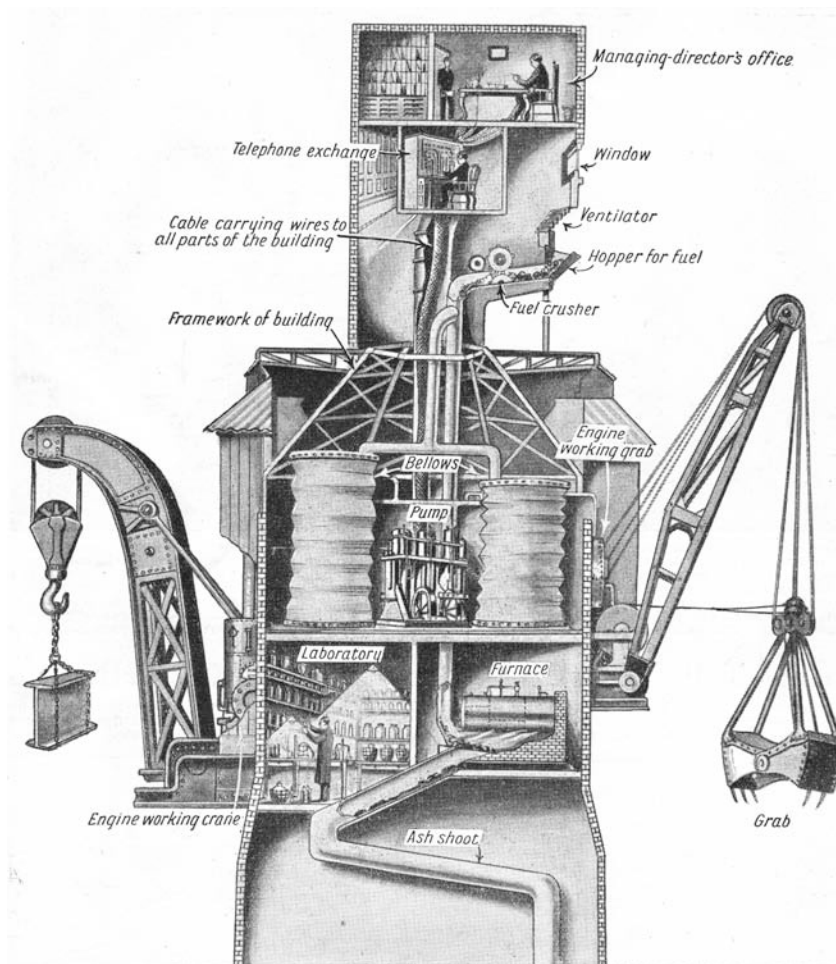


TRANSMISSION: AGENCY
(LABOUR, WORK, ACTION)
2012

PENNINE LECTURE THEATRE
HOWARD BUILDING, CITY CAMPUS
SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY

TUESDAYS FROM 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.



16th October

**An introduction to Transmission, Art Sheffield/Sheffield Contemporary Art Forum,
Site Gallery, and Fine Art staff**

From October 2012 to March 2013 Sheffield Hallam's Fine Art Transmission Lecture Series will be a discursive platform to address the theme of **AGENCY (Labour, Work, Action)**, developed in collaboration with Art Sheffield 2013.

The economic value of work, labour and art have been much discussed throughout the last three centuries and have been critical drivers in the thinking around Art Sheffield festivals over the last decade. The last four years have accelerated new interests in these discussions as a restructuring of international financial interests intersects with communities lived experience across the globe. Sheffield is not unique, nor is it the same as anywhere else. People, place, and history in relation to shifting economic values remains a central interest for the curatorial team developing Art Sheffield and the collaboration with the Transmission Lecture Series is a marrying of concerns and conversations in our developing understanding of work and labour.

Each session will be hosted by an artist currently teaching in Fine Art, Sheffield Hallam University, or a member of the Art Sheffield consortium.

The political theorist Hannah Arendt refused to be called a philosopher, for philosophy, she said, deals with the singular, while she addressed the plural, that humans not man inhabit the world. She proposes that freedom is constructed in community, in common space, and it is associative, performative, and public (which we saw in the events of Tahrir Square in Egypt, for example, and we may also look to models such as the Paris Commune of 1871). In her book *The Human Condition* (1958), she develops her theory of political action, drawing out the distinctions between what is social and what is political, and that which lies at the heart of our lecture series: what is labour, what is work, what is action (and thus, how is agency achieved, the capacity to act, to make choices, undetermined by supposedly natural forces). Arendt proposes three important human activities: labour, work, and political action. She is as materialist as Karl Marx: labour is a biological activity, a vital necessity operating under constraint. The goal of production is to produce, and there is a constant exchange of objects. It is never-ending, consumed quickly, making a slave of the labourer. Work may be thought of differently, most usefully with the term '*œuvre*': as what lasts or remains, as 'technique' and *poiesis*, as what is not spent or wasted and is transmitted; a 'common world' where life unfolds and objects endure beyond the act of their making. Transmission, in Arendt's sense, is a struggle against death, and thus already a form of liberty. It is, one might say, the distinction between what is kept and what is thrown away. Yet this freedom is only partial, for work is still instrumental, determined by causes and ends. While Arendt has been criticised for overly restricted characterisations, her distinction between *praxis* and *poiesis* (between action and making) may help to lead us to new formulations of identity and meaning. To work and labour, then, like Arendt, we will add an essential action, when 'something new is started which cannot be expected from whatever happened before', and frame these by **AGENCY**, asking what role might be played by the artist or work of art.

23rd October
Guest: Megan Cotts
Host: Alison J. Carr

Megan Cotts' sculptures and site-specific video installations in the context of space create narratives of history and memory. In *D3*, the artist collaborative, Cotts provides a personalised program to help clients divest burdensome objects from their collection. In the image of self-help service, *D3* accepts objects with accompanying paperwork, then creating surrogates of the original object, degrading its physicality, and thereby transforming the human-object relation. The object is eventually 'destroyed', and symbolic value becomes equal to the economic. In her current work, *Honeycomb*, Cotts has built an archive of material surrounding the history of the Heilbrun & Pinner factory in Halle (Saale), Germany that specialised in decorative paper products. The factory was owned by her family until production was stopped in 1936 due to Nazi pressure. Cotts resuscitates the patents filed by the company as the source for her sculptures and paintings. The patent provides space for the development of an idea/economy/process, thereby locking down an intellectual and economical space in technological growth. As an artist, Cotts' labour is automatically preserved in its integrity by copyright laws that govern this body of material. She began as an art director in Hollywood, ever on the search for the perfect object, responsible for the background imagery to create context for the performance. She is currently in residence at GlogauAIR in Berlin, Germany.



Megan Cotts, performance still, *Spirit Resurrection: D3 1980 Special Edition*, 2012

Alison J. Carr is currently writing up her practice-led Fine Art PhD at Sheffield Hallam University. She completed her MFA at the California Institute of the Arts in May 2009 and BA (Hons) Fine Art at Sheffield Hallam University in 2001. She is a strayed photographer at heart but now her practice takes a number of forms: photography, video, performance, and writing. Her research *How do I look?* investigates showgirls and her own modes of viewing showgirls, putting this into a wider critical context. Her approach involves watching lots of showgirl shows, from large-scale Parisian and Vegas spectacles, burlesque cabarets, to gentlemen's clubs, and interviewing showgirls of all kinds. She thinks about glamour, agency, and what it means to be a theorist, an artist, a feminist, and a dilettante showgirl.



Alison J. Carr, *Dancing in Front of Artwork by Dale Holmes*, 2012

30th October
Guest: Francesco Finizio
Host: Sharon Kivland

Throughout the last decade **Francesco Finizio** has developed devices that pursue his exploration of questions relating to exchange, circulation, and experience, as well as exposing the difficulty of transmission. Using visual resonances and the association of ideas, he undertakes various experiments combining play and reverie that border on the absurd. Finizio's works are devices for listening and transmission that render action uncertain, stop time and totally escape the logic of productivity, performance and exactitude. Transmission always occurs in the gaps, through loss and approximation. Finizio questions our possibility to experience in an overly controlled, commercialised, and pre-fabricated world, This subtly critical and off-kilter vision of society and its stereotypes also calls upon the service of animals: *Canary Island* (2004) is a pirate radio station whose musical programming is entrusted entirely to the whims of a canary in a cage. Finizio turn things topsy-turvy, underlines the notion of process and blurs boundaries between the worlds of art and business: in *How I Went In & Out of Business for Seven Days and Seven Nights*, 2008, the ACDC Galerie in Bordeaux was transformed into a construction site commercialising various materials over a week.



Francesco Finizio, Quick Hotel vitrine from *How I went In and Out of Business for Seven Days and Seven Nights*, 2008

Sharon Kivland is an artist and writer, Reader in Fine Art at Sheffield Hallam University, Tutor in Critical Practice, Wimbledon College of Art, UAL, and a Research Associate of the Centre for Freudian Analysis and Research, London. She is a keen reader, thinking about what is put at stake by art, politics, and psychoanalysis. Lately she has retired to her studio to prepare for forthcoming solo exhibitions. Her work is represented by DOMOBAAL, London, Galerie Bugdahn und Kaimer, Düsseldorf, and Galerie des petits carreaux, Paris. Her books in the series *Freud on Holiday* are published by information as material and Cube Art Editions.



Sharon Kivland, *Ma Pouffiasse*, 2012

13th November
Guest: Arnaud Desjardin
Host: Chloë Brown

Arnaud Desjardin is variously a publisher, an artist, a bookseller, and an exhibition organiser. The Everyday Press, the imprint he started in 2007, is used as a channel for publications, events, collaborations, and exhibitions. He recently published a rambling reference book on books and reference material about artist's books released since the early 1970s: *The Book on Books on Artists Books*. That project also includes an ongoing series of exhibitions where the original source books are displayed and showed as an archive or collection. Recent exhibition include *The Book on Books on Artists Books*, a Bloomberg Commission in the summer of 2011, and a solo project at Focal Point Gallery in Southend, entitled *Please Do Not Place Drinks on Vitrines or Books*. He recently produced a version of 'business as usual' for the London Open at the Whitechapel Gallery where booklets were materialised and distributed in the space of the gallery as part of an installation.



Arnaud Desjardin, 2011

Chloë Brown is an artist who uses film, sculpture, taxidermy, books, and drawing in her practice. She is Course Leader of Fine Art BA at Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, and is a member of the Research Group for Artists Publications (RGAP). Recent exhibitions include: *The Hum*, LoBe Gallery, Berlin and Sheffield Institute of the Arts Gallery, Sheffield (2011); *Isola di San Michele*, Basement Gallery, Vienna, Austria (2011); screening at The International Seminar on Art and Nature, Goethe Institute, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2011); *AbbaraCadabra*, Mardin, Turkey (2010), *Aller à Ouessant: Vidéo sur L'Île # 2*, Festival of video art on the island of Ouessant, France (2010); *The Animal Gaze*, Unit 2 Gallery, London and The Peninsula Arts Gallery, Plymouth (2009); and *Tier-Perspektiven* at Georg-Kolbe-Museum, Berlin (2009). She was commissioned to create a film for the Sheffield Pavilion at the Istanbul Biennial, 2009.



Chloë Brown, film still from *Sticky Knots*, 2009

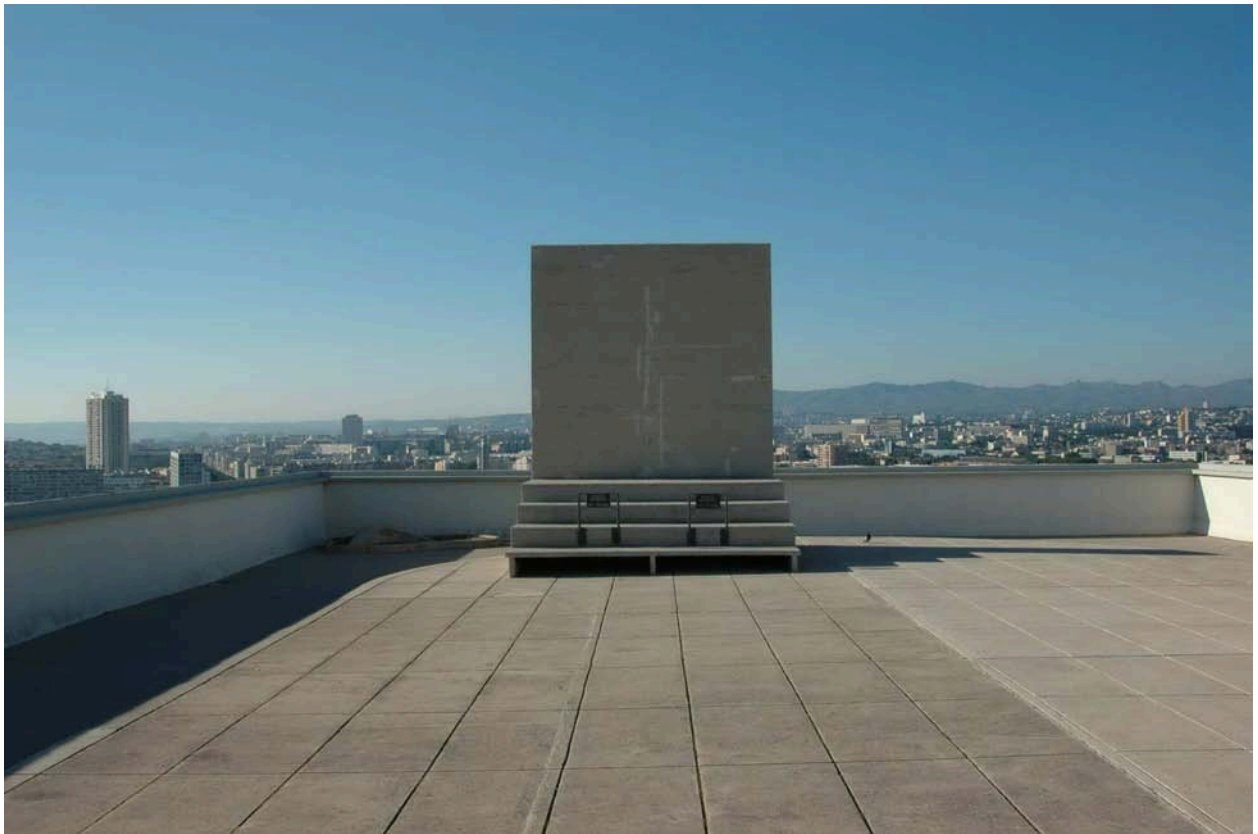
20th November
Guest: Armin Chodzinski
Host: Jaspar Joseph-Lester

Armin Chodzinski is an artist based in Hamburg and Luzern. He has worked in the fields of management and consulting. He received his doctorate in the field of anthropogeography. His work deals with the relation between art and economy, which is, as he states, distilled in urban space. Self-experiment is his method of approach, which is articulated in performance lectures, exhibitions, lectureships, and consulting projects.



Armin Chodzinski, film still from the work *Dr. C. erklärt Hannah Arendt* (Doc C explains Hannah Arendt), 2012

Jaspar Joseph-Lester's is an artist based in London whose work explores the role images play in urban planning, social space, and everyday praxis, latterly focusing on conflicting ideological frameworks embodied in urban regeneration projects. He is currently lead artist on the Dallas Pavilion and has recently completed a photo-essay titled 'A Guide to the Casino Architecture of Wedding' for the next issue of *COLLAPSE: Philosophical Research and Development*. Author of *Revisiting the Bonaventure Hotel* (Copy Press, 2009), co-editor of *Episode: Pleasure and Persuasion in Lens-based Media* (Artwords, 2008), he is a director of the Curating Video research group, and Reader in Fine Art at Sheffield Hallam University.



Jaspar Joseph-Lester, *Spirit*, from a photo-essay, 2008

27th November
Guest: Pavel Büchler
Host: Hester Reeve

Pavel Büchler, a Czech-born artist, teacher and occasional writer, describes his artistic practice as 'making nothing happen'. He was Head of School of Fine Art at Glasgow School of Art in the 1990s and since 1997 he is Research Professor in Art at Manchester Metropolitan University. Awarded the Northern Art Prize 2009, Büchler has recently exhibited at, among others, DOX, Prague, Tinguely Museum, Basel, Contemporary Art Museum St Louis, Museion Bolzano, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva, Wilhelm Hack Museum, Ludwigshafen, and Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver.



Pavel Büchler, *Honest Work (No Time)*, 2011, unique letterpress print, 34 x 50 cm.

Hester Reeve navigates her complex relationship as an artist with the world through her conceptual persona HRH.the. Her practice incorporates the artist's body-agency, drawing, writing, lens based media and forms of philosophical dialogue and explores at its heart issues of individual identity politics and rituals of meaningful relationship making. Public showings include former Randolph Street Gallery Chicago, LIVE Biennale Vancouver, Women's Library Gallery London and most recently, Arnolfini Bristol. Awards include an Arts and Humanities Research Council award for 'Live Notation' (with Alex McLean) and an Arts Council of England award for her upcoming commission with the Yorkshire Sculpture Park.



Hester Reeve, *Virtuoso (Dismembered Sonata for Hannah Arendt)*, performance for camera, 2012

4th December
Guest: Mikhail Karikis
Host: Laura Sillars

Mikhail Karikis is an interdisciplinary artist whose work emerges from his long-standing investigation of the voice as a sculptural material and a conceptual compass to explore notions of community and the politics of work. He studied architecture at UCL, and completed his MA and PhD at the Slade School of Fine Art. Exhibitions in 2012 include MANIFESTA 9, Belgium; Sea Women (solo), Wapping Project, London; XENON (solo), Galeria Eduardo Fernandes, Sao Paulo. In 2011, Danish Pavilion, 54th Venice Biennale; 3rd Thessaloniki Biennale, Greece; a tour of his video work with FLAMIN's SELECTED; and performance commissions for Barbican and Royal Opera House Covent Garden. Forthcoming shows include Voice & the Lens, IKON Gallery, Birmingham; Becoming Voice, South London Gallery; Celeste Art Prize, Centrale Montemartini, Rome; SeaWomen (solo), Arnolfini, Bristol; and Aichi Triennale, Nagoya, Japan. Karikis is a senior lecturer in Performance and Visual Art at the University of Brighton.



Laura Sillars is Artistic Director at Site Gallery and Honorary Senior Research Fellow (CAVA) at University of Liverpool. Before taking on her role at Site last March, she was Programme Director at FACT, Lecturer at the Open University, and curator for Public Programmes at Tate Liverpool.

Site Gallery is the international centre for contemporary art in Sheffield. It aims to support new artists, new work and new audiences. Site started life as an independent photography gallery in the Walkley area of Sheffield in 1978. Since 1995, it has expanded its programme to incorporate new and experimental digital and multimedia work alongside traditional image production. Site is committed to showcasing both emergent and established artists, often alongside each other. The gallery always strives to tackle contemporary debates and issues, and also supports the dynamic field of live art.

Art Sheffield

Sheffield Contemporary Art Forum initiates and organises citywide events. To date these have included:

Artlink in October 2001

Linked the programmes of the gallery spaces in Sheffield by means of a joint promotional campaign and a free bus route between venues

[Art Sheffield 03](#)

Art in Sheffield 03 in March/April 2003 a multi-venue festival of contemporary art, involving over 55 artists in 16 venues and drew an audience of 39,000

[Art Sheffield 05: Spectator T](#)

Spectator T took place in November 2005, and was a high profile citywide festival involving 12 new commissions and work by 41 established and emerging artists which drew a total of 48,446 visits.

[Art Sheffield 08: Yes, No & Other Options](#)

Yes, No & Other Options involved 38 artists, 15 of which created new commissions. This took place in February/March 2008 and attracted over 150,000 visits.

[Art Sheffield 2010 Life: A User's Manual](#)The most recent events

Most recent citywide event took place in six venues across the city from 6 March until 1 May 2010.



SUGGESTED READING

- Adorno, Theodor W., *et al.*, *Aesthetics and Politics*, London: Verso, 2007
- Agamben, Giorgio, *Homer Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. by Daniel Heller-Roazen, Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998
- Almenberg, Gustaf, *Notes on Participatory Art: Toward a Manifesto Differentiating it from Open Work, Interactive Art and Relational Art*, London: AuhtohouseUK, 2010
- Benjamin, Walter, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, trans. by J. A. Underwood, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2008
- Arendt, Hannah, *The Human Condition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999
- Bennett, Jane, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010
- Bishop, Clare (ed.), *Participation*, London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2006
- Cavarero, Adriana, *For More Than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression*, trans. by Paul A. Kottman, Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005
- Coole, Diana and Samantha Frost (eds), *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010
- Danchev, Alex (ed.), *100 Artists' Manifestos: From the Futurists to the Stuckists*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2011
- Frieling, Rudolf and Boris Groys, *The Art of Participation: 1950 to Now*, London: Thames & Hidson, 2008
- Kester, Grant, *The One and the Many*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011
- Latour, Bruno, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007
- Lefebvre, Henri, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith, London: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991
- Rancière, Jacques, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. by Steven Corcoran, London: Continuum, 2009
- Roberts, John, *The Intangibilities of Form: Skill and Deskilling in Art After the Readymade*, London: Verso, 2008
- Sennett, Richard, *The Craftsman*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2009
- Sholette, Gregory, *Dark Matter: Art and Politics in the Age of Enterprise Culture*, London: Pluto, 2011
- Tisdall, Caroline, *Joseph Beuys*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1979



