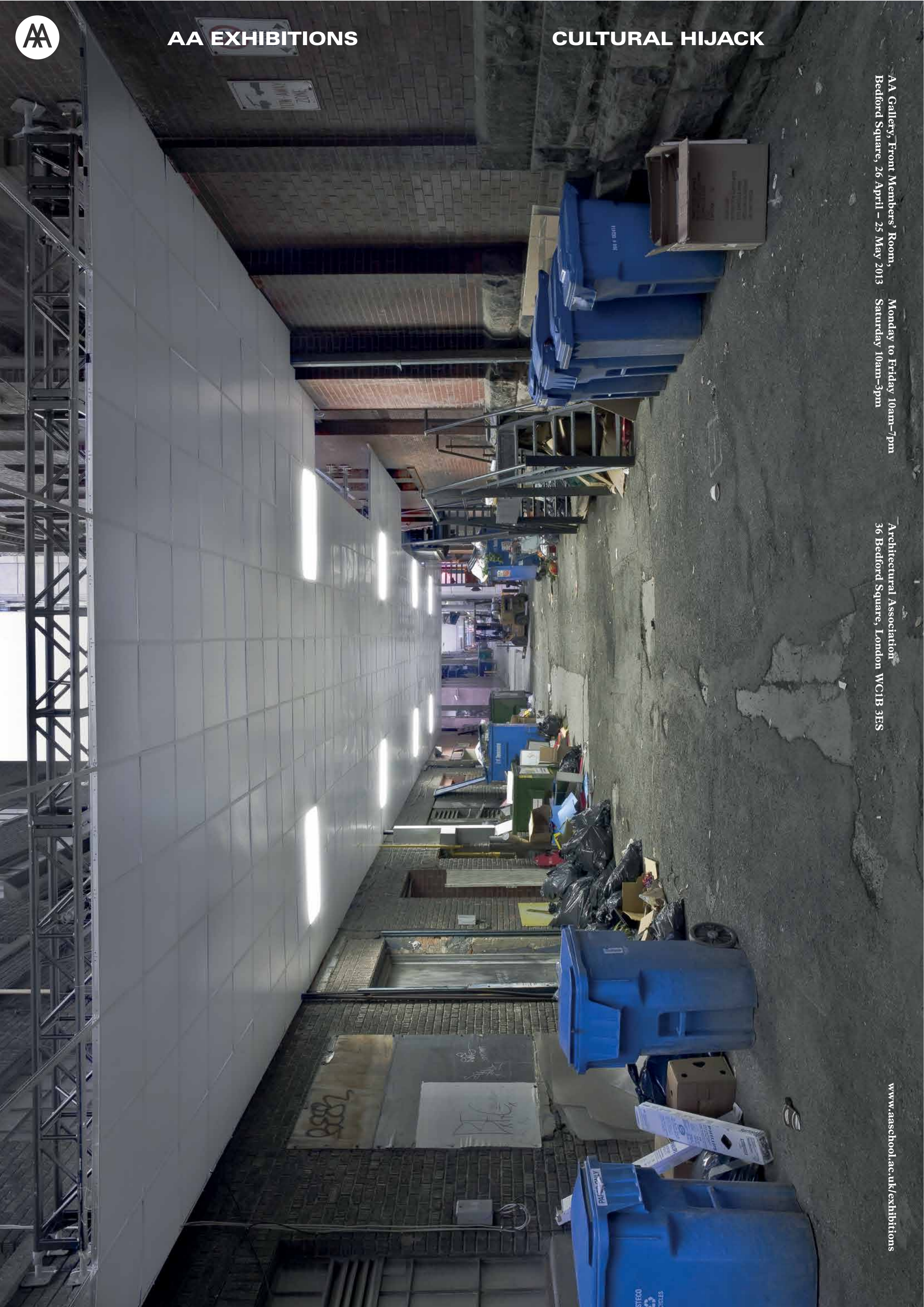




AA Gallery, Front Members' Room,
Bedford Square, 26 April - 25 May 2013
Monday to Friday 10am-7pm
Saturday 10am-3pm

Architectural Association
36 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3ES

www.aaschool.ac.uk/exhibitions



Rethinking Intervention

Cultural Hijack presents a survey of provocative interventions which have inserted themselves into the world, demanding attention, interrupting everyday life, hijacking, trespassing, agitating and teasing. Often unannounced and usually anonymous, these works have appropriated media channels, hacked into live TV and radio broadcasts, détourned billboards, re-appropriated street furniture, subverted signs, monuments and civic architectures.

The exhibition sets out to explore the role of art and the artist in contemporary society and to offer the opportunity to rethink the growing use of interventionist art practices, particularly in relation to the field of creative cultural activism. The exhibition positions itself at the intersection of art, politics and social justice in a historical moment, as we witness a rising tide of global

resistance to neoliberal capitalism through an expanding 'movement of movements', from Zapatismo to the Arab Spring, from alternative G8 summits to Occupy Wall Street. In the shadows of this moment, artists are joining in with the writing of alternative histories, the reclamation of our rights to the city and the unfinished project of the revolution of everyday life.

In attempting to house these ideas together within an institution, we are mindful of the Architectural Association as an influential zone, where the physical future of architecture and urbanism is significantly shaped. We propose that the dissemination of the ideas and practices gathered for Cultural Hijack might similarly shape the possibilities for us to occupy as yet unimagined futures, where user-generated cities and systems, that support individual and collective empowerment, become more prevalent.

Cultural Hijack traverses our shared landscape – the spatial, social and psychological territories of our everyday lives. The work is present as documentation in the AA galleries, as a programme of live interventions throughout inner-city London, and in a 'CONTRAvention' where questions raised will be pulled apart. An active archive will be in operation in the exhibition – updated daily to reflect on the transition from live work to the documentation of such work.

EPOS 257 (Czech) like many artists in the exhibition, he works under a pseudonym. He sits at a table making oversized polyurethane paint-filled bullets to be fired from a giant shooting instrument at commercial billboards and antagonistic architectures in a gesture of reverse take-over. In response to the Czech Republic's first direct presidential elections, EPOS cut out the heads of candidates from giant billboards and reinserted these ragged portraits in libraries and other public spaces. *Exhibition | Live*

Street artist Zevs (France), renowned for his liquidation logo series, used invisible ink (visible only under UV light) to paint the silhouettes of Mohammed Atta and Abdul-Azzia Al-Omari in the room they stayed in the night before the 9/11 attacks. *Visual Kidnapping* surgically removes a giant 40ft woman from a Lavazza advert in Alexanderplatz, Berlin. The three-year campaign to ransom his kidnapped icon is ultimately successful in the pursuit of €500,000. *Exhibition*

The interventions of Matthias Wermke & Mischa Leinkauf, exploring urban infrastructures and architectures, are translated into playful and poetic films of trespass and civil disobedience. *In Between* documents their exploration of the inner workings of the Berlin subway at night. *Exhibition*

The Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army [or CIRCA] (UK and worldwide) offer the surreal sight of a highly disciplined army of professional clowns acting against corporate globalisation, war and other issues. In a carnival protest against the invasion of Iraq, CIRCA formed a welcome committee for 'arch-clown' George W Bush on his visit to the UK. *Exhibition | CONTRAvention*

Alan Dunn (UK) intervenes in his own daily commute to offer free art to the people with whom he shares buses, station platforms and streets. Dunn collaborates to create multi-artist projects including billboards and a series of soundtracks for road tunnels and bus journeys, the colour grey and music for a revolution. *Artists' uses of the word revolution* explores the phonetics of the word *re-vo-lu-tion* across history. *Exhibition*

Michael Rakowitz (USA) explores the political discourses and public perceptions underpinning the West's relationship to Iraq. In *Spoils* (2011) he took over a haughty Manhattan restaurant to serve up traditional Iraq dishes on rare pieces of fine China imported from Saddam Hussein's personal collection. In a dramatic conclusion, a cease-and-desist order by New York City authorities resulted in the repatriation of the dinner plates by the Iraqi government. In his ongoing project *paraSITE*, Rakowitz also works with homeless people to create custom built inflatable shelters that attach to ventilation ports. *Exhibition*

ZTOHOVEN (Czech) are group of artists who expose and exploit cracks in the system. For this TV hijack Ztohoven hacked a live camera feed used for automatic weather forecast, inserting an explosion into a panning shot across the Krkonose Mountains. In demonstrating the possibilities to intervene in these systems the group operate with a constant threat of prosecution and have twice successfully defended their actions in court. *Exhibition | Live*

Cyber activists and artists Electronic Disturbance Theater (USA) are known for their electronic actions in support of the Zapatista movement. Applying the tactics of trespass and blockade, they adopt a form of electronic hacktivism called Floodnet that creates virtual sit-ins to attack websites, including the Pentagon and the Mexican Stock Exchange. In *Transborder Immigrant Tool*, they hack cheap GPS mobile phones to install a device for helping Mexican immigrants cross the US-Mexico border. *Exhibition*

The International Peripatetic Sculptors Society (worldwide) makes instant unsanctioned public sculpture in the back alleys and forgotten spaces of cities across the world. Fusing the situationist tradition of *dérive* with Allan Kaprow's invocation to reclaim the art of everyday life, the Society encourages the transformation of the urban environment by small gestures of creativity. Before his death, Kaprow relinquished sole authorship of his scores, so that his initial versions were not seen as originals or permanent works, but ideas to be reinvented. *Exhibition | Live*

Loophole for All by Paolo Cirio exhibits the art of corporate identity theft by offering an audience the privileges of offshore companies through the purchase and hijack of various company identities. Cirio uses interviews with major experts to expose the mechanics of institutional crime and alert us to the economic injustice of siphoning capital as a form of institutionalised crime. *Exhibition*

Seated around the fireplace a group of pensioners are knitting tailored balaclavas for selected public statues around the city. Making use of the gallery as both a site of production and intervention Ben Parry (UK) & Peter McCaughey (Ireland) engage a process of crowning public statues whose acts of liberation and radical dissent are brought back to the fore in a double-edged gesture where the black balaclava conceals and reveals, transforming and awakening monuments as live participants. *Exhibition | Live | CONTRAvention*

Tushar Joag (India) takes the performative aspects of street theatre and activism and translates those tools and methods into his own form of interventionist art. Among the many methods is the artist's mock corporation *UNICELL* that mimics many of the absurdities of government bureaucracy, designs utility products for the citizens of today's over-populated megalopolises and challenges the processes and outcomes of inequitable development as part of the recent history of social-political resistance of India's urban poor. *Exhibition | Live | CONTRAvention*

During the night of 14 June 2010, actionists Voina (Russia) painted a giant 65m-long phallus on the surface of the Liteyny drawbridge leading to the Bolshov headquarters of the Federal Security Bureau in Saint Petersburg. Rehearsed in a parking lot, the action *Dick Captured by KGB*, was completed in just 30 seconds before the drawbridge was raised. *Exhibition | CONTRAvention*

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq and correspondingly the largest anti-war rally in history. The work of Peter Kennard (UK) is activated by and interacts with the politics of major events. *@earth*, a haunting and poignant photo essay, charts this period. *Exhibition*

In 1985 Krzysztof Wodiczko (Poland), a pioneer of large-scale public projection as political art, hacked his own state endorsed artwork for Trafalgar Square. By projecting a swastika onto the pediment of the South African embassy, he showed solidarity with the demonstrations staged below against Thatcher's support for the South African government during apartheid. *Wodiczko's Veteran Project* works with soldiers who fought during recent armed conflicts and are returning to civilian life. The *War Veteran Vehicle* transforms the voiced testimonies of veterans into a mobile sound and projection vehicle as words are fired onto the desired surfaces of public buildings and monuments. *Exhibition | Live | CONTRAvention*

Quebec collective BGL (Canada) are known for their playful reflections on consumer culture, nature and human behaviour and have been described as urban pranksters. Their interventions provoke significant encounters as accidental gestures that cannot somehow be explained. Subterfuge, trickery and chance create situations that lie between reality and fiction in which uncertainty provokes cognitive dissonance and anxious self-reflection. *Exhibition | Live | CONTRAvention*

Tatzu Nishi (Japan) creates out-of-scale and out-of-place encounters in public spaces around the world, transforming street lights, parked cars and monuments. Stationed in front of the AA, *Ascending and Descending* converts the everyday vernacular of a building site and its implicit expenditure of human labour power, into a sisyphian duration performance, as a worker loads earth onto conveyor belts, relentlessly moving earth back to the hole from where it came. *Exhibition | Live | CONTRAvention*

Paul Harfleet (UK) continues his ongoing *Pansy Project* wherein he locates sites of homophobic abuse, and in a gesture of quiet resistance, takes soil from the nearest source and plants a single unmarked pansy. *Exhibition | Live*

Upper Space (UK) an organisation comprised of artists, academics, activists and community organisers, engage issues of social, economic and environmental justice. Their arm of unsanctioned works explores alternative ideas of public space as a contested site of democracy. You can find them playing outside the AA, around the edges of appropriated acts of citizenship. *Exhibition | Live*

As a rule, Laura Keeble (UK) inserts her work in the streets and public spaces in the early hours of the morning while the workaday city is still asleep. Nearly all of Keeble's interventions are unsolicited, appearing overnight by necessity. *Exhibition | Live*

London-based street artist and subvertiser Dr D (UK) joins forces with situationist filmmaker and journalist Leah Borromeo (UK) in spontaneous street interventions designed to shock the viewer into questioning the injustice of public sector cuts across Britain and the repercussions of wanton capitalism. *Exhibition | Live*

London-based architects Space Hijackers (UK) continue their battle against the oppressive encroachment of corporations, public institutions and urban planners in a bid to create a user-generated city determined by its citizens. Known for their Circle Line parties, SH's carnival approach to disruption means their lips are sealed on this one, though they said something about a cabin. *Exhibition | Live | CONTRAvention*

Knit the City's (UK) Yarn Corps are a band of sneaky, stitching graffiti-'knit-and-crochet' artists with an ongoing mission to guerrilla knit the city of London, and beyond. They suggest their interventions encourage others to bring their own city to life in ways only they can possibly imagine. *Live*