



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.aa-school.ac.uk/exhibitions

ZEVS (FRAN), Ztohoven (CZEC), 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 (CZEC), Electronic Disturbance Theater (USA), Nina Edge (UK), Alan Dunn (UK), Paolo Cirio (ITA), Leah Borrromeo & 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

http://www.aaschool.ac.uk/Downloads/press_releases/press_images/cultural_hijack.zip

For further details please contact:

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Associated publication:

Cultural Hijack: Rethinking Intervention, edited by Ben Parry, Liverpool University Press, 2011
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AA EXHIBITIONS

CULTURAL HIJACK

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

Monday to Friday 10am–7pm
Saturday 10am–3pm

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 *Trans-border 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 Sisyphean 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*

Architectural Association
36 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3ES

AA Gallery, Front Members' Room
and Bedford Square
26 April – 25 May 2013
Monday to Friday 10am – 7pm
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Private view
Thursday 25 April 2013
6.30–8.30pm

Cultural Hijack

A programme of events
accompanies the exhibition.
For details please visit:
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Conseil des Arts
du Canada

Canada Council
for the Arts



P H Holt Foundation



Québec





Weekly Bulletin

Thursday 25th April - Sunday 5th May 2013



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>

Further enquiries: culturalhijack@gmail.com

Zeus (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.

Weekly Bulletin

Thursday 25th April - Sunday 5th May 2013



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.

Weekly Bulletin

Thursday 25th April - Sunday 5th May 2013



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.



Weekly Bulletin

Thursday 25th April - Sunday 5th May 2013



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.



Weekly Bulletin

Thursday 25th April - Sunday 5th May 2013



“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>

Weekly Bulletin

Thursday 25th April - Sunday 5th May 2013

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.



Weekly Bulletin

Thursday 25th April - Sunday 5th May 2013



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.



Weekly Bulletin

Thursday 25th April - Sunday 5th May 2013

supported by



CONTRAvention, RIBA 25th May - Conference Schedule.

Part of **Cultural Hijack: Rethinking Intervention** – The Architects Association,
Bedford Square, London, 25th April - 26th May 2013

- 09.00 Registration: Tea & coffee and a bun
- 10.00 Welcome: **Tobias Klein** (Architectural Association)
- 10.05 Introduction: **Peter McCaughey & Ben Parry** Overview of Cultural Hijack & live-programme
- 10.30 Keynote: **Gregory Sholette** *Dark Matter* (30 min + 15 min Q&A)
- 11.15 Break – tea & coffee
- 11.30 **Voina** (Yana Sarna) *Art & Politics in Russia* (30 min)
- 12.00 Short interventions
- Gavin Grindon**, (10 min)
- Alana Jelinek**, *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 **Krzysztof Wodiczko** *War Veteran Projects* 30 mins + 15 mins (Q&A)
- 2.30 Short intervention: **David Pinder** *Geographies of Resistance* (10 min)
- 2.40 'Unsolicited Resistance' Presentations from:
- Space Hijackers** (20min)
- Ztohoven** *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 **Nina Edge**
- 4.15 Presentation by **John Jordan** *Resisting Stockholm Syndrome: Anecdotes on Omniside, activism and sinking your cultural capital.*
- 5.00 30 one-minute statements from the floor... - invited from the floor chaired **Graham Jeffery**
- 5.30 Closing comments **Barbara Steveni** (APG)
- 5.45 End performance
- 6.00 CLOSE

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

www.culturalhijack.org

