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Following PG3, which took the word 'ground' from the title as a thematic starting point, PG4 addresses ideas of 'play'; tracking our associations through notions of theatricality and staging, music and performance, work and leisure, action and protest. We invite consideration of the meaning and value of play within teaching and learning, as a strategy or concept in artists' practice and within curatorial approaches to programming for students and teachers in an international art museum.

Sharing the thinking, ideas and questions coming from the Schools and Teachers team and programme at Tate Modern and Tate Britain, *Play Ground* magazine follows the life of an idea as it develops, noticing what exists beside, before and after the programme. It becomes a platform for the Schools and Teachers team to mark out a collective ground and to play with ideas. Through a range of material, from images to essays, we collate and present the peripheral responses, provisional thinking or integral encounters to come out of teachers' courses and events, our personal and programmatic research, and conversations with artists and teachers.

PG4 aims to weave together multiple ideas and thoughts around an expanded notion of play rather than compiling any comprehensive theory or history. We pose questions and hunt the various possibilities of play and playfulness: what is at stake when we play? What might the performative space of play allow in teaching and learning? How might artists' practice smudge the boundaries between work and play? What do notions of play across disciplines do to our concept of representation, sincerity and reality?

PG 2
YVONNE RAINER
STILL FROM HAND MOVIE 1966



LEARNING IT!

2 CHARACTERS

JO ADDISON
ALICE WALTON

It is morning in late summer 2015.

The two characters have been friends for many years. Their work has kept silent company in their studio and they have long enjoyed the idea that it maintains its own dialogue when they, the artists, are away.

All three conversations, which are continuous, take place in two easy chairs at the back of a studio in a repurposed 1960s print warehouse on a residential street in Loughborough Junction, South London.

(If a realistic set is used a number of prompts should be utilised; the chairs are old; used coffee cups sit on an upturned box between them. Light is provided by strips and two large windows beyond which trains pass at regular intervals.)

ACT 1 RETURN TO TOMMY

(It's early, a pale light settles on an array of odd objects interspersed across the floor.)

ALICE: I've been thinking about this theme play and wanting to subvert it, or frustrate the idea of it being inherently childlike and tending towards the ... frivolous. And so, I'm wondering about the *difficulty* of play ...

I know playfulness is a knotty issue in relation to your work, which is exactly why I wanted to explore with you where it surfaces within both making and learning.

Having shared a studio with you for over ten years I can't help but be acutely aware of an inconsistency between the finished work and the process by which it's realised! There's an obvious struggle in your making, which often takes the form of a repetitive remaking in an effort to find the right language to allow each idea to emerge fully. It's an endeavour that belies the seemingly easy, light-touch quality of the objects that make it out of the studio ... and could almost be interpreted as you allowing the materials time to act on you.

It's as though you, your idea and your material need to work (or play) towards one another, over and over until you reach a perfect union – a light touch maybe, but one at the end of an often painful labour!

Is this a fair description of your process?

JO: I'm afraid so! The apparent ease of the outcome definitely belies the process ... during which I usually cry! *(Laughs)* I don't find the work playful to make but I definitely seek play, or something like it in the outcome.

ALICE: Why might that be do you think?

JO: I think it's because I'm uncomfortable with work that doesn't *(long pause)* ... undo itself. I'm wary of definitive, erm, finite statements in my work.

ALICE: This *undoing*, what does it look like in practice and how

do you think it impacts the outcome? Could it be said to be an expanded notion of playfulness? And where does it leave the viewer?

JO: Mmm, I don't tend to use the words play or playfulness ... probably because the process of making is too painful! But I definitely do require the outcome to possess something of it ... perhaps fallibility or errancy (is that a word?) is more appropriate? Strangely, I'm more comfortable with playfulness in teaching, where it's become quite important to how I communicate.

ALICE: So while you don't find the experience of *making* the work playful, and don't expect to, you've got a clear idea of how the work should function in the world ... with a certain easy humour.

Are you hoping to support the audience to play through looking?

JO: Well, I try not to be overly concerned with the audience when I'm making the work, but I think you're right that I have quite a clear idea of the tone or (*pause*) mood I want the work to be in.

ALICE: You talked about needing the work to be fallible, or errant, perhaps to undermine itself. Are you suggesting that it has a distance from you as its author? Or that it, the object, should take a certain responsibility for not taking itself too seriously?

JO: Yeah, I like the way you've described that. When I think of errant and fallible objects I always end up talking about Tommy Cooper ... In Spoon Jar, Jar, Spoon, he's undone the gag before it starts ...

ALICE: (*Interrupts*) What is the gag?

JO: He makes a metal spoon dance inside a glass jar. I've got to show it to you ...

He's front-stage holding a jar with a spoon in it and someone else is back-stage pulling the string on his cue. It's so carefully crafted not to work properly. He's deliberately and characteristically clumsy and ... apparently unrehearsed. The set is very quickly and calculatedly undermined; the *workings* are deliberately visible (*pause*) ... perfectly clunky. He gives them parallel status to the illusion and it's in this staging that the humour lies.

The allure is in this perfect balance ... not in the illusion itself.

I often show it when I'm teaching, in relation to discussions about the visibility of process in objects and the decisions we

make about how much of it to reveal.

How much is it about staging an outcome or staging a process?



1

Tommy Cooper, performing
Spoon, Jar, Jar, Spoon

A L I C E : I assume by that, you're hoping to highlight that sometimes the process by which something is achieved is what ends up being interesting about the work? And that placing too much emphasis on arriving at a polished outcome might miss something vital in the process?

But aren't you doing exactly that, staging an outcome? Presenting the audience with a series of objects that appear to operate on their own terms, exerting their playful wit and apparent effortlessness ... a million miles away from your experience of making them (*smiles*)?

J O : Mmm ... yep, there's definitely a paradox ... the process is implicit in the objects but I've also chosen what not to reveal.

A L I C E : Does this have anything to do with the almost obsessive remaking of each object, as though you are folding in but also hiding away the difficulty?

I've seen you rolling out a length of clay, over and again, close to tears! Seemingly exercising a *painful* perseverance ... literally practicing it! Crying and rolling!

You obviously weren't enjoying it but needing to work

something through perhaps, waiting for the clay to reveal something to you. I wonder what happens between each of the versions? To me they looked almost identical!

JO: I know! And now, with distance I probably can't say what the difference was. But a good example of what you're talking about is Huggle (*looking at a minty green object the size of a large dog sitting close by*).



2
Jo Addison, *Huggle* 2015

I made the basic structure, the armature, over a year ago, and from then until relatively recently I've painted the surface almost weekly. I couldn't tell you on what terms ... but it was never right! So after every attempt I coated it in a new layer of Jesmonite ... and started again.

Initially there was quite a lot of variation each time in the way I painted it but then each coat became pretty similar. I really feel I *learned* that object, like learning an instrument ... but I didn't know what instrument it was!

ALICE: (*Laughing*) I love the idea that the object has taught you. I love the silliness of a green amorphous blob being your teacher!

So, how does this idea of learning from or learning with the making of an object compare or relate to teaching and learning more generally?

JO: Well it might sound a bit romantic, but all of my learning of that object is encoded in that object. (*Obviously thinking*) And in the current climate of art education we seem to lack confidence in the object or in our ability to decode it. We tend to seek other evidence, usually from the student, to prove that learning has taken place.

ALICE: Yes that's true ... often, whether at school or university, or in fact even as an artist, we're used to being asked to describe or account for our actions ... through annotation or group discussion, personal statements, etc.; demonstrating our references, revealing our processes. There's always a tension between the idea of art 'speaking for itself' and the need to articulate our intentions.

This certainly feels like an issue when it's understood as adding value to the thing in question. How are things allowed to operate on their own terms ... beyond the realm of spoken language?

JO: Mmm ... perhaps we can explain this dependency on quantifiable evidence as a result of an increasing pressure to make ourselves accountable for the judgements that we make ... as teachers *and* students ...

We want the same information repeated back to us in a different language because we can't quite allow ourselves to trust the object.

ALICE: So, to return to Tommy, is your practice attempting to stage an outcome but with a mindful attention to what the process has allowed that outcome? The two seem inextricably bound together ... the nimbleness only possible thanks to its laborious and sometimes gruelling process!

It seems to me that the results of your 'undoing' could be said to make the difference between a straightforward facsimile and an object that exerts its own force ... an object of cunning, with agency, that plays at being stubborn, alludes, mocks, challenges, invites ...?

JO: Yes, yes! I like the way you've attributed the cunning to the object itself. I've just read Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and there's a kind of seminal moment when Jekyll 'reveals all' in his *Full Statement of the Case*. He talks about how he drew steadily nearer to the truth, which is something like 'man is not truly one, but two'.

And of course, he's referring to his own duality ... part moral doctor and part (*pause*) depraved fiend! He talks about the balancing of these parts and being ... I think he says *radically both*. And the reason I'm mentioning this is that for me the sort of ... graveness of the making has to be performed to arrive at what you've referred to as ease. And the object is *radically both* ...
ALICE: ... and takes its opportunity to be playful!

ACT 2 LASH

(Later, on another day. Rain pits the windows and raps against the wooden trap door in the ceiling. The remains of a makeshift lunch are still on the table.)

ALICE: The way in which you title your work is significant in as much as it seems to endorse, even amplify, its seeming playfulness. And often you play on words. How do you arrive at your titles?

JO: Sometimes working titles are quite persuasive for me. I like the immediacy and persistence of them and lots of pieces just hang on to them. They tend to be nouns (rock, pole, rail ...) but I do find that whilst there is honesty in these *names of things*, they also have the potential to stop the object. Maybe it's because they are so bound to the forms in the world around us and more recently my objects are loosening themselves from the specificity of these things.

Increasingly, I feel the language (of the title) has to offer something in its own right or on its own terms, so that it sort of rubs off on the object and perhaps vice versa. In fact this makes me think of another relevant definition of play and it relates to mechanics. It's the play of ... (*strange movement of hips and hands*) components ... where there's just enough slack or space for things to really affect each other physically, to wear and reshape one another. I think it's called *Lash*.

ALICE: This seems apposite, both your Jekyll and Hyde and Tommy Cooper references, and now this, Lash, too ... for you they are all examples of value being distributed across many things so that a balance is achieved. Your process resists being linear and is less about the singularity of the idea and more about what is made possible through a number of components being brought into a relationship, an often simple idea, a material and title being brought to bear, each on the other. This feels familiar: in the Schools and Teachers team we often talk about our approach as

being fundamentally relational. Audience, artists and artwork are brought into dialogue in order to discover together, the principle being to acknowledge the agency of all contributing elements. For me this is about reciprocity, and I also like the idea of enjoying a reciprocity with say, clay! Does this come back to the desire to acknowledge a place for the uncertainty of the learner-maker?

JO: Yes, and as a tutor I am always looking to recognise the uncertainty of the student as a *function* of their learning. As well as learning about the historical and contemporary context in which they make work, they are *learning* their *own* work. And we don't know what that's going to be. So it seems important sometimes, to debunk or broaden inherited models of what it is to be an artist. Or to point to enough examples to encourage an uncertain and negotiable testing ground.

ALICE: What is the model being debunked here?

JO: Being determined! Students learning to locate a practice with confidence. Learning how to do what you do and then doing it, with aplomb.

ALICE: So rather enabling the confidence to allow uncertainty?

JO: Yes, to learn that you can be uncertain and that you can claim uncertainty.

ALICE: And this goes back to what your work might have shown or taught you? That you learnt what you were doing through doing it?

JO: Yes. And while I'm obviously talking here about students at university level, I think it might also relate to schools. And it all tracks back to how we assess success, whether of an artwork or a project, which in turn returns us to the issue of evidencing and making explicit every move. This doesn't allow for the moments when you don't know why you're doing something; don't even know that you are doing it!

ALICE: It is certainly true that teachers are under constant pressure to account for their students' learning. I think there is an increasing need to be inventive in addressing assessment criteria so as to maintain space for the kind of finding out and retrospective understanding that you are talking about.

I think it's also an issue about how we learn to be in the

world. Hesitancy, uncertainty, deliberation, even fear are rarely considered positive but all seem to have a crucial role in surviving the studio for example. It begs the question (rather a large one for here) of how we support young people to learn to be unsure!

JO: Mmm ... I was at a conversation between Lisa Le Feuvre and Phyllida Barlow last night, and Phyllida said something like 'something that doesn't resolve itself isn't wrong'. She was talking in relation to not knowing when artworks are finished but I think it's a useful maxim more broadly.

ALICE: This does all make me think of play again, play as being in and of the moment, sometimes with no specific goal in mind but not necessarily without motivation. It seems to me that it often takes the form of a series of interconnected acts or decisions, consciously or subconsciously undertaken: the focus being on the immediate but with an investment in the process as it unfolds. If we inserted an alternative word for *play* here, *lash* perhaps, could we be describing your practice again?

JO: Perhaps. That *lash* requires slack in order for the components to wear and reshape each other is crucial – this is the space where dialogue happens, where making and learning can wear and reshape one another.

ACT 3 WRONG

(The room is emptier now, many of the objects having left for a show. The light is even. The radio talks quietly in the background.)

ALICE: I wanted to borrow the *form* for this conversation from the other definition of play, that of a play or script: a dialogue between characters. Along with the visual playfulness I enjoy the notion that it might extend its own particular invitation. And, when I mentioned this, the fact that a script is usually intended to be performed rather than just read was of particular interest to you.

JO: It is, I'm really excited about the possibility of taking this back to my students as a performative exercise: acknowledging a method of copying or re-enacting as a tool for learning.

ALICE: *(Shuddering)* Do you mean literally handing this script over to your students? What might you or we or they learn from that?

JO: I think by briefly inhabiting someone else's position, or argument, perhaps we can more clearly locate our own. By literally speaking someone else's words (which might fit snugly or uncomfortably) you can find your own position, whether through opposition, confirmation, debate ... There's something quite appealing about subverting the model of teaching through copying; a sort of atelier gone wrong.

ALICE: Are you using 'atelier' here to allude to the notion of the great master or studio under which a student would study?

JO: Yes exactly.

ALICE: I immediately feel panic at the ... *(pause)* ... conceit, the suggestion that our words have an authority worthy of emulation, but I understand that you're taking pleasure in being tongue-in-cheek and are actually offering up our conversation as something to be challenged. The students contend with our position in order to establish their own. But has it in fact 'gone wrong', it is, isn't it, a form of learning through copying?

JO: I think the spirit in which it's proposed is key. Not least because

there are ethical implications ... although no more than what should be at stake in every encounter between teacher and students! It's an invitation to engage in a re-enactment, not as a means of replication, but as a way to transform and make change.

ALICE: What I find interesting about this is how something as didactic as performing another's ideas, in their words, might open up the space to learn about oneself. It makes me think of Allan Kaprow and his ideas around control creating freedom.

And what do you imagine we might learn, particularly you, hearing your words spoken by your students?

JO: Well I think there's something equally revealing and perhaps disorientating about hearing your own words spoken back to you. In that sense it might offer an opportunity to reposition myself, as an artist *and* tutor. And I think this is an important thing to do in both roles. It makes me think there needs to be a bit of *lash* or *slack* here too, between all of the parts; artist ... object ... tutor ... student ... object ... all jiggling around, being shaped by one another.

ALICE: It sets up an intriguingly precarious dynamic, simultaneously provocative and generous – a willingness to let someone else inhabit and disrupt one's thinking. The invitation to perform also necessitates an element of staging, which potentially means receiving back our conversation (not only ours now!) in a new form. This may have implications for our own sense of agency in the moment of the re-presentation, especially if we are part of a broader audience!

JO: You mean, you and I? Yes, I think you're right, it does have very interesting implications because that disorientation and repositioning that I'm imagining would happen in quite a public way.

ALICE: I wonder if part of the appeal of this idea for you relates to the notion of art that undoes itself – your need for your work to undermine itself? After all one side effect might be that your students leave you feeling 'undone'!

JO: What a wonderful and terrifying prospect. Since we returned to this conversation, I've been rereading a book by Juhani Pallasmaa, in which he talks about the necessity, in the creative

field, of unlearning, whereby forgetting is as important as remembering and uncertainty is as important as certainty. What we have done in this conversation is bring up to a level of consciousness something that is usually embedded in making for me. It's a verbal exercise in which we've tried to make sense of something non-verbal, something which, incidentally, we ask our students to do on a regular basis. Pallasmaa quotes someone called Feldenkrais (or Feldensomeone!), a sort of physicist healer who said something like: 'the fact that we do something doesn't mean we know what or how we're doing it'. He was referring to moving our bodies, and an example is that if you pay attention to an action in detail, then something as simple as getting up from a chair becomes a mystery. Scripting our conversation and offering it up to students is like watching myself get up from a chair. And it's a reminder of how remarkably perilous the processes of making, teaching and learning are.

ALICE: I love that this text might hold within it that function: to be a conversation *about* learning as a practical tool for learning. Equally I like that this might be just one of several ways in which it might operate. It can, of course, be simply read, followed, absorbed ... or not! As you have described, it could propose a more active invitation to oppose or support a particular, and in this case personal, line of thinking. And connected to that is this idea of a practical exercise, a script to perform as a way of literally trying on ideas.

What is interesting is that much of what we have discussed is about how things ... components (*gesturing*) ... perform in relation to one another in order to 'allow' or open up space for one another. Jekyll and Hyde's good and evil as equally necessary, the value placed on the constituent elements of audience, artwork and artist within the Schools and Teachers programme, your making-learning-making balance in the studio and the play of one thing against another through *lash* ... if I have understood correctly?

Might this text be offering up an equivalent for your students? Is it looking to draw their attention to the relationship between things and what things in particular?

JO: Between themselves, their teaching, learning, each other ...

THE EMPTY BOX

Play is notoriously difficult to define and in trying to pin it down, it mutates like mercury. That said, there are points of agreement. Diane Ackerman, Fred Donaldson and Johan Huizinga are in apparent consensus on defining features of play as related to art (Ackerman), learning (Donaldson) and culture (Huizinga)¹. First, play exists apart from and within human culture, it is beautiful, and it is fun. It has no moral function, and it is irrational. Play is actively engaged in and freely chosen. So it is not lounging or boredom, but it does include daydreaming and fantasy. Play has rules, but it is flexible. Players can do the unexpected, experiment with novel behaviours and ideas, inverting and subverting the rules as the trickster: a shape-shifting figure who appears across cultures to provoke and say the unsayable. Play frequently has an *as-if* quality defined by its rules and the marking off of a sacred circle or playground that all the players understand; for example, when pretending that a cardboard box is a car, or when dogs pretend to growl and bite but do not harm. Thus players can recognise when play is signalled and when playing has ceased. Finally, play is voluntary, an end unto itself. Its goals are self-imposed.

¹
Diane Ackerman, *Deep Play*, New York 1999. Fred Donaldson, *Playing by Heart: The Vision and Practice of Belonging*, Nevada City CA 1993. Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, Boston 1950.



EmptyShoeBoxIncidentChildP
Photograph from Tate Modern
Visitor Experience Incident
Report of Gabriel Orozco's
work *Empty Shoe Box* 1993,
after being kicked by a child

A running theme through our examination of the relationship between art and play is the value of incompleteness. The more we researched into the origins and intentions of *The Empty Shoe Box* by Gabriel Orozco, the more of a mythology we discovered surrounding it. Consider the openness of the empty box, a piece that in his studio represents the repository of his ideas.

While one writer would tell of the innocent but impish act in placing it in the middle of a huge space at the Venice Biennale (a playful critique on the competitive vying for space by major international artists at this event), another spoke of the deliberate artfulness and faux naivety of Orozco's intention suggesting this as a classic 'readymade', placed precisely to question its own placement, context, meaning and relationship with the audience.

Huizinga famously found the link between play and art ('plastic art' as he termed it) less obvious than with music or performance, perhaps because art of that era was predominantly bound to the material. He said 'the absence of any public *action* within which the work of plastic art comes to life and is enjoyed would seem to leave no room for the play factor'. Placed artfully on the gallery floor, during the Tate Modern Gabriel Orozco exhibition

(January–April 2011), *The Empty Shoe Box* had no barriers or 'do not touch' signs:

minutes later, a woman in her senior years throws in a scrunched-up tissue ... Danielle's litter isn't discovered for 10 minutes – but once it is found, by security guard Jim, the rigmarole that follows is hilarious. Jim informs Martha, the visitor assistant. In turn, Martha calls her manager, and three minutes later, the manager strides in to survey the terrain. She approaches the box. She inspects it – and then leaves, presumably in search of special tissue-extraction utensils. Two minutes later, she returns, armed with rubber gloves. Finally, nine minutes after the litter was first reported, she extracts the offending Kleenex. For good measure, she also whips out a floor-plan, and checks the box is still positioned at precisely the right angle. It's an episode that highlights the most provocative thing about the box: the tension it creates between visitor and gallery.²

²
Patrick Kingsley, *Watching Gabriel Orozco's Box*.
7 February 2011,
[www.theguardian.com/
artanddesign/2011/feb/07/
gabriel-orozco-tate-modern](http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2011/feb/07/gabriel-orozco-tate-modern).

Nigel Henderson
*Photograph of a young boy looking
through a box with a hole* c.1949-1956
Tate Archive - TGA 201011/3/1/38/7
© Henderson Estate

www.tate.org.uk/art/archive/tga-201011-3-1-38-7/henderson-photograph-of-a-young-boy-looking-through-a-box-with-a-hole



Both play and art construct and deconstruct meanings for our lives. Many of our most affecting moments of understanding are at those times when our minds are opened to possibility – art and play meet on the corner of possibility and ‘what if?’

Secret Tate
September 2007
Photograph: Richard Eaton

Nobody must know the secret of the box.
SpongeBob SquarePants



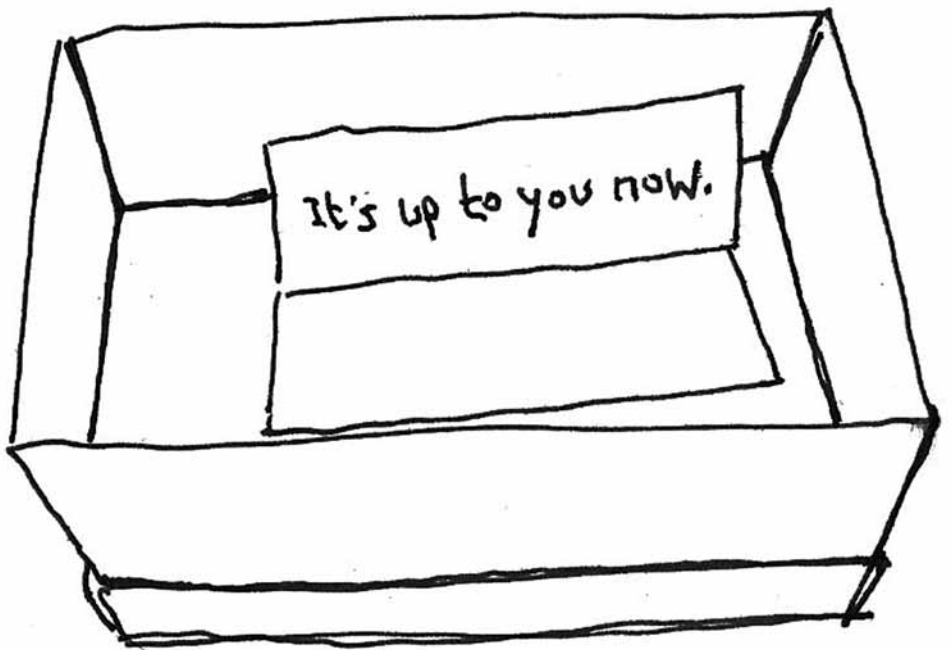
Influenced by the principles of Froebel, Steiner and Montessori for a more holistic view of children as active agents in their own learning and well-being, Simon Nicholson developed the *Theory of Loose Parts*, where the function of play is close to the 'adaptive variability' of Brian Sutton-Smith, and the 'loose parts' are variables in a space that spark and fuel inventiveness, experimentation and creativity (cardboard boxes not climbing frames). In 1976 Nicholson launched the modular Art and Environment course at the Open University where students could undertake a range of projects, many of which were exploring the affective and sensory as much as the conceptual in art:

*Just look at the simple everyday things around you, and play with them in your imagination. And maybe then let your imagination be in charge of externalizing itself. And enjoy the externalizing ... the generation of a product ... not just for the product, but for the doing. Because the doing – the VERB, the process – is the essence of important realities.*³

³
Kristina Hooper, Letter
from External Assessor,
1975.

One of these modules was entitled The Empty Box and consisted of a box with a simple message inside.⁴

⁴
Art and Environment:
The Empty Box
(TAD 292 Unit 1)
The Open University,
A Second Level
Interdisciplinary Course,
OU Press, 'prepared for the
course by Simon Nicholson',
1976. For further reading
look here: [www.open.ac.uk/
blogs/History-of-the-
OU/?p=2250](http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/History-of-the-OU/?p=2250) or view the
course materials in the
Tate Library.







SELECTED
EXTRACTS FROM
DRAMA QUEENS,
A PLAY BY
ELMGREEN &
DRAGSET WITH
TEXT BY TIM
ETCHELLS

Drama Queens is a play without actors. Seven 20th century superstar sculptures find themselves trapped on a theater stage and out of their usual context. How do they interact with this new environment and with each other? The drama unfolds through a series of clashes and crossovers between the various “isms” and aesthetics which these sculptures represent.

Characters:



WALKING MAN inspired by Alberto Giacometti's *Walking Man* [1947]



UNTITLED [GRANITE] inspired by an untitled granite sculpture by Ulrich Rückriem [1984]



ELEGY III inspired by Barbara Hepworth's *Elegy III* [1966]



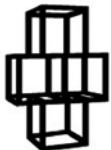
CLOUD SHEPHRED inspired by Jean Arp's *Cloud Shepherd* [1953]



RABBIT inspired by Jeff Koons's *Rabbit* [1986]



BRILLO BOX inspired by Andy Warhol's *Brillo Box* [1964]



FOUR CUBES inspired by Sol LeWitt's *Four Cubes* [1971]

Empty stage. Offstage voices, bumps, cracking and crashing sounds. Multiple voices saying: "Oops, au, I can't see anything! Where am I?" - and so on.

Light comes on slowly. Untitled [Granite] is already onstage. Lurches around onstage alone, moves around a bit as if exploring, then speaks in German and bad English.

UNTITLED (GRANITE): Gott in Himmel. Gott in Himmel. Was ist das? Was ist das? *(moves a bit more)* Was in die Hölle ist das?

...

UNTITLED (GRANITE): *(to the audience, slow, loud and rude as if they did not hear him the first time he said this)*
"Guten Tag, audience!"

...

ELEGY III: Are we supposed to do something?

RABBIT: Think of them like a busload of tourists. They came all the way through some museum and what they really want to see is you. Their feet are tired, they're sitting down on some benches, they turned off their audio guides and now they're looking at you. Staring. Waiting. Do something dazzling!!!! Showtime, babe!!!

...

Music plays. They dance, some more reluctantly than others.

RABBIT: Four Cubes, Untitled - don't sit there like squares! You're not getting out of this. It's time for a paaaarty! Oh man, oh man. You can really trust that silver rabbit to get the dancing started.

RABBIT: *(as they dance)* Come on - move it! Shake it baby! Get Down! *(some James Brown squeals etc.)*

UNTITLED (GRANITE): Ja! Ja! *(on the beat, in between delighted squeals from Elegy III and Cloud Shepherd)*

The music stops/"collapses"/cuts off brutally.

...

WALKING MAN: *(still walking)* They said that I "was a perfect example, that I symbolized certain eternal aspects of human experience, the walk of the thinker, the gatherer, the hunter..."

RABBIT: Will you give it a break, reading out your own press materials?

WALKING MAN: (*still walking*) I'm trying to make a conversation.

RABBIT: We can all play that game.

ELEGY III: They called me soft, and quiet. Some said I was derivative.

RABBIT: They said I was a nothing, an empty gesture, a superficial if kind of clever decoration. Others said that in fact I embodied a devastating critique of the economy of the superficial. They said that from the tips of my ears to the ends of my feet I was a dazzling attack on a whole culture's obsession with wealth, glitz and easy pleasures. Still others thought that I was genuinely charming, that I showed a real and honest sense of fun – a kind of joy without irony that has all but vanished from the world.

ELEGY III: And, what's your own opinion?

RABBIT: I am a silver rabbit, based on the form of a cheap but colorful plastic toy. I am cast in stainless steel, which they call poor man's silver and I am approximately 104 cm high. I just reflect reality on my beautiful skin.

...

Crash. The Warchol Brillo Box falls to the floor. Everyone rushes away to all sides.

RABBIT: Wow! Cool! Who's that?

END

TOTALLY ON FIRE FOR THE UTOPIA OF RULES

WORDS FROM *THE UTOPIA OF RULES* BY DAVID GRAEBER
IMAGES FROM *TOTALLY ON FIRE* BY KEIRA GREENE

'[A]ll games have certain common features. First, they are clearly bounded in time and space, and thereby framed off from ordinary life. There is a field, a board, a starting pistol, a finish line. Within that time/space, certain people are designated as players. There are also rules, which define precisely what those players can and cannot do. Finally, there is always some clear idea of the stakes, of what the players have to do to win the game. And, critically: that's all there is. Any place, person, action that falls outside that framework is extraneous; it doesn't matter; it's not part of the game. Another way to put this would be to say that games are pure rule-governed action.

It seems to me that this is important, because this [is] precisely why the games are fun. In almost any other aspect of human existence, all these things are ambiguous. Think of a family quarrel, or a workspace rivalry. Who is or is not a party to it, what's fair, when it began and when it's over, what it even means to say you won - it's all extremely difficult to say. The hardest thing of all is to understand the rules. In almost any situation we find ourselves in, there are rules - even in casual conversation there are tacit rules of who can speak in what order, pacing, tone, deference, appropriate and inappropriate topics, when you can smile, what sort of humour is allowable, what you should be doing with your eyes, and a million other things besides. These rules are rarely explicit, and usually there are many conflicting ones that could, possibly, be brought to bear at any given moment. So we are always doing the difficult work of negotiating between them, and trying to predict how others will do the same. Games allow us our only real experience of the situation where all this ambiguity is swept away. Everyone knows exactly what the rules are. And not only that, people actually do follow them. And by following them, it is even possible to win! This - along with the fact that unlike in real life, one has submitted oneself to the rules completely voluntarily - is the source of pleasure. Games, then, are a kind of utopia of rules.'



¹
Penny Wilson, *The Playwork Primer*, Maryland USA 2009, p.19. A quote from Bob Hughes's taxonomy of playwork. Also after Vygotsky 'a stick denoting a horse' cited in Doris Pronin Fromberg, 'A Review of Research on Play', in Carol Seeffeldt (ed.), *The Early Childhood Curriculum: Current Findings in Theory and Practice*, New York 1999, p.31.

WHEN A STICK BECOMES A HORSE¹

LEANNE TURVEY



'I, suddenly powerful as a "jackdaw", climbed to the top of the sacks, or "climbers" as we knew them, and swooped down upon Myrtle and Brudie, flapping my wings and making a hawklike cry. "Nini's the jackdaw," they said at meals when Mum or Dad asked what we'd been doing. "Nini's the jackdaw and we've been climbing up the climbers.'"² Whilst working in an Adventure Playground in 1999 young boys would regularly run into the hut to let me know that they wanted to be Ninja Turtles. Materials would be combined quickly to fashion items that could be worn or held. My role was to respond to what they wanted but also to anticipate potential extensions and digressions. There was an intensity to this responsive role in the children's play, and after leaving the playground to work in a gallery it took many months for their voices to leave my head. But it wasn't until prompted by a discussion in 2011 with Steve Seidel, Director of the Arts in Education Programme at Harvard, that I began to consider that Adventure Playgrounds might have fundamentally informed my approach to working with artists, teachers and young people in galleries.

The Adventure Playground is interesting not only for the type of play promoted in relation to learning and young people, but because it has at the heart of its evolution a contradiction; a polarity reflecting complex tensions in broader understandings of and attitudes towards play and its function in society. The following is a series of descriptions, arguments, theories and stories intuitively organised in order to consider these tensions as a way to begin to explore the potential influence of playwork on my thinking.

The first Adventure Playgrounds were set up in 1950s London with the support of the National Playing Fields Association, and influenced by the ideas of Lady Allen of Hurtwood, who herself had been influenced by the junk playgrounds in Denmark.³ In a nuanced interpretation of the history, purpose and motivations behind their emergence, writer and researcher Stephanie Sutton locates Adventure Playgrounds between 'radical idealism' and 'municipal practice'.⁴ She describes how on the one hand Adventure Playgrounds grew out of the ethos of 'state paternalism', where they were seen as spaces for young people to expend their delinquent energy and be integrated into community life; and how on the other, with their emphasis on non-hierarchical decision making and the autonomy of children's play, they were reflective of and demonstrations of radical politics in action.⁵

Sutton argues that this 'polarity' is the result of the socio-political context in which these play spaces became a feature of our cities, pointing to the post-war street life that took place amongst the rubble and rebuilding. For children, playing within the bomb sites, this was a period of freedom that followed the 'evacuation and confinement' of war.⁶ Post-war children were returning to cities they had been absent from, and were therefore consequently more visible. Sutton makes the case that this increased visibility of children coincided with an interconnected set of ideas being developed in society that would go on to impact on their lives. These ideas were: the emergence of the 'belief in children as distinct users of specialised spaces and consumer goods';⁷ the development of advocacy for good parenting and taking care of children; and public concern about a growing youth culture that included a fear of hooliganism and delinquency. The fact of children playing in the streets, Sutton argues, came to be seen as indicative of the 'damaging

2
Janet Frame, *To the Is-Land*, London 1993, p.22.

3
Susan Raven, 'Treasure Islands', *The Sunday Times, Colour Supplement*, 7 August 1977.

4
Stephanie Sutton, 'Islands of Freedom: Adventure Playgrounds, from Post-War Paternalism to Radical Alternatives', *ARC*, vol.17, no.3, 2013, p.12.

Sutton is currently studio assistant, Steven Claydon Studio, London; exhibitions and archive assistant, Camden Arts Centre, London; magazine review coordinator, for The Twentieth Century Society, London; and co-editor, *Beyond Text, Unmaking Things*, RCA/V&A, London. 'Islands of Freedom: Adventure Playgrounds, from Post-War Paternalism to Radical Alternatives' was developed from research for her MA in History of Design at the Royal College of Art.

5
Sutton 2013, p.10. Sutton writes that 'at a local level many playgrounds were the result of petitions, occupations and even squatting on the part of parent and voluntary action groups.'

6
Ibid., p.5.

7
Ibid., p.5.

8
Ibid., p.8.

effects of overcrowding and dense [urban] living conditions'.⁸ Adventure Playgrounds were developed to channel a war-traumatised generation of children's creative energy, to rescue them from the potential vagrancies of street life; but were also developed by communities as public spaces defined by their own needs.

Whatever the competing motivations behind their development, early Adventure Playgrounds offered spaces for children to alter and rearrange according to what they wanted for the purposes of their play. Key features were unpaved ground, some kind of large play structure, urban contexts, local community influences on activities and free play and playground staff called "playworkers". They were seen as a departure from standardised municipal playgrounds, a key difference being the presence of the playworker. Early playworker practice involved supporting children to explore the elements that made up their world (earth, fire, water, etc.) as material for play, and child-led play. 'It is a different kind of experience because, through play, the children are seeking answers to their own questions, realising their own aims, not those set for them by adult society.'⁹

9
Harry Shier,
Adventure Playgrounds:
An Introduction, London
1984, p.3. Scanned facsimile
of the original publication
published by National
Playing Fields Association,
now the Fields in Trust,
www.fieldsintrust.org.

When I worked as a playworker in an Adventure Playground in Peckham I wasn't aware of their history, and I didn't have a sense of the, by then, well-developed theory of the practice that underpinned my role. I did, however, have a sense of an ethos, shared amongst my co-workers, that was loosely based on a practice upheld (through training, etc.) by the local authority the playground was owned and managed by. This ethos was that the young people attending the playground should lead the play and we as playworkers should respond.

The nature, interests and skills of the workers when working with the play interests and individual personalities of the children encouraged a *kind* of play in *that* playground. Other playgrounds felt different, each one in the borough felt different. At ours, football was very popular amongst staff and children. In fact, a football school was developed out of the site with patronage by players who had come through the playground and gone on to play for Premier League teams. There was also pool and table tennis, wooden structures with rope swings, table football, and an arts and crafts area.

The arts and crafts area was the section I managed, and here there was a mixture of planned and 'free' activities. However, all activities began as prompts: an open bag of clay, sugar paper and paints; something from the art cupboard that looked a bit new had just as much potential for open interpretation as a pile of cardboard and tape. A drawing session might evolve into a dance routine, as we responded to what was running through groups of young people as an idea or interest. Rules for organised games might slacken as they accommodated a five-year-old among a group of older children. We followed the children; if they weren't interested we shifted. By the time I was working in one the idea of the children creating the playground for themselves, and of playing with fire and learning how to build, had shifted to fixed play structures and some organised activities. This development reflects new policies and cultures in the management of provision for children that are very different to the practice, policies and

cultures of the 1960s and 1970s. However, the principle ethos of being led by the children's play remained.

It is significant to note that it is playworkers themselves who have been largely responsible for developing and defining playwork practice. Dr Fraser Brown, Professor of Playwork, Leeds Metropolitan University, has a personal biography that supports the narrative of the more spontaneous, community-rooted growth of Adventure Playgrounds. He started his own play scheme with a friend in a park in a 'disadvantaged' area of London during the last holiday of his politics degree.¹⁰ After he graduated, his first job was as a playworker in Runcorn, near Liverpool. In describing the emergence of these play spaces, Brown focuses more on a series of individual pioneer playworkers such as Drummond Abernethy (who started the first play leadership training in Thurrock) and Lady Allen of Hurtwood in the 1950s, and Joe Benjamin and Bob Hughes in the 1970s. Brown cites Hughes and Hank Williams as starting the first attempt to provide a 'solid theoretical grounding for playwork practice'.¹¹ From these early beginnings there is now a wide range of graduate and post-graduate studies available in playwork; numerous publications to support the practise (many written by playworkers), and a research discourse that covers 'biological, psychological, evolutionary, sociological and developmental models' of playwork.¹²

Some key ideas framing both the role of the playworker and the role of the playground have been drawn from the work of paediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott. Play Development Worker Penny Wilson describes how Winnicott's theory of the 'good-enough mother', where the parent is neither perfect nor failing but the best they can possibly be, can be applied to the playworker.¹³ And how Winnicott's theory of the 'holding environment' created by the good-enough mother, where 'as the child becomes more able, more independent, the mother adapts the parameters of the holding environment to the changing needs of the child', can be applied to the playground itself.¹⁴ Wilson also references Winnicott's theory of the 'transitional or potential space'¹⁵ between the mother and the child that has been marked out by the early mirroring games introduced by the good-enough mother. These games (involving the mother repeating what the child does) help the child to 'perceive themselves being perceived' by the good-enough mother.¹⁶ For Winnicott, the idea is that play doesn't take place just in our imagination or just in the external world; it happens in the interface between these two.¹⁷

Winnicott was also interested in 'the capacity for being – the ability to feel genuinely alive inside', which he 'saw as essential to the maintenance of a true self'. The 'true self' was fostered, he believed, by 'the practice of childhood play',¹⁸ continued (and necessary) into adulthood. We transition from childhood to adulthood still playing; the 'intermediate space' of the transitional objects met throughout life, for example 'music and religious experiences, share with the early transitional objects the quality of being felt simultaneously from within and without'.¹⁹

We can therefore think of the experience of looking at and making visual art as being an 'intermediate space', one where you can know about yourself, and see this shared quality as one of the connections between art and

10
Fraser Brown, 'Playwork, Play deprivation and Play: An interview with Fraser Brown', *American Journal of Play*, vol.4, no.3, winter 2012, p.267.

11
Ibid., p.268.

12
Ibid., p.268.

13
Penny Wilson, *The Playwork Primer*, Maryland USA 2009, p.28. Penny Wilson previously managed an Adventure Playground in London and now works for Play Association of Tower Hamlets.

14
Ibid., p.29.

15
Ibid., p.30.

16
Ibid., p.29.

17
In a letter in the *London Review of Books* from Joel Kanter, responding to Frank Kermode's review of Winnicott: *Life and Work* by F. Robert Rodman (Frank Kermode, 'Clutching at Insanity', *London Review of Books*, vol.26, no.5, 2004) it is interesting to note, in relation to practitioners leading or developing theory, that Winnicott developed his ideas in close collaboration with his wife Clare. Kanter points out that Clare Britton began working in social work in 1941 with evacuees in a hostel in Oxfordshire. At that time Winnicott was the 'consulting physician' and Clare's task was to help the untrained hostel staff work with the psychoanalyst. Kanter goes on to write that their working together produced two co-authored articles as well as a marriage, and that both of them gave testimony to the

Curtis Committee leading to the formation of Children's Services throughout the UK (they also taught together). Kanter is suggesting that their collaboration influenced Winnicott's 'work and thinking'. 'He was certainly aware of Clare's creative use of transitional objects (which she simply referred to as "first treasured possessions") with the evacuated children and he directly acknowledged his debt to her for the term "holding".' Joel Kanter, *Letters*. London Review of Books, vol.26, no.7, 1 April 2004, www.lrb.co.uk/v26/n05/frank-keemode/clutchingat-insanity, accessed 27 January 2016.

18
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald_Winnicott, accessed 27 January 2016.

19
Sherry Tuckle, *War Zone*. London Review of Books, vol.11, no.22, 1989, www.lrb.co.uk/v11/n22/sherry-tuckle/war-zone, accessed 27 January 2016.

20
Wilson 2009, p.3, quoting Stuart Lester, Senior Lecturer in Playwork, University of Gloucestershire.

21
Ibid., p.5.

22
Ibid., p.3, citing Gordon Sturrock.

23
Hilary Floe, "Everything Was Getting Smashed": Three Case Studies of Play and Participation, 1965-71', *Tate Papers*, no.22, 4 November 2014, p.1.

24
The three exhibitions were: *Popa at Moma: Pioneers of Part-Act*, at the Museum of Modern Art Oxford, 1971;

play. Both play as learning to be and play's relation to art are reflected in what playworkers say about the work they do – 'we aim to provide a play environment in which children ... can learn, in the widest possible sense, about themselves, about others, and about the world';²⁰ in the spaces playworkers seek to create – 'It might be helpful to think of an adventure playground as a Gesamtkunstwerk, or "total artwork," a space and time where all one's senses are engaged';²¹ and in the theorising playworkers do – describing play as 'a process, not a product' and as 'both doing and becoming'.²²

Taking a critical look at these connections between art and play in her recent article for *Tate Papers*, curator Hilary Floe writes that 'there is a long theoretical tradition reaching across philosophy, political theory and psychoanalysis that valorises play as a means of facilitating uninhibited expression and self-discovery'.²³ Floe focuses on a particular period in art history where exhibition-making explored shifting the behaviour of audiences through invitations to actively participate. She points to prevalent ideas from this period that said play releases inhibition, and facilitates expression and self-discovery; that play essentially does us good.

To explore this notion, Floe draws on case studies of three exhibitions between 1965 and 1971 in the UK.²⁴ Each one invited audiences' playful participation, designed to challenge and test the normative behaviours and culture of gallery and museum-going. All three shows closed prematurely. Floe suggests that this was because the audiences' playful, liberated modes of engagement, a response to the invitation to participate offered by the exhibitions, challenged both the institutions exhibiting the work and the artists that made it. Her analysis is that despite the artists' desire to have audiences engage with their work with freedom and unpredictability, they were actually 'relying precisely on the conventions of museum reception that their rhetoric forswore'.²⁵ They expected or assumed (and in some cases stage-managed) a particular type of behaviour from their audiences that would ultimately mean the artworks would be interacted with in a particular way. However, for each exhibition the audience did not behave in the anticipated way. 'Each of these three exhibitions bore tell-tale signs, material and discursive, that the artists' practical expectations of ludic behaviour were in some ways narrowly defined, in ways contrary to their ideological models that emphasised freedom and unpredictability'.²⁶

Floe suggests that there is something about the institutional commitment to hold the artists' intentions alongside the perhaps doggedly persisting institutional culture (that exists both in the systems, structures and culture of the museum, and in the minds and behaviours of museum and non-museum-going publics) that produces an unpredictability that can't be supported. The exhibitions close, and 'play it seems oversteps certain lines only to redraw them'.²⁷

The intentions of the artists were at odds with the context within which play was being invited. The Adventure Playgrounds may have been perceived as free, so perhaps wild and lawless,²⁸ but they were and are in fact carefully framed spaces. The playing child is held, and the intention is not for what is played, or even how it is played, but for play itself to happen. The reflective

practice of the playworker, the listening and responsive approach to the play as it is played, means that the unpredictability can be accommodated. In the art museum the play encouraged cannot not be known; both the artistic intention and the cultural norms (and curatorial responsibilities) mean that it is difficult to manage unpredictability.

From the same period, the 1968 film *The Swimmer* highlights a possible subtext within Floe's presentation, an anxiety around the efficacy of play for adults. What happens to adults when a stick becomes a horse? Play, wayward and dysfunctional, is seen as 'still something in which we "indulge" (as in sexual acts), a form of moral laxness'.²⁹

The Swimmer is a Frank Perry film (screenplay by Eleanor Perry), based on a 1964 short story by John Cheever for the *New Yorker*. A man named Ned Merrill decides to swim from one side of the valley to the other via his neighbour's pools as a way to get home. He chooses the name Lucinda for this 'river', after his apparently estranged wife. The film is a sequence of scenes showing Ned arriving at a neighbour's garden, taking part in an exchange, and swimming from one end of their pool to the other. Our sense of why he has decided to do this journey in this way shifts from it being about a kind of poetic escapade, to feeling an increasing unease and confusion. It becomes more and more apparent that his understanding of himself is at odds with everyone else's. As the film nears its conclusion it is clear that we are witnessing his physical deterioration from the effort to complete the task long after his actual decline; his life (job, family, wife, social standing) has had a complete collapse prior to the start of the story.

In a sense, Ned is playing a game with himself that he is asking everyone to play along with. He is play-acting the 'Jackdaw'. But the warm (if bemused) responses from the first few neighbours gradually turn into a refusal to play, and even in some cases a cruel undermining of the game. A key scene drawing out the thematic of play-acting is with a lonely boy called Kevin. When Ned arrives at the Gilmartin's house the boy has been left alone save for the maid. Not managing to explain before they get there, Kevin leads Ned to an empty pool. Empty, it turns out, because Kevin isn't a strong swimmer. Ned is dismayed at the interruption but comes up with a plan that draws on the larger game that he is playing:

NED There's one thing I could do. I could get down there and make-believe I'm swimming across the pool.

KEVIN That's kind of cheating, isn't it?

NED Not if I did all the strokes exactly as if I were in the water.

KEVIN (*happily*) That's a good idea.

NED (*rises*) Okay, let's do it.

Delighted, the boy follows him to the shallow end of the pool. They jump down to the concrete bottom.

NED All set? Let's start off with a crawl.

Walking side by side and stroking as if they are really in the water, they begin.

Oh What a Lovely Whore, by Mack Boyle and Joan Hills at the ICA, 1965; and the Robert Morris retrospective at Tate Britain in 1971.

25
Floe 2014, p.11.

26
Ibid., p.11.

27
Ibid., p.11.

28
Sutton 2013, p.9. Sutton, quoting a Romford Times article from 1956 and a Sunday Times article from 1973 respectively, describes the playground as being 'labelled as a "training ground for hooligans" and a "truants' hangout"'.

29
Benjamin Shepard, *Play, Creativity and Social Movements: If I Can't Dance, It's Not My Revolution*, New York 2011, p.3. Shepard quoting anthropologist Victor Turner's analysis of where society's attitudes to play lie.

NED That's right. Relax. Reach out. Say, you've got very good form.
KEVIN I've had lots of lessons. It's just that I'm afraid of the water.

They continue about a third of the way.

NED Okay now, change to the side stroke.

They do so.

...

They have gone another third of the way.

NED Breast stroke!

They pantomime the breast stroke.

NED Yes sir. My kids think I've got all the answers! My kids think I'm just about it!

They arrive at the end of the pool.

KEVIN (*jubilantly*) I've done it! It's the first time I've ever swum the whole length.

NED Congratulations.

KEVIN (*suddenly crestfallen*) I suppose it doesn't count because there's no water.

NED For us, there was.

KEVIN (*looks at him curiously*) Well – that's a lie, isn't it?

NED No. You see if you make-believe hard enough that something's true – then it is true – for you.³⁰

30

Eleanor Peppy, *The Swimmer* [1968], *Screenplays For You*, <https://sfy.eu/?script=swimmer>, accessed 28 January 2016.

At the end of the scene, after Ned has left a disappointed Kevin to himself once more (his mother is in Europe), he thinks he hears the boy on the diving board. He rushes back to the pool to 'save' the boy, but the boy is fine. The crisis is imagined, but has revealed that for Ned the game is play as self-deception, whereas for Kevin it was make-believe – never real.

KEVIN What's the matter?

NED I thought you were going to dive –

KEVIN (*amazed*) You thought I was going to dive?

Ned releases the boy who turns and stares at him.

KEVIN (*as if explaining to a child*) There's no water in the pool!³¹

31

Ibid.

The adult's play-deception is foiled by the child's easy ambivalence towards what the game is affording him in the moment by way of emotional relief against his apparent weaknesses. This is the therapeutic role that Winnicott ascribes to play when he is talking about the transitional or potential space it affords the player. For Kevin the game gave momentary respite; for Ned it appears that the line between the real and fantasy has been unstrung. He is

seeking play as a way to *avoid* his 'true self'.

From these examples it appears that play's therapeutic and transformative efficacy is contingent. In her paper, Floe refers to critic Edward Lucie-Smith's analysis in left-wing magazine *Encounter* that 'the therapeutic agenda of fun-filled play-based culture' serves 'only to assuage feelings of frustration with the status quo'. He goes further to say that it works only in 'dissipating the energies needed to achieve political reform'.³² Floe herself is suggesting that her analysis of ludic exhibition-making demonstrates that play should not 'be idealised as a lawless sphere of freedom and authenticity', and calls for 'a more nuanced understanding of it ... to be developed, one that acknowledges its social, contextual, rule-bound and performative aspects'.³³

32
Floe 2014, p.12.

33
Ibid., p.13.

It is interesting here to think about the roles being assigned to play in the context of the public as opposed to a community space (such as a local playground). The difference being one space is *in* public, and one essentially in private (as in, not on display). In his book *Play, Creativity and Social Movements*, Benjamin Shepard draws attention to the values underlying criticisms of the efficacy of play in the public space of protest movements. He refers to the suggestion that the logic (such as that of Lucie-Smith) that play is distracting from the serious political point is rooted in 'a Protestant ethic that favours work over play'.³⁴ Academic and writer Carmen McClish, who in her review of Shepard's book references the emerging scholarship on 'the important relationship between play and activism',³⁵ makes the case against this criticism of the role of play in change movements. McClish is seeking to extend the debate around the efficacy of playful protest. While she acknowledges the truth in the assertion that 'expressing felt anger mobilizes government more effectively than (gleefully ironic or otherwise) celebration ... no policy, law, or budget will change unless the State feels threatened', she argues that maintaining this position exclusively might be 'short sighted'. To make her case she takes the Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping as an example of an 'effective playful protest group'.³⁶

34
Shepard 2011, p.3.

35
Carmen McClish, Book Review. *Liminalities*, vol.7, no.3, 2011, <http://liminalities.net/7-3/shepard-rev.html>, accessed 28 January 2016.

36
Carmen McClish, 'Activism Based in Embarrassment: The Anti-Consumption Spirituality of the Reverend Billy', *Liminalities: Journal of Performance Studies*, vol.5, no.2, 2009, p.2.

37
Ibid., p.3.

38
Ibid., p.4.

39
Ibid., p.5.

40
Ibid.

Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping, led by Bill Talen in the persona of the Reverend Billy, focus on 'invading retail chain stores' to carry out actions.³⁷ The group is based in New York and have a music director, manager, choir director, choir and musicians. They believe in the 'Shopocalypse', an end to humanity brought about by overconsumption.³⁸ For McClish, the Church's efficacy can be seen in how their humour runs up against the humourlessness of the opposition, in this case major corporations such as Starbucks. Starbucks take the actions very seriously, and Reverend Billy has been arrested over fifty times. The Church of Stop Shopping sees 'play as an innovative strategy' that works because transnational corporations 'don't know how to react to silliness'. This humourlessness is the 'opportunity' for playfulness to have its effect. Talen is quoted as saying 'Starbucks ... is nothing if not humorless. In fact, the first thing you can say about chain stores and malls, all those over-commodified "planned communities" is that no one there can really *play*'.³⁹ McClish writes that the 'Church of Stop Shopping encourage citizens to come play with them, to frequent a place less contrived, and to live a life of their own making'.⁴⁰

41
Ibid.

The stopping shopping fosters resistance, as McClish quotes Talen saying 'by bringing back the human details and building our lives moment by moment, our own voice is coming back, we feel our personal past re-arriving'.⁴¹ This connection to Winnicott's notion of the 'true self' echoes what playworkers describe as the function of play for children being about doing and becoming. There is also a connection to Winnicott's interest in feeling genuinely alive; Talen is quoted as saying 'when we Back Away from the product, all kinds of Life rushes back in'.⁴² For McClish, the Church of Stop Shopping's actions are a viable response to 'serious problems' with how US society functions in relation to human rights and the environment. In support of this example, Shepard writes that 'while serious politics often mirrors the very power structures activists oppose, playful responses open up questions, stories, spaces'.⁴³

42
Ibid.

43
Shepard 2011, p.275.

Shepard makes the point that using play in protest movements is drawing on a long history of art practices, in particular the Dada, Surrealist and Situationist movements. Taking the paper *Situationist International* from the 1950s as an example, he describes how the movement used 'pranks, jokes and game playing' for 'provoking and cultivating authentic experience'. For the Situationists, play would be a means of 'resistance', and bring 'desire and vitality' into the everyday. At the heart of their politics was the making of intensely 'lived moments'.⁴⁴ Talen, likewise, makes a connection to art practices that share the action of stopping us 'to start us', citing the Guerrilla Girls,⁴⁵ and states that he 'wants to use imagery and language that changes the way people look at things'.⁴⁶

44
Ibid., p.29.

45
McClish 2009, p.9.

46
Ibid., p.8.

Ned Merrill's play experiment was driven by such a psychological need to misremember and to not know his true self that he overlooked the transitional space make-believe was affording him. The same can be said for the issues with play as it is configured through exhibitions in the museum raised by Floe's analysis. Here play is made a *play* of play, a performance of play rather than playing. It is this allowing play itself for itself, and the reflexive listening practice required to enable this, the improvisation at the heart of playwork, which has had an impact on the way I work with young people, teachers and artists in galleries. As an individual practitioner and as part of a team of programmers in a learning department, my interest in fostering a responsive, listening approach is to maintain a speculative space for learning. This particular quality of the speculative comes through supporting artists to help us do the stopping and the being described above; the slowing down, the drawing attention to, the upending, the opening out and the questioning that artists, through working via their practice (their thinking, interests, research and making), can invite from those they work with in gallery learning contexts. Programming learning contexts in this way, through artists' practice, seeking to avoid the inertia of the repeated method, is about maintaining the *flow*, space and an openness to possibilities. Play has a serious charge to it, it has the intensity of being alive, and has the promise of the serious possibility for change. McClish's key point about the Church of Stop Shopping is that the play that Reverend Billy and the Church are involved in is not parody. They are really playing, but 'always aware that [they are] playing to make a point'.⁴⁷

47
Ibid., p.17.

Ten Games

Pencils. Paper. Hungry children. Stick insects.

£100,000 of unmarked bank notes in boxes, bags, sacks or carrier bags. Accordion.

A Deserted nightclub. Lubricant. Mousetraps.

**Luminous paint. Nightvision camera. Rope.
A ghetto. Runners. Walkers. Hiders.
Sleepers. 3 helicopters.**

**Dogs. Feathers. Asylum seekers. Fertilizer. 14 Amulets.
New prisoners. Ice.**

Trumpet. Plastic fish. Hurdles. Tourniquet.

**4 cubic metres of industrial cement. 26 Blindfolds.
Medicinal Alcohol. Scorecards. Pyjamas. MRI Scanner.
Autographs of footballers. Pig's blood. 32 Hand grenades.
Fragrance by Calvin Klein. Loan forms. Minutes of a
meeting in the House of Lords. Adidas holdall. Busker
music. A Jew's harp. Mouthwash. Autumn leaves.
12 miles of institutional corridor. Swimming pool.
Magic mushrooms. Rohypnol. Snakes.**

**Statues. Gold leaf. Lead shoes. Tarot cards. A map
of Edinburgh.**

Asbestos. Bowling shoes. Razor blade.

**A stairway. Turmeric. Love. 9 Escalators. Ribbon. Human
sadness. Two kites, each in the shape of a sparrowhawk.**

Tim Etchells 2012

'One unique quality of SoHo was that artists from disparate artistic movements lived and worked there simultaneously.

1
Helen Molesworth, *Work Ethic*, Pennsylvania 2003, p.37-38.

...the Artists' Tenants' Association was formed in 1960-61 in order to protect artists' right to live in lofts zoned for manufacturing. In their attempts to gain the attention of Robert Wagner, then mayor of New York, they threatened to boycott all art exhibitions in the city unless officials stopped their eviction policies...¹

'The loft laws were resolved to ensure artists' ability to inhabit them. But residency came with a requirement that the spaces be studio-residences: the lofts could not be used only for living (as opposed to living and working).'²

2
Sharon Zukin, *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change*, Baltimore 1982, p.50.

Hence the edict to work was in place as a mandatory component of the legal solidity of SoHo as the artists' neighbourhood. If one of the most enduring legacies of the early-twentieth-century avant-garde was the desire to blur the boundaries between art and life, then loft living may have furthered this initiative.'³

3
Molesworth 2003.

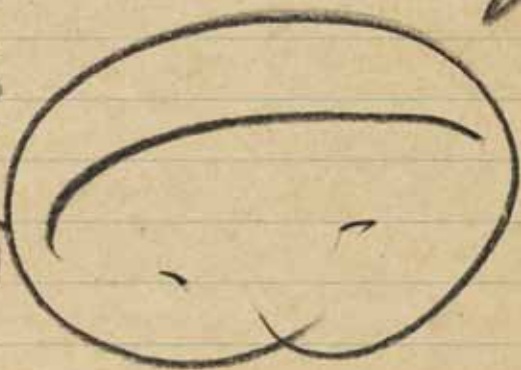
Note from Kenneth Armitage to Joan Moore, [c.1962]
© The Kenneth Armitage Foundation, presented to the Tate Archive by Kenneth Armitage 1999

This note was written by the British artist Kenneth Armitage to his wife and fellow artist Joan Moore. The front is inscribed with a draft letter concerning an offer for the second cast of Armitage's *Seated Group Listening to Music* 1952.

I had expected the offer made by your client
of \$1000 for a second car of Seattle from Boston
Mass. which was to be available in London, & another car to
next month. He is no doubt aware of the difference
in price of cars by the same make sold in the U.S.A. &
in England - an average of 50% and some than the
100%, etc. This offer is very good and some than the
English price agreed to with my New York selling
house you very kindly ask your client to be made
under no less than \$1200 for this work. Then if this price
I run the risk of damaging my relationship with the
Gallagher concerned, but an agreement to write it.
If the car comes they give me the title of the car and new
license you send the title to Shun
Franklin that there may be other new York
members he might be interested in Shun
at my office, in London 115 London, or Shun
New York.

Thank you for your letter 5/20/1914
of 5th kind. While I am on my way
I am providing him for Leeds, & may I draw you
please to the change of address.

I hope you like
 in your time +
 enjoy the
 weather
 K



shut eyes to
 sleep better !!

9920/2/2014

Play
Open Play
Enclosed Play
Outer Play
Play suit
Play age
Living Play
Projective Play
Play capsule
Lack of Play
Play band
Play heater
Deep Play
Play odyssey
Play salesman
Euclidean Play
Play cadet
Play station
Blanky Play
Play out
Parking Play
Play invaders
Play walk
Play time continuum
Play bar
Lost in Play
Staring into Play
Watch this Play
Play curve
Play lattice
Play opera
Catcher Play
Play sickness
Buncher Play
Three-dimensional Play
Hair Play
Play race
Null Play
Leave a Play
Play of a moment
Intercostal Play
Available Play
Play needle
Position in Play
Edges of Play
Play writer
Wide open Play
Lack of Play
Play saving
Enclosed Play
Play filler
Wasted Play







I almost called this text *David Graeber Made Me Do It*. However, that title would have been misleading. David Graeber has never made me do anything, in fact, quite the opposite. David Graeber has only ever told me 'to act as if I am already free'.

David Graeber is an American anthropologist and activist, and was a tutor on my MA course. Once a week for a year I would watch and listen as he shared another idea, essay or theory with us. Always slightly dishevelled, he would lecture whilst slurping on coffee and noisily sucking on squares of chocolate, his lips sticking together as he spoke. This didn't matter. He was always enjoyable and passionate, and social mores are nothing next to ideas. He had wild facts, and catchy sayings. He gave lectures on the nature of value, direct action, money, manners, debt, fetishism, consumption, revolution, European table manners, love potions and on why the police hate puppets. All his lectures were linked by a clear purpose: to explore the nature of social power and the forms that resistance to it have taken - or might take in the future.

In recent years, Graeber has written and spoken increasingly about play,¹ but the first book I read of his was *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*.² In it he laid out his vision for how societies might be organised along less alienating lines - how they might be more egalitarian, less hierarchical, more autonomous, more free, more enjoyable. The book frames what is currently known, or knowable, about successful anarchist societies, and sets out a proposal for how more could come into existence. 'Acting as if one is already free' is Graeber's primary recommendation. The sentiment of this recommendation appealed to me, and its inviting call for action has been stuck in my head ever since. It got stuck because it became one of those snippets that gets stockpiled in the back of your mind that you keep returning to and mulling over. That stockpile of snippets that signifies moments of excitement, or change, or poignancy - a stockpile of snippets of knowledge perhaps (or of wild facts and catchy sayings).

As an artist-in-residence on the Tate Schools Workshop Programme from 2013-14, I found myself drawing on this stockpile of snippets and putting some of them to the test in the workshops I led. To begin with I called them my Dead Anthropologists' Society workshops. This was a wildly inaccurate description. This didn't matter. It was playful. My own art practice is heavily influenced by contemporary anthropologists and thinkers like Graeber, as well as others including Alfred Gell, Daniel Miller, Lisa Blackman, Tim Ingold and Bruno Latour. A lot of my work could be seen as

1
David Graeber, *The Utopia of Rules: On Technology, Stupidity and the Secret Joys of Bureaucracy*, New York 2015. See also, David Graeber, 'What's the Point If We Can't Have Fun?' *The Baffler*, no.24, January 2014, <http://thebaffler.com/salvos/whats-the-point-if-we-cant-have-fun>, accessed 1 December 2015.

2
David Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, Chicago 2004.

an ode to certain trains of thought that have led out of my encounters with them or their work. Over the year I delivered workshops influenced by each of them in different ways, sometimes directly and sometimes far more tenuously. I was interested in knowledge transfer and how one piece of knowledge might get translated, or mistranslated, from one person to another. More broadly, I am interested in how knowledge is co-created and transformed in different contexts – and what that means for the dissemination of knowledge and power. I gave each workshop a nickname in my head that referenced the person I attributed the original snippet of knowledge to. Hence the potential alternative title *David Graeber Made Me Do It*.³

3
In playful reference to
Esther Newton's *Margaret
Mead Made Me Gay*, Durham NC
2001. *Margaret Mead Made
Me Gay* is the author's
biographical tribute to the
people who influenced her
work and life.

Last summer, I went on holiday with my partner's family to the remote Scottish island of Coll. There is not much to do on Coll, and even fewer people to do it with. About 150 in fact. We stayed in a cottage on the quieter side of the island largely entertaining ourselves, with help from the island's twenty-three beautiful empty beaches.

At one point early on in the holiday I found myself trying to explain the phrase 'You had to be there' to my eight-year-old nephew. I can't remember the context it had been used in, but the explaining conversation went something along the lines of:

ME: Well, in one way it just means that if you had been there, you would know what it was we were laughing at, you would also find it funny.

NEPHEW: So what was it, the funny thing?

ME: Well, it doesn't really matter because the other thing about the phrase 'You had to be there' is that the thing being referred to is generally not that funny.

NEPHEW: Yeah, but what was it?

ME: Well, the other, other thing is that if I tell you it almost defeats the whole point of the joke.

NEPHEW: What joke?

ME: Oh yeah, well that's the other, other, other thing. 'You had to be there' is meant to be a joke.

NEPHEW: Hmm ... It's not very funny.

ME: Yes, I know. That's also part of the joke in a way.

NEPHEW: Hmm.

Jokes, as a concept, are slippery. They can fall between things. 'You had to be there', even in joke form, falls somewhere between an explanation and an excuse. As an explanation, it is used to indicate to the other person(s) in the conversation that the situation being talked about could only be properly understood if that person had been present. And as an excuse it is used after someone recalls a story that is not particularly funny, in an attempt to make it funny.

More than that, and harder to explain, the sentiment of the phrase relies on a shared experience, and on an agreement between one or more parties to carry the conversation, or the moment, further; to remember it, to make it a 'thing'. It relies on a sociality; a common ground. Perhaps another alternative title could have been *If you had been there, you would know, you would agree.*

The *David Graeber Made Me Do It* workshops also relied on a shared experience, and on an agreement between one or more parties to carry the conversation, or the moment, further; to remember it, to make it a 'thing'. It relied on a sociality; a common ground.

I would often start the workshops by asking the group questions like 'What do they expect to happen during the workshop?' 'What do they want to happen?' 'How much control do they think they have over what happens?' We would talk about rules and social mores and what they thought was possible within the gallery setting and why. We would talk about their workshop as a unique 'event', and about who or what had the potential to influence their event over the next ninety minutes.

As a group we would watch the Aleksandra Mir film piece *First Woman on the Moon* [1999]. The film shows heavy machinery and manpower transforming a Dutch beach into a lunar landscape, before the artist restages the moon landings with an all-female crew. We would discuss the concepts of 'stage' and 'staging', with a particular focus on the relationship between artist and audience, and we would talk about the ordinary versus the extraordinary and how something gets transformed from the former to the latter. I would then task the group to use the gallery as their own stage to create an experience for themselves that they hadn't imagined possible - to turn their workshop into an event marked out from all other events.

I was interested in us rethinking and questioning power relations in a playful way. As an artist working in education settings, I am interested in creating space for chance encounters, for autonomous experiences, for individual choice and for decision-making. I am particularly interested in the introduction of risk and the randomness this brings with it. The rigid/not rigid (slippery) setting of 'the gallery' provided the perfect setting for challenging both the group's, and the public's, social expectations for the space. The groups were invited to consider the rules - or the game - of the gallery, and to act as if they were already free.

Each group approached the task differently. One group staged a football game in the Turbine Hall, another challenged members of the public to 'non-art' pursuits like push-up competitions or mind games, one group made it their task to make everyone who passed them laugh (mainly achieved by forming a human tunnel-shaped 'Happy Birthday Machine' that would celebrate anyone who walked through it (and then near it), one group meticulously marked out a stage and put on an improvised forty-minute play, another group went to sleep in front of a Cy Twombly.

You probably had to be there.

The day after arriving on Coll, the youngest members of the group - my eight-year-old nephew and his two sisters, aged eleven and four - decided to play a game. The cottage we were staying in stood alone in its own grass field. A narrow walkway of slate slabs clung to the house between the walls and the grass. It was between things. It was just wide enough to be a viable 'path', but at the same time it was too narrow and too close to the house to be comfortably traversed without leaning outwards slightly. Unless you were short that is, which the youngest three members of the group were. So, their game involved the path. The premise was simple. One by one you had to run all the way around the house - staying on the path (this was the important bit) - until you got back to the beginning. You would be timed doing this, and then when your time came round again, you would repeat the same task, trying to outrun your personal best.

There were two notable variations to the game that kept it the game of choice for the whole week on tiny, quiet, beautiful Coll. One was running without shoes, and then without socks. The other was leaping over the new daily goose droppings that would appear on the path overnight. This variation added a touching element to the game when

midweek one of the three resident geese was run over.

The beauty of children's games is how they make a mockery of all attempts to take games seriously. As one rule was introduced, another one was changed, until everyone was playing and making up their own rules. After a while it even became imperative *not* to beat your personal best. Unless you were four, in which case beating your personal best remained imperative, and was supported by the adoption of increasingly unreliable time-keeping methods. Over time the main focus became on the experience we were having as a group, on the affect our actions were having on each other, and on how we could carry the game, the moment, further; on how we could continue to make it a 'thing'.

The focus of the *David Graeber Made Me Do It* workshops was also on the experience we were having as a group, and on the affect our actions were having on each other. Unlike on tiny, quiet, beautiful Coll though, the focus of the workshops was also on the affect our actions were having on the public. I was interested in the social contagion of these experiences, and on what it meant to be so playful in a public space.

A colleague in the Schools and Teachers team once commented on the workshops creating, or rather being, alternative playgrounds. Playgrounds that were produced *through* actions rather than playgrounds that were productive of actions. Playgrounds that were forming and becoming through the actions of the groups as the workshop went on. This comment led to further discussions on the idea of 'support' and how the more structured an activity is the more likely an adult is to step in and take control. These snippets of conversation fed back into future workshops which became less and less structured as the year went on.

Although often playful, I had not considered these workshops to be a form of play in themselves. Going into the schools workshop programme at the beginning of the year I had begun thinking of how the workshops may function as 'laboratories' of sorts, as sites for experiments. Thinking about them as playgrounds was not something I had considered. Mainly because I am not sure if I like playgrounds.

Prior to anthropology my academic background was in physiotherapy. As a result, my stockpile of wild facts and catchy sayings also carries a myriad of snippets on human physiology, on neurological anomalies, on contemporary pain theory and alternative movement therapy. I blame these snippets (and of course David Graeber) for the mild distrust

I have of playgrounds, or designated play spaces more generally. I find discomfort in the repetitive nature of the movements these spaces and frames produce – always within limits, always within the normal range, always safely soft, curved or rounded. I know there are reasons for this, and I know there are exceptions – these I find exciting. A simple one is in the park at the top of my road. It has a large slippery slide that runs down a natural hill, and cuts between two big bushes. The slide curves so that you can't see the bottom from the top or vice versa. My nieces and nephew love it. I went on the slide for the first time this weekend and thought it felt much bigger than it looked. I have heard parents complaining that when they are at the bottom they lose sight of their children for five seconds as they run up and round the bushes to reach the top of the slide and come back down again.

Whilst definitions of play vary widely, most agree on the following few things. Play must be self-motivated. Play must be voluntary. Play must involve rules (often a lot of rules) but importantly these rules must be changeable. Play must be created by the players. Play must be enjoyable. Play must have some relation to the non-play world, but importantly not be the non-play world. This last bit reminds me of definitions of images.⁴ For something to be recognised as an image, it is required to look like the thing it is an image of (be a likeness), but importantly at the same time it must not be the thing it is an image of. Slippery.

I have a big scar on my left foot from a swimming lesson I had at school. We were at the local pool doing widths. I was quite good at swimming so I was in the group using the deep end. As I turned at one end of a width, I caught the top of my foot on a screw that was sticking out of the ladder we used to climb into the pool. The screw ripped the skin open on the top of my foot. I remember swimming another width before looking through my goggles at my foot – the layers of skin were flapping slowly in the water. I was about ten. I got carried away from the pool in the arms of a lifeguard. Our school nurse turned up on her bicycle to have a look. My mum then arrived in her car and drove me to the hospital, where they glued the skin back together. I remember going back to school the day after next and my best friend Hannah Cash gave me a hard time because she said our teacher Miss Tyne had made it really clear that I was her favourite when she told the whole class off for being naughty and loud after the swimming lesson when they should have all been worrying about

me. I remember around this time Hannah and I used to engage in a lot of role-play games, pretending to be different people in our class and acting out different scenarios. I remember this 'Miss Tyne' incident infiltrating our play.

Remembering this incident reminded me of a quote Graeber read out in a lecture by Dutch historian and cultural theorist, Johan Huizinga:

In play there is something 'at play' which transcends the immediate needs of life and imparts meaning to the action. All play means something. If we call the active principle that makes up the essence of play, 'instinct', we explain nothing; if we call it 'mind' or 'will' we say too much.⁵

With the *David Graeber Made Me Do It* workshops I was interested in autonomy, in equality, in democratic decision-making, in non-hierarchical forms of organisation, in enjoyment.

Play can encompass all of these factors, but only if the parameters of play are open. I am interested in where and when this freer type of play takes place, and whether by default it cannot take place in the 'play' ground or at 'play' time, or in a 'playful' workshop. There is a demand on play in these spaces that is not in tune with play as purely voluntary and self-motivated. Play in this instance is still fun, and enjoyable, but it also serves other purposes that make its use or naming as 'play' slippery territory.

This reminds me of the slippery territory of Carnival. It was Graeber who first made me interested in the phenomena of Carnival. From an anthropological point of view, Carnival is a reversal ritual, in which social roles are reversed and norms about desired behaviour are suspended. Like a group of students at playtime, there is no doubt that the population of a carnival have power and agency in that space, but there is also no doubt that Carnival, as a space and as an idea, has been used as a form of control in itself. In medieval times carnivals would be 'allowed' by the ruling parties purely for the purpose of reminding a population just how much they needed them to be in control. The Carnival would be wild and fun and debauched and then allowed to continue for that little bit too long so that the population began to fear the debauchery would never stop, and that control would never return. Carnival was a space for the release of impulses that threatened the social order that ultimately reinforced social norms.⁶ Interpretations of Carnival today present it as a

5
Johan Huizinga,
*Homo Ludens: A Study of
the Play Element in Culture*,
Boston 1955 [originally
published in 1938].

6
Abner Cohen, *Masquerade
Politics*, Berkeley CA 1993.

7
Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, translated by H. Iswolsky, Cambridge Mass. 1984 (original published in 1965).

8
David Gaerber, 'On the Phenomenology of Giant Puppets: Broken Windows, Imaginary Jars of Urine, and the Cosmological Role of the Police in American Culture', *Possibilities: Essays on Hierarchy, Rebellion and Desire*, Chicago 2007.

social institution that offers an alternative to the seriousness of daily life beyond a simple respite,⁷ as a social transformation, as an escape. Carnival is also a form of protest, a home for puppets,⁸ a demand for freedom and a demonstration of agency and power by a population.

Slippery.

As an artist, and an anthropologist, I am probably more interested in the slipperiness around play than in play itself. Or in the 'You had to be there' element of practically everything.





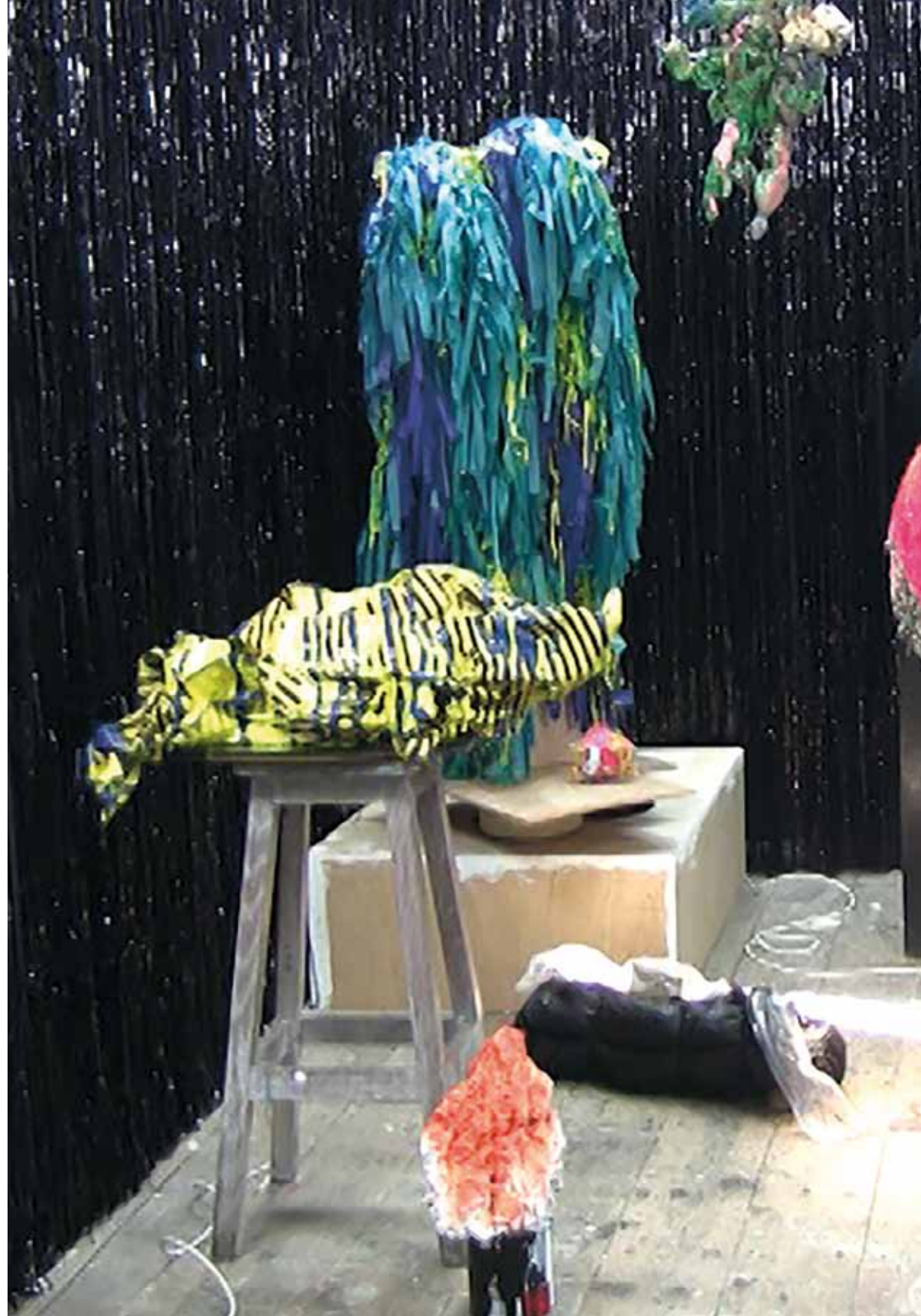
**YOUR HAIR IS LONGER THAN
ALL OF JOY DIVISION BALANCED
ON THE EIFFEL TOWER.**

**YOUR HAIR IS LONGER THAN
LONG DIVISION.**

**YOUR HAIR IS LONGER THAN
THE GAP BETWEEN A DORMOUSE
AND AN EAGLE.**

**YOUR HAIR IS LONGER THAN
AN ICICLE IN AN ICELANDIC
WINTER.**

**YOUR HAIR IS LONGER THAN
AN ARGENTINIAN SNAKE.**



PG 61
ALEX SCHADY
POP VIDEO 2011
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



**TEAM OF THE DECADES IS A
PERFORMANCE CREATED BY WILL
DICKIE, PERFORMED BY WILL
DICKIE AND TIM HOPKINS.**

**IN RECOLLECTION OF ITS
APPEARANCE AT THE *IN BETWEEN*
TIME FESTIVAL, BRISTOL
FEBRUARY 2015.**

We are met by Coach in this makeshift locker room, briefed for the game ahead.

Our names are written into his notebook, we are introduced to each other; we are teammates. Choose a jersey or jacket; it's cold out, it might rain, we need to be prepared for these inclement weather conditions. There are hand warmers and tea.

We stand together full of anticipation, an imperfect team in mismatched kit bearing someone else's name tag.

How's your brisk walking? How's your light jogging? Have you warmed up? I suggest some light stretches.

The conditions are changeable, three inclines, it's really important that we stick together as a group. Coach will be with us all the way and if there's anything we can't manage, anything we're unsure about then just let him know.

Are we up for it? Let's head out. We huddle for a briefing. Lead us out. Head taps, high fives.

We're moving as a group and covering ground. I'm being patted on the back. I'm doing well. We're training and we're doing great.

It's been raining and as we enter the park it's muddy underfoot. We line up, a team presented as a unit.

Fix your eyes. We wait and watch.

We huddle, we move and sway, we all put our palms in and we're stacked up together. Take a step in. We're all doing it. We were close enough before and now we're all touching. We are tough and powerful and we're really supporting the captain. We're integral to this working out.

Stay alert and stay with it. We listen and watch, then we are called to act; suddenly we are relied upon. We are bearing his weight, being useful; it's a team effort. I'm feeling the pace because it's in my breath too.

Our final challenge and all I want is to be able to do it well. The team are cheering me on and we're doing so well.

People look on and for a moment, as I catch their eye, realise for the first time how this might appear; strange in a public space. Eyes fixed on the game.

To participate in something is to cross the psychological boundaries between the self and the other and to feel the defining social tensions of those boundaries. The experience of participating – especially when it is catalysed in play – transforms the participant as well as the game. Participatory art dissipates into the situations, operations, structures, feedback systems and learning processes it is like.

Jeff Kelley in Allan Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, Berkeley CA 2003, p.xxii.

Can we refocus our attention to thinking through the lens of support? While this might reveal hidden relationships, foregrounding support also proposes to understand production through forms of mediation and interface towards the making of place, which does not produce objects but relationships to context.

Céline Condorelli, *Support Structures*, Berlin 2009, p.7.

Think about the contact. Think about the first hit. Squeeze the arms. Feel that. The unity. And it's down to us – no one else. I don't care what happens today, as long as you can look at each other, honestly, and just say – I didn't let you down.

Will Dickie, Team of the Decades. www.willdickie.co.uk/Team_of_the_Decades.html, accessed 30 December 2015.

Play
Play up
Play list
Fore Play
Play away
Play time
Long Play
Press Play
One act Play
Word Play
Play back
Play thing
Play mates
Play house
Play Mobil
Play date
Play suit
Play dough
Play Station
Active Play
Role- Play
Play pen
Poor Play
Foul Play
Play room
Play ground
Single Play
In Play
Horse Play
Play dead
Play down
Under Play

PG 65
HAROLD OFFEH
COVERS: *AFTER GRACE JONES, ISLAND
LIFE, 1985* [*GRACEFUL ARABESQUE*] 2008



'Principle 7
The child shall have full
opportunity for play and
recreation, which should be
directed to the same purposes
as education; society and
the public authorities shall
endeavor to promote the
enjoyment of this right.'

MEMORIES

I did endless role play with dolls which I made from paper cut-outs, creating scenes for every situation out of cereal boxes, from wobbly living rooms to wobblier hospital wards. They got haircuts and vaccinations, they travelled the world (my bedroom) and often worked in the secret service on some peculiar mission. I once took all the dolls to the beach and flooded the bathroom floor with 'the sea'. A soggy affair all round! My sister and I also played a lot of Swallows and Amazons in the garden, 'rowing' our wheelbarrow to the sandpit. I still do a lot of role play in my head with new peculiar missions in mind.

Anna Cutler, Director of Tate Learning

AS A CHILD

REMEMBER

In primary school my friend always wanted to play make-believe, usually based on *Lord of the Rings*: as a child I didn't like fantasy stories, they had too many rules I had to learn, a whole new world to detail before getting to the real story. Yet I would spend all playtime rooting through three-leafed clovers to find a four-leafed one, and when a stray leaf momentarily clung on, trying to convince myself I had found one. Mainly I knew I never would but maybe the smallest chance kept me holding on. Or maybe the anticipation of turning over each leaf was the real high, that and the solitude in it. A conversation between me and nature. A form of make-believe – a creation of a new world in which I would not only find one four-leafed clover, but one every break time.

Rebecca Lindsay-Addy, Tate Schools and Teachers programme intern

FROM

OFF

I have a strong memory of playing on the carpet of our sitting room at home. It had a dark haircord carpet and my mum was great in that she would let us draw directly onto it with coloured chalks. My sisters and I used to create elaborate maps across the whole floor which we would then populate with model cars, animals, bits of plants from the garden, pebbles and anything else we could get our hands on. It was possible to immerse yourself completely because of the scale of the map and feel like you were in a world of your own creation. I've no idea how we (or more likely my mum) cleaned it up, but it provided hours of fun.

TATE'S LEARNING

Emily Pringle, Head of Research, Practice and Policy

LAUNCH

As a child I was always fascinated in the construction of make-believe scenarios. Not role play, but the ability to 'play god' over a miniature world of toys. Things like Micro Machines, Lego, Monster in My Pocket, where I would be able to act out a bank heist, a getaway chase or a great battle. They could go on for HOURS and I would need little other attention from my parents or even peers! It is not a surprise that I am currently organising a series of events with the artist David Espinosa who enacts table-top performances with miniature characters called *Mi Gran Obra (My Great Work)*. David explains that *Mi Gran Obra* is the stage show he would organise if he had an unlimited budget, a huge theatre, 300 actors, a military band, a rock group, animals, cars and helicopters. And this appeals to me greatly. Another aspect of toys like these was the desire to collect as many as possible to make bigger and better worlds. Is there a parallel here to museum art collections? I like the idea of the directors of major institutions stood around a playground saying: 'Picasso ... got ... Matisse ... got ... Turner ... got ... Rembrandt ... NEED NEED NEED!!!'

DEPARTMENT

ING

Joseph Kendra, Assistant Curator of Public Programmes

My little sister's head would go round as a ball as soon as her hair got wet. The sweetness of her little head in the bath or the sea would overcome most, if not all of the childhood furies between us. After wetting her hair she would grind her toddler head into the beach, caking it with sand and leaving defiant head shaped hollows in her wake. As a patient she would lie very still, only her eyes would move, following me cautiously around the room as I selected my implements. It was necessary she be this still, as Sellotape spooled from her wrists, ankles and ribs in all directions, bringing her the vital fluids needed to stabilise her condition.

Alice Wroe, Schools and Teachers programme Booking Assistant

In the garden of my home in Tokyo, there was the trace of what used to be a small pond, which was dried out and filled in with pebbles. We had a tiny statue of a tortoise which was made of metal, so when I was little I used to play pretending that water was still there and that the tortoise was swimming in it (as I didn't know the difference between tortoises and turtles). There was also a stepping stone just outside the garden door from the house, and there were ants living underneath it. I loved lifting it up to look at the hundreds of ants (or it at least felt like hundreds). Looking at ants in my home garden was generally always fun until about when I started school.

Chinami Sakai, currently works at the V&A Museum of Childhood and was previously Assistant Curator in the Families and Early Years team at Tate

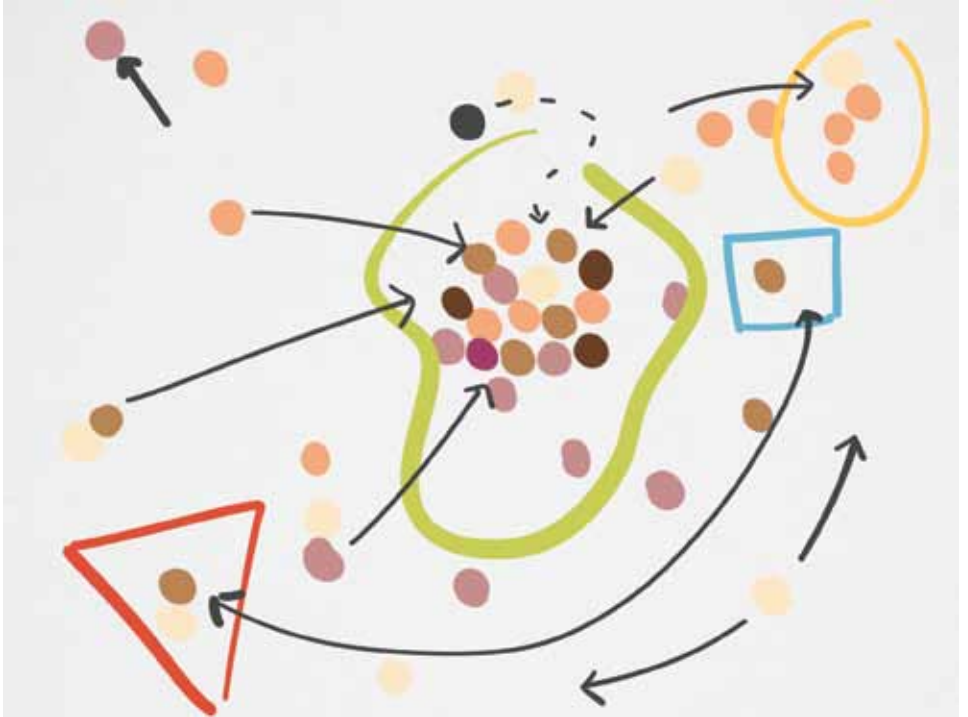
The island of Aphrodite

The heat in the air sucked the breath from your body. In between our houses and the next was a flat valley and a deep one, bondus. Arid, buzzing, pale yellow dust-floored valleys with low dry trees and scrub. There was a girl with green eyes like a cat with pupils that weren't round but vertical. All the children 'played out'. 'Can we play out?' running way beyond our back gardens, into each other's bedrooms, in the streets, around someone's house. They eat tinned carrots. They have balconies. Tasting the petrol in black olives and scratching at the bottom of trees, drawing lines in the dry mud to show farmsteads and territories. There was no grass. The mud was orange and only red geraniums grew there. The lizard detached his own tail when we caught it. The trees were tall and deep and the dark green held by the leaves in the air; pathways, hardened by wear, leading to clearings. The sand on the rocks by the sea was white and fine, like flour. We made patties by mixing in sea water. Once we played so hard we cried (someone had died). Towards the end of the long summer there were thick face paint sticks, with gold wrapping you could unwind as they got too blunt, that smelt of make-up and glue; a different kind of play. Back-stage there were two sisters with long brown hair that had turned blonde in the sun. They were older. I think I got the part that I did because Dad was the stage manager.

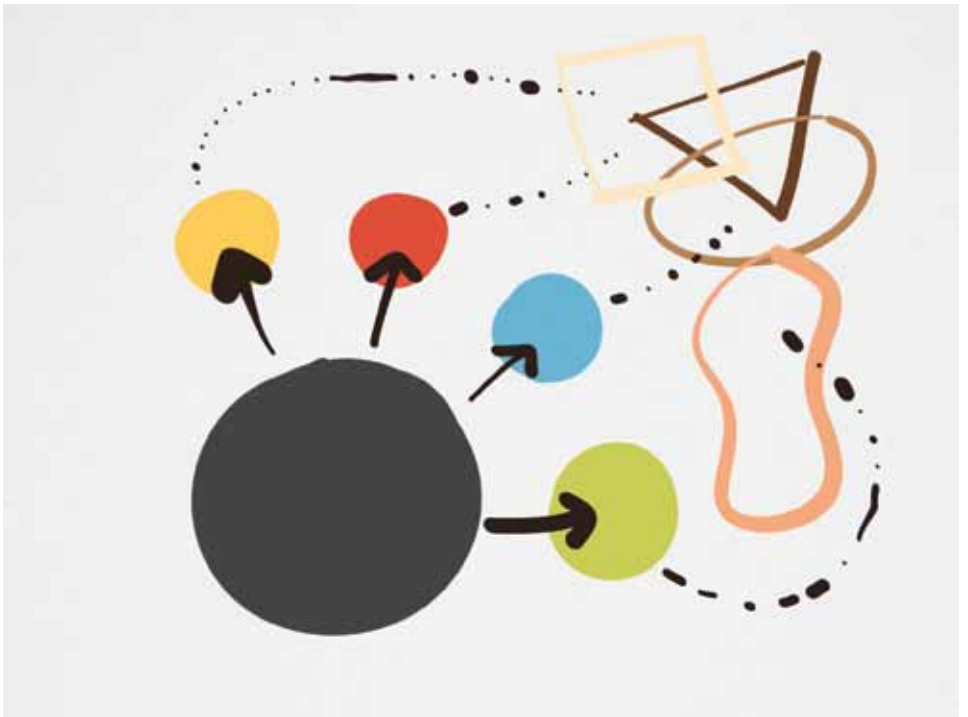
Then washing my hair for the first time, bent over the bath, rubbing the sand from my scalp. At the end of each day you are growing up. It is relentless.

Leanne Turvey, Convenor for Schools and Teachers team

Adam James,
Play Score 5
2014



Adam James,
Play Score 6
2014



tatecommonprojects
UNCATEGORIZED

‘What are you currently listening to? Looking at? Reading?’

SEPTEMBER 21, 2015 | RALPHDOREY | 3 COMMENTS |

What I’m listening to is records, currently the laila je t’aime compilation from Sahel Sounds, but it’s been a long day and there have been lots of others. What I’ve been looking at and reading is really the same thing, a lot of emails, proposals, lecture notes and ideas about play. The world of ludic activity is more or less where I live. My teaching practice has shifted so far in this direction that it has required not only the reassessment of the content of what at one stage was technically an art lesson, but the reassessment of how a lesson can still exist when its subject is; freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated.

This being the standard definition used by play professionals in the UK. Play in this sense, the thing I am looking at and reading, is less a solid than an absence. It’s a hole in a veneer of order, as its content is not known, often even to the person doing the playing. And like a hole in a surface, there is a constant tension at the edges where fluidity meets rigidity. The question I keep asking is, why stop the hole at this point? Why not let play continue further?

Among the notes and emails are some from the leader of the research department at the school I am employed at. I am consulting on a research project that is looking at how to measure mental health and well-being in our students. The standard procedure for this measure in mental health is

service-user surveys. As a special school our students embody a broad range of physiological and neurological difference, making the survey unsuitable as many would not be able to complete it. So we are using a proxy, which is engagement. The research model which we are trialling holds that if students are engaged in what is going on, then it follows that they are happy. We breakdown engagement into behavioural, emotional, cognitive and agentic. Once again, what I am actually looking at is play. The engagement we are looking for is this one; freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated.

Other things on my cluttered desktop and laptop are directed towards this same central concern. Notes and sketches for exhibitions and art commissions I'm working on are reminders of how my professional studio practice is play. An activity driven by and perpetuating itself, whether I work at it on my own or in collaboration with others the work is paradoxically its own motivation yet completely voluntary and controlled only by us as agents.

Right at the top of the heap is my currently sparse notes for a talk I need to write for next month on the class system in relation to art. Again, this definition of play returns to the centre, as it is deeply problematic for the labour hierarchy of most workplaces; freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated.

While this might be a fairly standard atmosphere in many design firms, research centres, artisan studios and laboratories, it is not everyone who gets supported to take the risks aiming for such an environment. Not everyone is encouraged to play, and where it is presented either as a leisure activity or a dangerous risk much is done to dissuade those without a financial or cultural safety net from following it too far.

mrswardster says:

SEPTEMBER 24, 2015 AT 8:43 PM 0 EDIT

I'm listening to Nils Frahm - though not enough. Have you heard of him? You should. Especially if you like pianos and feeling amazing inside.

I'm looking at lots of social media images about art and education: Pinterest, Facebook, YouTube; trying to walk the tightrope of 'inspiration' v. 'comparison and sense of failure'. So, not feeling very amazing inside, but spurred onwards.

Also I'm reading (very slowly) The History of Christianity by Diarmaid MacCulloch - for the second time, as by the time I get to the end of such a long book I forget where I started, so the whole process seems pointless unless I do it again and hopefully retain a little more information. That's not really play is it? I suppose that's the danger, wanting to 'feel' like you're making progress but play has no measures and significant markers - certainly not in the short term. So sometimes what starts out as a pleasant walk becomes a treadmill of trying to prove something. I'm not sure what. It's like when you go on Pinterest for pleasurable browsing and inspiration but end up feeling like you wasted hours of your life, rather than invigorated it. Damn you Pinterest. Really you are an illusion of play - I'm trying to gain from other people's efforts. I should just pull out my sketchbook and get doodling - or get my hands on a really sharp knife and finish carving that spoon. But when it becomes 'should' - is that play? Perhaps you only know if it's play once you are in it and you want to keep doing it. Like when your parents used to say, 'Let's go for a family walk in the woods' and you'd throw a tantrum because you didn't want to, but once you got there it was REALLY fun.

Play requires a mind-set, as well as an approach, to practise. 'Freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated', my suggestion is that as teachers our role is to direct the choice into something we think they will respond positively to, because we have so much more experience and knowledge. But how can you do that in compulsory state inner-city education? All answers on a highly creative, playful postcard please. It's the kernel of why I attend any alternative CPD I can get my hands on - but perhaps I should just be playing more (and definitely not going on Pinterest)?

ralphdorey says:

SEPTEMBER 26, 2015 AT 11:40 AM 0 EDIT

This is really interesting, thanks for raising so many ideas. I'd perhaps disagree with the phrase 'direct the choice', because that doesn't sound like a choice anymore. I like the idea of creating a situation which is stimulating and provocative. Directing pupils to a place where new choices arise (the choices made on the family walk).

In one sense I know more than my students, I've lived longer, I've studied. However in many other ways I know far less, particularly when it comes to them, their inner state, and their particular culture that develops with their peers. I might assume that students might be using a tool back to

front because they don't know that it isn't intended for this, or it might be because they have a completely different use in mind for this tool.

Choices are a complicated idea within any framework. By definition they are always both open and closed to degrees. There's a phrase I hear a lot at work which is 'good choices', and it's generally used to mean when the pupil learns to make the choice which you'd prefer. So kids get good at cold-reading adults to make their response. This is arguable a useful skill! However, it's also got obvious disabling factors like making kids defer to 'what would the adult do' which isn't particularly good for their own flexible thought, moral understanding and self-esteem.

mrswardster says:

SEPTEMBER 27, 2015 AT 7:32 PM 0 EDIT

I agree, I think 'direct choice' was too clumsy. Really I mean facilitate choice. But yes, I agree - actually the choice I want them to make as a teacher is the choice that I feel will get them the grades. The choice I want them to make as an artist is the choice that will allow them to explore and develop at their own pace.

PLAYING

Encouraging students to explore the threshold concepts that underpin the discipline of photography has become an important part of my practice as a teacher. In a world saturated by photographic images it seems important for students to understand the ways in which pictures cajole and coerce. Of course, students experiment with these big ideas by making their own photographs, but it's not always easy to make the connection between theory and practice. What if students began to see photography as a kind of game with its own rules and procedures? For example, photography relies on juggling calculation and chance, strategy and serendipity. What if they were set the challenge of designing a photography game? This was the basis of a project I recently set my Year 12 photography students. I gave them a brief, a deadline and a set of resources to get them going – everything from the *Exquisite Corpse* to *Oblique Strategies*. One of the products of these experiments is presented here. Georgina fully embraces the combination of theory and practice in her game, creating an intriguing and enigmatic set of instructions that she can continue to use in her own practice. If you are interested in learning more about this and other photography projects, check out the various resources contributed by colleagues across the country on the PhotoPedagogy website, www.photopedagogy.com.

JON NICHOLLS

GAMES

The task of creating a photography game at first would seem a simple one. There are several games already on the market which incorporate elements of fine art and creative writing, even if child-like Pictionary doodles is what first comes to mind. So why isn't there a mainstream photography game?

To start our photography course in Year 13, we were given a six-week project to design a photography game. The concept proved challenging, as although there were various educational themes I could focus my game on in the fields of art history or techniques and processes, I wanted to consider the aspects of photography I had learnt and found most revolutionary in my work during Year 12. For example, I learned to accept that photography could be a personal and subjective art form rather than just a mechanical process with a purely documentary purpose.

[L]ike every mass art form, photography is not practiced by most people as an art. It is mainly a social rite, a defence against anxiety, and a tool of power.
Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, New York 1977, p.8-9.

As well as the educational aspect, I wanted my game to encourage creativity in the players through less obstructive rules and instructions. When I researched modern board games, I found them to be restrictive. For example, it isn't possible, when adhering to the rules of Monopoly, for the players to turn the game board into a tent and then charge three hotels worth of rent for the duration of the game. This would break the rules of the game, without which the game isn't really a game anymore. Contrary to this, photography is a fairly open medium, with the only restraints being social barriers to subject matter and slight technological limitations. So when making my game, I had to set some rules which would help the game to function whilst allowing the players to be creative as photographers.

With this in mind, I decided to research more abstract games from the Surrealist and Fluxus art movements. These games ranged from having no instructions at all to games which set explicit instructions with no explanation. A Fluxus example is Yoko Ono's *Grapefruit*, which contains pages of directions for artists to follow in order for them to question their own mental and social restraints.

At first glance Ono's instructions may not appear to be games, but with reference to the characteristics of games they do have game-like qualities; a set of *instructions* with possible social or mental consequences the player follows under *certain parameters* to reach an *end goal*. *Grapefruit* reveals that a game can take any form, but realistically it's

a concept that is unlikely to become widely played, making it successful as a thought-provoking art piece, but not necessarily conventional family entertainment.

Following my research, I created the game *Obscura*. This consists of a small tin containing various household objects, a set of vague instructions and thirty 'prompt' cards. The aesthetics of the game are devoid of colour, reflecting the philosophy that the player creatively controls the game. To play the game, one player is instructed to select an object, and a card is randomly allocated to the other players. Each player must then create a photograph, prompted by the object and information on the card in a predetermined time period. Similarly to the Surrealist idea of automatism, I wanted my game to stimulate potential connections between text and objects in order to produce photographs which are personal to the players. I am interested in how initial ideas for photographs are generated and how photographs become meaningful.

The process of designing *Obscura* was fairly straightforward. Even if those playing the game in my test group didn't fully grasp the amount of control they had, cameras were operated and photographs were taken. The real challenge came in deciding how players could 'win'. To refer back to the Monopoly example, spotting a winner in a business scenario of money and properties is fairly obvious. But how do you determine a winner in photography? Is one photographer superior to the other because their work is considered innovative or because s/he is admired by more people? Ultimately, all art is subjective, both on the part of the artist and the viewer. A photographer may have a certain philosophy about the making of a photograph, but the viewer is likely to infer something completely different. Can the photograph be considered unsuccessful because the viewer didn't immediately understand the subconscious discovery made by the artist when pressing the shutter?

Despite these queries, the *Obscura* instructions do attempt to identify the criteria for 'winning'. Each player votes for his or her favourite image. Of course, this could and *should* prove impossible if the game is played with a completely artistic mindset, essentially rendering the game self-destructive.

After completing the project, I was left wondering whether creating a game about this aspect of the photographic process is actually possible. In my opinion, to create a successful art piece you need only create it. Designing a photography game may mean redefining the notion of a game altogether.

Georgina Baker, Year 13 student, Thomas Tallis School

How to play Obscura:

1. Each player should select an object from his/her surroundings. This could be something small, like a paper clip, or a larger object.
2. Shuffle the Obscura cards and allocate one to each player at random. You may want to keep the phrase on your card secret.
3. Take a photograph. The photo must reflect the nature of your card and contain your chosen object. For example 'edges' could mean the edge of a surface or to feel 'on edge'.

The next steps are up to you.

What are the time constraints and where will the game be played?

Can a 'winner' be found amongst the participants?

Some suggested card phrases:

EDGES
DISTINCT
TRAPPED
SHALLOW
ISOLATED
ILLUSION
ASYMMETRIC
CROSSED

WHENEVER I REFER TO A CREATION
AS AN ART WORK, IT STRIKES ME
AS MORE SUITABLE TO REFER TO
IT AS AN ART PLAY.

UPON ENTERING A NURSERY, IT
WOULD SEEM STRANGE TO SAY 'WHY
ARE YOU DOING THAT?' 'WHAT
DOES IT MEAN?' OR 'WHO WOULD
BE INTERESTED IN THAT?' YET
THESE ARE QUESTIONS SO
COMMONLY ASKED TO ARTISTS.

IT'S AS IF WE ARE SOCIALISED
OUT OF EXPRESSIVE PLAY; THERE
CAN BE A CONFINING EXPECTATION
FOR THE ADULT TO JUSTIFY THEIR
CREATION WITH LOGIC.

YET OFTEN WHEN A TODDLER IS
ASKED 'WHY DO YOU LIKE IT?'
ABOUT AN ART PIECE, THE
RESPONSE IS 'I LIKE IT BECAUSE
IT'S GOOD'. HOW LIBERATING NOT
TO HAVE TO JUSTIFY ONE'S WORK;
TO DO IT FOR THE SAKE OF DOING
IT, AND TO LIKE IT FOR THE
SAKE OF LIKING IT.

JONNY BRIGGS



ASTRID'S MASKS IS THE LAST IN A SERIES OF FOUR 16MM FILMS WHERE ASTRID (AGED ELEVEN) AND I RECONSTRUCT SCENES FROM ARCHIVAL CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AND LIFESTYLE MAGAZINES FROM OUR PARENTS' GENERATION; THE 1960S/1970S. THE FILMS ARE LIKE REPRO FURNITURE IN THAT THEY MERGE DESIGNS, APPROXIMATE, AND EMBELLISH THE ORIGINAL. WE ARE INDULGING IN OUR SHARED NOSTALGIA FOR THIS PERIOD AND MEDIUM WHILST ALSO BEING VERY SELECTIVE, CRITICAL AND CAREFUL NOT TO WASTE TOO MUCH FOOTAGE; THERE IS SERIOUS FRIVOLITY AT PLAY.

SOPHIE MICHAEL





MY WORK IS VERY PLAYFUL. I DISRUPT THE SITUATIONS I ENCOUNTER IN PUBLIC SPACE BY SUBVERTING OR INTERVENING IN THEM, USING OBJECTS OR ACTIONS TO GENERATE NEW STORIES. I AM REPLAYING AND REMIXING REALITY. THE PROCESS OFTEN BEGINS INTUITIVELY BY WANDERING AROUND THE STREETS AND NOTICING THINGS, THEN IMPROVISING RESPONSES WHICH ARE DEVELOPED INTO PERFORMANCES, AUDIO-VISUAL WORKS, OBJECTS AND TEXT.

LOUISE ASHCROFT

OUR COLLECTIVE NAME SISTERS FROM ANOTHER MISTER STEMS FROM UNI FRIENDSHIP THAT PLAYS WITH A MEDIUM OF COLLABORATION. PLAY, PAUSE, STOP, FAST FORWARD, REVERSE, FLICKER, SYNC. PLAYING A VIDEO. LICKING A VIDEO, HUGGING A SCREEN OF A VIDEO, PAYING IN A VIDEO; WE PUT A BODY MASK OF A FISH TO SLAP EACH OTHER'S FACES, DRESS WITH A GREEN LEOTARD OUTFIT (FOR THE SAKE OF 'THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ELSEWHERE') WHILE GOING FOR A MORNING RUN. MIMING KARAOKE TO THE *TITANIC* SOUNDTRACK, PUTTING GREBE BIRDS MASK TO MIME THE BOOGIE DANCE BY BACCARA (THE SONG DISCOVERED BY YOUTUBE MIXER). PAINTING OWN BIKE IN GREEN (AGAIN FOR THE SAKE OF 'THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ELSEWHERE') AND ROLLING IN A PARK (FOR THE SAKE OF FEELING GRAVITY) BUT TAKING IT VERY SERIOUSLY.

SISTERS FROM ANOTHER MISTER

PLAY DEFINITELY HAS A PLACE IN MY PRACTICE. WHEN I WAS A KID I USED TO PLAY FOR DAYS AND DAYS WITH FIMO AND MAKE MINIATURE FOOD. I'M PRETTY MUCH STILL PLAYING IN THAT EXACT SAME WAY IN MY PRACTICE TODAY, JUST NOW I THINK ABOUT IT A LOT MORE.

JEMMA EGAN

PG 81
DOES PLAY HAVE A PLACE
IN YOUR PRACTICE?



END MATTERS: REFERENCES

1 (Cover Image)

Intrigued by this 1970s image of Somerville Adventure Playground in New Cross (found by Schools and Teachers convenor Leanne Turvey whilst researching her text 'When a Stick Becomes a Horse') we contacted the Playground to try and find out the story behind the image. We were put in touch with the owner of the photograph, Hanneke Nicholson. Hanneke is a self-described 'play lifetimer' who worked at Somerville for over thirty years. Hanneke told us she has many fond memories of the Playground, and that the original image was a small picture that she scanned from an old book of photos taken before she arrived in 1977. Conversations with Hanneke about the history of the Playground brought us into contact with Kimmy Spreadborough, daughter of the Playground's first playworker, Ron Martin. Somerville has been a part of Kimmy's life from the beginning. She dated the image as about 1973, and pointed out that you can see the bomb-site remains of Somerville Road and that at the far end of the hut is a crater hole. She also remembered there was only an outdoor chemical loo at this time; it was emptied down the sewer hole that used to be in the middle of Somerville Road. The image encapsulates the nostalgia, the personal narratives, and the open-ended nature of the enquiries that populate this edition of *Play Ground*.

Somerville Adventure Playground c.1973
Image courtesy Hanneke Nicholson

2

Yvonne Rainer
Still from Hand Movie 1966
5 min, b&w, silent, 8 mm
Close-up of a hand, the fingers of which enact a sensuous dance
Camerawork William Davis
© Yvonne Rainer
Courtesy of Video Data Bank, www.vdb.org

3

Elmgreen & Dragset
Drama Queens 2007
At Skulptur Projekte Münster 07
Photograph: Elmar Vestner
Courtesy of the Artists
© Elmgreen & Dragset

4

Extract from *Drama Queens*, a play by Elmgreen & Dragset with text by Tim Etchells 2007
Reproduced with the kind permission of Studio Elmgreen & Dragset
© Elmgreen & Dragset

5

The film *Totally on Fire* (2015) by Keira Greene has its genesis in a real experience recounted to the artist by her father. His story is from a journey he took to California in the late 1970s, during which he found himself at the gates of the hedonistic Esalen Institute. Here he encountered a group of residents playing a silent game of naked volleyball, played with no net and no ball. *Totally on Fire* is a conversation across time that restages this original game. The cultural phenomenon of the game acts as a model to examine trust and intimacy. Greene's films often focus on the subjective experience of shared space, and the inclusion of her work in this edition of *Play Ground* adds a sense of vulnerability and seriousness to the notions of play being explored.

The seeming incongruity of this vulnerability and seriousness, with the intended hedonism of the Esalen Institute, and with the presumed lightness of games, leads to the quote by David Graeber from *The Utopia of Rules: On Technology, Stupidity and the Secret Joys of Bureaucracy* 2015. By positioning Greene's images alongside Graeber's words, the intention is to offer up a moment of consideration of the weightiness of games, of the comfort of rules, of the fragility of fun, and of the seriousness of/at play.

The inclusion of Graeber's quote also offers a sideways introduction to themes taken up in 'You Had to Be There'.

6

Tim Etchells
Ten Games 2012
Courtesy of the Artist

7

When presented with the theme of Play for this issue, I was immediately drawn to its opposing state, Work. Perhaps this was because I was reading a book entitled *Work Ethic* at the time or

that I was working my way through an increasing to-do list. During a presentation on Tate's Archives and Access project, a colleague mentioned that there was a great little note in the collection by an artist which had on one side something about an artwork he had made and on the other a personal note to his wife. Intrigued and amused by this combination of the professional and private, I made a search to find the note and uncovered it as one by Kenneth Armitage to Joan Moore. I like to think Kenneth's instruction to not go to sleep before eleven is giving Joan license to play after a hard day's work, even though he has clearly taken the studio home with him.

These pages hope to explore the blurring of the boundaries between the public and private, bringing the, at times, estranged friends Work and Play into dialogue and highlighting their ultimate dependency on one another. *Anna-Marie Gray*

Note from Kenneth Armitage to Joan Moore has been digitised as part of Tate's Archives and Access project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. To see more archive collections and find out more please visit www.tate.org.uk/art/archive.

8, 13

Species of Spaces and Other Pieces by Georges Perec was one of various texts, images, artworks and ideas that influenced this edition of *Play Ground*. Perec's pared-back use of language, self-imposed restrictions and form prompted two reimaginings of his text *SPACE*. One in which we created a playlist adopting the same rules governing the original text and a second where we simply replaced the repeated word 'space' with 'play, teasing open the wordplay to bend it to our game. Created as a tribute to Perec, and in his playful spirit, we hope to borrow a certain sense of pattern and repetition to lend to the experience of reading *Play Ground*.

9, 10

Art School (2013) by Paul Winstanley, is a collection of images of art school studios shot between term time. While devoid of any activity, empty of everything but a trace of departed students, the images harbour all the potential of each space's intended function as a site for creativity. The starkness of the image, predominantly white,

teeters on the edge of abstraction. In the context of *Play Ground* this blankness stages a pause or gap for your consideration.

Winstanley's presentation comes at a particular point in the history of the art school when space being at a premium threatens the studio as the basis for an art school education.

Alongside the Winstanley photograph we have included an image of our Learning studio space at Tate Britain to further open up considerations of the spaces in which we work as students, artists, teachers and curators and of the nature of making and learning in general. The empty space holds a tacit invitation; as a stage-set in need of action, a pause to be considered, a place to occupy, a blank to be completed.

Paul Winstanley
Art School 109 2013
© Paul Winstanley

Emma McGarry
Empty Studio 2016

11
In 2014, the Tate London Schools and Teachers team collaborated with Touretteshero to develop *We Forgot the Lot!*, a one-day artist-led event for young people with Tourette's syndrome and their families at Tate Britain. The list of tics, taken from the Touretteshero website, reflect Jess Thom's way of seeing the condition as creative, playful and full of humour. It is this perspective that she draws on to support young people with Tourette's Syndrome and their families.

12
The central protagonists in *Pop Video* (2011) by artist Alex Schady, are a collection of bizarre and haphazard objects that appear to be in some kind of odd and silent dialogue. The camera slides over and around the individual things as though following a play that no one else quite understands. We enjoyed this still in relation to the other images and texts that reference staging, script and performance.

Alex Schady, *Pop Video* 2011
Courtesy of the Artist

14
Covers: an ongoing project in which Offeh explores a series of music album covers from the 1970s and 1980s.

Graceful is a body of work that examines the image and iconography of the model, singer and actress Grace Jones. My starting point has been a video and photographic restaging of Grace Jones's *Island Life* album cover. In the work I attempt to recreate Jones's impossible arabesque pose, the original is a highly manipulated realization of the classic image of an exotic, androgynous black figure. My slightly pathetic attempt to restage this is part homage to Ms Jones and part attempt to deconstruct this stereotype. *Harold Offeh*

haroldoffeh.com/Covers

Suggested further reading: Yvette Greslé, Interview: Harold Offeh: Performing Covers. *Fad Magazine*, 2013, fadmagazine.com/2013/12/09/harold-offeh-performing-covers/.

Harold Offeh
Covers: After Grace Jones, Island Life, 1985 (Graceful Arabesque) 2008/9
Courtesy of the Artist

15
Declaration of the Rights of the Child
Proclaimed by General Assembly Resolution 1386(XIV) of 20 November 1959.

Drafted by Eglantyne Jebb, a British social reformer and founder of the Save the Children organisation.

This was the basis of the Convention of the Rights of the Child adopted by the UN General Assembly thirty years later on 20 November 1989. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was entered into force on 2 September 1990.

16
The play scores emerged by accident. Tracing them back, I see them as a convergence of various pre-planning and evaluative methods. They arise from an ongoing passion for creating strategic maps used in miniature war gaming

and working as a storyboard artist for film and commercials which commonly involves visualising scenes as top-down plans for camera placement and lines of actions. More recently they connect to my pre-planning for LARP-based (live action role-play) performances in a manner akin to an American football coach delivering plays to the team. During my time at as a 2014/15 artist-in-residence on the Tate Schools Workshop programme I initially created scores which helped me visualise the interactions between participants, artworks, architecture and my position as facilitator or games master. Having tried and failed to put the results of the workshops into words, I began to evaluate them retrospectively using the pre-score plays.
Adam James.

Adam James
Play Scores 2014

17

Programmed by Anna-Marie Gray and Sarah Jarvis, Common Projects is an ongoing project within the Schools and Teachers team. Over the course of each year the team work alongside a group of twelve teachers, who meet bi-terminally to explore art and education and the intersection of our different roles (spanning formal and non-formal education, artist, curator, teacher) in relation to those areas.

The Common Projects cohort for 2015/16 are: Anna Baker, Deborah Britton, Ralph Dorey, Nicky Field, Cyrus Iravani, Anne-Marie Juniper, Emily Limna, Eimear McClean, Laura Nichols, Hannah Preedy, Jon Purday and Esther Tyler-Ward.

Throughout the year we have been gathering notes, references and comments in a shared blog. Posted here were Ralph Dorey and Esther Tyler-Ward's responses to the PG4 play lists call-out, which unfold into this reproduced conversation.

18

In 2015/16 the schools workshops were led by artist-in-residence Louise Ashcroft, Jonny Briggs, Jemma Egan, Milda Lemberaite, Sophie Michael and Amelia Prazak.

Jonny Briggs
The Empathetic vs The Mimic 2011
Lambda C-type print
100 x 135 cm

Sophie Michael
Astrid's Masks 2014
Production still

Louise Ashcroft and Noga Inbar
It's Lovely Isn't it? 2013
Film still

Sisters From Another Mister
Fish Fight 2014
C-type print
120 x 175 cm

Jemma Egan
From Here to Eternity 2014
Steel, acrylic, brass, oil
Video still

19

Sprouts is a game of strategy devised by mathematicians John Horton Conway and Michael S. Paterson. The former worried he'd wasted his youth playing silly games but subsequently realised they had often led him to new discoveries and ideas.

In the game an arbitrary number of dots are marked on a page and two players take turns to draw a line between any two of them. Only two lines may sprout from each dot and no lines may cross.

The game ends when no more dots can be connected.

If you're playing by the rules. *Sarah Carne.*

END MATTERS: CONTRIBUTORS LIST

JO ADDISON is an artist and BA Fine Art Course Director at the University of Kingston

LOUISE ASHCROFT is an artist-in-residence on the schools workshop programme 2015/16

GEORGINA BAKER is a student at Thomas Tallis School

JONNY BRIGGS is an artist-in-residence on the schools workshop programme 2015/16

SARAH CARNE is Curator for Art School and Assembly Project Coordinator, Schools and Teachers, Tate Modern

COMMON PROJECTS 2015/16 – Anna Baker, Deborah Britton, Ralph Dorey, Nicky Field, Cyrus Iravani, Anne-Marie Juniper, Emily Limna, Eimear McClean, Laura Nichols, Hannah Preedy, Jon Purday, Esther Tyler-Ward – is a group of teachers working alongside artists, curators and educators, to form a collaborative community of shared conversation

ANNA CUTLER is Director of Learning at Tate

JEMMA EGAN is an artist-in-residence on the schools workshop programme 2015/16

ELMGREEN & DRAGSET have worked together as an artist duo since 1995

TIM ETCHELLS is an artist and writer Artistic Director of the theatre collective Forced Entertainment he is also Professor of Performance and Writing at Lancaster University

DAVID GRAEBER is an anthropologist, political activist and author. He is currently a professor at the London School of Economics and was one of the earlier organisers of Occupy Wall Street

ANNA-MARIE GRAY is Assistant Curator, School and Teachers, Tate Learning

KEIRA GREENE is an artist filmmaker and curator

ADAM JAMES is an artist; he was an artist-in-residence on the schools workshop programme in 2014/15

SARAH JARVIS is Assistant Curator, Schools and Teachers, Tate Learning

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CAMERON LEADBETTER is a graphic designer at Shining Studio

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EMMA MCGARRY is Resource Coordinator, Schools and Teachers team, Tate Learning. She was also an artist-in-residence on the schools workshop programme 2013/14

SOPHIE MICHAEL is an artist-in-residence on the schools workshop programme 2015/16

HANNEKE NICHOLSON is a 'play lifetimer'; she worked at Somerville Adventure Playground in New Cross Gate for thirty years before moving back to Holland

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MATTHEW POUNTNEY set up Touretteshero – an organisation to offer creative opportunities for young people with Tourette's, to help remove barriers for them and their families – with artist Jess Thom

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The Schools and Teachers team, Tate London Learning, in particular: Sarah Carne, Anna-Marie Gray, Sarah Jarvis, Emma McGarry, Amy McKelvie, Linda Stupart, Leanne Turvey and Alice Walton. Assistant editorial support from Rebecca Lindsay-Addy

END MATTERS: CONTRIBUTORS PLAYLIST

JO ADDISON

LISTENING TO: These are the things I have listened to in the last few days: Rozi Plain, Foals, Peter and the Wolf, Monster Mash!

READING: This is a pile of books that is currently moving about the house: Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Thinking Hand: Existential and Embodied Wisdom in Architecture*; Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*; Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*; William B. Jones, Jr. (ed.), *Robert Louis Stevenson Reconsidered: New Critical Perspectives*; Ryunosuke Akutagawa, *The Life of a Stupid Man*; a two-week-old Saturday Guardian; The Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism, *The Book of Symbols: Reflections on Archetypal Images*.

LOOKING AT: I am not really sure ... things in windows ... Erwin Heerich architecture ... *In Praise of Hands* ... a little film by Donald Winkler.

LOUISE ASHCROFT

READING: *Glass* – a cultural analysis of the material, by John Garrison, as part of my research into Canary Wharf and its ideology of transparency. I'm also reading *White Noise*, a novel by Don DeLillo which a friend recommended because of its descriptions of supermarket shopping. I'm spending a lot of time doing fieldwork in supermarkets and retail parks at the moment. I prefer to work in public space rather than a studio. I read lots of different books at the same time, so the content is jumbled and hybridised in my thoughts.

GEORGINA BAKER

LISTENING TO: A stream of rare and classic music on the Magic Transistor Radio website.

READING: David Crow, *Visible Signs*.

LOOKING AT: The abstract patterns and shapes in the films of Len Lye and Steven Woloshen.

JONNY BRIGGS

LISTENING TO: Classical film scores; most often Philip Glass. It surprises me how in the absence of visuals, the sound still evokes a narrative. Regardless of what I'm doing, no matter how banal, it will feel as if an epic narrative is unfolding. I'm also enjoying seventies and eighties punk music; Siouxsie and the Banshees, Blondie and X-Ray Spex. There is something liberatingly transgressive about both music and lyrics; experimental and unhinged. Once again this takes me back to the importance of play!

READING: I'm currently reading a book on quantum mechanics; it pushes me to a mind-opening acceptance that there's so much more to learn about the world around us, and furthermore that things are much more connected than often we realise.

LOOKING AT: I've developed a recent interest in fascist architecture, which often appears in grand, seemingly permanent forms with strong vertical lines, pillars, order and repetition. The buildings were often built as symbols of power, and protection from threat outside of the building; dividing self from 'other'. Yet through using power to try and free themselves, the structures ironically start to take on the form of entrapping prisons, evoking detachment and isolation. We can see the vulnerability through the brutal facade.

DEBORAH BRITTON

LISTENING TO: Pavlov's Dog and all the records my father-in-law has bought me over a few months. Randomly refreshingly curated hidden gems.

READING: Albert Camus, *The Outsider*.

LOOKING AT: With my photography group we have been photographing the playground after home time. Seeing what people have lost and forgotten/left behind.

SARAH CARNE

LISTENING TO: ELO.

READING: Mornings – just started Slavoj Žižek's *Event* (been on my table for two years, now feels like the right time). Evenings – Ian McEwan's *Saturday*.

LOOKING AT: Anything by a woman artist over fifty.

ANNA CUTLER

READING: James Meek, *The Heart Broke In*, but am generally addicted to crime novels.

JEMMA EGAN

LISTENING TO: *This American Life* podcast, episode 569, 'Put a Bow On It' (which four people separately told me I should listen to). It's about 'Frankenfoods' and in particular fast-food brands designing the 'next big thing': www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/569/transcript.

READING: The Robert Galbraith (J.K. Rowling) Cormoran Strike books which make me think I could be a really great private detective. Also revisited Barthes's *Mythologies* just recently, I particularly like and identify with 'Ornamental Cookery' which is talking about magazine food photography.

LOOKING AT: Derek Boshier, *The Identi-Kit Man* (at Tate Britain), a fair bit which is a painting in part of stripy toothpaste. I've also been watching a documentary on Channel 4 about Domino's Pizza, it's called *A Slice of Life* (I really recommend it, I've watched it three times now).

TIM ETHELLS

LISTENING TO: Deus, *The Ideal Crash*. Cat Power, *Colors and The Kids*.

READING: Marlon James, *A Brief History of Seven Killings*. M. John Harrison, *The Course of the Heart*.

LOOKING AT: Emily Jacir, *Europa* (catalogue). Jonathan Burrows and Matteo Fargion, *52 Portraits* (video, work in progress). Vlatka Horvat, *This Here and That There* (performance documentation).

ANNA-MARIE GRAY

LISTENING TO: Crochet tutorials.

READING: Yvonne Rainer, *Work 1961–73*.

LOOKING AT: Vintage family photos of seaside holidays that I found in a suitcase in a flea market.

KEIRA GREENE

LISTENING TO: Zammuto/Karen Gwyer/Sonic Youth.

READING: Michel Houellebecq, *Atomised*; Stephen Grosz, *The Examined Life*; David W. Bernstein, *The San Francisco Tape Music Center*.

LOOKING AT: Laida Lertxundi/Anna Halpri/Ben Russell/Chantal Akerman/Hal Hartley.

CYRUS IRAVANI

LISTENING TO: A lot of Snarky Puppy, a jazz-fusion collective from the US that I saw live in July. This might raise a few chuckles from Mighty Boosh fans, but I have to confess to being a bit of a jazz fan: www.youtube.com/watch?v=IE9I6NrE2S0.

READING: I was engrossed in two documents, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and 'Prevent Duty', both required reading in preparation for our recent ISI Ofsted inspection, which was completed a week ago (phew – it's over now). As an escape, I decompressed by rereading passages from Matthew Colling's *It Hurts*, a survey of the New York/US contemporary art scene which was originally published in 1998, but still feels relevant in its tone and content.

LOOKING AT: A lot of rugby, given that it is the World Cup. My IB art class was asked to examine and compare David's *Oath of the Horatii* with *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* (the ceramic poppy installation at the Tower of London last year) and I got a bit carried away, trying to compare the *Oath* with the modern-day equivalent of the rugby changing room before a match. Sadly for my students, they're hearing a lot of analogies about art and rugby at the moment, but that'll pass in a few weeks, I'm sure.

Yesterday I was at the British Museum with my wife and eleven-year-old daughter, trying to avoid the subjects that she was studying at school in her social studies classes (namely the Celts and Romans), as she kept reminding us that she was on a half-term holiday, not at school. I read a caption that was describing how the early hunter-gatherers had a nomadic existence for 85,000 years and was stunned by this fact. It made me think about how the endeavour of art-making (artefacts/buildings/objects of value and symbolic significance) were such an important part of our move from simply existing to living lives full of meaning and aspiration.

ADAM JAMES

LISTENING TO: Stars of the Lid; Claus Raasted's podcast on Nordic Larp; Joris Voorn, *Balance 014*.

READING: *The Strange Last Voyage of Donald Crowhurst*; Zip's Topsy Dressing Days (handwritten volume 15) November 2015 to June 2015 by Captain Zip.

LOOKING AT: *Quest for Fire* (repeatedly); *Tribe; Threads*.

SARAH JARVIS

LISTENING TO: *Dancing by Myself: Lost in Northern Soul* – Patti Smith talking about (among other things) her love for ITV detective shows on Woman's Hour. And I've just discovered Lianne La Havas and Frazey Ford.

READING: Susan Neiman, *Why Grow Up*; an A-level annotated copy of Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*.

LOOKING AT: Thomas Hellum's Ted Talk about Norwegian slow TV.

ANNE-MARIE JUNIPER

LISTENING TO: Radio 6.

READING: Edward Hollis, *The Secret Lives of Buildings*. This book takes us on a series of short journeys through time and place to show how even the greatest of buildings, ones which feature so strongly in the public conscious, are not works of pure architectural form but have been shaped and reworked over decades, centuries and even millennia. With each chapter acting as a personal biography of an individual building we gain an understanding of its personal life story – how the building has been used and abused through time. Only by looking at architecture as an ongoing process in this manner can we truly understand why the buildings featured in this book have achieved such iconic status.

LOOKING AT: Brassai, *Graffiti*. Best known for his photographs of nocturnal Paris and its demimonde, Brassai also took pictures of wall carvings and markings over three decades. Published in 1961 in the collection *Graffiti*, the prints were divided into sections, including painted graffiti, which Brassai titled 'The Language of the Wall'. Brassai was interested in how the images eventually altered, either through additions by later graffiti artists or because

of the vagaries of time. Here, chance has worked to magically reveal the symbol of Free France, the double-barred cross of Lorraine, at precisely the moment of the country's liberation at the end of World War II. Adopted as a counter-symbol to the Nazi swastika, the cross had been painted out, presumably during the German occupation of France. The symbolic meaning was perfectly evident to Brassai, who captioned the photograph, 'The political struggle on the wall. General de Gaulle's Cross of Lorraine, covered over with black paint, begins to re-emerge.'

JOSEPH KENDRA

LISTENING TO: Lovesliescrushing, *Voirshn*; Title Fight, *Hyperview*; A Mote of Dust, *A Mote of Dust LP*.

READING: Christoph Lindner, Margriet Schavemaker and Hendrik Folkerts (eds), *Facing Forward: Art and Theory from a Future Perspective*; Haruki Murakami, *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running*.

LOOKING AT: Alexander Calder, *Performing Sculpture* at Tate Modern; Jimmy Cauty's *New Bedford Rising*, America Street, London; Matthew the Horse's website.

CAMERON LEADBETTER

LISTENING TO: Unknown Mortal Orchestra, *Swim and Sleep (Like a Shark)*.

READING: Henri Barbusse, *Under Fire*.

LOOKING AT: Mikado Koyanagi, *Book Design of Graphic Designers in Japan*.

REBECCA LINDSAY-ADDY

LISTENING TO: George the Poet

READING: 750wordsaweek.wordpress.com – a blog by Paul O'Kane, applying his experiments in art writing to a weekly art criticism blog, he describes this as being 'highly subjective and stylised'.

LOOKING AT: *Strolling Series* – web-based short documentary videos by Cecile Emeke.

EMMA MCGARRY

LISTENING TO: Radiolab podcast, *Remembering Oliver Sacks*.

READING: Naoki Higashida, *The Reason I Jump*; Marshall Sahlins, *The Sadness of Sweetness*.

LOOKING AT: YouTube 'How To' videos about expanding foam.

SOPHIE MICHAEL

LISTENING TO: BBC Radiophonic Workshop.

READING: Patrick Hamilton; *Ghost World*; seventies/ eighties teen magazines.

LOOKING AT: *Blake's 7*; *The Tomorrow People*; *The Box of Delights*; *The Prisoner*.

JON NICHOLLS

LISTENING TO: An odd compilation of songs I made on Spotify that includes the Jackson Sisters, The Velvet Underground, Robert Forster, Sharon Van Etten, Scott Walker, Rita and the Tiaras, The Daktaris, Cilla Black and others.

READING: Nicholas Mirzoeff, *How to See the World*; Wallace Stegner, *Angle of Repose*.

LOOKING AT: The images in David Company's catalogue *A Handful of Dust* and Richard Learoyd's amazing camera obscura photographs.

LAURA NICHOLS

LISTENING TO: !!!, *Freedom '15*

READING: Wendy Jones, *Grayson Perry: Portrait of the Artist as a Young Girl*.

HANNEKE NICHOLSON

LISTENING TO: The aeroplane going over.

READING: *The Volkskrant*.

LOOKING AT: The tree in the front garden.

HAROLD OFFEH

READING: The exhibition catalogue for a recent show in Madrid: Chantal Pontbriand (ed.), *Per/form, How to Do Things With(out) Words*; Inke Arns and Gabriele Horn (eds), *History Will Repeat Itself. Strategies of Re-enactment in Contemporary Art and Performance*; Amelia Jones (ed.), *Sexuality*, from the Whitechapel: Documents of Contemporary Art series.

LOOKING AT: Working my way through UbuWeb video art pages. I would recommend a lucky dip approach: www.ubu.com/film/.

MATT POUNTNEY

LISTENING TO: The Mills Brothers.

READING: Kate Pickett, *The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone*.

LOOKING AT: *Master of None*.

EMILY PRINGLE

LISTENING TO: Lots of Brian Eno because it's very calming.

READING: Texts on practice as research as this is my current obsession.

LOOKING AT: I've just been to the shows on 'love' at the Irish Museum of Modern Art and 'trauma' at the Science Gallery in Dublin, both of which were fascinating.

JON PURDAY

LISTENING TO: The new Chemical Brothers album *Born in the Echoes* and the new Foals album *What Went Down*, and live mixed music at street feasts. The last one is the most inspiring!! I've got to get a record player!!

READING: Jason Fulford and Gregory Halpern (eds), *The Photographer's Playbook: 307 Assignments and Ideas*. It's really good. I'm also reading *The Little Prince* to my eight-year-old daughter, which is really good for ideas about drawing, journeys and the imagination.

LOOKING AT: The Tate magazine, reading and looking at the pictures of *The World Goes Pop*, Pipilotti Rist videos, Martin Creed works.

VICTORIA DE RIJKE

LISTENING TO: Jacob Collier play all parts for Stevie Wonder's *Don't You Worry 'Bout a Thing* on YouTube; *Classroom Projects*, incredible music played by children in schools, Trunk Records 2013.

READING: Miguel Sicart, *Play Matters*.

LOOKING AT: That fish play catch, a Texan farmer playing trombone to his cattle and the artist Francis Alÿs's films of worldwide children's games on YouTube.

CHINAMI SAKAI

LISTENING TO: Christmas songs.

READING: Emails.

LOOKING AT: Computer screen.

ALEX SCHADY

LISTENING TO: David Bowie, *Black Star*.

READING: Agustin Gómez-Arcos, *The Carnivorous Lamb*.

LOOKING AT: *Geeks and Freaks* – American comedy-drama television series, created by Paul Feig with Judd Apatow.

REBECCA SINKER

LISTENING TO: Podium.me (podcasts by young people).
DubNoize Sound System.

READING: To myself: Tim Etchells, *The Broken World*; with my eight-year-old: Russell Hoban, *The Marzipan Pig*.

LOOKING AT: *The Walking Dead*, because there's nothing as cathartic after a heavy working day, as watching humanity eat itself. Starling murmurations (Brighton or Aberystwyth piers are great spots, November–February).

SISTERS FROM ANOTHER MISTER

LISTENING TO: We find ourselves often collecting fragmented chats of couples we hear while sitting in a cafe or a restaurant.

READING: Jeremy Narby, *The Cosmic Serpent: DNA and the Origins of Knowledge*; Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse 5*. Guess who is reading what.

LOOKING AT: Gentrification of bodies into liquid green landscapes and what lies outside the frame. Godard movies and brutalist architecture (trendism).

KIMMY SPREADBOROUGH

READING: This email.

LOOKING AT: Into the past.

LISTENING TO: Flower Power Radio.

JESS THOM

LISTENING TO: Kate Tempest.

READING: Mark Thomas, *100 Acts of Minor Dissent*.

LOOKING AT: Islington Community Theatre, Brainstorm.

LEANNE TURVEY

LISTENING TO: Patti Smith, *Horses*; French radio for listening practice: *France Inter* and *Radio Fip*.

READING: Poems: the poem 'Pleasure Seas' by Elizabeth Bishop from *The Complete Poems 1927–1979*; Yvonne Rainer's *Poems* 2011; and *The Bees* 2011 by Carol Ann Duffy and Karen Harryman's anthology *Auto Mechanic's Daughter* 2007. For distraction I have just read Hilary Mantel's *A Place of Greater Safety* on the French Revolution.

LOOKING AT: I have just watched, on YouTube, all four episodes of *On the Edge – Improvisation: Its Nature and Practice*, a 1992 Channel 4 documentary adapted from Derek Bailey's 1980 book of the same title, and narrated by him.

ALICE WALTON

READING: Following a meeting with Michelle Dezember, the Learning Director from Aspen Art Museum where we talked about difference; I have just ordered Bell Hooks, *All About Love: New Visions*.

LOOKING AND LISTENING TO: Rain.

ALICE WROE

LISTENING TO: The New Yorker 'Fiction Podcast' – short stories chosen, read aloud and discussed by a different writer each month.

READING: Cora Sandel, *Krane's Café*.

LOOKING AT: Astra, an exhibition organised by the Feminist Library, a celebration of Astra Blaug – feminist activist, poet and artist.

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TATE