

Monkey Business invites Jake Kent (Manchester), Timothea Armour (Edinburgh) and Nathan Anthony (Edinburgh) to join the collaborative curatorial and artistic practice of Timber and Battery (London and Nottingham) to interrogate the themes of irresponsibility, playfulness, carelessness and stupidity that drive their work; as a subject matter, a methodology, and in the relationship between art, politics and society. Grouped together, these artists undertake rebellious and childish image-making; ineffective and leisurely dilly-dallying; subtle and irreverent jokes; and fleeting logics of emulation and idiocy.

Each of the five artists would undertake the following:

- to become a host for a week, undertaking at least one public event
- to contribute artwork to be exhibited within the space throughout the project
- to join us in an open talk to discuss the themes of the work
- writing or other materials contributing to a new joint publication

Within a wider climate of austerity and neoliberalism, the artistic scene announces its political utility as a site of assembly, exchange and expression. However, 'engagement' has become suspect in its role within New Labour's policies for arts and the cultural industries. Engagement with the public suggests responsibility, articulacy and shared values. What does it mean for artists to 'engage' when their work continually shirks responsibility and refuses to keep a straight face? How might (a passive?) public be invited, tricked or seduced? Resisting society's calls for productivity, stringency and accountability, we will investigate art's potential to remain wasteful and non-instrumentalized - a playful frittering of energy, time, space and possibility.

Directly confronting (or avoiding) these questions, each artist will develop a strategy of their own in the position of host. Timber & Battery, for example, proposes a 'Hang Out' in which visitors are invited to rehang the exhibition with us, intervening indecisively on our own work as curators. This exhibited work holds a quiet and persistent distance to the program of events - and as a frame it takes on a rebellious, static agency - elaborating connection and divergence, and revealing the contradictions held within each position. Meanwhile, Jake Kent's intervention would draw directly from skateboarding culture to question the political potential of 'hanging out'. Whilst host, each artist will enter into a public conversation with us, identifying key questions, and elaborating on the concerns of their artistic process, and wider social or political engagements. Rather than ossifying the position of the artist, however, we take these sites of dialogue as a space for provisional (in)articulation.

Finally, a small booklet will be published, generating a discourse beyond the project - featuring material from the invited artists, alongside writing and thinking drawing directly from the events and conversations throughout. The project will close with the launch of the publication; widening access to the research itself; giving space for nuanced critique in response to the project; and ensuring documentation of the project itself and the longevity of future research.

Lewisham Arthouse would be the ideal organisation with which to undertake this project. We are inspired by the role of critical engagement associated the gallery and its support of young and emerging artists is a vital and tangible force. This opportunity would provide us with a seed fund for an ambitious curatorial programme, making it possible to represent artists from around the country, recognizing a diversity of approaches and political understandings. This would be a major platform on which to foreground the questions that drive our diverse practices - to make visible these concerns to the public and the artistic community - to legitimise and embolden the artists themselves - but to also force ourselves to confront the important political and ethical questions of what it means to be making this reckless and careless work in the contemporary moment. We hope to ensure a momentum that drive this work into the future with a new rigour and awareness, and to encourage new generations to flirt with stupidity, recklessness and idiocy.

Curatorial practice/approach

Timber & Battery's playful work considers meaning and meaninglessness through oblique gestures. The collaborative practice of Rohanne Udall and Paul Hughes, it takes place across choreographic, performance and visual arts contexts. Trained in fine art and philosophy, our practice is a meeting point between disciplines; a fidgeting enquiry that continually questions itself, and the contexts it finds itself within. Foregrounded by encounters with possibility, choice, and indifference, our work emerges from a legacy of conceptual practice that engages with what is close to hand, resourcefully rewriting the possibilities of a given circumstance.

Our curatorial practice encompasses; editing and publication, the organisation and hosting of public events, invitations to artists into dialogue and the co-presentation of work.

Participatory projects include; Imaginary Festivals Project (Forest Fringe, Edinburgh, 2014) and Digital Writing Group (International Conference on Artistic Research, The Hague, 2016). Recently, we have run our movement research lab 'Open Platform' at Chisenhale Dance Space (Open Lab, London, 2017) and Decoda (Groundwork, Coventry, 2017). Across 2015/16, we hosted a series of work-in-progress performance nights at the University of Roehampton, and from January to March 2016, we helped organise a peer-led class at the University of Roehampton. Open to students, staff and those outside the institution, these projects formed platforms to share artwork and knowledge and undertake embodied and artistic research.

Strongly identifying our work as research, we feel it imperative to engage with discourse and share our knowledge beyond the production of artworks. In the past year, we have presented our work and spoken at three conferences (Yes Conference, ATW Institut, Giessen; February 2016, The International Conference on Artistic Research, Society for Artistic Research, University of the Arts and Leiden University, The Hague; April 2016 and Dialogues on Dance, Philosophy, and Performance in the Contemporary Neoliberal Moment, Coventry University, Coventry; June 2017) and a postgraduate symposium (Positioning, University of Roehampton, London; May 2016).