

A black and white photograph showing the lower half of a person standing on a sandy beach. The person is wearing a light-colored, knee-length dress. The ground is covered in sand and scattered dark, tangled driftwood or branches. The background is dark, suggesting a night scene or a shadowed area.

**now
not
now**

Cover image: detail from **Bobby Baker**, *Drawing on a Mother's Experience* (1989)
Photographer: Andrew Whittuck, The CCA/Third Eye Centre Archive

now
not
now

A Live Art in Scotland Publication



INTRODUCTION

Bryony White and Stephen Greer

Now/Not Now offers four new essays from Harry Josephine Giles, Ivor MacAskill, Mamoru Iriguchi and Johanna Linsley, edited, and compiled by Stephen Greer and Bryony White of the Live Art in Scotland project at the University of Glasgow. Drawing together archival images—of performances, fleeting actions, and intimate moments—and these new commissioned essays, *Now/Not Now* invites its readers to move between past and present, the document on the page, and the conditions of memory.

One of the central claims of the Live Art in Scotland project is that archival research concerning the history of live art might meaningfully inform conversations about the kinds of curation, support and development needed to foster experimental practices in the future. Alongside that idea, though, is recognition that archival encounters might lead us to places we had not anticipated in advance, and which might resist the instrumentalisation of the past as a stable field of knowledge. Which is to say that every encounter with the archive seems to produce a new version of the history that *might* be written about live art in Scotland.

In commissioning these essays, we asked contributors to consider how access is an essential part of the process of discovery and contextualisation of creative, social, and political histories. As Giles writes, in their contribution, ‘The Inaccessible Archive’, ‘sometimes making something accessible to the right people means keeping out the wrong people. How do you know when to pull up the drawbridge and when to build a ramp?’ In Ivor MacAskill’s eponymous essay, he develops a neuroqueer approach for

Bobby Baker, *Drawing on a Mother’s Experience* (1989)

Photographer: Andrew Whittuck, The CCA/Third Eye Centre Archive

archiving the politics of personal experience, asking how might our own archives—in polaroids, pen drives, and notebooks—become the site of joyful, meandering, and often overwhelming distraction?

We also wanted to think about what role documentation plays in recording an artists' practice. What gets left out through the filters of the camera, or as Mamoru Iriguchi writes, what happens to 'smell, body temperature, breath, and all kinds of bodily fluids [...] essential and intimate elements that simply cannot get through the screen'? Or, in Johanna Linsley's contribution, how might performance souvenirs—seemingly both talismanic and inconsequential—serve to surface countercultural, non-normative, unexplored, "illegible" identities, experiences, and communities of practice? In all the writing here, there is a desire to ruminate in the nuances and complexities of histories, movements, and their documents—particularly those that appear resistant, wayward, or marginalised.

The archival images that accompany this writing reflect very specific moments in time—the end of the 1980s and start of the 1990s when Glasgow was fast becoming a major site for experimental theatre and performance, and when institutions and independent groups of artists sought to develop alternative structures and contexts for developing and presenting new and experimental work. They also reflect a series of fresh encounters in the present. First, at the height of the pandemic, when access to archives was heavily constrained, with the usual provision of gloves to protect material from skin oils supplemented with masks, social distancing, and limited working hours. And then, as restrictions began to lift, a series of more open, porous moments: returning to archives to take the photographs that appear in this publication and, inevitably, making new discoveries.

It's the unspoken and perhaps dirty secret of archival work that we're drawn to images, documents and 'evidence' by desire and chance discovery as much as by the logics of rigorous academic enquiry. In a guest blog for the Live Art in Scotland website, Bryony writes about the possibility of archive joy: a practice of 'lingering in the messiness of the archive, of not finding what you want, but finding something otherwise'. In previous work, Steve has written about optimism in performance as a kind of determined orientation on the present, and perhaps there's something similar at stake in *Now/Not Now*, where archival encounters are as much about the here and now as they are about the past moments which they might unveil.

Archives can be difficult spaces insofar as they carry the imprint of historical exclusions into the present, in the work of artists and communities of practice whose presence registers only as absence. But they are also places from which we might raise inquisitive, hopeful questions about the terms on which knowledge of live art might be expanded and carried forward.



Neil Bartlett, *A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep* (1989)
Photographer: Andrew Wylie, The CCA/Third Eye Centre Archive



Penny Arcade, *Bad Reputation* (1994), The CCA/Third Eye Centre Archive

PERFORMANCE SOUVENIRS

Johanna Linsley

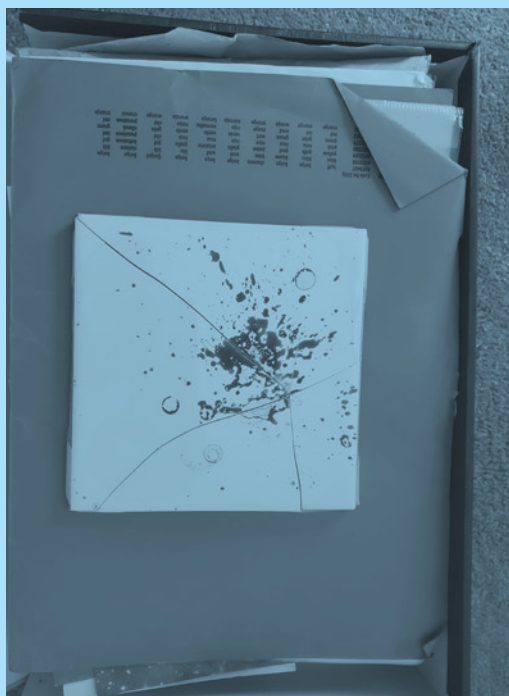
1. As an undergraduate student, London's Live Art Development Agency requested a team of volunteers to prepare for the Live Culture event. I spent a long afternoon putting double-sided sticky tape onto strips of different-sized square-shaped mirrors, cutting them up into individual segments then gluing them onto the naked body of the artist Oleg Kulik. After the performance, I removed the mirrors from his body. Some of them had slipped off due to the sweat produced under the stage lighting; some of them had body hair stuck to them. I grabbed a bunch and stuffed them into a Tate-branded, orange takeaway cup. At the time I think I grabbed a whole handful, but over the years, as I moved about, I have reduced the amount I kept. Since 2008 they remain in the bottom of a set of drawers at my Mum's house in Wiltshire—still in the cup.

P.S. can't believe it will be twenty years since this event next year. The mirrors have not deteriorated and there are still some small curly hairs attached.

Souvenirs are kept in boxes or drawers, albums, or arch files. We look at souvenirs when we move, or when we clean, caught by surprise, and plunged into short, sharp reverie. Unlike the exhibition poster, designed and purchased for display, the souvenirs I'm talking about are contingent and so often private, their backstories only available to the collector. They are hidden not for shame but because they are not for anyone else. Somewhere between the ordinary and the ecstatic, a souvenir is both precious and disposable.

Archives of live art often resemble souvenirs, not least because many artists' archives are kept in domestic spaces: under someone's bed, in someone's garage, at the back

of someone's wardrobe. This is generally a matter of exigency, as artists struggle for resources to preserve and disseminate marginalised practices. However, as performance increasingly enters art institutions and as artists' documentation strategies are digitised, what about the audiences and fans squirreling away bits and pieces of performance—blood-soaked, sweat-stained, anecdote-laden? In this short essay, I propose the performance souvenir as a complicated but potent category of performance document that may offer another way of making accounts of performance. I imagine an informal and decentralised trail of performance souvenirs that might, if taken together, tell a collective—if necessarily fantastical—alternative history of performance. Without taking away from the hugely important work of institutional archives in making more widely available the documents of art and performance, I want to consider one of many kinds of strange and unpredictable extensions of performance that exists beyond the archive. As this publication works to animate the crucial, but currently under-utilised live art collections held in Scotland, this short essay thinks through the private impulse



A white household tile cracked into four different-sized pieces and held together with tape at the corners and mounted onto cardboard; there are splashes and drops of blood in the centre and around the cracks.

Name of artist: Jamie Lewis Hadley

Title of Work: *This Rose Made of Leather.*

[Performance scholar] Dominic Johnson gave it to me as a gift in 2014 (or 2015). I keep it in a box file on a bookshelf at home.

to collect, the desire to bring a performance home and so perhaps make homes more like a performance.

Souvenirs are metonymic—they are remnants of an experience more than a mimetic representation of it. The performance souvenir may not look, sound, or feel like the performance 'itself'. The iconic images of performance art are well known: Chris Burden in a white-walled gallery standing opposite a man with a rifle in his 1971 *Shoot*; Valie Export in trousers with the crotch cut out in her 1969 *Action Pants: Genital Panic*. Amelia Jones argued in 1997 that such images circulate with as much ontological

weight as the event ‘itself’: to experience performance through an encounter with an image is no less real than to experience it in person.¹ Performance may also be indexed by objects that are related but not identical to actions. Franko B, for example, has used the blood-stained textiles left by performances like the 2003 *I Miss You* to make items of clothing, in collaboration with fashion designers. These images and objects are not souvenirs but approach the condition of artworks themselves. They resonate, they prompt response, and they are acquired by individuals and institutions for the impersonal value they bear. When I talk about the performance souvenir as something private, on the other hand, it is partly because of the impulse to keep and collect, but more because this impulse is based in individual recollection and not public discourse.

Travel writer Rolf Potts writes, ‘the inability of most travel objects to evoke an intuitive sense of provenance and significance to people who weren’t there [...] is why souvenirs inevitably carry a personal resonance that can’t be replicated at a broader social level’.² The souvenir means something to the person who keeps it, but this meaning may not translate, particularly at first glance. Souvenirs are personal, and maybe even a bit embarrassing, because of this gap.

At the same time, souvenirs are culturally conditioned – how and why souvenirs are collected changes over time and reflects important shifts in desire and structures of the self. In his short cultural history, focusing principally on tourism departing from global hegemonic sites of power, Potts traces the travel souvenir and the function these items play. From holy relics gathered on religious pilgrimage to the extravagant collections amassed by European aristocrats on the Grand Tour to the rise of mass transit and mass consumption, the development of the souvenir is inflected by capitalism and colonialism even as—or precisely because—souvenirs operate at the level of the intimate, the ephemeral and the domestic.

A broken piece of a terracotta vase.

Artist: Yoko Ono

Title of Work: *Oh gosh, I can’t remember.... It’s from a performance she did with her son at the opening of the 2009/2010 (?) Venice Biennale. She broke these vases on stage and then gave everyone a piece. I keep it next to my plants on my windowsill.*

¹ Amelia Jones, “‘Presence’ in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation”, *Art Journal* 56.4(1997), 11-18. Jones has recently offered a fascinating update to her position on the ‘live’ in a forum on COVID-19 for TDR. While maintaining that neither live nor screen-mediated encounters are ‘morally or politically or aesthetically superior’ to each other, she notes that during various lockdowns, ‘after a few months the lack of actual bodies in spaces (performing and witnessing) starts to wear thin’. She continues to lament the loss of encounters between artists and audiences of performance particularly in domestic spaces: ‘I miss hanging out with [artists] at our homes having food and drink, since we are all friends. That’s one of my favorite ways of “doing research” on performance art!’ TDR Editors, ‘Forum: After COVID-19, What?’, *TDR* 64.3 (2020), 191-224. 194. The live and living (along with the social exchange that implies) are entangled in complex ways here and resonate with my sense of the performance souvenir as both personal and collective.

² Rolf Potts, *Souvenir* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 47.

‘[T]he souvenir and the collection are objects generated by means of narrative,’ writes poet and literary theorist Susan Stewart.³ For Stewart, the souvenir attains meaning through the stories it prompts about an event that is necessarily past. Decades of debate about the status of performance documentation have circulated around the productive tension between event and object: events that extend beyond single acts through the material traces they leave, and objects that exceed their position in time and space through narrative and association. Performance thus intensifies a wider dynamic characterized by Stewart:

The souvenir distinguishes experiences. We do not need or desire souvenirs of events that are repeatable. Rather we need and desire souvenirs of events that are reportable, events whose materiality has escaped us, events that thereby exist only through the invention of narrative.⁴

The reportability of performance is precisely what is at stake for the performance souvenir. The transformation of the performance event into something more lasting through acts of communication and exchange means that it’s important to think carefully about what we are reporting on and to whom we are reporting. For Stewart, the narratives prompted by the souvenir—that produce the souvenir as meaningful rather than simply material—are fundamentally normalising. ‘The souvenir both offers a measurement for the normal and authenticates the experience of the viewer’, Stewart writes.⁵ Key to this normalising process is domestication. The destabilising effects of travel are tamed and the traveller’s orientation recalibrated by bringing a piece of the outside in: ‘external experience is internalized; the beast is taken home’.⁶ The souvenir asserts the primacy of individual experience and keeps that experience in the realm of the private through a domesticating process of narrative. But are there other kinds of narratives that might be generated or other ways of constructing those narratives?

The cork from a bottle of cava signed by iconic queer performer David Hoyle and US-based drag performer Christeene. Hoyle and Christeene got ‘married’ in a performance at Vogue Fabrics in London. I was stood at the front of the audience and as part of the ‘ceremony’, Hoyle fucked Christeene’s ass with the cork. Then he and Christeene signed it and threw it at me. I happened to have a Ziploc bag with me, so I kept it. It’s in the back of my desk.

One of the most important developments in cultural criticism in recent years has been initiated by Saidiya Hartman’s landmark work on ‘critical fabulation’.⁷ Hartman shows how narrative acts can play an important role in approaching histories of trauma

³ Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993),.xii.

⁴ Stewart, 135.

⁵ Stewart, 134.

⁶ Stewart, 134.

⁷ Saidiya Hartman, ‘Venus in Two Acts’, *Small Axe* 26 (2008), 11.

and violence, where official records may recapitulate violence and/or erasure. In her influential 2008 article ‘Venus in Two Acts’, Hartman confronts the personal dilemma of accounting for the lives of enslaved people—a particular enslaved person, registered only with the name ‘Venus’—murdered on a transatlantic slave ship. This need is countered by the limits of an archive that, as Hartman quotes Michel Foucault, ‘is little more than a register of her encounter with power.’⁸ Critical fabulation is how Hartman describes her method of using narrative to both acknowledge and imagine beyond the constraints of the archive:

The intention here isn’t anything as miraculous as recovering the lives of the enslaved or redeeming the dead, but rather laboring to paint as full a picture of the lives of the captives as possible. This double gesture can be described as straining against the limits of the archive to write a cultural history of the captive, and, at the same time, enacting the impossibility of representing the lives of the captives precisely through the process of narration.⁹

Narrative, in these terms, doesn’t have the power to overturn the violence of the archive, but it is a necessary tool for the intricate and difficult work of imagining the future.

What if the performance souvenir doesn’t domesticate performance but casts the domestic in a new shade? What if the impulse to keep a performance souvenir comes from a desire to show commitment to the queer, marginalised spaces from which



It's a lump of rock salt - it's crystalline but marbled like a cut of meat, so also strangely fleshy. I was given it at the end of a performance of Selina Thompson's show Salt during the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2017. Thompson was sitting in the corridor outside the theatre after the show with a basket full of similar lumps, giving one to every member of the audience who would take one. I think part of the invitation of the show is to sit with a history of violence and injury, rather than attempt to resolve it or push it away. The salt is on my desk in my office on campus in Glasgow.

⁸ Michel Foucault, ‘Lives of Infamous Men’, in *Essential Foucault*, ed. Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (New York: New Press, 2003), 284. Quoted in Hartman, 2.

⁹ Hartman, 11.

performance often emerges? How might we account for these small but charged gestures?

The idea for this essay came from conversations with friends and colleagues where stories of performance souvenirs naturally arose, and in each instance these stories prompted further stories. The examples presented here have been informally gathered and while they shouldn't be taken as representative of any wider social phenomenon, my hope is that they offer concrete shape to the notion of the performance souvenir. The objects described often bear traces of the bodies who produced them. Some were distributed purposefully by artists, some were found or recovered incidentally. Ultimately, while the associations and recollections with which they are infused are contingent and personal, perhaps they are also evidence of collective endeavour. They remind us that performance happens between people.

I have considered how the travel souvenir constructs the exotic to normalise a certain (white, bourgeois) understanding of the domestic. However, performance souvenirs might operate differently. They might be collected with the hope of extending the event of performance into domestic and workspaces, to cause a shift, however subtle. An accounting of performance through its souvenirs would be tentacular, rather than spectacular, performance as fantastic entity as well as event.

A transparent plastic jewel shaped case with clasp approx 10mm x 10mm x 10mm containing a piece of blood-drenched muslin cloth.

Artist? Ron Athey **Title of Work?** Sebastiane.

A male performer dressed in nothing but a nun's habit ripped the cloth from Athey's bleeding body, cut it into a number of souvenir sized pieces and placed them into individual jewel boxes and passed them out to a selected few audience members. I reached for it. It felt special. Strangely the performance happened exactly 7 years ago today! I have moved several times in this process and now it's ended up back on a shelf next to perfumes I never use.

Souvenirs generously shared from the following: 1) Rebecca Collins, 2) Harriet Curtis, 3) Liz Rosenfeld, 4) Johanna Linsley, 5) Steve Greer, 6) Owen Glyndwr Parry

Many thanks to Judit Bodor, Season Butler, R. Justin Hunt, Diana Damian Martin, and Luke Pell for further souvenir recollections.

13-15 CHISHOLM ST. TRONGATE GLASGOW 041-552 4813

TRANSMISSION

Exhibited by the Scottish Arts Council

EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS

Saturday 2 August 3:00p.m.
TRANSMISSION GOES VERBAL
 guest writer's: **Tom Leonard, James Kelman**
 discussion, refreshments, music, in association with **EDINBURGH REVIEW**

11/12/13 August noon-6pm
NEW PERFORMANCE by STUART BRISLEY
 the artist will be conducting a seminar as part of the piece

19 August-13 September tues-sat, 12-6
paintings/drawings Lesley Raeside
constructions/paintings Matthew Inglis

GLASGOW EVENT

6-25 October
VIDEO ART FROM GERMANY
 10,11 October **a storm of images** Super 8 Films + new films by women
 17 Oct. New Performance; **Richard Layzell**
 21-25 Oct. NEW PERFORMANCE **Charlie Hooker**

check gallery for details

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national virus

An installation of new work by **EUAN SUTHERLAND and ROSS A SINCLAIR**
 MONDAY 20th MAY THURSDAY 30th MAY 1991
 OPEN FROM 5.30pm MONDAY to SATURDAY

TRANSMISSION GALLERY

28 KING ST. TRONGATE

TRANSMISSION GALLERY IS SUPPORTED BY THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL AND GLASGOW DISTRICT COUNCIL



13-15 CHISHOLM ST. TRONGATE GLASGOW 041-552 4813

TRANSMISSION GALLERY

OCT 6-25

6-25th Video Art from Germany.
 in association with Goethe-Institut Glasgow
 Mon. - Sat. 12-6

10th 'Storm of Images'.
 recent Scottish SUPER 8 Films
 7.30

11th new films by women
 7.30

17th **RICHARD LAYZELL**
 PERFORMANCE and VIDEO
 7.30

25th **CHARLIE HOOKER**
 'White Lining' 7.30
 NEW PERFORMANCE and MUSIC

GLASGOW events space 2

BECK'S BEER
 THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL
 TRANSMISSION GALLERY

Glasgow Event Space 2. 1986. Transmission Gallery. Image credit: Transmission Gallery.
 National Virus. Euan Sutherland & Ross A Sinclair. 1991. Transmission Gallery. Image credit: Transmission Gallery.
 Untitled performance. 1986. Stuart Brisley. Transmission Gallery. Image credit: Transmission Gallery.
 Glasgow Event Space 2. 1986. Transmission Gallery. Image credit: Transmission Gallery.

The Puberty Institution propose to perform a durational installation/event which will take place on JUNE 13TH, 1988. The space is a car park basement, owned by Scotrail, situated in MIDLAND ST., opposite a soup-kitchen, near the River Clyde, in the "soon-to-be-destroyed" Broomielaw in the heart of the "merchant-city".

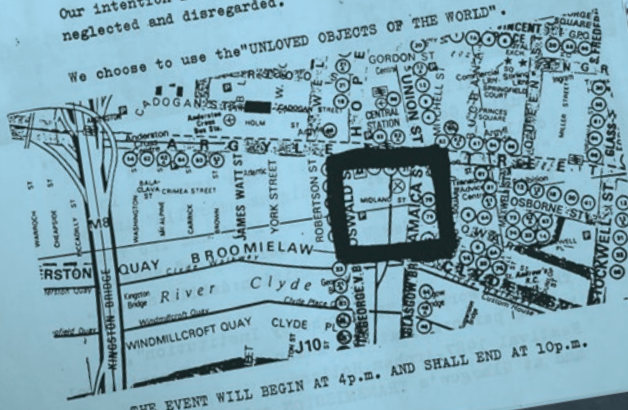
"We propose a minimal intervention in a vast and derelict space. We feel that the choice of space is an integral part of our art-process. The work strives to create an atmosphere based upon our psychomotor responses to the space and selected objects within that space.

The work will employ all forms of sensory communication.

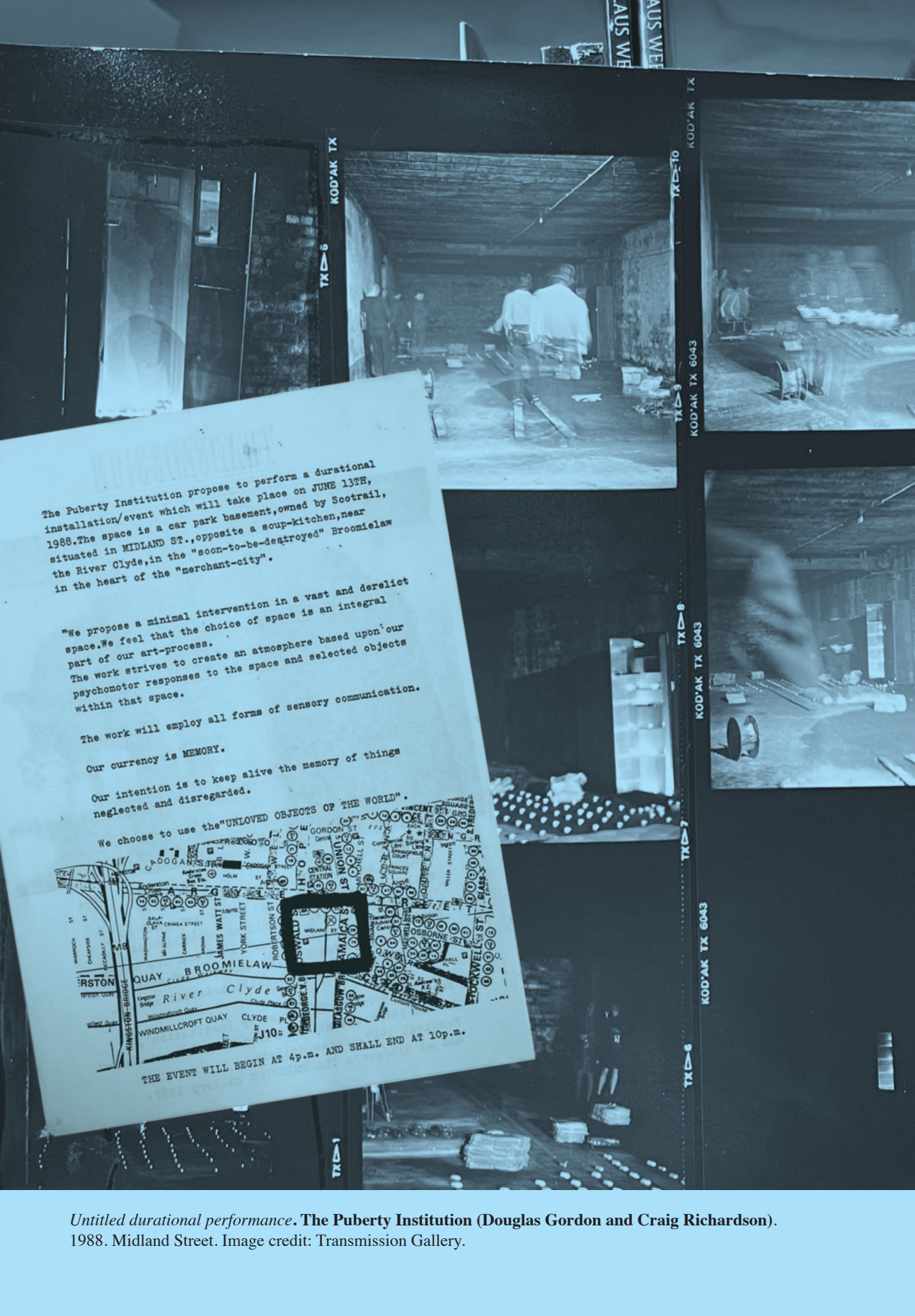
Our currency is MEMORY.

Our intention is to keep alive the memory of things neglected and disregarded.

We choose to use the "UNLOVED OBJECTS OF THE WORLD".



THE EVENT WILL BEGIN AT 4p.m. AND SHALL END AT 10p.m.



Untitled durational performance. The Puberty Institution (Douglas Gordon and Craig Richardson). 1988. Midland Street. Image credit: Transmission Gallery.

NOW/NOT NOW: A NEUROQUEER RESPONSE TO THE LIVE ART ARCHIVE

Ivor MacAskill

Here's an impossible task: **"Respond to the idea of a Live Art Archive"**¹

Rules:

1. Understand the task will seem impossible (that's the point) so frame it as a material encounter with your own archive—aka all the stuff you've held onto from past performances.
2. Hold onto your belief that this process will not only generate a fascinating piece of writing, but also give you the motivation and material to fully overhaul your website, organise everything, digitise the analog and physicalise the digital, tidy your room and basically sort out your whole life.
3. Don't get distracted.
4. Keep track of time.
 - a. How long is appropriate for the fee being offered?
 - b. You don't want this to hang over you for months when it can be done in a day or two.
5. When the time comes to edit, don't get carried away with lots of new thoughts rather than refining what you already have.
6. Simultaneously create something that perfectly captures your unique creative voice and the wondrous way your brain makes connections between thoughts and ideas, whilst also being coherent enough for a public audience to understand.

¹ In 2000, I took part in the Goat Island Summer School in Bristol, and loved their work, as well as their generosity towards young artists. This piece is inspired by the 'Impossible Task Exercise' from Goat Island's Schoolbook. See Goat Island, *Schoolbook 2*, (Chicago: School of Art Institute Chicago, 2000)

GOOD LUCK

STEP 1 - PULL OUT ALL OF YOUR STUFF

- Papers: newspaper reviews and clippings, programmes, posters, flyers, scripts, scores, plans, technical drawings, doodles, words that were once very important.
- Photographs: actual physical photographs both from performances and for promotion, and of family, friends, holidays (do these count?)
- Notebooks: evidence of being an artist?
- Hard drives: Pen drives, SD Cards.
- DV Tapes: I've got no idea how to access what's on these or what it might be.
- Minidisks: have kept the player but have no interest in what's on them.
- Miscellaneous objects from past performances that might come in handy: 20 pairs of 3D glasses, a golden hula hoop, rolls of LX tape, Bluetooth speakers that play birdsong.

STEP 2 - GET SOME INSPIRATION

I watch a video of Harold Offeh's 'Live Art Salon - Animating the Archives' on Tate's website, which starts with a great montage of archive boxes, white gloved hands, rolling stack shelving and photographic negatives to remind you what an archive should be. I start to wonder: is your archive just the stuff that people have to deal with when you're dead?²

STEP 3 - THINK ABOUT TIME

This archive is holding onto times gone by, but it needs to get with the times. While you've been stuck in a box in a cupboard and carted between homes, the people you've captured have been transforming.

Of course, it's no surprise that in looking back over souvenirs of the past 20—30 years, you're going to see some shifts. But since coming out as trans, the person in the old photos is now identifying as a different gender, with a new name and pronouns. And I'm now recognising that person is also neurodivergent. And part of understanding the traits of my ADHD is about looking back to see where it might have been expressing itself—unbeknownst to me—and how my unique brain wiring interacts with my strengths as an artist. Can the archive be relevant to my explorations even when it's missed all the hot goss?

I'm glad to see that it's not painful to look at old photos of myself now that I have greater understanding of what I need. But it's also hard not to feel wistful about how that young artist would have got on if they'd known what I know now. (Perhaps I'll feel the same in another 20 years if I get a chance to look back).

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBGebJ2liFE>



Lindsay John, (1994), The CCA/Third Eye Centre Archive



Rough Trade – Iris Moore, (1994), The CCA/Third Eye Centre Archive

I know that I experience time differently from what is ‘typical’. They say people with ADHD can be in a state of everything being ‘Now’ or ‘Not Now’ and I relate to this. If it’s Now — I’m all in, in the moment, and that moment can go on and on and on. Again again.

But it’s hard for me to conceive of things happening in the future. They say people with ADHD have a shortened time horizon. ‘A time horizon is the point in the future when things stop feeling real and begin to feel imaginary. It is the period of time that we can realistically conceive and work within.’³ It’s hard to explain but it just feels like the future is this other world that is so distant that is very hard to have it in mind whilst you’re in this moment.

(RULE 3 - DON’T GET DISTRACTED BY DOING A DEEP DIVE INTO TIME HORIZONS)

Of course, being in the moment can obviously be really good for making and performing live art because most of my work comes through improvisation and responding live. And they say it’s really good for things like your well-being to ‘just be in the moment’ and ‘go with the flow’.

But I guess that other people can be in the moment but also know that there’s probably another, different moment coming up soon when they might be expected to do something else. They can move from one moment to another moment without that feeling stressful. But for me, those transitions between activities can feel difficult, especially if they’re not engineered by me, in my own time.

Similarly, it’s hard to have an awareness of the past—although my brain can definitely fixate on old wounds and perceived failures. I have a good memory—I can recall the past and make it feel like now—and seem to know a little bit about a lot of things. But when it comes to personal achievements or values—things I know about myself—I find it hard to hold onto them if I’m not purposefully focusing on them individually. My experience is not accumulative. I always feel like I’m starting from scratch, so looking at documentation and keepsakes can remind me of what I’ve done and learned over the years.

But because of my ability to be in the Now, to hyperfocus and lose track of time, I feel uncertain and reluctant to deal with my archive. I’m resistant because I’m worried about getting sucked into the past when I know I’ve got plenty to be getting on with in the present, let alone trying to think of a future.

It can feel amazing when I turn my attention to something I find interesting, and I always find myself interesting. It’s thrilling as my brain makes routes and connections between people, places, performances, and versions of myself. But it leads to reminiscing which can turn to rumination and that can be hard to escape. Going through old stuff, you can

³ Brendan Mahan, ‘Time and ADHD’, Commonwealth Learning Centre (www.commlern.com/time-adhd/)

find yourself sitting on the floor hours later poring over the ephemera.

Obviously I'm not a detached archivist. I'm in it and of it and handling it and not even putting on a pair of white gloves. The papers I'm looking at are infused with the oils of my own body from every time I've handled them.

And how do you know when you should put it away and return the archive to the world of Not Now?

How long does each object need to be looked at to have done its job?

How often should you open the box and let the contents breathe the new air?

STEP 4 - LOOK FOR LINKS

Looking at photo prints (remember film and Snappy Snaps and negatives and getting doubles just in case?) reminds me of being at Dartington College of Arts (1998–2000) and seeing black and white photos of artists in the Bauhaus. There are photos of them hanging out on the roof, posing on the stairways, showing off their very extra fancy-dress costumes and basically looking cool. And I remember thinking then that I wanted to be in that kind of photo with other artists, that that's what artists and collaborators do.

(RULE 3 - DON'T GET DISTRACTED - but do read the first few paragraphs of an article about the women artists who were erased from art history and be reminded that archives offer up the tiniest scraps of evidence from a particular time. What remains mocks everything that is gone and forgotten.)

I realise that some of my past projects intentionally incorporated a group photo: an archive-making moment as part of the live experience. *The Conference Call of the Birds* saw audiences dress up and take on the role of a national bird of a commonwealth nation. This was created as part of the cultural programme when the Commonwealth Games came to Glasgow in 2014. At the end of a strange 30 minutes that included a procession outside to communicate with local birds, we took a group photo, as if at the end of an important international summit.

In *Everyone's A Winner, Baby!*, we created winning moments for members of the public where we celebrate small and big wins and ask bystanders to cheer you on for a winning photo. There are hundreds of these Winner photos online and that's just a fraction of the photos we took and that members of the public took on their own phones. Each photo representing a separate performance made especially for you. But pretty similar to the last and the next one. In terms of documentation, once you've seen one...you get the picture.

Each photo shows the participants in the centre surrounded by gleeful, sporty, gold-clad performers, unafraid to show you how amazing you are in this very moment. And looking back at these identical but different arrangements, you spot the difference and see the passage of time. The babies who are now at school. The couples now split up. Those who go by different names. And everyone changes.

(This photo-based moment-making mechanism was probably inspired by seeing Gob Squad's *Say It Like You Mean It* in 2000 in which the audience help to create a commemorative ceremony to celebrate the first day of the new world.)

- (They first performed it at Kampnagel, Hamburg, where we just performed the premiere of *The Making of Pinocchio*)
- (The copy also says they asked the audience "to 'let go' in order to be 'in the moment' (another link).

STEP 5 - FIND AN OLD PEN DRIVE

As I look through my old files and photos (from 2004-8), it strikes me that here is a person who is unafraid of all the ideas that their brain can come up with. They're thrilled to respond to the world around them, to different sites, to the work of other people, and to a range of artistic opportunities. And it strikes me that unearthing these documents gives a window into past selves who had more faith in their responses. Or what I mean is I feel like I've lost the confidence in having all these ideas flying around because maybe they've started to feel unwieldy, or the coping strategies I've developed are no longer working.

And as time has gone on and my career has developed there's been a sense of needing to be more focused, to be more ambitious, more 'proper'. And that sometimes looks like letting go of all the other possibilities in order to have one true work that gets made. But in trying to focus on one true work it can feel as if I've lost the processes for the ideas and the creativity to come out. I see that my artistic mind is always wanting to respond, respond, respond; to get carried away and go off on flights of fancy. And perhaps that is ok? In fact, perhaps it's necessary to find ways of supporting and containing those flights of fancy in order to get the work done.

So, this is interesting in terms of understanding my neurotype because I want to embrace my strengths and work with who I am not who I think I should be, or who I think other people think I ought to be. And it's important to find the ways that work for me. And here are some clues about what worked when there wasn't the pressure of 'this is your full-time work'; 'this is your career, and it needs to be brilliant'.

The person held in the old pendrive and in the early images is someone just giving it a go and trying things out and seeing what sticks when they throw it against the wall. What might it be to take that person back out of the archive and dust them off?

STEP 6 - STOP

Exhausted. Slightly overwhelmed. Yes, maybe the job is just to put it all into some boxes and then keep them forever.

And take what you can off the DVDs and CD-Roms and pen drives while you still can.

I want to try to have a visual representation of each thing and a description. There is a photograph album I can use if I print off copies. Tomorrow's job. (This doesn't get done).

A programme of a festival from 2010. I look through and at least three of the artists are dead now. None died of old age. What do we do about that?

These children are now adults, girls have become boys, artists are now no more. What do we do about that?

Here are pictures of me snuggled up next to people I barely talk to anymore. What do we do about that?

STEP 7 - ABANDON

STEP 8 - COME BACK AND HAVE SOME FEELINGS ABOUT IT

This new round of wrangling seems impossible. (I mean the editing process) Impossible again. My actual, physical body is pushing against it: not happy. Fingers refuse to tap, words don't come out right. The task itself makes the body feel overwhelmed. Or perhaps it's just the very loud voices in the cafe I've come to.

What is the simplest version of this?

Can I tame it?

Do I refuse to tame it?

Do I try and make it more unreadable and wilder?

STEP 9 - LEAVE IT FOR A WEEK BUT KNOW THE DEADLINE IS LOOMING

STEP 10 - MANIFEST THE IMPOSSIBLE

The 'Not Now' of this piece being completed is drawing nearer. I've been busy with the idea of archive for the past three months and busy with how I've dealt with the task. I'm trying to develop better ways to work with my brain, to support and encourage its creativity and mitigate some of its struggles.

I find dealing with archival material complicated—in the same way as clutter—because having ADHD can mean struggling to prioritise and know what matters. What is worth

keeping and what is for the bin? What should I focus on and what is not worth it? Where can I add value to a situation rather than wasting time and energy?

Arguably this struggle makes it possible to be an artist because you can generate boundless interest for things other people don't think matter, and that can be where the juicy stuff is that constitutes your unique artistic offering. It explains why I can easily go down the wormhole of looking at all the old images on my hard-drive, and I can riff on an idea about what their significance might mean. But it can be hard to order my thoughts to make sense. And I feel like I should be able to tame the wild workings of my brain and make them palatable, even when I know that's not always necessary or desirable.

As I look back on what I've written about the work I've done in the past, there's an undeniable sense of loss.

Who is missing? The collaborations that came and went. What structures and supports were in place then that are now gone?

What's the point of looking back if we can't get things fixed for our future?

Where are the venues for a group of artists to be photographed on the steps?

And yet in the documents of the past might be a blueprint for future success. I can reconnect with the drives and interests I had as a young artist. I often feel like a new graduate when I start a new project and maybe I can embrace that as a positive and curious position. What does it look like to embody an artistic practice that has the freshness of being at the start of your career, with the benefit of new understandings about your identity and the proof that you can be successful as an artist for at least 20 years?

It would be great if the archive did the job of reinvigorating our collective artistic practices, reminding us of what got us excited when we started out, how to seek inspiration across space and time from other artists and teachers, how to be our own teachers from the past. And to remind us of what is needed to bring creative responses to fruition: the spaces, the people, the support, the money, the time, the understanding of now and not now.

(RULE 3 - DON'T GET DISTRACTED BY GOING TO LOOK FOR YOUR GOAT ISLAND SCHOOL BOOK)

(But find it in the bookcase where it belongs:)

- (Open it and find a personal note from Lin Hixon saying "Ivor (she actually uses my old name because that was my name then): 'I have to say it is hard to find words to describe the power of your writing, your performing, your presence. I can say it gives me much hope to know you are in the world making art. Thank you for this. Lin'
- (Use this as a great motivation to finish this piece and keep making art)



(top) **Goat Island**, *How Dear To Me The Hour When Daylight Dies* (1996), The CCA/Third Eye Centre Archive
(bottom) **Tim Miller**, *Queer Glow* (1994), The CCA/Third Eye Centre Archive

A SINGLE LENS

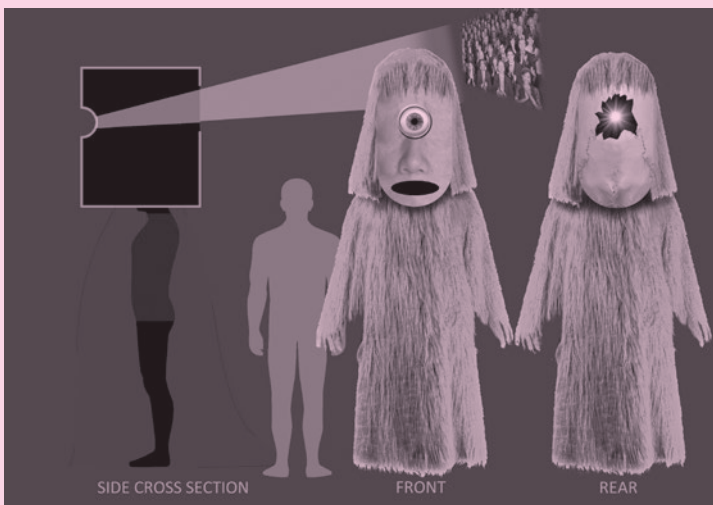
Mamoru Iriguchi

What does it mean to capture live performance through a single lens, to receive it on a rectangular sensor—whether that is analogue photosensitive film or videotape, or the digital CMOS sensor? What does it mean that live, in-person performances are presented, live or pre-recorded, in the form of 2D photographic images (either still or moving)?

I am currently exploring these questions as part of the process to develop my new performance piece called *What You See When Your Eyes Are Closed / What You Don't See When Your Eyes Are Open* (referred to as *See/Not See* hereafter). This two-person show about visual perception and liveness features Cyclops, a furry monster that sees the world through his sole eye and broadcasts his view, and Fake Mamoru, a human

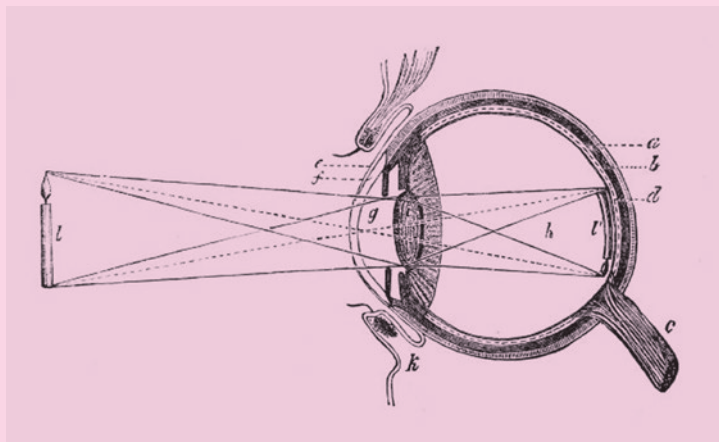


whose head has been optimized for appearance on TV with large 2D images of his face. There is a video camera inside Cyclops' single eye, which he operates. The monster crops what he sees into a rectangular frame, eliminating the 'uninteresting', and broadcasts that feed to a group of remote, fictitious viewers, staring at their TVs or phone screens elsewhere. The back of the Cyclops' skull is smashed open and leaks a video projection of what those fictitious viewers are supposedly watching: a live-stream of the *See/Not See* performance, consisting of two live performers, a live audience, and the space they coinhabit. Cyclops captures everyone and everything in the space where the performance of *See/Not See* takes place, except—and this is important—his own presence, which is, by design, excluded, as is the cameraperson and broadcaster.



My inspiration for *See/NotSee* originally came from a book entitled *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (1979) by James J. Gibson, an American psychologist who emphasised the ecological importance of studying visual perception. In the 1970s, the term 'ecology' referred to a branch of biology where relationships between animals

and their surroundings were studied. As such, Gibson proposed that we must pay attention to how an animal ‘sees’ in nature, where it moves its eyes, head, and body to visually perceive its surroundings and other moving animals. Gibson was also a harsh critic of the classical understanding of the human visual system, typically explained with a diagram consisting of a candle and cross-section of an eye, both of which are placed in fixed positions. He states, ‘our visual system did not evolve for this.’



Indeed, animals, including humans, evolved their visual system in order to visually perceive their surroundings and other moving animals whilst they themselves are moving. This idea naturally encouraged me to let those involved in the performance of *See/Not See*, both the performers and the audience, to do the same. My current plan is to seat the audience in a traverse configuration in the first half, then invite them to leave their seats and roam the space to view the second half of the performance in promenade from wherever they wish.

When I began the initial Research and Development for this piece in 2019 (thanks to Buzzcut and Glasgow’s Centre for Contemporary Art), *See/Not See* had a subtitle: F**k NT Live. Without attending a single NT Live screening, I was dismissive of the idea of watching the streaming or pre-recorded documentation of a live performance in a cinema or on TV. My eyes, head, and body hardly move during such a performance. Further, I am not allowed to see what is happening outside of the screen as the contents are deliberately cropped: framed by someone (e.g., a television director) who never appears on screen themselves.

This framed screen also functions as a solid fourth wall, which I find frustrating. It is, in fact, far more impenetrable than the fourth wall we find in conventional proscenium theatres, as no performers can ever break this wall to make physical contact with the audience. This is ironic if you think about the fact that the National Theatre’s Olivier Theatre was designed without a proscenium arch because there was a strong desire to bring live performances much closer to the audience. Adding a solid rectangle

frame—as in NT Live—over a performance taking place at the Olivier feels to me like a retrograde step.

The more intimate the performance gets (think about watching a piece of Live Art on TV!), surely the more frustrating the viewing experience becomes? Smell, body temperature, breath, and all kinds of bodily fluid, stain their clothes and cause discomfort: those essential and intimate elements simply cannot get through the screen.

I felt it wrong to keep the subtitle F**k NT Live during the pandemic, as live-streaming became the only way for us to experience live performance. I appreciate live-streaming and streaming of pre-recorded documentation of live performance work will remain crucial for those vulnerable to the virus and those who have other barriers that prevent them from attending live events.

Once the pandemic had offered me opportunities to actually watch live-streamed performances for the first time, I nonetheless found that my feelings about mediated live performance/performance on screen were reinforced. My attempts to reconstruct real-time, in-person experience from the 2D on-screen representation were not very successful. I was instantly confused by abrupt jump-cuts of the show, viewed from multiple cameras set in various positions. Some seemed to represent the audience members' viewpoints and the others were the performers' or even that of a technician on the lighting bridge. The rapid shifts of viewpoints drove me to existential crisis, creating a distressing and fragmented narrative. It felt as if I had been torn apart into multiple personalities taking totally different responsibilities (e.g., audience, performer or technician) to make the performance 'work'. Yet, it was absolutely impossible for me to influence the performance in any way.

Further, even though the performance was 'watched' by several cameras, I simply could not feel the presence of my fellow audience, which left me cold and lonely. I missed many things such as the overwhelming combined smell of fragrance and sweat, the crinkle of crisp packets, and the constant kick of the person behind me. I missed the envy of someone with a better view in the theatre. I missed all holding our collective breath together.

I felt my loneliness was shared by the performers too, who I knew were performing in a space with no audiences. I have performed for audiences of very few people in the past, but this is far worse than that. Performing in an empty space to several lifeless cameras with single lenses expressing no response to your performance would easily be my worst nightmare as a performer who is heavily reliant on audience responses to make my performance work. To me, live in-person performance is complete only when there is mutual communication between performers and audience.

Watching live streaming also made me realise how much time I spend looking at stuff

other than actual performances. I have a peculiar obsession with theatrical lanterns (their shapes, beam angles and colour gels). My attention is also easily drawn to architectural features of the space, what other audience members are wearing or what they are choosing to watch at any given moment.

These theatrical elements—that my live performance experience is reliant on—seemed to be skilfully edited out from the 2D frame as ‘unnecessary noise’ by a team of people whose expertise lies not in live performance but in TV or film. These elements are excluded, together with the TV or film crews’ own presence and intentions.

One of the objectives of the *See/Not See* project is to explore the mechanics of the act of transferring live performance onto a 2D screen. The performance offers the live in-person audience an opportunity to view the same performance from two different perspectives. Firstly, through their own eyes, witnessing Cyclops roam the space to keep placing himself in locations to produce the best 2D imagery for broadcasting. Secondly, the audience are also able to see what Cyclops broadcasts as it is projected on the walls. As such, the audience is required to actively choose from which viewpoint to watch the performance.

Cyclops was designed to represent those working behind the camera during live broadcasts and fight against Fake Mamoru who represents in-person performance. However, how Cyclops live-streams the show started to feel like an honest and meaningful methodology for transferring live performance onto a 2D screen. His framing cannot help but reveal the labour of technicians and audiences that is crucial to making performance. Further, Cyclops’ camera work is clumsy at best: the image is often out-of-focus and shaky. Even though Cyclops’ presence is theoretically excluded, his clumsy footsteps and fur, which constantly enters the frame never fail to remind the viewers that one of the main characters of the show is behind the camera.

Most importantly, what appears on screen is a completely subjective journey of one person (or monster) who is actively involved in the performance and has no intention whatsoever to objectively document it. As such, the video documentation that Cyclops produces through his single eye may not serve well for the traditional purposes of documentation such as archiving, promoting, or remounting the show. But I do, however, hope it helps live artists explore what live performance can uniquely offer that TV, film or photography cannot.

1988

**NATIONAL
REVIEW
OF LIVE
ART**

**BRITAIN'S PERFORMANCE
FESTIVAL GLASGOW
6-9 OCTOBER 1988
(PREVIEW: 5 OCTOBER)**



Third Eye Centre
Performance Commissions
from:
Geraldine Pilgrim
DV8 Physical Theatre

+
Invited Artists include:
Shaun Caton, Von Magnet,
Entr'Acte (Australia),
Bobby Baker,
Boris Ukhyanov (USSR),
Stephen Taylor Woodrow

+
'A Year On' — 1987
Discoveries including John
Jordan, Euan Sutherland and
The Puberty Institution

+
1988 Platform:
'The next generation'

+
Video Installations
Screenings, discussions and
lectures from invited
speakers

The
National
Review
of
Live
Art



**THIRD EYE CENTRE 350 SAUCHIEHALL STREET GLASGOW
BOX OFFICE/INFORMATION/CATALOGUE: 041-332 7521**

Event London 1988

Supported by the Scottish Arts Council

National Review of Live Art Promotional Postcard, 1988, The CCA/Third Eye Centre Archive

THE INACCESSIBLE ARCHIVES

Harry Josephine Giles

There is a writer. I won't tell you anything about her, except what follows, because even these few details are a betrayal. Her work has shaped my thinking about the politics of writing more so than any other writer, most often through her unrelenting criticism of projects in which I am invested. I have followed and financially supported her work for the last five years, and watched her grow more and more disillusioned with the world of publishing, more pointed in her critique, more willing to set fire to all of literature. Anticipating what was coming, I went through her internet presence and saved as much of it as I could: I downloaded every pdf; copy-pasted her blogposts to a word document; searched for Tumblr archiving bots. Sure enough, she then announced her intention to delete herself from the internet as a protest against the capitalist and white supremacist world of literature, and as a means of regaining control over her own life and work. I was relieved that I had archived as much of her work as I had. Now it sits in a folder in my cloud storage account, and I can't share it with anyone without betraying her even more than I already have.

*

Once I stole a live art archival art book from a memorial. This is one of the most honest things I have ever done.

*

There are five box files on the bottom of my bedroom bookshelves labelled "memories". They are on the bottom shelf, because otherwise their weight would buckle the particle board. They are filled with papers and trinkets from my thirty-five years. I never look

inside them except to add more items. Somewhere inside one of them is a hand-written letter from someone who hurt me terribly, a letter which fails to apologise, and which hurt me more. Somewhere inside one of them is a letter from someone I hurt terribly, to whom I failed to apologise, hurting them more. They are the same letter. I only read it once. I can't bear to read it again. There are only four people I have ever told the real details, and one of them is a therapist. There are five box files, and I never look through any of them, because I don't know which one contains the letter. There is so much inside the boxes that I want to see again.

*

Once I lost a pet. It was my fault. There is now a small pile of their shredded aspen around a gap in the floor, the same gap through which I lost them. One day I will have to Hoover up these shreds of wood. That day is not today.

*

There are three zip files on my computer labelled "Twitter Archive". I made the first in 2019, the first time I was hounded by an organised political movement opposed to my existence. When it happened, I locked my account, downloaded my data, and set a bot to delete all my tweets up to that point. I didn't want my enemies to find all the embarrassing things I have said in public. I didn't want them to make a collection of screenshots that could be used to vilify me for years to come. I'd seen that happen to others. I asked for allies to go through the attack threads and screenshot anything dangerous. I have those zip files saved in another folder. The zip files of my own tweets contain some of my best jokes and my weakest thoughts. The zip files of my enemies' tweets contain some of their best insults and my weakest moments. In a way, these files are the most complete record of my life. I look through these archives once or twice a year to find an important moment, one that builds me up or breaks me down. I'm the only person in the world who has access to these archives. I haven't yet decided whether to have them deleted when I die. I told a person at a party once that all my tweets are now automatically deleted after a year. The look of horror in her eyes filled me with glee.

*

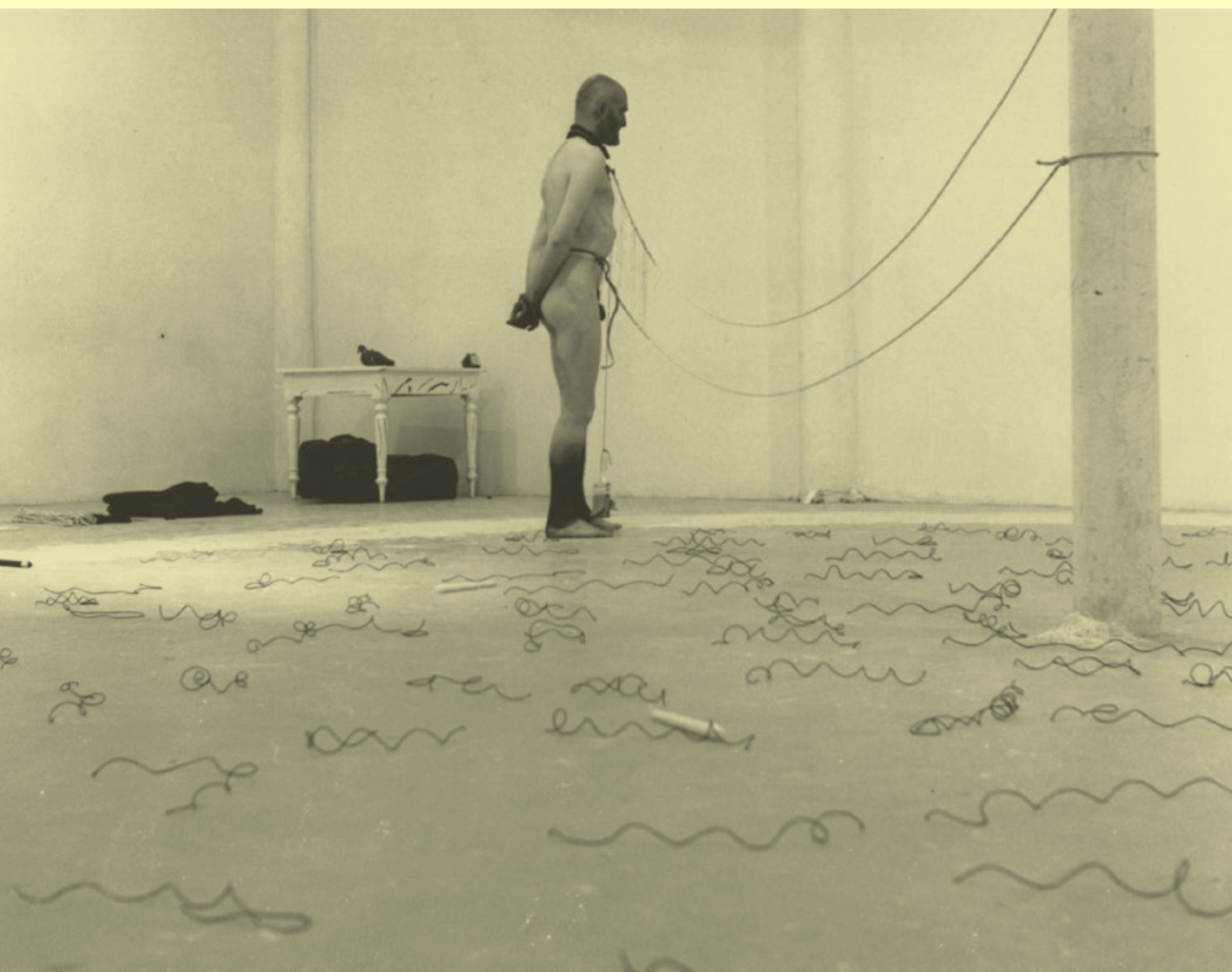
Once I gave a talk about the liberal fantasy of universal inclusion, proposing instead the crip radicalism of refusal. The talk was in a university, gated, in a room few could find. Later I put it online with a transcript that edited out all my hesitations. Sometimes making something accessible to the right people means keeping out the wrong people. How do you know when to pull up the drawbridge and when to build a ramp?

*

There are a few thousand photos and two hundred hours of film documenting the live art series I co-curated for a decade. It would take a couple of weeks of work to properly archive each item, matching the filenames and dates to the performance information on our website, seeking permissions from artists, and uploading it all to the internet. The workers' co-operative which ran the series is now dormant, all member-directors doing other things and lacking the will and time to revive the work. The event was killed by Covid, bureaucratic error, and the impossible economic conditions of building a sustainable live art event series. Our work was never fully integrated into the live art world – which some call a community and which I prefer to call a workplace – for equally messy reasons. I carry many resentments about what happened, and I feel both failure and pride. I helped to build something that mattered, that supported and shaped an artform in this country, that was never fully recognised for doing so, that could not last. We have a few hundred pounds left in our bank account. We could use that money to pay someone to make our archive public and ensure that our work is remembered in some form, or we could use that money to hold one last event to say goodbye to the project, an event which would not be documented, which would be ephemeral, which would only live in the memories of the people who were there. We do not have enough money to do both.

*

Once I visited a live art website archiving a major publicly-funded organisation, highly influential in its field. There were hundreds of hours of recordings, enabling these world-class events to be enjoyed into the future, on a laptop screen, on demand. It was a pandemic. There was no live art that was live. I watched five minutes and bookmarked the website. I have not returned.



Alastair MacLennan. *NEITHER NOR.* 1982. Third Eye Centre.
Image credit: George Oliver / The Cordelia and George Oliver Archive.



Pamela Sneed, (1994), The CCA/Third Eye Centre Archive

BIOGRAPHIES

Johanna Linsley is Lecturer in Creative Practice at the University of Dundee. She researches contemporary performance and live art and has published in *Contemporary Theatre Review* and *Performance Research* journals, and numerous edited collections, focusing on artistic practices that are concerned with knowledge and non-knowledge, the private and the collective, and life and death. She has an interest in documentation and archives and is co-editor of the collection *Artist in the Archive* (Routledge, 2018) and was previously a convenor of the Documenting Performance working group of the Theatre and Performance Research Association. Johanna also works on sonic epistemologies and questions of the voice. Her collaborative creative research project *Stolen Voices*, with artist-researcher Rebecca Collins, was a slowly evolving eavesdrop on the east coast of the UK.

Ivor MacAskill (he/they) is a trans and neuroqueer live artist and theatre maker based in Glasgow. He creates and performs unique live performances for both children and adults. His latest works, *The Making of Pinocchio*, made with Rosana Cade, and *The Polar Bears Go Go Go!* are currently on tour.

Mamoru Iriguchi is a performance artist and theatre designer with a background in zoology. The Edinburgh-based artist's performance work includes *Sex Education Explorers (S.E.X.)*, *Eaten* and *4D Cinema*. His new piece *What You See When Your Eyes Are Closed / What You Don't See When Your Eyes Are Open* will be premiered at the Wellcome Collection (London) and Schwankhalle (Bremen) in Autumn 2022. His theatre design includes *Mincemeat* (Cardboard Citizens, Best Design, London Evening Standard Theatre Awards).

Harry Josephine Giles is from Orkney and lives in Leith. Her verse novel *Deep Wheel Orcadia* was published by Picador in October 2021. She has a PhD in Creative Writing from Stirling. Her show *Drone* debuted in the Made in Scotland Showcase at the 2019 Edinburgh Fringe and toured internationally.

Stephen Greer is Senior Lecturer in Theatre Practices at the University of Glasgow where his research and teaching focuses on the history and politics of live art, queer and solo performance. He is the author of two books – *Contemporary British Queer Performance* (2012) and *Queer exceptions: solo performance in neoliberal times* (2018) – alongside a broad range of essays and articles on British and European theatre.

Bryony White is an Assistant Professor of Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Warwick, where her research and teaching focuses on gender, sexuality and race in performance and contemporary art.

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