

hi Melissa, hi Marina

I very much feel I would like to make some sort of contribution or presentation for WE (Not I) . I'm sorry for not following up with this before!

So much of what the event proposes to discuss is so closely entwined with my practice and my interests (and my life too I guess). I'm just not sure what to do yet... And perhaps some of this comes down to my default mode of operation being collaborative (whether with Tom or others). Anyway, I feel that given all this, I really should find a way to say or do something.

It's a shame I wasn't able to make it along to the planning meeting. I think this would have helped me focus my ideas as to what to do. However, given that my default way of working is collaborative , or reactive in some way, one thought I do have, is that I may wish to present something with someone not on the list of invitees as yet - would this be ok?

Joanne

P__ will be offering 1-2-1 mentoring sessions to four artists on Friday 24th April, for 1 hour between 13:00 – 16:00. To apply, please complete this application form and return to Hannahm@balticmill.com. We will aim to notify applicants by Wednesday 22nd April.

Please answer the following question in max. 200 words:

How would you like to use the mentoring session, what would you like to focus on and what would you like to get from it?

I have been working as an artist for two decades and that in itself feels something of an achievement. However, it's a career that lacks certainty; I can be no more sure as to the next 20 years than I was (which I wasn't) about the previous 20. It's this that makes me wish to apply for a mentoring session. I'm motivated both by the ways in which I might personally benefit and also by the broader conversation that is to be had about the structure and progression of an artist's career, and how this is articulated within and through the institutions and mechanisms that support, exhibit, disseminate or discuss contemporary art. As someone who might (possibly?) be termed a mid career artist, and one who's a lecturer too, I'm usually on the other side of the mentoring fence – and this feels like a rare opportunity to reflect on what I have been doing for the last 20 years and to consider where and how this might develop. I think P__'s role as a writer and curator and editor is useful or relevant here too. It's a role that's different to my own in its function rather than its specific activities – and as such I'd welcome his perspective on the particularities of an artist's career.

hi S___

Thanks for your email and the invitation to contribute to the publication and sorry I didn't get chance to talk to you on fri - but I actually hadn't had chance to think about it at that point anyway!

I admit I do feel sad not to be included in an exhibition which plots a history of women artists in Glasgow. Studying, living and working in Glasgow for nearly 20 years formed my identity as an artist and shaped my practice - and I feel this all the more strongly now I find myself living in another city where (as yet) I have no context.

I have also sometimes felt my identity as a woman artist is seen as compromised because I work in collaboration with Tom. I get this feeling because I don't get asked to show my work (which is of course also Tom's work) in exhibitions etc. such as this which look at women's art practices. To me this has always felt a misunderstanding of the processes of collaboration and its relationship to the identities of the people working within it... For me, working collaboratively came out of a desire to challenge ideas of authorship /subjectivity/identity (not that I would claim that that is what the work is all about) , things which seem central to a feminist project, so it has been frustrating to feel outside of certain conversations.

I realise that the exhibition is not claiming to be anything other than what it is - work by artists , who are women, who live in/near Glasgow or lived there before death . However, of course, it will also be seen as much more than this. It comes at a time, when Glasgow is increasingly formalising and setting down its recent art history. This is of course something that anyone who has been involved in this wants to contribute to - and the history needs to be and should be contested. (Tom and me are actually thinking around this for "A New Path" walking tour in Garnethill). As the curator of this exhibition it is completely right that you can choose the parameters and terms by which to include artists. There are a number of artists living in Glasgow I would have included, that you haven't and vice versa...

So, to return to your invitation, I'm not sure as yet whether to contribute to the writer's pages. I do write, (sometimes under my own name, more often under collaborative authorship) - but I am not a writer and I feel my presence in those pages would need some explanation, or clarification. I think it needs to be clear why I am not exhibiting as an artist.

Finally, I just wanted to say how I appreciated your email before we left saying how important our work and presence has been in the city - and I hope you don't see this email as antagonistic, it's really not meant to be! I apologise as well if it seems to somewhat unnecessarily make a meal of things - its just that I find increasingly, as an artist (and a woman!!) that I have to try and say what I need to say... I'm hoping also, that writing this will help

me clarify whether to accept your invitation or not - and then for the right reasons. I'll try and respond one way or the other soon.

best wishes,

Joanne

ps The tweet about not participating in shows that exclude men was just one of a number of inspiring things from Jo Spence's conditions for re showing her work in "Not our Class"- have you seen it? Its published by Studio Voltaire , Louise Shelley, who I see you have also invited to write was also involved.

Dear Louise (or should I say Victoria)

I thought I would continue the conversation by writing to you, although it is not in any specific sense a reply to anything you have written to me. To some extent we both know this is a pretend conversation, as it is after all, as we've discussed, primarily a vehicle to say the things one needs to say, or perhaps, more particularly, to find a way of saying those things in a way that feels appropriately direct and revealing. The epistolary form I am adopting here offers the possibility of such writing perhaps precisely because it is bound by conventions to the degree that it functions as a literary genre in its own right.

It's perhaps a curious way to go about writing and does, I realise, contain within it something of a paradox. I am talking about finding a voice to say what I wish to say, and to say it clearly and directly and yet it seems that my means to do this is to adopt a voice (or voices) that I acknowledge as belonging to others. This paradox in turn reveals one of the things I want to talk about. So, the means through which I will do this, here in this letter, will mirror the content of that which I wish to talk about.

I've been thinking a lot about mimicry. It's obvious that this is something that occurs within my work (as well as our work), both in terms of the forms and conventions through which the work makes itself manifest and then, also, quite specifically in the writing and texts or scripts that often constitute part of our larger projects. It's perhaps one of those words that one fastens onto from time to time as a mechanism through which to deliver a finely tooled illumination of the wider processes of thought and interest around what it is one does.

What surprises me is that this word mimicry actually only just occurred to me as a useful or relevant way to describe what we (or perhaps just I) was doing – and in fact had been doing for quite a long time.

Going back 25 years to my undergraduate degree and I was attempting to slip into and out of or around the modes of art-making that I saw were expected or accepted. This act was motivated both by my desire to fully inhabit a (or perhaps another) subject position and my own ambivalence as to the integrity of these approaches to do what their "artistic producers" purported they did do. My final degree show was not mine, it was a fiction, albeit one that I had successfully submerged myself within to the extent that I could no longer see the edges by the time it was presented.

My collaboration with Tom was a similar sort of negotiation, one born out of fascination and frustration with my own uncertainty as to my authorial status, and what as a young woman who wished to be an artist, I should or could say. The collaboration began as an act of mimicry. This manifest itself through the copies or perhaps pastiches I made of his work (works that were, in their way, also an attempt to consider the parameters of subjectivity that can sometimes seem to frame art-making). Around this time I was also writing with found writing, creating first person disclosures out of psychology and anatomy texts.

Twenty years later, these works provided the starting point for "An unsuccessful proposal for the 1994 MFA interim exhibition", a series of retrospective semi-fictionalised hypothetical projects written to accompany Studio 58, an exhibition at

Glasgow School of Art in 2012 that mapped a post WWII history of women artists in Glasgow

I'm tempted to create a further and perhaps somewhat inconvenient digression in which I tell you about my contribution to my school's sixth form magazine, in which I think I bewildered my fellow editorial team with an out of time approach to satire slash pastiche that was at odds with the general pitch and tone of the rest of the contributions.

The digression reveals itself to be worth it, as even now, (and here I slip from the remote safety of the epistolary mode into one more redolent of Kevin Spacey, as he turns to camera to confide in his audience) - as even now, in the process of writing this I realise that this autobiographical aside, reveals a continuity in my approaches that characterise, not only my practice as an artist, but also probably something more fundamental about the construction and performance of my subject position or identity Or the psychologies that underpin or form that.

Neatly, again (fortunately) this allows me to return to mimicry (although just the word, for now, if not the idea). It's also an opportunity to indulge in more personal disclosure. Disclosure was a word that Tom plucked from Chris Kraus's and Sylvere Lotringer's dialogical introduction to their history of semiotext(e), "The History of Capitalism". This word, or its function as vehicle for further thought became a source of focus or obsession even during 2011 and 2012, as I tried both to negotiate my hunch that my 19 year relationship was over, whilst simultaneously writing a text with my soon to be ex partner that spoke of our personal and creative histories and relationships within and through a community of artists in Glasgow that coincided with the start and ultimately end of our own relationship. We'd also only just recently divorced ourselves from Glasgow too of course - something we were both still coming to terms with.

It was a complicated time. We'd bought a three storey 1971 town house (40 years old at the time, the same age as myself). It was a house with open plan living spaces and wall to wall windows and for which we had aspirational architectural plans, including a studio on the ground floor opening onto the garden. Unsurprisingly, I'm somewhat obsessed by the 2014 film Exhibition (although I've yet to see it) which an artist couple played by Viv Albertine and Liam Gillick act out the end of their relationship in a modernist house). Back in 2012, I was still living in my own modernist house with Tom and desperate to do something, but not knowing how or what, I signed up to Guardian Soulmates - an act that felt equal parts shameful, empowering and bewildering.

Two and half years on of online dating, and I have accessed spaces, languages and behaviours that I now find fascinate me to an extent that I regard it, as whilst not in the same league as or undertaking psychotherapy or a PhD has been an experiences that has shifted things around in quite a fundamental way. (I should add at this point that it remains somehow within and off the process in itself, with no relationships successfully jumping the species divide to become part of my so called real life.) It's also been a place which has allowed and enabled me to write, although I have as yet to resolve what to do, if anything with these tens of thousands of unpublished words.

It's a curious place; one that both compels and repels. There's misogyny of the worst kind, in that it may well remain invisible to those to whom it primarily shouldn't, by which I mean both the originators and recipients of these messages. A lot of men talk about chemistry and many go so far as to reveal their Myers Briggs personality type.

I'm ENFP on the cusp with ENFJ. I've got a three page summary of my personality type, or rather , given my borderline status, I've got two three page summaries of my personality types. I can take my pick. I'm also a Gemini, and as per the OkCupid parlance, "it's fun to think about".

I'm both an ideas person and a people person. I see everything as a part of cosmic whole. As a kid I did a lot of imaginary things. It's like acting. I have strong sometimes surprising values and viewpoints and I tend to try and use my social skills and contacts to persuade others gently (though enthusiastically) of the rightness of my views. I want to help people and to be liked and admired by other people on both an individual and a humanitarian level. I have a strong sense of ethics and fairness and I can be a little too aware of an imbalance. I am a perfect mimic. I can be someone else and get enormous insight about that person, and I want to tell them about it.

In 2012 myself and Tom made "The default exchange adjusted". There'd been a lot of dumb works, works with mouths gaping , saying nothing, but this one spoke for itself, it had a voice. In fact it had two. This has been followed by a series of vocal works: objects that talk, and mainly about themselves, at least in as much as they articulate the contexts of their production or circulation. "Is your tesserae really necessary" spoke with two voices from two mouths of the histories and relationships of artists in Glasgow. It was a resolution of sorts of the fraught work begun in the 1971 townhouse. "DOES THE IT STICK" interwove the histories and agendas of public and private funding for art in Newcastle. Most recently "Shall we name it our shame or is our shame the same as it" was, however, silent.

Shame sits within the list alongside mimicry and disclosure as a word that, for me, signposts modes of being or enacting in others through or from the making of art . These are words that seem important to me at this moment and perhaps always were, although its just that I'm only now putting a name to these things. There are things here about voice, and therefore also about authorship and identity (all of which, in an inevitable sort of way, feels both vague and important). I could make another formally inconvenient autobiographical detour here and talk about shyness or stuttering but I won't. I could talk about typographical glitches or repetition or reiteration, but I won't.

There are other words I could talk about, but these are words of a different order that have arrived, delivered intact, and that rather than acting as tools, provoke, for me at least, the need to break these words down into their constituent parts, to decode them, to understand how they are used and then what this really indicates. Collaboration is one such word. Feminism is another. I also have a particular interest in the rise of the word research and how it is now used and, of course, misused. There are also words that arrived ready paired up and often preceded by the definite article. The creative economy. The accelerated academy. These provide external points of departure for further thinking and embody (as much as something can be embodied through words) the future promise of all my frustrated parallel careers that will never be.

I'll finish with a final fictive flourish. I logged into E:Vision earlier to see if you'd completed a report from the March supervision meeting – the one we had with Mark in Bethnal Green. I realise its more than a few weeks ago now that we met, but there were a lot of useful things we discussed ... which I hope you can remember in more detail than me. Also, I was wondering if, as April is now nearly over, if one of our less formal meetings would suffice for this month's record?

See you soon – and thank-you.

Joanne