquisitors wore card faces



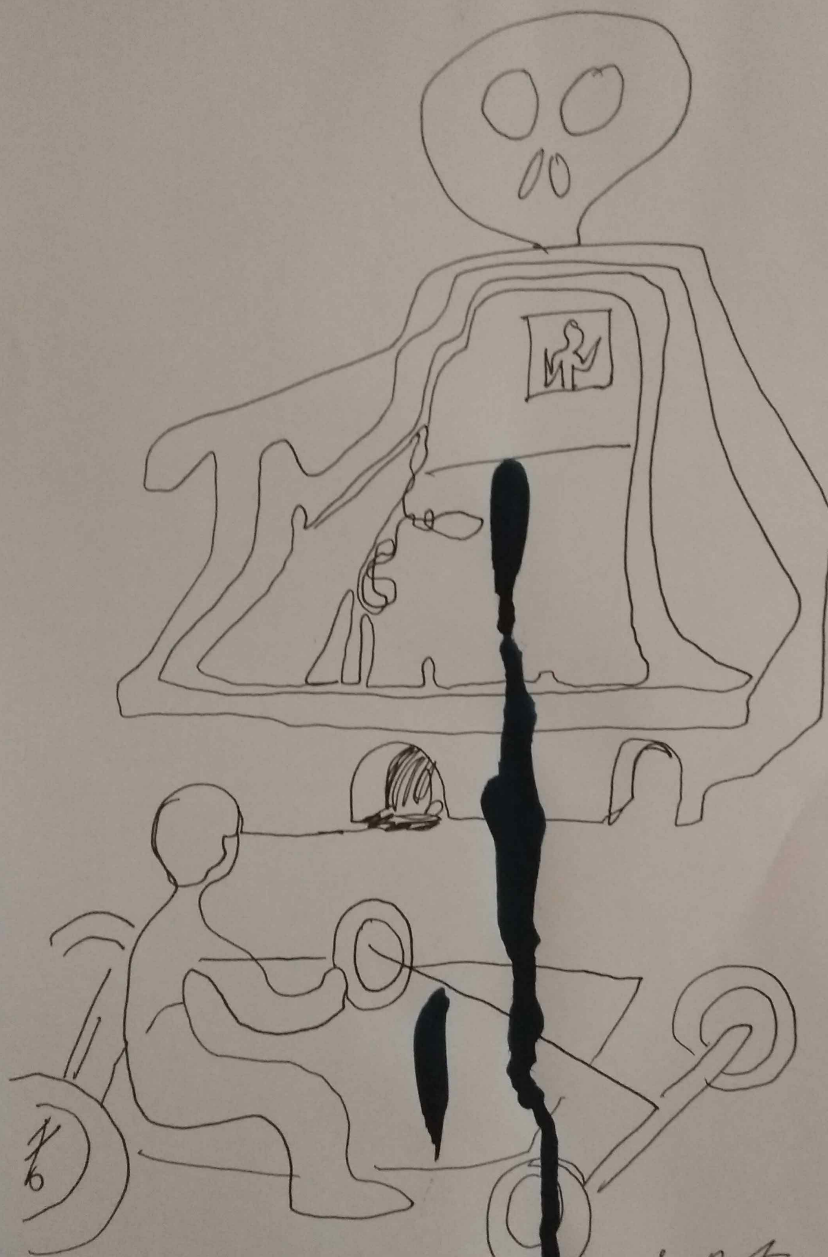
Hendiady's



I meet an old and boney hag



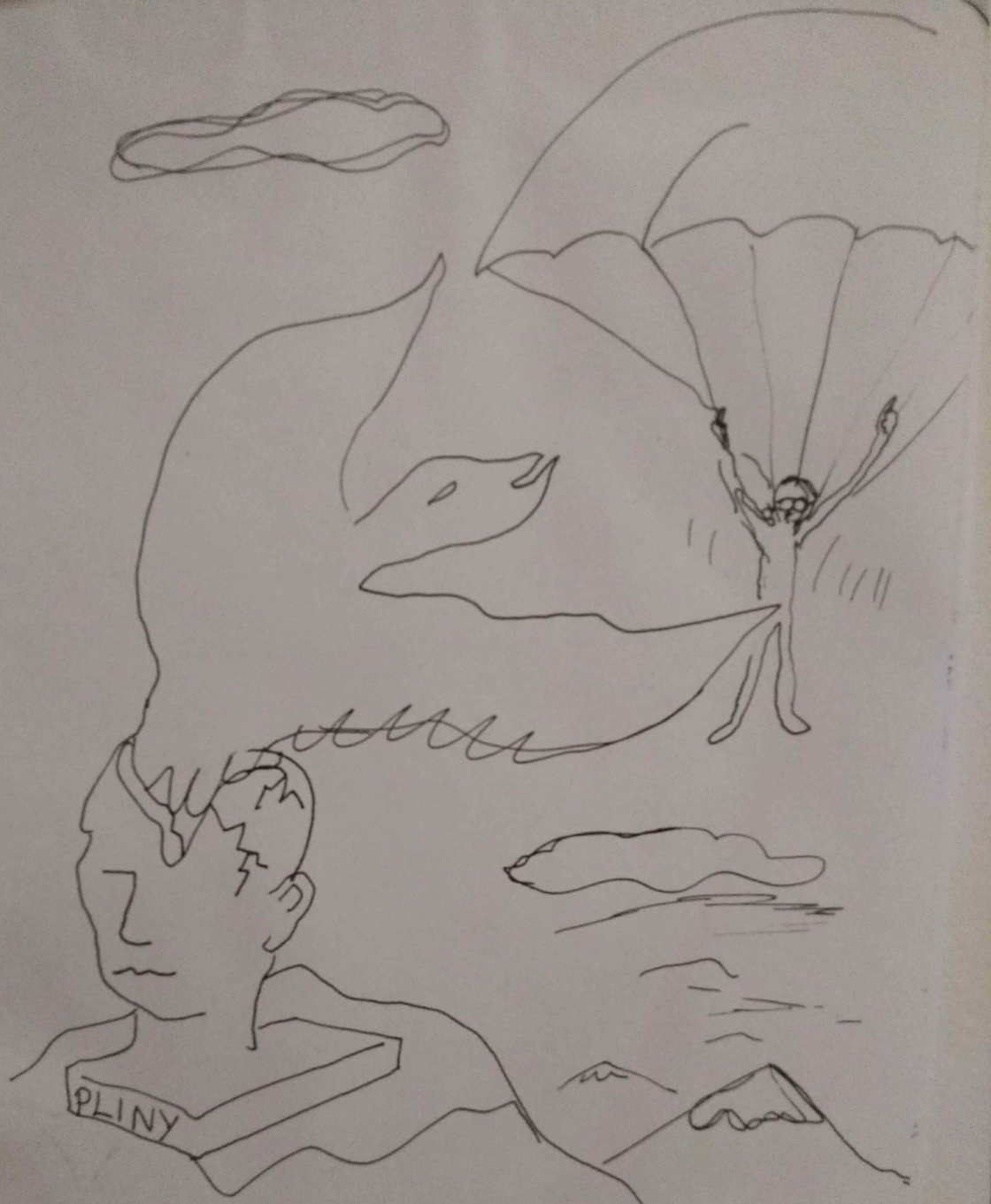
Many were wary of his demands



The garage was not open.

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The descent was not without event,



death shows me out

Fright fright fright

thanks for your sympathy

I called out

Across the cavern

To the figure on the stage

thanks for your support

Wrote the echo

Above the rushing swoosh

Of the underground stream

You can keep your bloody pacemaker

I yelled into the void

throwing down my jumpers

Feeling quite upset

That I let them bring me down here

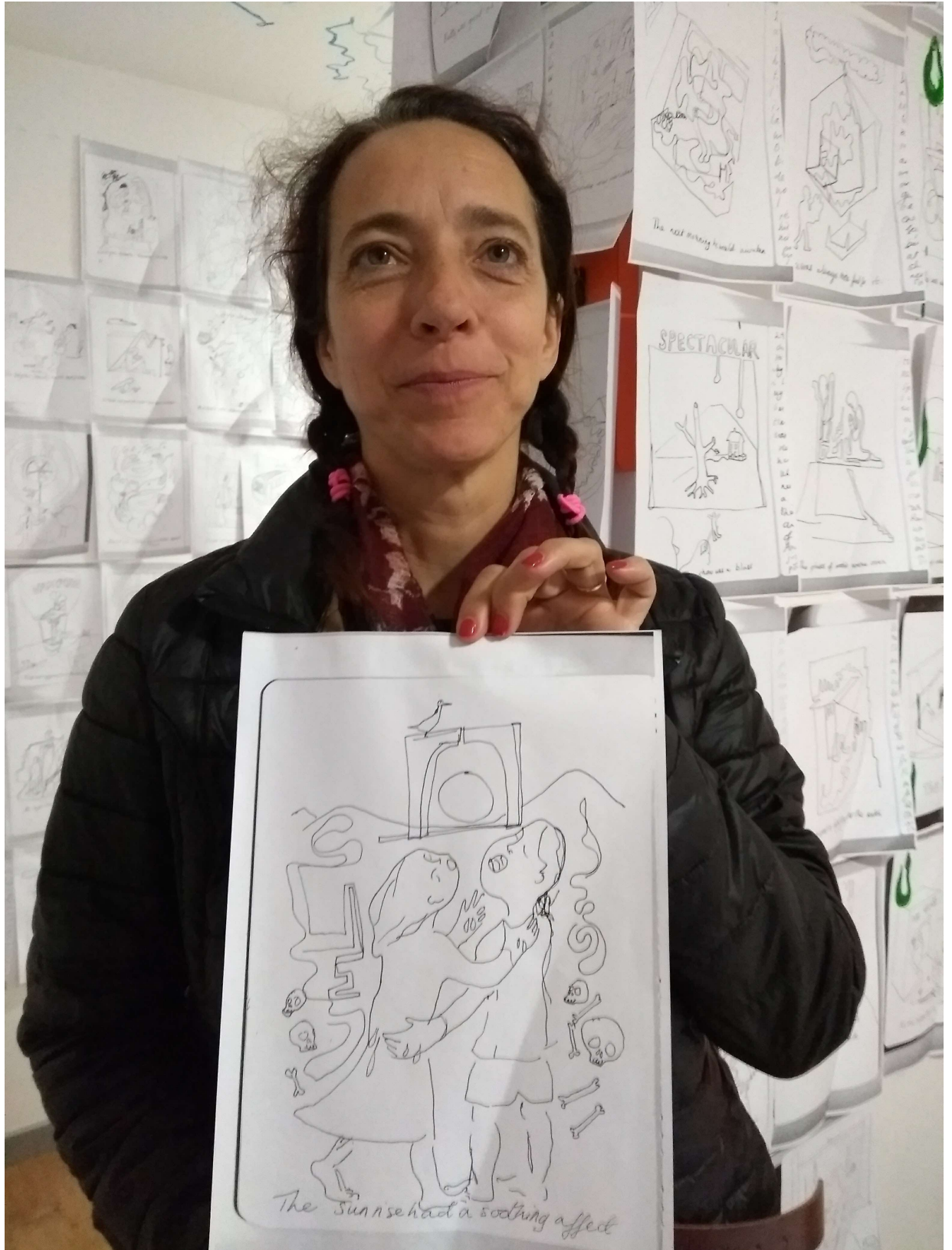
To where there is no day

And the only sound is my pulse

Telling me to run away

I found jacob in his mothers
dress sitting on the cliff again.





Know this much (September 2015)

How did we get to a stage where we don't know we don't know?

I don't know but I can hazard a guess.

We are never more than one click from a fact

We live in an age where data is king

Data is processed

Learning to process data is learning

One minute I was in a realm of limitless possibilities

The next we're running out of clouds to store our unlimited knowledge

I know this sounds unhinged

But the brooms are running amuck.

The door of binary certainty is open or shut

It will never never close again

It's not even funny

I mean have we read We?

George Orwell did

We managed to turn that into a cctv camera

A husk of the original longing.

Rational is holy

Rational is clean and good.

Actually what we mean is certain

This void of real meaning has been filled

By chancers, fakes and quacks

Which makes it easy for rationalists

To step up like O'Brien and say

There there let rationalism save you now

Rationalism is the pre-Newtonian idea of knowledge

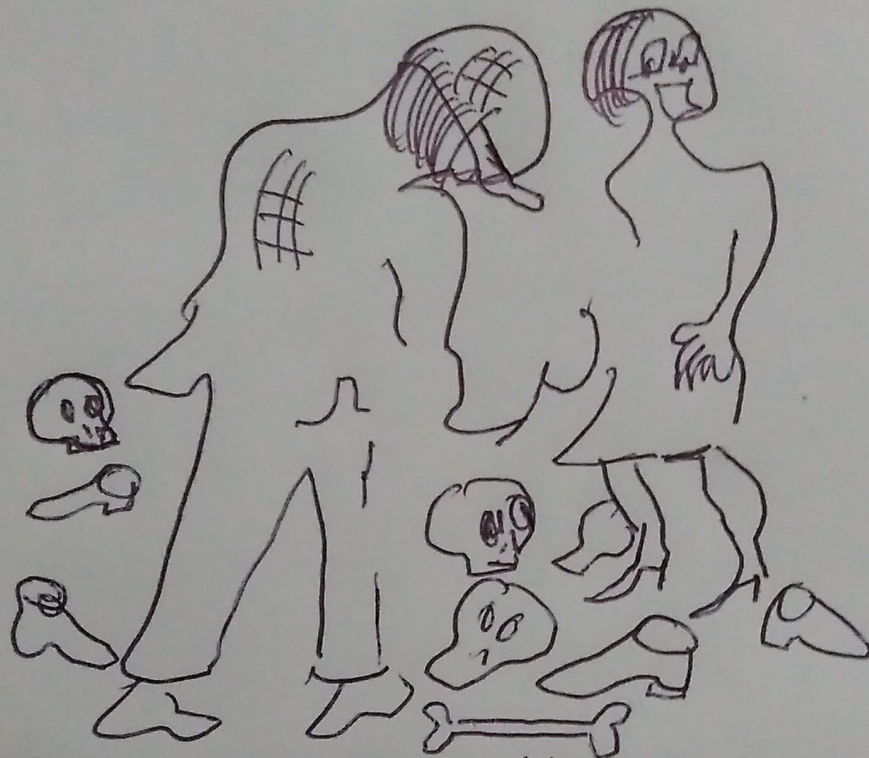
Facts are building blocks.

Things move to their rightful place

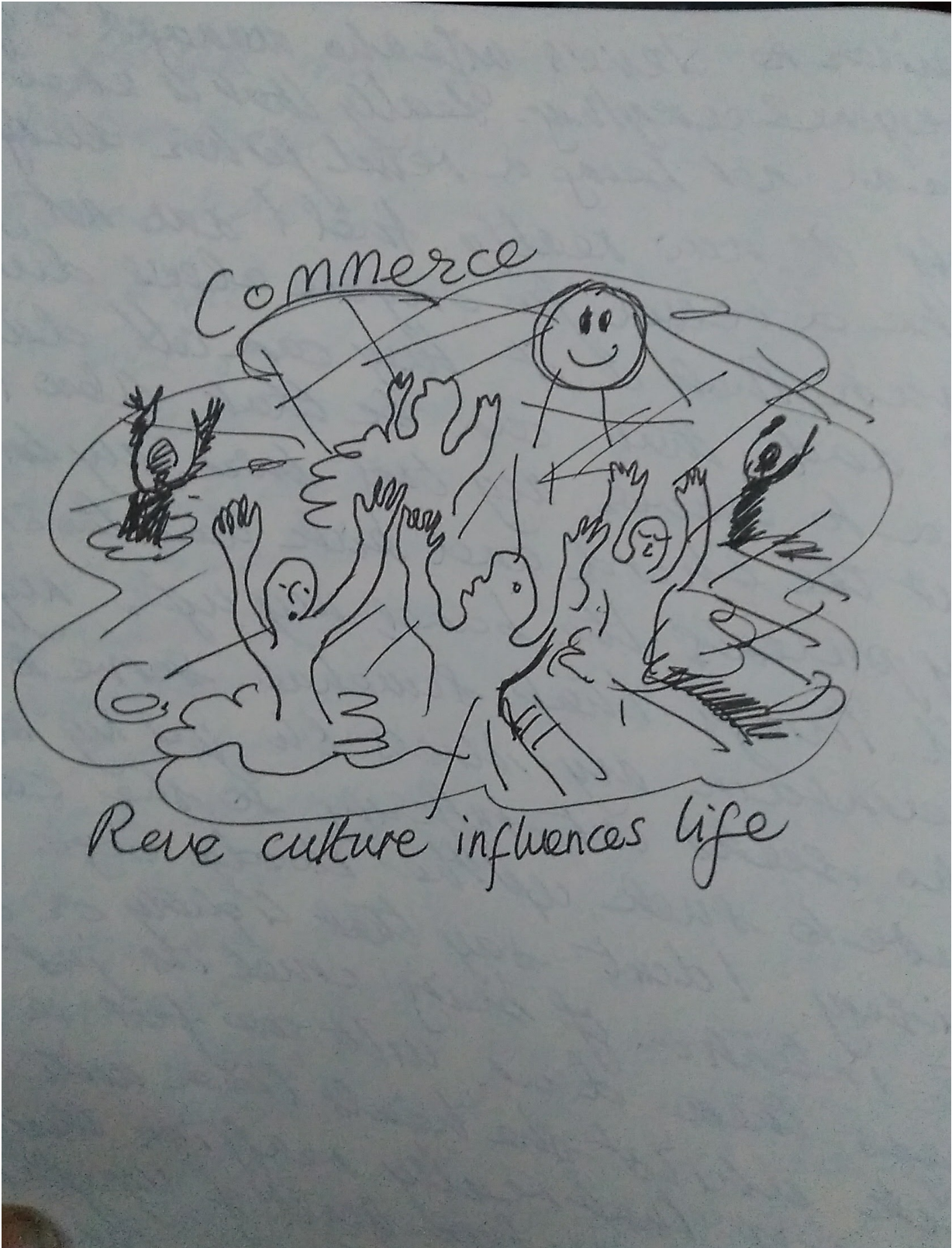
An apple moves to where it belongs.

The fact that we now know for a fact that
The Universe is officially supernatural
Is neither here nor there
Leave that to the wide-eyed rationalists
Who understand
Except they just see on or off.
Spooky action at a distance is a fun fact.
Chomsky's psychic continuity a fizzy treat.
Non-rational is bad and dirty
Homeopathic sexual you.
Wasting taxpayers money
Funding facts. Fact funding.
Budgets budgets budgets
See they fund microcosmic essence of owl
Rationalism wins.

Can't take more refugees
We don't have the budget in our hearts
Get out of the lecture room if you can't stand the kitchen
It's paid for by the hour
Except we are charging ourselves
Oh I see. Online technology made this possible.
Honestly a lecture room is charged
by the university to the university
That is rational
Our hearts are quantifiable
Charity totalers surge up and we cheer
Only now can we see how much we care.
Rational rational rational.



Sheila enjoyed the carnage



Kimey Peckpo Hatches Out



Kimey Peckpo Hatches Out! Multi-Media installation AVA Gallery (2019)

Kimey Pekpo was inside his egg. Lately he had begun to feel very warm and happy indeed. "Momo has been hatching me very nicely," he thought.

"I am all cosy-cosy but it is time for me to hatch out and show Momo just what I am." So Kimey Pekpo began to bash at the shell until he had made a little gap like an escape hatch at the top of the egg. He stuck his head out and looked around at the outside with a smile on his face. The landscape was very strange, being mainly pink with very few landmarks to speak of. "Its like a blancmange desert," chuckled Kimey Pekpo to himself (he liked chuckling to himself). Still he couldn't wait to explore and climbed out of the hatch he had bashed for himself and called out "Momo!" feeling certain she would come and lead him on his exploration of the world outside. "Momo!" he called again but no response came. He noticed he was still very warm and guessed that Momo was asleep and had forgotten to turn down

her hatching heat. He looked up at her glowing bottom above him but had to turn away as it made his eyes hurt. "I know," he thought, "I will put the top of the egg on my head to keep the heat off me. I will walk around to Momo's lap, climb up for a cuddle and then she will wake up." So Kimey Pekpo set off and found himself walking a very long way without escaping the hot heat of Momo's hatching behindness. He thanked goodness that he had thought to wear the shell top as a hat. He smiled to himself at the strangeness of his situation and shook his head. Presently he came to a tree and sat down for a rest in its leafy shade when a thought came to him, "I know I will climb up the tree and tickle Momo until she wakes up and turns down the hatching heat. So carefully Kimey Pekpo climbed to the top of the tree and raising his hands above his head he began to wiggle his fingers in the direction of the great glowing hatching behindness orb.

"This is sure to work," he thought to himself and curled up on a branch whilst continuing to tickle with one hand. Soon he began to doze off with a contented smile on his face at the thought of all the fun he would have with Momo when she woke up. The motion of the tree in the breeze soon soothed him into a deep sleep. Sometime later he woke up to a fleeting smell of pine forests. He slowly opened his eyes and right next to his face he found a bird's nest full of tiny eggs. Suddenly remembering his quest to Momo's lap he sat upright with a jolt. Upon seeing he was so high off the ground his head began to spin. Then he realised it wasn't hot anymore. The hatching heat had gone but who had tickled Momo if he had fallen asleep? "Oh you are a kind and clever tree," said Kimey Pekpo " you have tickled Momo whilst I lay dreaming on your branch and now at last she has woken up and turned off the hatching heat behindness orb. Now Momo's orb was a shimmering silver colour and he noticed that it no longer hurt his eyes to look at it. How beautiful

it looked to Kimey Pekpo as he climbed down the tickling tree and determined once more to walk around to Momo's lap for a cuddle. Just as he clambered down onto the lowest branch he saw a pair of eyes looking out at him from a hole in the tree. "Whoo whoo are you?" said a voice so barely there that it sounded like the sound of the sea in the tiniest shell or a feather brushing a cobweb.

"it is I, Kimey Pekpo and I am on my way for a cuddle from Momo. Who are you?" "Oh I am the Woodle Owl and I sit in this tree catching mice as they scurry past." "How strange," thought Kimey Pekpo "I have not seen many mice around here but perhaps that's because the Woodle Owl is very good at catching them. Yes that is the most likely reason unless of course the Woodle Owl's ancestors used to do this thousands of years ago and the Woodle Owl now sits in the tree believing mice catching is what he was born to do." Kimey Pekpo shook his head wondering where such a strange thought would have come from. "I've got to get going" said Kimey Pekpo "but if I see any mice I will send them scurrying past you". And off he set again into the shiny darkness.

He hadn't gone but twenty paces when the strangest feeling came over him. He felt that instead of him walking towards Momo, it was Momo who was following him. "Oh Momo I am trying to walk around you for a cuddle on your lap but shall never get there if you simply walk along beside me." He carried on walking hoping that Momo would stay still but instead Momo's glowing behindness followed him over his shoulder. So Kimey Pekpo turned around to walk back the way he had come and as he did so a gust of wind came and blew the top of his shell down over his eyes. He had, by now, quite forgotten that it was on his head at all and, feeling surprised, he pushed it back onto the top of his head. He walked back to the tree where the Woodle Owl was

sitting in his hole. Momo's Behindness Orb glowed in the liquid black like a clock face above them. "Oh dear precious Woodle Owl won't you help me?" cried Kimey Pekpo up to the hole under the lowest branch. "Whoo whoo said that?" came a papery voice. "It is I, Kimey Pekpo and I am looking for Momo's lap but she keeps on following beside me. If you were to fly out perhaps she would follow you instead and then I could sneak around and get the cuddle I so desire." Kimey Pekpo was not even sure the Woodle Owl could fly but before he had time to worry he spied two beautiful white wings gliding above his head. "Don't forget to call out if Momo follows you!" cried Kimey Pekpo up into the sky. When he could hardly see the Woodle Owl any more Kimey Pekpo began to worry and called out, "Is Momo following after you?" "Whoo whoo" came the quietest paperiest of replies upon the pine scented breeze. "Yes!" thought Kimey Pekpo and holding onto his shell hat he set off to get the cuddle he so longed for.

This time he walked straight towards the great hatching glow confident that Momo was distracted by following the Woodle Owl. Sploosh Sploosh went the ground under his feet. How peculiar thought Kimey Pekpo who now saw not one but two silvery Momo Glow Behindnesses. One above him and one straight ahead of him. He looked down to see why the ground was splooshing and all around his feet he saw hundreds of tiny turtles. Kimey Pekpo had seen a turtle mirror in the dream he had dreamt up the tickling tree so was not alarmed (although he had not expected mirrors to go sploosh). He saw the turtles floating along in the great mirror and tried to copy the way they moved through its shimmering surface. In this manner he edged neared and nearer to the hatching glow below the one in the sky. "Oh gosh!" cried Kimey Pekpo after what seemed like a very long time "I am getting tired". The turtles bobbed along beside him

and tried to help him on his way. Just then a golden glow began to appear on the edge of the mirror and Kimey Pekpo cried out to the turtles, “Look look Momo is smiling because she has seen me and is laughing at how clever I was to trick her into following the Woodle Owl! Now, at long last, I am going to get my cuddle” and he kept on swimming (although he didn’t call it that because he didn’t know what he was doing) harder and harder as Momo’s smile grew broader and broader. “See she is pleased to see me!” he kept on splosh sploosh splooshing until at long last the mirror stopped splooshing and his hand fell upon something warm and silky. It was such a lovely feeling and he called out “This is Momo’s lap!” And he pulled himself out of the mirror onto the gorgeous golden swathe ahead of him. It was perfectly round and soft. He lay down on its glowing surface soothed by its warmth against his skin as Momo smiled down at him. He closed his eyes and snuggled himself up under the shade of Momo’s necklace that waved in the breeze like a palm tree (which it was). He put his eggshell hat down in front of him and soon the mirror came and carried it away. For a moment Kimey Pekpo opened his eyes and saw it bobbing up and down getting smaller and smaller and he smiled to himself. Now he had his cuddle on Momo’s lap and tomorrow he would wake up and go back to thank the Woodle Owl for helping him before setting off on his adventures. Until then he would simply enjoy his cuddle and Momo’s warm smile beaming down upon him.