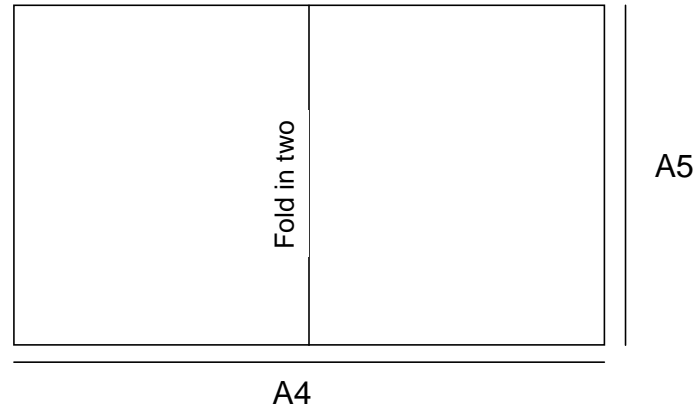


Printing instructions

To read thearchivist.net it is first important that you print it out and assemble it correctly. Thearchivist.net is designed as an A5 format publication. Therefore each preceding A4 page in this document contains two A5 pages of thearchivist.net.



The pages of this publication are composed so that the first page (after this one) that you print will be the front and back cover. When you turn that page over and print the proceeding page onto the other side of it, that will be the second page and the second last page. Hence the last part of the document you print will be the middle pages.

To print and assemble your copy of the archivist follow these simple instructions:

1. **REMEMBER: WHEN PRINTING PRINT ONE PAGE AT A TIME ONLY**
2. Print the next page of this document. This is the front and back cover of thearchivist.net
3. When it has printed, place it back in your printer so that the following page can be printed onto the back of it.
4. Make sure that the paper has been placed in the printer so that the binary Poem by a. Smith will be printed on the inside of the back cover, and that the blank side of the A4 will be printed on the back of the front cover (the one with the archivist logo).
5. Print this page
6. When it has printed, fold it so that the thearchivist.net logo is on the outside and the binary poem is on the inside.
7. Print out the next page containing the index and the Adirondack train timetable. Place this back in the printer and print the preceding page so that the editorial appears on the back of the index. Again fold this page in two with the so that last side of the page printed is folded in on itself.
8. Repeat this method of printing for the rest of the document, use the numbers at the bottom of the page if you get confused and email info@thearchivist.net if you need any help.

ENJOY!

Binary poem #3

a. smith 2002

The poem is designed on a grid (in this case, 2030 squares) then translated to form the poem.

Inaugural

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Front cover text taken from de Jonge, Alex, (1973) *Nightmare Culture: Laotrémont and Les Chants de Maldoror*, New York: St Martin's Press, p.123

EDITORIAL

(DO IT YOURSELF) BY VIRTUE OF THE VIRTUAL

thearchivist.net is an online review that examines and continues discussion generated by contemporary art and related fields of practice. Essentially politicised, the archivist solicits dialogue, cajoles polemic, and provides close analysis and description of currents, actions and proposals. The archivist seeks a mandate to disseminate texts and activities of artists within an inter-regional perspective.

(Mission Statement of *thearchivist.net*)

Sensing the seeming potential for cynicism everywhere and in all things, three artists - Julie Bacon, Roddy Hunter and Justin McKeown - held a spontaneous meeting in a café in Totnes, Devon, England in the summer of 2002. Making a meeting seems always the most dynamic response to unthinking cynicism and voluntary malaise. The three agreed and quickly reached a decision. They decided there must be a direct and tactical way to stimulate and contribute to inter-regional network activity in fields of contemporary culture imminent to performance art. *thearchivist.net* is the outcome of this collaboration and you are holding the first fruits of this venture in your virtual hands.

thearchivist.net is an online review of contemporary cultural currents that represent the ever-expanding field of performance art in socio-political context. We are not the first to do so - we question the value of being pioneers in this regard - and intend *thearchivist.net* to complement the work of those past, present and future who inspire us. Our interests lie in unpredicated and unpredicted performative relationships within social, ideological, political and urban processes. The vernacular of *thearchivist.net* finds utterance in aesthetics, architecture, anarchism, audio art, avant-gardism, conceptual and contextual art, constructions of desire, mark-making and erasure, ethics, 'the everyday', gender, installation and installa(c)tion, intervention, nomadism, performance art, praxis, processes of historicisation, psychogeography, textual (de)construction, technocratic and utopian praxis and urbanism.

Conclusion

Chashama occupies a strange texture of space where worlds collide, as though it were a rupture on the continuum of the downtown commercial Manhattan bubble. In comparison to the districts around it, Times Square is an arid place with little to recommend it. A frenzy of neon lights and high things do not a pleasuredome make. Amazing Grace: how sweet the sound of the clamour of Mammon's cathedrals, the gnashing teeth of tourists? I wondered what the word was on the street amongst the merchants around the square surprised by a sudden rise in sales of obscure items.

On the way back on the train, the countryside was as beautiful as 6 days previously. It was the Fall, as the train headed North-westerly, running first along the Hudson River, then Lake Champlain and up into Québec. A ranger had been employed by Amtrak to tell us the history of the places en route. He was miked up in the buffet car. He told us about every battle that had ever taken place in the vicinity, including a famous one. When I left the train, the artificial air conditioning gave way suddenly to the seasonal temperature of a cool Montréal.



Her / She Senses

All images: Dan Mckereghan (except Uto Gusztav: Cheryl McKereghan)

Thai-born **Chumpon Apisuk's** video-performance was made from footage he shot at a recent workshop in Nagano (Japan). It showed participants of all ages writing a contract, on materials such as toilet paper, whilst they spoke aloud the text they were writing, a form of mantra about 'freedom from existence'. The action terminated with them all flushing the paper down the toilet, presumably dispatching it to the authorities/and or the ether. It was funny and very poignant.

The Transylvanian-born artist **Uto Gusztav's** *This Landscape is not for Sale* performance was economic with time, space and materials. He attached a lamp similar to a miner's torch to his head, forming a grid of tape across his features, with a tube running around his mouth and up the side of his head, like a snorkeler. Standing to one side of the entranceway of Chashama, he placed some rocks on a small heated grid. The rocks eventually produced a sulphurous smell, with water I believe, adding to the curiosity of the street crowd he was attracting. The action took place near a landscape/water feature, resembling a mini oriental garden, which we had all passed by during the event. All the while, a hand-written note had advertised this territory for sale.



Uto Gusztav

At the end of the performance, everyone was led back into the space, and Dan Mckereghan made an action to close the festival. After having removed his host suit jacket and T-shirt, he put on paint-covered overalls, and began inviting the artists up to be applauded. At the last artist, he continued going, announcing the technicians and then the members of the audience, asking their names as he went, until everyone was on stage. It was a fitting ending as we had been supported by those working on the event, the modest audiences had been engaged and Dan Mckereghan had put in every ounce of his

thearchivist.net lives in the gaps between zeros and ones. It occurs by accumulation of dialogue through its web presence. Aware all too clearly of the political disadvantages of an online presence - there are many others than us interested in intelligence gathering - the decision was made in the interests of optimum inter-regional dissemination and conversation. Alastair MacLennan was the first we know of who publicly drew the distinction between *international* and *inter-regional* as one way countering tendencies of 'split thinking' and globalisation. We agree and proceed in our desire to situate our web presence nowhere and everywhere, neither 'here' nor 'there'. We do seek, however, a mandate to disseminate texts and activities of artists inter-regionally perspective. This tactic explicitly counters increasing problems in most territories where rights of access to publication and participation in culture depend wholly on access to institutions of capital more broadly.

We welcome correspondence and submissions from any and all interested in dialogue and who seek such access. The focus of *thearchivist.net* will always remain tightly maintained by the editorial concerns outlined here. Equally important to note is that, like the editorial committee, contributors to *thearchivist.net* remain currently unpaid. The crucial advantage of an online review is the lack of immediate financial costs associated with paper-based publications. Whilst *thearchivist.net* is principally published in English, it is our intention to publish articles in other languages in the future. Because the review is not funded, this possibility depends on the Editorial Committee's knowledge of other languages and offers of assistance with translations. Currently it is also possible to submit work in French.

Our ethos is that should you wish, and if you can, you might download and print your own copy of each edition from our website. *No money changes hands*. Win the absence of financial remuneration, we pledge our efforts to presenting contributor's work, documentation and discourses with ultimate sensitivity and we seek to protect their copyright, unless the contributor wishes otherwise. While we obviously support viable working conditions for practitioners, we also think that *thearchivist.net* is an ideal venue for the airing of initial views, of exploratory approaches by as wide a range of parties as possible. Contact us with proposals, comments, manifestos, analyses, essays and artworks and we will take it from there. Love and thanks to all friends and collaborators who made this inaugural issue happen.

[Editorial committee]

YOU ARE BE A EN : SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE CITY

[a. Smith]

For some time I had been thinking about making some work about the city.



“There’s something frightening in the very idea of it; you get the impression you can fasten only onto tragic or despairing images of it – Metropolis, the mineral universe, the world turned to stone – that you can only go on endlessly piling up unanswerable questions. We shall never be able to explain or justify the city. It’s there. It’s our space and we have no other. It’s here that we breathe. When we catch the train, it’s to go from one city or town to another. There’s nothing inhuman here, unless it’s our own humanity.”¹

¹ From Perec, Georges, (1997) *Species of Spaces*, Trans. John Sturrock, London: Penguin

details in it, along with her own footprints marked earlier in black paint when she walked on a series of acetates, and duly expedited the male-female performance data to the official history authorities. Do-it-yourself archiving.

Mckereghan opened the doors for the audience to enter the Chilean-born **Alexander Del Re’s** *I’m Afraid of (Some) Americans* performance one at a time. I entered with caution, to be grabbed by the hand by the artist, and hurried over to the seating area, just in time for him to run back to receive the next person. This beginning created the feeling of being targeted, and the waiting to be chosen to enter installed a tension. It was interesting also as the observed became observer, watching those who came in after them. Every detail of their reactions seemed highlighted. Once we were all inside, Del Re took a spectator into a partitioned-off part of the space, which was surveilled by a video camera. Those of us on the other side watched greenish, slightly amorphous images that were relayed out to us. I’m not sure if this was intended, or if the low-lighting distorted the effect. Del Re went between the two areas, attaching twine as he went, and then headed to the door and exited the space. He went out into the packed streets around Times Square wearing a T-shirt which read ‘I’m afraid of Americans’. The reactions were varied and some quite strong, including accusations of madness and terrorism, displays of curiosity, and laughter. There was for me a very real tension, not diminished by a police car mounting a pavement, narrowly avoiding a mother and a pushchair, to chase someone escaping on motorbike. A hand-out distributed by Del Re showed the sites of every surveillance camera around the Times Square area, and there were many.



Alexander Del Re

This was an ultra-male hurricane, and that is easy to misunderstand. Such a direct work and unapologetic display of individual force could seem like adherence to macho cause and macho-ego. Can the display of force by a man in performance have more than one meaning? In my experience, this work sought to bring down the myth of U.S.A. elysian idylls, collapsing towers and all. There was commitment and sustained climax, and fuck-offedness. Which reminds me of something Istvan Kantor said after a performance, in response to a question of whether he thought the term avant-garde was pertinent, or should be replaced. He suggested something like 'fuck-off revolution' instead, not indexed under 'a' in the art history book then, but 'f'.

Meanwhile Derek Horton was making his *The Game* durational performance in the basement, in an installation including a hockey goal. He recreated hockey-scenes for the duration of a match, as the radio blared out.

The third and final evening

Her/She Senses is a performance collaboration between **Angela Ellsworth** and **Tina Takemoto**. Their durational performance *ErotoElectric* took place in the same window-space area used by Buege. This time it was decked out in a kind of exaggerated department store window attraction. Both artists were clothed luxuriously in hybrid 'oriental style' clothing, performing an ethereal sound-track. Both moved slightly, in repeated stylised movements, like those of wind-up clockwork dolls or slightly animate showroom dummies, one on an exercise bike that rolled backwards and forwards on the spot. Ride, ride. The exoticism and fantasy of commercialism, and going nowhere-ness of plastic-glamour came to mind.

Finnish-born **Irma Optimist** came on for her *Rational Man?* action in a black skin tight dominatrix-style outfit with long black wig, designed to play on stereotypes of female attractiveness and dominance/submission. She demonstrated some pseudo-mathematical dynamic principles, playing with the role of pin-up science teacher, including inviting spectators up to fire a toy bow and arrow at an image of a male body-builder. Two men were then seated in front of an overhead projection and handcuffed together. She carefully explained the distance in communication between their brains and crotch areas, circling these on an acetate, and recounting anecdotal evidence. Her performance presence is all the while sharp and funny. The climax of the 'demonstration' involved her placing a ruler on their trousers and simulating measuring their penises. She then addressed an envelope to the Bureau International des Poids et Mesures (International Bureau of Weights and Measures), the institution responsible for safeguarding the official standards of such weights as the kilogram and such lengths as the metre. She placed their

I decided to make a walk starting on the East boundary and moving toward the West.

I wanted to think a bit about London, about what it is, what it meant, what happens there, what I did or what I was doing there, what other people did there, how old it is, how quickly it changes.

I was thinking about writing something that thought about things like that or at least had some thoughts about them.

I'd been reading a lot about cities and towns, about the shape of them about the movement of them about what happens in the street.

I was thinking about paying some attention to that.



I was thinking about the city changing, about how I have changed while I've been living here, and about how it and I will change in the future.

I was thinking about how in an urban environment people can often move in, about, and on quietly, and how it's often the physical remnants that get left behind or last longer.



I remember reading something that condemned modern architects, saying how they sit and design buildings and while they're designing them they're thinking about what great ruins they would make rather than their function in the moment and the recent future.

I was noticing when I was walking through the city thinking about this how much construction was going on, and also at the same time how many buildings had just been left empty.



by a statement at the end which naively recognised that 'U.S.A. people can be just like other people'. A criticism of performance I once read came to mind, which claimed that performance artists turn the audience into 'moral victims'. I weighed it up. Such a generic idea of what 'performance art' is reveals as much about the person's prejudice as anything, but it does echo a criticism that I have heard made of art, which asks 'what's the point of showing me something if I already know about it'. In response, I would say a performance may involve an *act of conscience* on the part of performer as well as the *action of conscientisation* of the audience. Is performance, or any other art, a matter of conveying 'new' things? Whilst the target of the anger in the work was misplaced, there was passion in it, and perhaps in a more considered form and another site, it could have been more potent.

Wladislaw Kazmierczak and Ewa Rybska came on in evening suits for their NYC: *I Like America and America Likes Me* performance. They projected images of New York, taken since their arrival, in the style of post-cards, along with explanatory text; a silent voice-over. The story of how Beuys had come to America - for his *I Like America and America Likes Me* performance of 1974 was accompanied by a critique of what Beuys 'actually' was. Anecdotal evidence about Beuys, relating to the experiences of Kazmierczak's family in Poland, pointed to his dubious Nazi past and suggested a con-man personality. There was also the implication that the U.S.A art scene embraced him for spurious reasons to do with their own guilt complexes. In short, the performance focused on debunking the Beuys myth. There was a mocking dance and reproduction of Beuys' work. There was something odd, like disingenuity, about the piece. I have wondered before about how the referencing of art history, critical or otherwise, may be a means of the artists, conversely, deriving art capital for themselves. There was laughter, appreciatively, amongst the audience, but there was also a slight air of bitterness on stage. The work questioned Beuys' fame more than undermining the nature of elevations to fame themselves.

Jamie McMurry had arranged a set-cum-installation involving three oblong towers, papered with the silhouette images of palm trees and tropical sunsets, California-style, maybe, as he is based in Los Angeles. He came on for his *Paralyze* action dragging a bucket full of earth, by means of a chain around his neck. With him reddening, there was a succession of actions, all rapid, including the consuming of an apple, drinking from wine glasses which he then smashed, and the use of a fake gun to shoot balloons full of liquid dangling from each tower. When it stopped working after the first one, he smashed the gun, jumped up on the glass and splattered the remaining balloons himself. He then lay down in front of each tower and successively pulled them down towards him by means of a rope. He rolled out of the way just before they disintegrated, or else breeze blocks on top of each stopped the fall, allowing enough space so as not to crush his body.

And then the Second Evening

I returned to the architecturally incongruous site of the Chashama oasis, inserted in a desert of skyscrapers, the next evening. It was still humid and approaching 24 degrees after sunset. As I wandered into the black-box, I saw a figure dressed in copious clothing and a mask, reminiscent of a home-made Aztec god, seated at the front of staging blocks arranged to form a catwalk. The figure began to talk, a monologue that centred around the sadness of the God figure at the fate of his people. After a while he began undressing to reveal what could have been the costume of a poor labourer. I realised it was **Eduardo Flores**, then **Emilia Villanueva**, his collaborator, arrived dressed as a pornographic Darryl Hannah: long blond wig, tight skimpy white dress, and high heels. He was Mexico, she the U.S.A for their *We Are All Terrorists, We are All Victims* action. She paraded around the audience confidently and provocatively, caressing the male members, of the audience, as images of U.S.A-made or sponsored disasters in Central and Latin America spliced with adverts selling sex were projected on a screen behind her. All the while, Flores vied for attention, shouting 'Look at me'. There was a three way split: him, the video, her.

Villanueva selected a stereotypical U.S.A white middle aged man from the audience, who happened to be Boehme, a Canadian, to go up on stage with her. He sat on a chair with his back to the audience, and gamely 'endured' her writhing around him. Images flashed with disturbing statistics of rapes and deaths, as she undressed, holding up beauty-queen like sashes with the name of countries in the Americas, save the North. It suggested the enforced prostitution of these States to the U.S.A. : Imagine George W. Bush is Dolly Parton in the Greatest Little Whorehouse in Texas. All the while Flores' cries become more theatrically desperate. There was an escape from the weight of the choreography into something more intense as, near the climax, Villanueva stood naked apart from the Stars and stripes of the U.S.A. flag over her vagina. She then removed this.

The pitch of the video and indeed the performance seemed to suggest the audience were unaware, or insufficiently aware, of the abuses and murders described. It is probably true that some of the facts and specific incidents were not known by some, and it is true that some of their impact may be understood too abstractly. However, I feel they did not manage to create the awkwardness of atmosphere that allows for an exploration of nuance. It seemed to focus more on inducing guilt. One could question the necessity of the performance in that context. There was, after all, an atmosphere of support for the Mexican-born artists, and the audience at Chashama may not be the most representative of U.S.A imperialism. Moreover, the performance was followed

I remember reading something by Virilio that said in the latter part of the last century we were moving toward an eclipse of consciousness. He said that little by little the difference between the contemporary living space and the sites of the archaeological past would fade.



I was also thinking about the buildings, about where they are constructed and why and the way that they are constructed.

I was thinking about all the different ages of architecture.



I remembered reading something by Walter Benjamin that talked about the notion of space in buildings, how the space in the arcade almost has the appearance from the outside of not existing.

I also read something related to this about the design of shopping centres, about how some were built with huge glass and reflective exteriors.



I concluded the evening with a performance entitled *Moments before, passing away*, involving a slide projector with a full carousel of 80 images. These were a mixture of recent images, and material from my archive, photographed in Devon (England), in Montréal (Québec) and in New York City. Most of them featured seagulls, pigeons or other birds common to the Northern hemisphere (living and in one case dead) and/or a book entitled *How to Know British Birds* by a man called Mr Joy. I had captured the volume in various positions in the locations, as though it were itself the subject of a (psycho-)ornithological society outing.

I handed out battery-powered mini-fans, which the audience used to aerate themselves with. The slide projector was connected to a motion detector and as I made discreet actions in front of the screen, the projector and three large rotary fans were activated. Some of the actions I made reprised positions in which I had found myself whilst preparing to take the photographs for the performance, involving particular arrangements of hands, the head and materials. Each time the projector was activated, the slides turned on a timer, 5 at a time, whilst I held the gesture. In the score I composed, the actions were named as follows:

<i>Head forward</i>	1
<i>Head side</i>	2
<i>Head side</i>	3
<i>Head up</i>	4
<i>Whistle</i>	5
<i>Hand big feathers up</i>	6
<i>Fan-feather wind</i>	7
<i>Hand red feathers</i>	8
<i>Hand blow red feathers</i>	9
<i>Postcards</i>	10
<i>Fan plastic bag and feather</i>	11
<i>Hand white feather</i>	12
<i>Hand blow white feathers</i>	13
<i>Book + bird</i>	14
<i>Hand big feathers down</i>	15
<i>Hand big feathers down + up</i>	16
<i>White feather eye</i>	17
<i>Red feather eye</i>	18
<i>Whistle</i>	19
<i>PILLOW</i>	

Finnish-born **Pekka Luhta's** *Phantom Throat* performance was made against the backdrop of a video projection of images involving fire and water, amongst other things. With the aid of an artificial arm, he picked up a series of objects, including a bread baguette and a walking stick, and explored their phenomenological properties in relation to the single arm and hand he possesses. Then he put on a pair of roller blades, which was no mean feat. He began skating around the room, adding different items to the composition of his body in motion as he went. There was a string of silvery plastic beads and a water melon, that was shattered by his arm-hook prosthetic. I thought of Robin Williams as Peter Pan in the film of the same title. I thought of California's surgically adjusted body tribes. I sensed an increasingly evident critique of the vanity and stupidity of materialism. There was an awkwardness in the performance because it was difficult to tell whether some actions had gone 'as intended' or not, although this begs the question is performance really about control and things going to plan? I appreciated - control (including of one's image) was an area of investigation in the work's process, as he used his one-handedness to unsettle us and to play on ideas of freakishness and mishap. This is risky as the performer may be judged somehow 'incompetent'.

He skated around with an umbrella on fire - the synthetic fabric dripping like gold - and set fire to a mask which he placed on his own face for a while. I am not blasé enough to say 'not another man with his head on fire'. Now, as I write, I am reminded of a story the Indonesian-born artist Arahmaiani once told me about the practice in Jakarta of setting fire to people in the streets. A cry of theft gathers ground, a mob forms and there is a pursuit, before the victim is ignited. This is sometimes strategically done to dispose of an unwanted person. At this moment, the flaming face also evokes impressions of the fate of the 'debauched' people Charlton Heston - the prophet of the National Rifle Association - discovers when, as Moses, he descends from Mount Sinai in the film *The Ten Commandments*. Luhta's final action involved dipping the stub of his lost arm into a black tar-like substance, after which he daubed 'Rewrite my name oil in Iraq' on a white piece of paper. His critique of materialism emerged as a condemnation of the cynicism of the U.S. A's application of it, just as he had transformed the exploration of his individual body to highlight the handicap of a State.

New York-based artist **Jessica Bueges** had spent the afternoon and early evening in Chashama's window space, emptied out to provide a clean setting. With her back to the audience, facing a monitor on which her *Between us* action was relayed, she swallowed a length of white ribbon, virtually imperceptibly. One end of the strip of material remained in her mouth and later on that evening, she moved out of the durational mode and into a rapid frontal performance in which she extracted the ribbon from her stomach, by her mouth.

One of the achievements of this, said the architect who wrote the article, and I suppose to an extent Benjamin as well, is that the buildings reflect the older buildings around them rather than drawing attention to themselves, and they feel like they could have no interior. When you enter them its like a magical land, and this said the architect has a double purpose because it's much more conducive to spending and also to the heritage of the area because it reflects the buildings around the building.



I wondered about making a building that had a totally reflective interior. Or a building that doesn't admit its own existence.

I was talking with some friends about history and heritage. We were talking about the fact that sometimes in this country it seems important to some people to make history seem almost unreal and untouchable.



This got me to thinking about tourism, about where I myself have been a tourist in the past, and how I viewed the city or wherever I was then and how that view is different to the city where I live.

I was thinking that when you move to a place, I mean when you become someone who lives somewhere rather than someone who is just visiting, you become very accustomed very quickly to its idea and its rhythm. You get to understand the way things work with more efficiency; you tune into the environment in a different way

If you move to live somewhere then pretty soon you know which direction things are, where you need to go to get food or your washing done or where the green spaces are.

Your mindset is very different when you're a tourist. You map your way through a place differently, almost with more efficiency and perhaps with more caution, or a different kind of caution.

Next up came the Canadian-born **John G. Boehme**. Using a microphone, Boehme recited dialogue which seemed to be drawn from a manager's assessment of an employee's progress: a *P.E.R. (Performance Evaluation Review)* [the performance's title]. The dialogue was more of a monologue as the 'manager' seemed to be asking the questions and replying for the worker:

- A. How does this job fit in with your overall career goals?*
- B. Thank You for your time.*
- A. What might make you leave this job?*
- B. Thank You for your time.*

The text related to his work over the past four years as an employee of the Federal Government in the Department of National Defence at the Fleet Maintenance Facility Dockyard. As a Marine Industrial Labourer and member of Shipwrights, Joiners and Wood Caulkers' Industrial Union Local no. 9, Boehme works hand in hand with trades people and has used this contact to explore the relationships between the white, pink and blue collar work force.



John G. Boehme

His text was accompanied by two slide projections - one of which was an archaic set of instructions for a naval vessel computer replacement switch – as well as a live video feed of Boehme's version of a 'male patterned baldness' make-over: the application of thick foundation and shaving a bald patch into his head. He has a face that can make you laugh, and then unsettle you as quick as you like. It made me feel the way I do about clowns I've seen on the television– that's to say, they're hilarious, calamitous, and quick-witted. In part the piece played on stereotypes of middle-aged men and their aspirations, making himself the butt of the joke to reach a sense of pathos and empathy with the identity of a working class man.

The first performance evening

Fumiko Takahashi's empty inflatable swimming pool was waiting for us in the centre of the space as the doors of the black box opened and the first evening of performance got underway the following day. As we entered her *Lemon Smash & Ash action*, a container on a podium was marked with the invitation to take a lemon and write our names on it. There were plastic cups on a performance table filled with a variety of fizzy drinks and milk. As people milled around the bar, Takahashi ambled around too, and after a short while she got into the pool. Mckereghan invited us to add our lemons to it and then to take one of the plastic cups provided and pour its contents into the pool. Which people duly did. Takahashi writhed a little ambiguously. This was effective because you couldn't quite place her mood as people doused the liquids over her. It was strange that no-one I saw poured it into her mouth, though she was opening it as though to suggest this. I have wondered more than once why people interpret an invitation to do something in an art-space performance in terms of actions of excess and challenge-confrontation, albeit mild and playful in this case.

But then, all was turned on its head as Takahashi arose, dripping wet, picked a tennis racket out of the pool, and began firing the lemons in different directions around the room. People began to feel concerned and, moreover, targeted – which they were, remember everyone's name was on a lemon, and she was reading them out as she went. The passive body became highly 'interactive', as she created an ambience reminiscent of the participants' attitude of joking confrontation, only distinctly more volatile. She had anticipated human nature, and so her audience, very well. A simple and engaging work, on behaviour and interpersonal dynamics, within which she highlighted attitudes towards the female body.



Fumiko Takahashi

I think when you're a visitor sometimes it's almost less easy to just wander to just drift, unless you force yourself to do so or through circumstance you have to, often that's an exciting time, you get lost or you're out of money or something and you end up just walking. I think you often get closer to a place if you do that.



Sometimes, you might be visiting people that show you round and they decide for you what would be good for you to see and because they live there you trust them.



Also sometimes when you visit somewhere there's often a restriction of time.



Last year I went to Barcelona and managed to see a lot of things in only a weekend. I was aware of how I used a different kind of energy than I do when I am at home.

I was thinking maybe the reason for this was I knew when I was going to leave.

Also I was thinking that the changes occurring, by which I mean the necessary movements and business of the place, were perhaps not as important to me consciously or unconsciously in the time that I was there.

In one weekend the change in the city wouldn't occur much. I wouldn't be a significant part of its economy or movement, and the focus of what I was seeing while I was there – the architecture and the monuments – were what was seen as the more continuous more famous elements of the city or what the city was famous for.



I was think-
I moved to

ing about when
London.

The move felt like it had some permanence, like I was thinking to myself 'well I'm here now I'll be here for a while.'

I was thinking that this was almost like the contract – if you can call it that – which I entered into with London, with this city



It was like admittance to something, maybe the fact that while I was here I was going to change and I knew that it would too, physically and mentally. That I would or at least could, maybe discover something new about it everyday, that we could make things together here, that I was part of its fabric.

The opening and the exhibition

The event opened on Wednesday night with a performance of Roddy Hunter's remote action in Chashama's foyer, the space in which the mostly wall-based paper and image works in *Currency Exchanges* were presented. The exhibition enabled artists who couldn't travel to New York to participate, and of course emphasises the role of correspondence and extended community in performance art networks. Hunter's *Not here / No there* piece consisted of a list of instructions printed on an A4 sheet attached to a wall. In these, Hunter explained what to do with 4 sets of ribbons, each containing a yellow, black, white and red strip, laid out on a table. In summary, he invited members of the audience, up to four, to stand around the table and pick up one of each of the colour ribbons. They would then place them in a pocket, close their eyes, take one out at random with one hand, extend the other outwards (as though to shake hands) and place it between the thumb and forefinger of this hand, with their eyes still closed...

After some time thinking and breathing and maintaining the held out hand, the participants would open their eyes to see the colour of their ribbon, as well as those of the others. The action was repeated 3 or 4 times by groups of four artists-audience members. Over time it created a beautiful focus for the opening of the event, evoking as it did accident and design, meeting and difference, wondering and wandering, along with other metaphysical and symbolic meanings one could attach to the colours and gestures involved. And as chance would have it, despite the repetitions, not a single person drew red.

Other works in exhibition included eye-catching colour laser print copies of André Stitt dressed in platform high heels and women's underwear with a geek-like expression on his face. These images were taken from Stitt's *Eugenics* performance at the Arvika Rock Festival (Arvika, Sweden 11th July 2002). This work centred on the fate of Sara Jane Wiley who as a teenager in 1959 had been sterilised and incarcerated at the old Virginia State Colony for Epileptics and the Feeble Minded in the USA. Overall 60,000 Americans were victims of a country wide eugenics programme. Eugenics involves using the principles of genetics to 'improve' humankind. There were also contributions by Skip Arnold (US), Peter Baren (Holland), Adina Bar-on (Israel), Nenad Bogdonavic (Yugoslavia), Jeffery Byrd (US), Peter Grzybowski (US), Alistair MacLennan (No. Ireland), Boris Nieslony (Germany), Amy Shapiro (US), Iwan Wijono (Java), and Roi Vaara (Finland).

CURRENCY 2002/ CURRENCY EXCHANGE
New York City OCT.3-5 2002 :
three performance evenings and an exhibition

[Julie Bacon]

Next door to the 53rd highest building in the world, the 48-floor Condé Nast skyscraper on West 42nd Avenue, New York City, sits a two-story building called Chashama. It is the site of a black box space, founded in 1995 by Reza Abdoh's dar a luz Company, in the commercial 'heart' of Manhattan. That's where I was heading when I took the 68 train from Montréal (Québec) to the metropolis, October past, for the first international performance meeting to have taken place there for a number of years. The organiser of the event entitled *Currency 2002*, and of the accompanying *Currency Exchange* exhibition, was Dan Mckereghan, a performance artist, long-time active member of the city's arts community and many beyond. This is an overview of the fruits of his efforts and imagination and that of the 16 other artists, and 13 exhibition participants, who contributed from regions around the world. This text is based on memory.



Jamie McMurry, performance

I was thinking about the buildings in the city of London, their relation to the history of the movement of trade up the river Thames, how it was once the main or only trade route into the city. The street and building names reflect this.

I was thinking that tradition more than trade keeps the buildings here. I was interested in the fact that even though we don't use those physical trade routes as much or perhaps anymore something means they're still on the river.



When I used to work in the East end I would think about that a lot in relation to the Docklands and Canary Wharf. I would think about how even though financial dealings don't get made through the arrival of boats and the transportation of goods up the City Road or The East India Dock Road into the city of London anymore a significant amount of dealings important to the capital still took place there.

I was thinking about the movement of people too.

The poem on the statue of Liberty, which welcomed migrants into the new world, reads:

*Give me your tired, your poor
 Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free
 The wretched refuse of your teeming shore
 Send these, the tempest tossed, to me:
 I lift my lamp beside the golden door*



I was thinking: people have been arriving here in London for two thousand years or so.

I was thinking about where people ended up and why. How the East of London has always been by tradition a poor area because of its proximity to the river and the West has always been by tradition an area of wealth.

I remembered this idea that I read about somewhere, that whatever form of transport people took to get there, train or boat or plane and how many thousands of miles they may have travelled for whatever reason, that often people still only settled about as far as they could carry their belongings.



Last year I went to visit friends who were living for a while in New York.



On one particular day, I think it was because they were busy and because I only had a limited amount of money, I spent most of the day just walking. I walked for a long time.

What most amazed me, or what I thought about a lot as I walked through the buildings of Manhattan, was that about two hundred years previously hardly any of it had been there.

It's also noticeable how that city is built. You get to know the grid quickly and once you have your bearings: uptown, downtown, West and East you can get around very easily.

In London the streets don't follow as much of a pattern, and you know that underneath the foundations of some buildings are more and more foundations.



ES : C'est vrai qu'il y a une différence entre la performance qui demande la participation en directe, cela peut devenir une confession. Non seulement dans la performance, mais aussi sur les talk-shows [causeries télévisées], dans la thérapie populaire... Cela attire beaucoup d'attention parce que l'intimité devient un spectacle. C'est la première fois que je suis dans la situation de parler d'une manière personnelle de quelque chose avec l'audience et je le fais d'une manière intime et non pas publique, ce qui crée une complicité, et cela s'éloigne d'une forme affectée ou prévisible. J'ai demandé la permission aux gens de filmer l'action que j'ai fait à la fin de chaque discussion. La plupart étaient d'accord. Mais l'entretien lui-même est resté entre le spectateur et moi. C'était temporelle.

JB : Est-ce que on peut critiquer en même temps qu'imitant l'espace public et privé tel qu'ils sont démarqués dans la société?

ES : Il faut faire attention des conditions qui sont déjà bien acceptées. Pour moi, cette société crée ses propres mécanismes d'anti-subversion. L'espace d'experimentation est plus intéressant pour moi... l'intime...

JB : La conspiration intime? !

ES : La conspiration est toujours intime. Je veux dire que je ne travaille pas toujours avec cette méthodologie, comme tu l'appelles, mais je m'intéresse actuellement à m'approcher des individus pour parler de la mémoire, comment elle se repète... Une femme avec qui j'ai parlé m'a dit 'j'aime beaucoup ce travail mais est-ce qu'il risque d'être, ou de déclencher, quelque chose de nationaliste. J'ai dit 'qu'est ce que vous comprenez par le nationalisme?'. Pour moi c'était un point très important. Nous avons commencé à débattre nos concepts de nationalisme. Partout dans le monde il y a une situation où le nationalisme est jugé à partir des positions d'identités, des positions contre une globalisation barbare. Mais on n'est pas nécessairement conscient de comment le nationalisme marche... Deux personnes sur une quarantaine m'ont parlé de ce sujet. Et j'ai demandé à d'autres après cela, 'est-ce que vous pensez que mon travail peut avoir un côté nationaliste?'. Pour moi c'est une base importante, la question. On discutait... L'intime devient plus honnête.

L'installation a touché des gens de différentes manières à partir de leurs propres critiques. En même temps les gens se sentent liés à l'oeuvre, parce qu'ils connaissent des rapports... la chose la plus importante dans un travail artistique est la question. Tout le monde sait que j'ai rencontré des gens mais ils ne savent pas ce que j'ai discuté avec eux, il y a un niveau éphémère du travail et cela transforme aussi.

ES : Oui, mais je pense que la plus importante de cette réflexion c'est comment détourner ces valeurs, comment toucher l'univers des valeurs de la société en général, cette société qui nous inclut. Quand on fait de l'art on crée soit un objet soit une action et on pense créer des questions. On n'a pas l'intention que les gens se conscientisent par rapport à cette dynamique entre l'éthique et l'esthétique... Les questions importantes sont *dans* l'oeuvre d'art, les questions que pose l'expérience de l'oeuvre. Le contexte que j'ai créé dans la galerie fait circuler les gens différemment, exigeant une autre attitude. Ils font partie de l'exposition et ils peuvent se sentir agresseur.

JB : C'est intéressant que le spectateur peut se sentir agresseur au lieu d'agressé. J'ai lu une critique de la performance qui disait que souvent la performance traite les spectateurs de victimes morales. J'aimerais avoir tes commentaires par rapport à cela, parce que justement la force du spectateur est très présente dans ton travail ici, tandis que ta force est relativement dispersée.

ES : C'est important de créer un contexte, ouvrir la possibilité, de la participation, sans que les gens laissent leurs propres personnalités dehors pour devenir des acteurs. Je veux provoquer des situations où les gens peuvent réagir comme des individus. **ES (cont.) :** Cela donne une vision de comment les gens peuvent assumer une situation en dehors de leur quotidien, une situation urgente.

JB : Pense-tu que beaucoup de performances cherchent à installer un sens d'urgence?

ES : Oui, et je pense que c'est important.

JB : C'est un risque, de travailler de cette manière. Des fois on ne sait pas qu'est-ce qui va arriver. Mais l'ouverture envers les spectateurs est aussi une ouverture pour l'artiste. On cède une partie du contrôle, il ne s'agit pas nécessairement d'exécuter quelque chose d'efficace. J'aimerais te parler plus de ce que tu nommes la 'mémoire vivante'. Il y a une approche où les artistes demandent des anecdotes des gens pendant la performance, en directe. Qu'est-ce que tu penses vis-à-vis des approches directes ou indirectes d'explorer la mémoire. Parce qu'il y a une manière de solliciter la mémoire que j'appelle 'confessionnelle', il me semble que ce n'est pas la même méthodologie que tu emploies dans ton travail sur la 'mémoire vivante'.

I read that when they modernised and expanded Liverpool Street Station they dug up thousands of bodies that were packed in about eight to every square metre.

I was wondering what effect that inherent history had on our consciousness as city.

[...] "ours is a very different world, and what makes us so different and means that, whether we like it or not, we are indeed Londoners, is our very diversity. We've arrived here from all over the world and some of us will move sooner or later, but the minute you choose to live here you're one of us. We've got hundreds of languages, just as many cuisines, and nearly as many problems. We've got scores of creeds, colours, cultures and classes. We've got 8 million people in 32 boroughs and together we make up one city."²

Even though it's so full of people I was thinking that London is a place where – often in the middle of a day and all of a sudden – you can feel that it's only you that's there. While I was walking I would think about this and I was thinking about all the places where it happens.

The place where I get this feeling most often is in tube stations. Because of the way they're built you can get off a train and just turn down a tunnel and all of a sudden it feels as if you're totally on your own.



² Elms, Robert, writing in *Time Out*, London (31/7-7/8 2002)



I was thinking about this in relation to the way people feel about London, or at least the clichés that often emerge when people are talking about it: how it's fast, noisy, smelly, unsociable.

Recently I had been in different cities making performances and I suppose because I have been thinking about things like this I have often thought that these other, smaller cities seem more hostile. I wasn't sure if it was because of my inexperience of their environment.

I read that Chekov wrote "How shall I live, given who I am?" and I wrote it down and I then I wrote it down as How shall I live given where I am? I have been living in London now for five years. It's the longest time that I've ever been an inhabitant of a single place of my own choosing.

JB : Tu juges la force qu'il faut dans la situation donnée?

ES : Oui, s'il faut être agressive, de quelle manière? Pour détruire ou pour construire? Je me demande comment je peux aborder une situation pour m'approcher aux conditions ; comment je peux éviter le moralisme. Je cherche toujours cela, je suis dans une recherche continue sur la situation. Je ne veux pas me former dans quelques idées de comment faire, ou développer un style...

JB : Une esthétique, finalement ?

ES : Oui

JB : Est-ce qu'on peut dire que tu t'intéresses plus à une recherche sur l'éthique que l'esthétique?

ES : Je pense que maintenant il n'y a pas de limite claire entre l'esthétique et l'éthique.

JB : Dans la pratique d'art contemporain ou dans la société?

ES : Dans toute la vie. Je pense que l'esthétique et l'éthique se rapprochent.

JB : Est-ce que c'est une analyse extérieure que tu fais de la situation ou est-ce que tu penses que cela est dans la conscience des gens?

ES : Quand je fais une action sur la rue je cherche à attirer l'attention des gens et ce n'est pas clair comment ils vont me regarder et qu'est ce qui va attirer l'attention de ces gens dans le contexte quotidien? Je dois créer une forme visuelle, principalement, alors il y a un esthétique. En même temps je veux détourner des valeurs, la forme visuelle est influencé par cela.

JB : Tu ne crois pas qu'il y a une *déresponsabilisation*, par exemple par rapport à l'image, que justement l'éthique de l'image, les valeurs que propagent les images, s'éloignent des conditions de vie?

ES : Oui c'est une condition des consommateurs, mais on peut prendre une oeuvre d'art comme un point de départ à une réflexion sur cela.

JB : Adopter une stratégie pour répondre à la division entre l'image et les valeurs?

ES : Cet espace exige doucement une autre attitude dès le moment d'entrer. Je ne veux pas attirer l'attention des gens d'une manière violente ou dramatique. J'avais l'intention de sensibiliser les gens avec des éléments très simples. Quand les gens touchent mes cheveux cela provoque une sensibilité... comment puis-je le dire

JB : Dis-le en français ou en anglais.

ES : en espagnol?

JB : Non, malheureusement, ça serait plus longue!

ES : C'est intéressant cet aspect du travail. Il y a des éléments très simples, très humbles et en même temps impressionnants. C'est pareil quand on touche une toile d'araignée, c'est fragile, insignifiante mais puissante. Je voulais sensibiliser les gens et critiquer certaines attitudes quotidiennes, changer un peu leur rythme, proposer que l'individu fait son propre rythme et cela peut devenir une forte critique. Je n'ai pas voulu faire la morale. Il y a quelques années j'ai travaillé avec des actions très directes en parlant des problèmes très bien connus. J'ai trouvé que cela pouvait toucher les gens, leur montrer un autre côté, mais il y avait quelque chose d'insatisfait.

JB : Il y a un contraste entre ton travail ici et ce que tu as fait en Israël [pour la biennale *Blurr 3* en 2001. Parmi les gestes qu'elle a posés, Santamaria a poussé une chaise dans une salle communautaire dans le kibbutz - le contexte du festival - et cette chaise s'est ensuite accrochée à d'autres chaises et tables qui bloquaient la direction où elle voulait passer. Elle a continué jusqu'à ce qu'elle déplaçait un grand nombre des meubles dans la salle avec son corps. Les spectateurs ont dû se déplacer eux-mêmes pour éviter l'artiste, ce qui a occasionné, dans certains cas des réactions, tel que la résistance ou la tension].

ES : Mes performances dépendent de la situation. Je ne réagis pas toujours de la même manière. Je n'essaie pas de préciser un style ou une manière que je pense être 'la meilleure' forme. Non.



I was trying to think of the exact reason that I ended up here. I don't think my reasons are in any way unusual. They're probably very similar to a lot of people: friends, work, that London is a place of and for, if not necessarily opportunity, certainly possibility. These are also I suppose the reasons that I stay. I was thinking that I couldn't remember consciously thinking that when I packed a small amount of belongings into a car and drove south for the first time.

I kept re-walking my walk – I was going to do it again as a performance of sorts, take some people with me – but it never felt as if I was repeating or rehearsing it. I kept getting lost. The more I walked the less familiar things became. Like I was in an unrecognisable, almost impossible place.

All images: a. Smith

THE PROCESS OF GOING NOWHERE: *INCORPORATING* BY ROLAND MILLER

[Roddy Hunter, Dartington, April 2000]

Roland Miller is a barefoot artist and inter-regional itinerant. He once, over the course of three days, marked streets surrounding the Garden Rooms in Sheffield¹ with chalk, string and action. These streets themselves map their own circular oblong and the markings offered by the performance held in common with this auto-cartography a map that was neither microcosmic nor macrocosmic. In equal measure was this map neither wholly subjective nor objective. As with the delineation simultaneously rendered by the streets, the artist's performance *marked and mapped itself* on a 1:1 ratio. Here was a very credible, and indeed creditable, attempt to give emergence to a performance thoroughly consistent with its methodology. Through mapping in a phenomenological manner, Miller allowed the phenomenology of the place to articulate itself through its own material conditions. Now that the artist's chalk line has disappeared, the streets themselves may continue to be marked in this way.

Miller's methodology of mapping is quite unlike that behind the Ordnance Survey version of the same area, which he bought before the performance and which came to serve as a crucial starting point. The importance of the OS map to this process was twofold. Firstly, 'amplifying' the 1:500 ratio of the OS map to the 1:1 ratio of place and time raised initial material implications for the work. Miller was required to consider the tools and technology of cartography. While OS cartographers employ satellite navigation systems, this artist ultimately opted for string and chalk. Secondly, the dependency upon a grid template in the OS map gave Miller a well-established art historical reference, a particular concern in painting and drawing, from which to work. His superimposition of the OS grid onto the actual place it depicted, largely through "tying string knots at points where [he noted] time/place graticules."², revealed manifold contours of difference operating amongst these spatial and temporal ratios. The 'gaps' in perception and conception this process provided laid the foundation for Miller's challenge to the normalised economies of representation, repetition and situation his discourse wished to address.

¹The Garden Rooms is "an artist-run complex of studios and workshops." (Miller, Roland, *Incorporating*, Sheffield: Live Art Press, 1999, p. 17)

² Miller, Roland, op.cit.

JB : L'installation est très discrète. Est-ce que c'est souvent le cas dans ton travail qu'il y a un questionnement par rapport à la visibilité des choses ou bien une critique concernant le rapport entre le spectaculaire et le discret, ou la valeur relative des choses? Est-ce qu'il y a une stratégie de demander à l'audience de faire un effort?

ES : Je trouve qu'il y a une *sur*production de tout. La production des objets, la production des attitudes, ou la *ré*production des attitudes. C'est presque toujours en cherchant une attention qui est propagandiste. Il y a un chargement de valeurs, une surévaluation d'une valeur sur une autre. J'ai dirigé l'attention vers la présence, pas seulement ma présence, mais la présence humaine, la sensibilité de l'être humain.

JB : Parfois on se promène dans l'installation et on voit à peine, ou pas du tout, quelques éléments et on se piège dans quelque chose. Tu m'as dit que c'est voulu. Tantôt j'ai déplacé quelques petites roches par terre. Il y en a partout, avec des livres et des allumettes. Cela crée l'impression qu'il faut faire attention, mais le travail anime un certain besoin de douceur dans l'espace aussi.



JB : C'est la première fois que tu travailles avec tes cheveux?

ES : Je travaille toujours avec mes cheveux, d'une manière simple, depuis presque 20 ans. Ils sont un signe important de ma caractère, de ma présence. Je fais principalement la performance, je travaille avec ma présence, mon corps. Je ne voulais pas m'éloigner trop des matériaux principaux avec lesquels je travaille en performance. Je me suis mis une condition, de ne pas les arracher, ne pas les couper pour ce travail parce que je les avais coupé pendant une action quelques mois avant. Cette fois je me suis dit 'à partir du moment que j'arrive au Québec je vais les collectionner, les ramasser ensemble pour en faire une construction.

JB : C'est très symbolique, le fait utiliser des cheveux. On parle par exemple du 'fil narratif', 'du fil historique', 'du fil du temps', c'est métaphorique et tangible en même temps.

ES : Cela peut devenir complexe. Je trouve des valeurs différentes quand les gens me parlent de mes cheveux. Il y a beaucoup d'interprétations...

JB : Peux-tu me décrire comment tu les as employé dans l'installation?

ES : Pendant les 19 jours de rencontres avec des gens j'ai construit une structure avec mes cheveux qui a un rapport avec cette période de temps. Donc, j'ai commencé à faire une ligne avec 19 cheveux suspendus du plafond. Le 1er jour j'ai utilisé 19 cheveux, et en dimuant les cheveux jour par jour j'ai crée une forme triangulaire. Le dernier jour j'ai accroché seulement un cheveu.

Ce n'est pas facile de les voir mais quand je montre les lignes avec les aiguilles [attachés à quelques cheveux], les gens commencent à voir qu'il y a quelque chose dans l'installation. C'était une question de jouer avec des conditions. Ce n'est pas une proposition arbitraire. Il y a un rapport avec le temps, les gens, avec moi-même, avec la nature de mes cheveux...

Throughout those three days, I watched this barefoot artist tying his knots of twine and marking the relevant streets with what would become a continuous white line of chalk. Although 'armed' with a previous knowledge of this artist's work, and indeed too of its discourse³, I was still struck by the instantaneous translation of ratio in the performance. I asked myself 'can I believe what I am seeing?' In addition, why, moreover, did I sense an almost voluntary suppression of *doubt* within myself? Could I have *faith* in this artist's particular synthesis of colliding and colluding nuances of this temporal and spatial context? I *hoped* I could.

In fact, I *knew* I could. I could and do because I always err on the side of the dissenter rather than on the side of caution. I do this, I think, as I am also an artist. It must have been my awareness of this fact, above others, that made me eager for Miller's innovative and skilful methodology to succeed. It is questionable, however, the extent to which those of us, who were present at the performance on the pre-text of its artistic merit, were actually reliable witnesses to what occurred. Is it fruitful to 'read' such a performance on premises other than those that it occupies? This question could mislead if it presumes the art to be apart from inter-relationships of encounter and mediation. *Incorporating* prompted the spectators who asked themselves these questions to re-evaluate their understanding of art practice. Jason Quincey of the University of Sheffield's Bakhtin Centre writes usefully in this regard:

*"This is the double-bind of postmodern theory: that whilst discourses are seemingly embraced as a valid Interpretation - they can also be dismissed as merely an interpretation. Therefore the mechanism remains in place in which, despite the supposed end of privileging, certain discourses may be privileged on the grounds of resources, status, fashion and so on"*⁴

Yet, was Miller suppressing recognition of his activity as artistic in order that it could actually be so? This is quite probable given his lengthy consideration of both this specific performance and performance-as-art more broadly, evident in the publication accompanying *Incorporating*⁵. I am also fortunate perhaps in being aware of Miller's interest in the psychopathology of performance, wherein 'mistaking' performance as 'madness' is as possible as deducing it to be 'artistic'. In the course of the performance I witnessed several encounters the

³ I had, in particular, been present at "*Postpupok*" (III), October 1998, Glasgow, Scotland: an antecedent performance of *Incorporating*.

⁴ Quincey, Jason 'Problematic Theses?: The Crisis of Academic Writing in the Postmodern World' <http://www2.shef.ac.uk/uni/academic/A-C/bakh/jason.html>

⁵ Miller, Roland, *ibid*.

artist had with individuals who were mostly required to frequent the area by virtue of their employment in offices, shops or factories. It was clear to me that Miller drew upon either of these perceptions of himself (as 'artist' or 'madman') as he felt appropriate in any given instance of encounter. I am equally sure that his experience as a performance artist allowed him to 'act' in either or both of these roles or capacities when he thought it pertinent.

The artist himself highlights another important aspect of this matter in the *Incorporating* publication:

*"The use of 'face to face encounters' in performance art sets it aside from other forms of 'live art' and from all reproductive forms. This of course means that the reproductive economy so central to the development of 20th century art forms is not available to practitioners of what I call 'Performance Simple'."*⁶

This non-reproductive element of performance can make it appear dysfunctional. If so, it becomes an obstacle (and possibly a threat) to reproduction. An extraneous apparition that predicates its own minority economy of rationale and, as such, endures attempts launched against it in defence of the economy of a dominant rationale. In his efforts to wholly locate, and almost 'secrete', *Incorporating* within actual everyday life (as opposed to simply within a notion of 'the everyday'), Miller risks finding his performance mapped and seemingly destined for such dysfunction. This tellingly occurred during the performance in an encounter he had with a BMW 'dealership', and particularly its management staff, at the bottom of Garden Street. In addition to 'discussing' the legal rights-of-way as regards the pavement nearest the showroom, they also debated what should occur there given 'the interests of the dealership'.

By this act of encounter, Miller incorporated this contemporary commercial corporate body into his performance in parallel with, and in contrast to, a local history of independent craftsmen working in the same area. Miller believes these craftsmen of the cutlery trade "were not necessarily, nascent captains of industry."⁷ By these means, the performance portends reminders both welcome (of uncharacteristically affirming experiences for which we are now nostalgic) and unwelcome (that these experiences are now past.) *Incorporating* invokes comparisons between contemporary corporate bodies and yet-to-be-incorporated sole practitioners with their historical counterparts of agrarian-based nation states and nomadic settlers respectively. It is useful to consider Kenneth White's view in this regard:

⁶ Miller, Roland, *ibid.*, p. 13.

⁷ Miller, Roland, *ibid.*, p.6.

JB : Est-ce que tu as trouvé que les gens avaient de la difficulté à arriver tout de suite avec une mémoire personnelle? Par exemple, est-ce que tu as remarqué que le conditionnement de l'éducation formelle était déterminait des réponses?

ES : J'ai dû diriger l'entretien que j'avais avec eux en les demandant des questions, comme de me nommer des oeuvres de l'artiste ou de dire 'pourquoi cet oeuvre-là t'as touché?'. 'Quelle est la relation entre toi et cet artiste, ou entre toi et des moments dans la vie de cet artiste?'. Alors ils ont commencé à me raconter des anecdotes, ou des moments importants. Petit à petit on a pu arriver à une voix intime à travers une discussion de l'artiste qu'ils proposaient. Il y avait des artistes qu'ils nommaient qui avaient par exemple une grande exposition au moment qu'on parlait ou qui sont reconnus officiellement. C'est vrai que cela a joué un rôle. Quand je leur demandais d'aborder personnellement l'artiste quelque fois ils changeaient d'artiste, mais il y avait des individus pour qui ces artistes reconnus ont une signification personnelle, politique et dans la collectivité. Il y avait un mouvement entre l'importance personnelle et les intérêts collectifs, comme une oscillation.

JB : Après qu'une personne t'ait raconté une histoire ou t'avait parlé d'un artiste, tu lui as fait une performance, à la fin de la discussion?

ES : Oui. Je voulais connaître quelque chose de la culture québécoise, mais je voulais le faire dans une sorte d'échange. Je n'ai pas voulu seulement prendre des informations des gens, mais d'offrir quelque chose...

JB : Peux-tu me parler des matériaux que tu as utilisés pour l'installation? Comment est-ce que tu les as choisis? Par exemple, le choix d'utiliser tes cheveux comme un matériel de construction, as-tu décidé avant d'arriver que certains matériaux seraient importants ou est-ce que c'était déterminé par des discussions sur place pendant la résidence?

ES : J'ai décidé de travailler avec mes cheveux quelque mois avant de venir au Québec.

LA CONSPIRATION INTIME

Extrait d'une entrevue avec Elvira Santamaria lors de sa résidence à la Chambre Blanche dans la ville de Québec en 2002. Au cours de quelques semaines, elle a monté une installation inspiré par sa recherche et ses rencontres sur place. La galerie du centre d'artistes était ouvert au public tout au long du processus. Au fur et à mesure qu'elle travaillait, elle a fait des courtes performances dans l'installation suivi d'une action pendant la soirée du vernissage.

JB : J'aimerais te parler de ton projet *Apparition de la disparition* ici à la Chambre Blanche.

ES : C'est la quatrième fois que je viens au Québec - j'ai des liens forts ici. Cette dernière fois je voulais vraiment connaître plus sur la culture québécoise: d'où viennent les québécois, quelles sont des références historiques des gens - dans une période de temps relativement courte - mais aussi quelles sont des mémoires qui sont en train de construire quelque chose ici. Je voulais connaître le Québec du côté des artistes, des intellectuels et des gens qui forment la culture. J'ai eu l'idée de faire une recherche et de faire une oeuvre basée sur ce travail.

J'ai invité les gens de venir me rencontrer pour parler des artistes et des intellectuels disparus qui ont une importance personnelle pour eux par rapport à la culture et après on pouvait passer à d'autres niveaux d'importance historique. Mais je voulais m'approcher à une mémoire personnelle, individuelle que j'appelle la 'mémoire vivante'. La mémoire historique c'est un autre niveau ou l'histoire est un autre niveau de la mémoire que bien sûr j'ai touché aussi. Mais c'était surtout un sondage de ce qui est vivant chez les gens.

JB : Tu as invité des gens à venir te voir pendant 19 jours, avant de présenter le vernissage. Au fur et à mesure tu as construit l'installation à partir de l'échange qui a eu lieu lors de ces rencontres, n'est-ce pas?

ES : Oui

"I suggest we look first to Southern Siberia, in the second millennium B.C., the far-eastern point of Palaeolithic civilisation. The tribes were beginning to settle down into societies based on a productive economy, [and by] the middle of the second millennium, [...] people were apparently ensconced, once and maybe for all, in comfort and prosperity - but it was just at that moment that several tribes dropped out and turned nomad. Which meant extensive movement rather than sedentary business, dispersion among nature rather than huddling round social edifices, an adventure in space rather than the security of codes. [...] I am not proposing that we turn ourselves into Mongols. I am simply suggesting that something similar is happening today. At the very peak of industrialised civilisation, a discontent has manifested itself, a discontent that has not merely run itself down into quiet desperation. It is as though civilisation were, to say the least, badly in need of breathing space."⁸

My inclination to apply an idea of nomadism, as a trajectory resisting the obligatory disenfranchisement of corporatism, to Miller's *Incorporating* can only be successful if we remember that that the nomad does **not** 'move'. Deleuze & Guattari have previously elaborated upon this, choosing to believe that Arnold Toynbee⁹ "is profoundly right to suggest that the nomad is on the contrary he *who does not move*."¹⁰ They continue:

"Whereas the migrant leaves behind a milieu that has become amorphous or hostile, the nomad is one who does not depart, does not want to depart, who clings to the smooth space left by the receding forest, where the steppe or the desert advance, and who invents nomadism as a response to this challenge"¹¹

Toynbee's earlier articulation of this challenge revolves around the observation that the nomad tribe, having the ability to domesticate animals, did not share with the agrarian state a need to extend its borders in pursuit of more land. By contrast, the nomad would adapt to the inhospitability of their environment by seasonally rotating their activities within different areas of their plateau. This would thus only result in the crossing of a border when agrarians would newly declare one within the nomads' territory. Thus, it is not the nomad who moves.¹²

⁸ White, Kenneth, 'The Nomadist Manifesto', in *Gairfish: The McAvantgarde*, Dundee: 1992, p.61

⁹ See Toynbee, Arnold, *A Study of History*, abridged by D.C. Somerwell, New York: Oxford University Press, Vol1, 1974 pp. 164-68.

¹⁰ Deleuze, Gilles & Guattari, Félix, *Nomadology: The War Machine*, tr. Brian Massumi, New York: Semiotext (e), 1986, p. 51.

¹¹ Deleuze, Gilles & Guattari, Félix, op.cit.

¹² Toynbee, Arnold, op.cit.

If we accept contemporary corporate bodies, made manifest by the tentacles that are their 'franchises', as descendants of agrarian states, then we are compelled to consider Miller's actions as demonstrably nomadic. The actuality of this analogy finds greater pertinence if we consider the impact of this contemporary corporate body in rendering differences in public consciousness between work and leisure, desire and ruin, function and dysfunction. Indeed, in the process of going nowhere, the artist drew a chalk line precisely to mark these specialist binaries. They are, after all, as ever present and apparent in the area surrounding the Garden Rooms as they are throughout the milieu of contemporary culture. Whether it is possible to discern or account for these binaries on any particular map depends upon the methodology and matrix employed in its origination. In the case of *Incorporating*, the performance renders a map and the map renders performance simultaneously. Both were as non-reproductive as they were instrumental in actualising this artist's discourse which is ultimately in opposition to definitions of quality.

The installation touched people in different ways, based on their own critiques. At the same time, people felt connected to the work because they know about the relationships I explored. The most important things in an art work are questions. Everyone knows I met people but they don't know what I discussed with them. There is an ephemeral level to the work and that transforms as well.



All images: CHAMBRE BLANCHE and Louis Audet

ES: It's true that there is a difference between performances that invite live participation, which can become like a confession. That's not only present in performance, but also in talk-shows, in popular therapy. It attracts a lot of attention because intimacy becomes a spectacle. This is the first time I've been in the situation of speaking personally about something with the audience and I've done so in an intimate not a public way, which creates complicity and moves away from affected or foreseeable responses. I asked people's permission to film the action that I made at the end of each discussion, and most agreed. However, the discussion itself remained between me and the spectator. It was temporal.

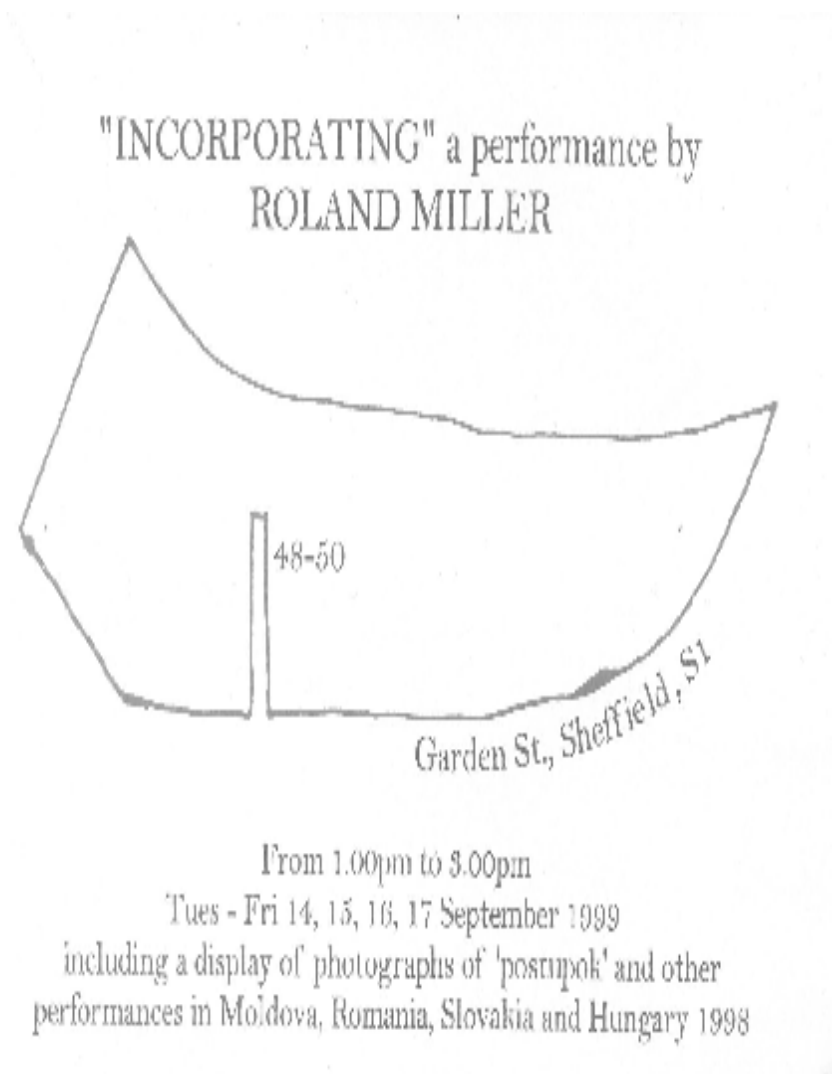
JB: Do you think it is possible for an art work that imitates the way private and public space are demarcated in society to also critique it?

ES: One must take care with conditions that are already well accepted in society. In my opinion, society creates its own mechanisms of anti-subversion. The space of experimentation is of more interest to me...the intimate...

JB: Intimate conspiracy? (laughs)

ES: Conspiracy is always intimate. I don't always work using this methodology, as you call it, but I am interested at the moment in approaching people to speak about memory, to consider how it repeats itself. A woman with whom I spoke said to me 'I like this work a lot, but doesn't it risk being seen as nationalist or provoking this?'. I asked 'what do you understand by nationalism?'. This is an important point.

We began discussing our concepts of nationalism. Throughout the world nationalism is judged on the basis of positions of identity, and the positions of those who are against a barbaric process of globalisation. But people are not necessarily aware of how nationalism works...Two people out of about forty spoke to me about this, and I asked other people after that 'do you think my work could have a nationalist side to it?'. Questions are an important basis of my work. We discussed things, and the intimate became more honest.



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ES: Yes, but I think that the most important aspect of this reflection is the question of how to detourn these values, how to touch the universe of values in society in general, and which includes us. When we make art, we create either an object or an action and we think about creating questions. We don't necessarily intend to make people conscious of the dynamic between ethics and aesthetics. The important questions are *in* the work, they are posed by the experience of the work. The context that I have created in the gallery makes people circulate differently, and invokes another attitude. The spectators are part of the exhibition and they can feel as though they are an aggressor within it.

JB: It's interesting that the spectator might feel like the aggressor rather than a person being attacked. I read a criticism of performance which claimed that performance audiences are often made to feel like 'moral victims'. I'd like to know your opinion on that, because the spectator's 'force' is very present in your work whereas your own 'strength' is relatively dispersed.

ES: It's important to create a context, to open up the possibility, for participation, without people leaving their own personalities outside in order to become actors. I want to provoke situations in which people can react as individuals. This creates a vision of how people might take on situations outside of the scope of their daily lives, urgent situations.

JB: Do you think that a lot of performances seek to install a sense of urgency?

ES: Yes, and I think it's important.

JB: It's risky working this way, because you don't know what is going to happen. But an opening up to the audience is also an opening for the artist. It's a questions of relinquishing control, and it's not merely a matter of executing something effectively. Could you talk more about your concept of 'living memory'? There is an approach whereby artists ask people for memories during the performance. What do you think about direct and indirect ways of exploring memory? There is a way of soliciting memories that can be 'confessional', and it seems to me that the methodology of your work on 'living memory' is quite different from that.



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politics?

ES: Yes, if it's necessary to be aggressive, in what way? In order to destroy or construct? I ask myself how I might approach a situation in order to get closer to the conditions involved, and how can I avoid moralism? I am always looking to do this. I am continually researching situations. I don't want to train myself in certain ways of doing things, or develop a style...

JB: An aesthetic?

ES: Yes.

JB: Might it be said that you are more interested in researching ethics than aesthetics?

ES: I think that there is no clear limit now between the aesthetic and ethic.

JB: In contemporary art practices or in society?

ES: In life. I think that the aesthetic and ethic are getting closer to each other.

JB: Is that an external analysis that you are making or do you think that this is what's going in people's consciousness?

ES: When I make an action in the street I seek to attract people's attention and it's not clear how they will perceive me and what will attract their attention in a day to day context. I create a visual form, principally, and so there is an aesthetic involved. At the same time, I want to detourn values, and the visual form is influenced by this.

JB: What do you think about the idea that there is a 'de-responsibilisation', in terms of the image for example. The idea that the ethics of images, the values propagated, are becoming increasingly distant from living conditions?

ES: Yes, that's a condition of consumption, but we can take an art work as a basis from which to engage in a consideration of that.

JB: Artists can adopt a strategy to address the division between images and values?

ES: This space gently demands another attitude from the moment you enter it. I don't want to attract people's attention in a violent or dramatic way. I wanted to sensitise people by using very simple elements. When people touch the hairs it provoke sensitivity...how can I put it...

JB: You can say it in French or English

ES: or Spanish?

JB: No, unfortunately, that would take a lot longer [laughs]

ES: It's interesting, this aspect of the work. There are elements that are very simple, very humble and impressive at the same time. It's like when we touch a spider's web. It's fragile and insignificant but powerful too. I wanted to sensitise people *and* critique certain day to day attitudes, to change their rhythm a little, to propose that the individual find their own rhythm, and this can become a strong critique. I didn't want to be moralistic. Some years ago I worked with very direct actions, which dealt with very well known problems. I found that this could touch people, show another side of things, but there was something unsatisfactory about it.

JB: Your work here contrasts with your performance in Israel [for the *Blurr 3* biennial in 2001. Amongst the gestures she made, Santamaria pushed a chair in a communal room in the Kibbutz - the site of the festival - and this chair got caught up with others. She continued to push until she was displacing a large number of the items of furniture in the room with her body. Some spectators had to move in order to avoid the artist, which resulted in reactions such as resistance and tension, as well as amusement].

ES: My performances depend on the situation in hand. I don't always react in the same way. I don't try to specify a style or a way of doing things that I think is the 'best form'. No.

JB: You gauge the force, and type of force, needed in any given situation?

irl: My feet are cold

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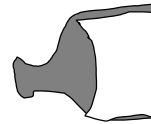
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JB: The installation is very discreet. Is it often the case that your work questions the visibility of things or else critiques the nature of the spectacular and the discrete, or the relative valorisation of things? Is there a strategy of asking the audience to make an effort?

ES: I find that there is an *over*-production of everything. The production of objects, the production of attitudes, or the *reproduction* of attitudes. It's almost always in the quest for a type of attention that is propagandist. There is a loading of values, and an *over*-evaluation of one value over another. I directed the attention towards presence, not only my presence, but human presence, the sensibility of human beings.

JB: At times, a spectator might walk around the installation and barely see some of the elements, or miss them altogether, until they get caught in something. You mentioned that this is intended. Earlier, I accidentally moved some small rocks that are on the floor. There are lots of them around the place, with other objects like books and matches. This creates the impression that we must pay attention, be careful, but the work also activates the need for a certain gentleness in the space.

JB: Is it the first time you have worked with your hair?

ES: I have been working with my hair, in a simple way, for almost twenty years now. It is an important sign of my character, of my presence. I mostly make performances, I work with my presence and my body. I didn't want to distance myself too much from the principal materials with which I work in performance. I gave myself some conditions, to not pull my hair out and not to cut it for this work, because I had cut it during an action some months earlier. This time I said to myself 'from the moment I arrive in Québec I am going to collect my hair [as it falls out naturally], gather it together and make a construction from it.'

JB: It's very symbolic, the use of your own hair. For instance, the idea of a hair is close to the image of a thread in expressions such as the 'fil narratif' [the narrative thread], the 'fil historique' [the historical thread], and 'le fil du temps' [the passage of time]. It's metaphorical *and* tangible at the same time, a part of your body.

ES: It can be very complex. I come across different values when people speak to me about my hair. There are many interpretations...

JB: Could you describe to me how you have employed it in the installation?

ES: During the 19 days of meetings with people, I built a structure with my hair that has a relationship with this period of time. So, I began to make a line with 19 hairs hung from the ceiling [of the gallery]. On the first day I used 19 hairs, and by reducing the number of hairs used to make the lines, I created a triangular form. On the last day I attached only one hair.

It's not easy to see them, but when I point the lines out, some with needles [attached to certain hairs], people begin to see that there is something in the installation. It was a question of playing with the conditions. It's not an arbitrary proposition. There is a relationship with time, people, with myself and the nature of my hair...

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Intimate Conspiracy

Extract of an interview by Julie Bacon with the Mexican-born artist Elvira Santamaria, recorded during her residency at the Chambre Blanche artist centre in Québec City, 2002. Over a period of several weeks, Santamaria created an installation inspired by discussions in the gallery space and research in the city. As she worked, she made short actions in the space for individuals she met, followed by a performance during the opening night of the work.

JB: I'd like to discuss your project here at the Chambre Blanche *Apparition de la disparition* (The appearance of disappearance).

ES: This is my fourth visit to Québec, I have strong links here. This time I really wanted to get to know more about Québécois culture: where do the Québécois come from, what are people's historical references - over a relatively short period of time - but also what is the make-up of the memories that are in the process of constructing something here. I wanted to know more about Québec in terms of the artists, intellectuals and people in general who shape the culture. I had the idea to research this and make a piece based on this exploration.

I invited people to come and meet me to speak about artists and intellectuals who have disappeared and who are of personal importance to them in terms of culture. Afterwards, we moved on to other things, other levels of historic significance, but I wanted to get closer to the personal, individual memory that I refer to as '**living memory**'. 'Historical memory' is another layer, or rather history is another layer of memory, which of course I touched upon as well. But it was above all a kind of poll of that which is *living* in people.

JB: You invited people to come and meet you throughout a 19 day period, leading up to the presentation of your work at an opening. During this time, you constructed the installation on the basis of the exchanges that took place during the meetings, is that right?

ES: Yes.

JB: Did you find that it was difficult for some people to move straight into the mode of personal memory? For example, did the conditioning of formal education seem to be a determining factor in the responses you got?

ES: I had to direct the encounters I had with people by asking them questions. For instance, I might ask them to name art works by the artist they were talking about, or ask 'Why does this work move you?' 'What is the relationship between you and this artist, or else between you and some moments in the life of this artist?'. And so they began to recount anecdotes or important moments to me. Little by little, we were able to get to an intimate voice through a discussion of the artist they were proposing. Some people named artists who had a big exhibition on at the time, or who are officially recognised. It's true that official recognition was a factor. When I asked people to approach those artists from a personal point of view, sometimes people changed the artist they wanted to talk about. But there were people for whom these artists do have a personal or political significance, or an importance in terms of the collective. There was movement between the emphasis on personal importance and collective interests, a kind of oscillation.

JB: After each person had told you a story or had spoken to you about an artist, you made a performance for him or her, at the end of the discussion?

ES: Yes. I wanted to know more about Québécois culture, but I wanted to do so through a form of exchange. I did not want to merely get information from people, but to offer something as well...

JB: Could you talk about the materials that you have used to make the installation? How did you choose them? For instance, the decision to use your hair as a construction material, did you decide before arriving that certain materials would be important or was this determined by discussions you had during the residency itself?

ES: I decided to work with my hair a few months before coming to Québec.