

## Speaker Abstracts and Biographies

### **Robin Bale**

#### *Man Next Door*

“There’s a man who lives next door – in my neighbourhood – he gets me down”

It is very easy to imagine the heckler as an unruly other, one who can be ejected from the brief polity that an audience create. That is, the heckler becomes a guest – one who has no automatic leave to remain - as soon as they become heckler. The relationship between performer and audience is dynamic. A variety act may thank the audience for having them, as one would to a host, or a comedian will fight the audience to become the host and receive the host’s due: they will laugh at his jokes. Performers talk of “losing the room”, as if it was part of ongoing hostilities – which in a sense it is.

I will look at the heckler through the figure of the neighbour. Neighbours are universally unavoidable. Unlike the guest, we cannot eject them if they speak out of turn or become tiresome. They do not have a visa that can be revoked. Equally, we do not have to laugh at their jokes or effusively appreciate their generosity to placate them. As anyone who lives in a flat will know, the neighbour is constantly present but usually unseen, the relationship is mostly auditory. We can hear their footsteps, smell their cooking, pass judgement on their taste in music or sex lives, know how often they use the toilet and when they go out to work. They will know, and do, the same with us -and there is nothing that can be done about them. Unlike the other, whose position is always at a safe distance, from which we can turn away from them – or invite them over – the neighbour is almost as close as our own skin.

Robin Bale is a performer and writer who makes spoken word improvisations, frequently using digital technologies and hacked electronic instruments to manipulate his voice and create soundscapes. Having served a form of apprenticeship as a performance poet on the anarcho-punk scene in the 1980’s, he has developed a strong interest in the antagonistic relationship between artist and audience. He is currently studying for a practice-as-research PhD at Middlesex University, working title “The Performer and the Polity: making (a) public”.

### **Peter Bond**

#### *Off-side*

I want to take up a poststructuralist line of enquiry; a way of thinking that does not assume a humanitarian discourse and aim for homogeneity. With this in mind I want to proceed with hypothesis. I will speak as a theorist, a teacher, a performance artist, a theatre maker and a painter. In short my life has been very unstructured, divorced, beheaded, survived....

So I have arrived at the performative and I speak of my experiences, not of autobiography but of my experiences of being... confronted by the force of authority. That at school I was made to sit cross-legged on the floor and sing hymns.

I think I only know one joke...

I was also taught to never begin a sentence ... I think...

Sitting in silence, arms folded to watch a piece of live-based art with your mobile phone switched off is a construct of control. The tyrant called control, the knob of Jonathan Dimbleby, broadcaster of Question Time. Control is the reason why theatres became dark, no windows, such was the power of its voice, the threat.

Performatives are 'about the event-ness of the critical encounter'<sup>1</sup> (Butt: 2005). They are distrustful of 'the record' or 'official account' when weighed in against a present 'critical encounter'.

Even with today's obsession with recording and mediatisation we still have a desire to excavate or court response from provocations produced by live actions; the viewing and/or participation of an event or artwork as it is experienced in the first instance and circumstance. Performatives are located in first instances and they acknowledge first hand experience. Or do we prefer to be gagged and tied in cyberspace?

As the pioneers of early performance art may testify, there is an urgency in knowing and seeing ourselves directly, especially in the ages of the so called 'super powers' and of virtual realities.

Peter Bond is Senior Lecturer, Performance theory and practice, Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, London.

What the hack?, sorry, what the heck! ... let the heckler in DaDa

My career as an artist has led me from stage design and painting through to my current practices in writing, performance art and theatre. Alongside my research outcomes I have always maintained a teaching practice, often in the form of action research.

Currently this is concerned with teaching and learning through the development of theory supporting practice and practice supporting theory. This includes making performance works with groups that use the medium as a 'voice' for issue based material such as the politics of identity, hegemony, reality and illusion, gun crime and so forth.

In doing this I aim to restore performance to its use value held in symbolic exchange within the quotidian and hence my interest in performatives that stem from linguistic speech acts.

## **Andrew Brown**

### *The Refuser*

Andrew Brown's 15-year practice of leading groups through cities and countryside has led him to experiment with various means of instruction and involvement, inevitably causing him to confront and consider issues of authority. Why are we prepared to confer authority onto artists? Are artists trustworthy? What about 'audience participation'? What are your feelings towards artists in general? Have they undergone appropriate training? Have you ever intervened, ignoring the instructions not to touch an artwork or take photographs? Have you ever walked out of a performance? Did it feel good? What about badly-designed or deliberately flawed instructions, or those confronting us with unacceptable levels of risk? Is art actually 'good' for us at all? How might we feel if an artwork breaks down and/or an artist ends up somehow getting us lost? How might we respond if authority for an artwork or performance is suddenly imposed upon us? Why are we prepared to go along with artists' demands, indeed why are there audiences for art at all? Do people respond differently towards artists in other parts of the world, in other communities?

Whilst exploring the liminoid through art, and engaging certain critical faculties in the process, do we simultaneously relinquish some of our agency and capacity to act to complete strangers, becoming passive recipients within a 'designed experience' that fits another's agenda? Is collective engagement with art a form of 'rite of passage'? Drawing from diverse sources, as well as from his own experiences, Andrew Brown will attempt to frame a response to some of the above questions.

Andrew Brown lectures in Fine Art at Nottingham Trent University. In 2006 he founded Open City, a project based upon observation and subtle manipulations of social behaviour, that emerged from a long-standing interest in performance, and his involvement with the live cinema/percussion ensemble Left Hand Right Hand and various solo and collaborative projects since the early 1980s. He is the author of 'Trial: a study of the creative process in Reckless Sleepers' Schrödinger's Box' and has written extensively for arts publications including Dance Theatre Journal.

## **Ian Bruff**

### *The materiality of the body and the viscosity of protest*

Notions of heckling and impoliteness bring to mind broader discussions of performance and speech acts that have dominated the social sciences and humanities over the past few decades. That is, such resistance and disruption call attention to the use of certain forms of communication and the promotion of certain discourses as embodied in certain types of social and political agency. In this paper, I argue that this takes approach fails to take the body-in-resistance seriously enough. A key weakness of the focus on performance and speech acts is that the dominant emphasis is on the discourses and the communications which constitute bodily

practices and actions. As a result, social and political agency is often reduced to a series of relatively frictionless interactions between competing discourses and speech acts. In consequence, the materiality of the human body is neglected to the point of ignorance. This means that there is an inability to acknowledge how 'reflexive, interrogative capacities morph out of corporeality, [and nor is there] any conception of a situated body with active, agentic capacities' (Coole 2007: 231; emphasis added). Thus, such scholarship 'surrenders an investigation of or engagement with experience to an analysis of discourse (or representation).' (ibid.: 104).

In contrast, this presentation will argue for a renewed focus on the living, breathing materiality of the body, one which acknowledges that '[t]o understand the social practices and cultural products of any time and place, we need to know something about [the] conditions of survival and social reproduction, something about the specific ways in which people gain access to the material conditions of life.' (Wood 2008: 12). More specifically, it enables us to see how the acts, and arts, of heckling and impoliteness are – by their very nature – visceral. This viscosity ranges from the brain as a bodily organ to the physical projection of voice in particular social spaces and to the broader discomfort felt by those whose views are being challenged and whose sense of normality has been disrupted.

Coole, D. 2007. *Merleau-Ponty and Modern Politics after Anti-humanism*. Lanham, MD.: Rowman & Littlefield.

Wood, E. M. 2008. *Citizens to Lords: A Social History of Political Thought from Classical Antiquity to the Late Middle Ages*. London: Verso.

Ian Bruff is until 31 July 2013 Lecturer in International Relations in the Department of Politics, History and International Relations at Loughborough University, and from 1 August 2013 Lecturer in European Politics at the University of Manchester. He has published widely on the evolution of European political economies, social (especially historical materialist) theory and the sociology of the body.

### **Lee Campbell and Claire Makhlouf Carter**

#### *Contract, Collaboration and Confrontation*

We will take the figure of the heckler as a person who undoes comfortable differentiations between polite/rude, social/antisocial, speaker/listener, performer/spectator etc and reflect upon a recent collaborative performance-based arts project in which we set up an artistic situation which interrogated the live performance, performance document as witness, and the characteristics of a heckler.

We will refer to the document as heckler and will address how our use of a contract and a factual analysis operated as performative documents. Through an understanding of the performative as

related to 'action' in response to John Langham Austin's ideas surrounding the speech act, we will describe how the actions between us generated moments of confrontation throughout the project. Our contract set out conditions to be performed and was seen by both of us as having a multi-function as: legal agreement; artwork; a durational prop, which simultaneously developed and tested the boundaries of the collaboration and as a performative document.

Claire ultimately referred to our contract as a heckle since the reality of using the contract as a working performative document had a difficult yet exciting and challenging antagonistic quality. Similarly, the factual analyses which we wrote to state our own versions of the project's events also problematised the complacency of shared experience.

Lee Campbell is currently undertaking PhD research supervised by Mel Jordan and Gillian Whiteley at Loughborough University School of the Arts interrogating ideas around the term heckler inside a discussion of a convivial participation. In 2012, he presented research at De Appel, Amsterdam and was a resident artist at the Banff Centre in Canada. This year he has undertaken collaborative artworks with Claire Makhoulf Carter at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, London, University of Cambridge, Arnolfini Gallery and Manchester Metropolitan University as well as presenting joint paper with Mel Jordan at a conference concerning impoliteness in Poland. He is an Associate Lecturer/Visiting Practitioner at Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design, London. Forthcoming book chapter: Campbell, Lee, 'Heckler: Performance, participation and politeness: using Performance Art as a tool to explore the liminal space between art and theatre and its capacity for confrontation' in Remes, Outi, MacCulloch, Laura and Leino, Marika (eds.), *Performativity in the Gallery: Staging Interactive Encounters* (Oxford: Peter Lang Ltd., 2013).

Claire Makhoulf Carter generates performance events that take place within art openings, seminar rooms and galleries. They tend to orchestrate humorous procedures and interventions that highlight the problematics of labour relations, using gatecrashing as a form to explore relations critically. Carter hires temporary workers as part of her performance events including a sniffer dog, two mercenaries, a make-up artist cum cloakroom attendant and a tombola man. A full script and relating documents for DEMO PENFOLD STREET, Showroom Gallery is published in 'Bring the Dead Back to Life: Again A Time Machine from Distribution to Archive' Book Works, 2012. Her PhD by project at the RCA was awarded in 2012.

### **Corinne Felgate**

#### *The Accidental Heckler*

It is expected that the artist should explore, probe, debate and since Bicycle Wheel the desire that she too should be a heckler was bought to the table.

Later propelled by Manzoni et al circa 1960 and cemented by Hirst, the notion of the artist as a

thorn in the side of society was firmly established.

Heavy with the weight of this history, and in an attempt not to be quashed by it, I like many others have created works that attempt to heckle the heckler. In tidal wave of pseudo ironic odes to... my generation of the artiste Uber-moderne has become adept at the homage-critique.

Yet the true baiter's, the ridiculer's of our normalities are not the artist's but a select few of their works, the ones that got away. The delicious rouge, the artworks that outgrow & devoured to take on life beyond their makers; prodding poking and puking on society decade after decade popping up without warning or agenda.

To heckle or not to heckle. That is the question.... for the artist. However, the greatest post-wheel works know no such bounds. They are born hecklers, far exceeding the aspirations of their creators. From the perennial questioning that Merda d'artista actually contains shit, to the society wide debate that The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living actually is shit; this paper is dedicated to the exploration of such objects; The Accidental Hecklers

1. Duchamp's 1913 work.

Corinne Felgate's sculptures, drawings and installations rewrite the world in both modest and ambitious ways, often with wry humour. Her works are both cerebral and emotional and ultimately explore, test and mock what it is to exist in the world today. Her work has been commissioned by Arts Admin, mac (Birmingham), Tate Modern and The National Gallery, and is held in collections worldwide. She continues to write, curate and exhibit internationally.

## **Ben Fitton**

### *Opposing Impositions and Interventional Art*

What are the roles of imposture and imposition in a politicized art practice? This paper will outline how a model of antagonistic political art (which imposes itself uncomfortably on its context and its audience) has emerged as a constructive and critically robust method of 'enacting' or 'producing' politics. This impositional model is at times, however, indistinguishable from the most reactionary forms of artist-centred apolitical practice, and some adjustments are necessary in order to understand how a properly political imposition on an audience or site meshes with authorisation and permission. These adjustments here are developed primarily out of the linguistic analyses of Jean-Jacques Lecercle, and Alain Badiou's conception of decisive 'points'.

Accounts of these kinds of impositional practice tend to hinge on interpretations of 'what the art does', and onto my own account I would like to impose Jean-Jacques Lecercle's conception of interpretation as a form of imposture, and his use of an idea of 'strong' vs. 'weak' interpretation. A weak interpretation on the part of the reader attempts to deduce the author's intentions, whereas a strong interpretation proceeds with indifference towards the author, with the intention of putting

the text to creative (mis)use. My key point will be that artworks that are regarded as strongly antagonistic and interventional tend to rely on a 'weak' mode of interpretation, and that a 'strong' impositional reading of artworks is a difficult but necessary outcome for a truly political art practice.

Ben Fitton is an artist living and working in London. He has shown extensively in the UK and internationally, including solo exhibitions at Site Gallery, Sheffield; IBID.projects, London; Floating I.P., Manchester; and The Economist plaza, London. Recent collaborations with artist Dylan Shipton include 'The History Still to be Made Shows Itself' for The Space, St Leonards-on-Sea, and 'Monument to the Excluded Middle' for HOUSE 2013 in Brighton. He is currently working towards a PhD on language and the politics of site-specific art at Loughborough University.

### **Mel Jordan**

Mel Jordan works collectively with Dave Beech and Andy Hewitt as the Freee art collective. Freee is concerned with the publishing and dissemination of ideas and the formation of opinion, or what Habermas describes as the 'public sphere'. Freee's practice combines and links a number of key art historical elements: the use of text (as slogan), print, sculptural props, installation, video, photography and montage.

Freee have exhibited at the Liverpool Biennial, BAK, Utrecht as part of the major research project 'The Former West', and Smart Project Space, Amsterdam. Freee have been selected for the forthcoming 13th Istanbul Biennial 2013, Mom, Am I Barbarian?

Jordan is principal editor of Art and the Public Sphere Journal; a cross-disciplinary journal that combines the study of art, politics and geography. She is Reader in Fine Art at Loughborough University.

### **Dániel Z. Kádár**

#### *The 'Impoliteness' of the Heckler – A Mimetic-Relational Perspective*

Heckling is a noteworthy manifestation of interpersonal aggression, as it takes place in the public and it inherently involves an interpersonal clash, since the uninvited interruption of someone's public speech upsets institutional normativity, and the moral order it entails (cf. Kádár and Haugh 2013). Heckling has been studied in various disciplines, including for example discourse and conversation analysis (e.g. McIlvenny 1996), social psychology (Silverthorne and Mazmanian 1975, Bull & Fetzer 2010), as well as arts (Jordan 2011). Thus, it is surprising that heckling has received relatively little attention in 'mainstream' im/politeness studies (e.g. Culpeper 2011), despite that this phenomenon has some self-evident merits for the analyst (e.g. it can be easily observed as it occurs in public). Whilst previous interactional research informs us about the techniques, sequential properties and other aspects of this phenomenon, we know much less about the interpersonal dynamics of heckling; also, previous research has some shortcomings to

address, such as failure to capture the relationship between heckling and other interactional phenomena.

This paper aims to address this knowledge gap, by modeling heckling from interpersonal and mimetic perspectives. It is important to elaborate an academic definition for heckling (which should, however, be enriched by popular understandings of this phenomenon); following Kádár's (2013) recent framework, I model heckling as a mimetic and potentially ritualistic, face-threatening phenomenon. In accordance with Turner (1982), I argue that heckling is a theatrical social drama, evaluated by its watchers as 'judges', and that it is a liminoid phenomenon. In the centre of this social drama is the heckled person, who has institutionalised right to speak, and potentially the heckler, who can get voice through interrupting the speaker. If successful, heckling is a performance and a ritualistic social action; the counter-action of the heckled one (which may include non-acting, when non-action counts as an action) is a ritualistic counter-performance, by means of which the public speaker can regain control over the interaction. Through the social actions of performance and counter-performance the heckled and the heckler aim to affiliate (Stivers 2008) themselves with the audience, and success of these actions depends on a complex set of factors.

The present performance-based approach is innovative because it helps us bridging (linguistic) interaction research on heckling with research in other disciplines, such as arts. The present study is based on multimodal analyses, i.e. it looks into both the linguistic and the non-linguistic features of video-recorded cases of heckling.

Dániel Z. Kádár is Professor of Linguistics in the University of Huddersfield. His main areas of research include relational rituals, politeness and impoliteness, language games and performances, and intercultural communication. He has published 17 volumes; his recent monographs include *Relational Rituals and Communication* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) and *Understanding Politeness* (with Michael Haugh, Cambridge University Press, 2013). He is Editor (together with Michael Haugh and Jonathan Culpeper) of the *Handbook of Linguistic Politeness* (Palgrave Macmillan).

### **Kypros Kyprianou**

*Let me paint you a picture.*

In certain situations, the strategy of heckling, ('disconcerting others with questions, challenges or gibes'<sup>1</sup>) might prove fruitless. In the case of being 'kettled' by a phalanx of Met officers, they aren't particularly in the mood for a two way conversation - heckling the performance of an armed body of men merely entrenches the acting out of assumed positions. When being stopped and searched under Section 76 of the Counter Terrorism Act for the 'suspicious behaviour' of taking photographs it can be wholly counter productive.

In such situations is 'heckling' – allowing the space for public discourse - even possible? If not,

how does one create the space for effective heckling to take place?

This presentation focuses on the experience of a set of performances that used portrait drawing of members of the security services, carried out in London during political protests. Armed with pencil and sketchpad – I attempted to reposition the barrier between ‘us-versus them’, drawing security personnel into personal conversations about the legality of police tactics, personal responsibility and the particular qualities of their face.

Kypros is an artist and film maker who most often works collaboratively. As one half of the artist duo Hollington & Kyprianou he makes ominous-humorous installations, performances and interventions that investigate how competing representations of science and politics shape the locus of the rational. His most recent collaborative project (with Roland Denning, John Lundberg and Mark Pilkington) is ‘Mirage Men’, a feature-length documentary that explores how U.S government agents targeted citizens in ufo-based disinformation campaigns to discredit them.

## **David Mabb**

### *Protest Paintings*

The Protest Paintings were made during and immediately after the student demonstrations against increases in tuition fees and education cuts that occurred from late 2010 into 2011. They use painted images of slogans taken from banners and graffiti from both recent and historical moments of protest and surround them with William Morris patterned fabric frames.

In the Protest Paintings, cheap contemporary patterned furnishing fabrics have been wrapped around the frames of the Protest Paintings, the traditional home of the decorative. Some of the fabrics use wallpaper and fabric designs by Morris, others use designs produced by Morris & Co. but designed by others, such as John Henry Dearle. The fabrics frame the painted images of the slogans. The slogans carry with them a long history of struggle. Liberté Egalité Fraternité ou la Mort has its origins in the French revolution. Property Is Theft is a slogan by French 19th century anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. Educate, Agitate, Organize is a Wobbly slogan and Workers of the World Unite is from the Communist Manifesto. A number of slogans originate in French Situationism. Capitalism Isn't Working is a play on Saatchi and Saatchi's infamous Conservative Party election campaign “Labour isn't Working”.

The slogans might appear to be clichés. Perhaps the Morris fabrics, too, in their contemporary mass produced form, are overly familiar and drained of meaning. In domesticating the slogans for the gallery environment, the Morris frames might be seen as rendering them mute. But at the same time the voices of the slogans resonate, sometimes across the centuries, and in the new context of the Morris frames, there is the possibility of reading them afresh. And, of course, the dialogue works both ways: the slogans heckle the viewer, ‘charging up’ and revivifying the political content of the Morris fabrics for a new era.

David Mabb works with the designs of 19th century designer and socialist William Morris. Mabb's paintings, photographs, textiles and videos all, in different ways, work with and against Morris' utopian designs by contrasting them with other forms of modernist production. His most recent exhibition was *Regime Change Begins at Home* at the William Morris Gallery, London and he is currently working on a solo exhibition for Focal Point Gallery, Southend during 2014. David Mabb teaches Fine Art at Goldsmiths, University of London.

### **Tim Miles**

*'I'm Kirk Douglas' son': a phenomenological model of the role of the heckler in stand-up comedy*

Much of the current literature on stand-up comedy comments on its interactive and co-constructed nature. Double (2005, 19), for example, claims: 'It [stand-up comedy] involves direct communication between performer and audience. It's an intense relationship with energy flowing back and forth between stage and auditorium.' Similarly, Ritchie (2012, 164) points out that: 'The [stand-up comedy] performer-audience relationship is symbiotic: the one cannot exist without the other.' (164) But what is this 'energy flow', and how do we understand this 'symbiotic relationship'? It is argued that the key to answering such question lies in phenomenology and, in particular, phenomenological inter-subjectivity. To quote RD Laing in *The Politics of Experience* (1967) stated that: 'The other person's behaviour is an experience of mine. My behaviour is an experience of the other. The task of social phenomenology is to relate my experience of the other's behaviour to the other's experience of my behaviour. Its study is the relation between experience and experience: its true field is inter-experience.' Based on an examination of over 200 interviews, and questionnaire data, with stand-up comedians, and their audience members, the article examines these inter-experiences, looking specifically at the heckle and its functions. Cook in *Ha Bloody Ha, Comedians Talking* (1994) states that: 'It's not the heckles that a comedian fears the most – it's the silences. A heckle gives a comedian something to get their teeth into – and a chance to turn a gig around.' In analysing this, attention is paid to, among other areas: the role of heckling in uniting, and dividing, an audience; how heckling impacts of performance improvisation; how heckling conditions the audience-performer relationship; the ambivalence of audience attitudes to heckling; and how heckling re-affirms the role of the compere as relationship negotiator.

Tim Miles is in the process of completing his PhD in stand-up comedy at the University of Surrey. His doctoral research involves looking at stand-up comedy from a phenomenological based performance perspective. He has published in the field of theatre, humour and performance, including on humour and the erotic, and comic responses to the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland. He sits of the editorial board of *Comedy Studies*, for whom he regularly writes reviews of books on humour. He also occasionally performs stand-up comedy. He is currently looking for an academic job!

### **Sarah Sparkes**

*The Disembodied Heckler*

'As it was 3am we decided to finish, so I said, "Go and vanish Gef" to which a voice replied, "I mean to throw a brick at you at night when you are asleep"

Harry Price & R.S.Lambert *The Haunting of Cashen's Gap: A Modern Miracle explained*  
Methuen & Co. Ltd (1936) p.106.

In 1931 several national newspapers covered the story of 'The Talking Weasel' an alleged poltergeist emanating from an isolated farmhouse on the Isle of Man occupied by the Irvin family. All three members of the family claimed to have heard, felt and, in the teenage daughter Voiree's case, seen a manifestation taking the form of a talking mongoose called 'Gef'. Gef taunted the family and their visitors from behind the house's wood panels, interrupting 'respectable' conversation with insults and comic songs. When psychical researcher Harry Price sent Captain MacDonald to investigate the 'hauntings' Gef mocked his authority with derisory personal comments and threats – see above quote. Poltergeist is a compound of the German 'poltern' meaning to make a noise, rattle, knock about, scold or bellow and 'geist' meaning ghost. Historically poltergeists infest domestic places where there is a teenage family member, usually female, residing. Poltergeists disrupt routine and order in a domestic arena with insulting retorts, the use of domestic objects as missiles and the occasional possession of a family member. . Poltergeists subvert the family dynamics, with child becoming the intermediary of outside forces and unpleasant behaviour rewarded with notoriety. At their most successful they will come under the scrutiny of a much wider, even global, public audience via media coverage.

Drawing on a number of case studies from the Harry Price Library of Magical Literature, this presentation will put the case for poltergeists as 'disembodied hecklers'.

Sarah Sparkes is an artist and curator. She is an associate lecturer at Chelsea School of Art and CSM. A Research Fellow at UOL (2009-2012), her research centred on The Harry Price Library of Magical Literature. She runs the visual arts and creative research project GHost. She has lectured widely on GHost and ghosts including: New College Oxford, Northampton University, Treadwells and The Ghost Club. Her chapter on GHost is being published in the Ashgate Research Companion to Paranormal Cultures, Nov 2013.

Exhibitions 2013 include: Fate and Free Will, Torrance Art Museum, Los Angeles, USA, Uncanny Landscapes, Centre for Creative Collaboration, London.

