

Re-Imagining Citizenship

Collectively curated by the Politicized Practice/Anarchist/Theatre and Performance Research Groups based at Loughborough University

Wednesday 30th May till 16th July 2018



In government parlance, being a citizen means to be recognised as a 'subject or national'. How does this play out in our everyday relations? What is at stake in re-imagining new forms of citizenship and modes of civic participation? How can the notion of citizenship - in our trans/post-national society - be reconfigured without subjection?

The exhibition centres on the concept of the citizen/citizen-artist/artist-citizen to explore the potential for art practices to re-imagine citizenship. It brings together a range of audio-visual and text-based responses with contributions by artists, researchers and students from across and beyond the University. It includes artworks produced by staff and students at the Institut Supérieur des Beaux-Arts of Besançon (France) with whom the Politicized Practice/Anarchist Research Groups and the Theatre and Performance Research Group has an ongoing dialogue around themes related to art, performance and political activism. Join us for an

Thanks to the Working Class Movement Library at Salford for the loan of archive items

Matthew Adams

Towards Anarchist Seating Arrangements: Paul Goodman and the Active Citizen

Printed text and diagrams

Paul Goodman's reputation has suffered its share of reversals. Seen variously as a neglected sage 'un-heard of today'; a powerfully original thinker who was a vital touchstone for student rebels in the 1960s; and a writer of 'unreadable' poetry and social philosophy, he was, nevertheless, a challenging social critic committed to exposing the hypocrisies of his age.¹ Emerging from my work on anarchism and the idea of the public intellectual, this text emphasises the attention Goodman devoted to the environmental factors shaping active citizenship. Blending perspectives from urban planning and psychoanalysis – and fusing them with an anarchist politics that looked to maximise meaningful participation – his work is a reminder that not only is it important to think about the ways social ecosystems help or hinder the *action* that underpins citizenship, but also the value of bold, perhaps utopian, thinking in energising efforts to create new participatory political mechanisms. Matthew Adams is a Lecturer in Politics, History and Communication at Loughborough University.

¹ Michael C. Fisher, 'Introduction' to Paul Goodman, *New Reformation: Notes of a Neolithic Conservative* (Oakland, CA, 2010), 1; Louis Menand, 'The Book that Scandalized the New York Intellectuals', *New Yorker* (1st May 2017).

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Antoinette Burchill

Freckled Mischief Street Theatre

The Wizard of Oz (2015)

Guerrilla street theatre performances, Hackney, East London

This participatory guerrilla street theatre adaptation of L. Frank Baum's 1900 novel, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is a contemporary political satire. Tinman, Scarecrow and Lion are searching for heart, brains, and courage. They are lost, bewildered, and hope that by asking the public for advice on how to become good and great leaders, they'll find their way back to Oz. The performance questions what constitutes strong, effective and honourable political leadership. The performers ask the citizen/participants they meet to define what makes a good leader. Participants in this performance hold an unequivocal high status in terms of knowledge, insight, rights, and legitimacy. Citizen/participants are facilitated (prompted, provoked, and given permission) to speak reflectively, critically, playfully, and politically in public.

The Delegates

BACS: Bankers on Active Community Service (2013)

Guerrilla street theatre performances, City of London, and Dalston, East London

BACS: Bankers on Active Community Service is a participatory street theatre show. The performance satirically reimagines a world in which profligate bankers publicly apologise, and personally repent for the financial scandals they instigated, perpetuated, and profited from. In this way the bankers repay, via a rhetorical BACS transaction, their debt to society. Citizenship is addressed through public participation, and by questioning the accountability and responsibilities of those in power, by those who experience the repercussions of their behaviours. The film documents guerrilla performances in London, July 2013. Locations include Dalston, East London, the City of London and the Bank of England. Each location has a resonance with the 2008 financial crisis and engages with publics living and working in its geographic, social, political, and economic shadow.

Antoinette Burchill is an artist, performer, mischief-maker, and Artistic Director of Freckled Mischief. She is a PhD candidate at School of Arts, English and Drama and her practice-based research questions how guerrilla street theatre can provoke politicised dissent and agonistic conflict.

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Jo Crossley

Feminism's Done! Your Complete Guide to How All The Battles Were Won
Pamphlet

Art activism is the main focus of Jo's design practice. Feminism is central to her ethos of what it is to be a citizen artist. The pamphlet *Feminism's Done! Your Complete Guide to How All the Battles Were Won* pokes fun at one of the common messages propagated by modern media, and indeed after every significant stride in the struggle for equality; that feminism in Western Society is now somehow redundant. The work utilises a sarcastic tone as a nod to the women artists of the second wave feminist movement and Jo's personal idols, Barbara Kruger and the Guerrilla Girls. For her, humour is often the best way to approach divisive conversations, and gently encourage people to reconsider their opinions. Jo is studying for a BA in Graphic Communication and Illustration at Loughborough University.

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Anne-Marie Culhane

FLOW – The Toastmaster

Photograph by Jenny Steer

(Ideally hung with sticky tabs – should be possible, at head height)

FLOW is a 5km long ribbon orchard that brings people together to assert public ownership over a green space along the River Exe managed by Exeter City Council. The park runs along the river's banks, the spongy tissue either side of the backbone (the river) of the city.

One question *FLOW* explores is: how do we articulate our response-ability for shared spaces or commons and learn how to work together? I suggest that this requires imagination and practice and invitations to experience and experiment.

Being a citizen includes being part of the people, the land, flora and fauna. *FLOW* developed over a year of conversations with people from the local areas individually and collectively and time spent on the land listening and learning. *FLOW* entered the weave of the place with 250 people coming together over a weekend to plant two orchard areas, sharing food, drink, listening to a story written as part of the project and a singing a new wassail amongst the trees. The character of Toastmaster emerged as a re-articulation of the tradition of hanging toast in the trees for the robin, the spiritual guardian of the orchard. We gathered and sung with local choirs, warmed ourselves on the fire and passed the wassail bowl hand-to-hand, brimful with warmed spiced cider.

Anne-Marie Culhane is an artist, educator and activist living in Devon. She is founder, designer and curator of the Fruit Routes project at Loughborough University campus that is in its sixth year and winner of the Guardian University Award 2015 for Sustainable Project. Image by Jenny Steer. Jenny is a photographer and photo-journalist based in Exeter. See www.fruitroutesloughborough.wordpress.com for events on Loughborough Campus 13-16 June, 2018.

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Fred Dalmaso, David Stickman Higgins, Thomas Juga-naut Higgins

A sound meal for 7/8

Sound installation 13 mins loop

A sound meal for 7/8 investigates rhythm as a tool to “renew the meaning of things, and reach the sense that we have of our being”¹; rhythm not as the repetition of the same but as the unpredictable interplay of differences; rhythm as resistance against the humdrum.

¹ www.fruitroutesloughborough.wordpress.com

As part of their Rhythm Resilience Project (funded by the Cultural Capital Exchange Programme), performance artist David Stickman Higgins and performance-philosophy practitioner Fred Dalmasso shared meals with Nottingham-based mixed-heritage families within their own home soundscapes. At each family table, either David or Fred was a complete stranger who listened while they cooked, talked and played, but said a few words. Then rap artist Thomas Juga-naut Higgins edited the encountered motifs, patterns, themes, words, sounds or silences into a choral piece, a sound meal, to which you are now invited.

¹ Henri Meschonnic, "The Rhythm Party Manifesto", *Thinking Verse I*, 2011, p.165

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Johanna Hällsten

Group Behaviour

Vinyl lettering and cards

Group Behaviour explores Janteloven (Law of Jante) and its impact on contemporary society in Scandinavia. In 1933 the Danish-Norwegian author Aksel Sandemose wrote *En flyktning krysser sitt spor* (*Fugitive Crosses His Tracks*), criticising the relationships between individuals and the socio-cultural norms of a small town in Denmark, *Jante*. In this highly influential novel, 10 punitive laws are drawn up that pertain to how a good citizen should behave and make decisions based on the greater good of the whole of society rather than the needs of the individual.

This understanding of societal behaviour had already been in common practice for many centuries. For previous generations of Scandinavians the assimilation of these attitudes in education, business and social welfare was seen as a positive influence on their understanding of community. Now, with economic globalisation, the relationship and knowledge of these laws in contemporary society has changed.

Johanna Hällsten is a Swedish artist interested in translation between different cultures, species and forms. Often working with text, sound and performance. She is a Lecturer in Fine Art at Loughborough University.

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Chiara Dellerba

Manifesto Remix (2018)

Participatory installation

Manifesto Remix is a participatory attempt to generate dialogue and shift constantly between the personal and the public. Visitors will be invited to create their own manifesto remixing other people's anonymous manifestoes, to experiment and play with it as a form of daily resistance and a powerful civic tool used by artists and ordinary people to redefine their personal and collective identity as citizens.

Chiara Dellerba's practice is focused on projects which encourage engagement and participation, and facilitate practices of commoning and are concerned with critical ideas of citizenship. Working beyond media, and often inviting the public to contribute in the work, her artistic practice lies somewhere between conceptual art, performance and socially engaged practice. The Manifesto rhetoric and intent towards shock value to achieve a revolutionary effect has addressed, in the past, essential themes such as revolution, freedom and equality, employing art as a political tool and the artist as someone who can enact essential pedagogical strategies for the citizen to think critically.

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Contrat Social

La Rhodiacéta à Besançon et l'expérience du groupe Medvedkine group

Audio 46 min, 1 sec (in collaboration with Faïdos Sonore)

Graphic scores

A bientôt, j'espère, directed by Chris Marker and Mario Marret, 1968

Film, 44 mins

Contrat Social is a research center of the Institute Supérieur des Beaux-Arts (ISBA) de Besançon (France) composed of three artists, Géraldine Pastor-Lloret, Gilles Picouet, Philippe Terrier-Hermann and one historian of art, Stéphanie Jamet. The main purpose is to question the artist as a citizen, inspired by socialist utopians Charles Fourier, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Besançon's worker political history. What binds the team is the common desire to put art in society; to ensure that artists have a real place as citizens to rethink social bonds. Questions are: How can artists imagine their place within today's society? How can they build a new relationship with people who are foreign to art? Be it by finding new places, new moments, new actions. *Contrat Social* based its research on the attitude of workers and artists who ended up supporting the workers during major industrial struggles and strikes at the Rhodiacéta textiles factory in 1967 and at Lip, a high precision watch manufacturing factory, in 1973. The *Contrat Social* group still believe that art can bring noticeable and intellectual emancipation.

In 1967, during the strikes at the Rhodiacéta factory in the town of Besançon, Jean-Luc Godard and Chris Marker filmed these moments of struggle. Their films sparked many discussions and reactions from workers. They found the vision of Chris Marker's film *A bientôt, j'espère* (1968) too romantic. At the time, Marker gave cameras to the workers, offering them the opportunity to express themselves. This experience of self-representation led to the establishment of the Medvekiné group, a worker film collective. For the sound piece in this exhibition, ISBA's students interviewed former workers and combined archive sounds from the period of the strikes with the workers' testimonies.

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Kerry Featherstone

Périphérique

Lines About Kandahar

Two poems, printed texts and audio recordings

Debates about citizenship have often focused upon – or addressed the tensions between – rights and duties. But an element of both sides of this binary opposition is the assumption of freedom of choice: both participation and the exercise of rights require a context in which the citizen is able to decide for themselves. These two poems address situations in which citizens are constrained by geo-political power relationships which affect their ability to enjoy rights or fulfil duties. In France, the resonance of colonial history affects immigrants from North Africa and their experience of citizenship. In Afghanistan, the legacy of two centuries of western intervention literally and physically circumscribes the ability to engage in acts of citizenship. Although my poetic practice most often focuses on landscape, I am also concerned to reflect the experience of inhabitants of these landscapes. These two poems are examples of that concern.

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Courtney King

A Glitch in the Landscape

Photographic prints

Courtney has found that her art can act as an effective message. As an artist-citizen, she wants to use her art practice as a method to communicate the environmental issues we face in our modern culture. Art is a way to bring issues to life, showing a new perspective and portraying a sense of urgency. These images have a combination of beauty and malfunction. As an artist, she believes we all need to become equally ecologically minded and be more aware of our own impacts instead of turning a blind eye. It's a message showing the consequences of our anthropic attitudes, that have caused this fragility and glitch in our environment, which we have often become unaware and

isolated from. She aims to bring back the subject of environmental issues to familiar locations so that multiple audiences can relate to this urgency about the environment. Courtney King is studying for a BA Fine Art at Loughborough University.

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Ruth Kinna

Citizens on citizenship

Text/pamphlet

Reimagining citizenship involves exploring the traditions of thought that have shaped our current conceptions. Asking how fellow citizens have understood citizens' rights and duties can also help us recognise the constraints that membership of the community imposes and so reconfigure our political relationships creatively. This small, collection of letters published in *The Times* is intended to provide a snapshot of popular twentieth century views. From the rights and wrongs of womens' participation in juries to the duties of prisoners to accept their punishment, it reminds us that citizenship is not just constructed through the law but equally by our citizens' prejudices and expectations. Ruth Kinna is a Professor of Political Theory at Loughborough University.

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Ameet Malhotra (concept and performance), Manish Pingle (musician), Herbie Elton Rowley (film)

We are made of music

Video installation

Imagine we were all made of music. How would it be to be a citizen of a country where we recognized that we are all made of vibration - a unified field of vibrations. What if we could feel that in our daily lives, even for one day!

How would we view ourselves in space and time as citizens of a country where individuals knew no boundary or separation from one another.

We often talk of music as an international language - something we all understand. This work brings together Indian classical music and the yoga of sound for an immersive performance piece that aims to create the experience that we are all made of music. It questions the need to position oneself within a society of individual citizens and seeks to point instead to citizenship as a collective project.

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Sofia Mali

Reflections in the female body – EU borders. After the last birth, 2016

Print of black ink and watercolour on paper

Reflections in the female body – Girl. Growing up alone, 2016

Print of black ink and watercolour on paper

Sofia is an educator, researcher and curator. Currently, the special focus of her work is on global challenges, democratic practices and issues of identity representation. She examines meaning-making practices around national and local narratives and the construction of national identities. Her current project *Reflections in the female body* is a critique of the Neo-liberal condition, attempted through the study of the female body of the 'other', among different 'others'. These two works represent an exploration of the social and cultural implications of the current political transformations in the West and the East, for the girls and women living in, moving around, but also fleeing to European countries; native, migrant and refugee women. Her project takes into account: current power politics, dominant ideologies and social institutions in Europe - each of which may contribute towards trauma in and on the female body of the 'other' as well as that of the 'self'. In the drawing language: here, we see some reflections of these transformations in and on the female body. Sofia is an Associate Lecturer in Cultural and Historical Studies at University of the Arts London.

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Alessio Mazzaro

Can I tell you an anecdote? (A new citizen)

Participative performance, audio piece and printed text (written by Enrico Manganelli, commissioned and translated by Alessio Mazzaro)

Alessio is an artist and director. He questions the conditions of becoming collective beings, working on the threshold between witness and performer with a focus on collective performances and sound pieces. Anecdotes constitute the verbal form of an experience that we have desired to fix because it contains the potential of a concept that does not yet exist. Alessio wrote some anecdotes about a “new citizen”, they will be passed down to the audience during the exhibition, in a word-of-mouth process and audio installation, to open a space where to question the actual citizenship and to imagine/construct a future one. The anecdotes imagine a citizen beyond the concept of national identity, that probably lives in a time with an European passport and an European vat, when the newcomers are really accepted for what they are. During the show the participants will have the possibility to create and add more anecdotes.

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Evgenia Papamikrouli

Ἔστί, (2018)

Digital media/printed poster

Evgenia Papamikrouli is a UK based artist whose works investigate religious iconography. Her current works focus, in particular, with representations of the Madonna and their cultural resonances, especially for women, in both religious and secular contexts. Religious / spiritual belief is (in the UK) predominantly followed through choice and therefore without subjection. The work here, *Ἔστί*, rekindles the significance of re-imagining the incorporation of religious and non-religious belief systems into a successful model of civic participation.

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Zoë Petersen and Roberto Gonzalo Ceballos

Empty Air | Insectos Voladores

Parallel translated texts

In 2017 researchers based in Krefeld concluded that there had been ‘a dramatic decline in average airborne insect biomass of 76%’ across western Germany over the preceding 27 years; the air had been depopulated of flying insects. *Empty Air | Insectos Voladores* uses memory, friendship and translation to respond to this and other, similar, losses worldwide. What can the nation-based, human-centred concept of ‘citizenship’ mean in this context of ecological crisis?

Zoë Petersen is an artist and PhD researcher at Loughborough University. She facilitates the Glazebrook Growers gardening group in South London and her thesis ‘Networking Eden: Practising the Commons with a Housing Estate Gardening Group’ looks at commons-based practices in relation to human and nonhuman collective action in the garden. She was for two decades a translator and interpreter. Zoë made ‘Empty Air | Insectos Voladores’ in collaboration with Roberto Gonzalo Ceballos, a friend and music teacher trained at the Universidad del Cauca, Colombia, Middlesex University and the London Institute of Education. Roberto is based in the coffee-growing region of Colombia where he develops and runs musical education programmes for rural peasant and urban communities. He also owns a coffee farm where he carries out small scale ecological conservation projects.

The texts exhibited are in English and Spanish.

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Gillian Whiteley

Moments of Re-imagining/Citizen Artist reading corner

Curated selection of archive and facsimile pamphlets

Reading corner with texts relating to Citizen Artist

This curated assembly of original and facsimile pamphlets brings together material about a few key moments of revolt: the Paris Commune of 1871, events of 1968 (50 years on) and Occupy. These 'suspensions of historical time'¹ created ruptures in the ordinary underlying hierarchies of everyday life and facilitated a re-imagining, a re-enactment in some cases, of what citizenship *could* be. In each case, art and creativity played an important role in these re-imaginings. Besides building alternatives, artistic practice also offers the potential to subvert, dissent and critique current models of citizenship. The 'reading corner' provides a selection of texts, reflecting different perspectives on the premises, aims and assumptions of what it might be to be a 'citizen artist' today. Gillian Whiteley is a Senior Lecturer in Art History and Visual Culture at Loughborough University.

¹ 'The Suspension of Historical Time', in Furio Jesi's *Spartakus: The Symbolism of Revolt* (1969) written in the aftermath of May 1968