Exhibition Press Release

Cultural Hijack
26 April – 25 May 2013
AA Gallery, Front Members’ Room and in Bedford Square
An exhibition at the Architectural Association, accompanied by a series of temporary public artworks, events and performances

Private View: Thursday 25 April 2013, 6:30pm – 8:30pm
Open to the public from Friday 26 April to Saturday 25 May 2013

Opening times:
Monday to Friday 10am – 7pm; Saturday 10am – 3pm

Public Lecture: (un)CONVENTION, Friday 26 April 2013, 6pm, New Soft Room

Events: A programme of temporary public artworks, events and performances accompanies the exhibition – for details please visit www.aaschool.ac.uk/exhibitions

ZEVS (FRAN), Ztohoven (CZECK), Krzysztof Wodiczko (POL), Matthias Wermke & Mischa Leinkauf (GER), Upper Space (UK), Gregory Sholette (USA), Michael Rakowitz (USA), Ben Parry (UK) & Peter McCAughey (IRE), Tatzu Nishi (JPN), Renzo Martens (BELG), Knit the City (UK), Peter Kennard (UK), Laura Keeble (UK), Allan Kaprow (USA), Tushar Joag (IND), Space Hijackers (UK), Paul Harfleet (UK), EPOS 257 (CZECK), Electronic Disturbance Theater (USA), Nina Edge (UK), Alan Dunn (UK), Paolo Cirio (ITA), Leah Borromeo & Dr. D (UK), BGL (CAN)

From the creation of insurgent public spaces to the playful disruptions of public life, Cultural Hijack – curated by artists Ben Parry and Peter McCAughey – explores the role of art and the artist in contemporary society and offers the opportunity to rethink the growing field of intervention in relation to cultural activism and social change.

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 artworks have appropriated media channels, hacked into live TV and radio broadcasts, attacked billboards, re-appropriated street furniture, subverted signs, monuments and civic architectures, organised political actions as protest, exposed corporations and tax loopholes and revealed the absurdities of government bureaucracies.

Cultural Hijack occurs in three parts: a survey exhibition at the AA Gallery of documented artworks from across the globe, supported by a programme of artists’ talks; a programme of live-interventions, in which artists arrive in London to agitate and infiltrate the urban territory, starting in Bedford Square and moving out across the city; and CON(tra)VENTION, in which the programme culminates in a carnival weekend of lectures, symposia, screenings, participatory actions, interventions, dinners and debate.

The exhibition positions itself at the intersection of art, politics and social justice in this historic 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 mass-mediated movement, artists join in the writing of alternative histories, the reclamation of our rights to the city and the unfinished
project of the revolution of everyday life. Cultural Hijack addresses what it means to intervene, to insert cultural experiments without warning or consent, and asks: do small acts of resistance and creative disruption feed an appetite for real alternatives to neoliberal capitalism and what might the tools, tactics and poetics of the interventionist artist – who exposes the blind spots and plays in the cracks of capitalist ideology – offer the insurgent imagination of activism and social movements?

Images:
A selection of Press Images can be downloaded from

For further details please contact:
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This exhibition is supported by Arts Council England, The Architectural Association, P H Holt Foundation, Polish Cultural Institute, FACT, Québec Government Office London, CitizenM, WAVE, Jump Ship Rat, EU-Japan Fest, Canada Council for the Arts and University of West of Scotland

Associated publication:
Cultural Hijack: Rethinking Intervention, edited by Ben Parry, Liverpool University Press, 2011
ISBN 978-1-84631-751-4
CULTURAL HIJACK

AA EXHIBITIONS

AA Gallery, Front Members’ Room,
Bedford Square, 26 April – 25 May 2013

Architectural Association
36 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3ES

Monday to Friday 10am–7pm
Saturday 10am–3pm
Cultural Hijack traverses our shared landscape – the spatial, social and psychological territories of our everyday lives. 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 corporate globalisation, war and other political discourses and public perceptions.

Cultural Hijack presents a survey of provocative projects including billboards and a re-appropriated advert in Alexanderplatz, Berlin. The interventions of Matthias Wermke & Mischa Leinkauf, exploring urban space and the artist in contemporary society and to offer the documentation of such work.

Michael Rakowitz (USA) explores the political discourses and public perceptions underpinning the West’s relationship to Iraq. In Spools (2011) he took over a haunted Manhattan restaurant to serve up traditional Iraqi dishes on rare pieces of fine China imported from the US national collection. In a dramatic conclusion, a cease-and-desist order by New York City authorities resulted in the repatriation of the diners to Iraq. The work is presented to the Israeli government. In his ongoing project paraSITE, Rakowitz also works with homeless people to create custom-made shelter stations to attach to ventilation ports. 

ZTOHOVEN (Czech) are a group of artists who expose and exploit cracks in the system. For this TV hijack ZTOHOVEN hacked a live camera feed from the European Commission. They inserted an explosion into a panning shot across the Krkonose Mountains. In demonstrating the possibilities to manipulate these channels to operate with a constant threat of prosecution and have twice successfully defended their actions in court. Cyber activists and artists Electronic Disturbance Theater (USA) are known for their electronic actions in support of the Zapata movement. Applying the tactics of trespass and blockade, they adopt a form of electronic guerrilla warfare and doctored virtual sites to attack websites, including the Pentagon and the Mexican Stock Exchange. In Trans-border Art (USA) uses cheap GPS mobile phones to install a device for helping Mexican immi-

Street artist Zeys (France), renowned for his radical urban interventions, translates into playful and poetic films of trespass and civil disobedience. In Between documents their exploration of the night before the 9/11 attacks. Visual Kidnapping surgically removes a giant 40ft woman from a Lavazza advert on Alexanderplatz, Berlin. The three-year campaign to ransom his kidnapped icon is ultimately successful in the pursuit of €500,000.

The interventions of Matthias Wermke & Mischa Leinkauf, exploring urban space and the artist in contemporary society and to offer the documentation of such work.

The Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clamy Clown Army or CIRCA (UK and worldwide) offer the surreal sights of a highly disciplined army of professional clowns acting against buildings, banks, corporations and other institutions. In a carnival protest against the invasion of Iraq, CIRCA formed a welcome committee for ‘arch-clown’ Garry Bushell (UK).

Alán 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 has hijacked multi-art-

Loophole for All by Paolo Cirio exhibits the art of corporate identity theft by offering an audience the privileges of membership. The viewer can 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. 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 engagement and discussion, and are often hard to explain or interpret. Exhibition / CONTRAvention

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Alain士Nishi (Japan) creates out-of-scale and out-of-place in encounters in public space. He has transformed street lights, parked cars and monuments. Stated in front of the AA, Ascending and Descending coat Bortone’s (UK) of a building site and its implicit expenditure of human labour power, into a sisyphian duration perfor-

Upper Space (UK) an organisation and network of artist-activists and community organisers, engages issues of social, economic and environ-

London-based anarchist chic Space Hackers (UK) wage a battle against the oppressive encroachment of corporations, public institutions and urban planners in a bid to create a user-generated city centered by its citizens. Known for their Circle lines,

Knit the City’s (UK) Yarn Corps are a band of sneaky, stitching graffiti-“knit-and-crochet” artists with an on-going 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.
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Cultural Hijack

A programme of events accompanies the exhibition.
For details please visit:
www.aaschool.ac.uk/exhibitions
As we start the next series of Live Works, we pause to send out a Week 1+ bulletin. It’s been a busy start for the cultural hijackers....

**Exhibition** documenting artworks / interventions.

*AA, 36 Bedford Square. 25th April - 25th May  
Times: Mon-Fri 10am – 7pm, Sat 10am-3pm  
www.aaschool.ac.uk*

**Live-Programme** of interventions around London

*City-wide 22nd April – 26th May (wk.1 bulletin below)  
www.culturalhijack.org*

**CONTRAvention**, carnival weekend of events.

*City-wide 23rd May – 26th May  
www.culturalhijack.org*

main event, **Rethinking Intervention** – RIBA 25th May

*Book Now: http://culturalhijack.eventbrite.co.uk*

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Further enquiries: culturalhijack@gmail.com

Zevs (FR), Ztohoven (CZ), Krzysztof Wodiczko (PL), Matthias Wermke & Mischa Leinkauf (DE), Voina (RU), Upper Space (UK), Gregory Sholette (US), Michael Rakowitz (US), Platform (UK), Ben Parry (UK) & Peter McCaughey (IE), Tatzu Nishi (JP), Renzo Martens (NL), Knit the City (UK), Peter Kennard (UK), Laura Keeble (UK), Allan Kaprow (US), John Jordan (UK), Tushar Joag (IN), International Peripatetic Sculptors Society (UK+), Space Hijackers (UK), Paul Harfleet (UK), EPOS 257 (CZ), Electronic Disturbance Theater (US), Nina Edge (UK), Alan Dunn (UK), Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (UK+), Paolo Cirio (IT), Leah Borromeo & Dr.
Chicha Muffler Taxi

Various locations
inner city London
25th April.....Ongoing

Quebec Trio BGL converted a traditional Hackney cab into a mobile communal shisha pipe, inviting people to literally smoke the cab through its adapted exhaust. Watch out for the Cab on the streets of London in the week Westminster raid a Shisha factory.

The UNICELL Department of Transparency and Communication undertook a cleaning operation on 23rd of April 2013, attempting to identify edges, mapped and un-mapped, real or imagined, within London.

A highly trained and experienced team of window cleaners ‘GAZE-A-GLAZE’ collaborated with UNICELL (Tushar Joag) to go through the city to clean these edges to increase permeability and transmission.
Marx at Twilight

Karl Marx Grave
Highgate Cemetery
24th April….Ongoing

Peter McCaughey & Ben Parry
Part 1. with Lauren O’Farrell

A one-metre-cubed balaclava installed as the first of a series of re-appropriations of public statuary.

Senior Citizens, Madelaine Emberton, Libby Lee, Shashi Aul and Alida Guest, occupy the upstairs gallery of the AA, sitting by the fireplace, supplied with comfy armchairs, tea and biscuits, knitting outsized headgear, crowns that are then bestowed on selected statues around the city.
Ascending and Descending
(After Escher)

Bedford Square. Wed 24-Fri 26th April. Tatzu Nishi

A rota of men took turns to dig dirt from a deep hole, shovelling it on to a series of conveyor belts that return the material to the same hole.

From early morning to late at night the scene continues.

The work only ceases to allow a Victorian gothic drama to be filmed in the Square.
“For Fathi Bouchareb”
Bedford Square

At 8pm on Thursday 25th April, Paul Harfleet planted a pansy at the site of the murder of Fathi Bouchareb, Bedford Square, London.

This is part of Harfleet’s ongoing Pansy Project to plant pansies at the sites of homophobic abuse.

http://www.thepansyproject.com/page8.htm
Emergent Workers Party

The Space Hijackers held their May Day party in the courtyard of Google's multi-million HQ, just off Tottenham Court Road, an event demanding a shutdown of the internet after business hours.

Party goers celebrated with dancing and drumming as in days gone by, but with a maypole tangled with cables instead of the traditional May Day ribbons.

These May Day celebrations also marked the establishment of the Emergent Service Workers Party.
**IPSS**

*International Peripatetic Sculptors Society*

_April 25 - May 25th_

A series of walk-talk-intervene dérives around London

**Walk 1**

Parliament Square to Tower Hill

**Date:**

International Workers Day 6th May

**Image title:**

The ‘Burghers of Calais’ Revisited

**participants:**

Graham Jeffery, Pamela Barnes, Thomas Mrnz, Eleanor Yule, Ben Parry, and Fiona Milne.

As one of a series of interventions during a 3 hour journey around inner London, a division of the IPSS occupied the empty pedestal of the bronze cast of the ‘Burghers of Calais’.

The workers wear one life belt between two – they are obviously in dire straits. Rodin’s original artwork, placed on a low pedestal to bring art down to the people, is brought further down to earth, as the heroes here are the ordinary precarious workers, rather than the rich men of the town of Calais.
CONTRA\textit{vention}, RIBA 25\textsuperscript{th} May - Conference Schedule.


09.00 Registration: Tea & coffee and a bun
10.00 Welcome: \textbf{Tobias Klein} (Architectural Association)
10.05 Introduction: Peter McCaughey & Ben Parry Overview of Cultural Hijack & live-programme
10.30 Keynote: \textbf{Gregory Sholette} Dark Matter (30 min + 15 min Q&A)

11.15 Break – tea & coffee

11.30 \textbf{Voina} (Yana Sarna) \textit{Art & Politics in Russia} (30 min)
12.00 Short interventions
  \textbf{Gavin Grindon}, (10 min)
  \textbf{Alana Jelinek}, \textit{This is Not Art: Activism and Other 'Not-Art'} (10 min)
12.20 Panel discussion: Yana Sarna, Gregory Sholette, Gavin Grindon, Alana Jelinek

12.45 Break - Lunch

1.45 \textbf{Krzysztof Wodiczko} \textit{War Veteran Projects} 30 mins + 15 mins (Q&A)
2.30 Short intervention: \textbf{David Pinder} \textit{Geographies of Resistance} (10 min)
2.40 ‘Unsanctioned Resistance’ Presentations from:
  \textbf{Space Hijackers} (20min)
  \textbf{Ztohoven} \textit{Moral reform and media sculptures} (20min)
3.20 Panel discussion - Space Hijackers, David Pinder, Ztohoven, Graham Jeffery

3.40 Break: tea & coffee

4.00 Short interventions \textbf{Nina Edge}
4.15 Presentation by \textbf{John Jordan} \textit{Resisting Stockholm Syndrome: Anecdotes on Omniside, artivism and sinkin your cultural capital.}
5.00 30 one-minute statements from the floor... - invited from the floor chaired \textbf{Graham Jeffery}
5.30 Closing comments \textbf{Barbara Steveni} (APG)
5.45 End performance
6.00 CLOSE

(Sunday 26th May: FREE participatory event 11.30 - 5pm Allan Kaprow, \textit{Transfer}
Register and get your free ticket at: \url{http://allankaprow.eventbrite.co.uk/})

www.culturalhijack.org