

# [*the*] EVIDENCE

**Version 2, August 2008:**

[*part*]: “*on Excess*”

[*an*] Entry point:

Hunger:

The Pigeon and The Egg:

Mother Religious:

Any Cunt Will Do:

Mirror:

Relative Excess:

Curating Knowledge...The Stupidity of the

Signifier Collectivises:

Apatite:

Untitled Merchandise (trade urn):

Stereo:

Carmelo Bene’s Untimely Revolt:

Corvée:

7pm:

Liam Cole interviewed by Susan Donam:

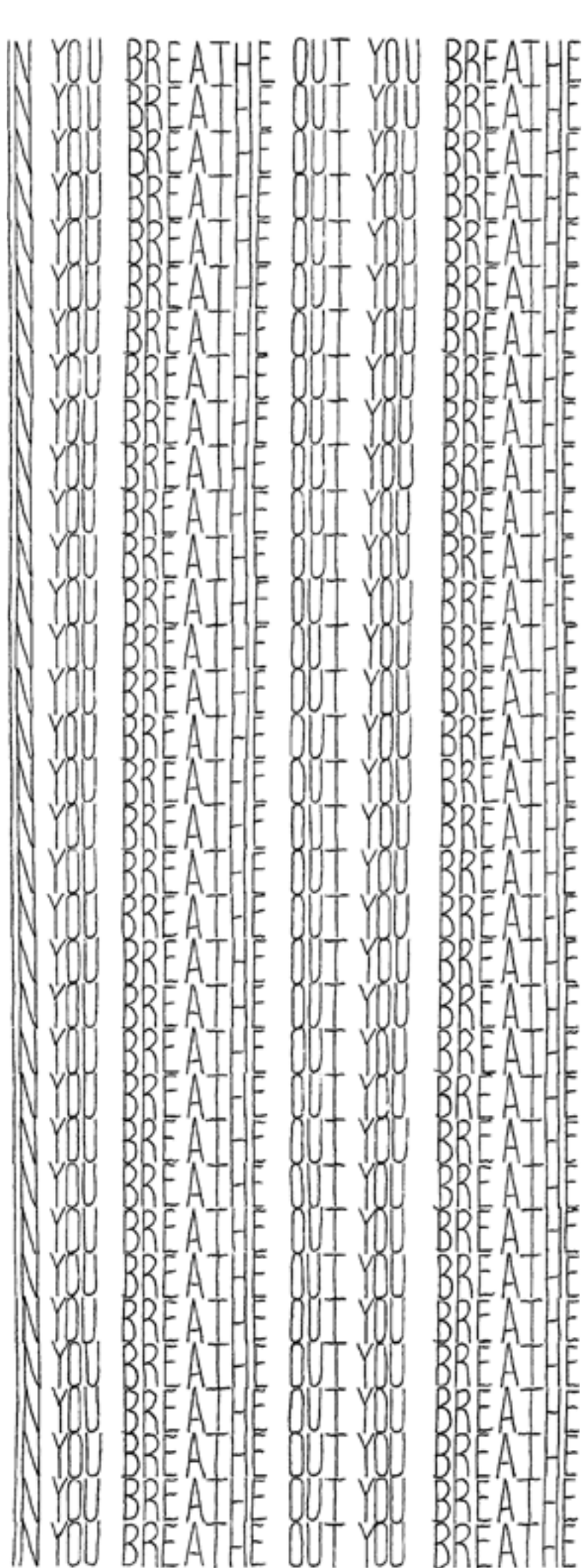
Ryan, Annie and Ali:

Susi McCloud Part 4: Towards the End of the

Wedding Ceremony:

Pageant:

Of Possibility:



*You Breathe In, You Breathe Out:* biro on A4 office paper/  
performance; series ongoing: 2008 - **Chris Shaw**

## ***Version 2 [whole]*** **“on *Excess*”**

*[an]* Entry point: **Natasha Rees.**  
*Hunger:* **Sam Porritt.**  
*The Pigeon and The Egg:* **Rennard Milner.**  
*Mother Religious:* **Josephine Wood.**  
*Any Cunt Will Do:* **Clunie Reid.**  
*Untitled:* **Simona Brinkmann.**  
*Mirror:* **Clare Kenny.**  
*Relative Excess:* **Julika Gittner.**  
*Curating Knowledge...The Stupidity of the*  
*Signifier Collectivises:* **Enda de Burca.**  
*Apatite:* **Ana Genoves.**  
*Untitled Merchandise (trade urn):*  
**James Richards.**  
*Stereo:* **Christopher Grieves.**  
*Carmelo Bene's Untimely Revolt:*  
**Fann Paul Clinton.**  
*Corvée:* **Terence McCormack.**  
*7pm:* **Richard Battersby.**  
*Liam Cole interviewed by Susan Donam:*  
**Susan Donam.**  
*Ryan, Annie and Ali:* **Dallas Seitz.**  
*Susi McCloud Part 4: Towards the end of the*  
*Wedding Ceremony:* **Tina Schimansky.**  
*Pageant:* **Jacopo Miliani.**  
*Untitled:* **Clare Kenny.**  
*Of Possibility:* **Ilsa Colsell.**

### **Contributor biographies.**

***Jacket PROJECT:*** *You Breathe In, You Breathe Out* - 2008: biro on A4 office paper/ performance; series ongoing. **Chris Shaw.**





## [an] Entry point

Also, identified as a *glut*; *surfeit*; an *overloading*; *surplus*; an *overkill* or ‘*ecstatic*’ *effusion*, *Excess* implies the violation of a boundary or an infringement on that which is moderate or low-key. Whether literal or symbolic, *Excess* is mass that’s an overproduction of more than is essential, obligatory, or desired. *Excess* can also signify a stark competitiveness between itself and inadequacy – or an accepted, conservative, measure of something. In sound, this could be punk; noise; thrash metal; drone music... John Cage’s music could be seen as excessive because of its abundant silence. *Excess* can be empty pages or pages crammed with full-stops...

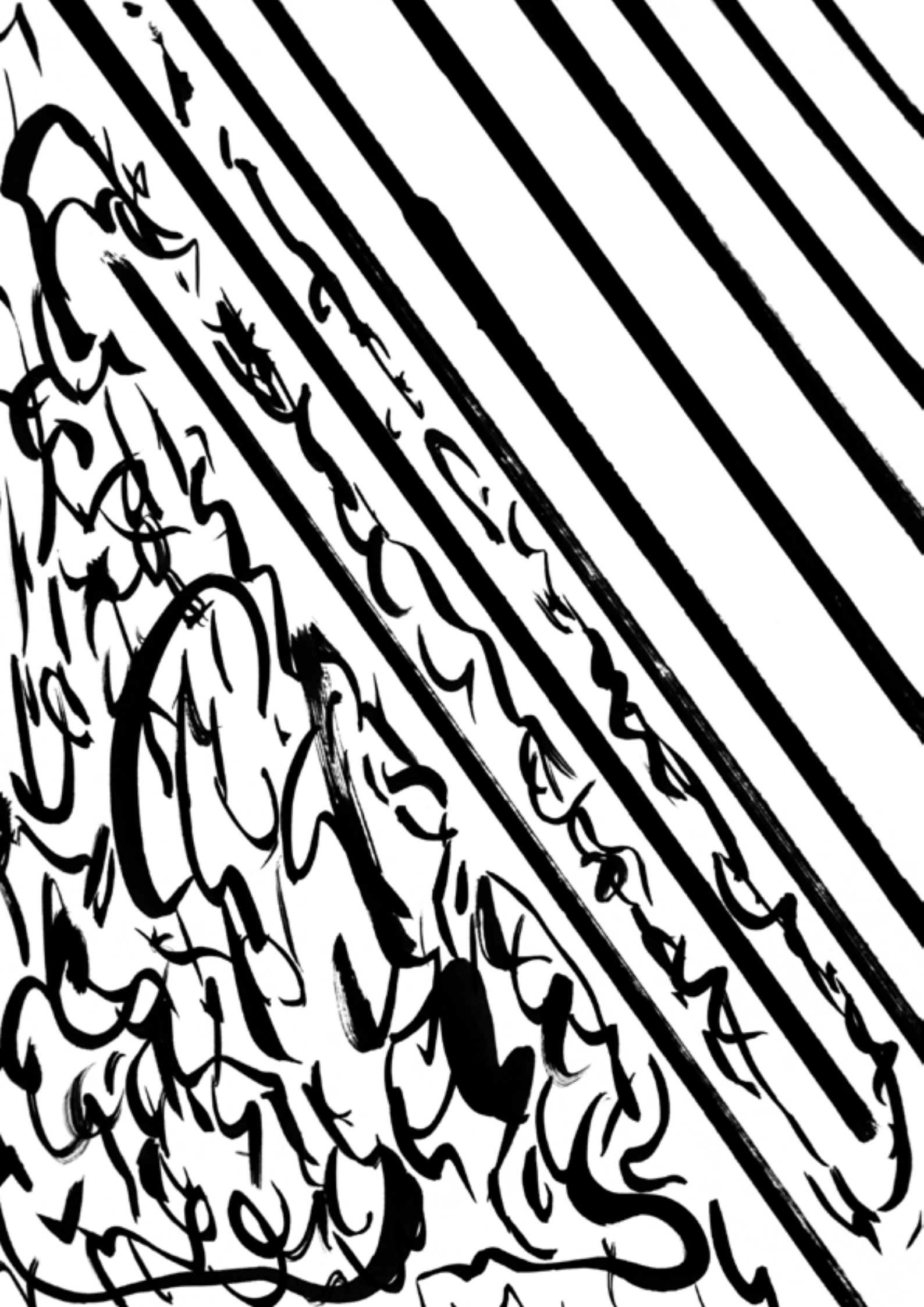
The first time I saw *Der siebente Kontinent* (“*The Seventh Continent*”, Michael Haneke’s first feature of 1989) it struck as one of the most systematic films I’d seen. By scrutinising perfunctory routine, it focuses on the lives of a ‘first world’ family who reject the values attached to their existence, through suicide. What Haneke deploys in this film I think, is a structure that highlights the subtle infestation of how being “*forced to serve everyday things*” can smother a fulfilling inner life and sense of purpose. Of how a closely-knit, professional family unit creepingly comprehends its lack of true drive through obdurate daily rituals – radio alarm at 6am; preparing and eating breakfast; dressing for work and school; grocery shopping and so on, to realise the traps and futility of its materialistic subsistence. In Haneke’s words; “*they don’t really live, they do things*”. The parents also understand that there is nothing left in their lives to salvage, too far down the line are they to recouperate any purpose of engagement.

Instead of coercing this (true) story towards a feeling of emancipation, Haneke maintains the film in firm stasis. It’s clear that the family’s decision to disengage is not a happy one and this keeps *Der siebente Kontinent* away from sentimental, fake optimism. What is optimistic about the film, is that it’s made precisely in this way. The ‘shock’ remains in the ease with which modern living has a capacity to corrode fundamental human-ness. Haneke has remarked, that “*by explaining the effects...we can tell stories with a clear conscience, rather than pretending to know the causes*”, and when the family destroy their possessions and themselves, it is with the same rhythm and anxious calm with which they built their lives.

The idea of boundary here is an uneasy one, as the antagonism between conformism and the will to find meaning erupts violently within the family’s final gesture.

*Next page:*

*Hunger*: ink on paper: 2008  
**Sam Porritt** - courtesy Brown Gallery



# The pigeon and the egg

The scene and the mood are set. A meeting between two strangers. A painter, say. And a showgirl.

On a bench in a rrrrrrrrolling RRRRRRoyal Park.

Would that in rrrrrrrrolling RRRRRRs was how one ever spoke again.

A three-toed pigeon, a noble survivor, pecking about their feet.

*"He is troubling more with the small crusts and ignoring the big."*

*"It is the economy of pace."*

The focus of the creature was an instinct. The instinct overrode its intelligence, being more fully formed. Its ignorance became an extravagance.

*"I see such misery in its scavenging. It is disgusting."*

*"That is not disgusting. Rape is disgusting. War crime is disgusting. Paedophilia is sometimes disgusting. How do you expect to become initiated?"*

*"In that you arouse every evil instinct in my nature."*

*"You mean at heart you're a trouble causer, which means you can't take a joke."*

A quiet wind swirled between the two.

The scent of grass and freedom and misunderstanding choked them like low cloud around twin peaks.

*"I am neither a trouble causer nor a spoilsport. But I will not suffer you for your very own good."*

*"You are offering me cruelty as kindness? You are the very model of established behaviour."*

*"Not so much cruel to be kind as inflexible to be explanatory."*

Both were killing themselves with how they felt. At pains in hypocrisy - the survival instinct without the courage. The breeze settled. The pigeon pecked. People across the world bore witness to others. Some hearts skipped a beat in love, and those who died, died.

*"I have never seen you in this light before."*

*"I am seeing you for the very first time."*

*"I could grow sentimental or even religious."*

*"I may become an individual."*

They were creating their performance. Making the worst of what they didn't need to believe.

*"I am fearing catastrophe."*

*"I am choosing to understand."*

There was no lack, no void, just cowardice and laziness of spirit. There was no peace in the most. Yet apathy changed the mood and the conversation lifted.

*"We could throw a Molotov cocktail or two."*

*"Or weep on demand."*

Mid-peck and with one eye, the pigeon looked at the two. With the other he looked away.

And instead they understood kindness as magnificence and freethinking came to the fore. There was no 'act' in 'do'. No 'tolerance' in 'tolerance'. No 'trans' in 'trans'. And no 'funk' in 'funk'.

*"My awareness of this denies it bees at all."*

*"Even the mention of my name puts my effect into question."*

*"The authentic look is a waste of time."*

A cycle became apparent and it was all there was. They developed their sense of situation. Became better and better at less and less until they were experts at nothing at all. Refusing to choose between the world and a knowledge of it, they chose each other.

*"Until this point I was a modification of nature."*

*"A corruption of power."*

*"Let us never think of it again."*

They looked up to the sky with its westward-barrelling clouds. And just for a moment they sensed the bench move, gently horizon-bound. The swoop of the bird broke their reverie, and looking down they found it gone. No scavenger, no crusts. Just sunlight on the empty scene.

**Rennard Milner**





*Mother Religious* - oil on canvas; 2008 -  
**Josephine Wood**



ANY CUNT WILL DO





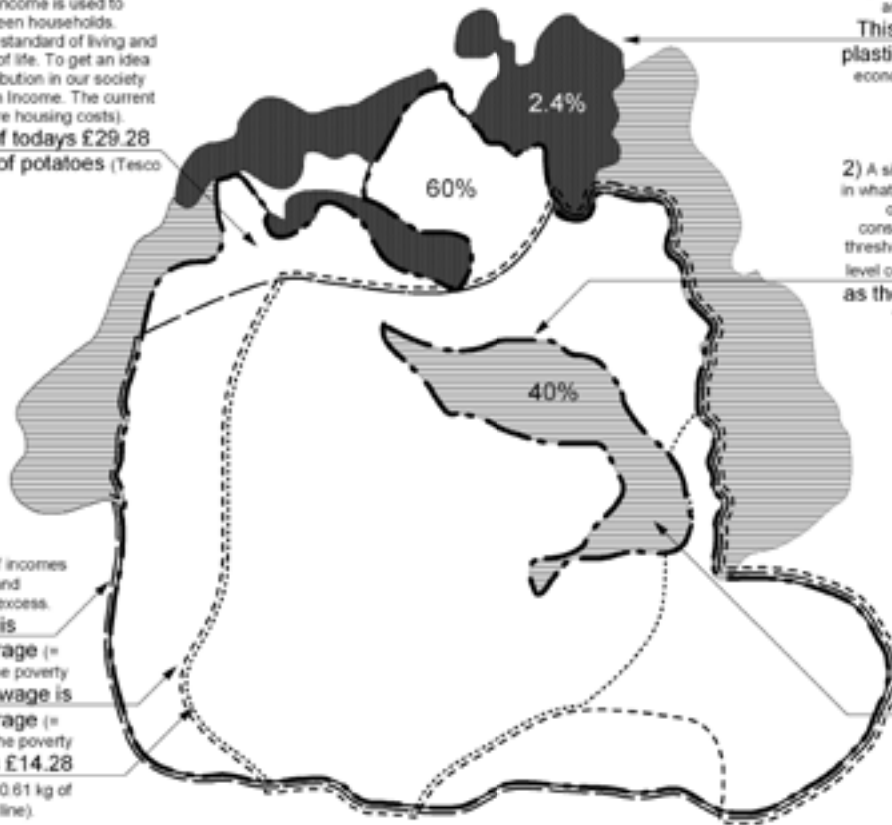


*Mirror* - black and white photographic series; 2008 -  
**Clare Kenny**

## Relative Excess

1) The level of consumption of good and services we can attain with our disposable income is used to compare living standards between households. Growing income increases our standard of living and therefore improves our quality of life. To get an idea about the general income distribution in our society we refer to the National Median Income. The current NMI is at £29.28 per day (before housing costs). Here we see the total of today's £29.28 converted into 37.4 kg of potatoes (Tesco Value price at 0.41 per kg).

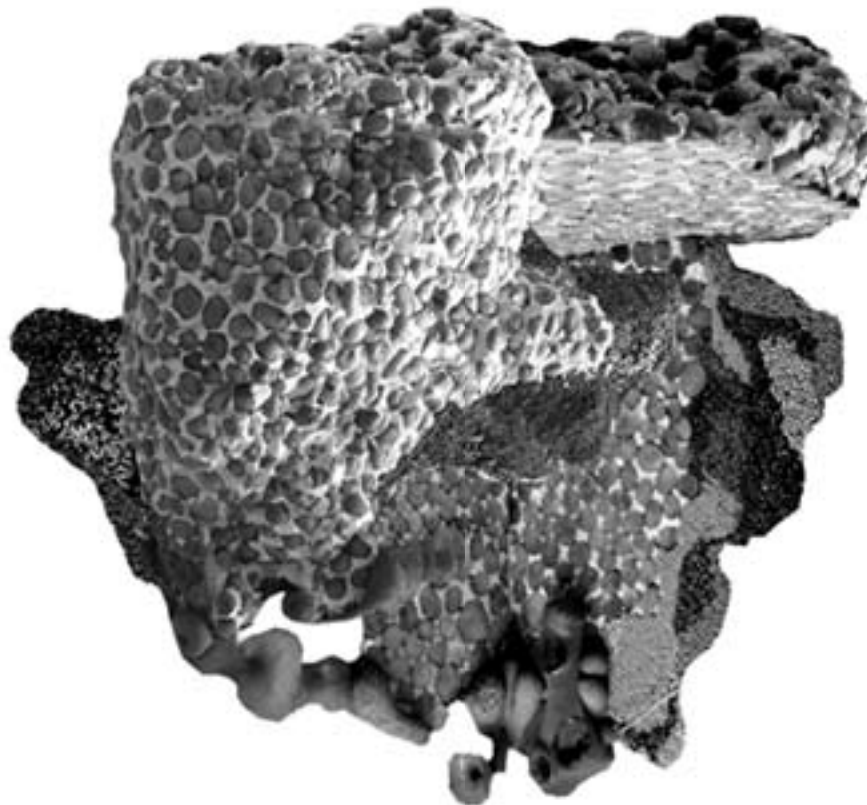
4) Here are three examples of incomes that lie below the poverty line and therefore exclude any relative excess. **Jobseekers Allowance is £17.42 per day on average** (= 0.48kg of potatoes less than the poverty line). **National minimum wage is £15.76 per day on average** (= 5.83 kg of potatoes less than the poverty line). **Disability Benefit is £14.28 per day on average** (= 10.61 kg of potatoes less than the poverty line).



5) The rise of the national median income leads to an increase in excess, resulting in extra excess. This is the extra excess converted into plastic, pulses and potatoes. As long as the economy continues to grow the world will become a more congenial place for us to live in.

2) A situation where we are excluded from taking part in what is considered our normal, acceptable standard of living is defined as relative poverty. Poverty is considered to be relative since the at-risk-of-poverty threshold is defined in relation to the country's general level of prosperity. 60% of the NMI is defined as the poverty line (this equals £17.57 per day). 12.5 million people are living below this amount today. They are excluded from relative excess.

3) Since the poverty line lies at 60% the remaining 40% can be defined as relative excess. Relative excess exceeds the provision of the defined reasonable standard of living in our society. So if £17.57 per day cover an acceptable standard of living the remaining £11.71 are the relative excess. This is the relative excess converted into 9.52kg of mixed pulses (at an average Tesco price of £1.23 per kg).



# Curating Knowledge ...The stupidity of the signifier Collectivises

An aggressive headless construction or knowledge that teems with excited anticipation of an enjoyment of total abandon may find itself expressed in a number of figurations. We might consider the authority of the towers blown away or the hammers destroying the capsize monument to a tyrant or perhaps the video recording of executed decapitation circulating on the net or the no less glamorous corpse found in a North London supermarket car park. The carnivalesque violence of everyday pathology assumes a dismal routine-ness in the anti-place of tough love anarchy. *“Deal with it!”*

Assemble from the wasteland with no belief in treasure. Don’t panic, go organic, kill shit cunt NOW! The scavenger will take what he can, what pittance of enjoyment is offered from this ecological nightmare of excess. Mario Merz or David Hammond, the artist puts shit in our way.

When Giorgio de Chirico distances himself from the dreamlike, imaginary fumbblings and frottages of psychic automatism he has no time to wait in phenomenological passivity for the dream to put subjects and objects in his way. de Chirico constructs with a conscious intensity that comes from a fully committed personal and structural engagement that arises from *“a fatality of the human spirit which is governed by fixed mathematical laws. It ebbs, flows, departs and returns and is reborn like everything on this planet.”* In those

words de Chirico describes the institution of his isolated subjectivity with a visceral and structural pulsation, the return of the fatality of the jouissance of the signifier. The death drive and the responsibility and relation to the Other of the subject is structurally taken into account. de Chirico does not shy away from the subjective responsibility for the fatality of the human spirit. His drive to create is no flight from reality to a non-antagonistic inhibited inner space. So too does de Chirico avoid the pitfalls of group idealising ego identifications by rejecting the politically correct protest of the surrealist manifesto bound as it is to its own superego injunction of cohesive formulation. de Chirico’s is an aesthetic that is concerned with its place in this world as the subject/object relation is fraught with doubt and our relationship with our environment, increasingly sadistic. It was that very striking relation with its place in this everyday world that gave the work an intensity that stunned Breton as he first encountered de Chirico painting in a shop window. Max Ernst first viewing was in a book shop and Yves Tanguy first struck by its mystery from the top of a bus.

Committed to engaging in everyday conscious life in conception and showing, the works of de Chirico critiques the vainglorious aesthetic of utopian modernism and refuses the political posturing of the post modernist protest. And so the vitality of de Chirico construction remains

in critical dialogue with contemporary awareness of the objects crucial place in the world of excessive production, an unrelenting production that is bound by no law but a headless pulsation.

The works of Sarah Lucas, Isa Genzken, Sam Durant and others have been described by Massimiliano Gioni as seeming to stem from badly repressed rage describing a space *“where domestic violence overlaps with social unrest and class rebellion.”* This anti-oedipal rage against the machine (“altogether now, “Fuck you I won’t do what you tell me” chorus”) is celebrated as an attack against all authority, *“artists dethrone any sense of authority”*. Is this critical celebration and carnivalesque masquerading really so wonderfully subversive or liberating? In today’s culture of compulsive immediate superego enjoyment, the headless corpse of barbarism is the authority that returns profanely in many guises and the premature critical celebrations of anti-authority identification is but another manifest return. If work is to engage with everyday life in a structural sense, it must not merely repeat *“the stumbling on the scene of a freshly committed crime”*, (Gioni on Lucas) a compulsive repetition of a restaging of the already democratically sanctioned headless enjoyment of idealised affections.

Yesterday, I actually did stumble on the screen of a freshly committed crime. The pavement was police cordoned in fetching dayglo tape and plastic barriers, a coagulated blob of thick mucous livery red-black puddle seemed to pulsate, an aborted message in the afternoon heat, a pound of suffering flesh, a disturbing vitality of enjoyment. We can describe the abject horror of Kristeva or we can look to the failure of the signifier or the success of the signifier in relation

to jouissance. Difficult to differentiate the staging from the act.

*“Obviously another stabbing. London is crazy”* the guy from the Italian coffee shop tells me. The effect of the signifier, that introduces the symbolic law can found the belief that there is this Other that is barring our enjoyment. A vitality of enjoyment seems to be surrendered, this is the price to pay for symbolic subjectivity. A seeming loss of ones being of radical enjoyment. The gain is in being able to relate to language as desire and not as a being truly trapped in the imaginary world of paranoid and murderous, rival identifications. When the entry to language as desiring subject is barred by the lack of a metaphor, (which is increasingly the case in an instrumentalised, anti-authoritarian, universalising culture of jouissance, the erasure of the Other of symbolic institution) then the subject identifies at the level of psychotic demand. So there is a problem with this form of headless celebration of excessive anti-authority, freedom and enjoyment. The problem may be that this form of critical celebration merely apes the trauma of liberal subjectivity and propagates the ideological assumptions of a globalising universalism, that is heightened egoic individualism with all of its unconscious paranoid conflicts/enjoyments.

In the disregard for the symbolic law we abandon the subject to the jouissance of the Other. Universal amusement replaces the Other, death of the author and the pound of flesh made real. The coagulating sameness of the drive of the Thing of progress. We are experiencing-increasingly the barring of the critical signifier that can take us away from the deathly jouissance of the Other, the retreat of criticality. These are the everyday events,



the ongoing foreclosing occurrences of everyday life, the failures of universal liberal language to deal with real difference. If the works of de Chirico critiques the vainglorious aesthetic of utopian modernism and refuses the political posturing of the post modernist (surrealist) protest by acknowledging the structural repetition of the death drive, then might we discern in his works and words, a criticism of the vain glorious aesthetic of anti-authority posturing that corrupts the utopian freedom of the marketplace.

With de Chirico, the fatality of the human spirit is never seen as one of existential gloom. The ego's mechanical identifications are rejected in favour of an isolation that takes account of the pulsating ebb and flow of the Subject/Other confrontations. The relation to the other, object is subjectivised as de Chirico constructs a metaphor of universal resonance, a metaphor that loads the object with excess signifier-ness, with the sense of both timeless, suspended enigma and unspoken superego guilt. Philip Guston, picking up on de Chirico's superego excess, rejects the inhibition of the ideals of the existentialist gestures of freedom, those same ideals now being taught to bad terrorist guys in Afghanistan in anger management lessons in programmes referred to as "*Beauty without Borders*", cynical idealisations. Guston paints the superego excesses of meaning of words and things in a metaphor which connects the excesses of historical material incessant production to the excess which escapes socially conforming desire, the jouissance of the headless, hooded excess knowledge, as enjoyment of the human dereliction regarding responsibility toward the other. Guston has learned from de Chirico who being half Italian and half German had learned from Schopenhauer "*that to have original, extraordinary even*

*immortal ideas one has to isolate oneself from the world for a moment in such a way that even the most commonplace happenings seem new and unfamiliar and so reveal their true essence*".

The truth of the subjective relation to the Other, a revealing of the fantasy that underscores reality. With their carefully constructed grotesqueness and their backward looking classical expressiveness de Chirico's works between 1911 and 1917 reveal a drive from within that devours monumentality and which also negates the subversive desire of heroic protest. These works seem to render superfluous and contrived, most of their surrealist counterparts. One hundred years later, in a world of unrelenting, headless, anti-authority, production and proliferation of image excess the question regarding production must be "*who needs it?*" If the drive to compulsively produce, the inbuilt death drive that takes no account of responsibility to the Other, perseveres, as seems to be the general hope in the art schools, then art practice is to produce nothing but more cynical (that is naïve) commodities and re-stagings for the amusement of an innocent if ironic, marketplace. Artists dealing with the real issue of the responsibility of the art-things' place in the everyday world are confronted with an everyday world in which one presumes one's own pathological freedom, an attitude that presses toward a totalising denial of the Other, that takes its own cynicism to be, the-be-all-and-end-all of creative production and destruction, a civilization on the brink of becoming overrun by its own disavowed discontents, its own excessive, perverse objectality.

In a critics attempt to look at "*things*" in the social world in "*the context of socially engaged art practices*" as opposed to looking at the "*power of the subject, artist, participants and so on*",

Hansen attempts to critique the sociality of "woolly" relational aesthetics. Taking as an example, Cerith Wyn Evans' use of a rose, which could refer to any rose in art or literature or perhaps to the logo of a Japanese department store, he concludes that the potential multiple readings of things, their layers of meaning allow us to enter a sociality that is to claim an identity for ourselves. Mind-boggling insight apart, in this embrace of easy identity do we not witness the retreat of anything antagonistic in the fantasy of the relation subject, object/thing. An internalised critical retreat that substitutes identity for any antagonistic real relation to the Other, in a non-political arena of lifestyle choices. This internalisation of the ideal, the denial of the real antagonism of the Subject/Other relation is what allows us understand the retreat of criticality as J.J. Charlesworth has attempted to politically describe. Without understanding the relationship of substitutions between the ego ideal and the critical agency, the superego, his project can only bear fruitless witness to an impotence which passively observes the dumbing down of culture from the master technicians, the fat controller of Foucault and Frankfurt. Reduced to the object of enjoyment of his own fantasised Other his own critical agency can only take flight.

The anti-authority protest of liberal economic ideology feeds on the formations of paranoiac ego-ideal constructions, ego-ideal identifications. Scientific progress pulsates with the pure fatality of lumpen spirit that relinquishes responsibility for the other, and forecloses the relation to the particular individuals relation to the Other of language. Accepting this scenario then, the retreat of criticality is inevitable. The symbolic becomes increasingly imaginised as we continue to take ideals and identifications to substitute for the particular production of subjectivised meaning.

Protest has become the site of copycat idealisations and universal demands for prescriptions of freedoms. Anti-authoritarianism, the internalised angry religion of the day, drives an art production and theory of recycling and restaging, an aesthetic that tries to take account of the decadence of affluence and runs the risk of psychotherapising the political by domesticating the death drive.

The mediated everyday environment of international trafficking, pharmaceutical control and ammunition manufacturing represent material attempts to murder the subject, the incessant pulsation of free reign progress. The denial of the Other of real difference is also internalised in the universalised ideals of instrumental liberal freedom with its egoic identities and paranoid constructions. Subjectivity is taken for the ego object in object relational aesthetics, in appropriating protest identities and also in the cynical, idealised belief that we know nothing can change. Sally O'Reilly in an *ArtMonthly* review of Sonsbeek 2008 suggests that the Sonsbeek curator, Anna Tilroe, is not realistic when she speaks of "*the struggle to be an individual who makes his own sovereign choices but also participates in society with a strong sense of responsibility*". O'Reilly goes on to say that this notion has already "*been pooh-pooed*" by a cynical U.K. art community which is more realist. More than a hint of the liberal notion of progress then, the U.K. leading the cynical way forward toward the "*One*". One wonders from what site of enunciation does Sally O'Reilly make her judgemental claims of more reality, might this privileged insight not also be her own fantasy from where she constructs her cynical U.K. cool, non-antagonistic "reality". And might this site not be the very ideologically constructed space where she stages the loss of her



own critical agency in favour of an adaptation to social conformism even if of the cynical kind. One result of ego ideals taking the place of subjective critical agency would be in their production of inhibitions. “*Boys don’t cry*” maybe, or U.K. artists being cynical or realist do not believe that they can “do” anything. The tiredness of the retreat of criticality, aggressive posturing, masking the passivity of headless cynical identification. The fantasy of the certainty of cynical reality hides the truth of the subjective relation to the Other, truth as a revealing of the fantasy that underscores reality. The psychical objects disrupts this picture of an all seeing eye, I that gets the picture. The object gaze denatures the normal relationships between objects, bodies and space we use in order to articulate our being. The gaze and the object voice are intrusive interlocutors that make it impossible to put ourselves in the picture.

If art practice is to be anything other than “*the repeated attempt by neurotics to adopt the Others ego-ideal*”, Lacan (Ecrits), then it must cast off the inhibitions of our contemporary cynical cultural superego. Daniel Lagache has demonstrated how the ego-ideal and superego are partners in the cultivation of identifications and guilt in relation to the egos assumption of the demand of the Other. Social conformism and adaptation results in this substitution, this guessing of the Others desire. The Artist gets lucky! Desire prefers the pleasure of fantasy than the satisfaction

of the drives. In these universalising guessings of the groups, liberal, curatorial formations desire is served as conservative demand that inhibits the drive. In these globalising curatorial celebrations we witness the inhibiting defence against jouissance. The ideological (fantasised) object of cynical (headless) knowledge presumes a cultural or curatorial subject satisfaction in replace of a radical subjectivisation of Other desire. The result is necessarily a disappointing retreat of radical subjectivity, criticality, and an all embracing defeatist and cynical curatorial congratulation. In “*Civilization and its Discontents*”, Freud has predicted that this type of idealising ethics is another manifestation of the cultural superego that “*only offers the narcissistic satisfaction of thinking one is better than others.*”

The curators of this Summer’s blockbuster “*Traces du Sacre*”, at the Pompidou Centre informs us that, “*In today’s post industrial world the idea of self transformation through art has lost its function*”. Existentialist self, cultural identity or biochemical organism? What they do not inform us is exactly how they came to this knowledge. So many current curatorial and supposed critical inhibitions. Whatever the knowledge the curators have in store it is only the fall of such knowledge that can effect some version of subjectivity other than that of sociological and cultural restaging of identifications and traumas in the name of understanding.

Knowledge as accumulation is a fantasmatic construction that attempts and fails to contain the stupidity of the drive. This fall is the road to the unconscious where an ethical link between interpretations and effects can create a meaningful change. Apologies, curators and cultural (object) relational theorists and critics.

In a delirious climate of incessant knowledge as goods acquisition, a writing of the Other in the real is subjugated to the mastery of a curatorial, galvanizing, institutional discourse of market desires. Psychosis is very current in the clinic of analysis. When the Other is refused, the stupidity of the signifier collectivises in silent violations of the vain-glorious aesthetic of utopian cynicism.

#### Reference:

- Civilization and its discontents*: Sigmund Freud  
*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*: Sigmund Freud  
*Theory and Technique*: Bruce Fink  
*Language and Psychoanalysis*: Laplanche and Pontalis  
*Unmonumental*: Laura Hopman, Richard Flood, Massimiliano Gioni and Trevor Smith  
 Sally O’Reilly on **Sonsbeek 2008: Grandeur**: *Art Monthly*: July-August 2008 (No: 318)  
*Retreat of Criticality*: J.J. Charlesworth  
*Freud*: O.Mannoni  
*Idealisation*: Daniel Lagache





*Apatite (detail)* - paint on board; 2008 - Ana Genoves

*Next 2 pages:*

*Untitled Merchandise (trade urn):* 2008 - Laser  
etched pewter commemorative urn -

**James Richards**

*Untitled Merchandise (trade urn):* 2008 - Laser  
etched pewter commemorative urn with hand  
printed fake suede sports shoulder bag -

**James Richards**

*“So, security approached a few boys  
on the dance floor of an infamous or  
legendary gay nightclub. They weren’t  
dancing and seemed to be crying.  
When asked what was happening,  
the boys explained that they had just  
fulfilled the last request of their dead  
friend and his ashes had been scattered  
across the dance floor.*

*Untitled Merchandise series is an  
ongoing project.*

*Untitled Merchandise are imaginary  
ready-mades.*

*Untitled Merchandise are deluxe  
commemorative products.*

*Untitled Merchandise are all about  
exiting, contemporary and loft style.*

*Untitled Merchandise can be found in  
the gift shop at the exit of gay culture.”*







*Stereo* - black and white photograph; 2008 - **Chris Grieves**

# Carmelo Bene's Untimely Revolt.

This year has seen yet another anniversary, and consequent reassessment, of the events of May 1968. As ever, this has dominated institutional film programmes, making much of Guy Debord's critique of the 'spectacle'-the alienating control the commercial image exerts over social relations-and its influence upon the student uprisings that provoked a futile general strike. Yet this reassessment, like many before, has been marred by the continued omission of a major film work of that year: Carmelo Bene's "*Nostra Signora dei Turchi*" (*Our Lady of the Turks*). Bene's film is significant not only because he explicitly announced that it was "*against the revolution of 1968*", but because his excessive vision rejects the very notion of revolutionary time.

Revolutionary temporality seeks future change, generally in order to achieve greater personal and or social freedom. For the filmmakers and protestors of May 1968, this time was clearly linear. Driven by Marxist-influenced theories, such as Debord's 'spectacle', revolution was a teleology that had as its goal-the overturning of present ideologies and the emancipation of social groups from their constraint. The future-oriented push of revolutionary temporality pervades those film works identified with May 1968. It continues to drive the marketing of this anniversary, with the endlessly reproduced imagery of a generation of young rebels laying waste to historic Parisian boulevards. Directors, most notably Debord and Jean-Luc Godard, deployed a range of techniques aimed at disruption, including the insertion of inter-titles, silences, and the use of a polemic voice-over unrelated to the projected image. Through such strategies, they hoped their films might bring about a moment of revelation, in which the audience would become aware of their oppression. As Tom Boellstorff indicates, borrowing from Foucault, political movements that rely upon linear time invent themselves as a doxa through their "*inability to think of co-presence*" and are thus always oppositional, and complicit with the functioning of power. They become as the very ideological systems they oppose, as only one true worldview, and time, can exist at any point. Understanding the present moment as inevitably heading towards a particular political goal, the revolutionary movement pulls the future back into the values of that present. Paradoxically, any future liberation must also be conceived of as a total break with the present, meaning additionally that it denies the possibility that power shapes that aim.

Against this revolution then, although sharing many of the same criticisms of modern life, Bene's film, at first glance, appears to propose a backwards turn, to the Baroque. The film exists as a sister project, rather than an adaptation of, Bene's un-translated novel of the same name, though it has little of the structure or content of the original text. Set in and around the cathedral at Otranto it takes that site as a point of departure, locating the film in the shadow of the 1480 Saracen invasion of the city and following, only very occasionally, the attempts made by Bene's character to meet with St Margherita there. This summation of the events is

announced at the outset of the film as Bene's sonorous voice rings out amongst the bones in the cathedral's ossuary. However, this is already to say too much, as such a narrative can hardly be derived from what follows. Indeed, it is a gesture typical of Bene's contradictory thought (a way of thinking that exceeds the bounds of sense making) to begin his film an ossuary, a place that might be defined as the end of the road. Reversing, without shifting gears, what Bene appears to be driving at is the Baroque as the inauguration of the spectacle. This is nowhere more literally manifested than when he drives a car into a bedroom, attacking and conflating an obsession of Italy's literary history with one from the commercial present, namely sex and the motor car. Seeking to impress the power of church and state upon the viewer by provoking an immobilising sense of awe using sensuous imagery, the art of the Baroque is the precedent for the alienating forces of the spectacle. Elsewhere Bene shows a sloppy cook trudging about a dirty kitchen, and a saint that is all too human in her lustfulness and indifference towards Bene's suffering. He defiles every preoccupation that can trace its roots back to that age (with its religious depictions of food and flesh) transgressing the boundaries of moral acceptability, with his often heretical imagery of profligate saints or a dysfunctional holy family. Preoccupations with food, faith, eroticism and politics, that keep the Italian people under capitalist and state control, through the commercial production of foodstuffs or the fear of sin, are all mercilessly targeted. But Bene does not present mere satire, under the illusion that to revisit history critically, is to undo the workings of power. Nor is this the work of a political reactionary, who wishes to return to a time before the image took hold, and who believes our future lies precisely in our past. To believe this would be to remain, however perversely, within the grip of linear revolutionary time.

Instead, Bene opts for an excessive vision that eschews narrative development. Images accumulate, undermining the cinematic fiction of continuity, so that one scene, in a period setting, will suddenly cut, inexplicably, to another that is contemporary. That those jumps in time appear, in order to foreground internal contradictions, signals that the image here is unmoored from diexis: the linguistic mechanism that assigns the discrete distinctions of space and time to secure representation. The projection is slowed down or otherwise sped up, so that, in one scene, plants grow at an accelerated rate and take over a house.





*Still from Carmelo Bene's Nostra Signora dei Turchi,  
(Our Lady of the Turks): 1968.  
Image: La Fondazione L'immemoriale di Carmelo Bene, Roma.*



*Still from Carmelo Bene's Nostra Signora dei Turchi,  
(Our Lady of the Turks): 1968.  
Image: La Fondazione L'immemoriale di Carmelo Bene, Roma.*

Colour saturation is made so blindingly bright it takes the image beyond the bounds of visibility. The parodic, over the top, performances of Bene and his cast deny any integrity to their characters, allowing characteristics to remain interchangeable, seeing identity as provisional and contingent. The viewer is presented with a time that is without orthodoxy, but is instead of continued variation. Images are superimposed so that more than one time can exist in the same space, pushing that contingent moment into an untimely heterogeneity. The dialogue, like the imagery, is either broken or nonsensical, so that the film cannot be said to be strictly about anything but rather only against. His heretical transgressions are also temporal so that the Saint, in medieval dress, is to be found flicking through magazines. Undermining the place of God, by going against His word, Bene also sets out to displace the Holy Father as origin, from whom linear time descends. Bene described his sub-representational art of subtraction by addition-his challenge to narrative's hold on the real-as the "*undressing of the image*". This iconoclastic stripping of the sign even lead Bene to scratch, stamp upon, and deface, the celluloid itself.

He draws upon the abundance that is the mark of Baroque art in order to oppose the logos. The bones of disconnected images pile up anonymously as in the ossuary, a funereal art that reached it's apex during the Baroque era and gives visual definition to the concept of accumulation as a horror vacui, a generative fear of the "*impossible*" that was for Georges Bataille both death and renewal. This film then enacts a potlatch, that Bataille's notion of excess as sacrificial. Bataille saw in excess the possibility to reject hierarchy, that quality inherent in ideology that keeps humanity subjugated under, even when opposed to, one set of authorised values at a time. The repeated attempts of Bene's character to meet Saint Margherita are as much acts of lustful excitement as devotional fervour, and are indicative of this anti-hierarchical thinking by finding in the highest aspirations the very lowest intentions. That Bene's film abounds with images of cathedrals and castles under siege is also particularly instructive as Bataille saw monumental architecture as the prime example of humanity under constraint, and instead favoured a ground-based atheology. The first rumblings of dissent towards linear time in '*Nostra Signora Dei Turchi*' are announced during the description of the Otranto cathedral as "*a synopsis of history. Or maybe it wasn't! It was its own converted executioner*". For Bene, as for Bataille, the cathedral puts the axe to its own neck when it cuts into an excessive, pagan temporality, and seeks to establish for itself the authority of a fixed historical location.

Gilles Deleuze, the thinker most often associated with the interpretation of Bene's work, saw in the film's contingent time and infidelity to the word, traces of the virtual. He saw subtractive excess as revealing at the sub-representational level, the forces of creativity, the virtual, and the sensations particular to the artwork that constitute it as an artwork. Simon

Taylor has criticised the theory of the virtual as a return to the representational thought Deleuze sought to avoid, because it leads to the belief that "*the artwork that stands up on its own as an artwork stands up thanks to that by which it stands up on its own as art*". The virtual is furthermore problematic as it describes in the work of art an act of drawing back the future, albeit a future divested of content, into a discernable potentiality and process of becoming. A representational concept of futurity, bound by the suffocating constraints of the logos, and that bares the directedness that is the hallmark of revolutionary time. This clearly does not describe the temporality at play in Bene's process of emptying out the sign. The caricatures that populate Bene's films, betray no sign of faith in the future, and are indeed locked in hopeless tasks, such as the soldier in armour who repeatedly attempts to have sex, or the chef forced to cook and recombine the same old rotten ingredients. But what, then, is the object of this excess, if not an emancipatory future? Once moral boundaries have been exceeded in Bene's work, what comes to take their place? To approach these questions we might want to turn to Pierre Klossowski, a philosopher whom Bene knew personally, (although their collaboration amounted to very little; a recorded monologue and an abandoned exhibition project) yet whose intellectual relationship with the director remains curiously unexplored. In Klossowski's Sadean philosophy, to exceed prohibition, that had once been prohibited cannot come to replace the law. To exceed the moral dialectic-and the oppositional politics that the lone path of revolutionary time restricts thought to-is to engage in a task of continuous upheaval that can know no end. If a model of excess takes us beyond the limitations by which ideological regimes subjugate the subject, it also forces the admission that impersonal power disciplines desire. The subject is bound to a constant mode of attack, which knows no fidelity, even to the self, and with nothing to follow but further revolt. The method of subtractive excess appears as an obsessive, repetitious practice, a denial of the self, and the constants that secure identity, which tears at the flesh of meaning like a Sadean flagellation scene. The fabulous horrors that Bene presents run away ahead of any possible visual pleasure, engendering the detached, "*perpetual movement*" that Klossowski outlines. Far from promising any liberating future, Bene created '*Nostra Signora dei Turchi*' as a continued assault on the society of 1968 and its cinema, which only ended when he ran out of film. It remains an exceptional work that meets the challenge of a fragmented body of dissident philosophies. That it remains neglected is perhaps a sign that our time lags behind his excesses.



*Corvée*; black and white silver print: 2008 - Terence McCormack

# 7pm

As he left the building he noticed the third floor data pod lights were still ablaze, allowing him to just make out the operators' foreheads, bent into their screens, nursing their mice, unaware of the dark threatening sky through the blinds. Pushing the door open released Six O'Clock Street Orchestra's Speed Symphony, its horn, wind, key and vocals sections crashing together in the sonic answer to fusion cuisine. In one black and white leap, recently released Operators rushed towards him, heads set in position: forward, arms thrusting as their black rear strap-ons bounced up and down, stuffed full with empty plastic lined with food remains and a change of clothes. At regular intervals they had to re-align their course to allow for stray Heritage Trailers, armed with front strap-ons stuffed with notepad and check-list filled with monumementos, necks raised, shuffling over to ask directions from the purple Daily Chuckles Pamphlet stand operator.

Outside one of the 90% Hot Import Academies stood thin forms, wrapped in shards of fabric, in a post-Pleasure Hunt haze, bodies stretched out over the building's grey façade slowly releasing nocturnal chemicals, hoping for more pleasure before opening their ears to Temporary Advisor-talk. Their Sure-To-Soon-Be-Ditched hairdos went unnoticed as the black and white fleet's eyes concentrated on reaching the entrance to the home tunnel.

On the main strip, men with the latest £500 a head-dos lined up sipping at cups, eyeing potential candidates. He started to pedal, out past Presentation Land's bronzed beauties, past more leaping zebras, past lorry drivers unloading at the end of viewing a much longer than feature-length high speed film of insects signing off, and through the gateway to the most expensive shops. Inside large expanses of glass he noticed young men and women dressed in black, nervously clutching small objects, attaching them to walls, then walking away, pausing for a moment, before returning to re-position.

Almost completely dark now, the sirens were getting louder and more frequent, and as the incline of the hill grew steeper, so the number of basement cafes increased, filled with dark-haired men sitting at tables on gold-rimmed fake leather chairs playing games that would last well beyond dawn. Café window stools lay empty where large women in their specially sectioned-off areas had sat all morning with their rolling pins, crafting Popeye breakfasts in a roll, steaming hot straight off the metal plate. Inside one restaurant, decked out in white and blue cloth, an impeccably dressed couple sat across the table from each other, staring into each other's eyes, passing comments and occasionally signalling

to the waiter for more, as smoke erupted behind, transforming their succulent lamb cubes from red to brown. Next door, a man with close-cropped, freshly-gelled hair and precision-trimmed moustache performed with his razor, eyes fixated on the sharp edge gliding through white foamscapes, his audience reclining on leather chairs in front of yellow walls.

A little further up, shouts could be heard from inside the drinking den, as supporters rushed about in excitement at their team's victory, in the most beautiful interior of wood panelling, large mirrors, heavy brown velvet curtains and deep-pile carpet, soaked, he imagined, from the result of a million over-excited arms. Outside, midnight blue people carriers glided past, earpieces fastened to their pilots' ears, alternating with the odd white van stuffed with aggressive-looking short-haired, stern-faced men, dropping in for some meat off the big spinning stick before accelerating to the next scene. It was a few moments later, a couple of hundred yards further up the street, that The Stranger appeared. Tall and overbearing, with a long coat and dark hair matted with strong-smelling cream, and an expression of restrained excitement on his prune face. He did not utter a word, simply gestured up the street and smiled. Confused, but reassured by the smile, he decided to follow the man's directions, and sure enough it wasn't long before he could hear the source of The Stranger's excitement.

**Richard Battersby**



*Liam Cole: colour photograph; 2008*  
- Susan Donam

# Liam Cole interviewed by Susan Donam

*Treasure Island Media* (T.I.M.) is the most controversial gay porn studio in the world. Based in San Francisco, its raw documentary style videos present promiscuous unprotected (“bareback”) sex between men. This goes against the safe-sex message that has been targeted at the gay community for more than twenty years in the fight against HIV and AIDs.

T.I.M.’s stated aim is to “*document male sexuality in the 21st century*”, but critics claim that titles such as Dawson’s 50 Load Weekend put actors at risk and encourage reckless behaviour in viewers.

Liam Cole recently joined T.I.M. as a director and his first video, *Bad Influence*, is scheduled for release on August 22, 2008. I met Liam in London, where excerpts from the video were recently screened at Elevator Gallery and The Whitechapel Gallery.

**Susan Donam:** How did you get into making porn?

**Liam Cole:** I wrote fanmail to Paul Morris [founder and owner of T.I.M.]. He said I should try making porn, so that afternoon I made a tape of a man jerking off and sent it over. He liked it.

**SD:** Morris is notoriously reclusive. Is it true that he never appears publicly in connection with the studio and there are no known photographs of him?

**LC:** As far as I know, yes. He’s a faceless villain.

**SD:** He also has something of a personal mythology built up around him; that T.I.M. is as much a cult as it is a porn studio [many of the models are tattooed with the studio’s logo, which Liam drew on his forehead, Charles Manson style, while I was photographing him] and that Morris is the charismatic maverick at its centre, attracting devotees to his sexual philosophy.

**LC:** That’s not a myth.

**SD:** Is Morris’s a philosophy of excess?

**LC:** What do you mean?

**SD:** For example, the standardisation of condom-use in ‘90’s gay porn established a limit on showing physical intimacy. Paul Morris defined T.I.M. by exceeding that limit, focusing on the exchange of semen in a way that was more extreme than anything even from pre-AIDs porn.

**LC:** I’m not sure I agree that T.I.M. is defined by that, but in any case the arguments made against bareback porn revolve around the idea of excessive risk, not excessive intimacy. The premise is that unconstrained sexual

intimacy is of limited value and therefore not worth risking too much over. Paul raised the stakes on that by setting a higher value on sex. Then there’s the general attraction of risk itself. The “*fuck it, I want this*” effect. Why do people drive too fast? Or have affairs? Danger is fun.

**SD:** There is also a logic of excess, a pattern of exceeding precedents, evident in T.I.M. videos: Dawson’s 20 Load Weekend is necessarily followed by Dawson’s 50 Load Weekend and then Loaded in which the load count goes up to about 75.

**LC:** Right, more each time. But those videos show Dawson’s sexual appetite as it really is. It’s not a concept that Max [Sohl, the videos’ director] thought up and forced onto Dawson. There’s no script. Nobody says, “*in this video you’re going to have to play the part of a man who wants 75 strangers to cum in his ass*”. Dawson is that man.

**SD:** It sounds like the antithesis of “*gay-for-pay*”.

**LC:** Forget “*gay-for-pay*”. Any man you see getting fucked in a T.I.M. video is there because he wants it, and there are plenty of others who contact us requesting to be gangbanged – more than we have time to shoot. These men have a compulsion. If there is a logic of excess, it comes from them.

**SD:** If that’s the case, why did you recently feel it necessary to send an 18 year old man to a hypnotherapist to encourage him to be fucked by a group of men on camera? That seems excessively manipulative, and deliberately so. A parody of the pornographer as exploiter.

**LC:** Tommy Haine already wanted to be fucked by a group on camera. The hypnotism was an extra little experiment, because he was interested in giving up control. The first time I shot with Tommy was a 1-on-1. Afterwards he told me that it had been too vanilla, and that he wanted to go further, be treated like an object, get used by a group. He asked for it.

**SD:** Did you grant that request?

**LC:** I shot more with him, yes. He’s been fucked a fair bit. I don’t know how much of it will be in *Bad Influence* because this video’s not a huge gangbang type of thing, and it’s still being edited. A lot gets shot, a lot gets cut, and nothing gets released without Paul Morris’s approval.

July 2008

Susan Donam





*Annie* - digital photograph; 2008 -  
Dallas Seitz and Annie Sprinkle



*Ali* - still from '*Love Story*' (1970 -  
Dir. Arthur Hiller); 2008 - Dallas Seitz





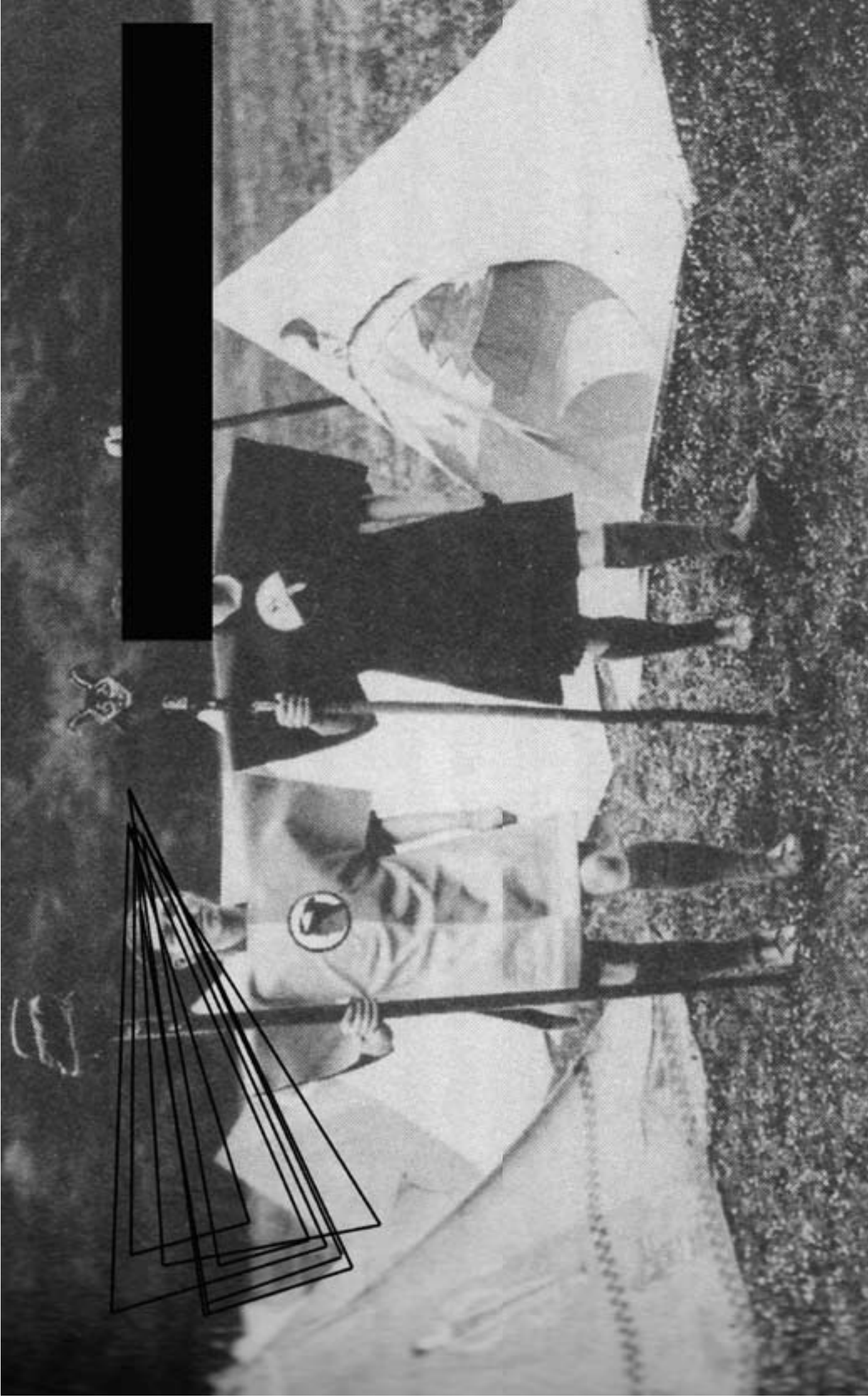






*Susi McCloud, Part 4: Towards the End of the Wedding Ceremony:*  
- photo reportage: 2008 - **Tina Schimansky**



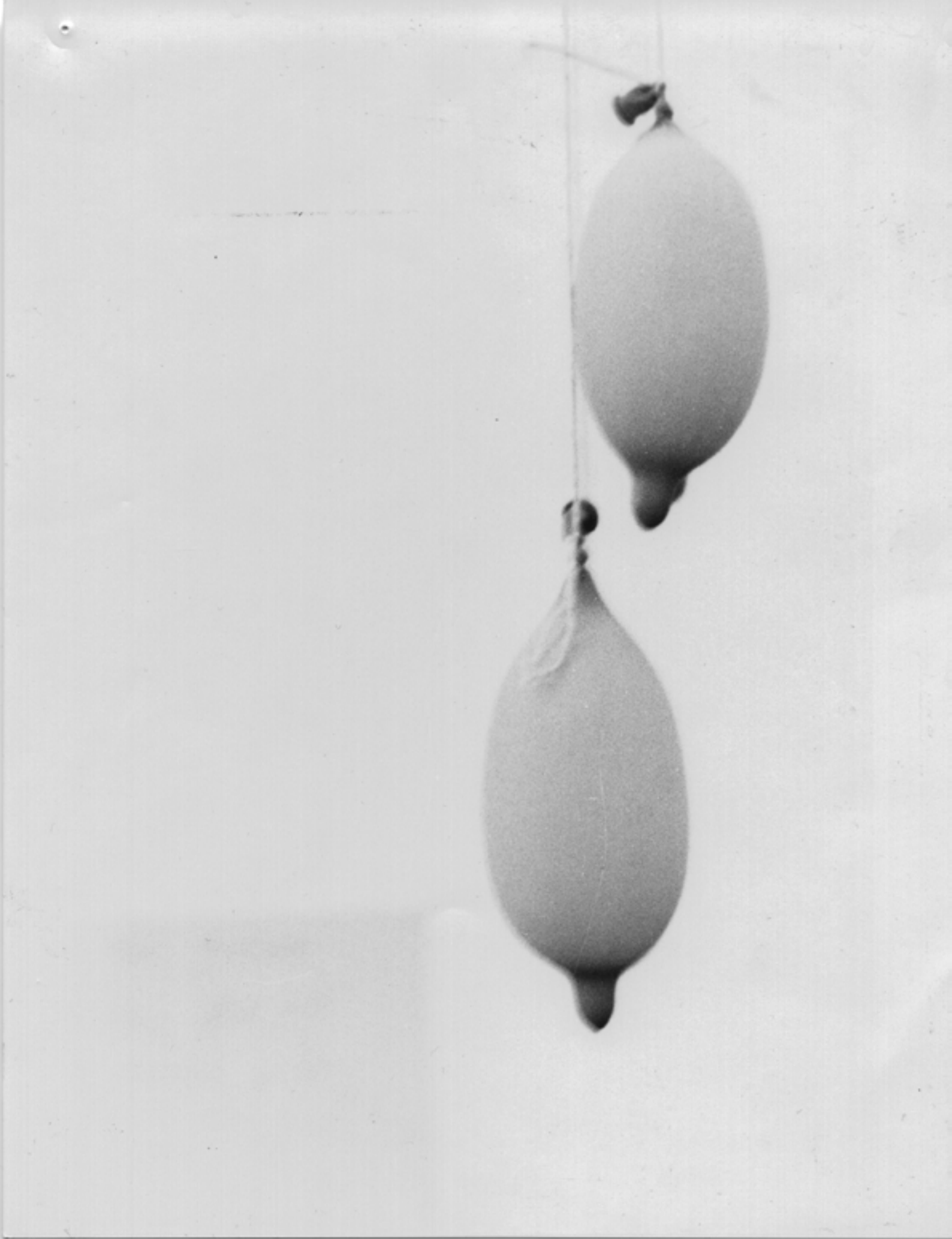


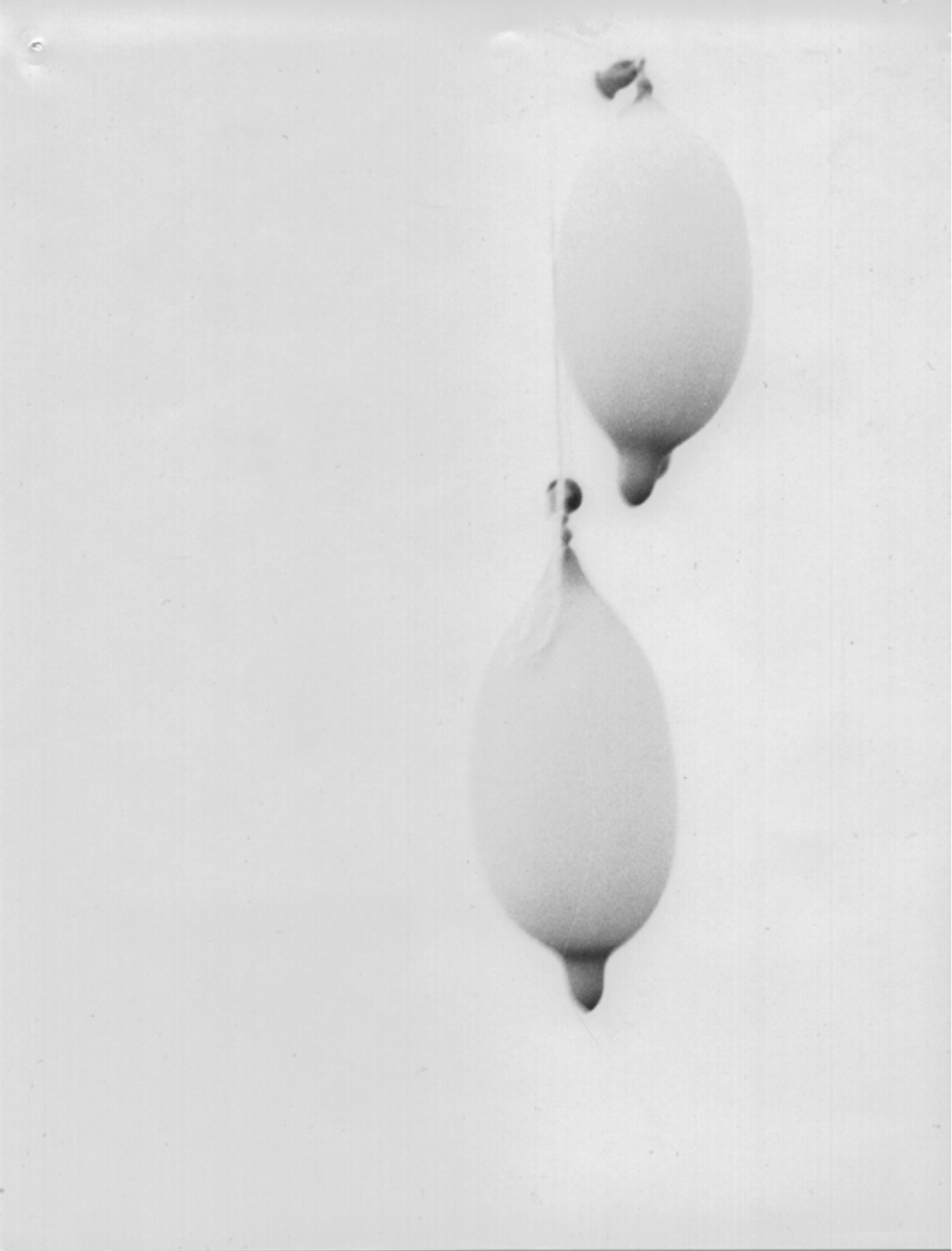
*Pageant; ink on found image, 2008 - Jacopo Miliani*















*Untitled* - black and white, photographic series; 2008 -  
**Clare Kenny**

# Of Possibility

I am rooted to the spot.  
I am spiralling down.

This promise wears around my neck like a heavy burden and the pressure to make one proposition a reality keeps digging in and down my collar-bone - pressing harder and creeping in about every part of me. It has been bearing down for so long that my thoughts are now filtered through this fug and when they do surface, spattering and spluttering for air they are heavy, mumbled offerings – fit for nothing.

My feet hang off the edge of the curb, quivering slightly when concentration momentarily gives way. Occasionally, decisive figures brush past me, eager to make their way out beyond this line - that at this precise moment feels like a captor and not the cusp of great beginnings.

Until this moment each movement on this point has been similar; a well-practiced and slick achievement that elicited no deliberate forward motion. Joints just moving slowly through an anthology of various minute repetitions. Cyclical replication of the former - amounting ultimately to the same gesture; an illusion of action only. But then it wasn't designed to excite – it had been carefully constructed to avoid attention. Any gaze that had flitted occasionally to my frame was quickly deflected and encouraged to move on, further and away.

I am crystallising here, under this suit.

With each figure that purposefully strides off past me there is a gust of possibility that seems almost enough to wave me off on my first step into this beyond. But as it reaches the tipping point it disappointingly subsides and I am returned unmoved to my vigil back here on the curb.

There are, on my own part, frequent tentative attempts at progression but it is the crippling enormity of varied direction that immediately tenses muscles and returns limbs to their starting position. Conviction is curtailed at a fraction after it's inception.

Sustenance for my captive mind has consisted of working over and through the many possible scenarios of advance – this from the glorious comfort of inertia. I have closely dissected these images for all their projected merit, reworked them, dwelled a while in some and abandoned many. Few I return to, and though they all share exact starting points they seldom reach the same outcome. Satisfactory as methods of fantasti-

cal escape, I wonder that perhaps they are intentionally constructed to be improbable and thus entirely unavailing modes of actual forward movement. It is safer this way.

There is no frustration in such illusory placation, no wishy-washy sentiment that would lead me to say that it seems always to have been this way; but there is not a time I can remember in which it was not so.

I have never stood anywhere but here.



# Contributor Biographies:

**Chris Shaw** was born in Manchester, England. Studied at Wimbledon College of Art (MA). Recent shows include: *Bang For Your Buck*: Sassoon Gallery; London (2008); *Approaches To What?*: The Nunnery, London (2008); *The Drawing Cabinet*: Scope Basel, Switzerland (2007); *Days of the Commune*: Stockwell Studios, London (2007). Lives and works in London.

**Sam Porritt** is an artist based in London.

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**Clunie Reid** is an artist and part-time lecturer at Wimbledon College of Art. Recent shows include *East international*: (2008) and *Nought to Sixty*: ICA, London (2008). Lives in London.

**Simona Brinkmann** is an artist. She was born in Milan and lives and works in London. Studied at Middlesex University and Central St Martin's College of Art and Design. In 2007, was awarded the Clifford Chance Sculpture Award. Recent Projects include: *New Reform*: Network Centrum voor Hedendaagse, Belgium (2006); *The Aesthetics of Anxiety*: Marc de Puechredon, Basel (2007); and a solo presentation at *Art Athina*, Athens (2008).

**Clare Kenny** is an artist and curator based in Basel, Switzerland.

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**Ana Genoves** was born in 1969 and studied at Chelsea College of Art (BA Hons) at the Slade School of Art (MA). She's had solo exhibitions in London, including The Approach Gallery and The Drawing Room, and has participated in several group shows like *New Contemporaries* (1997) and *The Square Show* at Bloomberg Space (2003).

**James Richards** is an artist living and working in London. Currently associate artist at LUX film and video, Richards' has recently shown at Vegas Gallery, London and Project(or), Rotterdam. Upcoming projects include *nought to sixty*, ICA and *showstudio.com*

**Chris Grieves** is an artist and musician based in London.

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