

## TRANSMISSION 2014 15



### **AN UNSENTIMENTAL EDUCATION. ON BECOMING AN ARTIST**

Fine Art Lecture Series, in collaboration with Site Gallery  
Sheffield Hallam University  
PENNINE LECTURE THEATRE  
HOWARD BUILDING, CITY CAMPUS  
Sheffield S1 1WB

**Every Tuesday from 4.30 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.,  
followed by an open seminar discussion at 6.00 to 6.30,  
or an event at Site Gallery**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT ON 25 NOVEMBER THE LECTURE WILL BEGIN  
AT 4 O'CLOCK PROMPT**

There are no lectures on Tuesday 4 November or Tuesday 24 February

**THE LECTURE SERIES IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Transmission is convened by Michelle Atherton, Sharon Kivland, TC McCormack, Hester Reeve,  
and Julie Westerman, in collaboration with Site Gallery, Sheffield

[www.transmission.uk.com](http://www.transmission.uk.com)

[www.sitegallery.org](http://www.sitegallery.org)

## AN UNSENTIMENTAL EDUCATION: ON BECOMING AN ARTIST

At the end of Gustave Flaubert's great novel about love and history, *A Sentimental Education*, from which we shamelessly steal part of our title, the protagonist Frédéric Moreau and his oldest school friend Deslauriers reminisce about their adolescence. They remember going to a brothel together, the anticipation and excitement. Once there, thinking that the laughing prostitutes were making fun of him, Frédéric bolted from the place. But in the unconsummated experience, there lies the possibility of fantasy and happiness:

‘That was the best we ever got!’ said Frédéric.

‘Yes, perhaps so, indeed! It was the best time we ever had,’ said Deslauriers.

Could this be the model for learning how one becomes an artist: A lack of satisfaction that provides a drive? An expectation of knowledge that is never fully imparted? The imaginative reconstruction of the past?

We ask how artists become and why, how this is learnt (and unlearnt), how it is imagined and exemplified. In an era where the ‘artist as personality’ may no longer be thought to be of interest or instruction to understanding art, we look at the external forces and inner structures that produce artist-figures and artistic capacity. What type of fantasy is at work here and how much does the decision to become an artist count in becoming one? Though our students may grumble now at certain of the things we expect them to do, they will soon go on to say (joining every other former art school graduate): ‘Oh, how I miss art school, how I miss the crits – it was truly the best time of my life!’

**7 OCTOBER**

**Presentations on BECOMING AN ARTIST, followed by a discussion**

Michelle Atherton  
Chloë Brown  
TC McCormack  
Hester Reeve  
Julie Westerman  
Sharon Kivland

**Chair: Sharon Kivland**



**14 OCTOBER**

**FELICITY ALLEN**

**Chair: Julie Westerman**

**Felicity Allen** is an artist, writer and curator/educator. She is currently producing *Begin Again Chronicles* (Verisimilitude), an image/text document based on 160 dialogic watercolour portraits with 75 sitters, interviews and written reflections. Recent publications include *Textual Intimacies: Letters, Journals, Poetry – Ghost Writing Telegraph Cottage*, with Simon Smith, *The Installation* (Intercapillary Space), and *Education* (MIT/Whitechapel Documents of Contemporary Art). As a visiting scholar at the Getty Research Institute, Felicity Allen has been working on the implications of feminism for artistic practice and its overlaps with education and employment. She has published several articles about artistic practice and gallery education, and has considerable experience in producing local, national, and international gallery education programmes and teaching in art schools.



I often think there's a lot to be said for the invisibility of middle age, there is freedom to not being looked at

I can remember being looked at and the fire and it being not quite warm enough but almost

an artist is mentioned, then dropped from the discussion once the director says, But hasn't her star rather fallen?

**21 OCTOBER**

## **SIMON & TOM BLOOR**

**Chair: Sara Cluggish**

**Simon & Tom Bloor's** works and projects focus on our often ambivalent relation to the structures of public space. They are currently developing large-scale public works in Cambridge and London and have been commissioned by Arnolfini Gallery and Bristol City Council as part of the Primary Capital Programme. Recent solo exhibitions have taken place at the Whitechapel Gallery (2013), South London Gallery (2011), and Modern Art Oxford (2010). They were born in Birmingham in 1973 and are amongst the founding directors of Eastside Projects, Birmingham.



**Site Gallery studio, 6.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.**

Following their lecture, join Simon & Tom Bloor for drinks at Site Gallery. Chat to them and the Site Gallery team about the residency experience, and explore some of the sculptural objects that were tested and made during their Platform residency, *Planning for Play*. You will also see a few of their inspirations, such as vintage books on playscapes and images of Sheffield's own play architecture. Places are limited and booking is advised:

<http://drinkswithsimonandtombloor.eventbrite.co.uk>

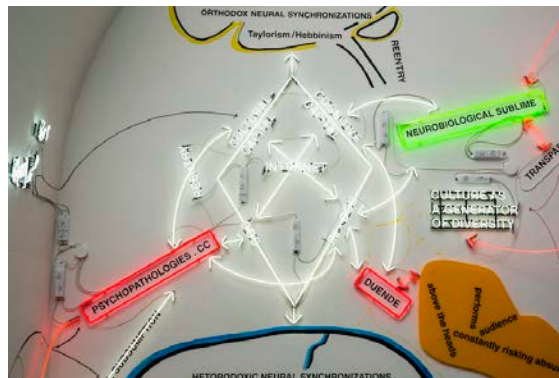


**11 NOVEMBER**

## WARREN NEIDICH

Chair: Hester Reeve

Warren Neidich is a Berlin and Los Angeles-based post-conceptual artist and theorist who exposes the interfaces between Marxist inspired cultural production and its interrelationship to the brain and cognitive capitalism to produce an Emancipatory Materialism. His interdisciplinary anarchic experimental works combine photographic and video elements, Internet downloads, scotch tape, painting, and noise installations. Selected international exhibitions include: PS1 MOMA, the Whitney Museum of American Art, ICA London, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the Walker Art Center, Kunsthaus Graz, Kunsthaus Zürich, and Los Angeles County Museum. He was a tutor at Goldsmiths College on the MA Visual Arts, and has taught at Harvard University, Princeton University, Brown University, Columbia University, University of Cambridge, the Düsseldorf Academy, among others. Selected awards include the Fulbright Specialist Program Award, Fine Arts Category, American University in Cairo, 2013, and the Vilem Flusser Theory Award, Berlin, 2010. His book *The Psychopathologies of Cognitive Capitalism Part Two* was recently published by Archive Press, Berlin, Germany. His collection of essays *Resistance is Fertile* will be published by Merve Verlag in 2014.



**Site Gallery studio, Wednesday 12 November, 10.00 a.m. to midday:** Critique with Warren Neidich, hosted by Hester Reeve, open to BA and MART students. There are places for eight students to join in a special crit session to get feedback to one of their works, a work in progress or an issue pertinent to their studio practice (which could be theoretical) through a 10-15 minute informal presentation followed by feedback discussion led by Warren. There are eight further places for students who wish to attend but not show work, benefiting from engaging with the discussion. Please email Hester Reeve to gain a place, please indicate if you wish to present work or attend, including a paragraph about why you wish to participate/how you think this opportunity will benefit your work: [H.Reeve@shu.ac.uk](mailto:H.Reeve@shu.ac.uk)



**18 NOVEMBER**

## MEL BRIMFIELD & GWYNETH HERBERT

Chair: Sara Cluggish

**Mel Brimfield's** practice is rooted in exploring the vexed historiography of performance art and its relation to theatre and popular cultural forms. She makes work in regular collaboration with a broad range of performers, including comedians, choreographers and dancers, musicians, cabaret and theatre practitioners. In recent years, she has developed exhibitions and performances for agencies and institutions including Yorkshire Sculpture Park, the Government Art Collection at Whitechapel Gallery, Camden Arts Centre, Henry Moore Institute, and Ceri Hand Gallery.

**Gwyneth Herbert** is a critically acclaimed singer/songwriter with six albums to her credit, including the recent *The Sea Cabinet* commissioned by Snape Maltings. Paul Higgs is Brimfield's long-term collaborator, and has been the musical director, composer, arranger, and multi-instrumentalist for all of her large-scale live performance and film works in the last four years.



**Site Gallery, 6.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.**

Following their lecture, join Mel Brimfield and Gwyneth Herbert for drinks at Site Gallery. Taking place on the first day of their Platform residency, *Barbara and Henry – The Musical*, their talk offers early insight into the project. Over the course of four weeks they plan to turn the gallery into a theatrical set and stage a musical exploring an imagined and fictional relationship between two English sculptors and modern masters – Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth. Places are limited so booking is advised:

<http://drinkswithmelbrimfieldgwynethherbert.eventbrite.co.uk>



**25 NOVEMBER** N.B. this will begin at 4 o'clock, ending at 5 o'clock

## VANESSA PLACE

Chair: Sharon Kivland

The *Boston Review* called Vanessa Place 'the spokesperson for the new cynical avant-garde', the *Huffington Post* characterised her work as 'ethically odious', and *Dazed* called her 'the super cynical dark overlord of the poetry world', while philosopher and critic Avital Ronell said she is 'a leading voice in contemporary thought'. Vanessa Place was the first poet to perform as part of the Whitney Biennial; a content advisory was posted. Place also works as a critic and criminal defense attorney, and is CEO of VanessaPlace Inc, the world's first poetry corporation.



**Site Gallery studio, Tuesday 25 November, 2.00 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.**

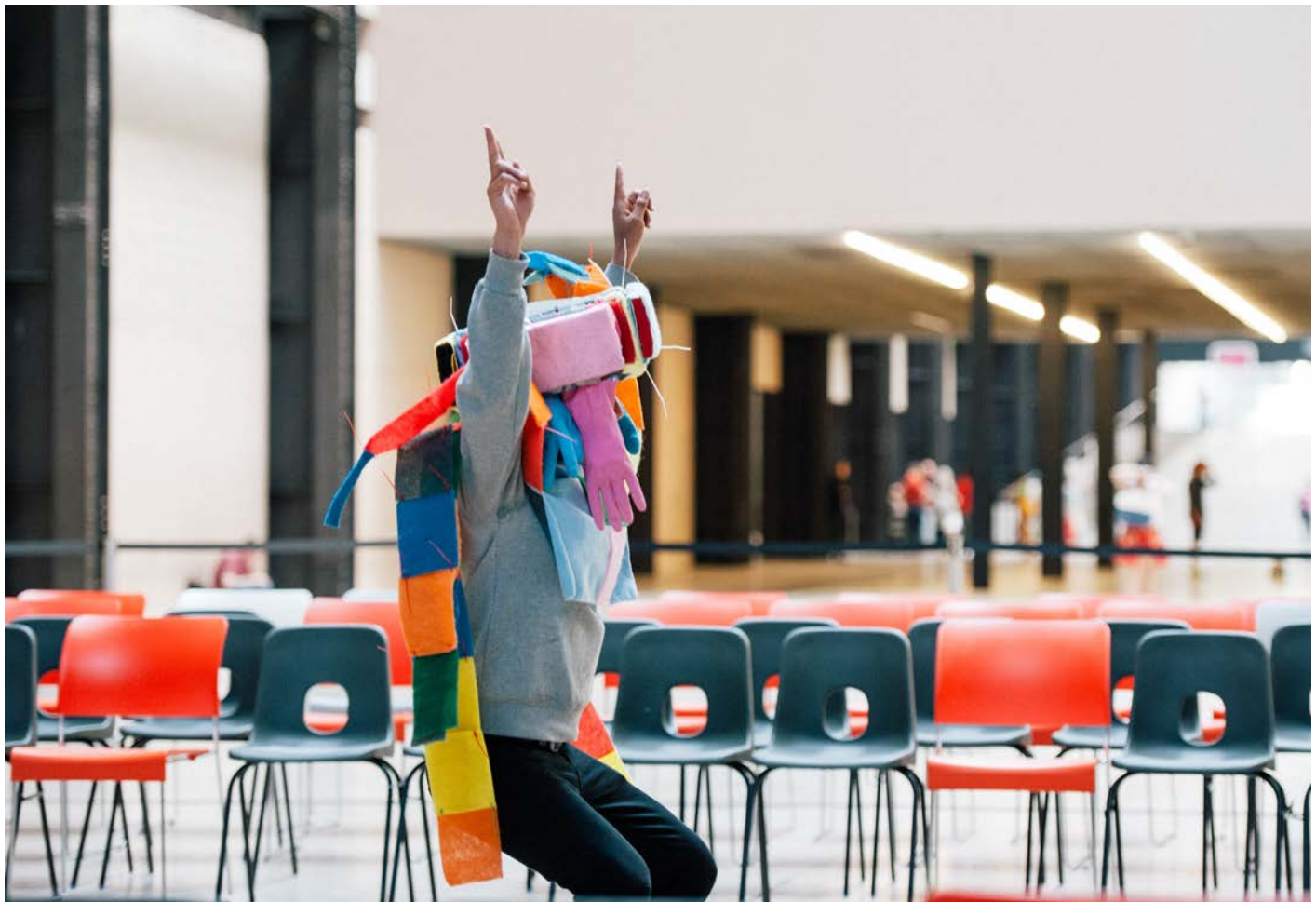
Vanessa Place will give a workshop on conceptual poetics, open to fifteen students, in which various practices will be discussed and what makes something 'conceptual' *versus* simply having a concept. To book a place on the workshop, please email: [S.Kivland@shu.ac.uk](mailto:S.Kivland@shu.ac.uk)

**2 DECEMBER**

**OREET ASHERY**

**Chair: Michelle Atherton**

**Oreet Ashery** is a London-based artist working across performance, objects, still and moving image, events, and writing. Most recently Ashery has interrogated the ethos of the avant-garde; performances of liberation, freedom rhetoric and collective actions. In this context Ashery produced *Party for Freedom*, an Artangel commission in 2013, *The World is Flooding*, a Tate Modern commission, 2014, *The Unclean*, a banner for the front of Secession building in Vienna (also known as *the Union of Austrian Artists*) as part of the exhibition *Utopian Pulse – Flares in the Darkroom*, 2014, and a solo exhibition at waterside contemporary *Animal with a Language*, 2014.



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### BOOKS:

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Tom Hardy (ed.), *Art Education in a Postmodern World*, Bristol: Intellect, 2006

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Illich, Ivan, *Deschooling Society*, London: Marion Boyars, 1995 [1968]

Kardia, Peter, & Malcolm Le Grice, Hester R. Westley, *From Floor to Sky: The Experience of the Art School Studio*, London: A & C Black, 2009

Madoff, Steven Henry, *Art School (Propositions for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century)*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009

Maude-Roxby, Alice, *Anti-Academy*, Southampton: John Hansard Gallery, 2014

Neidich, Warren (ed.), *The Noologist Handbook and Other Art Experiments*, Paris: Paraguay Press, 2013

Place, Vanessa, & Robert Fitterman, *Notes on Conceptualism*, New York: Ugly Duckling Presse, 2009

Rancière, Jacques, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, trans. by Kristin Ross, Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991

Szczelkun, Stefan, *AGIT DISCO*, London: Mute Books, 2011

Tickner, Lisa, *Hornsey 1968: The Art School Revolution*, London: Francis Lincoln, 2008

### FILMS:

*A Man Escaped*, dir. Robert Bresson, 1956

*The White Ribbon*, dir. Michael Haneke, 2009

*Céline and Julie Go Boating*, dir. Jacques Rivette, 1974

### WEB LINKS:

[http://www.deutscher-pavillon.org/2009/pdf\\_gillick/School.pdf](http://www.deutscher-pavillon.org/2009/pdf_gillick/School.pdf)

[http://www.variant.org.uk/39\\_40texts/comp39\\_40.html](http://www.variant.org.uk/39_40texts/comp39_40.html)

<http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/year-locked-room>

<https://www.ica.org.uk/whats-on/just-what-it-makes-todays-art-schools-so-different-so-appealing>

## AN UNSENTIMENTAL EDUCATION

### NOTES ON BECOMING AN ARTIST



#### MICHELLE ATHERTON

*Frieze* Issue 164 June August 2014. *What's hot what's not*

#### HOT

Despair/ politics (sort of) /appropriating queer imagery / complicated back-stories to arrangements of seemingly unrelated objects / being a really young artist / being a really old artist / being a dead artist / penises / good ceramics / bad ceramics / old ceramics / new ceramics / paintings with stuff on them / Madame Récamier / re-creating canonical paintings with the figures removed / selling art to rappers / rappers / 1980s Scottish painting / boycotts / blank verse / Feminist Cyborg theory / fridges / getting married / poodles /

#### HOLDING STEADY

A vague sense of ennui / solipsism / Chris Marker or Siri-type voice-overs / allusions to object-orientated ontology while signaling skepticism / mis-use of the word 'performative' / breasts / galleries showing mainly male artists / lovely vitrines full of abject objects / unrealized films / impenetrable press releases / divorce / Jean Cocteau / vitrines full of invitations to performances in Ghent in 1964 or the East Village in 1972 or artists run- spaces in Hoxton in 1993 / no-one having a clue what "post-internet art" means / vague ethnography / vases / iambic pentameter / cupboards / dressage / fabric / spiritualism / cats /

#### NOT

Earnestness / authenticity / being controversial / soft electronic 'ping' sounds in videos / beauty (the old fashion kind) / ignoring the politics of the country you've been invited to show in / bottoms / boastfulness / quoting Rosalind Krauss in your press release / Shia LaBeouf / turntables / hard-edge abstraction / James Franco / Ryanair / eggs / elbows / Charles Bukowski / describing what you do in your studio a 'praxis' / poles leaning against walls for no good reason / hegemony / taxidermy / rhyming couplets / relational aesthetics / banging on / poor punctuation / bad manners / religion / rodents

## SHARON KIVLAND

Let me state my political affiliations.

I am a Jacobin, radical and open-hearted, believing in education (until my language was silenced). No, I am a Montagnard, an uncompromising woman of action. Then I am a *Communarde*, betrayed on the last barricade by all those herring voucher distributors who failed to give us a plan; I stood shoulder to shoulder with my comrades in the cemetery of Montmartre (I shall never cease to cry for vengeance). I am an anarchist, preaching revolution, making inflammatory speeches and burning bakers' shops. No, more properly, I am a Bolshevik, militant and class-conscious. As a *soixante-huitarde*, I am utopian, *jouissante*, shouting 'teachers, not police', building barricades once again. I retreat, reforming my position under the banner of feminism. A *banlieusarde*, I overturn cars and set fire to them. In the Malian clubs of Barbès, I dance the *Guantánamo* with others (we hold our hands above our heads, clasped at the wrists, as though manacled). With the *NPA*, I march in the streets, against the deportation of those without papers, against racism, against the pension reforms, against education cuts, against tuition fees. OCCUPY means something to me, a moment to live and think, where freedom is constructed in community, in common space, and it is associative, performative, and public. I am a keeper of history.

I remember that Hannah Arendt said of herself: 'I don't fit'. I remember her idea of '*l'oeuvre*', the work, the work of art opposed to labour.

## TC McCORMACK

My guidelines are: acting in headlessness; 'Energy = Yes! Quality = No!'; being weak but wanting to make a strong work; not economizing oneself; self-expenditure; 'Panic is the solution!'; being both precise and exaggerating; undermining oneself; being cruel vis-à-vis one's own work, being tenacious, 'Less is less! More is more!'; 'Never won, but never completely lost!'; having the ambition to coin a new concept with my work; assuming responsibility for everything concerning my work; accepting to look dumb in front of my own work; 'Better is always less good!'; refusing all hierarchies; believing in the friendship between Art and Philosophy; being ready because the first to pay the price for one's work.

'Doing Art Politically' Thomas Hirschhorn

When does this moment occur, when many artists accept the title of *artist*, what triggers an individual to claim this label for themselves? Is it when they need to fill in a form that requires them to identify their occupation, or on renewing their passport, or maybe it's when an innocent question put to them in some social setting. What is their answer, many can't quite claim the pure unadulterated label 'Artist', many of them prefer to prefix it with some qualifier such as; *emerging, part time, misunderstood, lapsed*, or just mumble a incoherent sentence containing a term like; *multidisciplinary* or *community based*...

Hirschhorn's text is not only refreshing for the simple confidence to accept the label of Artist, but to proclaim the terrain that defines his practice. Becoming an artist is a process of identifying the shape of our practice, it permeates everything we do and how we do it; from understanding our processes of thinking and making to how we interact with the world. This *process of becoming* asks us to get better at owning the confidence to claim such a rarified space, an often misunderstood and even distrusted space.

Do we ever really make this claim, stand up to proclaim and identify ourselves as artists, I suspect it's more likely that it creeps up on us, after a period of time and having produced a 'body of work', do we own up...in a moment of weakness or resignation, a retrospective reality hits us and we step out of the diffuse soup we have been swimming in. This 'stepping out' moment needs more recognition, for it's only at this point (and beyond) that we can proclaim guidelines akin to Hirschhorn's. We have understood how to freely navigate towards unknowable outcomes and how failing better is the best means to get there.

## HESTER REEVE

I always felt I was, but only when I became one, was I one, an artist. And at the very point when I firmly starred in my own novel as a practiced, qualified, travelled, eulogised, and most artistic of artists did I realise that, indeed, I needed to no longer say the word 'artist' in conjunction with myself. Because as I became, the molecular structure of my world changed itself so that the very becomingness of me became blown up as a large question which still sits on a chair in the corner of my bedroom. It waits for me to come home from the Academy each evening (and then eyes me up hungrily as I sleep). And when we read together my heart beats fast and when I go into the studio we intermingle as a secret pocket of amorous matter. Growing in this pocket is also the memory of seeing Salvador Dali's *Enigma of William Tell*, when still a very young child, because part of my living being is still stuck to the ground in front of that image, certain of my organs are as much composed of well-used paint brushes as they are of flesh. And so, you see, it is pointless to chase after me for words of wisdom; I am lost to you forever in my longing to become the apple of the Art Question's eye.

## JULIE WESTERMAN

I feel that I am always in the state of becoming an artist and having been in that state for so long that perhaps I am now in a state of becoming a better artist. This may be followed by a period of becoming a mature artist, reinventing myself as an artist, or establishing myself as a different type of artist. Perhaps I will take some time off from being an artist so that I can get on with making some work



Transmission is the passing of information *via* a channel, and this is the intention of the **Transmission** project. We enquire about the aesthetic and discursive forms required by practices in the field of contemporary art and theory that address sociality and subjectivity. It has encompassed a lecture programme, seminar discussions, an annual symposium, a print portfolio, four series of books: *Transmission Annual*, *The Rules of Engagement*, *Transmission* chapbooks, and five volumes of discussions/interviews, entitled *Transmission: Speaking and Listening*. The lecture series, which began in 2001, in collaboration with Site Gallery and Showroom Cinema, changed its format in October 2007, emphasising its integration into both pedagogy and practice/research. In 2013 **Transmission** was part of **Art Sheffield**. The lectures series has a annual theme, and involves students from all parts of Fine Art. It is co-convened with Site Gallery, and this year includes several workshops and gallery visits with exhibiting artists.

**Site Gallery** is Sheffield's leading international contemporary art space, supporting artists specialising in moving image, new media and performance. Pioneering emerging art practices and ideas, **Site** works in partnership with local, regional and international collaborators to nurture artistic talent and support the development of contemporary art. At the heart of what Site does, is the connecting of people to artists and to art, inspiring new thinking and debate through their public programmes and participatory activity.





