

On Falling

A Study Room Guide on Live Art & falling



Compiled & written by Amy Sharrocks
2013



Live Art
Development
Agency

LADA Study Room Guides

As part of the continuous development of the Study Room we regularly commission artists and thinkers to write personal Study Room Guides on specific themes.

The idea is to help navigate Study Room users through the resource, enable them to experience the materials in a new way and highlight materials that they may not have otherwise come across.

All Study Room Guides are available to view in our Study Room, or can be viewed and/or downloaded directly from their Study Room catalogue entry.

Please note that materials in the Study Room are continually being acquired and updated. For details of related titles acquired since the publication of this Guide search the online Study Room catalogue with relevant keywords and use the advance search function to further search by category and date.

STUDY ROOM GUIDE

ON FALL

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Amy Sharrocks

September 2013

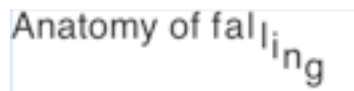
This guide is a compilation of material from a Study Room Event I hosted at LADA on November 28, 2012.

I prepared a short track listing of music (P2248), the poetry I included on sheets, plus a bibliography of works, books and inspirations. There is also a little book of falls: a group of falling stories from the participants who came on the night available in the LADA Study Room.

At the event I talked for an hour, and kept 2 hours for a group discussion. I have kept this guide in note form, for ease of reading, and in the hope that people can read between the lines, and see the rhythm and shape of the discussion which was wide-ranging and non-stop.

The event was expressly collaborative at all times: each participant wrote about their most memorable or latest fall ahead of time, everyone sent in photographs, (included in the PowerPoint P2248) and many suggested works to read. I have tried to reflect this by including as much of everyone's detail as possible, and I would like to thank everyone who came for their keen and thoughtful participation, which made the discussion so interesting. I have gone over my notes to include mine and Katy Baird's notes from the post talk discussion.

I have written an article:



in Performance Research (A0543), and I would like to thank LADA for the chance to make the event and for all their continuing support.

Amy Sharrocks

The participants were:

Francis Alexander
Katy Baird
Emilyn Claid
Alice Colquhoun
Rosa Farber
Dorota Halina Gaweda
Lois Keidan
Debbie Kent
Dafne Louzioti
Claire Mander
Aicha Mehrez
Kerstin Moller
Mary Osborn
Amy Sharrocks
Helen Savage
Clare Thornton

In 2012 I won a Sculpture Shock award from the Royal British Society of Sculptors, and I spent the 3-month residency on falling.

For more information please visit <http://sculptureshock.rbs.org.uk/artists/amy-sharrocks>

For more information on my work please go to

<http://www.museumofwater.co.uk>

<http://www.swimthethames.co.uk>

<http://www.iwanttoswim.co.uk>

<http://www.londonisarivercity.com>

<https://twitter.com/amysharrocks>

This comes with a warning about images and vulnerability.

Photo from LIFE magazine



A brief history of falling in my family:

of physical and
debilitating falls and jumps,
of parachuting,
of alzheimers
and of falls from grace

A vocabulary of falling,
and the intransitive nature of
the word – unaccusative –
the lack of an aggressor

Fall/
jump/
leap/
trip/
occur/
lapse/
collapse/
befall/
crumble/
droop/
drop

Chris Burden, 220
1974



Vikenti Nilin,
From the Neighbours, 1993-present



Doris Humphrey's writing on falling – the upright as safety and stability, and the fall as adventure and progress – the necessity for both in every minute.

I explored the anatomy of a fall, proposing 5 phases:

Approach

Vikenti Nilin

Aicha 1

Chris Burden 220

Letting go

Aicha 2

Buster Keaton

Jan Bas Ader, *Organic Fall / Geometric Fall*

Harold Lloyd *Safety Last* (3.40-4.40) YouTube comedy of a continuous approaching catastrophe

Yves Klein, *Leap into the Void*

Falling/Out of control

Amanda Coogan, *The Fall*,

Clare Thornton & Emma Cocker, *Tacturiency*

Bruce Nauman, *Artist Walking & Failure to Levitate*

Amy Sharrocks, *Pulling the Rug Out*

Lucille Power, *Woman Falling*

Pipilotti Rist, *Entslastungen Pipilolotti Fehler*

Amy Sharrocks, *SWIM*

Kira O'Reilly, *Stair Falling*

Jochen Gerz and Ester Shalev Gerz, *Monument against Fascism*

Amy Sharrocks, *Keepy-Up*

Felix Baumgartner, world's freefall record

Tintoretto, *The Miracle of the Slave*

Jeremy Geddes, *Woman Falling Down the Stair*

Crash

9/11

Cai Guo-Qiang, *Head On*

Peter Breughel, *The Fall of Icarus*

Chris Burden, *SHOOT*

Darling Woman, *Sunday Drive*

Daniel Bragin, *Bedtime Story*

Recovery

Amy Sharrocks, *Drift*

Graeme Miller, *Track and Linked*

Amy Sharrocks, *Pause*

Tintin, *Stars Dazed Moment*

Buzz Lightyear – "THATS NOT FLYING, THAT'S FALLING WITH STYLE"

Toy Story

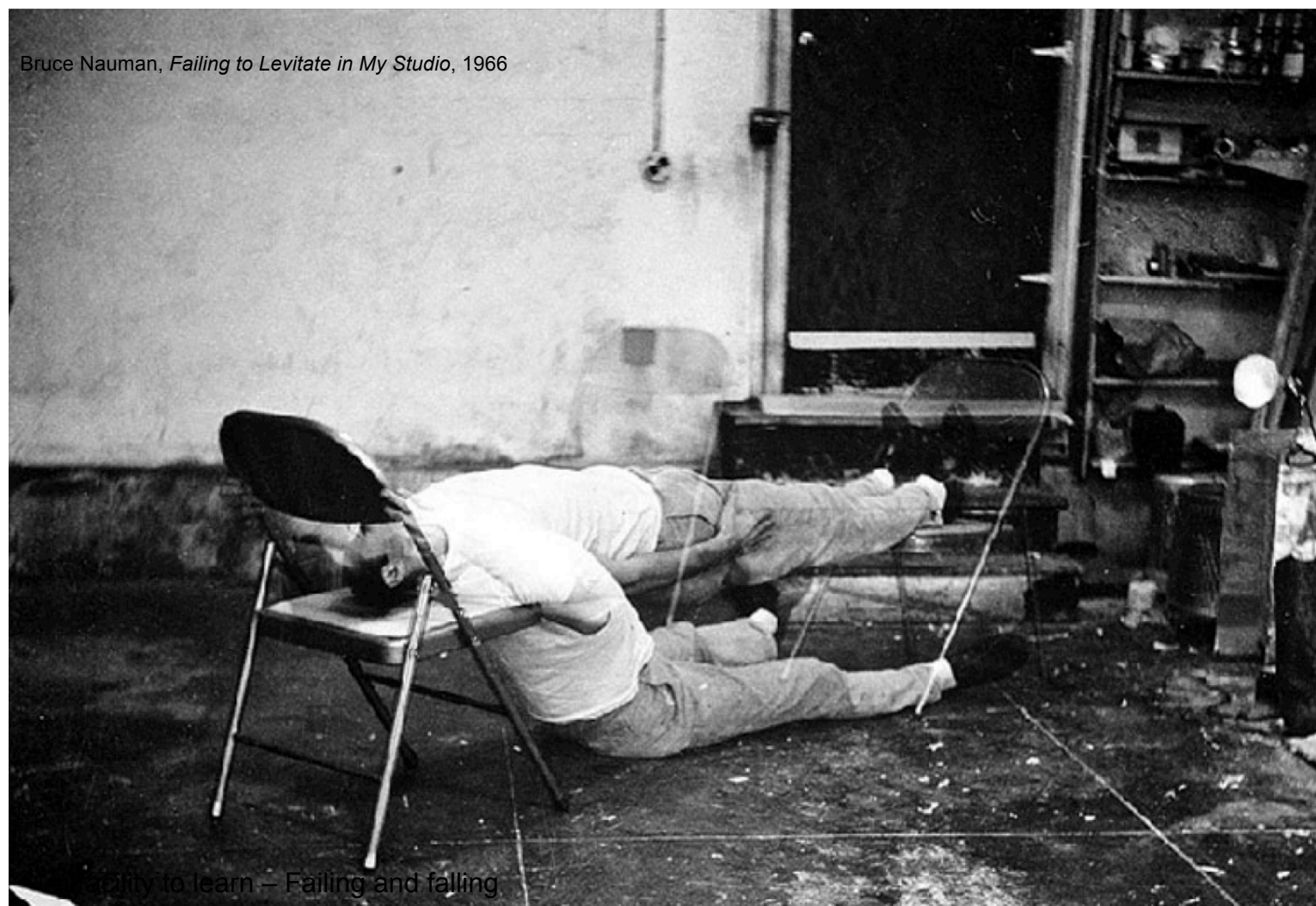
We could bastardize Beckett - "Ever fallen. No matter. Try again. Fall again. Fall better"

Worstward Ho. Beckett 1983

Amanda Coogan, *The Fall*, 2009



Bruce Nauman, *Failing to Levitate in My Studio*, 1966



Ability to learn – Failing and falling

Falling/jumping/leaping/dropping
Repetition & slowing down as ways of
extending our exploration/gaze at falling

Romanticisation around potential
Romanticisation of failing/falling?
It hurts

21st century response?
cf falls of Marie Finney

Does time slow down or do our minds speed
up – what happens to time when we fall?

Shame/not shame - Where is the shame?

Do we need to be out of control to have
meaning?

Are some falls unbearable?

Falling is funny, and we need laughter
Awful ungainly positions
Trauma
How to make it seamless (Clod Ensemble)

Is it a woman's act?
Shy/shame/exposure
Cf. models falling, Naomi Campbell's fall in
Vivienne Westwood show
Franko B's catwalk

Are high heels purposefully meant to de-
stabilise women?
Sexism

Hysterical fainting – desperate measure – was
it powerful? Cf. The Wailing Women

Dancers fly
(Mehmet Sanders, Elizabeth Streb)

Allow the risk in

Social body

Falling in groups. A group flop.

Economic falls

Ungainly – refusal to be elegant

Humiliation for men as much as women?
The last woman standing – the first one to fall
Claiming the right to be ungainly

The power of sitting
A dead weight (Butoh, San Kai Jukuh)

Falling = a strength
Fallibility

Do men and women approach it differently?
(Pina Bausch, Trisha Brown)

Falling off of words/meaning
Brokenness
Death

Droop

Contract between media and audience –
pause – suspension – hope

Is falling a failure to be adult?
Act of wilfulness

Compulsion for a moral judgement

Unsettling

Willingness to be vulnerable
How far can you fail – failing to kill yourself

Ungainly/elegance
Deeply awkward/not composed/un-dancerly

Dead weight
(Chris Howlson, Chris Schilling)

Nature as bully

Lucile Power, *Woman Falling*
2004

Falling comes before or after the
moment of intensity –
the moment of in-between

Withhold the moral judgement
Not the agent of your own destiny –
the unintentional fall

Gravity = Secret partner of falling
Essential to standing upright
Muscles-gravity push and pull

The Fall – argument that all our lives
are lived in the nature of this falling
state – obviously one of potential

The Funny in falling

Freefall (because intended –
framed as such – otherwise a drop)



Waking up – Surviving a fall –
interpretation – You've Been Framed
Glee afterwards
Many emotions at once

Is it dangerous?
Do we need it as a society?
Addicted to the fall

Falling and landing = erotic and libidinous
Introspective (Jungian)

Unsettling a horizon (Hito Steihl)

The Fall might represent a political or
economic regime

You cannot navigate through a fall (Henry
Lefebvre)

Fight/flight/fall

Martial Arts to train you through a fall

Kira O'Reilly, *Stair Falling* (2009).
Photo Marco Agnelli
Marina Abramovic Presents...
Whitworth Art Gallery
Manchester International Festival 2009



Fall is a failure to be adult?

Control is lost to the ungainly

The joy of watching other people fall

The fall out (Martin Bruck)

Speed of falling like cinema – frames through a gate

Conscious and reflex action (faster than conscious thought)

Go with the flop (advice from a parachute expert)

"I see. You see. I see you seeing. You see me seeing. I want to show what I see. You want to show what you see. Nirvana in the rose garden." Pipilotti's faults (appeasement)

"What is the explanation of the seemingly insane drive of man to be painter and poet if it is not an act of defiance against man's fall and an assertion that he return to the Garden of Eden? For the artists are the first men."

Barnett Newman



Amy Sharrocks, *SWIM*, 2007

SWIM

The Swimmer

Fall of the American Dream
again and again like lemmings
into old age

British anarchy of falling and flesh offering a different orientation

Lack of Shame as if shame was a shackle you could loose



Amy Sharrocks, *SWIM*, 2007



“We invite the citizens of Harburg, and visitors to the town, to add their names here next to ours. In doing so we commit ourselves to remain vigilant. As more and more names cover this 12-metre tall lead column, it will gradually be lowered into the ground. One day it will have disappeared completely, and the site of the Harburg Monument against Fascism will be empty. In the end it is only we ourselves who can stand up against injustice.”

Jochen Gerz & Esther Shalev-Gerz
Monument Against Fascism, 1986

See Gloucester's fall in King Lear

Relief from
relentless gravity

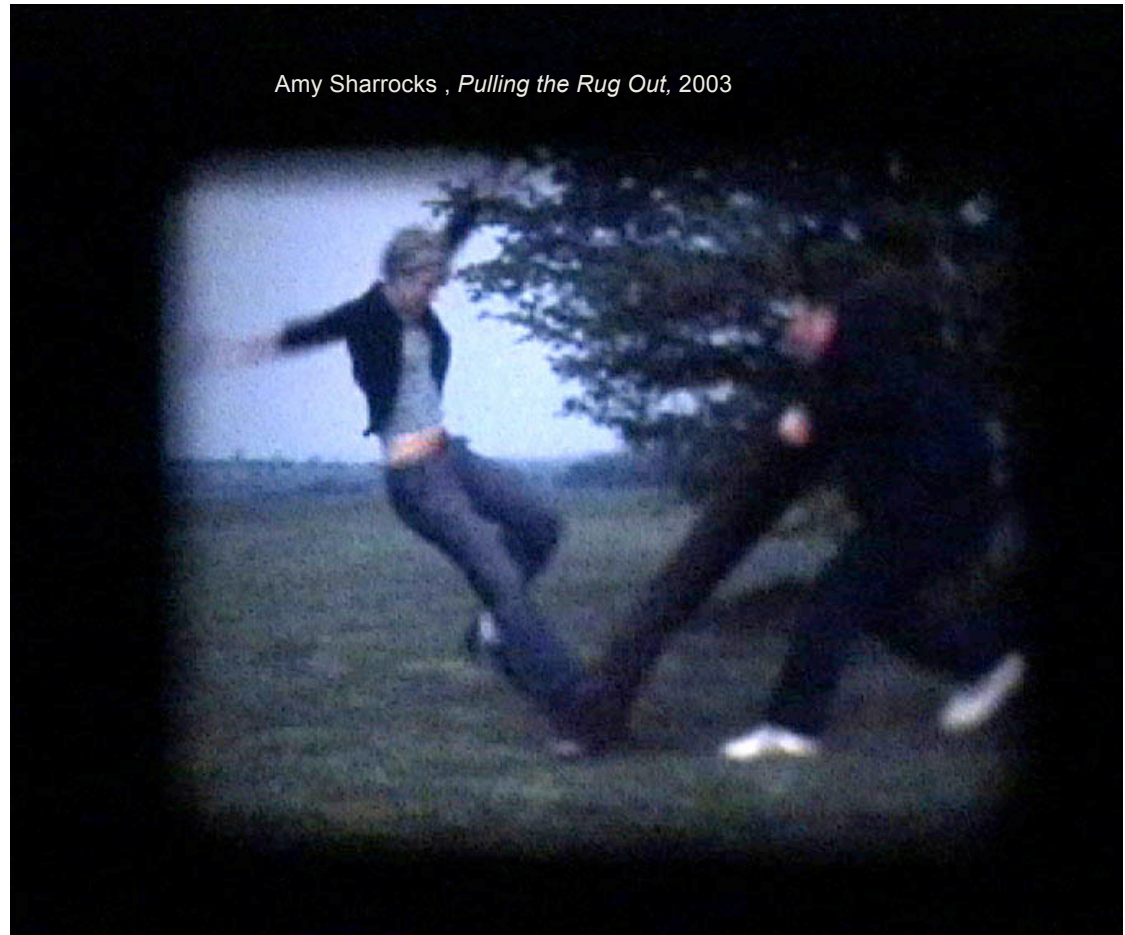
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about resonance,
our impact on each
other
their slow falling
gives us pause
consideration of
this quintessence,
conglomeration of
dust

fragility with
resilience
pause to consider
ourselves

Another person –
to keep the real
risk in

Amy Sharrocks , *Pulling the Rug Out*, 2003

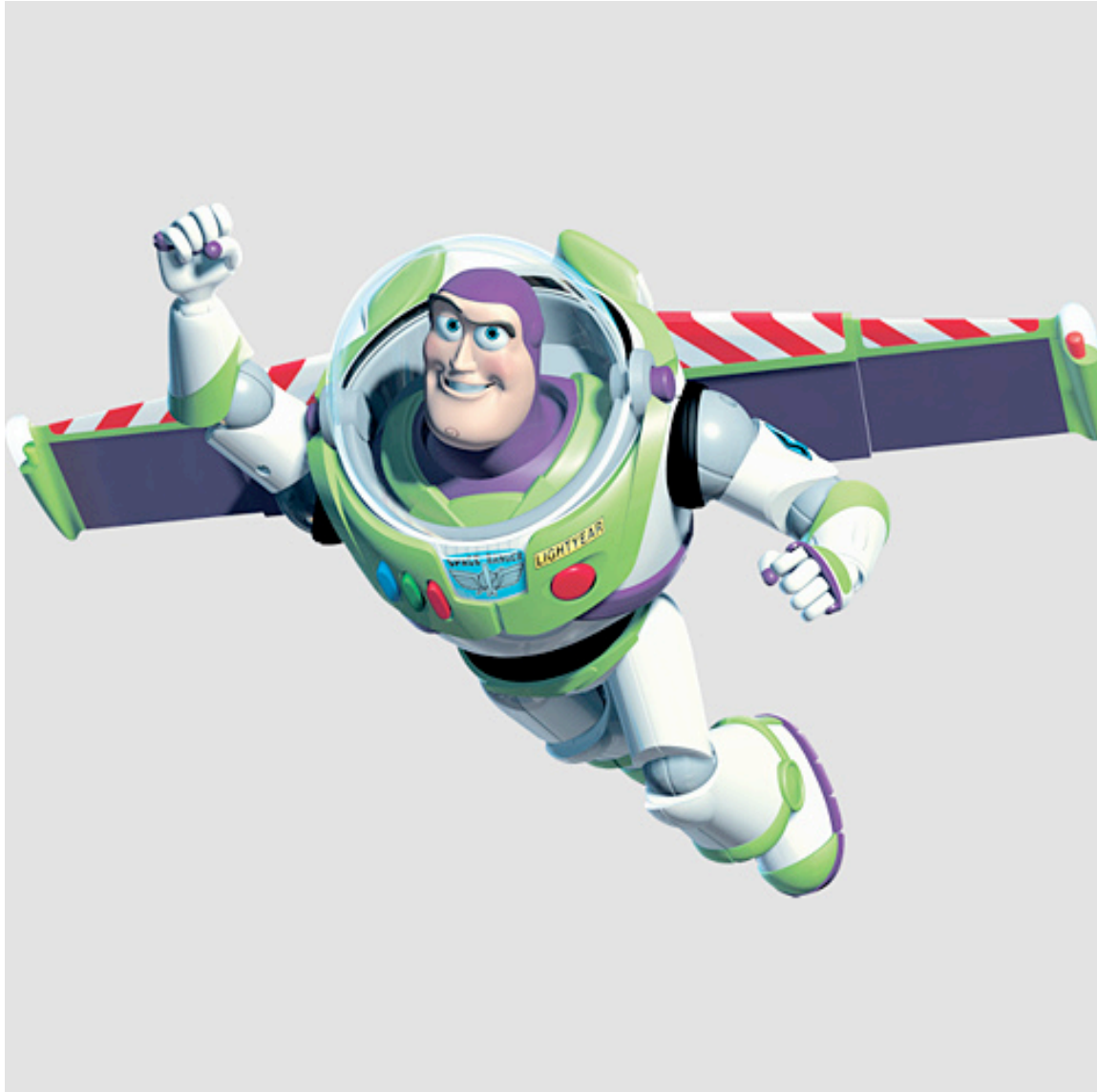


Amy Sharrocks, *Keepy Up*, 2009



Tintoretto, *The Miracle of the Slave*, 1547





“That's not flying. That's falling with style.” –Woody

(*Toy Story*, 1995)

BIBLIOGRAPHY ON FALLING, WITH LADA CATALOGUE REFERENCE NUMBERS

PUBLICATIONS

Ref.	Artist/Author	Title
P2248	Amy Sharrocks	<i>On Falling</i> PPT Presentation and Playlist
P0671	Rebecca Schneider	<i>Solo Solo Solo</i> in Gavin Butt, After Criticism: New Responses to Art and Performance
P0893	Chris Burden	Chris Burden
P0994	Prema Chordon	When Things Fall Apart
P1297	Melati Suryandarmo	<i>The Butter Dance</i> in Loneliness in the Boundaries
P1586	Trisha Brown	Pioneers of Downtown Scene New York 1970s
P1591	Royd Climenhaga	Pina Bausch
P1311	Ric Allsopp and Scott deLaHunta	The Connected Body
P1912	Roisin O’Gorman and Margaret Werry	Performance Research: On Failure
P1923	Elizabeth Streb	How to Become an Action Hero?

ARTICLES

A0543	Amy Sharrocks	Anatomy of falling
A0157	Martin Herbert	To See a Body Think
A0219	Holy Bodmer	Introducing Falling to My Practice Happened Accidentally. I Fell Over. This Initiated the Interest
A0355	Sophia New & Daniel Me Belasco Rogers, plan b	You and Everywhere We Go: plan b
A0358	Kira O’ Reilly	Stair Falling
A0433	Mehmet Sander	Manifesto on Dance

DVDs

D0016	The Canton Opera Company	Falling Human Mortals
DB0105	Franko B	I Miss You!
D0857	Helena Hunter	Tracing Shadis

D1409	Action Hero	Sacred 2009 – A western
D1453	Helena Hunter	Dis-locate
D1612	Mehmet Sander Dance Company	Mehmet Sander Dance Company: Selected Works
D1670	Pina Bauch	Pina
D1716	Action Hero	Frontman
EF5048	Mehment Sander	Uncomfort Zone

ESSAYS

Tom Junod, 'The Falling Man', 2011: <http://tinyurl.com/pkbg54j>

Dustin W. Leavitt, 'Dance Kitchen', *Kyoto Journal*, no. 58, 2004: <http://tinyurl.com/28ehzdx>

POETRY

T.S. Eliot, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, 1915

Claes Oldenburg, *I am for an Art*, 1961

J. G. Ballard, *What I Believe*, 1984

Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal*, 1868

William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 1608; *Macbeth*, 1623

VIDEOS

Bas Jan Ader, *Broken Fall* (organic), 1971 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BfcQrsI7uM>)

Bas Jan Ader, *Broken Fall*, (geometric), 1971 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Kq03KxFKho>)

Buster Keaton (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwH8jkv2Hq0>)

Harold Lloyd, *Safety Last*, 1923

(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QEcTjhUN_7U&feature=youtu.be&t=3m25s)

Pipilotti Rist, *Ghostek, Distances and Coffee*, 1988 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sx6tE-sz3EA>)

Kira O' Reilly, *Stair Falling*, 2009 (<http://vimeo.com/15900495>)

Felix Baumgartner, world's freefall record, 2012

(<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/space/9608140/Felix-Baumgartner-watch-the-jump.html>)

Chris Burden, *Shoot*, 1971 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26R9KFdt5aY>)

Graeme Miller, *Track*, 2009

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2OzDWYKSjtE&feature=youtu.be&t=36s>)

PHOTO CREDITS

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 Amy Sharrocks, *SWIM*, 2007 Photograph by Ruth Corney and Amy Sharrocks, *Keepy Up*, 2009 Photograph by Hugo Glendinning
 Kira O'Reilly, *Stair Falling* (2009). Photograph by Marco Agnelli, Marina Abramovic Presents... Whitworth Art Gallery Manchester
 International Festival 2009

Claes Oldenburg

I Am for an Art (1961)

I am for an art that is political-erotic-mystical, that does something other than sit on its ass in a museum.
I am for an art that grows up not knowing it is art at all, an art given the chance of having a starting point of zero.

I am for an art that embroils itself with the everyday crap & still comes out on top.

I am for an art that imitates the human, that is comic, if necessary, or violent, or whatever is necessary.

I am for all art that takes its form from the lines of life itself, that twists and extends and accumulates and spits and drips, and is heavy and coarse and blunt and sweet and stupid as life itself.

I am for an artist who vanishes, turning up in a white cap painting signs or hallways.

I am for art that comes out of a chimney like black hair and scatters in the sky.

I am for art that spills out of an old mans purse when he is bounced off a passing fender.

I am for the art out of a doggy's mouth, falling five stories from the roof.

I am for the art that a kid licks, after peeling away the wrapper.

I am for an art that joggles like everyone's knees, when the bus traverses an excavation.

I am for art that is smoked, like a cigarette, smells, like a pair of shoes.

I am for art that flaps like a flag, or helps blow noses, like a handkerchief.

I am for art that is put on and taken off, like pants, which develops holes, like socks, which is eaten, like a piece of pie, or abandoned with great contempt, like a piece of shit.

I am for art covered with bandages, I am for art that limps and rolls and runs and jumps.

I am for art that comes in a can or washes up on the shore.

I am for art that coils and grunts like a wrestler.

I am for art that sheds hair.

I am for art you can sit on.

I am for art you can pick your nose with or stub your toes on.

I am for art from a pocket, from deep channels of the ear, from the edge of a knife, from the corners of the mouth, stuck in the eye or worn on the wrist.

I am for art under the skirts, and the art of pinching cockroaches.

I am for the art of conversation between the sidewalk and a blind man's metal stick.

I am for the art that grows in a pot, that comes down out of the skies at night, like lightning, that hides in the clouds and growls.

I am for art that is flipped on and off with a switch.

I am for art that unfolds like a map, that you can squeeze, like your sweet arm, or kiss, like a pet dog. Which expands and squeaks, like an accordion, which you can spill your dinner on, like an old table cloth.

I am for an art that you can hammer with, stitch with, sew with, paste with, file with.

I am for an art that tells you the time of day, or where such and such a street is.

I am for an art that helps old ladies across the street.

I am for the art of the washing machine.

I am for the art of a government check.

I am for the art of last wars raincoat.

I am for the art that comes up in fogs from sewer-holes in winter.

I am for the art that splits when you step on a frozen puddle.

I am for the worms art inside the apple. I am for the art of sweat that develops between crossed legs.

I am for the art of neck-hair and caked tea-cups, for the art between the tines of restaurant forks, for the odour of boiling dishwater.

I am for the art of sailing on Sunday, and the art of red and white gasoline pumps.

I am for the art of bright blue factory columns and blinking biscuit signs.
 I am for the art of cheap plaster and enamel. I am for the art of worn marble and smashed slate.
 I am for the art of rolling cobblestones and sliding sand. I am for the art of slag and black coal.
 I am for the art of dead birds. I am for the art of scratchings in the asphalt, daubing at the walls.
 I am for the art of bending and kicking metal and breaking glass, and pulling at things to make them fall down.
 I am for the art of punching and skinned knees and sat-on bananas. I am for the art of kids smells.
 I am for the art of mama-babble.
 I am for the art of bar-babble, tooth-picking, beer drinking, egg-salting, in-sulting.
 I am for the art of falling off a barstool.
 I am for the art of underwear and the art of taxicabs.
 I am for the art of ice-cream cones dropped on concrete.
 I am for the majestic art of dog-turds, rising like cathedrals.
 I am for the blinking arts, lighting up the night. I am for art falling, splashing, wiggling, jumping, going on and off. I am for the art of fat truck-tyres and black eyes.
 I am for Kool-art, 7-UP art, Pepsi-art, Sunshine art, 39 cents art, 15 cents art, Vatronol art, Dro-bomb art, Vam art, Menthol art, L & M art, Ex-lax art, Venida art, Heaven Hill art, Pamryl art, San-o-med art, Rx art, 9.99 art, Now art, New art, How art, Fire sale art, Last Chance art, Only art, Diamond art, Tomorrow art, Franks art, Ducks art, Meat-o-rama art.
 I am for the art of bread wet by rain. I am for the rat's dance between floors.
 I am for the art of flies walking on a slick pear in the electric light.
 I am for the art of soggy onions and firm green shoots.
 I am for the art of clicking among the nuts when the roaches come and go.
 I am for the brown sad art of rotting apples.
 I am for the art of meowls and clatter of cats and for the art of their dumb electric eyes.
 I am for the white art of refrigerators and their muscular opening s and closings.
 I am for the art of rust and mould. I am for the art of hearts, funeral hearts or sweetheart hearts, full of nougat.
 I am for the art of worn meat hooks and singing barrels of red, white, blue and yellow meat.
 I am for the art of things lost or thrown away, coming home from school. I am for the art of cock-and-ball trees and flying cows and the noise of rectangles and squares.
 I am for the art of crayons and weak grey pencil-lead, and grainy wash and sticky oil paint, and the art of windshield wipers and the art of the finger on a cold window, on dusty steel or in the bubbles on the sides of a bathtub.
 I am for the art of teddy-bears and guns and decapitated rabbits, exploded umbrellas, raped beds, chairs with their brown bones broken, burning trees, firecracker ends, chicken bones, pigeon bones and boxes with men sleeping in them.
 I am for the art of slightly rotten funeral flowers, hung bloody rabbits and wrinkly yellow chickens, bass drums & tambourines, and plastic phonographs.
 I am for the art of abandoned boxes, tied like pharaohs.
 I am for an art of water tanks and speeding clouds and flapping shades.
 I am for US Government Inspected Art, Grade A art, Regular Price art, Yellow Ripe art, Extra Fancy art, Ready-to-eat art, Best-for-less art, Ready-to-cook art, Fully cleaned art, Spend Less art, Eat Better art, Ham art, pork art, chicken art, tomato art, banana art, apple art, turkey art, cake art, cookie art.

add: I am for an art that is combed down, that is hung from each ear, that is laid on the lips and under the eyes, that is shaved from the legs, that is brushed on the teeth, that is fixed on the thighs, that is slipped on the Foot.

What I believe

by T.G. Ballard

I believe in the power of the imagination to remake the world, to release the truth within us, to hold back the night, to transcend death, to charm motorways, to ingratiate ourselves with birds, to enlist the confidences of madmen.

I believe in my own obsessions, in the beauty of the car crash, in the peace of the submerged forest, in the excitements of the deserted holiday beach, in the elegance of automobile graveyards, in the mystery of multi-storey car parks, in the poetry of abandoned hotels.

I believe in the forgotten runways of Wake Island, pointing towards the Pacifics of our imaginations.

I believe in the mysterious beauty of Margaret Thatcher, in the arch of her nostrils and the sheen on her lower lip; in the melancholy of wounded Argentine conscripts; in the haunted smiles of filling station personnel; in my dream of Margaret Thatcher caressed by that young Argentine soldier in a forgotten motel watched by a tubercular filling station attendant.

I believe in the beauty of all women, in the treachery of their imaginations, so close to my heart; in the junction of their disenchanted bodies with the enchanted chromium rails of supermarket counters; in their warm tolerance of my own perversions.

I believe in the death of tomorrow, in the exhaustion of time, in our search for a new time within the smiles of auto-route waitresses and the tired eyes of air-traffic controllers at out-of-season airports.

I believe in the genital organs of great men and women, in the body postures of Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher and Princess Di, in the sweet odours emanating from their lips as they regard the cameras of the entire world.

I believe in madness, in the truth of the inexplicable, in the common sense of stones, in the lunacy of flowers, in the disease stored up for the human race by the Apollo astronauts.

I believe in nothing.

I believe in Max Ernst, Delvaux, Dali, Titian, Goya, Leonardo, Vermeer, Chirico, Magritte, Redon, Durer, Tanguy, the Fa-tour Cheval, the Watts Towers, Bocklin, Francis Bacon, and all the invisible artists within the psychiatric institutions of the planet.

I believe in the impossibility of existence, in the humour of mountains, in the absurdity of electromagnetism, in the farce of geometry, in the cruelty of arithmetic, in the murderous intent of logic.

I believe in adolescent women, in their corruption by their own leg stances, in the purity of their dishevelled bodies, in the traces of their pudenda left in the bathrooms of shabby motels.

I believe in flight, in the beauty of the wing, and in the beauty of everything that has ever flown, in the stone thrown by a small child that carries with it the wisdom of statesmen and midwives.

I believe in the gentleness of the surgeon's knife, in the limitless geometry of the cinema screen, in the hidden universe within supermarkets, in the loneliness of the sun, in the garrulousness of planets, in the repetitiveness of ourselves, in the inexistence of the universe and the boredom of the atom.

I believe in the light cast by video-recorders in department store windows, in the messianic insights of the radiator grilles of showroom automobiles, in the elegance of the oil stains on the engine nacelles of 747s parked on airport tarmacs.

I believe in the non-existence of the past, in the death of the future, and the infinite possibilities of the present.

I believe in the derangement of the senses: in Rimbaud, William Burroughs, Huysmans, Genet, Celine, Swift, DeFoe, Carroll, Coleridge, Kafka.

I believe in the designers of the Pyramids, the Empire State Building, the Berlin Fuhrerbunker, the Wake Island runways.

I believe in the body odours of Princess Di.

I believe in the next five minutes.

I believe in the history of my feet.

I believe in migraines, the boredom of afternoons, the fear of calendars, the treachery of clocks.

I believe in anxiety, psychosis and despair.

I believe in the perversions, in the infatuations with trees, princesses, prime ministers, derelict filling stations (more beautiful than the Taj Mahal), clouds and birds.

I believe in the death of the emotions and the triumph of the imagination.

I believe in Tokyo, Benidorm, La Grande Motte, Wake Island,
Eniwetok, Dealley Plaza.
I believe in alcoholism, venereal disease, fever and exhaustion.
I believe in pain.
I believe in despair.
I believe in all children.
I believe in maps, diagrams, codes, chess-games, puzzles, air-
line time-tables, airport indicator signs.
I believe all excuses.
I believe all reasons.
I believe all hallucinations.
I believe all anger.
I believe all mythologies, memories, lies, fantasies, evasions.
I believe in the mystery and melancholy of a hand, in the kind-
ness of trees, in the wisdom of light.



J.G. Ballard wrote the above—which could be described as a surrealist's catalogue, "part poem, part prayer"—in response to a request from editor Daniel Riche for a contribution to a series entitled "Ce que je crois". It first appeared in French in the premier issue of Riche's magazine *Science Fiction* (January 1984). This is the first time it has been published in English. We are indebted to the author, and to Daniel Riche, for permission to use it here.