

# DIY 2

## Professional development BY artists FOR artists

January to March 2004

### Full reports by DIY 2 project leaders

#### Anne Bean

##### NOW

Throughout January, February and March 2004  
(5 participants selected by invitation)

We have travelled together sharing tides, planting seeds, hatching sea-monkeys, growing flowers from crystals, watching sunsets, putting messages in bottles, meditating on furry monkeys, following shadows, decaying our photographic portraits, deciphering the building blocks of everyday life, sifting beaches, discussing many artworks from Sophie Calle's piece where she follows strangers to Warhol's 'Sleep' and 'Empire State' films as well as ideas from Simone Weil's state of waiting to Stephen Hawkins' arrows of time to film-maker Humphrey Jennings' Mass Observation group. We have all taken great responsibility for the whole group and because the process lasted throughout January, February and March, all of us meeting for four days plus other meetings, a profound and intense connectivity was set up which has led to a very natural arrival at future collaborative ideas, at least some of which we will definitely do.

My original brief to share the 90 days of the DIY as a conscious 'time-travel,' was not only explored but expanded beyond my expectations. I have been touched by the sensitivity and commitment of everyone involved, the depth and spread of conversations, the extent of communication in the many emails that passed between us and the level of creative process explored. Each participant came up with several concepts and brought to each meeting inspiring and stimulating imagery from videos of skin creasing and uncreasing, to polaroids of odd ordinary moments fully observed, to unintentional but intensely different photo booth portraits of the artist, to the changing skies on a journey to and from Japan, to images using the same photographic framing of a certain point of departure for many trips.

I have become particularly excited about the notion of memory and how that carries through time outside of any documentation and we have devised a public performance situation to probe this, as one of our future events. Also the idea came up of an identical object being given to all the participants as well as the same object being placed in numerous diverse situations and then bringing them all back together after a year, each with its own 'adventure' etched on its surface.

The DIY scheme has allowed the time for a truly organic process to take place and has nurtured our work individually and collaboratively.

#### **MY EXPERIENCE ON ANNE BEANS DIY WORKSHOP EXPLORING THE NOTIONS OF 'TIME'.**

**Holly Darton**

Monthly meetings, Good food, Time, Projects, Continuous conversation through e-mails, Games, Experiments, Walks, Landscape, Journeys.

These are my experiences of DIY.

The first meeting was fantastic, mouths moving at the same time and everyone exploding with interesting ideas, experiences, stories and information, we walked to the beach and explored the

sand, made patterns from found objects and discussed the sea and its importance to time. This meeting then continued for the next three months, located somewhere between Anne's kitchen and the internet, messages passed between us all and a dialogue that contained fresh and exciting news...yet binding us in some way to each other.

Our work was not essentially collaborative and there was no pressure to produce, we chose not to try and find a collaborative project as we felt it would be forced, pressured. It was in fact the bits in between our projects, that to me often and still are more important, - the conversations and correspondence...the thinking of, and being aware of each other during the time even when absent from each other... a relationship between us all.

On pondering this I started to consider more the times in my life that may lie secondary to other specific times. The glamorous moments not being in fact as interesting as the mundane, my personal exploration of time for the project really holding little interest in comparison to the experiences I was having during my time at Anne's house with the rest of the group or reading an e-mail from one of the group, these in between processes that have led me to the visual outcome.

I began to think about journeys and the places I travel to and from and what transport I use. I became aware how this varied according to the place in which I was living. Out of London for a while I was in my car, the rural setting of my village assured no public transport. My car was enabling me to reach places that would not be possible by foot due to time. The car changed the time of a distance; it moved me faster than naturally possible. I began to note down what time it was upon reaching a different location, mapping the amount of time I spent in a certain environment...*10.30-13.46-home, 13.46-14.10-car, 14.10-14.22-tesco, 14.22-14.28-car....*

After 3 weeks I stopped doing this. I found where I had been was not important, but the house to which I returned was more interesting, those subtle changes, not noticed, the assurance of it always being there always the same. This place that lies between the journeying that houses conversations, relationships, information to start and finish other journeys. The times I choose to not document are the times that interest me the most. I have been capturing my house on camera when leaving and returning to it.

Journeys stayed with me through out this project and I started to make a conscious effort to walk to places around my village, I began to focus on places of interest, and notice the landscape, changing seasons and the weather, often hidden when zooming out of the village in my car to get somewhere else...somewhere better? I thought of the passing of time and times in which other people were going to be standing/looking like I was. I remembered back to the sea conversations, weathering, changes and movement. I decided then to hang packages around my village containing a camera, I wanted others to capture time, their time at the spot and remember it. When the film had run out I would post them their photo.

One package blew away, one stolen, the camera nearly full with photos. I have successfully developed the third and I am in the process of posting the photos back to the participants.

### **Exploration of ideas about time with Anne Bean. Lucy Baldwin**

It has been a wonderful time working with and being mentored by Anne Bean. And to meet and exchange ideas with Holly, Meg, Miyako and Lucille.

The very openness of the form of DIY enabled us, in return, to open up creatively.

It was a rare opportunity and one we all recognised. It allowed us to be inspired, to gather momentum and explore ideas.

From the beginning, I was very drawn to the idea of a daily reference to the project – a daily 'meditation' on something that had its own life and was at least in part beyond my individual control.

Anne's generosity in opening up her house allowed us a great meeting place where we roamed through ideas about time and memory, digressing on to personal anecdotes, coming across ideas and images in an unhurried and unforced way. Although for me, time outside the DIY sessions often seemed crammed to overcapacity; within the half day sessions we spent together, it seemed to expand and unfold. We had enough time to gently explore our different backgrounds and starting points and to find a language of memory and sensation, place and space, which we could share and interweave. In our shared activities we developed a tiny history together, which 'weathered' and changed – just as the photos that Anne took of us all in the first session, are now weathering on her balcony.

I came to the first session nervously crammed with ideas: a personal project – a minute's worth of choreography improvised everyday – a growing book of movement which might intersect with the language of the shipping news (latitude and longitude) and would reference a recent period of spending a long time lying on my back looking out of a window on the seventh floor, of a downtown building which was not my home.

The notebook was important to me - a background conversation – like sketching - I realised it threw into relief ideas about gravity and weight, about waiting and moving. I thought about the specific relationship between choreography and moving through time (as well as space). A book of choreographers' drawings inspired me with their energy, their 'solid' representation of movement.

Through emails and meetings, I was inspired by other responses to our group conversations. They allowed me to have the confidence to let my own ideas quietly sit (rather than forcing them to a conclusion). I looked forward to hearing how other's projects had developed, shifted or changed. And I enjoyed the different bursts of energy which DIY allowed for.

During the latter part of the project I developed a video response for artist Mark Jeffery's NRLA work. Saturated in time and memory, I took some ideas from my DIY notebook to try out within the application. These were a live VJ application – layering up different moving images, revealing parts or segments of complete pictures. Then I folded this back into my developing DIY ideas, and shot some moments of tiny choreographies and mixed this with words taken from my notebook (as well as images of the body marked by clothing and daily activity: a starting point which I want to develop further).

I feel very 'charged' by the project - that it has quietly and consistently sown new pathways of creating. And allowed me to experience a different way of 'collaborating' (more akin to simultaneous creativity over individual work (a cross-fertilisation of responding), rather than fitting pieces into a single work.

As artists we often develop work alone: it's been lovely to have companions for three months and to discover the beginnings of possible future collaborations and continued conversations.

From my 3 month notebook on time:

#### **28<sup>th</sup> January**

one minute of improvisation:

Shift-weight-hip-relax. PAUSE.

Shift-weight-hip-relax. PAUSE.

Ankle. Ankle lift an-inch-above. breath.sharp

Silvery-early-morning. Shadow on my neck.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> February**

one minute of improvisation:

fail-again-

fail-better

fail-again-fail-better

fail-fail-better-fail.again.

small circle, eyes drawing a line.

## **16th March**

45% to the door. Ifoundmyselfjustleaning.  
Eachvertebraeraised.. shoulder blades like chicken wings.

“wings raised to the second power”

From Simone Weil and Paul Virilio – writings on gravity and weight:

...incapacity to feed upon light.

“all the natural movements of the soul are controlled by laws analogous to those of physical gravity”

“We must always expect things to happen in conformity with the laws of gravity, unless there is supernatural intervention.”

“Gravity. Generally what we expect of others depends on the effect of gravity upon ourselves; what we receive from them depends on the effect of gravity upon them. Sometimes (by chance) the two coincide, often they do not.”

“To come down by a movement in which gravity plays no part.....Gravity makes things come down, wings make them rise: What wings raised to the second power can make things come down without weight?”

Creation is composed of the descending movement of gravity, the ascending movement of grace, and the descending movement of the second degree of grace.

Grace is the law of the descending movement.”

“I think that we can't see the world any other way than as a fall into the world. This is not a metaphor. Our human vision depends on gravity, that is to say on the fact that one does or does not fall. Horizontal movement, walking is a way of falling from one foot onto the other, and in the same way, the perspectival vision that we have of the horizon is linked to the fact that we fall into the horizon. Let me explain that: the Renaissance perspective on real space is already conditioned by gravity. The notion of high and low does not exist independently of the feeling of heaviness, neither for the living body or the visual cortex; there is a fall at the origin of the perception of the world, and I would say that goes back to Genesis. When Adam and Eve open their eyes, when they discover themselves naked, they fall into reality. But I think this symbolic vision is a practical vision. I think that every rapport with reality is a rapport of falling, thus a rapport of weight.”

## **Live Art Development Agency Report - DIY 'Time' Workshop, Jan- March 04 with Anne Bean**

**Meg Mosley**

### **The DIY experience with Anne Bean, Holly, Lucille, Lucy & Miya:**

Anne Bean created an open and generous atmosphere for experimentation. The group was a safe place where we saw the rise and fall of enthusiasm for particular ideas, some of which were developed while others were left behind. The group communication kept the work alive so that it was never a simple solitary work but became an individual expression amongst a whole spectrum of ideas and possibilities fired by our conversations. (See fig 2 Time psychologies) This enabled my private engagement to be continually kept open. The collaborative aspect caused me to consider the possible impact that my work had on the wider sociological issues inspiring other members of the group to re-investigate ideas of daily life. This was so important and kept a tension between the private and public arena.

### **My individual response to the brief:**

When I read Anne Bean's brief, I responded most strongly to the words, 'Time is an inescapable collaborator in all art and life', which resonated strongly with the themes in my

work. The impetus of my artwork is the psychological and social processes by which human identity is constructed through the possession of artifacts. The 'Time' project made me think about the psychology behind controlling time, by fixing it in something physical.

Over the period of one month, I used the photograph as a device to 'frame' time in a frozen moment. I was interested in the desire to control time by creating ritualistic repetitions of journeys in daily lives, be they practical or obsessive.

I chose to document myself daily using the photo booth. The image produced from the photo booth seems to be a particularly potent moment in time due to the formality of a posed subject juxtaposed against a blank backdrop. Photo booths interest me in regards to private and public space. Drawing the curtain signifies the boundary between these two spaces. I used my time whilst in the privacy of the booth to write down a reflection relevant to that point in the day. The images and text were then connected to the group through email and brought to the four meetings we had throughout the workshop making it a collaborative interaction.

### **Summary of the work:**

In a sense I was collecting myself. I continued my fascination of documentation, collection, order, representation and psychology.

It was uncomfortable to confront the daily representations of my face, without the social veneer or smile. The face looked naked tired and sometimes unrecognisable to me. I was unnerved by certain representations of myself. Usually we would edit or choose to pose again, but I took the first of each shot that the photo booth captured.

I was fascinated by the intrinsically narcissistic nature of the photo booth as a distorting mirror to ourselves. Photographs become crucially definitional objects that we collect and edit to suit our desired representation. This led me to think about sociology and how identity is constructed, commodified and sold to us through the medium of photography. (See fig.1 Photo: constructing identity).

The repetitive daily pilgrimages to the photo booth led me to think about the creation of modern day rituals in place of the lack of religious ones. The spaces that the booths were located: car parks, shopping precincts, air ports; train stations and supermarkets for me represented the modern day places of the people to 'congregate'. My interest in themes of modern rituals resonated in these digital shrine-like altars. I was investigating and engaging in these non-spaces through the act of my work as a form of performance anthropology. The conversations we hear or the feelings of modern isolation experienced in the supermarket, car park and tube station seemed the ideal place to go behind the curtain of the photo booth - to express how these experiences feel.

### **Future possibilities:**

In the future, I hope to explore the publication of my photographs and texts in a book and possibly exhibit in alternative venues such as the photo booths themselves. I also am interested in hiring and locating a photo booth away from the original static spaces of the supermarket etc and in more (organic) environments to create a collection of photographs from passers by taking the booth away from its original fixed location and meaning. It will be inspiring to see what the response and outcome will be.

### **Live Art questioning:**

The DIY experience created engaging dialogues around notions of 'performance' 'event', 'audience' and 'art'. Interesting debates arose around the constraints of 'what is the work?' Was the process of visiting the booth a daily 'live art' interaction or is the 'art' the documentation of the event? The group allowed me to take this tension forward into new ground. I was enabled to dispose of my fixed notions of what it is to perform in art and re-evaluate my own practice. With new awareness of the performative aspects in my work, I was able to 'see' that I frequently use myself as subject as an immediate and direct expression of an idea.

Previously I 'froze' when I thought of the idea of 'performing' in art but with this group I came to understand the importance of trust and gained a new understanding that 'live art' can be a simple action or interaction with an environment. Every time we feel fear we are about to grow. So it is with a nervous energy I go forward with a group of artists whom I respect into an opening of my practice and myself.

### **Lucille Power**

When Anne contacted me to invite me to take part in her project, I welcomed the opportunity; what a fine way to begin 2004; what a welcome combat to the bleak January climate.

My own immediate response to this 90 day project exploring 'time' took the form of observations; of my daily life and immediate surroundings. As someone who spends much of their time at home, this is where I began. Having just moved house, I took the opportunity to measure the passing of the first months in my new habitat. This encompassed the minutiae of my immediate physical environment (worn concrete/ grass growing through cracks in the pavement/ the light at a certain time of day), but also the people passing my window, or using the park opposite. I wanted to see what might come of this noticing. How might the routines strangers locate me, and feature large in my own most mundane moments.

My observation initially took the form of writing and taking polaroids. The writing took me by surprise, as language and I have never enjoyed a particularly comfortable relationship as far as creative exploration goes. However, having people with whom I could informally and quite freely express my thoughts in writing, enabled me to use it as a constructive tool, and begin to develop a more pleasurable and confident relationship to it.

The whole process of exploration was enhanced by our monthly meetings, during which we discussed 'time' in the widest possible sense, went off a vital tangents, and got overexcited. I apologise to any of the group who might have suffered at the receiving end of my over-enthusiasm, and not been able to get a word in edgeways!

Is it usual for a group of strangers to be able to hang out, discuss ideas, eat delicious food (thank you, Anne), and feel so comfortable almost immediately? This was largely down to the easy and generous environment that Anne provided. Exploring in the group was a key part of our process, and something I looked forward to each month. This has provided a welcome focus through the last three months, providing a chance to review each month past, and look to the one ahead. This could not have happened at a better time for me. Both in relation to my development artistically and professionally, but also because I met some really great people. My confidence has grown during this unique and invaluable time.

I have been thinking about the things that cause us to become momentarily aware of the passing of time. The randomness of this fascinates and seduces me. This usually has a specific trigger. This could be a song, a taste, a person, a location etc. These memories can be like morsels, a taste of a fragment of time, quite abstract and fleeting.

I relish catching slivers and fragments of others' lives. What appeals most is not the dramatic or the spectacular, rather the small day to day moments. I am reassured by their leaking presence in my day to day meanderings; by they're touching into my privately public moments, or should that be publicly private? There are so many of these, and they enrich my life so utterly comprehensively.

My body and I inhabit an uncomfortable time/activity continuum. Some years ago my body decided to take a long break from daily life, forcing me to stay in bed for most of six years. As the years progressed, it allowed a very gradual increase in activity. We have tentatively learnt to respect and accommodate one another; through necessity, I might add. In short, my body is not the body I was born with (but then nobody's is). We are companions through force of circumstance. We have come to an understanding.

I am using a mixture of writing, photos, video, and maybe sound recording too. I'm trying not to be censorious at this point, and to enjoy being part of this project, and the freedom that comes from this. To allow a freedom to just notice, explore, collect, observe, consider, and reflect.

I've been thinking about the aversion I have to taking photos, precisely because I feel reluctant to step into the role of observing and fixing moments. It seems like the proliferation of the media (cameras on phones etc) to communicate our lives can become an oppressive pressure to document a perfect life. Anything less might be a failure of some sort.

I am analysing and noticing my relationship with/ to time. Sometimes we get along, and sometimes time downright pisses me off/ puts me on a downer. Time is my most constant and intimate companion. It knows things about me from the moment I began to exist in time and space...I am beginning to think that time is a reflection of myself, and of my most internal and private mechanisms. But what of that? So what? And frankly, who cares? Old father time is indeed an exacting and testing old geezer.

# Lucy Kimbell.

## FREE EVALUATION SERVICE

18, 20 and 25 February 2004

(6 participants selected by open submission)

The aim of this project was to help artists gain insight into the discourse and processes of 'evaluation', an increasingly common requirement within the arts. It was intended to offer participants genuine help by providing a conceptual framework to enable them to reflect on their practice, at the same time as framing evaluation itself as a problem within contemporary culture.

In order to achieve this I designed a 90-minute session as a service to other artists. This took the form of a one-to-one encounter during which I helped each participant evaluate his or her practice. The process included asking the artist to define a set of performance indicators for their own practice, by making a paper dashboard with several dials. Each artist determined what the right dials were for their practice, revealing several different ways of thinking about what a 'successful' art practice might be.

Having completed all six sessions, I completed the service by sending the artists a simple paper toolkit, which shows dashboard dials created by them during the sessions, to adapt and use. I plan to make this available to others as well via my website.

### How it worked

#### Beforehand

Participants emailed me directly having seen the announcement, and wrote a short description of how they evaluated their practice and that of another artist. On the basis of these, I selected six participants and arranged session times with them. I wanted to have a range of types of practice represented and range of backgrounds. More women than men applied. Several people who had seen the email later said that the very idea was intimidating. However the people who applied all seemed to want to grapple with what evaluation might mean in the arts, and to have a chance to reflect on their practice.

#### On the day

Participants travelled from London to Oxford, to the Said Business School, a relatively young department of Oxford University, located in a new building designed by Dixon and Jones. I arranged to have the FES here in order to cloak myself with the ethos associated with a management school, which is intimately involved in disseminating and reinforcing evaluation as a practice. For the session, I borrowed their reception room, which is a large gallery-type space at the front of the building with one entire wall as a window onto the street. Again, I deliberately choose this space in order for me and the participant to have our encounter in an incongruous semi-public but private space.

Having welcomed the participant, I explained my intentions, the fact that this was a private session for them, and what we would do.

First, I asked them to do a brain dump by writing onto a flipchart of lots of words and phrases they associated with 'evaluation' in the arts. Typical responses included things like assessment, audience numbers, statistics, checking, feedback, indicators, context, value, funding.

Then I asked participants to begin to list any indicators they could use to check the health (or otherwise) of their artistic practice. The metaphor I suggested as that of dials on a vehicle dashboard, which at a glance give you an indication of how a number of variables are changing over time. For one participant, who was central European, 'evaluation' was initially only understandable in terms of aesthetics and her personal view of her artistic development. The other five, all seemingly more familiar with UK arts funding and with the requirements to evaluate publicly-funded projects, were able to latch more easily onto the idea of evaluating their practice and were happy to play with this mode of representation.



Having created a list of possible indicators for the successful development of their practice, participants then worked with me using materials I supplied to create their dashboards. I had brought simple black and white photocopies of hand drawn dials as well as coloured pens, scissors and glue. As participants started creating their dashboards by cutting the dial shapes, choosing suitable axes, calibration, and zones, and sticking them onto a large sheet of paper, we talked more generally about the drivers behind evaluation. At the end of the session I made an A3 photocopy of the dashboard for the participant to take home, and (of course) asked them to fill in a questionnaire to evaluate the session.

The service was free – participants invested their time and a trip from London to Oxford, and their travel was covered.

### **Feedback from participants**

4 out of 6          found it useful

5 out of 6          found it stimulating

4 out of 6          found it challenging

The only participant who responded to the invitation to write something negative wrote 'low tech'.

6 out of 6          found me open

0 out of 6          found me confused, confusing or smug

### **Other comments**

"This could easily have been a whole weekend."

"I think the differentiation between artistic feedback/mentoring and professional feedback interesting. They are separate yet co-related."

"Very useful for clarity and self-perception and future self-presentation."

I found it useful too, because the DIY2 project gave me a chance to test out ideas for a project on a small scale, and reflect on how I can engage directly with a 1-2-1 audience.

# John Jordan

## RESPONSE-ABILITY

5, 6 and 7 March 2004

(20 participants selected by open submission)

### **Building bridges between art and activism.**

#### **A three day retreat for rebellious tricksters, fools and buffoons**

*"I had been involved in previous creative political activities before and had always felt slightly on the out side, as my desire to be a conventional artist would always draw me back to a more conventional form of expression. By being given the space to retreat, a place in which to explore new forms in which to communicate old ideas, was a great luxury. It invited me into a space which let me to see political clowning as part of my art not just part of my politics."*

#### **Extract of participant feedback from Theo Price, live artists**

#### **The response to the call out**

There was a good response to the call for participation, over 60 people made inquiries and 40 people applied by filling in the application form. I had planned the retreat for 20 people (this was due to the size of the venue and the desire to create of an intimate space). Due to the high level of applications, I decided not to turn anyone away, but to run two retreats. The first one for people who had had more experience with trickster/fool/clowning work and some people I had worked with before. The second retreat, for applicants who had a more general interest in art and activism.

The second event is due to take place on 24th-25th April and therefore falls outside of the frame for this DIY report.

#### **The Retreat**

*"The raw juice of creativity infused and enthused the weekend. The political discussions were rich with metaphor and image -- alive like I have never quite experience before. The beautiful location provided a safe and nurturing place to find our own trickster. A special gift. I found a new sense of play, while being met and affirmed by others committed to working for change."*

#### **Extract of participant feedback from Viola Sampson, activist/geneticist**

What happens when you put a philosopher together with a stripper, a geneticist, a samba maestro, a geographer, a stand-up comic, an anthropologists, a bunch of activists, a dry stone waller, a handful or live artists, a pair of buffoons and a clown?

It was an experiment. Would such a seemingly diverse set of twenty one people, who all share a desire to bring art and activism together, yet come from so many different levels of experience and approaches, be able to work successfully together? What would happen if we spent three days and nights, in a rural idyll, away from the busyness of London life, focusing on trying to develop new methodologies of cultural resistance?

The event began at the London Activist Resource Centre, a building in Whitechapel, run as an open resource space (meeting hall, library, high speed internet access) by and for radical activists groups. Introductions tea, biscuits and name games were followed by a tour of the building. Everyone then piled into a mini bus and was driven to "The Locket", a large cottage in Wiltshire, where we would be spending the rest of the retreat.

The group was broken down into 5 smaller groups who then worked together facilitating a series of performance games that each participant had been asked to prepare before hand. These games were taught to the whole group and after several hours of physical playing a very warm trusting space had been created amongst participants. The evening was spent drawing a 20 metre timeline that described the personal /political and creative lives of each participant. An after dinner presentation about the satirical work of drag artist Pauline Pants Down, who managed to scupper the career of an extreme right wing Australian politician, led to interesting discussions about the political effectiveness of creative strategies, humour and popular forms.

The following day was taken up with four skill sharing workshops, facilitated by 3 participants and myself. Two concentrating on activist tactics and two on different forms of clowning. The mixture of more heady left brain discussion in the activist workshops and playful right brain physical clowning workshops, balanced the day well. Later that evening, what was planned as a one act evening with Jennifer Verson performing her moving and hilarious show " Excerpts from power: An introductory lecture on the history and practice of civil disobedience", turned into a marathon cabaret , with numerous participants spontaneously presenting acts and workshops: including an ear-splitting performance by La Bia, an operatic fool. A samba workshop, transforming kitchen implements into drums and a frightening presentation by "Christian White - visiting CIA operative" explaining CIA 's strategies of political subversion.

Participants Danny Schlessinger and Hilary Ramsden had spent the evening secretly planning a workshop for the final day (which was purposefully left open), which developed some ideas related to the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army project that had become a central topic of discussion. This final workshops magically brought together all the themes of the weekend. A long critical feedback meeting included discussions of future work as a group and a few good-bye games in the field as the sun set behind the valley, ended the Retreat.

The success of the project went beyond all my expectations. A combination of clear structure (timetable and planned workshops ( see appendix)) with a spirit of openness , in an extraordinarily beautiful location with delicious meals ( provided by outside caterer) led to one of the most convivial working atmospheres I had ever experienced.

### **Conclusion**

*" It think there is a methodology being tapped here that has perhaps been used for a long time in the realm of performing groups, theatre, and the arts in general, however its relatively new application in the field of direct action and street protest/performance, and in the formation of affinity groups (for whatever purpose, community or otherwise) are astounding and beg further investigation and experimentation."*

### **Extract of participant feedback from Julie Chadwick, activist**

Many of the artists left the retreat further convinced of the importance of applying their creativity to political contexts. Meeting committed activists they were able to discover new contexts (campaigns, groups, issues) for their work and potentials for new working partnerships. Meanwhile, many of the activists were able to experience new methodologies - such as creative play and games - which would help them in developing successful group work and create warm participatory/creative spaces within campaigning contexts. Spending time with artists also helped many of the activists dissolve the dominant left brain thinking that occurs within political circles.

For myself, this past six months has involved an exploration of new methodologies; a return to the body and performance based work (after several years writing and working as an activist organiser) and the beginnings of an interest in the role of the trickster/buffoon as a new tactic for cultural resistance. The success of the retreat left me convinced that applying the mocking parody of the buffoon, the absurdity of clowning, the slipperiness of the trickster and the wisdom of the fool to radical political activism is the path I want to take with my practise. My desire to build a new collective / performance company working on these methodologies, came a step closer to reality thanks to the retreat. The group dynamic was so extraordinary, " I don't think I have ever felt such a collective sense of love in such a small space with so many random people." was how one participant described it, it seems that working on further projects together is inevitable.

*"The weekend filled me with ideas, confidence, inspiration and best of all a network of great people I would love to work with and see again. There were lots of ideas and lots of calls for action. It was brilliant! More please!"*

### **Extract of participant feedback from Jolie Pierce, live artist**

## APPENDIX:

- 1) Practical information sent out to participants.
- 2) The Gift of Games: letter to participants.
- 3) Retreat Timetable
- 4) (object) "Happy Meal" pack given to participants when they arrived at meeting point outside MacDonalds, Liverpool Street Station.
- 5) Unedited participant feedback.

### 1) Practical information sent out to participants.

Dear Response-Ability Retreat participants,

Sorry for the delay in sending you information about the Retreat, but its partly due to the unexpected Luddite (interesting that Microsoft spell check refuses to recognise that word ) spirits who killed my computer and cell phone last week and then decided to repeat the attack today despite my computer having just returned from the menders !! Then my son got ill and had to stay off school - so all in all the universe is conspiring for the retreat to be a bit more of a feast of self organisation than originally planned, which is a good thing...nothing like a bunch of self managed clowns to scare the hell out of authority!

Anyway, we are finalising details and a timetable will be sent very soon, but here are a few logistical details:

#### Meeting point Friday 5th March:

***"The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist. McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas... And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies to flourish is called the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps."***

Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*

Friday 5th March - 9am Liverpool Street Station - outside the shrine of our fallen angel Ronald Mc Donald - (in Liverpool street itself). Please be on time as we will have a tight schedule.

#### The Place:

***"The trickster exists on the borderline between life and art, the personal and the political, the selfish and the communal, the real and the imagined. She/he/it for it's gender is often undecided, dwells in a particular midzone, a place that is neither one place nor the other. A no place - Utopia in fact."***

Klepto the Clown, *Notes for Absurd Rebellions*

You will be taken by minibus to the retreat which is located in a beautiful cottage set deep in a valley littered with sarcen stones in the extraordinary landscape of Wiltshire. Lying somewhere between the money burning Ministry of Defence Training grounds and the mysterious magic sites of Avebury and Silbury Hill, the cottage has a long history of visits by creative rebels.

It belongs to the family of one of the participants and has valuable personal belonging etc. in it, so we would ask everyone to treat the place with a lot of care and respect and clean up after yourselves.

#### Food and Feasting:

***"Clowns always speak of the same thing, they speak of hunger; hunger for food, hunger for sex, but also hunger for dignity, hunger for identity, hunger for power. In fact, they introduce questions about who commands, who protests."***

Dario Fo

Delicious vegan/vegetarian meals are included in the price and caterer extraordinaire, Sam will be cooking for us ( she has also promised home made bread and cakes !!! if the oven is suitable !)

Alcohol is not provided so if everyone brought a couple of bottles of wine/beer then we would be able to lubricate the evening fireside debates. (If anyone has issues about alcohol, please contact me ASAP and we can send a message out to everyone to make it an alcohol free weekend).

**What to bring:**

**"Imagination is a tool of survival" Peter Fend**

It might get cold so bring some warm clothes and clothes to do physical workshop / movement in.

Please bring sleeping bags or bedding and a towel. There are beds and mattresses for most of us, although a few will need to bring sleeping mats..( any chance the Sheffield crew as you are in a car could bring some if you have any, ill bring a couple .. you don't have to sleep on them - beds, mattresses and mats will be allocated by consensus spokes council at the beginning of the retreat).

And please don't forget the £20 to subsidise food/space rental/transport.

**What not to bring:**

***"The moment we choose love we begin to move against domination, against oppression. The moment we choose love we begin to move towards freedom, to act in ways that liberate ourselves and others. That actions is the testimony of love as the practise of freedom."***

Bell Hooks. Love as the Practice of Freedom in *Outlaw Culture*, Resisting Representations. Routledge 1994

Please leave any cynicism, cool "realism" or closed hearts at home.

**Ending the retreat:**

***" This is how the true men and women learned that question are for walking, not just for sitting around and doing nothing. And since then, when true men and women want to walk, they ask questions. When they want to arrive they take leave. And when they want to leave they say hello. They are never still."***

Old Antonio in 'Story of Questions' by Subcommandante Marcos

Depending on the way the retreat has gone and the weather, we could walk to Avebury after Sunday lunch, which is a 2 hour walk away, perhaps a nice way to think and ask more questions.

We aim to leave Wiltshire around 5pm arriving back in London around 7pm. We can drop people at a central London transport hub that works best for everyone. ( Waterloo ? )

see you all soon  
yours  
JJ

2) The Gift of Games: letter to participants.

## THE GIFT OF GAMES

"Most definitions of play involve notions of disengagement, of free-wheeling, of being out of mesh with the serious "bread-and-butter", let alone "life-and-death" processes of production, social control, "getting and spending," and raising the next generation..Play can be everywhere and nowhere, imitate anything, yet be identified with nothing.... Yet although "spinning loose" as it were, the wheel of play reveals to us the possibility of changing our goals and, therefore, the restructuring of what our culture states to be reality."

Victor Turner "body, brain, and culture" Zygon 18 (3) 1983.

hi there

For the first afternoon of the retreat, we wanted to break/melt the ice, share skills and remind ourselves that at the heart of a practice that creatively builds better worlds are notions of PLAY and of the GIFT. So we thought it would be nice if everyone brought one of their favourite games on the retreat and that we shared them and played them during the afternoon. By game we don't mean Cluedo and definitely not Monopoly, but games which involve things such as moving the body, exploring spontaneity , warming up creative juices etc..or even ones based on paper,words, props, balls etc.... So please give it a thought..thanks...

JJXX

--

**2) Retreat Timetable: This was the framework timetable, a few things were inevitably shifted around and changed somewhat during the retreat itself, but the basic structures remained the same.**

### **RESPONSE- ABILITY a 3 day retreat**

#### PROPOSED TIMETABLE

This is a suggested structure for the retreat. We would like to run the retreat using principles of consensus, horizontality ( non hierarchical ) and self organisation - so this timetable should only be taken as a framework proposal to be discussed at the first group meeting. Please feel free to tear it up, re work it etc.

#### **DAY 1**

Friday 5th March

9am - Meet outside McDonalds - Liverpool Street Station and await your Happy Meal .

10am - Minibus Leaves from London Action Resource Centre. Fieldgate Street, E1(02073779088)....

Noon - arrive at "The Locket"

12-30 - 1.30 Introducing ourselves and ice breaking facilitated by Jennifer

1-30-2.30 - Consensus decision making skill share and Process meeting, introducing the space, agreeing on timetable, logistics etc. facilitated by JJ and Zoe.

2.30 - 3.30 Lunch and feast of chatter

On Friday and Saturday the idea is to use lunch as a convivial and warm space to have focused discussions around certain themes , in small groups. See what colour sticker you have to determine your lunch group.

Theme for first lunch; We would like to accomplish 2 things:

1) Share the idea of the game you brought and decide amongst yourselves three of your groups games you would want to share and play with the whole retreat after lunch, decide who and how you will facilitate these games.

2) Discussion: What have been your most powerful experiences of creative resistance ?  
When have you seen art and activism blend together in the most successful way ?

The idea is to share stories and anecdotes based on these questions.

3.30 - 4.00 - over coffee all together - brief feedback from group discussions.

4pm - 7.00 THE GIFT OF GAMES

The 3 groups share their games with everyone and we PLAY 9 games together.

7pm - 9pm Dinner

9pm After dinner treats: - Exclusive Triple bill :  
Movie (UK premiere) : Retooling Dissent: Creative Resistance Projects at the World  
Economic Forum protests, New York City Feb. 2002. and  
Surveillance Report: Enduring Search and Seizure.

Live performance: Excerpts from power: An introductory lecture on the history and practice of  
civil disobedience. By Jennifer

Chill out besides the fire...

## **DAY 2**

Saturday 6th March

9am - 10am - Breakfast -

The idea for the day is to spend it skill sharing creative activist and clowning ideas and  
practices. The best thing will probably be to rotate 2 groups of 10/11 people. Group A / B.

10.00 - 12.00

Group A)  
The Outsider Within, and How to be Cruel by being Kind - Bouffon Beginnings. Facilitated by  
Hilary

We'll explore our own outsider personalities, the fear factor, and the  
killing joke.

Group B)

'Learning to love disobedience - is taking direct action as scary as it sometimes seems?  
Facilitated by Mark.

This workshop will use role play and discussion to look at some of the practical issues that  
arise when people take direct action. These issues include arrest, emotional support,  
communication and the question of whether it's always possible to keep things playful.'

12-30 - 2.30

Group B)

"The Idiot Inside" a commencement of clowning. facilitated by Danny.

We will explore the internal clod and let them out to have fun. No brain required.

Group A)

Troublesome Tricksters and the weapons of imagination: Rethinking direct action in a time of permanent war. Facilitated by JJ

A discussion to explore creative tactics using the experience of the Clandestine Rebel Clown Army 's first outing during George Bushes state visit , the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, The Yes Men, The white overalls and Reclaim the Streets as case studies.

2.30 - 3.30 Lunch and feast of chatter .

Theme for second lunch discussion( in new groups) : What is the radical political potential of clowning ? What is so powerful about a bunch of disobedient revolting clowns ? How can clowns change our/your/the world ?

3.30 - 5.30

Group B)

The Outsider Within, and How to be Cruel by being Kind - Bouffon Beginnings. Facilitated by Hilary

We'll explore our own outsider personalities, the fear factor, and the killing joke.

Group A)

'Learning to love disobedience - is taking direct action as scary as it sometimes seems? Facilitated by Mark.

This workshop will use role play and discussion to look at some of the practical issues that arise when people take direct action. These issues include arrest, emotional support, communication and the question of whether it's always possible to keep things playful.'

6pm - 8.pm

Group A)

"The Idiot Inside" a commencement of clowning. facilitated by Danny.

We will explore the internal clod and let them out to have fun. No brain required.

Group B)

Troublesome Tricksters and the weapons of imagination: Rethinking direct action in a time of permanent war. Facilitated by JJ

A discussion to explore creative tactics using the experience of the Clandestine Rebel Clown Army 's first outing during George Bushes state visit , the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, The Yes Men, The white overalls and Reclaim the Streets as case studies.



8pm - 10pm Dinner

10pm After dinner treat: An evening with Pauline Pantsdown and the Kabouters

A presentation of the work of drag queen Pauline Pantsdown's involving electoral campaign actions mocking the right wing Australian politician Anne Hanson and the inspirational 1970's Dutch Anarcho pranksters the Kabouters.

Chill out besides the fire...

### **DAY 3**

Sunday 7th March

9am - 10am - Breakfast -

In the spirit of creating open participatory spaces and the clowns desire to be spontaneous, we have decided to leave this final day much less structured. To see what emerges from the previous days work. Suggested topics of discussion and workshops could be around future plans, give space for people to present proposals for projects, prepare for actions during the 20th March global day against occupation etc..

10am - 1pm - Open space

1pm - 2pm Lunch

2pm - 3pm Tidy up / clean the space

3pm - 5pm Group walk to Avebury ?

### **Participant feedback**

"The raw juice of creativity infused and enthused the weekend. The political discussions were rich with metaphor and image -- alive like I have never quite experienced before. The beautiful location provided a safe and nurturing place to find our own trickster. A special gift. I found a new sense of play, while being met and affirmed by others committed to working for change. And while I was left with the tantalising feeling of having only just started --just scratched the surface-- I will be incorporating our discoveries into my ongoing work and look forward to working with the group some more.

Thank you so much for all the work and lightbulbs you put into the weekend John, like I said, it was a special gift. I've been needing a spark and now I wanna leap in that fire."

**Viola Sampson, geneticist / activist**

"thank you - I really enjoyed meeting a new group of people passionate about what they do, enthusiastic and willing. The food was fantastic, the company good and the location was great."

**Danny, Clown**

"I had been involved in previous creative political activities before and had always felt slightly on the outside, as my desire to be a conventional artist would always draw me back to a more conventional form of expression. By being given the space to retreat, a place in which to explore new forms in which to communicate old ideas, was a great luxury. It invited me into a space which let me to see political clowning as part of my art not just part of my politics. I found the weekend quite intense with the level of honesty and conviction of some of the other participants. The level of commitment that I saw was a serious wake up call. I left the retreat with a heavy head full of questions and realised that I had to do some serious consideration about my aims for my art, activism and the world in general. I realised along the way that I hadn't always been as committed to change and creative progress as I perhaps I

thought I was. Without realising it I needed to question those beliefs and the retreat encouraged me to truly believe that we can produce a more open creative space in which to live. It seems the more I think about the politics, as a clown, the more creative and absurd my politics become. The clown army is a ridiculous idea and having met all the other clowns I feel very inspired about how this new tool can be used to great effect for social intervention. I feel positive about the future and can see it all getting very very silly."

**Theo Price, live artists**

"What a great tool for change clowning is, and how great it was that you pulled such an amazing group of people together for the weekend. I learned loads of practical skills that I can now go out and use in my group, as well as learning some more personal stuff about myself. I think this could be the beginning of something seismic!"

**Mark Brown, activist**

"The retreat was a huge inspiration for me as it opened up many possibilities in many different areas of my work. First of all it was a useful opportunity for developing my clowning/performance skills and it was a real privilege to train with a variety of excellent workshop leaders. It was also an opportunity for me to discuss and develop my ideas around clowning and the scope it has as a subversive medium. It also provided a comfortable and safe space for us all to talk about issues to do with subversion, to hear other people's views and also to hear about how other people are using the arts to express their views. The weekend filled me with ideas, confidence, inspiration and best of all a network of great people I would love to work with and see again. There were lots of ideas and lots of calls for action. It was brilliant! More please!"

**Jolie Pierce, live artist**

"The weekend retreat was potentially daunting for me because, although confident, I do not have much experience at 'performing' other than when I was a child and thus I didn't know what to expect.

As it turned out, it wasn't actually about performing per se; I discovered that the entertainment aspect of clowning is actually almost a side-issue, an effect (as in, the sister of cause). In that sense, it wasn't daunting but rather kind of confronting. What I and the other 20-something participants' training focused on was instead of learning to 'perform a clown', we had to learn to open up and let our clown come out. This involved playing around and interacting in various ways until we got into a space of 'being' a clown - a boundless character that was actually a sort of shadow-self.

That shadow self can be elusive, I'm still not quite fully acquainted with mine. It takes time. But one thing I am sure of is the joy inherent in the method of discovery; essentially playing a lot of games that confront one's inhibitions, pry open the dusty creative spheres of the mind and take one into a realm where a shoe can also be a deadly weapon, a head-dress, a secret treasure, a potato; where the guy you just met, amiably chatting politics with over lunch, is now tightly tango-ing you across the room with a gleam in his eye, under the watchful gaze of an evil grandmother.

The path of discovery is the path of a child, and with it comes many thrilling implications for the group involved, whether they know each other or not. The participants in our weekend retreat mostly consisted of mutual strangers and vague acquaintances on the whole - a curious experiment with a fascinating group, ranging from anthropologists to artists, philosophers to filmmakers.

What stood out most about this particular genre of training/playing/interacting was the speed at which it pulled down the walls delineating our everyday social space and hurtled us collectively and comfortably into forming trusting, childlike relations with one other. This fairly continuous 'guards-down' state in turn allowed for much bonding, and safe space within which endless creativity began to flow. The chatter and information exchange virtually never ceased, in- or outside of workshops. We became stimulated in a manner I am familiar with but have never exactly experienced on such a level in a collective situation (and equally individually), especially not so quickly, naturally, and genuinely.

It think there is a methodology being tapped here that has perhaps been used for a long time in the realm of performing groups, theatre, and the arts in general, however its relatively

new application in the field of direct action and street protest/performance, and in the formation of affinity groups (for whatever purpose, community or otherwise) are astounding and beg further investigation and experimentation.

**Julie Chadwick, activist**

"The training weekend was fantastic, loads of inspiring people and just the right balance between a useful structure and scissions and space for creativity and open thought and action, Unbelievable food, inspiring all round! Cant wait for the next one."

**Paul Chatterton, Geographer/activist**

"As physical host, I sort of planned to be in the background of this weekend, doing a little light reading and writing between keeping the aged dog out of the workshops, making sure everyone was warm and fed and that nothing got broken.

Hahahaha.

Despite super cook taking over the kitchen, and everyone pretty much availing themselves tidily of the facilities, I had about as much hope of sitting down quietly with some work as I had of being beamed up to the mothership.

I don't know what it is about this crew but before I knew what had happened I was gurning, gesturing and socking with the best of them, making silly noises and writhing on the damp lawn playing dead with the dog panting perplexed in the middle of it all. That these guests are artist, activist, academic, scientist, dry stone waller, philosopher, sambista, stand up comic, fantastical opera singer and god nose what else - as well as all having the most hilarious and heartbreaking eyes above a small red nose - well it was almost more that I could quite bear.

Even after the ceremonial outdoor ending of the weekend went on longer than the farewells in 'Return of the King', driving a cargo of beloved loonies back to the great big smoke I found myself singing rounds with wicked women till our voices gave out.

The following of nose is often advisable, but this was a rare old ball for sure."

**Zoe Young, Activist Researcher (Owner/host of the retreat venue)**

"I've seen the future and its silly"

**Rodrigo Nunes, Philosopher**

# Amy Sharrocks.

## COSTUME IN LIVE ART

6 March 2004.

(14 participants selected by open submission)

I organised a one-day workshop on costume in live art, where all the participants were invited to arrive in costume. I hired a small theatre in Central London, the Diorama, which allowed us an intimate space to talk, but included a stage, lighting, and a phantom audience through which we could explore issues of performativity in live art. I invited two speakers, Tim Etchells of Forced Entertainment, and the video artist Edwina Ashton, to give presentations on their work. At lunchtime, all the participants changed into their usual clothes, and we continued our discussions through the afternoon.

I wanted to create a space for talking, to use a whole day as an opportunity to discuss, and planned that our use of costume would open up the discussion and the day for wider and more playful interaction. To make a performance of the day. I arranged music to arrive and to eat to, and a feast for lunch, which added to the carnival atmosphere that costume generates.

In preparation for the day I did a great deal of research on costume and its uses as apparel and disguise. The workshop gave me the valuable opportunity to become a member of the British Library to further this research. I feel I used the time from Christmas to March very profitably to research as if for a thesis. I also spent a long time gathering more experience of live art myself, seeing a lot of live work and watching a lot of recordings of other artists, which has been very valuable to me. I had a rather limited knowledge of other live artists before, so I have gained a much greater understanding of possibilities in live work. The workshop focussed and drove my research, and the money allowed me to do it.

Costume was a way in to a great deal of questions about live-ness, about fictionality and performativity, about the lines between theatre and live art, and about ways of approaching every new live work. I was overwhelmed by the positive reaction to my initial idea, and deeply pleased by its success, and people's response to the actual day. I have gained enormous confidence from the whole event.

I was very glad of the chance to work with the speakers at the event. Tim Etchells and Edwina Ashton work in such different ends of the live art spectrum that the discussions following their talks had acres of space to flow and draw from. Edwina's deeply private way of working was miles away from Tim's public arena. The two practices were not at odds with each other, but managed to hold in suspension paradoxes that while we did not attempt to reconcile them, helped us all to explore a sense of presence and endeavour in live art. They were both very generous speakers with their time and effort, and helped to make the day an extraordinary journey.

I think everyone who attended the event gained a lot from the day. By asking everybody to arrive in costume, the performance of the day had already started before the workshop had begun. The excitement of working live was already with people before we met, which translated into an immediate eagerness to communicate on arrival. Our experiences were all ready to be shared. It was brilliant to be able to explore work with 14 collaborators. I think the day felt joyous throughout because we, who might often be regarded as the freaks of society in our unusual costumes, had found a body of like-minded people. I think we came away with a great deal of strength from our community and numbers.

I felt my role in the day was as organiser and enabler. From my research I had a lot of issues I was interested in, and I had prepared a lot of photocopied material that might provide interesting insights on different grounds, should the discussion touch on them, but I wanted never to control the talks. I wanted to enable everyone to talk and be heard, and I hope this worked well. I had not attempted this role with other artists before, and had felt this as a keen pressure in front of my peers. But it worked out really well, and I learnt an enormous amount from the day. I felt like it confirmed my move from student to artist.

We talked about the authenticity of costume and about character, which might be easier to approach if we understand it as a construct, so that we can talk instead of the properties of a person. This led to a discussion of props, and the 'occupation' of a costume. The Butoh idea of wearing the cosmos widened further the discussions of inhabitation, and the language of a property economy evolved. Peggy Phelan's writing on skin and formlessness, and Freud on the uncanny informed our talks: is all costume a quest for home?

The carefully chosen participants came from a variety of different live art practices, which opened up the discussions. The professional versus the amateur costume maker was explored, the room for art in the gaps of skill. The nature of live art and the sense of the detour. I hope everyone came away from the day having really enjoyed sharing their experiences and knowledge, gained a great deal of joy and information, and felt much better enabled to manage their presence in live artworks.

The workshop was invaluable to me, and gave me enormous confidence. It also confirmed to me my pleasure in collaboration and the event, and how large a part of my practice it is clearly becoming.

### **Costume in Live Art - Amy Sharrocks - Some Good Books**

Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, Athlone Contemporary  
Amelia Jones and Andrew Stephenson, Performing the body, Performing the text, Routledge Books  
Peggy Phelan, Mourning Sex, Routledge Books  
Peggy Phelan, Unmarked, the politics of performance, Routledge  
George Bataille, Visions of Excess, University of Minnesota Press  
Early work of Cindy Sherman, Glenn Horowitz Bookseller  
Julia Kristeva, The Sense and Non-sense of revolt, Columbia Press  
J.L. Austin, How to do things with words  
Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Visible and the Invisible  
Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Phenomenology of Perception  
Guy Brett, Exploding Galaxies, the work of David Medalla  
Steve Baker, Postmodern Animals  
Nikki S. Lee, Projects  
C. Carr, On Edge, Performance at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century  
Research, Angry Women  
Jacques Lacan, Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis  
The Society of the Spectacle, Guy Debord, Zone Books  
Harrison & Wood, Art in Theory, Blackwell Press  
Thinking about Art, Conversations with Susan Hiller, Manchester University Press  
The Legend of Leigh Bowery, CD, available in June  
Irving Goffmann, Presentation of self in everyday life

### COMMENTS

Dear Amy

I want to thank you for including me in such an inspirational event! I thought it was excellent and enjoyed the presentations from such opposing viewpoints, Please will you let me know Edwina's last name as I would really like to follow up on her film images...they were fantastic! I relished the opportunity to speak to other performance and costume related artists and if there is to be another workshop, my suggestion would be that it should extend over two days with time allocated for each participant to show their work and cross reference with the other artists. The venue was very appropriate, well I thought so, and the opportunity to arrive in costume lent an edge to the experience, I will be doing some more travel performance interventions in the public domain in the future after this. Actually I had more response to my appearance on my return journey when I was only half costumed and had thought looked "normal"...more subversive maybe...interesting ideas to play with .....degrees of costume and relative responses...you see it started me thinking. Also the food was a lovely spread and well

considered, Thank you for all the work you put into facilitating the event,, it is much appreciated. It was a pleasure to meet you and I look forward to your next e-mail. All the best  
Lizzie Hall

Dear Amy,

Just to say thank you, again, for the workshop. It has been an interesting day, from the start, in exploring the costume as a wearable 'other identity', from wearing it before getting to the workshop, during the discussion, changing again as in our 'everyday' one. It was an unique time, as was the idea altogether. I wish it could have continued for another 4 days, since the topic is so wide as well as specific in its theoretical and most of all practical/performative elements. I am aware, though, of other problems regarding organizing a workshop like that. I hope I will be lucky to take part in another one (?) I was hoping that I would have had more time to talk about the use of the costume in my work, since it seems a fundamental element in my practice. Thanks for allowing all of this and to have giving me grounding and stimulation.  
Fabrizio Manco

Dear Amy

Thanks very much for a fruitful day. I found it interesting and useful on many levels:- the simple act of arriving in costume having travelled up from Richmond was quite revealing - my feelings on the journey and the responses of people around me.- Edwina's presentation was a real bonus - liked so much what she shared and as well as loving the film extracts (which I have been raving about back here) I found her references to historical costume/sporting outfits particularly relevant for my research.- Tim's presentation and input helped the discussion a good deal also and channelled it into a direction that I sense was really useful to many of us.- and finally your warm enthusiastic over seeing of the day felt both welcoming and supportive and encouraged a relaxed sharing atmosphere.

I agree absolutely that a two day session would have been great – in fact I would be very much into developing a workshop with you next year if that idea appeals at all?

Clare Thornton

...and thank you again for the lovely day ..i really enjoyed it .i learnt allot

thanks

Ella Golt

Thanks for organising the DIY day on Saturday. I was really glad to be there and be a part of it.

Tim Etchells

hello hello I have been meaning to write again and say how marvellous you and it were on Satcostumepageantday and how much I enjoyed it beside the sweat (literal) and fears ... I thought Tim's writing was splendid - he's a clever man.

Edwina Ashton

Hi Amy,

Thanks for a fantastic event/nonevent! It was good to meet other people in an intimate atmosphere which created space for discussion, with many memorable moments and a kinda MI5 in assembled chaos excitement too it, I felt I wanted spy movie music rolling credits when I walked out through the gates with my holdall containing wig and dress. And it was really interesting to hear Tim, Edwina and everyone there talk about their relationship with costume in their own practice - a thought provoking dialogue.

I plagiarised the 'quest for home' in relation to a becoming or past becoming from the following.

The eternal quest for home (towards a performance of place fullness) curated by Kenny McBride and Joe Sallis.

"Contemporary issues of home, home-liness, home-lessness, memory as both active and as site, identity, foreignness, and the "other" The festival was an invitation for artists to come to

Poznan and perform work for a seven days festival responding to the following context: As our world witnesses unprecedented levels of migration, how do we, as artists, define ideas, or ideals of homeliness, homelessness, foreign ness, the other? How may the global diasporas have notions of memory and loss?"

Helen Pritchard, Gilbert & Grape

It was a great day I came away feeling very well fed. ...

Can I say again how much I enjoyed the day- in case you thought I meant the lunch was good when I said well-fed- it was the total experience.

Caroline Astell-Burt

Just thought i'd say a big thanx for the workshop. It was great!. I've been up to my eyes since so I ain't really had a proper chance to digest all that was said and shown. It was great to speak in such depth again-that's something I miss since graduating, and i'm sure it will effect what I do in the future.

Dorothy Howard

Dear Amy,

what a good day was Saturday!!!!

i enjoyed meeting a diverse group of artists, and look forward to some reading!!!

Arkem

## **Richard Layzell**

### **THE NETWORK**

25, 26 and 27 March 2004

(18 participants selected by open submission)

Mine was the last of the series and I'd proposed that the final evening became a networking event/celebration in which we, as a group, invited all the other workshop participants, their artist/facilitators and representation from the three host organisations.

There was definitely an increased demand and knowledge of DIY compared to the previous year, and my quota of 15 filled quickly, without the need to target any likely participants. In fact, I increased the numbers to 18.

This was a diverse group, ranging in age from 21 to 55, and from a broad base of experience and practice - mainly from visual / live art, but also music, performance studies and dance. My intention was to aim the workshop at established practitioners and this happened, with just two part-time MA students taking part.

Having just completed a six-day Winter School for the NRLA in Glasgow, I'd also been able to test out some of my ideas for this workshop in advance.

Day 1 involved a range of activities aimed at establishing the beginnings of a network through gaining knowledge of each other as practitioners and as people.

Day 2 began with people diagrammatically mapping out their own networks, followed by a silent walk from Toynbee Hall through the back streets of Liverpool St and Moorgate. This was followed by a session on process - explaining the complexities of a series of process questions, which I've developed through my association with ResCen. The final exercise of the day involved working in groups of six. Each member of these groups then took on the role of artist/director/maker to devise a short intervention or piece, that was then very thoroughly documented by the rest of the group through text, photography, video and /or audio. I explained the diversity of possible roles as 'documenters' or 'witnesses', and these were then defined by each maker/director in turn.

Day 3 saw a change of location to the Live Art Development Agency and the conclusion of the documentation exercise. Each group had one or two members still to make their pieces. The second part of this exercise involved looking back at the documentation, then reflecting and giving feedback on the evidence, in turn. The final hour was spent on exercises to establish the network and to see where to go from here, before preparing for the evening event.

Looking back over this I can see why people were tired by the Saturday afternoon and consequently why I volunteered to run a couple of simple networking exercises in the evening (I had originally thought that members of the group would devise these).

The fact that all 18 people turned up for the 3 days was, for me, an indication that it was working well. Another indicator was the volume of planned future activities for this potential new network - within a week there were plans for four professional outcomes in networking, exhibiting and performance contexts. We have also arranged to meet again at the end of April, and this may well become an ongoing monthly event. A further indicator was my own sense of enthusiasm and excitement at the end of the three days, that, once again with DIY, I had explored some new territory.

The one remaining aim for the project was to offer them the potential to link up with an existing Australian network. I think how this may happen will unfold in the coming weeks and there are already plans for a 'streaming' event.

Once again, DIY has given me the opportunity to experiment with new ways of working with artists. I should mention that my workshop for DIY1 (Deprivation and Overload) was repeated



and modified many times over the past year, both here and internationally. It has made a considerable impact and would not have come into being without the very open brief set out for the DIY initiative.

I look forward to reporting back on subsequent developments from this DIY2 project and would like to thank all concerned for making it happen.

### **Participant's comments**

*As a result of taking part, the workshop has helped me to identify that the physicality of the process in my own practice is probably the reason why I was finding it difficult to move forward into the various professional networks available. Consequently during the workshop I was able to share the vision for my own process with others, receive feedback not only verbally, but visually too and go on to realise the vision in a more tangible way.*

**PRICELESS!** - the value of 'the team', the value of documentation and both together empowering artists to believe that making work or realising a vision is possible... under any circumstances.

Barbara Dean

*"I've learnt more in these three days (with Richard's DIY project) than in the past six months."*

Caspar Below

MA student at Central St Martins College of Art and Design

*Overall, I think the workshop succeeded because it worked well on many different levels and from different points of view. In catering for a large group it seemed to strike the right balance between individual space and collective space, framework and fluidity, simplicity and complexity, - 'the parts and the whole'- and was able to maintain a dynamic that was both cohesive and coherent. The other essential ingredient of 'group chemistry' enabled a progressive and harmonious relationship between 'process' and 'production' to develop quite naturally.*

*Aside from formal analysis it was a thoroughly enjoyable and stimulating few days in general. I would fully support any activity that furthers the development and continuation of the DIY workshop and of any other projects and initiatives of a similar nature in the future.*

Neil Young

*Surprising for me was the apparent ease with which networks can be established. Your skilfully facilitated workshops enabled each to swap stories, to voice an opinion and to say "here I am this is what I do" in an environment that left the ego outside. I also saw how my experience and view of myself fitted (or not) with a wider world.*

*It was simple but hard work. The key seemed to be allowing time and space for the group to begin a conversation, solve problems and discuss results.*

*Also made me acknowledge how easily networks could be dismissed, abandoned or ignored. I think now that if you (un)network you stand less chance of doing what you like doing (making art) in the long-term.*

Andrew Mottershead

*I really felt the workshops worked well using the time scheduled 3 days thoroughly. I felt safe and well supported by the group which helped me go through necessary processes. The silent walk was one of the things i really enjoyed and i don't know why i took my sketch book i kind of went back to foundation level when i really did not need to take it just enjoy the flow and pace of the walk. Richard has most of the time a very laid back approach which works considering the pace we worked at. I found myself getting through the thing of finding a way to work live with my work which was completely new to me. The group i worked with which we called family were very constructive afterwards which helped. I creatively clicked into some of the groups work which was good as i was thinking constantly on my feet. The finish at lavda*

*think iv'e got that right was good and the evening very nice with food and drink and meeting others. These events do let artists meet each other as we do lead quite isolated existances even in studios as everyone works different hours and it has always struck me how we all look pleased to see someone and have a chat about work and life. I really am pleased already to have received an email from Kevin and hope to go to his happening at Florence Trust studios. Good constructive safe support is one of the best experiences and this workshop definitely gave that to me.*

Teresa Mills

*I thought the three days were exceptionally well-organised and run - it was great to see how you facilitate workshops and how generous and relaxed they can be. Also really liked how the responsibility for organising time & creating the networks was increasingly passed over to us.*

*As you pointed out, the creation of our network/social map was a great tool to recognise how many contacts I do have and how I could choose to draw on those more actively. Also very interesting to see others' and make connections/links. Thought that was an excellent exercise.*

*The highlights for me were the silent walk through the City (great to communicate non-verbally and the frequent moments of humour) and the evening at LADA because by then I felt confident enough to talk to people from the workshop and (with the aid of your social warm-up exercises) talk to other DIY-ers too. Also managed to approach people I knew by sight but hadn't previously talked to - all a result of feeling more socially confident I think?*

*I do think the DIY project is a valuable opportunity for the sector - run by artists for artists - and in conversations with the other groups on the Saturday night, everyone was buzzing with enthusiasm about their particular experiences. I hope the funding is continued.*

Rebecca French