

*Heroin Kills; context and meaning in contemporary art practice*

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of  
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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others. This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

## Acknowledgements

The research submitted here has been completed with the assistance and support of many people, including Lars Bang Larsen, Robert Johnston, Will Bradley and Alexia Holt, who all contributed to the realisation of the *HK* publication. I would also like to acknowledge the financial assistance provided by, amongst others, the Scottish Arts Council, The Modern Institute and Tramway, as well as the Burton Family Trust. Finally, I would particularly like to acknowledge Tom O'Sullivan's role within the ongoing *HK* project.

## Abstract

*Heroin Kills; context and meaning in contemporary art practice* is a thesis comprising of two parts; the *HK* publication and a separate written submission.

Since 2000 I have worked simultaneously as a Fine Art research student within the University of Leeds and as a professional artist within the context of contemporary art. This thesis aims to negotiate these two parallel yet distinct sites, within which art practice occurs. The two contexts make different demands of art practice. They do not operate within a common discourse and they do not necessarily use the same systems to validate art activity. As such, art means differently within each of these two contexts.

This thesis uses these differences of context to enable a consideration of how art, in the form of objects, images and words, means. Concurrently, the thesis then uses this potential for different meanings to articulate the distinctions that exist between these two contexts as sites for art.

The *HK* publication exists both as a component element of the thesis and separately outside of the context of the PhD as a handbook for the *HK* project. The *HK* project has been enabled by the context of contemporary art and this remains a principal signifying site for the publication. The PhD thesis re-presents and re-frames the *HK* publication. The publication functions through how and where it is positioned, drawing attention to the mechanics of its presentation as it does so.

The written element of the thesis considers the relationship that exists between an artwork and the written word. The writing attempts to present an alternative method for taking account of the contexts for the production, exhibition and dissemination of art by constructing a narrative around *HK* that provides an account parallel to the *HK* publication.

The two elements of the thesis work together to consider the context of the Fine Art practice PhD as a site for meaning for contemporary art. I hope *HK*, the project that resides behind, above and beyond this thesis, survives this process.

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## CHAPTER ONE

FROM: larsjakob@planet.dk  
TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net  
DATE: 10/7/01 5:27pm  
SUBJECT: from Lars

Hi Joanne and Tom,

I just sent off a mail to Alexia saying that I will be happy to write a text for your Tramway exhibition. The outline of your project sounds absolutely great, so it will be really interesting to write this! Maybe the best thing would be to have a chat on the phone about things, because I am basically only familiar with your work through the Berlin showing of The Glamour (and C—'s praises). On what number can I reach you? I'm travelling at the moment, but my home # is +45 3225 1989, mobile +45 2117 3397.

Speak soon then,

Lars

FROM: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net  
TO: larsjakob@planet.dk  
DATE: 11/7/01 10.31am  
SUBJECT: from Joanne and Tom

Hi Lars

It's great that you're happy to do a piece of writing for us! We really enjoyed your piece on The Glamour for Art Forum. We're also interested in your writings about the social function of Art, relational aesthetics etc. It would be great to have something that brought the two together (!), but really, we would be very happy with whatever you wanted to write.

We could send you some slides to show you what we have been up to. We also have some bits of writing by Christian on our work, which might be useful for you.

Perhaps it would be best for you to see this before we talk?

Have you got an address we can send stuff to?

Our telephone no is +44 141 323 1990

Hope to hear from you soon.

Joanne & Tom

FROM: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

TO: larsjakob@planet.dk

DATE: 14/8/01 11.37am

SUBJECT: HK

Hi Lars

Hope you had a nice holiday. Did you receive the slides we sent? Some of the work is quite distant now, but we thought we'd send it anyway.

We're hoping your writing will work as another element within the project. We've been thinking about the way the "critical essay" functions within the art exhibition.

At the moment we're thinking the essay will be printed as a poster/publication,

which we're designing with R—. HEROIN KILLS is after all just a big bit of

typography - and we want the whole design / typographic thing to work together.

We see the presentations by the Glasgow drug support groups as having a similar curious relationship within the project. Officially it provides a context of useful information for the HEROIN KILLS sculpture - but only if a viewer sees the work in a literal way.

There is a plan to do a catalogue type publication after the show. We like the idea that this is maybe a year plus later.

We went in a couple of weeks ago to build a trial letter R, which went very well.

The scale was such that it was easily possible to walk under the arch of the R!

We're talking to Alexia about getting some money so we could maybe meet up and talk. We'll let you know.

best wishes

Tom and Joanne

FROM: larsjakob@planet.dk  
TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net  
DATE: 15/8/01 10:22am  
SUBJECT: Sv: HK

Hi Joanne, hi Tom!

Thanks a lot for the material you sent me - I received it already a few days after we talked on the phone. It looks great, it should provide me with background knowledge of your work. I will spend the weekend with it and try to think of ways to approach the text in the light of what we've talked about.

The trial run of the R sounds wild! I really like the idea of messed up scale relationships.

It would be great if we could meet up in Glasgow, I would love to come over if possible so we could have a chat about everything. I think it would also be useful if I could do some research in Glasgow in relation to the drug scene/problem and the way it is dealt with there.

Anyway I'll sit down and have a look and a think about it. Let's talk on the phone Tuesday or Wednesday next week. I will be in Helsinki and will give you a call then. Take care, best to C— and A— if you talk to them.

Lars

*"Hi Lars. It's Tom. We heard from C— that you're coming over to Glasgow next week. We're just wondering if you were hoping to meet with any of the drug support groups while you were here, just we've only just sent off introduction letters and it might be too short notice to set up meetings. We're sort of hoping you might have your own idea about how to go about checking out the context over here, but if there's anything we can do before you arrive let us know. Ok, bye."*

*"Hi Tom and Joanne, it's Lars here. I arrive in Glasgow on Wednesday afternoon and I'm staying through to Saturday. Sorry for not being in touch before. G— is also in town with work then and we'll be sharing a hotel. Ok, I look forward to seeing you then."*

FROM: larsjakob@planet.dk  
TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net  
DATE: 10/9/01 12:28am  
SUBJECT: Sv: HK

Hi Joanne, hi Tom,

A brief mail just to say hi. It was very nice to meet you in Glasgow last week and talk about the HK project (and art and life in general!). I'm very excited about HK and looking forward to writing the text. It feels good to be working with you and R— on this project. I'll let you know how the writing goes... don't think there's any risk of writing blocks this time though. Looking forward to talking again. I'm back from Stockholm on Thursday and I will call you then.

Best,

Lars

FROM: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net  
TO: larsjakob@planet.dk  
DATE: 11/9/01 9.50pm  
SUBJECT: Re: Sv: HK

Hello Lars

It was really good to meet you. It made us think hard about certain aspects of the project again - which is always good and we're looking forward to your writing. We've arranged to meet people from the Glasgow Association of Family Support Groups and Phoenix house rehabilitation centre later this week. We'll let you know how that goes.

Here's the contact for Ken Butler at the Council that you asked for. I think he's happy to help, but he is quite busy. His phone no. is + 44 (0)141 233 6061. I think their researcher at the council is called David Macpherson.

We're just watching events in New York on TV...

Tom and Joanne



FROM: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

TO: larsjakob@planet.dk

DATE: 21/9/01 9.50pm

SUBJECT: HK update

Hi Lars

How's things?

We have met up with two of the Glasgow drug support groups - Phoenix House and Glasgow Association of Family support groups. Phoenix House is a residential programme for those who are coming off heroin. It is a privately run organisation but residents are funded by the council. I thought I'd pass on the website if you want to know what they do - [www.phoenixhouse.org.uk](http://www.phoenixhouse.org.uk)

Glasgow Association of Family support groups is an umbrella organisation, run by its members, of about fifty community support groups. We met one of the association members, who was very open about talking to us about the association and about giving us information and leaflets we could display. Again, they had no problem with the idea of the exhibition. They have a quilt that is a patchwork of memorials by family and friends of people who have died from heroin overdoses. Its a bit like the U.S Aids quilt, but much smaller scale. It's a very poignant representation. We meet the association again early next week and hope to get some documentation of the quilt and other info, which we will then send on to you.

Best wishes,

Tom and Joanne

FROM: larsjakob@planet.dk

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

DATE: 3/10/01 5:40am

SUBJECT: HK

Hi Joanne, hi Tom!

I am now finished with the text, but I would like to sit on it (or rather sleep on it) till tomorrow. Hope this is OK. Then we can maybe have a telephone congress about it on Friday. Take care, Lars

*"Hi Tom, hi Joanne, its Lars here. Wednesday turned into Friday morning... sorry. I'm sending the text now. Let's speak later today. Ok, bye."*

FROM: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

TO: larsjakob@planet.dk

DATE: 5/10/01 9.27am

SUBJECT: Re: here is a text for you

Hi Lars

We'll read it now. Speak to you later.

Joanne

FROM: larsjakob@planet.dk

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

DATE: 9/10/01 6:01pm

SUBJECT: addition!

Hello there J + T,

I'm happy you liked the text! Like I said it was great fun to write it. Hope everything's otherwise going well with the preparations. Got a mail from Alexia yesterday re: talking about your work... maybe we could do some kind of performance ("") together? Let's speak tomorrow on the phone, also about the editing of the text perhaps. Let me call you when I get back from Helsinki.

Also, I have an addition to the text. I came across this Chinese Red Army slogan which seems quite appropriate in the context of HK:

"One could say that it is not the two that recompose in one, but the one that opens into two."

I'd like to propose that we insert it after paragraph 6.

What do you think?

Speak soon, take care.

Lars

FROM: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

TO: larsjakob@planet.dk

DATE: 9/10/01 9.00pm

SUBJECT: Hi from Tom

Hi Lars

Thanks for the note. I've just got in from teaching and I'm teaching again early tomorrow. Joanne is away in Leeds. How about talking Thursday morning?

Thought you might like to see the attached - the draft design for front and back of the HK handout.

Speak to you soon, Tom.

FROM: larsjakob@planet.dk

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

DATE: 9/10/01 6:01pm

SUBJECT: Sv: HK poster

Looks great, can't wait to see it "live"!

Speak soon, Lars

FROM: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

TO: larsjakob@planet.dk

DATE: 6/11/01 10.11pm

SUBJECT: Hi from Tom and Joanne

Hi Lars

We have been so busy with the HK project (and teaching) I haven't got round to giving you a call. The building is going very well; the R, O and S are up and look really great!

Tom



FROM: larsjakob@planet.dk  
TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net  
DATE: 14/11/01 3:13pm  
SUBJECT: Sv: Hi from Tom and Joanne

Hi there Tom and Joanne!

I can imagine things are pretty hectic for you right now... Hope everything's going well with HK. Sorry for not having got back to you before now - I've been in Berlin. We should talk about our talk! Give us a call tomorrow morning if that's convenient, on my mobile and I can call you back from our landline.

Cheers, Lars

FROM: larsjakob@planet.dk  
TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net  
DATE: 17/11/01 5:16pm  
SUBJECT: *no subject*

Hi Tom, hi Joanne,

I'm glad everything is going well with the building. I'm now back in Copenhagen and I leave for Glasgow on Wednesday. I'll call you then.

See you soon, take care, Lars

FROM: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net  
TO: larsjakob@planet.dk  
DATE: 11/12/01 6.08pm  
SUBJECT: Farewell to an idea...

Hi Lars

Attached are the edited transcriptions we did for HK (apart from one for various reasons). Also, here's the details of the TJ Clarke book I kept going on about:

"Farewell to an Idea - Episodes from a History of Modernism"

T J Clarke Yale University Press ISBN 0300089104 1999

Have a very good Christmas and see you in the New Year.

Tom

FROM: larsjakob@planet.dk

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

DATE: 12/12/01 9:17pm

SUBJECT: Sv: Farewell to an idea...

Hi Joanne, hi Tom,

Thanks a lot for the last time in Glasgow, it was a great experience to see HK and take part in the seminar! I've been propagating your production in Copenhagen so your audience should be well prepared when you land in April... By the way, please let me know if I should try and set something up in terms of talks and stuff when you are around, maybe I can be of help.

TJ Clarke is definitely going on my list of Xmas wishes.

I'm in Sao Paulo right now, but I'll be in Glasgow by the beginning of the New Year, so see you then. Take care, and have a merry Christmas!

Lars

## CHAPTER TWO

*Scene: a small room with a table and a number of chairs. The furniture is institutional; grey plastic chairs and a table with a scratched plastic surface and thin black steel legs. The room is dark with only a small window. The light from the window is further decreased by the slatted venetian blind that hangs partially shut over the window. The view afforded through the slats of the blind offers no recognisable feature. The walls of the room are painted a pale green. Their appearance is again institutional. The finish of the paint is shiny and durable, as if applied in anticipation that it will soon need to be wiped clean. On the long wall opposite the table hangs a large patchwork banner. It's the one feature of note within the room and provides a brightly coloured counterpoint to the drabness of the décor. The wall hanging is composed of separate pieces of fabric, each of which has been embroidered in commemoration of a relative or friend who has died as a consequence of heroin use. The squares contain the names of the deceased and their ages. Some are in their teens, some in their twenties, some in their thirties. Some of the squares also contain anti drugs messages, such as heroin kills, drugs screw you up and don't die of ignorance. Two people sit at the table, a man and a woman. There is a tape recorder between them. One of them leans forward to turn on the tape recorder.*

**Q:** How did you get involved with the centre here?

**A:** I heard about this through other folk that I knew. Then my drugs worker got me a place. It was a day programme, and I was interested in that. It's not residential like the place up the road and its a lot more relaxed here. You're here and you're back in the community, you know. My drugs worker told me more about the place, and I'm like, that's really good. I'll give it a try.

**Q:** You said before that you'd been using since your teens. How did you get involved with drug use?

A: I started off smoking hash and I enjoyed it. Before that I was buzzing gas, glue and then got into using other stuff. My Mum brought us up with good morals, but the expectations that she put onto me were that I'd be like my older brothers and sisters, that I would go to school, get good qualifications, maybe even go to university... But, my Dad was an alcoholic and he used to always have a go at me, you know he would be constantly like this, you wee rat, you worthless shite. That's what he was like. He used to batter my Mum and all that too and I used to just go off with my pals. It was something we were all doing. I thought I was cool and nothing that'd I heard, that it was bad for you, or that it was illegal, had any affect on me.

*(There's a knock at the door and a middle-aged woman starts to enter the room. When she realises the room is occupied, she apologises, steps back and shuts the door behind her.)*

Q: How long was it before you started using heroin?

A: I was introduced to it by someone I looked up to, someone older than me that I had respect for at that time. I'd progressed right through the recreational drugs, I was buzzing glue, then I got into smoking hash. I was drinking, taking speed. I was always chasing something, chasing that extra buzz. So, what happened was I tried it and it became part of my life, on and off, for the last fifteen years. What you've got to remember is that I enjoyed using drugs. In my life, at that point, I could use them to control how I felt, you know, and that was something I needed. For a long time I managed to find ways to control my using so that I could use and I'd still be okay. I always thought I could just drop it when I needed to. Money wasn't a problem because I used to sell, and money was always there for me.

Q: You mentioned that this wasn't the first time you've been involved with a group like this. When did you first think you had a problem?



A: The people I worked for left me in the lurch and I've never been in so much pain before. I thought I'd got things under control, but I ended up having to do things that I regret now. I was in a bad place. I ended up going to the North Street Centre, the crisis centre. I stayed there for a wee while, tried to get myself together. That's when I realised that I was dying and that - well, I was not just physically sick - but that inside me I was dying. You see, if you're using, what it does to you, is it takes away how you feel. I was at a point where I realised I felt nothing.

*(The man begins to coil the wire from his clip-on mic around his finger)*

Q: So, you felt you'd hit rock bottom?

A: Yeah, I felt I was as low as it can be. But since then, I was in the crisis centre four times before I realised I needed to do something. It took me three years from that point, from realising I had a problem to deciding to do something about it. I saw that I needed to do something long term and I got myself into residential rehab. I needed to find out what was wrong with me, you know, that I needed to keep going back and taking the drugs. I'd lost everything you know by that point. I'd lost my family. I couldn't see my kids... I was sleeping in the street. I was totally burnt out with the whole lifestyle by that point. So I got myself a drugs worker and she sorted out for me to go to the rehab centre, but I screwed up. I was there for six months, seven months and then I left and it was a big mistake and I was straight back into it all again. I was very angry with myself, yes, because I'd had it all going for me. I went back to my drugs worker, and I had to really push to get back in. There's all sorts of expectations that get put onto you and I'd messed up once, you know. In the end I had to leave of my own accord and that was two years ago. I thought I could leave on good terms and get transferred somewhere else, but it's all down to funding. Because I'd already had a couple of shots at rehab, I was put to the bottom of the pile.

Q: How are things working out now, here at the centre?

A: It's going great and I've got a much better outlook on life now. I know what I want now, because in the past, I think it was with my family and all that and with them always putting me down, I wasn't interested in anything. I get a lot of inspiration from ex users. I've got pals who I used to use with... they're out there doing counselling work, community work, that kind of thing. I've got a focus now that I used to lack in my life before.

*(The woman has picked up a pen and, while not shifting her attention from the man across the table, has begun to make a series of small lines around the edge of folded leaflet in front of her.)*

Q: I was wondering how things are structured here. What kind of help are you getting?

A: It's a nine month programme, with different stages that you go through. I'm doing a course on money management right now, because it always goes right through my fingers. That's stage two - there's three stages. You start off doing stuff about your feelings and dealing with stress, anger management and all of that and there's also, er, more practical things like computers. A lot of it's about coping, it's about talking to other recovering users and that helps me learn how to cope. It means I don't feel so isolated as I used to feel because I 'm learning how to share what goes on inside my head. I had zero social skills before. It's knowing how to just do small things, everyday small talk. I'm not getting any younger. I've wasted a lot of my life using, you know, and I want to experience life now, do things. I want to travel, go places with my kids.

Q: Could you tell me about the quilt on the wall over there?

*(Both the man and the woman turn to look at the patchwork banner)*

A: There's a bereavement group... part of the family support they run for families and friends of users, ex-users too. They made this to remember the folk who died. It's quite affecting for someone like myself. There's names up there... people I used to know. It puts things directly in your face...

*(The man starts to pick at something on the sleeve of his top.)*

Q: We spoke before about the sculpture at Tramway that will say "Heroin Kills". What do you think about those words?

A: Well, look around in here *(The speaker gestures towards the banner)*. The reality is heroin does kill, you know, but it takes away your soul before it does away with your body. That's what heroin kills, and all drugs really, I think it kills your soul. It's not just the physical or emotional stuff, it's much deeper than that. See the crisis centre, you should go and sit in the waiting room for twenty minutes; and that's why it annoys me so much - the Daily Record does this "Deal with it" campaign, it's all Death to the Dealers and all that, and if someone's house gets burgled then a junkie must have done it. That's all just ranting and raving, it's pure ignorance. My Mum was like that and then she started to read up on stuff. She joined a family group and she's changed a lot, I've never seen her the way she is now. It's about talking to other folk, making connections. That's how I 'm planning on surviving.

Q: What are your plans for when you finish the programme here?

A: Like I said before, I'm not getting any younger and the first thing is to keep off the heroin. It's a sad and pathetic way to be. I'd like to... I dunno, there's not a lot of stuff for someone at my age, unless, well, I mean I'm not going to go to university or anything now. It's not that I'd say I wasn't bright it's just that I'm more streetwise than anything. Maybe I put myself down too much. I don't know, I just love doing things, that's what I'll do.



Q: Is it okay if we call it a day there? Do you think you've said what you wanted to say?

A: Yeah, that's fine. Turn it off.

*(After a moment's pause, the tape recorder is turned off.)*

## CHAPTER THREE

## Day One

It was still dark as we finally got down to work. It'd had been a long evening and the day's work was only just beginning. We'd started the night off at a party, before making our way over to the gallery via a couple of the South Side's more salubrious bars. Luckily the effects of the alcohol were now beginning to wear off. I'd knocked out those last couple of glasses of wine pretty quickly and that seemed to have done the trick. As I started to sober up I noticed how exhausted I was. Things would only improve from here.

We all changed out of our clean clothes, replacing them with old jeans, t-shirts and overalls. It was going to be dirty work. As I walked into the gallery, I saw that Henrik was already in there. This didn't surprise me. It was as much his project as anyone's I guess. He was kneeling behind the S, working away at some detail. He must have decided that was the best place to begin the unconstruction. He was carefully removing the paint with a small brush. It might have seemed absurd to begin such a massive undertaking in such a small way, but it wasn't up to me make those sort of decisions. Henrik must have heard us walk in. He stood up and came over to join the group.

Even though Henrik was the one leading the unconstruction, we didn't expect him to start issuing any orders. It didn't really work like that; it was much more relaxed, more casual. We stood around chatting for five minutes, maybe more, and eventually one or other of the group would leave, heading off towards the storeroom area. Then, it was just, Henrik, Rineke and myself left chatting. Rineke finished her cigarette and placed it back between the silver foil, and we made our way over to the storeroom.

Over in the store, a couple of the team were unrinsing out plastic trays and rollers in preparation for the paint removal. It was going to be quite a task. I reckoned that it'd be to at least two or three days work before we'd uncover all the MDF. Each of the eleven letters was covered with a least three coats of vinyl black emulsion, with each layer having to be removed separately.

Some of the team were carrying out ladders and I could see that Henrik had got the scaffolding tower wheeled out already. We'd probably need to use the big cherry picker too. The letters were massive, nearly six metres high, and that meant a lot of paint. The empty pots were scattered around the gallery, ready to store it in. I picked one up along with a tray, a roller and a long wooden pole.

When I got out into the gallery, I saw Olaf and Naoto already up the scaffolding tower over by the K. They were frantically removing the first coat of paint, rolling the black liquid back into trays. Other members of the team were dragging dust cloths into place below the letters so we could catch the paint drips up from the floor. It was hard to know where to start when there was no reason to be methodical. These things always ended at the same place, wherever you began. I fitted my roller onto the pole and angled it up towards the top of the S and began to roller the paint off in quick short strips.

By lunchtime we seemed to be making good progress. The K and the S were already showing MDF through. The coats of paint were coming off quickly, with barely half an hour passing before the next layer was wet enough to begin stripping. I took my lunch with Rineke, László and Lukas. It was a quick break, just enough time to take our food out, and then we were straight back in the gallery. The first few days of the unconstruction were always like this: long days, short breaks and everyone feeling worn out and exhausted.

Henrik was still in the gallery, working away at the S. Even though the team were still removing the paint, he'd already started to nail loose one of the MDF panels that clad the front of the letter. At the other side of the S, Keith was up on the platform of the hydraulic lift, reshaping an MDF panel before it was removed. The pace of work was still frantic. I wondered when we'd be getting our first requisition order in. The earlier orders were usually for small stuff, just a box of screws, or a couple of bolts. It was only as the unconstruction neared its conclusion that the big stuff started to shift off.

By nine thirty there was barely light left in the sky. We worked on until our trays were full and then tipped the paint back into the containers, leaving the rollers wrapped in plastic bags ready for the following day. As we left, the team paused for

a moment to assess the unconstruction we'd completed so far. There was a detectable patchiness here and there on the letters that formed the word HEROIN, although other areas were a persistent and overwhelming matt black. The letters forming KILLS were much further on. The S was most progressed, although it was frustrating to see how slowly the curved side panels were coming off. The gallery itself was beginning to fill up with all the necessary raw material of an unconstruction. Erik had been busy most of the morning emptying out sawdust at specific locations across the gallery floor. The sawdust was essential part of the constitution process. He'd also begun to carry out some of the MDF cut-ons that were kept in the store. The cut-ons intrigued me. These curious shapes would somehow be united, piece by piece, to form the rectangular eight by four sheets required for requisition.

#### Day Two

Today saw the first requisition order of the unconstruction. Six rawl bolts for Donald Brothers. As always the order was ready and waiting to go. I took the delivery, returning with the £11.71 cash. Henrik took the call afterwards to confirm the details.

#### Day Four

An early start, working through from ten o'clock first thing in the evening to nine in the morning. The team started the shift exhausted and little was achieved before the first break of the day. Daylight, what there was of it, was some six hours away. I was still rolling the black paint off. After three days, the muscles in my arms were eventually easing into the job and the aches and pains were beginning to lessen. The bad news was that a faint scar had appeared on the edge of my thumb. I flinched at the thought of the wound that would open. It looked like a ten dayer to me.

The paint was nearly all off by now. László, Lukas and me were completing the final removal. Rows of filled pots were already stacked on the pallet, ready for requisition at some future date. We'd left the lower reaches of the letters until last. It



was just easier that way. It was a satisfying feeling to take off a final layer of paint and reveal the smooth MDF underneath. Maybe it sounds strange, but as each letter was individually uncovered, it would become almost complete. I often had moments like that during an unconstruction, where I wished it the process could stop before it went any further. I wanted a chance to take stock of what had been uncompleted so far. Maybe it was just the haphazard nature of the unconstruction that frustrated me. As I finally finished removing the last strip of paint from the R, each of the other letters would be moving along through the various states of unassembly. The process would only be complete when the gallery was finally empty.

### Day Five

Monday already! Now that the paint was finally off, the team were working in twos and threes to complete particular tasks. I joined Erik and Ingmar unfilling the cracks between the MDF panels. It was a tedious job. First we had to slowly rub on layers of dry unfiller, then wait for it to soften before skimming it off using wide palette knives. I started back at work on the R, this time working my way up the structure. Even with a stepladder there were still several metres that were well beyond my reach. Rineke had managed to get use of the scaffolding tower and was working her way along the upper panels of the letters that still needed unfilling. Many of the letters were now unconstructed well beyond that stage. Keith and Naoto had been up in the hydraulic lift firing the nails out of the upper boards. The nails were all carefully placed into small cardboard boxes, while the sheets of MDF were taken down one by one and piled up onto a flatbed trolley.

The S had received the full attention of the team during the first few days of the unconstruction. The timber structure under the side panels was fully revealed, while the front and back of the letter was stripped down to the plywood under layer. Henrik had now moved his attention to some of the other more complex letters. The K, for example, now existed only as a timber outline and the N was not much far behind. The tops of the Is, the Ls and the sides of the O were similarly insubstantial.

The second requisition order of the unconstruction was collected just after lunch: three nine inch roller frames, three twelve inch roller frames, three nine inch paint trays and three tubs of unfiller. The paint trays and rollers had been wrapped and ready to go since the day before, but I was just completing the final tub of unfiller as the collector from Akzo Noble walked in through the door. This was an account payment, so no cash changed hands.

With tomorrow being the weekend, we knew it was likely we'd get another requisition order in before the shift was through. We might all be working over the weekend, but the companies we supplied would be shut until four o'clock Friday at the earliest. Sure enough, just after ten, Henrik emerged from his office with the delivery notice. It was a big order. Sixty sheets of nine millimetre MDF and fifty metres of two inch by four inch CLS plus the stack of nail boxes that Keith and Naoto had been filling all day. We'd get nearly £500 for that lot. Santiago, Olaf and Henrik carried over the last few sheets of MDF from the workbenches where they'd been assembled and wheeled them out to the truck waiting outside. I took up one end of the lengths of CLS, with Lukas and László taking the weight in the middle and at the far end. Outside there was the usual banter as the MDF was loaded up onto the truck. After the truck had driven off we stood around chatting for a few minutes, all shifting feet and rubbing hands in the frosty air.

Back inside, it felt like some of the sense of urgency had lifted. It was often like that just after we'd got a big order out. All of us, even Henrik, were hanging around a bit aimlessly, as if we were waiting for something to happen. After fifteen minutes or so the team started to drift off one by one. I collected my things and made my way out into the cold morning twilight.

## Day Six

The entire team was needed back in for the weekend shift. Sundays are time and a half, which means we pay out one and half times as much for each hour we work. My usual hourly payback rate increases from £5.77 to £8.65 and even though it had all been paid out weeks back, it was still an annoyance when it came to actually working the shift.

## Day Seven

I think today it dawned on the team just how much work there's still left to do. The real work of the unconstruction has barely begun. Getting the paint off was just the start. That was easy going compared to unassembling these giant letters. Then we have to take all the raw materials and constitute them to the level required for the requisitions. It's exacting stuff. Okay, so some of the MDF sheets might look like they just need one or two joins made in them, but then there'll be a strip missing off an end or something. It can take days for all the pieces to finally come together.

Henrik, Keith, Naoto and Olaf were taking care of most of the heavy stuff. The less skilled members of the team were working on the details, such as sanding up the edges of the MDF boards. Santiago had already swept out great piles of sawdust and wood shavings around the bottom of the letters. Some of these larger pieces would take more than sanding to join them to the panels. It was very important to get such detailing right at this stage, otherwise you might end up with an incomplete sheet, stuck with a join or something which didn't quite match up. Not that this ever happened, we always made sure all the edges were sanded up just the right amount. It took fine judgement to know when to switch off the sander. You had to use your eyes and your brain, but it was also an instinctive thing. I worked on gut feeling a lot.

By the end of the day, I was starting to feel pretty rough. Maybe it was the noise from the sanding machine, because my head was splitting. I ended the day crawling into bed straight after I got home, just managing to get one strong black coffee out before I crashed in.

## Day Eight

Henrik had given us a late start today. I'd woken up at one that morning, my head spinning with alcohol. Well, that explained the headache I'd had earlier. I staggered out to meet the rest of the team in the pub for our traditional start of the week drinking session. As usual, we all gradually sobered up in time to start work.



We were now entering the mid-phase of the unconstruction. The K and the N had completely vanished from the line of letters. Some of the other letters, such as the Is and the Ls were stripped back to such an extent that they were no longer recognisable as letters. The solidity of the structure was starting to break down. It was no longer at all clear what two words had been spelt out before we got to work. The team had also started to realign the remaining letters, gradually moving them away from the two perfectly parallel lines they had originally followed. It was a satisfying sight.

### Day Ten

The big event today was to get the S lowered from its vertical position and get it flat down on the floor. This would make it easier for the team to continue stripping the letter of its wood. The plywood under the top layer of MDF was twelve millimetres thick and would go onto form some very large heavy sheets once it had been constituted up. The letter was both too heavy and too high to get down without a bit of mechanical intervention.

Henrik was also concerned that the CLS struts battened around the edge of the curves would have no support if the ply was removed whilst the letter was still upright - causing the whole thing to crash in. It was following through things like this that made the unconstruction such a lengthy process. There were no short cuts. Each step had to be followed through carefully and at the appointed time.

The team were going to need some assistance and Henrik had asked the guys who rigged the lights for the theatre to come and help. The first thing was to get the pulley chain fastened to a suitable spot above the letter. The riggers took the hydraulic lift and drove it over to a spot just behind the S. High above us, one of the guys stepped out onto the beam and began to attach the pulley, first to the beam, then onto the letter. Once they were back on the ground, the riggers took control of the pulley chain, whilst our team braced against the bottom of the letter. It slowly began to swing out of position, and then lifted several inches off the ground. There was now a real tension, real concentration. This was a very heavy mass of wood and screws. There was an alarming screeching noise as the wood strained against its

own weight. With a lot of frantic shouting Henrik managed to get the lower edge of the S back on the ground, and then gradually we began to lower the letter to the floor. The team guided the letter down with our arms stretched above our heads, while the chain rattled through the pulley. The scale of the project really kicked in. We were completely dwarfed by the massive structure being lowered down. As the S dropped towards the horizontal, the team moved to the sides of the structure to steady it onto the ground. The chain went slack as the letter finally settled to the floor.

Henrik and Keith unscrewed the planks they'd used to help secure the structure and the rest of the team gradually moved off to continue with their own tasks. I'd been helping Erik constitute lengths of CLS that had been removed from the letters. Different lengths had been left in piles after being removed. Our job was to saw them together and then measure where each join had been after we'd done so. Each measurement was then off checked against our list. The pile of sawdust at our feet was gradually receding, although we knew that there would be plenty more bags delivered before the unconstruction was complete.

### Day Eleven

The team was starting to lose numbers. Ingmar and Lukas hadn't been in since Wednesday and today Naoto had also failed to show up. As the letters gradually became constituted up into the completed panels and lengths of timber, there was less work to do and the work that did remain was becoming increasingly specialised. From the figures on my payback slips I reckoned that I'd be seeing this unconstruction through to the end, or as good as.

### Day Twelve

Monday again already. I woke with a sharp pain in my hand. I'd been aware of the scar gradually opening up over the week and it looked like today was the day. I prepared myself by peeling off the clean pink plaster and replacing it with a grubby, slightly blood stained one.

The afternoon was busy and productive. When I arrived Henrik was already up in the hydraulic lift, unfitting some of the last MDF panels from the curve of the O. I joined László and Rineke working on the E. The E still contained a lot of raw material which needed to be constituted up in time for the next requisition. I'd seen the paperwork on Henrik's desk and knew we were expecting a large collection later that day.

It was sometimes surprisingly slow work unfitting the MDF panels. It wasn't so simple as just unscrewing them and taking them down. Sometimes we'd find ourselves taking down a panel, then adding an edge on here or there, and then putting it back up again. This procedure might have to be repeated several times before we'd get the right shape and size. It was a frustrating process that could take half an hour or so for each of the panels. The uncomplete MDF sheets then had to be measured, sawn back together and then measured again, before finally being taken over to the neat stack piling up by the door ready for the collection.

By the end of the lunch break my hand was really quite painful. I took off the grubby plaster and replaced it with a wad of bloody tissue paper, strapped around my hand with several long strips of masking tape. It was makeshift, but I imagined I wouldn't need it for much longer.

Just half an hour later and I found myself back in the toilets, with my hand in the sink, blood and water pouring up out of the plug-hole. The water turned from clear to pink to red. The pain really was quite immense. I flinched as I caught sight of the raw wound. I rushed back out to the gallery as quick as I could. The team were also making their way over to the workbench where I'd been sawing the MDF up before lunch. I picked up the jigsaw clumsily, feeling dizzy by the throbbing and the shock of the situation. I don't remember exactly what happened next. I think I only just caught the edge of my palm with the blade, but it was enough to stop the bleeding and the pain instantly. These incidents were stressful, obviously. It was the countdown to the inevitable I suppose, as symptoms worsened, pains sharpened and scars unhealed. Afterwards, I wouldn't describe the feeling as one of relief exactly, it was just as if the whole thing had never happened.



Shortly afterwards and Henrik asked me to make the delivery for the first requisition of the day. He handed me the order: filler, brushes and paint for Akzo Nobel at a cost of £69.44. It was the last of the painting orders and was all stuff we'd had ready since the week before.

By the time I returned, the wood order was nearing completion. Within ten minutes of the final sheet being stacked up, the collector from the timber wholepurchasers had arrived and the team began shifting the sheets out to the truck. I checked the order: seventy-five sheets of nine millimetre MDF and nearly four hundred metres of four by two CLS.

As I walked back into the gallery after the collection, I noticed that the place was actually starting to look quite empty. The H, E, R and O were all that were left standing. The S still lay where we'd left it after lowering it to the ground two days ago, while bits of the other letters were scattered around in a state of partial unconstruction. The scattered piles of raw material that accompany any unconstruction were noticeably decreased in size.

Tomorrow was Sunday; it would be our first day off since the beginning of the unconstruction.

### Day Fifteen

Friday evening arrived all too soon and I felt more exhausted than I had on Monday morning. The aches in my muscles had resurfaced with a sharpness that was almost painful. The team was down to five now, including Henrik, and it was a slow start to the day. I think everyone felt as tired as I did. The sense of urgency that motivated us when we began the job a fortnight ago had been replaced by a relaxed sense of resignation.

The first task of the day was to bring down the O. Once again Henrik had got the riggers in to come and assist. The procedure was no less testing than before, and by now of course there were fewer of us to steady the weight of the letter as it was lowered down. The shape of the letter must have strengthened the structure and there were fewer of the disturbing screeches than had accompanied the descent of the S.

The O was formed by several large sheets of twelve millimetre ply all battened together with four by two CLS at the rear surface. The two faces of the O were then connected by a large number of shorter CLS batons placed at regular intervals around both the external and internal curves. There was a huge amount of timber contained just in this one letter. Keith and I started to unscrew the upwards facing side of the O away from the batons, collecting the long screws and placing them into small cardboard boxes.

Meanwhile the riggers were back up in the hydraulic lift attaching chains to the R. Keith and I left the O to go and assist with this final heavy lowering. The other two remaining letters, the H and the E were much simpler structures and were already stripped of wood down to their armatures. With the R finally horizontal, the gallery now took on a very different appearance. There was still work to be done stripping the R and the O back and then constituting the wood ready for requisition, but the raw materials of the unconstruction were now almost completely depleted.

#### Day Sixteen

Today the team was down to four, with just me Henrik, Keith and Rineke left. The atmosphere of camaraderie that typifies the early days of an unconstruction had all but evaporated. The remaining team members were still friendly with each other, but the sense of purpose that had united us all less than a fortnight ago was no longer present.

#### Day Seventeen

The remaining frameworks of the H and the E came down today. The frameworks were then quickly unconstructed and the team continued with the remaining constitution work on the R, the O and the S. Henrik was sawing together the sheets of twelve millimetre that had formed the curves of the S. It was skilled work, requiring a steady hand to follow along the smooth curve and create a neatly fitted complete sheet. Thick reddish brown sawdust and splinters flew up off the floor from where they'd been swept out. The uncut ply was carried away to another spot in the gallery, where Rineke and I unscrewed the CLS batons from the backs of

the panels. Keith then came and collected the batons and sawed them together, ready to stack in the growing pile of raw timber ready for requisition.

At two the team took an early lunch break. As the week passed, the lunch breaks were getting longer and more relaxed. The other remaining members of the team were much less tired too. I borrowed Rineke's bike and cycled over to the supermarket to deliver lunch for everyone.

After lunch Henrik started work on the O. I swept out the next pile of sawdust, then helped Rineke to collect together the curved pieces of ply that would be needed to constitute up the eight by four sheets. The team stood around idly watching and chatting as Henrik concentrated on the careful sawing process. Once that was completed we all began the process of removing the CLS batons then sawing them into six metre lengths.

### Day Eighteen

Another big requisition of wood today. The collection cleared out the timber we'd been working on, leaving only the unfinished sheets of twelve millimetre plywood and a few imperfect sheets and CLS lengths

### Day Nineteen

The last day of the unconstruction began with a late start. Henrik and Keith continued with some final constitution work on the wood that remained after the previous day's big collection, while Rineke and I started the fine detailing on the twelve millimetre sheets of plywood.

The twelve millimetre sheets were all marked with pencil outlines showing where the letters had been sawn together. Our job was to remove the lines, one by one, leaving the sheets of ply unmarked and ready for requisition. I was working on the S. The sheets were no longer fastened together, but were arranged on the floor as if they were. It was a slow and laborious task, and although not as physically demanding as most of the unconstruction work we'd been doing, it was still pretty hard on the knees. The work began by gradually unclarifying the line that the saw had taken by using freehand drawing. Each curve drawn off took it that bit further



away from the clear defining line I'd started with. Sometimes I got it wrong of course and had to rub a line back on before it could be finally lifted off. When all the lines were off, I began the tedious process of removing the crosses that plotted out where the lines had been. I'd draw the cross off, then calculate its position and check it back to the scale plan of the letter I was working to.

The final part of the process was to draw off the grid. The grid stretched across the full expanse of the boards, with the longest lengths nearly seven metres long. Rineke and I had to work together to draw off the lines, moving a straight edged length of MDF between us to guide the pencil along the lines of the grid.

As the end of the morning's work approached I began to anticipate the end of the unconstruction. As ten o'clock drew near, Henrik, Rineke, Keith and I stood around with cups of tea, surveying the almost empty space before us. There were always remnants left over to be completed at a later unconstruction, but the piles of raw materials had disappeared to be replaced by tidy piles of fresh smelling timber, clean sheets of MDF and an assortment of refurbished tools all awaiting collection. The exhaustion had lifted like magic, as it always did when an unconstruction was complete. We stood around chatting for five minutes, maybe more, and eventually one or other of the group left, heading off into the decreasing morning light.



## CHAPTER FOUR

FROM: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

TO: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

DATE: 5/7/02 6:38pm

SUBJECT: Hi from Joanne and Tom

Hi Lars

We're hoping that we could meet up when you're next in Glasgow. We're putting together an application for SAC funding for the HK publication and are hoping to propose a new piece of writing from you. The SAC would need a portfolio of some previous examples of stuff you have written. Deadline is end of July.

Anyway, it would be great to catch up over a beer.

Best wishes

Tom and Joanne

FROM: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

DATE: 17/7/02 7.58pm

SUBJECT: Sv: Hi from Joanne and Tom

Hi there,

Good to see you last night! Attached are a few things for the application - if you need more just tell me. I'll be back in Glasgow at the beginning of August - let's speak then.

Take care,

Lars

FROM: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

TO: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

DATE: 2/11/02 6:45pm

SUBJECT: HK publication

Hi Lars

Good news! The SAC awarded us the money for the HK publication. We've also managed to get some extra cash from various other sources and can now start putting things together. We've been thinking about how the whole thing should shape up and it would be good to talk to you about your contribution some time soon. We're in Glasgow most of November, so let us know when would be a good time to meet and talk more.

All the best

Joanne and Tom

FROM: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

DATE: 6/11/02 11.58pm

SUBJECT: Sv: HK publication

Hi there Tom and Joanne

That's great news with the catalogue, I'm looking forward to getting started with it... I'm on my way to the US for a week now and I'll be in Glasgow again sometime after that, so let's be in touch when I'm back and meet up for a chat.

Take care,

Lars

PS I just got Clark's "Farewell to an Idea"!!

FROM: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

TO: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

DATE: 19/12/02 5:06pm

SUBJECT: HK

Hi Lars

Just thought we'd fill you in after the HK meeting with Will and R— this afternoon: We see the publication as a document of the HK event. Your text would run through the whole book, accompanied, even illustrated by black and white images of the event. These would mostly comprise of shots with people in. We've got some great shots of the construction of the work! Your text and these images would exist as

parallel narratives. Also, we're thinking of including some of the original interviews, probably as a separate section that will act as a counterpoint to your text. These are very much preliminary thoughts. A lot depends on how you approach the writing. Is the end of February a reasonable time to aim for in relation to a first draft from you?

Best wishes and have a very good Christmas!

Joanne and Tom

FROM: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

DATE: 8/1/03 12.21pm

SUBJECT: HK

Hi Joanne, hi Tom,

Happy New Year! We're moving this week so everything's a bit hectic...

Thanks for the follow up on the meeting. It sounds good and I should have a draft ready by the end of February. My feeling with the text and the way you're talking about the publication, though, is that the longer it is the better... and I'll need some more time for that, but I can have an outline and an idea of the final word count ready by the end of February, no problem.

Hope to see you soon, maybe at the Lambie/Dawenhogge openings in a couple of weeks?

Cheers,

Lars

*"Hi Lars, it's Tom. We just got your email. That's great you can get us a rough plan for the end of February. Hope the move is going well and see you soon. Bye."*

FROM: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

TO: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

DATE: 9/2/03 4:30pm

SUBJECT: HK

Hi Lars

Good to see you - very briefly! - last night.

We're thinking of showing a continuation of the HK project at Venice (the model and the piece of jewellery) so we hope the HK publication will be out for then as well...

Bearing this in mind, the end of February would still be good in regards to a draft/word count from you so we can start putting it all together. If you want to meet up before then to discuss anything, just let us know.

Best wishes

Joanne and Tom

*"Hi Tom, hi Joanne, it's Lars. The writing is going well and I have an estimate word count for you. Maybe you could call me and we could talk more. I'm in New York on my way back from Mexico City but you could call me at home tomorrow or maybe the day after. I met Santiago from the Tramway at a gallery tonight, which jogged my conscience! Ok, take care, speak soon."*

FROM: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

DATE: 4/4/03 1.49pm

SUBJECT: HK

Hi Joanne & Tom,

Hope all is going well with the HK preparations for Venice. I am afraid things are only progressing slowly with the text. It's a bigger job than I thought that entails a bit of research and I can see that I won't be able to finish it by next week... that'd be too shoddy a job, so I'd rather ask you for a longer deadline - also because it's a text

I'd like to spend some time with. I basically need another month... I am very sorry about this but I hope you understand.

I am going to Denmark for about a month to spend some quiet time with this text and some university work (our squash game will have to wait a bit, Tom!). But I'll be back again by the beginning of May, would that work for you as the deadline?

Take care,

Lars

FROM: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

TO: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

DATE: 5/4/03 11:14pm

SUBJECT: HK

Hi Lars

The beginning of May is fine - we're looking forward to seeing what you do! Have a good time in Copenhagen and in the meantime I'll start practising my backhand!

Tom

FROM: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

DATE: 28/4/03 8.44pm

SUBJECT: hk stuff

Hi there Joanne and Tom,

I'm knuckling down to deliver the goods and it's progressing well - but slowly!

Mannerism proves to be a quite productive vein, you might want to start calling yourselves neo-mannerists...

I wanted to ask you if I could see some of the

interviews you made with addicts and former addicts? Also, do you have any stats

on drug abuse in Glasgow? If you don't have any handy then don't worry, it should

be easy to find on the net.

I'll give you a bell later this week to talk stuff over.

Take care

Lars



FROM: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

TO: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

DATE: 29/4/03 9:54pm

SUBJECT: Re: hk stuff

Hi Lars

Neo-mannerism sounds good!

We've just got back to Glasgow this evening, all things HK are down at the studio.

We'll get a chance to go down there on Thursday and see what statistics we have.

The interviews are attached.

Glad to hear it's going well and look forward to hearing from you later in the week.

Best wishes

Tom and Joanne

FROM: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

DATE: 3/5/03 1:54pm

SUBJECT: h

Hi there T&J,

Here's HK the way it's looking now, so you can get an idea of how it is progressing.

It's pretty rough, especially towards the end, where it all falls apart into fragments and notes... and it's also possible that I need to alter the sequence of some of the paragraphs.

I need to discuss the gothic, satire, Smithson and absurd theatre... Let's speak on Monday afternoon. I'll be leaving Denmark around 3 local time, so let's speak early afternoon.

Take care

Lars

FROM: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

TO: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

DATE: 8/5/03 4:44pm

SUBJECT: In pursuit of oblivion

Hi Lars

It was good to talk with you the other day. I've just ordered "The Pursuit of Oblivion; A Global History of Narcotics" from Amazon. It should arrive within the week. I'll put it in the post for you (will this give you enough time?). Alternatively I could try and locate the relevant bits and email them over.

Speak to you soon

Tom

FROM: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

DATE: 8/5/03 9:40pm

SUBJECT: Sv: In pursuit of oblivion

Hi Tom,

Great, thanks a lot for that... Please send it to me, it should be all right time wise.

Take care, hi to Jo

Lars

FROM: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

TO: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

DATE: 13/5/03 10:29am

SUBJECT: Silver HK necklace

Hi Lars

Attached is an image of the prototype silver necklace - also a couple of images from the show at Kunsthaus Glarus.

Your book has arrived we'll put it in the post today!

Hope all's well.

Tom and Joanne

*"Hi Tom and Joanne, it's Lars. Thanks for the book, I got it yesterday so I'm flicking through it now. Would it be possible for you to meet up next Friday in the morning? I'll arrive in Glasgow Thursday and have meetings Friday afternoon. I'll send you the text on Tuesday so you can have a read through it before we meet, then maybe we can have a discussion about what should stay and what should go. Oh and the necklace looks great, by the way. Congratulations! Okay speak soon. Take care."*

*"Hi Lars, it's Joanne. I just got your message. We just got back in. Friday morning is fine to meet, we're free all morning. When and where's good for you? Call us back, bye for now."*

FROM: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

DATE: 20/5/03 11:20pm

SUBJECT: txt

Hi there T&J,

So here's the latest instalment... I didn't get as far as I'd have liked to. It still needs the elaboration of de Man (found a good section in "The Resistance to Theory" on the evasive nature of shifters that is really spot on) and Smithson. Swift and the absurd theatre still needs to be fitted in. However it's a cleaner version than the previous one and the Gothic is in there now, as well as more TJ Clark on suprematism.

I'm not sure if I'll be going to Venice this year, but see you soon!

Lars

FROM: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

TO: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

DATE: 16/6/03 10:42pm

SUBJECT: Hk in Venice

Hi Lars

We're just back from a very, very hot and sticky trip to Venice. The HK necklace went well, although not completely to plan... In the end we had quite a range of people "hosting" it. Jim Lambie wore it for the Zenomap opening and then Enrico David (do you know him?) for the Scottish party. Sadie Coles was very keen to wear it but it was hard to meet up in the heat. We then passed it on to Stefania Bortolami (the Gagosian connection through H—). She said it looked very El Lissitzky. After Stefania we lost sight of it and she passed it onto Adam Szymczyk from Kunsthaus Basel and then H— wore it to a curators' breakfast... Finally it ended up around the neck of Pavel B—!

I don't know if what happened in Venice changes how you approach this aspect of the project - but we like the way the work took on its own life. One other thing - we saw an amazing mannerist Venetian painting at the Academia that we were so sure was the one you mention. There was a lily limp limb, a decorative dress and even a baby prince. We realise now that it was the wrong artist, but nevertheless...

We go to Prague next week - do you think you'll have something to send before then?

Speak soon.

Tom and Joanne

FROM: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

CC: will.bradley@hotmail.com

DATE: 19/6/03 12:04pm

SUBJECT: HK

Hi everybody, here we go...

It's some 8000 words now so let's all have a read and see if there's something that needs to be developed or added.

Swift is only discreetly present, I couldn't get my head around the satire thing in the end; it made more sense to approach HK's political stance from the contemporary point of Giddens and 3rd way slogans.



I have a proposal for the illustrations if we're still doing that: HK portrait gallery, with more or less all the people mentioned in the text, including the artists and the author (the editor will be a mere shadow presence to make him even more scary!) Art pieces can't be heroin users, only people can, so I thought it could be a (slightly paranoid) way of illustrating specificity of the issue, and how we "go down" with HK and drag others along with us.

Will, let's talk about the editing, but I'd like it to be as straightforward and accessible as possible. A fireside chat on heroin sort of.

Looking forward to talk... take care,

Lars

PS My mobile is sort of working (I'm high up in the Alps) +45 7132 7944

FROM: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

TO: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

DATE: 16/6/03 10:42pm

SUBJECT: HK

Hi Lars

We're reading and digesting the text... Looking forward to a chat - maybe call you over the weekend?

Speak soon, take care.

Tom and Joanne

FROM: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

CC: will.bradley@hotmail.com

DATE: 23/6/03 10:24am

SUBJECT: HK

Hi there T&J

Good to talk to you yesterday. I'll get the final version to you and Will tomorrow, in the am so you can take it to Prague if you should get the urge.

Here's an invoice, I didn't have your address but send it to me and I can mail you a hard copy.

All right, let's all be in touch tomorrow.

Lars

FROM: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

CC: will.bradley@hotmail.com

DATE: 24/6/03 10:12am

SUBJECT: txt update

Hi all,

Here's the latest version of the text...

Will, let's speak later today about the edit - I'll try and reach you.

Good luck in Prague, Tom & Jo!

Lars

FROM: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

CC: will.bradley@hotmail.com

DATE: 15/7/03 12:19pm

SUBJECT: new hk

Hi T&J and W,

Here's the latest HK. The only major change is a new ending that sums up the discussions in a clearer way, I think, than the first one. At least it doesn't make any attempt to continue the allegorical spiral... Other than that I've only worked with language stuff.

I'm in Copenhagen all week (+45 3579 1822) so let's speak when you've had a look.

Take it easy,

Lars

FROM: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

CC: will.bradley@hotmail.com

DATE: 18/7/03 11:30am

SUBJECT: final hk

Here's the final. I've had a go at punctuation in a few places (I've been too liberal with the semicolons), and I've changed small things in the de Man footnote on page 3, around Eleonore of Toledo (the baby prince has a name!), and in the last paragraph. I found the Finlay quote, which also brought a few alterations along. Otherwise I think we're there.

I'll be away in Istanbul for the weekend, but let's speak Monday.

Cheers

Lars

*"Hi Lars, it's Tom. I don't know if you're back from Istanbul yet. We've got a few more edit suggestions. Call us when you're back. There's no big alterations. Ok, hope to speak soon."*

FROM: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

DATE: 18/7/03 12:16pm

SUBJECT: (no subject)

hi T&J

Ok, I've had chance to look at the edits you suggested. New version attached. Looks better without "slogan" and "word sculpture" is good. The only place it doesn't work is p3, where slogan was replaced with "work" which is confusing because it can be taken to mean HK incl. interviews...

I've summed up the immaterielle Arbeit quote in English. Also changes on pages 7, 10, 12. All changes are in bold. I don't know what the missing word is. I don't have the book with me here in Copenhagen, but I'll try and phone it in later today.

L

FROM: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

DATE: 22/7/03 11:30am

SUBJECT: *(no subject)*

Hi there.

You're right about the taking out last line - the ending is better without it.

I'm afraid the lost word remains lost at this end. Can you check up on it?

Speak soon,

Lars

FROM: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

CC: will.bradley@hotmail.com

DATE: 22/7/03 8:21pm

SUBJECT: HK2207

Hi -

Thanks for the latest edit, it looks good, and thanks for translating the immaterial labour quote to whoever did that...The only thing is on page 12 where it now reads:

"Where avant-garde movements readily embraced the political by denouncing tradition, this aesthetic treason weighs heavily on Mannerists and Goths.

Accordingly, the possibility of the political lies in blowing the covers of identity and history and showing them for what they really are: charades, stylised and discontinuous."

Could we change the last line to: "Accordingly, their political possibility has turned in on itself and lies instead in blowing the covers of identity and history and showing them for what they really are: charades, stylised and discontinuous."

How does that sound? Just to explain the twists and turns of the political engagement of mannerists and goths.

Take care

Lars



FROM: larsbanglarsen@earthlink.net

TO: jtatham.tosullivan@virgin.net

CC: will.bradley@hotmail.com

DATE: 29/7/03 1:26pm

SUBJECT: 23 changes for HK text

Hi there,

Got the latest version of HK but have been in KL (!) so only got a chance to look at it today - it looks like the final version to me too...

I'm in Copenhagen the rest of the week so let's speak soon about proof reading and stuff.

Take care,

Lars

## CHAPTER FIVE

I'm in a dark room, perched on a hard chair. My hands are tied behind my back. I try and look around, but the darkness is absolute. I hear a cough and a murmur, followed by a click and a low hum. I shout out.

"Hey, who's there?"

There's no reply. There's another click and the room fills with bright white light. I want to shield my eyes, but I can't get my hands free. I hear a rustling behind me.

"Hey, what's going on?"

A click, a flash and an image drops into place on the screen in front of me.

"What the hell...?"

The image flickers in and out of focus. I narrow my eyes, trying to make sense of the information in front of me. It's hopeless. I turn my head, hoping that I might be able to identify my captor. No such luck. I'm hit by a beam of light between the eyes. All I can make out are the thick dust motes swarming in front of the lens. I turn back to the screen in front of me. Now, suddenly, the projector jumps right into focus. I laugh out loud. I can't help myself. It's probably the tension of this whole situation.

"Shut the fuck up."

I shut up. It's the first time I've heard his voice. It's nondescript – kind of middle middle-class, maybe even lower, although admittedly it's hard to tell these days. There's no traceable accent, just some sense that this guy used to live someplace else, although God knows where. He's got that just right; this is definitely a voice that's been worked on.

"Look at the screen."

I'm already looking, but I move my head forward so that it shows that I'm really paying attention. Then I incline my head to one side, like I'm really scrutinising the detail. I don't really know what I'm looking at. I mean I can see what it is, but I don't what it's meant to be. I don't get it.

"Tell me what you're looking at."

There's some quality in the voice that seems familiar. Maybe it's some place I visited some time, maybe that's where he's from. My work means I get to travel a lot. I get to meet a lot of interesting people.

"What are you looking at?"

I detect a shift in the tempo. He's making like he's getting aggrieved. I realise I'd better answer his question.

"It's a picture."

Silence. I figure my answer is inadequate somehow. I try again.

"It's. ...it's a photograph."

More silence. I don't get this.

"Come on. What do you want me to say? Let's just get this over with. I've got appointments to keep... I'm, er, a busy man."

The lights black out again. More silence. I'm beginning to wonder if this guy is really a professional. He's acting like some kind of extra.

"Hey, maybe you could undo these ropes for me. They're starting to rub. I've got an evening engagement and, er... that bondage thing is so over."

I start to feel this line of reasoning isn't going down too well with my host. It's true that I've got a dinner that evening. Ulrich's hosting. I realise that if I'm going to make it, I'm going to have to start playing it a bit cooler.

"Ok then." I say. "Let's just sit here in the dark."

There's no response. I begin to consider that perhaps he's left the room. Maybe sometime when I was talking he just sneaked out a back door. I begin to feel an absence, and I admit this worries me. As the minutes pass I become even more anxious. I really need a Xanax. I make a tentative struggle with my hands at the ropes, but it's no good. I'm starting to sweat. I really need a cigarette.

As the minutes pass, I become even more anxious. I start to fall asleep. Click. The projector flashes on. My head jolts up.

"Ok. Now you're... refreshed."

His voice has changed, but it's definitely the same guy.

"Tell me what you're looking at... "

"I'm looking at a picture, a - a a photograph..." I take a deep breath. "It's a photograph. It's a photograph of... of a jester."

"Ok. Good take it easy now. Don't rush it."

His voice has definitely changed. I can detect a pronounced Serbo-Croat inflection. I decide not to mention this.

"He's holding something... he's holding a necklace."

"Wrong. Look harder."

"I look harder. I don't get it. I don't get what I said wrong. I start again.

"Ok, I'm looking at a photograph of a jester..." I stumble to a halt, "Come on help me out here. What do you want me to say? Just tell me what you want me to say, then I'll say it and we can both get out of this pit."

"Tell me about the jester."

I don't know what this guy's game is, but I'm beginning to realise that I've got to find out soon - and start playing.

"Ok. It's a jester. Well, I guess I don't mean a *real* jester. This one's made of glass, or something."

I hear something that sounds like a sigh of relief. I take this as a positive.

"Yeah, it's one of those little glass jesters, like, like..."

I pause. A memory is breaking through, some flashback or something.

"Yeah, it's one of those little guys, like you get at the airport."

Silence.

"You know, duty free shit."

The brand name flickers in and out of my thoughts. I can't pin it down though, not under pressure like this.

"Keep looking."

"It's a small glass jester. It's, er... I don't know, I guess it's about six centimetres high..."

I've got to keep talking. Find out what gets the approval and what gets the silent treatment.



"Er... it's clear glass. Except for the tips of the hat. The hat, you know, it's like, er a typical jester's hat. It's got these two points coming off. Like horns. They've got a different colour of glass at each tip. One's red, one's yellow."

"What else?"

"There's coloured glass balls on the tips of the feet. One red and one blue. The red foot is high in the air. The jester is made to look like he's just fallen over, or maybe he's fooling around, you know..."

"Just tell me what you see."

"The face of the jester has got a different surface to the rest of it. It's... er... it's frosted. Looks like he's wearing a mask..."

I hear a disappointed sounding sigh behind me, but it seems I'm expected to continue.

"In front of the jester there's this necklace or something leaned up."

I hesitate. I got caught out here before.

"Yeah, it's a necklace. I'm certain. There's a chain attached. It's gold. I'd say it was eighteen-carat. There's a good clean shine to the gold. "

"Tell me more."

"The necklace. It's, er, letters. You know like a name-tag, only this has got a cool El Lissitzky twist to it."

"What are the letters?"

It's hard to make out. The necklace is angled on its side. Part of it's obscured by the jester's leg. I shift my head to one side and begin to spell out.

"H - E - R - O - I - N - K - I - L - L - S."

Behind me, there's a laugh.

"The letters on the necklace spell out heroin kills."

I'm choosing my words more carefully now. Then without warning, a thud, aimed from behind and a sharp pain breaks out across my right cheekbone. I shout out. My face stings I try to right myself, blinking, staring at the image in front of me as it shifts in and out of focus. This time it's my eyes making the adjustments.

"What did I..?"

But then the lights go out and this time the pain hits really hard. Briefly, I reel, dizzy in the darkness and then I'm out.

I register a click and then a familiar a flash of light and I'm coming round. My hands are sore where the rope's been tied and I realise I must have been out for some time. Now I'm scared. I'm really scared. I lift my head and look at the screen. The jester, the necklace. It's all the same. I feel like I've been taught a lesson, but learnt nothing. Yeah, now I'm really scared.

"Ok. Now it's time to start using this."

He taps me on my skull. I wince. This guy's a sadist. I'm trapped in a fucking basement with a fucking sadist. And another thing, I think his voice has changed. It's definitely the same guy, but his voice is... kinda different. I say nothing.

"Tell me what you see?"

"A jester... a necklace..."

My voice sounds pathetic now. There's no response. I try again.

"Heroin kills."

"What do you mean, heroin kills?"

"The necklace, that's what the necklace says."

Suddenly, I'm getting a flashback. It's the necklace; I've seen it before. But before I get chance to think, a thud. A fist hits the spot, the same spot as before. This is precision beating.

"What do you mean heroin kills?"

"I don't know. It sounds like a slogan..."

"Yes?"

He sounds interested. Alert.

"It... it sounds like a slogan, I dunno."

"What else?"

His voice has definitely changed. There's something almost Scandinavian in his pronunciation. This doesn't necessarily reassure me.

"Heroin kills. Well I guess it's true. It's like smoking kills on a cigarette packet. But I imagine a user doesn't care whether heroin kills, just as smokers don't spend good smoking time worrying about lung cancer."

I'm trying to fix on that flashback. I need to get back to where I saw that necklace. I've got to keep talking. I cough nervously, playing for time.

"Keep going."

"Listen. It means that heroin kills. There's this drug, and sometimes it can kill you."

"What else?"

I've still got his attention.

"Well, sometimes it doesn't kill. The sentence could mean anything. Heroin kills. . . Maybe. Sometimes. Hey, I dunno."

There's silence. I wince in expectation of his fist bearing down, again, but nothing comes. My mind's working overtime now. I've got to keep talking. I cough nervously, playing for time.

"I guess it's a kind of inconclusive fatalism. I mean, if it is a slogan... it's a pretty dumb slogan. It, ahem, spawns too many questions."

Words enter my head and exit my mouth. My efforts elicit no comment. I keep talking.

"I mean, er... like, what's the point of these two words as a necklace, and why place it over this, er... trinket."

"You tell me."

There's no discernible trace of humour. I've got a feeling I might just have talked myself into a corner. I've got no fucking idea what this jester has to do with heroin killing, or not killing or whatever. Come to that, I've got no fucking idea, why any of this has got anything to do with me anyway.

"Come on. Tell me why."

This is said in way that makes it clear that this is no casual enquiry. I've got to remember where I saw the necklace...

"Come on. Why."

"Listen, man. Help me out here. This isn't easy you know."

There's an unexpected sound, a deep, long sigh. Human breath exhaled slowly, in sympathy, in despair, in contemplation, I don't know. I detect whole histories of unspoken narratives in that one sigh. I decide to persist.

"Hey listen. I'm really trying you know. I really want to help you. Tell me what you want from me..."

I don't get to finish my sentence. My head is yanked back hard and something cold and hard smashes into my skull. I pass out as the chair starts to topple backwards to the floor.

When I come round, even before I open my eyes, I know I'm someplace else. The room I'm in is bright and warm and I keep my eyes closed, relishing the reprieve. Through closed eyelids I can see bright red and black swirls. Through an open window I can hear the put-put-put of an outboard motor and the churning sound of water as a boat pulls away from a jetty. There's a cooling breeze blowing across my body, making the burn of direct sunlight on my leg bearable, pleasurable even. There are voices, shouting. I'm still, but alert. My muscles relax in the heat, then tense in anticipation of the next onslaught: verbal, physical, whichever. Through closed eyelids I can see bright red and black swirls, through an open window I can hear the put-put-put of a motor and the churning sound of water. Then I remember where I saw the necklace. I feel the gentle pressure of a chloroform soaked pad placed silently over my mouth and nose. Images flash rapidly before my eyes and I pass out.

When I come round I'm in a dark room, perched on a hard chair and my hands are tied behind my back. The darkness is absolute. I hear a click and a low hum followed by a cough and a murmur. I keep quiet.

There's another click and the room fills with bright white light. An image drops into place on the screen in front of me. The image flickers in and out of focus. I narrow my eyes, trying to make sense of what I'm being shown. Suddenly, the projector jumps right into focus. The image hits me like a misplaced memory. Words and pictures flood my mind. I open my mouth to speak.

"I..."

"Keep your mouth shut."



I shut up. I've got to stay in control.

"Ok, you know the drill."

His voice has definitely changed. There's something Swiss-German about his intonation. These accent changes make me think I'm working with some kind of low budget amateur. I look at the screen, moving my head forwards so I can really take everything in. My mind's working overtime. I've got to say the right thing. I've got to be ready with an answer.

"Tell me what you see now."

"It's a photograph of a woman."

I pause, trying to assess his response. There's silence.

"She's wearing designer biker shades and the necklace."

I pause again.

"She's smiling, she looks healthy, relaxed."

"Ok, you can cut the advertorial."

I flinch in anticipation of his fist bearing down again, but nothing comes. My mind's working overtime now. I've got to keep talking. I cough nervously, playing for time. At least I've got his attention.

"It's the same necklace, y'know, er, the same as in the last picture..."

I don't get to finish my sentence. Without warning, his fist thuds into my face and a sharp pain breaks out across my left cheekbone. I blink, staring at the image in front of me as it shifts in and out of focus. Then I remember where I saw the necklace. I can hear the put-put-put of an outboard motor. Stefania is smiling at me, her white halterneck is vivid against the green silk wallpaper. Adam is over by the open window chatting to Jim and Enrico. Pavel has crashed out in the corner, an empty champagne bottle rolls by his side. Piotr, Olaf, Monica, Christian, Sadie and Keith all walk in together.

"What can you see?"

"Nothing. Everything."

My voice sounds pathetic now. There's no response. I try again.

"Heroin kills."

"What do you mean, heroin kills?"

"The necklace, that's what the necklace says."

"What do you mean heroin kills?"

"I don't know."

"What do you mean heroin kills?"

"Heroin kills?"

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing. Everything. It sounds like a slogan..."

"Yes?"

He sounds interested. Alert.

"It... it sounds like a slogan, I dunno."

"What else?"

His voice has definitely changed. The accent is Sudanese meets Home Counties. This doesn't necessarily reassure me. I keep talking, playing for time.

"Heroin kills. Well I guess it's true. Heroin does kill, but it takes away your soul before it does away with your body. That's what heroin kills, and, er, all drugs really, I think. It kills your soul."

"What else? Tell me what it means."

At least I've still got his attention.

"Well, sometimes it doesn't kill. The sentence could mean anything. Heroin kills. . . Maybe. Sometimes. You know, I dunno."

My head is yanked back hard and something cold and hard smashes into my skull. I pass out as the chair topples backwards to the floor.

When I come round, the room is just a dazzling white. There's no image: no necklace, no jester. The chair has been put upright again. I can here the sound of my captor breathing behind me. I feel strangely disconnected.

"What can you see now?"

I can't see anything.

"Two words. Heroin kills."

"Good"

"It's not a slogan but it sounds like one."

"Keep going."

"But as a slogan it would be ineffective, er... given the opacity that follows the message's, er, initial bombast."

Words enter my head and exit my mouth. I feel myself slipping in and out of consciousness as I speak.

"It... it shuns the deitic... the linguistic mechanism that distinguishes between here and there, now and then, we and you..."

I have no idea what I'm saying. I have no idea where these words are coming from or what they mean. I feel strangely disconnected.

"The readings don't sit easily with any of... of its bottom lines on, er, either side of the literal meaning residual meaning divide."

My head falls forward. I pass out briefly and come round to the sound of my own voice.

"...it isn't obvious how the sentence operates or how it can be talked about..."

The lights blur my vision. There's nothing to see. I black out.

## AFTERWORD

*Heroin Kills; context and meaning in contemporary art practice* is a thesis comprised of two parts: an exhibition, in the form of a publication, and the written work that precedes this endnote. This afterword attempts to discuss some of the factors that informed the research towards the thesis, and outlines the rationale that determined the form of each of these two main elements.

Over the last four years I have been working concurrently as a Fine Art research student within the University of Leeds and as a professional artist within the context of contemporary art. The approach to my PhD has been underpinned by the need to consider the relationship between these two parallel, yet distinctly separate contexts.

The activities I engage in, in either of these contexts, may not initially appear to be fundamentally different. In fact, these activities have often manifest themselves through the same material outcome. However, I was aware that while the outcomes of my activities may appear identical, the two contexts in which I operate frame and determine meaning in specific and different ways. The same thing, seen in a different place, turns out not to be the same thing after all.

As an artist, the work I make always responds to the context in which it will be seen. I use the term context in its broadest sense; for example an artwork may respond to the political ideology that informs how a specific gallery is run, or it may consider the mechanics of the wider market of contemporary art. The artwork, however, does not exist to present an illustration of a context to a viewer; instead it consolidates context as one of the factors that will determine its interpretation and meaning.

As a PhD student in Fine Art practice I have considered it necessary to account for context in precisely the same way as I do as a professional artist outwith academia. However, the context of doing a PhD and the wider context of the University has proved an exceptional set of circumstances through which to operate.

The submission requirements of the PhD in Fine Art practice at Leeds University are identified as: an exhibition in a form appropriate to the candidate, a



permanent record of that exhibition and a written work of 15-20,000 words.<sup>1</sup> These submission requirements appear to relate back to existing models within the School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies. An Art History or Cultural Studies PhD submission is required to take the form of a written thesis. The dominance of this model within the Department creates a precedent that appears to privilege this aspect of the Fine Art practice based PhD submission, over the presentation of artwork. From this position, the written work can appear to have acquired special status: one that affords it the ability to act as a transparent conduit for meaning. The University's restrictions on form, layout and title serve to further demonstrate this idea; the guidelines reaffirm the apparent autonomy of the written thesis as the site for meaning.<sup>2</sup>

All of the three components that make up the Fine Art practice submission (the exhibition, the dossier and the written work) are presented as being both neutral and transparent: they are presumed not to impinge upon the way in which academic research can convey its meanings. Furthermore, it is implicit that the relationship between exhibition, documentation and writing is incontestable and that these are

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<sup>1</sup> This information is taken from the Fine Art postgraduate handbook that I received when I first registered at Leeds University. There were no guidelines about the practice based PhD in any of the following years' handbooks that I received.

<sup>2</sup> I had some difficulty finding a title for my PhD submission that met with the approval of the Research Degrees and Scholarships Office at Leeds University. The request for a title was not accompanied by any information about what exactly I was titling or a form that would be acceptable. I initially thought it would be appropriate to submit a title that would reflect the practice based nature of the PhD. In addition, I hoped to use a title that would reflect some of the titling strategies that I use within my practice. I employ titles to exist as part of the narrative space constructed by an artwork; they do not label, or provide a literal explanation. The titles often use found words or idioms, adopting a process similar to that employed in the presentation of an art object (and also in fact the written work that you have just read). My initial attempts to submit a title were all rejected. I eventually managed to get a title accepted by following the format of title; semicolon; explanatory subtitle. The resulting title is obtuse, perhaps even absurd. It uses a form appropriated from academia and subverts it. It makes no literal sense; it also makes perfect sense for this submission.

discrete concerns with clearly defined functions. This unquestioned connection between form and meaning is at odds with the ways in which contemporary art practice operates. Contemporary art makes meaning through negotiating the form in which it occurs; it has no autonomous language that presumes to act as a direct conduit for meaning. Therefore the conventions that surround and inform the thesis guidelines for Leeds University's Fine Art practice PhD present a considerable challenge to a contemporary artist.

The submission requirements are pivotal within the framework of the Fine Art practice based PhD. As such, they gave me a very present and direct opportunity within which to take account of the context I was working in. The submission requirements provided a framework within which I could position my research. They offered both a form and a context, and in doing so presented a perfect opportunity to consider the systems and structures that governed the practice based PhD.

I particularly wanted to question the idea that the context of a PhD in Fine Art practice can somehow present a neutral space within which to engage in contemporary art practice. Furthermore, I wanted to challenge the model for Fine Art practice based PhDs that could be summarised as "exhibition plus writing", such as that at Leeds University. My main motivation in challenging this model is that, to me, it appears to privilege the written submission over the exhibition as the primary site for meaning within the thesis.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Many amongst my peer group of contemporary artists have been slow to recognise the concept of thesis by exhibition. The culmination of my activities as a PhD student has been presumed to be a lengthy written work, rather than an exhibition. This is surprising, as many of this group have been through a similar process for a Masters in Fine Art, such as at Glasgow School of Art, where the assessment is made mainly on the final exhibition. This misperception about the Fine Art practice PhD is probably due to both its relative newness and the cognitive gap that exists between professional contemporary art practice and Fine Art research within a University. In addition, many institutions do privilege the written component to a much greater degree than at Leeds University. I have, on occasion, found myself succumbing to the misapprehensions that surround Fine Art practice PhDs. In

In the Leeds guidelines it states that the writing "should provide both the historical context and the critical commentary" (*Graduate handbook*: 66). The implication, it seems, is that an artwork may be unable to provide those requirements for itself. In this scenario, the exhibited work is mute. It appears to know its place - or rather, not to know its place; it is art that exists out of context. In considering context as key to meaning in art, I am hardly alone. Art no longer means - or is produced - as if it were autonomous.

The difficulty, then, with the model of "exhibition plus writing" is that the exhibition all too easily finds itself sidelined. The method of examination for the PhD privileges the word; the exhibition is temporary and inevitably distanced from that process. The final submission, stored in the library, will not easily submit to functioning as an artwork. The exhibition will ultimately exist as documentation within a storage box, for which clear stipulations about colour and size make it indistinguishable from the more conventional written theses that will surround it. The artwork, as documentation, assumes secondary status, whilst the written work, is primary and therefore assumes the status of thesis.

At the time of writing my PhD proposal, I was aware that negotiating the relationship between the written and exhibited elements of the submission would form a central part of my research. However, as my research continued I realised that the idea of "exhibition" was equally problematic on its own.

The current examination model for the Fine Art practice PhD is not very different from that provided by the undergraduate degree show, with the practice element of the research expected to culminate in a final exhibition. This similarity

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response to enquiries about the progression of my PhD I have often found myself responding in relation to the written component. This is despite all my arguments to the contrary in this afterword that it is not the written work, but the exhibition that is primary. In my role as a contemporary artist it seems that I share the same equivocal relationship to the written word that many of my peer group do. As artists we are seduced by the charms of theory (whatever that is). There are hints of esoteric knowledge (those who have the key to the dusty library acquire the aura of the initiate). At one level, of course, I have benefited enormously from this, but I suspect I shall be found out sooner or later.



with the undergraduate degree show implies that the three or four year research period will enable the artwork to get "better", with the "best" work to be presented as the culmination of that process. This allows the work in the exhibition to self-validate through a circuitous route of reference to earlier (and therefore inferior) output. This model for presenting art reveals the difficulty perceived within an academic context of assessing artworks or exhibitions. The uncertainty that exists about art practice and artworks is, of course, also demonstrated by the requirement for a written accompaniment. The existing model of exhibition needs to shift to take account of the wider context of contemporary art, something that would in fact enable the process of assessment.

The current model fails to reflect the wider context of production and exhibition; it does not acknowledge the importance of the process of dissemination, and presumes a limited site within which meaning occurs.<sup>4</sup> My PhD research has been dependent upon maintaining and developing opportunities to produce and exhibit work. This provides both a discourse with which to engage, as well as the space and money necessary for production and exhibition. The current model often seems to wish to confine practice to a monastic existence. Perhaps this is not surprising, as it is only reflecting the conventional PhD models on which it is based.

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<sup>4</sup> This was something I considered through my PhD upgrade presentation in 2001. I presented a collection of texts that existed around the artwork *The Glamour*. *The Glamour* was first realised as a collaborative exhibition with Tom O'Sullivan at Transmission Gallery, Glasgow in June 2000. By the time of the upgrade paper in Summer 2001, *The Glamour* had been re-presented at ARCO, Madrid and as part of the Berlin Biennale (both 2001). The upgrade presentation included reviews of the work from art journals, a diary style account of the work's production and reception in Madrid and an account of the work written in a fictional style. The upgrade paper re-positioned *The Glamour*, a work that may originally have appeared to be a sculptural installation, as an event. The material that was generated through the dissemination of the work allowed the work to manifest itself within an alien context.



There seems to be a reluctance to find any sort of parity with the systems that qualify professional contemporary art practice.<sup>5</sup> This means that the "quality control" of Fine Art PhDs is at odds with those of contemporary art. The systems that validate Fine Art research in Universities need to reflect contemporary art practice. Removing the discrepancies that exist at every level between contemporary art practice and academia is increasingly important given the value of research outputs that occur in a professional context. In addition, it will allow for and enable more sophisticated enquiry in art practice.

### The exhibition

The exhibition element of my submission consists of a publication, *HK*. The publication is submitted as a specific response to the context of the PhD in Fine Art practice at Leeds University. The publication exists and functions in a number of distinct ways.

The *HK* publication is part of an ongoing project that was first realised at Tramway in Glasgow in November 2001. This exhibition, also titled *HK*, was comprised of several elements, namely, eleven six metre high three-dimensional black letters spelling out the words HEROIN KILLS, as well as a series of texts based on transcribed interviews with people involved with heroin use and addiction in Glasgow and a poster with a text by the writer and curator Lars Bang Larsen.<sup>6</sup> The *HK* project has continued with the *HK necklace*, an 18-carat gold necklace that spells out the same words as the Tramway sculpture. The necklace was hosted by an

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<sup>5</sup> As a professional artist I rarely mention my status as a PhD student. It does not qualify my status as an artist, if anything, I worry that it might lessen it.

<sup>6</sup> A review of *The Glamour* by Lars Bang Larsen was included as part of my PhD upgrade presentation in 2001. This text was the first point of contact with Lars. His writing, with its artworld in-jokes, caught something of the attitude behind *The Glamour*. He is recognised for his association with artists such as Superflex and N55, who are known for their socially-engaged practices. This made him an interesting choice for the *HK* project, with its ambivalent relationship to its own sense of social responsibility. In a sense, we appropriated Lars' context.

invited selection of artists, gallerists and curators at the 2003 Venice Biennale. The *HK marble* is a 1:20 scale version of the Tramway letters, made from Absolute Black Zimbabwe marble. This piece was produced as an edition with The Modern Institute gallery in Glasgow.<sup>7</sup>

The *HK* publication provides a record of the *HK* project in its different manifestations. The publication contains photographic documentation and transcribed interviews from the Tramway exhibition, as well as an extended essay by Lars Bang Larsen, in which he provides a detailed analysis of the *HK* project. A photo essay, comprising mainly of found images, provides additional contextual information for the project.

The *HK* publication is, in fact, both a document of the project as well as forming part of the project itself. As such, I would describe it as a handbook for the *HK* project, rather than as a catalogue. The letters of *HK* are shown half-built, rather than as seductive installation views of the completed exhibition. As a handbook, the publication does not remove itself from the *HK* project, rather it is embedded within it. It avoids the temptation to adopt the detached gaze that the exhibition catalogue so often seems to aspire to.

To work successfully as a handbook, the *HK* publication must communicate through the content within its pages. This content, in the form of the written essay, the photo essay, the photographs and the transcribed interviews, allows itself to be read as a book. The contents of the publication also provide a solution to the submission requirement to supply a lasting document of an exhibition for the library archives. The publication also fulfils the requirements of the dossier.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The *HK* project, at least as it exists within the context of contemporary art, is co-authored with Tom O'Sullivan. I discuss some of the issues surrounding collaboration and co-authorship later on in this afterword.

<sup>8</sup> In the PhD guidelines it states that the dossier must represent both "previously exhibited work" and "the work leading up to the final exhibition", as well as contain "theoretical reflection". The *HK* publication contains elements that could be seen to fulfil all of these requirements. The *HK* project at Tramway and the *HK necklace* are both exhibitions of work that pre-date the PhD exhibition of the *HK* publication. The photographs within the

So far I have outlined how the *HK* publication functions as a book. However, by presenting the *HK* publication as the exhibition component of the thesis, I am proposing that the publication can also function in other ways.

By submitting the *HK* publication for the PhD examination I am attempting to create a scenario within which the work can articulate the contexts of its own production, presentation and dissemination. The publication can do this by functioning as a found object that means through its *positioning*. The meaning of the publication is determined by the situation in which it is located, i.e. as part of a PhD submission. In this sense, the publication operates in a manner more akin to an artwork than a book. It functions within the tradition of Duchamp's *Fountain* and like the urinal it means differently when relocated.

As a found object sited within the thesis, the *HK* publication is able to frame itself and its status. The opportunity to produce *HK*, to have the necessary space, support and budget, reflected my "track record" as an artist. The funding for the publication was made available through similar mechanisms and validating systems: the two main funders being the Scottish Arts Council and The Modern

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publication show *HK* being constructed; literally providing a presentation of "the work leading up to the final exhibition". Lars Bang Larsen's essay could be seen to fulfil the requirement for theoretical reflection deemed necessary by the guidelines. However, to interpret these elements as a fulfilment of the PhD requirements would be to miss the point. The *HK* publication provides an interpretation of the requirements for the dossier that is so literal minded that it could be seen to function as critique. However, such a critique of the dossier is not intended to be the primary function of the *HK* publication, instead it serves a more complex role as the exhibition component of the submission. The notion of the dossier is based on a model of art production that presumes working processes that are far removed from my own and that are based on an outmoded model of where meaning occurs. For me (as for many others) work is made in the public realm; the working processes manifest themselves through commission, exhibition, publication and dissemination. Meaning is not slowly chiselled out by hand, to be then presented with a flourish, then left to gather dust.



Institute in Glasgow.<sup>9</sup> These systems of validation manifest themselves in the *HK* publication. The siting of the *HK* publication makes it necessary to take account of the level of professional validation required to produce both the *HK* exhibition and publication.

This strategy further illuminates the disparity between the submission requirements for a PhD and the methods that may need to be employed to realise them. The *HK* publication is a response to this very real predicament: it provides a means of presenting an exhibition that is able to negotiate the uncertain context of academia. The publication is framed by the context that generated it, i.e. the context of contemporary art practice. In a sense, the *HK* publication could be said to carry its context with itself.

The *HK* publication is able to operate simultaneously both as a book and as a sited object. As such, it uses two distinct frameworks of meaning to fulfil its remit within the PhD presentation. This strategy intends to confound linear or singular methods of interpretation. The presentation of the *HK* publication for the PhD is determinedly ambiguous.

Despite the *HK* publication's handbook-like format, it still operates within the interpretative framework that governs all exhibition publications. The exhibition publication is a device that convention renders neutral; the audience sees through it to view the artwork. The publication documents, it is both secondary and transparent. The *HK* publication, as an exhibition publication, always also exists *elsewhere*. The *HK* publication may exist as a thesis within a University library; however it also exists *alongside* the eleven monumental letters at Tramway and the photograph of a woman in Venice in *Frieze* magazine.<sup>10</sup> By submitting the *HK*

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<sup>9</sup> The total cost of the *HK* publication was just under £6000. The Scottish Arts Council awarded £2500 to Tramway to produce the publication, The Modern Institute contributed £1500, with smaller awards from Glasgow City Council and Cumbria Institute of the Arts. Leeds University contributed £500, which is the allowance available towards PhD exhibition costs.

<sup>10</sup> Polly Staple wrote about the *HK* necklace at the 2003 Venice Biennale in the contemporary art magazine *Frieze*. The photograph that accompanies the review shows



publication for the PhD examination I am exploiting these conventions and opportunities for meaning.

Within my PhD submission the *HK* publication exists as both the exhibition component and as evidence of another exhibition elsewhere. This makes the submission knowingly misleading; it tempts the audience (the examiners) with the wider *HK* project. The six metre high letters at Tramway and the Venice necklace offer themselves up for PhD examination. The mechanisms of meaning in contemporary art are such that it is possible for the wider *HK* project to be both the PhD exhibition and not the PhD exhibition. After all, *HK* does not exist, or rather it exists through image and spoken and written words.

This strategy of positioning the *HK* publication as the exhibition component of the PhD draws upon the interpretative discourses of contemporary art. One of the devices of this discourse is paradox. The *HK* publication, as the PhD exhibition, functions through paradox. One of the purposes of using this strategy is to reactivate the issue of parity between the two contexts within which I have been working. The positioning of the *HK* publication as part of the thesis forces a comparison between the discursive systems of academia and contemporary art.

Both the wider *HK* project and the *HK* publication function by negotiating their own multiplicity of meanings. HEROIN KILLS can be seen as analogous to the way in which the *HK* publication operates within the context of this PhD submission. The way in which the *HK* publication presents itself for the PhD submission requires that these two words cannot and should not be ignored.

HEROIN KILLS exists as both a physical manifestation and as a sequence of letters. It can be read as a found object, or understood as word-language. It is both specific and random; it *is* about heroin because it cannot evade such a burden of content, but is also not about heroin at all. The words HEROIN KILLS re-mean as they re-contextulise themselves; they reflect, *know*, the sites that they occupy. HEROIN KILLS becomes a sign (for itself). The words would not function as art,

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Stefania Bortolami of the New York Gagosian Gallery wearing the *HK* necklace at a party at the Palazzo Giustinian-Lolin in Venice.

as they do, if they weren't "heroin" and "kills" next to each other, in that order - yet the work simultaneously acts to deny the specificity of this word meaning.

### The written work

As with the exhibition, the submitted written work has developed in response to the conditions of the context in which it operates. The written work attempts to provide both an account of the context of production, exhibition and dissemination of contemporary art, and to demonstrate this through the form that it has adopted. It consists of five short chapters, which together form an account of the *HK* project. The chapters each adopt a distinct style or approach that hovers, to varying degrees, somewhere between the fictional and the factual.

The written work differs from the exhibition component in that it has been produced solely because of the requirements of the PhD. This is not to undermine this aspect of the thesis, rather to establish that it is not a requirement of the parallel context of contemporary art. This clear demarcation provides the written work with a more easily knowable framework within which to operate. There is no overlap to negotiate. However, as I discussed earlier within this afterword, this is not to say that the written element is unproblematic. The PhD guidelines imply that there can be a straightforward relationship between artwork and written work. The written work that precedes this is constructed as a response to this.

I considered it necessary for the written submission to function in relation to the work submitted for the PhD exhibition. The PhD exhibition is itself composed of words, both in the form of the *HK* publication and in the object-words HEROIN KILLS that the publication refers to. The inclusion of the Lars Bang Larsen text within the submission in particular is deliberately provocative. The content and approach of the Bang Larsen essay provides "historical context and a critical commentary" (*Graduate handbook*: 66) for the *HK* project. However, as the essay is in fact located within the exhibition element of the PhD submission it does not, and is not intended to, fulfil this aspect of the submission requirements. However, the presence of the essay within the overall PhD submission, can still act as a

persuasive argument that a similar approach for the written component would be unnecessary.

My PhD research has been framed by the necessity to find an appropriate and acceptable solution for the written component. In my PhD proposal in 2000 I identified a possible strategy to negotiate the relationship between the written and exhibited components. This strategy aimed to challenge the presumed model for writing about art by drawing upon sociological research methodologies.<sup>11</sup>

Sociology is an attempt to provide an account of complex social circumstances; as such I was interested in what models it could offer to take account of art and the context of its production. The different research models each presented different possibilities. Quantitative research models use statistical information to convey information about often large groups of people. This model demonstrates an almost visible discrepancy between an experience and the representation of it. This slippage makes it an appealing system to use to consider art. Its form readily reveals its own failure to provide a truth.<sup>12</sup>

Qualitative research draws out the narratives within society, using personal accounts acquired through a number of approaches. Recent research using qualitative models has seen the methodology followed through to its logical conclusion, in that the researcher has become both author and case study. In this, the subjective account seems to have acquired parity with other methods of recording and representing experience.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> In my second year of PhD research I attended a programme of postgraduate seminars within the Sociology Department at the University of Leeds.

<sup>12</sup> In 2003 the Scottish Arts Council published their Audit of Visual Artists. The survey used questionnaires distributed through various artists' networks to provide an account of the social and economic position of Scotland's artists. I have found the audit strangely compelling; it feels as if the complex lived experience of my contemporaries, my friends and myself has been reconfigured into neat columns of numbers.

<sup>13</sup> In *Disarming Patriarchy*, Sasha Roseneil used her own experiences of living in the Greenham Common Peace Camp to provide an ethnographic and historical account of a community. Sasha Roseneil is Professor in Sociology and Gender Studies at Leeds



This line of enquiry returned me to one of my original points of reference for my PhD proposal, Elizabeth Price's 1999 PhD thesis in Fine Art practice at Leeds University.<sup>14</sup> The written component of her thesis consisted of a precise and detailed account of her actual making of her exhibited work. By interpreting the submission guidelines in a determinedly literal minded manner, her written work managed to provide an effective riposte to the requirements of the PhD examination.<sup>15</sup>

I recognised that rather than produce an ethnography of a contemporary art world, that I could consider the context for art production through an account of the *HK* project. This strategy was ratified by the decision to present the *HK* publication as the exhibition component. The different sociological methodologies that I had examined suggested a number of systems through which I could take account of the *HK* project. I was interested in adopting a number of approaches simultaneously, ranging from the objective to the subjective, to create a multi-layered account.

These strategies tallied with the approach I had taken for my PhD upgrade in 2001. Here the project *The Glamour* took account of itself through a presentation of the texts that occurred during the process of its dissemination. I began to establish an archive of documents relating to the *HK* project, from its inception in early 2001 in the first year of my PhD research, through to the current date. Documents include

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University, however she lived at Greenham prior to her academic career. Her approach appealed to me. It seemed to offer a way of taking account of the broader context of contemporary art by focusing on the specific lived experiences within my immediate community of artists, writers and organisers.

<sup>14</sup> I saw Elizabeth Price present some of her written PhD submission as part of *Education in Reverse*, a programme of contemporary art events, lectures and performances organised by the artist Sarah Tripp that took place in and around Glasgow in November 1999.

<sup>15</sup> In a paper by Fiona Candlin on practice based PhDs, Elizabeth Price draws attention to the problematic relationship between formal critical writing and art practice and "the relative status of these things within the context of the PhD... probably 90% of the formal discussions I had were about the status and value of the written component". Her experience at the University of Leeds and her response to the situation has been reflected in my own experiences of completing a PhD.



orders for materials for the exhibition at Tramway, e-mails exchanged over the course of the project, as well as reviews and coverage of the work in newspapers and art journals.

Although actual, the documents within this archive cannot be presumed to present an accurate or truthful account of the *HK* project. The final form of the written work draws upon this archive, but filters the evidence through a range of styles or genres. Although the chapters adopt different approaches, taken together they provide a narrative to accompany the *HK* project. Characters and details of information re-occur from one chapter to another to reinforce the coherence the story.

The writing uses the conventions of contemporary literature to play with its own factual (or fictional) status. It adopts a number of specific literary devices to create an effect of fiction. In one chapter, the narrative is constructed as if events have occurred in reverse; this has the effect of heightening the reader's awareness of the physical and material. Other chapters mimic the convention of incorporating texts, such as diary entries letters or e-mails into a narrative. These texts are presented as "found", although both reader and author are complicit in the deceit. The written submission subverts this convention, transforming actual found text into something that may appear fictional.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The backwards narrative device has been used by both Martin Amis in *Time's Arrow* and by Phillip K Dick in *Counter-Clock World*. AS Byatt is a particularly prolific user of fictional "found" texts within her novels. In *The Biographer's Tale* the central character, Phineas G Nanson, a disillusioned post-structuralist and (ex) PhD student, uncovers a box of cards that seems at first glance to be "a file of disjunct quotations or jottings". Byatt represents these cards within the novel, allowing her to incorporate known events and actual characters (for example Henrik Ibsen) into what is, ultimately, knowingly, a fiction. *The Biographer's Tale* is a book about knowledge and the systems that we use to take account of or make sense of it, and as such has been useful reference. Other books that have been useful, both generally in terms of their approach and specifically in terms of their style are Brett Easton Ellis' *Glamorama* and Stewart Home's *69 Things to do with a Dead Princess*.

The approach to the writing reflects the manner in which the *HK* project exists. The six metre high letters at Tramway exist only as photographic documentation, art reviews and the collective consensus that it did actually occur. The *HK necklace* at Venice is similarly present (or rather, absent). It functioned through myth, rumour and an occasional snapshot. *HK* is a project that functions primarily through spectacle and myth. In the after effects, it is myth we work with, something halfway between fact and fiction.

#### A note on collaboration

Collaborative practice presents a challenge to academic conventions of authorship. The existing academic framework attempts to take account of collaboration by using a model that presupposes each contributor to be responsible for a specific and accountable input, with authorship allocated on a pro rata basis. This model is inappropriate and inadequate to deal with collaboration within creative practice. Collaborative creative practice posits a model of production that occurs outwith the individual subject. It is a model that is intrinsically social: it exists as a dialogue within the wider discourse of its context.

Collaboration provides an opportunity to test the parameters of an artwork's production, presentation and interpretation. It is a device through which to consider how an artwork *means*.

The *HK* project is an example of such a process.<sup>17</sup> The work is presented under the joint authorship of Joanne Tatham & Tom O'Sullivan, something that is itself an accepted convention within the context of contemporary art.<sup>18</sup> However, the *HK* project functions as an event that both necessitates and creates

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<sup>17</sup> Here I mean the *HK* project as it occurred at Tramway, the Venice Biennale etc.

<sup>18</sup> The agreed form for the collaborative authorship is "Joanne Tatham & Tom O'Sullivan". There is an inclination to either reverse the names, placing Tom's name first, or to remove our first names. Interestingly, The Modern Institute, the Glasgow gallery that represents us often describes us as "Tatham O'Sullivan", creating a further, third, single identity.

collaborations, in both its production and its reception.<sup>19</sup> The meaning of the work is determined through its existence within the public realm; it exists within a terrain of knowledge that results from collected experience and is not the consequence of authorial determination.

The thesis, *Heroin Kills; context and meaning in contemporary art practice* is not a collaborative work. At the beginning of this endnote I outlined my rationale for the separate elements that comprise the thesis. Each of these elements - the exhibition (which is also the dossier) and the written work, exists as a positioned artefact. They cannot be read or understood outwith the context in which they are seen, i.e. the context of a PhD submission in Fine Art practice. This framework of interpretation allows me to claim sole authorship in a manner that an artist presenting a found object in a gallery would claim sole authorship. This process is in fact analogous to the way in which the *HK* project itself operates; it is the presentation of a found sign, made meaningful through its context(s).

This line of reasoning proposes that the author of a PhD in Fine Art practice is defined differently than an author of, for example, an Art History PhD. As a practice led submission, the Fine Art PhD must necessarily take account of concepts of authorship that exist within the wider context of art, yet this inevitably presents a challenge to the predominant academic model. Whilst we would not have difficulty attributing authorship to an artist who was not directly involved in the manufacture

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<sup>19</sup> The following people in particular all played key roles in the project. Robert Johnston designed the letter font, as well as collaborating on the design of the publication and Tramway publicity material; Lars Bang Larsen wrote essays for the *HK* publication and a shorter essay for the Tramway exhibition; Iain Kettles, the Tramway gallery manager, along with the technical team designed and built the letters at Tramway; Alexia Holt, Tramway visual arts officer until 2003, commissioned the *HK* exhibition; Anne Lindsay produced the *HK necklace* for Zenomap in Venice; Stefania Bortolami, Enrico David, Adam Szymczyk and Pavel Buchler amongst others hosted the necklace in Venice, Toby Webster initiated the *HK marble*; Polly Staple reviewed the *HK necklace* in Frieze. All of these people, as well as many others contributed to the discussion, which enabled *HK* to enter into a public discourse and into the realm of meaning.

of their own work, such an approach is not so easily absorbed into models of academic activity.

I wanted this thesis to consider the implications of joint or multiple authorship in both the contexts of contemporary practice and academia. This thesis finds and frames the collaboration(s) that occur within my practice. The collaboration of Joanne Tatham & Tom O'Sullivan occupies a similar relationship to the thesis as the artworks that are produced within it. Both the collaboration and the artworks are absent signifiers; they inform interpretation but for the reasons outlined in this preface, always remain elsewhere.



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THE PRESS release for HK, issued by Tramway on the 12th November 2001, referred specifically to Joanne Tatham and Tom O'Sullivan's earlier projects and to recent exhibitions at Transmission Gallery, The Modern Institute and The Showroom. The intention was to communicate something of the artists' practice, their concerns and approach to their work, without describing literally what HK was actually going to be. Although the text mentioned Tatham and O'Sullivan's current research into the anti-drugs campaigns of the eighties and their media representation, it did not explain what the sculptural installation would consist of, or even what the letters of the title might stand for. If this was a strategy to intrigue the reader it was successful. Those who worked on the installation of HK were asked repeatedly by friends in Glasgow what the show was about and what the artists were up to. One journalist who came to the preview on the 22nd November had deliberately avoided certain people in case they gave it all away. However, beyond the immediate effect of creating a sense of anticipation around HK, the release was ultimately entirely appropriate to the project. By not dictating at this early stage what HK was or might be about, this preliminary text seemed to predict the considerable levels of debate that surrounded the show. It also implied that HK would not be limited to just one exhibition but could continue to develop through a series of related projects.

The enigma surrounding the exhibition was superseded by the physical impact and monumental presence of the installation itself. On one level, the work was a direct response to the vast scale and hard, industrial character of the gallery. During a month-long residency in the summer of 2001 Tatham and O'Sullivan had worked with Iain Kettles, Tramway's Gallery Manager, to develop a system of construction for the eleven six-metre-high letters. The scale of this sculpture necessitated, by mid-November, a team of seven people to complete the installation over a three week period. Photographs were taken during every stage of the project to record not only the magnitude of the build itself but also the ways in which visitors negotiated and interacted with the work. The physical experience of standing between the letters – at a point where the sense of any text fades away – was crucial to the work as a whole.

In collaboration with Robert Johnston, the artists had adapted and developed a specific font for the letters. However, the use of text was not limited to the main gallery. A series of posters, located on a purpose-built wall in Tramway's entrance foyer, presented statements and abstracts of interviews collated as an integral part of the project. Over a six month period, Tatham and O'Sullivan met heroin users and their families, social



workers and project managers to record their experiences of drug use in Glasgow. Those individuals that took part were extremely generous with their time and stories: few were unwilling to have their comments transcribed and displayed, and many took an active part in the process. Beyond the act of testimony, the presence of these statements highlighted the methodology of the artists' practice and located HK within an ongoing dialogue central to the work of Tatham and O'Sullivan, in which the parameters of what can be considered to be art are challenged and the processes of its production are continually and emphatically exposed.

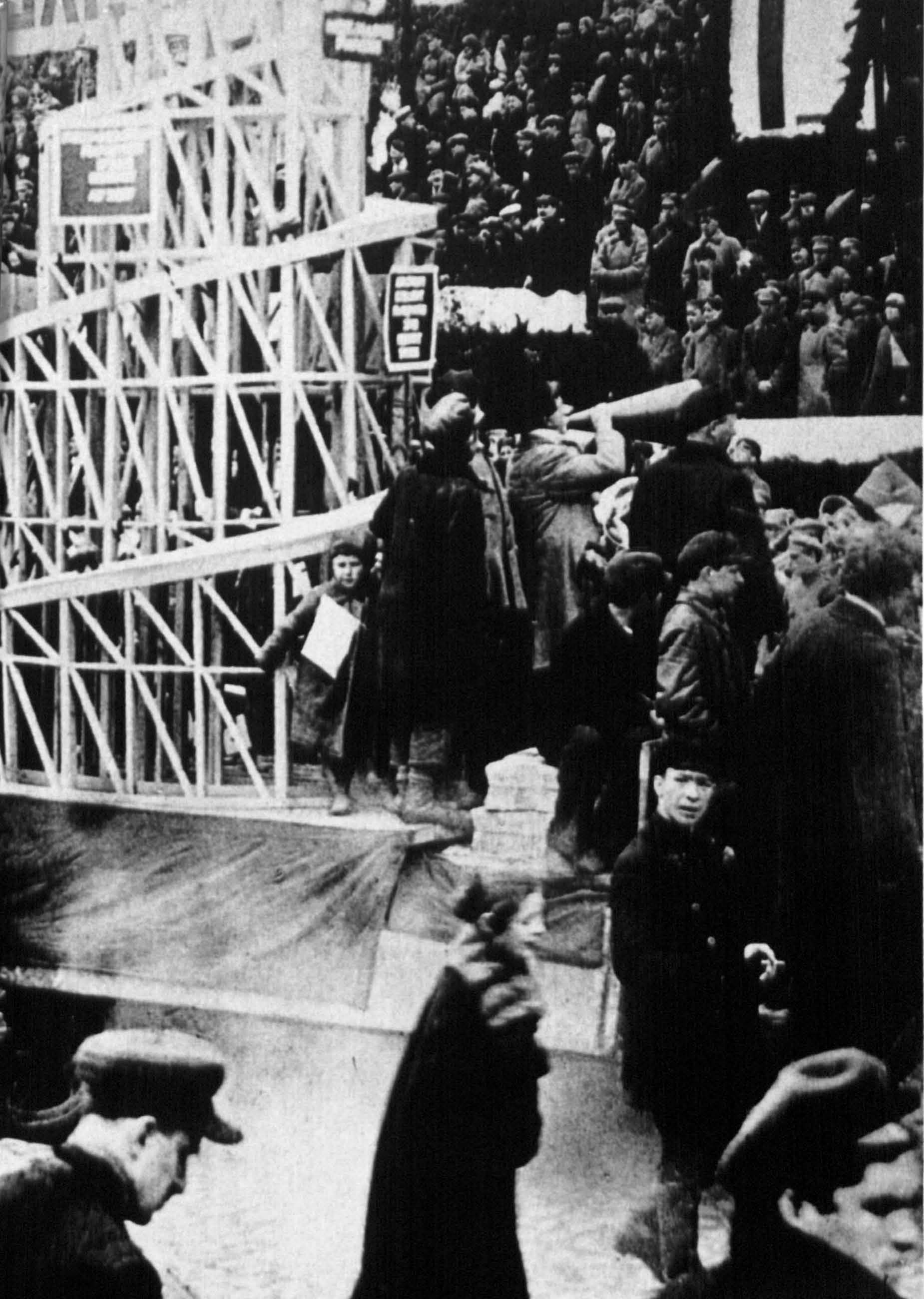
A further text was a commissioned critical essay by the writer and curator Lars Bang Larsen, available at the exhibition as a poster to take away. Larsen's ongoing involvement with HK has been a key element in the way the project has developed, and for this publication he has written a new text that expands upon his original essay. HK was arguably the most controversial exhibition at Tramway in recent years and it is therefore particularly appropriate to produce a publication which not only documents the work but also develops the numerous ideas and concerns that it puts forward.

ALEXIA HOLT, CURATOR, TRAMWAY

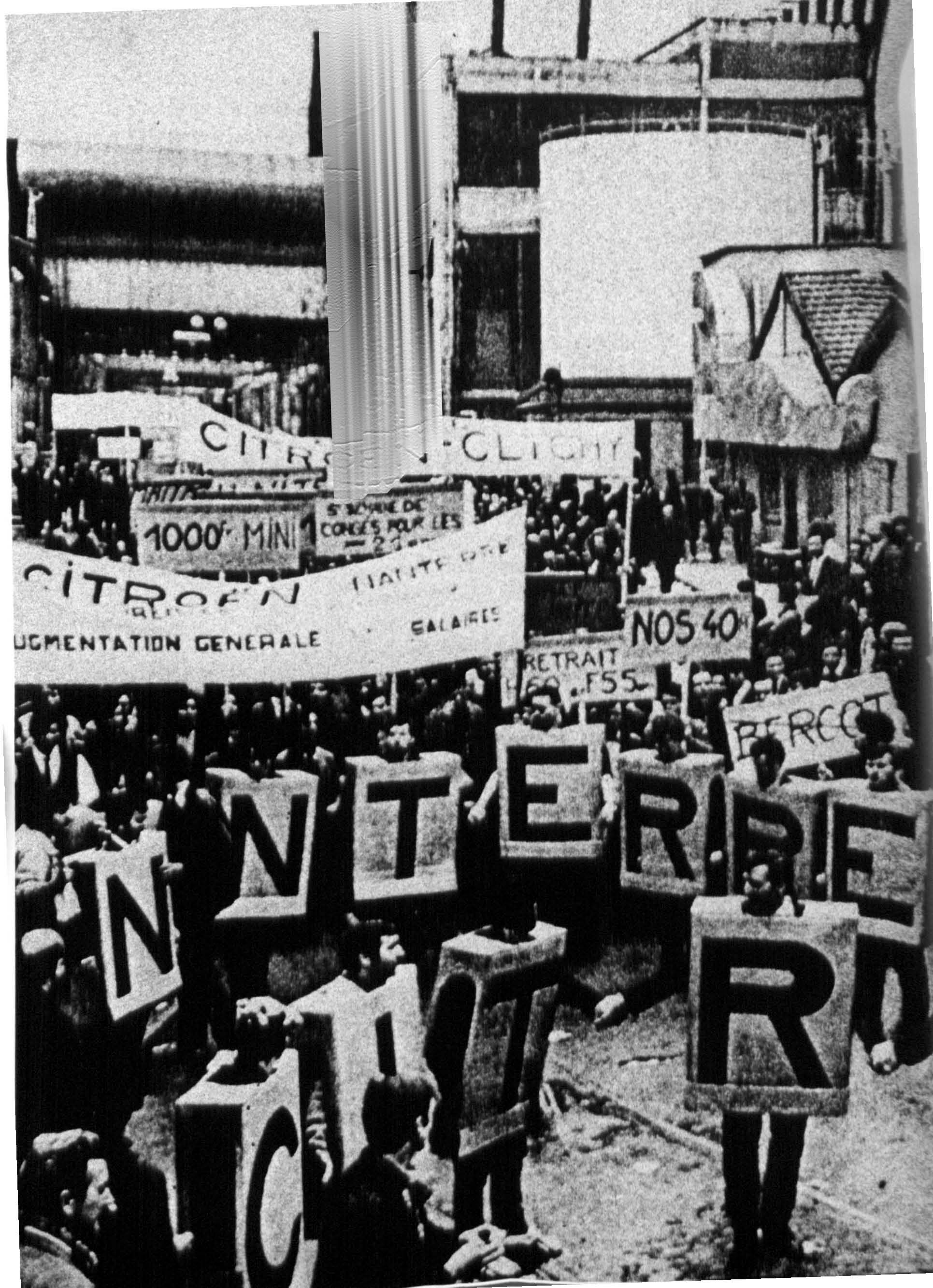












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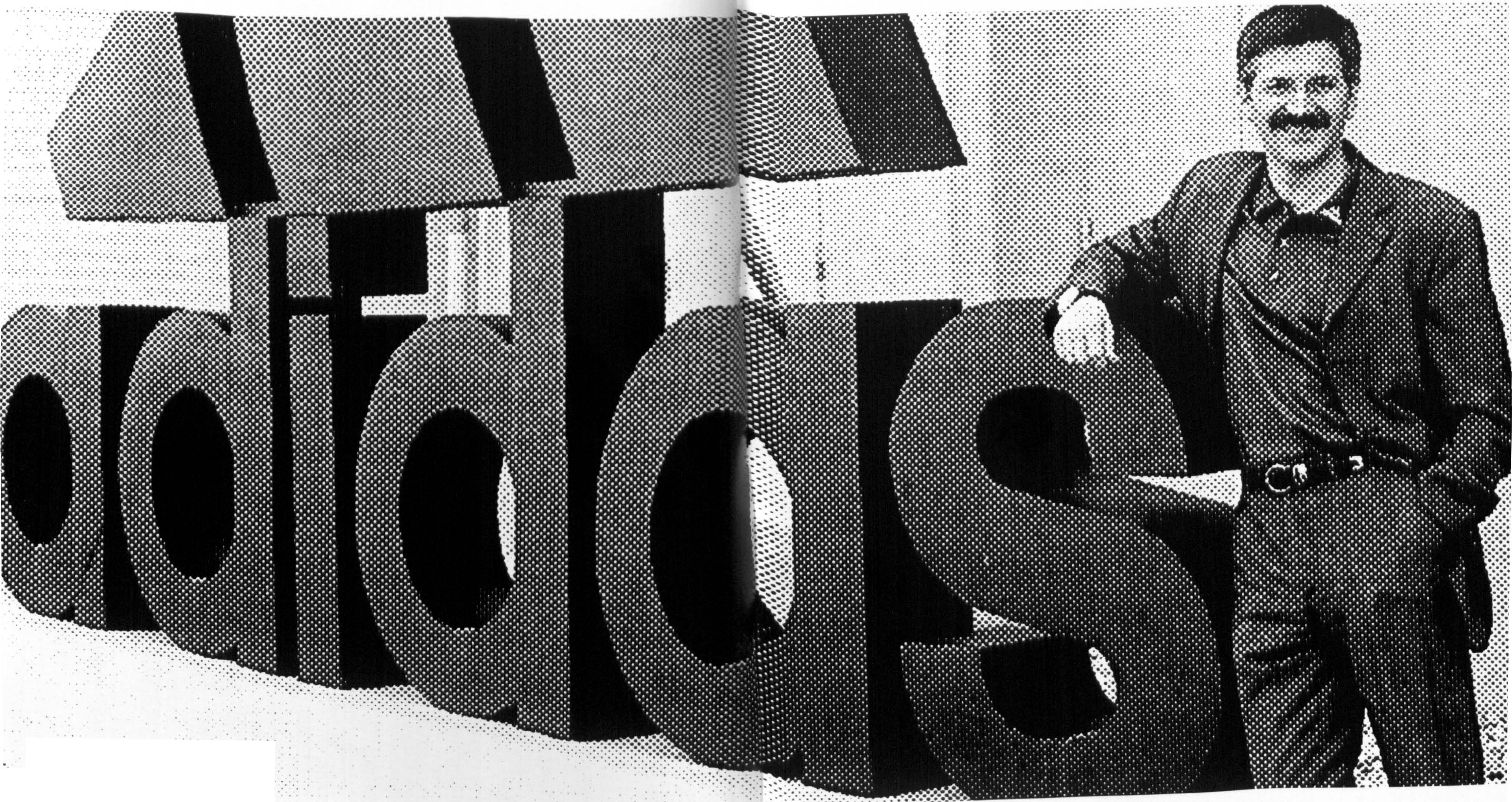
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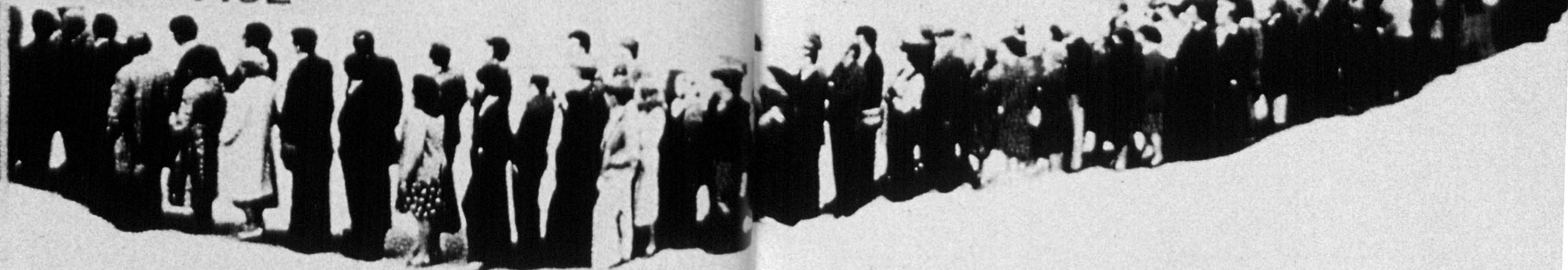


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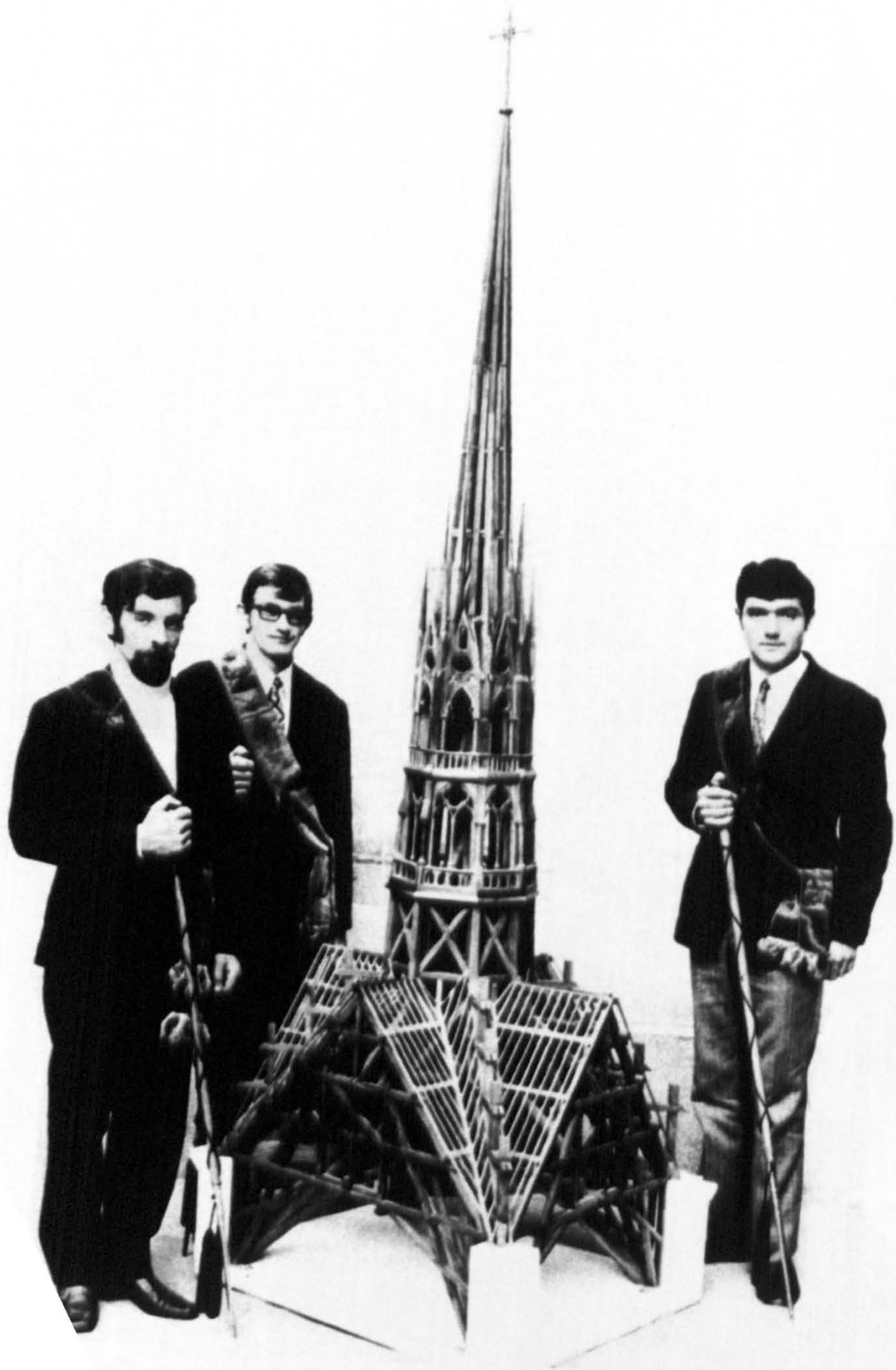
**" I BEG YOUR PARDON, MA 'AM,  
BUT I THINK YOU DROPPED THIS."**





*DEATH or LIBERTY! or Britannia & the Virtues* Constitution in danger. & Violation from the gr<sup>t</sup> Political Libertine, Radical Reform!

























HAWK

BATTERERS

BATTERERS







*Vladimir Tatlin's Monument to the Third International paraded in a Moscow street, 1927.*

*Demonstration by Citroën workers, Paris 1968. Citroën workers became involved in the French general strike after students picketed the factory and handed out leaflets to workers.*

*Cutting from The New York Times showing Herbert Hainer, head of Adidas-Soloman, May 2003.*

*Negativland responding to the temporary restraining order issued against them in 1991, after they released a single parodying the U2 song I still haven't found what I'm looking for.*

*Katherine Hamnett and Margaret Thatcher at a Downing Street reception for British Fashion Week, 1984.*

*Saatchi and Saatchi, Labour Isn't Working, 1978. This poster is often credited as instrumental in the collapse of the Callaghan-led Labour government and the subsequent election success of the Conservative Party.*

*John Leech, cartoon published in Punch. Leech worked for Punch between 1817 and 1864.*

*George Cruickshank, The peril of changing the British Constitution, 1819.*

*Model of the Spire of Notre-Dame de Paris, built by the Compagnons Charpentiers, 1971.*

*Found illustration.*

*Agnolo Bronzino, Eleonora of Toledo-Medici with Giovanni Medici, 1546.*

*Stefania Bortolami of the Gagosian Gallery, New York, wearing the HK necklace at the Palazzo Giustinian-Lolin, Venice, 2003.*

*Robert Morris, detail from a poster accompanying the exhibition Labyrinth-Voice-Blind time at Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 1974.*

*Cutting from The Daily Record showing demonstrators with a home made banner on an anti-drugs march in Glasgow, April 2001.*

*Cutting from The Daily Record showing demonstrators on an anti-drugs march in Glasgow, April 2001.*



**IT'S NOT** a slogan but it sounds like one, like smoking kills, or speed kills. But opacity of meaning succeeds the bombast: How does heroin kill? Does it kill everybody or just a few? Who is telling us? Don't we already know? Why are the letters six metres high? And why complicate the reading of the sculpted words by exhibiting interviews with heroin users, their advisors and families? Or is it the sculpture that complicates the reading of the interviews?

A user presumably doesn't care whether 'heroin kills', just as smokers don't spend good smoking time worrying about lung cancer. The slogan 'smoking kills' now appears on cigarette packets, and perhaps this makes an impression as you work your way through the first one, but after that the words are null and void.

The inconclusive fatalism of 'heroin kills', considered as language, is gnostic. It will never have any agency in the world: it comes either too soon or too late. To the user it functions as a deferred message, resonating in the guilt of addiction ('one more fix, then I will kick'). If heroin does kill the user, it becomes valid, but too late. And if the user indeed chooses to stop, it isn't thanks to the slogan as language, but only to what we imagine is the intention behind the statement. The perception of class A drugs is that there is no outside to their use and that the inside is untouchable. You either do them or you don't, and if you do you are in real trouble. At the same time, heroin's morbid gravity overpowers a legislative rationality whose prohibitions played a part in creating the drug's mythology in the first place. The residue of heroin is some kind of dark glamour, it fucks things up and makes you interesting. The words 'heroin kills' sit inconveniently on the fence, and we won't find meaningful presence on either side. Heroin kills, heroin keeps killing.

Physically the letters are too big for their message to be quite legible. You are necessarily myopic; you can say it but you can't see it. It is clear that we are dealing with heroin as a sign, spelled out in letters three or four times our own size. However, this doesn't much help our efforts at characterisation: even as a sign, 'heroin' is still a forceful referent that cannot be abstracted with impunity, and the disproportionate scale of the letters only reminds us of that fact. There is no telling if the words should be shouted or whispered. But then – because heroin is heroin – the wavering of meaning is overtaken by the sinister, though baffling, immediacy of the statement itself.

You don't expect irony here. You want art to assume a more responsible stance, not to be testing attitudes to art. To allow for semiotic redundancy in issues that cut to the



marrow of the social seems frivolous, flippant in a nihilistic, punk rock sort of way. Punk made a habit of stealing and emptying out moral signifiers, from *Will Damage Your Health* by The Cigarettes, to The Ramones' *Blitzkrieg Bop* and Joy Division's casual reference to sexual exploitation in the Nazi concentration camps. In his autobiography, Johnny Rotten recalls how he would clean his fingernails with Sid Vicious's much-hated girlfriend Nancy's syringes so her skin would get infected from mainlining. But punk wasn't just the free play of ugly signs for the hell of it. There was a political aspect to the way it phased out authority.

Punk referenced morbid and disgusting things that couldn't possibly signify anything other than themselves: glue sniffing, abortions, nose picking and wanking vicars – because the world is ugly and insane, and whatever you say or do there is nothing you can do to embellish it.

It is as obvious as the letters themselves that neither the exhibition, nor the message it propounds, can solve any problems. There is something self-destructive in addressing this level of responsibility. It is hard to imagine another message written six metres high that would carry the same level of contradiction; **MEDIOCRITY KILLS** OR **POLLUTION KILLS**, although truthful, just wouldn't have been the same.<sup>1</sup> **HEROIN KILLS** becomes a yoke on our shoulders because the uncertainty about the statement's how, what, when and whom makes a dramatic contrast to the tragic value we tend to give to the word 'heroin'.

The statement shuns the deictic, the linguistic mechanism that distinguishes between here and there, now and then, we and you and thereby gives authority to an assertion and the theoretical enterprise that decodes it. Because of this evasion it isn't even obvious how the sentence operates or how it can be talked about, and this is a significant part of the way it comprehends itself. In the words of the literary theorist Paul de Man, it becomes an allegory of its own reading.

To de Man, the radical act of reading can't be admitted by any theoretical enterprise but has to be understood through itself. De Man shows how reading resists being understood by theory, but at the same time can only be worked through by theory. We can't know what theory is unless we get to grips with what reading is: the two presuppose each other like chicken and egg. Sameness and difference are intertwined and set each other in motion, and theory paradoxically confirms reading's self-referentiality. Jorge Louis Borges said that allegory is 'an aesthetic mirror'; de Man would argue that reading mirrors itself in allegory. The allegorical drive is literature



turning inward to its own rhetorical form, where reading and theory are shown to be twins feeding off each other.

In the same way, de Man proposes, we have to find the linguistic moment in painting and music.<sup>2</sup> Of course, allegory is nothing new to visual art, it used to be the secret handshake of classical painting. HK, however, is an allegory complicated by the fact that its 'images' – the word-sculpture and the interviews – are linguistic structures that both convey and resist the real. Language's resistance to language's own drift away from the real is what allows HK to simultaneously make contradictory propositions, tragic and redundant, obscure and transparent, overwhelming and insufficient, art and non-art. As de Man puts it, '... there is probably no word to be found in the language that is as overdetermined, self-evasive, disfigured and disfiguring as "language."' The same shakeout is hinted at in the title, [eit] kei]. We know what H is, K is more elusive, together they fail completely to gel into a symbol. And that is when you don't even consider the size of the word-sculpture itself. In HK, power and representation go head to head through language and scale.

Obviously, what is represented and what is meant in HK aren't separated, as they usually are in an allegory with proper didactic qualities, but are both subject to extrapolation and collision. Allegory is on the side of dysfunction, as shown in the exaggerated discrepancy between the materiality of the signifier (massive, black and hollow) with the materiality of what it signifies (almost not there). But we can't isolate its dynamics here, that would be to relegate the project to the realm of theoretical and artistic space. Instead, HK's reading passes through layers of cultural and social signification it can't master.

Allegory in itself isn't an active form. Although he developed an anti-authoritative theory of reading, de Man never opened an explicitly political dimension in his writing. But, as HK deconstructs itself, historical markers are close by. HK indicates Glasgow's massive drug problem, only to withdraw to become its own problem. It operates both as a contextual dialectic and an autonomous form, a historically informed and self-conscious genre piece, with and against the space it is in.<sup>4</sup>

As if to suggest this vortex that sucks in any attempt at closure, the original design for the HK poster displayed a spiral, lifted from the cover design of William Burroughs' *The Wild Boys*.<sup>3</sup> Robert Smithson, writing about his famous Land Art piece *Spiral Jetty* (1970), develops the spiral as a figure of infinity and fluid scale:



The scale of the *Spiral Jetty* tends to fluctuate depending on where the viewer happens to be. Size determines an object, but scale determines art. A crack in the wall if viewed in terms of scale, not size, could be called the Grand Canyon. A room could be made to take on the immensity of the solar system. Scale depends on one's capacity to be conscious of the actualities of perception. When one refuses to release scale from size, one is left with an object or a language that appears to be certain. For me, scale operates by uncertainty. To be in the scale of the *Spiral Jetty* is to be out of it. ... This description echoes and reflects Brancusi's sketch of James Joyce as a 'spiral ear' because it suggests both a visual and an aural scale, in other words it indicates a sense of scale that resonates in the eye and the ear at the same time. Here is a reinforcement and prolongation of spirals that reverberates up and down space and time. So it is that one ceases to consider art in terms of an 'object'. The fluctuating resonances reject 'objective criticism,' because that would stifle the generative power of both visual and auditory scale. Not to say that one resorts to 'subjective concepts,' but rather that one apprehends what is around one's eyes and ears, no matter how unstable or fugitive. One seizes the spiral, and the spiral becomes a seizure.<sup>6</sup>

When one accepts uncertainty, the spiral can become a trap, and hence real. In Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958) the spiral indeed becomes a traumatic fixation point for James Stewart's character, Scottie, caught in a play of doubles in the setting of 'a vast simulacra built by an evil demiurge, and peopled with frozen automatons.' The seizure – in this case caused by the conjunction of Scottie's vertigo as he climbs the spiral staircase with Madeleine's apparent suicide – is the result of a paranoid twist of anxiety that responds to a threatening object by magnification or diminution, thereby attributing to it disproportionate power. In the spiral, human experience reaches the limits of intelligibility.

Still, in the midst of HK's figural form it is impossible to forget the destiny of the victims. In other words, Joanne Tatham and Tom O'Sullivan are caught between being artists in the morning and activists in the afternoon. 'Then why don't they make up their minds?' one could ask. And why don't they decide whether we are an art audience or visitors to a community project? Because to be an artist in the morning and an activist in the afternoon, and admitting as much, is clearly different from being either all day, and it is different from fusing the two.

The artist-or-activist squeeze becomes relevant from the perspective of the civic decline of the 1990s, as represented not only by the rise of right wing populism but also by the realisation of 'third way' ideologies. This politically flexible 'third way' paradigm



has spread from Tony Blair's New Labour to other European Social Democratic parties, and then to bona fide neo-liberals, who would find its tenets strangely familiar. This is Anthony Giddens' 1998 list of catchwords for 'third way' values:

**EQUALITY**  
**PROTECTION OF THE VULNERABLE**  
**FREEDOM AS AUTONOMY**  
**NO RIGHTS WITHOUT RESPONSIBILITIES**  
**NO AUTHORITY WITHOUT DEMOCRACY**  
**COSMOPOLITAN PLURALISM**  
**PHILOSOPHIC CONSERVATISM<sup>8</sup>**

These slogans may seem axiomatic, but we may also, five years on, reflect on their real political meanings and effects in a way that compromises their origin in the abstract space of political science.

We can imagine Giddens' slogans as the positive inversion of HK's black malediction, spelled out six metres high on top of Whitehall, but what else does the 'third way' have to do with HK's artist/activist double-bind? First of all, concurrently with the development of 'third way' ideology, behaviour has become aesthetic through immaterial labour's new patterns of communication and consumption.<sup>9</sup> In this new paradigm of labour, production takes place in a manner similar to the way artists invest their subjectivity in the reshuffling of information. Secondly, it could be argued that, as a result of third way policies, citizenship is at odds with economics, because the constitution of public discourse has been shifted to financial concerns and individuality has lost its symbolic value. Now, let us take for granted that when artists act in social reality there is no functional link between their art and real politics; and that, on the other hand, when you act as an activist you invest your citizenship in an exemplary way. But the roles of citizen and artist have been rearranged and confused, so, today, to be a citizen is to be an artist, and to be an artist is often to be an activist.

HK, with its two components, refers to art of the 1980s and '90s with an activist slant: the block letters recall Barbara Kruger's billboards; the structurally different elements of the installation, the sculpture and the interviews, form a combo similar to Group Material's intertwining of art, information and politics. In that type of juxtaposition of art



and documentation, different discourses are shown to affect each other, but HK isn't out to expand the limits of artistic agency. In fact it could look like it performs an almost self-deprecatory demarcation of what art can do. Somebody's getting their feet stuck underneath those ostentatious letters.

If Joanne Tatham and Tom O'Sullivan had made a gesture towards a homogenous presentation of the two components of HK, they could have condensed their position into an 'artist-activist' hybrid. However, the two tiers of HK set up a divided terrain where different properties exist simultaneously – in parallel or in contradiction, but kept apart as entities in order to maintain the possibility for their integrated evaluation without recourse to transcendence from the real.

But if it only were that easy to establish material reality through HK. In Brett Easton Ellis's novel *American Psycho* (1991) there are several good examples of the impasses that our desire can lure us into. Ironically enough, one of them seems to be involuntary. The chapter 'Concert' is about a U2 gig. Other representations of pop music in the book (apart from the name-dropping) are monographic essays on pop greats Genesis, Huey Lewis and Whitney Houston, apparently authored by the main character Patrick Bateman and inserted as breaks in the narrative. To explain the highs and lows of a career appears to be Bateman's idea of connoisseurship. In the fictional economy of the book this lifelessness needs a counterpart in genuine artistic expression. At the U2 gig, ill at ease because he hates live music, Bateman suddenly feels an inexplicable correspondence with the band's singer, an epiphany that strafes the veneer of yuppie culture.

That is the risk when you operate with indivisible referents. You risk Bono. Of course, I could be doing Ellis an injustice here. You could argue it is a question of taste; maybe Bono travels well across the Atlantic; or maybe it wasn't such an obvious discrepancy to pin an ethics on U2 during the uninspiring political and musical apocalypses of the 1980s. Joanne Tatham and Tom O'Sullivan show where and how this crisis of authentic signs hurts, because they don't point to signs they hope will provide them with a get-out clause. Instead they make themselves complicit with the impossibility of Glasgow's heroin problem.

HK itself knows its message is compensatory. We can't parse the sentence. It is as though it has fallen from some higher realm of reliable signification to crash-land across the tramlines of Tramway's concrete floor. HK deals at the same time with a socio-political problem, an artistic problem and a meta-artistic problem. With this drama



heroin has come home, in a way that is muter and more matter-of-fact than Irvine Welsh's early 1990s tales of smackheids (that to some extent followed Alexander Trocchi's idea of heroin as a protest form). From a historical perspective, Richard Davenport-Hines writes about the class issue of Scottish drug misuse:

Scotland's experience indicated that social deprivation was becoming a significant cause of drug misuse, and that poverty and barbarous surroundings made such misuse more intractable. Overall, the Edinburgh and Glasgow clinic policies of the 1960s were myopic and narrow-minded. As intended, they only displaced the pain from their communities. In the early hours of a dismal wet London morning in 1969 Margaret Tripp watched intravenous barbiturate-users, 'loaded with barbs, abscesses and their internal conflicts', circling near the Eros statue in Piccadilly. They formed a small group, mainly Scots and Irish and all troubled with ... a strange combination of uncontrolled aggression alternating with servility which makes equal loving relationships practically impossible. Separated from their friends and family, the Dilly was their end point, there was nowhere else for them to go.<sup>10</sup>

Heroin addiction is often only visible as a class problem, but even then it is always displaced, pushed outside. When the Glasgow tabloid *The Daily Record* turned the fight against drugs into a media event in 2001, it authorised itself to become a mouthpiece for community protest. The anti-heroin march that the *Record* sponsored presented a corporate vision of a united front, defining heroin abuse as a problem to be isolated and disowned, while claiming 'ordinary people' and 'the real world' for itself with self-promoting populist rhetoric. Everyone but the user seems to get something out of the junk scene.

HK poses as a message everybody is supposed to benefit from, just as everybody is supposed to benefit from art. The conventional notion of aesthetics is that of an edifying presence within the bourgeois public sphere. It exists for the stimulation of the individual imagination on the horizon of the common good. Aesthetics isn't about the content of different evaluations, but about the effect of meaning: we are able – so the Western subject was told – to have experience regardless of class, gender, race etc. But where the Western subject has had the right to his or her own aesthetic taste since the 18th century, drugs forbid the subject's performance and productivity. Art and heroin are both universal quantities – heroin as the sign that travels intravenously, art as the



slowest of all liberators – and both are propositions that involve the whole of socio-political life in an arbitrary but absolute way. For example, aesthetic experience represents disinterested well-being, the metaphysical equivalent of the opiate high. As heightened experiences, heroin and art are supposed to work best for and in themselves according to quite different ideas of purity. Art through its philosophical autonomy, and heroin as a debaser with which you can abjure the world. To the bourgeois mind heroin will pollute anything it touches, and art will be tainted by any exterior source. Heroin: corrosive. Art: edifying. But in both cases, when on heroin or art, the modern subject appears to be most intensively herself.

As Alexander Trocchi realised, heroin wasn't merely a 'critical tool' to subvert counterfeit individuality, but an indulgence of great vanity too – it flows in *my* veins, *I* am turned on. Smack is the surfeit of self:

– Cain at his orisons, Narcissus at his mirror.

The mind under heroin evades perception as it does ordinarily; one is aware only of contents. But that whole way of posing the question, of dividing the mind from what it's aware of, is fruitless. Nor is it that the objects of perception are intrusive in an electric way as they are under mescaline or lysergic acid, nor that things strike one with more intensity or in a more enchanted or detailed way as I have sometimes experienced under marijuana; it is that the perceiving turns inward, the eyelids droop, the blood is aware of itself, a slow phosphorescence in all the fabric of flesh and nerve and bone; it is that the organism has a sense of being intact and unbrittle, and, above all, inviolable.<sup>11</sup>

As a sign heroin is ultra-hedonistic and self-referential. It cancels out body, freedom and desire. Most other drugs make you feel or do something else. Heroin doesn't enhance your performance in any way, quite the opposite. It is the opposite to the expressive. Heroin is indifference, a-effect. Insofar as heroin connotes death and death overlaps with the real – the latter two being entirely at one with themselves – we bounce back in fascination and fear. In HK, however, our next move is already prefigured: we will go round once more in the spiral and explore another allegorical turn in its specificity and historicity.

Let us go back to the 'primal scene' of *l'art pour l'art*, since this is what seems to fuel HK's allegorical engine. In the early 1500s, Italy was invaded by the Spanish and



the French, and the Reformation was in full swing. The fiction of a balanced state of affairs could no longer be maintained. Mannerist art grew out of the perfect forms of Renaissance art but, sensitive to the impending doom all around, rejected its philosophical harmony. Mannerist art indirectly expressed the historical crisis: economic disarray, religious intolerance and what, in Machiavelli's euphemism, is called 'political realism'.

With Mannerism, nature had had her day. More than any previous art trend, Mannerism deconstructed the art of the preceding epoch, turning Renaissance form into a rhetorical reservoir, a convention. But Mannerism tried too hard: 19th century art historians saw it as an anomaly, set against the Renaissance, and later neo-Classical, myth of Naturalism. Ruskin alliterated that Florentine Mannerism was vile, vacant and void.<sup>12</sup>

Arnold Hauser, however, doesn't pass judgement:

We are dealing here, in other words, with a completely self-conscious style ... the conscious attention of the artist is directed ... to defining the artistic purpose itself – the theoretical programme is no longer concerned merely with methods, but also with aims. From this point of view, Mannerism is the first modern style, the first concerned with a cultural problem and which regards the relationship between tradition and innovation as a problem to be solved by rational means. ... it is impossible to understand mannerism if one does not grasp the fact that its imitation of classical models is an escape from the threatening chaos, and that the subjective overstraining of its forms is the expression of the fear that form might fail in the struggle with life and art fade into soulless beauty.<sup>13</sup>

But the rational means slipped. Mannerism's approach was cool, but not necessarily born of reason. It enlisted opposites to exist side by side, uniting the prudish with the lewd, the economic with the extravagant, the spontaneous with the affected, and idiosyncrasy with a belief in authority.<sup>14</sup>

In architecture, this breaking up of space introduced *Raumflucht*, 'space flight', a strategy for exploding central perspective by emphasising a building's horizontal dimension. The building becomes a line of flight because its vertical hierarchy is eroded. Hauser mentions the loss of spatial unity in painting as the most striking example of the way that 'there is no relationship capable of logical formulation between the size and the thematic importance of the figures.'<sup>15</sup> It is impossible to decode a picture according to the



principle of hierarchical size because the leading theme is suppressed and pictorial space usurped by secondary motifs.

With his chilly depictions of Florentine nobility, the late mannerist Agnolo Bronzino is the foremost exponent of the court painting of the period. But it isn't in overexcited depictions of the body or subjectively re-arranged pictorial space that Bronzino's manner appears. In his portraits of a stoically glazed aristocracy he locates expressivity in painstaking representations of the *Nebenwerk*, the peripheral detail that surrounds the ostensible subject of the painting; vestment, armoury, jewellery, décor. In the portrait of Eleonore of Toledo (ca. 1544-45) you will lose yourself in the tiny surfaces of her dress: a stunning negative of black and gold, it is crowned by Eleonore's mannequin shoulders and a puff sleeve, from which a hand extends, lily white and limp as an octopus on land. By her side Giovanni, the baby prince. There is often not much psychology in the art of troubled times. The overworked *Nebenwerk* is the exhaustion of subjectivity.

It could be argued that for every Classicism there is a Mannerism, unadjusted, secretive, decadent, in which the artist works against the nothingness of history to produce irrefutable looks and styles.<sup>16</sup> In HK, admittedly, you can't accuse the leading theme of being underrepresented. It is rather the opposite that is the case, but that could be an equally mannerist move. The primary motif is debunked by its own excess. For their participation in the 2003 Venice art biennial, Tatham and O'Sullivan came up with a new HK design: HEROIN KILLS refashioned as jewellery, a gold pendant. This heroin chic number adorned various artworld figures handpicked by the artists. We can imagine that it disturbed the social transparency of its wearer and started a familiar, laborious process of decoding, in a reprise of the way that Eleonore is freeze-dried by her eloquent dress. The HK necklace was an incorrect ornament, incorrectly worn by the art-world aristocracy, in their damp and beautiful Adriatic prison.

Fast-forwarding from Mannerism a few hundred years, we can now be more accurate in pinning down HK's style allegiance. It isn't a post-punk style after all. Although, to paraphrase Trocchi, it is born of the respect for the whole chemistry of alienation, HK doesn't have an uncomplicated cause the way punk did.<sup>17</sup> Punk was straightforwardly propagandist, like the Baroque, and a negation of art like Dada. Its bilious histrionics were anarchist and its vexations ultra-egalitarian: punk actually cared. HK is more exclusive. Although produced in a way that implicates neither the master nor the amateur, the HEROIN KILLS letters are all in the same font, nicely cut, drilled into line and far



from the cut-up stylings of punk graphics. And it would never cross a punk's mind to allegorise.

Instead, appropriately enough given the way it was echoed by post-punk bands like the Banshees and The Damned, we will have to look to the Gothic, which was altogether more elitist and right wing.<sup>18</sup> Court Mannerism was the first great international style after the gothic period in the Middle Ages, and the echo of its split origin recurs in the Gothic revival of the 17th century, which perhaps explains the spiritual ecstasy, mysticism and anti-humanism that runs through both styles. Robert Smithson implicitly connects Mannerism and Gothic:

Mannerist art is often called pseudo, sick, perverse, false, phoney and decadent by the naturalists or truth tellers, yet it seems to me that what the Mannerist aesthetic does disclose or recover is a sense of primal evil.<sup>19</sup>

The coupling of Mannerism and Gothic also ties into the modernist figure of engagement. As the philosopher Boris Groys has shown, assuming that we are absolutely free to chose, the possibility of treason is an intrinsic part of the nature of engagement. If engagement can't be betrayed it is no engagement, but merely an expression of outer or inner necessity to which you may passively submit. In order for art to engage itself politically, it has to learn treason: in breaking with its own tradition art gets the necessary freedom to engage.<sup>20</sup> Mannerism and Gothic learn treason the hard way, as their desires to stay true to tradition are forbidden by historical loss. Where avant-garde movements readily embraced the political by denouncing tradition, this aesthetic treason weighs heavily on Mannerists and Goths. Accordingly, their political possibility has turned in on itself. It lies instead in blowing the covers of identity and history and showing them for what they really are: charades, stylised and discontinuous.

While Mannerism has been dismissed as an afterthought to the Renaissance, the Gothic – albeit of the order of 'low' culture – has proved to be quite persistent. In the Gothic, new forms and motifs appear through dislocation. Its versatility is almost promiscuous, drawing on a swathe of signification since it came back from the medieval. Having served both as a vehicle for the discontents of the political classes of the 18th century, and an awe-inspiring architectural style for the nobility in the early 19th, it plays its foremost role in a nihilist dialectic:



[The Gothic] revival was an expression of the Counter-Enlightenment, the emotional, aesthetic and philosophical reaction against the prevalent eighteenth-century belief that by right reasoning humankind could achieve true knowledge and harmonious synthesis, and hence obtain perfect virtue and felicity. Enlightenment philosophers sought to dispense with the prejudices, errors, superstitions and fears which they believed had been fostered by a selfish priesthood in support of tyrants; but their theories of knowledge, human nature and society seemed dire and dismal to those who believed that fear could be sublime.<sup>21</sup>

Davenport-Hines further argues that the resurgence of new Gothic in recent years has been provoked by a new fundamentalism, and by mainstream culture's aim to infantilise, cleanse and control. HK locates itself in a critical red zone where it states its business with the 'simplicity of profound corruption', a negativity that is at the same time the seed of its own dissolution.<sup>22</sup>

The monumental sentence in the gallery maintains one of the staples of the Gothic mode, that of enormous power put forth and resistance overcome. The body in HK, summoned by default by the sculpture's overwhelming proportions, is downcast and humiliated, awaiting only a giant flyswatter. However, the overcoming of resistance not only lies in the letters' gigantism, but most of all in the paradoxical effect of the referent made terrorising because it is evasive. Once again, the twisted intelligence of Evil is victorious.

In the classic Gothic novel *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Horace Walpole describes how the house of Prince Manfred has been corrupted by Manfred's late grandfather, who criminally separated the principality from its rightful owners. Divine powers intervene to offer a restoration as, immediately before his wedding, Manfred's ailing son Conrad is crushed in the castle's courtyard by the sudden supernatural appearance of a gigantic steel helmet, complete with plume:

– But what a sight for a father's eyes! – He beheld his child dashed to pieces, and almost buried under an enormous helmet, an hundred times more large than any casque ever made for human being, and shaded with a proportionable quantity of black feathers.<sup>23</sup>

For Walpole, a Whig MP, this burlesque tale was a warning against royalist reaction and intervention in the debate about property inheritance, a conflict between the



aristocratic and bourgeois ideals of the day.<sup>24</sup> The greatest threat to freedom, Walpole maintained, is the control of property over people. Confronting conservatism with 'the great resources of fancy' the novel was formative for the whole genre of 'modern romance', or 'terrorist fiction', whose aim it was to generate anxiety as a transgressive strategy. Walpole's gigantism isn't hyperbole: the overwhelming force of the threat he allegorised was real and present.<sup>25</sup> The monstrous casque is in proportion.

From this Gothic viewpoint, *HEROIN KILLS* is a dark play on power, where the giant letters take on the roles of lonely lords of a desolate prospect. They are mummers enacting a masquerade where face, dress, voice, everything is feigned. The beholder gets lost in the symbolic, a dwarfed extra lost in a forest of signs, lost between cognition and emotion. In the Gothic drama, as in *Bronzino*, the props become protagonists in their own right, distinct from character, plot and dialogue. The Gothic is, after all, an underdog tactic that opposes control by exaggerating it.

No doubt HK's allegorical spiral can be extended. Our reflection on the negative in art connects artists in and across history through defamiliarisation and through antagonism to authority and comfortable notions of progress; a fissured 'genealogy' spreading by frustration and showing radicalism in the face of constraint.

As we have seen, HK allegorises both artistic and non-artistic relations that rest on dynamic distinctions. What is being allegorised is the fact that ideas are in conflict, but, more than that, the abstract battles with the actual, the latter attacking and perhaps threatening to destroy the allegorical mode. Ian Hamilton Finlay sees such a scenario as the dissolution of what he calls dramatic allegory:

One cannot describe as merely allegorical an event in which the presence of the actual [is] more obvious than the presence of the idea.<sup>26</sup>

Is this a drama that has already been prefigured by HK itself, or could this surplus of the actual become allegory's breakdown? To give this question a further twist, what comes after the allegory as a post-modern seizure evoked by deconstruction's scrutiny?

Traditionally, an allegory is the illustration of an idea or a parable. In deconstructive theory, allegory is constituted in the text's meeting with a remainder of signification unaccounted for, which then is shown to spin the reading of the text. For the latter, allegory has lost its didactic content, but in both cases the allegory consolidates pre-



established concepts or strategies. The content of traditional allegory was guaranteed by religion or metaphysics; the deconstructive allegory is inevitably exercised by, in and for the act of reading. It is different with HK. Even its formal instability is not something you can count on. As much as it performs several allegorical functions – configuring conflicting subject positions, the artistic and the social being implicated yet dissociated – HK is the event of its allegory's dissolution in history. It opens up a temporal dimension where non-artistic events disrupt the project's mastery over its own constituent parts. Moreover, allegory traditionally works by personification: a blindfolded figure holding a set of scales stands for justice, a lion for courage. The darkness around HK is exactly its impersonality, its figural implosion – the fact that there is nothing to represent the victims who are lost.

LARS BANG LARSEN



## NOTES

- 1 Thanks to Pavel Büchler for the use of the title *Mediocrity Kills*.
- 2 Paul de Man: *The Resistance to Theory*, Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1997, p. 10.
- 3 Ibid. p. 12.
- 4 De Man writes: 'Technically correct rhetorical readings may be boring, monotonous, predictable and unpleasant, but they are irrefutable. They are also totalizing (and potentially totalitarian) for since the structures and functions they expose do not lead to the knowledge of an entity (such as language) but are an unreliable process of knowledge production that prevents all entities, including linguistic entities, from coming into discourse as such, they are indeed universals, consistently defective models of language's impossibility to be a model language.' (p. 19). I would argue that HK leaves behind the negatively totalising ambition of deconstruction and locates doubt and unreliability historically, not just linguistically. This would mean, then, that HK also can lead to the – if only applicable and provisory – knowledge of an entity, in this case heroin.
- 5 William Burroughs: *The Wild Boys: A book of the dead*, Grove Press, New York 1992.
- 6 Robert Smithson: *The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam, University of California Press, London 1996, p. 147.
- 7 Ibid, p. 353.
- 8 *The Third Way. The Renewal of Social Democracy*, Polity Press, London 1998, p. 66.
- 9 According to Maurizio Lazzarato, the concept of immaterial labour refers to two things: '... on one hand ... the modifications of working-class labour in the big industrial concerns and big organisations in the tertiary sector where the jobs of immediate labour are increasingly subordinated to the treatment of information. On the other hand ... a series of activities which, normally speaking, are not codified as labour, in other words to all the activities which tend to define and fix cultural and artistic norms, fashions, tastes, consumer standards and, more strategically, public opinion.' *Umherschweifende Produzenten*, ed. Antonio Negri, Maurizio Lazzarato, Paolo Virno, ID Verlag, Berlin 1998, pp. 39–40.
- 10 Richard Davenport-Hines: *The Pursuit of Oblivion*, p. 335. It should be mentioned that Glasgow in recent decades has developed more progressive attitudes to its user population (see for example p. 379).
- 11 Alexander Trocchi: *Cain's Book*, Calder, London 1998, pp. 10–11.
- 12 J Ruskin: *Modern Painters*, II, Part III, New Edition, London 1873, pp. 54–55.
- 13 Arnold Hauser: *The Social History of Art*, vol. II, London 1951, p. 91.
- 14 Hauser notes the same ambivalence in the dawning individualism of the post-renaissance artists: 'In them we encounter for the first time the modern artist with his inward strife, his zest for life and his escapism, his traditionalism and his rebelliousness, his exhibitionistic subjectivism and the reserve with which he tries to



- hold back the ultimate secret of his personality. From now on the number of cranks, eccentrics and psychopaths among artists increases from day to day.' *Ibid.*, p. 116. Trocchi is also caught between life and art: 'For a long time now I have felt that writing which is not ostensibly self-conscious is in a vital way inauthentic for our time. For our time – I think every statement should be dated. ... I know of no young man who is not either an ignoramus or a fool who can take the old objective forms for granted. Is there no character in the book writ large enough to doubt the validity of the book itself?', p. 59.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 93.
- 16 John Boardman writes about a group of painters during the Athenian vase monopoly (ca. 540–520 BC), amongst them 'The Affecter', and suggests that every epoch has its mannerists: "The Affecter" is a stylist like no other and the content of his figure scenes bothers him little. Passive, mechanically rendered old men gesticulate without meaning while men greet youths or Hermes jumps about before the crouched Zeus. It is a world of make believe, and if the Athenian tradition had not prescribed that pictures be applied to vases, "The Affecter" might have made a distinguished and primal exponent of an archaic art nouveau.' Quoted in Torsten Welmarck: *Konst och varuform*, Kalejdoskop Förlag, Åhus 1979, p. 146. (Author's translation).
- 17 Trocchi, p. 33.
- 18 I have used 'gothic' to refer to the historical medieval period; 'Gothic' with a capital refers to the aesthetic movement.
- 19 *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam, University of California Press, London 1996, p. 350.
- 20 Boris Groys: *Trotzki, oder Metamorphosen des Engagements; in Logik der Sammlung, Am Ende des musealen Zeitalters*, Carl Hanser Verlag, Vienna 1997, p. 110.
- 21 Richard Davenport-Hines: *Four Hundred Years of Excess, Horror, Evil and Ruin*, North Point Press, New York, 2000, p. 2. In this study the author traces the Gothic aesthetic movement mainly in terms of its British reception. Perhaps, he even suggests, it is a predominantly Anglo-Saxon phenomenon?
- 22 In the words of the author Charles Robert Maturin (1780–1824), *ibid.*, p. 219. This is perhaps what led Sarah Lowndes to write that 'Simplistic in its approach though this exhibition is, it would be hard to enumerate the ways in which it offends.' (*The List*, 4–17 Jan 2002, Issue 431). However, given its open ambivalences, that probably gives the project too much credit. If it on the other hand is the ambivalence that is offensive then surely that must be an argument against simplicity?
- 23 Horace Walpole: *The Castle of Otranto, A Gothic Story*, ed. W S Lewis, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 19.
- 24 *Ibid.*, p. xxxi.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. xiii.
- 26 *Justified Sinners. An archaeology of Scottish counter-culture 1960–2000*, ed. Ross Birrell and Alec Finlay, Pocketbooks, Edinburgh 2002. No page reference.

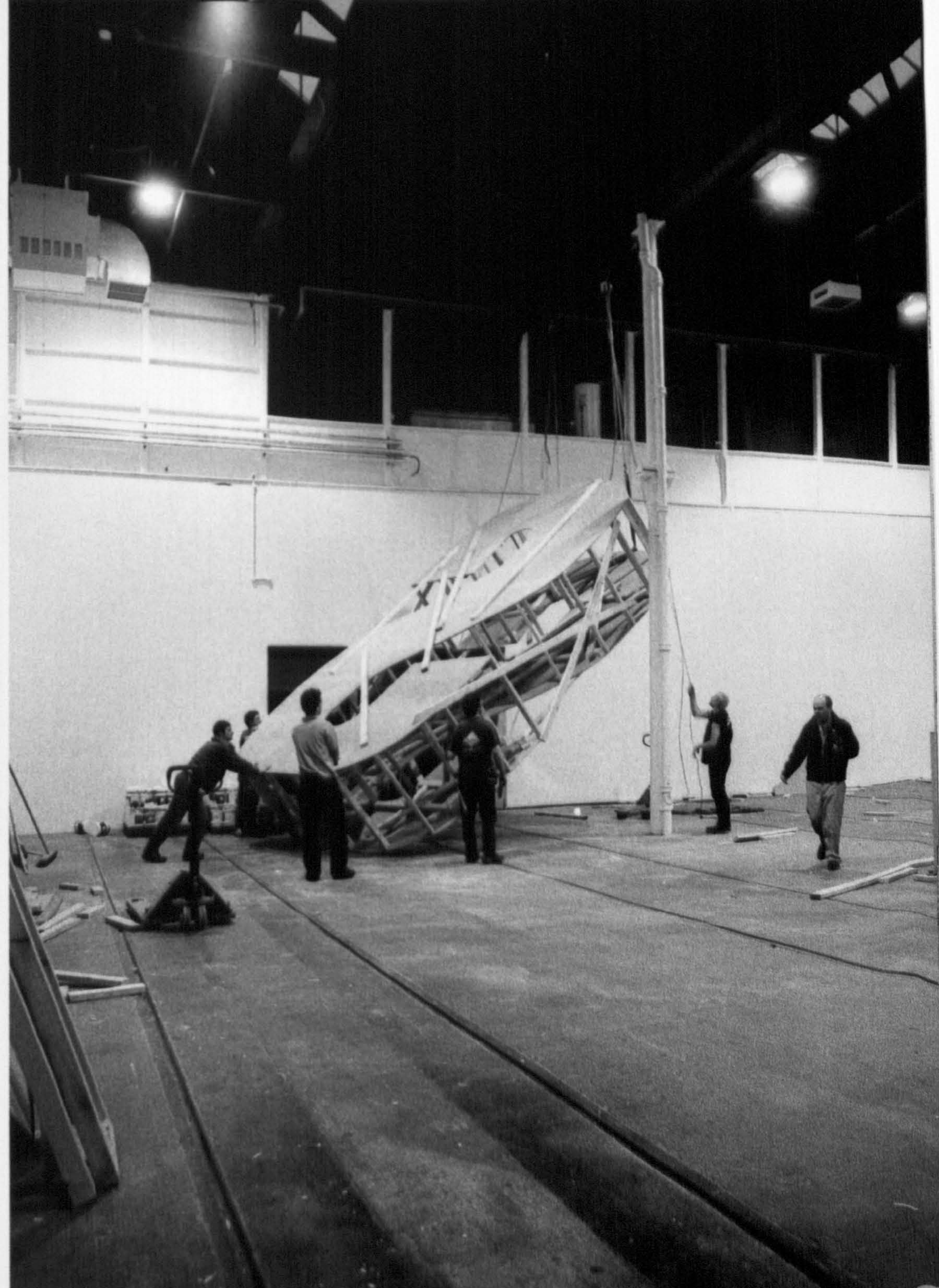












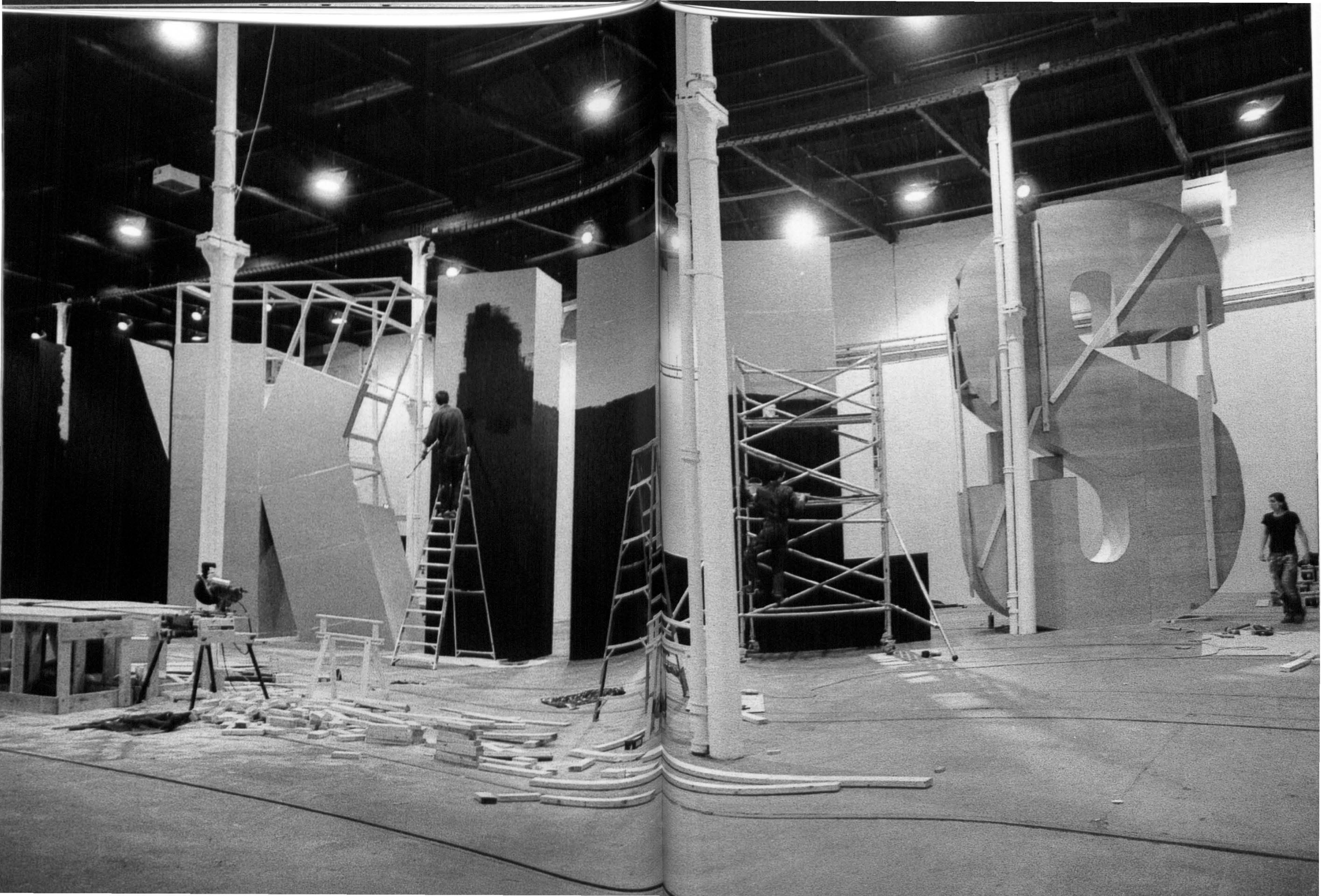


















## T

I work in residential and the remit is offending and offending behaviour – with that comes addiction which is causing people to offend. The remit of the project is that when they come in it's independent living and change, you try and empower the clients to change what they need to change in their lives. If it's addiction it's trying to empower them to put stuff into practice and help them. It's a sixteen week residential project. If everything there goes okay they then move on to a flat. With it being residential, I live with them as well. I see them quite a lot. It's a key worker system – we arrange two meetings a week and work on whatever programmes they've chosen to work on, such as alcohol awareness, drug awareness, anger management, victim awareness and assertiveness. For each individual to look at why they're using drugs, the way they're using drugs and whether they can use drugs in any kind of successful way. And if the answer's no, if they're honest enough with themselves, and they look at their past experience and they say no, then we can look at ways of trying to change that and trying to develop different skills, like buying food, budgeting money, and trying to integrate with society.

The house I got brought up in, the morals and values that my Ma tried to give me, were good morals and values – that's the ones I try to live by today. But back then I didn't realise what she was doing. The expectations that she put onto me were that I'd be like my older brothers and sisters, that I'd go to school, that I'd get a good education and get a good career. But I wanted to be like the people hanging about the housing scheme, doing all the stuff that you shouldn't be doing. That was the examples that I followed. Basically what I thought was, I couldn't match the expectations that my Ma was putting

onto me and I didn't like the way that she was putting them onto me. My Ma was wrath, you do what you're told and that was that. There was all sorts of crazy stuff filling my head at the time, that she didn't love me, all that kind of carry on, and I sought that elsewhere.

I progressed right through the cards with recreational drugs, then moved on to harder drugs, opiates. What that does to you, is take away how you feel. I never felt nothing. I lost all my family. I ended up derelict, sleeping in the street and spent a long time in and out of jail and ended up totally burnt out with it, that whole lifestyle . . . housing schemes, how to get it, who's got the best, how to get the money for it. You end up burnt out with it. I came here, I came to Family Support. When I took the drugs, I had no social skills whatsoever. I couldn't talk to anybody, you know ordinary small talk, every-day small talk, I couldn't do that. I came here and these people hauled me up basically. They accepted me, they didn't judge me, and they got me involved. And that brought my self-esteem and my self-worth back.

The stuff that I'd programmed into myself for twenty years was that you do unto others before they do unto you, and I knew, I knew way back then that it was wrong. I would feel guilty and I would feel ashamed, I would be remorseful, it was just a circle trying to escape from that stuff. So when I came here I knew somewhere deep inside me, I knew that was the life I wanted to try and to live and I had to change the way I lived my life, the people I would go about with and the places that I went about.

I would commit a crime and because of my previous convictions I would go to court and then get sent to prison. If they'd have really looked at the core issue that was causing me to



do what I was doing: when I was sent to prison I was just took out of society basically. I paid a price for what I did, but never got any treatment. I came back out with good intentions. I wanted to stop, I wanted to go back to my life, I wanted to be a father, but I wasn't equipped, wasn't helped to achieve that. So when I came back out I went right back into the same circles, talked the same talk, and done what I always done, hence ended up back in jail again.

I knew that I would need to go back and learn the stuff that I didn't learn when I was a kid – I got flung out of school when I was twelve. There was a teacher who came in here and taught us the basic stuff. I was taking baby steps. I then did different courses, counselling courses, drug awareness courses. I started going out and doing different talks, talks to schools, talks with the police.

I've been to schools and I talk to parents and children and just try to educate them. What I lacked in my life, it wasn't safe for me to come and speak about – I tried this – and talk about my experiences of trying that, then to get a bit of right information and a bit of help. It wasn't safe for me to do that. When I was going into schools I was trying to put the message across that it's not cool to do it, first and foremost, and this is where it might lead you, but in that process, if at any time you want any help or you need any help, don't be too scared to come and talk. Because saying to them, just say no, that's pie in the sky. I found that I would go into different classes, and I could always spot the jack-the-lads that I used to be like myself. I would judge and criticise anybody that was trying to give me information, you know rubbish it right away, I would spot that, and what I would basically do, I would take myself back to that age, and talk

about what was going on with me. Take them back, give them a bit of identification about the jack-the-lad stuff, and how I'd rubbish stuff, and how I'd do stuff to try and be accepted and try and be I'm the man, and then where that led me.

What I think is underneath that is just fear, it's a defence. Then trying to get across the message that it's okay to talk about your emotions. That it's okay to be a bit scared and it takes a lot of courage to go and sit down with somebody and say, I don't like what I'm doing, I don't like the people that I'm with, and I'm a bit scared, and trying to give help to help them get out of that. It wasn't cool to talk about your emotions growing up in a housing scheme, you couldn't. If you showed any weakness at all, you were pounced on, you were used and abused, so it definitely wasn't cool to do that, but then there's the damage that comes with that as well, and it's trying to find somebody who it's safe to do that with.

It's awesome now, totally different end of the stick. It's great, it's the way that I always wanted to live my life, but I was never able to do it, through internal pressures, and external, and my own emotions and my own head stuff and the stuff that was coming at me from all sides. I could never, never do it.

## J

Addiction has no boundaries, none whatsoever. The only reason the majority of our client group are in the lower social and economic classes is because those that are in the higher ones can afford to fund their habit without thieving. Because that's how the majority of them get caught, because they have to start thieving. Drug related crime is ninety percent acquisition, it's stuff that



they can sell so they can fund their habit. I think that a lot of the social and economic issues do effect, but you can't say that's the only reason, because those who are, who come from Bearsden or wherever, Milngavie, they're not using drugs because they've no money, or because they've no job, or because they've not got a stable house, so they're running away from that, you know. But that doesn't mean to say there's not other issues. The ones that would jump to mind are the young people who the expectation put on them by parents is to achieve, and they can't cope with that. That's a classic in your higher class circle – I know we're supposed to live in a classless society. Another one could be again, young people who've been sent to boarding school, there's not been the same bonding with parents and again it's like an escape. They get in with a community who they feel more accepted by, but in order to do that they've got to participate in this particular action.

I got into this work through default. I'd just finished a diploma in advanced nursing and I got a summer job in a residential rehab unit for drug and alcohol abuse in Argyll. It wasn't that I had this long burning desire to work with substance misusers – and I was as green as the grass! They probably took me for a ride big time those three months that I was there. But that opened my eyes because I was probably quite prejudiced even up to that point. You know, alcoholics were the people you saw in George Square, and junkies, I mean I wouldn't call them junkies now, but then that's what I would have called them. Junkies, well they were just a waste of space and you know, they were in places like run down houses in Easterhouse and all the rest of it. That's how na•ve I was at that stage, and I think those three months opened my eyes, and I realised

they weren't an alcoholic or a junkie, they were a human being, who had dreams and who had ambitions, that for a variety of reasons they'd never been able to fulfil because something generally had happened that got in the way and stopped them reaching their potential. Maybe that sounds a bit patronising, but . . . Most of my experience has been residential, this is my first experience of a community project and it is different, no doubt about it.

I think it's much harder in the community, on the basis that you're asking people to live in the same house or the same close, which could be next door to the same dealer that they've been dealing with, or users, other users on the close. And other users know where they live and they will continue to go to the door. And the amazing thing about substance misuse – see once somebody tries to stop, then all their friends are up offering them tenner bags, you know here's a bag for nothing. Whereas when they're using nobody would ever do that to them, and that's quite difficult for them, because you're asking them to try and abstain, and when all around it's still trying to force the substance onto them. So in that respect, it's much more difficult, they don't have twenty-four hour support. In residential there is always a staff member 24 hours a day, you don't have that in a community basis. In this project the average service user or client is only here maybe 20 hours a week, which is not a lot when you think how many hours there are in the week. So in that respect we're asking them to survive a bit better on their own. But in saying that there is a place for residential, there's no doubt, some people need the cotton wool, the complete isolation away from it, they can't cope, but for others the isolation would kill them, particularly for women if they've got children.



That's a big issue, at least in the community service they can still hold on to them.

More could always be done. Name me a country, name me a local authority, name me an organisation that's got it one hundred percent right. I don't know if we ever will. I mean I don't believe that we'll ever attain perfection, but we have to be open enough to keep adapting services to suit the needs, so that's what it should be about. There are numerous services that are available in Glasgow, but yet it's amazing the amount of people that are still not in a service. And particularly when you look at your methadone population. The percentage of methadone users in Glasgow who don't have any connection at all with any service is staggering, but they're beginning to address that now. Some of these people don't have an addiction worker, or a social worker. They just go week in, week out, pick up their prescription and that's it. There are people who prescribe methadone who are of the opinion that you can be on methadone for life, because if that means that person can function for the rest of their life, that's fine, it's not any different to being on heart medication or whatever. And then there's the school which believes, well wait a minute, it is an addictive substance, people can be free from it if they get the right help, so why, why let them be labelled like this for the rest of their life when they could be free if they choose.

My cynical side, what I think about that whole thing is, it's much easier having somebody coming in collecting their script who's not going to cause any problems. They don't have to be referred to the social work departments, or all the rest of it, and because they've got a job and their life's ticking on, that's easy. Now if we have to start detoxing this person, they're going to

have to go through, people underestimate – it's the psychological withdrawal, it's not the physical. Physical withdrawal, it's out of your system within a matter of days, weeks, whatever. It's the psychological addiction that projects like this deal more with. Trying to get people to develop strategies where if you get into an argument, you don't just without even thinking about it go and take a drug. The definition of rehabilitation is to change one's attitudes and behaviours. It's not easy to do.

I would say the majority of the general public, and this is just an opinion, I don't have any facts, but my experience is they have no idea what it's like to be a drug user. They have no idea what these people go through on a daily basis. They've no idea how the cycle perpetuates itself. They've no idea whatsoever. They have this kind of naive notion that they should just be able to say I'll not take drugs anymore. It's not as simple as that. You're not just dealing with a physical addiction, you're dealing with a psychological addiction. The best way that I sometimes try to get across to people is, I'll ask them, what is the most favourite thing you love to do, what is it? For arguments sake let's just say they said, oh, I play football five nights a week, and I say to them well, I want to tell you that as of now, you're not allowed to ever, ever play football again. Not at all. You can't go near a football ground, you can't watch football on the television, you can't read about football. I want you to totally disassociate yourself, for the rest of your life. You want to talk about football, you can't do that. Your friends that are football fans, that are all football fans and all the rest of it, and I say, you imagine, could you do that? Well that's what it's like for somebody that's trying to give up drugs. It's exactly the same. It's not as easy



as people think it is. It's so tied up with their whole life structure.

I was at a seminar about understanding addictive behaviour. They gave out this statistic and it was something like, they'd done a survey on fourteen to sixteen year olds, and it was something like 50 or 60 percent had tried hash, but of that 60 percent only three percent went on to have a drug problem. I just think it's a scare-mongering tactic that's been used over the years. You start smoking cannabis – I know people that smoked cannabis for 30 years and never touched anything else. Again it's not just about the drug, you've got to look at the person, where are they at in their life, what are the issues. Nine times out of ten that's what's more responsible for them moving on into higher grades of substance abuse.

I'm not into the *Daily Record's* campaign. I can understand the sentiment in it, yeah if I can get hold of a few drug dealers I know what I'd like to do with them, but the bottom line is they shouldn't be targeting the general public on the street, they should be targeting those bringing the drugs into the country. That's the level they should be targeting at, you know. Forget your wee street pusher, who's only pushing, you know, because he's got a habit. I'm talking about, let's get the guys who are bringing the stuff in, the millions that they're sending, you know let's cut off the supplies, which then brings you into another realm. It begs the question, you know are drugs coming into this country and people know they're coming in, because it's politically expedient.

We could actually produce heroin for pennies and if the government so wanted we could tax it. You'll still have a problem, you still have people with a problem with it, like you do

people who've got an alcohol problem, but it probably wouldn't be as vast as the issue is now, on the basis that it's not illicit. People having to be so underhand about it all. But I'm not – please don't think for a minute I'm saying we should legalise heroin. I'm certainly not at that stage, because I've seen the destruction it can do.

## K

I think there is actually some research which shows that there is a genetic predisposition in some people towards addiction. I'm not saying here that addiction is hereditary and that if you have a particular gene you will be an addict, but I think there are fairly well established grounds to believe that there is some sort of genetic predisposition. However, I believe that you can have that genetic predisposition and not become a drug addict, or alcoholic, or addicted to cigarettes or whatever. I think that it's a kind of nature/nurture argument again. I think maybe some individuals are addicts waiting to happen, because they might have some sort of biological predisposition if you like, then maybe the circumstances of their upbringing are such that their psychological make up also then becomes a contributory factor, and then perhaps specific life events come together.

Addiction is a more complex thing than simply issues of social deprivation or poverty or lack of education, and we currently have a state of affairs where a lot of people who are socially or economically or educationally deprived fall into addiction – but I don't think that that's the only cause and I don't believe that only if those factors are in place that people will suffer from addiction. I think addiction is an illness. It can happen to anybody at anytime right across the



social spectrum, irrespective of what you have or what you don't have. You only have to look around. Lots of people with money, particularly celebrities involved in the music business, movies whatever, in and out of rehab all the time. They end up with addiction problems precisely because they have money, rather than they don't have it.

People make big distinctions between alcohol and drugs, and at the moment you know, the big thing is drugs and the cause of addiction. If it wasn't drugs it would be alcohol. If it wasn't drugs and alcohol people would find other ways of relieving the stresses, if you like, of being poor or economically deprived or whatever. The two things aren't necessarily a direct result, one of the other. What actually happens, I think, with people who are poor and on the margins, is that they become criminalised through their addiction. I managed to make my way through my addiction, financing it and staying out of trouble with the law. I was lucky I didn't get caught buying illegal street drugs, which I did over many years; but I didn't get caught and so I could avoid that whole kind of thing of having to be drawn into the criminal justice system which happens with so many people. That's as a result I think of their poverty and exclusion, rather than their addiction. I managed quite successfully to maintain my addiction.

The circumstances in my life as a young person; I discovered drugs really early on. I discovered them in a kind of context where they were acceptable to use, they were cool. I was introduced by a slightly older young adult who I really respected and looked up to, you know all that sort of stuff. I'm not saying for a minute that they were trying to do me any harm. So I found drugs as a way, initially, of coping with life, and it

just so happened that I think all sorts of things, you know a lot of the other sets of circumstances and factors were in place for me. I was starting to do something that was actually really going to dominate my life, and in fact dominated my life a long time before I was even aware that it was doing that. Because I mean I was aware of addiction and went to considerable lengths to try and not be like that, to try and avoid being labelled an addict, but in actual fact drugs were the foremost obsession in my life for me. They had been from my middle teens.

I enjoyed taking drugs. I thought that I was being very grown-up and sophisticated by doing it. Initially I smoked hash and I liked that and that made me want to experiment with other drugs. Nothing I heard from any authoritative source if you like, you know that taking drugs was illegal, was wrong, was bad for me, had any kind of impact on me at all. In fairly quick succession I'd smoked hash, I'd got into taking speed, downers. I ended up taking opiates, I used acid; all those things because I wanted to, because I enjoyed the way they made me feel and it was really very easy and straightforward. I suppose I wasn't particularly happy as a teenager. I was very rebellious and I was breaking out and breaking away from my parents, the society that I lived in, all of that kind of thing. And at the time in the late sixties and early seventies there was a counterculture where using drugs was part of that counterculture, and I just fell right into that, into the whole ethos of it. Also, I enjoyed the drugs. For me, I actually enjoy very much being able to control how I feel and when I used drugs I could control how I felt, until in my addiction it all got out of control. In the end I couldn't control it any longer. I couldn't use drugs successfully, but as long as I could I



was quite happy, and I was always looking for ways to try and control my using so that I could continue to use successfully. I substituted the drugs I'd taken before with alcohol and cocaine, but I was totally out of control by that stage.

What changed was that I really became aware of the fact that I was dying. Though I was actually really physically unwell by the time I realised, I realised not only was I physically unwell but that I was mentally gone, and I was spiritually, if not dead, then absolutely dying. I remember having an experience where I could really see my life slipping away from me. At that point I realised that I had a problem, and from that point it took me four years to actually go to Narcotics Anonymous, which for me was the support group which enabled me to stop using drugs and to stay stopped using drugs. I had quite a struggle with it, although I did go to seek help, there was a period of time when I was unable to stop even with support, or going looking for support. It took, for me, finding a twelve step programme in NA.

I'd lived entirely inside my own head. I ceased to communicate with anyone or to have any kind of connectedness with other people at all, and through becoming involved with Narcotics Anonymous that's changed completely, because I've come to understand that the healing for me, the solution is – I mean, I can put drugs down, I accept I can't use them successfully and in a sense I knew that all my life, but it didn't actually ever stop me using them. I would keep going back to using them, so I can stop using drugs, but what I couldn't do was stop that process of living within myself, living in isolation, living in complete emotional isolation. In the end the only relationship I had was with drugs. So, even if I wasn't using, or I was trying to use less,

I would still be in that sort of, that space where I was really emotionally absent from the world, and everything happened inside of me. And through becoming involved in Narcotics Anonymous, that's the thing that has started to change, and it's what enables me today not to go back and use a drug when I feel a certain way. It's an understanding of the importance of being connected with other people. If I can look outside of myself, if I can make connections outside of myself, if I can stop actually obsessing about myself, living inside my own head and my own thoughts, then that's the beginning of the process of coming back into the world again. Yeah, in that sense it's really important for me to be around other people who have experienced the same sorts of isolation and to share that with people, and to talk to people about how I'm thinking and how I'm feeling. I'd developed no mechanisms in my life for actually expressing how Kate felt, ever, about anything, and through being involved in self help support, NA, I've actually discovered that it's possible to do that and I've started to actually practice doing it. That is how I stay drugs free; through going to NA, also through coming here, which was an extension of that in a way, putting something back in, you know spending time with people, telling people about who I am, how I feel, what's going on for me. Connecting.

Do you know what I think heroin kills, and all drugs really, I think it kills your soul. I think that's what it kills. And I think that's what's happening for me, what's turned around is understanding that, understanding that there's some sort of spark of life inside me that can be sort of re-ignited, and it's that – whatever that is – that connects us all. Connects us as artists, connects us as human beings, connects us as drug users.



I think drugs are damaging in the effect that they can have on certain types of people, the kind of spiritual effect. I mean that rather than the physical or emotional impact, but what happens at a deeper level.

### B

She was on heroin for 18 months. She was 19 when she started and she was 21 when she died. It was through unemployment. She was in two or three different jobs. Her first job lasted two years. Paid her off because it was too high wages, they wanted another junior in. She started in Go-Karts, which she loved. She was the receptionist there, plus she was welcoming folk in at night – the parties and whoever won the race she was getting the champagne. She was really bubbly Katrina, so she really liked that. What happened was they started cutting all her hours, but they wanted her in every day, some days she was only in two hours. She went back to the job centre and said this is not working out. Now, if you give your job up, you don't get any money and that was the reason she went to see them. She said well I'm paying bus fares every day, I'm going in every day, I'm going in on a Saturday and a Sunday. They agreed, pack it in, it's not worth it. And then her friend got her a job in Capital. They went into liquidation, that was her out again.

She got in with friends, well people she knew, that were actually on heroin, and she took pity on them at first, especially as one of them had a wee girl, and she used to ask me for food and bring the wee girl up to feed her. This went on for months, and her Dad and I we used to say, Katrina ... but she's like that, Mum they need help, they can't help it, it's not their fault. She was like that all through her life, I mean even when

she was young. When she had birthday parties and that she always asked the ones that didn't get invited to the parties. She's like, aw they never get invited, because maybe they're a wee bit chubby, or they didn't have the right trainers, which happens, but she always made sure they were the first on the list to get invited. So for some stupid reason she tried it, this went on, on and off for about 18 months. And these people that she helped at first, chased her out of Rutherglen, because I think she knew too much. And that's ... well what happened, we found out.

Within a period of maybe going on for two or three months her attitude changed. She was getting cheeky, and Katrina loved her hair, she had nice blonde hair, and she had really thick hair as well and she always took care of it. It was just getting tied back. I mean she always still got up and showered and that, but her hair was just getting tied back, where she used to go mad with her hairdryer going all the time. There were just wee changes like that, not coming in for her tea, then when she was coming in – she always used to come in to say goodnight to you, but then it was just that's me in. She wasn't actually coming into the room, and she was going out in the morning and I'm going, where is she going? And it was when her Dad was working, it was a Friday afternoon, and she said, I've got something to tell you Mum. And if you're not aware of drugs you've not a clue and I thought she was going to tell me she was using hash, and she said, Mum you start taking these shots of it, and I think this was the start, the stage where she was starting to feel she was needing it. She had to go out in the morning and go and get her fix. We got her to the doctors right away. Our doctor wasn't on, but somebody else spoke to her, and they gave her painkillers to try and get her over the worst of it,



because they said the amount of times she's used and how much she was using, she still hadn't really done herself any harm, and she could get herself sorted out. She got sorted out for a wee while, and then I'd see her start to get ... the phone would be going and it would be them. No, you can't always blame them, because Katrina still took it. She still took it.

I mean I feel sorry for her old friends. Her best friend's taken it really hard, because I think quite a lot of times Katrina used to ask her to go out and she wouldn't go because she had a boyfriend. Rachel was a wee bit older than Katrina again, so she was at the age to start getting a steady boyfriend. Katrina was still at the age that she would meet somebody, but she was always worried about what her pals were doing. You know she would arrange to meet them up the dancing, I'll go with my pals, you know. And then ... she'd been off it a wee while, and as I say she went back on it. She told me she owed people money, and these people that she was helping to feed and that, and they were starting to phone up and kind of threaten her, so her Dad paid them off. I still don't know to this day if it was money lenders or the dealers who was owed the four hundred pounds. I really don't know. She told us it was a money lender, but it could have been a dealer, but I don't know if a dealer would give you all that heroin. But her Dad got that sorted out and she went up to stay with her Granny and she got another job, in a shoe shop. She got herself sorted out, started work again. What happened in there, they wanted a girl to take over as manageress, but she didn't want the responsibility, so they'd to bring somebody else from another shop, so what happens is that Katrina was last in again. And that's because she was afraid to come into Rutherglen she started

mixing about with dealers and that from the town, which was a big leap compared to the people she knew, and she ended up staying in a hostel. It was horrendous. It was too much for my Mum as well, because I think she was starting to take money from my Mum's. I think what happened was, that when she used she didn't like to be at home because she didn't like us to see her like that. You know she would always be away. And then this went on for a wee while, and she got herself sorted out about eight weeks before she died, and she phoned me up asking me if I got a letter asking me to meet her, saying, I'll understand if you don't want to meet me. But there's no way I would never have met her.

She met me, she took me for a meal, and you see when she was on it she always had to run away and I could never understand that, but I was that stupid I thought she was running away from me. Because Katrina and I, we were dead close, we'd go shopping, she'd come with me into the town, and she was about five foot ten Katrina, and she always just held my hand, because she said if I took her arm I was too low down! So we were really really close. And then this was happening and she was running away, and I'm going like that, what's happened, what's changed, but she must have been going for a fix. The last day she was with me the whole day, she told me she'd met an American, and he was a pilot and I'm who's he kidding? I thought maybe he was a steward and he was kidding her on. That's what really I thought right. And she's going, oh he's dead nice to me Mum. During all this time, she always used to be quite polite Katrina, I started even seeing her change the way she was speaking. I was, for God's sake Katrina what's happening to you? And she was saying, it's good because I've got to speak right for him



to understand what I'm saying. She said he takes me to nice places, and she was telling me the first night he took her out she had five pounds, and after he bought the meal she was going to say, well I'll pay for my share but hoping he was going to say don't be silly. He paid for the meal and gets her a wee rose and that and it was really nice.

I did see a change in her and I'm saying, well she's not running away and she's bought me these flowers and she's paid for the meal. She bought herself a dress, because he was only here maybe about once a fortnight. He'd come out from Chicago. It was the nice weather and she'd bought herself a wee dress from Benetton, a wee summer dress, and I helped her towards a pair of sandals. So she was fine. So next thing, three weeks later, she was dead. Died in a close in Haghill. And that day she died, the phone went, well obviously the phone's going to be going all day, but it was the American. He says this is Scott, could you go and tell Katrina I'm here. So I'm like, what am I going to say to him, so I had to say Katrina's dead. And he's like that, I don't know what to say to you, I really don't know what to say to you. He just said he was sorry and he put the phone down. I regretted not saying anything, I'd have said I'd have liked to have met him. So the next day the phone goes again, and Lindsey's like, Christine, it's Scott, it's Scott who's on the phone. So I took the phone and I said to him that I would like to meet him. So he came up, and he didn't know she was on drugs. So when he came up we had to sit and we'd to tell him and he was shocked. He said, I introduced her to all the crew, and that's when I realised he was the pilot. He said, oh and they loved her, and they'd arranged a night to go to the Tattoo, and his crew said to him why don't

you bring Katrina. The day of her funeral he flew from Chicago to come to her funeral and he said he would never come to Glasgow again. I got a nice letter. We don't write to one another now. At the beginning we got a nice Christmas card from him saying that he remembered Katrina. But he didn't even know she used drugs.

There's more people understanding now because of what's happened in *The Daily Record*. Because people are starting to write stories. They're starting to say, well this is my son and this is what he was like. He was just an ordinary person. And you're starting to see – putting a face to those who're dead. I think people are standing up. Well before, I must admit, I didn't tell anyone Katrina was using drugs because I kept thinking she was going to get better. I really thought, well what's the point of people knowing, she's got this to live with without everybody knowing. It's the stigma of knowing your daughter or your son's on drugs. But people are now standing up and saying, well it's a problem they've got. They're still ... they're not just junkies.

## M

I heard about this through other guys that I met. They were saying that this was a day programme sort of thing. I was interested in it, because I've done rehabs, I've been in Phoenix up the road, the residential. I've done that twice. If I'd known this was here before I'd been into rehab I'd have done here first because it's a lot, it's more ... it's not structured. It's constantly structured up in that residential, there's a lot of structures and things like that, whereas this is more relaxed. You go and you're going back into the community. I think it's a lot better in my personal view, it's a lot better than residential.



I think here, when I found out about here, I just went right to my drugs worker and says, I've heard about the Phoenix day programme, any chance you could give us a bit of input about it. He spoke to us and I'm like, aye that sounds really good.

It's a nine month programme. It's like you go into different stages. Three months you're in phase one, that's you learning about your feelings, stress, doing a bit of computer, learning how to work the keyboard and things like – you know how to get into certain things. It's all about finding your feet basically in phase one. I'm in phase two now, I just went in there, I went in there last Thursday. So it's a lot better now, you start to deal with things like anxiety and stress and things like that. You learn how to put in coping strategies in case you – I get bored dead easy. My coping strategy is just go out, walk, either go to swimming, do something that keeps my head going, and that's what it is in phase two. Putting things into coping strategies, knowing all your triggers, boredom, stress, everything. It could be anything, and it's just putting it into place.

I've got a better outlook on life now, so I have. I know what I want now. For years and years I always just thought ... I think it was through past experience, through my Da putting me down all the time, and I always thought, this is going to be me. Down and out, not interested in anything. When I was in the rehabs and things like that, they gave me a taste of what I could have, going to college and stuff like that. But it's because I was wrapped up in cotton wool, when you leave something like that you're just open to all sorts. In here, it's like you're not wrapped in cotton wool, you're going home at the end of the day, you're still out in the

community and that just makes you a stronger person I think. It gives you a – it gives me a good outlook, knowing what I want. I know what I want and I know how I'm going to go round about it and get it.

I started off smoking hash, well didn't start off with it, started off with – I was buzzing glue, gas, at nine year old, but before that ... my Da was an alcoholic and he used to batter me, you know, and because I used to defend my Ma all the time, man, I used to just get it worse. I got big brothers and wee brothers and sisters but it always just felt as if it were just me that got it all. I'd defend my Ma anyway even though I knew I'd just get a doing. It's the anger which was triggered from that and my Da putting me down constantly. You're a wee rat and all that sort of thing. I had chances, because I played football, S-form and that, and I just fell away because my Da pushed me and I just rebelled against it. Then it just led to missing school, buzzing glue, gas, then it went to smoking hash, then it went to drinking, then all my pals, you know, my pals and that all doing it, and I thought this was the hip thing you know, everybody all doing it, so obviously you go along with the flow not knowing that you've stepped onto something else. With me, I chased it, I chased something, I chased that extra buzz, that better buzz. I just kept on chasing something. I wanted that ultimate experience, an ultimate buzz and ended up just sleeping right through everything. You name it, I've taken it, taken heroin. That was my ultimate buzz the first time I ever tried it, but then you're chasing something that just doesn't happen again. You know, you get that ultimate high the first time you take it right, but after that you're chasing it and it doesn't come, you never get it no matter what you take or how much you take,



you'll never get that first time effect. Strange, but that's how everybody I think gets a lot addicted to it, because they're chasing that ultimate buzz.

I didn't think I had a problem for a long time, I thought I could just drop it, until one time. I used to sell, I sold everything, drugs, I sold a lot of drugs, so I never had to do really anything to get my drugs, because it was always there for me, and money was there for me, and it was always there, and then one day it wasn't there, because I got into heroin. People that I was doing things for just took it away from me. I earned my money, whatever it was I was selling at the time and I was left in the lurch. I never felt so much pain in all my life. I've never been like that in all my life man, the heavy cramps and stuff like that, it was, it wasn't nice, no. Wasn't very nice. I ended up doing things that I regret, that I had to do to stop that pain. There's lot of things playing in your head, and it's not a nice place to be in.

I lost my girlfriend, my three weans and that, lost everything, my house, the whole lot. I couldn't handle it. I was living in the street. I was in the street for about a year and a half, and I ended up going, I can't do this anymore and I went to the crisis centre in West Street. Went to there, stayed in there for three weeks, got my head together, but it was, I just wanted to feel a bit better, feel healthy. That's what it's there for, a respite. So I just wanted to feel alright again, because I was fed up going into jail and things like that. But I went into the crisis centre three times, no four times I was in the crisis centre before I actually went like that, I need to do something here. And then I said to myself I need to go long term or something, you know rehab or whatever it may be. I need to do something, I need to find out why I keep going back to drugs. I went to Phoenix rehabilitation centre up the

road, I went there, I was in there for eight month and I left with a lassie. And when I was walking out the door, I started greeting, because I knew I was doing this big blunder, the biggest mistake of my life doing this, but once you're out you can't get back in. I realised this and I just went back down that road, because I was more gutted with myself. I punished myself basically and that's what it was, because I had everything going for me.

I went back to my drugs worker, I pushed and pushed and pushed, saying I really do need this, I want it again. I went back into rehab, and the lassie that I left the rehab with had come back in and she was also with this other guy, and it was just all bad. Instead of getting me flung out for violence, or anything like that, I just went, I'll leave and that way I'll get left on good terms, that I could get in somewhere else. I should have just went to the staff and says, look any chance I could get sent somewhere else, another rehab, or can I get my funding transferred to somewhere else. But I didn't, I just went I need to get out of here, and I just left.

Then this must be about four years since I was in the rehab, and now I just heard about this. All the other times, man I done it for everybody else, I did it for my girlfriend, my ex-partner, I wanted to see my weans, I wanted my Ma to be proud of us, I wanted everybody to be proud of us, and I was doing it all for the wrong reasons. I was doing it for all them, whereas I wasn't doing it for me. Now, it's taken me all this time to realise it, and it's me I need to do it for. It's me, definitely man.

Ex-users give me inspiration. I want to do a lot of things. I want to experience life, like to travel, whatever, experience things man. I could also see myself - I'm doing a mountain leader-



ship course. I love that. I go out hill walking every Thursday, get away, wherever. You know I love that, I love canoeing, whatever, orienteering, you name it, I love all that. I could see myself getting into that, but I could also see myself doing this, you know this sort of work. It's something that I know, it's something that I've done for fifteen year, so I would say that I'm very experienced at it. You can't get any more experienced than somebody that's been it themselves. But I push myself away from that because I don't want to – see just coming straight from this, being so many years clean, going into sessions and things like that. I don't want that, I want a time gap, whether it be two, three years whatever. I want a life outside away from it, I don't want it just in my face constant.

## R

Politically people are now willing and able to make an investment in addiction issues and see the impact on families, on children, on the criminal justice system. There is a realisation there that drug and alcohol is a sustaining factor in that and that needs to be treated to address the other issues and the bigger social picture. There's more resources coming in, which can therefore go and deliver much much better more complex services then we've able to do before.

We've also had a major review of our own services lately. It's covered various different levels and a lot of the work centred around consultation with existing staff and various stakeholders and service users, service users families, GPs, the whole gamut. In addition to that we have a research officer in the team and he's been collecting data over the last four or five years, bringing this together and actually

identifying the trends in the city and the service needs in the city. Really making the services more appropriate for the city they're in. The funding in the past for drug services has been very ad hoc and it's very much depended on funding being available in certain areas of the city, whether urban aid or one off payments. Some areas of the city have been well served and others were poorly served, small teams in very densely populated problematic areas. What we have done is we've come down from 13 teams to nine – they're big teams – and equipped them in accordance with the level of need in their area of the city, so that regardless of where people try to access a service in the city they're going to get a comparable service.

Drug treatment testing orders we've piloted for the last two years. The pilot's almost finished on that and we're starting the drug court pilots – drug courts for persistent offenders. So that's the first one in the UK, although there is one in Ireland. There's a lot of work gone in to that to get it to that stage, and once we actually get it into to court it'll be very interesting to see how it all works. It's very much a treatment-based option for people, which is obviously going to be beneficial.

Drug court is going to deal very much with drug related offending. It doesn't need to be a drug charge, but offending that's drug related. There's going to be a huge emphasis in assessment that people are willing and susceptible to treatment of some kind, and then there will be a continuation, where we assess people very comprehensively before they go back to court with a full treatment plan put together by the client and the treatment providers. If the Sheriff feels that that's the right way to go, then they will have some sort of order, be it a drug treatment



and testing order, or enhanced probation or the like, then it'll be a question of working with that order. It gets people into treatment with some level of accountability as well, because with drug treatment and testing orders offenders are back in court every four weeks in front of the Sheriff and they have to account for their progress, good or bad. But what we have found is that the congratulations around people who are doing well has a phenomenal effect to keep people really trying hard and doing well and moving forward. It's got to be about the positive reinforcement of progress, as much as, you know things haven't gone too well so pull your socks up.

There's a lot of damage been done to people over the years. It takes a long time to be able to leave that behind. But there are different sorts of services that people can tap in to, again something that we're just about to look at is our purchased services, both residential and community based, and to try to get good models of service over the city so that people can access them regardless of where they are.

There has to be different options available to people because people are individuals with different experiences and different backgrounds and different needs, so it needs to be a very diverse range of good quality services. I think that's the really important thing; they have to be of a high quality. Also something that we're starting to look at more and more on a city wide basis, although it has been done on various little pieces of local work, is working with female drug users; because the whole way women work psychologically is entirely different to the way men work. There's been a lot of research done to start and reach women, to try and find the best way of working with female drug users and trying to help them. It's arguably more difficult

for women to come forward for services. I think in our community teams we've set about a 38 percent female to 62 percent male client group. Ideally we'd need to redress that balance and get more women specific services; but because they've got childcare difficulties, because of the pressure from partners, and because some women are reluctant to come forward because they know society feels that drug using's not a good thing for women to do, it's very very difficult.

We've been looking at the patterns of female offending and how courts deal with female offenders and again it's quite different. Women tend to be sentenced more regularly, also the crimes that they tend to commit such as soliciting, shoplifting tend to be a lower tariff, so they don't trigger social work. They drift through the court system and into Cornton Vale and then come back out again without actually triggering anything such as a report request from court, social work inquiry reports. So that's something we're working on at the moment: trying to get services together to try and support these women and give them the opportunities that other people naturally have.

A review of the methadone programme has been completed, and that's just finished consultation and just about to work towards implementation. Again, if people are using methadone properly and it's well supervised people can be on methadone and nobody would know. People can function very very well, there are people who are on extremely low doses, only two mls or five mls a day. It's just breaking that with people, and it's about helping them get the confidence and the realisation that they don't actually need it, but when people have used drugs for 20, 25 years it's very difficult. It's about trying to give



people, help people identify other things in their life, drug use can be put in the background and not be important anymore. Equally people do function very very well on methadone if it's properly adhered to and properly dispensed.

In many many areas of Glasgow and outwith, drug use is not unusual and therefore it does not hold the fears for young people that it did maybe ten years ago, and it's not seen as being so far out of society, so we definitely do have an obligation there. Part of it's been about the services being there and being accessible and to be going to parents so they can learn how to best try and help their children to avoid the pitfalls of becoming involved in drug and alcohol use. But again that's something that our teams along with people that come in for their help can hopefully work together on, to try and get as much accurate information as possible.

I think it's difficult to put figures on things, people are individual and addiction's a complex thing to try and get out of. I think generally there's a lot of people who we have in our services who are very very stable and doing very very well. Up until recently there hasn't been the move on services available for them, so hopefully what we would like to see is that people who are currently stable and doing very well are moving in through the services so they don't need us any more. Also we have to achieve a better level of stability for other people; really keep that continuum going. That people are moving through, rather than coming into service and staying there, that people are going through successfully.



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