

# **Transmission 2010-2011**

Rachel Smith

## **Transmission**

The Art Writing module is a part of the first year of my MA Fine Art study at Sheffield Hallam University.

This booklet charts the two voices I have developed in response to the Transmission Lecture series from 2010 – 2011.

Voice 1 is an unedited stream of consciousness written during the lecture. This voice weaves in and out of...

Voice 2, which is a more objective voice, an attempt to understand the artist and their intentions.

As part of the task we were asked to bring the two very different voices together potentially into a Voice 3 – this is my response.

## **The Juneau Project 6.10.10**

*long day...too much information...head aches...it feels like being at the cinema...*  
The Juneau Project are two blokes from Birmingham who presented their  
*compare note books...is mine too frivolous?...everyone else is very practical...can a notebook*  
back catalogue of work in a very unprovocative manner. They mix band  
*be frivolous?...cool little table...pull it out...nervous anticipation...lights dim...ooh very*  
culture with performative art and community based projects. Funding for such  
*bright...phew dim again...the noise of a burning needle ow my ears are bleeding...*  
work in the future is now under threat and leads to questions as to how they  
*bright again...signer makes me think of Brighton...wish I was by the sea...squirrels make*  
will develop their ideas. Their work seems to engage the public in a  
*me chuckle...more passion than the speakers...tired...is everyone else listening*  
lighthearted way and owes much to the participants who make their work  
*hard...wonder if tea will be ready when I get back...sea shells Margate installation and*  
come to life; whether they are children, adults or squirrels.  
*back to the seaside again...how is this provocation?...hope not too many more questions...*

**Maxa Zoller**

**13.10.10**

*we are very high up...table or no table it twisted my back last week...a curator could be...*  
Maxa Zoller as a curator discusses the work of others, rather than address provocation in relation to her own practice. Zoller discusses the provocation *different than last week...oh this is about provocation!...she's very dynamic...the signers are* of capitalism and looks specifically at 2 films by Renzo Martens which raise *so good - fascinating to watch...I really should learn sign language...hurrah for her way of* provocative issues of white colonial power. She then takes the stance of the *identifying herself...lights go down, its too dark to write...film makes me angry...he knew* outsider in order to propose the undoing of knowledge as power and the *the outcome...led them to a crushing end all for his own means...patronizing shit...here* need to engage with emotion. She wants the audience to imagine and believe *comes the bright light again...second film is not really holding my interest...her passion is* in change in order to make it happen. There is a feeling of rebelliousness *keeping me awake...believe in change...imagine the change...I try to imagine but feel* about her that is intoxicating.  
*tired and defeated*

**Tony White**

**20.10.10**

*he keeps moving his books about... his power base?...penny fiddles with her scarf...they have*  
Tony White says he identifies as being an artist despite wanting his book  
*a powerful connection...signer apologies - cant sign - too fast...he reads on...remember*  
shaped objects to be part of mainstream fiction. He works with stereotypes  
*trainspotting? a similar thick colloquial dialogue...people are shuffling...language...is it*  
and provocative language which certainly caused some provocation in the  
*justified?...I can feel other peoples anger...what is the guy in front writing?...he never*  
audience. He presented his art by displaying book jackets and reading from  
*stops...wonder about other peoples perception...book shaped object..but fiction...find it hard*  
the novels Foxy T and CharlieUncleNorfolkTango. He discussed the book  
*to see where the art starts and the fiction ends... just had this conversation in the studio*  
shaped objects in relation to their value which has risen well above the  
*...is it art?...no longer a relevant question...but finding myself asking it anyway...*  
recommended retail price.  
*condescending!*  
*that's a good question...*  
*but is that an answer?*

**Mark McGowan      27.10.10**

*woman gesturing in front of us... what is she doing... moving people forward... who is she... she's making us move now... just settled... move right to front, can see him in the eye... hope she's happy... surprised... feel churned up and angry now... why cant I sit where I want -*

Mark McGowan presented a slickly edited set of TV clippings of much of his *its 4:17 ... ooh its loud... coughing behind... strong shadows across his palms catch my eye...* performative work and the media reaction. He clearly courts the media in a *as does the clock again, now I can see it I cant stop my eye flicking... mobile phone goes* provocative way and judges the success of his art by how much attention it *off its 4:31... lots of laughter today... full range of emotions... he's very engaging and flippant* gains. He uses his work to play with truth and humour and he put on an *and yet there's more under the surface... Sharon moves something on the desk what is it...* entertaining performance. However once the laughter dies down we are left *Becky needs a mike... oh the thing is a mike... do I really want to make people fall over when* wondering who he really is. It is sad that he seemed to loose the audience *they look at my work?... painting for losers and for girls... is that student angry because he's* somewhere around the act of keying cars and he ended up admitting that he *a painter or compared to a girl?... ok we get it... he really talks with his hands... why do* didn't really commit that act of vandalism, which seems to prove that we all *people ask so many questions in one breath as they wont get answered... it really is* need to be liked, as well as the naivety of some sections of the audience. *different being at the front, making eye contact... but that stupid clock is still mocking me...*

## Thomas Thwaites      10.10.10

*OMG ...no pen - where did it go ? how stupid am I...borrow a pooky pencil and a biro...girl behind wont shut up...oh I missed his surname...he is stood almost outside the fire door*

**In response to a quote from Hitchhikers' guide to the galaxy, Thwaites**

*He is barely in the room...lots of whispering and rustling...he's moving about so much...it attempted to create a £3.94 toaster from Argos, starting from completely raw looks so crazy he is stood behind the signer who is sitting down...the more I watch the less materials and working them by hand into something that resembles a toaster, I can listen - they are a signing totem pole... she is controlled and clearly communicating.. costing £1187.54.*

*he is wildly gesticulating...*

**He also made a spoof documentary about the possible future use of bees in he seems unable to get his message across...Jasper and Sharon are both disturbed by noise policing in a humourous and potentially political attempt to look control and level...Sharon reacts...why wont Thomas get off the fence...I love his work but he wont occupy surveillance in our society.**

*a position...yeah, yeah...yeah, yeah...seriously stop saying that...I want to love his work as*

**His work seems to have the potential to spark interesting and provocative much as the first time I saw it but he is getting in its way...who is the questioner on the steps debate. However in order for this to occur successfully it would require the and what on earth is he on about?... it feels he has been hijacked and made to look a fool, artist to admit to his position or belief, which he seemed unwilling or unable because his philosophical knowledge isn't deep enough...audience are like dogs with a bone to do.**

*too painful to watch...*

**Sally O Reilly**

**17.11.10**

*She was absent and so was I - work commitments are such a pain sometimes - having to be one place when you desire to be in another - others spoke enthusiastically of the film shown in her absence.*

**Craig Richardson 24.11.10**

*he's 'actually' an academic what is that supposed to mean?...its very bright today ...ok now*  
Craig Richardson, an academic and post graduate moderator, spoke about  
*the other extreme, this is ridiculous its totally dark...torchlight on a mobile behind as I*  
gallery spaces and how they should contain something that is not occurring in  
*realise my notes are useless as I'm writing on top of earlier scribbles...his water bottle is*  
everyday life. He also explored how the artists' studio has a role in this as a  
*illuminated by the strong light of the projector... huge shadow of someone writing on the*  
space where everything and nothing is possible. He seemed to be calling for a  
*ceiling projected by mobile phone light...his voice is hypnotic and making me sleepy...*  
new way of presenting art outside the gallery. He also discussed how the  
*I have counted 4 visible CCTV cameras...we are always being watched...someone asks for*  
critical review has no effect, but that artists have the ability to affect the  
*the lights on to make notes...we should make mental notes he replies...I might if I could get*  
political and he ended by reminding all the students about the political action  
*a handle on what he is saying...feel he is saying something really interesting but I am lost*  
and demonstration taking place the same evening.  
*in his sea of words...maybe I am not alone as only the lecturers have questions...*

**Phil Collins**

**1.12.10**

*sitting in front of a roaring fire....no buses...Sheffield at a stand still...snow...snow..*

**Transmission cancelled.**

*tiddy pom....the more it goes...tiddy pom....on snowing*

## **Marcia Farquhar      8.12.10**

*an unusual start having to hand out our manifestos for art writing...totally different - greeting everyone who comes in...easier to slip in unnoticed and sneak glances at people unwatched...here we are on show...most people take all leaflets...if you thrust something in their hand they seem obliged...wonder if they will be read?...do I want feedback? ...*

*vote on the gallery name for Arundel gate court...seriously that's the name...what a bunch of idiots...he stands to take a bow...now that's provocative... and finally we get started...*

Marcia spoke widely about provocation in her own work, inspirations and the she admits to a loud voice - deaf grandmother -ha...is it Jason or Jasper!!...he's going to work of others. She discussed her punk roots and how successful the DIY get stick for that...oh the film accidentally starts and she lets it...I think she feels she's approach can be; just get out there and do it don't wait to be asked.

*talking too much...ooh I hate distorted sounds...why am I so sound intolerant?...oooooh*

She showed a film by Andrew Cottings of her performance piece and border terrier eating a sausage...oh sorry not really the point...oh I can see lads in front

discussed the nature of giving someone else editorial control over her work. *reading a manifesto...I don't think he gets it...sniggering and not really reading between*

Whereas she performed the piece as a Punch and Judy show once every hour *the lines...I think it's mine and Helen's he looking at but cant quite see, I want to challenge* to a live audience he made her do it for 6 hours without a clear audience.

*him but it might cause a scene not the time or place...yeah she likes Samuel Beckett...*

This caused interesting distortions within the piece due to the endurance nature of the performance and it stands as a powerful piece about collaborative working. For her it 'engendered an existential loneliness'.

She finished by talking about provocation when it is unintentional, *people are leaving and she challenges them...good for her it's like a stand up*

questioning whether this is more or less successful. Some of the questions *routine...cool...Sarah manages a question with all the words in from critical forum...*

that followed came from a place of anger rather than analytical or critical *some people are very rude in their questioning...why cant we be more supportive of each* thinking, which is frankly becoming rude and tiresome.

*other?... I am getting tired of all the egos and posturing...*

## Craig Fisher

25.1.11

*we are sitting on the opposite side to normal...I do like a bit of Marilyn...why so camp?*

Craig Fisher produces fabric creations which visually seem to draw heavily on *stroking fabric...playing at fetish...person next to me has a mike to record the sound...*

Claes Oldenburg. He discussed how, though his work could be seen as *its weird and I am aware of my own noises, shifting in seat and clearing throat - wonder if sculpture, he thinks like a painter and his sculptures have fronts and it will be recorded?...bang someone drops a sketchbook...he actually used the sublime backs, rather than being seen in the round.*

*word...girl behind asks if he has filmed the video clip of the shining...seriously?...another*

Craig believes the provocation in his work comes from the audience being *behind asks friend what kitsch means...are they for real?...2 men facing lake, a bad seduced by the beauty of the violent objects he makes. These objects include attempt at subliminals...cringe...I find myself irritated by his deliberate campness...straight sequined sick and satin spunk as well as beautifully hand stitched knives, men playing camp...grr...though I like the importance of the labour intensiveness and that bombs and blood. It seems very important that they are made by him; the he makes it himself...it reminds me of a friends work that she did on her degree back in the labour intensive process holds value for him.*

*1990's...gosh hadn't thought about her in ages...*

## Laurent Tixador 2.2.11

*this guy is French with a translator...could be tricky...looks like a climber rather than an artist...oh he is a climber and walker and that's the art is it?...I have mates who are artists as the work. He walks camps and digs in places around the world. He looks without realising!...lots of scrolling through images...its making me dizzy...slow down and for the influence of specific sites to flow through his work and consequently let us look...Sharon says compass...I am finding it hard to listen between the French finds it hard to produce something which he considers suitable for gallery and English I feel sorry for the translator it seems really hard for him to translate all of exhibition. He walked with a friend from Nantes to Metz in a straight line with this...makes me feel very inadequate as I only really speak English...how pathetic and very a compass and they turned up to the private view with nothing to show but English of me... lady with black bob turns and shhhs...its a Chinese guy with an Elvis quiff themselves. Though he states this is a moment of sacrifice offered to the carved in a spoon...what?...noise of the mouse scroll...Sharon translating vanitas...well viewer, which should be enough. However he clearly does not completely that's the symbol of your death...wry smile...ooh Jaspar is under the table trying to get the believe it is enough and this struggle leads him to produce carvings from DVD to work...grubby blokes...wriggling in sleeping bag...itchy feet...fleabites...eeeurgh... wood and bones found at the sites he works in. These beautifully carved I can't decide if the objects he carves are beautiful or a little bit naff..but don't tell anyone miniatures are often displayed in bottles and are the gallery exhibition pieces he seems a really interesting guy the more the talk goes on but the language barrier is to justify the experience he has gone through, though they are a problematic and even he starts to try to speak in English as he goes along... surprising legacy for the performative nature of his work.*

**Ian Rawlinson**

**9.2.11**

*having just decided to go in the right hand door to the lecture theatre the fire alarm starts...so much for breaking habits...girl tries to stop us sitting near back but we overrule her and sit there anyway...tired of being controlled in our seating arrangements...*

Ian Rawlinson works in conjunction with Nick Crowe who could not be welcome...man on screen with a ginger beard and a Quaker hat ish...he works with Nick present, as he was in Berlin. Their work has a strong performative element who is in Berlin...weird but steady buzzing noise today...no signer...sound of girl in front and is "concerned with the languages of power" though the artist classed the tapping on keyboard wish i could see how she is spelling his name...oh facebook now is tone as poetic.

*it...Ikon gallery...internet banking...tetras and on it goes...the well lit screen constantly*

The two pieces that stood out were 'Welcome', where the artists dress draws my eye away from...top of the morning...sound of paper being torn from a pad as leprechauns and address each other in Arabic and Hebrew dialects.

*Loud slurping noise...is that a drink?...I feel really noise sensitive today...I wonder why?*

Though at times their dialogue seems to connect they are at cross purposes Oh they are dressed as lephrocorns in natty green felt outfits...lots of burning going on in and the words are always disrupted in their flow. This is because

*work...boys will be boys they just cant help setting fire to stuff!... fireworks sound like a they don't form any real meaning or ever amount to anything; the viewer is violent squash game ricocheting off the walls...loud tearing sound again how many*

left with an overriding feeling of frustration and also sadness as they mistakes can you make?...oooh...the sounds are loud today its making me want to cry...

persevere despite their inability to communicate.

*Fingers down a blackboard times 10 distorted sound at maximum volume equals pain...*

The other piece was the visually and aurally arresting 'Four Horsemen'. This the tulip image is quite surprising, though without the horrific noise I doubt its power

was a video of tulips being scorched by matches which was mirrored, now suddenly we are onto sculpture...whizzing by ceramic anvils and climbing rope

transforming the movement into an unnerving alien looking bug head.

*weapons...you've lost me now...and there is no time for him to explain the connection*

The process was accompanied by an unbearable noise; equivalent to nails the questions start and people immediately feel free to leave...feel very unimpressed by the

down a blackboard which added greatly to the feeling of primordial terror.

*glowing edges computer effect added to his video...very GCSE....now that's just rude...*

**Oliver Zwink**

**16.02.11**

Zwink's work speaks of the city. Even when specific, the shapes are built in generic terms. His work seems to contain an interesting tension between abstraction and realism. The video work 'Cuben' has a futuristic feel and yet at the same time it echoes existing memories from past popular culture. His cubed city is made of solid, brightly coloured uninhabited forms which are fractured by trance like human sounds that lend a visceral edge to the clean lines of the structures. The film flicks between skimming the outer surface of the cubed city and delving into the interior, leaving the breathtaking feeling of having just penetrated the surface of the new death star.

**Oriana Fox**

**23.2.11**

*wow that's a nice suit - power dressing eighties meets Laura Ashley...with green shoes and a*  
Oriana Fox arrived dressed for success in her performance clothing and her  
*wig to match...for the sock fetishist in the audience we have black and white checks from*  
headline read - 'Performance Art can change your life for the better'  
*Chloe - ta da sound comes from the computer as the talk begins...sex and the city...chuckles*  
She began with an image of Oriana past as a way of showing her new and  
*wow there's a lot of cunt in amongst all this and it feels a little dated...very American...*  
improved self - A living advert as proof of her slogan. Her video of family  
*was that a john lewis bag under the table while cock is entering cunt?...how have you not*  
members played out by her was a humorous yet insightful piece. She showed  
*experienced sexism?...how cozy must your life be?...why is it ok to re-perform other peoples*  
a wide selection of her work with a great deal of tongue in cheek  
*work without any sense of moving forward?...Jaspar is smirking a lot and Becky is*  
humour. However looking past the surface humour there seemed merely a  
*frowning needing the mike...Vanessa Beecroft is proving a sticking point...cant imagine*  
reworking of 70's feminist art which perhaps lacked enough of a new way  
*why!...as we sit further forward they do seem to move back -did they guess our plan?...*  
forward. As an art history lesson it was informative and well delivered but left  
*well its over and as we leave people start to express their disappointment after their initial*  
many in the audience looking for something more.  
*feelings of high hope and expectation...*

## **Cornford and Cross 9.3.11**

*panic of almost being late, so sitting now at the back, not as we discussed in the front row,*

**Cornford and Cross are collaborative site specific artists. They engage in**

*but so many more people late after us, I counted about six people or even eight after us -*

**pushing boundaries as well as critiquing historical and political assumptions.**

*so nothing to worry over - start to breathe normally and relax in order to see the work .*

**They work in a fluid way, allowing the work to develop in response to each**

*I am fairly under-whelmed by the work but the ideas are good - back to how much do*

**site acknowledging both social and historical readings of each place. Despite**

*visuals count- the work is so visually understated - bury a pipe underground can't imagine*

**the often complex political concepts embedded in their art practice the**

*why they said no! - Where do they get the money from to do these things? - ah, even*

**aesthetic nature of the work is unassuming and surprisingly un-provocative.**

*they are questioning that now, in the current financial climate.*

**At times the art is barely visible and as such often requires the written**

*Rapunzel and her lettuces get everywhere at the moment - Why does this keep coming up?*

**documentation and proposals to provide an explanation, which potentially**

*I wonder what the universe is saying?...*

**allows the viewer a way in.**

*burgundy trousers match the curtains*

**With**

**16.3.11**

*Remember to count this week - a different approach, how will it change the experience?*

The talk was certainly a witty and slick examination of identity, self invention

*0 people sat in first 4 rows on the right side of the theatre*

and existential anxiety. The work is a critique of the value of exchange and

*2 people leave immediately as the questions start*

capitalist identity commodification but at the same time there is a danger of

*I smelt orange- does that make it 3 smells or just a differing opinion on the hand cream?*

the work becoming a part of what it attempts to critique, particularly in terms

*3 chairs in a line*

of its slick branding and website shop space. However is it worth considering

*4 times the speaker reads other peoples reviews of his work*

if we could club together as a group and raise £100 for WITH to accidentally

*4 people rustling*

and affordably break a glass for us – or should we aim higher and get him to

*5 chuckling sounds from woman in front*

write voice 3?

*counting is fun!*

**John Jordan**

**23.3.11**

John Jordan presented almost a manifesto of how to be a political artist. His *we are counting again today for the blog...it brings a totally different experience to being* eleven points were delivered in an engaging way and his work is provocative *here as my focus is different and I am also aware that there may be more of whatever I am* but in a thoughtful way. He called for direct action to be considered as art *counting behind me...though it is an odd sensation to turn around and stare at the* and in his community based work he is not visible in the art but acts as a *audience behind...so here goes...1 empty row at the front...2 new recycle bins...* facilitator that allows the project to grow organically. The workshop he was *2 men in a Courbet painting...3 chairs in an arc today...4 times the word beautiful is used* asked to run at the Tate was eye opening as they asked him not to perform *6 hats including the artist...No rustling today or I am listening too hard to him to notice?* direct action against them or their sponsors; BP! This did not work out as the *free chips always gets people involves...I like his style...shame he hasn't brought any today!* gallery hoped and the participants of the workshop did indeed organise *he repeated number 5 in his list twice...is that deliberate?... just to check we are still awake...* several actions to highlight BP's terrible record with spilling oil and not taking *loving the idea of women entering the gallery and bursting bags of oil, concealed in their* responsibility. The end of the talk brought more provocation as he asked the *dresses onto the floor and then kneeling in their high heels to mop it up ineffectually...* audience to come down to the front to take part in a spectrum debate, *genius! Spectrum questions audience participation ...it was strange to stand at the front* placing themselves along a line to illustrate how they responded to several *and look back into the remains of the audience... see why it could be intimidating for the* questions. This allowed for a much more open and productive debate and *speakers...I counted 47 people left sitting in the audience at the start of this activity!* was a strong end to the transmission lecture for this year.