



Issue 30
Jan 2011

BLANKPAGES



>_awaiting your input

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer

Recorders

A major exhibition by international electronic artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, featuring seven interactive installations, two world premieres and four UK premieres.

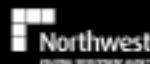
18 September – 30 January
Manchester Art Gallery
Free entry

www.manchestergalleries.org/recorders

Manchester Art Gallery, Mosley Street,
Manchester M2 3JL Tel: 0161 275 8888



People on People is a co-commission between Manchester Art Gallery and Abandon Normal Devices (AND) festival.



The Henry Moore
Foundation





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YOU ARE LISTENING TO...

Excuse? Me! by With That Knife

COVER ART

by Paul Skavinski

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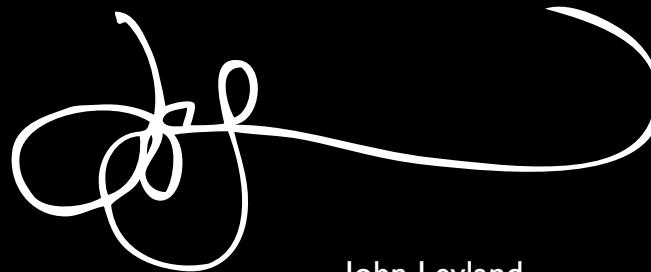


Welcome...

January sees the opening of our BLANKSPACE, with BlankExpression 2011 paving the way for an exciting series of events this year at our new creative hub at 43, Hulme Street, Manchester. We've been working hard since November to get everything ready for the launch so come along on 27th of this month to check it out and celebrate the start of something great with us.

As you might imagine we're very excited by the opportunity presented to us with BLANKSPACE – it promises to be a cross-pollinating, vibrant community space with plenty of different opportunities to offer to the emerging artists we support in each different media. We'll be holding workshops, discussion groups, exhibitions, live art, performance, meetings and much more!

blankpages will be taking advantage of this marvellous multi-disciplinary atmosphere, presenting you as ever with everything we can think of that's interesting, challenging and beautiful to look at. So keep reading, and keep in touch throughout 2011.

A white, stylized handwritten signature on a black background. The signature is fluid and cursive, starting with a large loop on the left and ending with a long, sweeping tail that curves upwards and to the right.

John Leyland
blankpages editor

WELCOME

Paul Skovinski

What are Analogue Projections and how to perceive them?

There are two canons that lead to the visual universes. Hand made slides and liquid projections are applied to any surfaces; buildings as architectural lighting; venues and clubs as an interior fill, or to lighten up music acts or performance of any kind.

Still slides (Digital Free Arts) are made of various materials mixed together and then projected via analog projectors.

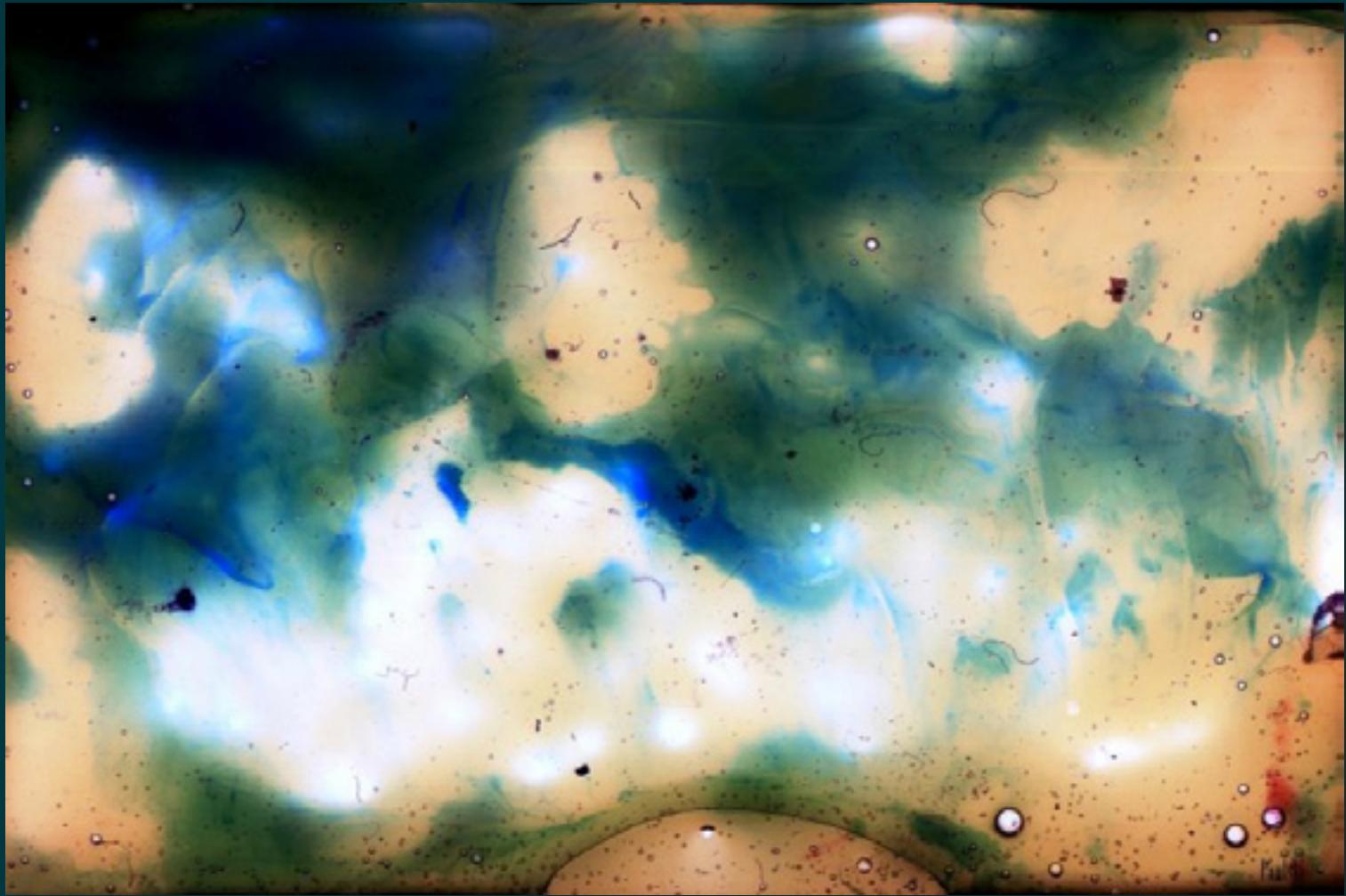
As well as projections, they are also scanned in high resolution using a 35mm scanner, and are available in various formats such as prints, iPhone wallpapers, Desktop wallpapers and posters.

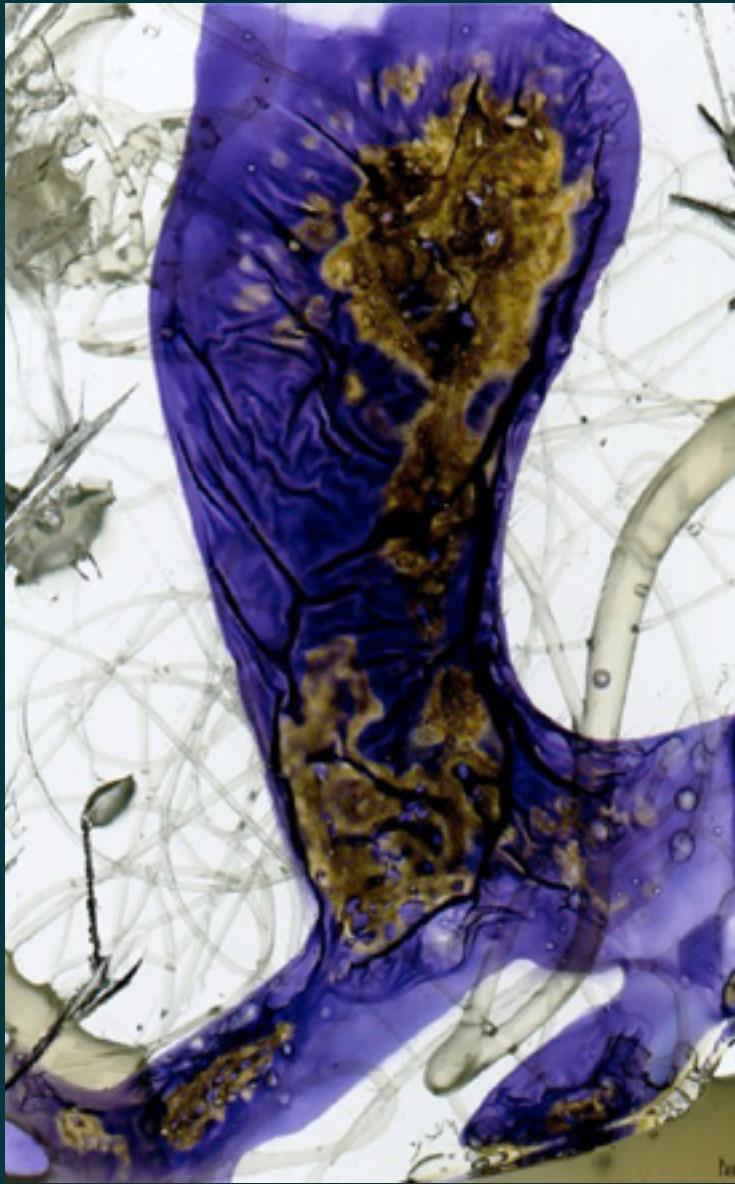
Just stop for a while and stare at it. Use your imagination and visualize anything your mind sees in it.

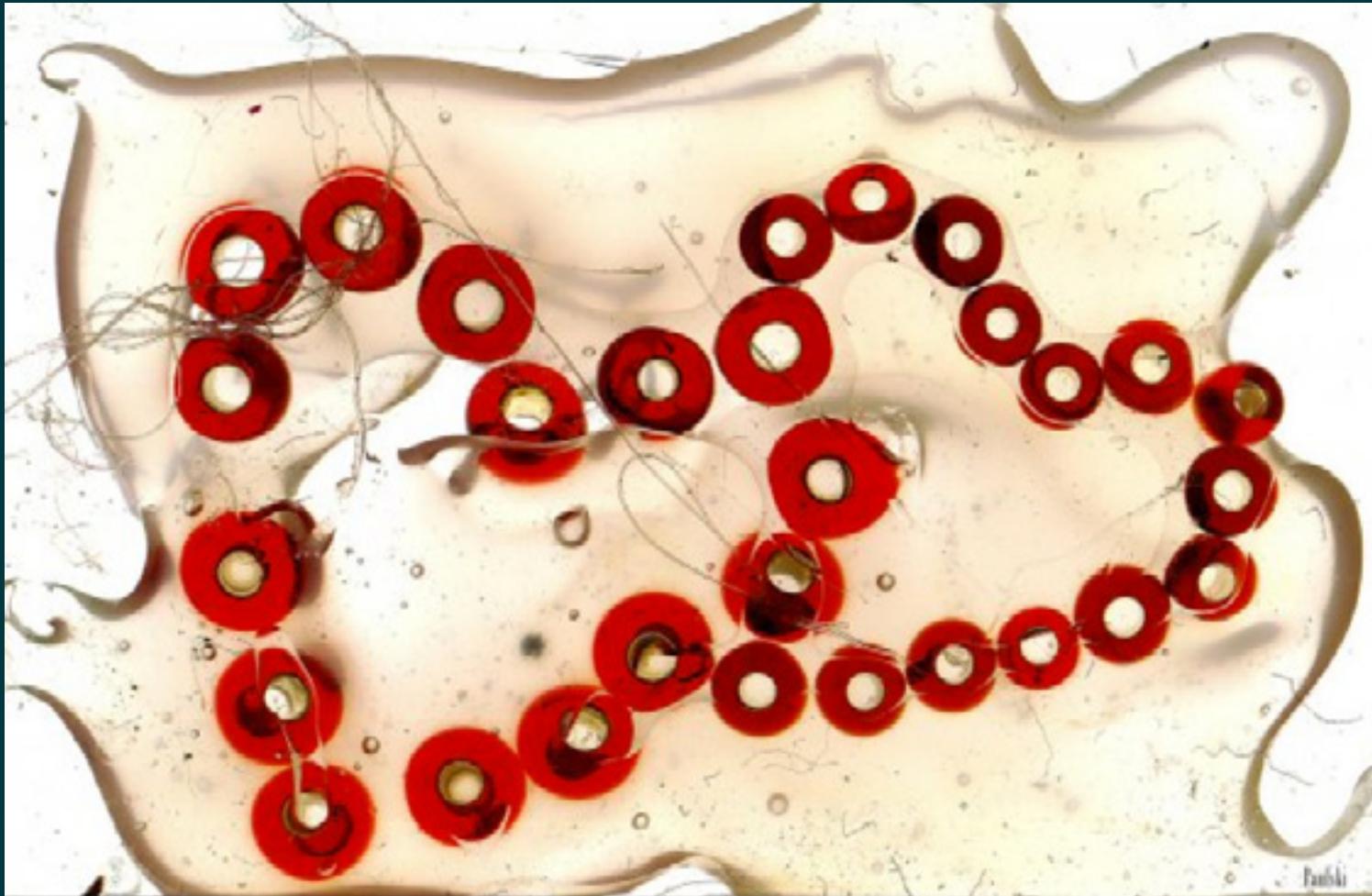
Liquid projections are made of various liquids; water-based and chemical-based materials that mixed together give beautiful unpredictable movements and an organic feel. These deep analogue colors as well as stunning occasional chemical reactions take you away from the digitized era we are living in and take you into a space - whether inside you or out there – beyond the earth. A fusion of colors and shapes creates visuals that are triggered by your mind and filtered by your soul.

What you see totally depends on you - what you see is yourself. I am not the one who tells you what to see – just stay in tune with the illusion – listen to your imagination and discover your own talent of perception.

This is not a poem or any artistic message; focus on details and you see the whole. Focus on yourself. Notice the mother nature in you.







Paulski – A Naturally born perception unit shifter. Musician, sound designer, Producer, Writer, Experimentalist, Theorist and Analogue Projections Designer Living in the UK since 2004. Born in Poland 1982. Graduated in 2010 at University of Westminster BA Commercial Music,

“Paul is very much the sort of person with whom one might while away the odd hour or three enjoying good music, looking at abstract art and sticking it to The Man. These things can go either way of course, but I don’t think there’s much affectation with Paulski” – Nick Quentin Woolf / Xstream radio/music mash

Check out Paul’s brand new video here:

www.paulskimovie.blogspot.com



Abrasion

Andrew Gilmore

He's been messed about, stabbed and shot at but here it is; the underground publication *Abrasion* is out now and available on Amazon.co.uk. Andrew Gilmore's cult book contains two very different stories and never before seen illustrations.

In the author's notes Gilmore discusses the stories. "What [sic] the shorts here have in common is the feel during execution; it seemed as if they had already been written, and I was simply clearing the sand away."

Abrasion has been printed in a limited edition of 250, every copy is signed. Once they're gone they're gone forever. The first story is a bizarre science fiction tale in the tradition Asimov called *Only With Yourself*. The second, *Frame 313* is a contemporary horror story, a love letter to cult cinema with an EC Comic slant.

"You could sit back in the threadbare seat watching the scuffed and fuzzy print of exploding heads, pasty flesh go-go dancers, car crashes, dubbed Italian thrillers, rubber creatures gorging, rape and Kung Fu."

—*Frame 313*

Exerpt

It is funny how I can remember pieces of the crash with crystal clarity, while the rest is blank. My brain denies that any other information exists.

In the fragments I know by heart I have searched for a loose end or an anomaly, anything that might trigger a total recall. After thinking I can only assume those pieces of brain died in the crash.

I am alive and must be thankful for that. However, my comrades did not receive the same luck. We seared through the planet's stratosphere and the hull split; a section tore away like paper and the external forces took a bite from the cockpit. In the corner of my eye the dark interior changed to light and heat. I turned to see Captain Michael Harte and my co-pilot, Simon Froud, already shapes shrinking into the distance. Still harnessed to their seats, they spun away within a flock of shrapnel. No, I'm lying. I witnessed more than that and in vivid Technicolor.

The expression on Harte's face is unfortunately one of those crystal clarity memories.

My gaze walked in at the exact point he heard the first note from the Fat Lady's mouth. It seemed like a switch flicked inside his head: hope to despair.

That circuit connected when his chair sheared its

bolts and the suction grabbed him. His head had jerked towards me and his hair looked like steel sticks bent at 45 degrees.

It's like a movie. I am able to pause the image, zoom in and out. I can wind it backwards or spin it forwards, or loop my favourite bits. He might as well be sitting up beside me, with that dagger-sharp stare, his mouth stretched into a zero of terror.

That image will hound me for the rest of my days. I wonder, what was going through his head? Did the terror turn to delirium? I'll never know the answers. That bothers me for some reason. I want to ask him but I'm frightened he'll answer.

-Only With Yourself.

Andrew Gilmore is a Manchester based writer and artist. His artwork has been used by bands and exhibited across the UK. In 2010 he branched out into filmmaking and performance art. Next year will see the nationwide publication of Gilmore's cult children's book *The Boy with Eyes the Size of Miami Football Stadium*, available from WH Smith, Waterstone's and on Amazon.



FIVE GET A LIFE

By Dave Weaver

Captain Georgina Smith eased the Golf GTI carefully along the narrow sloping lane. She paused the car a few moments at the last winding bend as the vista of the moonlit bay appeared in the windscreen before her. She could just make out Kirrin Island silhouetted against the darkening horizon. Had it really been twenty-two years since she'd last been here? So much had happened since then, a lifetime of danger, excitement, happiness and pain that the others could hardly be expected to know about. And yet it seemed like only yesterday since their final drunken party here and then the great parting of the ways. All of them had been off to university, striking out for different parts of the country, different challenges and different lives.

For her it had been the armed forces, a decision firmed up in her mind at her Uni's various cadet corps meetings and outward bound weekends. She'd cut her teeth on Northern Ireland, learnt things the hard way in Iraq and found herself tested to her limits in the killing fields of Helmand Province. She'd supposedly passed that test, but at what cost now? Would she be a lonely soul without ties or family forever?

Well, maybe there was still one family left for her. She thought of the others, probably all gathered down there right now awaiting her arrival. Would they be

the same Anne, Dick and Julian of her memories? No, she smiled at the very idea, of course they wouldn't. They'd have changed just as she had. But she could still hope they'd have some semblance of the laughing children she remembered from those long golden summers that seemed to last forever.

Anne's text had said dinner would be ready at eight. It was nearly that now. It was a long way down from Aldershot but she still should have got here an hour ago. Normally she was so punctual and precise but tonight something had held her back. Lately the past had become a refuge from the horrors of war. She didn't want to risk destroying that sacred place.

She shook herself and continued driving down to the distant speck of white along the bay that was Kirrin Cottage. A few minutes later she was pulling up next to the BMW parked outside.

The big old oak door opened and a shrill voice called out. "George, is that you?"

A woman's slight figure stood in the doorway. Georgina climbed out of the car, reached back in for the bottle of wine, then made her way up the rough stone steps towards her. A spotlight came on momentarily blinding her and she put up a hand to shade her eyes.

“Anne? Anne darling, how are you? Happy birthday!”

The two women hugged awkwardly. “Oh George, its so lovely to see you again. The big 4 - 0 as they say. Come in and get warm. Julian’s already here and Dick and Joanna just texted to say they’re on their way.”

Anne led Georgina into a large oak-beamed lounge filled with heavy-looking furniture and two massive settees arranged before a large brick hearth. There was a roaring fire crackling away.

A tall figure in slacks and polo-neck shirt got up from one of the settees and made his way towards her.

“Julian? My god you look...” Georgina was about to say old, but changed it rather unconvincingly to “Great.” She couldn’t hide her shock at his appearance though. The thick blond hair was now thinning to a dirty grey, which failed to hide a bald patch, and the once wiry body had run to a comfortable middle-age spread. He looked well fed and groomed though, like an old stallion that someone had taken particularly good care of. Money does that for you, she supposed. But chasing it had also put those stress lines on his face. She thought he looked tired.

Half-way towards her he put his glass down on the coffee table and opened his arms to hug her. She smelt the whisky on his breath mingled with his cologne.

“George! Its great to see you again after all this time.” He finally let her go. “I’ve been hearing terrific things about you.”

She smiled self-consciously as Anne bustled around taking her coat and fixing her a drink.

“This is lovely isn’t it? The three of us, just like in the old days.”

“What, you mean pirates and treasure and secret passageways?” Georgina smiled.

“And lashings of ginger beer, although its more like lashings of rosé these days.” Anne giggled.

“Yes, go easy on the old plonk love. Dick’s not even here yet.” Julian warned.

“How is Dick?” Georgina asked them. “I saw he got in again. Must be quite high up in the party by now.”

“Oh Dick’s doing just fine. He’s changed a bit, naturally, but then haven’t we all?” Her voice sounded slightly brittle to Georgina.

“And you, Julian. You’re a big wheel in the city now I hear.”

“Oh, I’ve had my successes and my failures you know, a few more of the latter lately of course. But we’ve all been following your career, haven’t we Anne? Brave girl, that’s our George”

“Oh, I’m not that brave, really. I just get on with the job. Its the guy’s up front who are the real heroes. I just provide the logistical support and all that technical stuff.”

“It must be very dangerous though, at times.” Julian persisted. “I mean, have you ever been involved in any of the actual fighting?”

“There were a couple of attacks on one of the forward bases while I was there.” She paused. “And about a month ago the jeep in front of me got blown up by an IED.” She bit her lip and turned away from his gaze. “My, that’s a great fire you’ve got going for us Anne.”

“Oh, it took me ages to get the hang of lighting it. This old place is so draughty, but then I don’t have to tell you that. After all, you grew up in it.”

“Yes, I did.” Georgina looked around her as if studying the cottage for the first time. “It doesn’t seem to have changed much.” She looked out into the gathering gloom though the French windows. “Though I see you’ve put in a patio out the back.”

“John gave me a hand. Hopefully he’ll be along later as well. We found each other again through ‘Friends Reunited’. He’s got his own central heating business now. Well make yourself at home, food’s nearly ready.”

Georgina gave Julian an enquiring glance after Anne had left the room.

“She means Tinker. That little kid who used to try and tag along with us, your dad’s scientific colleague’s boy. Never thought much of the little twerp myself but she seems taken with him. May be a good thing,

get her out of this place.”

“What do you mean?”

Julian took Georgina’s arm and quickly guided her out to the hall. “Just showing George the rest of the place for old time’s sake while you finish off doing the food Anne. Back in a mo.”

“OK.” A voice came from the kitchen along with a wafted smell of cooking.

The two of them stood in Georgina’s old bedroom. “Didn’t it seem odd to you that Anne wanted to buy this place? Julian asked her. “I know you were abroad at the time and it all went through solicitors, but didn’t you wonder why she’d want to come back down here from London?”

“Well, her e-mails said she wanted to make a fresh start, something about a divorce. When dad died and I had to put mother into a home it was the best option I had. Quite frankly it was the only one. Nobody wanted the place in the condition it was in.”

Julian gave her a long look. “George, Anne’s had two failed marriages, one to some hopeless druggie she met at university and another to this guy who used to beat her up.”

Georgina recoiled in shock at Julian’s words. “That’s terrible, oh my god, poor Anne.” A thought came to her. “But where were you and Dick when all this was happening? I always thought you’d be around to look after her.”

Julian had the grace to look embarrassed. “Dick’s had his politics and I’ve had the bank. I’ve been in the States for the last few years helping them sort the mess out over there. We’ve all gone our own way I’m afraid. I feel guilty as hell about it now of course, that’s why I don’t want to see her get hurt again. She’s hiding away down here now but I’m not convinced this Tinker bloke’s the answer either. Got to find some man to fuss over, that’s our Anne. Can’t seem to manage a life of her own, God knows why.”

The front doorbell rang.

“That’ll be Dick now, and Joanne.

“Joanna, that’s his wife isn’t it?”

“Yes, you remember Gypsy Jo don’t you? Don’t call her that to her face though for god’s sake, or she’ll sue the lot of us. Got to be careful about that sort of thing these days.”

“Oh, that Jo!” George said, trying to hide her surprise.

“Apparently the two of them always had a soft spot for each other. She’s a councillor now, runs the local Minorities Development Grant Committee. On quite a packet I hear, then there’s the money her dad left her from his haulage firm. Pretty lucky seeing as Dick’s expenses claims have taken a bit of a dive lately. Lib Dems no better than the Torys in that respect.”

“George darling, is that you up there?” Dick’s voice came from the bottom of the stairs.

She saw his still boyish face grinning up at them, the old mop of brown hair now a neat short back and sides. He wore a smart tailored suit as if he’d just been to a meeting. Behind him stood Joanne looking beautiful in an expensive red dress. She had an unreadable expression on her face.

Dinner had gone well. The starters had been a little burnt but they’d laughed that off and had been congratulating Anne on her Coq-au-vin and homemade cheesecake. George had noticed though how Anne had started to slur her words after drinking regularly throughout the meal. She’d also been making regular trips to the hallway to use her mobile, each time re-entering the dining room looking more and more agitated. By the end of desert it was clear something was terribly wrong.

Suddenly she bristled at their compliments. “Oh yes, thank-you very much indeed everyone! I’m such a wonderful fucking home-maker to be sure.”

“Anne!” Georgina was shocked.

“Steady on old girl.” Julian told her gently.

“Oh come on George, I know you soldier-types swear all the time.”

“It’s not that, Anne. What on earth’s the matter dear?”

Anne gave a bitter laugh then put her face in her hands and began to cry.

“Oh-oh, here we go again.” Dick said to no-one in particular.

“Shut-up Dick!” Julian told him. He was red-faced with a mixture of drink and anger. Joanna remained silent but glanced at Dick as if to say ‘can we go now?’

“What is it darling?” Georgina asked, moving around the table to put an arm round Anne.

“John’s just told me he’s going back to his wife.” She told her between sobs, “He...he says I was like some kind of childhood fantasy, him being part of the gang again, and then he woke up and realised what he was doing. He’s got two kids apparently, I didn’t even know...” The sentence ended in sniffles.

“Never mind dear, we’re all together now aren’t we.” Julian tried to be soothing. “All the old gang. You don’t need him.”

“God, you people make me sick sometimes.” They all looked up at Joanna’s harsh words. “You just can’t get over yourselves, can you? The great Famous Five, including good old Timmy who’s probably buried under that bloody patio out there... You always looked down on us locals even when you deigned to let us join in your pathetic games. We were just a bunch of thieves and layabouts to you toffs. Look at you all now though.”

Dick put his hand on her’s to quieten her but she snatched it away. “No Dick, you’ve been saying the same for years. You’re the only decent one amongst

them. Anne boozes her life away feeling sorry for herself while she’s getting off with other people’s husbands, Julian’s a bigger crook now than any of the poor people he sneaked on to the police. And George...”

She turned to face Georgina, her dark eyes flashing with hatred. “You’re busy enjoying yourself oppressing another country’s population in an illegal war. I suppose that’s just one more game for you, the biggest of the lot.”

“War isn’t a game, Jo.” Georgina replied steadily.

“And I hear you’re batting for the other side now as well, but then you always were what they used to call a ‘tomboy’. Probably used to fancied me a bit as well.”

“I’m sorry you feel that way about us.” Georgina told her in a quiet voice. “I’ve got nothing but good memories of our time together, but...”

“I’m sorry too, but I really don’t think I can do this anymore. Let’s go, Dick.”

Dick held up his hands to them apologetically and followed his wife out to the door.

Julian helped Anne to her feet. “Time for bed I think old girl. We’ll do the dishes.”

“I’m so sorry, George.” Anne told her unsteadily. “This was meant to be such a lovely evening and now I’ve ruined it for everyone.”

“No you haven’t.” Georgina gave her a strained smile. “But Anne darling, I really think I may have

made a terrible mistake in selling Kirrin Cottage to you. I want you to promise me you'll try and get out of this place as soon as you can. OK?"

Anne nodded her head tiredly and left the room. Julian sat down again across the dinner table from Georgina.

"Poor Anne."

"Joanna had no right to say those things about us though." Julian was still angry.

"Perhaps she had a point, from her side of things. We must have seemed unbearably smug to ordinary people in those days."

Julian's face broke into a smile. "Yes, I suppose we probably did." He hesitated. "You were going to bring your partner along with you tonight, weren't you? Sandra, wasn't it?"

"Yes, it was."

"What happened, did you two break up?"

"No, no we didn't quite do that. Remember that jeep I told you about?"

"Oh..." The smile fell from his face. "Oh my god. Oh George, I'm so sorry..."

"That's very sweet of you Julian, but I'll be alright." Georgina told him. "I suppose some adventures never really end."

As they sat quietly listening to the rain begin to lash against the windows she thought that summer had never seemed further away.

Dave Weaver is a graphic designer who enjoys writing short stories. His published works include stories for The University of Hertfordshire's *Visions* anthology, Kinglake Publishing's *Ten Modern Short Stories* and the American literary magazine *Shalla*. He has also had his science fiction stories featured on the American sci-fi webzine *Aphelion*. He is currently working on his first novel, *Jacey's Kingdom*.



Ross Sutherland

Poem looked up on Google Streetview

Two girls in sympathetic postures and winter coats
are swapping stories about Northern cities, or discussing granddads,
or impractical music stands, or psychohology,
sat on the cold stone steps
of a chiropodists
or an editing suite.

Nearby, a cycle courier
or process server
stares at a sticker book of barcodes
or a holiday spread in the Express
or a terrible sandwich
with a look that is either entirely content
or sinister, or both.

Meanwhile, some fifty-five miles East and three years later,
I am sitting here, anchored off the coast of this story,
Trying to imagine how this gripping yarn will end.

Or even (lets be honest) how it intends to begin—
Software has automatically removed the identities
of the hundred people that led our characters up to this moment,
their faces blotted out with bits of British sky.

Across the street, a man with the haircut of pianist
walks purposefully towards Dean Street, and yet
try to follow him and you join another timeline.
The city resets at the crossroads, jumps back to 6am,
leaving nothing on the road
but vague chalked instructions
for yesterdays Climate Camp
already fading back into the tarmac.

These empty moments are often the most complicated,
where the thousandth analogy for London breaks down.
London is not a broken river, nor a waterlogged mirror,
nor an ageing, racist, colour-blind boxer. If we assigned a metaphor to it,

we'd just end up talking about something else.
Like a game of Charades where you pick words from a hat
and you unfold your paper to find the word CHARADES.

“Wet Paint,” says the sign on the railings.
Which is the closest we're going to get to prophecy—
Everything here is still waiting to dry,
for some artist to return from his long lunch
and sketch that central character into the frame,
some camped-up London duke or pinstriped Beefeater.

Then again, perhaps the reason that we cannot see the hero is because we are already possessing its body: the Google Car itself, with its horrible insect eye that forces the rest of London into a supporting role.

It's in moments like this
that London has never felt more lonely.

By now, I think it is dark
on pretty much every street in England.
And so I slip a bookmark into London, turn off the city,
pour myself a glass of water
and return to the age-old literary device of Googling myself.

Hitting refresh
the same way our parents threw stones into lakes,
the same way cartoonists always start with the eyes
then return every couple of lines
and add another invisible circle. And I see my Father there
Striding off over stones, all limbs
Striking out into the wide, lonely plane
Strolling, waving, buffeted by breeze

Now I go to the beach
And I see the sea
But there's nothing there
It's lonely, just me.



Nude XI

Dear Telepath, here at my makeshift bureau,
I'm trying my hand at a picturebook

about clouds that hang above airports.
The book is set in June 2004.

You can't hear the polyphonic ringtones,
but they're there all right.

Things are pretty samey round here. The lake is a bit greener,
the antique shops have closed. We get the hunting channel now.

I just wanted to thank you for the box of broken joysticks.
It's the kind of thing only you would think of.

No one has seen you since Jim's party, where you took
apart the swimming pool to see how it worked.

You looked so beautiful thrashing about in the water.
The sky full of Welsh thunder. Some of those clouds have won awards.

Whenever I think of you at night, I know you're tuning in,
sitting there in your house with its see-through walls,

glass hedgerows, all of suburbia cut through into cross-sections.
The lusts of the upper sixth, humming like an electrical storm,

mixed with the fluorescent dreams of spiders,
the boy next door, checking the smell on his finger

after lifting weights. I try to imagine the shape of my thoughts
in the hope that the feedback loop boosts the signal.

Your police reports are inadmissible. You burn toast.
You sold your best painting to a knob and you know it.

I hope that makes you feel a little less special. This town is full of
kids from unaired pilots who sandbag their personality tests and I'm sorry

I think you were the only person who knew what I was trying to do
opposed to what I actually did.

The Message

A musical sculpture has been installed
inside a pitch black gallery.
The song contains a hidden message
oscillating between the notes,
like tapes found under pillows,
spooling advice into not-too-distant futures.

“What does it say?” I ask the artist.
On the other end of the phone there is a whining sound
like overloaded dumb waiters.
The artist evades the question. “It says the same thing,
over and over and over,” he deadpans. “Hmmm,” I say.
Mistaking this for a dialling tone, the artist hangs up.

It is always the same young gallery assistant
I find clacking her heels against the stool.
I reason no one has heard the sculpture more times than her.
Each time I leave the darkened room
I ask her what she thinks the message is.
Her eyes roll back as if reading it off the rafters:

“Entertainment is a medical reaction.”
“Better the scorpion you don’t know.”
“Art is filibustering in the abyss.”
“I still hate Thatcher.”
“There may be safety in numbers, but no dignity in the data.”
“Everywhere we go, people are bastards.”

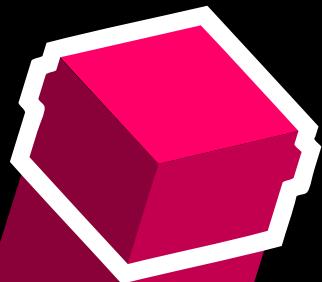
We know we’re getting closer every day.
I bring her cans of Coke and fan her with my programme.
“Pastiche cumulo-paroxysms,” she says,
the words turning over in her mouth like information.
The art has encoded itself into her posture,
the message blurring on her lips as she sleeps.

The final time I visit, the room is bright.
The gallery assistant is sitting in the middle
of a fluorescent mechanical quilt. She is flanked
on both sides by skeletons in symmetrical Fonzie stances.
She looks sheepish, as if she has lured me
into some horrible trap set by the artist.

I expect the apocalypse to go something like this.

Ross Sutherland was born in Edinburgh in 1979. He was included in *The Times’s* list of *Top Ten Literary Stars of 2008*. Ross is also a member of the poetry collective *Aisle16* with whom he runs *Homework*, an evening of literary miscellany in East London. His debut poetry collection, *Things To Do Before You Leave Town*, was published in 2009. His new book, *Twelve Nudes*, was published recently by *Penned In The Margins*.

www.rosssutherland.co.uk



BLANKSPACE

43 HULME STREET, MANCHESTER

LAUNCH EXHIBITION

BlankExpression 2011

An exhibition of innovative pieces by creative practitioners working in any media, BlankExpression 2011 is an open submission exhibition and is the first event that will launch BLANKSPACE, a new creative hub in Manchester.

BlankExpression 2011 is an ambitious and exciting showcase of works by twenty-six emerging practitioners from London to Victoria, Barnsley to Tel Aviv and anywhere in between. Taken from an open submission call, works will engage, stimulate and challenge each and every viewer. With a wide variety of works spanning over a range of disciplines, BlankExpression 2011 promises to be the start of something very special happening at the iconic 43 Hulme Street building.

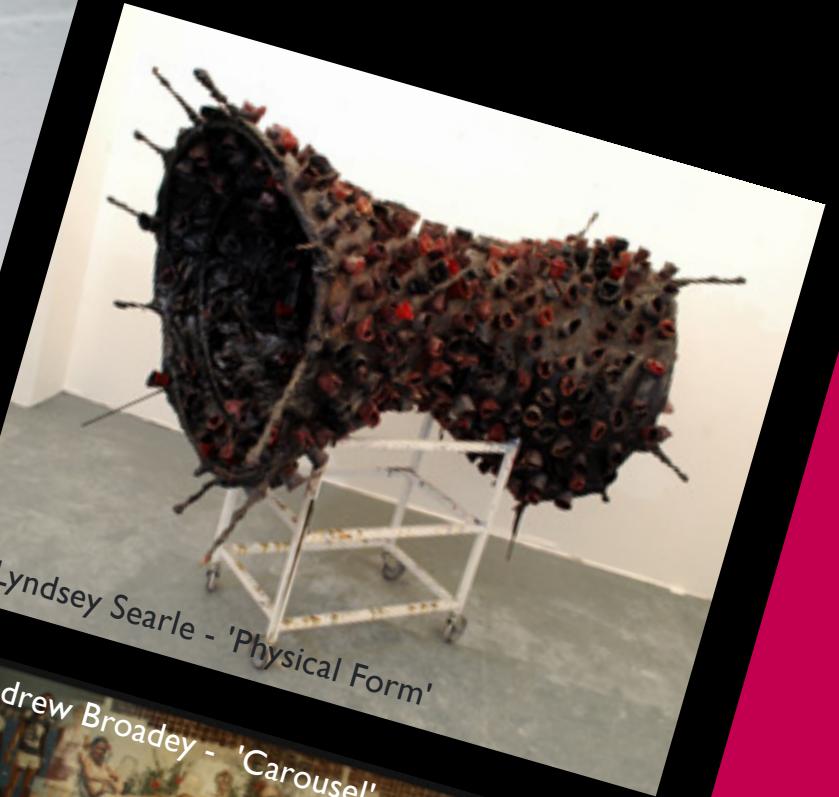
Due to this being the debut exhibition of BLANKSPACE, we chose its title, BlankExpression 2011, based on another pioneering exhibition for Blank Media Collective, as in both name and nature it pays homage to BlankExpression, our first ever exhibition, which took place at Zion Arts Centre, Manchester in July 2007.

Alexander Ashton | Andrew
Broadey | Andy Nash | Andy
Nizinskyj | Ben Sloat | Claudia
Borgna | Daniel Fogarty | Hadas
Tapouchi | Hannah Brown |
Hannah Wiles | Jane Lawson |
Jen Ross | Jez Dolan | Jude
Macpherson | Karl Kolley |
Katrina Vivien | Lucy Ridges |
Lyndsey Searle | Matthew
Stanners | Michael Thorp |
Rachael Gittins | Rebecca
Wild | Rose Barraclough |
Ruth O'Brien | Shreepad
Jonglekar | Stephen White |

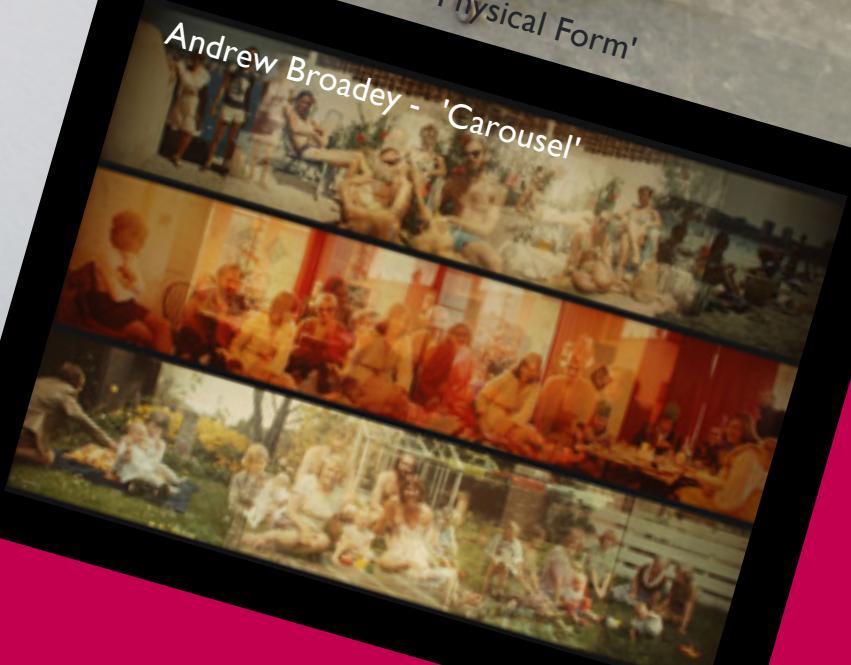
BLANKSPACE, 43 Hulme Street,
Manchester, M15 6AW
Public Preview: Thursday 27 January 2011 Exhibition
continues: 28 January –
13 February 2011
Information: blankmediacollective.org



Daniel Fogarty - 'Spinario'

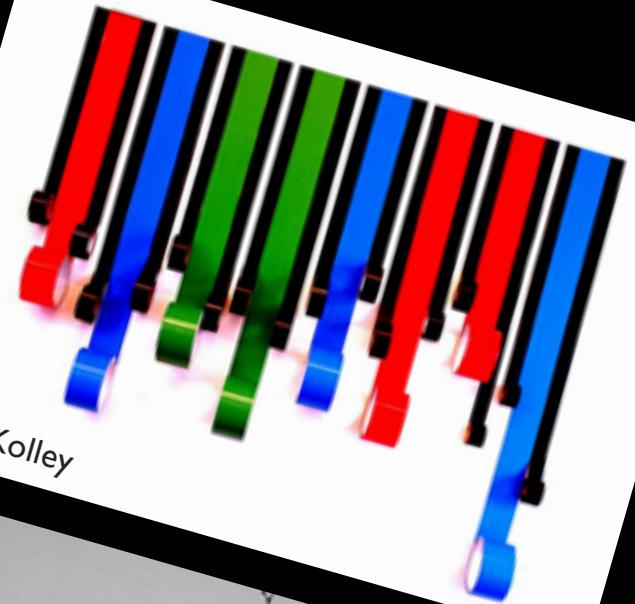


Lyndsey Searle - 'Physical Form'



Andrew Broadey - 'Carousel'

Stephen White - 'It's Time To Take Matters into Your Own Hands



Karl Kolley



Lucy Ridges - 'Neo'



"Want jaw-dropping cohesiveness and the visceral energy of punk?"

[THIS MONTH'S MP3]

will get your toes tapping and your mind racing"

Having been tipped for success by the likes of Manchester Evening News, Channel M, Drowned in Sound and XFM, With That Knife released their eagerly anticipated debut single *This Place, A Thousand Times* on March 2nd 2010 before embarking on a much-talked about UK tour that demonstrated why Manchester is still the home of vibrant and forward thinking music. The band met at university in the city, with the members hailing from around the country; Blackpool, Manchester, Wantage and Reading. They are all huge music fans, spending most of their time together listening to it, arguing about it and playing it. Balancing the aggression and ferocity of Fugazi and At The Drive in with the structural and

textural influence of artists like Aphex Twin and LCD Soundsystem With That Knife play creatively catchy, short songs as loudly as possible.



"With That Knife sound as far away from the stereotypical "Manchester band" as you could hope to get. Instead they seem to draw from an eclectic range of influences and construct them together like a puzzle; think Foals, but Foals jamming with At The Drive-In riffs, or The Clash's brash punk energy but played over the top of LCD Soundsystem's rhythms."
- Godsintv.com

"A heady mix of hardcore, electronics and post-punk rhythms, are vicious, visceral and booming with righteous punk anger."
- City Life (MEN)



Logo-morphic Asemic Writing Entities

Henry Roberts interviews William Tombs

What has led you to make this work?

I don't know if it's led me to make this work, or that first making this sort of work set me thinking of it, but somehow it has a lot to do with the dichotomy between words and things. The motif of an ideal language crops up in ancient thought a lot, of a sort of Edenic Ur-language comprised of the true names of things. Names that perfectly encapsulate, and even are the thing, rather than merely describing or symbolically standing for it. And if you know something's name you can own it, have power over it. I'm given to understand that ideas like this underpin lots of esoteric and sacred alphabets, and ideogrammatic systems from Hebrew to Kanji. That words or their component phonemes are the basic atomic stuff of reality itself. In Christianity it's made very explicit: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And in this latter day, religious or not, most of us still are constantly building up what we take to be reality out of words and ideas. This true-language notion is an inspiring fantasy, but essentially I think it's a

symptom of a great illusory disease that our civilization (if not all civilizations) suffer from: fundamental confusion of word and thing (or the ideal and the real).

This work is largely what people call asemic writing (meaning “writing devoid of semantic content”). I had actually never heard the term asemic until about nine months ago, and was amazed to find that this was something I had been doing for a long time without knowing other people did it or that it had a name. However, I find the term misleading, and I think some of the asemisists seem to be fundamentally confused about what it is they’re doing. If I’ve read their arguments right they claim that it’s a variety of literature. Asemic writing, though certainly devoid of semantic content, is not writing. It is a form of visual art composed not of writing but of logomorphic entities. And in fact what interests me about these logomorphs is not lack of semantic content but that they are in fact their own semantic content. And maybe that’s about as close as I can come to creating the UR-language.

“Asemic writing... is not writing. It is a form of visual art composed... of logomorphic entities.”



So, what's important to you in the work you're making is not that it's a fantasy language or something that can be interpreted or decoded but just something that can be experienced purely as a unique entity in its own right. Is that accurate?



It is. Asemisists say that their work provides a sort of semantic vacuum that 'readers' supply with their own meaning. This is true in the same sense we see shapes in clouds and faces in trees. But really we're doing that all the time anyway, even when we think we're not 'reading anything into it'. Habit and language train us to see things through words and categories to filter what we're seeing through thoughts. To see concepts instead of things. Our words and thoughts are abstractions from what is. Of course, for an entity to be logomorphic it has to be abstracted

from written language, ie: it has written language as its dominant visual model. But it's an abstraction that allows the viewer to see forms like the forms of written language concretely without being distracted by actual words invading the mind. A literate person, like you, cannot help but read words he sees; advertising thrives on this phenomenon. I can easily get to feel word-clogged, and keenly desire time away from words. One of my favourite things to do is what I call 'seeing the fireworks'. I just watch the world happening, not naming (as much as I can help) just digging what I see, being patient, thinking nothing, enjoying.

The priest/poet Gerard Manley Hopkins called a thing's essential, individual quality its inscape. It's an idea that he perfectly expresses in these lines:

Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves—goes itself; *myself* it speaks and spells,
Crying *What I do is me: for that I came.*

I love the use here of 'selves' as a verb. And the notion that the basic business of anything is to 'self', to enact itself, I find both joyously simple and profound

And when it comes to the curious logomorphic entities in question (or indeed anything I draw),

I like to create forms that 'self'. Forms imbued with thier own distinct quiddity. I like playful, lively forms that dance on the page. In one of the Moomin books, Moomintroll puts a book into a magic hat and all the words are transformed into tiny insect-like creatures that squirm and wriggle across the table.

I know you are not just a visual artist - you are an actor and a writer too. Would you say there are underlying principles or themes running though all your work?

Yes. A lot of what I do is mask-work, and requires tremendous clarity of gesture. A gesture MUST mean just what it is supposed to mean. Superfluous arm flapping, or any undirected action can result in loss of meaning and the audience's loss of interest in, and understanding of the story. probably my biggest guide to



how it's done properly is *The Simpsons*. In designing the masks, too, clarity is very important. A character-mask is not just another face worn over the actor's own, but a sort of ideogram designed to enhance and convey the essential characteristics of

a stage persona. Above all, I think theatre (and all arts) should be entertaining. Unfortunately, most of the time, it isn't. Most of the time theatre is worthy. And, I can't imagine that most people go to the theatre expecting to be entertained. They go for something called *culture*. Nobody really enjoys eating oysters. Do they?

I was asked what I'd thought of a ballet, and I said that I'd found it very boring. The ballet-lover who'd asked said:

"That's just because you don't realize just how much they have to train to be able to dance like that." Years spent training to be incredibly boring. That's perverse. That's virtuosity.

"Nobody really enjoys eating oysters. Do they?"





What are the main influences behind this work?

Early Medieval illuminated manuscripts, particularly Spanish; Mayan codices; modern masters like Klee, Picasso, Henry Moore, and William Steig; and the million anonymous masters of folk and 'primitive' art, from which I believe we still have a lot to learn.

Readers will notice there's a strong element of symmetry, or near-symmetry in some of this work. How important is this, and what relationship does it have with your work?

I make some images that are mandala-esque in their multi-directional symmetry, but most of it uses bi-lateral symmetry, or near-symmetry as you say. It has imperfections because I don't just duplicate sides and put them together - I make both sides and often let my own imperfections as a draughtsman dictate where the differences and asymmetries come in. I imagine bi-lateral symmetry is interesting to me because I am a human being and am therefore almost bi-laterally symmetrical! I like images that don't try to deny their two dimensionality - when an image has the illusion of three dimensions it can seem a bit cheap and ugly to me.

You mention that your imperfections affect the way you make these drawings. Treading carefully here, would it be fair for a critic of your work to suggest that your aversion to three dimensional representation may also have something to do with the limitations of your skill, or is there a valid reason for it?

Lack of drawing skill is my valid reason! If anyone aims to make a drawing, or painting, or sculpture 'life-like' he will be held back by profound lack of skill. No-one can realistically render life. Reality is reality and utterly transcends any viewpoint you can see, or imagine it from. We only mimic it. And in my eyes the more illusory the image, the more 'life-like' it is meant to be, the more it only succeeds in mocking reality by trying to contend with it. What we call 'realism' in painting, is a debasement of reality, which itself is a richer thing than any brush can ever catch. To waste hours of one's time imitating the work a camera can do in seconds is a virtuoso trick, but the end result's usually pretty boring.

Anyway, aside from this *logomorphic* stuff my work doesn't avoid representing depth. It avoids mimicking depth or giving the illusion of depth. The viewer will understand there is depth if depth is communicated.

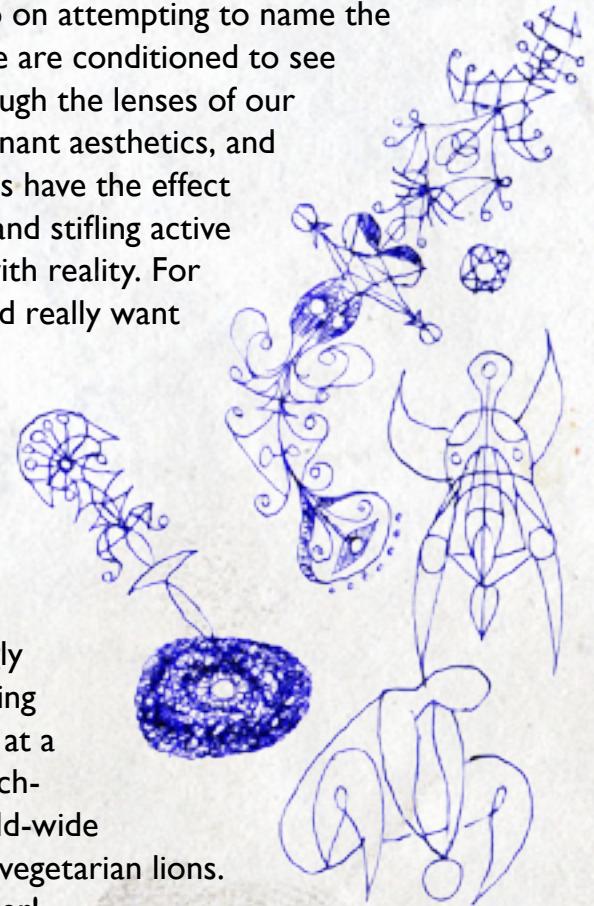




“We are conditioned to see the world through the lenses of our societies’ dominant aesthetics...”

I have a little monograph on the subject of the green-man that I bought for the pictures, that says medieval carvers tended to invent their own leaf-shapes “as if real trees had existed in vain.” I find that sentiment distressing. I think that to try to rival reality is the true vanity, or worse, to try to out-do and idealize reality, as in the case of Classicism. One only has to look to the regimes that have espoused (and drawn inspiration from) some form or other of it (the Romans, the Babylonians, Socialist Realism, National Socialist realism... tub-thumping, macho, comic-book stuff; pure braggadocio) to see that there is

a real case for suggesting there is an urgent moral dimension to matters of taste. I could go on... I won't. The relevant point here is that preference for what is normally called 'abstraction' in art, or 'the primitive' is, quite contrary to the green-man author's suggestion, indicative of high-regard for reality; a taboo on attempting to name the unnamable. We are conditioned to see the world through the lenses of our societies' dominant aesthetics, and literalistic styles have the effect of fixing ideas and stifling active participation with reality. For instance: Who'd really want to live in the Jehovah's Witness heaven-on-earth? Never aging, always well-groomed and wearing ugly jumpers, beaming big false smiles at a perpetual church-picnic in a world-wide safari-park for vegetarian lions. I'll bring the beer!

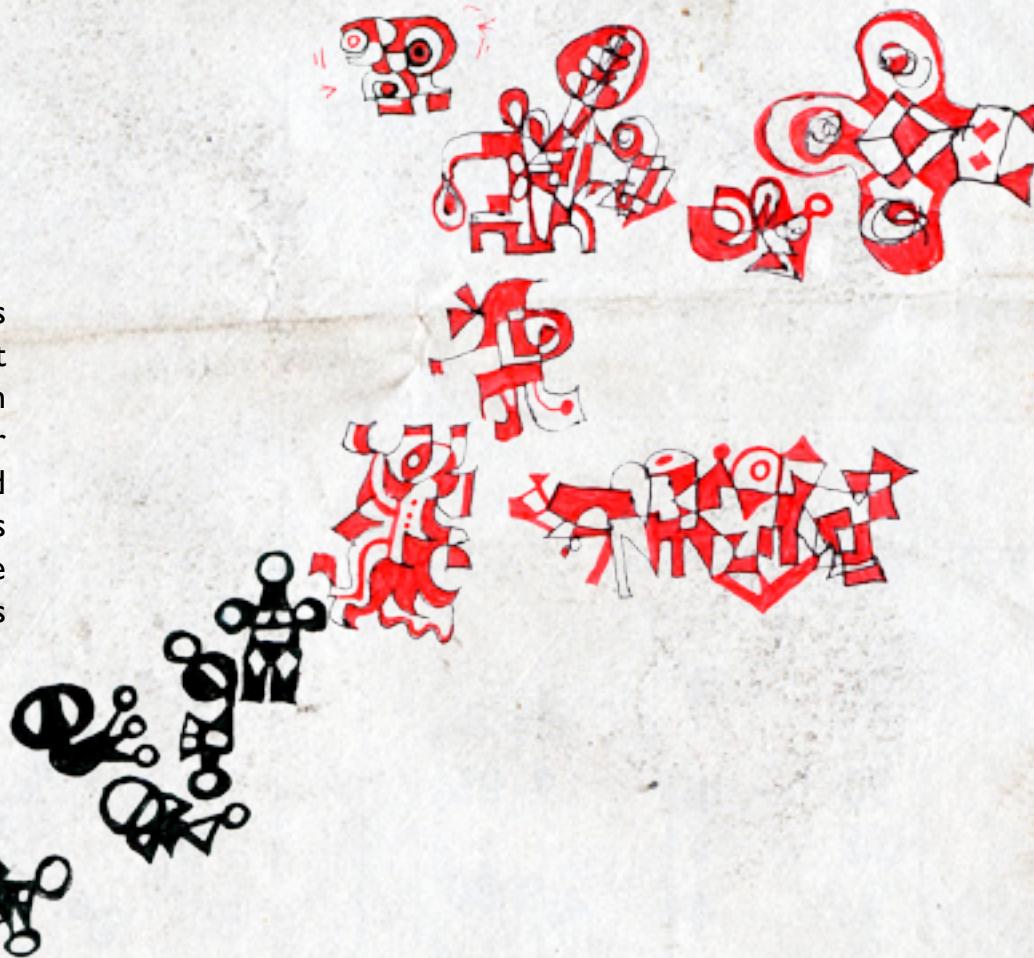


Although a lot of your drawings could be labelled as doodles, they're definitely conscious and considered, aren't they?



I don't like the label 'doodles'; it implies absent-mindedness. My mind is present, but not imposing anything. The same way in conversation you don't need to know what to say. You hardly ever decide what to say, you just open your mouth and words emerge that more or less fit your purposes. It's not just things spilling out from the subconscious, like in a dream. I actively participate in making the marks on the page. I play.

I find that if I approach work in any sense other than a playful one, I have a terrible frustrating time full of false starts and blunders, and produce stale uninspired work. If I aim for spontaneity I do not achieve it. It's what the Taoists called *wu wei*, or not-striving. And it can be a real struggle to stop from struggling as most of us know.

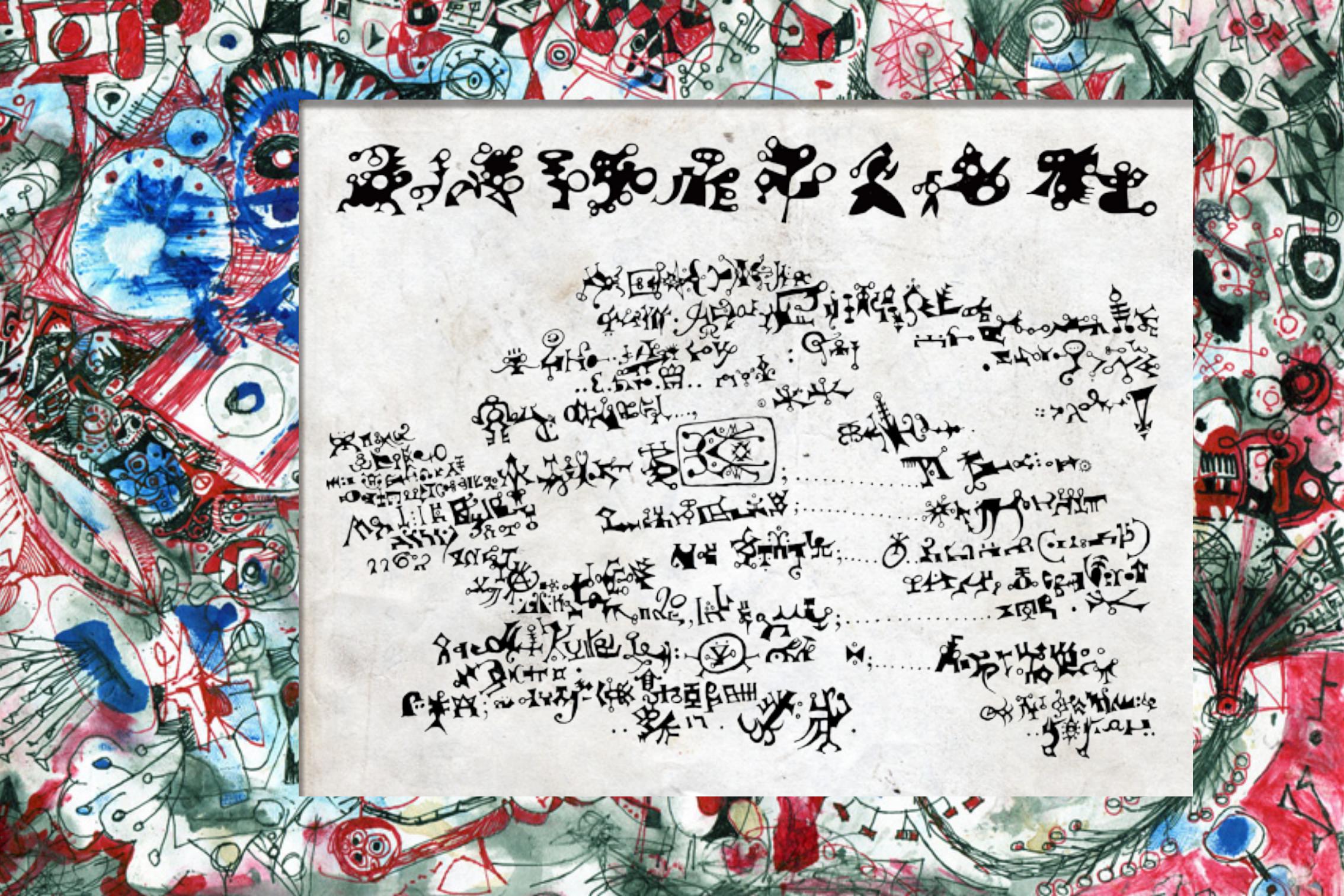


If you had to describe your work in a word what would it be?

Enthusiastic.

Handwritten title in a stylized script, possibly a mix of Devanagari and other regional scripts, located at the top of the page.

Main body of handwritten text in a complex, stylized script, possibly a mix of Devanagari and other regional scripts, arranged in several lines across the page.





William Tombs works mainly as an actor and theatre practitioner. He is Artistic-Director of children's theatre company Teatro-Saurus, soon to be mounting a 2011 tour of his play *OOK! And the Terrible Thing that Happened*.
www.teatro-saurus.com

Ben Judge

Foreword by Matthew Hull

Continuing our series focusing on Manchester's blogging heroes we have a look behind the raggedy curtains of one of the most habit-forming blogs to come from within the city limits. *Who the Fudge is Benjamin Judge?*, put together and updated by the conveniently named Ben Judge, was highly recommended by last month's blog pick Valerie O'Riordan. Alongside hallucinatory flash fiction and off-kilter observation Ben intermittently runs online events through the blog, like last year's *Literary World Cup* (in which Elizabeth Baines fought off Jorge Luis Borges and Douglas Adams to lift the cup) or the Story Advent Calendar which featured a piece of skewed, and occasionally crude, festive fiction for each day leading up to Christmas. You will definitely find yourself compulsively refreshing the page every few hours in the hope that something shiny and new has been posted.

So without further fluff here's Ben, talking about what he talks about when he talks about blogging.

I started a blog because I was lazy. I was someone who thought being a writer might be a nice thing to do, but I didn't get any closer to actually being one than thinking about ideas for stories. I hoarded ideas like jewels and then sat on them like a fat dragon in a dank cave. If I was going to become a writer I needed to fly. I needed to deliver those jewels to the people like a happy dragon that delivers precious stones to people.

I thought writing a blog might get me into the habit of writing and that in turn this might help me become a writer. It worked, to a point. I still struggle with metaphors. I am like a dragon who struggles with metaphors. Not really of course. I am pretending not to be amazing so you will like me. This is quite hard as I am the sort of person who puts their name in their blog title. I am also amazing.

My blog is the end product of my attempts at self motivation. It really did work. By writing a blog you create an audience, but they will soon drift off elsewhere if you don't post regularly. Writing really is a habit. I now write all the time and not just on the blog. Over the last year writing has become a sickness that has taken over my life. I used to fear running out of ideas, now I just worry about running out of paper.

Who the Fudge is Benjamin Judge? is a smorgasbord

of literary ramblings, very short stories and a sort-of diary. I sometimes wonder if my life is worth reading about but then I will eat grey squirrel or break my toe trying to kick my underpants into the laundry basket and another post will begin to take shape in my mind.

Thanks largely to people like Kate Feld and Chris Horkan, Manchester is a veritable paradise for bloggers. The Manchester Blog Awards are a brilliant celebration of the city's on-line writing and the regular Blog Meets allow like minded wordmongers to talk nonsense together (and often have a free bar). You should come along to a Blog Meet sometime. You never know who you might meet and, I don't know if I mentioned it, there is sometimes a free bar.

I have been head-over-heels in love with the Manchester blog scene for some time now so picking one blog to recommend is extremely difficult. I have cheated by selecting a blog that brings together a lot of very talented writers - *Screen/50*. It is a collection of film reviews that are limited to a picture and exactly 150 words. It is run by the immensely talented and very lovely Dave Hartley. I think the site is worth a browse not only because it features writing from some of the cream of Manchester's bloggers but also because it welcomes reviews from anyone. Artistic,

clever, collaborative and welcoming to newcomers; *Screen/50* is Manchester. See. I told you I was lying when I said I couldn't do metaphors.

Who the Fudge is Benjamin Judge -

www.benjaminjudge.com

Screen/50 - www.screen150.wordpress.com

Forthcoming Events

UNSPoolING: ARTISTS & CINEMA

Cornerhouse, Manchester

Runs 'til January 11

Abandon Normal Devices (AND) Festivals paean to cinema!- An exhibition uniting artists and spectators in the act of navigating cinema. The artworks evoke the pre-cinema era, exploit our collective memory and immerse the spectator, creating sensual responses to images. Exploring cumbersome analogue devices and absurd performances we will supplant slick bite sized digital video and software, highlighting the subversive nature of anti digital production. Featuring the UK Premiere of Ming Wong's Death in Venice, in which he plays the entire cast through rehearsal and reinvention.

www.andfestival.org.uk

POETRY: ITS RELEVANCE AND BEYOND

Blackwell University Bookshop, Manchester

January 19, 6.30pm

Angelica Michelis and Antony Rowland will be in conversation with the Salon audience, chaired by Dave Bowden, including some short readings by guest poets.

www.manchestersalon.org.uk/poetry-relevance-and-beyond-january-2011

NOT PART OF NYE

FAC251, Manchester

January 15, 3pm

A one day microcosm of what the festival sets out to achieve, an open platform with a varied mix of creators supporting each other. So on Saturday 15th January 2011 Fac251, Manchester will host over 30 acts over 7 hours in 3 spaces (including an art gallery!). A ticket to Not Part of NYE gets you into the after-show party straight afterwards in Fac251. Tickets are now on sale from Quaytickets priced £7 adv. / £6 conc.

www.notpartof.org/nponye2

UNANNOUNCED AT DEANSGATE

Waterstone's Deansgate, Manchester

January 22, 6pm

Come for an evening of songs and poems and stories...to perform or just to listen. Come and make an announced name for yourself at our first monthly Open Mic evening in the bar. The first drink of the evening is on us and the entertainment is on you!

BLANK MEDIA

MINDSCAPES

ArtCell Gallery, Cambridge
Runs 'til February 27

Helena Hadjioannou and Mark Judson – Structure, texture, form and space, these are factors that link both of these two artists' work. The canvas is used as an expression of an inner world in that intuition and impulse are important during the working process. Both artists create texture by the use of sand and earth. Helena uses oils and Mark uses glass, sawdust, acrylics inks and oils, and although both artists use a similar way of working the final outcome is quite different. Mark's work is colourful and open to interpretation, capturing a frozen moment of being and becoming.

www.stefaniereichelt-photographyandprints.com/artcell

DOUG JONES: LARES ET PANATES

Ceri Hand Gallery, Liverpool
January 14 - March 19

For his second solo show at the Ceri Hand Gallery in Liverpool Doug Jones has constructed four rooms inspired by a British Bed and Breakfast; the reception, the breakfast room, the guest's bedroom and the private 'back room' of the female proprietor.

www.cerihand.co.uk

MAGICAL MOOMINVALLEY: THE ILLUSTRATIONS OF TOVE JANSSON

Bury Art Gallery
Runs till January 15

The world of the Moomins from Finland has delighted and captivated children and adults alike for the last 65 years. This autumn Bury Art Gallery will bring this magical world to the town as the first exhibition of a unique cultural partnership between Bury and Tampere in Finland. It will be the only exhibition in the UK that coincides with the 65th anniversary of the Moomins.

www.bury.gov.uk/arts

PAOLA MCCLURE - SPARKLE AND SPIN

Visual Arts Centre, Scunthorpe
Runs 'til March 11

Dundee based artist Paola McClure is well known for her strange alien-like creatures handmade from vintage fabrics and second-hand clothing. She is interested in fabrics, pattern and colour, and her influences range from the primitive to the camp. Taking its name from a popular children's book by Ann and Paul Rand, Sparkle and Spin will feature new 'soft sculpture' characters and large-scale installation pieces.

www.paolamcclure.com

RECOMMENDS



Featured Event

DRAWN TO THE BEAT

Band on the Wall, Manchester
January 27, 7pm

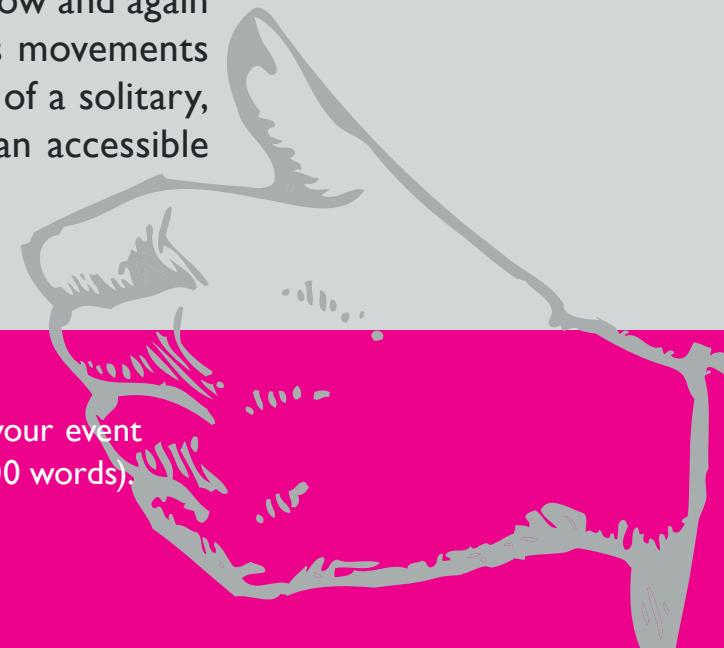
The fascinating method of drawing music Naomi Kendrick has developed has the act of listening and physical response is at it's core. Through drawing in this way she attempts to bring an immediate connection between mind and body that results in a drawing. This process often involves working with her eyes closed and using both hands, moving in response to the layers and speed of the sound heard, and building up an energetic drawing of layered marks.

This event is to encourage other people to draw and respond to the music in their own unique way. The silent disco technology will silently deliver an eclectic mix of music, selected in collaboration with musicians, to head phones worn by myself and the participants as we draw. Two different channels of music can be chosen from via the headphones meaning you could be drawing classical music whilst your neighbour draws reggae! Every now and again the music will be 'played out' to be heard by everyone, connecting peoples movements and drawings with the music. This will create a playful space where the idea of a solitary, internal perception and a shared act of creativity can be explored. This is an accessible event open to all ages.

www.drawn-to-the-beat.eventbrite.com

Ear to the Ground?

To include your event or recommend someone else's in a future issue just email us with your event title, location, date, time and a short description. editor@blankmediacollective.org (max 100 words).





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