

# The Art of With 2

Artists and Curators



## Seminar Report

Cornerhouse, 25 November 2009

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*“The Art of With is an action research project by Cornerhouse that aims to explore how a contemporary arts organisation should work with audiences, artists and curators at a time when technological development and web 2.0 means we live in a culture of openness, participation and collaboration.” – www.cornerhouse.org*

In early 2009, Cornerhouse commissioned essays by Charles Leadbeater and Tom Fleming, each addressing the above key aim of *The Art of With* project.

Following this, The Art of With Seminar: Setting The Scene was held in June 2009, and was based around questions and feedback raised directly by these essays. A report on the first seminar is [available online](#).

The Art of With: Artists and Curators was held on 25 November 2009, returning to address similar questions to those originally raised by the project’s core aim. This time, though, the seminar was specifically focused on gathering and airing the views of artists, curators and industry decision-makers.

The day was divided into 3 main sections, as follows:

1. Presentations from keynote speakers
  - i. New York-based curator **Michael Connor**. Connor explored why the ‘many-to-many’ logic of the Web has not yet transformed contemporary art in the way that it has revolutionized other sectors of the culture industry. The talk covered the role of user-created content and participation in contemporary art, bringing together a wide range of historical and contemporary examples. Michael Connor’s talk was based on his essay *A Manual for the 21st Century Gatekeeper*, the third to be commissioned by Cornerhouse for The Art of With thus far.
  - ii. Rotterdam-based artists **Bik Van Der Pol**. Bik Van Der Pol discussed artistic practices in relation to *The Art of With*, including their work *Nomads And Residents*, a project which creates a collaborative platform for presentations by artists, critics, curators, architects and others.
2. Break-out discussions in smaller groups, with the aim of airing questions and issues raised by the keynote talks, and presenting individual ideas in response to the core question behind The Art of With project. (These were partly organised in response to suggestions from attendees of the first seminar, some of whom had felt that the core Art Of With questions could be more effectively addressed in these sorts of environments than in the format of a lecture or presentation.)
3. Quickfire presentations. A series of five minute presentations from artists, curators, practitioners and individuals about projects relating to ideas which were discussed at The Art of With Seminar. The presenters were chosen following a call out for presentations.

# Keynote Talks

## 1. Michael Connor

The full text of Michael Connor's essay *A Manual for the 21st Century Gatekeeper*, on which he based his talk, is [available online](#)

Key points raised were as follows:

- The cultural sector has hitherto tended to deliver content 'to and for' audiences, treating the human subject as a consumer, a problem, a number, rather than "bundles of capabilities and potential" (quoting Leadbeater's essay *The Art of With*).
- Today, the Web has altered the logic of the age of mass communication; now, audiences often produce and distribute their own content and millions of cultural producers share their work on countless online channels.
- Almost every part of the cultural landscape outside of contemporary art (newspapers, record labels) is experiencing upheaval as content and audiences move online. They adapted late, and their resistance to change offered an opportunity for disruptive innovations from upstarts and outsiders.
- This narrative has not yet applied to the contemporary art world and it's not clear that it ever will. The explosion of online content has given rise to an attention economy, in which many platforms compete for audiences' time, and yet art institutions seem to fare well in this increasingly crowded landscape.
- One explanation for this is offered by Iwona Blazwick, who suggests that an increasingly screen-based society has a strong desire for the kind of real-world experiences that can be found in the gallery; that the art institution is thriving precisely because it provides 'real' experiences for a society awash in virtualisation.
- Nevertheless, this should not give rise to complacency: contemporary art institutions tend to reach a small minority of the population. In short, they're good at catering to an active base and not as good at connecting with non-specialist audiences.
- And yet, these institutions depend on their audiences for small donations; success for many will hinge on how well they reach out to and engage a broad network of supporters and audiences. In order to do so, these institutions will surely have to embrace the Web not only as a tool, but also as a new cultural paradigm.
- Today, audiences increasingly expect their cultural experiences to emphasise interaction and creation. In the age of the Web, 'talk and do' are becoming more important than 'enjoy'. Moreover, audiences today are used to curating their own cultural activities from a seemingly endless supply of content. In a world where everyone is a curator, what good is a curator?



- A perceived conflict between openness and quality exists in contemporary art, and partly explains the continued existence of the gatekeeper (curator) in the age of the Web.
- Nevertheless, in the absence of a gatekeeper, can high quality exhibitions, film seasons and events be created using wikis (mass gatekeeping)?
- One key problem with this idea seems to be that the aggregation of many aesthetic judgments will not necessarily result in a more correct assessment of aesthetic quality. Rather, the bigger the crowd asked, the more likely you are to end up with a mere confirmation that popular tastes are indeed popular.
- This is arguably no more valid a view than that of a single expert. In addition, a crowd-curated show will lack the sense of personal risk inherent in a show presented by a single curator (effectively a kind of public performance).
- The real source of the gatekeeper's current crisis is that their authority pales in comparison to the audience's vast collective stores of knowledge and passion. Gatekeepers must re-define their role in ways that harness the power of the audience, without losing the sense of subjectivity and personal risk that lie behind aesthetic decisions. How?
- Many possible answers exist. The key point in exploring them is to 'fail cheap'; in other words, avoid the temptation to launch into expensive hi-tech mass participation experiments whose results will be unpredictable at best.
- Wikipedia has been cited in scores of funding applications for technology-based cultural projects, but the main lesson of Wikipedia is to try things out as quickly and cheaply as possible, to admit failure when appropriate, and to recognise success when it comes along - even if it's not what you expected. This principle applies equally to developing a cultural programme and facilitating participation.
- Every cultural organisation has both 'pebbles' and 'boulders' (small events and blockbusters respectively). Senior curators and directors develop the boulders, while the job of lower-level curators is to complement these bigger elements with pebbles to enrich and support it.
- Arts organisations that want to be more participatory should reverse the flow of programme: start with the pebbles, and let the boulders build on their success. The programme should allow the low-cost elements, which can be made receptive to ideas from unlikely places, to direct the high-cost ones.
- This approach allows prototypes of 'pebbles' to be built, and 'boulders' to be created from them if the reception is good enough. This allows for the gathering and encouraging of polyphonic passions; appropriate participatory audiences are then effectively operating as a polyphonic gatekeeper, and yet institutions would be avoiding the inherent problems of trying to broadcast content to (or rather 'at?') a mass audience (the hopelessly indistinct 'public at large').

## 2. Bik Van Der Pol

Rotterdam-based art duo Bik Van Der Pol's (Liesbeth Bik and Jos van der Pol) delivered a much more organic keynote talk, focusing on a series of projects they'd carried out in the past which tackled similar sorts of issues to those *The Art Of With* is attempting to address.



The main projects they referred to by way of example were:

- A film project executed in Istanbul (*Istanbul, 59 Locations: A Format For Nightcomers*), whereby 150 user-submitted short films were projected on to a series of vacant walls around the city over a number of evenings, creating a form of semi-improvised guerrilla cinema that toured the city to a predetermined schedule detailed in a guidebook.

Every location used was mapped, described, recorded and photographed, the idea of the guidebook being, in Bik Van Der Pol's own words, to "create access, allow a glimpse into the wide variety of Istanbul's daily dynamics, and invite the public to embark on a trip." The open, public participation format was created with the intention that "thousands of people living in areas without access to 'high culture' could have direct contact with contemporary art," and in doing so, "contemporary art is brought to the frontier of a true public gaze."

- *The Travelling Magazine Table*, in which numerous venues consecutively host a touring display of not-for-profit art magazines. An area is set aside in each venue for publishers of fanzines, periodicals and journals to showcase their work alongside others, creating a mass user-submitted media display. This is perhaps the Bik Van Der Pol project that most directly relates to the duo's stated aim: to explore the potential of art to produce and transmit knowledge. *The Travelling Magazine Table* continues to tour without the artists having to be present; with a simple set of suggested guidelines for the venue, the project has proven itself able to exist semi-independently, generating its own momentum as it moves from venue to venue. The collection of publications gradually builds, transmitting an ever-wider range of local and international knowledge as it does so.
- A durational 24-hour project held in New Zealand as part of the nationwide One Day Sculpture initiative. Bik Van Der Pol's submission was titled *1440 Minutes Towards The Development Of A Site*, and was a project organised in collaboration with students from the University Of Auckland. The overall aim was to explore reactions the passing of a 2007 law that had potential limitations on freedom of speech, specifying what could and could not be said in support or denouncement of a political party. By creating an active space around the Albert Park bandstand, itself a site long associated with political activism and the celebration of free speech, Bik Van Der Pol worked for exactly 24 hours with students, who used the time to produce and disseminate a part-humorous, part-serious newsletter in response to the aforementioned 2007 Electoral Finance Bill.

Across all of Bik Van Der Pol's example projects, questions regarding the practicalities of community engagement and participation were the primary concern.

As each of the projects raises questions about how the relationship between artist, audience and venue might be explored and developed, the presentation raised many questions highly relevant to *The Art Of With*.

Several of these were later explored during breakout sessions, including:

- Quality vs. independence: is it possible or desirable to have built-in methods of maintaining a certain level of quality when relying on user submissions?
- Finance: it was noted that neither Bik Van Der Pol's nor Michael Connor's talks had really touched significantly on issues of finance and funding, despite money usually being seen – along with time – as one of the two defining walls of a project.
- Time: how far in advance would an artist have to start planning a project such as *1440 Minutes...* As Liesbeth Bik noted, a major issue contributing to the need for advance planning (which in the case of *1440 Minutes...* began around 18 months beforehand) is the lack of time or funds for the artist to make repeated site visits when the work is being staged abroad. This forces them to be extremely resourceful when it comes to researching a project, using local contacts as extensively as possible as a source of information.
- Legacy: do Bik Van Der Pol feel that they have a responsibility to leave anything behind when taking contemporary art to regions that may not have experienced it before? Liesbeth replied that their work tends to be open-ended; it attempts to create the potential for interaction with those outside of the art world, but Bik Van Der Pol are not themselves workshop leaders and don't personally tend to follow up after a project is over. She also explained that in their work they are interested in the chains of events that come from fate and crossing paths, and so a key part of the experience involves happening to be there at the time. (Besides which, as artists, they are always working within the constraints of resources – principally money and time – and thus even when participants do suggest further engagement, it isn't always feasible.)

# Breakout Sessions

The second half of the afternoon was given over to a series of smaller discussions. These were held simultaneously in groups of about ten participants and steered by the presence of either a keynote speaker or a Cornerhouse staff member, but were largely freeform and reliant on input from the day's attendees.

A number of potential starting points for debate were outlined at the start of each breakout session. These centred on questions raised by the title *The Art of With*, including:

- 'With' whom? (Acknowledged to be arguably the most crucial question.)
- Where?
- Who is this art for? Why is it selected?
- What is the art? (For the purposes of the discussion on the day, it was broadly acknowledged this last issue was probably of lesser importance.)

The various breakout groups collectively covered a wide range of topics, both ones raised by the earlier keynote talks and others relating more directly to the broader question: how a contemporary arts organisation should work with audiences, artists and curators in the current climate. (Interestingly – perhaps inevitably – for most of the groups, 'in the current climate' more or less translated as 'in the age of Web 2.0'.)

Key areas of discussion that surfaced across numerous groups included:

## A) Engagement

The visibility of projects and ways of navigating the audience/curator relationship were felt to be crucial in nurturing engagement with the public.

The idea of two-way projects and two-way communication was mentioned repeatedly during discussions on how best to start creating 'communities of interest' – an echoing of Michael Connor/Charles Leadbeater's contention that 'talk and do' were becoming more important to modern audiences than simply 'enjoy'.

As a branch to this latter point, it was noted that in-built audiences – in other words, the many interesting (and interested) niche or special interest groups that already exist – may play a key role in establishing these wider communities of interest.

That said, why ought the focus be on niche groups, as opposed to mass interests? 'Energy' was a word that kept cropping up in response to this question: smaller, more esoteric groups were generally seen as tending to be more passionate and close-knit, and often keen to achieve some degree of recognition from (or at least open channels of communication with) the mainstream. Harnessing and transferring this energy was agreed to be a difficult but potentially very rewarding problem.

However, it was noted that it's easy to inadvertently mute even a passionately interested group when taking an idea off the street and placing it in a gallery setting. Many such groups' activities, ideas and practices are inherently sensitive, and it was agreed that artists and curators need to be aware of this at all times.

Jeremy Deller's work on *Procession* was cited as a case study in successfully engaging with these sorts of groups and activities. It was suggested that Deller succeeded by acting as the fulcrum on which the groups' energies could pivot; a perfect example of the curator as mediator, rather than gatekeeper. He recognised his duty as artist/curator as being to keep pathways open, rather than wielding the power to close them.



## **B) The role of gatekeeper**

Although Deller's *Procession* was viewed as an example of good practice, a pressing concern across several discussion groups was the idea of maintaining quality, and whether or not quality will necessarily be compromised where a curator is more mediator than gatekeeper.

Bik Van Der Pol's *Travelling Magazine Table* project was brought up repeatedly here: as an installation based on open submissions of printed zines and periodicals, had they attempted to curate the content to ensure a degree of artistic quality?

They responded that they had not wished to intervene in this regard, and indeed they had not usually been present as the project travelled around; in fact, the only movements they had made towards curatorial action was to suggest to each host venue that they eschew more established magazines in favour of lesser-known or independent ones.

A suggestion was made that a person or group automatically becomes a gatekeeper when they start excluding things (either facets of a project in the making, or the end product) because they don't want them in their gallery. While this proved a largely workable definition of a gatekeeper for the purposes of our discussions, it was also frequently pointed out that the need to make practical choices is an inherent part of any project, and that filtering needn't necessarily always be negative.

(It was further noted that perhaps Michael Connor's vision of a 'polyphonic gatekeeper' had, in contrast to Bik Van Der Pol's approach, inherently defended the right of a curator to act as a filter and safeguard of quality, which would be just as much of a leap as saying that curators had no right to do anything of the sort.)

While the discussions did tend to veer towards favouring a polyphonic or wiki-type knowledge base by engaging the key audience for any given project in some curatorial aspect, no group was fully able to deal with the one concern that crept back repeatedly: the fact that, on some level, aggregation is the death of subjectivity.

### C) Relationships between artist, curator and audience

'Local experts' were identified as potentially useful or pivotal figures in mediating the relationship between audience, artist and curator. The value of such a role, it was suggested, lies in the local expert's ability to re-communicate and contextualise artist/curator ideas to the community, effectively helping to establish a crucial two-way dialogue (see **Engagement**) between institution and audience.

While encouraging two-way dialogue between artist and audience was seen as inherently valuable, various potential concerns were identified regarding the complete removal of conceptual 'barriers' (for want of a better word!) between the two.

Would removing them altogether compromise the artist's self-determination or uniqueness of vision too severely? Can having an artist effectively thrust into their midst simply annoy or neuter a previously active community, in fact? And might the very act of removing these conceptual barriers falsely influence the outcome, creating an alien situation and skewing the results in ways that didn't reflect the natural tendencies or true values of either the artist or the audience?

Whatever the answers to these individual questions - and all are highly debatable - it was agreed that not interfering with community or audience groups' terms of operation was of huge importance; they must be allowed to work, contribute and communicate as they wish.

The ideal attitude when working on these sorts of projects was suggested by one commenter (and broadly supported) as being "A generosity of spirit - continually asking ourselves 'What are we doing? Who are we doing this for? Are we communicating this effectively?'"

### D) Success vs. failure

Michael Connor's advice on finding ways to 'fail cheap' gave rise to a discussion on how exactly we might define or quantify failure, and moreover who should get to do so.

One popular conception of failure appeared to be lack of public interest: what happens if you open the gates and no-one turns up? (While not a solution to this problem per se, the possibility was mooted that, in pursuit of creative/artistic endeavours, anxiety based on the worst case scenario in this regard may actually prove a positive influence in terms of both motivation and quality of output.)

It was also voiced that the success or failure of a given project might be quantifiable by evaluating its legacy, although this idea proved somewhat controversial. (Current Cornerhouse exhibiting artist Artur Żmijewski is a convenient example of an artist who claims not to be interested in the legacy of his work; for him, his responsibility ends when the project ends.)

Still, it was generally agreed that either of the above avenues of investigation would be more useful in trying to gauge success or failure than any attempt to apply absolute values ('wrong' or 'right'). Moreover, it was universally agreed that the *right* to fail must be established before the potential for success can truly exist in any project.

### E) The Web as a platform for activity

One particular conversational theme that dominated several groups concerned how the Web could be used to achieve results in and of itself; as a way to make things happen rather than simply existing as a tool, a novelty, a wastebasket, a playground, or simply an additional (imaginary) space.

Ideas tended to come in the form of suggested commandments for effective harnessing of the web, and included:

- i. Developing a physical format for online collaboration, e.g. a wiki
- ii. Ensuring that artistic results are achieved which actually exist in cyberspace, having both a location and a clearly defined value or role (ie. not just the online equivalent of an unsupervised graffiti wall)
- iii. Acknowledging and utilising the fact that, in certain situations, cyberspace has advantages over a gallery space due to the restrictions imposed on a gallery by its own physical structure
- iv. Bearing in mind the fact that it's easier to achieve user-generated (or indeed user-curated) content online than in a gallery space
- v. Being aware that 'darker' forms of participation - ie. subversion of original aims - tend to be more successful online than collaborative attempts to reach a common goal. One of the defining characteristics of the Web is the degree of anonymity it grants; as has been proved time and again in countless forums and messageboards online, opening up access does not necessarily generate a positive atmosphere, even if open access is seen as positive in itself
- vi. Remembering that some people will always prefer the gallery environment due to the physical interaction (with both artworks and other viewers/participants) a real-world space entails
- vii. Making use of the fact that the Web is a direct conduit to achieving a global view, which must be held as important by both curators and artists
- viii. Remaining conscious that future generations will be entirely used to online interaction as the norm. Their very understanding of the word interaction will differ from ours, and they will instinctively seek to work in ways which reflect that

Despite the above suggestions, another group's discussion focused on the fact that the Web, though an excellent enabler of wider participation (largely thanks to it making participation physically easier and quicker), tended to be good at encouraging a certain kind of participation that was actually very passive and quite superficial; the implication being that it couldn't yet be relied on as a rich source of people willing to make a commitment to physical action.

The example of mass protest was used to illustrate this: the Web, and particularly sites such as Twitter and Facebook, has been responsible for a huge upsurge in the number of people willing to sign petitions, display banners promoting particular causes etc, as it's now a one-click job to pledge your allegiance. However, the percentage of these 'online activists' who would actually attend a real-world march for the same cause probably hasn't increased significantly at all; indeed, it may even have gone down now that there are so many other readily available ways in which to make your feelings known.

The suggestion was also mooted that the Web is therefore helping to reduce the value of the physical body - in a sense, turning 'participants' into mere statistics. This is completely counter to what an arts institution should be setting out to achieve (indeed, it's more or less a step further back into the finance-led, numbers-driven equations galleries have traditionally always been at the mercy of).

# Quickfire Presentations

The day ended on a series of quickfire presentations, described by the presenters as follows:

- **On the organisational structure of The derive Detectives Review; The Art Of With by Tom Watson & James Snazell**

The derive Detective Review of the first Art of With seminar was conducted as a murder investigation, the charge being that a murder had been committed as part of The Art of With seminar at Cornerhouse in Manchester. There were no extra details given when beginning, other than this accusation; it was up to the review process to determine what had happened. This assertion meant that each artist involved in writing the review, had to adopt one of two roles depending on the value of their participation in the Art of With seminar:

Those four who attended the seminar became the Witnesses

Those four who were interested, but were not present became the Detectives

The interviewing then began

Organisational structure of the review as creation of a space from which to form a critique, rather than simply to provide content:

Written by artists who were not at the seminar, the review serves as an illustration of the legacy of the first seminar, as something which Cornerhouse made happen, and like all work, had to let go of, so that it may exist in the world. This is almost entirely true, the only thing holding this claim back is that through the group derive, we tried to keep a conversation alive along the lines of our interest. We shared it amongst ourselves and with others, and went to lengths to apply other ideas outside of the texts provided, to garner a wider perspective. We did this of our own accord.

- **The Village Green Projects by Hafsa Naib**

Public Intervention. Performance. Consultation. Collaboration. Research. Community Engagement. Contemporary Art Practice.

By locating a desk and chair on the village green in Levenshulme Hafsa Naib will be operating an 'outdoor surgery' where an additional colleague will be inviting people to sit and discuss their requirements of art. Each of these ideas/discussions will form the basis of an individual Village Green Project to be realised through public funds.

Hafsa Naib's presentation described this project as well as consider the reasons, contexts and implications of this on her practice in the future.

- **Joel Porter**

Joel Porter looks at hidden data that we carry around, whether credit card, biometric passports, ID cards, and oyster cards for public transport, his work concentrates on utilising everyday technologies to process imagery. In his recent work shown at Cornerhouse in June entitled *Ubiquitous Interactivity*, he used radio frequency card technology to generate images based on hidden card data. By swiping your card (ID card, Biometric passport, Oyster card) over a card reader, a unique image is projected from the hidden numbers embedded in the card's microchip.

Joel Porter is interested in creating interactive works based on information that the visitor carries with them in order to create visual works from the hidden and often secretive personal data.



- **How and why I made: Joy of CEEFAX 2.0 by Maria Gabriella Ruban**

A light romantic film about the nation's favourite television information service, which is now disappearing with the digital switchover. The project was crowdsourced through Twitter and features interviews from regulars at the Social Media Cafe Manchester and made by Maria Gabriella for a special screening at the BBC. This film contains images of a sexual nature, possibly.

The film can be viewed in full [online](#)

- **LiveWire Young People's Programme**

LiveWire is Cornerhouse's participant-led young people's programme. Young people not only decide what projects they want to take place but they also manage them. Marisa Draper and Alison Kennedy presented key projects that have enabled young people to take control and get involved in something that is directly relevant to them.

# Appendix

## Speakers Biographies

### Keynote speakers and Chair:

- **Michael Connor**

Michael Connor is a writer and curator based in New York. He is an adjunct lecturer at Brooklyn College, Guest Curator for Independent Curators International, and a Programme Consultant for Creative Capital Foundation.

Since 2007, Connor has worked as Co-Curator of a permanent exhibition that explores screen culture in all its forms at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image. He also co-organised the exhibition *The Thousand and One Nights*, an exhibition featuring works by six contemporary artists from Palestine. His 2008 exhibition *The New Normal*, exploring the theme of privacy in artists' work, is currently touring through Independent Curators International. Previously, Connor worked as Head of Exhibitions at BFI Southbank in London. While there, he established a new gallery dedicated to artists' film, video, and new media, as well as an interactive moving image archive. From 2002 to 2005, Connor worked as a curator at FACT in Liverpool.

[www.michael-connor.com](http://www.michael-connor.com)

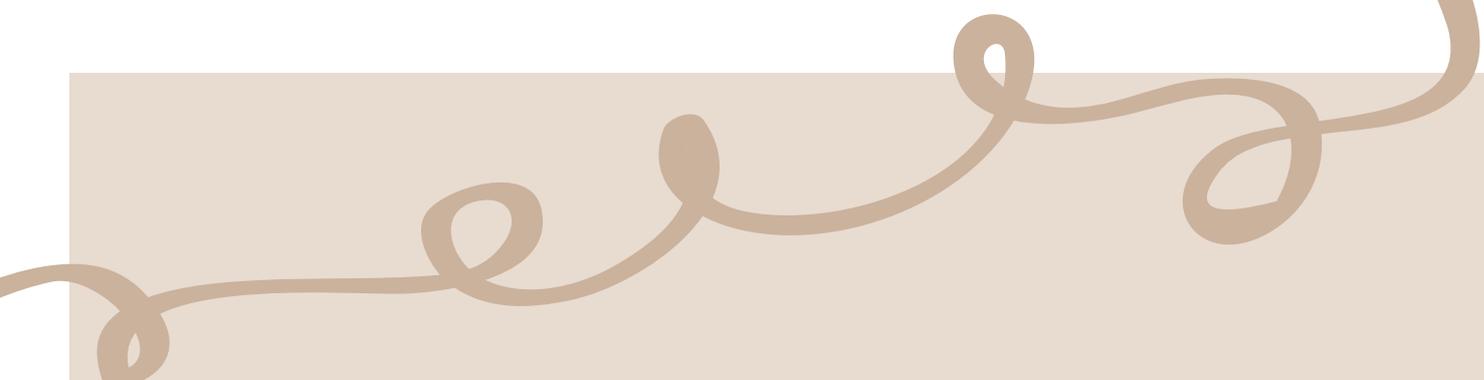
- **Bik Van der Pol**

Bik van der Pol are Liesbeth Bik and Jos van der Pol. They live and work in Rotterdam and have been working collectively since 1995. They explore the potential of art to produce and transmit knowledge. Their working method is based on co-operation and research methods of how to activate situations to create a platform for various kinds of communicative activities.

They have shown their work in CCA Glasgow; Lyon Biennial; Wysing Art Centre, Cambridge; One Day Sculpture, Auckland; Pumphouse Gallery, London; Marie Louise Hessel Museum/CCS Bard, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY; Van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven; ISP Whitney, New York; Kiscelli Museum, Budapest; Istanbul Biennale and more.

Part of their practice includes publishing books, such as for example *Catching Some Air* (2002), *With Love From The Kitchen* (2005), the ongoing series *Past Imperfect* (2005, 2007), *Fly Me To The Moon* (2006) and *The Lost Moment* (2007). They curated *Neverodoreven* for the Piet Zwart institute in Rotterdam (where Liesbeth Bik is also a tutor), *I've got something in my eye*, Marie Louise Hessel Museum/CCS Bard, and *Married By Powers* TENT/Frac Nord Pas Calais

[www.bikvanderpol.net](http://www.bikvanderpol.net)



- **Ruth Mackenzie**

Ruth Mackenzie OBE is Expert Adviser on Culture & Broadcasting for Her Majesty's Government, UK. She also works as Consultant Dramaturg for the Vienna Festival. Formerly, she has been General Director of the Manchester International Festival and of Scottish Opera, Chief Executive of Chichester Festival Theatre and Nottingham Playhouse, and worked as consultant for the BBC, Tate, Barbican Centre, London Symphony Orchestra and Arts Council of England amongst others. She is a Visiting Professor of City University, London, and has sat as a non-executive director on many cultural boards.

**Quickfire presentations speakers** – biographies provided by the presenters

- **derive**

derive is a monthly meeting place for artists who see research as a crucial part of the continuous development of their practice. derive aims to crystallise and make visible the forces which drive and coerce the production and distribution of art, by building up a critical dialogue through regular presentations of a diverse series of interests.

We meet in Islington Mill in Salford, and have adopted a number of ways of organizing ourselves and maintaining a regular programme. derive is here to provide artists with a quality engagement with fully or partially formed interests, and to expand the process of sharing as a fruitful way of engaging with other practitioners.

[www.toflowtobededuced.com](http://www.toflowtobededuced.com)

- **Hafsah Naib**

Over the last five years of practice Hafsah's professional encounters have been exploring the nature of art and the role of the artist through the production, exhibition and publication of a diverse range of work.

Her making is informed by an interaction and exchange between herself as artist and participant and which results in the creation of contemporary work and is interested in how this approach translates within the spaces of the school classroom, the hospital ward or the art gallery as examples of spaces where identities are seen to operate on fixed positions. Recent work *TV*, 2009 was made in collaboration with individual participants who were interviewed about their relationship to their Television and which were then 'broadcast' on their donated television as part of an installation.

- **Joel Porter**

Joel Porter studied MA Media Arts at Manchester Metropolitan University (2007) within MIRIAD (Manchester Institute for Research and Innovation in Art and Design), following his graduation from West Surrey College of Art and Design, BA (Hons) Photography in 1994.

Recent projects also include: *Instant* (Touchstone Gallery, Rochdale, 2009), *Reflective Stories* (Holden Gallery, MMU, Manchester, 2008), *Art Takes the Streets* (Valencia, 2008), *Urban Screens* (Manchester, 2007), *The World Is My Imagination, Media, Model, Miniature* (CUBE Gallery, Manchester, 2007).

- **Maria Gabriella Ruban**

Maria Gabriella Ruban is a Manchester-based filmmaker with a background in arts events and management. Recent work includes producing videos and short fiction films for a variety of organisations including Creative Tourist, Manchester Camerata and First Light.

- **Alison Kennedy**

Alison Kennedy is currently working as a Project Assistant at Cornerhouse. Having taken part in the LiveWire programme for three years, she has personal experience in how projects work and what opportunities are available to young people having participated in such activities.

- **Marisa Draper**

Marisa Draper is Cornerhouse's Young People's Programme Manager. She specialises in facilitating creative filmmaking, art and technology workshops that enable young people to take ownership of their ideas and work within a team to learn new skills and realise their potential.



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