

# **For & Against: Art, Politics and the Pamphlet**

## **Public Symposium**

**Friday 26 May, 11am – 5pm**

**Fearon Hall, Loughborough**

**11am**            *Introduction – Gillian Whitely and Jane Tormey*

**11.15am**        *Keynote - Mark McGowan*

The political pamphleteer in the age of social media. Nothing has changed except its physical appearance but the principle is still the same ... How to carry a message. Going to be talking about not the message but what it looks like and how that influences the potential to change your political position. Shouting crying lying all framed within the screen of multiplicities. The Internet is God. The pamphleteer the disciple of the medium.

**12.10pm**        *Paper One – Urban Pamphleteer*

**Ben Campkin & Rebecca Ross**

This paper will reflect on our experience of initiating and editing the first six issues of an online and physical publication, *Urban Pamphleteer* ([www.urbanpamphleteer.org](http://www.urbanpamphleteer.org)), from two perspectives. First, we will consider the significance of pamphleteering, in the context of histories of radical pamphleteering, in instigating urban change, and the lessons that can be learned in addressing the most pressing challenges linked to contemporary urbanization. Second, we will consider how the form of the pamphlet relates to the city itself, through its printing, circulation and links to public(s) and public spaces; and how it might prompt us to disrupt and reconfigure problematic aspects of conventional academic publishing.

*Urban Pamphleteer* (2013 -) strives to engage with contemporary urban questions from academic as well as professional, community and creative perspectives. The intention is to stimulate debate, and in the process empower and inform citizens, professionals, researchers, institutions, and policy-makers, with a view to positively shaping change. The

publication is an experiment in the interstices between academic and wider scope publication, and the first six issues have focused on some of the most contested areas of debate, such as the phenomena of 'smart cities', 'regeneration', and 'design against crime', and the social and other impacts of associated discourses and practices. Rather than framing these as polarised debates, the publication has intentionally brought out complexity, and varied perspectives, communicated in a direct and accessible way.

**12.30pm**      ***Rant one – I am For & Against***

**Joanne Lee**

This rant emerges as a response to the binary position implied by being too neatly for or against. It is also a reaction to what is an increasingly divided country after the Brexit vote, further stratified by unequal wealth and opportunity, economic and job precarity, and counters a culture in which expertise is derided and populism provides oversimplified solutions. It also suggests that those academic arguments producing narrow theses reduce the possibility for a more nuanced understanding of the situations we are living through, and that creative practice can contribute richer and more intricate understanding. I am for sustaining space in which an increasing complexity of expression can be generated. I am for a creative, critical constellation of thought and practice. I propose bringing together the urgency of the political pamphlet with the digressive potential of the essay form. It will find its iteration in a verbal performance accompanied via a proliferation of what I am describing as a digital pamphlet, a scrolling, expanding series of screen-based photographic/typographic illustrations whose aesthetics draw on the history of political and social pamphlet design, and are intended to amplify connections and generate new resonances when 'read' with/against the spoken words. This rant is realised in connection with the proposed contribution for a Market Stall made in collaboration with Sheffield design studio *dust*.

**12.40pm**      ***Discussion***

**1 – 1.45pm**      ***Lunch***

**1.45pm**      ***Rant two – The Curationist Manifesto: A Sonic Pamphlet by Gruppen***

**Tim Brennan & Dean Brannagan**

In 2002/2003 Brennan published 2 works; a treatise entitled 'Curationism: Nu-Curator as Performer' and The follow up 'Curationist Manifesto'. Both outline a radical new way of perceiving expanded activities in contemporary art. Curationism is proposed as a new cultural formation in which its practitioners, Curationists, emerge at the nexus of cultural politics and art production. At first glance the project at hand appears janus faced, involving an unearthing of pre-capitalist approaches to collecting with more recent modernist developments in fine art. However, the Curationist is much more than an eclectic synthesis of these seemingly disparate strands. By drawing upon a range of historical examples it proposes a radical rethinking of what anti-capitalist practice might need to be in an increasingly globalised economy of free trade.

**2pm**      ***Paper two/ conversation – Silver and Gold: Ryan in Conversation with Silver and Cameron***

**Evelyn Silver, Shirley Cameron & Miffy Ryan**

The performance *Silver & Gold* (1991) is celebratory in tone and emphasises Evelyn Silver and Shirley Cameron's investment in ten years of performance collaborations. Their work together, although political was, Silver explains in the pamphlet very friendly 'we've often made cups of tea for audiences' and 'often involved people in other ways too.' The notions of conversation, pamphleteering and friendliness are political in the context of feminist campaigning and feminist enquiry as they promote sideways rather than upwards forms of organisation, and construct the political as well as the aesthetic around personal interaction and everyday experience. This three way conversation is an alternative to presenting a paper with the subjects distanced and consigned to history, academic disassociation is challenged.

Despite *Silver & Gold's* celebratory nature and the professionalism of its execution it can be viewed as both ironic and subversive. On page three of the pamphlet Cameron explains 'I could say a lot more about the financial side of putting on performances, but really this would not fit in with the spirit of celebration! I'll just say that the Arts Council has a

Performance Art Advisory Group, but we have never had any support from them, either directly or through the organisations they do fund. I hope in the future we will be more successful.' The pamphlet was made in order to be heard but also to protest against being ignored.

**2.20pm**      ***Rant three – Under the sea light (a manifesto of an immigrant artist)***

**Chiara Dellerbra**

I will proclaim the manifesto for an immigrant artist, drinking a glass of water and salt, 1 for each sentence of the manifesto till the end. There will be 10 glasses of water and salt in a circle. In the background, the sound of the sea.

Recently, on the Mediterranean coast, immigrants have protested against the lack of help by the hosting nation by drinking an incredible quantity of seawater, causing a great many deaths for protest. Sea salt, however, contains other elements in addition to sodium chloride. Among these there are potassium salts, iodine salts and Epsom salts. These substances are not poisonous in themselves, but the quantity present in marine water has become toxic to the body. The normal water we drink, the one called "fresh water", contains less than 0.1% of dissolved salts. Our blood contains about 0.9% of salt and about 0.25% of our body is made from salt. Seawater instead contains 3.5% of dissolved salts and its eventual ingestion can be very toxic.

As an artist I am an immigrant, outsider exploring and discovering new worlds. I am seeking either to uncover what is strange in the familiar, or journey to foreign terrains, in reality or imagination. The manifesto is based on the "Immigrant movement international document", written in the 2011 in collaboration with immigration academics, activists, politicians, and community members at a convening at the IM International headquarters in Corona, Queens, New York.

**2.30pm**      ***Paper three – Smart Verbal (1979 – 1981)***

**Mo White**

The paper will discuss a historical moment in my early art career when I co-published a fanzine, *Smart Verbal*, in Birmingham in the early 1980s. This will look broadly at that political and cultural moment and the context in which these fanzines were produced. It will locate this marginal art activity as one that emerged from a punk aesthetic, a burgeoning local music scene and what can be called a period of political disillusionment with the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979. It will discuss how this context merged with local left wing movements, the women's liberation movement and the academic work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. This produced the backdrop for the activities of two young women to publish 6 issues of the fanzine between 1979-81.

*Smart Verbal* was a DIY production, something consistent with the times; this will be looked along with some of the other popular cultural products that were contemporary with it – in particular, the music of the band, the Au Pairs. This will highlight a moment when it was possible, in a local context, to make culture that was both popular and critical.

**2.50pm**      ***Discussion***

**3.10pm**      ***Break***

**3.30pm**      ***Paper four – There's no pecking order in poo***

**Andrew Wilson**

This is a playfully provocative invitation to consider our societal contempt of shit, and the associated domestic tasks of dealing with shit, to undermine the dominant human systems that are in decline. Delivered verbally this 10 minute performative lecture is accompanied by a barrage of visual imagery to both authenticate and contradict the recitation.

Given the deplorable scale of our ecological and global humanitarian crises, in a political and economic landscape which aggressively separates and propagates divisiveness *There's no pecking order in poo* asserts a need to radically (re)think, not as individuals or nation states but as a species. Citing diverse examples from intellectual studies, popular culture and lived experience artist Andrew Wilson invites us to reflect upon our relationship with everyday

waste on both a domestic and societal scale. *There is no pecking order in poo* is intentionally humorous (though certainly not comedy) to captivate a broad audience, and is intentionally provocative to encourage broad discussion and debate.

**3.40pm      *Rant four – Transform Education – Transform the Economy***

**Ruth Beale**

A proposition for education and childcare (formal, informal and lifelong) to be radically opened out and de-institutionalised, for the good of the economy, happiness, health and wellbeing. Starting with childcare and maternity/paternity leave, to how this affects flexible working, productivity and women in the workforce, through to shifting the school age later, abolishing testing, playfulness in learning, unschooling, and creativity in the curriculum, as well as changing the emphasis from competition to making skills, onto the right to free higher education and the value of ongoing adult education to society.

**3.50pm      *Rant five – SATISFIED: A 10 Minute Feminist Presentation on the Affective Turn***

**Andrea Gibson (nee Wheeler)**

In this poetic and political text I explore affect and question its significance within the current climate for feminist theorists and teachers working in the academic institution in the US. My feeling, as expressed in the text, and with which I hope there is some resonance, is situated in current feminist philosophy and by contemporary theories of affect. My feeling is of a human being, who happens to be foreign and female in the US and is affected bodily by the loss of all ethical dialogue, of all environmental concern, of a natural human response to others in danger, and of all questions of women, our work for rights, which are falling insignificant by the wayside. The question I ask in the text however, is whether our feelings, our felt-bodies, nature-felt in this current climate, and especially women's, can be, and even have to be, the start of a new genesis: an energy that must be harnessed to build new conceptions of what could be a shared environment between man and woman, between the human and nature, between one nation and its others. This would be a new feminist politics, post-human but not post-woman, nor post feeling.

**4pm**            ***Rant six - radical reThink(ing) HE- a polyphonic manifesto for 6 voices – not a rant but an atonic***  
**Radical rethink**

We appreciate that historically pamphlets have been more monologic in tone, their rhetoric often verging on the stuff of manifestos and shot through with phallogocentric desires and drives. By challenging these conventions through a polyphonic sensibility, we aim to experiment with a feminist approach to pamphleteering. At stake here is urgent resistance: finding strategies to refuse elite power structures by promoting non-binary alternatives. This aspiration underscores not only the content of our pamphlet but also how this couples with its form. We want to evoke *and* transcend agitprop, along with other good old-fashioned forms of 'creative comms', as they combine to relay and overlay the vocal lines of our Symposium, 14/01/17: the pamphlet emerges then as both call and response, theme and variation.

**4.10pm**        ***Discussion***

**5pm**            ***Close***

**5.30pm**        ***Exhibition Opening - 'For & Against! The Art of the Pamphlet'***  
Charnwood Museum, Loughborough (approx. a 10 minute walk from Fearon Hall) Join us for an informal opening, performance and drinks reception.

## Contributors

**Ruth Beale** is an artist whose work considers the evocative relationships between culture, governance, social discourse and representation. Her practice includes drawing, performance and installations, as well as socially-engaged processes. She is co-founder of *Performance as Publishing*, an active research project into text and writing for performance, and collaborative practice *The Alternative School of Economics* which uses the practice of self-education to study economics, creating a framework for investigating political, social and cultural issues. She has performed and exhibited at Whitechapel Gallery, London, ICA, London, Turner Contemporary, Basel Kunsthalle, MoMA Ps1, South London Gallery and Modern Art Oxford.

**Tim Brennan** has exhibited internationally for over 20 years. He is engaged in the notion of discursive practice through: performance, photography, sculpture, writing, drawing, painting, curating and teaching. Since the early 90's he has developed approaches to art based on the journey (which he refers to as the manoeuvre). This work exists in a region between traditions of performance art, loco-description, history and journeying, and surfaces as an exponential mode of radical-writing.

**Dean Brannagan** studied at Jan Van Eyck Akademie Maastricht in the 90s. His practice is diverse - ranging across disciplines and fields to uncover the political relations and contested spaces between people and things. He has performed and exhibited extensively across continental Europe and the UK.

**Shirley Cameron** studied at St Martins School of Art, Sculpture Department under Anthony Caro 1962 - 66 (and at 3 other art schools). Started working with Roland Miller in Performance Art 1970 - ongoing. Performance Art and Installation art work in Holland, France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, Poland, Slovakia, Italy, Canada and throughout the UK. Birth of twin girls, 1974 and start of performance and installation art work which includes them, 1974 – 2004 including; *Washing the Twins*, performed with Angela Carter, Portugal 1977. Exhibition *Sister 7*, with artists and poets including Evelyn



Silver and Monica Ross, 1982 - 1987. MA at Leeds University Fine Art Department under Professor Griselda Pollock, 1995.

**Ben Campkin** is the author of *Remaking London: Decline and Regeneration in Urban Culture* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2013), which was awarded a commendation in the Royal Institute of British Architects President's Awards for Research (2014) and won the Urban Communication Foundation's Jane Jacobs Award (2015). Ben is also co-editor of *Dirt: New Geographies of Cleanliness and Contamination* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2012), and *Engaged Urbanism: Cities and Methodologies* (I.B. Tauris, 2016). Ben is Senior Lecturer in Architectural History and Theory at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, and has been Director of UCL's cross-disciplinary Urban Laboratory since 2011.

**Chiara Dellerba** is a visual artist whose work experiments with the potential energy of the human body. Her pieces are often site specific with an interest in the dichotomy between energy/movement and time of reaction/determined space. Dellerba's practice is an organic open work structure of experimentation using a system of signs and methodologies. She investigates the unconscious necessity for the human beings to regenerate their lives, their environment, their relationships, and their way of perceiving a reality in order to be actively part of it. Since the 2009 she has been exhibited in: Marilena Bonomo gallery (Bari), Museum of Contemporary Art (Rome), Alessandra Bonomo gallery (Rome), American academy (Rome), Sara Zanin gallery (Rome), Onetwentyeight gallery (New York), Kiyomiyamagishi (Nagano, Japan), New Art Exchange (Nottingham), Surface gallery (Nottingham), Midlands Art Centre (Birmingham).

**Andrea Gibson (nee Wheeler)** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Architecture at Iowa State University where she teaches a class on Green and Sustainable Architecture and is a studio instructor. Since completing her doctorate in 2005 on the work of Luce Irigaray she has been working on issues of gender, sustainability in the built environment. Most recently she has presented papers at conferences organized and hosted by Luce Irigaray including "Thinking Love" at the University of Bristol in June of 2016 and "To Be Born: Genesis of a New Human Being" at the University of Sussex in February 2017.

**Joanne Lee** is an artist, writer and researcher with a curiosity about daily life and ordinary places. Much of her work develops through a serial publication, the Pam Flett Press, which explores the visual, verbal and temporal possibilities of 'essaying' the everyday, and via the opportunities for production that arise in dialogue with creative and critical friends. The Pam Flett Press has appeared in *PROGR-Fest*, PROGR - Zentrum für Kulturproduktion, Bern, Switzerland; *Offprint*, Tate Modern and *KALEID London*, an exhibition showcasing the best books by European-based artists, and at conferences including *Perequian Geographies*, University of Sheffield; *Provocative Plastics*, Arts University Bournemouth; *Art of the Edgelands*, University of Exeter; *Art, Politics and the Pamphleteer*, Peoples History Museum, Manchester, as well as occasioning a chapter in *Materiality and Popular Culture: The Popular Life of Things* (Routledge, 2016) and an article in the journal *Literary Geographies* (forthcoming). She is Senior Lecturer in Graphic Design at Sheffield Hallam University.

**Mark McGowan** is an artist who lives and works in London. Known also as the Artist Taxi Driver a political video blogger. Studied at Camberwell and Goldsmiths.

**radical reThink** is a group, a process and an event. We exchange and co-produce ideas as a practice of solidarity, allowing our different points of view to find expression in the face of funding cuts and the marketization of education which seek to instrumentalize creativity, limit criticality, and marginalize dissent. radical reThink is SE Barnet, Marsha Bradfield, Georgia Brown, David Cross, Kelly Chorpening, Kyran Joughin and Ana Oppenheim.

**SE Barnet** is an internationally exhibiting artist working with Instigation and Language, previously based in Los Angeles, now a Birmingham City University Research Fellow and an Associate Lecturer at University Arts London.

**Marsha Bradfield** rides the hyphen as an archivist-artist-curator-educator-researcher-writer. This multi-barrelled practice is fired by an interest in the lived experience of authorship. Bradfield is presently based at Chelsea College of Arts as an associate researcher and lecturer and a PhD supervisor. She also co-directs the London-based art organisation Pangaea Sculptors' Centre

**Georgia Brown** is an artist/strategist operating in London. While studying Sculpture at Wimbledon College of Arts, Brown worked with artist David Cross to launch UAL Divest, a campaign that succeeded in instigating an ethical investment policy at UAL.

**Kelly Chorpening** is an artist who exhibits internationally. In 2016, she had a solo exhibition at Horatio Jr., and was selected for the Jerwood Drawing and Derwent art prizes. She is the Course Leader for B.A.(Hons) Drawing at Camberwell College of Arts, UAL.

**David Cross** is an artist who engages with the contested ideal of sustainability and its relationship to visual culture. As a Reader in Fine Art at UAL, he attempts to engage staff and students in creative action to align the university's operations with its values.

**Kyran Joughin** is a writer who lectures in film and documentary ethics at UAL, where she is both/and: employed (casualised worker) and elected (Board of Governors), inside the HE market place.

**Ana Oppenheim** is the Campaigns Officer at Arts Students' Union and a Governor at UAL. She is a highly active opponent to the marketization of education, and an influential member of UAL Divest.

**Rebecca Ross** works across fields including graphic design, media studies and urbanism. Current and recent projects include *London is Changing*, displayed on digital billboards around Central London in 2015; *Urban Pamphleteer*, co-edited with Ben Campkin since 2013; and a manuscript in progress on the history of the London postcode as a distinctly open interface between communities, machines, and the complexities of urbanization. Ross is Senior Lecturer and MA Course Leader in Graphic Communication Design at Central Saint Martins in London. She is also Honorary Visiting Research Fellow at the University College London Urban Laboratory.

**Miffy Ryan** studied Fine Art at Goldsmiths in the 1990s, has a Master's degree in Art & Design and submitted her thesis for a PHD at Loughborough University on the topic of *Maternal Aesthetics and Matrilineal Performance to Camera*. Ryan has exhibited

internationally (Chongqing 2010, Prague 2011, and Nottingham 2012) and is featured in the LADA study room guide on Maternal Performance (2016). Her work *My Studio Performance's With Matilda* is held in the ProCreate Archive of mother artists at the WAL (2015). Ryan's performance *My Nana's Wedding (Gown)* is published in *Curating Contemporary Aesthetics* book (Dr Ming Turner 2017). Ryan's most recent performance was in collaboration with Shirley Cameron at Leeds Beckett University (2017).

**Evelyn Silver** was active in early 1970s Community Arts, and subsequently worked in Leicestershire County Drama Workshop. During the 1980s, Silver practised Performance Art, collaborating with Shirley Cameron, Sister Seven and Visible Women. Informed by feminist and Jewish politics, Silver presented work independently of mainstream galleries, engaging with grassroots politics and actions, and helped establish Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp. During the 1990s Silver focused on her Acupuncture practice, culminating in 2000 with a residency in New Zealand. On her return to the UK Silver was known for her beautiful glasswork, and is now established as an artist/celebrant.

**Jane Tormey** is co-editor of *Art, Politics and the Pamphleteer* and the Bloomsbury Book series *RadicalAesthetics-RadicalArt* with Gillian Whiteley, and the *Routledge Companion to Photography Theory* with Mark Durden. In general terms, her research interests explore how uses of photography and film encounter social and political concerns. Each of her books demonstrates an interdisciplinary emphasis and an underlying interest in the conflict between aesthetics and political content: *Photographic Realism: late twentieth century aesthetics* (Manchester University Press, 2013) and *Cities and Photography* (Routledge Urbanism and City series, 2012). She is an Honorary Fellow of Loughborough University.

**Mo White** is an artist, writer and lecturer. Mo works in moving image media and, photographic media and has exhibited widely, including exhibitions in New York, Dublin, Athens, Berlin, Oslo, Belfast, and Birmingham. Broadly, her research is concerned with gender, diasporic and queer identities and their effects on contemporary artists and art practices. She was awarded a PhD for the doctoral thesis that examined the work of Laura Mulvey and artists using the moving image in the UK since the 1970s. Mo is a Lecturer in Fine Art at Loughborough University.

**Gillian Whitely** is Senior Lecturer in Critical and Historical Studies at Loughborough University, Gillian is co-editor of *Art, Politics and the Pamphleteer* and Bloomsbury book series *RadicalAesthetics-RadicalArt (RaRa)*. Interests include historical/contemporary practices of creative dissent, ludic protest, art activism and bricolage. Publications include 'Welfare State International' in J. Bull and G. Saunders (eds) *British Theatre Companies: From Fringe to Mainstream*, (2016) and *Junk: Art and the Politics of Trash* (2010). With members of the Politicized Practice Research Group and Anarchist Research Group at LU, she is currently working on a collaborative project around *Art activism and political violence*.

**Andrew Wilson** is an artist based in both Leeds and Newcastle upon Tyne. Currently undertaking a long-term live/work residency with *East St. Arts* (Leeds); Andrew has also recently embarked upon a self-initiated research & development period looking at establishing an alternative co-created tabloid media for the North-East. Andrew is a studio holder at *The NewBridge Project* (Newcastle). Andrew works both independently and in collaboration with a variety of individuals, groups and organisations; including *Allenheads Contemporary Arts* (Northumberland), *The Star & Shadow Cinema* (Newcastle) and *Flatpack Film Festival* (Birmingham). He works regularly with artist Toby Lloyd, as *Lloyd-Wilson* and since 2009 has worked with *Chilli Studios* (Newcastle) facilitating creative opportunities for adults who experience social exclusion.

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Radar

