



text + work

(tape runs out)

David Burrows +  
Mark Hutchinson / Paul O'Neill

 (tape runs out) is a collaborative project between Mark Hutchinson and Paul O'Neill. It involves the generous participation of David Burrows, as the writer, Pil and Galia Kollektiv, Barnaby Drabble, Sarah Pierce, John Lalor and Annie Fletcher, who participated in email dialogues with Mark Hutchinson about the project and his work.

Propositions is the work produced by Mark Hutchinson, influenced by this process. The following is an edited extract from an email written by Mark Hutchinson to David Burrows:

"Although I am fulfilling the role of artist, this is a joint project with Paul O'Neill, who is fulfilling the role of curator. The project arose out of the desire to make visible the broader conversations that influence and constitute individual art practices. The idea is to make an exhibition that turns around conversational influence, in the form of the relationship between the artist and others. I will make the work but Paul will give me instructions that will intervene in the process of making the work and the exhibition. He might, for example, instruct me to engage in conversations with particular persons; or give the exhibition a title; or specify materials out of which the work must be made. His first instruction was to contact you, to ask you to be the writer for the project and to provide this explanation of it.

"It is in this context that we talk of the 'roles' of artist, curator and writer and ask you to fulfil the role of writer. Obviously, these designations signify the positions from which each of us speaks and writes but, rather than being ironizing descriptions, I hope the idea of 'roles' will open up a minimum gap between the position of enunciation and what can get said. Thus, here the role of the curator, contrary to the dominant liberal institutional ideology, is to provide obstructions for the artist: to force the artist to engage in

## On Tape Running Out

- 1 Liam Gillick (to Paul O'Neill): "If we're sitting here talking about the idea that people, whoever they might be, might think that curatorial structures are too locked down, too defined something or too didactic or too obvious, then we are probably not..."[tape runs out]
- 1.1 To be presented with a fragment of text is to find oneself in the position of a philologist trying to decipher a dead language.
- 1.1.2 Dead language can only be analysed in terms of the meaning of its words because the context of the use of this language is radically inaccessible.
- 1.2.1 If words are the bones of language, intonation is the living animal in motion.
- 1.2.2 Dead language lacks intonation.
- 2 The basic unit of meaning is the word.
- 2.1 A word is used differently, and for different things, in differing circumstances by different persons or groups.
- 2.1.1 Dictionaries are ideological: they obfuscate the way that every time a word is used it is transformed; every use is a new use.
- 2.1.2 Each word is a site of conflict, of struggle.
- 3 The basic unit of speech is the utterance: the sentence.
- 3.1 The 'theme' of the utterance, as opposed to the meaning of its words, is a function of the whole sentence.
- 3.1.1 The broken sentence is a broken tool: it is like a wooden handle with nothing attached to it.
- 3.1.2 We might be able to deduce something about what is missing from what is there: what we cannot do is use the part we have.
- 3.2 Each utterance is a unique tool, fashioned for the particularities of the occasion of its use.
- 4 The basic reality of speech is verbal interaction.
- 4.1 Language is not the medium of subjective expression.
- 4.2 Language is not an abstract, objective structure.
- 4.3 All use of language is particular: it is to be located spatially, temporally and in relation to the use of language of others.
- 4.3.1 Every utterance is embedded in social being.
- 4.3.2 To speak is to take sides
- 5 To imagine the completion of the broken sentence is not to imagine a set of words; it is to imagine a conversation and a social situation.
- 5.1 The sentence could be completed in an infinite number of ways.
- 5.1.1 The sentence could finish: ...going to want to reproduce these conditions in the ways we find of going on.
- 5.1.2 The sentence could finish with a full stop: the missing predicate could be implied by the preceding conversation.
- 6 There are times when a satisfactory conclusion is impossible.

conversations and activities which would not otherwise have been there. And the role of the artist is to be influenced and deviated: that is, to realise the comedy in trying to get things done. And the role of the writer, here, is not to interpret or explain the work but rather to take it for granted: which is to say to constitute it in some way.

Mark Hutchinson's work will analyse (in a quasi-philosophical way) every aspect of the exhibition: writing; walls; toilets; the public; conversation; the ontology of the art object; etc. This is an absurd and infinite undertaking bound to end in failure and bathos. However, the work is paradigmatically open to change as the project goes along.

"I have written several catalogue essays and each and every time the commissioner says that they do not, necessarily, want me to write about the work; and each first draft gets the response that it was not quite what they anticipated and, perhaps, I could write about the work a bit more. On the contrary, I propose that you do write about the work but without the hindrance and blindness caused by seeing or reading any of it."

Mark Hutchinson & Paul O'Neill

## On the Found Object

1



2 Something extraordinary had to happen before a found object could become art.

2.1 The Readymade was invented by Dada as a tactic of negation.

2.2.1 The Readymade was incomprehensible (and that was the point) within contemporaneous discourse.

2.2.2 The Readymade should be defined by its negative properties: as the result of the attempt not to do something else.

2.3 Art was transformed by the anti-art of Dada.

3. Today, in art, practices of nomination and appropriation are normal.

4 To find 'a Buren' is to find something that was not previously there.

4.1 With a 'found Buren,' the thing found was not, and is not, a Buren; it was not made by Buren.

4.2 To find 'a Buren' is to apply a particular description to a piece of the world.

4.2.1 Such a description is, at the same time, both appropriate and inappropriate.

4.2.2 The 'found Buren' is a deliberate oxymoron: a kind of willful category mistake.

4.3 To nominate something as a 'found Buren' is to apply a description rather than to nominate a bit of the world.

5. To consider a piece of the world under an anomalous description is to make unexpected connections.

# ‘Unsolicited Proposals’

Transcripts of seven recordings found on a disc marked ‘Unsolicited Proposal’

**First Recording** Hi... if you're listening to this... then you're most probably my boss and I'm already dead... or you'll be ordering my elimination shortly... if you're a journalist, then I'm about to get snuffed, or it has already happened, but I trust I have chosen well and you'll know what to do... and if, by chance, you're a member of the public... whatever that might be... then you'd better listen with both ears because there is something you should know... I work for cultural security... never knew we existed, right? But we're everywhere... anyway... a report came in a year ago, 'unsanctioned information in the public domain'- public, there's that word again... anyway, Johnny Jones called it in... I asked him whether it was political. 'Hard to tell', was his reply. 'Well how big an area is contaminated?' 'One street in East London', he said, 'and maybe a building, a gallery, that's why I called you'... well [...] you too! I asked for more information. 'What do you mean one street, how many broadcasts are we talking about?' 'One,' he said, 'It's a poster on a wall, and maybe another in the gallery, but the building is private not public property, boss wants you to investigate'... you see, I work undercover, no one knows about my security work... I was recruited at university and I've lived a double life ever since as an artist and writer and as an Arts Council agent... you might wonder why money's so tight at the Arts Council, it's because we're hidden in the budget, an order of pencils here, a consultancy there, we're the black ops unit of the A.C. but we're so deep that not even Whitehall knows about us... no one can figure out why I'm awarded so many grants or make any sales at all... it's kind of funny... I'm paid well for my services... but in all the years I've worked for cultural security at A.C. I've never been asked to investigate such small scale activity... it was just a poster... jeezus... should have known there and then

## About the Exhibition

*Everything Must Go* aims to include every artist who has participated in previous V.T.O. exhibitions. It is an exhibition of hundreds of artworks packed into a small gallery space. It is, therefore, a display of an excessive amount of art. The challenge for any participating artist is to make a work which will not be subsumed by the spectacular excess of this curatorial premise. That is, the inclusiveness of the unselected show is radically indifferent to the identity of any particular piece of work. The curatorial logic of the exhibition is the play of differences between works; what is important is the structure of multiplicity. Individual artworks articulate points in this structure; they occupy points of display which are semantically empty: they could be filled by anything.

Thus, the group exhibition can be a trap for the artist; the difficulty for the artist can be to escape its particular logic. If the curatorial structure determines how works are seen, then it seems necessary for the artist to tackle that structure: circumstances which precedes the display of artwork. Making art can be part of the problem. Curatorial expectations operate not only in the exhibition but in the things surrounding the exhibition and especially in writing about the exhibition. Writing can be a form of containment. In order to keep alive the idea of escaping from the exhibition, and, indeed, to be vigilant against the closures of art itself, it might, ironically, become necessary for the artist to write something: to put writing, and thus reading, in the place of the point of display of art.

There is, or was, another, companion piece of writing posted in the street outside the gallery. It is a piece of writing which has attempted to escape the exhibition. If this panel of writing in the gallery is about the exhibition in the sense of describing something about it, then the piece of writing in the street is about the exhibition in the sense of being outside of it but in proximity to it. To be in the street, however, is not to escape from the closures of interpretative structures.

that I was being set up... the posters- there were two of them- seemed simple enough, one text about the exhibition, Everything must go, that Hutchinson was showing in, and another in the street, extending the gallery, or rather... and this is what has unnerved my boss, Director Guyton... the second poster tells you that the street, as a site for art, is not free of the limitations of the gallery... and that, in the context of presenting art, the street is continuous with the gallery and not as others claim- as many artists supported by the Arts Council are trying to claim- some kind of readymade democratic or radical space where art can enlighten the public... or, reading between the lines, improve the lives of the public and regenerate urban environments... I spoke with my controller, agent Searle, he gave me another text by Hutchinson, On Writing... told me to study the text... work out how it works... there was one slice of text that really disturbed him... To act is always to do the impossible: to bring about a situation that was inconceivable beforehand. For an act to be genuine, its outcome cannot be known... he read it out and grunted, 'that's against Arts Council policy for a start, what's his game?' 'But I have the guy's name,' I said, 'Mark Hutchinson, why don't we just bring him in, ask him what he's up to?' Agent Searle was adamant, 'We're not after him, it's the reader, the man or woman he wrote the text for that we want, now go and do what I pay you to do, find them and eliminate them'... I had never been asked to kill anyone before... lose an artist's grant application, yes, place bad reviews in the press, bribe judges and curators, sure, after all everyone's at it... destroy works, firebomb galleries and collections, that too, but snuff someone, never... that kind of thing is normally arranged by the regional arts officers... this is why I've made this recording, things are going to end badly...

## About the Exhibition

*Everything Must Go* is the title of an exhibition. The slogan is usually an enticement to buy something: an advertisement. This poster, however, is an escapee from an art exhibition. It is not trying to sell you anything. On the street, however, it might be a kind of stain: something out of place. However, it is designed to be read in the street rather than the gallery: to be seen to be continuous with everything else.

Being in the street is no way to escape the determinates of the gallery. The street is not a place free from the constraints of the gallery; art in the street is subject to the same divisions, exclusions and absences as art in the gallery. The point of putting art on the street is to emphasise the continuities with the gallery not to draw a distinction. Social division and contradiction are not articulated in the divide between art and something or everything else but run through everything, including art.

There is another companion piece of writing in V.T.O. gallery. It is a piece of writing that masquerades as an official explanation of the exhibition. It should be obvious that it is not what it might appear, however. It is about the difficulty facing artists participating in shows such as this: something that such texts do not usually bring up. The writing attempts to be some kind of hiatus amongst the other artworks

## Second Recording

Twenty four hour surveillance of the poster in the street produced no positive identification of Hutchinson's target audience, we're probably too late... should've been at the opening the day before... but to tell you the truth, I was relieved, don't want to catch anyone anyway... the thought of actually killing someone makes me a little queasy, I don't think I could... but if I don't do it, then someone will and I would be next on their list... everyone's talking about increased security, get them before they get us, everyone's gone nuts... there's paranoia sweeping through every art organisation in the country... everyone's feeling it, and the constant pressure from the government and... anyway, twenty subjects read Hutchinson's poster today... we pulled them all in, put them behind the one way glass and grilled them... not much point... a woman walking her dog... three painting lecturers from Slade School of Art... all thought the poster wasn't art... hated it in fact ... pulled in nine local kids on the way to a mosque in Whitechapel... said they didn't think it was meant for them... one said that the person we're looking for is probably one in ten thousand people... that's exactly what agent Searle said, 'and one in a ten thousand can do a lot of damage, that's why they've got to be terminated'...

## On the Public

- 1 Art is produced in relation to other people.
- 1.1 Art does not enter into a relationship with the public; art is formed in the relationships between people.
- 1.2 In art, generosity is not a function of meaning; it is the refusal to mystify one's own conditions of possibility.
- 2 Producing art 'in public' is not the same as producing art for a public.
- 2.1 The public does not exist.
- 2.1.1 The public are diverse, multiple, contradictory, fractured, fragmented, inconsistent, changeable and perverse.
- 2.1.2 Each individual is diverse, multiple, contradictory, fractured, fragmented, inconsistent, changeable and perverse.
- 2.2 Art must manage without a public.
- 3 What might follow if one thought of art as the search for collaborators rather than as the search for a public?

Third Recording I've found something... dug deep... Hutchinson's texts have all these funny numbers down one side, some kind of code, each slice of text has its own number... turns out that this system of numbered sentences was employed by a philosopher, man named Wittgenstein... and Wittgenstein is a kind of hero for some hard-core conceptual artists and radicals active around 68-72... this has got to be a signal... to others... to someone that, like Hutchinson, has read Wittgenstein and understands the code... other like-minded individuals... people who write like Hutchinson, that, to quote the man himself, think there are times when analysis seems to be the only possible course: the only way of keeping alive the possibility of action in the future... the kind of people the A.C. despise the most...

## On Escaping

- 1 Nowadays, it is common for art to escape the gallery.
  - 1.1 There are no nooks and crannies of either public nor private space into which art cannot go.
    - 1.1.1 Art can try to colonise public space.
    - 1.1.2 Being somewhere is not the same as belonging there.
    - 1.2 Art can try to be subservient to public space.
      - 1.2.1 Being responsive to the culture of others is not the same as being part of that culture.
  - 2 All public art is ugly in the specific sense of being out of place: of being that which does not belong.
    - 2.1 Art belongs with other art.
      - 2.1.2 The trouble for the artist is what to do if he or she does not feel at home with art as it is.
      - 2.1.3 Giving up is one way to solve the problem for the artist but it does not solve the problem for art.
    - 2.2 There are things about art from which the artist might wish to escape.
  - 3 Art is need of an operation.
    - 3.1 The escape from the absences and contradictions that hinder art can only take place in time, not space.
    - 3.2 Art's attempt to escape its constraints is to enact the impossibility of escape.
  - 4 True art is fugitive.

## Fourth Recording

I've been reading Hutchinson's texts, trying to think about the voice of the text... if a text can have a voice... perhaps it is better to say tone rather than voice... the tone is deadpan, functional, down to earth, without pleasure or pain... objective... of the mind, not the body... sensations and perceptions are of no consequence in the text... his words are without any psychological inflection... and seems knowing, or rather the text states what can be known or agreed upon... the kind of thoughts that are seldom discussed or raised by artists these days but once might have been called something like critique, or institutional critique even... we thought we'd buried that one... we built Tate Modern, funded Frieze, put art on the TV, made art glamorous... but there's always someone who wants to spoil the party, there's always pockets of resistance- like rats, these scum will survive a nuclear war.. Hutchinson's text doesn't ask me any questions or invite dialogue... it tells me things, carefully, so as not to make any grand statements... he doesn't offer any opinions... and actually they're not statements at all, and there's nothing humorous or self-consciously performative about them either... they're pure... they're propositions... If I find myself disagreeing with the text I begin to think about what is being proposed... I find myself thinking... being critical too... so that's his game... nothing incendiary about these texts... Hutchinson's file states that he is soft-spoken, thoughtful, well mannered... we can't get him on incitement... his psycho-profile says he's not the type for romantic gestures or idealism... just the goal of sparking a thought, a critical thought in the mind of someone else... but who? Got to be careful... it's like an infection... once you start reading his texts you read through to the end... better stop reading...

## On the Outside

- 1 Being inside a *gallery* is not the same as being outside a *gallery*.
- 1.1 The architecture, design and coding of a *gallery* promote particular forms of behaviour within a *gallery*.
- 1.2 To be outside the *gallery* is to escape the architecture of art.
- 1.2.1 It is usually easy to spot art outside of a *gallery*: art usually draws attention to itself as art.
- 1.3 The *gallery* is not just architecture.
- 1.3.1 The *gallery* can be a kind of allegory of the interpretative structures that precede any particular piece of art.
- 1.3.2 Being outside the *gallery* can be little different from being inside the *gallery*.
- 2 Outside the *gallery* art is, typically, in a place of diverse interests.
- 2.1 Public space is used in a multitude of different and competing ways.
- 2.2 Outside the *gallery* art does not have a captive audience.
- 2.3 There is no reason to suppose that someone outside the *gallery* will have any interest in any art there.
- 2.2.1 There are plenty of other things in which to be interested, apart from art.
- 3 Art is nothing special.

## Fifth Recording

Hello again... still here... there's been another 'contamination' called in... this time by A.C. vice... seems Hutchinson put up a poster on a toilet door... as the poster itself explains, the toilet is a classic public/private space where illicit contact and exchange can take place... and like other posters, it's straightforward... a lot of stuff about Duchamp and the Readymade... strictly speaking, I don't know whether the poster is art, and if I could convince agent Searle that it isn't, it would no longer be in my jurisdiction... it's probably anti-art though, which would make it art anyway... but it's not a can of worms I want to open... as long ago as the 70s, when my predecessor was called in by the head of Coventry Art School to flush out a group known as Art and Language, that particular issue has been verboten... a philosopher was called in to report on whether the group and their students were producing philosophy or art, as more words than objects were being produced. The philosopher said he couldn't tell but was enthusiastic about what they were up to and didn't care whether it was art, the words were important... so that particular ruse went pear-shaped... other means had to be found to remove the group... but it is a good example of how an operation can go wrong if you get ensnared by that question, the 'is it art?' question... the group just became martyrs, telling the story of the philosopher over and over... Art and Language came up in a conversation Hutchinson had the other day... I have it on tape, a phone tap recording... Hutchinson said that he was influenced by the group's ideas... as if any further proof were needed... it's there in black and white, I quote Hutchinson's text On Toilets... Any art that is not aligned towards the collective will misrepresent its own condition... he also said he was interested in what collaborators might be out there, that might be engaged through the posters... I listened to that recording a hundred times, he sounded sincere but... I don't get it... I mean, doesn't he know who he's communicating with? There must be someone else directing him... a controller... and another thing... Hutchinson said that he's interested in the negation of the negation, marking or revealing that which is absent in a discourse or structure... the gaps he called it... marking the gaps... I called in the TEU... that's Terminology Explanation Unit... they said that I had a 'critical realist' on my hands... and they seldom work alone...

## On Toilets

- 1 The toilet is not, usually, something to be contemplated in a gallery.
- 1.1 The toilet is, usually, discreetly placed within the gallery.
- 1.1.1 The toilet is to be used rather than to be seen.
- 1.2 The toilet is separated from the gallery by a door, or doors.
2. The door is, amongst other things, an invitation to leave: to be somewhere else. It is, perhaps, a potential escape route.
- 2.1 The toilets do not (under usual circumstances) offer a way out of the building.
- 2.1.1 The toilets are, however, a conventional place of escape. In drama, it is often through the toilet window that an improvised exit is made.
- 2.1.2 The need for the toilet can also be an excuse to leave a conversation.
- 2.2 The toilet can be a refuge.
- 3 A toilet is unlike any other room. It is dedicated to a fairly narrow range of bodily functions.
- 3.1 The toilet is a room in which the body asserts itself, where it is difficult to ignore.
- 3.1.2 In the toilet one emphatically has a body (in a way that is not generally true of the gallery space or conventional conditions for encountering art).
- 3.2 The toilet is also a place of secret desires, such as sexual encounters and narcotic ingestion.
- 3.3 The toilet is somewhere to escape from surveillance: somewhere to be not seen. It is as if the needs of the body are beyond sight: as if indulging in the body is itself an escape from being seen and regulated.
- 4 The toilets are a kind of readymade.
- 4.1 Duchamp's urinal was a readymade that was taken out, metaphorically, of the toilet and relocated in the gallery.
- 4.1.1 One way to think of *Fountain* might be as an attempt to disrupt the smooth functioning of the aesthetic gaze.
- 4.2 To implicate the existing toilets of a gallery in an artwork is, amongst other things, to draw attention to the architectural margins of the gallery.
- 4.2.1 The toilets are not (usually) considered part of the space of display of the gallery. They are not something to look at (nor to be looked into).
- 4.3 The toilets, qua readymade, do not follow the Duchampian criteria of objects that provoke complete visual indifference.
- 4.3.1 The toilets are not presented as objects to be looked at.
- 4.3.2 The toilets are a reminder of things that are conventionally ignored: a way to bring into consideration that which is normally left out.
- 5 There are times when a toilet is more interesting than an artwork.

## Sixth Recording

I knew it... I bloody knew it... jeezus, the Hutchinson case has just turned inside out and I'm being squeezed both sides... ten forty five, yesterday morning... got a call from the man himself... Hutchinson... did I get the e-mail he sent me and would I write a catalogue essay for his autumn show? I nearly pissed my pants... my first thought was, 'this is how it happens, he knows who I am, must be A.C. assassin'... this is some kind of sick joke, I'm investigating the guy who's going to snuff me out... or if he isn't A.C. he knows who I am anyway and he's just playing with me... JEEZUS! ...well I hadn't received his mail... he apologised... 'Why me?', I asked... as cool as a cucumber he replied, 'Paul O'Neill, the curator of my show, he told me to ask you, you see his role is to stipulate the form and limits of the exhibition and the work I will make, he tells me what to do, up to a point'... I was silent for few seconds... 'What, is he... like your controller or something?' 'Yes', he said... YES! Just like that... I knew it, I bloody knew it... I just put a trace on O'Neill, fully expecting him to come up as Arts Council on the system... he didn't but that doesn't prove anything... I've said yes to writing the essay... what else could I do... now I'm not sure if I'm working against Hutchinson or for him... or O'Neill... Just got to think, better read the new text he sent... get to the bottom of all this...

## On Contamination

- 1 It is possible to think of art as a contaminant, as something which spoils the pristine space of the gallery.
- 1.1 To contaminate is to render impure by contact or mixture: to corrupt, defile, pollute, sully, taint, or infect.
- 1.2 The contaminant is that which does not stay in its proper place or keep its distance.
  - 1.2.1 The same sensation of being touched is experienced differently depending upon whether the attention is wanted or not.
  - 1.2.2 The undesired touch commonly provokes physical revulsion and an attempt to get away: to re-establish a distance.
  - 1.2.3 When the contaminant gets inside the subject it induces vomiting as an attempt to expel the contaminant: this, of course, produces more contamination.
- 1.3 It is as if the worst thing that contamination threatens is the collapse of the subject's distinction from everything else.
- 2 The contaminant not only spoils that which it touches but everything around it.
  - 2.1 The logic of contamination is to spread.
    - 2.1.1 The stain on the sheet spoils the whole sheet: it has already spread beyond its physical location.
    - 2.1.2 There is no surface to the stain: it is that which is uncontaminated.
- 3 Contamination is excessive.
  - 3.1 Contamination is sudden and unpredictable, even if expected.
  - 3.2 Contamination is always close by, just out of sight or precariously contained.
  - 3.3 The detectable contaminant is always a promise of more to come: it contains the threat that order will break down.
- 4 The idea of contamination implies the idea that there was, prior to the contamination coming, a place free of contamination.
  - 4.1 The contaminant is a breach of order and purity: it makes the erstwhile fantasy of purity unsustainable.
  - 4.2 It is in being unpredictable and uncontrollable - the ability to spread not just itself but uncertainty - that the contaminant destroys the predictable and ordered space around the subject before it gets to the subject.
- 5 The gallery is usually a place of purity and order.
  - 5.1 The sanctioned transgressions of some artists reinforce this purity and order rather than challenging it.
  - 5.2 What would it mean to think of the gallery as a place of genuine uncertainty or unpredictability?
- 6 The contaminant is a reminder of that which is repressed in order to maintain illusions of coherence and unity.

Seventh Recording Hi... this is probably the last time you'll hear my voice... I feel the assassins are closing in... darkness is closing in just as everything is becoming clearer... I feel like the punch line of a joke that is no longer funny... it's all there in Hutchinson's text, Propositions on art and the public... I understand why the A.C. put him under surveillance, the text spells it out... The public does not exist... You get that? You don't exist! All these years I've been making art for you, writing for you, working for the Arts Council, living a duplicitous life for your benefit, working for you, just to please you and entertain you and enlighten you... AND YOU DON'T EVEN EXIST! YOU'RE A LIE! A BLOODY SICK JOKE! An idea dreamed up by educated men and woman so that they could feel important and fill their pockets and stomachs whilst working for the public good... The bleedin' public, the best con trick since Jake the peg with his extra bleedin' leg... Hutchinson is right... you are far too diverse, multiple, contradictory, fractured, fragmented, inconsistent, changeable and perverse to be anything but a myth... and he's on the money when he writes that art must do without the public... and if the public does not exist, then why the hell should the A.C. It's organisations who conjure up the public, it's their little trick, with their questionnaires and reports... their endless bleedin' bureaucracy... I put that in my last report... I should call it my suicide note, but I am beyond caring... sod 'em, sod all those pompous guardians of the public good and SOD THE PUBLIC... you may have gathered that I'm a little fired up, a little pissed... that's right... I've been drinking... I've been drinking to celebrate one of Hutchinson's propositions in particular... I hope you'll join me, whoever the hell you are, in raising a glass for a toast- raise your glass for art, as the search for collaborators rather than as the search for a public!

David Burrows  
Artist + Writer October 2006

## On Walls

- 1 The wall marks a boundary.
  - 1.1 The wall can keep people (or something else) in or keep people out.
    - 1.1.1 Both interior and exterior walls define and divide space.
    - 1.1.2 The wall is a division made concrete. It is the negation of continuous space; a de-totalising split in the public sphere.
  - 1.2 Defining a boundary is a function of private property.
- 2 The wall is both symbolic and material.
  - 2.1 The wall is an intervention in material space which is also material.
  - 2.2 Each and every wall is a site of social conflict.
- 3 The wall can be a support.
  - 3.1 It is possible to stick things on walls.
    - 3.1.1 It is not unusual to stick art on walls.
    - 3.2 It is possible to entertain the idea that the kind of wall to which a piece of art is stuck will effect the said artwork.
      - 3.2.1 A wall can be part of the production of an artwork.
      - 3.2.2 A wall can be a mechanism in the reproduction of art.
    - 3.3 The location of a bit of art is, amongst other things, the relationships between people made concrete.
- 4 Not all walls are the same.

Mark Hutchinson  
Artist + Artist

Mark Hutchinson is an artist. Recent projects include: *Escape*, solo exhibition for Vamiali's gallery, Athens; writer for, and participant in, *Metropolis Rise*, a touring exhibition in Shanghai and Beijing; a co-author of the collective text by the Analysis group, *Analysis 1: On Collectivity*; co-organiser of, and participant in, the touring exhibition, publication and symposium.

*There is Always an Alternative: possibilities for art in the early nineties*, with Dave Beech; *On Public Art*, a poster produced for *It's the Only Life I Know* at the invitation of Hewitt + Jordan, for a project organised by [Insert Space]; *Escape From Studio Voltaire*, solo exhibition at Studio Voltaire, London: and *Contaminant*, an installation for the Collective gallery, Edinburgh. He is co-editor of the occasional pamphlet and website, *The First Condition* ([www.thefirstcondition.com](http://www.thefirstcondition.com)).

He is author of the influential essay 'Four Stages of Public Art,' which applies the critical realist dialectic of the philosopher Roy Bhaskar to art. Recent essays include: *All Art Is Collaborative*, for Ayling & Conroy, Nottingham; *Work is the Obscene and Shameful Secret of Art* for the Futurology publication by Hewitt+Jordan, the Walsall Art Gallery; *Stillness*, on aspects of animation for the touring exhibition *The Animators*; and *The Terrors of Experts, Curators and Publics*, for *The Internationaler*, issue 01.

He has written catalogue essays for Beagles and Ramsay; Caroline McCarthy; Paul O'Neill and Lindsay Seers.

on writing

- 1 In art, writing is everywhere.
  - 1.1 In galleries, there is writing about art and writing which is art.
    - 1.1.1 It might not be easy to tell whether some writing is about art or is art.
    - 1.1.2 There are other ways of categorizing writing in relation to art.
    - 1.1.3 There is writing that seeks to be part of a critical understanding of itself and of art; and there is writing which does not.
    - 1.1.4 It might be the least interesting thing about some writing, whether it is taken to be a work of art (or not).
  - 1.2 Writing as art, or as part of an artwork, is now a familiar and established strategy of art practice: seemingly one artistic choice amongst others.
    - 1.2.1 Nowadays, to take up writing as art can be little more than to make a choice about what kind of artist one wants to appear to be.
    - 1.2.2 Some artists write because they perceive the necessity of analysis.
    - 1.2.3 Nowadays, writing, qua artwork, must be aware that it will be taken as a commitment to style rather than content, if it is not to perpetuate the state of affairs that promotes style over content.
- 2 Reading has become a normal thing to do in a gallery.
  - 2.1 It can be hard to read writing in a gallery because so much that is written there is dull and inconsequential.
  - 2.2 The familiarity of writing can be an obstacle to transforming an onlooker into an interested and interesting reader.
- 3 Language is social.
  - 3.1 Language is at once both formed by the practises of its users and formative of those same practises.
    - 3.1.1 Language is in a continual state of transformation.
    - 3.2 Writing both presupposes and perpetuates a constituency of users.
    - 3.3 The divisions of a divided society run through every aspect of language.
      - 3.3.1 Every word is a site of struggle.
      - 3.3.2 The use of language is always partisan.
  - 4 For an artist, there are times when writing seems to be the only possibility of going on: when being articulate is the only way of being adequate to the situation in which one finds oneself.
  - 5 All writing, qua art, is not the same.

Paul O'Neill  
Artist + Curator

Paul O'Neill is a curator, artist, lecturer and writer, currently based in London. He was Gallery Curator at londonprintstudio Gallery between 2001-2003, where he curated group shows such as *Private Views; Friction; A Timely Place...Or Getting Back to Somewhere; All That is Solid* and solo projects: *Being Childish Billy Childish; Phil Collins Reproduction Timewasted* and *Locating: Corban Walker*.

He is Co- Director of *MultiplesX*; an organisation that commissions and supports curated exhibitions of artist's editions, which he set up in 1997 and has presented exhibitions at spaces such as the ICA, London; Temple Bar Gallery and Project, Dublin; Ormeau Baths, Belfast; Glassbox, Paris and The Lowry, Manchester.

He has curated over 40 exhibitions and projects, that include recently: *Mingle-Mangled, Cork Caucus, Cork; General Idea: Selected Retrospective, Project Art Centre, Dublin; La La Land, Project, Dublin; Coalesce: The Remix, Redux, London; Tonight, Studio Voltaire, London, 2004 Coalesce: With All Due Intent* at Model and Niland Art Gallery, Sligo, 2004 and *Are We There Yet?* at Glassbox in Paris. As an artist, he has exhibited internationally, including at Zacheta Gallery of Contemporary Art, Warsaw; Glassbox, Paris; Villa Arson, Nice; The South London Gallery, temporarycontemporary and Cell Project Space, London; and at Project and Temple Bar Gallery, Dublin. Currently he teaches on the MFA Curating at Goldsmiths and is a PhD scholar at Middlesex University, researching the Culture of Curating. His edited anthology of new curatorial writing *CURATING SUBJECTS*, will be published by De Appel and Open Editions in December.

He writes regularly for many journals and magazines including *Art Monthly, Contemporary, the Internationaler, Everything, Space & Culture Journal* and *CIRCA*.

## On Absence

- 1 Absence has ontological priority over presence.
- 1.1 Constraints on living and being are defined by absence rather than positive obstructions: the absence of clean water; the absence of money; the absence of recognition; and so on.
  - 1.1.1 People are not born free.
  - 1.1.2 To be unfree is not to have supplementary forces enchaining a pre-existing freedom; it is to be restricted by what one does not have.
- 1.2 To become free is to remove lacks: to absent absences.
- 2 Art is constrained by what is absent from it.
- 2.1 Appropriate behaviour with art is nothing but the exclusion of the possibility of other forms of behaviour.
- 3 Expectations, rules and conventions block alternatives as much as prohibitions do: they deprive one of the terms in which something else might be thought or done.
  - 3.1 The Law and its transgression establish and rely upon each other.
    - 3.1.1 Freedom is not alternative behaviour.
    - 3.1.2 The absence of Law is not its transgression; it is the absence of the dialectic of Law and transgression.
  - 3.2 Freedom is alternative relations between persons.
- 4 Freedom is a different society.

## David Burrows: Artist + Writer

David Burrows was born 1965, London and received an MA in Fine Art from Goldsmiths College London.

He has exhibited in both the UK and abroad and his exhibitions include *Popnosis*, Chungking Projects Los Angeles 2005; *Moonage Daydream*, Praz-Dleavallade Paris 2005; Mirror works, fa projects London 2004; *New Life*, Chisenhale Gallery and UK tour, 2004-05, *Macro/Micro: British Art 1996-2002*, group show curated by British Council, Muscarnok/KunstHalle, Budapest, 2003; *Modern Domestic Disasters*, Frederieke Taylor Gallery, New York 2002; and *Becks Futures 2*, 2002.

An element of his practice has been collaboration with other artists and writers including exhibitions with BANK and *Sample Scatter Synthesis (Amplified)*, Artspace, Sydney 2003, Australia and *Synthetic Sublimation Party*, Nylon, London 2002 with DJ Simpson. He is a contributor to Guerrilla Plastique Fantastique, a collaborative practice formed with Simon O'Sullivan. Awards include, Paul Hamlyn Visual Arts award 2002. Writing includes reviews, essays and fiction for magazines, journals, catalogues and books. Writing for exhibition catalogues includes essays for exhibitions by Mark Wallinger, Manuel Ocampo, Lindsay Seers, Nicky Coutts and DJ Simpsons. Recent short stories and cartoon stories have been published in *Victor B* and *Frozen Tears* and *Magnetic Promanades*. David Burrows lives in London and lectures in art at the University of Central England where he is also the editor of Article Press.

## On Repetition

1



- 1.1 In evolution, convergence is the name of the process by which two unrelated species come to possess the same or similar characteristics because subject to similar evolutionary pressures.
- 1.2 Similar processes happen elsewhere.
2. Repetition in the world is commonplace.
  - 2.1 Repetition in the world of things is conditioned by utility and the mode of their production.
    - 2.1.1 Products are standardized.
    - 2.1.2 Branding makes the standardized product recognizable and easy to consume.
  3. In psychoanalysis, repetition is a sign of blockage.
    - 3.1 In the symptom, the subject unwittingly repeats the traumatic event.
      - 3.1.1 The repressed, via the unconscious, forces its way to the surface.
      - 3.1.2 Repetition is the cost of repression.
    - 3.2 To repeat is to be haunted: a sign of unfinished business.
    - 3.3 The subject clings to her symptom; if she did not, it would not be a symptom.
      - 3.3.1 Repetition can be reassuring.
  4. In art, repetition is expected.
    - 4.1 Consistency can be reassuring for art's makers and consumers alike.
      - 4.1.1 One pressure on a successful artist is to repeat the success.
    - 4.2 Literal repetition is dumb.
      - 4.2.1 Copying oneself is as mindless as copying someone else.
      - 4.2.2 Mindlessness in art and mindlessness in the world can look similar.
    - 4.3 Repetition can be a refusal.
      - 4.3.1 Repetition can negate all kinds of talk of originality, sensitivity and so on.
  5. Repetition gives the artist something else to do.





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## EVENT

The Gallery invites you and your guests to the  
**text+work event and private view**  
on Thursday 18th January 2007, details are as follows:

**Event** Thursday 18th January 2007 from 4.30 to 5.30pm  
Lecture Theatre One

Followed by a **Private View** in The Gallery from 5.30 to 6.30pm

For further information and to book a place for the event please contact:

Violet McClean, Gallery Officer  
on [vmcclean@aib.ac.uk](mailto:vmcclean@aib.ac.uk) or 01202 363351





David Burrows + Mark Hutchinson / Paul O'Neill

tape runs out

11 December 2006 – 26 January 2007

The Gallery, The Arts Institute at Bournemouth

Opening Hours

9.00am – 8.00pm      Monday – Thursday (term time)

9.00am – 4.00pm      Friday

9.00am – 1.00pm      Saturday (term time)

Closed Bank Holidays and Saturdays during non term time

Please check website for dates

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