

LYNDA MORRIS  
JCHP CRITICAL BOUT

JCHP invited individuals to publicly critique their practice, the ideologies of the exhibition and CRITICAL DECOR : WHAT WORKS! LYNDA MORRIS led the final Critical Bout session and was prepared to give JCHP a good drubbing.

CRITICAL DÉCOR was a determined bid to reformulate the conventions of the exhibition apparatus and disengage the relations of production with the relations of distribution, which are immobilised in their bind to one another in the art system.

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**SK:** Hi all and thank you for coming to the final of the Critical Bouts. I'm persisting to the end with my language of warfare, ridiculously I accept, to set up this artificial hostile background to the talks between the artists and invited speakers. I've gone the furthest tonight and sold the event as Lynda giving the artists a good drubbing, which is probably why we're packed out...or maybe it's lost in translation – it's, er, a Glaswegian term for a thrashing.

The first of the sessions was led by the poet and critic Michael Hampton and he laid out a very thorough groundwork for Critical Décor and JCHP's practice in relation to this. Alex Bowen then made a very knowing attempt to lay into JCHP's practice but with defeat at the beginning. He labored the point that JCHP is beyond criticism, in no small way because they use and absorb criticism as a vital part of their practice, and he used the analogy between a perfectly efficient proto capitalist advertising business model and JCHP brand and how they worked very similarly.

So it's down to Lynda to get through this seeming force field. Lynda Morris is an art historian and curator and a seminal figure in modern exhibition history and Professor of Curation and Art History at Norwich University of the Arts. Lynda's prepared a challenging set of questions for JCHP and there will be a chance for questions and answers...

**LM:** Or you can interrupt as I'm doing here with Sadie...

**SK:** Yes and I'd just like to say that I'm delighted that Lynda's here in the closing week of LGP. Lynda's work has been very important to me and had a big influence on LGP and she's helped me in the complex negotiations of running a University gallery programme. And is of course the ideal last match for JCHP, to dig into the lineage that JCHP's practice holds to early conceptualism.

**LM:** Thank you for inviting us Sadie. I wanted to keep the talk quite light hearted but relatively formal. I didn't want it to descend into a television chatshow and I've quite a respect for academia, particularly the whole idea of enlightenment. I think that the problem with a lot of academic activities of this day and age, is that it has become more about concealing, not letting people know what's going on and I'm really interested in the whole concept of the continual process of unconcealment and for me, learning, research, knowledge is really important but it's up to you in a sense, not the institution, which I hope is a subject we'll get onto.

I'm here this evening, and I've prepared 26 questions to ask of the artists, which I hope are the questions that are going through your heads which is why I say do interrupt us.

I'm here this evening asking these questions because I'm very interested in the work of JCHP and I think this is a great exhibition and publication for Sadie Kerr's very important programme to be brought to a sadly premature end. I've watched LGP with more interest and enthusiasm than I think of any other art school gallery programme in Britain in this day and age and since, sadly, my own programme in Norwich was brought to an end in 2009, after 30 years of continual output.

The first question is that London, standing for England, standing for Britain, has had a difficult history with conceptual art since the 1990s. More so than Europe and the USA and we now have a substantially different idea of contemporary art history in this country to what is there in Northern Europe and the USA. I think the way in which Craig Martin and the YBAs, Anthony D'Offay, White Cube, Saatchi and Tate Modern have distracted from what the rest of the world sees as a major late 20<sup>th</sup> century movement. And I wonder as a big starting point, general question, how do you position yourselves in this debate, where here in Britain we've developed a very different understanding of what is contemporary practice to the way in Europe and in the States, conceptualism is still a major position?

**JCHP:** We were unaware that there was such a difference to start with... and the difference being?

**LM:** I think if you look at the Tate collection, and what they bought in the 1970s through to early 80s and other major museums throughout the Western world, there is a very coherent picture to do with conceptual art practices. What I feel very concerned about in this country, is the way that from that international basis, for e.g. looking at the earlier exhibitions you'll have say 6 artists from USA, 4 artists from Britain, 1 from Belgium, 1 from France, 1 from Italy, 1 from Holland and perhaps 4 from Germany and that picture has been completely destroyed by what I see as an artificial creation of the YBA movement and the list of names that I've just read out.

**JCHP:** With regard to the YBA, and the question was how do we position ourselves with regard to that, is not something we've ever discussed or explicitly talked about before with each other, but just seeing it as a really successful way in which distribution has become practice. They did that very successfully. That's carried on probably more pervasively because of what they achieved. In terms of how we position ourselves against that, bringing it back to our practice is an attempt to do what we think is the opposite.

**LM:** The aspect I'm most interested in is that you've gone back to a sort of conceptual practice. Or gone back to continuing a conceptual practice?

**JCHP:** It would appear that it looks like that definitely... and maybe that is true.

Second question

**LM:** Was that an answer?

**JCHP:** From our point of view, summarising that YBA thing as being successful for making distribution a smooth well oiled part of the machine of making work. The intention here, whether it works or doesn't is a different issue, is to try to bring a studio practice into the act of doing an exhibition. So I suppose that is the opposite, if it had to be viewed from that position.

**LM:** You used to be artists, then you became gallerists and this exhibition shows that to some extent, you're still looking around the possibility of you being artists. That's my summary. Is that fair?

**JCHP:** We both ran galleries but separately and didn't know each other when we did that, but we did make a decision to produce work together... so we're now artists, not in any grey floating area of gallerist/ curator/ intermediary...

**LM:** So this is a survey of your practice as artists or a survey of your practice as gallerists into continuing your practice as artists.

**JCHP:** It's not really a survey... no, but I appreciate the fact that it might look like that... and we've included a lot of stuff...but more that they just seemed relevant to the piece the Stonebreakers that we were producing. For the first time, seeing them in a frame on the wall, instead of being sent out in the post, they seem to warrant inclusion rather than stuck in some back catalogue.

**LM:** Before we get on to the Stonebreakers, I'd like to ask you about the text in *Critical Décor* – why was it handwritten, which made it much more difficult to read?

**JCHP:** When we were setting out the type and going through this piece of writing, that we thought of as provisional and ongoing, everything when properly set down in type looked too much of a statement and by handwriting it, it somehow looked like we were in the midst of it and it was the only indicator that we could think of... but we realise that it becomes ineligible ... that it slows down the reading...

The whole idea of the exhibition and publication is that the exhibition isn't fixed, it's not a realised object.

...but by the very act of setting type, you are enforcing the opposite...and you read it as that...

...and that book was put together fully in the knowledge that there will be another book that will be the full stop to this process and that will have the finished text, typed and set.

**LM:** I've just put out three books here: *Horizon*, edited by Cyril Connolly – I did a show years ago called the Artist International Association and this has an article *Why Do I Paint* by George Downs, who was famous for being taken up by the AIA as a working man who painted a bit, so he was a completely untrained artist. I also had sitting around at home Terry Atkinson's *The Indexing World War 1* and Terry's talking tomorrow and is quite an important point of reference for this exhibition and JCHP's practice. And then I started looking at, as an object, the little publication *Critical Décor*. What does *Critical Décor* mean? *Décor* is something that I associate with the world of interiors and not with quite dense theoretical publications. Do you all know the *World of Interiors*, the sort of *Vogue* of your house?

**JCHP:** House and Garden?

**LM:** No it's something more, a lot of artists appear in it, there was a recent issue a couple years ago on American minimalists and their houses.

Anyway, *Décor*, all those associations, I was also thinking about critical décor and thinking about Socialist Realism, it had that kind of connotation and then I started to think about the Gerhard Richter, Sigmar Polke, Konrad Lueg group in Dusseldorf in the 60s. They became this idea not of Socialist Realism but Capitalist Realism and there's a lovely story of Konrad Fisher taking

some of their work to show Ileana Sonnabend, the wife of Leo Castelli, in Paris and he was doing the portfolio and she was holding it and when it finally dawned on her that this was a German pop art group, she just couldn't get over the idea that the Germans could do pop art and she just roared with laughter and dropped everything on the floor. I wondered whether your critical décor had a tangential relationship to your practice, a bit like capitalist realism?

**JCHP:** No, I think there is a point when you've been asked to do the show and you sit there with a piece of paper working out the scale of the space and it felt like decorating, you know, where does that go...

Originally it was closer to interior design, this is intended to function on those terms.

**LM:** Which is why I thought it would be nice to have the chairs here, take them out of the display and..

**JCHP:** And have all of us sitting like this...

**LM:** So world of interiors is not so far away...

**JCHP:** Décor hints at failure, that no matter what you do, no matter what people say, it always ends up with stuff on the wall.

**LM:** The word critical takes us into the area of criticism and theory, was that intentional?

**JCHP:** Yes

**LM:** On the first page of your text, you use the term reified and this of course takes me back to Marxist Hungarian Lukacs in the *Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat*, and I'm delighted to introduce the term proletariat at this early stage in our discussion, although I would much prefer to be using working class. However I see your position as being really rather more bureaucratic than my older working class roots.

**JCHP:** What, white collar, upper working class?

**LM:** The upper working class becoming the bureaucracy of the present day. That universal higher education has changed slightly, that sense of the working class from people like myself who are 67 or so and once you go back to that immediate post-war period. I was wanting you to talk a little bit about the ways in which you were using the word reified. I think it's an important concept, it means to make visible doesn't it, to take an abstract concept or something that you haven't quite been able to articulate, and put into words, and to make an object about these issues, which I assume, the particular works of art you've chosen for the show, for you, represent that process, in historical terms, of reification.

**JCHP:** I can't remember the exact sentence but it goes back to what we were attempting to do with the Courbet. One of the main intentions in the show is that all of this décor points towards an artwork that is half completed, and all this work is an attempt to not get that actual artwork, that we're making at the moment, reified. So, that's the context in which we've probably used it. As in, becoming what it becomes because of some sort of value placed upon it.

**LM:** I also picked up in Terry Atkinson's text about you and the use of that term reified, being quite a lot about advertising. Part of this Marxist term has been used by the advertising industry as ways of making people's desires visible and selling it back to them. Obviously, with your graphics, you're using the language of advertising. Are you?

**JCHP:** It goes back to the décor thing. We've quite often thought of all this ephemera as a form of merchandise.

**LM:** The word I had most difficulty with in your text was oligopsony, I thought it sounded a bit like oligarchs. Would you explain the emphasis of your meaning of the use of that word?

**JCHP:** It's probably from the same root. If I remember rightly, we used it to do with the distinction between having a practice and having a career. The idea of an oligopsony is that it's a very small group exchanging a particular type of commodity, so it's used in the sense of an art market. In the conception of the art market as a top down hierarchical system, the oligopsony exists at the top and everything from it filters down to artists, who are to a certain extent, complicit. And I suppose, why we were talking about it with regard to career and practice is the idea that if you've got a practice, it hangs over you like a black cloud but if you've got a career, going back to the YBAs or whatever, it illuminates your practice like a beacon from on high.

**LM:** For people who have been through it, your text cites Brecht's *Messingkauf*, again suggesting a sympathy with Marxism or at least with a certain kind of central European pre-war intellectual socialism. Terry Atkinson, on page 96, writes that JCHP use it - Brecht's *Messingkauf* - as a criticism of exhibitionism in an exhibition. There's a contradiction there. Brecht wrote it in America?

**JCHP:** And when he was in Denmark before travelling through to America... It's a collective title for a body of work made from fragments and excerpts which he has at some point tried to bolt together, badly, in an awful clunky way, to make a play. It's never been performed, ever, although it's been published. It's unproducible as a play - half an hour in and you'd be slitting your wrists over the long abstract dialogues of a particular political nature of Denmark in 1940. But as a text...

**LM:** Are you using Brecht as a symbol? You all know about Bertolt Brecht, you know about the Berliner ensemble in East Germany, Brecht being kicked out of Germany, being the great playwright of the Weimer period up until 33 when the Nazis take over, and then Brecht also being charged by the House Un-American Activities Committee and the famous footage by Emile De Antonio of Brecht being forced to give evidence about his associations with communism in that beacon of freedom, America. Now, I must not say America, my South American friends tell me, I have to say USA and the example that they give to us is that we wouldn't call Africa part of Europe. Just a slight digression...

**JCHP:** The use of this was in terms of how it would be useful for himself, it's an attempt to write theory in a dialogue form. For us, that's the immediate attachment to it, Brecht trying to express something that he's been working on, the process of production laid out...

It's obviously become a reference in our works but we were aware of the risks of referencing something like Brecht, that it was just something to suggest what it suggests. As the Courbet suggests also...

It's useful as a tool. There's an analogy between the idea of estrangement that you get throughout all of Brecht's work, and in theatre, and going back to what you were saying about décor really, a way of getting the audience not to approach the work as a passive spectator. The *Messingkauf* meaning buying brass, the idea that purchasing a trumpet for the value of its raw materials. Scrap basically rather than its potential cultural value. So it implies a future art object or performance, recital or whatever on the trumpet. And to a certain extent is alienated by this grubby transaction which does away with that straight away.

**LM:** Steptoe and Son?

**JCHP:** ...more like Hercules the horse.

The reason we used it, is that there's a useful analogy we think, specifically with dealing with doing an exhibition.

**LM:** Develop that a bit...

JCHP: The whole idea of the table set up and the photocopied *Stonebreakers* on the wall is trying to imply there is a future artwork made by us, in pencil, of a version of the *Stonebreakers*, which is unmade in this exhibition. It's supposed to imply this potential work, or can be seen as a holding off until the conditions arrive to exhibit. It's not at the right moment here to exhibit as a final thing.

We've got an example of how Brecht explains the idea of alienating an audience.

**LM:** Would that be useful? How to alienate your audience. Yes, go on.

**JCHP:** It's quite short.

Suppose you've a play where the first scene shows A bringing B to justice, then the process is reversed in the last scene and after all kinds of incidents have been shown, B brings A to justice. So that there's one in the same process bringing to justice with A and B exchanging their respective roles, executioner and victim. In such a case you'll undoubtedly arrange the first scene so as to give the maximum possible effectiveness to the last. You'll ensure that on seeing the last scene, the audience will immediately be reminded of the first. That the similarity will be striking and at the same time that the differences will be overlooked. Such things are certainly done. Above all, in such a case the first scene oughtn't to be played as a transition to the next, it must be given a weight of its own. Every movement in it must be planned in relation to the same or altered movement in the last scene and an actor who knows that later on he's going to have to change places with his colleague, is likely to act differently from one who doesn't I'd say. He will represent the executioner differently if he remembers that he's going to have to represent the victim too. So the last scene alienates the first in the same way as the first alienates the last, which is the real gimmick of the play. The actor makes preparations that lead to a-effects (in other words estrangement) so now all you have to do is to apply this way of representation to plays where the last scene is missing. You mean play all the scenes with reference to all potential scenes? Yes.

So, that's a kind of practical example.

**LM:** It sounds like Kiev, with changing roles of presidents and prisons and all of that, which takes it back into real life, which is what we need to do isn't it. Terry Atkinson's text discusses new technologies a lot. They have vastly increased the propensity of both art producers and art consumers to indulge in behavior that is more and more reified. Adorno and Lukacs insist in what they conceive as the enlightened form of the bourgeois subject as being the carrier of social progress. I think it's the final bit that I'm really interested in, it seems like a critique of the theorists at the beginning of this century, that it is possible for enlightened forms of progress to come through bourgeois intellectual positions. Surely Courbet, however radical his ideas, we know from his painting of the studio that there was some degree of bourgeois splendor. So the social progress that is implied by the *Stonebreakers*, is that to be acceptable or not? Similarly, this would go right the way through to this kind of bourgeois set up in an art gallery of the university, possibly the most bourgeois part of that set of activities. Is it possible that real social progress can

come out of discussing the work, the meaning of the work, in this kind of context? Is that what Terry is trying to get at?

**JCHP:** It sounds like that. Good question, we'll have to ask him tomorrow. The first part sounds like it's to do with the failure of what Benjamin was hoping for with regard to new technologies...

**LM:** To indulge in behavior that is more and more reified. It doesn't seem to be bad, or expecting very much.

**JCHP:** I think there was a hope in Benjamin that new technologies would offer a way in which objects were less subjected to reification, which obviously didn't turn out to be the case.

**LM:** I always try and lower the tone of things a little bit and there's a book called *The New Look* about Britain between 1940 and 1960 and it's made up with newspaper cuttings and it's what influenced me when I did the Vanley Burke book, to use newspapers. In his little introduction, he talks about the social revolution that was brought about by the mass acquisition of the motor car and the television set and he said that what these did was to open a window on the world and shut the door to the street. That stayed with me over the years as quite an important concept. It feels like it even more now, because when you're sitting on the bus, everyone is there with their smartphones so they're not taking any notice of what's there around them, it's all there in the smart phones.

Again, this is not a question but some art history. At a round table in San Francisco in 1949, Marcel Duchamp had a very vicious argument with Frank Lloyd Wright, a capitalist lackey as almost all modern architects are. Duchamp argued that the majority of collectors think of art as an adjunct of Wall Street.

**JCHP:** How prescient, yes. It kind of rings true doesn't it. There's people like Degas saying equivalent things in 1880 about painters making objects to sell. Well, I suppose Degas saw it as a Jewish artworld problem, that the financiers were Jewish so maybe that's why it's not used...

**LM:** But surely that's the 1990s in London...

**JCHP:** And also the 1880s in Paris...

**LM:** No one really cared about the art, and the collectors were all property developers rebuilding the city of London and interested where Tate Modern might go to be useful in terms of their developments. It doesn't change, does it. Continuing with those ideas, the Romanian artist who lived in Paris in the 70s, Andre Cadere, wrote just after Carl Andre's bricks at the Tate and the big sensation around them, about the idea of space and politics and the way in which the ownership of the space comes between the artist and their public. This space for instance is owned by the University of Coventry... so does your consciousness about the ownership of this space, have any effect on your working and contact with the audience?

**JCHP:** As much as it's the space, it's the funding that goes along with the space that allows things or might make different considerations around that.

**LM:** A tiny little question now, In your text, all the different sections have the title {TITLE}. Why?

**JCHP:** We hadn't put the titles in, it's where the titles will go. It wasn't being clever.

**LM:** So there's a reason for it?

**JCHP:** There will be a title where it says title.

**LM:** The *Stonebreakers* by Courbet, is a very loaded choice. Firstly, Courbet's involvement with the Paris Commune, apart from the Russian revolution, was probably one of the most important revolutionary moments. Secondly, the discussion of Courbet's work by T.J. Clark is probably one of the most important art historical studies in the late 20th century and would be highly recommended to everyone here if you haven't read it. I wonder in your choice of Courbet, are you addressing Clark and the importance of that book in our culture as well as the importance of Courbet in revolutionary moments in European culture?

**JCHP:** We feel obliged to read the Clark undoubtedly, and if there's any reaction, it's the fact that we've put cartoons up as descriptions. Compared with the Clark, I think they do the job far better than he does, they point out something that is there within the painting far more clearly than Clark, who over large extended chapters, drags out and makes it a little drier than it should be.

**LM:** And what do you think is the essence of the cartoon's explanation of the *Stonebreakers*?

**JCHP:** Their clarity and being contemporaneous. They see what might be the real issue of the painting...so when they take the piss out of the size of the shoes, we get that...Clark obscures it as much as reveals it, and if you're talking more about revealing an image, the cartoonists reveal far more...

**LM:** Is it about the dignity of labour, the father and son relationship and the dignity of labour. Is that what Courbet did the painting for?

**JCHP:** He mentions something close to that in a letter...I think what he talks about is the working life of a young man and an old man and that it's cyclical, he'll die and his son will become him. From our point of view, the choice of using it comes back to this problem of artists referencing critically weighty subjects. It's a problem that quite a lot of art references stuff to glean credibility, so we're wary of that on one side and also not using it for its huge amount of interpretations put upon it. And the historical fact that it seemed to have done something in terms of when it was shown and how it was reviewed. It seemed to be doing something.

**LM:** Is the reason you accepted this invitation because of your ongoing interest and respect for Terry Atkinson, who has collaborated with you. Terry Atkinson, as well as being a member of Art & Language, was appointed to the art history department at Leeds University by T.J.Clark. We've got a close set of relationships which I think most people would agree were pretty close to the centre of British art in that particularly strong moment in the late 70s prior to Thatcher being appointed. T.J.Clark always said he went to America because we had Thatcher.

**JCHP:** But they had Regan?

We decided to do an exhibition here primarily because it was offered. Offers are few and far between. Once having the offer, it's a case of dealing with the context, including the institution, and quite generally interacting with some form of institution. The thing with Terry is just an ongoing exchange...

**LM:** But there's a particular significance to Terry and to Coventry in British art, which has been totally ignored by the Tate gallery for instance. The endless nonentities that they're showing these days. I did a show back in 87, 89 of Terry Atkinson's work which was called an eight piece

retrospective, I liked that because it was like an eight piece combo of some sort but it was also that idea that I was doing a retrospective of Terry Atkinson's work in a small university gallery because the Tate wasn't doing it and how Terry has been damaged by that gap in how we see conceptual art here in England and how it's viewed internationally. When did you last see a Terry Atkinson in a big show in London?

**JCHP:** Ok, keep going. Question 17.

Can we have a break maybe?

**LM:** What you want a fag break, a comfort break?

#### BREAK

**LM:** Another little art history lesson. Fredrick Antal wrote in the 1940s that England had only had one revolution with Cromwell in the 1640s and that was very much a bourgeois revolution. And this is reflected in the bourgeois realism of Joseph Highmore's paintings. I don't know if you know that wonderful portrait of a group of men around a table in the National Gallery. Antal saw Coldstream as being an heir to this notion of bourgeois realism and the most that you could expect of a country that hadn't had a serious revolution in 400 years, was a sense of continuing bourgeois realism rather than any form of Socialist realism. And this was what Coldstream, and that period in the 1930s, when he stops painting and goes into filmmaking and comes out the other side and goes back to painting, and he's working with mass observation in Bolton. I suppose I labour that slightly because I know that Terry Atkinson comes out of quite an intense close relationship with Coldstream when he was a student at the Slade, although he had to be failed. For me, this is to do with the whole sense of what we mean by the avant garde and avant garde art. I'm sure you've picked up the radicalism that you're dealing with, an idea of avant garde practice.

**JCHP:** I suppose there are references to that, although I don't think the idea of the avant-garde, like the word radical, I don't know how meaningful or useful, in terms of our practice, it is. The word radical is thrown around so much, almost to the point that any artist is radical, which is obviously ridiculous...

**LM:** But if you take that two hundred year old definition of the idea of the avant garde going back to the French revolution. Consistently since 1795, if you don't take the idea of the avant garde as being the stylistic progress towards abstraction, which was taken up by post-war America to mean, and artists were stylistically related who "belonged" to the avant garde, you can see that the way in which young radical artists have been upset by society, particularly by the warfare of the society that they were born into and the real meaning of the avant garde is the constant re-expression of that idea of the opposition to war and the way in which societies have become poor because of the governments' fighting of wars.

**JCHP:** Regarding the conditions in which work is produced, that's probably the reason why we were drawn to the *Stonebreakers* but how possible it is to even contemplate a radical piece of work in the conditions that artists operate now...

**LM:** What I'm saying is that there isn't a sustained serious production of art targeted at that, look at Courbet and learn the lessons of history, look at Terry Atkinson and his WW1 pictures...

**JCHP:** The important thing is that it's sustained, rather than idle gestures.

**LM:** Ok, let's get onto William Morris and Tolstoy.

**JCHP:** ...and their enormous beards....

**LM:** You beg the question, do you make work that's not for exhibition? You've implied that you have continued your studio practice. The point continues to an almost William Morris or Tolstoy idea of the social exchange of objects that preceded industrialised society's move towards the accumulation of capital. Yet you're also questioning your own production of handmade objects. Much of what you produce is based on mechanised procedures like photography and offset litho. Is this a contradiction at the heart of your practice, are you arguing for those handmade practices? Could you call these handmade practices?

**JCHP:** Well... we wouldn't call this artwork.

The intention is that there isn't really. The main thing is that these are all secondary material to the drawings. It's all intended to point towards this potential work, that if we could figure it so the conditions were right, we could produce it. It goes back to the other question about conditions, the way work seems to be received is with a gloss and that's the problem of exhibiting. The problem is exhibiting, or distribution, that's where the problem arises for us. We produce the work constantly and once this sort of situation comes about, that's when the problem comes. If we just put the work up, it would instantly fail because it would be absorbed into this gloss of indifferent reception that all artworks seem to, so the problem is that... but obviously there's a contradiction because we are showing...

**LM:** Or, other cultures, where you get the sense of the handcrafted, handmade, but the objects come from other cultural modes of production. And surely that's part of the increasing conception of what is art...

**JCHP:** If we could validate a work of art based on its handmade-ness, but that's not how, there's more of an indifferent set of procedures that validate an artwork as an artwork which is really the whole issue of the exhibition to a certain extent. We've thought about trying to figure out a set of criteria that we can validate the work as artwork, which I suppose what we've attempted to do, dealing with all this merchandise.

**LM:** You see this as merchandise?

**JCHP:** There's no other way to do it really...

**LM:** I've been on your mailing list for quite some time and I've always wondered how you managed to operate. I get this stuff through the post, or pick it up at exhibitions and it's all free.

**JCHP:** We don't have a studio... and if we paid for the rent on a studio it would work out as an equivalent to the printing and mailing. In fact, the mailing and printing costs were cheaper... Most people in London teach and have a studio only as proof of their identity but they don't go there... They teach art, they go to private views to look at art and maybe at the weekend they may pop in to meet their colleagues...

**LM:** I've got a phd student working with me on the idea of the document as a work of art and she's looking particularly at early conceptualism and the different kinds of documents there are and which could be considered as works of art, rather than just documents, or certificates, or whatever. This is quite interesting and it's something I feel more and more. My son is always looking at these websites where they offer invitation cards from the late 60s/ early 70s for sale. Last week I was up in Liverpool and there was a show from the Museum of Modern Art on artist ephemera from the 60s through to the 90s and it seems to me that there is this market now. It's

what people can afford to buy and that seems quite healthy and nice because you can start collecting...

**JCHP:** the scraps..?

**LM:** No, from today, you can start collecting and you don't throw your pieces of paper away, you box it up and gradually index it and keep it in the filing cabinets. When you're as old as I am, you can see that process taking place over the last forty years and thinking from now, to the next forty years.

**JCHP:** If the distinction between the artwork and the ephemera just goes, and I think it has already, and the answer to the thesis is yes, it can be reified. That distinction really does relate to our intentions with this show. We hold this idea that there is an artwork that is distinct from the scraps of ephemera, that do get reified because of a market driven artworld, but there is this idea of artwork that resists that... but the conditions as they are, it's not possible.

**LM:** I spent a couple of weeks in Dusseldorf with Joseph Beuys, but unfortunately I turned up just as he got kicked out but that was exciting in its own right. It did make me want to have a final question, which would be asking you, can you imagine having done as your exhibition, a performance as the Stonebreakers yourselves?

**JCHP:** Me and him?

Absolutely not.

**LM:** And that physical work, which Courbet was depicting?

**JCHP:.** No we'd never entertain the idea of that... ever.

**LM:** So the rocks we've got round the corner...

**JCHP:** No, that would undo everything...

**LM:** By your principles alone, isn't that a reason to do it?

**JCHP:** What...? as some kind of kneejerk reaction...er

and you put us off instantly because you prefixed it talking about Joseph Beuys. It just wouldn't be useful.

**LM:** I was thinking about Fluxus, whether it's Vito Acconci or Beuys.

**JCHP:** He came up before... Acconci, didn't he? Like a bad penny...Him and his particular brand of stage work.

**LM:** Can I thank you both very much and we'd be very happy to take any questions.

**AM:** You spoke earlier about ideal conditions and I wondered if you could say a bit about what the ideal conditions would be, so it wouldn't be just about the production.

**JCHP:** I don't really know what these would be but just the idea that there's an implied indifference to the way works are taken on by an audience. You would only know when they're offered, or tested, or put forward and arranged. We can't really answer that question but that

alludes to why we'd be interested in something like the *Stonebreakers*, when that painting would have had a social effect, a use value beyond reification. But obviously that would be unrealistic to revisit, or wait for.

**AM:** If you can't think of what those ideal conditions would be, do you think it's possible that they exist?

**JCHP:** Yes, absolutely, that's the intention of our practice. Otherwise they'd definitely be no point in pursuing a practice. Unless as I was saying before, you accepted the oligopsony, or art market, the only other option would be to accept that and there would be no point in continuing the practice.

**AM:** Apparently, you have sold all of this work...

**JCHP:** Who said that? Liars... Did that alter your view of the exhibition?

**AM:** It seems like the ultimate contradiction

**JCHP:** But we're already operating in that contradiction anyway. That hasn't happened but once you engage in exhibition, you engage in exhibitionism and it's about the market although this is an attempt to avoid that.

**AM:** Say Saatchi bought the lot and you became Saatchi's choice of the week. How would you respond or what impact would that make?

**JCHP:** It would be a complete failure.

**AM:** Would it?

**JCHP:** Yes.

**AM:** Profoundly or would you give up or take a different approach?

**JCHP:** That couldn't happen. There's a difference of that happening to somebody who's basing a career where that is the target. That's the problem, the complicity of art practices, even if it's done on a subconscious level, it deeply affects what happens in production...  
do you think that's enough...?

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## BIOGRAPHIES

### LYNDA MORRIS

Lynda Morris is Professor in Curation and curator of the Norwich Gallery at NUA and the EASTinternational exhibition, which has been held over the last 20 years bringing 25 artists a year to work in Norwich. The programme over the last 30 years has included work with Peter Doig, Neo Rauch, Jeff Wall, Lawrence Weiner, Richard Long, Marian Goodman, Peter Kennard, Gustav Metzger and Konrad Fischer.

After studying at Canterbury College of Art, she worked at the ICA 1969 to 1972 on exhibitions including *When Attitudes Become Form* and *Ed Kienholz 10 Tableaux*. She then worked for Nigel Greenwood 1971 to 74 organising the first exhibition of *Artists' Books*, *Book as Artwork 1960 / 1972* with Germano Celant (republished in 2010). She was Richard Hamilton's assistant for his Guggenheim retrospective in 1973 and wrote an MA (by thesis) at the RCA on the future of Art Education, based on *Art & Language* in Coventry, *Joseph Beuys in Düsseldorf* and *The Projects Class* at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Canada. The latter was the model for her *Visitors Programme* at the Slade School of Fine Art with projects by Dan Graham, Marcel Broodthaers, Gilbert & George, Joseph Beuys and Barry Flanagan. She organised the first exhibition of *Minimal Art* in the UK, *STRATA*, 1973 at the RCA. The Agnes Martin works were brought to SNGMA together with David Brown 1974.

Between 1976 and 1980, Morris organised exhibitions at the Midland Group in Nottingham including the first UK shows of Gerhard Richter, Robert Mapplethorpe and a curatorial project with R. B. Kitaj and John Szarkowski. She has just curated *Documenting Cadere 1972-78* at Modern Art Oxford, touring to Mu.ZEE Ostend and Artists Space New York. In 2012 Morris curated the Vanley Burke exhibition *By the Rivers of Birminam* of photographs of the Handsworth Jamaican Community. She edited the Special issue of *Third Text* magazine *British Art and Immigration 1870 to the present day* No. 11, 1990. She is continuing to work on *Picasso and Africa after 1945*. She curated the Tate Liverpool exhibition *Picasso: Peace and Freedom on Picasso and Communism after World War Two*. It travelled to the Albertina in Austria and the Louisiana in Denmark. The research began in the late 1970s with *A.I.A.: Story of the Artists' International Association, 1933-53* held at Modern Art Oxford in 1982 with a national tour which included the Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh in 1983. That in turn was inspired by her Paisley born Grandmother who was helping the Spanish Civil War Organisation in London and was a member of Wal Hannington's *Unemployed Workers' Movement*. As a curator, historian and tutor she edited *Unconcealed: The International Network of Conceptual Artists 1967-77 - Dealers, Exhibitions and Public Collections* after the death of her PhD student Sophie Richard with Ridinghouse/Karsten Schubert 2009 and *Conception, Conceptual Documents 1968 to 1972* with Catherine Moseley in 2000.

Lynda was born in Gourock, Renfrewshire in 1947, grew up in Dover and has two children.

### JEFFREY CHARLES HENRY PEACOCK:

Jeffrey Charles Henry Peacock is the sole collective practice of Dave Smith (Derby, Derbyshire, UK, 1972) and Thom Winterburn (Leeds, West Yorkshire, UK, 1970).

[www.jc-hp.co.uk](http://www.jc-hp.co.uk)

[www.jchp.co.uk](http://www.jchp.co.uk)

Lanchester Gallery Projects (LGP) is a curatorial research project that ran a contemporary art programme from January 2012 to March 2014. LGP examined the conditions, task and terminology of the art institution through a multifaceted programme of exhibitions, publications, residencies, education and events.

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