

One Year at
Cornerhouse
2007/08

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One Year at Cornerhouse

Cornerhouse is unique. There is no other cultural centre in Manchester that can match it for its programme of contemporary art exhibitions, film screenings, commissions, collaborative research, education projects and cultural events.

It is the most popular contemporary art gallery in Manchester. During the last twelve months, the galleries have achieved record attendances, with visitor numbers rising by almost a quarter. It's little wonder: by working with national and international curators, Cornerhouse brings the best in contemporary visual art to the region. At Cornerhouse, audiences, artists and filmmakers come together to experience and debate cultural practice, and it's also here that the critics and artists of tomorrow get their first taste of the creative industries.

It is largely thanks to Cornerhouse that Manchester audiences enjoy an intelligent and credible cinemas programme. With around 3,800 screenings every year, Cornerhouse cinemas show everything from hard-to-see international film releases to specialist film festivals.

Cornerhouse is much more than a leading arts venue. Almost half a million people pass through its doors every year. It brings cutting-edge culture to the streets of Manchester. It collaborates with organisations as diverse as Manchester International Festival and the BBC to bring newly commissioned work to national and international attention, with its commissions, premiered in Manchester, often touring all over the world. It is a leading distributor of art, architecture and design books. It is a cultural and social hub located in the heart of the city. And it trains, educates and inspires children, young people and adults through an education programme that is both comprehensive and innovative.

Always with an eye on the future, Cornerhouse continues to grow, both physically and in reputation. Plans are in place to expand the building, while the Cornerhouse team continues to commission original research and pan-regional projects that will change the way we consume and consider art, film and culture. But for now, read on to find out more about Cornerhouse's achievements during 2007-2008.

The year at a glance

Over 470,000 people visited Cornerhouse

Gallery visitors went up 23%

8 exhibitions staged, including 6 UK premieres

49 artists exhibited

3,800 film screenings per year

411 education events

3.1 million web visits

Over 44,000 books sold

Highlights

Outsider Art Historic and newly commissioned media artworks run alongside the world's leading conference on urban display screens

Imagine life before social technologies. No Facebook to share family snaps. No webcams, instant messages, SMS or email with which to keep tabs on friends and family. In fact, the only way to keep in touch is by post or telephone. A startling artwork at Cornerhouse last autumn recreated just such a world. In doing so, it forced contemporary audiences to question their relationship to the technology that now surrounds and informs our lives.

Hole in Space, part of the exhibition Outside the Box, was an extraordinary public broadcast. First staged over three nights in November 1980, unsuspecting shoppers in New York and Los Angeles suddenly found themselves staring at each other via two large screens. Not only that, they found that the on-screen, life-size images could see and hear them in real time; they could talk to each other as if they were standing on the same street together. In this pre-internet era, the installation caused a sensation. Before long, people were queuing at either screen to speak to friends and family they hadn't seen in years. Hole In Space had bridged the vast distance between two cities on opposite coasts of America.

Cornerhouse, using original footage and working with artists Kit Galloway and Sherrie Rabinowitz, re-staged Hole in Space in Manchester at the end of 2007. The work was part of a wider exhibition that traced three decades of interactive public art and, alongside this and another historic artwork by acclaimed conceptual artist, Jenny Holzer, Outside the Box included new work commissioned especially for the show. The Beijing-based artists Jiang Haiqing and Fu Yu created The V.I.P Room, a large scale audio-visual installation operated by visitors, while Anne-Marie Schleiner took to the streets (on skates, armed with a laptop and helmet-mounted projector) to trade experiences with the clusters of skater kids who regularly gather outside Urbis. Outside the Box is typical of the collaborative approach that Cornerhouse takes when curating its artistic programme. Here, Cornerhouse curators worked with digital arts agency, folly, to commission The V.I.P Room, while Schleiner's work was organised in partnership with Urbis.

At the same time as the exhibition, Cornerhouse hosted the international Urban Screens Conference. This annual event brings together specialists who produce or curate content for big, outdoor display screens, from LED and LCD displays to plasma screens and building projections. Described by critics as 'highly enjoyable and memorable... as substantial as it is accessible,' Outside the Box was as rewarding for the general public as it was for the media experts who'd travelled from across the world to attend the Urban Screens Conference.

Outside the Box ran at Cornerhouse and venues across Manchester from 14 September -11 November 2007. Urban Screens Manchester took place from 11-14 October 2007, www.manchesterurbanscreens.org.uk

From Silos to Shrek Ears Original research that has the potential to change the way the creative and cultural sector does business

The relationship between artist, arts organisation and audience has always been complex. But over the past decade, media technologies have challenged the relationship between producer and consumer as never before. 'The web is changing our world, creating a culture in which more people than ever can participate, share and collaborate,' says Charles Leadbeater, a leading authority on innovation and creativity. 'Ideas take life when they are shared.' Leadbeater's argument is simple: in this environment, the old ways of doing business simply aren't up to the job. Traditional hierarchies are out and collaborative working is in.

During 2007, Cornerhouse led a research project that explored the new models of leadership emerging as a result of this fluctuating cultural landscape. It joined forces with a UK-wide network of Cross Art Venues (known as the CAV Network), that, like Cornerhouse, combine digital and non-digital arts, independent film and popular social spaces. Funded by the Cultural Leadership programme, the network included Bristol's Watershed, the Showroom in Sheffield, FACT in Liverpool, Nottingham's Broadway and Tyneside Cinema. Together, the CAV Network undertook an unblinking analysis of the management, structure and leadership within their own and each other's organisations. They looked to companies as diverse as Google, Pixar and Adobe for inspiration and commissioned three leading thinkers - Charles Leadbeater, John Knell and Graham Leicester - to see what lessons could be learned.

'Our argument,' says John Knell, co-founder of the Intelligence Agency, 'is that both arts organisations and artists need to embrace more enthusiastically the task of engaging the public. Without strong leadership in these communities, personalisation of the arts will be slow.' Against this background, the resulting research report made some startling recommendations. Risk-taking, it argued, should be encouraged. A culture of blame binned. Top down management replaced by a far more fluid structure. The report's suggestions ranged from the easy-to-swallow to the more radical. Alongside creating new ways of enabling staff to share information, for example, the report praised Google's famous '20%' policy. Here, employees are encouraged to spend a fifth of their time at work on their own projects. As a policy for innovation, it's yielded impressive results: it's via this research time that Google Earth and Gmail were born.

Despite the report's ambition, many of those within the CAV Network are either already working in new ways or have committed to do so. In fact, Cornerhouse has gone as far as to devise a completely new programming strategy and organisational structure, one that takes the report as its starting point. 'We believe that if we share resources and ideas we can achieve much more than if we act alone,' says Dave Moutrey, Chief Executive at Cornerhouse. 'The new strategy will be introduced across the organisation as part of a five-year action-based research programme and our approach will position us at the forefront of developing practice in the creative and cultural sector.' It seems that this is one research report that isn't destined to gather dust in a filing cabinet.

From Silos to Shrek Ears: Personalisation and the Future of Successful Cultural Leadership can be downloaded from www.cornerhouse.org/fromsilostoshrekears

Students on Film The UK's leading student film festival returns to Manchester for its 14th year

Originally conceived by Cornerhouse, exposures is the UK's foremost student film and moving image festival. It attracts support from some of the biggest names in the industry and has top local screenwriter, Paul Abbott as its patron. exposures is an inclusive and diverse affair: it crosses the creative, cultural, commercial and academic sectors and remains the only regular national competitive festival for student film and moving image.

exposures runs for four days, with screenings, special events and awards showcasing work by Britain's most promising emerging filmmakers. With 2007's judges including Menhaj Huda (producer of acclaimed British drama, Kidulthood), the documentary director Kim Longinotto and TV and film producer Sally Hibbin, last year's competition was fierce, with over 600 entries received from all over the country. On top of screening shorts, experimental film, documentaries, drama and animation, exposures gives budding producers and directors the chance to hone their skills, courtesy of a series of workshops and networking sessions. It's also a chance for emerging filmmakers to keep abreast of changes in the industry: right from the start, exposures has run masterclasses on digital technology, internet distribution and computer generated imagery.

Running parallel to the main event, the underexposed strand of the festival really is for and by young people. The day is handed over Cornerhouse's LiveWire management team of 14-19 year olds, who select and programme films, organise events and produce an awards ceremony. Looking forward to 2008, exposures will celebrate its 15th birthday with a new collaboration with Urbis and a special gallery-based moving image programme.

exposures UK Student Film Festival ran from 3-6 December 2007. More information on the 2008 festival can be found at www.exposuresfestival.co.uk

An Experiment in Education Collaborative research that is changing the way arts organisations deliver education projects

Virtual Lives sounds like a dream project: you're given £5,000 and told to create your own media arts project. There are few caveats and no boxes to be ticked. You're given support as and when you need it, without being told what to do by the organisation that commissioned you. With this in mind, you'd be forgiven for thinking that the young people who took part in the Virtual Lives project had it easy. They didn't.

Virtual Lives was a pan-regional project run by Cornerhouse, FACT (Liverpool), Liverpool John Moores University and Lancaster based digital arts agency, folly. The project, funded by the Enquire programme, engaged twelve people aged 14-19 and did indeed give them £5,000 to create a media arts project of their choosing. But the group were set some serious challenges. They were told that the final product had to be both professional and ambitious. The budget had to cover everything from travel and materials to equipment hire and technical support. Communication was far from straightforward. The group was spread across the Northwest, with the wider project team including staff from participating organisations, artists and teachers.

Over the course of the project, the young people agreed an idea and then commissioned artist Dan Fox. Together, they made two interactive, wireless body suits that the wearer can operate to create sound and visuals (in effect, the wearer becomes a wireless VJ-DJ). What is particularly impressive is that the group produced every aspect of the finished suits, from internal circuits to audiovisual content. In fact, the standard of the resulting artwork, *Body Language*, was so high it has since toured to other venues.

What's particularly interesting about Virtual Lives is its dual purpose. Alongside the creation of a new artwork, it was a chance to test a collaborative approach to education. No single arts organisation, for example, would have been able to sustain a project of this geographic spread, scale and timeline. Working together, however, the project partners were able to develop a better understanding of how young people use media technologies and what kind of environment they find most conducive to learning. That environment was one where the participants were given a voice and the chance to direct the shape, pace and content of the project. It empowered them, helped them develop wider life skills and created a deeper level of engagement with both subject matter and the participating arts organisations.

The results of this particular experiment speak for themselves. Virtual Lives resulted in the production of a high quality artwork, constituted a significant experience for the young people involved and aided participating organisations' own professional development. On top of that, Virtual Lives contributed to a research project that has attracted the attention of top policymakers across the UK. Cornerhouse and its partners hope that this research will go on to change the way arts organisations throughout Britain consider and deliver education projects for young people.

Virtual Lives was part of Cornerhouse's award-winning participant-led programme, LiveWire
www.livewire-manchester.com

The Year in Pictures

Chosil Kil, *Living With Andis*, 2007
(exhibition: *Living With Andis*)

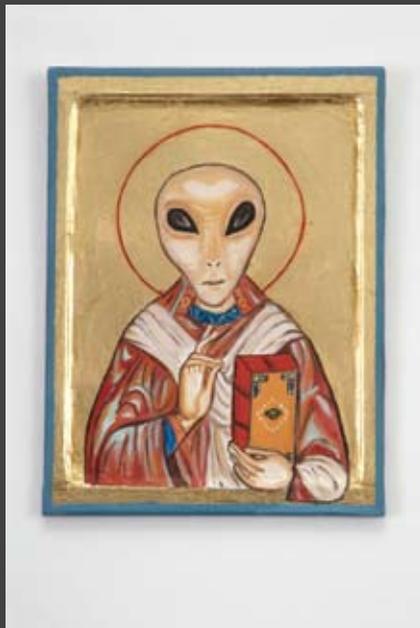


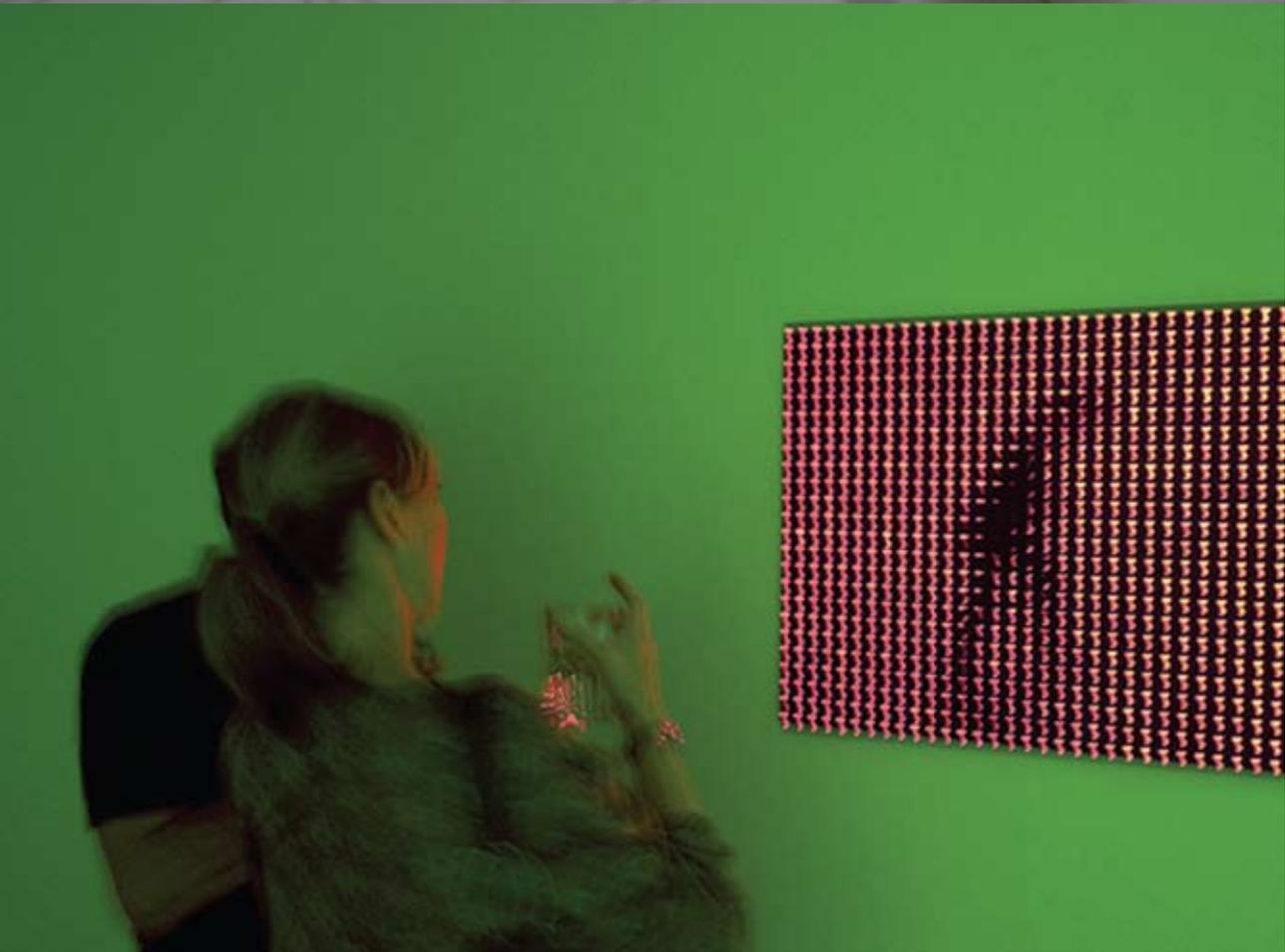


(Top) Sibylle Bergemann,
Kirsten, Hoppenrade, 1975
(exhibition: Do Not Refreeze)

(Bottom) Camilla Kesterton,
Census Hopeful, 2007
(exhibition: Bloomberg New
Contemporaries 2007)

(Opposite) Daniel Canogar,
Untitled (After Pozzo), 2007
(exhibition: Outside The Box)





(Opposite top) 8gg, proposal for The V.I.P. Room, 2007 (exhibition: Outside The Box)

(Opposite bottom) Jim Campbell, Ambiguous Icons, 2002-03 (exhibition: Outside The Box)

(Top) Pilar Albarracín, La Cabra, 2001 (exhibition: Metrópolis TV Lounge)

(Left) Juneau projects, Honorable Ordinaries, 2007 (part of The Bigger Picture National Commissions)

Film Stills:
(Left hand side, from top to bottom)
The Darjeeling Limited,
No Country for Old Men,
This is England.

(Right)
The Orphanage

(Pages 15-16)
Film Still: Control





Film Still: The Diving Bell
and the Butterfly



Radio studio in Cornerhouse galleries (Exhibition: Artradio)
(Opposite) Virtual Lives Project Launch





(Left) Filming Riot Gear for Rollartista in Cathedral Gardens (Exhibition: Outside the Box)

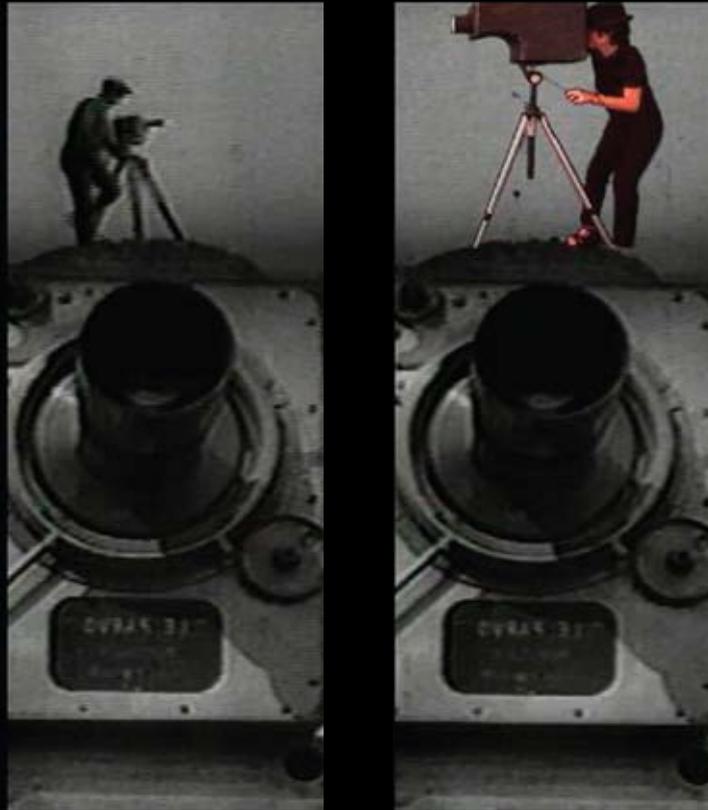
(Right top) exposures 07 Best of the Fest award ceremony, group shot

(Right middle) Dancing in the streets of Manchester: participant to susan pui san lok's DIY Ballroom / Live (part of The Bigger Picture National Commissions)

(Right bottom) In Conversation with the curator in Cornerhouse galleries (exhibition: Do Not Refreeze)



Perry Bard, 2008: Man With a
Movie Camera, 2007 (part of
The Bigger Picture National
Commissions)



What We Do

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Art Cornerhouse is Manchester's leading contemporary visual arts venue. Its talented team of curators collaborate with artists, critics and curators from all over the world. Together, they brought eight exhibitions, six UK premieres and eight live contemporary art events to Manchester during the past twelve months.

The year began with a startling exhibition from the former German Democratic Republic, *Do Not Refreeze: German Photography Behind the Berlin Wall*. Cornerhouse went on to play its part in the hugely successful Manchester International Festival, commissioning a brand new artwork by Rachel Davies, *The Assembly*, which had its world premiere in Manchester. Elsewhere, as part of the Mayflies project, Cornerhouse worked with colleagues across the North of England to mentor young curators, while two exhibitions, *Left but a Trace* and *Chosil Jill: Living with Andis* were both co-organised by Cornerhouse and curator Tereza Kotyk. During the year, the organisation also took part in major international events including the photographic festival, *Look 07* and *Bloomberg New Contemporaries*.

Cornerhouse has long championed art forms that exploit new technology, mass communication and digital media. This year, the organisation commissioned four works for *The Bigger Picture National Commissions*, which were broadcast on the BBC's network of outdoor screens, and converted its galleries into a public access radio station for *Art Radio*. *Metropolis TV Lounge*, meanwhile, was an exhibition that screened some of the best episodes from Spain's cult cultural TV show. Perhaps most importantly, Cornerhouse worked on a series of digital artworks premiered as part of the international conference, *Urban Screens* (see the feature on *Outside the Box*). With this amount of activity, it's unsurprising that the number of gallery visitors has increased by 23% over the past year.

(Below) Young People work with artist Dan Fox on the *Virtual Lives* project (Right) *Artradio* exhibition



Film Cornerhouse's independent film theatre is the only one of its kind in Manchester and one of only a handful in the region. It is here that cinephiles can view new films and re-releases, screenings of experimental films and shorts, film classics, documentaries, animation, unique archive material and avant-garde and foreign language films. 25 different titles are screened in its three cinemas every month. Each month also sees at least one film festival or specialist season, such as ¡Viva! Spanish & Latin American Film Festival, a long-running annual affair that brings new and unseen film to UK audiences and subsequently tours throughout the country.

The team working behind such a broad programme understand the demands of its diverse and culturally informed audience. They know that visitors come to Cornerhouse for more than a passive, anonymous cinematic experience. So, unlike the centrally programmed multiplex, Cornerhouse has the flexibility to book individual screenings and specialist films and it is for this reason that the organisation also offers regular introduced screenings and Q&As. Here, film fans meet respected critics, academics, directors and producers who offer insights into the work about to be screened. During the past twelve months, guests included Juan Antonio Bayona (Director, *The Orphanage*), Francisco Vargas (Director, *El Violin*), Matt Greenhalgh (Scriptwriter, *Control*) and Sarah Gavron (Director, *Brick Lane*).

All in all, Cornerhouse plays a crucial role in screening, promoting and contributing to the Northwest's film and moving image culture. So it's little surprise that the numbers of cinemagoers attending Cornerhouse continues to grow. This year, visitor numbers were up by almost 8% to just over 141,000.



(Left) Cornerhouse's Cinema
(Right) Director Anton Corbijn (*Control*)

Education Education is at the heart of everything Cornerhouse does.

Its innovative and inclusive education programme targets both formal and informal learners and is widely considered to be among the best in the country.

With over 300 education events staged over the past year, Cornerhouse's schools and colleges programme continues to innovate. The flagship initiative, *Projector*, uses foreign and British film as a novel tool to teach languages, while teachers benefit from tailored practical sessions designed to help them incorporate digital media into their everyday classes.

Elsewhere, Cornerhouse had significant success in engaging disadvantaged and isolated young people. *LiveWire*, an informal education project that allows young people to lead and make their own art and film, attracted over 1,000 students, while the project website received 60,000 unique users. With the depth and range of courses and events on offer, it's clear why over 11,000 people took part in Cornerhouse's education projects last year.

Books Cornerhouse Publications is a leading distributor of contemporary visual arts publications. With 2,600 titles available, it supplies a niche market worldwide and has, over the past twelve months, sold 44,000 books. It offers a complete sales and distribution service for over 100 publishers, galleries and museums across the UK and Europe. The clients who choose to put their trust in Cornerhouse's personalised distribution and support service include Arnolfini Publishing, Artangel, BALTIC, Hayward Publishing, The Henry Moore Institute, Ikon Gallery, the Institute of Contemporary Arts, JRPIRingier, Modern Art Oxford, Photoworks, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts and Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König.

Cornerhouse Publications does more than simply sell books. It provides representation, marketing, publicity and warehousing for its clients. It runs its own comprehensive online bookstore and also sells via Amazon. It has a network of sales representatives stretching across the UK, Europe and the Far East, works directly with wholesalers and distributors in the US and represents its clients at the Frankfurt and London International Book Fairs, the biggest such trade fairs in the world.

The publications arm of Cornerhouse also provides unique support to artists, curators, critics, writers and publishers. It is one of only a handful of specialist outlets in the region and, alongside selling hard-to-get books, provides advice on publishing to clients, arts organisations and the public. A written guide to the publishing process is available free of charge and, for those interested in the industry, this kind of advice is invaluable.



exposures 07 Corona Extra Best of the Fest Party

Hub Cornerhouse is Manchester's creative hub. It is a place to socialise, share ideas, eat, drink and do business. It's not unusual to see artists, filmmakers, writers and entrepreneurs in the café, shops or bar and it is this network of public spaces that means that Cornerhouse is more than just an art gallery or arthouse cinema.

During 2007, Cornerhouse continued its popular food and entertainment deals, many of which regularly sell out. The Sunday Breakfast Club combines a classic movie with a full English breakfast for just £9.20, while the Reel Deal is a weekly meal and cinema ticket offer that's followed up by the popular Monday Quiz. Elsewhere, free WiFi attracts connected customers, while the café is a popular venue for book launches. And Cornerhouse also has two shops. The original, ground floor outlet stocks a unique range of cards, magazines, gifts and specialist books, while the Gallery Bookshop (on the second floor) sells contemporary visual arts publications, catalogues, other media and a range of new and popular titles distributed by Cornerhouse Publications.

Projects Cornerhouse introduces casual visitors to its creative programme through a series of inspiring, changing exhibitions in the bar, stairwells, walls and even on the windows. These mini shows give up-and-coming artists the chance to exhibit at a major, public gallery and to interact with Cornerhouse's audience. Highlights from this year include Bitmapping, where new media collective CMYK invited the public to contribute mobile phone images that were exhibited throughout the café and bar and Navigating the Manchester Art Scene, an evolving series of network diagrams painted directly onto the walls of Cornerhouse from The Doorstep Collective.

Online The organisation's online profile continued to grow, with 3.1 million visits over the past twelve months. Cornerhouse Publications offers a complete online retail service for its customers, and visitors will soon be able to buy film and events tickets online. Cornerhouse is also collating its resources, including exhibition and study guides, film notes, reports and blogs, which are now available free of charge via the website. This resource archive – at www.cornerhouse.org/resources - is extremely popular, with the study guides for teachers being used across the country (and even by Spanish teachers in France).

(Below) Made Backwards, Dean Walton, exposures Corona Extra Audience Award Winner 2007. (Below left) Cornerhouse website



Trustees Lindsay Brooks, Dr. Adam Brown,
Jim Chapman, Peter Fell, John Hampton, Karl
Jackson, Dr. Eric Knudsen, Peter Morrison, Graham Nicholson, Philip Shapiro,
Andrew Simcock, Dr. Andrew Willis

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Where to find us Cornerhouse
70 Oxford Street
Manchester M1 5NH

Box office: 0161 200 1500
www.cornerhouse.org



Funders



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Susie Stubbs
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Registered address
Greater Manchester Arts
Centre Limited, 70 Oxford St,
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