

Gallery 3

The Seven Bridges of Königsberg, Re-contextualised, 1999/2005

The structure of this work is based on a diagram of the seven bridges of Königsberg and the books it held the first time the sculpture was displayed in Duisberg, Germany were arranged according to the mathematical proof associated with the bridges. Leonhard Euler (1707-1783), the 18th Century Swiss mathematician, after more than a century, devised the proof to show that it is impossible to cross all the bridges, only once, and return to your point or origin. His significant discovery made possible the entirely new mathematical field of Graph Theory.

The design of the bookcase embodies the arrangement of the bridges, and if Euler's theory is applied to the books that it could hold, when it is full, it is impossible to arrange the contents alphabetically from A - Z, without the need to retrace or back-track over sections of the shelves. In the sculpture at Cornerhouse the library no longer houses the original books donated by Duisburg residents.

The Seven Bridges of Königsberg is a library that embodies a pluralistic vision of culture and one which resists any 'totalitarian' or unified method of categorization. These values complement those inherent in the general design of all Clegg & Guttman's Open Public Libraries, namely their openness, the rejection of all unnecessary forms of control and the absence of surveillance and authority. Those who visited the original *Seven Bridges of Königsberg* when it was made in Kant's Park, Duisburg, Germany were encouraged to rearrange the books in any way they saw fit, creating new arrangements of the material, new categories and stimulating readers to contemplate the possibility of cultural pluralism.

Man with Beard - The Speaker's Platform of Grieskirchen, 2005

The Speaker's Platform of Grieskirchen was originally conceived by Clegg & Guttman to function like Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park, and for one evening to allow the

community of the small town of Grieskirchen in Upper Austria to identify with itself.

Clegg & Guttman built a small stage - based on the pedestal of a Baroque sculpture - on which towns people were invited to perform. Lighting and atmosphere were set so that whoever stood on the stage would seem like a baroque statue, discreetly signifying that the character may be the new community leader which the town lacked. At this event over 500 local people came to watch themselves perform. Only a handful of the acts were prepared, the idea being that this was a spontaneous act where the 'community would present itself to itself'. The event was documented by the artists and a photograph of it is presented at Cornerhouse. It is not shown alongside actual objects, as with other works in this exhibition, and the single image is deliberately frustrating, presenting only a partial view or explanation of the events that took place. The nature of the Spontaneous Opera is a transitory one intended for the benefit of the people of Grieskirchen rather than for visitors in a gallery.

About the Artists

Michael Clegg (1957) and **Martin Guttman** (1957) live and work in New York, Berlin and Vienna. Collaborating since 1980 they have shown extensively in the U.S.A and Europe. Their work is in the collections of the Whitney Museum for American Art, New York; Beaubourg, Paris; The Stadtgalerie, Stuttgart; and Museo Capello di Monte, Naples, Italy. Recent solo exhibitions include *Mach vs. Boltzmann*, The Secession, Vienna; *Der Flicker II*, with Franz West at Haus Wittgenstein, Vienna 2006; and *Mach vs. Boltzmann II*, at Braunschweig Kunsthalle, Germany. Their work has been shown in The Whitney Biennial 1986 and the 46th Venice Biennale. They have published twenty books and catalogues about their work.

Exhibition organised by Cornerhouse in collaboration with Georg Kargl Fine Arts, Vienna and supported by the Austrian Cultural Forum. Drinks sponsor Duvel.



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Clegg & Guttman: Social Sculptures, Community Portraits and Spontaneous Operas 1990 - 2006

11 August - 24 September 2006

Cornerhouse presents the first UK solo exhibition of work by Clegg & Guttman, *Social Sculptures, Community Portraits and Spontaneous Operas 1990 - 2006*. The exhibition includes five of the artists' public projects and the new work *Manchester 1911* which revolves around philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's and physicist Ernest Rutherford's connections with Manchester.

A collaborative partnership since 1980, Michael Clegg's and Martin Guttman's practice is an attempt to expand the idea of portraiture, moving away from its traditional conception as static images of people and places to a wider sociological, pluralistic and time-based exploration of communities and institutions.

All the works exhibited, except *Manchester 1911*, in progress in Gallery 1, were conceived at earlier times, in specific places. These five complete works demonstrate the complexity and the layering present in Clegg & Guttman's work. The artists have developed the terms Social Sculpture, Community Portrait and Spontaneous Opera to describe the overlapping aspects of the evolution of their works. Put most simply a Social Sculpture is a situation that brings together a number of institutions or people with a view to developing or changing the relationship between them; a Community Portrait brings together the various information gathered about a community, and Spontaneous Operas are often events or happenings which give unique opportunities for communities to present themselves, to themselves.

The context in which Clegg & Guttman are invited to exhibit often becomes the subject from which to develop new work. They take the place, community and history of a site or institution, and identify questions or issues that seem valuable and ripe for exploration. For example in *The Open Public Library, Graz* the artists sought to develop a new type of institution that would reflect the community by how it interacted with this intervention.

By working in this way, setting processes in motion that are affected by the many publics who interact, ignore or sometimes destroy their work the artists, depend on trust and patience. When Clegg & Guttman made their first 'community portrait' in Graz they:

resolved to accept anything that happened in [their] projects from then on without prejudice or preconceptions, believing that there is really neither victory nor failure in [the result of] such projects, with the only measure of success being the extent to which an authentic connection is made with the social environment, and the measure of stimulation added to the local imagination.

Clegg & Guttman's work brings groups, communities and institutions together in ways that make it possible for them to reflect on themselves and see themselves in a different way, and offer them a chance to disrupt and change the part they play in an established power structure.

Lesley Young
Visual Arts Education Officer

Gallery 1

Manchester 1911 2006

On receiving the invitation to exhibit at Cornerhouse and having never visited Manchester before Clegg & Guttman began to look for a point of research to develop a new artwork. Through discussion with individuals in the city, they discovered that the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein had studied Engineering at Manchester Victoria University between 1908 and 1911; and that it was from Manchester that he chose to move to Cambridge to study philosophy with Bertrand Russell. Also in Manchester in 1911, Ernest Rutherford was experimenting to split the atom. Around this time Europe was an intellectual crucible with Einstein, Picasso and Henry Ford defining the Modern age.

That such important thinkers from two disciplines were in the same place at the same time, fuelled Clegg & Guttman to ask whether Wittgenstein could have been fundamentally influenced by physicist Ernest Rutherford's revolutionary experiments. To consider this question, Clegg & Guttman have brought together a group of academics from the fields of Physics, Philosophy and Art to take part in a colloquium to discuss and debate the topic. It is unusual that such a broad group should be brought together to discuss such a question, but as well as furthering academic research at the highest level in an unexplored subject, the occasion creates a new community within a community and disrupts the institutional conventions which it operates within, making change possible.

This work continues to evolve throughout the period of the exhibition, with an active online-forum at: <http://manchester1911.cornerhouse.org/> where some of the colloquium transcripts are available, related books and papers can be read in the gallery, and a final colloquium event on September 22 at 1.00pm - 3.00pm, *Manchester 1911: Activating the Social Sculpture*, which will gather interested parties including the public to add to the discussion.

The sculpture in Gallery 1 consists of five modular 'chairs', two of which have screens for virtual colloquium participants and three of which can be occupied by real participants. Together they create a platform or stage, to debate and discuss, it is a physical manifestation of the colloquium. The artwork, seemingly redundant without the presence of the academic participants to activate it, actually draws our attention to Clegg & Guttman's intention for the work: to bring academic and cultural institutions from the North West together in order that the individuals within those organisations can see themselves and their institutions from a new and de-familiarised perspective. Clegg & Guttman wish to create a 'cognitive miracle' that allows things to be seen differently, even if only temporarily.

Gallery 2

The Open Public Library, Graz, Recontextualised (1990 / 1993 / 2005)

The first phase of the *Open Public Library, Graz* was initiated in 1991 when three unsecured full bookcases were placed in three carefully chosen locations in the suburbs of the Austrian town of Graz for three months. The books had been collected by the artists from the local community by door to door collections. The notices on each bookcase, which can still be seen, instructed visitors to 'take a limited number of books for a limited time and make further donations'.

The project grew out of Clegg & Guttman's previous photographic work with portraiture, which they wished to develop by making a portrait not of an individual, but of a community. Clegg & Guttman sought to develop a new type of institution that would reflect the community by how it interacted with this intervention. They devised an experimental artwork which they believed, if appropriately placed in the landscape, would be accepted by the community that lived around it. After three months one of the libraries was full, with people replacing books they took; the second although damaged, was almost full; and the third was almost empty.

Clegg & Guttman wished to see how the community would accept or reject the intervention of this new institution. Before the project took place, many were pessimistic about the outcome, with some believing that the bookcases would be destroyed immediately and the books taken and never returned, and others predicting that they would not be used, as they believed Austria a nation conditioned to only accept established institutions.

Returning to Graz two years later, Clegg & Guttman conducted video interviews in collaboration with Stephan Dillemath with the residents of the areas where the bookcases had been. This material-along with maps, photographs of the bookcases in situ and the actual weathered bookcases was then gathered together and exhibited at Graz Kunsthalle as part of the exhibition *Contexkunst*. At Cornerhouse the elements of the work have once again been gathered, and are available for visitors to explore, and use to develop their own portrait of the town of Graz.

Gallery 3

The Open Tool Shelter, Vienna, 1991/2006

The Open Tool Shelter is a free standing tool shelter originally designed to be placed in a suburb of Toronto. It was planned that local residents could use, exchange and replace the amassed tools as they needed over a period of months. The format is similar to how Clegg & Guttman's *Open Public Libraries* work, but to date remains unrealised in a public space. While rooted within the ideals of community, self sufficiency and self regulation that the artists explore within their other works, *The Open Tool Shelter, Vienna* remains untested with a real community. It is in fact incongruous with the rest of the works in the exhibition, as it houses objects with obvious practical power and usefulness, while the other works hold books, objects whose power and usefulness is more difficult to pin down.

Sha'àtn'ez or The Displacement Annex, Re-contextualised, 2004/2005

Sha'àtn'ez or The Displacement Annex, Re-contextualised is a bookshelf housing material that focuses on the psychoanalytical concept of displacement. Sha'at'nez is a Hebrew term which denotes combinations of things with no natural unity. For example certain combinations of fabric and food are forbidden in Jewish law. The elements of a sha'at'nez are displaced - put into a context which is not meant for them.

Events

Please book tickets for all events, including free ones, at Box Office.

In Conversation: Michael Clegg & Martin Guttman with Dave Beech

Sat 12 August, 2.00pm - 3.30pm

Clegg & Guttman will discuss their exhibition and the process of creating the work *Manchester 1911*. Dave Beech has written recently about independent art's need for its own institutions, identifying an unhelpful aversion to 'institutions' within contemporary arts accepted ideas. This talk will explore through Clegg & Guttman's work and Beech's research, the positive potential of art's institutions including institutionalisation of art.

Dave Beech is an artist, writer, curator and lecturer.

Free Gallery 1

Exhibition Tours

Thu 17 August 6.00pm - 7.00pm & Sun 3 September, 3.00pm - 4.00pm

Lesley Young, Visual Arts Education Officer will give informal introductory tours of the exhibition. The tour on Sun 3 September will be BSL interpreted by Siobhan Rocks.

Free. Galleries 1, 2 & 3

Clegg & Guttman's bookcase, an assemblage of replicas from different libraries, is itself a shat'at'nez. Originally designed for the Freud Museum in Vienna it consists of four parts from four highly significant locations. The first is a reproduction of part of Freud's original library, the second is a replica of the shelves at the Freud Museum in London, the third part is from the Psychiatric Institute of New York City and the last is a reproduction of the bookshelf in the library at the Freud Museum, which is located in Freud's original apartment in Vienna. The ladder, also made from parts of the existing ladders in the different locations, has the form of something functional, but is of no practical use.

The version exhibited here at Cornerhouse explores yet another level of displacement with photographs of the books originally exhibited on display instead of the books themselves. This piece speaks of memory and the re-contextualisation allows for an awareness of the distortion that takes place in the act of remembering.

One Hour intro: Wittgenstein Thu 7 September, 6.00pm

This event introduces philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's biography, as well as his contributions to logic, and the philosophies of mathematics, language and mind will be addressed in this event. Introduced by Raymond Tallis.

£2.50 / £2 concs.

Cinema 1 Education Space

Manchester 1911: Activating the Social Sculpture

Fri 22 September, 1.00pm - 3.00pm

To develop the research around *Manchester 1911* a public forum is being held within this 'social sculpture' on from 22 September, come along either to participate or simply observe. All welcome. This event can also be watched on-line, go to:

www.cornerhouse.org/ActivatingTheSocialSculpture.

An on-line forum of the discussion and research is available to view and add to at:

<http://manchester1911.cornerhouse.org/>

Free Gallery 1