

the Name

Shane Bradford

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FOR MARY WHITTAKER...

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*

*“... the attack on the institution of art is
the condition for the possible realization
of a Utopia in which art and life are
united”*

Bürger

*“... human actions do not accomplish the
intentions of those who carry them out”*

John Roberts

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Part 1

TROUBLE
IN THE
CARTESIAN
THEATRE

AN EXHIBITION BY
SHANE BRADFORD

Trouble In The Cartesian Theatre

By Shane Bradford

Neville Johnson, philosopher, critic, sage... outsider, had resisted untold social invitations and ‘nights out’ for many a year previously and it was only a devious and cruel set of coincidences and mishaps that had led to this unfortunate date with a dramatic production of a previously unrealized play by an unknown playwright who had recently perished in mysterious and inconclusive circumstances. After such a long sentence without a full stop Neville was already feeling fatigued and an existential dread had begun to return, only this time in a public space, which made it much less enjoyable.

And so it was with a well-established unease that Neville chose his seat in the stalls of this elaborately grand, ancient, yet perennially artificial theatre. He sat about half way down at the end, of course, so as to facilitate easy access to the exit. The thought of being penned in by a

rooted row of veteran socialites with the uncanny ability to withhold for hours on end was too much. With relief Neville settled in his seat without taking off his heavy woollen overcoat and began to ponder the circumstances that had led him to this moment.

What most people pre-supposed was his *good nature* was to blame for his current predicament; his inability to refuse polite invitations. What was it about people that inspired them to impose their considerate social advances upon him when any true consideration of his character would clearly favour leaving him alone? His pleading yet firm refusals of their kind solicitations was misinterpreted as shyness on his part and thus over-ridden by an inexplicable instinct on the part of his benefactors to transpose their charitable desires upon him. Such arrogant assumptions as to his unhappiness were made worse by the cloak of good intention that did little, in his eyes, to disguise the real aim of their friendliness, which was to impose *their* preferences upon *him*...

Mary Whittaker was nice – no way around it – no reasonable assessment of her gentle (possibly at times patronizing?) overtures in his direction, her self-deprecating accounts of the limits of her acting abilities and her seemingly urgent requirement for his ill-informed approval could justify any mean-spirited retort. Yet this indefatigability was itself a source of ire, leaving him without the basic human right to choose... How could *she*, seemingly so attentive to the feelings of others *fail so dramatically* not to recognize the *subtext* of his declinations?

As Neville became more and more *italicised* in his thoughtful ramblings, the house lights, encased by ornate arrangements of unlikely-coloured garden flowers, dimmed.

Mary, wearing an astonishing cartouche of pink and lemon satin, entered stage left and seated herself delicately on the lone chair at stage centre. The chair itself was of plain rounded wood with an old-fashioned woven straw seat. If it had not been painted stage black it might have resembled Van Gogh's famous *green*

chair, not only in appearance but also in the way it insisted on maintaining its own comic presence while somehow highlighting the expectant mood of its equally trivial surroundings.

A pause – Mary let the moment flutter, absorbing the attention of the air around her like a singularity. Silence, a cough, an intake of breath and a quick turn of the head to emit the fullness of her expression that, once released, hovered over the crowd like a sun-dried cotton bed sheet. Neville was suspended, unconscious of the comfort he was feeling. The analytical chatter, so often a marker of consciousness itself for him, had ceased. *(Typical that such a pleasure could only exist under such conditions of self-unawareness...!)*

She spoke: some dreamy lament. The soft syllables serving only to accentuate the mouth; a syrup of serenity dribbling from her lips. Bubbles of audible bliss broke on the soft wind of her speech whilst her tongue tickled the teeth and threw a small party for the tonsils...

Under the spell of such a soporific
soliloquy and entranced by such poignant
alliteration, Neville fell fast asleep.

(Interval: 20 mins)



The Cartesian Theatre...

The Cartesian Theatre...

The Cartesian Theatre...

The Cartesian Theatre...

The Cartesian Theatre...

The Cartesian Theatre...

The Cartesian Theatre...

The Cartesian Theatre...

The Cartesian Theatre...

The Cartesian Theatre...

The Cartesian Theatre...

The Cartesian Theatre...

The Cartesian Theatre...

The Cartesian Theatre...

The Cartesian Theatre...

The Cartesian Theatre...

The Cartesian Theatre...

The Cartesian Theatre...

The Cartesian Theatre...

The Cartesian Theatre...

The Cartesian Theatre...

ACT 2: SCENE ONE

(The stalls seat of an ornate darkened theatre. Date unknown. NEVILLE JOHNSON slumped comfortably, apparently asleep, is roused from his slumber by the piercing whisper of his neighbour seated to his left)

FATMAN

(To his mannequin mistress)

...A rarity these days to find acting so consistently unbelievable as to render one somnambulate in an instant hnyah yah

(NEVILLE, stirring, glances at the plastic couple next to him. Catching eyes with the FATMAN as he leans into his harlot and continues)

*An act of mercy to reach the interval...
a sup of champers darling to replace in
the mouth that which the ear has had
to endure... 5 minutes still to go I fear.*

(NEVILLE, coming to his senses with a pang of rage so long unsatisfied as to render it pure in its vitriol, makes a fumbling grab towards the starched lapel of the FATMAN'S wing-tipped collar. A prolonged scuffle ensues, during which the polished head of a fairground horse is torn from the parapet of the ice cream vendor's bar and tossed towards the ensemble cast that has gathered on stage to regard the reverse spectacle taking place in the pit below. The horse narrowly misses Mary Whittaker's powder-caked face and lands without ceremony on the toe of the circus strongman who, living up to the unlikely and somewhat clichéd expectations of his character,

hurls the horse's head back audience-bound whilst leaping after it to join gleefully in the bar-room brawl below. As the waiting staff from the salon burst through the theatre's grand portico doors, bottles of red wine are purloined from the cache recently discovered in an alcove. Bottles smash against the aged wallpaper.

Amongst the *melée*, NEVILLE JOHNSON is slowly dividing. Gradually he becomes JOHN SON and NEV VILLE. Then N-E-V etc until the letters themselves soak back into the alphabet. Disparate elements float away from his body as his central being unfolds and dissolves. Time, whilst still moving forward, simultaneously acts out a rewinding of its constituent parts. As N-E-V-I-L-L-E becomes *causal* he merges with a well-directed uppercut, a shattering green/red wine

bottle and the torn seam of a velvet cravat. Joining forces with a stranger's long-held bitterness N-E-V-I-L-L-E provides extra sting to a particularly biting insult before being hurled back into the origins of his own dismissal.

The fighting is now so widespread that it moves as one organism. The stage and stalls have merged, the balustrade indistinguishable from the backdrop. Flames from Mary's newly burning black chair mingle and melt the Perspex panes of bygone billstickers - obscuring the dates and dubious claims to their originality.

The untraceable genesis of a billion actions reassembles under the singular heading of the *incident*. The incident, over time, loses any sense of

context and simply becomes the *history*. Finally, in times yet to come, including the now, history drops any pretensions it had to an equivalent and mercifully becomes *the Name*).

Curtain.

Part 2

Preface

By Neville Johnson

The idea of making an artist book is slightly counter-intuitive to a creative ideological supposition emphasizing *simultaneity*. Compared to today's instant digital data, books represent a material solidity equivalent to an age of fixed ideas and doctrines.

Yet here we are, choosing to produce a bound bunch of paper without right to reply and contrary to the ideals it proposes (although not necessarily adheres to). Why?

I don't know. But in trying to answer the question, a few relevant points are illustrated which in itself is a good enough reason for the book's production...maybe.

As befits an ideology [!?] that totally embraces the probability of its equal failure, it is the contrary nature of the act that engenders, in the end, the only lasting legacy or possibility for success within the whole endeavour. In other words, the

apparent contradiction of producing a solid book endorsing super-fluidity is a good example of the energy-generating friction that can be more valuable in essence than either of the stated positions that are seemingly clashing in the first place. The contradiction inherent in this book's manufacture itself gives you tangible evidence that circumstance and opportunity do not always deliver harmony. We acknowledge that in this case it doesn't really make sense to make a book but in fact, as luck would have it, this illustrates very well a point we are choosing to celebrate, that: things don't always compute and what's more this non-computation ironically demonstrates its reverse, the success of failure. It is demonstrative of the pleasingly positive campaign for *the right to be wrong*.

(Having re-read this I've had an idea to include a section of blank pages, both for the purpose of bulking up the tome to increase the illusion of its authority whilst simultaneously allowing for the possibility of another author to write or draw in it. It will be interesting to see if this idea survives. Interestingly you, who for me currently reside in the future, know this

information before me – how can this be!?)

One tangible indication of this concept is the fact that quite naturally the exhibition seems to have necessitated multiple titles (*see* p.73). Instead of choosing one and thus limiting the book's potential for the sake of clarity, we now have several titles which express similar points of view but in different forms. (This phenomenon of expressing the same idea in different forms is the subject of Shane Bradford's previous exhibitions, entitled *Side-real Voyage*, May 2010, UNION, London and *SUMP*, Feb 2012, V1 Gallery, Copenhagen, in which similar strands of thought from supposedly different fields are identified and unified to create new *syncretic* junctures).

It is worth mentioning at this point that the exhibition with which the publication is (temporarily) twinned relies heavily on the temporal circumstances and conditions current at the time of installation for the specifications of its final appearance. So the only thing we are sure of at this time is that many practical, everyday issues will arise to scupper some of our intentions

whilst alleviating the constraints of other possibilities. This, above any deliberate and forceful attempt to dictate our will is the true author of the thing known as the ‘exhibition,’ hence a certain emphasis on simultaneity in the work and the show.

The next question, seeing as the exact content of a finished exhibition is always up for grabs, is: what then to include in the book? Acknowledgement of the anticipated gulf between the idea of a show and the reality of a show is significant in grasping the spirit with which the exhibition and the events surrounding it have been executed. It is likely that the book and the show lose some traceable connections while others remain. Again the acceptance of this discontinuity and even, if we are honest, the encouragement of such anomalies is illustrative of a doctrine whose purpose it is to create a secondary artificial context whereby the show is enabled to hold beliefs about its beliefs. In turn, this enables the show to *name itself* without having to resort to time travel. And here we have used for the first time the name of the exhibition/publication *the Name*.

The subject of all the actions that make up the final exhibition *the Name*, are the actions themselves. The fact that the publication was necessarily made before the show, incurred certain circumstances that instead of trying to iron out have in reality provided the incongruities that now act as subject matter for the exhibition. If there is success in this strategy it is that contrary to popular instinct, the concept values the *naming* of difficulty and circumstance over the *manipulation* and *forced resolution* of difficulty and circumstance. Artists go to great lengths to cover their tracks, to right the perceived wrongs and make a work *work*¹.

This is not to be confused with the *death of the author* however. We are both author and not author of this work, just as *the*

¹ (James Turrell for example, uses a microscope when painstakingly filing the edges of the blades used to project his geometric shapes onto the wall. This creates the amazingly sharp line and aids the optical illusion of 3-dimensionality. I am as seduced by the ‘beauty’ of the illusion as anyone, but must *name* the intentions behind the works. To what end are they made? I suggest: for the production of beauty, for the presentation of skill, for the art market, for the glorification of Turrell himself. Please, this is by no means a moral judgment but simply the naming of the mechanisms implied by Cartesian perspective.)

Name is and isn't really a name. The idea of a *secondary intention* is extrapolated later on – it has to do with the popular rejection of Descarte's theory of the Cartesian Theatre model of the mind and an alternative model recently put forward by John Roberts in *The Intangibilities of Form*.

To expand on the previous point, it would be valid to conclude that the author or instigator of these events is equally happy to be or not be considered an artist at all. Nomenclature, to use a favoured word, belongs to the age of the book, to teachers, to fixed definitions and to those who find comfort in groups. We are not your teacher; equally your criticism is welcome but ultimately belongs on a parallel plain, unable to cross over. (Praise however is universal and pervades the local atmosphere to penetrate our orbit...)

Amongst the images and texts that have miraculously found their way into this book you will find snippets of previous writings both in line with and contrary to the general thrust of the pervading aesthetic. The opinions expressed herewith are subject to change and in no

way represent any permanent belief on
behalf of the author...

To Dip

Something should be said about the dipping process in relation to *the Name*. The root of the dipped works, as it has been from the beginning, circa 2004, is painting.

The aim was always to repurpose the surface, to choose an approach on the periphery of painting from where it could gain a more objective view of itself. Even, if possible, to achieve an orbital position whereby a painting could be a painting and also not be a painting at the same time. Several strategies for this were outlined by Peter Lamb and myself in the concept and texts surrounding the exhibition *Insurgencies* that we curated in London, 2011 (Angus Hughes Gallery).

For *Insurgencies* we highlighted the tactics of collapse and renewal as a starting point for the disengagement and paradoxical (potential) reinvigoration of

painting. It was and is contingent that painting is able to lose itself, to give itself up in order to regain relevance, if relevance is indeed what we want (a complete lack of relevance might also be suitable as long as it was identified and presented as such). Many painters allude to such an implosion. Time and again you'll see it *referenced* yet most are unable/unwilling to *actually* let go of being painters. Painters will often use an attack on the institution of painting to reinforce their own credentials to authenticity, the attack itself fortifying the institution it deems to weaken. Without awareness, the default position reverts to a strategy of attacking authority in order to replace it with itself, a well- intentioned attempt to protect a beloved activity but one that ultimately puts another nail its coffin.

*

Insurgencies suggested strategies such as giving up the idea of *completion* and consequently loosening the desire for

singular authorship². Presentation of work as ‘whole’ units representative of an artist’s entire ethos was replaced with the admission that each work was a slice, a fragment, and an incomplete morsel of an uncertainty. We emphasized the role of context over object (and consequently environment over author) as the main arbiter of meaning. We selected artists able and willing to jettison, in real time, any *claims* made towards their work about anything. This abandoning of claims is significant here in the sense that the artists we chose, although presenting paintings, were seemingly comfortable to relinquish the *name* of ‘painter’. They were able to suspend their activity above nomenclature and take up an orbital position around the subject.

² My personal contribution was actually a two dimensional painting on 15 sheets of large format paper, layered on top of each other. This was a circumstantial and coincidental outcome. I had been attempting to decide which painting to exhibit and had momentarily hung *all* the sheets on the wall so that the floor could be washed. The work stayed that way and so in a sense the real-life situation was co-author to the painting.

And here we reach the crux of the matter. To name is a paradoxical pastime. On the one hand to name is to identify, to select, to separate favourably from the mass. Conversely, this selection condemns the selected to remain singular and fixed. If alternatively, one is able to produce a magic trick and become instead the *namer*, or better still to become the very process of naming, then a fluid orbital position may be achieved. In this non-committal range, space is created in which a pure event may take place, one that is able to be both *object* and *other* simultaneously, with and without conflict or hypocrisy.

This can otherwise be described as a mass dumping of responsibility, an opting-out on a gargantuan scale – an opting-out of opting-out itself! And why not? You are still you, I am still me, the show is still the show. The only difference is the possibility of difference built into the fabric of the work from the start, without which even the possibility is not possible at all.

With this grounding we finally arrive at the beginning and the use of paint within

the context of the exhibition we have fabricated here. Paint, itself having been substituted with a tinted transparent resin, is utilized in a very practical way. Paint is applied in order to mark a territory, to make a claim. Not a claim to authorship or skill or virtuosity, but a claim to the possession of an otherwise ownerless object. (The painted or dipped objects in the show are all so-called 'found objects' which is not really accurate as I wasn't looking for them when I 'found' them and they weren't looking for me) Nonetheless, object and author, by virtue of a thousand untraceable incidents got together in a synthesis of mutual need to take on their present, ultimately temporary form as art objects.

Since an art object points towards the past, more than to the future, we might do well to look even further back to see why I might want to continue 'dipping' and why dipping might have acquired some accumulated meaning along the way. It is only by virtue of my previous work with the dipping process that I am qualified to brand these objects in such a way. The perception of an artist is subject to change from the outside as the artist becomes better known. Not that I

am well known in a famous sense but a certain amount of activity in this area over the years entitles me to use the process as a signature now, devoid of its previous potential for meaning by its *fame*, but newly capable of a dispassionate action with its origins in painting. The painted objects demonstrate a literal dissemination of my name, an action based not on skill but on a fresh context generated by my name. And that is the fullness of my intentions toward them, which is not to say that other interpretations do not exist, of course.

become informed, aware, conscious, of some event?' (Dennett, 1998, p105) It is a trap in the sense that it may not have, or need, an answer because it has false presuppositions.

Fame in the brain

In later work (1996, 2001, 2005) Dennett replaced the metaphor of multiple drafts with the metaphor of fame in the brain. Just as becoming famous is not a precisely datable event like being transduced into a medium (like being televised), so achieving fame (or 'clout') in the brain is not a precisely datable transition in the brain. It is a competitive phenomenon --not all can be famous--and it is only retrospectively determinable since it is constituted by its sequelae. (As he never tires of insisting, one must always ask the Hard Question "And then what happens?") One cannot, logically cannot, be famous for fifteen minutes; that would not be fame. And a content cannot be conscious for fifteen milliseconds and utterly forgotten afterwards; that would not be consciousness. The fact that the hypothesis seems to make sense is due to the mistaken imagery with which we adorn the everyday concept of consciousness.

The transition from unconscious to conscious is real, but since it involves the accumulation of a wide variety of sequelae which may become undone and

He Slimed Me...

Just as Dennett sites a scene in the film Men In Black when a man's head opens to show an alien figure at the controls as the perfect analogy for his idea of the Cartesian Theatre (*see* p.69-70), so I can use the *sliming of Venkman* in Ghostbusters to describe the dipping approach to painting.

A ghost in a corridor of a haunted hotel confronts Venkman. There is no escape and Slimer (the ghost) charges Venkman. The film cuts away and when we return Venkman is on the floor covered in slime but otherwise unhurt.

Dr Stantz arrives at the scene,

“Venkman, what happened? Are you OK!?”

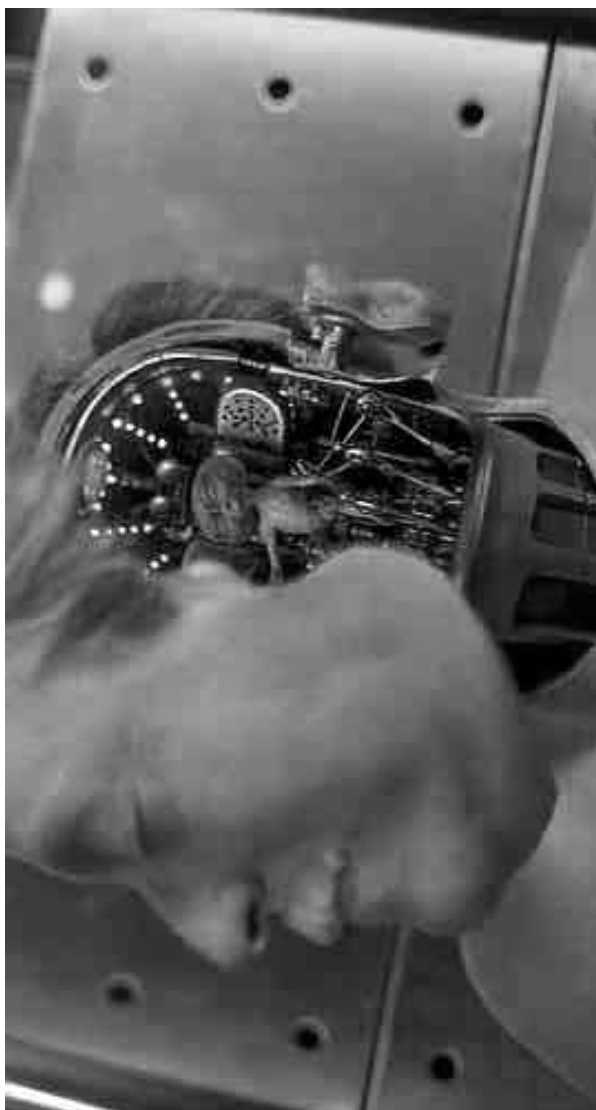
“He slimed me...” Venkman replies.

The slime that Venkman describes is ectoplasm left behind by Slimer as he attacks and presumably passes through Venkman. The slime is therefore a physical manifestation of the metaphysical world. The slime has anointed Venkman; baptised him with the glutinous evidence of a parallel state. The two are bonded in some twisted pseudo-religious condition that carries the potential of heightened meaning.

In a noteworthy real life addendum, the Ghostbusters writer Dan Ackroyd, who also plays Dr. Raymond Stantz in the film, later described Slimer as ‘the ghost of John Belushi’ his dead friend and comedy sidekick for whom the role of Venkman was originally written. Was Venkman’s sliming therefore a revenge attack from the other side, spanning the realms of fiction and reality?



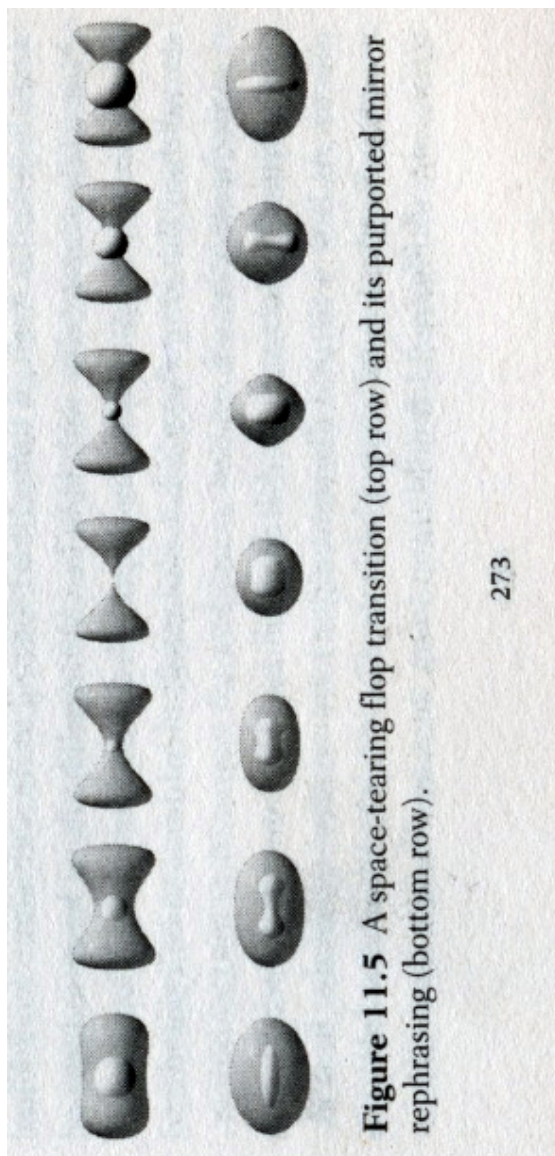
Ghostbusters, Colombia Pictures, 1984

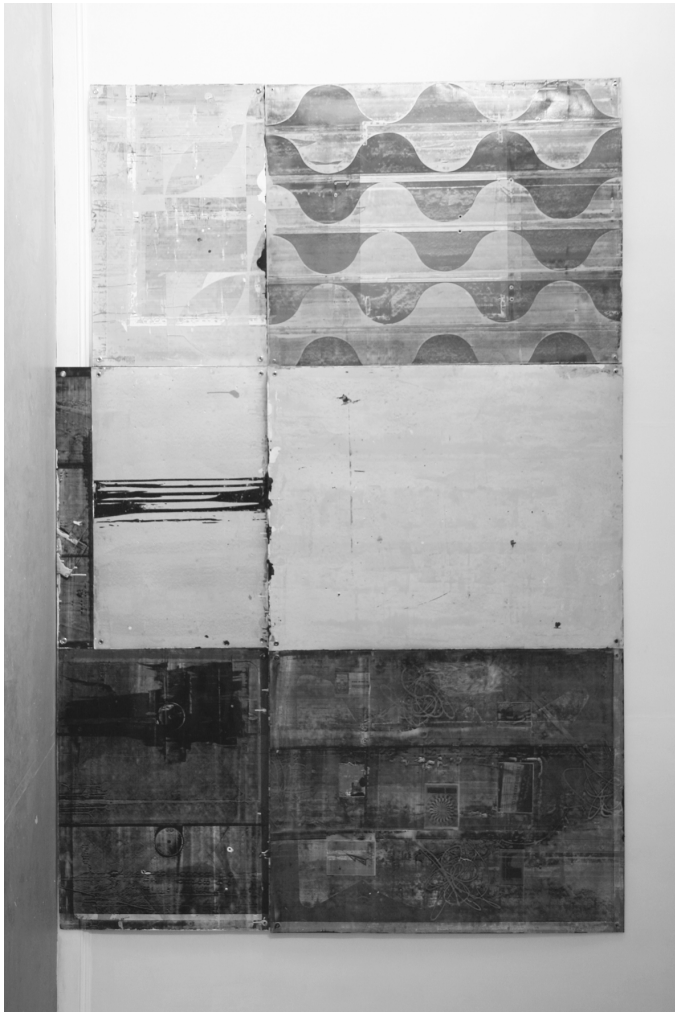


Men In Black, Colombia Pictures, 1997



Men In Black, Columbia Pictures, 1997





Shane Bradford. *Cosmic Slots*

245x366cm

Household gloss paint, acrylic, metallic emulsion, resin,
CD's, flyers on 15 layered paper sheets

2011 - ongoing

Right To Be Wrong

THE APPEARANCE OF IMPORTANCE

Jeremiad

A General Distrust of Uncertainty

SUMP

Spirit Level

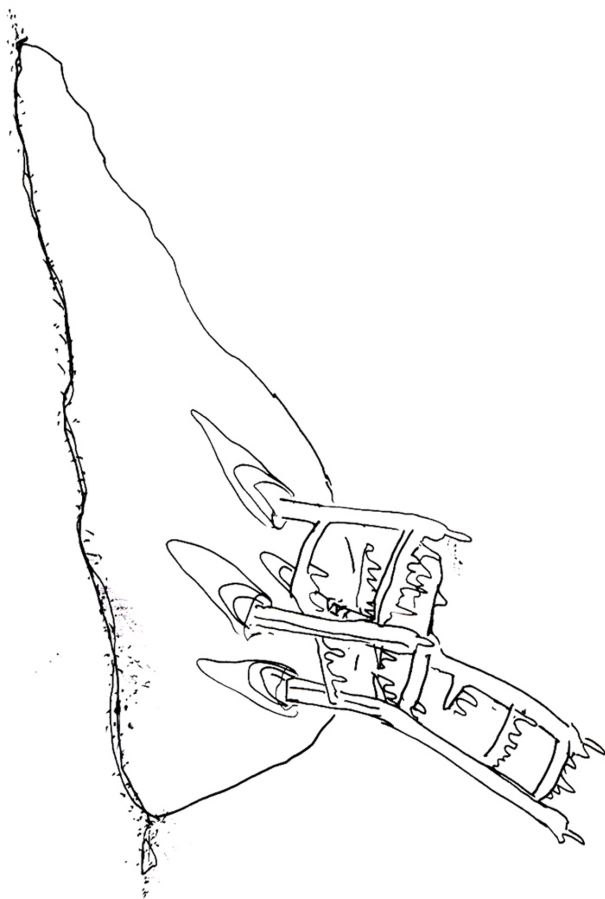
Bloody English

Noo Voo Doo

YOU NAME IT

HOW KNOW

THE RETURN OF THE PUSHED AWAY

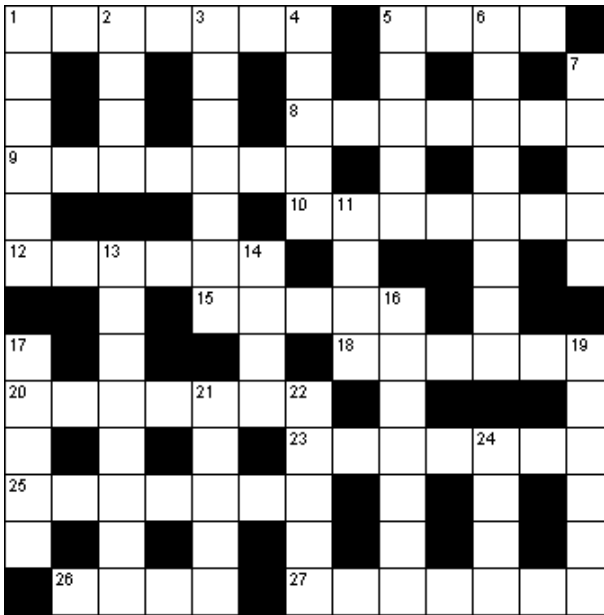




Shane Bradford. *Storm Resents California Sunshine* (det)
99x60x5cm

Tinted polyvinyl and urethane resins on found posters
2012

Subjective Crossword



Across

1. What's in a name? (7)
5. How is your brain? (4)
8. Why subjective words? (7)
9. Final outcome? (4,3)
10. How are you? (7)
12. Are you bored? (3,1,2)
15. Worst art form? (5)
18. Does it matter? (6)
20. My ego is ____? (7)
23. Choose one? (7)
25. Favourite cocktail? (7)
26. Erroneous love (sp)? (4)
27. Second worst job? (7)

Down

1. Who cares? (6)
2. Favourite colour? (4)
3. Are you sure? (1,6)
4. Is this cheesy? (5)
5. What time tomorrow? (5)
6. Make up a word? (8)
7. Where? (5)
11. Do you think? (4)
13. Have you got it yet? (8)
14. Had enough? (4)
16. Pick anything? (7)
17. Smarter than you? (5)
19. Reversed crossword? (6)
21. Now? (5)
22. Ever finish this? (5)
24. This is ____? (4)

Subjective Crossword Answers:

The crossword is subjective. The answers are opinions or instructions and thus specific to each individual or task. Fill it in as you please but unless you are *me* you will find it very difficult to finish. It can be done however, so here are *my* solutions:

Across:

1. Nothing 5. Sore 8. Unveils 9. Only end
10. Annoyed 12. Yes I am 15. Words
18. Seldom 20. Swollen 23. Elector
25. Molotov 26. Ador 27. Realtor

Down

1. Nobody 2. Teal 3. I seesaw 4. Gouda
5. Seven 6. (any answer here) 7. Aside
11. Nods 13. Schooled 14. More
16. Selecta 17. Asimo 19. Mirror 21. Later
22. Never 24. That

Insurgencies

Curated by
Peter Lamb & Shane Bradford

3 September — 2 October 2011

Angus-Hughes Gallery
26 Lower Clapton Road
London, E5 0PD

Nina Beier
Shane Bradford
Aney Catford
Peter Lamb
Hans Jörg Mayer
Oscar Murillo
Ruairiadh O'Connell
Thomas Øvlsen

Orbiting the field of contemporary painting, the exhibition aims to recreate conditions that nurture the insurgent attitudes of artists whose work is often homogenised by the familial processes of art world presentation and consumption. The exhibition is an active function that aims

...to recreate the emptiness where the pure event of form can take place.

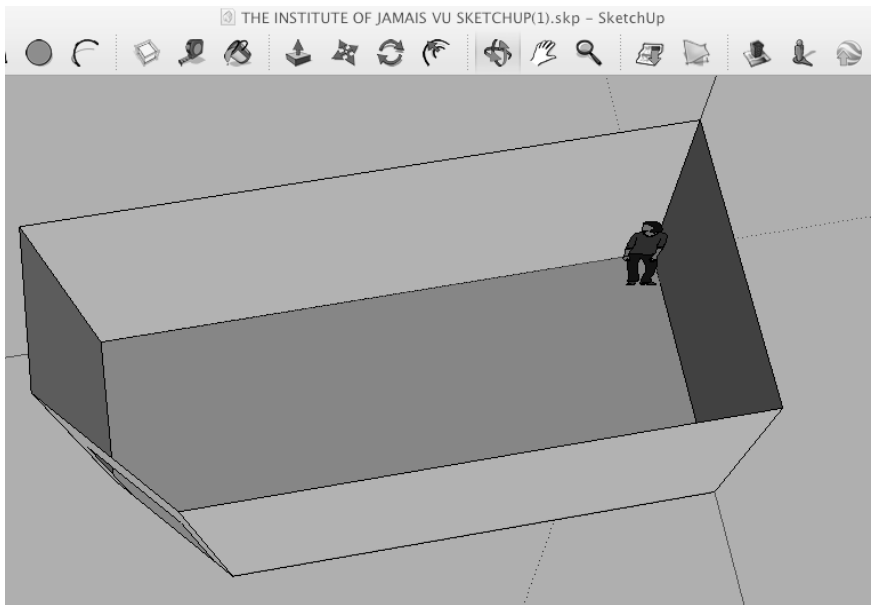
(Bradford)

If there is commonality amongst the artists it is that each demonstrates a willingness to denote or jeopardise artistic authority in favour of an acknowledgement of painting's shortcomings—as a paradoxical means to its re-investigation.

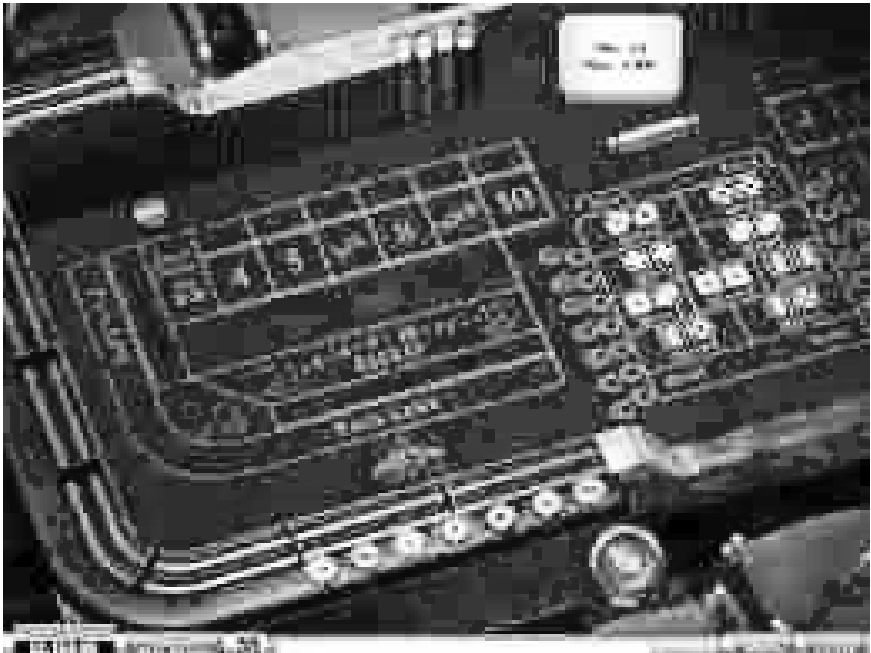
The subject of these works often manifests as a cross-examination of real-life circumstance, demonstrating an instinctive need to question the validity of the criteria by which it is judged.

Strategies vary of course, differences are naturally as common as similarities. Failure to synchronise is celebrated however, positive energy generated by friction. Each attempt is doomed and vital, fuelled by its own collapse. Contradiction, confusion, changes-of-mind, multiple-view points, disappearance, refraction, mistakes and cancellations are all proof of active thinking and reflect more clearly the skittishness of the contemporary Western psyche.





The Institute of Jamaïs Vu



A craps table



Superior Objective

The superiority of any object is a fiction or a preference. The object on view is merely one of many possibilities that through circumstance have achieved prominence. Its real value, given its privileged status, is as a beacon indicating the hidden network of events and coincidences that have contrived to engender it and that surround it still.

In this sense the object's *fame* is not a measure of merit but of circumstance. It is a manifestation of consciousness born of unconscious activity and owes its fame to everybody. In a linear sense an art object is a full stop rather than a starting point. It is a post-event prop whose story has already played out, a remnant from the theatre of dreams.

Likewise the gallery is a stage. Here under the guise of reality a dance of misconceptions shrewdly and silently imposes itself. It is real but only in the sense that a play is real whilst it's playing. The gallery drama is a truth within a truth

running backwards from its genuine direction.

There's nothing wrong with that whilst the drama remains a fiction. It's when claims to reality persist after the curtain has come down that questions may reasonably be asked! When the audience begins to occupy the same realm as its characters, seeing themselves as players in the same storyline that we might well ask; where has reality gone?

A Real Ghost

As a fictional person, people often ask me: don't you wish you were real!? Well, the answer is categorically *no*. You see it is by far the most modern way to exist (by 'modern' I mean the thing that best describes what is about to happen, not what is happening now). Being fictional allows me to not have to deal with the bothersome realities on the ground. When the volcano blows I am destined only to watch from orbit and need not run and take cover, as a *real* person in close proximity would surely have to. I am a one-way mirror. I am unaffected by the actions and opinions of the *real* while it is my very duty to affect it. I am expected to perform at the highest level and do. However, my opinions are not subject to recourse. This seems like a good deal to me and I readily accept it.

In affect, I am a ghost. From here beyond the veil it is much easier to be yourself. Only on Earth is everybody so concerned with *getting it right*. The idea I represent then is one you *hard-bodies* always find

impossible to cope with and that is that I may not be correct at all and what's more the idea that correctness is at all necessary in the first place is so terribly 20th century. Yet with all the proliferation of opinion platforms, the inevitable mention of new media, no one seems to get it, still. Given a place to slot your polemical opinion into a thousand million others should result in a neutralisation of that opinion. Sure, as an ant your tiny opinion can be added to the masses and like the proverbial butterfly beating its wing you may have some undetectable influence on a grand whole. But that is such a demeaning demotion of the illusion of self. Are you no better than an ant?

My point is that the most modern, accurate, useful and reasonable opinion to have is one that is instantly neutralized, turning to sand the moment it is released. It is not the content of opinions that counts; it is that they are opinions at all that matters. The paradox is that the sooner we all comes to terms with this, then opinions will begin to matter once again. This is because the very acknowledgement of the futility of things as concrete units enables them to change

shape. An opinion must be seen to be just 'any' opinion before it is granted the slightest possibility of becoming an opinion beyond the pale. Such a superior opinion can *only* come about by simultaneous realization of its inferiority. A simple paradox that as science has begun to discover, makes the world go round.

To reiterate; when you shine light on things it changes the very thing that you are seeing. Yet without shining a light on things they cannot be seen at all. Understanding this is in itself a step in the right direction of penetrating the paradox and seeing a closer approximation of the nature of things.

Put another way you can take the old saying, *the things you have to do to get what you want, often changes what you want* and apply it. Perhaps it is the smallness of opinions these days that has changed their nature in the same way that on a quantum level small things appear to obey different laws. Opinions are now so small that they lose their polemic properties and simply become the *state* of opinion itself. This is because at this tiny

level an opinion can be certainly THIS and certainly THAT simultaneously. Both are equally true and both can exist in one body with and without contradiction and hypocrisy. This is not just my opinion of course, this is what science is telling us; it is both ordinary and natural for things to exist in two places at once. It's just that society hasn't yet caught on to these scientific advances and put them into practice, yet.

Mathematically, as the population grows and the platform for the immediate expression of your opinion becomes instant then the mass of your opinion is mathematically devalued. Rather than creating a complexity, such massive numbers actually allow patterns to become more discernable – the more pixels the clearer the picture. At first this 'clearer' picture seems sound, its two-dimensional image a *dead cert.* Yet such high resolution allows us to zoom in ad-infinitum and our simple 2D picture becomes three-dimensionally endless. Soon the clear picture is but a simplistic veneer to an inner world so complex and

infinite as to cancel itself out and become, paradoxically, the picture again.

Here, I know, you are thinking; what the *!^* is he talking about! And rightly so, for it is only the action of what I am saying that carries any credible claim and not the contents. I believe in this, even though I know it is equally its own opposite and I am infinitely wrong to believe in it.

Elite Paradox

The implementation of a paradox demonstrates how nature achieves being in two places at once. If you can demonstrate the physical manifestation of an idea then you can achieve teleportation. Teleportation is not the act of travelling without moving but the art of being in two places simultaneously.

Mathematics and quantum physics demonstrate how this paradox is not only possible but fulfills an essential role in nature. Attempts by quantum theorists to find out if it is possible to rip the fabric of space-time, for example, have uncovered a natural mathematical paradox whereby a tear in space-time triggers a simultaneous repair, itself only made possible by virtue of a rip in space-time (*see* p71). Paradox is what seals the edges of the universe, stops it flying out of control.

An understanding and acceptance of paradox as the norm enables and necessitates an artistic liberation from the subject of art itself, if the artist is willing. Most are not. People who want to be

artists are, by virtue of that desire, not. Only true artists want to be something else. Or, better yet, to be both artist and *not* artist at the same time. The latter is paradoxically true of all artists, those who want to be or not. Beware the ones who tell you that they *are* because if they *were* they would also tell you that they *were not*. This is the only reasonable position to take because it accommodates its reverse³

³ I once impressed a girl with this. She said it gave her goose bumps.

Critique of Shane Bradford's 'Trouble In The Cartesian Theatre'

By Neville Johnson

This exhibition, held in an unlikely industrial space on a non-descript residential street in Manor House, North London, attempts an ingenious double bluff aimed at shifting the entire context surrounding the work so that the actual material presence of the art is eerily subverted by a nagging sense of a peripheral motivation. The effect is a deliberate ploy to engage the viewer not only with the beautifully crafted works in an aesthetic sense but to acknowledge the (almost tidal) influence of the context on the meaning of the work as well, beyond the immediate language of form.

In this spirit of contextual emphasis it seems appropriate to firstly mention the situation of the gallery. No less than 16 directors run the Institute Of Jamais Vu. Most are students of various colleges and creative disciplines and many of whom happen to live in rooms adjoining the main living area. Resembling an idealistic commune, a sophisticated youth club, or

at worst, a young offenders' institute, the space is full of comfortable second-hand leather sofas arranged around a barely-used looking TV set. The cleanliness of the open plan kitchen belies the youthful air of the place and points you, correctly, to the underlying studiousness and mature yet effortlessly modern nature of the set-up. For, plonked unapologetically in the middle of the hall is a fully functional art gallery.

When one stands in the gallery space you may as well, to all intents and purposes, be in a little white cube in Mayfair (it is more like a cuboid in fact, a 3D rectangle that brought to mind the proportions of a casino Craps table). But given that this is so obviously not the case, the illusion only just holds up. At the IJV the veil is thin. The deceptively minimal authoritative power of the white cuboid is so obviously an illusion here as to necessitate some acknowledgement on behalf of the artist to its at once false yet pure surroundings.

And Bradford's exhibition does just that. Trouble at the Cartesian Theatre is a short story/play script in two parts that describes a trip to the theatre one evening

by the lead character Neville Johnson. Neville, we are told is a slightly pompous, loner art critic and would-be philosopher who finds himself reluctantly at the theatre one evening to see an amateur production starring a well-meaning neighbour of Neville's. To his surprise Neville falls for his neighbour's performance and defends her honour against a rude-talking fellow theatregoer. A *melée* ensues during which Neville literally dissolves into the constituent parts of himself and his surroundings.

If, as intended, one takes the time to read the script before entering the exhibition, one sees that objects on view are, if not exact artifacts from the play, they certainly recall items that you've just read about. This has the eerie effect of creating a two-tier system of cognisance whereby the primary exhibition stands apart from a secondary reading to do with the play script. And here we reach the core of the matter. *The Name* deals with Descartes' well-known proposition of the mind in which Descartes famously described the process by which we process and respond to information received in the brain. Later derided by modern philosophers and

labelled the Cartesian Theatre by Dennett, the theory has maintained popular support despite its illogical and slightly religious basis.

Recently scholar Jonathon Roberts and others have modelled a more thorough interpretation of how we process and respond to information in the brain that campaigns for a more radial analogy, whereby the brain is a constantly moving network which projects certain ideas forward, made ‘famous’ momentarily by consciousness.

“...consciousness is given a radial structure in which it is the dynamic properties of neural networks that assume control rather than some centrally housed ‘essence’ or ‘spirit.’”

...‘The brain operates a second order intentional system of beliefs and desires. Such a system produces beliefs and desires about the beliefs and desires of both the self and others.’

It is this secondary system of beliefs and desires that makes the Name what it is. The exhibition is an exhibition about itself, which is an exhibition about itself etc. Somehow, in acting out this scenario, a match is found for the model of secondary intentions described by Dennett and Roberts *et al.* It is about the gap between the notion of something against the reality of its experience. The purpose of the show is simply to name itself. It does this by selecting paths that reinforce the appearance of its existence and reiterate the fact of its temporal being. In the act it goes a long way to uniting the often incompatible worlds of concept and aesthetics.



Photo courtesy of Bibi Katholm

Shane Bradford is not an artist, writer, curator, or Neville Johnson. Despite being born (1971) and raised in London, he has never lived in Singapore. Bradford has worked orbiting the world (of art) for the last dozen years. This is a flattering photograph of him in his native London, April 2012.

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