

Friday January 21th - 2011
Special publication
Edition 5.000

Vrijdag 21 januari - 2011
Speciale publicatie
Oplage 5.000



Lokaal 01
Kloosterlaan 138 Breda

STATE YOUR BUSINESS GAZETTE

LONDON ARTISTS SECRET BREDA TAKEOVER



**LEIGH CLARKE SAYS
"I HAVE UNFINISHED BUSINESS HERE
THIS IS NOT THE END!"**

State Your Business was inspired by a book written in 1972 and two moments I witnessed in 2004 and 2009.

1972
Gerald Woods introduces the book Art Without Boundaries with, *“At one time it was easy to distinguish between the ‘fine’ artist and the commercial artist. It is now less easy. The qualities which differentiated the one from the other are now often common to both. The painter, who once saw the commercial designer as a toady to the financial pressures of industry, may now find that the dealer can impose a tyranny worse than that of any client”.*

The potency of the book was in Woods selection of practitioners whose work interacted to an audience wider than the subject area they operated in. Also, his book focussed on work that had political resonance in the time it was made. Interestingly, the books release in 1972 was on the cusp of a great recession due to the economic after effects of the Vietnam War, an energy crisis that resulted in the rationing of oil and major conflicts in the Middle East.

2004
A New York based, 18-piece, electro – acoustic orchestra named Absolute Ensemble played the music of Frank Zappa at the Barbican Centre in London. The complex arrangements conducted by Kristian Järvi included musicians who played with Zappa, which made the event incredibly poignant for the hardened fans. During the evening, a hip-hop based, turntable trio named the X-ecutioners, walked on the stage and placed their turntables in front of the ensemble. The arrival of an unendorsed, populist alternative to Zappa’s music blew a frost over the crowd and made a man with a long-grey beard and an ethnic pie-hat stand, point and shout, “State Your Business!”

2009
The Royal Bank of Scotland in the City of London became the backdrop of much tension and temerity between protesters, bankers and police. Most newspapers took

advantage of the reflective glass façade of the RBS building, using it as a metaphor for a force field or a barrier between the banks and the protesters. The toughened surface reflected raised mobile phone cameras and hand-rendered protest banners. Bankers tormented the rabble below, the scene resembled a Hogarth engraving of Gin Lane. After much tussle, the cracks in the glass illustrated the defiance of the swelling horde.

This invincible green house still stands and has become a monument to the collapse and corruption of the banking system in Britain. What is intriguing when passing by the building, is the reflection of advertising from the side of buses that translucently layer the bank’s fine art collection beyond the glass. These brief moments of interaction, where adverts for SKY Sports cross a photo-realist painting, question the functionality of art and graphic communication during the collapse of the economy and central government.

LOKAAL01 and myself brought together a group of practitioners who are concerned with communication through language, typography and images. The artists and designers

involved in the project drew similarities with the turntablists in that they are creative, foreign invaders in unfamiliar territory. Like Gerald Woods grouping in 1972, those involved joined in solidarity to transcend the restraints of commercial activity and challenge the subject pocketing of their industries. The cohort bombarded the people of Breda with a range of graphic communication that inspired debate and pro-activeness in the LOKAAL01 project space and the city of Breda through typography, language and images. The posters, flags, signs, murals, billstickers and sculptures that appeared in various locations, confronted the public with subliminal messages that questioned the bombardment of information in city life and our compacency in reading and believing adverts and politicians.

Leigh Clarke
artist and curator of
State Your Business 2010

Iedereen kent het romantische beeld van een klepperend uithangbord in een donkere, gure nacht. Terwijl de wind door de straten raast nodigt dit vaak rijkelijk geïllustreerde bord verloren zielen uit om zich te komen warmen aan een haardvuur en een glas donker bier. Ze dragen namen als “The Princess of Whales”, “The Fox & The Hound” en “The Duke of York” en zijn een belangrijk onderdeel van het Engelse cultureel erfgoed. Oorspronkelijk bedoeld als beeldende vertaling van tekst, voor de vele analfabeten, vormen tekst en beeld op de pubsign gezamenlijk een verhaal over de geschiedenis van traditioneel Engeland.

Als ik op vrijdag 26 november de Latte’s & Literature binnenkom, achtervolgd door een koude sneeuwvlaag, is Mark Hampson net aan het vertellen over zijn pubsignproject. Hampson, een uit Engeland afkomstige kunstenaar die werkzaam is bij de Royal College of Art, heeft voor het thema “State Your Business” van Lokaal 01 een aantal ogenschijnlijk authentieke pubsigns in diverse cafés in Breda gehangen. Hoewel de context van een café klopt met de identiteit van een pubsign, is er op het tweede gezicht het een en ander mis. De borden zien er oorspronkelijk uit, maar zijn gemaakt door een groep kopieartisten: anonieme kunstenaars die, naast hun eigen werk, hun brood verdienen met het namaken van antieke voorwerpen. Hampson beziet het authentieke imago dat een pubsign bewust toebedeeld krijgt, vaak verveerd, ouderwets en bedoeld inspelend op de nostalgische en vaderlandslievende Engelsman, met een kritische blik. Hij drijft er de spot mee door een authentieke look te combineren met een voorstelling die niets met het verromantiseerde Engeland te maken heeft.

De pubsigns in Engeland hebben als nevenfunctie de taak de geschiedenis van het land aan de gewone man te vertellen. Verhalen over beroemde mensen of gebeurtenissen, zoals de hertog van York, of Shakespeare. Terwijl we met onze groep van café naar café dwalen, overal een biertje drinken en een werk bekijken, valt op dat Hampson’s pubsigns door heel andere figuren bevolkt worden: ongelukkige schrijvers, psychotische Nederlandse schilders en bizarre olifanten. Deze underdogs van de kunsten zijn Hampson’s spottende vertellers en hun verhalen staan haaks op de traditionele Engelse geschiedenis. Zo zijn meerdere vertellers niet eens van Engelse komaf; in O’Mearas hangt een bord waarop verwezen wordt naar van Gogh, die twee maanden in Engeland verbleef maar geen onderdeel is van de Engelse cultuur.

Ook valt de locatie van Hampson’s pubsigns

op: binnen in plaats van buiten, als schilderijen aan de wand. De uitnodigende functie van een pubsign wordt door Hampson vervangen door een kunstzinnige functie, zonder daarbij uit de toon te vallen. Hij integreert zijn kritische borden in de omgeving en laat zo de beschouwer langzaam hun betekenis ontdekken. In café de Vulling hangt de pubsign bijvoorbeeld heel hoog en verwijst zo naar de Spaanse schilder Murillo, die stierf nadat hij van een trap was gevallen. Een voorbeeld van Hampson’s zwarte humor, die in al zijn pubsigns een subtiële maar belangrijke rol speelt en een manier is om zijn boodschap over te brengen.

Door middel van plaatsing en verwijzingen naar bizarre geschiedenissen in beeld en tekst gebruikt Mark Hampson de verhalende kracht van pubsigns om zijn eigen kritiek tegen het traditionele en behouden Engeland te uiten.

Als ik terug naar huis loop, de besneeuwde markt over, klinkt de kreet “State your business” nog na in mijn hoofd. Maak duidelijk waar je voor staat. Maar waarom? De pubsigns van Mark Hampson zijn juist interessant door het spel dat ze spelen met hun beschouwer. Een spel van verwarren, verwijzen, vertellen en evalueren, verpakt in een prettig gevoel voor humor. Ze gaan in tegen het idee dat kunst altijd op het eerste

gezicht te begrijpen moet zijn. En tegelijkertijd roepen ook de pubsigns van Hampson “State you business!” naar de moderne Engelse pubsigns met hun antieke uiterlijk. Doe je niet anders voor dan je bent. Dat is een interessante dualiteit in Hampson’s project.

Als ik langs het gesloten café De Kleine Wereld kom zie ik binnen een van Hampson’s pubsigns hangen. Erop staan de swingende circusolifanten van D.G. Rosetti, begeleid door de woorden “World Famous Window Cleaning Elephants!”. Het is een van Hampson’s eerste pubsigns, maar voor mij de afsluter van de avond. Hun absurde vertoning en de bizarre begeleidende teksten zijn zowel een kritische persiflage van de echte wereld als een ironische knipoog naar zichzelf. Al dansend dragen zij vrolijk Hampson’s boodschap uit: “Come on, state your business!”

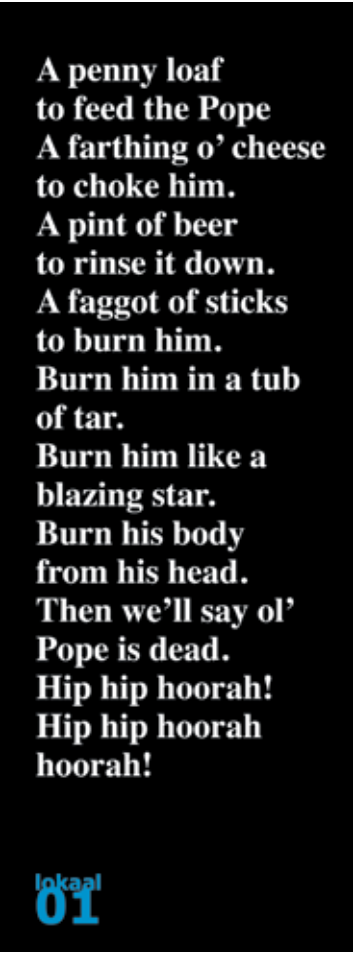
Roos van Mierlo

State Your Business and crawl with Mark Hampson



Bark Design





**Leigh
Clarke**

**Flávia
Müller
Medeiros**

Surprise, ongoing

Passport, post-it note, red ink

A small red heart drawn on a post-it note and placed inside the passport next to the current UK visa stamp where immigration officers look everytime Flávia leaves and enters the UK border.



**Ian
Noble**

Inside Out

existing plywood pedestals relocated from Lokaal01 and placed on the streets of Breda, Holland

An art gallery environment is often refereed to as a ‘White Cube’. Inside the ‘White Cube’ you will often find more ‘white cubes’, boxes of different proportions commonly called ‘pedestals’, supporting art objects. Unlike the internal white cube environment of the gallery, the pedestal is a box with only its external top horizontal surface used for the display of art.

For State Your Business all preexisting pedestals from Lokaal 01 will be relocated from within the gallery to the city, literally taking the ‘white cubes’ out of the ‘white cube’. They will no longer be the support for an art object, nothing is placed on the pedestal, instead it is the pedestal that is placed in relation to existing conditions within the city that share the same formal language, electric boxes, waste bins, car park ticket machines etc.



Daniel Eatock

STATING OUR BUSINESS Some Notes on Public Art

Christophe Van Eecke

The exhibition *State Your Business* takes art into public space. In doing so it becomes something entirely different from public art, which is usually art that was commissioned by the government. Rather than becoming public art, it becomes art that addresses the public. And the public it addresses is not the group of people that visits the exhibition, but the populace at large. This project brings a lot of philosophical, artistic, and activist ideas into play. By invading public space, it engages the legacy of the Situationists and connects with the actions of anti-globalists and other recent movements of resistance. Rather than being a comprehensive survey of this huge philosophical and artistic landscape, this essay offers a brief sketch of some points of reference one might encounter while taking art out into the world.

Public and Private

Public space is the space we all share. In her book *Between Past and Future* (1961) Hannah Arendt argued that the ancient Greeks saw public space as a place to learn to understand each other, ‘not to understand one another as individual persons, but to look upon the same world from one another’s standpoint, to see the same in very different and frequently opposing aspects’ (Arendt 1977: 51). This pursuit of understanding is the practice of politics, which Arendt describes as a mode of action. Arendt uses the term “action” to refer to a specific set of human activities in which no end product is created. In “labour” and “work,” the two other areas of human activity she distinguishes, there is always some product created that remains in the world after the activity stops. For instance, baking a bread results in the existence of a bread. But since this bread is subsequently eaten, it only remains in the world for a very brief time before being consumed in the cycle of life. This is what Arendt calls “labour”. The results of “work” are more lasting. For example, making a chair achieves its end result in the actual chair, which will often outlast its maker. When a house is built, it is usually not demolished when its owner dies. Somebody else comes to live there. The house is a creation that stays in the world after the activity of making it is finished. Works of art are the clearest examples of work: they are often made to outlast not simply the creator’s life but the life of generations. That is why we put them in museums for safekeeping: works of art are the record of the life of the mind of the human race. They memorialise what is best and most essential about an age. In “action” no such artefacts are created: the process is itself the purpose of the activity and all meaning is spent in doing the activity, not in attaining some net end result. Politics is the clearest example of “action” because nothing in politics is ever final. Every speech can be answered with a counter-speech, every law can be undone, every government makes way for a new government, every election undoes the results of the one before. That is why action is at the same time both of the utmost importance in human living and extremely futile. There are no guarantees in action, no certainties of a good outcome. In politics, people enter the public arena to speak in name of the common good. They take responsibility for the shared world.

It is the Marxist claim of the Situationists that modern capitalism has made this kind of action impossible: we are everywhere brainwashed by corporate messages that are bludgeoned onto our consciousness. The street, which should be the essence of public space, has become a battle-ground. Our governments are selling it from under us. Everything is now branded: wherever one looks, there are huge billboards blocking our view, buses carry around commercial messages, everything carries a sponsor’s label, certain fashion labels even treat people as walking billboards, with the brand’s logo emblazoned life-size on the clothes. Instead of a space where one meets one’s fellow citizens, the street has become a place of traffic and a marketplace. This reduction of public space to a commodity is what Situationists call the Society of the Spectacle. In it, people, objects, and places become commodities, things to sell, not things with a communal value in themselves. In the Society of the Spectacle one is no longer allowed to simply hang around in the street: one must move through it with purpose, either going to work or going shopping. Non-profit or casual use of streets is discouraged and in some cases penalised. To keep the streets safe and clean for yuppie profit-seekers, the entire public realm is structured around well-defined functions. Commerce and clean efficiency are the name of the game. This means that public space is quickly becoming private space: if it is owned by someone or by some corporation, we as citizens are no longer allowed to use it as we please. Private companies and private concerns determine what kind of use we should make of public space. We are only entitled to walk the streets if we submit willingly to the messages that bombard us and if we submit to the trajectories that are set out for us. We must walk in line, behave as desired, go through the movements of the docile citizen. In this sense, Mark Titchner’s poster for this exhibition could not have been more apt: it expresses the voice of power (as opposed to authority), bullying citizens into submission. We must always and everywhere justify our presence in the public realm. There is always an external power that might question our right to be where we are. This means that the meaning of public space has been inverted: from the space where people self-evidently appear it has been transformed into the space where nobody has any inherent and unquestionable right to be. It was the ambition of Situationists to subvert this new world order through several tactics, chief among them *dérive* or drift and *détournement* or subversion. Situationists practice what they call psychogeography, which is the systematic observation of the effects that particular urban environments have on our emotions. The way the world is shaped influences the way we experience it, which in turn influences our sense of well-being. The *dérive* or drift is an attempt to chart this psychogeography. To drift through an urban environment is to move through it on the basis of arbitrary criteria: nothing is planned, one simply moves along guided by whatever elements in the environment grab one’s attention. This way, the *dérive* wants to discover the authentic everyday life of a city. Obviously, this practice is not as straightforward as it sounds because every city, and indeed every public environment, is designed in special ways that are meant to guide our perception of it and therefore also our behaviour in it. For instance, all kinds of obstructions are put in place to guide our movements in a desired way. Streets, parks, or buildings are designed to

discourage certain kinds of behaviour. Obstacles are put into place to prevent cars or other vehicles from entering certain streets. But even the free movement of pedestrians is constantly being curtailed. Infrastructure, such as the presence of benches and well-mowed lawns, tells us which areas are designed for repose and which are aimed at traffic. There is legislation about loitering, undesirables such as the homeless are spirited away by the police, those fine guardians of public order, and there are prescribed places to put up posters. Cities now even have designated “graffiti areas” in an attempt to organise dissent and make it harmless by making it part of the system. Our perception of an urban environment is determined by all these elements, which colour our experience. For the drift to be successful it would need to make us look beyond this superficial layer of prescribed experience. Only then can our experience of urban life become authentic.

The aim of the drift is clearly political: it wants to generate new social relations by looking at the world with fresh and unprejudiced eyes. This makes it different from a mere walk or stroll or from the amblings of the *flâneur*. The drift is not passively receptive of sensory impulses, it tries to seek out impulses that are more authentic than the prescribed impulses to generate a new awareness of our environment. But Situationists will also subvert existing structures in order to change people’s perception of their environment, thereby enabling them to see through the ideological structure of the everyday urban environment. A favoured practice of subversion is *détournement*, which is the art of altering existing objects, specifically art and other cultural objects, to change their meaning. As Naomi Klein explains in her seminal book *No Logo* (2000), *détournement* refers to ‘an image, message or artefact lifted out of its context to create a new meaning’ (Klein 2000: 282). In a sense, *détournement* relies on the principle of collage: bringing together unrelated elements to generate new meanings. In cinema this happens by using found footage, as Debord did in his own films. Activists will often use this kind of collage to alter commercial messages, especially ads and billboards. A younger generation of activists has called this kind of subversive action culture jamming, but it is also called abducting or subverting. Naomi Klein defines culture jamming as ‘the practice of parodying advertisements and hijacking billboards in order to drastically alter their messages. Streets are public spaces, abducters argue, and since most residents can’t afford to counter corporate messages by purchasing their own ads, they should have the right to talk back to images they never asked to see’ (o.c. 280). The fact that graffiti or other instances of culture jamming often include the violation of some kind of private or bought space is justified by the fact that the corporate messages that have overtaken the public realm also violate private areas: by their oppressive presence in our everyday world they invade the privacy of our consciousness, trying to make us think and behave in desired ways. If you buy this product you will feel better, and if you wear this brand people will love you. If these corporations’ messages are allowed to get into our private space, we should be allowed to crawl into theirs.

Talking Back

Speaking in Arendtian terms, culture jamming would seem to be a mixture of work and action. Because culture jamming is a way of reclaiming our speech it is also a way of speaking in name of the common good. Culture jamming wants to restore the public realm to its true function: to be a meeting place for people with a view to understanding and the common good. Culture jamming is speech because it alters meanings and hence creates subversive messages. A sabotaged billboard is a message, even if it uses imagery instead of words to generate its meaning. But the speech of culture jamming is rarely speech in the physical sense of uttered sentences. Usually, its speech is embodied in artefacts such as the billboards and advertisements that are being subverted. In this sense, the speech of culture jamming is literally inscribed into the world. But by inscribing voice into the world culture jamming is an attempt at world-making, at reclaiming the shared world for the people. Culture jamming is an attempt to reclaim our own voice, which was taken from us and made to speak pre-programmed corporate speech. This is important because, as Arendt also points out, it is through voice that we share the world with others. It is a common misconception that people share the world with each other through their physical bodies and that the life of the mind is the private realm inside of that body. In reality, it is the other way around. The philosopher Elaine Scarry has made this very clear in her analysis of pain. It is very difficult for people to share their pain and to persuade other people of the fact that they are in pain. Nobody can share another person’s awareness of their body. The body physical is an intensely private area of experience. Thoughts, on the other hand, are very easily shared through voice. My most private thoughts can be made public in speech and in written text (like a diary). But the sensations of the body cannot be shared in such a way, except if we translate those experiences into words (Arendt 1977: 145-146; Scarry 1985: 33). So in speaking to each other we build a shared world. The actual physical act of building, as in the work of building houses, roads, and factories, comes later, when we have already established a shared world through human dialogue, which is the conversation of mankind.

Graffiti art takes a special place among the many forms of culture jamming. For one thing, it is probably the oldest form of cultural expression to have been in continual use. Graffiti is as old as human life. Urban centres have always known it. When Pompeii was excavated, the city’s walls not only revealed splendid (and often candidly pornographic) wall-paintings, but also a lot of graffiti, painted or drawn on walls, and sometimes even carved in the walls. Some would claim that even the cave-drawings of Lascaux belong to the history of graffiti. But I doubt this because it is quite likely that these drawings had a magical or ritual function that is distinct from the highly political and often critical expression of graffiti. Still, all major cities in all major cultures have known graffiti. The practice is extremely widespread. We find it in toilet stalls, in lovers’ hearts carved in the bark of trees, on writing desks in schools, on traffic signs, even carved onto the leaves of cacti (Grasskamp 1982: 17). In fact, even god himself was a graffiti artist, painting the walls at Belshazzar’s feast, baffling the revellers with his announcement of “mene tekel”. Some of the basic hieroglyphs of graffiti have become universal currency, whether it is the heart-with-arrow of lovers, the ubiquitous male and female genitals, the swastika, or the encircled A that is the international signature of anarchists. Basically, graffiti is a way of claiming existence (*‘Existenzbehauptung’*; o.c. 29): the individual leaving his mark is reclaiming his or her

individuality. He or she is saying: I exist and you must take note of me. It is small wonder that graffiti so often shows up on the concrete walls of impersonal and inhuman housing projects: to the extent that such buildings are not designed to harbour human life, our humanity must be reclaimed in the face of its denial. Graffiti is then a crude form of embellishment and a scream of human outrage.

But this makes graffiti dangerous. One of the reasons governments dislike it is the fact that it marks the presence of the individual. Governments want us to be the faceless masses, quantities of labour force that can be shifted about to suit the needs of economy. Graffiti not only makes us known as individuals rather than faceless and nameless masses, the graffiti artist as individual is at the same time extremely elusive. Unless they are caught in the act, the identity of graffiti artists often remains unknown for a long time. In this sense, the graffiti artist represents something the powers that be are very much afraid of: a dissident individual that it cannot control. Its presence spreads like fire. As soon as graffiti is removed, other graffiti appears. It is like weeds: you can never get rid of it. And from the point of view of power, it is a malevolent pest because it undermines established power structures in the name of the individual. Governments would have us believe that there are established channels available to the dissident citizen who wants to make his or her grievances heard. There is the press, there is politics, there are elections. But such media have become either corporate-owned or futile. Politically, terms like left or right have long lost their meaning. Every political party is liberal nowadays, in the most destructive sense of the word imaginable. The names of political parties are differences in packaging at best. No political party fundamentally questions the existing power structures. Even socialist parties now aim at the middle-class electorate: the poor, the unemployed, and the disenfranchised have become politically and socially irrelevant. They are an embarrassment that is best overlooked, tucked away in a suburb somewhere. Supposed forums of free expression, such as newspapers and social network sites on the internet, are privately owned and intimately tied up with corporate concerns. Such media are policed and censored. And even if they are not, the chaotic clamour of the masses who are all making themselves heard through these media assures that only very few messages actually have any impact. If everyone is venting his opinion on Facebook every day, every opinion gets lost in the gigantic muddle. The power structure likes this and encourages this: it is the best way of assuring that everyone will feel free to speak without ever saying anything that will have even the slightest impact. Freedom becomes a prison if it is commodified as mass entertainment.

Through its visibility, its anonymity, and its uncontrollable growth, graffiti is one of the last areas where critical messages can have any kind of impact on the public realm. That is why they must be outlawed. Graffiti is not considered art, nor is it considered free speech; it is vandalism and hence a crime. It is defilement of either private or public property (but where’s the difference between these two?). The graffiti artist who gets busted faces possible jail time and, which is often worse, enormous fines, having to foot the bill for the removal of their work. This means that their means of existence are removed, making it impossible for them to even exist. Furthermore, their messages are removed by the system, effectively quenching these dissident voices. This is the totalitarian practice of modern democracy: first, privatise the public realm, then criminalise any behaviour that is a breach of private property rights. The net result is the end of the public realm and the impossibility for free speech. When everything is owned, nothing is public. Hence, there is not even a shared world left. If anything, the space outside our home is a jungle where every street, every space, every stretch of land is ruled by its owner, driving away anything and anyone who is unwanted. This is the totalitarian logic of corporate fascism that goes under the name of liberal democracy (of course, many other total mechanisms are at work, especially in the treatment of the poor, the unemployed, and the immigrant, but this is beyond the scope of the present discussion).

The Art of Subversion

Culture jamming is a challenge for the street artist. Not only does he or she have to deal with the question of surveillance, having to act swiftly and deftly under the constant risk of being apprehended by the police, they also have to make sure that their message gets across. But if a subversive message is to make its mark on the minds of the passers-by, it must first reach its audience. This is in itself a challenge. Our environment is saturated with messages, commercial and ideological, and it is tough to create a subversive message that not only attracts the attention but also makes the viewer think. This is especially true when the artist not simply subverts existing messages but introduces his own. Take, for instance, Mark Titchner’s poster work. The first challenge lies in the fact that a poster must be noticed. The world is awash with posters so there is no intrinsic reason why people should notice Titchner’s posters rather than others. Obviously, total readability can never be the purpose of this kind of art. In the tradition of the *détournement* the artist is providing elements in the public realm that will now and then attract someone’s attention and make them think twice about their environment. But this is only the first hurdle, for even if a passer-by notices the presence of something new in the world, a fresh visual impulse among the many others, he or she will still have to take the step from noticing to *reading* the message, which means at least a minimal pause. But again, this is not enough, for we constantly pause, ever so briefly, to take in messages without actually registering or reflecting on what we are reading. Sometimes our eyes scan the shapes of the words, find some meaning there, but we never take the next step of actually reflecting on what is being said. And even if we do reflect, we will still need to actually *get the message* and its subversive content. This complex structure of poster communication is the challenge facing the poster artist. A poster may look like a simple exercise in design and layout, but it requires a lot of thought and imagination to make a culture jamming poster that is both a good piece of subversion, a critical statement, and a persuasive work of art.

Many artists choose to place objects and interventions in the public realm as small wake-up calls for passers-by. This is what the Belgian artist Benjamin Verdonck has been doing for quite some time. His interventions in public space, such as growing vegetables in a public garden, staging a huge dead sparrow in a shopping street, or organising a procession of illegal immigrants carrying huge sculptures of everyday objects, often take place unannounced. They only take place for the people who happen to be on the scene at the time the

event is staged. This way, Verdonck tries to generate a dynamic in the public realm that is not co-extensive with everyday use of it. Verdonck claims that ‘what we call public space does not really exist. There are separate spaces for everything: to make democracy happen, to shop, to act like an idiot. I wanted to play with those codes. What would happen if I acted like a fool in a shopping street? What if I vented my opinion in the street? Does that create a tension?’ (Tormans 2009: 28) Verdonck is also attracted to this kind of action because it changes the usual dynamic between the artist and the public. In the street, nobody is waiting for an artist to do his thing. If you stage a performance in a theatre or in an exhibition space, people will often pay to come and see your work. There is an exchange of money for performance, which implies that the public has certain expectations that need to be fulfilled. Be eliminating this circuit of capital the interaction with the public is changed (Jans 2010: 17). It also makes the work more democratic. As culture jamming graffiti artist Banksy has pointed out, graffiti art, and by extension all street art, is the most democratic form of art: there is no entrance fee and it is always shown on the best walls of town. It is anti-elitist (Banksy 2009: 8). By puncturing our everyday experience of the world, such public art seeks to alter our perception of the world, needing us with small warnings and playful red flags. In doing so, such interventions temporarily shift public space back to its original function: a meeting place for citizens to engage in the free exchange of ideas rather than consumer goods.

The most radical way of taking back public space is to literally take possession of it. A very effective way of doing this, and one that became very popular in the anti-globalist movement that emerged in the 1990s, are the so-called Reclaim The Streets events. Reclaim The Streets is a movement which originated in 1995. People who Reclaim The Streets hijack major crossroads, traffic arteries, and other important public spaces by flooding them by the thousands. Huge masses of people show up in a given place and simply take over the road, making any kind of traffic impossible. As such, they constitute a ‘critical mass’. The mass is critical in the sense that is dangerous to power: it undermines the dominant circuit of capital. It wreaks havoc upon the dominant use of the public realm. But the mass is also critical in the sense that it is a mass of people who take a critical stance. Both senses combined make it a critical mass for the oppressive forces of power and for the police, its bullies: the mass then becomes critical in the sense that it brings the ordinary traffic of the public realm on the verge of chaos, creating a critical emergency from the point of view of power. Like demonstrations, Reclaim The Streets actions demonstrate the power of the masses when they decide to turn back into what they are no longer allowed to be: the public. Modern capitalism reduces people to masses: a kind of goods that is shifted about to suit the needs of production. We are machines, or basic organisms, who have the sole task of producing and consuming so that the power elite can generate capital off our backs. But we must resist this reduction and transform ourselves back into what we were meant to be: the public, which is the gathering of free citizens who rule themselves through representative democracy. Governments nowadays tend to treat the populace as a nuisance. In reality, governments should be in our service, making our lives as good as possible. Instead, democratic governments have helped organise the massification of the public. Hence, they have no legitimacy and must be done away with. If the government exercises violence upon the people, as it does in exploitative capitalism, the usual channels of resistance and dissent become impotent. The game is up and the rule-book goes out the window. It is time to remake ourselves.

Communal Voice

The power of the people is demonstrated in a famous play by the Spanish playwright Lope de Vega, *Fuenteovejuna* (1619). It tells the story of the village Fuenteovejuna that is tyrannised by the commander who is in charge of the town. Sick of his abuses, the citizens band together and kill him. When king Phillip II sends a magistrate to investigate and punish the murderers, the villagers maintain that “Fuenteovejuna killed him,” making it impossible to designate an individual killer. In the end, the village is pardoned by the king. These days, with the massive resources for surveillance available to governments, it would be almost impossible to maintain such collective anonymity in the face of power. But the play still holds an important lesson about the power of the people to enforce change in the face of government-sanctioned corporate oppression (or corporate-supported government oppression, which is usually the same). It tells us that governments will not free us unless we force them to do so. We must free ourselves, by all means necessary. ‘Our world is a human world,’ Susanne K. Langer has written, ‘organised to implement our highest individuation. There may be ten thousand of us working in one factory. There are several millions of us living in a city like New York. But we are not the masses; we are the public’ (Langer 1962: 122).

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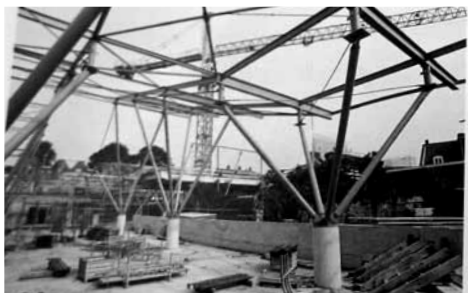
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Round and Round

Thoughts on returning

—Äbäke

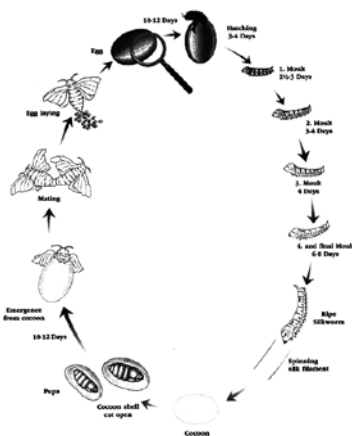
Breda library at Molenstraat was designed by Herman Herzberger around two ancient mulberry trees. The building was completed in 1993 and its structural framework is based on the trees—large columns widely spaced with branches tapering out hold up the roof.



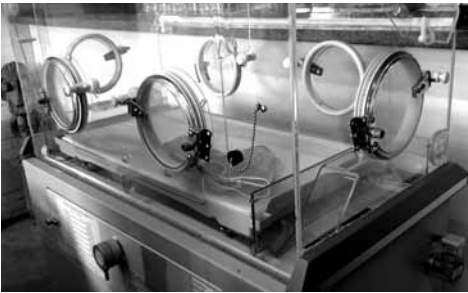
The trees in the closed garden are just old enough that a young Breugel the Elder could have conceivably had a fresh mulberry tart in his back-pack the day he left Breda for Antwerp where he would apprentice with Pieter Coecke van Aelst and meet his future friend Christophe Plantin.



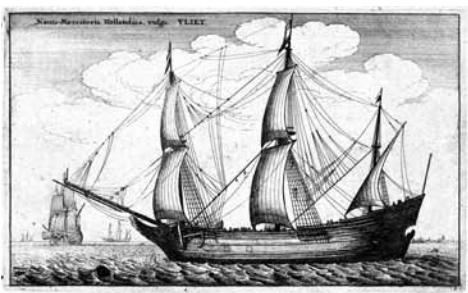
Mulberry trees and silkworms originated in China and have a symbiotic relationship. extraordinarily the leaves are the only food of the silkworm. Chinese scholar Liu Hsiang established the first library classification system during the Han Dynasty, and the first book notation system. The library catalogue was written on silk scrolls and stored in silk bags.



Silkworms no longer exist in the wild, when the chrysalis is formed the worm is boiled (the worms can be eaten) so the emerging moth doesn't interrupt the silk thread. The moths that do emerge have devolved to have smaller wings, and are incapable of flight.

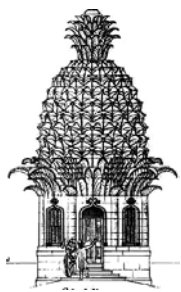


This development was successfully reversed by a local lepidopterist with a borrowed incubator.



During the Netherlands Golden Age of seaborne mercantalism, the Dutch produced the Fluyt—a pear-shaped vessel which had a large cargo bay near the waterline and a relatively narrow deck above. In part, this design was a method used to avoid high taxes collected by Denmark, which was assessed on the area of the main deck.

The Dutch colony of Surinam was administered as a business enterprise. A number of the company directors were also commissioners of the botanical gardens in Antwerp. As a consequence plant exchanges developed between the Netherlands and Surinam—mulberry trees were swapped for pineapples.



John Murray, 4th Earl of Dunmore erected this folly in the second half of the 18th century—a life like representation of a pineapple in stone. It's not clear who built it and when, but it was around the same time as Jeremy Bentham proposed the panopticon prison, a cylindrical building with a central core giving 360° vision of the inmates reducing the need for prison guards. Bentham never saw his idea realised in his lifetime, but Breda has one of three functioning panopticon prisons in the Netherlands.



Wakefield prison was established in 1595. In the courtyard female prisoners used to exercise round a mulberry tree. The prison's website suggests this could be the origin of the popular children's song *Round and Round the Mulberry Bush* and shows a picture of the tree today.



While undergoing treatment in Arles, Van Gogh made a self portrait *Prisoners Exercising (after Gustave Dore)* And painted a Mulberry Tree, in the colours yellow and blue.



Trees, how ghastly! said Piet Mondrian in Notes of a Painter (1908). The Rietveld Schröder house in Utrecht and the paintings of Mondrian share quite a few ideas and formal aspects. Even if Rietveld and Mondrian never met we can presume the planting of an apple blossom tree in the front yard is not coincidental



You can see three houses which seem to be made by Rietveld on the way back to the station from town. On leaving Breda a temporary roof has transformed the railway station into a forest.



With thanks to Bregt, Fred, Linda, Leigh, Marioka, Natasha & Sander



They say an image is worth 1000 words.
How many words does a magazine page hold?
How many letters compose them?
How many magazines are there in the world?
How much information do they convey?
Every week, every month etc.?

Do you think it is going too fast? SLOW-Alphabet started when we got given the opportunity by a magazine to fill a page with our content. It became this attempt to design a typeface with a slow pace. A professional typographer told us he needs 50 hours to design an entire alphabet.

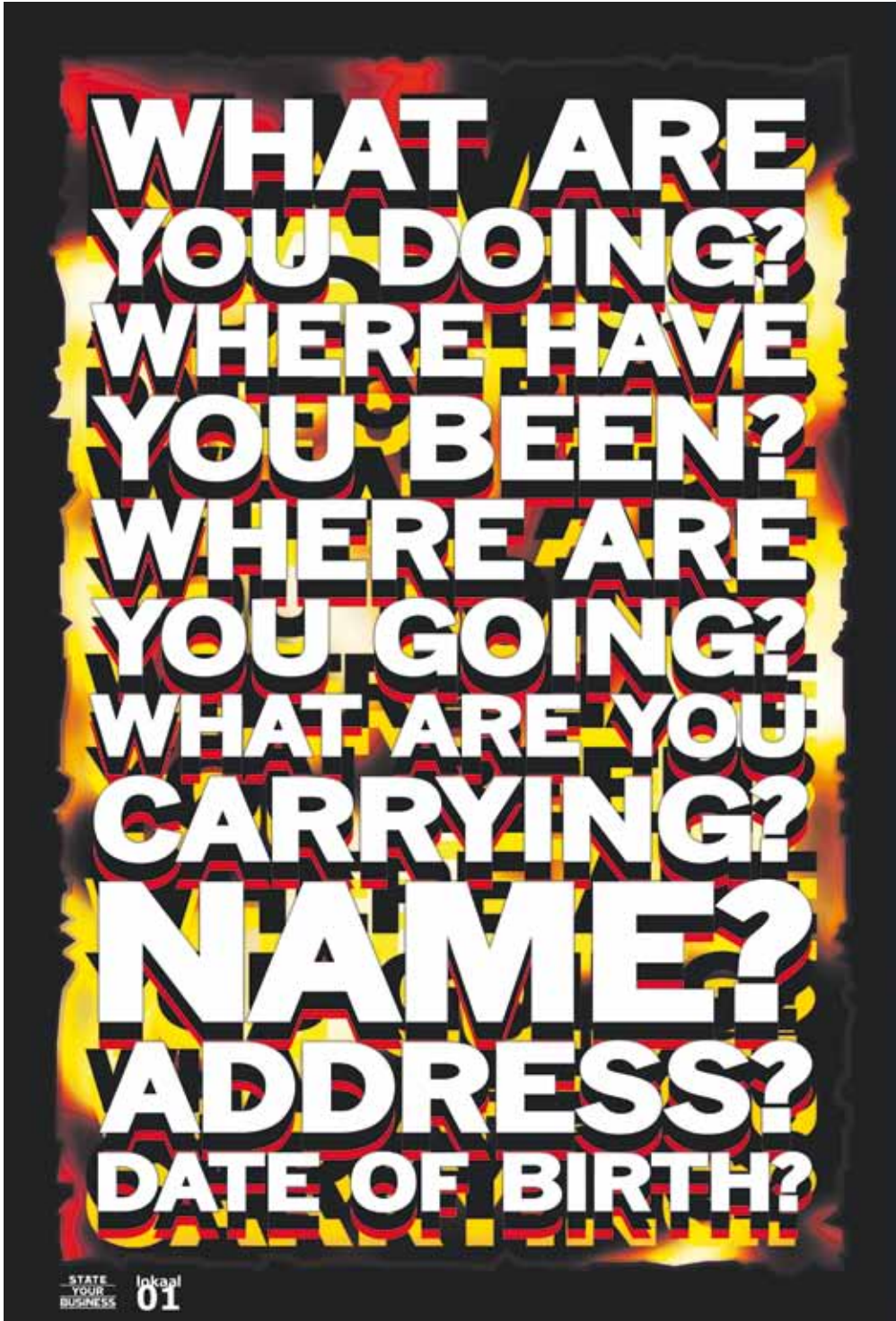
According to some specialised books, 256 signs are 'needed' for a font to be 'decent'. In five years, we negotiated 30 letters. At this pace, we'd need more than 37 years to complete the set. When we usually design a typeface for a project, we generally try to keep some kind of visual likeness throughout but with SLOW, the design of the signs are evolving according to our aging, knowledge, taste of the day, new discoveries, change(s) of mind(s) and format of the magazine.

SLOW ALPHABET BY ÄBÄKE

Thank you to 'State Your Business—Lokaal 01' for hosting.

Other letters can be seen in:

- 'B' in Sugo #0, Ma Edizioni, p.19, 2003 (IT)
- 'W' in ldn: three: volume 10: #3: flight of fancy ii, last page special insert, 2003 (HK)
- 'C' in Sugo #1, Ma Edizioni, p.112, 2004 (IT)
- 'A' in Ryuko Tsushin #498, p.86, 2004 (JP)
- 'a' in IDEA #309, last page of special insert, 2005 (JP)
- 'R' in Graphic magazine #7, p.156, 2005 (UK)
- 'H' in Lodown #45, p.138, 2005 (DE)
- 'K' in Cream, Summer edition #01, p.12, 2005 (HK)
- 'L' in Math #2, p.16, 2005 (UK)
- 'K' in Tecknaren #2, p.17, 2005 (SE)
- 'X' in IkAk, p.21, 2005 (RU)
- 'E' in Esquire #19, no 7, p. 80, 2005 (JP)
- 'Q' in Composite, 2005 (JP)
- 'M' in Grafik #129, p.68, 2005 (UK)
- 'N' in Art4d, #116, p.88, 2005 (HK)
- '3' in Axis #116, p.112, 2005 (JP)
- 'G' in Groove #96, p.51, 2005 (DE)
- 'M' in Metropolis M #6, p.13, 2005 (NL)
- 'm' in Muoto, p.39, June 2005 (FI)
- 'F' in SP06, August 2006 (NZ)
- 'ST' in Cream #05 of the summer edition, 2006 (HK)
- 'G' in Periodiek #3, p.6, 2006 (BE)
- '9' in LUX, p.52, September 2007 (PT)
- 'U' in Ultrabold, p.35, 2007 (UK)
- 'P' in Useless #6, p.39, 2007 (UK, USA)
- 'G' in Slimvolume Poster Publication, 2006/2007 (UK)
- 'g' in Arnolfini bulletin Sept 2008 (UK)
- 'S' in Slanted #6 Herbst, s.17, 2008 (DE)
- 'I' in Quotation #1, p.18, Autumn 2008 (JP)
- '=' in Concept Store magazine #01, p.51, 2009 (UK)
- 'O' in iconographicmagazine, p.12, 2009 (ES)
- 'j' in Laser, p.91, 2009 (DE)
- 'Z' in ME Magazine, p.47, 2009 (USA)
- 'ö' in design?design!design..., p.34, 2009 (SE)
- 'er' in Wallpaper, 2009 (UK)
- 'T' in Iaspis Forum on Design and Critical Practice: The Reader, p.119, 2009 (SE)
- 'V' in Mousse #23, p.59, 2010 (IT)
- 'D' in ARC RCA magazine, p.35, 2010 (UK)
- 's' in Book catalogue, chapter 13, 2010 (UK)
- 'Ä' The Sound Graphics Catalogue, p.1, 2010 (JP)
- 'r' in Vorn #6, 2010 (DE)
- 'B' in Some Magazine #0 Autumn, p.30, 2010 (DE)
- 'Q' in Graphic Worlds exhibition catalogue. (page / date to be confirmed)
- 'n' Nico magazine #5, p.217, 2010 (Luxembourg)



Potentiële liefde

Het is snertkoud en zomaar een dinsdag. Het is pakjestijd en bovendien zijn er koopjes koopjes koopjes. We gaan dus winkelen, logisch. De een na de ander meldt zich op de Mols Parking in het centrum van Breda. Maar voor wie wil, is er nog een graantje extra mee te pikken: sinds een week kan je hier een muurtekening van Richard Hogg waarnemen. Hij heeft er 3 dagen aan gewerkt en ik zou hebben gezworen dat niemand er naast kon kijken, zo groot en fel is ze. Maar ik zie toch bakken volk die dat wel doen. Niet erg, dat hoort erbij, bij kunst in de openbare ruimte. Als ze goed is, wordt ze 1 met de plek. En dus ook met de al dan niet shoppende mens op die plek. Deze muurtekening is geïnspireerd door sprookjesschilder Richard Dadds ‘The Fairy Feller’s Master Stroke’ -een wonderlijk werk, zoekt u het ook maar eens op. Bij Hogg zien we een gigantische zwarte vogel, een merel, die van op zijn tak het parkeerterrein overloert. Onder de boom waarop de merel rust, marcheren eindeloos veel absurde sprookjesachtige mannetjes voorbij die gele protestborden vasthouden. Ze hebben een mening, maar het is niet duidelijk waarover. Zij zijn het ergens niet mee eens, maar

waarmee niet? Wij zien alleen de achterkant van hun borden, de slogans staan op de andere kant. Wij lopen als het ware achter hen aan. Dus we kunnen alleen maar raden. Ik voel me onnozel. Ik heb ineens helemaal geen meningen meer, nergens over. Ik beweeg me tegelijk tussen al die slaafs lopende sprookjeswezens op die muur maar ook als een volger tussen de mensen uit de echte wereld die ik in hun auto af- en aan zie rijden met hun parkeerkaartje tussen hun lippen. Om het niet te verliezen -ik had er trouwens nooit bij stilgestaan dat zoveel mensen dat zo doen. Om hier weg te komen, moet ik eenzelfde richting kiezen dan alle anderen allemaal. Er zijn maar een paar opties. Mijn schaapachtige automatismen worden terstond bespottelijk transparant. Maar ik word ook een beetje gerustgesteld: ineens zie ik iedereen een beetje sussend tegen zichzelf praten, in het hoofd. Terwijl ze aan de arm van een ander hangen of gsm-end een kind voortduwen.

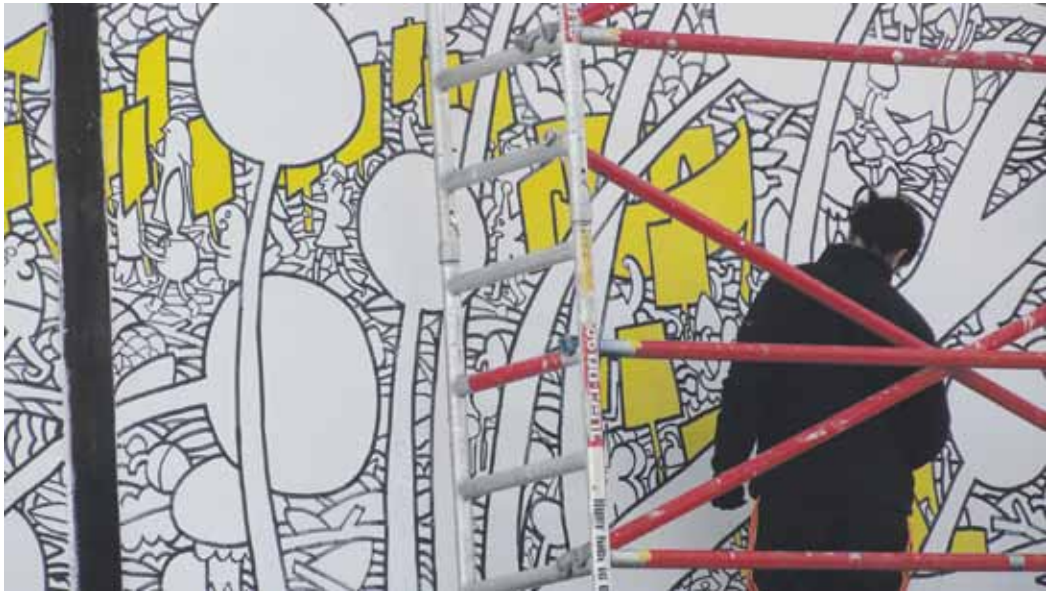
I could love them all
I could love them all
I could love them all
I could love them all
I could love them all
I could love them all

en nog wel duizend keer. Deze verslavende zin van Bark Design tref ik dan weer aan in het station. Een extatische boodschap (aangepast na de eerst meer

pessimistische versie: ‘I could leave them all’). Pendelaars lopen gratis (!) onder deze genialiteit door. Vrijelijk af en aan. Sommige lui wachten op iemand in de hal of op de definitieve versie van hun nu nog veranderende vertrektijd. Zij kunnen zeker niet om “I could love them all” heen. Op ooghoogte voor je de trap afdaaft. Naast de fritesjes. Hier moet de wereld toch eventjes mooier van worden, kan ik niet helpen te denken, zeker in een maand als december, waarin door al die feestelijkheden al zo wordt ingespeeld op gevoel en drama. In dat opzicht wordt deze zin compleet 1 met het moment. En dus niet alleen met de plek. Al zou het bij zomerjurkjes en Hawaihempjes ook leuk kunnen zijn, misschien erotischer. En hij staat los van welke religie ook, is geen gebod, maar een verwijzing naar de potentie van “mij”. Ik ben in staat iedereen lief te hebben. Zo simpel als wat. Iedereen: dat overstijgt alles wat familie, studiegenoten, religiegenoten, landgenoten en cultuurggenoten betreft. Als het aan mij lag, kwam deze zin in elk station in elke wereld, vooral in die waar miljoenen mensen dagelijks heen en weren. Hij zou ook *tout court* overal op aangebracht kunnen worden. Tot we compleet gebrainwasht zijn. Compleet ontmaterialiseerd. Dus. Deze zin ontrafelt en maant tot kalmte. En vult de treinen met meer potentiële liefde in al die reizende mensenharten.

Griet Menschaert

Richard Hogg



English artist outrages Irish drinkers

However, the Van Gogh work at O'Meara's created a conversation and response that was not the reaction predicted by the artist himself. Trouble began almost as soon as the artwork was being installed. When the Jameson's sign was taken down one drinker Fergal O'Connor (62) said "that's been here all my life, I feel like it's a part of my soul. Why would they get rid of it and put up that ugly thing pretending to be art?". Other locals quickly took objection to the prominent use of the word ENGLAND on the new signs address which they viewed as inappropriate and misguided in a Dutch, Irish themed pub.

Initial objections to the work were tentatively smoothed out by the artist who explained the conceptual underpinning of the work, its relationship to anti-English nationalism and its obvious humour. Whilst this went some way to pacifying the early criticism of those present in its installation additional objections were fuelled by the aggressive comments by a singer of a guest Irish band and further violent objections from Ireland rugby fans who had to be restrained from ripping the artwork off the wall and burning it in the street outside during a televised match. Soon the artwork became a focus for extreme nationalist abuse which blossomed quickly to the point where the word ENGLAND on the piece became a symbolic personification of everything the Irish hated in their problematic relationship and uncomfortable shared history with the English. Local Guinness drinker Patrick McMurphy (38) said "the whole thing was unnecessary. Whoever put up the work with that England stuff painted all over it and put it in here with us Irish was an idiot. I don't like the stupid thing". His bar companion Miss Rosalyn Uncouth (58) added "I would not mind but it hangs crookedly and there's nothing arty or neat about it. It's an insult to the well known history of Irish work and craftsmanship. We take pride in our stuff. A child could have done better than this..."

In a telephone interview from the safety of his home in England the artist told us "It was never my intention to provoke or be offensive to the Irish in Breda. Sometimes people read art in ways

Downtown Breda narrowly avoided riots when a controversial artwork came dramatically close to sparking uncomfortable confrontations at O'Meara's Irish Pub. The offending work, a painting depicting a mock advertising sign for a fictional Vincent Van Gogh museum for the unfortunate Dutch Artists missing ear was created by English Artist, Mark Hampson (42).

The artwork had been installed at O'Meara's Pub as part of the 'State Your Business' exhibition hosted by Lokaal 01, in and around the city centre during the winter. The work had been centrally placed opposite the bar in O'Meara's, a favourite with locals of Irish descent and expat drinkers from Ireland. It had replaced a much loved and familiar Jameson's Whisky advertisement.

Additionally, the artist had installed 10 other artworks in bars and pubs around Breda in which to promote the 'State Your Business' show and in order to create conversations about art with audiences who may not be regular visitors to the Gallery. The majority of these works were well received.

Ruud Poody

Leigh Clarke invited me to do a site-specific installation for State Your Business at Lokaal 01 in Breda. As I was only in Breda a week before the show was to open, my response was shaped more by my views from far away.

One of my initial ideas involved doing a sound shred of works from a distance, something we had discussed during a studio visit in London with Frederik, Leigh, Sander, and Linda. My approach there would be to 'translate' a sound composition from a Dutch composer using a code translator and then convert the code back to sound. I thought there should be an interesting distortion that would happen in the translation, much like Google translator does to language, and the Shredder program does to image and code from the web.

The Shredder utility, developed by artist Mark Napier, takes an existing website and

'shreds' the code and the visual together for some really unusual visual effects. I had used Shredder for an image-based series and found it to be a really exciting starting point for work. In terms of representing that through sound, I started looking at morse code as a possible means of distortion.

At the same time, I was looking at the history of The Netherlands, and noticed that economic transmissions and translation from one currency to another were central to shaping this country. In current times, natural gas is a huge component of the economy of The Netherlands, and the transit of gas through a complex system of pipelines is one of the key driving forces of the Dutch economic system, once again dictated through the intricate tariff systems that shaped its past.

While at Lokaal 01, I began to thread together the theme of gas pipelines and the technique of shredding sound in an installation that featured a construction made out of PVC pipe tubing with sound emanating from the pipe. We built two piping constructions into the columns in the main gallery, so that it appeared that the piping came out of the column. Sound transmission happened through the piping itself, so that the viewer/listener had to put their ear close to the end of the pipe to hear the sounds.

Working with a dense economics text on gas transit tariffs, I created two sound works piped through the tube constructions installed in the exhibition space. The Jepma Effect is a sound shred with segments of the text in Dutch, German and English layered over the top of each other, creating breaks in the flow of reading and giving a sense

of different transmissions going through at the same time. For the second piece, Route Service Interruption, I worked with the noise emanating from gas pipes, both the constant noise leaks reported by people living near the pipelines and the frequent emissions recorded at compressor sites along the route.

With this installation, I wanted to create a sense of the huge complex of pipelines that moves gas within the country from Groningen to the south, and that is used as a passageway for gas moving from Norway to other countries, from the north of Germany to its southern provinces, and from east to west, linking Dutch to British gas pipelines.

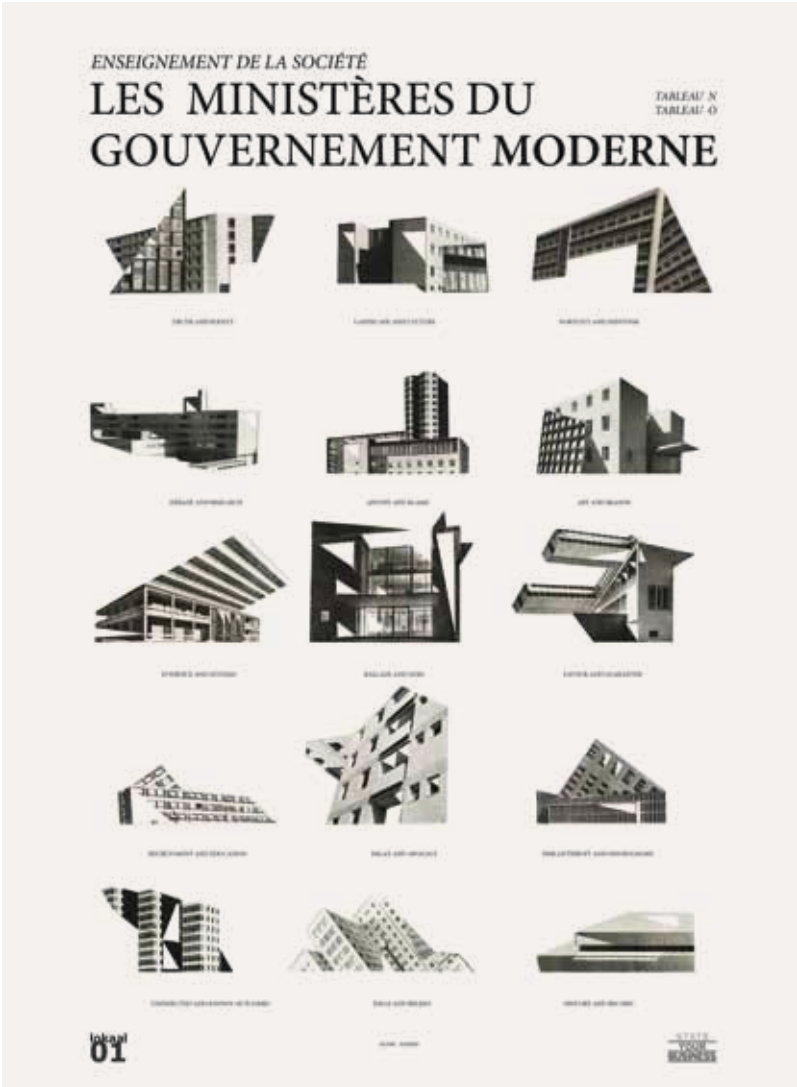
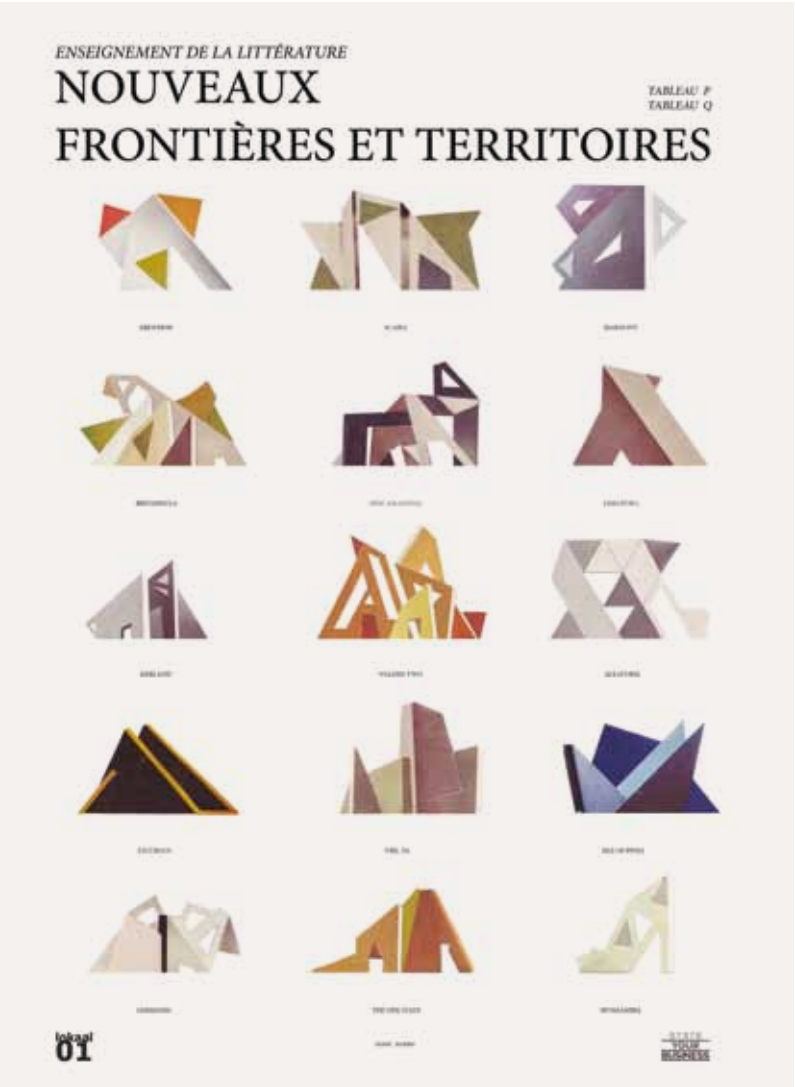
Monica Biagioli
2010



Linking Dutch to British gas pipelines

Monica Biagioli

Mark Harris



Bob and Roberta Smith's Horror Scope

January Thing are looking up. Reasons to be cheerful even in the depth of winter.

February The optimism of january was misplaced. Everything goes wrong for you this month.

March After a dreadful february green shoots of hope are sprouting.

April Well the green shots of hope get trashed this month. Yet again your life will fall apart.

May Warmth and spring well underway. You will feel good in may.

June In june you begin to understand that life is a roller coaster ride. You need to get control.

July Up DOWN Up DOWN, this time is a weekly cycle. July is Hell.

August In august its just one disaster after another with no respite. Wife leaves you. House reposessed. Car smashed up by daughter. Son in trouble with police.

September See doctor about beginnings of mental illness.

October Anxiety attacks will grip you this month.

November Is cancelled.

December With christmas looming like a huge vat of Bat manure over your head you begin to form the view that Xmas is not a happy time for anyone.



Workshop

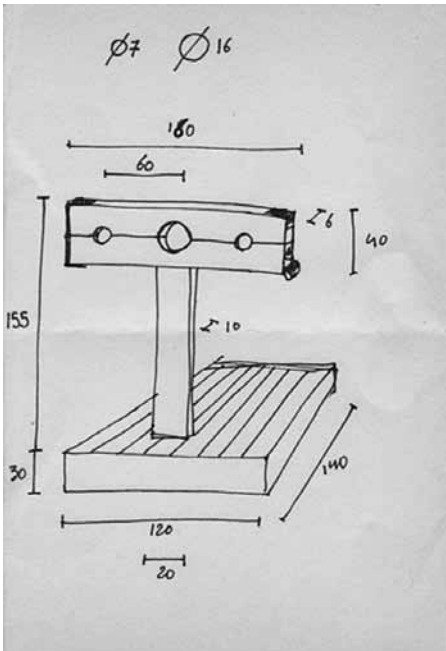




Dan Holliday

Wise
man
walking

Renie
Lamers



Benjamin Verdonck

Nu u mij erop wijst, zie ik het ja

Een ‘andere’ wandeling voor de bezoeker van Breda. Voor de bezoeker met de alerte blik en het plezier in de verfrissende confrontatie, *that is*. Een wandeling genaamd ‘State Your Business’. Of is het een tentoonstelling in openlucht...? Hoe dan ook: ik heb de tentoonstelling als wandeling ondergaan en ben daar blij om ook.

State your business. Wat bedoelen ‘ze’ (-wie eigenlijk-) daarmee? ‘Geef je business een stem?’ ‘Wees trots op je business?’ ‘Maak je business bekend?’ Doe het! of...wat? (we vergeten je terstond!?) Misschien is het een roep om ‘een statement’ met je business te maken? Alleszins zegt het: doe niet zomaar iets. Doe het alleen met overgave en met serieuze argumenten... Of is het zware ironie en wordt er stiekem bedoeld: laat me met rust, klere-business altijd overal altijd? Of is het uiteindelijk Lokaal 01, dat zelf even wil zeggen: hier ben ik, dit doe ik!? Dit kan ik zoals geen ander. Een kunstinstelling is ook maar een business, *after all*. Een business in zaken die het de moeite vindt om te delen, gratis en voor niets.

Ontvankelijk loop ik de Beste Binnenstad in. Helemaal klaar voor een nieuwe kijk op Breda. Een plattegrond meegekregen bij Lokaal 01 in mijn verkleumde-min-vijf-handschoenhandjes.

Daar duikt al direct een ingreep op: ‘Don’t Touch The Walls’, van Bark Design. Lichtvoetig van zichzelf want tactisch geplaatst op een bakstenen muur. ‘Een vlot verteerbaar begin’, reageert mijn impulsieve vooroordelenkoppeke *instantly*. Misschien is het ook wel een beetje flauw, maar nog steeds: een aangenaam werk om ‘erin’ te komen, in ‘State Your Business’. Stiekem gaat het

toch dwingen. Ik krijg namelijk maar weer zomaar voor niks een zoveelste leefregeltje, of ik daar nu behoefte aan heb of niet. En het staat dan bovendien nog op het stadskantoor, de über-regeltjes-keet van de stad, waarop het begrip/de belettering ‘Gemeente Breda’ ineens ook gaat doorwegen. En in zijn ontzettende lelijkheid beklemtond wordt door deze duizend keer knulliger maar daardoor wel eerlijker letters. Mijn hoofd gaat intussen rustig verder: ‘Don’t Touch This Building, Don’t Touch The Gemeentelijke administratieve rompslomp, Don’t Touch de dingen die zijn zoals ze zijn, de kleine zekerheden (de zogenaamde identiteit), Don’t Touch mijn rechten en plichten, mijn kijk op de zaak, mijn reden van bestaan, mijn komst hiernaartoe, Don’t Touch me.’

Will you speak to me
Is there anything else
You are attached to me
The Origin an the location of’ he ex e tion

Ik associeer de zorgvuldig in het straatbeeld gegoten zinnen van Bark Design met Lawrence Weiner, Joseph Kosuth, John -echt iets (of niets?) voor u- K rmeling en vooral met Douglas Gordons *Letters, Telephone Calls, Postcards, Miscellaneous, 1991-2003* dat onderdeel was van de heropeningstentoonstelling van het Van Abbemuseum in 2003. Dat oppikken van zinnen, ze tot een ‘ready-made’ maken en kijken waar ze elders een ander leven kunnen leiden, in een andere dimensie. Bark Design doet het zonder museale pretentie, nederig maar ook zeer publiek en daarmee kwetsbaar. Grappig genoeg reageren de mensen op straat heel defensief als ik vraag wat ze van de citaten vinden: “Ik weet er niets van, hoor.” “O, nu u mij erop wijst, zie ik het, ja.” “Daarbinnen weten ze er vast meer vanaf”. Een pijnlijk soort onverschilligheid. Ook geen zin om even na te denken, geloof ik. Het zal de kou wel wezen.

Dan maar een kroegentochtje langs de uiterst authentiek lijkende maar toch met het romantische kunstenaarsbeeld spottende ‘pubsigns’ van Mark Hampson. Wel erg subtiel...! Niemand merkt hun aanwezigheid, zo verweven met hun omgeving zijn ze, die dingen. Of zijn wij door de band zo lui dat we op café alleen maar aan

door onszelf georganiseerde drank en gezelschap willen doen en vooral niet aan enig onvoorzien engagement of uitdaging ? Ik als ingewijde ‘State Your Business’ -wandelaar ben bevoorrecht, kan meegniffelen van aan de wand, me even een houten bord wanend, een ogenschijnlijke stamgast van jaren, met de ingeslapenheid van de cappucino-slurper die het heeft over de studerende kroost en dat voor de kleinkinderen de echte zwarte piet tegenwoordig die van op tv is. Intussen niet opmerkend dat Sinterklaas boven zijn hoofd de verwarrende tekstcombinatie ‘Excitement Adventure Exploration / Marcel Broothaers / Cruises on the North Sea / B.O.G.O.F / une deux’ vasthoudt, of ‘L.O.O.K / Rose S lavy lovingly presentes Marcel Duchamps / elle a chaud au cut / Hot Ass Beer Review / Liquor in the Front, Poker in the back’.

Zo ging het in alle caf s die ik bezocht. Niemand leek de signs op te merken. Ze hingen er gewoon, voor de kleur en de vorm, voor het ambacht hooguit. En geef toe, welke gemiddelde vertierzoeker heeft al van Rose S lavy of D.G. Rossetti gehoord en reageert op informatie die hij niet meteen in een context kan thuisbrengen? De context is verloren, ook binnen deze borden, hij is zo fragmentarisch dat alles er wel in past en ook dat we het niet nodig achten veel tijd te verliezen met dingen die we niet meteen snappen. Als het echt nodig is, zal de informatie op zijn tijd zijn weg wel vinden. Kanalen zat. Waarom heeft Hampson al zijn signs verdeeld over verschillende caf s in plaats van ze in 1 cafeetje te verzamelen, waardoor de drinker er niet meer omheen had gekund? Nu blijken de caf bazen zelf niet eens te weten wat er precies aan de hand is, vraagt het duffe kunstgewoontemens in mij zich af. Is dat een spanning die Hampson wou? Is het misschien heel waardevol om kunst te camoufleren in een dagdagelijks pak? Mag kunst terug naar het volk -olee? Mag ze weer gewoon aanwezig zijn zonder dat er uitleg bij moet staan -olee? Zonder dat je erop gewezen wordt dat het wel degelijk kunst is -hm? Maar dus ook zonder dat tante Cor en Jan met de Pet het noodzakelijk gezien en gesnapt hebben en enkel degene die opmerkelijk en langzaam genoeg is in het op- en waarnemen van de wereld om zich heen? De kunstenaar met de missie houdt het voor bekeken. Hier spreekt de kunstenaar met stille hoop en absurde relativering. Olee.

Griet Menschaert

Word Search

THEFAUXTSRLBANKDITBGFODSEMICODED
IDDEVBUIPLOTMYGRUGHORNPHHNITHULK
WCISTHEREANYTHINGELSECPWECMMCKBD
AUGIAMSDOSFORSTONRBWAVERTOZHUGEY
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ASJDOMTHEDROUXBOFFLEWENHFORIWONT
EGTLLRCANDLUSPCGVIRGDTDEEDSFORAWE
SWETITUPSKEMAYIHAVEYOURATTENTION
ATTHESTARTYMIKLAWSUPEASPUDDINGTA

MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION
WILL YOU SPEAK TO ME
IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE
I WAS THERE I SAW IT ALL
HE SAID IT WAS OK AND PUT THE PHONE DOWN
IT WAS ALL AN ILLUSION
WE HAVE COME TOO FAR
THERE IS NO SERVICE

AT THE START
A BIG SCENE
THE ORIGIN AND THE LOCATION OF THE EXCEPTION
THE PRIMARY ONE
DO NOT TOUCH THE WALLS
I WANT TO SAVE MYSELF
I COULD LEAVE THEM ALL



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Speciaal voor de Cultuurnacht in Breda op 21 januari 2011. Oplage 5.000 exemplaren.

De uitgave verschijnt in navolging van STATE YOUR BUSINESS (5-11-2010 – 19-12-2010), een tentoonstellingsproject over communicatie via taal, typografie en beeld.

Fotografie: Tomas Uyttendaele, Lokaal 01 en de kunstenaars

Ontwerp: M/vG ontwerpers Breda, Berry van Gerwen

Met dank aan de Gemeente Breda, Breda's Museum, Mols Parking, ProRail, Breda Actief, de Mezz, Latte and Literature, café De Beyerd, café Het Hijgend Hert, café De Kleine Wereld, café O'Mearas, café De Vulling, café De Boulevard, café De Bommel, en Hotel Van Ham.

A special thank you to all the artists!

Gemeente Breda

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