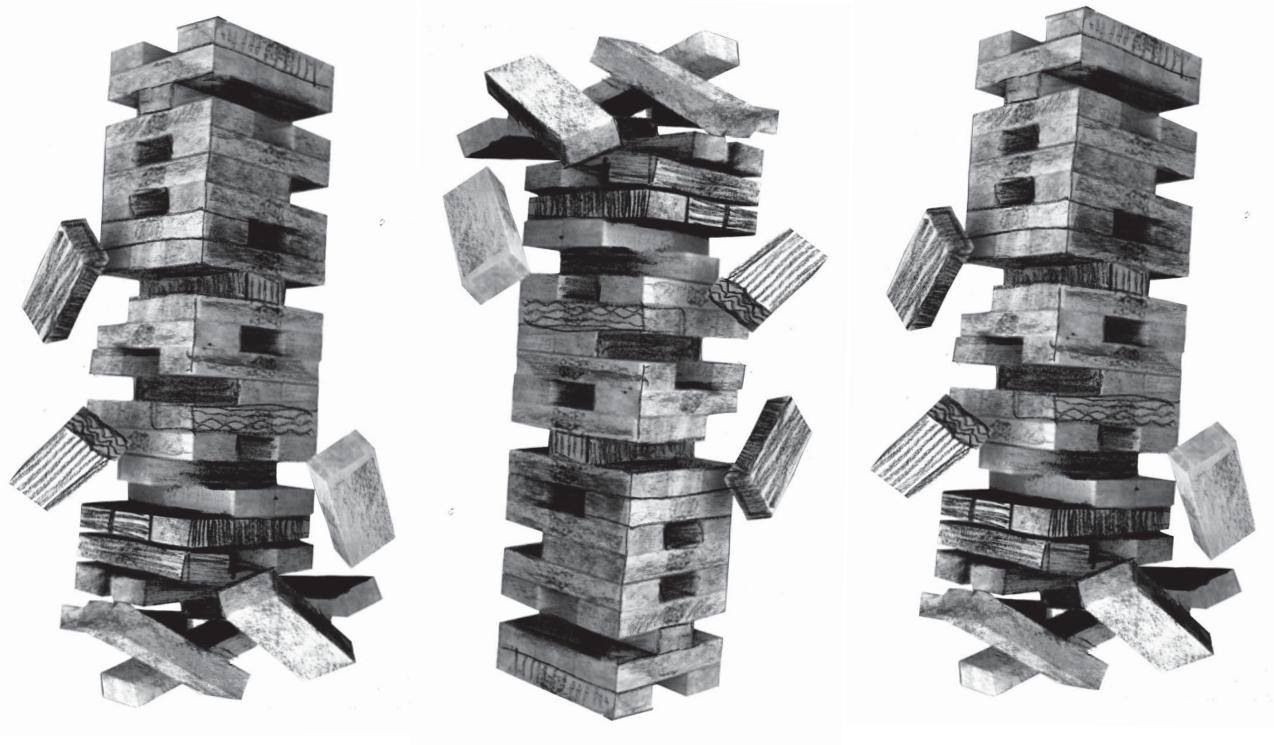


# COMMUNAL LEISURE

**free**



## Hello

and welcome to the second edition of Communal Leisure. We're still here, bleary eyed and deflated from a few terrible months, but committed to carving out a space where we can explore ideas of a world beyond work, attempt to chart lines of invisible labour, and cross-examine how DIY culture and the arts can have a role in resisting a political climate so toxic that it has become hard to follow our own newsfeeds.

## Sign of the times

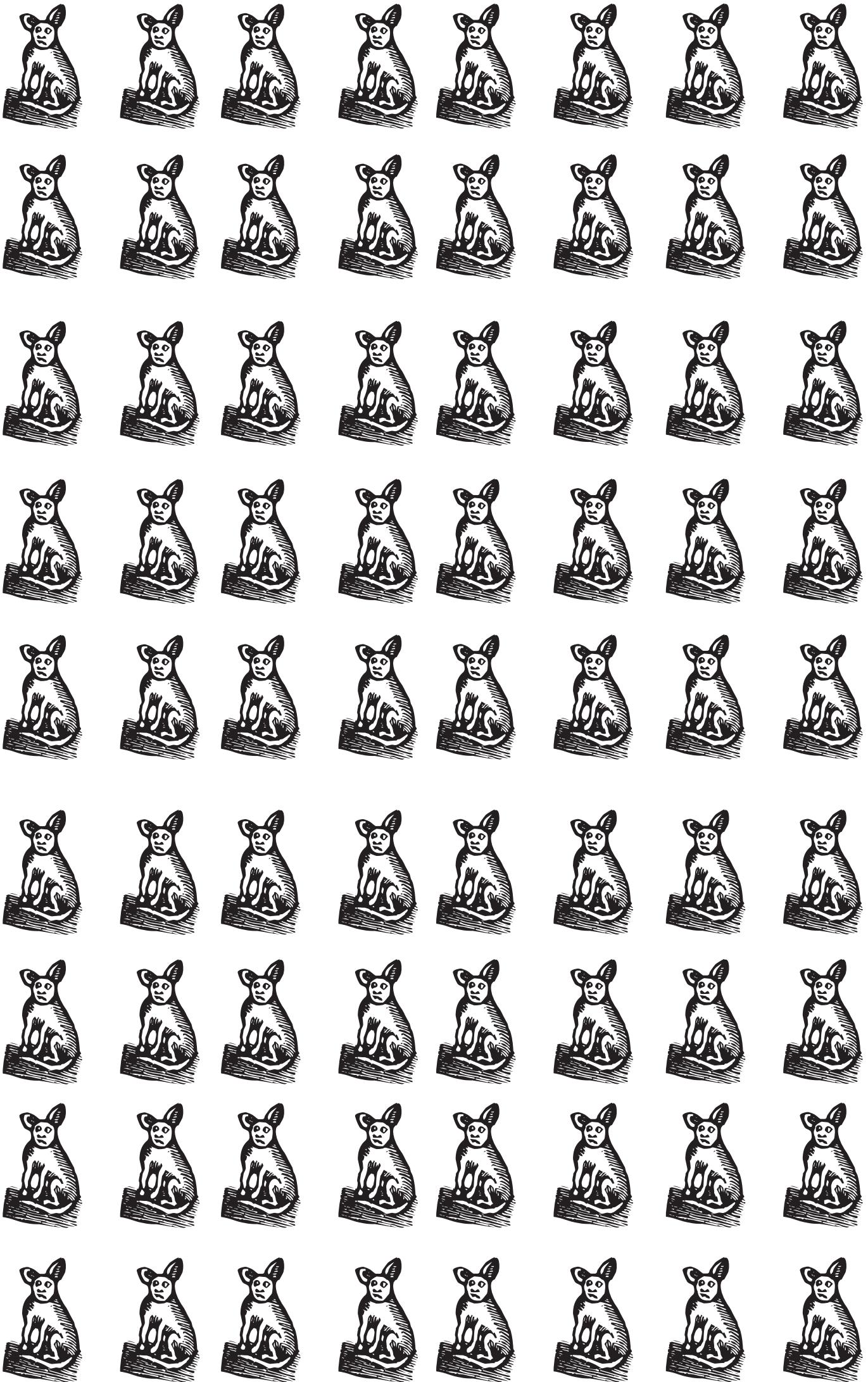
So much has happened since the last edition. Each election and referendum seems to embolden fascist, racist and patriarchal structures, re-entrenching all kinds of territorial and everyday borders. Against the background of sweeping despair that accompanies such shifts it becomes difficult to see the radical potential in the local gig scene, your friends' artwork, the top 40 chart, that unwritten novel – though it is there. Our abilities to make the leap between self-care and collective flourishing have been hit by attacks on time, work, health, and attention span, often leaving us unable to do either.

## Am i bad?

Political and cultural life has scarcely felt less connected, with barely a whimper about arts or music during recent referendums or coming elections. Cultural figures have been largely absent from political debate (Grime, as ever, being the exception that proves this rule for our generation). We could proclaim the need for arts as a means of retreat from such a shitty moment, or at best frame it as a 'challenge' to political power. But finding the currents of resistance in our art/work means understanding how heavily it is implicated in the structures we oppose, how we repeat and benefit from these structures, and what is at stake in dismantling them.

## Post - culture

More than ever we need the space to not only critique the impact of political forms on culture, but also how our understandings of art and 'resistance' feed into those very forms, and what a vision of post-work (and post-culture?) might then be. This edition of Communal Leisure looks at this tension. The mundanity, precarity and performativity of working itself. The psychological and behavioural conditionality of benefits.



## For the expansion of collective aesthetic capacity

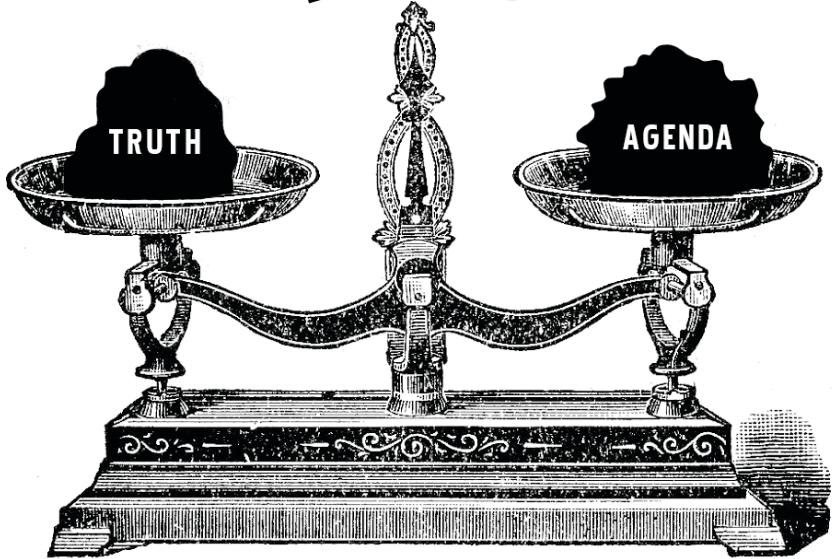
... Migrant struggles across a world of hardening borders and environmental collapse. Key intersections of organising within and across work - care work, sex work, supermarket work. Some pieces highlight the history of resistance and subversion within music - whether reggaeton rhythms, queer dance parties, or 1950's musical films. Others celebrate projects that make a critique of the power dynamics found within the club, music, theatre and art scenes.

This focus on culture need not overshadow the importance of thinking with a wide lens about how we resist the current waves of political change. With the SDL meeting up in Alloa and Wishaw, fascists being nominated for political positions in Glasgow University, and Tories winning council seats in Ravenscraig, it is clear that the right-wing, authoritarian surges across Europe and the US are present in Scotland. They must be understood and countered. But beyond political reaction, counterpunches and self-defence, we must make space to consider the world we want beyond all this, in its messy and uncotted glory. By doing so, we hope to allay that despair for a little longer, and turn such dreams of the future onto this nasty little present.

We would love to have more people involved in editing, writing and putting together communal leisure. Please get in touch if you are interested! We're also expanding our ace website and starting a series of podcasts, all of which you are invited to get involved with too: [communalleisure@gmail.com](mailto:communalleisure@gmail.com) [communalleisure.com](http://communalleisure.com)

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# NEWS



## CHEATAHS TURN TO OUTER ZONE WITH NEW LABEL

Intimate Glaswegian basement venue La Cheetah Club has launched a new label, christened 'Outer Zone'. The debut release on the venture comes from Solid Blake, aka Emma Blake, a Glaswegian DJ and producer who, currently based in Denmark, is member of truly excellent Copenhagen-based techno posse Apeiron Crew. Entitled, The 'MARIO EP', the release features a remix of the title track by Mr Balaclava himself, Detroit legend DJ Stingray. The crew celebrated the launch of this new label venture with a party in La Cheetah this April, featuring DJ Stingray, Solid Blake and Outer Zone's DJ's. Search for the label and Soundcloud to keep up with their various techno-infused adventures.

## PROTESTS CALLED AGAINST HORRIFIC 'FAMILY CAP' AND 'RAPE CLAUSE'

Protesters gathered in George Square on April 13th to protest a new UK Government policy that forces women to prove they were raped in order to receive Child Tax Credits. As the group behind the protest explains:

"On the 6th of April the Family Cap came into force, limiting Child Tax Credits to just two children unless a woman can prove that the third or subsequent child was born of rape. The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) wanted women's organisations to participate, and act as third party verifiers. In an unprecedented move, both Rape Crisis Scotland and Scottish

Women's Aid have refused. Despite having no-one to actually implement it in Scotland, the DWP pressed ahead UK wide, and we now have a policy that could make women choose between poverty and disclosing - possibly for the first time ever - that they were raped. Both the Family Cap and Rape Clause are cruel policies that will push women and their children into poverty. Life is unpredictable - people die, people leave, people lose their jobs - welfare is supposed to be a safety net that catches those who need it. Limiting welfare to two children is nothing but an attack on the poor. We stand against the Family Cap and the Rape Clause, and we're not giving up."

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson has also faced repeated calls to justify her support for the policy, which has been branded as 'barbaric', 'insensitive' and 'cruel' by campaigning charities such as Scottish Women's Aid (SWA), Rape Crisis Scotland (RCS) and Engender.

## FERRETS FUMING AT GLASGOW'S EXHAUSTING STREETS

An investigation by local news outlet The Ferret has revealed that levels of toxic fumes from vehicle exhausts have polluted 17 of Glasgow's busiest streets to dangerous levels, in breach of a legal safety limit that should have been met seven years ago, and with some levels up to 80 per cent above the limit. As they report, "the worst polluted place was Hope Street, followed by Gordon Street, the Heilanmans Umbrella and Union Street. Many of the city's other famous thoroughfares were badly contaminated, included George Square, Sauchiehall Street, Bath Street, Buchanan Street and Broomielaw."

"Between 2011 and 2015 seventeen streets recorded average annual levels of the gas higher than the legal limit of 40 micrograms per cubic metre of air. Councils were meant to have complied with the limit by 2010." "Four streets had very high average levels of pollution: Hope Street (73.2), Gordon Street (70), the north of the Heilanmans Umbrella North (69.4) and Union Street (63.6). Experts point out that levels below the safety limit also damage health." Air pollution kills 2,500 people a year in Scotland, according to Friends of the Earth Scotland's estimates based on a Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health study of the UK, published in February. Hold your breath!

## HIV PREVENTION DRUG PREP TO BE COMMISSIONED ON THE NHS IN SCOTLAND

People at risk of HIV in Scotland will be able to access game-changing HIV prevention drug PrEP through the NHS, it was announced this April, making Scotland the first country in the UK to routinely commission PrEP on the NHS. National Director for the Terrence Higgins Trust Scotland, Robert McKay, has applauded the decision, but warned of a potential 'postcode lottery' in the UK, "Today, Scotland has made history in the fight against the HIV epidemic. We are delighted that people at risk of HIV in Scotland will finally have access to this groundbreaking pill that will protect them from HIV," said Robert. "This makes Scotland the first country in the UK to routinely commission PrEP on the NHS. It can now be used as a vital tool in our HIV prevention armoury -

alongside condom use, regular testing and early treatment - to help bring an end to HIV transmission in Scotland. "NHS Boards in Scotland now need to make sure they heed the expert advice from SMC and make PrEP available to their patients who are identified as at risk of HIV as a matter of urgency. "In the meantime, it is brilliant to see Scotland leading the way in stopping HIV transmission - but there's a long way to go before everyone at risk in the UK has access to PrEP. "NHS Wales makes its decision on PrEP later this month, and we hope they will follow Scotland's leadership in preventing HIV. "Meanwhile a long-awaited PrEP trial from NHS England and Public Health England is still yet to materialise. We urgently need answers on when exactly the trial will begin and who will have access to it, and ultimately, assurance that the NHS will retain responsibility for PrEP in England when the trial comes to an end. "We must not let PrEP become a postcode lottery - it should be available to all those at risk, regardless of where they live in the UK."

Find out more about the Terrence Higgins Trust's work at <http://www.tht.org.uk/> or call their helpline Mon-Fri 10am-8pm on 0808 802 1221

## RADIO REAL LANDSCAPE BROADCASTS FROM THE BEDROOM

Glasgow has a new online-radio station: Radio Real Landscape, currently broadcasting most Thursday evenings at 9pm, and sometimes on Sundays too. RRL (to their friends) aim to broadcast a diverse range of music/ speech/ sound/ documentary/ live events, and is welcoming programming suggestions and new regular contributors to its static folds. Hoping to act as a "more of a tool for communication than distribution," they particularly "seek individuals or groups who are interested in the radio format and how it could be used creatively to explore space and listening environment."

Recent episodes feature acapella scots singing from Quinie, folk rarities from Chris Murray, weirdo synth eclecticism with Conal Murray, an extended live set from Luar Domatrix and RRL founder Murray Collier's own adventures in spiritual internationalism, named in homage to the gorgeous Arthur Verocai song "Velho Parente".

Listen live and to previous broadcasts at : <https://reallandscape.persona.co/> And get in touch here: [reallandscape@radio-reallandscape.com](mailto:reallandscape@radio-reallandscape.com)

## PRIVATE BUSES TARGETED FOR FUCKING

Glasgow's legion of privatised, change swallowing behemoths - the First Buses fleet - may have met their match in a new 'Fuck First Buses' Campaign, a self proclaimed "venting ground for angry passengers being ripped-off and pissed-off by Glasgow's private bus companies." The group have organized a number of protests and meetings around issues to do with reclaiming public ownership of the city's transport, and also have a top selection of subverted logos and infographics. As the FFB's facebook proclaims: "We direct our anger at the top: at SPT (Glasgow Subway) and The Scottish Government for their total incompetence, and at the senior management and shareholders of First Bus, Stagecoach Bus, McGill's Buses, Glasgow Citybus etc. who are profiting from everyone's misery. We show solidarity with bus drivers and other employees across the public transport network. We demonstrate that bringing the whole network back into public ownership is the only way we'll see the real long-term changes we want: a comprehensive, reliable and affordable service our city can be proud of." Check them out on Facebook at Fuck First Buses

@PublicOwnershipNow or search 'Fuck First Buses' and feel a momentary pang of joy.

## SISTERS UNCUT GLASGOW PUT THE COUNCIL IN THEIR CROSSHAIRS

The Glasgow Sisters Uncut group have been busy meeting and organising regularly since our last issue, providing space for discussion and actions that are "open to all women (trans, intersex and cis), all those who experience oppression as women (including non-binary and gender non-conforming people) and all those who identify as women for the purpose of political organising." This March the group, under the banner of 'Our Voices United' gathered ahead of the Glasgow City Council local elections on 4 May 2017, "to come together to create a list of demands and pledges that insist upon the preservation and centring of women's services in Glasgow." Joined by the Scottish Trans Alliance and Glasgow Women's Aid, the group worked on drafting a creative manifesto with the view to "launch a rigorous campaign, targeting all candidates to sign their name to these collective demands," going on to add that "with this event we hope to bring together our community, build relationships and support for service providers, and to build and present a united and strong collectivised front to those in power in our city." Find our

more and get involved with the group at @sistersuncutglasgow on facebook, or [sistersuncutglasgow@gmail.com](mailto:sistersuncutglasgow@gmail.com)

## CLUB 69 CLOSES IT DOORS, THEN (MAYBE) OPENS THEM AGAIN.

The infamous Paisley Club 69, more recently known simply as 'The Club', enjoyed what was apparently its final party this Hogmanay 2016-7. Club 69 was started by the owners of Rubadub Records in the early 90s, who took over a basement underneath an Indian Restaurant in Paisley and used it to host some of the first visits to Europe by techno founding figures like Juan Atkins and Underground Resistance, along with a regular program of parties that showcased labels like Mecca, Drexciya and Direct Beat, alongside eclectic tune selections that often finished in the kind of last-song singalongs that have since become Glaswegian club lore. After announcing their closure late last year, the owners of The Club piped up this March to ask via their Facebook page:

"Would you like to see The Club stay open? Our landlord thinks so, and we agree. If you think you have what it takes to pick up where we have left off, send us a PM with your contact details and a brief description of your vision." They have apparently been inundated with offers, so watch this (low lit, techno filled) space. Or get in touch with them yersel!

## DRUG POLICY CHANGES AFOOT IN SCOTLAND

The 'dear green place' (and beyond) could be getting that bit greener, as the Scottish National Party's conference in October backed the decriminalisation of cannabis for medicinal use. The SNP delegates' vote came the same month in which plans to allow drug users to inject safely under supervision were approved by Glasgow City Integration Joint Board, with the support of Glasgow City Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP). In this case, members of the health board, city council and police agreed to proposals for a new clinic that would facilitate drug-users to consume their own intravenous drugs. Such facilities have been running across many countries in Europe for some years, but this facility would be the first of its kind in the UK. David Liddell, director of The Scottish Drugs Forum (SDF), told BBC Radio's Good Morning Scotland programme there was a "desperate need" for such facilities, particularly in Glasgow where there is an ongoing HIV outbreak among drugs users. "I know it's been highlighted as controversial, but when you see that these have been running in many countries in Europe for a long time - Holland for

example now has 31 drug consumption rooms and Germany has 24," he said. "These are in addition to the existing provision. The key point is we have people who are mostly long-term users - people have been using for more than 20 years or more. Abstinence recovery is not on their immediate horizon. "The most immediate thing for these individuals is the need to keep them alive so they can recover in the future."

Such changes have occurred alongside of backdrop of wider changes in drug policy at Scottish Government level, where the Drugs Policy Unit has moved this year from the justice department to health.

## WORKER'S THEATER SET THEIR OWN STAGE

The Workers Theatre, "a new co-operative venue for liberating art", launched this March with a party at Kinning Park Complex. The gathering had poetry, music, dancing and performance, and also functioned as a celebration of the group's first 'Megaphone' project, a successful Kickstarter campaign to fund three residencies for artists of colour in Scotland. The WT aims to eventually "create a co-operatively owned and managed theatre in Scotland," with "residencies, collaborations and pop-up events, working towards opening a new venue. Our work will be guided by our Manifesto for a Workers Theatre, and will always be run on democratic co-operative principles." They host first ever weekend festival this June, featuring an array of new theatre, comedy, spoken word, and music from Scotland and beyond. As they explain, "With children's events and evening entertainment, social breakfasts and community workshops, games and plays, the weekender has something for everyone and welcome all." The event takes place between 9 June - 11 June at The Glad Cafe, 1006a Pollokshaws Road, G41 2HG, Full line-up to be announced in mid-May; with tickets at £18/22

unwaged/waged for the whole weekend. Find the group on facebook at @ WorkersTheatre or email at info@ workerstheatre.co.uk

## ACTION AGAINST AUSTERITY CONFERENCE BRINGS THE 'A GAME', CALLING WEEK OF ACTION AGAINST PIP

Edinburgh hosted an Action Against Austerity conference this April, with attendance from individuals and groups from Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty, Industrial Workers of the World, Dundee Against Welfare Sanctions, Perth Against Welfare Sanctions, Castlemilk Against Austerity, and beyond!

A self proclaimed "network of grassroots, self-organised groups in Scotland using direct action against cuts, welfare sanctions, workfare, and fighting for a better world." AAA statement after the meetup explained how "10 groups involved in the fight against austerity contributed to a serious take on where we go from here regarding the fightback against the austerity agenda. We see serious flaws in the current political system, Westminster is a mess and Holyrood is hedging its bets, on key powers available. One important decision was made regarding the transfer of welfare powers. We must pressurise Holyrood to implement a halt on Sanctions, and to Scrap the Work Capability Assessment programme in ALL its forms. Therefore we have decided to have a week of protests at MSP's surgeries on the week of 12 th to 17th of June, to press for the Scottish government to halt, immediately, the re-assessment of folk on DLA to decide whether or not they get PIP. This is a devolved power, and a decision by the Scottish Government would spare thousands of folk the degradation of these assessments. We need real support

on this issue, and would ask followers of this page to start to build for action."

Get in touch at @ actionagainstausterityscotland

## MIND THE WESTGAP! ANTI-POVERTY GROUP SEEKS NEW VOLUNTEERS.

WestGAP, a collectively run welfare rights anti-poverty organisation in Cessnock, is looking for volunteers. As they state in their callout: "Volunteer at WestGAP! Help us to fight benefits sanctions and the horrendous disability and health assessments. If you can spare half a day a week get in touch: info@westgap.co.uk . We can also help you apply for benefits or appeal a decision that's been made against you. Call us on 0141 3285133. or come to our drop-in Fridays 10am-1pm. 365 Paisley Road West, Cessnock, G51 1LX (just across the road from Cessnock Subway!). You can also find the group at http://westgap.co.uk or on facebook @ glasgowagainstpoverty

## GRASSROOTS GLASGOW AND #PRODUCERGIRLS DISRUPT THE DANCE MUSIC BOYS CLUB

Radically inclusive DJ crew 'Grassroots Glasgow' started their second run of over-subscribed workshops this April with a righteous call to arms:

"WOMEN, LGBTQ+ & POC TO THE FRONT! Round 2 of the free DJ workshops being held at The Art School

If you've always wanted to learn the basics of DJing but for whatever reason never got to then this is your chance.

This is part of a wider movement of improving representation across venues and organisations in Glasgow and beyond. Please share this with anyone who you think might be interested and if you'd like to join us then please RSVP

to grassrootsglasgow1@gmail.com as spaces are limited."

This follows a massively successful first run of DJ workshops with women, LGBTQ+ folks and people of colour, spearheaded by Sarra Wild and Cat Reilly of the OH141 and Push It club-nights. March also saw acclaimed local producer and DJ Nightwave team up with E.M.M.A's Producergirls collective (and Ableton) to do a hugely successful production workshop at SWG3. Keep an eye on http://www.producergirls.com/ for future events.

## SEX WORKER GROUPS IGNORED AND SHOUTED DOWN AT SNP CONFERENCE

SNP conference voted this March in favour of changes to prostitution laws to criminalise people who paying for sex. A resolution which aimed to create a "Scottish model of legalisation of prostitution" based on the 'Nordic Model' that criminalises clients, was brought forward by SNP MSP Ash Denham, and opposed by a variety of sex worker led organisations. Nadine Stott, chair of Scot-Pep, an organisation which advocates for sex workers rights, strongly condemned the adoption of the policy.

"The criminalisation of clients has been shown time and time again to make sex workers more vulnerable to violence, as interactions with clients have to become more rushed and clandestine - a gift to people with violent intentions. "Indeed, we already have evidence of this happening in Scotland - in 2008, the prostitution in public places act criminalised the clients of street-based sex workers, and SCOT-PEP saw a 50 per cent increase in violence against street-based sex workers within just the first six months of the law. "In particular, street-based sex workers need to not be fearing arrest for themselves or their clients, as that pushes these workers into isolated, hidden places on the edges of cities as they avoid the police."

A fringe event organised by the organisation was also disrupted by angry supporters of the Nordic Model and proposed law changes, as Commonspace journalist Robert J Somynne commented on twitter :

"At Scot-Pep fringe...some Nordic model advocates have snuck in & have started shouting down the spokesperson," with one SNP delegate interrupting a speaker to claim that, "these women might not want to have their clients criminalised but we should want it for them."

SCOT-PEP also took part this March in a Sex Workers' Festival of Resistance, alongside Sex Worker Open University, Umbrella Lane, and Arika. The 4 day

of event included workshops for sex workers only to develop skills to advocate more powerfully for our rights as well as public events open to all such as seminars, films and a party.

Find the groups on facebook or online if you'd like to get involved in the future!

## THE SPACE OPENS DOORS AND SMOOTHIE MACHINES WITH PAY WHAT YOU WANT FESTIVAL

The end of April saw a new art, music and events space re-open up near Glasgow Green and the Barras Market. Previously known as 'On The Corner', the project describe themselves as "not just another community centre," as "the word 'community' is often overused and abused to the point it has many negative connotations." Instead being an "open source collaborative network of individuals, social enterprises, artists, musicians and community based projects. We provide accessible and inviting experiences and opportunities to those in the east end and wider Glasgow public."

The group's statement on the re-born project states that "after two year of hard graft we're finally ready to open our doors and we have an amazing 5 days of events. Come be a part of them. The Space is Scotland's first entirely Pay What You Decide Venue for events, workshops, food, drink and laughter. Some events we expect to reach capacity hence why we have released tickets to avoid disappointment. Come enjoy the festival, sign up to as many events as tickles your fancy.

The Space is an accessible alternative venue. We do not offer any alcohol but you are invited to try our incredible list of drinks and different experiences."

Find out more about upcoming events at: <https://thespacescotland.org/>

## STREETS NOT MADE FOR WALKING ACCORDING TO GLASGOW COUNCIL AND POLICE SCOTLAND

Organisers of a street-reclaiming protest against sexual assault had their plans curtailed this March by council and police attempts to bury the protest in red tape and high costs.

Organisers Amanda Johnston and Ashley Crossan had organised a 2014 'These Streets Were Made For Walking' event took to facebook to announce that they had been forced to cancel this time, saying: "It is with a heavy heart that we have to announce, at this very late stage, that tonight's event can not go ahead."

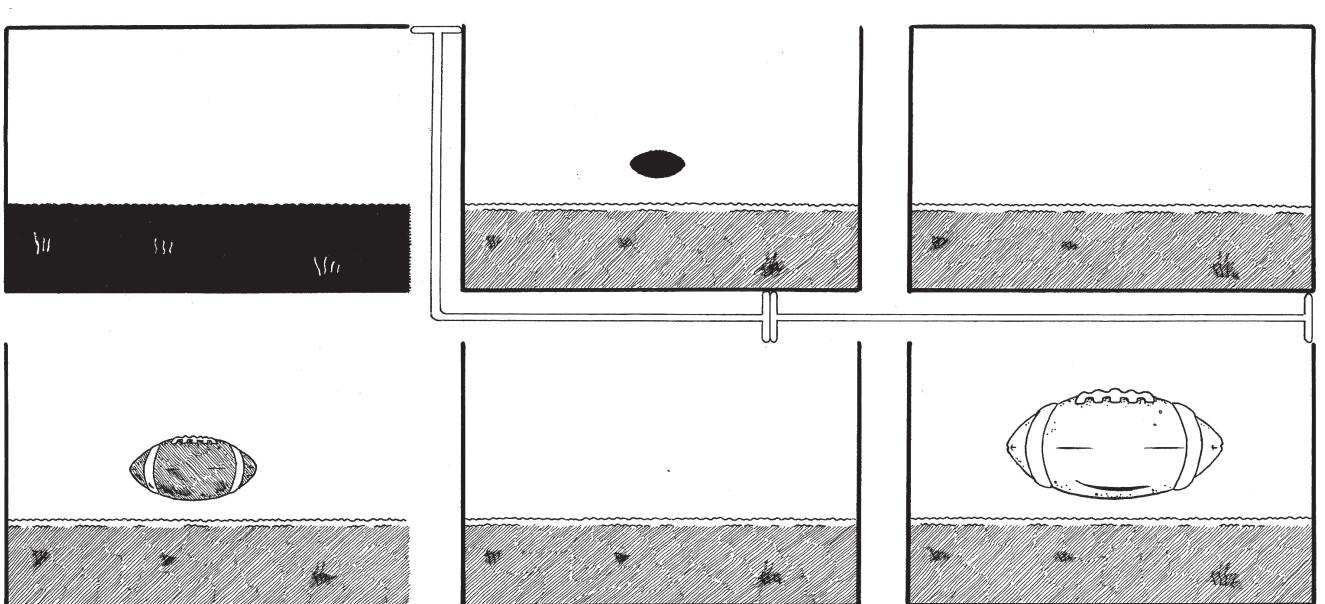
As they explained: "The reasons for

this very reluctant decision are twofold; 1. Glasgow City Council - the council asked us to cover our event with Public Liability Insurance, we didn't have this the last time, but their justification for

the night, They brought this information to us at a very late stage, about 1 week before the event. Even after we had given them 6 weeks notice that it was going ahead (2 weeks more than legally required). We are aware that this is a legality, and that by the council denying us permission to use their park..this does not strictly mean that we can't use it.. It is a public park after all. But but not giving us official permission, it means we cannot work with them as we had hoped. 2. Police Scotland - The community police, who we were in contact with at the early stages of the event, have, upon seeing the council's denial of permission to use the park, have now issued us with a notice, This notice states that if we go ahead with the walk, we will face prosecution for up to three months, and a fine of £500. It also stipulates that the police will fine anyone else who turns up to the event £200 if they fail to desist when the constables ask them to leave."

The statement continues, "All we wanted was to be able to walk our streets in peace, it is unfortunate that we don't have the support from the authorities and we are extremely disappointed that they are issuing us with blanket statements which they would give to mass, organised protests, without looking at the nature of our event, what it's for, who it supports, and the lack of trouble at our last event. We are deeply sorry about this, but we can't really see any way around it. We are trying to figure out what we can do to keep our campaign afloat. And just want to say at this stage that we are so, very appreciative of all of your support throughout the past 6 weeks." The pair have since announced an online photo campaign, and can be found on facebook by searching 'These Streets Were Made For Walking' for more information.

Milo at glasgow uni <http://newnormalmag.com/2017/03/anti-fascist-mobilisation-in-glasgow-university/>



# JOBCENTRE CLOSURES MAKE GLASGOW

## At the races

In December, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) announced plans to close half of Glasgow's Jobcentres – Anniesland, Bridgeton, Cambuslang, Castlemilk, Easterhouse, Langside, Maryhill and Parkhead – by the end of March 2018. According to Denise Horsfall, DWP work services director for Scotland, the closures will result in travel for many claimants increasing by up to four miles, based on some remarkably in-depth research: "I would love to say I sent my team out but they have got other work to do. I did use maps and the traveline website. The criteria is between Jobcentre to Jobcentre but I understand we have postcodes further away from the Jobcentre."

Aside from adding a new level of meaning to the phrase 'straight from the horse's mouth', Horsfall's announcement assures us that: "At the heart of everything we do is our customers, and we've made it easier than ever for people to access our suite of specialist services to find work and get the support that they need. We're continuing to modernise our operations while ensuring that our premises provide best value to the taxpayer." Rejoice!!! And please, whilst revelling in the brave new world heralded by the closure of Glasgow's Jobcentres, be sure to remember never to look a gift horse in the mouth – geddit!

If you look up #SaveOurJobcentres and #FightClosures on twitter, you'll see a range of groups and organisations – such as Disabled People Against Cuts (DCAP) Glasgow, the Maryhill Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) and the PCS union – who are beginning to organise and think about how best to respond to the threatened closures. It's useful also to highlight the continued work of the community group WestGap, who are based in Cessnock and provide a free, independent and confidential advice service covering welfare rights and a range of other issues<sup>1</sup>. The plan in what follows is to provide some background on the trajectory of Glasgow's economy and how the closures relate to the UK's current social security system.

## Glasgow's economy – a potted (and potholed) history

Glasgow's Clydeside-based shipbuilding industry went into rapid decline after WW2, often blamed on international competition from Japan but ultimately the result of a historic shift that occurred in UK economic strategy – as pursued by the state – from the 1960s onwards. This meant the privileging of finance capital (e.g. the banking sector in the City of London and, later on, in Canary Wharf), over the interests of manufacturing capital, in pursuit of new sources of economic growth. For Glasgow, and many other cities around the UK, this led to rapid de-industrialisation, severe economic crisis and mass unemployment by the 1970s.

Research using newly released Scottish Office documents reveals that Glasgow's plight was aggravated by bureaucrats based in Edinburgh. That is, Scottish Office regional economic policy in the post-war period steered investment away from Glasgow in order to support the socially selective New Town programme. Young families and skilled workers from Glasgow, for example, were targeted in order to populate the 'New Towns' that were built after WW2, such as Cumbernauld, East Kilbride and Irvine. This process of 'skimming the cream of Glasgow', as it was referred to in the 1960s, led to a serious population imbalance and served to further escalate Glasgow's decline.

To counteract the city's economic malaise, Glasgow's urban policymakers have – since the 1980s – promoted a new service-based economy that seeks to exploit the city's cultural infrastructure and re-imagine the 'dear green place' as an archetypal post-industrial metropolis. The range of place-marketing and culture-based interventions pursued to attract inward investment include promotional slogans such as 'Glasgow's Miles Better' (1983), 'Glasgow: Scotland with Style' (2004) and 'People Make Glasgow' (2013), as well as large-scale cultural events such as the Glasgow Garden Festival (1988), the European City of Culture (1990), the City of Architecture (1999) and, more recently, the Commonwealth Games (2014). This is the reason why, kicking about town, you'll see poster after poster – invariably backed financially by bodies such as Creative Scotland, Glasgow City Council and/or Glasgow Life – advertising an extremely impressive array of art, film and music events for a city of Glasgow's size.

Glasgow's turnaround has been championed by the city's marketers as an unrivalled urban renaissance. There are some grains of truth amongst the hype, though let us not get too carried away: many of those employed in the new service

sector industries (retail, tourism and arts & entertainment) are often left reliant on insecure, low-wage employment, whilst large swathes of Glasgow's poorer and working-class neighbourhoods are still cut off from the city's new-found success. Such communities are confronted by major structural issues relating to quality of housing, the availability of jobs and, ultimately, restricted life expectancies. Indeed, many of the Jobcentres targeted for closure by the DWP operate in areas experiencing the sharp end of poverty and dramatic health-inequalities.

## Get on your bike

The closure of half of Glasgow's Jobcentres is good for nobody, serving only the interests of the state in its guise as the DWP and the current governing Tory party<sup>2</sup>. It's important, nevertheless, not to get too Spirit of '45 about this: the social security system – and, by extension, Jobcentres – has several functions that are in tension with one another, and it would be a mistake, therefore, to assume that Jobcentres are – or have ever been – neutral sites in which benefits are simply administered and appropriate support provided to those who need it.

Unemployment benefits have never been unconditional and have always had certain strings attached. Since the 1990s, furthermore, a policymaking consensus has increasingly adopted the view that people without a job, whatever their situation, must be 'activated' from their presumed lethargy, through compulsion, work-related conditions and sanctions. Punitive social security reform was a central part of the New Labour project, whilst the shit truly hit the fan with the onset of the Coalition in 2010. Developments included: the widespread use of mandatory unpaid work placements; Work Capability Assessments (WCAs) for those on the main out-of-work disability benefit, administered by the sub-contractor Atos; and a new benefit sanctions regime with sanctions lasting between 4 and 156 weeks for various types of 'infringements'.

The social security system, in its current form, is designed to deter as many people as possible from claiming support, whilst placing stringent behavioural and psychological demands on those that remain. The planned closure of Glasgow's Jobcentres can be understood in this context, making it as hard as possible for people to actually make a claim and increasing the likelihood that individuals will be late for 'work-focused interviews' and thus liable to be sanctioned.

Whilst we should be critical, therefore, about the role that Jobcentres play in monitoring and punishing those who turn up at their doors, it is clearly important to resist the planned closures in some way. Indeed, the hypocrisy of

by now familiar appeals to 'taxpayer value' is currently being laid bare by the delayed introduction of the new Universal Credit, estimated to cost a minimum of £15.8bn to implement. A new welfare-to-work initiative – the Work and Health Programme – will be launched this autumn that, I kid you not, plans to define work as a health outcome for benefit claimants. It is not a stretch of the imagination, unfortunately, to conceive of some Tory minister welcoming Jobcentre closures on the grounds that walking an extra ten miles a week is clinically proven to be good for your health. Fuck that, and fuck them!

## Notes

1. <http://westgap.co.uk/>
2. Parts of social security are currently getting devolved to Scotland, and whilst the SNP have described the threatened closures as "morally outrageous", I maintain a healthy suspicion regarding how social security will actually operate in Scotland in the long-term.

## Credit: EW

## Suggested reading

- The Work Connection: The Role of Social Security in British Economic Regulation, book by Chris Grover and James Stewart (2002)
- 'The Clyde Gateway: A New Urban Frontier', article in Variant magazine by Neil Gray (2008) [online]
- 'History, politics and vulnerability: explaining excess mortality', report by the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, NHS Health Scotland, the University of the West of Scotland and University College London (2016) [online]



# MARK FISHER'S LAST LESSON

**Content Warning : discussion of suicide, depression, benefit sanctions and mental health.**

Mark Fisher - the prolific blogger, author and academic who took his own life in January 2017 - taught us much. I attended his memorial service, where many of the eulogies echoed Mark's own sentiments on the link between mental illness and capitalism: "We have to look outside the supposed 'individual', to the social, class, macro- and micro-political environments in which it takes shape, in order to understand the personal, and personal distress, in its true dimensions; an effective therapeutic discourse requires a political genealogy of the origins of unhappiness."<sup>1</sup>

We must learn from his tragic, final act. In the six months between mid-July and mid-January, four of my acquaintances died by their own hand. In recent months, I have struggled with my own health as I strain to balance personal work progress and social commitments with basic self-care and compassion; as I strain to suppress the all-consumingly bleak filter of depressive thinking, and strain to fight that tedious battle with myself each morning I awaken in what I call the 'default grief' state (where you just feel heavy with heartache and hopelessness before the cogs in your brain even start to grind and groan). The more aware I become of the patterns and logic of depressive thinking, the more I notice how constantly I berate myself in a manner I would never subject anyone else to, and the more I notice how bound up with self-improvement and productivity my mental state is. Do too little and I'm a piece of shit; do too much and I get too wired to sleep and suffer mentally and physically the next day. HEED THIS ADVICE: "valuing the part of us that is of no measurable utility, and believing that others can value it, is maybe a pragmatic condition for any kind of sustainable production. The primary support of a life is an organic body that needs care and occasional respite from demanding the impossible."<sup>2</sup>

"It was a little like Hogwarts, gathering in Goldsmiths' Great Hall surrounded by wise people in big coats.

Daisy and I sat side by side among them, like we once sat side by side in the hall at Oakbank.<sup>3</sup> I can't speak for Daisy but I felt, like I felt at Oakbank, like a fraud or phoney; the impostor syndrome has seriously ramped up today. The voices in my head are telling me that I have no right to be here, I didn't even really know the guy, I only met him twice at his talks, that I have no right to grieve this person I barely knew, that I have no right to occupy a seat, or the acoustic space with my sobbing. But the information shared on Mark's Facebook, by his wife Zoe, said 'All welcome', and Daisy lives in New Cross and attends Goldsmiths and has read Mark's writing too, AND I felt a profound need to go and pay my respects to someone who has literally changed my life and the way I see culture and depression. But still, that voice in my head is saying no, you shouldn't go, you're just tagging along, you're just a fraud and you have no right to be there..."<sup>4</sup>

Mark taught us that writing and communicating ideas, beyond the solitude of the 'self' and the dry paradigms of theory and academic pedigree, is golden. In many ways, it's all we've got. We are so repressed and find it so difficult to communicate these things in person, for fear of upsetting the other, for fear of burdening others, for fear of... falling from grace?

For fear of the questions, the well-intentioned urgings to keep your 'chin up', to 'keep calm and carry on', to get up and live because you have to; an overhang from the days where failing to 'get on with it' was a life or death situation (oh wait, it still is in our Welfare Sanction State 5). For fear of judgement because you have so much potential ("you're only on £15,000? You could be on £50,000!"). And you are failing your family, who have invested in your potential, if you do not live up to your potential. What are you playing at?! Some people have real problems...

Whilst I wish so much, for his and everyone's sake, that he had found the "compassion and care for [him]self"<sup>6</sup>. that he exhibited for others - the will and belief in oneself or the efficacy of medication and therapy necessary to get better - Mark's passing in part snapped me out of another descent to those all-too-familiar depths. When one is not in a consistent depressed state, it is possible to get better with will and support, to do all the right things in terms of forcing yourself to keep socialising, to eat well, to practice basic self-care, in short. However, with depression, the nature of the beast is that it makes you:

- isolate yourself emotionally and physically (so you become a shell of a

person who can't bring yourself to put on the human suit and live for the sake of others / because that's what you do) - NOT seek (or actively reject) support: "I'm a horrible unsalvageable person there's no hope for me and in any case I literally can't articulate this on a form / to the GP who sends me away with 7 Sertralines and tells me to come back in a week / to family who are better off without selfish fuckhead me / to friends who are having a great time and don't need me bringing them down" - abandon purpose / underrate purpose (purpose is daft, world is a fuck, you are a fuck. Why get up and dressed today only to do the same thing tomorrow? And the day after? Why put on your human suit and get a job and pay rent to live when living is hell anyways?)

And this self-destructive, isolating cycle perpetuates itself. So what can we do? Much work is to be done to normalise sadness and grief; to dispel the myth that doing all the right things and being materially comfortable precludes depression or melancholy. This starts with talking and writing about it in day-to-day conversation. When someone asks you how you are and you feel like a piece of shit in a can, say so! When you ask someone how they are and they say they're ok, press them, check they really are! Ask people frankly if suicide is on their mind. When I'm low, I think about it in an abstract way most days, and that's ok. I know now that it's a side effect of being locked in my own "skull-sized kingdom."<sup>7</sup>

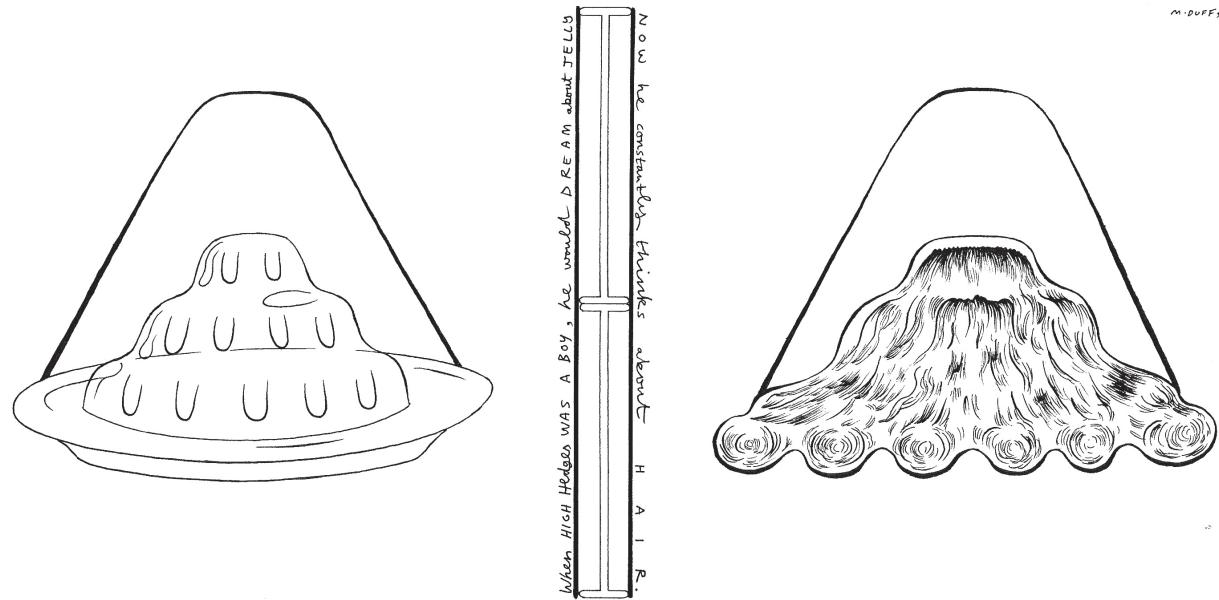
Have the number for Samaritans or your local mental health response team saved in your phone. Check on each other. If someone has been a bit off lately, there may be more going on than it seems. There likely is. We all go through shit, we all get sad, we all grieve and cry (sometimes for no 'reason' at all), and we all have our ways of escaping. Severe cases will need the boost of medication and the techniques of therapy to be well, and many will benefit from the range of strategies and resources available on sites such as [www.lltf.com](http://www.lltf.com) and [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk).

In many of us individualism it is so entrenched, like when you get off the train and FUME inwardly at the people walking so slowly on the platform. You know that this hatred of weakness/slowness/inefficiency is EVERYTHING you are against, but you still feel it raging within you, this sense of entitlement that you have somewhere you need to be, that people should get the fuck out of your way. The real work is to defy this impulse. **Resist the rat race. Commit to the labour of compassion and self-care.**

(9)



Dream Job Chair



1. Robin Mackay (2017) Mark Fisher Eulogy [urbanomic.com/document/mark-fisher-memorial/](http://urbanomic.com/document/mark-fisher-memorial/) echoing Mark's thoughts: "The current ruling ontology denies any possibility of a social causation of mental illness. The chemico-biologization of mental illness is of course strictly commensurate with its depoliticization. Considering mental illness an individual chemico-biological problem has enormous benefits for capitalism." (2009) Capitalist Realism p.37 2. As above 3. Oakbank is the comprehensive we met at and attended 2003-8 in our hometown of Keighley, West Yorkshire 4. My diary entry from the day of the memorial, 12.02.17 5. See [calumslist.org](http://calumslist.org) and [theguardian.com/society/2016/may/13/suicides-of-benefit-claimants-reveal-dwp-flaws-says-inquiry](http://theguardian.com/society/2016/may/13/suicides-of-benefit-claimants-reveal-dwp-flaws-says-inquiry) 6. Mackay, as above: "Maintaining compassion for actually-existing humans also means finding compassion and care for oneself." 7. David Foster Wallace (2005) This Is Water [web.ics.purdue.edu/~drkelly/DFWKenyonAddress2005.pdf](http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~drkelly/DFWKenyonAddress2005.pdf) Credit: GS

1 FUCK YOUR EXOTICA EROTICA

2 THE INJUSTICE YOU CREATE CREATES MY ANGER

3 RACIAL IDENTITY IS NOT A JOKE

4 RACIST JOKES BREED SELF-HATE

5 YT ALLIES BE LIKE YT PEOPLE PRETENDING NOT  
TO BE YT PEOPLE

6 LEARN ABOUT YOUR OWN CULTURE BEFORE YOU  
PROFIT FROM MINE

7 FREE HAIRCUTS FOR WHITE PEOPLE WITH DREADS

8 NOT YOUR TOKEN

9 NOT YOUR MULE

10 PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR PRIVILEGE IS

11 THAT'S SO GLASGOW: ALL YT SPACES

STEP ASIDE

NOT YOUR TOKEN

NOT YOUR MULE

# WHAT DOES A UNION MEAN TO YOU?

These interviews appeared first at the New Syndicalist blog - a source of worker-led, anti-capitalist theory and strategy from members of the Sheffield (UK) Industrial Workers of the World general membership branch - and are reprinted here with their kind permission. <https://newsyndicalist.org/>

Traditionally, trade unions have an association with heavy industries, transport, the public sector and professions – mostly stable work with a degree of social recognition. The IWW has always run against this thinking, maintaining that not just these but all workers in every workplace should be united under “One Big Union”. This has been shown throughout its history by organising sectors of the working class who have been marginalised, ignored or excluded from other unions – migrant and itinerant labour, women, children, people of colour, queer and trans workers amongst others.

It is in this spirit that this new irregular series focuses on the experience of work that is located outside of traditional spaces, is organised informally or atypically, is poorly known or misunderstood. In staging these inquiries we hope to understand what the One Big Union idea means within contemporary capitalism, what social, political and economic functions unions must fulfil and how organisers can further support and amplify existing acts of solidarity within these sectors.

## Sex Work

First, we talk to xxxxxxx about their experiences of working in the sex industry.

### How would you describe your work?

For lack of a better word I describe myself as a prostitute. I understand that independent full-service sex worker is a term used (and often preferred) for this role too. I'm self-employed. My job is essentially having sex with people for money, but most of the hours I put in aren't actually spent doing that, and it took me a while to realise that these hours were also “work” and not just “trying to find work”. I create profiles and ads on the internet. I respond to inquiries via email, phone calls, or

various messaging services or features on websites. I lurk around on adult websites and in chat rooms, waiting for people to approach me. I take bookings, and prepare for those bookings, which sometimes involves travelling some distance. This pays off every now and then and I meet up with people and they pay me money. Then I need to stick around for as long as they've paid me for, and do whatever takes their fancy (minus the activities that I've already clarified to them I won't do because they're too dangerous).

### What do you like about your job?

The absurdity of it all mostly. It's not polite to say so, but I find myself genuinely entertained by the types of calls and messages I get, even a lot of the horribly offensive ones. I'm constantly gaining new insights into capitalism and patriarchy, and the fucked up way they play out in our interactions with each other. I don't generally get bored when I'm actively doing the work that's involved, only when I'm waiting around for it.

I like the flexibility that comes with self-employment, even though it's a bit of a double-edged sword with the other edge being a very unpredictable income and the constant nagging feeling that I should be doing more to find clients. But it's good knowing that I could take a day off if I needed to, without sacrificing the whole job, but just a potential amount of money.

I also enjoy giving a bit of back-chat when I've established that a client is so horrendous, or a guy contacting me is so unlikely to ever pay up, that I need to write him off. I get a lot of shit, and sometimes it feels good to put people in their place who think the power dynamic between us is safely permanent.

### What do you dislike about your job?

I'm not sure where to start. I suppose I dislike having sex with people who I don't think deserve to have sex, to be honest. I'm not a prude, but in my private life my minimum expectation of someone I'm going to have sex with is that they would not want to proceed if I wasn't interested. My clients, having already bribed me with the money I need, aren't in a position to be able to establish this and have no good reason to assume I actually want to have sex with them, so the fact that they've hired me automatically puts them in the category of people I wouldn't otherwise have sex with. I've long been able to stomach the actual contact though, so emotionally it just feels like work. Which is, when it comes down to it, exactly the only problem I have with my job. I dislike it because it's work. Were my clients not compelling me to work I think a great deal of what I'm doing would be stuff I'd like to do anyway.

I dislike the way that my job effects the way that I feel outside of work. My clients level of entitlement seems

to know no bounds. Of course they expect me to be on call 24/7 and I will regularly wake up to numerous missed calls and from someone wanting to see me at 4am, for example. But additionally they demonstrate to me that where I live, how I live, what I do with my body etc, are decisions that should be made with their individual wishes in mind, which they invariably believe are representative of all potential clients' wishes. Body-positivity, for example, is a very theoretical concept for me. I want my body to look however my clients want it to look, because I want to be able to pay my bills. I judge myself harshly for not meeting conventional beauty standards, and what I would otherwise like, want for, or accept about my own body are things that have become so immaterial that they're barely relevant or even identifiable to me.

### Is there anything you do on the job that makes it easier/safer/more enjoyable?

Sure, as a lot of workers, I'm constantly finding ways to save myself time and effort, like copying and pasting stock responses to my most commonly asked questions, or trying to operate in a way that weeds out some time-wasters..

I do as much as I can afford to to keep myself safe. For example, I make my friends aware of when I'm working, where I am and with whom. I get into some sketchy situations sometimes, so I keep myself fighting fit.

I entertain myself in a few ways, like for example phrasing my lies to my clients in such a way that they're not technically lies but that my clients will understand them in the way that they want to understand them. I'm paid to make my clients feel unconditionally good about themselves, which is entirely incompatible with honesty, but I make a game out of expressing things ambiguously in combination with an unambiguously positive demeanour.

I find that how easy, safe, and enjoyable I can make my work, is directly related to whether I can survive on what I'm currently making. For example, if I wanted to save myself a lot of time I could demand a deposit off every client before planning a session with him, but even genuine clients are put off by the prospect of losing a deposit if something goes wrong, so I would lose more of my income than I can afford to. Or if I wanted to make myself safer I could only take clients who are willing to provide a certain level of identifiable information, but again I wouldn't be able to survive on just them so I don't. I might be safer (and would find my work more enjoyable) if I refused any clients who make their disrespect for me clear immediately, but I know exactly where I can afford to set the bar on what I need to tolerate. If I haven't been paid in weeks, I need to accept clients who sound more dangerous

than I'd usually be willing to risk.

As something always has to give, I try to make it my time more than my safety. The common fantasy of escorts who only take bookings from people they're “compatible” with is so far removed from the reality of my work that the idea of making my work more enjoyable by picking clients who are actually pleasant to spend time with is a joke to me. I enjoy my time with them by spending it planning my next meal.

### What does solidarity in your work mean for you?

Solidarity in my work means workers sharing information on abusive clients and time-wasters. It means backing each other up when a client is sending abusive messages, and making it clear that we're not as isolated as they think we are. It means helping each other out with tips, being there for each others safety, and making our resources available to each other. It means taking direct action together against attacks and theft. It means realising that we're stronger together than in competition with each other. It means not trying to distance ourselves from stigma by throwing each other under the bus with “I'm not your stereotypical prostitute, I don't take drugs”, or “I shouldn't be pitied or stigmatised, because I enjoy my job”. It means focussing on our common goals while not imagining that we're representative. It means always reaching out to each other, and finding ways to deal with our problems together.

Some of this happens more, some of it less. I'd like us to build on the ways we support each other individually and have more confidence to take action collectively.

### What does a union mean to you?

So so much. While I'm generally marginalised and stigmatised in society for my work, seen mostly as a less valuable human being for it, or occasionally as something fascinating and exotic, in my union I feel like I meet people on equal terms. We're all there for the same thing, whatever our circumstances. It's refreshing for my job to be seen as a job, and not who I am as a person.

While some organisations might preoccupy themselves with why's and what if's, debating the ideological implications of our work, when and how our industry could be abolished, and what, if anything, is socially useful about our work, I can depend on my union to be beautifully practical instead. My fellow workers in other industries ask me about my actual current conditions, what I want to do to improve them, and how they can support me, without expecting me to justify myself first.

Being in an organisation that's about workers supporting each other gives me confidence in standing up for myself at work. Sex workers can be fairly isolated

and clients try to use this to their advantage. I don't want to back down when it comes to my health and my safety, and I love that I'm in contact with other workers who will have my back if I experience repercussions for standing my ground. The effect this has, both practically in my ability to assert myself at work, and emotionally, in the way that I view myself, is invaluable to me.

## Social Care

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Here, we talk to Mike about their experiences of working in the social care.

### How would you describe your work?

I'm a support worker for people with learning disabilities. I help the learning disabled in their day to day lives, at their homes and in the community. What exactly I do varies according to the specific needs of the individual client, and can go from being very intensive support (including personal care etc) to essentially socialising with the client.

### What do you like about your job?

I like that I provide a service that is so essential to my clients lives, really making a direct, tangible and positive impact. I also like the degree of autonomy I have to get on with my job, rather than having a boss constantly scrutinizing my every move and throwing his/her weight around, as I mostly work one to one.

### What do you dislike about your job?

I dislike the widespread care industry practice of dumping high levels of overtime on employees. Working time regulations are regularly ignored by management, and workers are pressurised to jump in to cover regular staff shortages. I dislike the low pay, which is not remotely a living wage, and in reality often falls below minimum wage levels, openly ignoring employment law. I dislike the way management regularly ignore staff who raise concerns about workplace conditions, and fail to respond to complaints and queries. I also dislike the way our rotas, where we find out where and when we will be working, are released only a few days before the week in question, meaning planning more than a week in advance for our own lives is very difficult. I dislike a lot. The company I work for, and many other companies throughout the care industry, suffers from often poor working conditions and a large degree of contempt for support workers and carers.

### Is there anything you do on the job that makes it easier/safer/more enjoyable?

I try to pace myself and not rush too much, to minimise stress. I don't slack, and work diligently, but I don't break my back trying to do everything at once.

I also often refuse additional shifts and have recently insisted on sticking to a 40 hour week, so I have time to rest and do other things with my life.

### What does solidarity in your work mean for you?

It means recognising the difficulties we all face as workers and showing compassion to our colleagues, rather than getting caught up in petty rivalry and competitiveness. It means being constructive and supportive rather than attempting to cosy up with management on the backs of other staff. Unfortunately, the nature of largely working alone means forming the relationships necessary to promote solidarity is quite difficult.

### What does a union mean to you?

It's self defence. It's recognising that as workers, we are in a fragile and precarious position, and that the power is weighted in favour of the bosses. Ideally, it's active solidarity and support, including actively standing up for each other in the face of bullying from management. This would include using the tools of direct action we have at our disposal, e.g. striking, though in care-work there are obvious questions as to how this can be done whilst minimising disruption to those we care for. Legal support and advice are also useful areas a union can help in, including taking things to court if need be. In a wider context, a union perhaps represents something of a vision as to how society could function differently, with more emphasis on support and cooperation, and less on individualist competition.



## POSTCARD FROM WORK

Dear Tyres,

It's beginning to get pretty chilly at the moment which makes work as a cycle courier quite different to in the summer. I used to get many hours everyday lounging in parks, waiting for more jobs to come my way... parts of me desperately wishing the phone call would come soon because less jobs means less money but other parts loving the excuse to lean up against a tree and get through a few chapters of my book. Luckily there's more work in the winter so there's noticeable less waiting but the waits are less fun when you're shivering. I'm starting to scout out all the friendliest spots that might let me take shelter without spending money so I survive the winter without constantly chattering teeth.

I kinda wish I had more time and energy to put into campaigning for courier employment rights, because we really do get a sore deal. I've got cheap enough rent to always scrape through but not everyone has a partner they can share with and rent is far from affordable...! I'm quite happy making do in a self employed, commission only job for the moment though, at least I work for a friendly independent company and my boss lets me have time off whenever I want and properly sympathises about my period pains instead of just making awkward remarks.

There's a whole cycle courier community which is pretty sweet. They have an emergency fund which covers loss of earnings and any other costs related to accidents by selling merch and organising these crazy races around the city. I haven't been brave enough to join them yet but as even the most hardcore looking couriers are starting to smile at me now and I feel like I've been accepted into the community, maybe I'll take the leap and get a bit more involved!

I don't know how you work in an office to be honest. I mean, cycling all day does suck on days where it rains from start to finish but at least I'm breathing in fresh air (pah!) and soaking up whatever weather gets thrown at me! My body is constantly exhausted and I spend a large chunk of my spare time eating or preparing food for my day at work but the fact that my life mainly consists of cycling and eating means I've done myself proud!

I should tell you about the little games I play before I get back to work... Being alone and on the road all day can sometimes get boring, so here's a few things I do to make it more interesting: spit on every immigration enforcement van you see, try and make babies laugh/smile when you cycle past and learning lyrics to classics such as 'total eclipse of the heart' and then singing them repeatedly as loud as possible which results in a real good buzz when you finally realise you're not holding back even though there's other cyclists around. My newest challenge is to hi-5 someone flagging down a bus, but I haven't been successful yet.

I'll let you know how the new challenge is going next time I see ya.  
Blue skies & bicycle grease,

EmConn xoxo

# FINNEGAN'S WAKE: A TWITTER BOT REVIEW

Finnegan's Wake is overdrive Joyce. You haven't read it and you won't read it. It is unreadable. I have read it but I haven't read it and can't read it. It is unreadable. You cannot follow it because it is not meant to be followed. The idea that one page precedes another which follows another here falls asunder. Conventions are obliterated without acknowledgement. It is unreadable, and painstakingly so. The interaction of each word with itself, surrounding words sounds positions has been deliberated over. There's a fake lazy romance in considering 17 years of assiduously composed yet unread writing. Access it.

To read linearly is akin to not reading it. It floats and meanders sharply. Treat it differently. Sidle up to it at a parallel, and not head on. If it abandons formalities, then follow suit. So further chop the serialised instalments of

1922-1939. Hide, embed amongst saturated background. Function follows form, presentation mirrors content. Stream dreams of consciousness strike you. Find scraps of it on the TL. A bad Guardian article you won't read on babysitting apps, Avril Lavigne hot takes, maybe a shiba inu, Don't retch meat fat salt lard sinks down (and out). Final scoreline, your friend is hungover, fascism reigns, As we there are where are we are we there from tomtittot to teetootomtotalitarian. You notice when you've been tripped up by unexpected cacophony. Make neologism daily again. Approach it without convention as it has similarly approached you and a solution is found. Dipped in and out of and experienced fleetingly, with each fleeting construction containing within it a wealth of literary manipulation, 5,615 people are reading it. Finnegan's Wake: A Twitter Bot Review

Finnegan's Wake is overdrive Joyce. You haven't read it and you won't read it. It is unreadable. I have read it but I haven't read it and can't read it. It is unreadable. You cannot follow it because it is not meant to be followed. The idea that one page precedes another which follows another here falls asunder. Conventions are obliterated without acknowledgement. It is unreadable, and painstakingly so. The interaction of each word with itself, surrounding words sounds positions has been deliberated over. There's a fake lazy romance in considering 17 years of assiduously composed yet unread writing. Access it.



## EINBAHNKOPFSTEINSTRAESSE

By DJ Contemporary Novelist

"The mocker is never taken seriously when he is most serious." The Quaker Librarian

1

Could it be the case that in the land of ubiquitous Macbooks, the novel that dissects the nature of this diffuse landscape is an airport romance?

2

The hint of an interior life concealed prompts consternation and fright - what lies behind, and why is it not blatantly being proclaimed?

3

The city is always playing catch up with other accelerated cities - it is often slowly ambling, dowdy, subtle. The rising emblem is the solitary girl on a passing bus. Through the window you see the studied calm and elegance of a frame that is the dialectic of the filmic and Instagrammed gaze.

4

What is for sale and why is it being sold? A chance at aspiration peddled; overheard hedge fund chat. Meanwhile, the reality of this town is articulated through stuck faces, provincialism, and the narrowness of ownership.

5

Archaic workhouses, factories, spout beige interiors; grey exteriors are theorised alongside pasties, halloumi, entropy. The egotistic merchants of old have left their memorials. Meanwhile, the local trade recycles trends, concepts, cash.

6

My motion to adopt a policy of "hatred of capitalism" was shouted down at the local Momentum meeting.

7

Picking at the crumbs. Elective improvisation remains an option - refusal, kindness, dereliction of duties; the rhizomatic Utopian dance party. An arts festival amidst the ruins - the workers' playground.

8

The herding dog offers leisurely respite as the gut rumbles 'neath the ego bash.

9

Optimism of the will - Houyhnhnm of the intellect.



## INHOSPITALITY

I didn't appreciate his tone. I can't define this tone for you in any useful or determinate way but I'm certain that you already know the exact specifics of this particular tone. Like me, you have perhaps struggled to put it into words but you've felt it hit you squarely in the chest, a strange heat that prickles across your shoulders, up to the base of your neck. A tone that reveals a speaker's attitude to their auditor. He wore a blue de travail workers jacket. This detail feels important - the irony a small victory perhaps. The event could have only been underway for around 10 minutes or so. He looked at us both directly in the eye and informed us with utter sincerity that the situation, in his words, was "hopeless". His wife, for whom he spoke on behalf of, was not getting "the full experience".

It was at this moment that I was presented with an opportunity to enact a scenario that my former waitress self had played out many many times before in her head - to be able to tell a customer to fuck-off without fear of repercussion or redundancy. I was sorry to disappoint my former self and deny her this moment of catharsis.

The event in question was an evening of performances that took place at a sculpture garden on the outskirts of Edinburgh. I was helping some friends execute a performance work based on a reinterpretation of The Futurist Cookbook. Marinetti's Futurist Cookbook, a manifesto-come-culinary innovation, puts forward *the art of feeding* as a means of inciting social, cultural, and political change - acknowledging that people *think, dream and act according to what they eat and drink*. Operating under the alias of The Paleo Futurists, the performance entailed serving canapes based on the original recipes which had been updated and reinterpreted to incorporate contemporary relationships and rituals around food preparation and consumption, including a playful nudge towards the moralistic lexicon of 'clean eating'. Paleo diets avoid processed food and anything else that prehistoric man wouldn't have recognised. Our uniforms consisted of athleisure wear and aprons which had been stained with beetroot powder and turmeric to reveal slogans such as 'Hunting in Heaven' and 'Anti Pasta'. Our audience consumed chia seeds and raw cacao whilst being spritzed with orange blossom mist. We were 'hopeless' because we had 'run out' of vegetarian options.

I was reminded of a talk that Chloe Cooper gave at Collective Gallery a couple of years ago now, the Paleo Futurist performance recalled a phrase from Chloe's talk - "dining out is identity work". The desire to be defined by one's

ability to consume variety - be it cuisine, art, literature, etc becomes a means of performing our understanding of, or tolerance towards, something. It is the performance of the connoisseur - the demonstration of a sophisticated and adventurous palette, an arbiter of taste. So what about our cultural omnivore in the blue workers jacket? What disrupted this veneer of tolerance, of being 'in the know'? Maybe it accentuated a feeling that he wasn't quite as comfortable in this scenario as he would like to have people believe. Clearly, an expectation wasn't met - the "full experience" was being withheld from him. Though I wonder what expectations he held - what would the "full experience" feel like? I wonder what he made of the



Giacomo Balla  
painter.

other performances that evening - did they fulfil the expectations of whatever transaction he believed himself to be partaking in? If not, did he inform the other performers of his dissatisfaction in what they had delivered? Perhaps the aesthetic shorthand for 'service' our performance incorporated - the aprons, uniforms, platters of food - invited the opportunity for criticism that would not have been permissible to levy at the other clearly defined art works. Perhaps, emboldened by a familiar power dynamic, he felt more entitled to assert his opinion.

In *Invitation*, Anne Dufourmantelle wrote to Jacques Derrida that *hospitality is a place belonging to neither the host nor the guest*, and I thought a lot about the similar space that is created by performance - a space that requires negotiation from both performer and audience. This space can be an alienating one, in which a work is allowed the tendency to inflict itself on an audience - particularly works that rely on, and therefore assume and audience of willing participants. It was not just our man in the blue workers jacket whose behaviour conformed to these entrenched infrastructures - my own performance did too. In this place created by the performance work we both attempted to make sense of this space through established and familiar social transactions.

My performance of this Paleo Futurist waitress could have been anything - the character could have had all kinds of qualities and characteristics that were not my own. My performance of this waitress was too informed by previous experiences - she was gendered, obliging, understanding, and profusely apologetic. How far can a character stray from their performer? I was relieved that the performance wouldn't require me to adopt a persona, which I would find the execution of hackneyed and excruciating - this was a role I would be 'comfortable' with. In fact, at one point, I had convinced myself that I wouldn't be playing 'a character' at all because it was one I slipped into all too easily - like muscle memory. Years of waitressing and service work meant that the 'correct' mannerisms, disposition, and demeanor had long been metabolised into my professional repertoire of work and personality. It seemed like it was more energy than it was worth to explain to him that we were not in fact a catering team (not that this would have justified his behaviour had he actually been addressing 'real' waiting staff), it was easier to absorb this moment of suspended agency and apologise for our shortcomings.

I had initially thought that the performance would require very little of me - the (art)work had already been done in form of the development and execution of the dishes. Perhaps the performance aspect of this work wasn't located where I had initially thought it would be, perhaps it wasn't so much a question of performance but of performativity. In this instance I was performing the role of a waitress whilst simultaneously forgetting that waitressing itself already demands a performance - managing fake and real feelings - everyday deep acting. The aesthetic vocabulary of the Paleo Futurists work meant that performance element of the piece was automatically subsumed by the performative nature of the service economy itself.

Credit: KH

# WORKERS' REPORTS FROM THE SAINSBURY AND WAITROSE SHOP-FLOOR

We are still in process to understand the massive changes in the retail sector in the UK – the concentration process is rapid (see recent take-over of Bookers by Tesco) and so are the technological changes (online grocery shopping, self-check out etc.). This research will take some more time and efforts. Some of us work in factories of major supermarket suppliers (ready-meal processing), in supermarket distribution centres or as delivery drivers. We have written about our experiences there and will continue doing so. Here we want to use the opportunity to circulate two reports written by friends who work on the actual supermarket shop-floor, handling all the stuff that some of us might have processed, picked or fork-lift driven before. We will edit the reports for circulation in WorkersWildWest no.6 and feed them back to workers swimming in the supply-chain upstream. If you work in the sector and have stories to share, get in touch... angryworkersworld@gmail.com

## \*\*\* Angry Waitrose worker

I work for a big Waitrose store in central London, employing around 180 people. In light of the recent changes to the minimum wage (from £6.70 to £7.20 in April 2016), Waitrose has shifted up its minimum (for central London area) to £8.15 per hour. This has caused a certain amount of confusion and irritation, some of the older partners (Waitrose-speak for 'worker') consider that their wages have not risen correspondingly, although Waitrose says that they have. Wages are further divided through Waitrose's five performance categories: under-performing, developing, good, very good and outstanding, subject to an individual annual performance review. The vast majority of partners fall into the 'developing' or 'good' categories, with a certain amount of anger coming from some of the very committed partners who struggle to get their managers to put them into the 'very good' category. The highest category, 'outstanding', exists in mythology only,

it's fair to say you would need to live, breathe and shit Waitrose to come close to attaining it. Further, one can become a 'specialist' in a certain section (wine, fish, whatever) after a training course and receive an additional wage increase (if there is room for another specialist in the store). All in all it's possible to get about £9.50 per hour (specialist in 'very good' category), without going into a formal management position.

As has happened in other retail companies, Waitrose has got rid of the Sunday, bank holiday and overtime (all weekly hours worked after 39 hours) 1.5x bonus pay for all staff whose contracts began after February 2016. Some long-standing staff are still on the hallowed double pay bonus, while most are on the 1.5, and more and more new staff in the store are working without any bonuses at all. There's a certain amount of resentment at this amongst new staff, but as some say, a contract is a contract, a holy and binding agreement, good luck changing that. Certainly this change wasn't discussed by Partnervoice, our in-house representative body. Perhaps it was assumed that since it would only affect new partners, it wasn't of interest to existing partners whose contracts would remain the same.

Part of what makes Waitrose a 'unique' business model is our democratic in-house representative structure. 'Partnervoice' is an elected body of representatives voted for by the various sections in a store to convene each month and discuss the issues of the store and the business generally. In our store it has a pretty limited interest for workers, some of whom consider it to just be a rubber-stamping exercise to legitimise the proposals of management. I was curious to see what it actually did so I joined up. A short training course informed us that we were to take the issues and concerns of the workers from our section and feed them back to the Partnervoice monthly meeting, in which sits the branch manager to listen solemnly and offer solutions. Interestingly, after raising an issue about pay, I was told that we shouldn't discuss pay, that it was an individual matter relating to the specific worker and their manager. I was also told that the new partner contracts (without bonuses) was not an issue for Partnervoice since it relates to the general direction of the company. So in considering what Partnervoice is actually for I am given various tasks to complete, information to raise with the partners on my section to find out what they want to do for 'Partnership Day', why so many partners didn't show up to the Annual General Meeting, how we can crack down on the number of sick-days taken and so on. I am still wondering whether Partnervoice can be used in some way,

or whether it's inherently a tool of management. Certainly it holds little appeal for the vast majority of workers in my store, although I am told that this is not the case in all stores. I have had a small amount of interest in starting some kind of alternative meeting for all workers which I am keen to consider, although it's difficult to set a day and a place for such a meeting considering the varied hours and days that we work.

The workers in my store are comprised of a large amount of Philipino and Bangladeshi first or second generation immigrants, the rest being largely young white and black workers. There's no real division between these groups, and several languages are spoken. The store is organised into several sections, and while workers in each section spend the most time with each other, there are no special cliques or anything like that. There is a certain amount of resentment toward managers and their perceived laziness/uselessness/two-facedness. Generally the work is seen as fairly pointless, rolling cages around, pulling-forward products, cutting up steaks etc., work that could just as well be done by machines. There is a difference here in attitude toward work, with some of the longer-serving workers feeling a sense of pride in their work, a pride which Waitrose tries to foster; a sense of shared ownership, at a minimum-level this is manifest in the idea that 'the harder you work, the higher your bonus will be at the end of the year.' Most younger workers think this is bullshit, or vacillate between these two positions. In any case, in order to actually survive at work, it seems necessary to mobilise some kind of fantasy, whether thinking 'today's the day I process more cages than I ever have before!' or 'today's the day my cheese counter will look the best it ever has!'

Lots of the young workers live with their parents, and of those that rent, many claim housing benefits. A few workers won't work more than a certain amount of hours in a week because their payslips are reviewed by the state and they have to be making under a certain amount in order to qualify for low-income housing benefits. One of my colleagues' entire full-time Waitrose income goes on rent, while he makes another income as the owner of a small catering business. Lots of workers are pissed off at the price of rent and the virtual impossibility of being able to own their own homes in London. Some colleagues work at Waitrose only part-time as extra money on top of weekday jobs, some are doing A-levels or on gap-years or studying at university. Some full-time workers are basically chained to the job, given that they wouldn't be able to make the same salary (which is relatively decent for the workers with older contracts) leaving fresh for a new job. The cost

of living, housing, is a big issue which any potential worker's organisation is going to need to address seriously.

Practically speaking, unions are non-existent in our store. Nobody is a union member or really knows anything about the trade unions. Whether it would be a good idea to invite a union rep to speak or become one myself I am not sure.

Additionally, our breaks are soon to be subject to change. Currently we get paid breaks according to the number of hours of a given shift. This will be changing so that our hourly rate goes up to cover the loss in break, and our break is no longer paid. None of us have really deciphered what this means exactly yet, but I feel like it's an underhand way of getting rid of paid breaks to conform with most other retailers, and getting ready for further planned increases in the minimum wage.

## \*\*\* Angry Sainsbury worker

So I work night shift at a suburban Sainsbury store, putting stock onto shelves, nothing too fancy. The age of our workers ranges from 17 to 70+. Made up of both genders, majority of staff in our store is female. Something like a 65/35 split in that regard. Students are employed here, they generally work later shifts as well on weekends, we are losing a lot of them at the minute though as they are heading back into university/starting university terms. People stay for varying amounts of time, a few have been here for over 20 years since the store first opened. Honestly it really does vary as some can stay for as little as a few days before deciding that they just don't want to be here whilst others stay on for months or for several years.

The contracts are on a fixed hours basis. Working hours vary from person to person, the minimum contractual hours offered are 12 with the maximum being 39. Full time vacancies are quite rare now though. Everyone is offered a permanent contract, they start with a probationary period of 12 weeks during which there are three assessments and on the successful completion of these you are made permanent. The only time we have temps are at Christmas when the workload increases. Students can have a dual location contract where they can work at a Sainsbury's near their university during term time and then during holidays they can work at stores closer to their homes. They offer what is known as an RGS contract (no idea what it stands for) however some of the more veteran workers are on an older version of the RGS which gives them double pay for overtime as well as late night and Saturday premiums etc. Newer contracts don't have these kinds of perks.

There are skill payments as the bakers receive extra pay, the amount of time you have worked there doesn't affect the pay you are given. All are paid the same no matter their experience. Bonuses are based on our MCM measures (mystery customer measures = MCM), we are assessed 26 times over the course of a year and depending on the percentage scored per visit we are awarded a medal (bronze, silver, or gold). Depending on the medals received by the end of the year we will either get a 1 percent, 2 percent or a 3 percent bonus to our June/July wage. It is a taxable bonus.

Wages did rise following the increase to the minimum wage but structurally speaking nothing has changed. There are several benefits, the staff discount at our own stores is the most obvious. This can vary from 10 to 20 percent with the 20 percent usually tied to targets set by the head office.

The work process looks roughly like this:  
1) Pallets, Roll cages and blue crates containing the products arrive at the rear of the store via truck.  
2) During the day back door staff unload the lorry, at night the Night shift manager does the unloading. Delivery is accepted on a handset at this point.  
3) Grocery deliveries get broken down from mixed pallets and rollers to isle based rollers (tea and coffee on its own roller, cans and soup on its own roller etc)  
4) Night time deliveries tend to just be fresh products (meat, cheese, milk etc) or advanced grocery deliveries for the next day, the fresh delivery is ready to work and doesn't need breaking down. The advanced deliveries are left in the warehouse to be sorted out the next day.  
5) Rollers and pallets are left in the warehouse until just before nightshift workers arrive at work, then they are dragged onto the shop floor and left next to the relevant isles. Fresh deliveries remain in the chillers until workers are available to start working them.  
6) Workers unwrap the products from their packaging and place the products onto the shelves, there is no electronic component involved. If there is a gap on the shelf then the product goes into the empty space, it's usually left to a worker's own knowledge of the isle to locate the correct location for the product.  
7) If the product can not go out onto the shelf it is put onto a roller or U-shape for overs and is left in the warehouse to be worked at a later date.  
8) At some point in the day customers take the products from the shelves.  
9) Day-Shift workers can replenish the shelves from back stock that accumulates over time in the warehouse.  
10) When items are checked out they are logged by the system which generates the next order to ensure that if a potential gap appears more stock will be there within a few days.

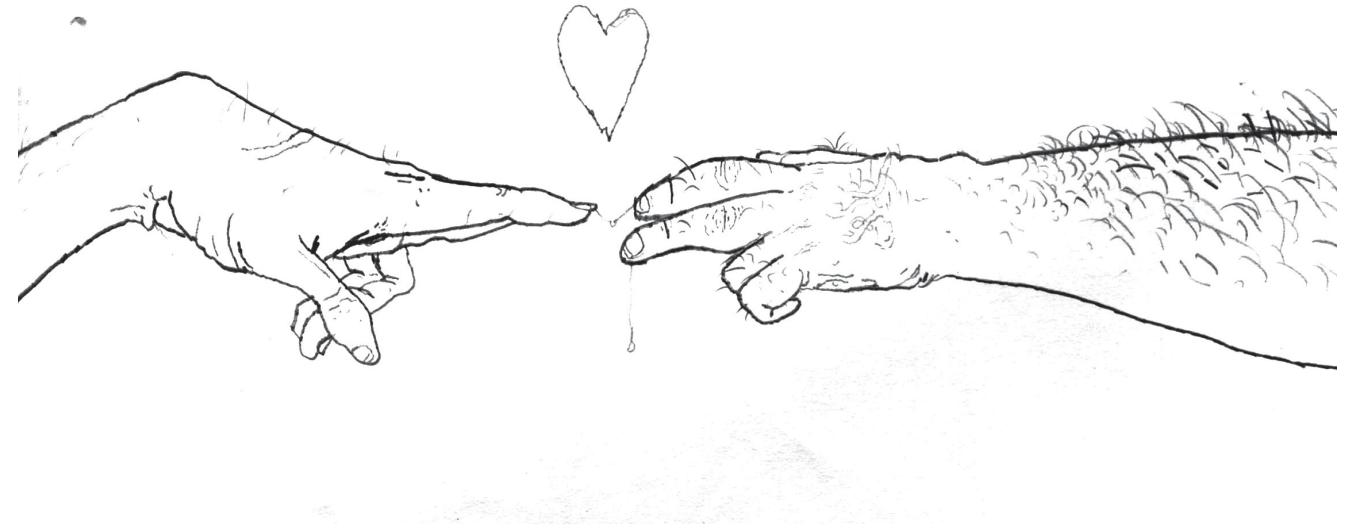
Then there is the work for online-shoppers. The online shoppers are what we call the workers who go about the store picking up the products that people have ordered online, so they gather it all together before taking it to the drivers so that it can then be delivered. In terms of vans you are looking at about 6-8 of them, and we have at least 100+ online orders a day but no more than 200 a day.

Things can go wrong, it can be a mix of both human error and technical faults. The only instance of recent human error that comes to mind is that on Sunday night all of the empty rollers from the day were accidentally removed by an outgoing delivery truck leaving us to effectively ration the few in the building left to us from what came in on later deliveries. The last example of technical issues was when the handsets for online shopping went haywire as a result of the system going down, resulting in orders with wildly unrealistic orders e.g 20+ cartons of milk for one person. It's not too common that anything major goes wrong, but as with any other job you get little issues every other week. Generally speaking there isn't too much that workers can do but adapt to the realities of the situation and management is left with sorting out the issues.

We don't get given an exact number of products that need to be worked, but we are given a time limit based on how much stock there is, so I might be given 6 hours down the soft drinks isles and then 4 hours down cheese and fats. There isn't really an overall target, we simply get told how many hours we have to work the delivery and then we go and try to complete what has arrived in store. It's isn't always possible to do, too much stock for one person to work can come in but whatever we don't do gets left for the day shift to work on at some point in the day. If we are faster than expected and complete the isles set to us we will either go to other isles in store and help to complete the work that needs to be done there, or we will work the back stocks out in the warehouse. We can't go for additional breaks (we are limited to 45 minutes of break time per shift) and in the year I've been here we have only been offered the chance to go home early once but our pay would be cut if we were to do so, so no-one took management up on that offer. If we are slower there is meant to be a system in place where if we fell behind schedule on 3 separate occasions we get a disciplinary, however that system has only ever been implemented for about 2 weeks or so out of the entire year. We don't have to stay longer if we fall behind, we just drag what we haven't worked back out into the warehouse/chiller to be worked by staff in the day.

The work intensity definitely varies from job to job in store, each job can be intense at different times depending on the time of day or season of the year. The busiest times of the day are around the 12:00 mark as well as the 15:00-17:00 time period due to schools and workplaces closing for the day. You tend to see an uptake in the number of customers around major celebrations in the year like Christmas/Easter etc. Workers from day shift will get drafted into working on the checkouts if the number of customers leads to queues forming, this tends to have an impact on the rest of the store though as it means back stock won't get worked which will then impact nightshift as we have to work whatever gets left over in order to prevent the chillers and warehouse becoming overwhelmed by the sheer amount of goods waiting to be sold. The amount of work remains fairly consistent throughout the year, with the only increase in workload taking place around major seasonal celebrations, the only other change that has recently taken place has been a focus on getting the entire fresh goods delivery finished for 04:00 in order to ensure that as much of the produce is available for the online shoppers as possible. This tends to make it difficult to finish the grocery delivery as you are left with an unsatisfactory amount of time to complete your task (this happened to me this morning where I was given 3 hours to do about 5 hours worth of work).

## OUR LOCAL m.p.



No one really mentions work speed, for the most part we go at our own speed and so long as we get the job done we aren't pressured by management to alter it. In terms of easing our workload there isn't anything specific, save for the tools available to us like pump-trucks (mini forklifts of sorts) and our L-shapes that help to move stock around the isle. Otherwise its simply a case of hard work and elbow grease. I wouldn't say that there are any particular tricks that workers share with one another, more often than not you tend to work in the way that you were taught to by a more veteran fw although if asked for help you do make sure that everyone is doing alright. Individualistic attitudes don't last too long on nightshift, you can keep to yourself but you can't forget that you are all still working as a team, so at no point do we make it so that our personal workload is easier only to make another worker's shift harder.

Workers in the same department can easily talk to each other, and workers on the shop floor can talk to one another, but checkout operators can't communicate with other workers, only with customers. Generally speaking it's up to the worker as to whether they go to break as part of a group or not, from my time on nightshift I can say that a large part of nightshift does go to break at the same times. Groups themselves are based on friendships, so we all sit together. It is rare for people from

different departments to be on break at the same time so there is never a situation where one part of the store staff separate themselves from another group of staff.

One or two things have come up since I last got in contact and the biggest event will have to be the closure of the local Morrisons, one minute it was there and the next it was shut so I was really taken by surprise by that. The other bit of news is that our wages are going up a tiny bit, so at the minute it is £8.91 and hour for those of us on night shift and I believe that we will be earning around £9.04 an hour or so starting at some point in September 2016. There is only one piece of news that affects multiple stores and that was some kind of initiative being implemented in order to "cut costs". According to the extremely brief report management gave us a few months back, it would seem that night shift workers in particular were either being made redundant or having their hours changed to daytime shifts. Petrol stations are also being closed at night with the staff offered other roles in store or being made redundant.

Angry Workers of the World -- [angryworkersworld.wordpress.com](http://angryworkersworld.wordpress.com) (Article reprinted with permission from [angryworkersworld.wordpress.com](http://angryworkersworld.wordpress.com), where it first appeared in February 2017)

## THE COMMUNITY



## TV HIGHLIGHTS AW 2K16/17 SO FAR

### Rupaul's drag race all stars 2 - [illegalitytv.com](http://illegalitytv.com)

Obvs this was a true early autumn highlight. I particularly appreciated Adore Delano's 'staying true to herself' in leaving the show in episode two. Other beaut moments included Alaska and Alyssa's Queens of Comedy and Katya's 'Krisis Kontrol' spray for 'shielding the psyche from pain'. The way she talks about mental health is yessss. and her rap lyric 'lenin in the streets Dostoevsky in the sheets'. She is clever everyone, she is like really clever. All all stars 2 was missing was Chi Chi Devayne, I am SO ready for her to be back on my telly/barely functioning Packard Bell. There's a 'shocker' extra, fourteenth queen on Season 9, maybe my dreams will come true...

### Annalisa Lamola, 5 AM/5 After Midnight and Brattavio on the Xfactor - [itvvvvv](http://itvvvvv).

So this years xfactor live shows+ was a pile of shit all in all. How Analisa Lamola didn't get through to lives I do not know, wtf? Annalisa, Gifty and Chanal's version of Fifth Harmony's Work from Home is worth 20-30 views at least. 5 AMs first audition of Drake's One Dance - yesssss! Shame the lives didn't allow them to do owt else as current/widely streamed/good (bloody Louis w). But Brattavio were fab, n cute, n funny and obvs should had been the only 'entertainment' act on there, fuck u no who(ney). Loved their blatant honesty regarding wanting a tv career and the fact they didn't spend any time with Louis W and they brought some beaut two-pieces to the mixxx.

### Rylan On BBOTS (big brothers bit on the side) [my5.essex](http://my5.essex)

So everyone who dipped into to CBB this year or stumbled over it via 'youtube'

probably thought Kim Woodburn was the star of the show. When all avid viewers know she got boring pretty quickly and really the true star was as per Rylannnnn (presenter of BBOTS, and now Xtra factor - forfilling a tv loop the loop in true style). He is my favourite presenter on uk tv, hilarious, charming, quick and sweet. CBBOTS airs at 11, sometimes 12am is full of dirty humour, bitching, innuendo and general levels of filth I don't see replicated on any other uk tv show. Highlights included him reuniting with his CBB2013 nemeses Speidi after four years and him losing it over \_\_\_\_ being in the studio - beautiful moment. (George Shore's Chloe comes in at a close second)

### Vicky Pattison ordering tampons from a takeaway on Virtually Famous. - nuff said.

### Danny Dyer on the bbc, itv and channel5

Finding out he was big deal royalty on 'who do u think u are?', normally a very dull bbc4 style mockumentary vs Craig Revel Hallwood on lyp sync battle uk.

Tory bashing, calling David C names on Allan Carr Chatty Man.

### Scarlett Moffat winning I'm a celeb - [itv.com](http://itv.com)

This was meta tv heaven, I love the channel4, itv, channel5 reality rounds.

### Marissa talking about her pregnancy and post-partum Depression on Ladies of Ind [itvbe](http://itvbe).

Ocassionaly itvbe offers moments of women talking about there bodies, in a way

### Debbie n Carol towie -[itvbe](http://itvbe) (the best channel \_\_\_\_ description)

Ever since I started watching reality television at the age of 0 I have wondered, what will they do when someone gets ill or dies, like in real life, on the telly? Towie never fails to answer my constructed reality queries with grace. When Nanna Pat, Towie star and

sausage plait connoseaur sadly passed away last year I cried. They televised a grand birthday party for her at the end of season \_\_ in the summer and it felt almost like a goodbye. Cut to the autumn season and we are invited to watch scenes of her daughter Carol grieving for her with the support of best pal Debby. It is sad and kind and allowed all us Towie supporters to feel a sense of loss too. The (female) writers and editors of this show are geniuses in making space for scenes like this in and amongst humour and silliness. MIC could only dream of ever bringing this to our screens. Don't need to tell you nanna pat died, press fills in story.

### JT Leroy documentary - [storyville @ bbc.co.uk/buyyourtvliscence](http://storyville.bbc.co.uk/buyyourtvliscence).

Describe. Watch it. It's fascinating. Constructed Reality Television At Its Finest. (not as well written as towie)

### National Treasure - C4

Describe. Stunning, moving, important drama. I (for some reason) trusted it because it had Julie Walters in, I trusted it to say the right thing and end in the right way and I think for what it was, it did.

### Chewing Gum

WATCH IT WATCH IT WATCH IT. Read about it...it's hilarious, important, I'm so glad it's on telly. Writer, director star is amazing. Only shortfall is there's not enough of it, you'll get through it in a whizz and be left wanting ten more series.

### Stranger Things

You all already know. It was really good, shame the kids are all really annoying irl.

### Terraced House [Netflix.com/user/](http://Netflix.com/user/)

intro from show \_\_\_\_ 'terraced house is dddaaa no script. Joy of watching the commentators. Mini-gogglebox within show. THEY are tv stars.

### DON'T READ FINAL PARA IF YOU DON'T WANT GIRLZ SPOILER.

So, plot twist, Hannah from Girls and Binky from Made in Chelsea are both pregnant. Except not really (a plot twist) cos their baby bumps were in photographs on the internet before it actually happened. Binky is 18 weeks pregnant (like now) and she's having the baby in the summer but MIC was filmed in the New Year and Hannah had a baby bump in August last year but this week she didn't and she hasn't given birth yet, basically they have the same due date and I cannot wait. I nearly shed a tear when our very own Sacred Paw's tune of the spring Everday introduced a scene of Binky maternity wear shopping with Marc-Francis and mummy felstead. A beautiful symbiosis of my broad and far reaching cultural preferences.

Credit: KW

# STEP BALL CHANGE!

## Sketching a radical history of the 'Musical Film'

### Leaving La La Land

Damon Chazelle's *La La Land* is a bad film; a terrible, glittering pillar of technicolour nostalgia that fits our shitty little moment like a vintage white glove. Making this argument now seems belated, as critical consensus has shifted from celebrating the film's supposed homage to Hollywood's "golden age", to highlighting its white-saviorism, sexism, and misguided jazzsplaining. This critical eclipse played out with stark irony in the now infamous 'Oscars Mix Up', with Chazelle et al eventually losing out for the Best Picture Academy Award to Barry Jenkins' wonderful *Moonlight*, after an accidental envelope swap that saw the former cast stranded on stage halfway through their acceptance speeches. Yet the popularity of *La La Land* and its soundtrack persists, and its appeal rests in part on its ability to capture the emotional and escapist power of the regularly maligned musical genre. While Chazelle's ultimate message of "*one day you could be glitzy star buying the coffee rather than the morose service worker serving it*" couldn't be a more damning indictment of the paucity of what 'dreaming big' means under capitalism, its wrapping up of such ideas in the comforting, fuzzy and cinematically impressive clichés of the "musical film" demonstrates at once the affective power of the form and the screaming shame of turning such a unhinged, fantastical genre into perfect exposition of 'capitalist realism' (RIP Mark Fisher), the death of alternatives.



Chazelle's relationship to the genre seems, like everything he "loves", to cut out between 1955-65, as he pilfers classic Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers routines, *Singin' in the Rain* and *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*, extolling Charlie Parker and bebop, but nothing much after (as one reviewer pointed out, this situates him before Jazz and Civil Rights became firmly linked). Like an Etsy Tarantino, substituting pulp violence and westerns for tap dance and painstakingly orchestrated set pieces, he brings a certain obsessive, male logic to the form; the remake or restage as a showy demonstration of cultural cataloguing and technological proficiency: he aims to impress. The film's chintzy score plays a huge part in this warm bath of constructed familiarity, and you'd be forgiven for thinking the very genre of "Musical Film" is at fault here - haunted by a legacy of minstrel shows, marauding sailors and countless awful songs - but for all its horror (and there is plenty),

an alternative history of musical films reveals the kind of explorations and tensions around gender, race, success, and yes, Capitalism, that *La La Land* works to erase. So here we chart eight radical moments from the history of the musical film - in no way attempting to be comprehensive (*Sorry, Hedwig and the Angry Inch*), but instead considering a partial history of sonorous sedition, buried within this misunderstood genre.

*"Though a man will fight his rival, to fish the muddy depths, in the end they'll dine together and consume the poor man's bread. For some men live in darkness, while others stand in the light. We see those in the light, while the others fade from sight."*

Pabst ends the film with a fade out of despondent protesters, backs to the camera as they walk out of a history unconcerned with their plight.

### 1931 - *The Threepenny Opera* -

**G. W. Pabst - 'Mack The Knife Reprise'**  
Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill's Weimar era savaging of corruption and bourgeois morality, *The Threepenny Opera* - based on John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* of 1728 - opened in Berlin in 1928, before being committed to celluloid in 1931 by G. W. Pabst. The play's most famous song, 'Mack The Knife', focuses on the corrupt, murderous subterfuge of central antihero Mackie Messer, who unlike "a shark" does not show his "pearly teeth" while murdering and abusing his way from gangster to bank boss. The song's history is itself a fascinating

### 1934 - *Jolly Fellows* [Веселые ребята] - 'Pan-flute / Animal Herding scene'

Grigori Aleksandrov's *Jolly Fellows* (also translated as *Happy-Go-Lucky Guys, Moscow Laughs and Jazz Comedy*) is widely considered the first Soviet musical. It centres around a musically talented shepherd named Kostia, played by Leonid Utesov, a veteran of the Leningrad musical theatre, who is mistaken for a famous Italian composer by an aspiring bourgeois singer. A wild, grotesque assortment of slapstick and comic song, it channels Charlie Chaplin and The Marx Brothers along with a whole litany of Russian folk theatre and rural songs, and was attacked for a lack of proper ideological and narrative rigour by some in the Soviet establishment, but allowed a pass apparently because it made Stalin laugh so much. Though Aleksandrov enjoyed a thorny but not fatal relationship with the Soviet leadership thereafter, scriptwriters Erdman and Mass were arrested during the shooting of the film and spent the next decade in exile, while cameraman Vladimir Nilsen would be arrested and executed a few years later while shooting *Volga-Volga*, another of Aleksandrov's comedies.

That many central figures of the film ended up contradicting, in morbid irony, the central notion of the film - "If you sing your way through life/ You will never lose your way" - lends a certain extra punch to the film's anarchic chaos. A key scene in the film involves Kostia playing a pan-flute peasant song in a decadent bourgeois house, only



to attract a herd of nearby animals, resulting in a glorious Rabelaisian *Feast of Fools* as social roles, plates and tables are upturned by the beasts (*Animal Farm* indeed!). This spirit of revolt is mirrored throughout the film by the assent of servant girl Anyuta, a breakthrough role for Soviet film star Lyubov Orlova, whose beautiful voice finds her leaving to join Kostia, whom she falls in love with, and

his tumultuous band.

As the Russian Film Symposium's 'Camp Cinema Russia Style' blog attests:

*"Jolly Fellows presents a musical utopia, where distinctions between high and low culture have been erased. Classical music is performed on the stage of a music hall, while popular music is performed at the Bolshoi. Jazz meshes seamlessly with the folk chastushki form, rubs elbows with Beethoven, and begins to make way for the new genre of mass song."*

### 1943 - *Cabin in the Sky*

#### - 'Honey in the Honeycomb'

"Little Joe : Petunia, is this really you? Petunia : mmmhmm - but not the same me that used to break her back busting suds over a tub for you"

*Cabin in the Sky* was an early in all-African American cast musical at a time when movie theaters in many cities, particularly in the southern US states, refused to show films with prominent black performers. Cinematically things had not progressed far from Al Jolson's infamous blackface routines in 1927's *The Jazz Singer*, which as the first film to feature some spoken and sung audio, had entrenched a racist stereotype at the formation of non-silent cinema.

Ethel Waters as Petunia channels the contradicting struggles of a black woman caught up in the gambling, philandering and violence of her husband, and a set of racist, patriarchal social relations that implored her only to piousness and salvation through this husband, and God. One key scene sees her confronting the spluttering cheat head-on, celebrating the boundless love she has for herself



and dancing with her husband's would-be killer:

*"There's money in the savings bank  
And I personally guarantee  
If there's honey in the honeycomb  
Then, Baby, there's love in me"*

Such moments stand out in what is still at times a shallow and stereotype-filled depiction of African American life, as Ethel herself explains, in reference to her original role in the theatrical production:

"I rejected the part because it seemed to me a man's play rather than a woman's. Petunia, in the original script, was no more than a punching bag for Little Joe. I objected also to the manner in which religion was being handled. After some of the changes I demanded had been made I accepted the role, largely because the music was so pretty. But right through the rehearsals and even after the play had opened, I kept adding my own lines and little bits of business

to build up the character of Petunia."

The film is a good entry point into a marginalized and erased history of

African American song on film, stretching from "Soundies": short 16mm "jukebox" musical films that featured black artists like The Ink Spots, Fats Waller, Duke Ellington and Sarah Vaughan at a time when feature films wouldn't, to a succession of late 1940s Jazz films like *The Duke Is Tops*, *Reet Petite and Gone, Hi De Ho, Jivin' in Be-Bop*, with both Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington turning up in *Cabin in the Sky*. Jazz here is a live and transgressive form open to diverse interpretations and improvisations - Petunia is rebuked early in the film by her husband during the film's most famous song, 'I'm in the Mood For Love', for seemingly going "too far" with an impassioned scat - and trailblazing; the former routine also includes Bill Bailey doing the first recorded version of the Moonwalk.

It hardly needs stating this is a history entirely ignored by Chazelle, whose films (*Whiplash* and *La La Land* both) are not really about Jazz, but a particular white-boy reading of what Jazz should be that focuses on "authenticity", obsessive technique and white figures that fit such a typology like Hoagy Carmichael and Buddy Rich (neither of whom necessarily deserve such a legacy).

### 1955 - *Guys and Dolls*

#### - 'La Grippe / Adelaide's Lament'

Even the musicals Chazelle purports to love have nuanced and satirical depictions of social life that he seems to have missed, and can be understood in radical ways. *Singing in the Rain* is nothing without the high-pitched bullish antihero of Lina Lamont, unforgettably played by Jean Hagen, who manages to impose her will in the face of a Hollywood boys club that sought to control every aspect of a female star's image, and sound. Even after her eventual unmasking as a benefactor of invisibilized women's labour, as the men of the film conspire to reveal her vocals are being dubbed by the placatable, golden voiced Kathy, Lina manages to sue and cash out of the arrangement. Her caustic speaking voice links to Vivian Blaine's wonderfully satirical turn as *Adelaide* in Joseph L. Mankiewicz's version of the Broadway musical *Guys and Dolls*. Unable to get commitment or



a social worker who decides that, "deep down inside him, he's no good!" and sends the "punk" to jail.

The song was banned by the BBC for its discussion of drugs and alcoholism in the role of social exclusion, and finds the boys proclaiming, "It's not I'm anti social, its that I'm anti-work" and "No-one wants a fella with a social disease." This, in the context of a film that also satirises



how, "Life is all right in America. If you're all white in America" and ends with all the main characters killed, incarcerated or heartbroken.

#### 1978 - *The Wiz* - 'You Can't Win'

*The Wiz* turned Charlie Smalls and William F. Brown's black, resolutely funk version of *The Wizard of Oz* into the most expensive film musical ever made at its time of release. Featuring a dream, entirely African-American, cast and musical score featuring Diana Ross, Michael Jackson, Richard Pryor, Lena Horne, Luther Vandross, Quincy Jones, and many others, the film was a commercial failure, offering an opportunity for Hollywood studios to retreat back to safe, white staples. Since then, the film has deservedly become a cult classic, largely thanks to Michael Jackson's incredible turn as Scarecrow, and Diana Ross' underrated Dorothy (she was derided at the time for being too old to play the part).



'You Can't Win' is a stinging commentary on how white supremacy attempts limit and control the scope of black liberation: the Scarecrow character is condemned as intellectually inferior, desperately lacking confidence, and made to internalize this pervasive racism through a repeated song led by a gang of crows. As a necessary antidote to the saccharine, fake meritocracy of *La La Land*, the song is unparalleled:

"You can't win  
You can't break even  
And you can't get out of the game  
People keep sayin'  
Things are gonna change  
But they look just like they're staying the same"

When a 2015 NBC reboot of the musical met a chorus of tweets condemning its all black cast as "racist", Dr Riana Elyse Anderson, scholar at the Racial Empowerment Collaborative, mused on 'You Can't Win's contemporary relevance

"Are they talking about how even having a Black president doesn't erase racism? Or how when Black folks strive for equitable treatment, they are ridiculed and told that they are complaining? Or that institutions or communities that serve primarily Black folks have disparities bigger than I have the time to outline here? I guess I can't win. It doesn't seem like I can get even - responses to *The Wiz* were clear on that. And yet, I still have to play the game. Where are those shiny heels to clap when I need them?"

#### 1986 - *Little Shop of Horrors* - 'Downtown'

"How do we intend to better ourselves?  
Mr when your from Skid Row ain't no such thing."

Pretty much a whole musical of biting Marxist critiques on work, gentrification, gender violence, and the idea of the sparkling 1950s golden couple, *Little Shop of Horrors* is about a man literally exploiting the bodies of his friends and neighbours to try and escape poverty, by feeding them to a giant plant, voiced magnificently by the Four Tops' Levi Stubbs.



Opening number 'Downtown' laments the systemically mandated impossibility of escaping social relations which have the power to lock whole neighborhoods into cycles of low pay, bad housing, violence and deprivation. As the useless hero Seymour, played to a tee by Rick Moranis, sings:

"Poor, all my life I've always been poor.  
I keep askin' God what I'm for.  
And he tells me, "Gee, I'm not sure."  
Sweep that floor, kid!"

Director Frank Oz shot a 23 minute finale to the film which had to be cut for something 'happier' after negative audience reactions: in it, the marauding plant Audrey II eats all of the cast and takes over the world, with a final shot of the U.S. Army fighting the plants on the Statue of Liberty and Audrey II bursting through the film screen to eat the audience.

#### 2001 - *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* - 'Give Me Something To Sing About'

Skipping entirely the 1990s, ruled as they were by Disney, Footloose and the ever present fog of Andrew Lloyd Webber's atrocious litany of biblical figures, cats and Jean Valjeans; we find ourselves at Joss Whedon's infamous foray into the Musical form, *Once More, With Feeling*. The episode finds Sarah Michelle Gellar's monster-killing feminist icon and her friends compelled by an evil demon to break into extravagant musical numbers, earning a classic but marmite-like status amongst Buffy fans. *Once More, With Feeling* comes a third of the way through season 6, with Buffy negotiating a tricky transition to womanhood, care-giving and a precarious economic situation following the death of her mother, all after being ripped from Heaven herself and returned to the hellish earth of Sunnydale. Whedon plays hard with the way musicals use song to communicate

otherwise buried or inexpressible sentiments, accelerating the season's plot by having the characters reveal intimate emotional secrets.

It stands within the genre as a pretty singular reflection on how the invocation to express, perform, and *feel* can have oppressive, as well as liberatory potential, summarising the uneasy responses many people have to musical films themselves, as 'escapist', 'fantasy' or just plain 'unreal'. Whedon breaks the fourth wall repeatedly, mocking the unnaturalness of spontaneous song and commenting repeatedly on how: "life's a show and we all play a part, and when the music starts, we open up our hearts" taking us right back to Brecht, almost, and certainly in contrast to the emotional force-feeding of *La La Land* et al.

Buffy's existential angst is prevalent throughout, in lines like "whistle while you work all day to be like other girls, to fit in this glittering world," while the bleakness of final number 'Give Me Something To Sing About' is made clear: "life's a song you don't get to rehearse, and every single verse can make it that bit worse"



This is a very different notion of 'breaking through the form' than post-modern musicals like *Strictly Ballroom* or *Pitch Perfect*, both of which focus on individual characters evading the rules of their chosen discipline (Ballroom, Acapella Singing) by sampling new, globalised forms to challenge the very tenets of that field. Instead, in *Once More, With Feeling*, we see the struggle to find agency at all in the face of wider structures of gender, family, friendship and social obligation - and the ambiguous role music and affect play at such moments, sometimes a useful trojan horse for critiques of power, but just as easily a vehicle for those very structures themselves to assert authority, with a smile.

In the year of the Buffy's 20th anniversary, with *La La Land* still enjoying critical praise as an effective channeling of the 'musical film' form (if increasingly little else), an alternative reading of this regularly dismissed, underloved genre can remind us that one important message should always be: "Don't give me songs, give me something to sing about"

Credit: JW

# LOVE YOURSELF



# REFUGES AND DEATH-WORLDS

*Climate change could displace millions of people, and border politics are a matter of life and death. This is the first of two pieces looking at climate migration, anti-migrant populisms, and no borders politics.*

"Many people—many nations—can find themselves holding, more or less wittingly, that 'every stranger is an enemy.' For the most part this conviction lies deep down like some latent infection; it betrays itself only in random, disconnected acts, and does not lie at the base of a system of reason. But when this does come about, when the unspoken dogma becomes the major premise in a syllogism, then, at the end of the chain, there is the Lager. Here is the product of a conception of the world carried rigorously to its logical conclusion; so long as the conception subsists, the conclusion remains to threaten us. The story of the death camps should be understood by everyone as a sinister alarm-signal."

Primo Levi, survivor of Auschwitz, that most infamous of Lager (Camp), proposes that the infliction of mass death on those deemed 'other' is the logical conclusion whenever the conflation of stranger with enemy is carried to its end. With the rise of anti-migrant populisms in the United States and Europe, recent events remind us that this 'latent infection' remains with us, even if the end of that chain seems as yet remote. Indeed, a lethal anti-blackness has formed a constant background, even if it has taken the movement around Black Lives Matter to highlight the 'system of reason' behind killings hitherto too easily dismissed as 'random, disconnected', a reason which all-too-easily transposes to devaluing the lives of black and brown migrants.

Worryingly, while 'the people' who take up this xenocidal logic are increasingly evident, 'the people' who could stand for free movement and refuge are not yet actualised: they remain only a latency, glimpsed in the vast efforts to support migrants and, of course, in the struggles of migrants themselves.<sup>2</sup>

There are a record 65 million forced displaced people in the world today. That is roughly 1 in every 113 people.<sup>3</sup> The UN describes our age as one "of unprecedented mass displacement".<sup>4</sup> This figure only includes refugees and people displaced internally by armed conflicts. It would rise further if those moving due to poverty, or displaced by 'natural' disasters such as droughts, storms and desertification were included.

The four-year Syrian war has been a major contributor to the current crisis, with around 11 million Syrians living as refugees outside Syria or internally displaced.

Meanwhile, the US government recently allocated its first funds for internally environmentally displaced people, providing \$48m to relocate the community of Isle de Jean Charles in southeastern Louisiana.<sup>5</sup>

A 2008 review by researchers from the Refugee Studies Centre at Oxford University found figures of 24-30 million

environmentally displaced people today, rising to 200 million or more by 2050.<sup>6</sup> This means environmental migrants already number close to half of those displaced by war (though these categories overlap<sup>7</sup>); and could number more than three times the current, record number of displaced people in three decades time. On these figures, if the world population is 10 billion in 2050, 1-in-50 people could be environmental migrants. This year, a different group of researchers have suggested that:

"the Middle East and North Africa could become so hot that human habitability is compromised. The goal of limiting global warming to less than two degrees Celsius, agreed at the recent UN climate summit in Paris, will not be sufficient to prevent this scenario."<sup>8</sup>

The Middle East and North Africa are currently home to around 400 million people. While some cities could adapt to increasingly hostile desert conditions given sufficient resources, this - and displacements in other low latitude regions - could mean somewhere in the region of 1-in-25 people being environmentally displaced through the 22nd century.<sup>9</sup>

Yet another study found that with the same two degrees of warming, desertification is likely to push north through Morocco and into southern Spain.<sup>10</sup> And to repeat: this is with just 2°C warming. If temperature rises go above this point the Sahara desert effectively jumps the Mediterranean. At higher temperatures still (beyond the four degrees forecast for 2100), Mark Lynas uses the concept of 'zones of uninhabitability':

"...places where large-scale, developed human society would no longer be sustainable in the five-degree world. Looking at the geological evidence of dramatic changes at the start of the Eocene, however, it is clear that even this discussion may be overly optimistic. Instead, we perhaps need to start talking about zones of inhabitability: refuges."<sup>11</sup>

Much of Europe lies at temperate latitudes likely to form one such refuge. Yet we read that Europe is already experiencing a border crisis. This crisis reflects not only the increase in displaced people, which is modest in light of forecast climate migrations, but also the political decision to scale back search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean.

When the Italian-led Mare nostrum operation was cancelled, the predictable - and predicted - consequence, was an increase in deaths at sea. It's not simply that thousands of people are dying trying to enter Europe - 32,000 dead or missing between 2000 and January 2016 - but that they are being murdered by the EU's border regime.<sup>12</sup>

Only a fraction of the world's migrants try to enter Europe; most are either internally displaced or living in neighbouring countries. Indeed in 2015 Europe as a whole received 1.25 million asylum applications, but 86% of refugees were hosted in "developing regions", with Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, Iran and Ethiopia being the top 5 host states in terms of absolute

numbers.<sup>13</sup> That this has constituted a crisis has more to do with a barely concealed racial revanchism - a growing feeling that every stranger is an enemy - than the numbers themselves.

Nevertheless, climate change, even under the best case scenarios, looks likely to force dramatically larger numbers of people into displacement. In such a world and absent freedom of movement - real refuge - the toll of thousands of migrants dying in the Mediterranean today could be dwarfed by the toll of the habitable zones' border regimes.

There is a ready-made concept, from the 1970s reactionary ecology of Garrett Hardin, which gives lethal border violence an environmentalist gloss. Hardin proposed a metaphor of nations as lifeboats, always in danger of being swamped by those trying to get in.

Hardin's lifeboats are not refuges. According to him, letting just a few of "the fast-reproducing poor" in will see them soon outnumber the original inhabitants and destroy civilisation (the eugenic, racist subtext is barely concealed). Hardin called this 'lifeboat ethics', and it provides a ready rationale for 'lifeboat states', where wholesale murder of migrants is considered a moral imperative, an act of racial-national self-defence.

Not only do we find this argument morally repugnant, but, as we highlighted in our critique of Hardin<sup>14</sup>, even the underlying ecological theory for these arguments is empirically and historically incorrect, relying on emotive metaphors and white supremacist common sense. However, this is precisely why these arguments remain ideologically useful to those looking for environmentalist justifications for border violence in an era of mass displacement.



*Border imperialism and its death-worlds*

To understand what it might take to avert a future of lifeboat states, a solid understanding of existing border regimes is needed. An excellent place to start is with the concept of border imperialism, developed by activists in the No One Is Illegal (NOII) network and outlined in Harsha Walia's collaborative book *Undoing Border Imperialism*:

*"Border imperialism can be understood as creating and reproducing global mass displacements and the conditions necessary for legalised precarity of migrants, which are inscribed by the racialised and gendered violence of empire as well as capitalist segregation and differential segmentation of labour."<sup>15</sup>*

- 13 UNISDR, Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015, pp.2-3: This does not imply benevolence on the part of these states, only proximity to displaced populations. In many of these countries there is no route to citizenship, so people displaced decades ago from Palestine or the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan remain 'refugees', as do their descendants.
14. Out of the Woods, The dangers of reactionary ecology, in Libcom.org, 30 June 2014.
15. Harsha Walia (2014), *Undoing Border Imperialism*, AK Press, p.75.

Displacement has typically come through economic shocks and/or IMF structural adjustment programs; or wars, often involving imperial powers. As we have seen, climate change will increasingly become a factor too. Displacement is usually multicausal, and attributing any given movement of people to climate change is difficult (although the UN already says that climate is a factor in 87% of disasters<sup>16</sup>).

Indeed, states have resisted the category of 'environmental refugee' as on paper - although increasingly not in practice - refugees have a legal right to refuge. However, a border imperialism perspective cautions against being drawn into such worthy/unworthy migrant classifications, towards the all-embracing demands raised by migrants, such as "*freedom of movement for all!*", "*everyone deserves a safe home*", and "*no more walls!*".<sup>17</sup>

The notion of border imperialism draws attention to the fact the border is not just the line on the map, but immigration raids on workplaces, surveillance in universities and nationality checks for schoolchildren, healthcare users and renters, and passport checks at transport hubs, as well as, 'on the other side', the riot police marauding through migrant camps and the activities of the EU border agency Frontex, which "*increasingly policies the EU's borders by taking its bordering practices directly to the populations it deems to pose the greatest threat.*"<sup>18</sup> Frontex activities extend as far as interdiction off the West African coast. On the one hand, these bordering practices produce the conditions for the exploitation of precarious, criminalised labour, on the other, they produce death-worlds for those racialised as not fully human, not deserving of life.

Two quotes serve to illustrate this point. The first from the academic Achille Mbembe:

*"I have put forward the notion of necropolitics and necropower to account for the various ways in which, in our contemporary world, weapons are deployed in the interest of maximum destruction of persons and the creation of death-worlds, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjugated to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead."*<sup>19</sup>

The second from a Syrian migrant, Abu Jana:

*"Let me tell you something. Even if there was a [European] decision to drown the migrant boats, there will still be people going by boat because the individual considers himself dead already. Right now Syrians consider themselves dead. Maybe not physically, but psychologically and socially [a Syrian] is a destroyed human being, he's reached the point of death. So I don't think that even if they decided to bomb migrant boats it would change people's decision to go."*<sup>20</sup>

Levi's warning haunts us. The refrains of lifeboat ethics are ready-made to rationalise and naturalise these horrors. Lifeboat ethics beget lifeboat states and the death-worlds of their border regimes. In the second piece of this two-part series, we will try and understand the current anti-migrant populisms in Europe and the US, and what this implies for undermining pro-borders politics while building a no borders politics within the likely habitable zones of the future. The latent infection diagnosed by Levi demands anti-fascist inoculation.

**Out of the Woods -- 'A collaborative blog investigating capitalism and climate change'** libcom.org/outofthewoods@out\_woods Part 1 of 2. Article reprinted with permission from libcom.org, where it first appeared in November 2016

1. Primo Levi (1991), *If This Is A Man / The Truce*, Abacus, New Edition, p.15. If we take Aimé Césaire's point that the Holocaust had its roots in colonial genocides, then we should perhaps not be surprised that non-Europeans are more readily treated as enemies.

2. For more on the role of 'the people' in populist politics see our discussion of climate populism in Climate populism and the People's Climate March, libcom.org, 10 Sep 2014.

3. UNHCR, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015*.

4. Sam Jones, One in every 122 people is displaced by war, violence and persecution, says UN, The Guardian, 18 June 2015.

5. Robert Hunziker, The Political Era of Climate Refugees, Counterpunch, 28 October 2016. This is the second time the Biloxi-Chitimacha people on the island have been forced to move: the island was populated by people fleeing the Indian Removal Act in 1830, when more than 20,000 indigenous people fled to the coast.

6. Refugee Studies Centre, *Forced migration policy briefing 1: environmentally displaced people*, University of Oxford. Note that these higher figures are disputed, though the alternative figures of "tens of thousands" seem impossibly low: Hurricane Katrina temporarily displaced around 400,000 people, Typhoon Haiyan around 4 million. Low-lying Pacific islands are home to over 2 million people, while tens of thousands of people annually are internally displaced by erosion in Bangladesh alone.

7. John Wendle, Syria's climate refugees, Scientific American (March 2016), 314, 50-55.

8. Phys.org, Climate-exodus expected in the Middle East and North Africa

9. The Adaptation Fund established under the Kyoto Protocol has currently allocated \$358 million (£288 million) in 68 countries to adaptation projects since 2010. For comparison, in 2014 the UK announced a £2.3 billion [\$2.9 billion] spend on flood defences, also over six years. The latter is an order of magnitude greater investment in just one aspect of adaptation, in one country, than the total allocated to-date worldwide via the Adaptation Fund.

10. Sabrina Shankman, Rapidly Warming Mediterranean Headed for Desertification, Study Warns, Inside Climate News.

11. Mark Lynas (2008), *Six Degrees*, Harper Perennial, p.209

12. The Migrant Files [Content note: catalogue of causes of death]. These murderous policies sometimes give way to straight murder, with documented incidents of Frontex firing on migrant vessels. See: Zach Campbell, Shoot First: Coast Guard Fired at Migrant Boats, European Border Agency Documents Show, The Intercept, August 22 2016.

13. UNISDR, Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015, pp.2-3.

14. Out of the Woods, The dangers of reactionary ecology, in Libcom.org, 30 June 2014.

15. Harsha Walia (2014), *Undoing Border Imperialism*, AK Press, p.75.

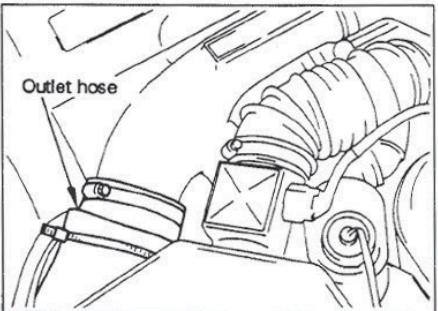
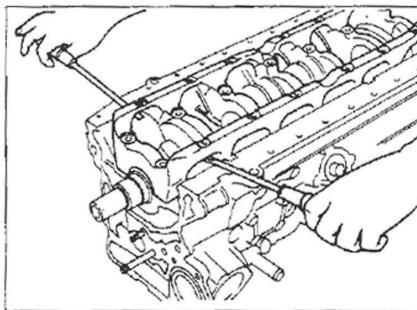
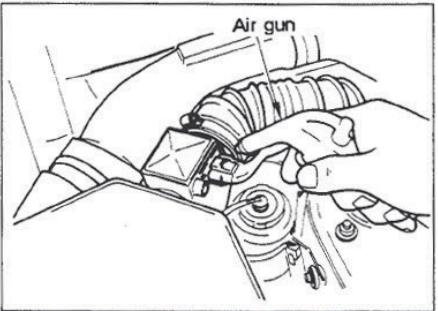
16. UNISDR, Ten-year review finds 87% of disasters climate-related, 6 March 2015.

17. These slogans can be seen in Guy Smallman's photos of a migrant-organised demonstration in Calais.

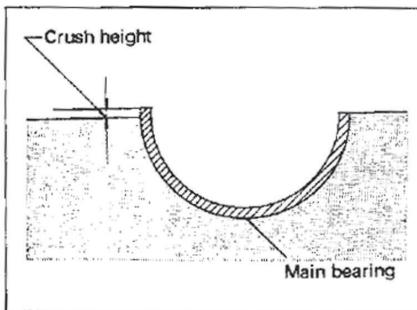
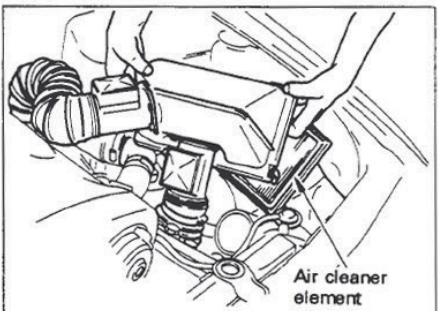
18. Nick Vaughan-Williams (2009), *Border Politics: The Limits of Sovereign Power*, p.28.

19. Achille Mbembe, *Necropolitics*. Public Culture 15(1):11-40.

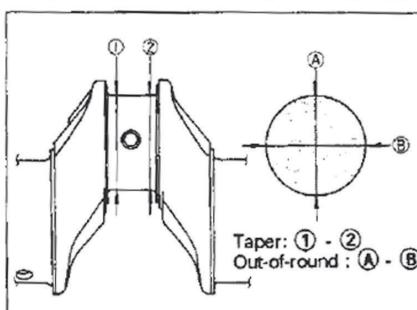
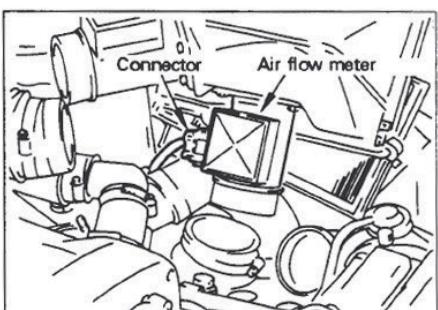
20. Quoted in Patrick Kingsley and Sima Diab, Passport, lifejacket, lemons: what Syrian refugees pack for the crossing to Europe, The Guardian, 4 September 2015.



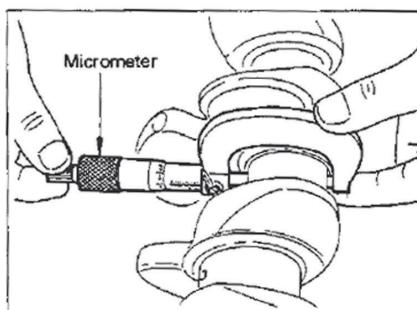
far from being an economic fact, skill is often an ideological category imposed on certain types of work by virtue of the sex and power of the workers who perform it.



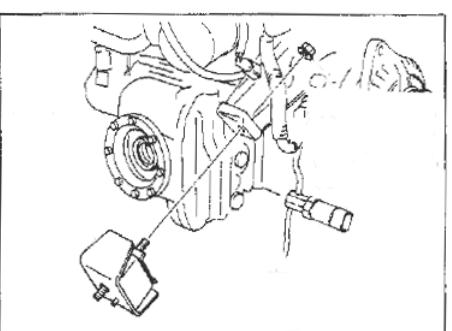
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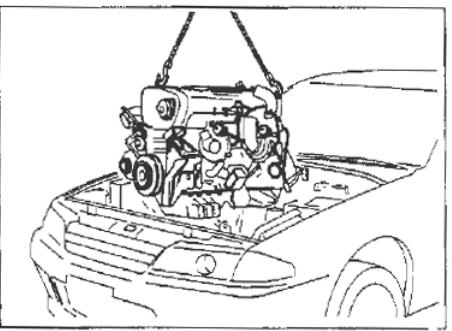
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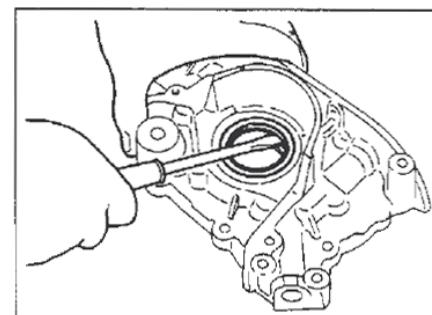
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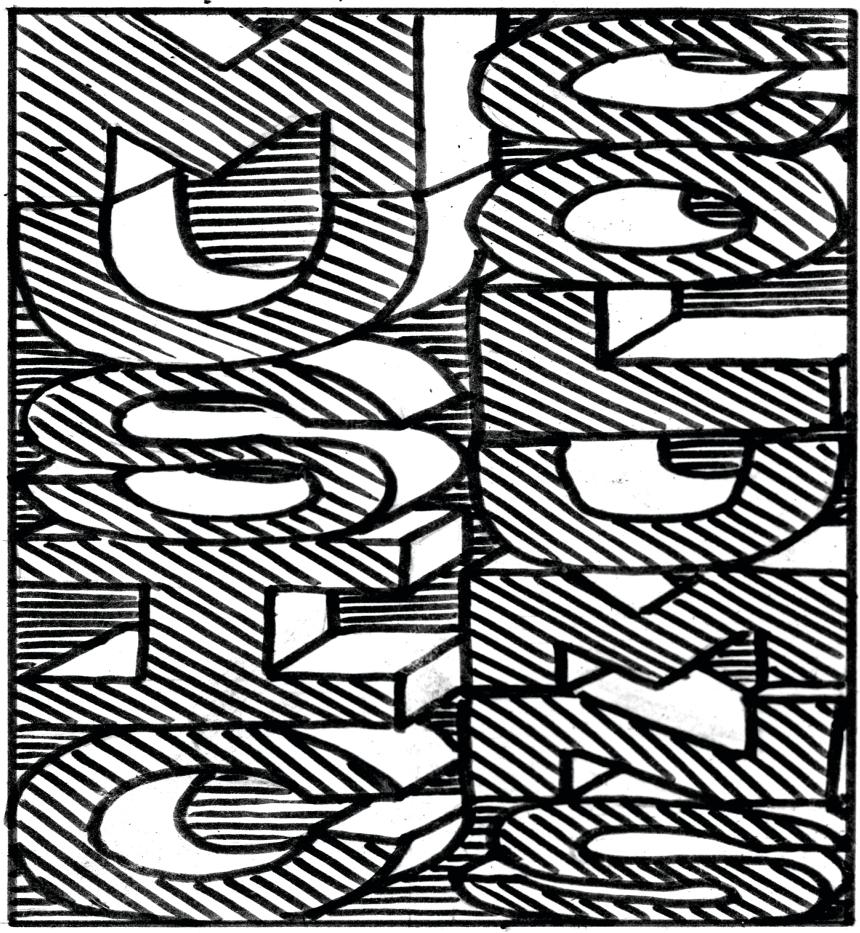
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Sweat and sweating



in 1943 it was passed that as long as a women could do her job 'without special guidance, assistance or supervision' they could receive equal pay to a man.



## DICK BASS

### The Nova-Scotian Snow- Trumpet

There are many bizarre musical instruments to be found: The Balinese Cloud Organ; The Kerguelen Cabbage-Banjo; The Hebridean Cockle-Ocarina; The Easter Island Puffin Bagpipes; But none are quite so strange as the Snow Trumpet of Nova Scotia.

The Nova Scotian Snow Trumpet was invented in 1946 by a Truro cobbler named Leslie Dennis Heseltine. In an interview given to the Acton Free Press in '53 Heseltine claimed the inspiration for the Snow Trumpet came to him in a dream. "I awoke to find a man standing at the foot of my bed, staring at me", he stated, "He smelt strongly of the sea, and said nothing". Apparently the figure was dressed "as would a pirate, unshaven, in his mid-thirties and dangerous-looking", and although the visitor remained taciturn throughout, Heseltine felt "a frightening gale of dark instruction pass through me". He awoke the following morning with a crystal-clear plan in his mind and vowed, still in his pyjamas, to build a musical instrument the like of which had never been seen. In the cobbler's own words, "I experienced the most terrifying clarity of foresight to achieving that end". It was at this point Heseltine made a very disturbing discovery: On the bedroom floor, right where the grim fellow had stood in the dream, there was a small pile of snow.



The Snow Trumpet is deafeningly loud. It is very dangerous to stand too close to the Snow Trumpet when it is being played at full volume. A well-directed blast from the Snow Trumpet will kill a dog stone-dead. The Snow Trumpet is louder than a hundred jumbo-jets.

What is really strange though, and what none of the leading ethnomusicologists have been able to fathom, is that the Snow Trumpet cannot be recorded, whether onto magnetic tape, digitally, or by any other method you may care to choose. Put simply, no microphone can 'hear' the sound, and no-one knows why. Despite great efforts to the contrary there has been, to this date, not a single successful recording made of the Snow Trumpet... only tapefuls of curling silence, spool upon spool of spiralling hiss, a horrifying ribbon of utter nothingness.

## PSF

Hideo Ikeezumi, who died on February 27th, was the founder of PSF Records, the psyche/weirdo/whatever imprint that acted as a gateway for so many into the Japanese underground since 1984. Named after their first release, High Rise's still evisceratingly satisfying "Psychedelic Speed Freaks", Ikeezumi's label would eventually unleash some of the most soul burningly intense sides of the era, from Fushitsusha's monolithic "Live 2" to important (yet often frustratingly difficult to source in the west) documents of improvisation by the likes of Kan Mikami, Charles Gayle ( Solo in Japan CD (1997) and numerous others. The former is a record so fundamentally heavy on just about every conceivable level that I sometimes don't listen to it for years at a time, just because I fear if I ever get bored of it's thrill there is probably precious reason left to enjoy anything in life. Gayle, a similarly uncompromising veteran of the NYC free jazz scene of the 1970's, only recently given the belated respect his impassioned work deserves, was a natural choice given Ikeezumi's predilection for the intersections between dumb as fuck rock music, blasted folk traditions and the relentless autodidactism of improvisation. Indeed, for much of PSF's existence capital "I" improv still held sway throughout much of Europe, but the playful idiosyncrasies of a Derek Bailey, say, were too often overshadowed by a permanently scuttley, somewhat rigid aesthetic which PSF's output - in particular that of Keiji Haino - acted as a necessary and vital counterpoint to, even for listeners still enamoured with European approaches to improv. Coming just days after the death of the great gonzo auteur of Japanese cinema, Seijun Suzuki, news of Ikeezumi's death is tempered only by the knowledge that PSF's back catalogue has recently been remastered and due a rerelease by the Black Edition label. R.I.P.

Credit: DB

## COME LEIS WITH ME

*Things that I need – notchu! I do not need it when you come to an Elysia Crampton gig and shout in my ear that you think the music is weird and hard to dance to. Get off the dance floor and stop making it hard for me to dance.*

Hiya! Music here. Have you been depressed and anxious?  
mmmm...

I wanted to soundtrack a recent period with this piece. Give you a little insight into what's been up personally, spin a little story for you, hopefully bring some visuals into your head and add a little medley mix to the scene.

Opening with Bullet Chained off Arca's Xen and right after we have Lotic's remix of Jaws of Life by Dan Bodan. Let's get things limber and supple, break a few bones, smack a shoulder blade hard off some thick mdf and really relish that 'ow' you feel deep inside your soul.

Bullet Chained is really really good. But all the yt/sc posts of it I found aren't playable in the listen to it on spotify or buy it (buy all this music). Here's my pov: BANG BANG BANG BANG bangbangbangbangbangbang. Uggghhhh, this is really good <3. Ya this is great, Mmmmmmmmm. Fuck ya. Life is really fucking intense sometimes but most of the time it feels like everything's happening around me. You know like that feeling when everywhere you go it feels like the waters part, you're standing there in the dry ground and all of life is happening back at its origins in the liquid which continuously evades your touch. Well this song is when you finally say "FUCK IT" and just as you're about to sit down in a huff the 40 foot+ walls of water come crashing down on top you and suddenly you're in it and part of it all over again. You're moving through it and it's moving you. Really beautiful stuff. As it's all getting a bit much and you begin to wonder again, a beautiful amphibious creature with silk like green and blue skin catches your drift and moves gracefully towards you locking eyes as it nears. They reach you and kindly but firmly stroke the skin on your cheeks as they lean into your mouth and you notice something else gliding up your backside. The song ends.

Many moments have passed where you heard nothing but the echo of a dulled pulsing slosh coming from below your tail's tip. All you could see was black and now you find yourself surrounded by oxygen and light from a burning flame somewhere in the dark distance. A sirens song rings out like an eerie alarm bell as you float on the surface of this liquid universe. Lotic's remix of Jaws of life begins to play. You might be a little scared.

This is something new and confident. But you trust it as you notice yourself steadily moving ever nearer into the bay. Twinkling eyes glow at you from a face who's mouth flickers consistently between a smile and a frown, so much so that you start to believe that they're both there at once, together. The song starts you into a gentle whirl and you feel a dip slowly emerging around you. As you swirl the dip grows and the vortex beneath you slowly opens. The siren keeps your gaze while you go down.

Pay It No Mind, you drop below to the bed once again. NerVosa reminds you with this interlude that it's important to keep living through your experiences and not to forget who's come before you.

Holes by 18+ is ever sexy as is to be expected from the duo. I don't know who you are. The incu/succu-bus taking the sexual gratification you want from the slew of bodies at your disposal or the ravaged beauty begging your lover not to leave. Neither? I've been both. Exploring holes is pretty interesting for a while. Ribbed steel pipes slide down stealthily the entire length of a man's shaft much easier than expected. Feeling the point of the instrument pressing through the flesh at the base, right above



the balls, is fascinating for about a second or two. A large fist and long forearm fit neatly inside a well prepared anus with a lot less struggle or screaming than you might imagine. And if you shove an erect cock to the back of the right throat on a sunny day when the wind is just right you can hear the splashes as the urine starts to flow and hit off the red and pink walls before it drops into the well rubbed hairy belly below. Who knows who'll love who after the last lover has gone but if you do it well they'll be sure to find traces.

333 Boyz, one after the other, please. Pairs Hilton and Manufactured Superstars remixed by the boyos reminds us of the times that were and will always be. Drunk Text is a story set in a twittersphere far far nearer than where my wildest dreams reside. A place called home, where you get messy drunk, invade someone's privacy and embarrass a perfectly decent stranger you haven't even met. But hey, it was just a drunk text. Let's gather together to hold up our phones and scream. Let out the rage, everything that's built up inside of you from the times you've made a fool of yourself and the times some fool has gotten

way to close to you in a club where the dj has 0 imagination but somehow maintains a 5 years long residency. It's worth noting that 333 Boyz's recent FW 2016 Global Freakout mix is amazing and that their choice to remix this song and bring a could-be-lost gem back into the public conscious earned them a special place in my heart.

\* a moment of divine clarity on the seabed dancefloor as you catch yourself mid sneer at another being you've never spoken to but for some reason thought you were better than because, what? You didn't like their outfit or saw them laugh too loud? \* Brooklyn White chimes in with a reminder to check ourselves before we project our insecurities onto others. Judgement. Hold it back, at least momentarily.

Now you've stumbled clumsily but correctly onto the beach where the scraggly haired stoner sits with his acoustic guitar and gently strums a song about his past sexual escapades. Crywank's Song For a Guilty Sadist really caught my attention because of the artist's and the track's name. Quite a nice melody for when you've worn yourself out with x-rated pleasures and begin to ponder upon the idea of mutuality and consistency. I have unresolved feelings about the content. A bit of a glancing side eye at his paralleling of chauvinism and fetishism, people are different though and I also don't know so I'll let it pass. There is something to be said for tender caring sexual exploration and childish play in the bedroom, I like it.

YOU'RE SO. You're so sick, you're so sick if you'd rather be with him. Wench scream through you using the ripe mouth you claim as your own for 'Sick', and you start to let go of envy. This song's hypnotic loop manages to both soothe and unsettle as it jumps to a halt between cycles. The relationship's been rocky and left someone jaded. As you keep moving forward and living your life well and positively you'll always feel the smack of walking into a sharp wall of loss. They're a sick twisted thin glitch in your experience and you love them for it.

Buy this music. Follow the artists profiles. Listen on Spotify. If you like it try and give something back.

You can find the *Come Leis With Me* playlist on soundcloud at: <https://soundcloud.com/dylanpmeade/sets/come-leis-with-me>

Credit: DM



# FOR THE LONGEST WHILE WE JAMMING IN THE PARTY

The eighteenth anniversary of Kevin Lyttle's Turn Me On presents a keyhole into Latin America's pop traditions, reggaeton economics, and the development of a pan-American phenomenon often seen from afar by Anglophone audiences.

Saint Vincentian Kevin Lyttle's signature track Turn Me On stormed school dances, hostel bars, and water parks across the Occident in 2003, with its teasing, lilting synth strings and Lyttle's joyous, exhortatory vocal performance. Yet Turn Me On wasn't all that new: its first release came two years prior, as a runaway Carnival hit, most notably in Trinidad. The track, produced by Adrian Bailey from Jamaica, was penned by no other than 112, the Grammy winning Atlanta-based R&B group. In an interview for BBC Caribbean in 2004, Lyttle himself remarked that Turn Me On's very instrumentation "was to prove that it would play at more than just carnival."

The tidy nexus of pan-American chart-engineering wasn't that new, like Turn Me On itself, but it was indicative of the piquing interest in crossover-minded artists such as Lyttle by the Big Four music groups (Sony and BMG would merge in 2004). It is the crossover which is of importance to this history. The consolidating corporate attention on demographics (an audience share comparatively dwarfing the Anglophone market while conveniently intersecting it) also combined with a historiography of hustle & promotion, in many cases official suspicion & sanction, and- most importantly- fervent underground support. What Turn Me On shares with this diachronic history, perhaps, is the number of versions Lyttle has spun off from his theme; what's singular about Turn Me On is that he's on almost all of them.

At this point the essay veers towards discussion of something larger: 2003 brought riddim culture to Western attention in a big way. Witness the blazing path of Steven Lenky Marsden's Diwali riddim that year, with mainstream success for Caribbean and Latin artists alike: Get Busy by Sean Paul, No Letting Go by

Wayne Wonder, and Never Leave You by Lumidee. All blew up Top 40 Billboard spots, with Sean Paul at #1 for almost a month that spring. Marsden received an ASCAP award for the triple feat. "It's giving riddims cred outside of the specialty market," Marsden conceded to Entertainment Weekly in 2002.

British readers are versed in Reggae's ineluctable contribution to British music as we know it. Similar musical translocation concurred in Central America, principally in Panama, largely through Jamaican emigration there. In step with riddim culture, as with Reggae, or Ragga, or Dancehall, Reggae en Español outgrew its formalist and national boundaries in Panama and abroad. American readers may be recently familiar with the Ragga Hip-Hop boom of the early 90s, centered in New York. However in Anglophonic markets, with regard to explicitly Spanish music, much less its ties to Reggae culture, Spain's Los Del Rios' La Macarena would be a track more familiar to most by the end of the decade.

For a social history of the stylistics of the subject of Reggae en Español and Reggaeton, surrounding the Shabba Ranks track Dem Bow, and its translation by Panama's Nando Boom and El General, and discussion of the elements of the pan-genre, Wayne Marshall's essay Dem Bow, Dembow, Dembo: Translation and Transnation in Reggaeton, 2008, should be sought out. Marshall richly illustrates the development of Reggae en Español in Panama, its anti-colonial component, as well as its relevance to Puerto Rican music culture. For more contextual analyses, and in particular, discussion of political violence and music in Puerto Rico, the anthology Reading Reggaeton, edited by Marshall, Raquel Z Rivera, and Deborah Pacini Hernandez, from Duke University Press, 2009, is an exhaustive collection.

In the martial colonialism of Puerto Rico, a United States protectorate marginalized by its non-statehood, what was known increasingly as Reggaeton was essentially banned, and as with any such art form, it was celebrated for its illicitness. (Funnily, La Macarena, a rumba, served as the reelection theme for the progressive governor Pedro Rosselló in 1993.) If the early 00s were the years reggaeton broke, as the island's underground music surfaced to continental visibility, and- at home- official respectability, it was all part of a long process for Puerto Rican pop culture. Reggaeton had been the subject of real violence, led by former entertainer and centrist Senator Velda González, who called on national police forces to intimidate artists and promoters, and shutter parties throughout the 1990s. The perreo, a booty dance, had been banned in that decade.

2004 was the year González finally lost her seat. Ivy Queen's album Diva, Daddy Yankee's Barrio Fino, and DJ

Nelson's Flow La Diskoteka compilation were released to big sales in Puerto Rico, as well as stateside Latin-Caribbean centers like Miami and New York, where these albums were primarily recorded.

To go back to Marsden's Diwali, the riddim had come up on critical radars in part through its 2002 Greensleeves license, though it was made in 1998, according to Marsden. But it was reggae in name only to some ears: "it's not much more than polyrhythmic handclaps and a few synthesizer notes," commented Kelefa Sanneh in The New York Times, June 2, 2002, reviewing Diwali's compilation release. In closing however, Sanneh praised the "creative power of a great beat, which suggestss a different song to every singer who hears it."

And then there was Cordell Scatta Burell's Coolie Dance riddim in 2004; the versions important to me were Elephant Man's Jook Gal remix with Chicago's Twista and Atlanta's Youngbloodz, and the duo Nina Sky with Move Ya Body. Reporting for the LA Times on July 25 that year, nodding to Diwali's success previously, Baz Dreisinger wrote "last summer launched a pop tradition that complements the summer song: the summer beat," and she remarks "Including the Elephant Man and Nina Sky tracks, Coolie Dance is at the heart of four radio hits, two full-length albums and one copyright infringement case."

That lawsuit was between Jamaica's Mr Vegas, with Pull Up, and Atlanta's crunk impresario Lil Jon and Miami's not-yet-Mr Worldwide, Pitbull, with Culo, which had performed better. A representative for Lil Jon and Pitbull's label mentioned in proceedings that a settlement might be reached by remix, featuring both the plaintiff and defendants. Coolie Dance was up for grabs.

When pressed for material by Pharrell associate Cipha Sounds, the Albino twins known as Nina Sky, born in San Juan and raised in Queens, delivered Move Ya Body, based on Burrell's beat. It dropped in April, and its bubblegum bump-bump-bump and languid vocals intersected on a format, which was a capitalization of Reggaeton's historical development, as well as its sampling strategy. It was a formalization, part of the same anticipatory process as Lyttle's intention with Turn Me On, which over the coming decade would establish Reggaeton as a dominant form of pan-American music.

In Puerto Rico, Marshall writes, underground music has been referred to as Música Negra or less complexly, Hip Hop or Reggae, "all evoking or intertwined with symbols of blackness." He continues, "in the new millennium, the genre increasingly found itself promoted as Reggaeton Latino," "dovetailing" with a globalizing set of interests. Importantly, tracks such as Move Ya Body evidence how, in Marshall's terms "the very cultural politics of the genre itself has changed ... with increasing appeal to a

mainstream, pan-Latino listenership." (He uses N.O.R.E. & Nina Sky's Boricuan anthem Oye Mi Canto [Hear My Song] from 2004 as his chief example.)

Writing for NACLA's bulletin in 2007, Raquel Z Rivera and Frances Negrón-Muntaner state "In earlier years, to belittle reggaeton was to denigrate poor, black, urban youth culture, an easy target. Today the genre represents one of the most impressive stories of Puerto Rican economic and cultural success."

Rivera & Negrón-Muntaner underscore the very real social function of the genre: "In becoming the island's most important cultural export since Ricky Martin, Reggaeton showcases how social groups written off by the state, educators, and the media have transformed a homegrown product from underground infamy to global popularity." They conclude "Reggaeton's success story highlights Puerto Rico's contradictory

Viacom had tied up competing cable interests to launch its MTV-derived Tr3s, to streamline delivery of its chosen artists.

More significantly in this trade-off, with a double-edged instrumentality, "Reggaeton artists and producers ... exploited and expanded hip-hop's hustle" through new telemedia platforms, with stakes in the diaspora, growing fanbases through homegrown channels, asserts Marshall, from an article in Boston's Phoenix, January 19, 2009. That concern for legitimacy through commercial means, as critics like Marshall & Rivera remark, insinuates a continuing colonial struggle in Puerto Rican identity, seen its reframing of supra-national centers of culture, such as Nuyorico, the Boricuan designation for New York.

In Puerto Rico's case, the discursive economy surrounding formerly criminal Reggaeton was already in place. Ivy Queen, quoted in interview, 2006, in

precisely because the music has not been marketed to Anglo-American audiences."

Whiter audiences could experience the genre through the continuum of club music, in the way that sampling in Hip-Hop has brought remix culture to levels of critical theory. It could also be seen as an enjoyable alternative to, say, Enrique Iglesias, and his performance of adult contemporary Latin culture. And in that sense it was "seemingly coming out of nowhere," as Rivera & Negrón-Muntaner put it. However for Marshall, as one might hear in Move Ya Body, "For most it appears that Reggaeton's boom-ch-boom-chick now says 'bailando sexy' more than anything else: experienced at a phenomenological level, it is body music."

And while this development potentially effaces the mark of cultural politics, the embrace of Reggaeton reconstituted has been overwhelmingly positive for a psychic Latin America. As Rivera & Negrón-Muntaner put it, "Reggaeton may at times imagine the nation as a contained space, but this notion of the local is composed of globalized cultures." And while Reggaeton has never been so commercially produced and consumed, the grassroots soundsystem culture that sustained the form in its nascence (from Jamaica to Puerto Rico) has continued to ornament the genre with remixes, versions and interpolations, and all of Latin America is in. So why open this essay with Kevin Lyttle, from Saint Vincent? Because this year marks a new release of his signature song, Turn Me On Fuego, headed by Colombia's AstrA, featuring Mexico's Costi and Lyttle himself.

Today the pan-Latino Reggaeton sound unarguably belongs to Colombia, centered in Medellín, thanks in part to a rapid, if asymmetric economic boom. Young gun Maluma has about 3 billion combined views on YouTube, and J Balvin, longer in the tooth, has more than 4 and a half billion combined views on that platform. He broke the record for a Reggaeton artist on the 1 billion mark for a single video with Ay Vamos. Channeled as these artists are, through a sophisticated, massive Hispanic mediasphere, it seems Western audiences may not be as aware of Latin America's musical developments, further away from us then, say, the Jamaican pop innovations of which Drake is fond. But with view numbers like that, Justin Bieber was more or less forced to release his remix of Sorry with J Balvin; if only to divert some of the subcontinent's clicks to North America.

Turn Me On, for its part, has always been pure balada, evidencing the "sexy" accessibility evoked by Marshall. In Turn Me On Fuego this affect is blazing, with conga-driven crescendos and extra stringy stabs. AstrA works the first verse for its all, and then in a flourish, after she and Lyttle interchange on the bridge, he sings his hit again, until Costi exhorts him to sing it once more, this time in Spanish.

Credit: SB



location in the global economy. While the island is poorer than all the states in the union, by using an independent production model inspired by U.S. Hip-Hop and based in the grassroots, Reggaeton artists are not only global stars but also local entrepreneurs."

In the establishment's recognition of Reggaeton's cultural value, a sea change, Marshall argues, "Reggaeton has also undergone a kind of whitening, or blanqueamiento, and a 'cleaning up' to befit commercial aspirations of artists, producers, and other music-industrial entrepreneurs." Marshall notes the consolidation of Univision's La Kalle radio share in the mid-90s, leading 'hurban' (Hispanic/urban) programming choices in the face of Reggaeton's salability. I add that by 2006

Rivera & Negrón-Muntaner's article, states: "It's only logical ... When you prohibit something, that's when a kid will most want to know about it. Velda González gave us the best promotion, because she sparked the whole world's curiosity. We have to be grateful for that. She helped us commercialize the genre."

That attitude, marked by Reggaeton's striding success in 2004, according to Marshall "draws our attention to the most obvious underlying reason for the genre's seemingly sudden ubiquity: simple demographics." In syncretizing and simplifying genres and attitudes before it, Reggaeton was both authentic and far-reaching, a haphazardly unifying, generous youth music, with a fabled, outlaw dance at its core. More over: "Reggaeton lacks much of an exotic veneer

