

Library Interventions: creative disruptions, a culture of curiosity

**Leeds College of Art, Blenheim Walk, Leeds, LS2 9AQ,
+44 113 202 8000**

**Leeds College of Art, Vernon Street, Leeds, LS2 8PH,
+44 113 202 8030**



@LibraryArtLeeds

Chris.graham@leeds-art.ac.uk

Jayne.roberts@leeds-art.ac.uk

Nick.norton@leeds-art.ac.uk

Library Interventions: creative disruptions, a culture of curiosity.

Nick Norton

Library Interventions is a programme of artist led forays into the Leeds College of Art libraries.

It has run for two academic years and a total of thirty artists have operated under the rubric.

Library Interventions:

Browsing, searching, collating, reading, recording.

Artists intervene in the library and revitalize some aspect of looking, inventing, discovering, connecting, engaging, and creating.

For the invited artists, the Library Intervention brief is to explore the library as best they see fit and create art that responds to some aspect of the collection and/or library environment.

Both artist and the art will be interacting with staff, students, and the public, modifying or amplifying some aspect of the library. We hope these creative endeavours, situated in the heart of this learning environment, are able to awaken curiosity as to the possible uses of the library as a vital component in the creative.

What follows is a summary of the artists and artworks which have constituted Library Interventions since its inception.



1 Sharon Harvey; Ultraviolet - installation view

Garry Barker. Art and Fiction

September - December 2013

“Artist myths, stereotypes and preconceptions are drawn together in this intervention as a library of possible readings. The intervention consisted of a bookcase that has been set aside and dedicated to art and artists in fiction. To aid the reader an additional text ‘Art and Fiction’ is provide by the artist that itself include an additional 26 micro fictions, each one written in response to the many myths of the artist.”



2 Garry Barker; Art and Fiction

All the fiction featured either art or artists as a plot device. In effect this display completed the central artist created book as the contents of Art and Fiction reviewed many of the books it was displayed alongside. A series of readings and discussions were staged by Garry during the installation period. In particular this work dealt with the myth of the artist as an alternative approach to art criticism.

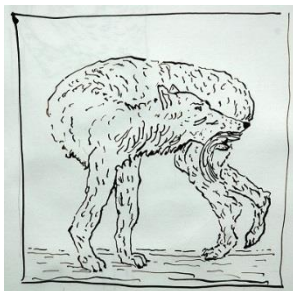
“Fiction creates imaginary spaces.

The word reshapes the visual world and provides us with the words to think, we see what we already see and think what we think we were thinking about what we see.

Art and how we think of how artists behave are both fictions.

Novels and poetry have shaped our vision of the artist providing a set of concepts so powerful that we can sometimes forget that the role we think the artist undertakes is a fiction, at times playing out the roles made for us by writers, as if we know the words of the play by heart.”

If anyone wanted to borrow the books, there was a specially created stamp with which to mark the date label:



3 Bark-er Stamp

Sharon Kivland.

February – March 2014

Sharon Kivland created her Library Intervention by engineering her own absence. Rather than be present she put a call for agents, doppelgangers or slaves who were willing to function on her behalf:



“While I would like nothing better than a month in a library [...] it is not really possible. I know an intervention might take many forms – that there is not a constraint of being present; nonetheless, that is what I would like most – a month or two of reading. How much easier my work would be if others were to undertake it for me. To this end, I invite applications from willing agents to go in my place and do my reading for me, imagining what I would read and to what ends: subjects are various, but would clearly require a little research on my work in advance (nothing too arduous), and might include the subjects of collections, revolutions, fashion and dress, fragmented bodies, the uncanny, postcards, stuffed animals, embroidery (oh my, there is vast possibility). It is, I suppose, a master/slave relation, after Hegel, for there is lordship on my part, and a form of bondage on yours, at least initially – for if one considers Hegel’s dialectic: after thesis and antithesis, there is self-realisation, and thus freedom. There will be a period of research, each agent following his or her proposed line of investigation then the writing of a report for me, a report on knowledge [...]



LIBRARY INTERVENTIONS, Closing event programme for Sharon Kivland, summary of agents presentations and reports on knowledge:

Abbie Canning : *Absolve me Sharon, quia peccavi*

The kissing of the feet of [...] slave masters, and the statues of slaves and gods has for thousands of years been practiced as a gesture of submission, humility or petition. Hence, the foot symbolised freedom or slavery.

Confess your sins and discover if you are awarded freedom.



4 Abbie Canning; The Confessional

Alison J. Carr : *The Enterprising Showgirl*

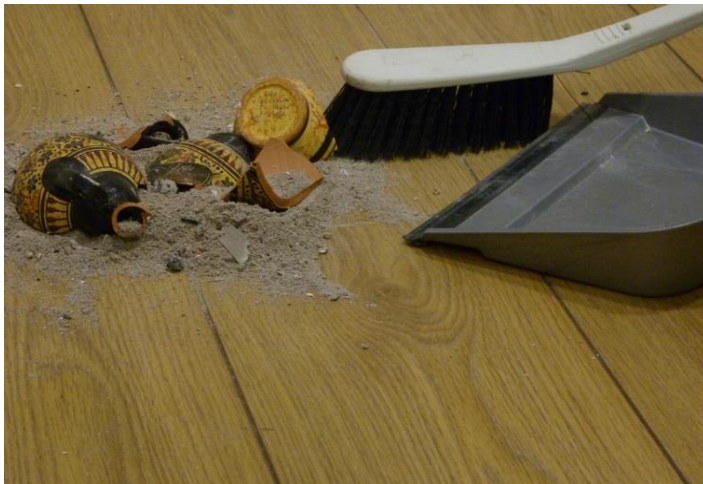
A reading of extracts from a private circulation pamphlet printed circa 1950s, found in the British Library. The colourful, bawdy story tells us about the fantasies projected onto showgirls at the time; maybe they continue to be now. This may be considered in relation to *The Mucky Bits*, an archive of photographs of the rude pictures taken from the library books in the collection.



5 Alison J. Carr - bawdy reading

Gin Dunscombe : *Memento mori*

Her agency took the form of an enquiry, collecting information about costume, the occult, *in memoriam* poetry, trick photography, body snatching and grave robbing, the monopolistic role of the undertaker, and the abrupt *volte face* of the Christian church in its attitude to cremation. The outcome of her labours was presented to Dr Kivland as a sixty-eight-page *leporello* commonplace book. The essence of her observations is represented by her accompanying work, but for this occasion she will read some Victorian *In Memoriam* and obituary poems, which allude to the working environment of the deceased craftsperson.



6 Gin Dunscombe; Memento Mori

Bryan Eccleshall ; *Steam Trains and Scribbling*

In which the agent reflects on various and diverse snippets of learning acquired while acting as an agent for another. Also, a reflection on the learning carried out for the other.



7 Bryan Eccleshall - the agent reports...

Helen Frank : *Characteristics of Copy*

A set of hand-drawn post cards, with a live drawing performed in Helen's Frank's absence by Rachel Smith. The drawing is postcard-sized and will take two minutes.

Chris Gibson : *Convergences*

Convergences is a twenty-page book in two halves: the first half is a fictional journey through Leeds College of Art's library which hinges on two texts, and the second is evidence of the actual process of reading that led to the work. The work is about the pleasure of reading as well as about the process of writing. There will be a ten-minute reading.

Lesley Guy : *Rebel Rebel*

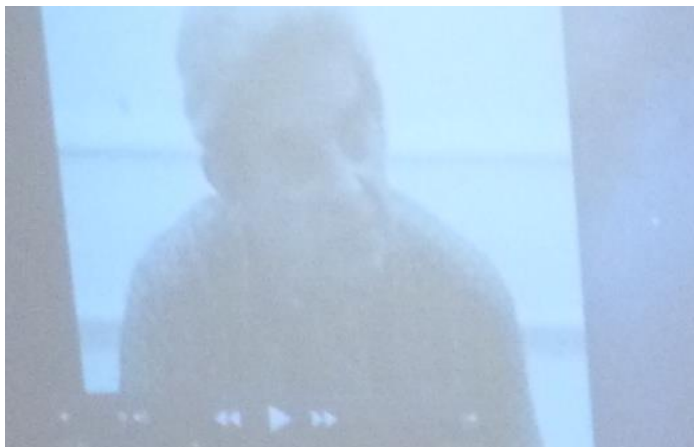
Lesley Guy spent too much time looking at the V&A's David Bowie catalogue in the library when she should have been researching for Sharon Kivland. There were so many beautiful pictures of outfits and amazing costumes all adding to the magical being of Bowie – she could not look away. She was sure she could have found something in there to add to her research, after all, she had promised something unexpected, but she was not giving this away – this feeling was hers. On her way home she listened to the music and knew she had to share this excitement with the other agents. She will perform *Rebel Rebel* from *Diamond Dogs*.

Chris Green & Katheryn Owens : **In which we attempt to recreate a walk previously undertaken, in seven minutes.**

A short reading, a walk of the imagination, a walk ...

Jane Harris : *Speaking of the Gaze*

A 3-minute film, in which the following often misunderstood quotation of Jacques Lacan is explored in a faintly absurd manner: 'So then, so then, and love, and love, is it always reciprocal? But yes, but yes!' (Lacan, 1972/73)



8 Jane Harris; Speaking of the Gaze

Katya Robin : *The Library Game, Dewey Decimal System 700–799, Arts & Recreation*

A musing on breaks and lateral thinking: The Roll-and-move game uses the Arts & Recreation section of the Dewey Decimal System for play. Game tiles represent a library class graphically and/or typographically. Mild peril is supplied by Wormhole tiles that lead to random alternative subjects. A demonstration of how to play a board game in a booklet, including 10-sided dice and companion text.

Rachel Smith : *Process and Dialogue*

A short reading of extracts from the artist book produced while acting as agent for *Library Interventions*: Sharon Kivland



9 Sharon Kivland relinquishes her mastery over Rachel Smith in triplicate

Holly Stevenson : *Tear To Care*

After working as an Agent, Holly Stevenson considers that when Jean-François Lyotard wrote 'desire baffles knowledge and power' he neatly summarised desire as baffle effect, an effect located in crystalline proportions in reflections made on the practices of wearing rouge and writing postcards. To consider what a Library Intervention might be in terms of desire as baffle effect she has made an artist's book that pursues intervention and intervener. There will be a reading from part of her report.

Isabella Streffen : *Something About The Girl*

In her reading Isabella Streffen confesses what she knows about the disappearance of the female detective as a strategy in contemporary art : called in remotely

Madeleine Walton : *Follow-On Embroidery*

Madeleine Walton read a series of texts on embroidery. After reading each text she used the Follow-on Technique to condense the text. The Follow-on Technique is as follows:

1. Take the first word in the text eg. *The*
2. Take the next word in the text beginning with the last letter of the first word, e.g., 'e' – *end*.
3. Take the next word in the text beginning with the last letter of the previous word, e.g. 'd' – *door*
4. Continue until the text is exhausted.

Rachel Smith will read extracts of *Follow-On Embroidery*

Lou Hazelwood & Jo Ray : *Elliptical Research Survival Kit*

The elliptical research space mapped their foray into the library to explore problems of recording and reporting. Establishing a methodology of sorts, models of 'good' practice were diligently drawn out and rebelled against.

Good intent to serve the master gave way to the satisfaction of the elliptical agent's own whimsy, with serendipitous connections of dubious substance. Bespoke search devices, coding systems, and forms of sustenance were developed, all exploring the shape of research. The elliptical agent will facilitate the use of these resources in a brief tour of the library and a tasting session.



10 Lou Hazelwood & Jo Ray open up their research kit

Joanna Geldard : *Other Oscillations*

A work that may be seen during the tour. What is familiar is a solid axis, while only an impression, oscillating and existing within frozen frames simultaneously.

Graham Head. The TEXT cupboard within the house of IMAGE

March – May 2014

A series of library based consultations- dialogues- events centred around Visual Arts' relationships with the Word. Ranging from Adolf Wolfi to Bruce Naumann via illuminated manuscripts.



11 Graham Head; Untitled

“The Exile of James Joyce” by Helene Cixous

Page 165: The young Joyce’s relation with language were already charged with sinister overtones and this may explain the importance he attributes at the beginning of his autobiographical meditation to a capture of the world by means of words; this is why the epiphany was at first a wish to perceive reality and at the same time a desire to do without words, although as the language crystallised into epiphany it exerted an irresistible attraction on the young artist. Phrases petrify into objects, so that he who perceives them can possess and make use of them.

Page 216: Only one thing is necessary, solitude. The great inner solitude: to go into one’s self, and to meet no-one for hours, this you must achieve.

Page 324: By day and by night he moved among distorted images of the outer world. He moves in a world which he distorts, and the reader is moved into a reality which never gives the impression of being real. More exactly, the reader is ushered into the mental circumvolution of an extremely subjective person.

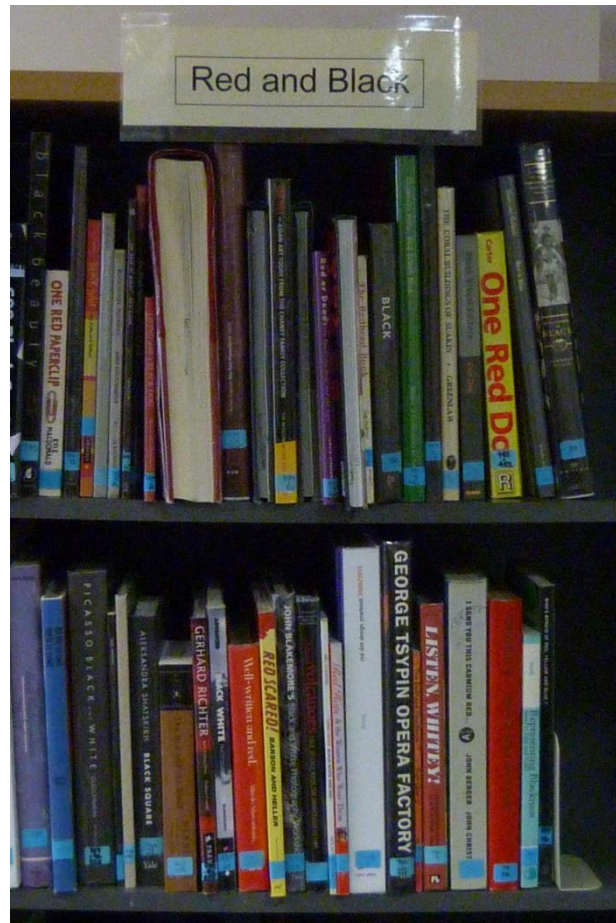
Pavel Buchler. Red and Black

March – April 2014

Instructions: The library will create a new subject/thematic section under the heading 'Red and Black' anywhere within the collection (but not a separate book case) and will gather together all the books that have the words "red" and/or "black" in the title or in the author's name. Within the section, the books will be arranged either by the author or in no particular order. The section will be identified by a sign in exactly the same style as the existing signage. It is not necessary that the collection include Stendhal's novel unless it is in stock.

Title / Author	Barcode	Classification	Date Lent	Date Due
Well-written and red: the story of the Economist poster campaign. / Marcantonio, Alfredo	R35553A0084	741.67	26 Feb 2014	23 Jun 2014
Valerie Belin (black eyed Susan). / Bezzola, Tobia (ed.)	R61547K0084	779 BEL	26 Feb 2014	23 Jun 2014
The trials and tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood: versions of the tale in a socio-cultural context. / Zipes, Jack	R42051K0084	398.2	26 Feb 2014	23 Jun 2014
Terry Frost: black white and red. / Gooding, Mel	R32425P0084	759.92 FRO	26 Feb 2014	23 Jun 2014
Swedish red: comfortably secure. / Eneroth, Joakim	R78573X0084	779 ENE	21 Mar 2014	23 Jun 2014
Roy Lichtenstein: early black and white paintings / Rosenblum, Robert	R38924N0084	759.92 LIC	26 Feb 2014	23 Jun 2014
Representing blackness: issues in film and video. / Smith, Valerie (ed.)	R23246F0084	791.1	26 Feb 2014	23 Jun 2014
Reflections in black: a history of black photographers, 1840 to the present / Willis, Deborah	R27205P0084	779	26 Feb 2014	23 Jun 2014

Red-color news soldier: a Chinese photographer's odyssey through the cultural revolution. / Zhensheng, Li	R36806K0084	779 ZHE	28 Feb 2014	23 Jun 2014
The red volcanoes: face to face with the mountains of fire. / Gerente, Alain, Lockwood, John	R72190X0084	551.21	28 Feb 2014	23 Jun 2014
Red star over Russia: a visual history of the Soviet Union from 1917 to the death of Stalin. / King, David	R60544X0084	709.47	28 Feb 2014	23 Jun 2014
Red scared! the commie menace in propaganda and popular culture. / Barson, Michael, Heller, Steven	R29143X0084	741.67	26 Feb 2014	23 Jun 2014
Red or Dead: the good, the bad and the ugly. / Kingswell, Tamsin	R43281W0084	390.9 RED	26 Feb 2014	23 Jun 2014
Red hot: Asian art today from the Chaney family collection. / Brand, Heather (ed)	R70506W0084	709.51	26 Feb 2014	23 Jun 2014
Red eye: L.A. artists from the Rubell Family Collection. - 1 / Coetzee, Mark	R72983W0084	708.73	26 Feb 2014	23 Jun 2014
The Red Book: Liber Novus. - 1 / Jung, C.G.	R56583P0084	150.195	26 Feb 2014	23 Jun 2014
Red and black. - 1 / Stendhal	R78286Y0084	843 STE	28 Feb 2014	23 Jun 2014



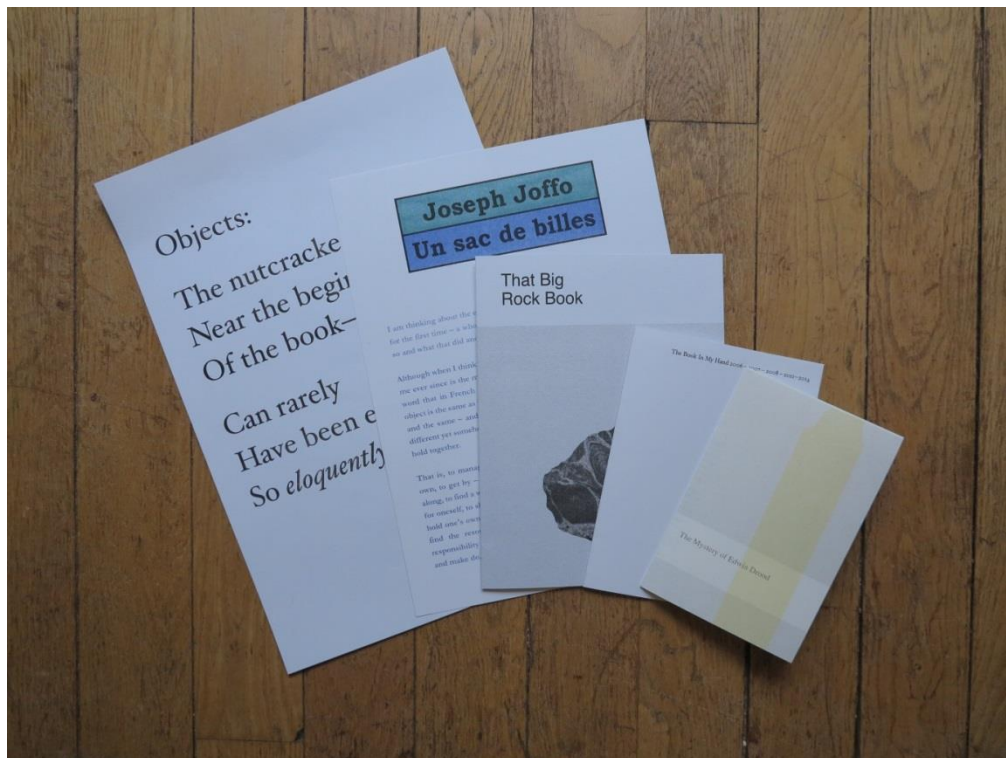
12 Pavel Buchler; Red and Black

Kate Briggs: *And This Is What We Call By the Book's Name* with workshop: Individual Reading Records.

May 2014, November 2015, May 2015

How do books exist for their readers once they are no longer actively being read? The question could be asked of all art forms. However, it takes on a particular urgency when asked of books – where the full experience of even the slimmest volume is always of a certain, often interrupted, duration (to be determined by the reader) and where the format is portable, meaning that the settings of the experience are varied and variable (again, to be determined by the reader). It is a question about memory, its editing and distortions. But it is also, potentially at least, a question about methodology. How to collect information about reading? What is (not) relevant to the reading experience? How to register or materialize that (each time) unique experience? How might we want modify our existing reading, writing or critical practices in anticipation of the devastating effects of reading a book?

Individual Reading Records as a workshop will explore these questions through discussion and practical work. It borrows its title from a homework task often assigned to young readers. In the UK, primary school-aged children are required to keep an individual reading record (sometimes called a personal reading log): an ongoing archive of the sequence of books read over a school year, the times of day that reading occurred, and the number of pages covered in each reading session. Participants are invited to engage with the very idea of an individual reading record by drawing on their areas of interest and expertise – which might include, for instance, graphic design, fine art, digital media – to retroactively produce one of their own.



13 Kate Briggs; *And This is What We Call By the Book's Name* – five publications

"I think we often expect ourselves to have the answers, especially when our work is graded or made public. It was inspiring to see a practitioner who was prepared to surface uncertainty and openly explore practice-led research strategies that were untested. I think that has given me confidence to take some risks in approaching COP3, and for it to be ok that I don't always know where it is going."



14 Kate Briggs (centre), Individual Reading Records workshop

"This was a really inspiring morning. Great to have staff, students and externals working together, Kate was an excellent facilitator."

"Would be good for students who attended to pass on to others how democratic and non-hierarchical these interventions are."

"I think this is an excellent initiative / offers high quality learning experiences for a diverse range of staff and students / promotes the value of the library and library staff as an excellent cross-college resource and as a potential hub for research activity... thanks."

Nick Thurston: Six and Twenty Six Letters

November-June 2015

Six and Twenty Six Letters is a short poem which plays with language and the letters.

By mirror writing the second half (D E T) and folding the sheet, the first 6 characters (A B C D E T) double-back onto the first 'C', thus not needing to repeat it.

The 7 are said by 6; and the 6 express the modern English alphabet (26) in a conceptually sufficient but otherwise inadequate way, just like Josphe Kosuth's famous 'One and Three Chairs'.

The intent is to invite library users to use the library's technologies creatively.

It is one A4 sheet which needs to be printed out and then trimmed down, following the instructions and annotations in un-used areas of the A4 sheet.

1. Make a two-sided print or photocopy, known as a **duplex print**, of this sheet of paper at a 1:1 scale.
2. If you're using a photocopier, return the sheet that you made a photocopy of to the Librarian or whoever you borrowed it from, keeping your own two-sided copy.
3. Using your own two-sided copy of the sheet, continue to follow the instructions on the other side wherever and whenever you can.



15. Nick Thurston; Six and Twenty Six Letters – screenshot - artwork downloaded from E-Studio.
Instructions make reading a haptic experience

Sharon Harvey: Ultraviolet

July – September 2014

The cyanotype process used to produce these photographs creates 'one off' prints that are unique

individual interpretations of the physical environment. Echoing the 'light bulb' moments of discovery that books within the library have inspired.

'A book of books' introduction written by Adrian Davies, Programme Leader, BA(Hons) Photography, Leeds College of Art

During July 2014, I created a series of cyanotype prints in Leeds College of Art, Blenheim Walk Library, as part of the Library Intervention programme. A cyanotype (or sun print) is a Victorian, photogram process introduced in 1842 by Astronomer Sir John Herschel.



16 Sharon Harvey; Reach, cyanotype, July 2014

To create a cyanotype watercolour paper was coated with potassium ferricyanide and ferric ammonium citrate, which reacts when exposed to UV (ultraviolet) light - sunlight.

Found objects and iPhone negatives taken in the library were placed in the path of the sun's UV rays and exposed for 5-10 minutes, and then rinsed in water, which produces a stunning Prussian blue background with the objects emerging as a range of tonal blues and solid whites.

The Process Continues.

December 2015

Library Interventions presented in a Leeds College of Art exhibition at curated by Sharon Bainbridge and Janine Sykes.

Library Interventions

What is a library and how does one interact with what it is?

A library is a collection. This library is more than its collection.

What is a collection and how do we interact with what it is?

A library is more than its collection and it is how we interact with “the more” of this.

The Process Continues.

Library Interventions are made in order to open up the *more of this*.

Be astonished, surprised, and delighted: *more of this*.

Be here to browse or to act as lens focussed and specific: *more of this*.

Be in a place which acts a fulcrum, weights of curiosity and knowledge spinning over this new sense of “you”, you are learning and you are recognising something you have known of old: *more of this*.

Or does the collection make one fearful?

We make Library Interventions in order to say: *less of this*.

Is stamina and grit the first quality required to enter into the library?

We make Library Interventions in order to say: *less of this*.

Does one search for a book in a blur of confusion leavened by a modicum of hope?

We make Library Interventions in order to say: *less of this*.

Library Interventions therefore came about with the intent of being a reminder of how the creative process and the learning process are one intimate and continuing process.

Library Interventions invite artists to break into the familiarity or every day of the library collection.

The interventions are chosen with the expectation of returning the library, the collection, the book, and the act of reading, once more toward that vital initiating state of being potent.

The library is a space of potency; apparently unchanging in aspect, it is yet a catalyst set to loosen the creative energy of all who choose to respond.

Rachel Smith: Drawing Out Language.

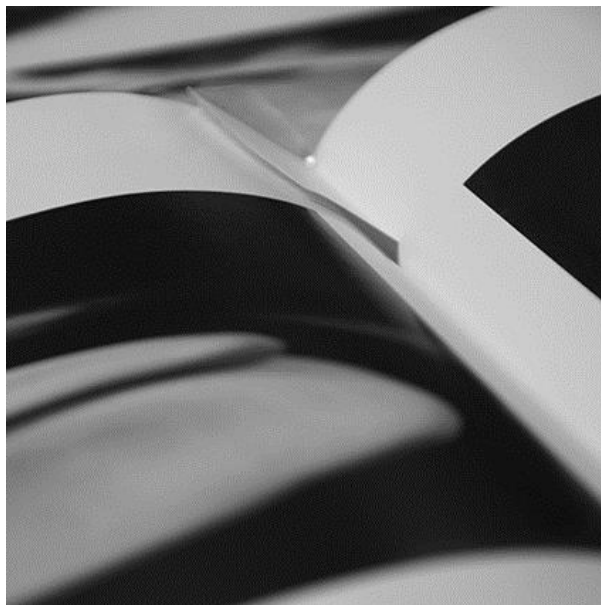
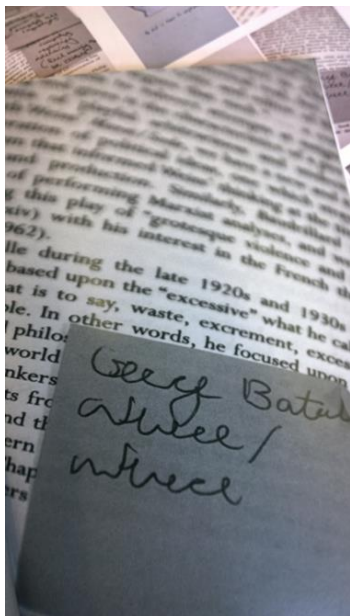
March – April 2015

When researching in a library, there is usually some concept or theme I am chasing. Books are generally selected from computer searches, recommendations or a bibliography.

However once the reading begins my attention is often distracted by the things I find left between the pages. I spend time wondering about the positioning of found bookmarks. I try to figure out the scrawled handwriting in the margin, based on the feeling that, if something was important enough to write in the book, it must be a gem of insight!

I would like to allow myself the freedom to devote time to follow these distractions in order to find a more speculative and spontaneous path through the books in the library.

I propose to follow the trails left by others through various books. I will use the found bookmarks and discarded post-it notes to guide my reading, taking my lead from the underlinings and scribbled marginalia in the books I choose. From the evidence I find I will produce a new work in the form of an artist book containing a combination of photographs, writing, and drawings based on the path I take and the thoughts I find.



Helen Frank: Drawing Theory, 741.092.

March – April 2015

All tracing is done with my (O)pposing (H)and. An example of the constraint is visible behind this text

Trace the book cover, verso and recto

Remove the book and place another piece of tracing paper on top of tracing #1

Trace the tracing (#1)

Remove tracing #1 and place another piece of tracing paper on top of tracing #2

Trace the tracing (#2)

Remove tracing #2 and place another piece of tracing paper on top of tracing #3

Trace the tracing (#3)

Layer all the tracings together, aligning at will

Photocopy the tracings, on to tracing paper, to make a composite of the 3 layers

Use the composite image as a second dust jacket, layered over the existing book cover. The original cover will be visible under the tracing paper.

The re-covered books are to be returned to the shelves for the duration of the intervention and will remain available for loan or study.



Louise Atkinson: Imaginary Museum, the art library as archive.

March – April 2015

My proposal for Library Interventions project is a development of my ongoing curatorial project 'The Imaginary Museum'. This intervention will be produced in response to the tradition of artists and theorists interrogating the museum archive format to investigate and expose the politics of collection and display. In direct response to the theories of Andre Malraux, Walter Benjamin and Aby Warburg (among others), the project aims to understand and communicate the ways that art history is made, and how artists engage with the collection and categorisation of art. Directly referencing the work of André Malraux, in the first volume of 'The Psychology of Art' entitled 'The Museum without Walls', the concept of the project began with the idea of photographic reproduction in books as the basis for the democratisation of visual art.

The 'museum', displayed on a postcard wall rack will be a series of 18 postcard reproductions created by artists selected from an open call. The audience will be encouraged to collect the postcards, in part or in whole, leaving a suggested donation in a nearby honesty box. There will also be small branded envelopes for audiences to keep their selection in, thereby creating their own imaginary museum.

These images should not be solely representative of singular objects and artworks, but instead reference the nature of the art library as archive through imagined collections, systems, documentation, and classifications. Depicting these multiple categorisation strategies as single postcard images aims to allow the viewer to consider the idea of the archive not only as a container for housing historical objects, but as a cultural artefact in its own right.

Imaginary Museum, the art library as archive: Postcard images



19 Aylwin Greenwood-Lambert; Screen Stars (Pragmatic Arrangement ii)



20 Barbara Greene; China Hands



21 Bertie Smith; The Paper Museum: The Collection



22 Dust Studies; "Can you imagine a being more crazed with sadness than a messenger who can deliver nothing?"



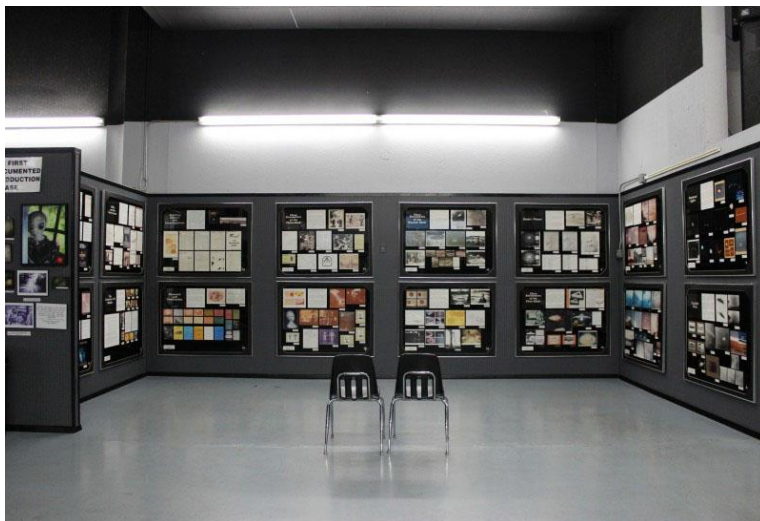
23 Garry Barker; What's my number?



24 Isabella Martin; Grip



25 Julie Cassels; Seeing Differently - Adjusted Library



26 Karen David; UFO Museum, Roswell, NM



27 Katya Robin; 12 Types

The Collector

Parents, children, friends, relatives, superiors, and subordinates make their feelings known through cups and saucers. The cup is the preferred gift, the most popular kind of knick-knack for a room.



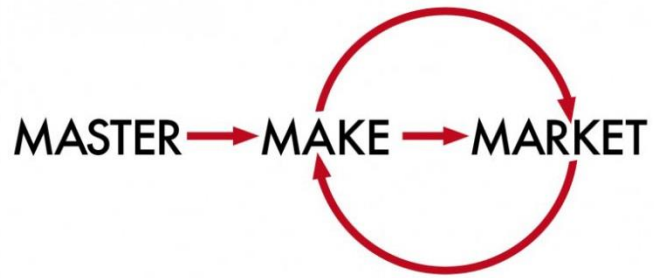
28 Louise Finney; From 'An Illustrated Accompaniment to The Arcades Project'



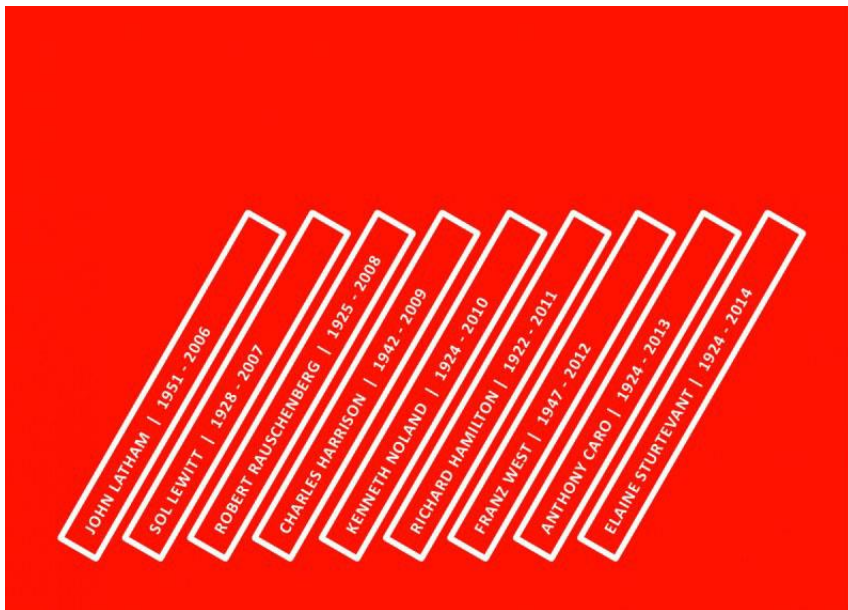
29 Malina Busch; Curl Up



30 Martha Jean Lineham; Postcard, photo, slide, photo, postcard



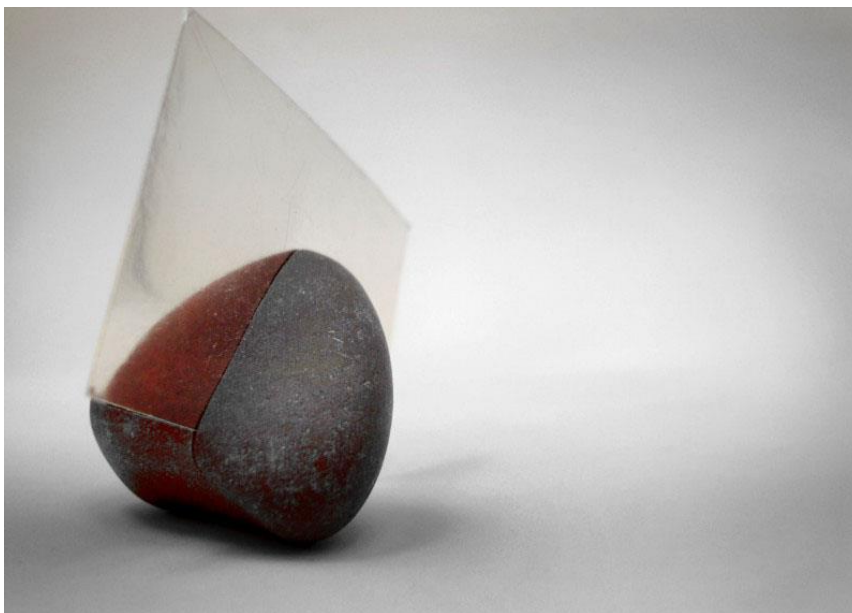
31 Paul Glennon; Artist Infinitum



32 Paul Jex; Artist Obituaries - Red, 2015



33 Ruth Rosengarten; Paper Trail: 14 years



34 Sarah Binless; Mnemonic for Stone



35 Shaeron Caton-Rose; Exhibition for Beginners (untitled)



36 Simon Parish; Dutch Portraits 1971

Dub Day: Non-Shhhh in Vernon Street Library

March 26th 2015

We presented the Library Interventions of Louise Atkinson. Rachel Smith, and Helen Frank by playing dub in the library, in the evening we moved into Vernon Street foyer space and we turned it up!

#LibraryInterventions definitely the most fun Ive had in a library #dub not #shh



37 DJ in the library

Robert Good: Sorry Picasso.

April – May 2015

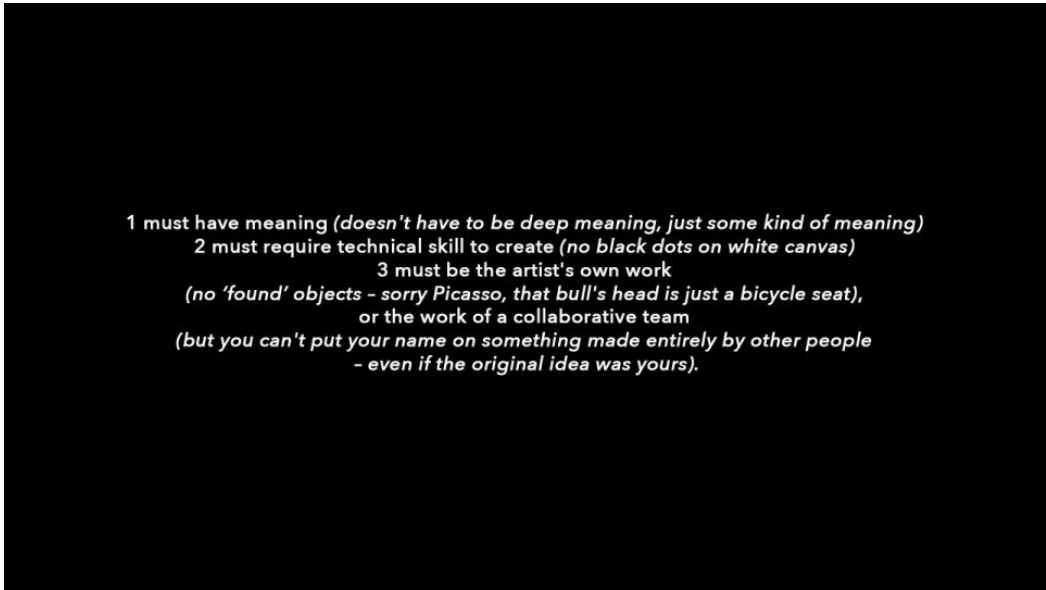
"no found objects - sorry Picasso, that bull's head is just a bicycle seat"

Sorry Picasso comprises a slide show of over 2000 definitions of art, harvested from chat rooms, websites and discussion threads across the Internet and displayed on a continuous loop with a run time of over 9 hours.

The definitions are periodically interspersed with artworks found by a Google image search for the word 'Art'. Lovingly and heroically formatted, alphabetised and annotated, the display is by turns immersive, humorous and frustrating.

Playing alongside the library catalogue search monitors, Sorry Picasso is a seemingly endless philosophical debate about the concept of 'Art'. Passions run high: as well as the serious and the theoretical, the definitions are sometimes heartfelt and very personal; at other times they are quarrelsome, witty and provocative. A conversation in which no-one can agree, no single definition can suffice; yet, in its totality Sorry Picasso paradoxically succeeds in capturing and celebrating the multiple possibilities for art.

The extended duration and sustained pitch of the work are important. Almost impossible to view in one sitting, it is instead something to dip in and out of, and in so doing the viewer oscillates between the realms of abstract theory and tangible reality.

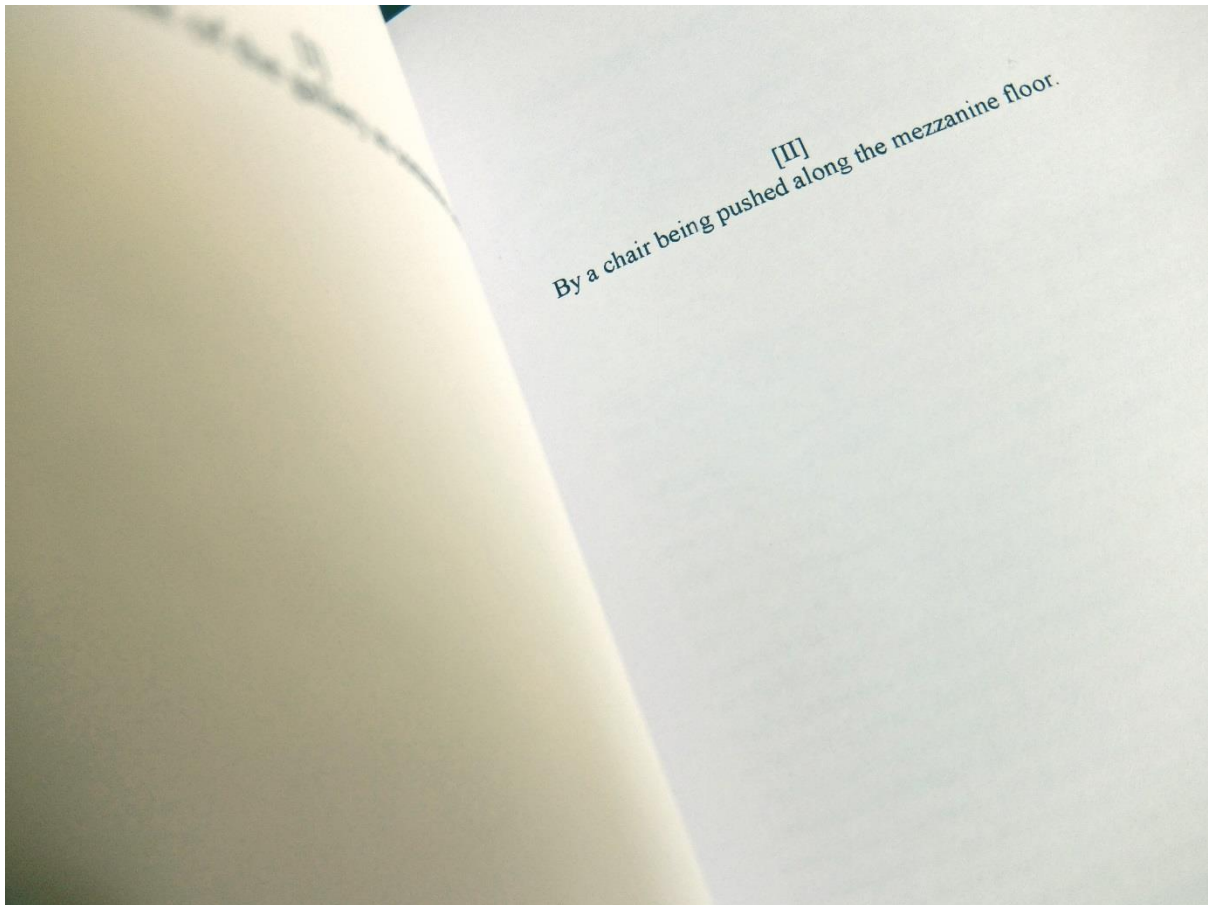


1 must have meaning (*doesn't have to be deep meaning, just some kind of meaning*)
2 must require technical skill to create (*no black dots on white canvas*)
3 must be the artist's own work
(*no 'found' objects - sorry Picasso, that bull's head is just a bicycle seat*),
or the work of a collaborative team
(*but you can't put your name on something made entirely by other people*
- *even if the original idea was yours*).

Chris Gibson: Daily Miracles.

April – May 2015

An artwork by Chris Gibson to be housed across the collections of Blenheim Walk and Vernon Street libraries at Leeds College of Art: The work will take the form of six books which collectively tell an unfolding narrative based in the library, a narrative that draws upon the locations in which the books are housed. By following one book to the next library users will make a journey across the breadth of the collection.



39 Chris Gibson; Daily Miracles

Lesley Guy.

April – May 2015

Civilisation – My Library Intervention at Leeds College of Art

On Monday 20 April I will be heading over to the Leeds College of Art library to begin a project called Library Interventions. LCA have been inviting artists to spend time in their libraries to research and make new work a bit like a residency only I won't be there every day.

My starting point for this intervention is the television series *Civilisation* by the art historian Sir Kenneth Clark who set out to show us what civilisation was supposed to be. Ours was the civilised world, he said, this European post dark-age world of art and learning and enlightenment. Below is a still image from the final scene of the series where he lovingly caresses a small Henry Moore sculpture that sits on the desk in his magnificent study – itself a great symbol of learning and privilege. The look on his face has always bothered me.



The picture below it is my school portrait aged 12.

The bookshelves aren't real – it is just a backdrop put there to create an illusion.

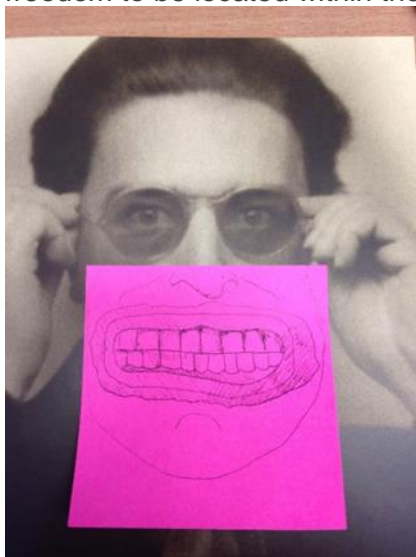


What is civilisation? How do we become civilised? Why is it seen as better than other forms of society or culture? Why does K. Clark bother me so much? Here's what the sociologist Michel Leiris had to say.

'Civilisation could be compared to the layer of green scum that settles on still waters. All our moral habits, polite customs, all that brightly coloured cloak that veils the crudity of our dangerous instincts, all those lovely forms of culture we are so proud of, for it is thanks to this that we call ourselves civilised, can vanish at the slightest turbulence, break up at the slightest shock revealing in the cracks terrifying savagery.'

I would like to use my intervention time exploring these cracks. By researching civilisation, enlightenment, dark age, ignorance and savagery I want to tread the fine lines between all of these ideas and find new ways to make work.

Early definers of civilisation such as Petrarch and Vasari vilified the Dark Ages. In his *Lives of the Artists*, Vasari says that the years between the sack of Rome and the Renaissance were a time of ignorance and barbarism and that all of the art made then was rubbish. We now know this to be untrue of course but I'm still fascinated with the idea of working within a dark age – a time and place with no expectation, no complexity or veneer of civilisation and therefore a space for creativity and potential. Where are the dark places of ignorance and freedom to be located within the library? How can I exploit them?



I will probably start out by using the library in a standard, traditional way: reading, looking, note-taking and collecting images – and documenting my findings and thoughts in this blog. I am also planning to create small drawings and papier-mâché objects in the form of amulets and votive bookmark offerings. I imagine myself depositing these around the place for library users to find and puzzle over.

Most importantly I'm going to experiment with being uncivilised in the library, whatever that means, with (or without) the permission of the librarian, out in the open and more enjoyably when no-one is looking, like when I was at school, secretly misbehaving.

Emma Bolland: Lectolalia

April – May 2015

“...the use of books & book covers in sculptural arrangements to create an animated sequence within a video, with a soundtrack that looked in part at aspects of at the processes of reading and writing. I will spend three days in the library (my choice of site will depend on their respective collections), selecting and photographing books that will suggest and inform a creative narrative / screenplay: the library itself will co-author the story. This will form both the soundtrack for the film (which will also without sound as a ‘visual poem’), and be produced as a text in small hand stitched pamphlet form.”



40 Emma Bolland; Lectolalia - proposed cover

