

## **Desktop Studio Visits: Ruth Angel Edwards (Transcript)**

### **John Bloomfield:**

Hello everyone, welcome to the first episode in a new programming strand at Wysing: Desktop Studio Visits. My name is John Bloomfield, and I work at Wysing as a curator. For this first episode, I'm joined by Ruth Angel Edwards, who's calling in over zoom from her studio in London. The format of the event is that Ruth and I have chosen some artifacts from Ruth's ongoing residency. We're going to play a show or read them. And we're going to talk about them. It's really as simple as that. Desktop Studio Visits are available as podcasts, videos and as live events. Our next event will be with CRYSTALLMESS in June. So I'll just introduce Ruth before we play our first video. Ruth Angel Edwards explores the dissemination of ideology through pop culture, drawing from sub and counter cultural movements both past and present, as well as the conditions which gives rise to them. Individualism, the body, gender and sexuality, consumerism and spirituality are recurring themes in her work. Hedonism, spectacle and dissent are deconstructed and reformed to create communicative works across the variety of media. Ruth has been in residence at Wysing over a number of periods since July 2020 working with a few friends and collaborators: Adam Gallagher, Chloée Maugile, Conrad Pack, and Emily Pope.

Ok, so let's play our first video of the publisher V Vale.

### **V Vale (in video clip):**

Hi, I'm V Vale, founder of RE/Search Publications, and before then Search and Destroy I'm holding a book entitled Swing, although sometimes I wish I entitled it

Retro, because it's all about Retro culture, appreciating the best that America's produced, and it's a fantastic guide to old vintage clothes, furniture, even vintage cars and motorcycles, but best of all vintage music, a lot of which has been almost forgotten, such as my favourite music of all time definitely encompasses artists like Cab Calloway, who's mentioned in here, and my favourite dancing of all time definitely has to be state of the art swing dancing, pioneered by Lindy Hop People, and this is the wildest dancing ever invented for partners, and I used to have a bad joke that I've never seen so many strange women's underpants in all my life.

This is an absolutely wild scene, people didn't understand why I did this book especially coming from punk rock, all I can say is "you weren't there", you missed this absolutely mind-bogglingly athletic dancing that was extremely provocative, and I like provocation. So, having said that, please check out this book and my website [researchpubs.com](http://researchpubs.com). Thank you very much

Hi I'm V Vale founder of RE/Search Publications, been here for 30 years it went by like snapping your fingers, and I'm happiest maybe of all the RE/Search books I like the Pranks! book the best, because I think reality is a despicable concept, and I think it ought to be second nature to deconstruct and reinvent reality wherever you go, and never be satisfied with reality, and pranks, as exemplified in this 240 page book, it's like taking a university course on remapping your brain and perceptions, for this book will definitely make you greatly appreciate the world as it ought to be not the way it is. Every time you see a billboard you will think of a way to reinvent and improve the billboard. You will not take reality at face value anymore. There is no substitute for the original Pranks! Book. Thank you.

## **Ruth Angel Edwards**

Basically, he started out, he claims to have made the first punk zine in the seventies, which is called Search and Destroy in San Francisco and from there he went on to start publishing these more, yeah, proper books, I guess, but they're very kind of pre-Internet way of documenting subculture and counter culture, or sometimes they're just, you know, the whole book is an interview with somebody, for example, we've got an interview book with JGBallard, I think, and really anything he wanted to publish so it's kind of yeah, he still has -- I could put it in the chat, actually, -- a link to -- it's called research publishing

**JOHN:**

We've got titles on, like, body modification, on industrial music, we were looking at earlier,

**RUTH:**

Yeah,

**JOHN:**

Yeah, like any – almost subcultures you could think of, really,

**RUTH:**

Yeah,

**JOHN:**

One of his things I was reading is that he believes that in the world there are something like a thousand truly interesting people and he calls them source thinkers and tries to track down those people, and I guess that's sort of his like lifelong project with the research publishing, yeah, that sort of imprint,

**RUTH:**

Yeah, It's really nice, like I think, some of the way he describes those videos, the two ones of him just presenting some of his -- some of the things he's published, He's got on his YouTube channel he's kind of got quite a few videos, not of everything, but of a lot of his more well known things , There's one, in fact I've got one here, I've got some actual things to show, as well, I don't know if that's --

**JOHN:**

Yeah,

**RUTH:**

Okay, But yeah, this modern, Gangs which pagans which is one of my favourite books he's published, and it's basically a series of different interviews with people, yeah, kind of like not -- yeah, mainly in America, Canada, and Europe, but yeah, it's just kind of really nice and a lot if them, I don't know, some of the stuff in there I just found really interesting, A lot of it is about communal living or kind of, yeah, just rejecting normal societal ways of living, in a variety of different ways,

**JOHN:**

Yeah, It's amazing, I mean one of the things that's really interesting about the project is the role it had before the Internet, and sort of how this could be a

source for so many – to find out about so many different subcultures, In music there are a few sort of -- there are lists which are really famous, I was thinking earlier about nurse with wounds, list, but in their debut album which is this really famous list of just loads of experimental and outsider music, some of which is supposed to be made up names of artists and bands, and in there there's also loads of incredible stuff, and then also I think like back in July we were talking about smile on nylon, which is my background today, and it's a series of cassette mixes made for a clothes shop in New York in the nineties, I think, So it's just before the Internet, and it was this like amazing result of all this digging culture, but like all the, you know, people would track them down, and sort of try and find out what the records were and just be like all this obscure stuff, I guess my question, then, is that I think we're about a similar age, and my sort of experience with the Internet is that I remember before, and I remember an after, I just wondered how you, when you were growing up, how did you find out about interesting stuff? That sort of thing,

**RUTH:**

Um, yeah, I don't know, I guess like, yeah, when I was much younger, there was still a thing of if you went somewhere you would just go to a record shop and pick up flyers, stuff like that, which are really, yeah, I kind of miss that a bit, Definitely has changed a lot, I think, like, yeah, I've got a massive affection for people like vale, and that way of kind of serving a really practical role within not necessarily a scene, because it's across quite a lot of different subcultures, but it's kind of like he actually aimed to produce a resource that people could use, So for example with the body modifications book it's also acted like a kind of yellow pages where

it had where you could go, all the different places and different cities, And yeah, some of them, I think he says that book took him -- he started making it in 1982 and only published -- finished and published it in 1989, so, compiling all of those different places as well as all the interviews, and everything, it's a complete labour of love, And I, even in that era when things maybe didn't move so fast, I guess by the time he published it, some of the stuff could already be outdated or the people might be -- I don't know, doing different things or whatever,

**JOHN:**

Yeah, That's fascinating, Okay, shall we move on to the next artifact, then, which is just the trailer for Matthew Barney's *Cremaster Cycle*

[ominous music as trailer plays]

**JOHN:**

Great, that's just the beginning of it, I guess the other 9 hours of the cycle are available somewhere, So yeah, I really wanted to show that because we talked the other day about what you spent some of your time doing on the residency, and yeah, could you tell us about that?

**RUTH:**

Um, yeah, so it was really nice, like you asking me about that the other day was -- it was good to put myself back into that headspace, and to think, because it has been quite a long time since I actually came out to Wysing and was actually out

there doing the first bit of the residency, so it was July last year, and it was very -- yeah, I don't need to go into detail about how weird a time it was because everyone is going through the exact same kind of things but yeah, it felt very surreal to suddenly be travelling everywhere, seeing people, everyone at Wysing hadn't even seen each other for a long time, and where I was staying in the farmhouse is, yeah, for anyone who doesn't know, Wysing as a site, that's like a building that seems to be pretty much designed for like collaboration and a sort of -- there's -- how many people can stay there? It's quite a lot, asked in it quite a lot of rooms,

**JOHN:**

Ten or 12 people

**RUTH:**

Yeah, big kitchen with a massive tables, a living room, very much seems to be somewhere that invites, yeah, like sort of hanging out in groups and talking and things like that, But because of social distancing I was staying in there on my own, which was kind of quite a mad, surreal experience in itself, but great, But also, yeah, very – not what I was expecting when I thought I was going to do the residency, But yeah, it was also just a weird moment to kind of reflect on what I'd set out to do for the residency, what I was even doing with my work, what kind of -- you know how you can produce art and what that even meant after this quite mad thing was going on, So for me, it became more -- when you asked me the other day what I was actually doing when I was out there in July, I was working in this amazing sound studio that you made but also a lot of the time I was just kind of, who am I? What am I doing? What do I want to even produce? And to the

future, And I ended up kind of just looking back at things that had -- yeah, been important to me at certain points when I was a lot younger or I'd come across a certain time, and had stuck with me, or I remembered them to be one thing and then relooking into them and being like: wow what do I think about that now? Yeah, So those kinds of things, I watched quite a lot of artists films that were on a big Dropbox thing that someone had sent me, And yeah, I watched all of the Cremaster Cycle films which is not what I was particularly coming out to Wying to do, but it was, yeah, I don't know, like looking back on that kind of art making now, just seems absolutely bizarre, because it's this pinnacle moment of just excess, I suppose, And the film itself, to me, seems to be this kind of surrealist investigation of – I mean pretty standard like, yeah, like male desire, advertising, that kind of I also quite enjoyed it, It's so decadent, and it is inspiring in a way, of just on a kind of ,, yeah just a sort of spectacular level or something, But yeah, I don't know why that was -- that came up in conversation but that's one of my main memories of being there in July, Also all those films are -- I think they were also made – he was really specific about how they would be distributed so I don't think -- they're not that easily available=, And the ones I ended up watching were kind of just ripped from -- they were VHS copies so they weren't very high quality, But that was maybe quite nice,

**JOHN:**

I think there are some really elaborate DVD editions just made to, yeah, just obviously super, super expensive,

**RUTH:**



Yeah, I think, as far as I'm aware, maybe I'm not right about this, actually, but I think the Guggenheim one which is the final one that was made, it was available on DVD, but I think the other ones were just available to buy as an art, you know, for galleries and collectors, Very, very expensively, But I'm not sure about that

**JOHN:**

Yeah, I guess we're always interested in what artists actually do when they come to Wysing, Everybody comes with their own -- for a research based residency, everyone will come with a suitcase full of books and films and things they want to go into in detail, to research, And then it's often really interesting to see how they get sidetracked and what sort of new discoveries or recovers rise of old things happen, which sort of takes us on to the next thing we're going to play, which is an extract from Hakim Bey's temporary autonomous zones, but the extract is put to music by Bill Lazwell so we could play that

[Radio extract]

Radio, temporary autonomous film by Hakim Bey, produced by Bill Lazwell

[distorted voices]

radio, coming at you from the, would you like us to change frequencies at this time? Over, That's correct's, Change frequencies at this time, Weird dancing all night computer banking lobbies, Unauthorized pyrotechnic displays, Land-art, earth-works as bizarre alien artifacts strewn in State Parks, Burglarize houses but instead of stealing, leave Poetic-Terrorist objects, Kidnap someone & make them Happy, Pick someone at random & convince them they're the heir to an

enormous, useless & amazing fortune—say 5000 square miles of Antarctica, or an aging circus elephant, or an orphanage in Bombay, or a collection of alchemical manuscripts, Later they will come to realize that for a few moments they believed in something extraordinary, & will perhaps be driven as a result to seek out some more intense mode of existence, Bolt up brass commemorative plaques in places (public or private) where you have experienced a revelation or had a particularly fulfilling sexual experience, Go naked for a sign, Organize a strike in your school or workplace on the grounds that it does not satisfy your need for indolence & spiritual beauty, Grafitti-art loaned some grace to ugly subways & rigid public monuments, Poetic Terrorist-art can also be created for public places: poems scrawled in courthouse lavatories, small fetishes abandoned in parks & restaurants, xerox-art under windshield-wipers of parked cars, Big Character Slogans pasted on playground walls, anonymous letters mailed to random or chosen recipients (mail fraud), pirate radio transmissions, wet cement... The audience reaction or aesthetic-shock produced by Poetic Terrorism ought to be at least as strong as the emotion of terror -- powerful disgust, sexual arousal, superstitious awe, sudden intuitive breakthrough, dada-esque angst, no matter whether the Poetic Terrorism is aimed at one person or many, no matter whether it is “signed” or anonymous, If it does not change someone's life (aside from the artist), it fails, Poetic Terrorism is an act in a Theater of Cruelty which has no stage, no rows of seats, no tickets & no walls, In order to work at all, Poetic Terrorism must categorically be divorced from all conventional structures for art consumption (galleries, publications, media), Even the guerilla Situationist tactics of street theatre are perhaps too well known & expected now, An exquisite seduction carried out not only in the cause of mutual satisfaction, but also as a

conscious act in a deliberately beautiful life, may be the ultimate Poetic Terrorism, The Poetic Terrorist behaves like a confidence-trickster whose aim is not money but CHANGE, Don't do Poetic Terrorism for other artists, do it for people who will not realize (at least for a few moments) that what you have done is art, Avoid recognizable art-categories, avoid politics, don't stick around to argue, Don't be sentimental; be ruthless, take risks, Vandalize only what must be defaced, do something children will remember all their lives, but don't be spontaneous unless the Poetic Terrorist Muse has possessed you, Dress up, Leave a false name, Be legendary, The best Poetic Terrorism is against the law, but don't get caught, Art as crime; crime as art,"

**JOHN:**

All right, So, Hakim Bey, Yeah, how did you find that?

**RUTH:**

Yeah, I brought it with me to Wysing with some other books as well, and I still have the copy that I had a long time ago, But yeah, I don't know, it was weird revisiting it because I think it holds in it some kind of ideas that always will resonate with me, and I think that aspect was really nice to see how those things stayed with me, but there were other areas where I sort of like oh no, like [laughs], And also, I didn't really, I think when I came across the temporary autonomous zone, I didn't, you know, really do any investigation into Hakim Bey and there was no context for me, because it was -- I didn't really know sort of, I guess now reading it, you're so aware of how performative it is and how it's kind of, the whole thing is on the edge of whether or not it's serious, and is it really

telling you to go and commit crime or do these things? But I think when I was like, yeah, a teenager, I guess, I was not perhaps aware of those nuances in the same way, But yeah, it's got some -- there's another clip from it which is longer that I might, if possible, play at the end, if anyone wants to listen to that as well, but that's about this idea of immediatism, which is kind of yeah, I guess a sort of, yeah, like dadaesque situation ist influenced idea that's kind of about the immediacy of creativity being, I guess, a way to reclaim the idea of art as being a commodity, And that's just something that, listening it to now, was actually -- well, there's a a version put to music which is what I sent to you, but obviously at Wysing I was just reading the book, Yeah, I think that is quite nice to read or listen to now,

**JOHN:**

There's definitely ideas in both that I can see in forming some of the work you made at Wysing or around that time, And it's just like the -- some of the styles seem so dated and the tone, And it's the, I guess it's just been subsumed into the mainstream, like listening to it, it actually reminded me of Fight Club or something like that, or, you know, the branding you'd get on a can of brew dog or something

**RUTH:**

Totally, Yeah, it made me think about, like, actually I mean I guess this always seems to happen, but it is a bit sad because I think there's an element to that text which is obviously sort of trying to think of the most ruthless ways to kind of break away from the commodification of sort of like with visual culture and art and music at the time, But now you just see all those ideas just kind of worked into different branding, and it made me think of, there's these oat milk adverts

that are everywhere at the moment, that have just got this tattooed person, I can't remember, They're all very sort of ironic or it's a bill board and it's a bit confusing or it's advertising, but it's sort of not, And then it made me think of, I don't know why, this came into my head but you know when innocent smoothies as like a sort of a gimmick, I think for Christmas or something, they put like little woolly hats on the smoothie, individually knitted hats, It's the kind of thing that sort of looks like maybe just a random person did that or something, But obviously they didn't it was innocent smoothie just deciding to do this weird novelty kind of thing that I don't know, yeah,

**JOHN:**

Yeah, I mean, it's a big history of that, of advertising being informed by sort of like the avant-garde, the situationists, like any of that, bringing all of those techniques into just, yeah, just like a act of selling stuff,

**RUTH:**

Yeah, In the other section that I sent, there's a bit which is -- it kind of suggests that the same people that would do these things or hold these ideas in private would have a kind of public facing sort of art or creativity that would be like art as part of an art, you know, the art world or advertising and things like that, which I kind of -- that had really, reading that again, or anything that, I was kind of like e you know who knows, this was maybe the same kind of of people who were kind of putting out this stuff, it was more of a kind of exercise, Or I don't know, I also think that there's still something to be taken from the poetic terrorism idea, It's not without possibility, to try to implement it today, for sure

**JOHN:**

On that not, let's play the next piece, which is -- well, we'll play it and then I'll introduce it afterwards,

**[Anti Phone Propaganda Film]**

[electronic buzzing sound]

[increases in intensity]

[heavy metal music]

[distorted voices]

[muffled beat music]

[smashing sounds]

[sounds of broken glass]

(breaking and smashing sounds)

[sound of phone ringing and buzzing]

[distorted buzzing sound]

**JOHN:**

Okay, great, Ruth, is that called, the anti-phone film, what's the title?

**RUTH:**

Yeah, I think it's at the moment it's just called Anti-Phone Propaganda Video

**JOHN:**

Okay I, Yeah, a bit of context then, we commissioned you to make a short work about a year ago, and it was one of the things that my sing did at the Wysing did at the beginning of the pandemic, and it's going to go up on our broadcast site next week but has already been in circulation for a while, I wonder if you could talk a bit about that,

**RUTH:**

Um , yeah, so basically it's kind of a weird, um, piece, because it's just when you, um, yeah, when that -- when I got that commission from you, it was definitely just -- I think I was meant to be going out to Wysing at that point but everything had been obviously postponed and put on hold, but yeah, just it's quite a kind of initially just felt like a quite didactic cathartic piece, just at the time, I was just feeling quite against smartphones, and yeah, just it was really quite enjoyable to just smash all these phones up and photo them in the park and take some film, and kind of work that into this video, And also, yeah, it was nice to kind of play around with this sort of quite crude animation, which is something that I'm kind of -- I want to make a second sequel piece to that, that's the animation is a little bit more, yeah, a bit more elaborate and it has some painted elements as well, But yeah, it's kind of, um, yeah, basically I made that then, and then I've also been, um, disseminating it, I guess, through targeted ads on Instagram, So there are shorter versions, because you have to have -- there's a certain time limit for the story or the post ads, And yeah, just making these kind of -- you can target it down to, you know, locations or people's tastes or age, all sorts of different things, So it's been quite fun, And now I've got a few different accounts that are

all kind of -- they're destroy your phone, or smash up your device, or different things like that, So yeah, it's kind of a weird thing that I'm just playing around with, Definitely, And it does definitely relate to the – although I've maybe didn't make the connection at the time, it does relate to the poetic terrorism kind of idea, because I was sort of trying to interrogate why I was enjoying doing it or why, you know, what it was for, and I think it is not, certainly not something I would think about as being a kind of, um, ,, yeah, sort of, I don't know, like anything to do with kind of a deep critique of technology or he's things, which obviously I agree with, but it's not, you know, it's more kind of about, you know, it feels more to me like fly posting or like doing it something where somebody might encounter it and not really know what it is, It's just part of the landscape and it may or may not resonate, and it's kind of, yeah, I was also quite surprised that I didn't -- I don't know -- I'm also kind of thinking who else is doing this? Because it's so cheap, You can kind of put not anything, but you can seemingly put a quite a lot of different things on there, that it will just process as an advert, So

**JOHN:**

That's like, for me, that's the thing that is some of the ideas in the poetic terrorism extract, some of them which have been, you know, as we discussed some of the more commercial uses, the thing that updates it for me is your intervening in the economy and just sort of turning Instagram back on itself in a way that it's, in a way, I don't know, I guess it is maybe it is quite crude, but I think it's interesting, And sort of I guess particularly around phones, there's a sense that like, you know, people have begun to realise that maybe being on your



phone is not all the time is not that great, and if you get a new phone now, there will be so many features on it which will be designed to limit your use, and that's such a weird thing, that they're just like assign point for a modern phone would be these features that that stop you spending so much time in it, And I think just as they're turning it, the product back on themselves, you know, you're doing something that kind of mirrors that by putting it on Instagram adverts, Okay, there's the next piece I wanted to read, I wanted to read a quote, So this is from KLF's infamous manual, how to have a number 1 the easy way, And the quote goes like this: "How do you go about achieving a UK number 1? Follow the step by step guide, Firstly you must be account in and on the dole Firstly, you must be skint and on the dole, Anybody with a proper job or tied up with full time education will not have the time to devote to see it through, Also, being on the dole gives you a clearer perspective on how much of society is run," The book as a whole is pretty infamous, it really is a guide to how you would make a number 1 record in, I think, it came out in the mid-eighties so it's like a great sort of snapshot of the music scene at that time, just sort of walks you through it, some of the ideas in it have actually been used like, they give this recipe for making a hit record which is from what I remember, you go and buy whatever the most – whatever is the top of the club charts, so you take the beat from that, So that will be the most up to date beat that exists, And then you just go back through, and you just go and find a melody from something that was number 130 years ago, and you basically sing that melody over that beat until you have got something that sounds different, and then you sort of work up the track from that, And that's actually something that loads of people have used, and is actually just a good idea, But anyway, I guess the starting point -- step one, is it basically says

you can't do this unless you're on the dole, you have to have no money and you have to be signing on, So the reason I wanted to read that was because you, along with Adam Gallagher, have been working on this series of podcasts called Welfare to Artwork so a series looking at the role of benefits system in British art and music, So yeah, how did you first become interested in tracing that history?

**RUTH:**

I think, basically, we were just both claiming benefits, and last year, And that wasn't unique to last year, but definitely during that particular period where suddenly loads of people were claiming, benefits, and it did at the time give us loads of time to make work, because there's also no other distractions at all, Yeah, I think we just started thinking about it then, And it was one of those things that when you start thinking about it more or looking into it or talking to people, especially different generations, younger and older, it was clear that it was just yeah, a conversation that hadn't really sort of, yeah, maybe hadn't -- no one had really been talking about that much but there could be some quite interesting things to look at, Yeah, it's kind of weird because we did one show, and then we kind of did another one, and now we were originally going to maybe do three and now I think we might do five or just keep it going, because the more we do it, the more people seem to be reaching out and just bringing up whole different sort of angles on different things, or different eras that we haven't covered, So yeah, it's been quite nice, Some have been more polished than others, as radio, but I think it's just a really nice outlet for just a lot of research and for having especially these kind of intergenerational conversations have just been brilliant, And yeah, we had Jimmy from the KLF on our second show, which coincidentally, he is a

neighbour of where we used to live for a long time, And we were living last year when we did that show, So yeah, but it's kind of weird because I actually -- we asked him and his wife, who was in an eighties pop group as well, to do it, and it was only after they'd done the whole interview and stuff and he brought up in the manual, it says to sign on, and I was like oh yeah, of course, And but the reason we originally asked them is because we knew they'd, yeah, they were squatting in the eighties, and they'd just experienced a completely different era of music, and, yeah,

**JOHN:**

One of the things you do that's really, that I found really interesting is tracing it through to the nineties and sort of showing how things slowly evolved and slowly -- well, that system slowly eroded because the narrative you always hear is artists, musicians who are prominent in the seventies or eighties comparing like then with now, and it's obviously really, really different, and yeah, you could squat, you could sign on, and that's basically, you know, the incubation period for so much of the great art and music we all love from that period, But it's just kind of seeing how that, like the twists and turns through the nineties I found really interesting, I think you used the phrase, you talk about a working class drag, and you and Adam talk about the nineties

**RUTH:**

Yeah, that was really interesting, definitely for this one, Adam in particular did loads of research, and that was -- it was really interesting kind of looking at, yeah, listening back to some of that music, like Britpop and stuff like that, and realising how absurd it actually was, Because yeah, at the time, I mean I was a kid, but I

don't remember that being sort of, I don't know, it's like a really saw it in a new light, I think, Yeah, and the stuff with new labour and things like that, But in the next one I think we'll probably -- well, we've got couple of interviews to do which will be really good I think, but also definitely it will be good to cover some more stuff about the new deal for musicians because that's definitely -- it's actually been quite hard to research, so that was something that Tony Blair brought in, which was a kind of musicians dole which was slightly more than the normal dole, and if you could prove that you were a a musician, perhaps going somewhere or, yeah, then you could get this musician's dole, But I remember at the time, I remember one of the main kind of most successful bands that got the musician's dole was do you remember the band the Klaxons but I think at the time they said they'd read the manual from the KLF and that completely informed them in making their about an and the music they made

**JOHN:**

Yeah, golden skans it's hung up by madonna, That's likely to be from that,

**RUTH:**

Oh wow yeah,

**JOHN:**

That's the manual, I'm not going to sing it, but that's the --

**RUTH:**

It's funny, yeah, the amount of stuff, there's this particularly awful, but I actually kind of love it, there's this album by black eyed peas, that's I think not a successful album by them, which is most of the tracks on it seem to follow this formula, and

like the one that's got that like kind of, it's like that kind of eightiesy song that was used on an advert for something that's like I've had the time of my life song, Do you know that one?

**JOHN:**

Yeah,

**RUTH:**

And it's kind of brilliantly awful, But yeah, that whole album was actually just so amazingly bizarre, Yeah,

**JOHN:**

Okay, we've got a few minutes left, There's just one other thing we wanted to show, So you think you wanted to share your screen to show this one and then we've got some questions, But only not that much time,

**RUTH:**

Cool, I can't remember what this -- what was I going to -- was it --

**JOHN:**

The camera

**RUTH:**

Oh yeah okay, Basically when you were asking me about my memories of being at Wysing last year, one of the other things I did was buy this camera that I used to have, I feel like as I'm talking now I'm kind of like ,, yeah, I don't want to come across as this person who is into all these kind of weird nostalgias and not at all

interested in the future, because I definitely think since last year, I've moved on a little bit with these things, But yeah, I bought this camera, which is a cannon camera from I think it's probably from 2003 or 4, and it's just like, at the time they weren't that expensive but now they're super cheap, I think got it this for like less than £20, And there's loads on eBay, But it's just -- it has this quality to it, that I really, really like that I don't think -- I think it's quite specific to a certain era of digital camera where you can achieve these kind of really paintily vibrant images, and there's something to me that they just-- I don't know it kind of -- they have this quality of being you're making something new out of what's there, It's not like -- digital photography has come on so much that it's very much now I'm using a phone and things like that, it's kind of capturing exactly what is there, whereas this still feels like making something, making something different, and I really like that about it, So yeah, that's another -- and since then, I've been taking a lot of photos with this camera, So yeah, that was one of the other things, But I'll work out -- yeah, I was just going to show an image to just give an example of the kind of photos that you can get with it, Sorry, I'm being a bit --

**JOHN:**

That's all right, While you're doing that, I'm just looking at the question – some of the questions that have come in?

**RUTH:**

How do I -- oh hold on, Share screen, Okay, So yeah, it's like these very – that paintily images, that's me and Adam at Wysing,

**JOHN:**

Okay,

**RUTH:**

Very saturated, So yeah, that was -- that was what I was going to show,

**JOHN:**

Okay, So Ruth, we are actually -- we've got like two minutes left, So I'm just seeing if we've got time for one last question, Okay, somebody has asked what's the framed poster in your studio on the left-hand side behind you?

**RUTH:**

Oh, okay, Um, [laughs], this is actually Adam's poster, of -- let's see if I can actually show you, It's a Guinness, an old Guinness advert,

**JOHN:**

I think that must be what it was, Thank you, okay, Yeah, that's satisfied that person's curiosity, I hope,

**RUTH:**

[laughs], Those Guinness adverts are amazing, I don't know who the artist was who made them but there were all these kind of visual persons, like that one has the, the kangaroo has a bottle of Guinness in his power, and then the milkman I think has a kangaroo in his apron pocket or something, But yeah,

**JOHN:**

Okay, Well, thank you, Ruth, So yeah, it's been -- thank you for joining, it's been great to chat through that stuff, I felt like we could have gone on for days, We

will play the other Hakim Bey extract just out as we -- at the end, But yeah, that's it from us, So yeah, thanks, everyone, for joining, and this will be a a podcast and video soon and you can revisit it if you want,

**RUTH:**

Can I I add something quickly? Also, if it's possible, we could maybe I could put together some links to some of the stuff that's been in it as a separate thing,

**JOHN:**

Yeah, we can do that, we can put it on the podcast,

**RUTH:**

Also, yeah, I haven't really talked that much about -- because I've done so many collaborations at Wysing, Obviously, and some more coming up, So, yeah, It doesn't matter, [laughs],

**JOHN:**

We can, because they're still in progress, we can come back to that, We'll have you become another day with Chloe, with Emily and Adam,

**RUTH:**

Cool,

**JOHN:**

Okay,

**RUTH:**

Cool, Thanks, John,



**JOHN:**

Okay, we'll play the last track then

[Sitar music]

All experience is mediated -- by the mechanisms of sense perception, mentation, language, etc -- & certainly all art consists of some further mediation of experience, However, mediation takes place by degrees, Some experiences (taste, smell, sexual pleasure) are less mediated than others (reading a book, looking through a telescope, listening to a record), Some media, especially "live" arts such as dance, theatre, musical or bardic performances, are less mediated than others, such as TV, CDs, Virtual Reality, Even among the media usually called "media", some are more, and other are less mediated, according to the intensity of imaginative participation they demand, Print & radio demand more of the imagination, film less, TV even less, Virtual Reality the least of all — so far, For art, the intervention of Capital always signals a further degree of mediation, To say that art is commodified is to say that a mediation, or standing-in-between, has occurred, and that this betweenness amounts to a split, and that this split amounts to "alienation", Improv music played by friends at home is less "alienated" than music played "live" at the Met, or music played through media (whether PBS or MTV or Walkman), In fact, an argument could be made that music distributed free or at cost on cassette via mail, is LESS alienated than live music played at some huge We Are The World spectacle, or Las Vegas nightclub, even though the latter is live music played to a live audience (or at least so it appears), while the former is recorded music consumed by distant & even

anonymous listeners, The tendency of Hi Tech, and the tendency of Late Capitalism, both impel the arts further and further into extreme forms of mediation, Both widen the gulf between the production & consumption of art, with a corresponding increase in "alienation", With the disappearance of a "mainstream" and therefore of an "avant-garde" in the arts, it has been noticed that all the more advanced and intense art-experiences have been recuperable almost instantly by the media, and thus are rendered into trash like all other trash in the ghostly world of commodities. Now, "Trash, " as the term was redefined in, let's say, Baltimore in the 1970s, can be good fun--as an ironic take on a sort of inadvertent folkkultur that surrounds & pervades the more unconscious regions of "popular" sensibility--which in turn is produced in part by the Spectacle. "Trash" was once a fresh concept, with radical potential. By now, however, amidst the ruins of Post-Modernism, it has finally begun to stink. Ironic frivolity finally becomes disgusting. Is it possible now to BE SERIOUS BUT NOT SOBER? (Note: The New Sobriety is of course simply the flipside of the New Frivolity. Chic neopuritanism carries the taint of Reaction, in just the same way that postmodernist philosophical irony and despair lead to Reaction. The Purge Society is the same as the Binge Society. After the "12 steps" of trendy renunciation in the '90s, all that remains is the 13th step of the gallows. Irony may have become boring, but self-mutilation was never more than an abyss. Down with frivolity-- Down with sobriety.) Everything delicate & beautiful, from Surrealism to Break-dancing, ends up as fodder for McDeath's ads; 15 minutes later all the magic has been sucked out, and the art itself dead as a dried locust. The media-wizards, who are nothing if not postmodernists, have even begun to feed on the vitality of "Trash," like vultures regurgitating and re-consuming the same carrion, in an

obscene ecstasy of selfreferentiality. Which way to the Egress? Real art is play, and play is one of the most immediate of all experiences. Those who have cultivated the pleasure of play cannot be expected to give it up simply to make a political point (as in an "Art Strike, " or "the suppression without the realization" of art. Art will go on, in somewhat the same sense that breathing, eating, or fucking will go on. Nevertheless, we are repelled by the extreme alienation of the arts, especially in "the media," in commercial publishing and galleries, in the recording "industry," etc. And we sometimes worry even about the extent to which our very involvement in such arts as writing, painting, or music implicates us in a nasty abstraction, a removal from immediate experience. We miss the directness of play (our original kick in doing art in the first place); we miss smell, taste, touch, the feel of bodies in motion. Computers, video, radio, printing presses, synthesizers, fax machines, tape recorders, photocopiers- these things make good toys, but terrible addictions. Finally we realize we cannot "reach out and touch someone" who is not present in the flesh. These media may be useful to our art-- but they must not possess us, nor must they stand between, mediate, or separate us from our animal/animate selves. We want to control our media, not be Controlled by them. And we should like to remember a certain psychic martial art which stresses the realization that the body itself is the least mediated of all media. Therefore, as artists and "cultural workers" who have no intention of giving up activity in our chosen media, we nevertheless demand of ourselves an extreme awareness of immediacy, as well as the mastery of some direct means of implementing this awareness as play, immediately (at once) and immediately (without mediation). Fully realizing that any art "manifesto" written today can only stink of the same bitter irony it seeks to oppose, we nevertheless declare

without hesitation (without too much thought) the founding of a "movement," IMMEDIATISM. We feel free to do so because we intend to practice Immediatism in secret, in order to avoid any contamination of mediation. Publicly we'll continue our work in publishing, radio, printing, music, whatever, but privately we will create something else, something to be shared freely but never consumed passively, something which can be discussed openly but never understood by the agents of alienation, something with no commercial potential yet valuable beyond price, something occult yet woven completely into the fabric of our everyday lives. Immediatism is not a movement in the sense of an aesthetic program. It depends on situation, not style or content, message or School. It may take the form of any kind of creative play which can be performed by two or more people, by and for themselves, face-to-face and together. In this sense it is like a game, and therefore certain "rules" may apply. All spectators must also be performers. All expenses are to be shared, and all products which may result from the play are also to be shared by the participants only (who may keep them or bestow them as gifts, but should not sell them). The best games will make little or no use of obvious forms of mediation such as photography, recording, printing, but will tend toward immediate techniques involving physical presence, direct communication, and the senses. An obvious matrix for Immediatism is the party. Thus a good meal could be an Immediatist art project, especially if everyone present cooked as well as ate. Ancient Chinese and Japanese on misty autumn days would hold odour parties, where each guest would bring a homemade incense or perfume. At linkedverse parties a faulty couplet would entail the penalty of a glass of wine. Quilting bees, tableaux vivants, exquisite corpses, rituals of conviviality like Fourier's "Museum Orgy" (erotic costumes, poses, and

skirts), live music & dance-- the past can be ransacked for appropriate forms, and imagination will supply more. The difference between a 19th century quilting bee, for example, and an Immediatist quilting bee would lie in our awareness of the practice of Immediatism as a response to the sorrows of alienation and the "death of art." The mail art of the '70s and the zine scene of the '80s were attempts to go beyond the mediation of art-as-commodity, and may be considered ancestors of Immediatism. However, they preserved the mediated structures of postal communication and xerography, and thus failed to overcome the isolation of the players, who remained quite literally out of touch. We wish to take the motives and discoveries of these earlier movements to their logical conclusion in an art which banishes all mediation and alienation, at least to the extent that the human condition allows. Moreover, Immediatism is not condemned to powerlessness in the world, simply because it avoids the publicity of the marketplace. "Poetic Terrorism" and "Art Sabotage" are quite logical manifestations of Immediatism. Finally, we expect that the practice of Immediatism will release within us vast storehouses of forgotten power, which will not only transform our lives through the secret realization of unmediated play, but will also inescapably well up and burst out and permeate the other art we create, the more public and mediated art. And we hope that the two will grow closer and closer, and eventually perhaps become one.