



Issue 32  
Mar 2011

# BLANKPAGES

BLANK  
MEDIA  
COLLECTIVE



# Still Here

Susan Laughton

greenroom

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## YOU ARE LISTENING TO...

*Hard Lines* by We Are Willow

## COVER ART

*Primaryclash* by Rebecca Wild

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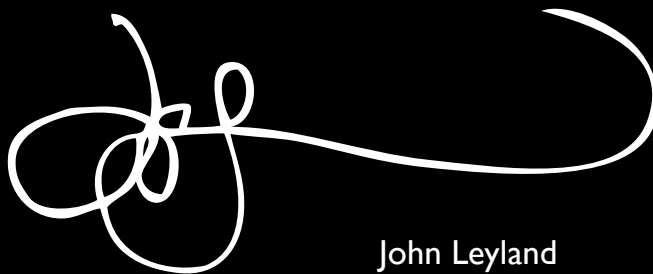
Welcome...

We're well into the swing of things at BLANKSPACE - thanks once again to everyone who came to the launch in January, and to our growing crowd of supporters elsewhere in the world. The pace and creativity is continuing and we're currently in the middle of *Freedom From Selection*, Blank Media Collective's new exhibition featuring five contemporary artists and their response to human biology through artistic practice.

For the budding writers, photographers and artists amongst you have lined up a plethora of workshops to engage, delight, enthuse and inspire. Among many other things to get your juices flowing, the black and white dark room is up and running, *BLANKSPACE In\_Tuition* has begun every Tuesday of the month and there's more in the pipeline.

For more information on this and all things BLANKSPACE you can visit the shiny new mini-site: [www.blankspacemcr.org](http://www.blankspacemcr.org). Watch that space!

So, before you turn the page, make sure you're in a comfy, tranquil space and enjoy these 'pages...

A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink, featuring a large, looping 'J' and a long, sweeping horizontal line that ends in a small hook.

John Leyland  
blankpages editor

WELCOME

## Rebecca 'Bex' Wild

Rebecca's artistic practice has for the past few years been exploring the technique of Scanography, resulting in work that is both experimental and spontaneous. With her childhood passion lying in painting, she has been combining these two elements to create work outside of the social normality. Using the scanner as both a camera and a canvas, she questions that way art is formed and approaches the idea of creating art in a new light. By combining these usually two juxtaposing forces, she is questioning the boundary that has been given by society and crossing the line between digital work and fine art.

Rebecca's most recent work has been looking at the idea of Abstract Art in a contemporary new light and thinking outside the usual constraints. Rather than using paint to create the piece, the paint itself becomes the central focus within Rebecca's work with the focus being on texture and colours, leaving the overall image open to the viewer's interpretation of what they think they see. She explores how abstract an art piece can be by exploring numerous unique ways to 'paint' onto her 'canvas', for example, using syringes or straws. Rebecca's work is not only experimental and constantly evolving but it is also unpredictable and this is the part that excites her the most. Due to the nature of this the final outcome can never

be predicted and no two pieces she creates are the same.

Rebecca's practice allows for the viewer to form their own explanations about the work and apply their own connotations to it. The idea of the abstract has been a key feature in her most recent work; however she also explores ideas that are on a more personal level, usually through mixed media and/or installation to communicate things that usually cannot be expressed with words alone.

Rebecca is a Manchester based artist and a full time student at Manchester Metropolitan University studying BA (Hons) Interactive arts. Her art practice encompasses painting, scanography and installation work in a new and experimental way. Rebecca has previously had work featured at the Capitol Theatre and Museum of Science and Industry and she has previously exhibited as part of the free for arts festival during October 2010.

Rebecca has recently become an active member of Blank Media Collective's Art handling team and has exhibited in their open exhibition 'BlankExpression 2011' in January.

[www.wix.com/thebexfactor/the-bex-factor](http://www.wix.com/thebexfactor/the-bex-factor)





Left: Kandinsky  
Remembered  
Right: Rainbow Vomit



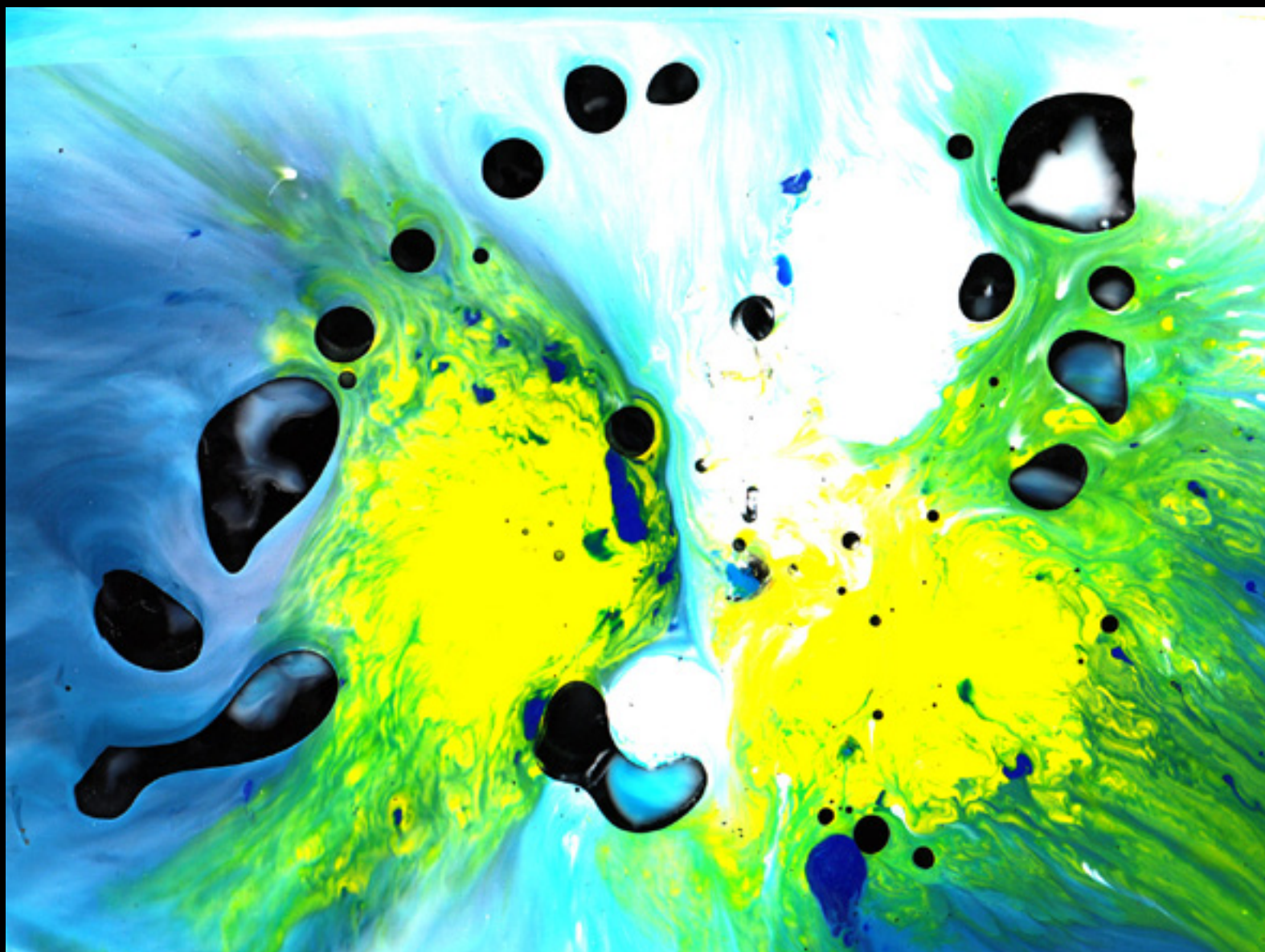


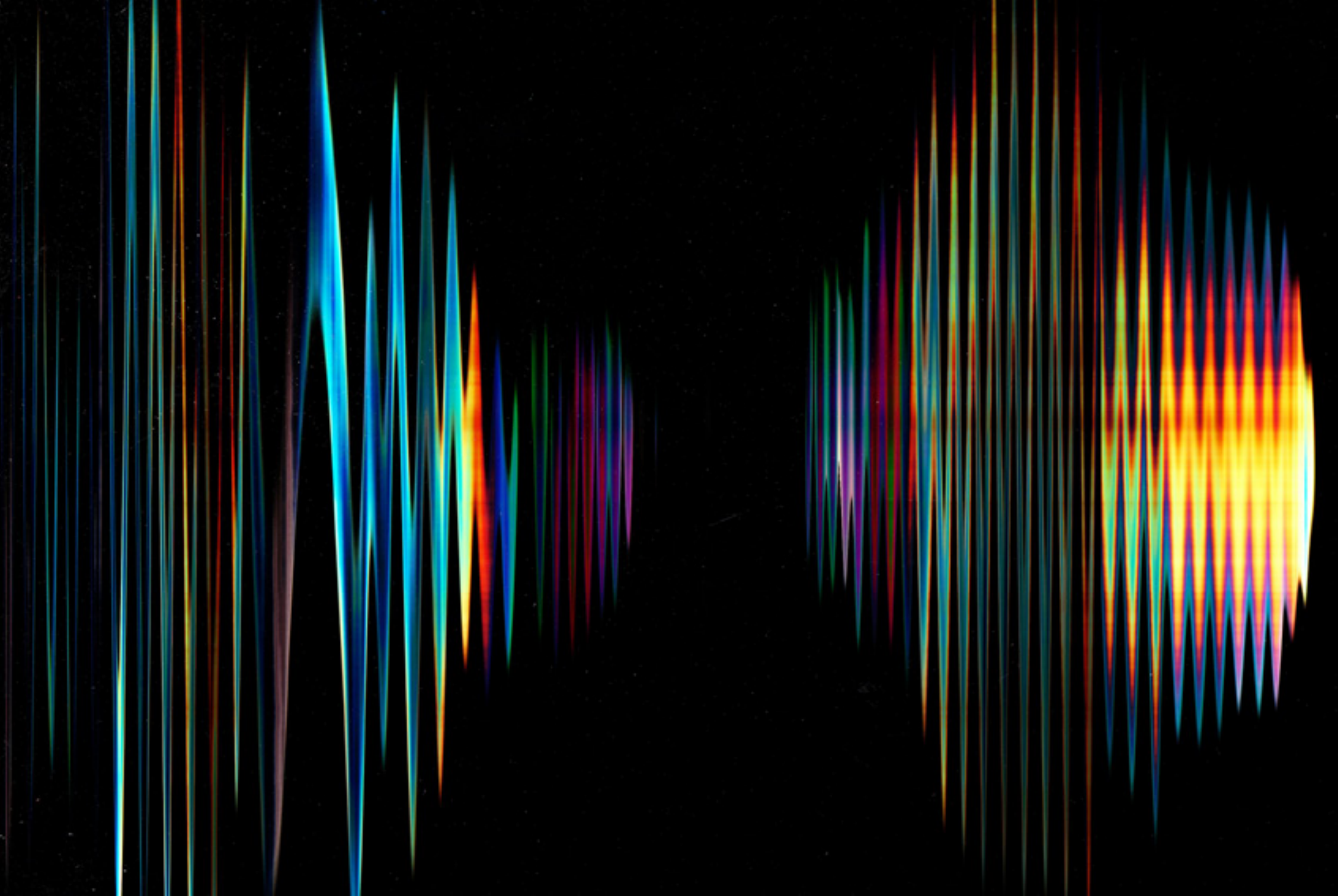
Left: *Oceanic*  
Right: *Chaos Theory*

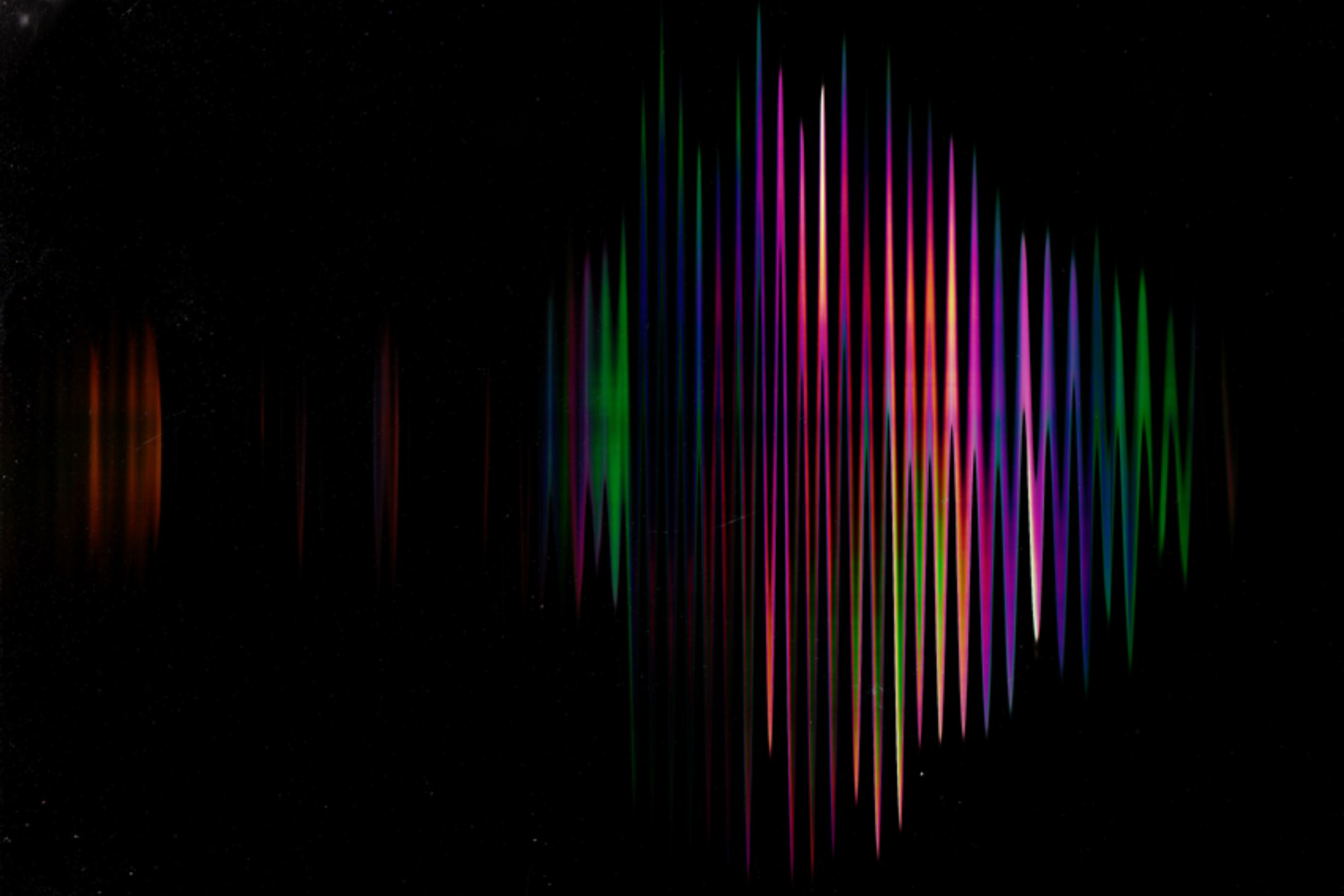
And on the next page:  
Left: *Musical Traces 1*  
Right: *Musical Traces 2*















## It Is Now

By Jonathan Swindlehurst

Illustration by Michael Thorp

I'd been looking forward to that day for weeks, we all had. Not felt community spirit like that for a long time round our way. All the flags lining Southward Park Road, like days gone by making me think of when I was a kid. Everyone wanted to go to, never seen such a rush for tickets. Me, I'd been to Old Trafford for the semi. Watched as the little Aussie fired home at the Stretford End, knowing that we were all going to get our day in the sun.

The buzz round Bermondsey had been constant leading up to the big day. Kiddies decked out in Millwall blue, signs outside the boozers, lads in the park kicking the ball around screaming Wise, Cahill and the likes. The sun seemed to shine all day. Good days brought to us by a former Chelsea captain; it's funny how things work out, isn't it? Would never have been appointed if he was West Ham though. Sure about that.

We'd all gotten up early. Met Tel and the kids outside the Costcutter. Nice bloke in there. Makes a lot selling booze to students after hours, but we've all got to make that living haven't we? That's what living round here does to you, teaches you to scrap for whatever you can, make the best out of your lot.

He might not be from round here but it doesn't take 'em long to learn.

Tel's two were so excited, never really been down the Den that much, but like I said everyone wanted to go. Not really that safe for littlens down there, although it's not as bad as it used to be.

So much blue getting on the Jubilee heading east, changing at Waterloo then up to Paddington on the Bakerloo. Real shame we've gotta go to Cardiff for this one, but then again can't really complain now can we? As we got off at Paddington remembering to mind the gap we caught a glimpse of a couple of reds. Two lads in early twenties, one with a shirt one with a scarf.

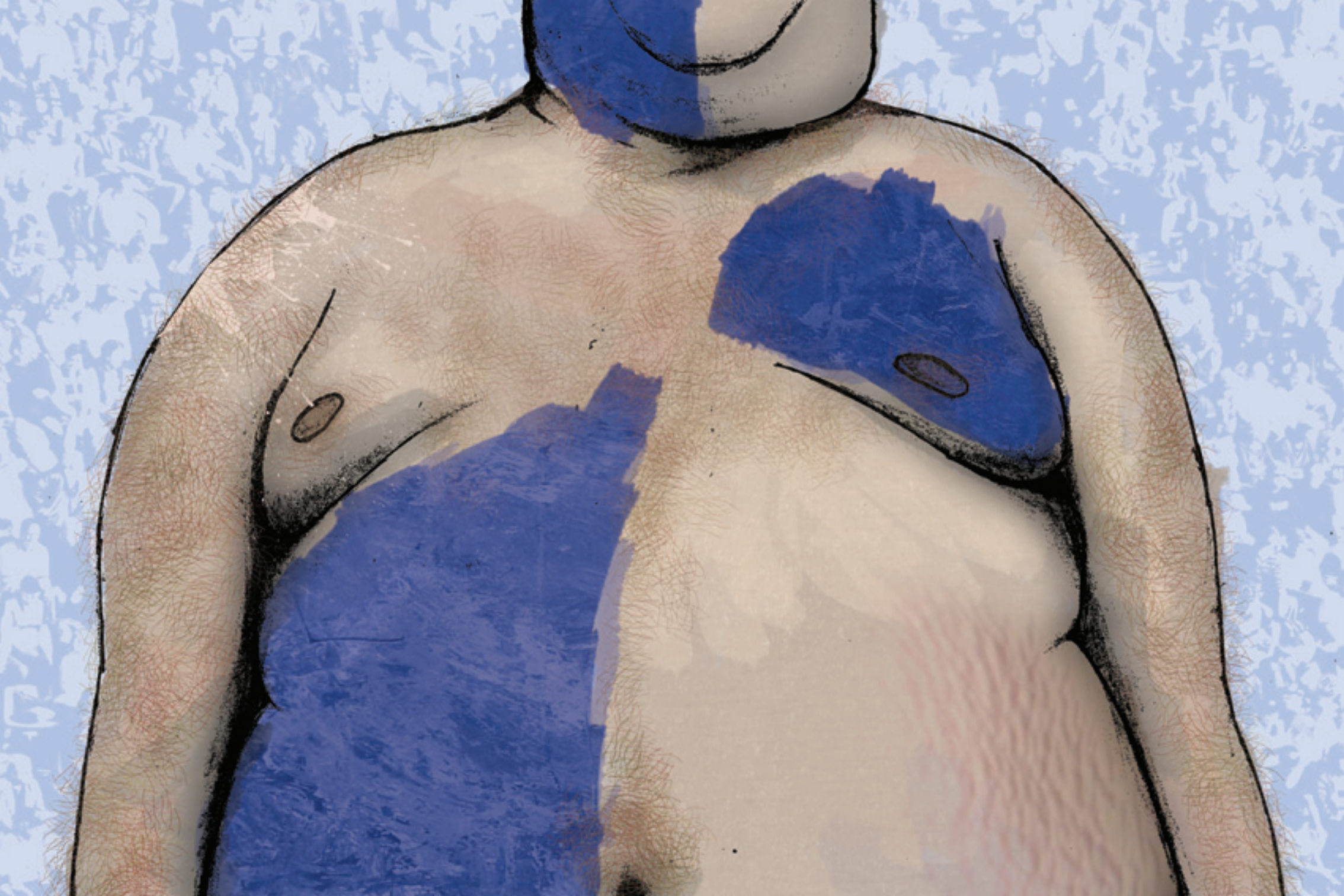
'Fucking Cockney Reds' was the shout from the mass of blue behind us.

'Do I look like I'm from fucking London' came the Manc drawl response.

'Well fuck off back then' some mouthy ex firm boy shouts, getting up in the Manc's face a little unnecessarily.

This prompts a chorus of "*no one likes us we don't care*" from all involved. There's no real needle today, it's all a little tongue in cheek, gotta give the press a glimpse of the Millwall they all wanna see. But this is Cup Final day – a day out for us all. No chance of winning, we're playing Man U for fuck's sake. But we're here, first time in years. Just a day out.







I'd been to Cardiff a few times but I always forget how long the train journey is. I'd started at a good rate and kept it up, coupled with the early start I was struggling a little bit. But got to keep going.

Got into the boozier. We struggled through the crowds, both sets of supporters mixing. Man U fans kicking round a giant inflatable ball, getting the kids and piss heads all involved together. We don't really like those Manc cunts but you gotta hand it to them, been to so many cup finals but still always up for the laugh. Have a tidy little firm too, all dressed in black, don't seem to be around here though. It's all smiles. Nice ground up there un'all. Had a great time up there at the semi. Chips with curry sauce or gravy, mushy peas – not sure about that but liked the picture of Teddy on the Legends chippy. He started at Millwall you know.

It was great in the pub; loads of singing. Tel's kids were running around, up on shoulders learning the songs. I even met that geezer from the Football Factory, the big one who was in *Lock, Stock* too. Millwall even though he plays Chelsea in the film. Good lad. Big fucker. Wouldn't want to be on the wrong side, but we were all just having a laugh. Like I said, just a day out for us.

Got in the ground early, watched the boys warm up in front of us. That boy Harris recovering from cancer a few years ago, bet he didn't think he'd be

playing in the Cup Final. That's what today's about, proud to be Millwall. Papers even saying good things about us too, not sure we like that, but don't really care today. We stood all singing the national anthem and *Abide With Me*. I always loved that about the Cup Final, never ever thought I'd get to do it myself, sung my heart out I did, big smile on my face.

Don't really remember too much about the game. That little twat Ronaldo with his fucking hair taking the piss a little bit, scored a good goal mind. Looks something a little tasty, that boy. We all thought it but none of us wanted to say. Wisey got stuck in though. Clobbered that ginger Scholes a couple of times, just letting him know he was there. Seemed over in a flash. We may have lost 3-0 but we were never embarrassed – against Man U. Lads did themselves proud. Who'd have thought it? Millwall in the Cup Final. One of the proudest days of my life.

We sung our hearts out on the way back up to the train. The day was starting to take over; I was getting tired, needed some munch to tide me over so I ducked into McDonalds. They had some big promotion or something going on, not really sure. I was pissed but I looked up and saw a Sir. Geoff Hurst to be exact; something about loving it. Don't really know, but before I knew it I was over to him in a flash, hand out gesturing for him to shake it. Just



as England's hero of '66 sees me approach he turns away to this Man U boy and says 'Well done today'.

Now I thought this guys taking the piss so I says - 'fuck off you cunt' - and before I know it I'm ushered out by guys in black, wishing the big geezer from the Football Factory was with me.

Now a few days later I'm on my the phone with my old man and he asks me how Cardiff was, so I tell him much the same story as I'm blabbering on about here and I tell him I met Geoff Hurst. He doesn't even let me finish. Just tells me he's a West Ham cunt and only played in '66 cos Greaves was injured. Should have never made him a Sir, should make good old Dennis Wise a Sir for getting the Lions to the Cup Final, even if he did play for Chelsea.

Didn't bother to tell him what happened, seems like he's already got Hurst's number. It's like I was trying to tell Tel's kids. Dad knows best. Ruined the day a little bit did that; it was just a day out for us. Didn't need any cunt ruining that.



Jonny is a freelance writer and an MA Journalism student at the University of Salford. He has just completed his first novel and is currently writing a collection of short stories. Born in Manchester and having spent time living in both London and New Zealand, he takes his inspiration from the mundane everyday world. Heavily influenced by writers such as Irvine Welsh and Bret Easton-Ellis he hopes to forge a successful career in both fiction and journalism.



# Bobby Larsson

## Snowballs

My strange neighbours are  
sewing flowers for the dreamless winter

sitting inside their tents  
listening to the patter.

Down come snowballs, not snow-  
flakes. It's just a new version of

the rain. And the hidden sirens sing  
celebrating the zephyr's load.

We cuddle up together and  
lie about ourselves.

Once we owned the world.  
Now it's the other way around.

## Valamál

"Do you remember my dream  
When we were all walking in  
Paradise neither male nor  
female but all loving one  
another? I hold on to that."

*(Text written by a student  
inside a copy of the book  
Grandchildren of Albion,  
Durham University Library)*

1  
shock-waves re-entering orbit  
she/he shakes under the sheets  
tactile trace un-seen  
un-heard un-steady

2  
super facial up front clubbing  
the big bang bong re-fracting  
behold the bartender's  
eyelid slips and sees

3  
flow out maintain re-group  
adjust external sensors now  
count-up hang loose  
re-travel hold on





## Cathedral

November's evangelical chill  
makes evening smoke on visitors' lips.  
Half-fog floodlights blaze the yellow sky.

Soles against stone  
soles against the stone  
in the stairwell spiral,

while the grass among the limestones  
is still green beneath the tower top.

Bobby Larsson was born in Skåne, Sweden, in 1980. He studied creative writing at Skurup. His poetry, in English and Swedish, has been published in Argotist Online, Great Works, Orbis, Ordkonst and elsewhere. He has recently translated a cycle of poems by the award-winning Swedish poet Ann Jäderlund. He currently lives in Helsingborg, and is working on a novel for children.



# SPOTLIGHT



## Patric Sandri

When it comes to creating a piece, Patric Sandri isn't one to look past the little things. With each new glance, it is certain that the viewer will notice a new element that was not seen at the first glimpse. His eye for detail and taste for subtlety makes Sandri stand out as an artist that most certainly has knack for creating pieces that will be sure to make everyone look twice.

Growing up in a small suburb of Zurich, Sandri didn't discover his love of art until he attended college; in fact he went through most of his education with focus in maths. It was when he landed in Lucerne that shift his studies to art, majoring in visual communications and

specializing in illustration. He explored his possibilities abroad in London, where he created a visual essay in the suburbs of the city. The experience taught him a great deal about composition, colors, painting and collage, which is what the majority of his mixed media tends to incorporate. He often mixes industrialization along with subjects of nature to create an even more puzzling view of the world, and it possesses an out of the ordinary experience, exactly the way he wants it to be.

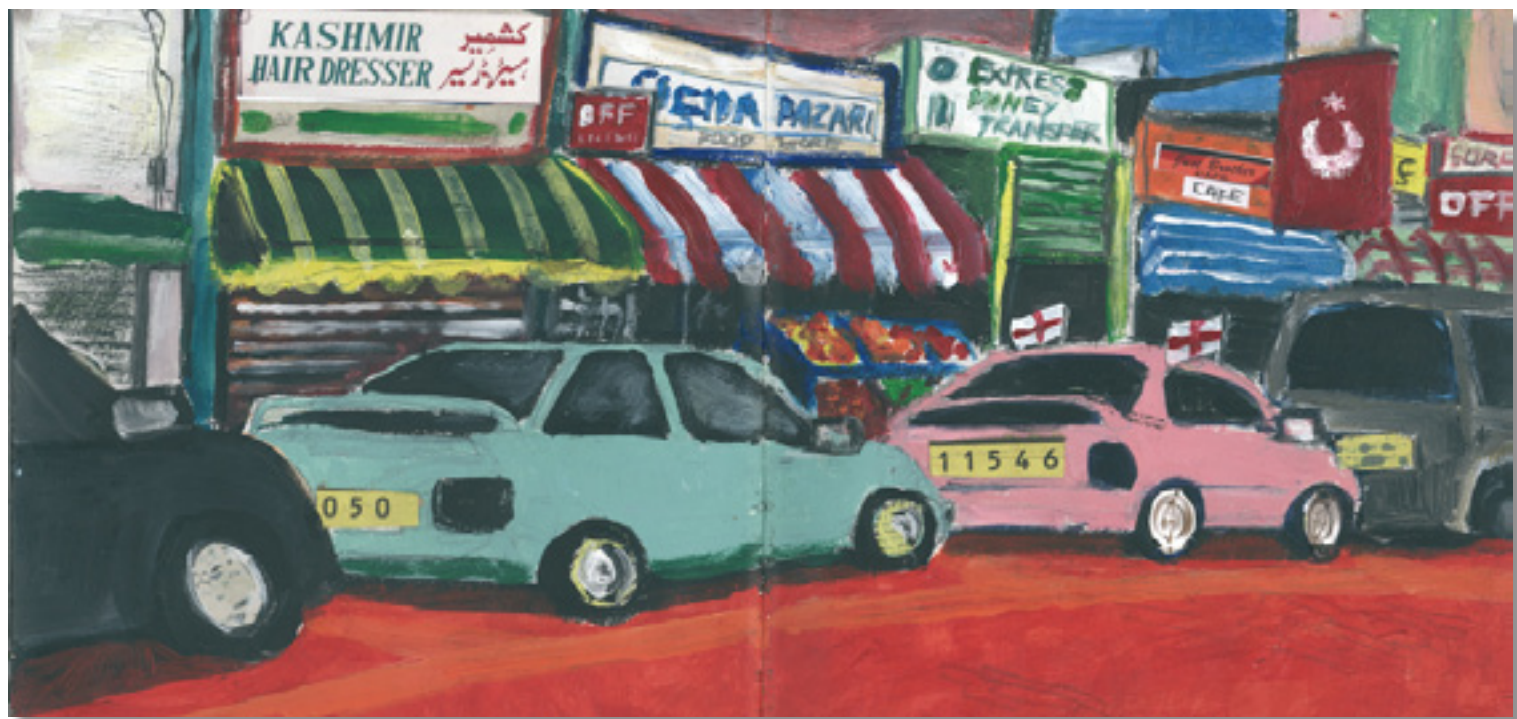
Since October 2010 he has been doing the MA at the Royal College of Art in London.



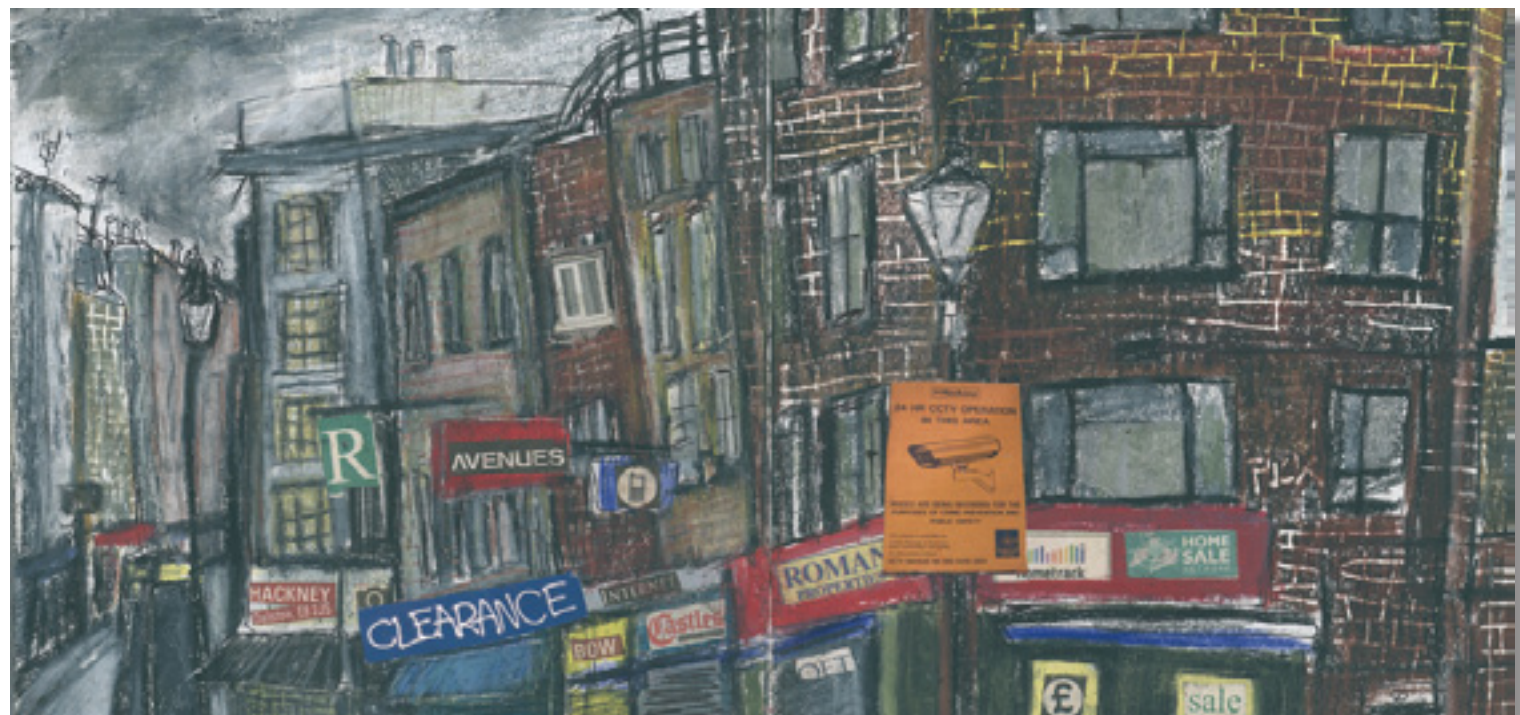
























"Imagine the simplest,  
loveliest composition of...  
wait, you don't have to,

**(THIS MONTH'S MP3)** is already playing!



# We Are Willow

Interview by Baz Wilkinson

Friday afternoon. Manchester, Oxford Road. Early evening. In the distance, through a set of trees at the end of Whitworth Park, glows a red neon “The Whitworth” sign that at present, the weather being bitterly cold, has a Sunday dinner warmth to it and is more a beacon than the name on one of Manchester’s fading but iconic traditional public houses. Grey skies, looking like snow could fall soon, are left behind crossing the hearth of its entrance to meet Chris Butler of *We Are Willow*, who is sat relaxed and checking his phone. First thing he says is, “Why is it...that you can be on your own for a bit trying to get hold of someone, then it all happens at once?” then apologises, takes a call and begins a conversation about records and gig dates, presumably to his booking agent.

Conversations...communication...interviews...like buses, I guess! I don’t mind though, it feels like I’m officially allowed to eavesdrop without the ‘guilty pleasure’ feelings that sometimes arise. And it feels good to know that someone is the right kind of busy...sorting things creative! I later find out Chris is currently working on a huge retrospective exhibition by LA based artist Mary Kelly....who has recently been featured on The Culture Show and

brings together four decades of Kelly’s work resulting in the most comprehensive collection of her work ever presented. Called *Mary Kelly: Projects 1973-2010*, her work turns personal experiences into a political arena and promises to be one of the most talked about exhibitions so far in 2011.

It’s exactly these opportunities which prompted Chris to move to sunny Manchester 7 years ago; to follow his longing to be more involved in what he obviously thrives on: creativity. He’s not only involved with the Whitworth on a regular basis, but he is also a painter in his own right and has earned his way on the back of commissions, here and there, for the likes of *New Balance Shoes* amongst others, recently having a series of photographs taken from Paris and published in the book ‘36EXP’. He has a studio at The King’s Arms in Salford and lives in Whalley Range, with his partner, also an artist and very talented musician, Kathryn Edwards. Not only is he connected artistically to Manchester’s art scene, but its music scene has a lot to thank Chris for because, as weird as it seems, his previous project *Butler/Williams* was perhaps the only male duo producing such



well crafted lo-fi folk...or 'bloke-folk' (as Kathryn called it). Following on from *Butler/Williams*, Chris has not stopped writing, which gave rise to a new collaborative project called *We Are Willow* and is comprised of three parts, each part with a different musician/set-up: Kathryn Edwards (Part 1), Simon Connor (Part 2) and it looks like Sam Lench, of widely acclaimed Samson & Delilah, for Part 3. His creativity, dare I say, has been let off its leash and, following on from two consecutive Record of the Week's at well respected Manchester outlet Piccadilly Records, a US/Canada tour, a jaunt to Spain with an accompanying feature in Barcelona based Go-mag, slots with BBC Radio and countless other mentions and recommendations, BMC caught up with him and secured an hour or so from his busy schedule to see how life has been treating him... Very well, it seems...

### **How have things changed for you and your approach since *Butler/Williams*?**

Well, I've never been too keen on playing solo stuff right from the off. I've always appreciated being able to bounce off other people and be open to the ideas that other people can bring to a set-up. *Butler/Williams* was a great relationship and it's a shame that things took a diversion and, who knows, maybe down the line we will hook up again...and get back into a routine. The set up of *We Are Willow* allows a bit more freedom and the fact that there's a finishing line in sight with each part of the project...I don't know, seems to keep it quite diverse with each part allowing for the set up of musicians involved to express themselves differently from what their own bands entail etc. And I like how each person brings something into a kind of melting pot of ideas...I find that, when it's just me on my own, it's possible to become a bit too self absorbed and you can lose perspective whereas the idea of bouncing stuff back and forth...you know you still keep it contained but it's like a narrative between the two of you and that needs to be nurtured...

**So what is *We Are Willow* and how did it come about?**

*We Are Willow* was set up as a label which Kathryn Edwards and Butler - Williams were signed to. I wanted to do the 3 part project so to boost the profile of the label and those involved i called the project the same as the label. The label didn't get going, so the name stayed solely for the project which in turn is a collective of sorts for all those involved creatively - both musically and visually. It was set up by myself and friend/chief collaborator Daren Newman, who had the Willow label and is also managing director of Funnel Creative on Tib Street. I know him from the work we both did for New Balance, and he offered to put out Part I of *We Are Willow* as well as design the cover. Me and Darren have got a lot in common and whilst working together we got talking about music and stuff and we realised we shared a lot of common ground about art as well as music. So Part I of *We Are Willow* was released with a great deal of help from Daren who designed the cover and helped to get the video done but, due to Darren's heavy workload, we decided that *We Are Willow* should strive to be more independent, which is great but also has a few drawbacks which

we're coping rather well with to be honest. A few weeks ago someone got in touch from new, strictly vinyl Manchester micro-label, 'Homophono' and it looks as though there's gonna be a Balaeric remix of Hard Lines from Part II and the exciting thing is that it's got international distribution on it. Not only that, but *We Are Willow* have actually been over to Barcelona to tour Part II which was amazing. We got over there and for some reason the Spanish people over there went a bit nuts and we were featured in Go-mag [a respected independent magazine, promoting independent culture in Spain] and we had, like, 100+ all crammed into these really small venues there hanging around for ages for encores and stuff and we were like "Er...that's it...that's all there is!" and we ended up, me and Si, playing through some of our own stuff which was good. So it's been really positive and we've also decided to get a booking agent now who's gonna take care of gigs/tours and that side of things for us.



**So, you released Part I, got Record of the Week in Piccadilly Records, and you and Kathryn then went off to Canada and New York, which I've got to say, the video from the New York apartment for Deep Blue Skies is lo-fi excellence, it's wonderful, how was that tour and do you feel it influenced anything that followed for Part II and III?**

The tour was lo-fi and a great experience. Due to the tight turnaround on the releases we were trying to book gigs for Part I before the tracks were fully finished which proved tricky. We ended up just going over and seeing what happened really. We played a couple in Toronto, quite a few in Montreal, our debut being here in a record store on 'International Record Store Day' which was intense as the shop was small and rammed with hard-core

muso-types. We then went on to NYC and just lurked and filmed a couple of tracks in the apartment we stayed in. As far as influencing the following parts, it made me want to travel with the project more. The whole point of it all is that no-one is tied to anything they're currently involved in. If we agree to jump on a plane and go and play some little gigs abroad, we can do it. No one knows us and the songs, so stay humble, see how it goes and have a laugh. All else is a bonus. It's like being freed from all the bullshit that comes with the industry of music and getting back to the real reason for doing it. That's when you write the best songs too, when there's no pressure.

**Part II with Simon Connor was also received very well and you got Record of the Week again! Do you know someone at Piccadilly Records?**

Well this is it! In short, the answer is no! I mean people start to go "Who do you know at Piccadilly Records?" but the thing is a friend I have who works on the mail order stuff isn't that fussed by my music, he's supportive, but it's not his choice to pick the records of the week, so people ask that, and I say "A

mate works in the-”, and they go “Oh, right yeah...” haha but seriously, it’s the owners who pick record of the week and I’ve only actually met one of them but it’s not like I slipped them a few quid or anything but the thing is, now we’re coming up to Part III and Sam’s [Sam Lench of Samson & Delilah, next collaborator on Part III] like, “Oh no...you’ve started a legacy now!”

**Can you see the projects coming together at some point? A kind of revue type tour with all three parts being performed?**

I’m not sure about a tour of all three parts because you’ve got to remember that each one on each part are musicians in their own right with really good things going on with their own stuff. Kathryn is now working with cellist Sinead [Fletcher]...Yields [Si Connor]...have an album in the pipeline..., then there’s Sam Lench from Samson & Delilah who’ve just launched their second album And Straight On Till Morning on Little Red Rabbit! So, I think, logistically, a tour is probably beyond it but who knows, I’m not ruling it out. Something I’m actually toying with is the idea of releasing the three parts as a three-fold album but with a few new tracks on.

**And before the three part album release thing we’ve still to be treated to the collaboration between you and Sam Lench, which sounds like a very shrewd choice... an astute matching of talents!**

Yeah we’re meeting up at the moment and discussing ideas and stuff but I’m not playing acoustic on it.....I’ve just bought a telecaster so it’s gonna be a bit louder and garage-y! I’ve been listening to a lot of Black Keys and stuff like that which is the way Butler Williams should or could actually go at some point as that’s still sort of unfinished for me at the moment...

**So will Part III be drums and bass etc or...what’s the idea behind it?**

Well the idea is... after part III has been written and recorded we’ll hopefully play a few gigs as a full band. I’m not saying anymore on that but we’ll see what happens! If it does happen, I know where I’m gonna be sitting the whole time. I’m not looking to be a frontman of a band, it’s about collaborating so basically, within that performance you’re always gonna get at least 3



songs if one of those people take up the lead vocal, it's not just me saying I'm the lead vocal and this is my project you know, it's more about wanting it to be about music, enjoying it and collaborating which does bring it to an interesting point for me because me and Kathryn know how to write music together, we might almost kill each other but that tension brings out the creativity and honesty, and same with Noel [of *Butler/Williams*], I can write music endlessly with Noel. But until Part II I'd never actually sat down with Si and wrote with him before, which was interesting and the same with Sam. The idea when they came to the project was that songs that they didn't use in the bands they were in, or that kept coming back and tapping them on the shoulder but have never seen daylight and stuff for whatever reason, *We Are Willow* was a kind of release for that kind of stuff. I mean, if a song keeps coming back to you, and you like it, and it feels good to play whether on your own or not then I think it's almost speaking to you...something about it is connecting with you and you can't get rid of it unless you take them out of your comfort zone and allow them to breathe. Like the first song on Part II, *Hard Lines*, was shaped by me having this little riff that wouldn't go away and then Si immediately latching onto it and creating a backdrop to it and bringing his influences and stuff

and we found that it just develops from that.

**And are we allowed to ask if there's any gigs in the pipeline for Part III yet?**

Well, as it happens, and as I mentioned before, we've now got a booking agent who's keen on getting us a lot of gigs and we're just in the process of sorting things like that and I'm looking forward to it as well as seeing what me and Sam produce...

Part III is currently being shaped and there have been developments on the gig front too. To catch *We Are Willow*'s next step you can either get on a plane to the US - they're travelling out there for Part I playing gigs in Portland, San Francisco and Los Angeles – or see them play Part II on your doorstep at these places:

**Mar 5 - Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham**

**Mar 17 – Puzzle Hall Inn, Sowerby Bridge**

**Mar 18 – New Cross Inn, London**

**Mar 20 – Dublin Castle, Camden, London**

For more information:

[www.wearewillow.com](http://www.wearewillow.com)

[www.myspace.com/chrisbutlernoelwilliams](http://www.myspace.com/chrisbutlernoelwilliams)





## Drawn to the Beat

By Naomi Kendrick

*Drawn to the Beat* was a participatory music drawing event involving 95 participants. The event took place on 27th January from 7 – 10.30pm at Band on the Wall, a music venue in Manchester.

Music drawing forms part of my wider art practice of drawing, sculpture, installation, participatory events in which I focus on creating work that by engaging people with the senses, offers a ‘full’ experience of something and consequently a more personal connection to my artwork. My method of music drawing has listening, and emotional and physical response at its core, establishing an immediate connection between mind and body. I often draw using both hands simultaneously, while sitting on a large expanse of paper, with my eyes closed to help me focus on listening to the music.

My aim for *Drawn to the Beat* was to create a playful space in which to explore the possibilities and contradictions of negotiating a solitary, internal perception and shared acts of creativity through music drawing. As my drawings communicate my personal experience of responding to music, sharing this direct experience with an audience is a form of interpretation around my drawings, another way in to them. I also want to create work that has a meaningful effect on the audience and to not only witness but also understand the nature of that response. For me a participatory event where within one situation artist, audience, artwork and response can be allowed to blur, is the natural home for an art practice driven by an interest in a multisensory experience and a desire





to know what that experience can do - where the art is found at that intersection of the intimate, personal and the shared.

In preparation for *Drawn to the Beat* I had covered Band on the Wall's stage, dance floor and balcony with large sheets of photographer's background paper. 400 crayons, 50 graphite crayons and 100 Silent Disco headsets also lay in wait.

There is always that moment when I introduce people to music, whether it is one person alone with me in my studio or a group in a workshop setting, where I don't quite believe it is going to happen. That they just won't do it.

Despite the fact that people had signed up to do exactly that at *Drawn to the Beat*, I still retained that feeling of disbelief. I stood at the start of the event, with everyone watching me, their faces a mixture of anticipation and apprehension, and led them into drawing. Miles Davis' 'So what' played through the P.A. and after I had asked everyone to close their eyes, to listen and to move, at last I could ask those on the 'draw floor' to pick up their materials and keep moving so that they were drawing. Then I could breathe.

The music, selected by musicians Chris Briden and Amalie Roberts and myself, was played for the majority of the night through silent disco headphones. This heightened the simultaneous solitary and collective experience of participatory music drawing. Using the headphones, participants were able to select from two different channels of music to draw, and when not drawing could use the headsets to watch and listen into, other's drawing. Complementing the silent disco and 'joining' everyone in the room simultaneously was a 20-minute set of live music (played through a P.A) by musicians







Dave Johnson and Paul Balcombe from the band 'To Sophia' playing the guitar and the djembe.

Squeezed in around my responsibilities as the artist running the event, I managed to grab a few opportunities to draw amongst everyone else and forget my sense of the initial fear of people 'not doing it'. In fact I noticed over the course of the night that people were drawing for far longer than I expected, and was reminded why I created *Drawn to the Beat* - because drawing music is absorbing, addictive and emotive; it is powerful, if you let it be.

The balcony giving a bird's eye view of the main 'draw floor' was a fantastic vantage point many people took advantage of. It revealed the amazing spectacle of crouched bodies that expelled, as if from within, vivid colour giving each person their own drawn aura. This colour then grew out from each individual merging and overlapping with others to create an almost vibrating surface, gleaming and heavy with the wax and graphite that had been pounded into it.

Beautiful as this drawing was, the purpose of the event was about the experience of drawing music, literally what happens to you in that moment. The resulting giant drawing made over the course of the night is a documentation of those multiple moments, a record. Further documentation of what happened, of people's movements, expressions



and even the sounds emitted from their drawing processes were meticulously gathered through photography and film.

The live musicians were fantastic; I wanted to give people the experience of drawing live music, but also for the musicians to be able to respond to us drawing their sounds. Drawing for this part, I felt as if we were all feeding from one another, as if the energy the musicians were forcing into their instruments manifested through our drawing.

The venue was integral to the event; physically it is a beautiful space, which offered the technical capabilities needed. But it is the association people have with that space, or type of space, that influenced the night and contributed a great deal to the diverse audience attracted. Some people have and probably always will describe *Drawn to the Beat* and future participatory art events I do as ‘a workshop’, but I think staging my work at the right venue and with the right support from that venue has helped people to realize the difference.

My feelings about *Drawn to the Beat* change as I digest it. But my overriding memory is of scanning the room, watching people drawing alone, lost in their own worlds, or drawing and even dancing side by side to a favorite song. Then every now and again I would see someone knelt or stood on the paper, surrounded by all this activity, headset on, crayons





in hand, just watching what was happening around them. It looked as if they had just woken up.

Thanks to the following sponsors and partners for making *Drawn to the Beat Possible*:

Najia Bagi, Andy Brydon, Andrew Brooks, Huw Wahl, Insa Langhorst, Jacob Russel, James Welch, David Johnson, Paul Balcombe, Amalie Roberts, Chris Briden, Gemma Connell, Elaine Mateer, the *Drawn to the Beat* Volunteers.

Arts Council England

([www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk))

DaDa Fest International 10

([www.dadafest2010.co.uk](http://www.dadafest2010.co.uk))

Curated Place

([www.curatedplace.com](http://www.curatedplace.com))

Band on the Wall

([www.bandonthewall.org](http://www.bandonthewall.org))

Creativity Backgrounds

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









Naomi Kendrick is an artist, consultant and workshop facilitator based in Manchester, and currently Artist in Residence at Salford University. Her work includes multi sensory installations, sculpture, drawing and participatory events, where people are invited to explore her work through interaction and encouraged to respond, through creating something themselves. Her practice is currently dominated by drawing music. This began in 1999 when, as part of research into creating and experiencing art without focusing on the visual, she spent a week wearing special glasses that gave her the effect of having severe cataracts. Kendrick's method of drawing music has grown to become an investigation into the act of listening and response, as well as creating a connection between mind and body that results in a drawing. She is currently collaborating with musicians and dancers to expand on these ideas.





## Drawn to the Beat Review

by Andy Brydon

Naomi Kendrick's *Drawn to the Beat* event at Band on the Wall represented a brave and hugely successful step for the artist who has until recently been better known, at least in the world of sanctioned cultural establishments, for her practice pushing the boundaries of accessibility in museums and galleries than for her output as an image maker in her own right.

Certainly in the world of outreach her reputation precedes her with her practice being recognised as breaking new ground creating experiences that allow disabled, partially sighted and blind people to engage with art exhibitions on a level playing field with the 'able-bodied' and sighted. But often, having words like 'access', 'outreach' and 'education' associated with your artistic output can be something of a millstone rather than a benefit.

On the one hand working in these fields has given many artists the opportunity to break into the trusted inner sanctum of the gallery world - opening up networks and creating relationships to the places where commissioning decisions are made and exhibitions are planned (as well as helping pay the bills). However, all too often by creating relationships within establishments as 'the access expert' means

that artists are then perceived as nothing more than that - falling into the trap of becoming institutionally compartmentalised by senior staff who talk of them in hushed tones behind closed doors as "being a bit 'community'".

The irony is that most of the public and trust-based funding dished out over the past decade has been fundamentally justified on the strength of this kind of work - creating legacy and extending the reach of the institution beyond the privileged and elite. However, its widely understood within galleries and museums, though rarely talked about openly, that most curators and gallery directors programme not for audiences, or even artists, but for their peers - other curators.

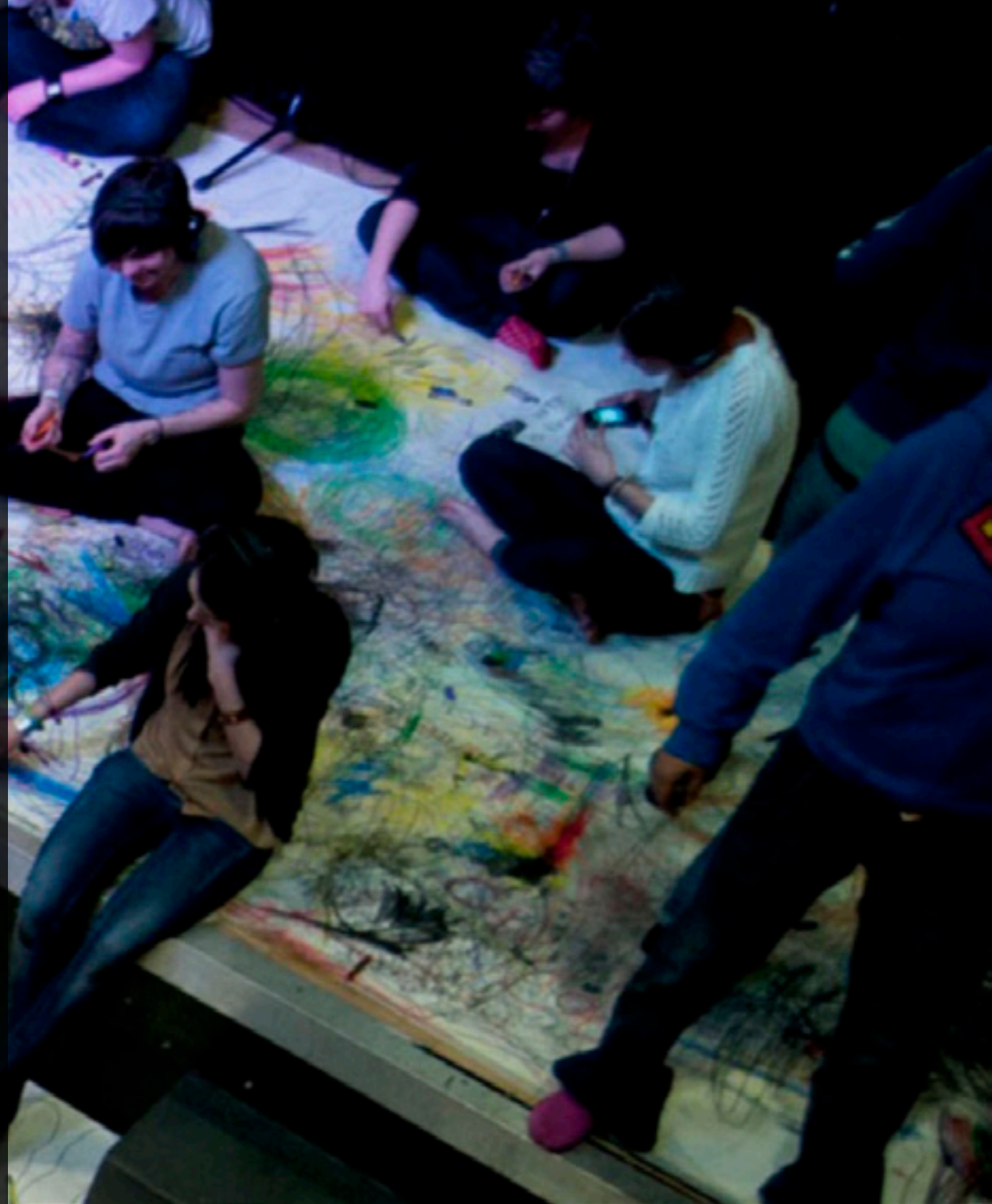
In the cultural landscape over the past 15 years or so this outlook has proved a winning formula. Many of those that have progressed into museum and gallery senior management have developed careers and secured regularly funded positions by establishing themselves as brokers of taste and artistic excellence by ensuring their intellectual output appealed to those in a position to give them their next career break - generally not artists. In addition, while it would be unfair to say that the majority have developed successful careers without having any regard for their audiences, it is fair to say that audiences have been featured a lot more prominently in the education and outreach provision of institu-



tions that have grown to sit alongside, rather than integral to, curated programmes.

While this preaching to the choir approach has been successful in the boom times, and led to the championing of the arts as a cornerstone of UK Plc, the drastic stripping back of the public purse that we're only experiencing the beginnings of leaves the frontline of the art world in a significantly different position that even 12 months ago. No longer is there the cash flow to drop in a rock-star YBA to substantiate your city's claims to cosmopolitanism, nor can wild architectural gestures any longer be justified merely on their status as "iconic". What is required to justify prolonged investment into the arts from both the public and private purse, is art that simultaneously engages and enriches audiences without neglecting the aesthetic or intellectual rigour that gives those of us already bought into the importance of maintaining a healthy cultural and creative ecosystem a firm belief in its long-term value and worth.

It's telling then that Kendrick, as an artist that has done her apprenticeship at the audience facing coalface of the cultural world, decided to deliver her first major solo event outside of the structures of the institutions that have, over time, come to neglect that aspect of their function in what they deliver as a headline product.







Both devising and delivering *Drawn to the Beat* Kendrick successfully blurred the boundaries of curated show and participatory experience and, in doing so, demonstrated that it is possible to deftly walk in the shoes of arts facilitator and artist having shrugged off the burdens of being regarded as an 'outreach specialist' without disregarding the wealth of experience she has gained working face to face and hand in hand with audiences. Indeed, it is her skill in communicating the creative process, no doubt learnt by spending more time in galleries when audiences are actually there than any curator could imagine, that enabled the participants in *Drawn to the Beat*, to unashamedly and wholeheartedly participate in her work.

Prior to the event it was easy to see that Kendrick's concept of music drawing had the potential to create beautiful work, her own pieces first publicly featured in Blank Media's recent Blankmarket show being snapped up by collectors even before the exhibition had even officially opened. However, while collectors buying an artist's work may bolster confidence in their creative process it is another thing entirely to then extend what is a personal creative practice into a public space. In doing so Kendrick demonstrated a huge amount

of courage to release her concept onto an untrained, unvetted and unknown audience that I've rarely seen within 'the institution' and showed a generosity to share her approach that an artist more accustomed to working in the mould of the individual genius - sheltered and hidden away from their audience's reach - would have shied away from, fearing their personal artistic expression be shown up as unremarkable.

What was remarkable, seeing the evening unfold, was that Kendrick's own works remained as stand out pieces of art created using her music drawing approach without ever undermining the experience of those participants that came along to do their own.

Stood in the room on the mezzanine of Band on the Wall it was easy to understand why. Looking down on the hundred or so people freely expressing their personal attachment to the music I was, for a moment, overcome with the feeling of being a voyeur. A feeling exacerbated by the use of silent disco to pipe the evening's dual soundtracks direct to participants personal headphones rather than through a room filling PA. Whilst watching without donning headphones myself it felt as though I was been given privileged, albeit

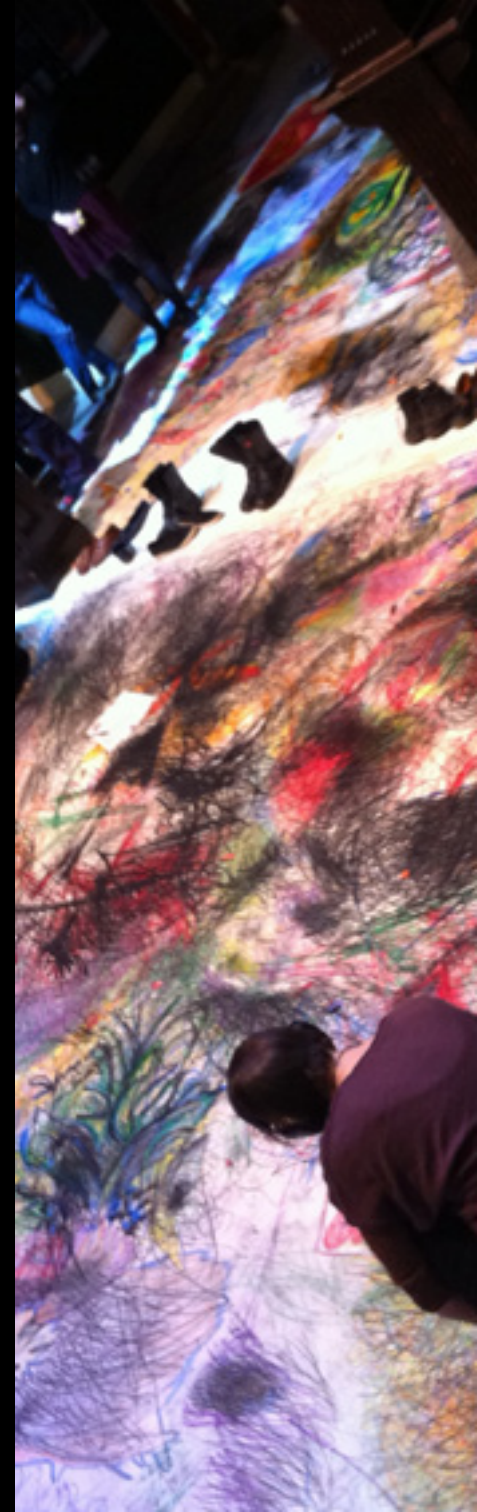
illicit, access to the inner-states of those listening - a state that left me incapable of criticising their creative output on account of the immediacy and freedom of expression unmediated by structures of external aesthetic hierarchy. Later, grabbing a pair of headphones and jumping into the silent disco experience, (albeit still as a spectator rather than a participant), that experience of being ill equipped to criticise a truly personal response was transformed into a remarkable opportunity to empathise with the self-choreographed movements of a room full of people all reacting to the same soundtrack in their own unique way.

The resulting drawings were of wildly varying quality when viewed objectively, some wonderfully free and brilliant, others disappointingly contrived. However, having been external spectator, semi-connected eavesdropping voyeur and ultimately a fully-fledged participant it became clear that the process itself succeeded in being a beautiful work of art on multiple levels. Rewarding as both a communal experience and a means of nurturing individual expression *Drawn to the Beat* achieved a rare feat in a world, like the institutionalised gallery, increasingly defined by the growing chasm between self and other - it connected people. It just so happens that when Kendrick does it herself it also results in spectacular art.

Andy Brydon is a curator and creative producer specialising in explorations of contemporary urban cultures that challenge traditional institutions. His hands-on, immersive approach straddles the void between curator, storyteller and artist, delving into all aspects of popular culture including music, film, photography and gardening.

He is the Director of arts production company Curated Place and responsible for the exhibitions *Haçienda 25: Fac491*, *HomeGrown: The Story of UK Hip Hop*, and *Reality Hack: Hidden Manchester* with Andrew Brooks. He is also the Festival Producer for the 2011 FutureEverything festival in Manchester.

[www.curatedplace.com](http://www.curatedplace.com)







## 330 Words

By Tom Mason

Manchester is full of brilliant writers you've never heard of. You probably passed some of them on the way to work this morning. They're everywhere; hidden in the leafy suburbs of Didsbury, hungover on the grimy student streets of Fallowfield and staring down at the city from their plush apartment towers.

But most of them don't know they're writers. Not yet.

Because, who wants to be a writer? The hours are long, the isolation is absolute and the self-criticism can be debilitating. And very few of us have the attention span to read a novel, yet alone write one.

Luckily, 330 Words is a home for people with short attention spans; a blog for writers who don't want to be authors. It's a place where you can take the first steps into a wider world and discover what can be achieved with just a keyboard, a bit of imagination and a camera phone. Take a photograph and write a piece of short fiction about it. A bluebottle fly once submitted a tale. True story.

Since its quiet birth in 2010, over 30 stories

have been posted on the site; tales from established authors, timid poets and people who haven't written a story in their life. And they're all marvellous. Tiny moments of a bigger tale, made all the more poignant because we'll never know what happens next.

And anyone can be a writer because, as human beings, we're never short of inspiration. This city, this marvellous city, is full of little stories; sights which tickle our inspiration buds and scenes which demand further reflection. A picture can tell a thousand words. I'm only looking for 330.

I'm supposed to be using this time to introduce another Manchester blogger, so here she is.

Sarah-Clare Conlon is the matriarch of 330 Words. She's written countless yarns for the site, read her tales aloud on stage and offered sage wisdom at every turn. She is wise beyond her years and it's been a pleasure to work with her on a number of different projects over the past few months. But, enough gushing. It's time to explain why she's here.

Like many of the Manchester bloggerati, Sarah-Clare has fingers in many blog pies. Not

only is she the writer of the fantastic online advice column 'Ask Ben and Clare', but she also hosts her own musings on the award-winning Words & Fixtures blog; a tome which, among other things, reviews the literary scene in this fair city.

And while her flair with the English language would be enough to merit her inclusion into these fair pages, Clare's small piece of the internet deserves its place on this pedestal for a simpler reason. Her blog is important.

Manchester has a vibrant literary scene. Try to jump across a puddle in the street and you've got a good chance of falling into a writing group, book club or an open mic session; they're everywhere.

Of course, you've never heard of them. They're not featured in the Manchester Evening News, The South Manchester Reporter or Inside the M60. Half of these events aren't even publicised (writers don't like to talk about their own work) and, if you're not already part of the scene, it's incredibly easy for it to skulk by unnoticed.

And this is where Words & Fixtures comes in; a blog which puts all the pieces together,

sniffing out the latest events, gatherings and publications. Armed with nothing but her bike and an unrivalled passion for literature, Clare provides a comprehensive view of Manchester's wordy scene. She's a bit like the local Lauren Laverne of literature. But don't tell her I said that. She'd hate the alliteration.

*"330 Words is a blog for writers. Or more specifically, writers with a digital camera or a camera phone. The concept behind 330 Words is simple. Take a photograph and let it inspire you towards a piece of fiction. Let your photograph form the foundation of your story. Choose your own genre and style. Keep the entire thing under 330 words."*

[330words.wordpress.com](http://330words.wordpress.com)

[wordsandfixtures.blogspot.com](http://wordsandfixtures.blogspot.com)



## Forthcoming Events

### MANCHESTER YOUNG CREATIVES

Band on the Wall, Manchester

March 11 5pm-7pm

To all Manchester creatives - Want to meet people from music, visual art, theatre, film, photography, dance and general arty-ness? Fancy meeting up for a drink?

Organised by Najia Bagi (Band on the Wall) and Eleanor Wotherspoon (Arts & Business), Manchester Young Creatives aims to bring people who work in the arts in Manchester together to discuss, collaborate and create stunning cross-arts projects.

[mycmarch.eventbrite.com](http://mycmarch.eventbrite.com)

### JOY DIVISION EXHIBITION

The Met, Bury

Runs 'til March 31

This exhibition of photographs by Martin O'Neill show legendary Manchester band Joy Division playing live at Bowdon Vale Youth Club in March 1979, over a year before their infamous show at The Met. They capture the intimacy of the gig, which took place on a tiny stage in front of around 150 teenagers.

[themet.biz](http://themet.biz)

### ANDREW GILMORE

Cornerhouse, Manchester

March 16 - April 18

Andrew Gilmore steals from magazines, flyers and newspapers. Some he stores for reference, others are shredded and cut-up to be used in the final image. For him, the mass produced image is as beguiling as it is numbing, and doodles and quick gestures are the simplest forms of expression, emerging almost subconsciously.

At Cornerhouse he wants to use the environment, surrounded by a busy city, to allow viewers a chance to study the mass media they are bombarded with every second outside.

[www.cornerhouse.org](http://www.cornerhouse.org)

### CLOTHES SWAP PARTY

8th Day Cafe, Manchester

March 5 3pm-5pm

We invite you to bring down all those clothes hiding at the back of your wardrobe - just because it doesn't fit you, doesn't mean it's not the perfect choice for someone else. And who knows what hidden gems, fabulous finds and perfect pieces are waiting for you at the clothes swap party!

There will be a professional stylist and seamstress on hand to answer all your clothing dilemmas and give some frank advice on your style queries.

[www.eighth-day.co.uk](http://www.eighth-day.co.uk)

**1984**

The Kazimier, Liverpool  
March 1-3, 7.30pm

How would you feel if you knew you were constantly being watched? If even your most private thoughts and actions were constantly scrutinised? If the only space that was truly your own was the few inches inside your head?

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

**IAN HUNTER AND ARTIST DAVID  
MEDALLA IN CONVERSATION**

Castlefield Gallery, Manchester  
March 10, 6pm-8pm

The Spirit of MERZ: an interview and presentation by international artist David Medalla with Ian Hunter Director, Littoral Trust.

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

**DEBT RECORDS & FRIENDS**

Band on the Wall, Manchester  
March 13 5.30pm

A showcase in aid of the Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy charity, featuring bands from one of Manchester's most exciting record label collectives, Debt Records.

[www.holdengallery.mmu.ac.uk](http://www.holdengallery.mmu.ac.uk)

**EDUARDO POLAZZI  
GENERAL DYNAMIC F.U.N.**

Holden Gallery, Manchester  
Runs 'til March 11

The Holden Gallery presents a new Hayward Touring Exhibition of screen-prints by Eduardo Paolozzi.

The works, which make up the exhibition General Dynamic F.U.N., demonstrate Eduardo Paolozzi's preoccupation with science, technology and popular culture. Fifty screen-prints and photolithographs created between 1965 and 1970 demonstrate the artist's pursuit of a connection between art and the applied sciences. The source materials were taken from his own eclectic archive, this drew on: pulp fiction, American magazines, consumer advertising, technical manuals, science fiction and philosophical texts. The use of everyday materials positioned Paolozzi's work within the 'pop' context of their time, whilst the approach still has strong connections to much contemporary work. The novelist J.G. Ballard described General Dynamic F.U.N. as a 'unique guidebook to the electric garden of our minds'.

[www.holdengallery.mmu.ac.uk](http://www.holdengallery.mmu.ac.uk)



# Call For Submissions

NervousTension is a project trapped in podcast-format. NervousTension was born as a result of two statements not dissimilar to: 'you do seem to have an eclectic music taste' and 'I like stories'. NervousTension is the product of a marriage between these two sentiments. NervousTension is designed to relieve – rather than instil – the feelings of nervous tension which may, or may not, be plaguing you in your daily life.

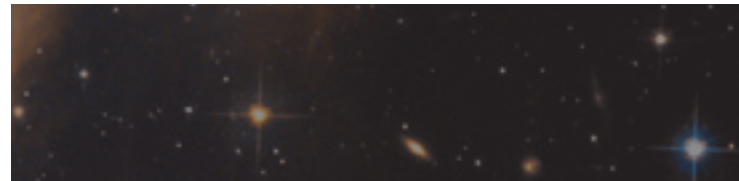
More prosaically, it's simply a vehicle to broadcast personal listening choices whilst also giving airtime to 'underground' authors; a chance for their work to be broadcast and read as they intended, cushioned by music.

Music of all genres and literature from underground authors.

[topofhead.net/nervoustension](http://topofhead.net/nervoustension)

Send your stories to [jackhasstuff@gmail.com](mailto:jackhasstuff@gmail.com)

Preferably, contributions should be as a digital recording and last no longer than 15 minutes. Contributors can be recorded within reason.



## This month in **BLANK**MEDIA COLLECTIVE

### **WOMEN IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES (WICI)**

BLANKSPACE, Manchester  
March 2, 6-9pm

An exciting opportunity for fellow creative women to meet, engage and exchange ideas at BLANKSPACE. Come along and enjoy a complimentary glass of wine (courtesy of Barefoot Wines, sponsors of Blank Media Collective and WICI) and view the current exhibition, Freedom From Selecton.

### **NO OFFENCE INTENDED PUBLIC PREVIEW**

BLANKSPACE, Manchester  
March 17, 6-9pm

No Offence Intended is an experimental external exhibition which aims to engage a collective of Manchester based artists through their perspectives on religion. The artists suggest that 'as an audience we pay homage to certain rites and rituals based from religious 'conditioning' in the same way we experience art'. Is the gallery space in someway like a 'metaphorical' church holding artworks like shrines?



In\_Tuition is an open forum for creatives based in the North West. An opportunity for artists to talk about their work and inspire others through creative understanding, musing and action!

### **IN\_TUITION (FINE ART)**

BLANKSPACE, Manchester  
March 1, 6.30-8.30pm

### **IN\_TUITION (CREATIVE WRITING)**

BLANKSPACE, Manchester  
March 8, 6.30-8.30pm

### **IN\_TUITION (MOVING IMAGE)**

BLANKSPACE, Manchester  
March 15, 6.30-8.30pm

### **IN\_TUITION (FREE-STYLE)**

BLANKSPACE, Manchester  
March 22, 6.30-8.30pm





### Blank Media Collective Team:

Director: Mark Devereux

Co-Director: John Leyland

Financial Administrator: Martin Dale

Strategic Development Consultant: Chris Maloney

Development Coordinators: Dwight Clarke & Elaine Mateer

Community Arts & Learning Coordinators: Chris Leyland & Jo Foxall

Communications Coordinators: Stephanie Graham & Dan English

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Moving Image Coordinator: Christina Millare

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