

THE YEAR

(5)

embrace failure

357 days

6 countries

27 flights

2 million pirates

30 knitted hats

wikileaks

Arab Spring

Aung San Suu Kyi free

new kitchen and bathroom

eurozone breakdown

coalition cuts

riots, students protests

royal wedding

Bin Laden, Lucien Freud RIP

NEWS OF THE WORLD dead

2 crushes

1 crash

THE FULL STORY

THE MOTHER OF ALL CRASHES

global ↑

(autumn)		(spring)	
1-2	BEGIN WITH AN END	25 to 28	HER READERSHIP IS LATE AGAIN
3-4	GENERAL STRIKE AGAIN	29	NO MORE MAY DAY FOR BIN LADEN
5-6-7	AUTUMNAL WHIRLWIND		
8-9	FOOD FOR THOUGHT	30 to 35	JUNGLE FEVER ALL OVER
10-11	CYBER WAR AND STUDENT PROTESTS		
12	STRANDED AND LUNAR ECLIPSE		
(winter)		(summer)	
13-14	HARD SHOULDER RANT	36 to 38	ONE TWO THREE
15-16	ARMAGEDDON		WHERE THE FUCK ARE WE?
17-18	POWER TO THE PEOPLE	39 to 43	ONE TWO THREE FOUR FIVE
19 to 21	BLOODY VALENTINE		WILL I SURVIVE?
22-23	DOWN MEMORY LANE	44 45 46	SUMMER ENDINGS
24	ON TIME	47 to 51	MY EARS ARE ALIGHT

THE MOTHER OF ALL SPRINGS TOO

arab[↑]



flight map 10/11

Everything is in place for a brand new cycle, the fifth one of this MOIblog experiment, THE YEAR (vol.5). A cycle that involves growing roots and shoots in two places despite the world global economical and mental meltdown; St Yrieix and London, where this adventure started back in September 2006. (See THE YEAR vol. 1, 2, 3, 4)



A U T U M N

Week 1 & 2

Begin with an end

Atmosphere; changing. News; another ecological disaster due to human greed - Larry Clark exhibition censored in liberal Paris. Book; Jacques Derrida, Archive Fever.

Tip; you make your bed, you lie in it.

-- Endings are so much more difficult than beginnings. What looks at first bright, broad, exciting and full of potential progressively narrows until it becomes so tight and razor sharp that it makes it hard to breathe, the only escape is to make it stop. I am not a big fan of confined spaces at the best of times, no room to roam, turn around, change directions or jump ship, you have to go down with it, true to the bitter end.

I was quite proud of my 4th ending last week, the best one so far, on time and as graceful as could be, followed by a sense of achievement mixed with relief and a touch of pride, which brought with it the usual sense of guilt of course, at the growing consistency and potency of the Moiblog experiment. I was looking forward to this new beginning, light and full of promises, very few shadows on the horizon, just one or two issues lingering unresolved.

-- That was forgetting the last destructive tremors of the relationship that has occupied my heart and mind for the best part of last year, a path I chose to follow to its bitter dead end. Time had come for closure and it happened abruptly but not unprovoked; ending is never easy. It is not like it is the first time or that it hadn't been on the cards for a while, but there was no time before, with such a busy summer which required all my energy and more, too much else was at stake or in the way. The memory of previous such occasions increases the sense of failure, yet it is easier to recognise certain patterns and avoid the usual traps and tricks survival instinct forces upon you. One knows the rituals and try to perform them a bit better each time, if only to minimise the pain and the arguments. I have learnt by now that closure doesn't require the other, on the contrary, it is like grieving, best done alone. Hazel may have been right when she said that only a doormat or a saint could put up with me, definitely not the self confessed doorman, an image which has proved uncannily accurate, who seduced me with his gift of the gab; clever wordsmith who found his way through my thick carapace so fast and effortlessly that I hardly had time to put up the usual defenses. I remained surprised and impressed by this until the end.

-- Unfortunately his actions quickly spoke louder than his words, however witty, poetic or honest they were. I can't pretend it doesn't hurt or that I am not angry or sad but this is also accompanied by a great if not unexpected sense of relief and calm detachment. I am now methodically archiving it all in my mind, heart, home and various hard drives, not necessarily in that order, like a big clear up the morning after the party, eager to get rid of any lingering smell of cold tobacco or spilt drinks that might spoil your memory of it. A quasi continuous inner monologue goes on as I go through the motions of my life, separating the good from the bad, deciding what is worth keeping and finding the right place for it; strangely enough not a trace yet of the usual sense of guilt or hopelessness or insecurity. For once the feeling that I have tried as hard as I could and more than ever before to accommodate or accept the other's baggage or recurring weaknesses or insecurities and more to the point, without imposing mine. I might not be entirely objective there but a certain pride prevails. Perhaps after all I am not the only one

who needs a saint or a doormat for a companion.
-- Meanwhile life goes on, bookRoom did very well at the Whitechapel book fair. I have spent two days finally setting up bookRoom press in its dedicated space in Farnham. Unpacking all the boxes felt like the best never ending Christmas. The first training and installing sessions have started, electric guillotine, staplers, booklet makers, drills, corner rounder, automatic folding machines, binding ones..... and this is just the beginning, in two weeks we are ready to tackle the digital press. It was so much fun after all these months of research, diplomatic negotiations and struggling with endless financial procedures in order to make it happen, learning how to use it all, making blanks books of all sizes, we were like children. The engineers were surprised and a bit thrown by it, used to the rational efficiency and demands of commercial printing businesses, not the creative curiosity of artists. I haven't felt that excited and hopeful for a long time. There is still a lot to do before it is operational and up and running but we are getting close. I am chairing the first bookRoom board meeting in a couple of weeks, all seven prospective board members have accepted and confirmed, long live the bookRoom.

-- There has been a couple of 50th birthday parties, Rachel in their new house in Dulwich, with a big yard and a two hundred year's old oak tree in the centre of it, great party, four generations taking turn at the mike to push their song. Then Emile set up the karaoke function of You tube and we went through many classics, French ones, English ones, old ones, new ones, all crowded in the living room, dancing and singing.



-- The following weekend, it was Roz's who had turn the back room of the Grosvenor pub in Stockwell into a campsite, cosy tents everywhere, complete with bedding, cushions, lighting, to accommodate various activities including a lie down in between two dances. Paul, her partner of Test Department fame was at the decks, great mixing; fantastic acts and what Roz called bedroom performers, people who had never been on stage before. A great concept that she tried for the first time, and what a success it was, she managed to create such a comfortable, warm and welcoming space where everybody was free to try things out and enjoy themselves. It sounds corny, but it worked and I hadn't danced so much for a long time. Then there was Laetitia little gig at Rough trade to launch her new CD, The Trip, just her with guitar, quite raw but beautiful melodies and her mesmerising voice, slight reminiscence of Stereolab of course but much more melodic and stripped down. I listen to the CD at least once a day, I do love her covers of Summertimes, short and slow, and Rita Mitsouko's 'Mes petits souliers', one of my favourite French songs ever.



-- Then there was the launch of the book, Goodbye to London, radical art and politics in the 70's, published by Hatje Cantz, great texts and photographs of the vibrant squatting culture of that time by the people who lived it and then became artists we all know and respect, Jo Spence, Peter Kennard, Stuart Brisley, Derek Jarman and many others, a great book almost making feel nostalgic of my beginnings in London. I realised that I, and Roz and Looby and Richard and Anna and many others I met and lived with in the early 80's were the continuation of that generation, I knew some of the squats depicted and heard stories at the time of some of the evictions mentioned. Though the ones I lived in and fought for do not appear. It made me want to dig up my old photographs and archive of negatives from that time.

-- Then there is the fact, I can hardly believe it, that I am now registered on Facebook, reluctantly, not too sure what to do with it, but I will give it a try. And I have just received a blackberry in exchange for my old Sony Ericsson, not ready yet to succumb to Iphone but I have internet access on tap. It does feel like a bit of a sell out, but hey I am human after all and no saint or no doormat. I am now in France after a two months absence, catching up with work at the cdla and the usual family rituals, customary 'petit crème' and newspaper in the sun every morning, the weather is glorious, and should stay that way for a few days. *Thursday 7th October 18.40pm.*

Week 3 & 4 General strike again

Atmosphere; moody, windy. News; France is paralysed by strikes, Uk to follow shortly as budget cuts are revealed. Book; John Berger, hold everything dear.

Tip; Better true fake than fake truth.

-- Sarkozy might do as he wishes with the Romanes but France is at a standstill with a general strike that has lasted for the best of last week and will start again tomorrow. All public sector workers, Radio, post offices, trains, town halls, underground, airports, and quite a few harbours too so that most regions have run out of petrol.... The French senate is currently debating and voting the new pension reforms. Even college kids are taking to the streets, not worried about their pensions yet, but if the working age is extended they will have even less chance to get a job than they have now. Strangely enough students are not taking part yet, perhaps because most students nowadays come from a well off family. We are talking of generations of young people who will have it much worse than their genitors in terms of standard of living and job prospects, something that has never happened since the industrial revolution. One joke is going around about a grandmother and her granddaughter demonstrating. The old woman says to the girl, at your age I was already working, the kid answers back, at your age I will still be working. People are taking to the streets because there are no other alternatives, there are no jobs, people who are in works don't earn enough to live on, the government is not listening to their concerns; governing not for the people but for their peers, the upper classes and the rich, the trustees and directors of big corporations, financial and industrial ones. Kerviel, the trader who lost Societé Générale a few millions has been found guilty and has to repay it all, the bank itself has been absolved of any responsibilities, a shocking and absurd verdict. People have had enough of Sarkozy's unfair ways.



His rating is at his lowest, so low that he has little chances of being re-elected. Some say that he is a desperate man and is hoping to regain his tough reputation by refusing to negotiate with the masses. It is the first time that I see people marching in St Yrieix, hundreds of them. Who knows I might see barricades next time I am here. And in such a small town it is easy to see who does take part and who looks down on those who do.

-- I am reading John Berger 'holding everything dear', not going as far as trying to do something myself; reading his words is all together soothing and empowering, his depressing insights about the world we live in being so sharp and clear. I remember a quote by Peter Ustinov who said that 'Terrorism was the war of the poor and war the terrorism of the rich; such a simple and accurate way of saying it. Striking is also the war of the poor. It was good to be away from London, having a bit of distance to reflect upon recent endings and new beginnings. I have finally vacated my studio there, the one that was burgled in suspicious circumstances. I have posted the keys back to the town hall with a small note thanking them for their 'gracious generosity', their words not mine, making sure I let them know how much their careless generosity has cost me; close to 10 000 Euros in stolen works, tools and equipment. Like the other more personal ending it is living me slightly bruised and broody, yet at the same time it is clearing space and energy for other possibilities. I am now looking for a live and workspace. I have put the word out, I am in no hurry but something will turn up I know.

-- This time around I took time for socialising and catching up with the few friends I made there rather than the usual working at the cdl or at home on my own projects, making the most of a quiet place and absence of internet and London many distractions. I went to Leni Dipple poetry reading in her beautiful restored old stone barn, her daughter in charge of an amazing organic feast which far outshone the poetry which although mature and confident was not that great. On the other hand the little tape slide piece she tried on the audience at the end, was simple and quite moving, black and white photographs accompanied with various sounds of gathering and cracking wholenuts in order to make oil. She had invited a few of her elderly neighbours, most of them widows, to come and crack nuts in order to keep sadness at bay, her own words. I had diner with Danielle and Gerard who came to London last year. They are trying to sell their farm with not much success so far, wanting to live in town again. I also sat around the fire with Jean Pierre and Nicole in the old barn he transformed into a beautiful home, great wine and a diner made with their garden vegetables that we shared with Klaus who is part of this small recent eco village / community, started as a limited company owning the land; each member has shares and build his/her own abode, new members are chosen collectively; he is finishing building his own house with straw walls and other eco friendly materials. I like the principle, I am curious. Who knows that might be a good way to have my studio and be part of a likeminded community?



-- The mushroom season was short and not generous, ceps in the supermarket sell for 20 pounds a kilo. I was determined to find some and went on my quest early on Sunday morning. It was cold and very windy, I wasn't hopeful and worried about hunters, many accidents have happened this way, strollers in the woods being mistaken for game. I had to turn back a few times when gunshots or barking was getting a bit too close for comfort. I did find two beautiful ones, the feeling of satisfaction is immense, the way they blend in with the falling leaves makes them hard to spot, yet when you see one it is as if it just popped in front of you on purpose, just to please you. It is such a pleasure to look for something which is not that easily found, supermarket shopping being so far from the hunting and gathering of yesteryears. I went to pick wholenuts too, they were even harder to find, not a good year, lack of rain. There were plenty of chestnuts; so much in the region in fact that very few bother picking them, they are too hard to peel. I found a huge black spider patiently waiting for me in the kitchen sink when I came back to London last night. Tomorrow morning I am chairing the first bookRoom board meeting. *Tuesday 19th October 22.01pm.*

Week 5 6 7 Autumnal whirlwind

Atmosphere; high and wintery mood. News; Brazil has woman president, George Bush publicly condones "waterboarding". Book; Ian Breakwell, away to paradise and other texts.

Tip; Apple bobbing is dangerous.

-- Winter is right outside, cold wind and rain, early darkness, various shades of greens slowly being sucked out of the landscape to be replaced momentarily by various shades of red, orange and yellow. Trees are beginning to bare their bones, I do love Autumn. I only wish I had more time to roam the countryside when I am in London, my only chance is when I drive to and back from Farnham. This has been a three weeks marathon of important deadlines and planning the year ahead in terms of academic workload, scheduled projects and the ones needing development. The unexpected changes to my Scottish adventures, work related and personal, have freed up quite a bit of time and energy that were actually greatly needed, not enough still to catch up with everything, that will probably never happen, so strategic decisions needed to be taken.

-- I have completed the design of THE YEAR vol4, picking it up on Thursday from the printers just in time for the Small Publishers fair this weekend. The pdf is online in Moiblog archive. I have decided to also make a picture supplement THE YEAR condensed, consisting of one headline and one photograph per MOIblog entry, in this case 24 pictures and headlines, acting as an interesting public and personal summary of the year just past. The design is inspired by a French magazine called POINT DE VUE et Images du monde, a glossy equivalent to HELLO which started in the 1960's. I am working with Ollie Poddar, a young graduate from last year who makes beautiful low budget books. We are printing it on bookRoom digital press tomorrow, killing two birds at once, making sure it is ready for the book fair starting on Friday while practicing on the digital press before the next visit of the engineer early December.



-- I have finished writing up the proposal of a new project JUNGLE FEVER a series of site specific collective performances and their documentation, relating to the Body thought Body talk workshops. I am proposing it to Beirut and Singapore where I have been invited to perform and have applied for some funding for production and travel, second deadline. I will use the workshop strategy to explore inner travel as a viable alternative to global tourism, guiding groups of willing tourists on a trip to their own town "best kept secret"; "their own hidden paradise". The work is inspired by advertising headlines collected from the travel section of the Guardian and The Evening Standard. They all speak of authenticity, escapism, paradise and exclusivity and are juxtaposed with various visual combinations of sea, sun, sand and (promises of) sex; regardless of the destination or its geographical cultural social or political makeup.

-- Third deadline, I have finally completed the report on the outcome of my Teaching and Learning research project testing the potential of using the body as a thinking and learning tool. My findings and documentation of the research should be online soon and I have been asked to give a paper at the British Library in January for a conference on Teaching and Learning. Fourth deadline, all research active staff has been asked to apply for membership to a research 'club' in order to be able to benefit funding and support in the future. This entailed listing and justifying all research outcomes since 2006 .

These need to be of national and international excellence in order, to fulfill government Higher Education new funding guidelines - writing a research profile and summary of all contributions to the university successes and activities. I do not necessarily agree with the strategy, which has the risk of being somewhat elitist, and leave behind new and/or young academics, but I have to comply if I want to keep up being funded and remain an active researcher. Final deadline, after postponing it for the past 3 years, this is the time to apply for a readership, the only way I can successfully continue the development of bookRoom research cluster and my research on the embodiment of knowledge in academic context; but also so that what I have done so far can be validated and acknowledged as significant contribution by the powers above. If I don't all my hard work and successes will be attributed to or taken over by others more ambitious than I am, as it has happened in the past. I had to learn the hard way and I cannot let that happen again, this would be foolish.

-- Then there was a quick well deserved break for Halloween, seeing Marisa Carnesky theatre performance, The quickening of the wax at Chelsea Theatre with Debbie, a grand Victorian style spectacle complete with gruesome waxworks of half dissected bodies, levitation, magic tricks, blood rituals, very entertaining and well constructed show indeed but not greatly thought provoking, which suited me fine for the occasion.



She is an accomplished performer and we did discuss afterwards the danger of big production and institutionalized performance art practices, it was all a bit safe. But it did the job and provided great distraction from all my deadlines and the difficult negotiations with Ian, trying to resolve in a fair and constructive way our differences regarding the continuation of our project and the changes of the nature of our collaboration. We are not quite there yet, I am still holding my breath but it is progressing. I want to make sure every aspect of the project and every work made so far and every possible future development is considered, discussed and agreed upon, each decision sealed with a written contract, to prevent what has already happened to happen again. The distance is making it both easier and harder, but this is the only way we can move forward. We have yet to agree on my contribution to the exhibition in Ann Lantair in March. Once this is done I think I will feel less anxious. Facebook or Blackberry might win me down in the end. I just received a message via Facebook, that my dear friend Huma in troubled Pakistan is about to have a baby. We had lost touch for a while and thanks to Facebook..... I am smiling.

-- I am just back from spending the weekend in Brighton, first days off in weeks and I was spoiled rotten, a feast for all senses, well almost.... Perfect weather, sunny and crisp, a belated birthday gift from Eva, a gorgeous Venetian glass necklace that make me feel like a princess, some great exhibitions part of the Photo biennale, some less great too. Martin's equally beautiful and sad Carceri photographs of empty cells in zoos around the world, Jason's subjective and egocentric hanging of 1990's photography, stripping all the images used, many easily recognisable, of context and ownership so that they all end up looking like his images. I had heard some good echoes from last time they were shown in Poland in the summer but I wasn't impressed, Eva, Richard and Dominic neither; perhaps it worked differently there. Martin Parr selection of contemporary documentary photography on the ground floor of the old Coop building was generous and memorable. Vivian Sassen refreshing and poetic images of Africa, refreshing because so different from the normal clichés of postcolonial guilt or of native photographers trying to please western critics and curators. Mohamed Bouuouissa staged documentary photographs taken in the Paris ghetto suburbs were really the highlights for me. We then went to Bexhill, my first time at the beautiful Delaware Pavilion in all its art deco glory, we arrived too late to enjoy it in daylight. The American South exhibition was well worth the long drive, Walker Evans, Eggleston, Alec Soth and Susan Lipper, the two latter really stood out, powerful and scary images I felt; interesting though to compare them to Eggleston's wonderful work, less in your face but still so current despite being 20 or 30 years old for most, I was imagining seeing them at the time, how avant-garde they must have seemed. I couldn't help thinking of Obama's recent midterm elections defeat, people depicted in these images were the ones he had to convince, sure that none of them would have voted for him. I am trying to understand what the Tea Party is, a perfect and catchy name, they are republicans, appear to be very red neck yet, they have the best slogans, clever and sharp and funny, some of their ideas do make sense, like having a smaller government, yet Sarah Palin is one of their main figurehead. And according to the news she is very likely to be Obama's opponent at the next election. This is all so contradictory and absurd.



-- We finished the day with my first live encounter with Laurie Anderson, I was so excited, yet we were disappointed, no visuals at all, a very sparse and detached retrospective performance, hardly any music, just her stories, some great ones of course, but something was definitely missing, it felt all quite mechanical, joyless and lifeless. It felt like the end of her live career, surely not we hoped. The weekend finished with the usual walk on the beach, talking with seagulls, brunch, more exhibitions and numerous talks with Eva about her recent experiences of fire and glass walking. I was and is still skeptical but in the end I promised to give it a go next time she organises a session. I do trust her entirely and she showed me the photos of herself and others too, not just walking on fire and on glass but dancing on it, eyes closed sometimes. I am very intrigued, and very scared too, not so much of pain, as of not living up to the challenge, which from what I understood is all about mastering the body/mind equation. I gave a ride back to London to Richard and Dominic. We got engrossed in a conversation about Love and relationships, power struggles and insecurities. I didn't start it but I ended up inflicting my usual inquisitive get right in there approach on both my passengers, trying to get to the bottom, so to speak, the heart, of their ambiguous friendship. They managed to turn it around and quiz me proper and for once I complied. Strangely enough the three of us go back a long time, back to our mad squatting days of the early 80's in Levita House behind the British Library, which wasn't built yet. *Tuesday 10th November 9pm.*

Week 8 9 Food for thought

Atmosphere; crisp , on the edge. News; Aung San Suu Kyi is free, Ireland is bankrupt. Book; John Berger; Kromer's freedom, Michel Houellebecq; la carte et le territoire

Tip; there is only so much you can do.

-- The whirlwind became a hurricane for a few days, multitasking and fusing up. There was the Small Publishers fair at Conway Hall, juggling between the centre des livres d'artistes and bookRoom displays, thankfully next to each other yet both requiring and attracting a great amount of attention, culminating in the launch of a new herman de vries publication 'a random sample of the seeings of my beings' and Nick Thurston's 'il avait, il pourrait trouver, il allait. Didier Mathieu and Nick Thurston improvised reading in French and English of Beckett's deconstructed text was fantastic. A parking ticket and a quick spout of food poisoning on the second day finished me off. Yet it was enjoyable and successful, the best fair so far in terms of sales and contacts made. It was also great for a change to displace the cdla from St Yrieix to London, reminding all that we exist down there, Didier did enjoy the mingling and networking.

-- Then there was finally putting into motion my application for readership at UCA, understanding the lingo, getting the three required referees and writing the actual document which has to maintain a subtle yet crucial balance between self promotion (why and how I have made a significant contribution to the world or Art, academic research and teaching) and elaborating on what I can bring to the university; an interesting and valuable exercise of evaluating where you are at and what you have actually contributed to the world at large, but not one I excel in, having never been good at putting forward my achievements. This application has been on the cards for three years, it cannot wait any longer. It is time to grow up and finally accept that I am part of the game and perhaps even good at it.



Refusing for ethical or other reasons to climb the ladder and always keep a foot down or out is counter productive and holding me back. Once more if I can manage to stick to what I believe and progress for the right reasons; allowing me to develop what I have started there, i.e. bookRoom and Teaching & Learning research. I am still trying to convince myself that this is not about buying into a capitalist system and its social order, but on the contrary gaining more freedom to make a difference from the inside. Two weeks later, after many evenings labouring over it both here and in St Yrieix, it is finally ready. I had advice and help from Karen, Richard and Anna, and their own proposal to guide mine. I can recognize myself in it what I wrote, but not the format and the language I have used. Still one week before the deadline, fingers crossed. I do feel strangely enough slightly more mature for it all. I have managed to overcome, for a while at least, my fear of failure and some of the anxieties I have regarding belonging fully to any organized groups, the outsider in me.....

-- I have spent a week in France, fulfilling my duties at the centre des livres d'artistes, Didier and I both on a high after the enjoyment of the book fair. Time enough to recover from a month of heavy demands on body, mind and soul. I felt quite close to my limits, I have been there many times, over stressed, over tired, the mind constantly racing, not being able to concentrate, not being able to sleep well, dragging my feet all day, all first signs of cyclical and seasonal low that I have so far managed to keep at bay, just about.



I was happy my parents were away so that I could shut down without worrying or hurting anybody's feelings. It almost did the trick, I have managed to slow the machine down and let go of a few lingering aches.

-- The best medicine that week was to make the effort to go and see Robert Filliou 'From politics to poetry, video works 1977-79' exhibition at the centre d'art contemporain de Rochechouart, an impressive medieval castle, the keeper of the Raoul Haussmann archive. The exhibition consisted of a whole room of texts, books and posters borrowed from the centre des livres d'artistes collection and a few of his video works;



Telepathic Music No; 7, Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts, Part II, And So on End So Soon, Portal Filliou. A mix of performance lectures, imagine Beuys with a pinch of French humour, and interesting video collages deconstructing the medium as much as the notion of narrative, mixing live and video relays, using repetition and permutation, images and words and voice over; great exercises in time based media storytelling, looking very contemporary thirty years later, one thinks John Smith, Jonas Mekas.... But what was truly inspiring and uplifting and the best possible medicine for my current frazzled and exhausted self was to hear and see him sharing his philosophy of Life and Art, inspired by Zen Buddhism, by Politics and his background in Economy.

I love his concept of la République géniale (the Republic of Genius), put to the test in his home in south of France; everybody is a genius and everybody ought to develop their genius rather than talent; research is the domain of the person who does not know, not the opposite. I spent all morning there, watching and re-watching each video from beginning to end.

-- What amazed me was how appropriate and timely my visit was, not just as a best possible cure and a rare occasion to see his work these days, but in relation to my readership proposal, in which I elaborated a lot on my current teaching and learning research and my use of body based performance art strategies in teaching and learning context.

Here was Saint Robert as I called him for the rest of the day, talking to me about 'Teaching and Learning as performing art. Another link was his connection to the writing of Charles Fourier, a 19th century French utopian socialist and philosopher. According to him it is possible to make all work into play, to make it pleasurable, desirable and deeply satisfying, both physically and mentally. Society should strive to eliminate all tedious or unpleasant jobs. He advocated a society based on the 'Law of Passionate Attractions' based on unity of action and harmonious collaboration. His ideas inspired Robert Filliou but also the founding of a few communities in America and Europe. As it happened the next day I was going to visit such little community,

an eco village started by a few ecologically and socially minded individuals 20 minutes drive from St Yrieix. I had met one of them Klaus, on my previous visit and I was invited to a communal Sunday lunch to meet them all and visit the place. I was deeply curious and could imagine it as a possible alternative for me, despite my awful carbon footprint or my reluctance to use dry toilets, bad memories of smelly uncomfortable ones a few years ago. This one started in 2002 around an old windmill, there is now 3 new finished houses, one in construction and one to start soon, plus one small wooden house, a big communal building with kitchen and dining room, a few working workshops, and a sort of dormitory on the first floor for travelers and wwoofing visitors (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms internet network), and a few outbuildings used as storage for now. The old house is soon to be occupied by a family with four kids. There are around 10 permanent members, I met about half of them. I visited all the houses, mostly self build in the most eco friendly way with home made bricks, straw walls covered with lime; all quite spacious with two floors, high ceiling and dry toilets of course, looking impeccable and clean, I must add, though I waited to be back home ... Great people, very friendly, good cooks too, immediate attraction for this mix of collective living for certain activities like our lunch, with privacy, each having their own house. Each new member must be vetted in by all before buying in shares. They do organize and host all kind of activities; courses in permaculture, a radio, a coop of locally produced wool, green activism..... Of course I mentioned Fourier, not necessarily respected by all. I cannot see myself building my own house, I haven't got the means, the energy, or the time, neither do I know how but I am definitely interested and there might be other ways. Jean Pierre and Nicole who had introduced, made sure they knew I was interested and I made sure they were aware of my awful carbon footprint, they laughed. -- Back in London energised, almost relaxed, and in tune with my instincts. Hence deciding on the spur of the moment to go and see the 'Move: Choreographing You' exhibition at the Hayward, playful, interactive in the good sense of the word, inspiring and very generous, offering the viewer two very well designed multimedia platform to view a gigantic archive of performance works; from the 50's up to now, absolutely fantastic research material. I had as much fun watching people interact

with the works as playing myself. Very timely in relation to the performance workshop I was giving the next day to MFA students and my workshop/performance work in progress, Jungle fever, where I explore inner travel as an alternative to global tourism. I decided to try out some of the idea in the workshop and got inspired by some of the strategies used in the exhibition. The Walid Raad exhibition at the Whitechapel was slightly disappointing, I had seen extensively the Atlas group works in Barcelona six years ago but I was looking forward to see what he had done since. I am not that impressed with his more recent work which has become super cool and minimal. What interested and inspired me most was how he dealt with archiving and presenting his material, and his fantastic exercises in storytelling using a great number of ways of articulating images, stories, and references, providing me with much needed research for the displaying of some of the work I made in Scotland.

-- I feel all fired up and leveled again after a few difficult personal and work related adjustments since my busy summer. I am happily back on my shelf, seeing what is out there, a few scars and bruises left and our exchanges are rarely candid, each accusing the other of the same deeds still. But I am relieved, endings are always difficult and I think it is finally accomplished. Distance that was once an issue is now a blessing. The world is big enough for us no to have to cross paths too often, we have yet to see if friendship and mutual trust will resume. As Roz said quite aptly, plenty of more fish in the sea, to which I added, and perhaps kippers are fairer and sweeter than skippers. We both laughed. *Saturday 27th November, 17.44pm.*



It is confirmed I am having a concluding / retrospective exhibition, a publication and an audio CD, for the VINST project in 2013 in the James Hockey gallery, in collaboration with various other institutions; plenty of time to plan it well and get in touch with all those who had something to do with the making and / or the playing of this peculiar vocal instrument, making sure this final venture keeps crossing borders, mediums and languages.

-- Strangely enough it all feels so organised and in control amidst the chaos in Education at the moment. The government has just voted for the increase of tuitions fees and the end of funding to Arts and Humanities research as well the end of the EMA, the education and maintenance allowance for young people; once more attacking the ones that need it most, over 85 000 pupils are getting it in London alone; it is helping pay for transport, lunch and books of the poorest teenagers. All this despite the numerous protests that took place in London and in many universities occupied by students. Even dear old Charles and Camilla got caught in the street actions, by accident of course. She was even 'poked', the exact word used on the news. As if the fact that touch was involved made it worse. All this is followed by the announcements of local council cuts, once more the poorest areas being the worse hit. Memories of Thatcher's unfair dealing, the poll tax, miners strikes in the 80's are starting to look like child play in comparison. What is strange is that we are not hearing much reaction from Labour, unless you count silence as a reaction. The only one bothering to speak is Ken Livingstone, then again he is preparing for his campaign to become London's mayor once more, a strong incentive in itself.

-- If you look at wikileaks in wikipedia the first line says. " WikiLeaks is not associated with Wikipedia or the Wikimedia Foundation". Then it goes on 'WikiLeaks is an international new media non-profit organisation that publishes submissions of otherwise unavailable documents from anonymous news sources and news leaks'. Julian Paul Assange, an Australian journalist and Internet activist with a French name is the public face and spokesperson for WikiLeaks.

Week 10 11 Cyber war and students protests

Atmosphere; highly charged. News; reactions to wikileaks trigger cyber war. Tuition fees raised and EMA scrapped. Book; Marshall McLuan, the medium is the message. Beuys is here, published by De la Warr pavillon.

Tip; if ever kettled in like a cow behave like one.

-- Christmas break is just around the corner and it looks like everything is on track from where I stand. My readership application has been handed in and acknowledged. It has been a real ordeal but I am glad I went through it, I feel a bit more grown up and mature for it; having managed not to put it off to next year and half mastered the kind of language required. Whatever the outcome what I wrote will always prove useful. I have almost completed the funding proposal to produce and publish 'An artist book about how to make an artist book', the first, hopefully of a series of artist books / learning tool produced under bookRoom press. David Rule and Marten Lange are working on it with me. We met up this weekend to discuss possibilities, it looks very promising, we all got quite excited. BookRoom press is up and running, we had a second training day on the digital press, I think we have finally mastered the beast or at least the basics of the beast. The official launch is planned for the 16th of February.



body thought body talk workshop - MFA photography @ Farnham

He has made occasional public appearances to speak about freedom of the press, censorship, and investigative journalism which in my view is what wikileaks is about, freedom of the press and of information. So it is not surprising that government around the world are try everything to stop him and it, the only bit of global media not yet under the thumb of ruling powers. A cyber war is now on for freedom and control of cyber information. Many Internet companies such as Amazon and Paypal have been under pressure to stop their dealings with wikiLeaks. Hackers have retaliated by temporarily crashing the sites in questions. Who will win? What casualties will it bring, virtual and real ones. How soon before governments will find a way to control the Internet? Julian Assange is in prison on allegation of sexual assault in Sweden. Coincidence or conspiracy? -- Next to this 21st century battle, Ai Wei Wei installation at the Tate modern looks very quiet and old fashioned. Yet I have found it hugely enjoyable and evocative, a gigantic field of ceramic sunflower seeds which no one can touch or walk on, a very still and silent tableau in complete contrast with its handmade production, one by one, by hundreds of pairs of hands. My camera couldn't contain or focus on it for some reasons. " Each seed has been individually sculpted and painted by specialists working in small-scale workshops in the Chinese city of Jingdezhen". In the short video projected next to the installation, Ai Wei Wei explained that many representation of chairman Mao used to depict sunflowers and sunflower seeds as Mao was symbolized by the sun. It was a very touching sight to see many inhabitants of the city meticulously making and painting the seeds at home and in workshops. After this I could almost see and feel their ghost image hovering over this field of hundred millions seeds , which felt no longer empty. I had a quick look at Gaugin's exhibition, too quickly to leave a lasting impression.

Next week at this time I shall be in Paris, metaphorically chewing the fat in front of good food and wine, catching up with close ones on the events of the past few months and fitting in a few exhibitions and a film or two before making my way to a family Christmas, a white one by the look of things. *Monday 13th December 20.10pm.*





W I N T E R

Week 12

Stranded and lunar eclipse

Atmosphere; Good. News; Iraq finally has a government. Uk is paralysed by snow. Book; Anne Michaels, fugitive pieces.

Tip; beware what you wish for.

-- This is the end of term, the end of the autumn chapter of this MOIblog experiment, the beginning of winter, the shorter day of the year, and the solstice coincides with a lunar eclipse, which I have missed, despite my attempt at getting up in time yesterday morning.

I rarely get a sense of wellbeing and fulfillment, feeling at one with the elements and the world around me as I do these days. It will not last I know so I am really savouring it; a sense of elation and calm determination with a hint of adrenaline and excitement, is what it feels like. What makes it even more special is that it is not triggered by anything in particular, no sudden success or unexpected flood of money or adulation or love. This quiet internal bliss has been made more poignant by an encounter with a homeless man while I was waiting for the bus on Brixton Hill, an encounter that brought tears to my eyes I felt so helpless.

He moon walked towards me, dazed and wobbling on his legs, in his 60's, disheveled with traces of a recent nose bleed stuck to his unkempt white short beard. He stood at the bus stop as in shock and walked on the first bus regardless and stood there motionless in the entrance. The driver tried to get him off his bus but he didn't move or even acknowledged him, I hesitated, not knowing what to do; should I take him to the hospital, or pay for his fare? I was late for a meeting at the South bank, should I take him home and look after him? I didn't move an inch, confused and almost as helpless as he was. A well dressed woman stood up and bought him a ticket, shoved it in his hand, wnet back to her seat, all that without eye contact or a word to him. The door closed and the bust moved on. I stood there on the pavement, my eyes watering, very aware of that invisible divide between one part of the world and those who have been forced by circumstances to cross the line. This man seemed almost unaware of which side he was on. I hadn't know what to do? I didn't help him, I just cried. What good can that do? My meeting was at the South Bank at the Poetry Library to sell some of my bookwork to their collection. I do love the South Bank and its generous and inviting concrete architecture, I like it almost as much as the Barbican because it is by the Thames. I was telling my story to David after our meeting, the South Bank is the refuge of many homeless people during the day, one was sitting behind us, his carrier bag between his leg, the only tell tell sign of his condition, that and the look of wonder mixed with quiet resignation in his eyes. Tears in our eyes again.

-- Amidst the various Christmas parties and merry seasonal buzz that December usually brings, the weather is creating havoc again. London looks absolutely beautiful in white but exactly like last year and despite days of warnings thousands are stranded because of a bit of bad weather and I am too; I refused to stand at the end of a one mile long queue, stretching from St Pancras station all the way to Euston station, in freezing conditions, thousands of people stranded for up to 8 hours like that with no guarantee of a train. I was gutted and appalled at the lack of contingency plan, after all this is the second year running that this happens. No apologies, no compensation offered this time around. I might have to spend Christmas here again.

Ironically I was using the free ticket I was given in compensation for having to spend last Christmas stuck in London. There are no planes either, airport having been closed for a while also. I have just spent the best part of the day on phone and Internet trying to find alternative. I would almost prefer staying put here and travel on the 26th, the earliest Eurostar can get me to Paris. But family pressures are great, they won't stand for another Christmas without me, very touching indeed, and part of me refuses to be beaten by the absurdity of the transport system. So I have managed to book myself onto a bus to Dover leaving at 7am, then onto a Dover to Calais ferry than on a TGV Calais Paris, having allowed for plenty of time in between in case of more delays or cancellations which I have been advised to expect. My nephew Florent will hopefully wait for me to drive down to the Limousin. I have pleasurable alternative if this doesn't work out, like last year with Roz Paul Kyle and a few other friends on Christmas eve and with Karen's family on Christmas day, or with another stranded wise soul that I met recently and who happen to be alone on Christmas day. The absurdity of the chaos a bit of snow can create in our global virtual world is for me the perfect reminder of what crazy times we are living, so full of stupid contradictions and unfair rules. Is this Nature reminding us of what we are by bringing it all back into perspective, playing with how spoilt and out of control we have become.



-- All my chores and tasks and duties having been taken care of, despite having to find two professors as referees for my readership application, having been informed on a Friday afternoon that in order for my application to proceed, I had until Monday to come up with the names, an almost impossible task. I am therefore trying another impossible task, slowing down and letting go, trying to enjoy being in London as if I was on a break somewhere; no hurry, no stress, taking my time, walking, reading in bed a touching first book, *Fugitive pieces*, poignant, sad and exquisitely written, some phrases I repeat for a long time to get more pleasure out of them; sleeping in, sauna, a few dates with friends, wonderful shiatsu and ginger compress treatment courtesy of Karen, followed by an evening by the fire indulging in a solstice pagan ritual, letting go of one or two things by writing them down on a piece of paper and burning them, then calling new ones by the same process. I remember doing this in Morocco when I was a child, but we were burying them in the ground. It is strange how powerful such simple ritual can be, despite being undertaken with equal amount of thoughtfulness and playfulness and plenty of laughter. Four days on I have been reminded or influenced by at least 5 times. *Wednesday 22nd December 18.40pm.*



Week 13 14 Hard shoulder rant

Atmosphere; unsettled. News; VAT rises to 20%. Suicide Bomber hits Cairo Coptic church at New Year's Mass, 21 dead. Book; Anne Michaels; fugitive pieces. Philippe Labro; Les Gens.

Tip; tea towels and handkerchiefs don't mix.

-- Here I am back in London after an uneventful Christmas break, apart from the getting there, a 20 hours ordeal of taxi, bus, ferry, bus, taxi, train, wait, train, wait, car. France is as bad as the UK, and Eurostar is refusing to either compensate or reimburse my ticket; three reasons given.

1/ It is the fault of the weather that they couldn't get me to my destination until the 26th of December, six days after my original date of travel;. 2 /How could they reimburse a ticket that was given free to me in compensation for my missed Christmas travels last year; and finally 3/ They didn't force me to make alternative arrangements to get there on time for Christmas.

This is so absurd and outrageous, yet there is nothing I can do and I am more than two hundred pounds out of my pocket. Christmas was very merry, no family tensions, no arguments, Champagne helped a lot, there was plenty of it, more than a bottle each according to final counts of cadavers by dismayed nephews and nieces who still gossip about the bubble induced silly behaviour of their British aunt (yes this is me) and her sister, nothing extraordinary but not the usual restrained and polite attitude they are more used too. My elder sister beautiful spread of carefully considered and lovingly made delicious food of all kind and flavours, spicy gambas, avocado mousse, creamy lobster soup, home made foie gras of course, mini tomatoes stuffed with feta and herbs..... was served as a buffet so that we could all mingle and graze all night, in between the endless opening of presents, one by one, in front of all others watching intently, starting from the youngest Louis who is 12 now, and finishing with my 83 years old parents, all 18 of us admiring and joking about each others treats; a cosy pajama, a lovely big scarf and a colorful velvet fantasy handbag for me, plus a present



that pleased me even more, a handmade game of empty tin cans labeled with various effigies of President Sarkozy to pile up as a wall and take down with a soft ball made of old pairs of socks, courtesy of Louis and his mother, my sister. My obsessive and radical dislike of Sarkozy is legendary in the family, a family whose members in age of voting, young and old, all voted for him. I am the only left wing soul of the party, and have always been. A few uneventful hangover days followed until the flu bug creating havoc in France finally caught up with me and I spent New Years eve, sat in an armchair, among dancing people at Jean Pierre and Nicole lovely party.

-- It is now 10am I am sitting in my car writing these words stuck on the hard shoulder of the southbound service station on the A3, for the past 2 hours, on my way to Farnham for an important course review meeting, my first day back this year. There is always a first time for everything. I was so distracted by the rising price of petrol, just back after yet another hellish Eurostar journey, being treated like a pack of sheep taken to the slaughter house in inadequate facilities and over packed train, still suffering from flu; my excuses for filling up my tank with diesel instead of petrol, as I do in St Yrieix with my old and faithful Peugeot 205, forgetting that my beloved Proton I was leaning against while pondering on the rising cost of life, only drinks unleaded. 200 yards later, as I was about to rejoin the motorway, the engine starts coughing and stops and I immediately realize my mistake. I have to push the car backward in a safer place at great effort, people staring while speeding past.

Finally parked 100 yards back on the hard shoulder, I reach for my mobile phone to call the RAC for rescue and UCA to inform them of my delays, when I picture clearly my mobile phone on my bed as my hand fails to locate it in my bag. Double catastrophe. There are no public phone anywhere on the service station ground, M&S yes, Little chef yes, Wild Bean café yes, cash point yes, toilets yes but no public phones. I feel lucky when I spot an RAC man and van on the car park, I run to him, damsel in distress. After much begging, the only thing he accepts to do isto lend me his RAC phone so that I can finally call to arrange for rescue. Thirty minutes later, with a promise that a special drain van will be on his way in 2 hours minimum at a cost of 200 pounds, I go back to my car, stressed, freezing, feeling sorry for myself and very angry at such poor and costly service, and for having forced myself to get out of bed this morning despite feeling poorly because of French flu. I sat there, preparing myself for a long wait without any means of communication, pondering on the sudden turn of my fate, which fell somehow deflated 2 hours earlier but optimistic and positive about yet another beginning

-- One hour later instinct and experience prompted me to walk back to the station, beg for their phone and call the RAC to get an update on the situation. After being put on hold for ages under the suspicious gaze of station staff, despite their knowledge that I was calling a free number, it was revealed that due to human error I had been misinformed and it would be 4 to 6 hours before a special drain van could be available. After much arguing I was offered the alternative of towing my car back to London at a cost of 150 pounds because my breakdown was due to human error. The absurdity of it all made me laugh madly and object even louder; I almost exploded in front of many half concerned half worried punters. After much begging again and arguing and threatening, the man on the line, while complaining of how unreasonable I was, found an other solution; there was a local ‘drainer’ subcontractor they could use, and who could be with me within the next 90 minutes to correct my human error at a cost of 170 pounds. It was 10am by then and it all became clear.

RAC preferred to let me wait 6 hours in an unsafe place rather than using a subcontractor so that all profit went to them; this could have been arranged 2 hours ago. As it happen when my draining hero arrived at 12.30 and I related my story, he told me that he was only contacted by the RAC at midday, he showed me the call on his Iphone.

-- So here I am, at 10.30 am, starting the year in style, red eyes in my car, missing an important course meeting, not being able to contact anybody, my guts, lungs and throat in tatters again with all that stress and agitation in the cold, having to occasionally beg to borrow phones from punters in their cars and trucks, all men strangely enough, who, I bet, would have been much friendlier if I had been a prostitute or twenty years younger.. I am pondering on how quickly life around you can collapse, human error or not human error; 1/ deciding to go to work despite feeling poorly 2/ leaving my phone behind as a possible consequence, it never happens to me 3/ mind trailing behind in France instead of switching to UK mode, unleaded versus diesel, perhaps if I could afford it I would do like designer Philippe Stark, who has only 2 keys, the same one to enter his three houses, in Paris, Tokyo and New York, and the other to operate the identical motorbike parked in front of each house...

4/ incompetence of a rescue service which prioritise maximum profit at the expense of the service it is meant to provide thus stretching its resources to breaking point. They are not the only ones, hence the travelling chaos of recent weeks, due to seasonal weather; airports, airlines, Eurostar and all other transport companies and infrastructures are breaking down, not coping and not assuming their responsibilities of getting people from A to B or looking after them or compensating them when they don’t. Travelers are not treated as paying customers but as a nuisance and a problem. You have to pay and get no service in return and there is nothing you can do. Government are at it also, and all for maximum profit and immoral greed.

-- It makes me wonder about how the expansion of our virtual and global way of living is inversely proportional to our capacity to cope with the most basic every day things and small inevitable mishaps. Neither our physical and psychological being nor the infrastructures that serve them are adapted to what technology and our intellect working together are constantly inventing. I cannot phone work, not just because I don’t have access to a phone, but despite working there for the past 10 years I do not know by heart the phone number, normally accessible at the touch of a button, the one I found on one of my business card deteriorating at the bottom of my bag happened to be wrong, to my great surprise. Yesterday when I came back despite feeling poorly I was looking forward to a promising and enjoyable year, if not still too fragmented with too many concurrent projects and prospects, quite a bit of travelling and a few planned visits from long awaited friends, Lee Wen form Singapore, Anne and Jonathan from Canada, Hazel from New Zealand, Marine and Marine from Lyon, and Roman form Bergerac, plus a brand new custom made kitchen courtesy of Jochen and Richard, which might have to be postponed by a month or two due to today’s expensive error of 300 pounds.

Anyway this is so trivial compared to what is going on around me and in the world at large, close ones fighting a long and hard battle against terminal cancer, another unexpectedly losing her beloved job, another discovering the pains and joys of motherhood. Without counting the powerless victims of global, ruthless and immoral capitalism, imposed by a few for their own greedy benefit; a system that happily and openly punishes the poorest and weakest to repair the faults of the richest and strongest. And the worse is that most of the suffering ones main ambition is to become one of their oppressor. Right now I do feel like retiring to the remotest part of anywhere with three goats for company, milk and cheese. Amen. 3pm, *Thursday 6th January.*

image file lost with stolen computer



Week 15 16 Armageddon

Atmosphere; weary. News; Tunisia in turmoil after president flees country. Epic floods around the world. Book; Anne Michaels; fugitive pieces.

Tip; no tips today.

-- Many beasts to be eradicated around the world. The president of Tunisia has finally taken the hint and fled the country, probably taking with him most of the country's wealth, or what he hadn't squandered before. Many dead, there is much turmoil and uncertainty, winter lowcost tourists are stuck in the middle and panicking. My cousin twice removed, Claire and her baby boy Hugo have had to come back in haste. She has set up house ad business in the south of the country, in Zarzis, many years ago. She is well accepted there and has many native friends, colleagues and employees. This didn't save her business premises from being trashed. The people have finally risen up against their totalitarian regime. There is much hope of a better future, and many of nearby countries rulers are scared and watching the situation with much interest. Decades of Extreme Greed, injustice and thirst for power have pushed a whole country and its population to the edge. Floods and mudslides are destroying big parts of Brazil, Sri Lanka and Australia.

The usual headlines are used: "biggest disaster since record began". There is nothing to be done but wait for the water to find somewhere to go, dragging everything on its way. Many dead, many homeless, many explanations are given; too much rain, illegally building of homes on mountain sides, too much garbage thrown into rivers, all coming back to haunt us with the floods, El Nina – not to be mistaken with El Niño - El Nina who brings cold air from the East against the warm waters of the pacific, causing huge amount of rain with nowhere to go; global warming, disappearance of the rain forest and extreme poverty are to blame Yet another shooting in America, Tucson Arizona to be precise, where one can buy guns or ammunitions at the supermarket, a few dead, including a judge. A congress woman was badly injured. Sarah Palin, the Tea Party, aggressively polarized political debates are blamed in turn. Strangely enough not gun culture or gun laws.

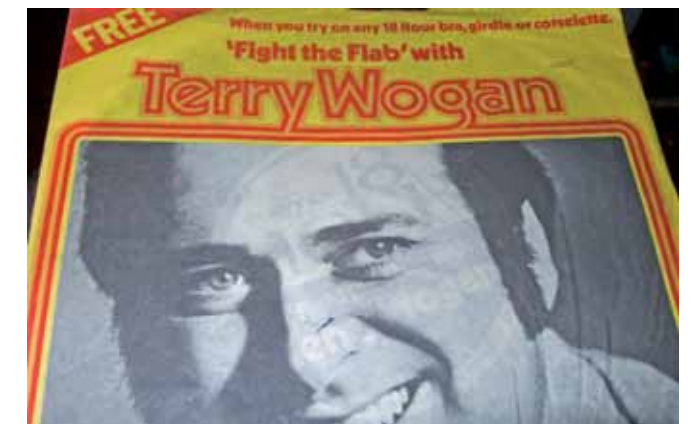
-- My laptop has been stolen from a locked teaching room in Farnham. One of the doors was smashed, most likely during a fire alarm that took place at lunchtime. I was assessing third year work. It is possibly an inside job. Who is to blame? Me apparently, for relying on the security of a locked door within my work place. The police didn't bother coming to take fingerprints; a phone interview is all the attention the incident was given, that and a crime number. The university's insurance will not cover it, as it was my own equipment. I am waiting to hear from my own insurance. The machine was almost 6 years old; the battery wasn't working probably, it wasn't worse much, and even less as stolen good. But the work I lost is impossible to replace. I am lucky I backed it all up at the end of November, limiting the damage somehow. I have to rebuild my email address book, hundreds of addresses, not backed up, a sort of a new start. This is hopefully the last episode of my run of bad luck since New Year. Well once I take the time to write my letter of complaint to Eurostar customer services for their refusal to pay compensation for the trouble, expense and stress they caused me. When I phoned, I was told by a very rude man talking down at me, that they had no responsibility in the matter, the weather was to blame and anyway how could they reimburse a ticket which was free to start with; it was ironically the ticket Eurostar reimbursed me last year, when they couldn't get me home in time for Christmas.



When I dared objecting, he added that they didn't force me to make alternative arrangement and that I could have waited patiently for the seat they had found for me on the 26th of December, instead of trying at all cost (an extra 200 pounds) to make it in time for Christmas. I was so outraged by his attitude, lack of compassion or understanding that I hang up on him, but not before I managed to force his name out of his mouth, Paul. I am even more determined now to make a formal complaint.

-- There have been a few good moments too, thankfully. I also have to be careful no to build up this reputation of being unlucky. Already when I met up with Manfred Werder, visiting from Zurich, I hadn't seen him for a few months, not since I told him about my misadventures with my burgled studio in St Yrieix. He of course made the connection, as if it all happened at the same time, making it look like this is a normal state of play in my life. Because of my recurring troubles with travelling this past year, ashes, storms, strikes, snow... a few people are making jokes, asking to be informed of my future travel plans so that they make sure they stay home that day. It is an easy joke to make. It is actually not surprising that with the amount of travels and moving around I do, I get more affected than most. But as Joachim says - he travels as much as I do - we are part of the problem, not the victims. Manfred minimal performance was wonderful as usual and such a welcome experience after the exuberance of some of the other works, that evening for Poliply at the centre of creative collaboration in Kings Cross.

--Another happy time was James birthday last Saturday for which I made a beautiful shallots tartatin. Also zooming through Tate modern, late last Friday night with Manfred, Tim and Angharad, trying to catch a bit of Art before closing time, we had to retreat in the downstairs bar for a long while, the place was so busy due to Gauguin exhibition final days. Or getting confirmation of funding for my collective performance work, Jungle fever, exploring inner travel as an alternative to global tourism, which will take me to Singapore and Beirut later this year. Or Hazel's long email giving me long awaited news of her adventures these past few months. Or going to see last week, *Of Men and gods* at the Ritzy. I had certain doubt beforehand but was soon completely taken in by the cinematic experience. It is a beautifully crafted film, I loved the slow pace, the long shots, the acting was excellent. I was also taken by the moral and spiritual dilemmas of this group of men and for once really enjoyed the communal shared experience in the cinema. We were surrounded by forty of fifty people, all completely engrossed in the film. I usually prefer empty cinemas and being by myself. I am very familiar with the story since my dear aunt Kiki, in her early eighties now, is a Franciscan none and lived nearby in the village down the hill. The monks in question were her friends, and celebrated mass for her small group of three to five nones. They used to lend them a few rooms in the monastery, in the summer so that the old or weaker nuns could escape the heat of the valley in the summer. She was living there until just before the murders. The mother superior decided that it wasn't safe to stay in the south and they were repatriated to Algiers, against their will. After the incident, they had to come back to France. We are very close and she had invited me to visit a few times, but I never went, to my great regrets. *Monday 13th January, 9pm.*





Week 17 18 Power to the people

Atmosphere; easing up slowly. News; new Tunisian government struggles to win people's trust. Algeria and Egypt in turmoil with daily mass protests. Book; Jean Pierre Brisset; la grande Nouvelle.

Tip; Everything is edible in a caribou

-- My bad luck seems to have run out. I am acting very cautiously though, still feeling the aftershock of my disastrous start of the year. It has also triggered the seasonal depression that I had managed to keep at bay since the autumn; a general sense of fatigue and lack of enthusiasm, bouts of anxieties when thinking of what lies ahead, projects, commitments, confirmations of funding and performance dates, in Singapore, in London, the feeling that I cannot cope, will not cope, a desire to cancel it all and sleep, sleep, sleep. Nothing new, I am used to it and know what to do, remembering that it is just a passing phase, due to a chemical imbalance that induces a negative outlook on things, a if someone did turn the lights off suddenly. So I force myself to only think about the day or week ahead, I make daily lists of things to get done and make sure they get done, it brings a little comfort when I succeed. I just have to lie low and not take it too seriously until it passes, hopefully soon. Yoga helps a lot, as well as spending time with friends and close ones.

-- I have had to write and give a paper on the findings of my research on embodied knowledge, empirical and sensorial approaches to teaching and learning in an academic context, for a conference at the British Library. It was a useful exercise to have to digest and formalize what I intuitively or instinctively found out as well as what I took for granted. The brief was to connect practice, research and teaching. I rarely go to Kings Cross or the British Library. I wish I did more often. It is a fantastic place; it would be so good to regularly spend an afternoon or a day researching there. The area feels very familiar. As I was registering for the conference, I realized that this is where it all started for me 27 years ago, when I arrived with my small bag from Paris after an all night train and boat trip, the only way to make that journey then, unless you were willing to pay a lot of money to fly. I landed on Ossulton Street in Sommerstown, staying in a squatted flat on the top floor of a council estate facing the wasteland where the Library now stands. I remember when the building work started and took many photos of the work in progress until I moved to west London. And here I was preparing myself to tell the story of my journey from Practice to Research to teaching and back. I decided to use this personal anecdote to introduce my talk. It went well I think, too short a time as always, I got a lot of positive feedback as well as requests to take part in future experiments. I have had a lecture to write on Narrative structure for the introduction of a 2nd year module starting tomorrow. It is not the first time I work on this unit but I have decided to change it quite radically. I have invited Natasha Caruana and David Rule to work on it, new team, new ideas, new ways, we are quite excited despite the fact that students numbers have risen again, 67, and I have been given half the number of sessional hours given last year to run it, teach it and assess it.

-- I have had to host and look after my niece and her friend visiting for a week, a little restorative break from their business studies in Lyon, one at MA level the other one finishing her degree. Two gorgeous young women both called Marine. I was dreading it as much as I was looking forward to it. My niece has been here before, we are close; my place is cozy and welcoming but not that spacious. They both come from an affluent middle class background with high living standard, far from what I can offer in my humble abode in Brixton. Though very

independent and well travelled, they still live at home, making the most of family comfort. Though I knew they wouldn't necessarily ask or expect me to do so, I would take on the mothering role and make sure food was on the table every evening and for breakfast. In the end I did enjoy the mothering almost as much as their company, as I knew it was only temporary. They ate like pigs, easily twice as much as I do, yet they both have such perfect figure ... It was also good for me to have a break from my living habits, one can get so set in one's way if you live on your own. They reminded me so much of myself when I arrived here, her friend possibly more than my niece, she is taking to London completely, I could easily see here living here. I was helping them to construct a good itinerary each day, a lot of shopping involved, they fell in love with Notting Hill of course. I was determined to take them out for a real Brixton experience, Hootanany on a Friday night, a live reggae dub concert. They loved it, the mix crowd of all styles and ages, the boys, the music, the atmosphere. The band was ok, good musicians, great vocals but they were all high, often having to start songs again because one or the other had lost the plot. It was very funny and fascinating to watch. The singer, not that young or sexy, got really steamy toward the end and started to rub his groin against the micro stand more then just suggestively and more than once. It was truly outrageous, the whole audience was in shock and hypnotized, he didn't seem to mind. The three of us started to imagine the faces of their respective parents if they were here.... Having said that their parents are my age, and the age of more than one in the audience.



-- I have been given a provisional date at the end of March for my readership panel interview, this is the final stage, fingers crossed. Hopefully I will have regained my high spirits by then. I have had a funny date with a funny man, handsome and charming and full of Carry On style innuendos. I was laughing a lot until I realized he wasn't necessarily joking when asking me repeatedly yet politely 'when would I allow him to pluck me'. Jochen, Richard and Mike are starting working on my kitchen tomorrow, it is all empty waiting for a complete make over. They will work while I am in France next week. That is if snow or strikes or anything else doesn't prevent me from traveling on Friday, using the ticket Eurostar finally accepted to reimburse me, small compensation for the stress and expense they caused me. But better than nothing I guess. I went to see Ghedalia Tazartes in a strange place in Wet Ham with Jochen and Sebastian, such a treat. You might want to check Howard Slater's article on him in Mute magazine, Howard I met at the concert, via Paul Noble who was there too. Ghedalia seemed very out of practice, obviously more used to the comfort of his apartment / recording studio in Paris than to the stage, it showed; but the mix of vulnerability, charisma and pseudo ethno-guttural vocalization on top of recorded tracks, in this small intimate archway at the end of the world provided for such a pleasurable and touching experience that I even forgot to declare him my love of his work after the gig. He is coming again at the end of March at café Otto.

Wednesday 3rd February 19.42 pm





Week 19 20 21 Bloody valentine

Atmosphere; electric. News; president Moubarak has fled, colonel Gaddafi rages on, David Cameron visits Tahrir square while Tony Blair phones Gaddafi. Book Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvenu; The Utopian vision of Charles Fourier, selected texts on work, love and passionate attraction. Howard Slater, Break/flow 1997/1999.

Tip; fear is the enemy of freedom and those only who are denied it value it.

-- I am three weeks late on this chronicle, too busy witnessing remotely what is going on in the Middle East and more importantly the Punch and Judy style responses from the West who suddenly have to justify their long support, friendship, dealings with the various dictators being targeted by this contagious wave of people uprising; while at the same time keeping up with my punishing schedule of deadlines across two countries. I have just checked my diary and this should hopefully ease up from April on.

-- My week in France already feels moons ago and I am about to set off again at the end of the week, yet the unexpected intake of light and sunshine I experienced there is still having effect, I hardly mind the current low skies hovering over London and the consequent lack of brightness.

All my pores were soaking it up after the few months of winter starvation, premises of Spring. Yet Nature is behind because of the amount of snow covering the ground for much longer than usual; hardly any signs of blooms anywhere. Launching the new exhibition at the cdla, 'pièces manquantes, appel à cotisation', displaying whole series of works from the collection while highlighting the missing pieces and asking for contribution to complete it. Didier Mathieu chose an interesting and clever concept I felt which worked very well in building a thoughtful critique of the compulsion to collect, while managing to convey the quality and extent of the cdla 'collection' without appearing to brag about it, very sharp indeed. I am also trying to develop and put in place a program of residencies, research projects and workshops that capitalises on the strength of the centre, the collection, the library or related books and materials on artists books, and the varied expertise and experience of the small team running it.

-- All this was interrupted by various tricky financial matters to negotiate with a French bureaucratic system that, because managed and operated locally, is way too efficient for my stretched budget in between two places; and family and friendly rituals, involving great food and wine, catching up on years of lost quality time with my elderly parents, mostly around a fire. No complaints there, a perfect counterpoint to my London/ Farnham buzzing urban life. Lets see how long for I can sustain both. Most late evenings were spent in front of the computer, in my quiet home, away from internet, phone or television, developing and putting together the first talk I ever have to give about the place of artists books within my work; an interesting exercise of looking at my practice from a different perspective and placing it within the historico/political context of the development of the medium. Being in France close to the whole resource of the centre des livres d'artistes was ideal. Chosing how to fit it all in 50 minutes, the time I was given by Maria for the bookRoom study day 'Book Time' was harder. The fact that I was speaking after Michael Mack of Steidl fame raised the stakes even higher. This was a great opportunity to introduce my current work to him.

-- Back on Valentine day to find my gorgeous new kitchen courtesy of Richard, Jochen and Mike, all handmade with ecologically friendly bamboo top, brand new appliances, uncovered wooden floorboard and great attention to details. It looks fantastic. I thanked them by making a tartatin when they came to finish the last details and settle payment. I am very happy if not very poor now. I still had to finish my talk for the next day, I never thought it would take that long, but it seemed to go down very well and generate quite a bit of laughing which is a good sign; I am finally learning to have a lighter touch. I was so involved with my kitchen and my lecture that I forgot to sent my annual home made virtual valentine card to my favourite male and female friends and colleagues of the moment, something I have enjoyed doing for the past few years, my way of responding perhaps to the crass and hypocritical emotional pressure we are all put under almost immediately after Christmas, while using the occasion to tell my chosen ones that they do mean a lot to me. There are often one or two who don't get the gesture and either get embarrassed or annoyed but this is part of it too, a sort of Darwinian natural selection. I wonder if anybody noticed the absence of my virtual love this year. No valentine dates either, as a matter of principles, but three dates of a kind in the past three weeks. One with a larger than life size and sensibility photographer with a sharp sense of humour, who didn't survive the rise of digital technology and switched to writing film script; An Irish NHS hospital doctor with a gorgeous accent and gentlemen manners who despite a pleasant evening full of banter, sweetly pointed out at the end that he does get better when he warms up, and finally a well travelled Londoner architect with a lovely smile and a passion for life drawing. Spring is in the air.

-- The Book Time study day went well and was followed by the launch of bookRoom press, finally, after one year of hard negotiating with the institution and researching and developing and buying and installing and training, it is all up and running and looking grand and absolutely amasing. It has been a great team effort, David Rule for the design of logos and publicity, Peter, Brendan and Robin for visuals and the website, Kerstin and Richard to help me with the wording of mission statement, Tim and Sally for technical aspect....

I fell like a proud mother; Michael Mack was impressed, declaring it as 'second to none' and 'unique' because it brings together the best of traditional and digital technology, expertise, as well as a critical and conceptual context. Membership is now open, I have a few requests already.

-- Meanwhile there has been a terrible earthquake in Christchurch, I was very worried for my dear friend John Kitto but I just got an email saying they are all fine, his friends and family too, but hundreds of people are still missing. On the other hand 'Emmanuelle', he wrote, ' if I could bottle the spirit that has taken hold here you would have a tonic so powerful, one drop would have you smiling for the rest of your life. There's armies of people in their thousands be bussed into town every day to help clean up, with armies feeding them. Helicopters flying in and out of the city continuously with fresh supplies.' Meanwhile David Cameron declared that multiculturalism doesn't work, a problematic statement that very few media commented upon, Sarkozy recycled the same words a few days later, during a public speech on national television as a way of rallying around him the Front National supporters, forgetting to mention that as opposed to England, France had never actually applied the M word, there are still no equal opportunity laws to this day. All this just after he holidayed in Morocco, Fillion the prime minister in Egypt, courtesy of Moubarak, and Alliot-Marie, the ex Defense turned foreign affairs minister in Tunisia, courtesy of the now defunct government. How unwise and untimely, but how funny. Yet none of them acknowledge having done anything wrong.





-- David Cameron went to visit Tahir Square after the events, and declared that the West had been wrong to support dictators and heads of states such as Moubarak and Gaddafi, easy for him to say, he is a new comer to power. On the other hand Hilary Clinton sent an American envoy, ex diplomat Frank Wisner, to try to persuade Moubarak to give up power; instead he declared publically; "I believe that President Mubarak's continued leadership is critical - it's his chance to write his own legacy". How could Obama or Hilary Clinton not know that Frank Wisner is one of the Washington law firm partners looking after Moubarak colossal fortune? He is on the dictator's payroll. In London we hear Mendelson declaring Tony Blair was right to befriend Gaddafi when he was prime minister, also that Tony Blair has been conducting regular business (of the oil kind I would guess) with Gaddafi in the past six months. Obama is imposing sanctions on Libya and on the raging man assets. Isn't this a bit late, the former will only affect the people and the latter is possibly of little concerned to a cornered man who has no other intention or solution other than to fight on to the end with maximum destruction and damages to his people and country. Surely there are more reasons to invade and attack Libya now then there was all those years ago with Saddam Hussein in Iraq! I am ranting now.

-- What I like seeing is that civil unrest is reaching our so-called 'civilised' countries. In America bills proposed by Republicans in Wisconsin, would strip state and local government workers of a lot of their rights;

Democratic members have left the state, depriving the State House from having the quorum needed to vote on the bill, tens of thousands of supporters turned out every day in the capital, Madison, and in Ohio and thousands more have staged support vigils across the country. Meanwhile everyday all over the UK, hundreds protests and disrupts council budget meetings planning millions of pounds of cuts for the next four years, Haringey, Lambeth, Hackney, Lewisham, Leicester..... Perhaps what is happening in the Middle East is going to inspire us to do the same against our governments and the global financial institutions controlling them. Barclays has revealed that it only paid 2.4 per cent corporate tax for 2009 because it took into account their losses of previous years; this is apparently the case for most banks. Perhaps we should ask the lawyers and doctors and other middle classes that started and orchestrated Egypt 'silk' revolution to come and helps us organize ours.

-- I am ranting again. But the absurdity and contradiction of it all, while being fascinating to observe, after all I am doing well and neither my well being or my life are being threatened, is infuriating; so much hypocrisy and double standard. I am really wondering how much further those in powers can take it before it all explodes in their hands. Part of me can't wait for this to happen, part of me would like to help it happen, part of me does like everybody else, words, words, words, but little action. Unless I consider as action the little gesture of protest I encountered at the Tate Britain while visiting the Susan Hiller show, which I really enjoyed by the way, apart from two works which were rather illustrative, Monument and Belshazzar's feast. Anyway, looking around other rooms, I really liked the Cerith Wyn Evans Morse code / candelabra piece, a perfect marriage of cool conceptual and kitsch, we stumbled upon the Damien Hirst room, in the corner behind the lamb in formaldehyde someone had placed a small cardboard arrow work, reminiscent of Bob and Roberta Smith, though the invigilator who had just informed higher authorities of the intrusion, hoped it may be a Banksy work. I rather like the scoop photograph I took, which will no doubt join my 'beauty of failure' collection folder. *Monday 28th February 2.40pm.*



Week 22 23 Down memory lane

Atmosphere; nuclear. News; Gaddafi regains strength and ground, we watch shamelessly. Nuclear panic after Japan is badly hit by earthquake and tsunami. Book; Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvenu; the Utopian vision of Charles Fourier, selected texts on work, love and passionate attraction.

Tip; Trains are better than planes.

-- I am in a Eurostar train, coming back to London after my monthly week of French duty and various other related pleasures. I have finally given up commuting on Ryanair, realizing that the train wasn't that much more expensive, more civilized, took only one hour more once you add it all up and is a much cleaner way to travel. Mind you while crossing Paris from one station to the next, I was both surprised and pleased to see that the Parisian metro is becoming as unreliable as the London one. I was stuck in there for 30 minutes, due to French signaling problems, it was absolutely packed and most people were moaning that it was becoming a recurring problem; the only difference with London is that people were voicing their discontent. One more thing to blame on Sarkozy who is as ever all talk and little action, proving it again by having to be the first to officially and publically condemn Gaddafi, without either consulting his government or the international community. He had to be the first to open his mouth, but no action followed.

Gaddafi is regaining control fast, we watch passively, indecisive about what to do, under the pretext that Lybian people want to liberate themselves without western help. I find it hard to believe that they would refuse our expertise or weapons. Sarkozy can now say, I really wanted to go in, I said I would but was prevented to do so by the USA, or the UN, the G8, the G20... As my brother in law says, our leaders have no balls and Gaddafi knows it. We have the perfect excuse to go and take him out, he has confessed being personally responsible for the Lockerby disaster; much more of a valid reason to go in or send a drone to take him out than the elusive pretext of weapons of mass destructions that Bush and Blair used to invade Irak. It is such an unfair battle for all those fighting the mad colonel, untrained, no adequate weapons, they have no escape and they will surely die one way or another if the West doesn't intervene.

-- I finally went to see the fabulous, mind blowing as well as mind numbing Christian Marclay's piece the Clock at the Hayward gallery part of the British art show. By far the best work there as it is so layered with subtext yet absolutely timeless despite its obsessive counting of time passing. This is achieved by assembling together old and new movie clips of various genres, all containing some manners of telling time; 24 hours of it so that it is always on time. This creates a constantly changing narrative which leads nowhere yet one that keeps you hooked and make time goes very quickly despite always being aware of it. It is a very strange experience to sit through it. It was also on for the whole 24 hours the weekend I left for France and I went for five hours, wishing I could have stayed for the whole length but I had a train to catch. It was a magical experience, the Purcell room was packed and remained so for a long while, making it quite a powerful collective experience if not an absurd one. I somehow felt, quite Orwellian in the way we were all transfixed for hours on end by this quick assemblage of time slices, hypnotized almost, despite the lack of a consistent storyline which was evolving at every cut. Though being completely happy being there and at one with the whole thing I didn't know whether to celebrate or criticize our docile acceptance of this bombarding of time keeping images for entertainment or art sake.



SHOULD PROTEST MAKES COWARDS

CHIPS

TOSS

NEWS

SOFT TOFF

P.R.S.C.





Wasn't this a form of brain washing? I was reminded of Guy Desbord and his wonderful society of spectacles, the endless cycle of recycled news images being the backdrop of his monotonous yet critical commentary. I am wondering what ulterior motives Marclay have with this work, beside its fantastic concept and pulling aesthetic.

-- I am reminded of Guy Desbord again while the media are having a ball, so much to choose from in terms of natural or manmade disasters, so much material for our starving eyes, zapping between Tunisia, Egypt, Christchurch, Japan, Libya, Algeria, Australia, the same iconic images are crossing virtual channels to end up on front pages all around the world. The political mixes with the humanitarian, governments are powerless and there is very little mention about the social or human impact in the aftermath. A French journalist talked about this, the other morning on French radio in a very thoughtful way. Whether in New Orleans or in Australia or in Japan, he spoke about the true nakedness and silence left once the media have gone away with their visual trophies and the officials are no longer needing to prove to the outside that they are coping; there are no infrastructures left, no more power in place, color has been drained off, leaving behind a traumatized naked and silent land and people. I thought this was such a powerful image.

-- This week I went back to a place I hadn't been for over 20 years, lac de Vassivière, A gigantic lake and small holiday resort for nature loving tourists in a remote wooded and hilly place in deep France, not far from when my family resettled when we came back from Morocco in 1974. We used to visit it sometimes at weekend, a weak substitute for the Moroccan sea left behind but water and sand nevertheless, almost on our doorsteps. I subsequently worked there in my late teens for a few summers, in 'colonies de vacances' (summer camps) for not so well off kids and teenagers from Paris suburbs, taking them on cycling and walking trips for a few days at a time, camping on the way, and sailing on the lake in between, great memories of it all, in fact my best memories as I never fully recovered from leaving behind my beloved home in Morocco to end up in this over green, over wet, over deserted, over aged and most deprived region of France, as far away from the sea as could be, where I was often called a dirty arab by my peers. Anyway here I was 25 years later, on a sunny morning driving there as part of my duties for the centre des livres d'artistes, attending a meeting in the centre international d'art et du paysage, a contemporary art centre and sculpture park situated on an island in the middle of the lake, as incongruous in the region as is the centre of artists books in St Yrieix, possibly more appropriate being among trees. The two institutions do not really work much together, but someone new in place has invited me to take part in a day of talks about a European educational project he was developing in collaboration with a museum in Bergamo, another one in Malmo in Sweden and one in Budapest; a timely invitation as I am in the process of setting up and finalizing the terms and the wording of a program of residencies and workshops.

-- Fantastic drive there, my mind racing down memory lane during the hundred or so kilometers, crossing places with familiar names, bringing back memories from a time when England or English were not part of my life, not even in dreams. I was longing then for somewhere much further south, somewhere much warmer that I still refer to as home. Not a good time, as I did find it almost impossible to adapt to my so-called homeland and couldn't see much room for me in that green and wet future.

I just wanted to escape and found refuge in language and fantasies, reading avidly writers and philosophers normally aimed at much more mature minds. I was aware that most of it escaped me, not being able to go beyond the surface of the words, but it soothed me to know there was meaning there and I read every page, not missing a word. When meaning did reach me, I used to copy the quotes on small pieces of paper and stick these all over my bedroom walls. I also wrote fantasy love letters and romantic stories involving heavy petting, until my father found them on my bedside table, believed them to be true, threw it all away, called me a slut, gave me a few slaps and grounded me for a few weeks. I never felt more upset, misunderstood, and let down. I think for the first time I realized that parents were not invincible. And this was a very frightening thought. I was at the time naive and innocent, I had a vivid imagination and got my hands on a few books I was too young to read, but I had never been anywhere near a boy. The meeting at the centre wasn't that great, so I left early and went driving around the lake to revisit the holiday campsite I worked at and other familiar places. Nothing had changed much, a lot of them were now for sale, the whole place feels like stuck in time, it is reassuring in some ways but I was happy to leave it all behind, no nostalgia. I am now back in home sweet home Brixton, daffodils are finally out, prunus and cherry blossoms too, winter is almost over and next week my mum is turning 84. *Tuesday 15th March 23.19pm*





Week 24 On time

Atmosphere; springy. News; Japanese death toll reaches 20 000, Fukushima keeps on radiating. Book; the aesthetics of Silence, The pornographic imagination; A Susan Sontag reader, Penguin books.

Tip; give rather than be stolen from

-- This is the last entry of the winter chapter and what a rollercoaster week it has been since my pleasant Eurostar journey back to London; full of excitement and achievement yet at the cost of two days of unexpected diplomatic and institutional battles, all run and won and sometimes lost by emails, this in between various teaching and other commitments, in order to finish spending the funding secured for the setup of bookRoom press. I was told very late in the day that I had less than a week to spend the remaining eighteen thousand pounds when I thought I had until July, I also had to fend off colleagues who thought they had better use for it than me; it was quite surreal, a strange game of twenty first century institutional monopoly with many twists and turns. What it took to achieve 'victory' and the adrenaline surge it triggered left me stunned and exhausted, suffering delayed stress. To top it all up my car was towed away from my courtyard because my tax disc was one day out of date. Why does it always have to be such a struggle?

-- The final exhibition of the Scottish project I have been working on for over a year, is opening this Friday on the Isle of Lewis, yet not much I feel like celebrating in the light of the past few months and the collapse of the collaboration which was at the source of it. I am not attending the opening, not because I do not want to but the dates have been changed too late in the day for me to be able to reschedule, possibly a good thing. The works will speak for themselves, I will not have to put up a happy face, or be tempted to put the record straight. I am happy I didn't walk out entirely when things went wrong in September; I sometimes wished I had. Time will tell if I should have done so, I am thankful for David's words this morning, 'The wave washes up the beach, and out again'. It is easy to be wise but not that easy to remain so to the end, I often find. Anyway my only regret is to have decided right from the start to put my entire trust in someone I hardly knew, because of his credentials and the connections we shared - people I love, respect and trust entirely - also because I generally have an issue with trust and control and thought this was a perfect opportunity to challenge myself. I went into the collaboration headfirst, no hesitation, even ending up mixing the personal and the professional. I think I better wait a while before drawing conclusions. I have been feeling quite morose for the past two days, feeling robbed of the sense of celebration and temporary pleasure that usually comes with the conclusion of a successful project, plus nobody likes to be reminded of ones failure. All this despite Spring being here, having Pedro as a houseguest for a few days, and other exciting projects coming into place. Despite considering what is happening in Japan, in Libya, in Christchurch, in Egypt, in Syria, in Bahrain, in Afghanistan, in Iraq.... The list is long, my little troubles seem ridiculous in comparison.

-- Pedro was here, we started to outline the partnership and possible collaborations between bookRoom, centre des livres d'artistes and the annual festival of the image he is starting in Huesca, with interesting crossovers and mutual interests that could lead to something good hopefully, which is fantastic, it would allow me to connect my various commitments in France and in the UK. We have to wait for the local elections in Spain in May. The project is commissioned by the regional government and could possibly be overthrown if a new leader comes in.

This gives us plenty of time to develop links between the various partners. We also went to see a few exhibitions together, I have never been that well escorted, Pedro on one side and Ed on the other, Latin and British charm mixed together, what more could I ask for... Starting with the opening of David Connearn show at Patrick Heide gallery on Church St, his beautiful and compelling epic line drawings that leave you speechless and staring. They are so complete, as complete as the wonderful apple jelly jam that he makes with fruits from his garden, perfect texture and transparency in a little pot with my name handwritten on it. You do hesitate to open it because it looks so lovingly and perfectly made, once you do the taste takes it to another level, a perfect balance of sweetness and fruitiness. Both drawings and Jam are so perfect that they generate what Susan Sontag refers to as 'silence', the silence after everything has been said, a silence that makes you stare rather than look. It prompted me to reread Susan Sontag. The Nancy Spero exhibition at the Serpentine was altogether very different, looking out of place and slightly out of date; feminism and activism in its crudest form, not pleasing to the eye and not trying to, very 1970's both in content and approach. I like her homage and recuperation of Antonin Artaud words, pain and alienation; I wonder what he would have thought of this detournement of his ideas. I personally found it very appropriate, why try to verbalise it all when he has done so in such a complete way. I am afraid her work didn't induce the same silence in me, on the contrary. It generated quite a bit of debate between the three of us, about feminism and authorship too. For me it worked in the way it revealed how over sophisticated and clever and subtle political or activist work is nowadays, aiming to be both politically critical and conceptual and aesthetically pleasing and as such, marketable. Now the Laurie Anderson, Trisha Brown, Gordon Matta-Clark. The exhibition at the Barbican is harder to get into, so much of it is photo and video documentation of performative and site specific works, but the energy is still palpable once you get into it, I love GMC energy drawings. We were lucky to see Trisha Brown's walking on the wall performance, so simple yet effective, some of the dancers made it look so easy, but others did struggle to keep up the pretence which gave it a little edge. To complete the day we celebrated with a great fish and ships at Kennedy's on Goswell rd, on Ed's suggestion with a super dry Prosecco.

-- On Sunday night Pedro showed me on a fascinating clip on what is called the McGurk effect, an experiment on perception, demonstrating that we trust more what we see than what we hear; you hear and see someone pronouncing BABABABABA and as soon as his mouth is pretending to pronounce VAVAVAVAVA, you hear it too, eyes open you hear VAVAVAV , eyes closed you hear PAPANAPA, incredible.

Yesterday I was listening to a wonderful new recording of John Cage Empty Words by the Wandelweiser people, Sandra's perfect voice and pronunciation mixed with various recordings where I could sometimes recognise Marcus cello or Antoine's flute... A real treat, I listened to it all day. Today Spring has started, tomorrow my mother turns eighty-four, this weekend we change the clock, next month I shall be going to Bayreuth, the following one to Singapore. In between I shall be doing my first public reading of my new project Story if O in London, in the same line up than Christian bök, how exciting. Tomorrow morning I am skyping with Beirut to put the final touches to the Jungle fever performance workshop project. I spent most of today on my computer, balcony door open on a sunny warm day, home made chicken broth gently simmering in the kitchen all afternoon. On Friday I shall be going to see Ghedalia Tazartes again. I will be supporting the massive anti cuts protest this weekend from a distance, supporting it nevertheless, my fear of crowds preventing me from taking part. What have I got to be morose about? *Tuesday 22nd march 23.10pm*





S P R I N G

Week 25 to 28

Her readership is late again

Atmosphere; unsettled. News; messy Western intervention in Libya, no one wants another Iraq. Violent clashes in Syria and Yemen. Fukushima has caught up with Chernobyl as first class catastrophe. Book; Honoré de Balzac; Sarrasine.

Tip; balance is not something one can hold on to, it is in constant flux.

-- This is Easter, summer is almost here, in London and in St Yrieix, temperatures are unusually high, spirits too. It looks like we have avoided April showers and the usual unsettled days that come with it.

I am not escaping the difficult awakening of body and mind that spring triggers every year, however prepared I am. Low mood, stressed mind, a sluggish and tired body yearning for more hibernation. I know what needs to be done, I am used to it by now, it doesn't make it easier to bear. I have had my first early morning swim at the lido this week, 16.1 degrees, very painful at first, muscles and nerves screaming, followed by the usual moment of ecstasy when the body becomes accustomed to it.

-- The world is still in turmoil, from natural catastrophes to human despair, from Japan to Libya. The other Arab countries catching up on the freedom and democracy bug age starting to rebel more violently against lifelong rulers refusing to listen to their peaceful protest or let go of decades of power and abuse; daily official killing in Syria and Yemen, we don't intervene, I don't think they have enough petrol to generate our interest, as opposed to Libya.

We don't hear much about Tunisia and Egypt anymore, but progress is slow and many of the old people in place remain in power, there are more protests in Tahir square. Refugees are fleeing Libya and Tunisia and while we send troops to help the 'rebels' to stand their ground we refuse to welcome their people. France and Italy are bickering about responsibilities and refusing to deal with the influx of desperate people. Sarkozy is trying to change the terms of the Schengen agreement in order to avoid having to take in so many refugees. Algeria strong military government is tightening its grip and banning all protests. Morocco is the only country where things seem to go quite smoothly, the king has agreed to relax his power and move towards a democratic kind of kingdom as in England with an elected parliament and a constitution.

-- Meanwhile England is gearing up toward THE royal wedding and the twelve days stretch of holiday created by the extra bank holiday one week after the Easter weekend; a clever move preventing many complaints against the event or its cost to the taxpayer in such hard times. Strangely enough I have heard, seen and read more about the wedding on the French radio, TV and magazines in the past two days in St Yrieix than in the past month in London.

-- After a long 6 months process and various hurdles to overcome, I am pleased to have succeeded at getting my readership. The panel interview was a very interesting but full on experience, I was prepared and did well I think. The panel was very supportive and full of praise of my track record and achievement. I left feeling optimistic about the outcome. I only had about an hour to wait before the positive answer. But I was slightly puzzled by some of the questions and feedback I got. It appears that I am doing way more than I am expected

especially on a fractional contract, I am not putting myself forward enough in all the research or teaching or personal projects I have achieved so far and I spend too much energy and time supporting others. That was seen as a weakness on my part, rather than a strength or a personal choice. I must admit that after reflection I have to sort of agree. After all one of the reasons why I went for the readership was to get some acknowledgment for past achievements which were going unrecognized or attributed to others who were more into self promotion than I was. I also started to question what lied behind my reluctance to put myself forward; is it true modesty or lack of confidence and fear of failure? I think it is probably a mix of both and the fact that I am more interested in making things happen rather than progressing on the career ladder. I do feel a certain sense of achievement and increase in self-confidence since becoming her readership, as Pedro refers to me, but I have become more aware of the need to be more focused and professional in the way I promote myself and what I stand for. As well as perhaps having to make certain informed choices and address how spread and varied my practice and research is, stretching from performance art to artist's books and their interplay with verbal and visual language, as well as with notions of place and identity. This with an increasingly specific methodology of practice based on risk taking, failure and body based thinking. I have until the 16th of may to define my exact title, whose purpose is to identify my area of specialism; it will start as Reader in photography and... book works or artists books, or something to do with the participatory nature of my work, in line with Nicolas Bourriaud 'relational aesthetics', so perhaps relational practices, or transformative practices or social practices.





-- The last installment of my collaboration with Ian Stephen is still on show at Ann Lantair on the isle of Lewis. I have received documentation of it. It looks good if not slightly too fragmented for my liking. The feedback is that it has been well received, my contribution to it well noticed and essential to the consistency of the whole show, very reassuring in the light of the stressing few months negotiating with Ian what was to go in and what happens to the underlying concept which was arrived at collaboratively despite his reclaiming of the whole project. Part of the show will probably travel to other islands, and to Edinburgh but I am not making any new work for it. As time passes it is becoming clearer what works can have a life outside our collaboration and its Scottish context and which ones can't. It has been an equally fascinating, exciting and difficult project; concept and works made I am very proud of, the collaboration element is more problematic. I don't think we will ever resolve the misunderstanding, and my returns in terms of exposure or financial rewards are pretty small considering the time energy and funding involved. For this I only have myself to blame for putting too much trust in someone I had never worked with before. Had I known earlier about his rather poor management of time and financial issues coupled with a skipper attitude on and of water, I would have been much more careful. On the other hand I met great people and had wonderful adventures.

Once the issue of my contribution to the book is resolved, Ian has once more come back on previous agreement on content and artist fee, the page will be turned for ever and I will not have to shiver at the sight of one more email from him, announcing yet another letdown. -- I went to visit Katy, daughter and hubby in Bristol, a quick two days visit to check the wonderful things she is doing up there with Chris Chalkley and the PRSC, the Peoples Republic of Stokes Croft. She is actively involved with this wonderful community based project regenerating this neglected area into a cultural quarter. There is now a cinema, various wonderful restaurants, shops and galleries, all run by local people, Katy's Stokes Croft museum where she spends her days painting while welcoming curious visitors; the place is full of old and newer bits of information, photos, remains of the area's history, brought in by the community or created by her and others from PRSC. There is a wonderful shop selling unique customized china cups and plates made with recycled designs, there are walls dedicated to mural paintings and graffiti work where local artist can come and practice a design for a nearby public wall. Katy has been involved with it ever since she came back from South Africa two years ago. She got in touch via internet, looking for kindred activist spirits in Bristol, being so shocked by British people inertia and lack of freedom of expression in UK current political and economical climate, compared with South Africa.

I was very impressed by what Chris and herself and other are doing and how it has effected the community, direct action, direct results, no public funding, and wonderful art made in the process; her exhibition and book project Banksy Q is wonderful, documenting the long queues waiting to get into the Banksy exhibition at Bristol Museum. She gave people cards to draw on while waiting, collecting more than 3000 wonderful drawings, and exhibiting them all in a beautiful installation. Banksy was very impressed by the project, visited the exhibition a few times and advertised it on his website. Apparently local government and Bristol museum are now showing a lot of interest into PRSC, pressure is on to not being taken over in some ways or used politically as an example of Cameron 'big society' idea, and for the area not to be gentrified and become fashionable now it has been cleaned up and brought back to life. This was all before my readership interview and I felt quite envious of what they were doing independently, not being part of a big institution and all that it entails in terms of bureaucracy and diplomacy in order to make anything happens. Bristol was very charming, they live in a big apartment on the heights near the bridge, a real village atmosphere, quiet, great cafés and small shops, and it didn't feel too provincial either. I felt very proud of Katy. Mind you she was proud of me also, with a readership pending, thinking that I could do as much good from the inside too. Yes, yes the grass is always greener elsewhere. I am hoping to do something with them at some point. And possibly see how bookRoom press can contribute to some of the projects, her Banksy Q book is truly wonderful. They also make some wonderful letterpress style posters and artworks for the PRSC.

-- I had the visit from my Dordogne sister, husband and three children, coming to slum it in Brixton. I was worried, they are well travelled but it was their first time staying with me or in London, and they live in the beautiful Dordogne countryside with stunning views, swimming pool, big house... I was worried that my small bohemian home wouldn't live up to their expectation and they would find Brixton too hard. Luckily the day of their arrival I felt too tired and fragile to get stressed after a late night celebration of my readership, with much champagne and wine, much banter too, followed by very little sleep.

It felt a bit crowded, especially in the mornings as there were people sleeping in every room, nowhere to go if you woke up early. Francis my brother in law found my futon was a bit hard to sleep on, they were not used to it. But it all went splendidly, I was making up an itinerary for them every day, trying to take into account their varying tastes, meeting them up in the evening for food. I managed to dismiss for ever the clichés I am ritually given every month when I visit them, the food is awful, it is always raining, and the fog comes out every day. They even left with a tan, after a boat trip we took to Thames barriers. In between I am developing and planning JUNGLE FEVER wish you were here in London and Beirut in a couple of weeks; a collective experiment in 'authentic travel' and beyond, as an antidote to global tourism where I am taking groups of willing participants to their own 'inner paradise'. It is taking shape very nicely, the visuals of the poster, flyer and facebook pages are really working well, thanks to Bim's and Emily's effort, my two wonderful and talented assistants. With the help of a lot of yoga and swimming I am trying very hard to not get too stressed about the lack of control I have on the outcome of the project especially in Beirut, first visit there, it is difficult to orchestrate it from a distance or to get used to their ways, quite chaotically and loose, reminiscence of my youth in Morocco. Hoping for a couple of days to relax and leave it all behind over the Easter break. *Saturday 23rd April 6.30pm*





Week 29

No more May day for Bin Laden

Atmosphere; very unsettled. News; a perfect royal wedding starts the bank holiday. Bin Laden killed and buried before the end of it Book; Pauline Reage, story of O.

Tip; balance is hard to regain once lost

-- I was woken up this morning by the news that Bin Laden had been shot in his home in Pakistan and had already been buried at sea to avoid any possibility of a shrine. It was so hard to believe my ears, it made me forget how terrible I felt after a night of bad sleep and cold sweats, worrying once more about current commitments, new projects, travelling, funding application, coming up to assessment.... Feeling of being overstressed and not able to cope. It has been a long week of troubled and sleepless nights in France, mind restless and racing not being able to let go, full of doubt and anxieties, followed by long days of feeling exhausted but relieved that my mind was occupied by other matters such as finishing and disseminating the material in French and English, for the new program of workshop and residencies I have been developing for the centre des livres d'artiste and wonderful lunches at my parents, catching up on lost times. Yoga every morning helped me to retain a minimum of composure, as well as a cocktail of homeopathic pills recommended by my sister, one for the mind racing at night, one for anxieties, one for cold sweat, one for better sleep, my pockets are full and tingling.

A personal reading of story of O at Polyply on Wednesday, Jungle Fever (wish you were here) in London on Saturday, and Jungle Fever (wish you were here) in Beirut in 10 days followed by 3rd year assessment just before flying off to Singapore for JUNGLE FEVER workshop and 'a duet virtually' performance at Substation theatre. I keep on repeating this list like a mantra as if it is going to make it all disappear. I should be excited and impatient, and I am once I manage to calm body and mind. I think this is called cracking up. Bin Laden is dead, no more, finished, soon to be a legend despite being denied a heroic death, shot in bed with his wife.

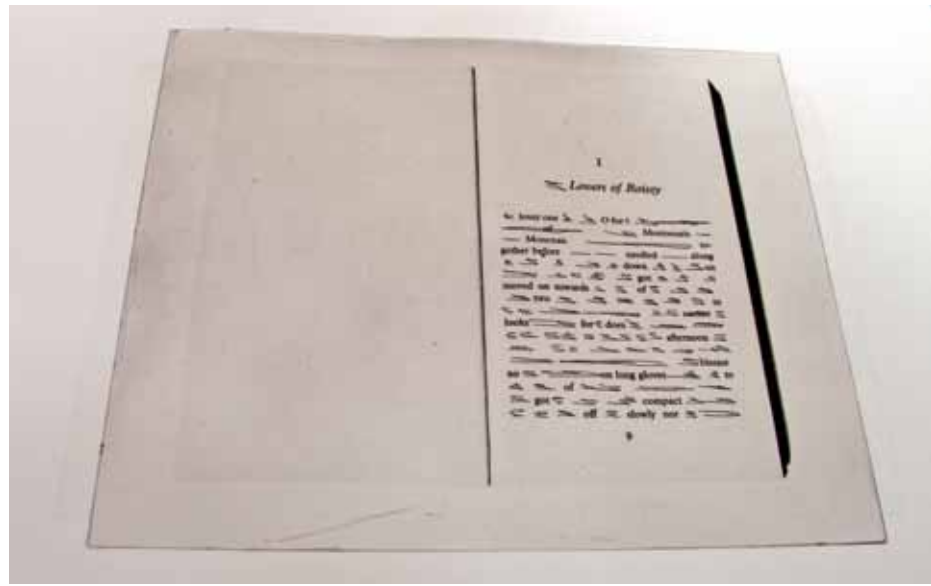
-- What a week it has been. I arrived in St Yrieix on Easter Friday, a working day there. I spent the Saturday at the centre des livres d'artistes catching up with things and planning my week, and in the evening sorting out the JUNGLE FEVER facebook pages that Bim had started to set up. I am such an amateur it took me hours of doing and undoing to load texts and photos in the right places, still not too sure whether the events are where they should be or if I have managed to link it to my own page, or send it to all my 'friends', hopefully not judging by the lack of activities or interest in the pages, bringing of course more stress and feeling of inadequacy. What a neurotic I have become, it is laughable. Followed two days of Easter celebration at my Dordogne sister, the one who just visited. Full house, every one was there, plus a few others on my brother in law side, 28 in total. It is happening less and less since the young ones are starting to travel for studies or work. It made for a great family photo ritual that I recorded on film. All my nephews and nieces are in their teens and twenties yet they all succumbed to the egg race, running around the huge garden to try to find as many chocolate eggs, rabbits and chicks as possible that we had been hiding for them. It was fantastic to watch them resisting the compulsion to do so before giving in completely and unashamedly to the pleasure of being a child again, chasing and racing each other, shouting and laughing.

-- As soon as I got there I was shocked to see that the royal wedding fever had reached France, it was all people could talk about, newspapers and magazines were full of it, television and radio too. It was even transmitted live on two national TV channel from early in the morning right up to the balcony kiss. In one day I found out more about it than in the past few weeks in London. I really didn't expect that. I would have expected a bit of republican reserve or even criticism. The only one I heard is that Sarkozy and Carla should have been invited and that she would have looked the part, despite the picture perfect couple Kate and William made. I was even informed, that an enterprising UK company had made a special edition of 'Crown Jewels' condoms, I was asked to bring some back on my next visit. I checked on the Internet and it is true. I found the name and the copyright, very witty, well if you like that kind of humour. 'Combining the strength of a Prince with the yielding sensitivity of a Princess-to-be, Crown Jewels condoms promise a royal union of pleasure. Truly a King amongst Condoms'. They add that Crown Jewels Royal Wedding Souvenir Condoms are not supplied to, or approved by, Prince William of Wales, Catherine Middleton or any member of the Royal Family and they are not suitable for contraception.

-- Jokes apart, I did find out some interesting facts. The royal family is costing the taxpayers in England, 79 pence each per year, less than the cost a pint of milk, and about half the amount that the running of the Elysée in Paris is costing each French citizen. This was one of the French argument used in favour of the Royal family and the cost of the wedding. When I go to lunch at my parents on Friday, the day of the wedding, they were sitting watching it intently, praising the organization, the patriotism, beauty, charm and modesty of the couple. I had no choice but to join them. I must admit that I did enjoy it, finding it almost touching to see a real fairytale princess in our crazy world, the look of wonder on her face, trying to take it all in, both of them looking so happy and at ease, the excitement of the huge crowd that had waited hours to get a glimpse of the procession. It felt so surreal and gentle and peaceful in the current climate of coalition madness in the UK and massive unrest in the rest of the world.

-- I came back the day after the wedding to see it all in every newspaper; Ryanair was giving away the Daily Mail, special wedding edition, as if I was there. I have had three day to try to settle mind and body and regain peaceful sleep free of cold sweats, while putting final touches to my personal reading of Story of O in a couple of days; finishing to write the preface that I will read first, finalizing the rhythm and method of delivery, reading form the book itself, picking up the words to read or reading from a pre-prepared script. I have been going through my sound archive looking for inspiration; Gherasim Luca, Gertrud Stein, Henri Chopin, Meredith Monk, Bob Cobbing, John Cage's empty words by Wandelweiser, and many others, a process of elimination of what I don't want it to sound like rather than an obvious definitive style to adopt. This afternoon I was lucky to be able to give a personal reading to David Rule, so that he could help me make final choices and in doing so hopefully alleviate some of my doubts. It was wonderful to be able to do so. I now feel confident in my choices. I think we were both reminded how important these moments of exchange and discussions are for any of us involved in making work; not just for the crucial and critical feedback they provide but for the pleasure and necessity to discuss and compare ideas and processes. It sounds so obvious but I rarely take the time or have the opportunity. Monday 2nd may 22.23pm





story of O' intaglio test print



Week 30 to 35 JUNGLE FEVER all over

Atmosphere; full on. News; Western forces fail to take down Arab dictators, Arab spring turns into a bloody summer. Book; Margaret Atwood, the year of the flood. Katherine Hayles, writing machines.

Tip; Go with the flow even if it dries up

-- Her readership is late again as never before. I have lost foot and control of my chronicle, not for lack of trying to stop and record some of it on paper. How can I now fit five weeks in between three countries in a few blog entries. I can't. Yet I have too. I thought of quitting, that is not an option, I thought of skipping, that would leave a crucial gap on the first travel experiments of the JUNGLE FEVER (wish you were here) project. So let's embrace failure, a phrase I have been using quite a lot this past month, as well as putting it in action on occasions with interesting results. It seems to have become a bit of a catch phrase.

-- Lets start with my reading of story of O for Polyply early May. I had the challenge to come on last and after the true showman Christian Bok who was bursting with words and energy, getting quite a few laughs from the audience, a real contrast to my reading which was rather subtle and minimal, with a poignant preface read in an even voice.

The narrative I created to connect VINST, HOLE STORY and story of O seems to have worked well in the way it provided both a forum and a context for my reading / reworking of story of O and play with my tendency to mix the personal, the conceptual and the poetic. I think I will use that strategy again, perhaps for Singapore. The reading of Story of O went as expected but I was really aware of the extremely slow pace of it and my unintended sad intonations, making me sound like a victim, worried that it was too much for the audience at the end of a long evening. I didn't feel the intensity of it as much as I did a few days earlier in my studio with David yet I got some good feedback afterwards from reliable sources. I am very aware of the tone and the diction, feeling deep down that it is not quite there yet. Much room for improvement but that is ok. That evening I really enjoyed the work of Dan Scott who did a live and simultaneous cover version of his performance elaborating on what a cover version is or could be, multilayered, very funny and thought provoking. For me the highlight of the evening.

-- This was followed at the weekend by the first JUNGLE FEVER (wish you were here) experiment in London at STRIKE studios in Clapham, ten participants out of twenty invitations sent, a few last minute cancellations but a good enough number. They didn't know each other and apart from Amanda Couch, none had any experience of performance art; two architects, a filmmaker, a musician, four photographers, a Shiatsu practitioner. I was extremely nervous, not sure if it showed but soon after introducing the idea behind the experiment and the purpose of the day, things went very well, way beyond my expectations in terms of my ability to create a conducive environment for 'letting go', preparing each 'tourist', each in their own way, for inner travel and self exploration. I can safely say that all managed to go far beyond their personal boundaries, individually and as a group. Some great interaction and abstract dialogues took place so much so that at the end of the day I had difficulties bringing everybody back to Clapham time and space. Some fantastic snaps were taken.



We all had a drink afterwards and I was amazed to see how friendly and comfortable they had become with each other, considering that they only met early that morning, talking and behaving as if they had really gone somewhere together. We all felt like we had been away, yet we never left the workshop space. I was so relieved, the anxiety I had been feeling for a few months vanished and for the first time I got excited about Beirut and Singapore, looking forward to see the project evolve. All documentation is on JUNGLE FEVER facebook page.

-- JUNGLE FEVER (wish you were here) in Beirut started very well with Hatem coming to fetch me from the airport and a night drive through the city. It felt a bit like my first time arriving in New York, comparing reality with all the familiar images in my head, real and imagined, mixed with a sense of familiarity; it resembled what I remember of Rabat, a mix of Mediterranean and occidental architecture, trees and plants from my childhood and the warm weather that makes your body immediately relax and slow down. I wasn't disappointed, I absolutely loved the buzz, the energy, the noise, the chaos, the friendliness and kindness, the contradictions, the contrasts, the food, the smells, the colors, the mix of cultures, religions and influences, the sea, the hills, the Corniche.... And above all the fact that everybody is at least bilingual if not trilingual or more, speaking Arabic, French and English, swapping from one phrase to the next, the man running the corner shop to the taxi driver and all the wonderful artists and journalists I met.

I could walk by myself night or day, I never got bothered, either as a tourist or a woman. I was so amazed at how everybody seems to respect or accept each other, at least on the surface, you see veiled women walking next to others in miniskirts and high heels. Besides I have never been in a place where History, the one you see unraveling in the papers and television, is happening all around you. Signs of it everywhere, destroyed buildings, bullet holes, presence of the army, the refugees, people stories... The day I arrived fifteen people got killed hundred miles away at the border with Israel, I met people who were there when it happened, yet life goes on. Everybody talks about it but there are no signs of the palpable fear, stress and sensationalism that you are forced in the West when anything happens.

I received numerous texts and emails from worried close ones back home but I felt very safe. The country and its people have been through so much that everybody makes sure life prevails as well as enjoying the small things in life; being together, laughing, talking, exchanging. They are all sick of politics and all the people I talked to, Catholics, Muslims, Refugees, Armenians, all want to live together in peace. Despite the political and economical instability, no government for the past 6 months, the city is in full expansion. There are new high rise buildings everywhere - the legacy of Rafiq Hariri's, the murdered president and construction magnate now resting in Martyr square new mosque that Solidere his development company has built, as part of his regeneration plans of the whole city. Life goes on, chaotically, noisily with maximum insecurity and instability but it is accepted as the norm rather than a temporary exceptional situation. It was very refreshing to see, comparing it with the UK and France where governments, banks and people at the top use security and economical stability as a stick to beat and squeeze us blue and dry and worried. I was staying at Zico House where JUNGLE FEVER was taking place, a big shambolic and disorganized old colonial building on four floors, housing a gallery, a big workshop space on the roof, various bedrooms in various stages of disrepair, a communal kitchen and bathroom, one or two charity offices, among which the first gay charity in Beirut, a big bar for party and concerts on the ground floor where JUNGLE FEVER departure lounge happened.

Zico who owns it knows everybody in Beirut and is involved somehow in setting up or organizing or managing everything artistic or musical that takes place, so much so that his own outfit is left to run by itself. No need to say that when I arrived nothing was in place.

-- JUNGLE FEVER did take place somehow, thanks to Hatem Imam and his various networks and circles of influence like Samanta comics and Annihaya record label. I did have to embrace failure fully and adapt the project to fit the chaotic and disorganized conditions and the lack of pre-publicity and dissemination. I am proud to say that I never got stressed about it and did go with the flow. In the end, plenty of quality inner travel and beyond took place, snaps and video were taken, including records of an interesting excursion to a no mans land by the sea that looked like a Kusturica or Fellini film set. Hatem and I improvised a video dialogue, yet to be edited that definitely deserves the JUNGLE FEVER label. The project was completed by using some of the snaps produced for a 24 hour comic marathon that Hatem was hosting, organized by Grandpapier in Brussels; you had to create 24 pages of a comic in 24 hours and upload it on their website. The theme, this year a philosophical text by John Locke on universal truth and human understanding written in 1690, was given on a Saturday at 3pm and your comic had to be uploaded before 3pm the next day. There was 15 of us, most were experienced comics and animation artists, among them, the amazing Alex Baladi, I have never seen anybody draw so perfectly, I told him jokingly, even better than a computer. It took me 19 hours to do mine, many gave up half way through but I was determined to carry it through despite being by far the eldest and least experienced illustrator there.

-- I was then asked by George H. Rabbath to run a version of JUNGLE FEVER for his Situationist project, Alligora, in the Sunflower theatre, a re-enactment as a living tableau of the Martyr square statue by a group of Beirut men and women. The statue is iconic and has become a symbol of the history of the country for all sides involved, even more so since the assassination of Hariri. It was fascinating to discuss first with the participants their experience and understanding of this symbolic place.

The workshop lasted 3 hours with numerous interruptions, but despite the awkwardness and self consciousness of some to start with, we were all truly amazed at what came out in the end, a beautiful and meditative improvised rituals where each in turn were posing still for a while as one of the 'characters' occupying the place; statue of liberty, statue of a wounded soldier or a dead victim, living tourist or passers by or soldier protecting the site 24 hours a day, before walking off aimlessly until posing as another again; thus creating an interesting series of loose living tableaux exploring variations, permutations and repetitions of the original configuration. Like what embracing failure does have its rewards. I am finally learning to let go of expectations and being in control, a fantastic achievement for a control freak like me. Long live JUNGLE FEVER. All documentation is on facebook Jungle fever page.

-- Followed a whirlwind of assessment in Farnham, seventy second year narrative projects and sixty five third year final resolution projects, all this within a week, truly inhuman and exhausting but it looks like it is going to be the norm now rather than an exception, the way higher education funding is going. It is finally over. There are a lot of issues that are worrying me in terms of the way we have to adapt and cope with decreasing funding and increasing students numbers; lowering of standard, dunning down and losing the reputation of high standard we have acquired over the years. We are all worried about this and trying to resist it but it might be a lost battle. My mother collapsed while on the phone and remained unconscious for 20 minutes. She is fine now, after spending a few days in hospital for all sorts of tests that revealed nothing apart from the usual wear and tear. In fact she is even in better shape and mood now than she was before, probably realizing how quickly it could all stop. She is eighty four but still behave like she was twenty. If anything it was more of a shock for my father and for us, to be reminded that the end is getting closer and that one of them will most definitely be left behind for a while.

-- Katy and daughter Lucy from Bristol, came to stay in St Yrieix. Katy had spent a few months at my parents twenty five years ago, while in her early twenties and figuring out what to do next. She worked on the farm, made goat cheese with my mother and provided my parents with much entertainment, laughter and diversion from their hard life at the time; not getting on, financial problems, difficulty dealing with and communicating with their two last daughters, my sister and myself. I had run away to London, not giving much news. I sent them Katy instead. She became a great messenger, I was even a little bit jealous at the time, of how well and quickly she fitted in and the laughter and joy she generated. It took me twenty more years to reach that stage. So Katy and Lucy's visit was very symbolic. They arrived a day before me, they all fell into each others arms as if they had only parted yesterday, the joy and the laughter resumed naturally. Eight years old Lucy, who has the sharp mind and tongue of her mother felt completely at home and was welcomed by all, young and old, they all adored her, which is not always the case when I bring friends. My mother has spent the past 15 years learning English, she is fluent now so communication was much easier than first time around where although they got on like a house on fire, they could hardly speak to each other. My parents used to argue or sulk a lot, so Katy had made masks with various expressions so that they could express themselves better and let each other know how they felt... They still speak about it today.

-- I am now back in London, getting ready for SINGAPORE story: The art of letting go and JUNGLE FEVER (wish you were here) workshop next week. John mcNaught from Highland Print Studios has just been here for a few days, giving a workshop courtesy of bookroom press, on polymere printing. It was so inspiring, interesting and successful, we all managed to produce a very nice print. It has generated quite a bit of interest form other members of staff. This is very encouraging for next year, more people are interested in doing work with bookRoom. The Venice biennale is on and I still haven't managed to make it, possibly in the autumn. Tracey Emin is showing at the Hayward to packed audiences. This is possibly my last entry before the summer begins. Monday 13th June 15.37pm



JUNGLE FEVER (wish you were here) in London



S U M M E R

Week 36 37 38

One two three
where the fuck are we?

Atmosphere; hot and sticky. News; more cuts and reforms brings more strikes and protests. Christine Lagarde replaces DSK as head of IMF. Book; Margaret Atwood, Lady Oracle.

Tip; Singapore is much less policed than London or Paris.

-- I am just back from my first visit to Asia, Asia for beginners as I was told in Singapore. It was my longest flight so far, thirteen hours each way for a six days stay,

including a day long JUNGLE FEVER (wish you were here) workshop, a performance at Substation theatre, catching up with Lee Wen, one of the founders and organizers of R.I.T.E.S (rooted in the ephemeral speak) who invited me; a great artist, a sharp mind with a great and generous soul and old friend I hadn't seen for many years, we studied together in the late 80's in sir John Cass in London. He has gone on to become one of the greatest performance artist, travelling the world from one event to the next while being at the forefront of the development of contemporary and performance art in Singapore, with his involvement with the artist village there and various other ventures. Many artists have been arrested in Singapore because of strict censorship guidelines.

Their hard work and activism is starting to pay off, he and a few of his colleagues are now included and offered exhibitions in the major museums as well as being included in the writing of the history of Asian contemporary art. They have also inspired a whole new generation of artists, who are bringing new energy and create a wealth of new funded and alternative events and spaces. It was very inspiring and refreshing to see so much going on for its own sake, or the sake of making good work and to experiment, a lot of political work challenging the establishment and its rules and regulations. Work that has more ambition than to simply respond to a funding criteria or an open call or the whims of a curator, a collector or an art critic.

-- I had a hell flight there, squeezed between a well travelled business man who had his own headphones and cushions and checked shares and stocks values on his computer for most of the flight, and a rather large but smiling young woman sitting in the window seat, making no use whatsoever of the precious extra space. I spent thirteen hours fidgeting about, watching movies in between many attempts at trying to sleep. I was travelling with Shannon Cochrane, the other foreign artist invited for the occasion from Toronto. She had been travelling non-stop for 24 hours, via New York, missing her connecting flight there because of bad weather. Last time we met was ten years ago when I took part in 7a*11d International Performance Art Festival in Toronto, she was one of the organizers. It was both our first time in Singapore. I found it very gentle and civilized, a perfect mixed of high tech and modernity with a lot of flashy cars, you have to change car every 5 years if not you get fined, a buzzing street life, cafes and food stalls everywhere, people sitting around, taking it easy in the hot and super sticky weather, 80 % of humidity, temperatures between 28 degrees at night and 35 degrees daytime, impossible to prevent sweating, you have to drink constantly water, iced tea or my favorite, barley juice, hot or cold. I felt almost as comfortable as in Beirut, as there is even more of a cultural and religious mix, Catholics, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, churches and temples often one next to each others, then a mix of Chinese, Indonesians, Indians, Thai, Malay, Philippines and many others I couldn't place.

Everybody is ever so friendly and helpful and smiling. Lee Wen for all these years, had described the town as a super policed state with very little freedom and maximum censorship, a sad and boring place indeed, you can't buy chewing gum and you get fined a lot of money if you are caught dropping a cigarette butt. So I had this image of a very modern city, like Washington, lots of tall buildings, police everywhere and people walking in line not smiling, a bit of a caricature perhaps but so far from what I was experiencing, a very laid back and friendly street life and a lot of smiling and laughter everywhere. In seven days there I didn't see one policeman and the immigration officer welcomed me with some mint sweets. Lee Wen says that every visiting foreign artist just wants to stay.

-- The food was even more varied and cheap and delicious than in Beirut, and much more exotic to me. There are open-air food halls at every street corner with different counters for each culture, and then you have little cafes with only 3 or 4 tables every 50 yards. I tried a lot of things, as much as I could, getting advice from the locals and the friends and artists who were always with us, I loved it all, not one bad experience for my tastebuds. I gained the reputation of being a lover of good things; my stomach had expanded hugely in the heat and was regarded as both proof and confirmation of my weakness. I was slightly ashamed but there wasn't much I could do apart from embracing my new shape fully. I hardly recognized myself in documentation of the workshop, with this strange bulge circling my waistline.





Strangely enough, it almost disappeared once back in London, thankfully. It must have been the heat coupled with the long flight which provoked bad circulation and water retention, plus of course the lovely cool Tiger beers every evening, fantastic with any of the food and a great remedy against the heat. I particularly remember laksa soup, prata with onion and eggs, fried water chestnuts, Malay breakfast of rice cakes with a spicy coconut tofu curry, beef noodle soup from south China.... I also ate my first durian, a real experience and a difficult taste to describe, definitely an acquired taste but I liked it, a fermented and earthy taste, not too sweet, referred to as the king of fruits, followed by the mango steen, the queen of fruits that complements it perfectly; a delicious subtle white and juicy flesh protected by a deep wine color thick skin, easier to peel than the durian whose pricks really hurts. The smell of your fingers after eating a durian is something else, a mix of rotten fish and flesh.

-- Shannon and I spent quite a bit of time together walking around, very slowly in the heat and getting lost, not sure how as this is not a big city but people have a very vague and confusing way of giving directions and we often found ourselves exactly opposite of where we thought we were, as if every time we blinked someone was flipping Singapore left to right or upside down. So much so that we made up this little ritual when looking for directions of flipping our map in random directions three times while saying '1 2 3 where the fuck are we? It didn't help but it was fun.

-- The JUNGLE FEVER (wish you were here) workshop went extremely well, taking place in a beautiful and air-conditioned dance studio, very different in content from the London or the Beirut one which is truly exciting. I am getting more relaxed and confident with the structure, knowing that so far I have always managed to take everybody beyond his or her comfort zone or personal boundaries. Thanks to Marcus Kaiser who told me about Singapore tropical garden, which has a genuine rain forest, we finished the day there, doing impromptu and improvised living tableaux in various locations.

It was fascinating to see how we managed to blend in with the environment, as members of the public came to join in as if what we were doing was completely natural, there was absolutely no boundary between our gestures and theirs, our space and theirs, the space of performing and their space of being a local or a tourist or a passer by. We were amazed, proof for me that the workshop is working. The next day I performed Singapore story; the art of letting go, a performance lecture / storytelling exercise trying to explain what led me to become a vocal instrument for all to play (with) and a tourist guide for authentic travels by looking back at and weaving together bits of past works and personal details and stories. It went well but was too long and overloaded. Once more I tried to cram in too many layers, too many links, too many possibilities. It flowed well and the audience seemed to enjoy and respond. I also generated quite a lot of laughing which is new for me, but it wasn't really fair on the three other artists, I didn't leave much room for them. This was a new way of working for me and I have learnt a lot. The next day I got ridd of over a third of the structure of my story, for future use.



What worked very well was comparing VINST, a virtual representation of me which was made over 6 years ago to what I have become today, slightly larger and older, my body bulging out of the VINST costume wherever it could, and my voice having acquired more depth and texture than its virtual counterpart. Yet the uniball remained as effective. The effect of the passing of time on both myself and the virtual instrument is a new dimension of the work that I welcome. Reef, a musician and one of the team organizing the event, played VINST for the improvised duet / dialogue that took place between it and its ageing analogue model, me. It was the first time in over a year that I performed with the voice and I loved it, I feel ready to reconnect with that side of my practice after such a long break.

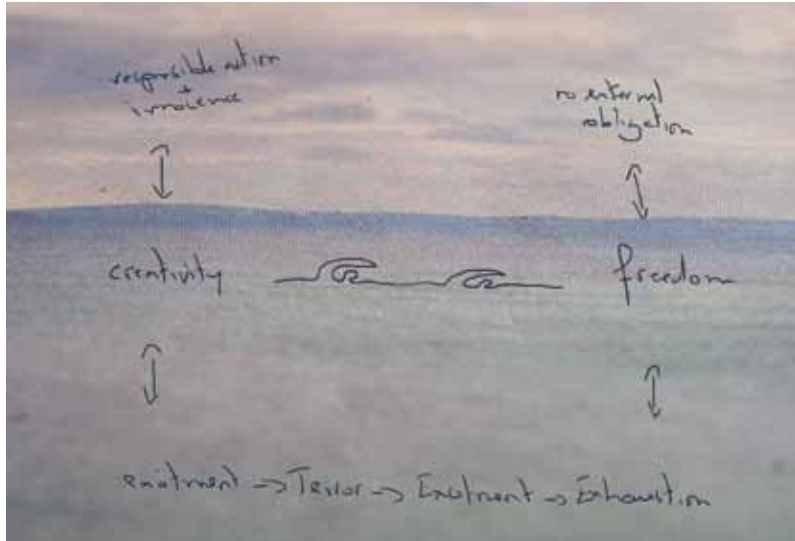
-- The rest of the time in Singapore was spent socializing, being looked after like a friend or a sister, rather than a queen, by everybody there, travelling at the back of Reef's scooter, such a pleasure in the heat, or walking around in the city with Jason Lim and Daniela, or sampling great food and drinking Tiger beer with all, often asking Jeremy Hiah to advise me, he was part of the line up of R.I.T.E.S and runs an alternative gallery space in his home in Little India, I really enjoyed his hospitality and his work too, which involved delicious food while also being quite political and humorous. A few strange links and connections that took place felt very life affirming. I had never been to Singapore, yet I was connected to many people who were in the audience or the workshop. I did my first performance ever with Lee Wen in Pullit in Camden in 1990, 20 years later, he has invited me to perform. One participant, Kim Criswell, from San Francisco, who spends part of the year in Singapore with her partner who works there, recognized Vitali Kononov, the Russian artist I worked and performed with in St Petersburg for my project PRAVDA showing at the Manege for the biennale there, it was my first vocal performance ever and led to VINST. I use a photo of both of us in my performance lecture. This was in 1996 and 1997. Vitali now lives in San Francisco and give physical theatre and contact improvisation classes that Kim attends. In the audience was Da Wu, the founder of the artist village which led to the vibrant performance and contemporary art

scene in Singapore today, he was Lee Wen mentor and lives part time in London. I met him and last saw him twenty years ago and he witnessed my first performance with Lee Wen. He was in the audience. Also there was composer and musician Li Chuan Chong, who used to live in London and introduced me to Sebastian Lexer in 2002, the father of VINST responsible for the subtle programming of the instrument. We are still collaborating today. Very strange indeed to realize that connections made 20 years or 10 years ago were crossing my path again, proof perhaps that I am on the right tracks.

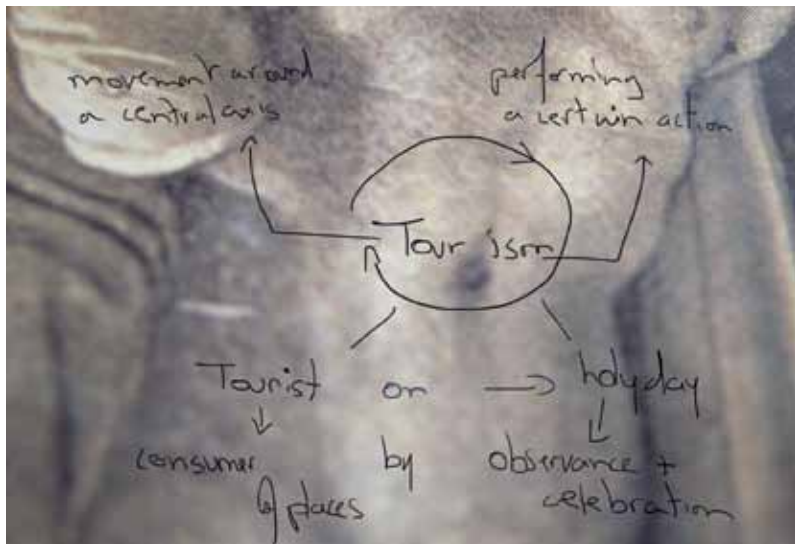
-- It was a well spent and fantastic six days, not one negative element, this is so rare. I arrived back in London to find the same tropical weather, hot and sticky, I slept for 24 hours before catching up on things here and getting ready for Ann and Jonathan's visit from Canada. I had time to go and see the degree show of my beloved students in Brick lane, whose opening was the same evening than my performance. It was great to see so many books with the bookroom logo and to hear that a few did sell out. I need time to reflect upon JUNGLE FEVER (wish you were here), so much has happened to it in the past two months, so many adventures, so many great photographs and videos, opening so many avenues. My summer is well planned and full of travels again, France, Belfast, Scotland, and Austria for various projects but I have managed to secure a few days at Ile de Ré, at the end of July and a few days driving along the north west coast of Scotland in August, after having signed the polymer prints in Inverness. Monday 4th July 2011 9pm



Week 39 to 43
 One two three four five
 will I survive?



the anatomy of freedom



the anatomy of tourism

Atmosphere; windy and mostly wet. News; R.I.P Lucien Freud, miss Winehouse, NEWS OF THE WORLD. America credit rating has been downgraded. Book; George Bataille, Le coupable.

Tip; Mercury retrograde might not be the source of it all.

-- Mercury has just turned retrograde yesterday for the next six weeks, not a good thing, it is meant to bring troubles and stresses, unresolved issues from the past tend to rear their heads demanding to be dealt with. I guess this is a good chance for spring cleaning and getting rid of lingering annoying aches of all kind. It was my birthday yesterday, the first one in London for many years, luckily the weather was almost tropical, hot and sticky. I decided to celebrate with little treats throughout the day in between finishing my talk for Belfast festival before taking off tomorrow. No big celebration or social gathering, hard to celebrate youth fading, and I am not ready yet to talk about faded youth. A rather reflective mood prevailed, wondering where it had all gone and how little time was left. Anthony's kind words reminding me of what a successful and productive year I had, generated a response of "yes it is true but"... not being able to finish the phrase. It is hard to acknowledge clearly what is missing, it might reveal the absurdity of one's expectations.

Anyway to start the day a swim and a coffee by the pool with Edith at the Lido in the early morning, Thai lunch with Karen and Jason, who surprised me with a wonderfully fresh coconut, ready to be consumed with a straw, absolutely delicious, it was my first ever, refreshing and sensuous too, the white jelly like flesh particularly delicate despite its appearance. Then diner at Catherine in the garden of her new home, with bubbles and candles on chocolate cheesecake in company of Junky, the aptly named skinny but beautiful neighbor's cat that has adopted her; I renamed it JK, wondering whether its name was the cause of its appearance.

Finishing the evening with Laetitia's lovely concert at café Oto, perfect treat to conclude an almost perfect day. I was worried she would dedicate a song to me, very relieved she didn't. But Mercury had to strike and I got a parking ticket at 11.30 pm in the tiny alley where café Oto is, I was furious, another case of legalized theft, the four guys in perfect green uniforms were buzzing around the only three cars there like flies on fresh shit, so happy they were to having found such lucrative spot. I have parked there many times in the evening without any problems. Anyway we didn't let this spoil our mood and Catherine kindly contributed to the extortionate fine.

-- I have only been back from a month in France for a couple of days, relaxed and tanned after a week at Ile de Ré, swimming in the sea and cycling in the rain mostly, eating wonderful fish, crab, giant prawns, lobster... Finishing with the most spectacular yet minimal sunset on the last evening, a giant egg yolk slowly falling behind the green sea from a dark blue sky, no fancy colors or lighting, just a few seagulls crossing the sky, nobody on the rocky jetty, apart from Pierre-Louis, Marie and I, our three bicycles, and a bottle of the best champagne to complete this perfect tableau. Time stood still for a long while, before night started to fall, not often does life feels that simple or complete. It was a perfect end to my first proper holiday for over three years, a well deserved one too; the month has been rather stressing and demanding and I was still tired from recent travels to Beirut and Singapore.





w

It was lovely though to have staying with me Anne and Jonathan from Canada, their first visit since they left four years ago, the occasion also to catch up with many friends I hadn't seen since then, Trish, Rhett and Jeir... They came to join me in France too for the 14th of July, we saw the most amazing fireworks on the lake in St Yrieix. Unfortunately I deleted by mistake, thinking I had already downloaded them onto my laptop, all photos taken these past few weeks.

-- This past month seems to have been about guilt, guilt of not being a good enough friend or hostess to Anne and Jonathan, not having enough time and energy to give them. Guilt about not being patient and loving enough or spend enough time and energy with my mother who is not well, having fallen into the deepest depression after the short period of high that followed her fall and loss of consciousness of last month. She now looks like a helpless child, not able to do anything or pull enough energy to put three words together apart from her instinctive NO she throws at you whatever you say or propose to her. She looks at you with big blue empty eyes that say help me, hug me, stay with me, don't leave me, it is heart breaking. My father has become super patient and gentle with her and does everything even the cooking, it is touching to see. She smiles and feels much better when I am around, we have always had a special understanding that doesn't require words, and my presence seems to comfort her, even if I am not always patient or kind. We talk sometimes the three of us about getting old and dying. I am quite sure that it is part of the issue.

They are both 84 now and have been super active, healthy and independent for all their life, and still are, well until last month in her case. She tells me that she feels completely empty and has to kick herself from the moment she wakes up in order to get up and stay awake. I reply that she is lucky to have had to wait until her eighties to feel like that. For some everyday is a battle for most their life. She is worried that she is becoming mad or senile. Her fear and anxiety are so obvious, yet she cannot acknowledge that it might be a sort of fear of death.

-- The situation is very distressing. At the same time it is giving us some great opportunity to discuss and share serious and emotional stuff; their emotions rather than mine, It is true that I do not share much of my feelings or thoughts with them, this is not the way I was brought up, we have never ever shared a hug or a 'I love you'. They do need and ask for it now, but I cannot do it. They also seem to need me there to be able to tell how much they love and need each other, it is beautiful and touching to see. But I get embarrassed and annoyed when they start directing it all towards me and expecting a return. I was having lunch with them every day and stopped by after my day's work at the centre des livres d'artistes, for a game or two of scrabble and a chat before going back to mine or meeting friends. They would have me stay for diner and sleep over too: if things don't improve I might have to do that one day. Once at lunch, they were exchanging sweet words when suddenly my mother asked my dad, if he remembered when was the last time they had actually done the 'bagatelle'. Both of us almost chocked on our food so embarrassed we were by this very intimate question. then I couldn't stop laughing and my father retreated to the garden to go and see his beloved chickens. She couldn't see anything wrong with her question but pretended it was a joke to avoid his reprimand. Guilt is still there as I write despite phoning everyday and going back there in a couple of weeks.

-- Guilt also at not being able to accommodate one of my godsons, Roman, the fourteen years old son of my close friend Katy who died of cancer three years ago. He wants to come and spend time in London with a friend of his this summer. It was agreed a long time ago that him and his brother, also my godson who is now 19 and share the same birthday with me, were always welcome here whenever they wanted, at my expense of course. I always thought they would come together, as they are very close. Roman has been asking me to come since last Easter. But so far it has been impossible to welcome him and not just for financial reasons. I don't feel experienced enough to be responsible for and mother two teenagers for a week or two, they are not as independent as I was at their age. Beside, between going to Belfast, Scotland and Austria for projects this month and back to St Yrieix to look after my mother and run the first artist residencies at he centre of artists books, it doesn't leave me much time or energy to be a mum. I have felt guilty and worried and inadequate for the past month, and it is only yesterday that I managed to write a letter to Roman to explain exactly why.

-- My beloved old Peugeot 205 that I brought back from London in 2006 has finally given in, the engine is perfect but breaks and suspensions need work and it is no longer legal to drive it because of the absence of a French or English MOT. I had to find another old banger on wheels, a French one this time. I was lucky to do so pretty quickly, second hand cars cost 2 or 3 times more than in England, you have to go through a garage, very few people sell their cars privately, they usually swap it for a new one and get a small discount in exchange. I am mobile again with an old Renault Clio, I am missing my old companion. Strangely enough my whole family who all have brand new fancy cars and have always laughed at my antic, would like to keep it as a souvenir. Nephews and nieces plan to buy it of me, and keep it somewhere and look after it. So I blend in more, I look like a normal French driver rather than a bohemian English expat. I miss the difference.

-- I am finishing this long overdue chronicle from Belfast, while waiting to catch my plane back to London. I might need to change the format of this blog, as I can no longer sustain the weekly exercise, I can barely do it monthly. Perhaps it should become more random when the moods take me or more continuous. I am keeping going as it is until the end of this cycle so that THE YEAR volume 5 resembles the other 4 volumes. This gives me a few weeks to explore alternatives. Belfast is very pleasant, vibrant with culture for such a small town. It was touching to be part of the first Northern Ireland Photo biennial, the organizers have high hopes and ambitions for its future development, and by the look of things it has everything to succeed. A super energetic and efficient young director, Michael Weir and a more mature and very entrepreneurial business director Jim McKeever, with a few established photographic institutions, Belfast exposed, MFA course, Catalyst art, some great photographers at the forefront of contemporary Photography, Paul Seawright, Donovan Willie and amasing wealth of photo archives of Belfast troubled history waiting to be exploited. My bookroom talk about artist's books and the future of photographic books went well, as usual I prepared way too much materials and had to seriously edit as I went along, comments and feedback were good. And from one talk to the next, I am perfecting, sharpening and developing my argument. The panel discussion the next day was interesting and more official than I expected.



It was chaired by Source magazine very own Richard West who was trying very hard to generate an argument between myself, Teresa Pereira, Blurb's head of marketing for Europe and young Anna Pfab from Schilt Publishing. Strangely enough I found myself in the position of keeper of tradition in relation to what a book of photographs is or should be, ie much more than a container of pages used to display or disseminate photographs, but an art form in itself with its own history and set of issues and constraints that are often disregarded or not even acknowledged by most photographers or publishers as well as most on demand printing outlets like Blurb. I made a few critical points about the current visual diarrhoea and book overload online and off, most in need of serious editing, blurb books included, without alienating the other panelists too much.

-- I managed to visit Belfast a bit, walking everywhere I could, easy in such small city, and very pleasant too as everybody is very eager to chitchat in the streets, cafés and pubs. I have never met such a chatty lot. I found it strange to see very little signs or remains of the troubled history in the city centre, like in Beirut for exemple where they make a point of keeping some of the bullet ridden ruins of buildings and monuments as a reminder. In Belfast very few people live in the centre still, as during the troubles, as they call it, because it was the centre that was targeted and bombed. The stigma prevails to this day, artists are trying to change the trend and move in but progress is slow and difficult.

On the other end famous streets like Shankill and Falls road, and other landmarks like the wall, the murals, the now abandoned Crumlin rd court house where so many trials took place, often without a jury, and the prison made famous by the hunger strikes, are now part of Belfast touristic city tours on open buses or by taxi. The cour house was designed by Sir Charles Lanyon, architect of so many of Belfast's landmark buildings, it closed in 1998 after the Good Friday Agreement was signed. There are plans to turn it into a hotel. Like in Beirut it was fascinating to speak to people about their experiences and memories, you do not have to ask even, it often pops up in the conversation, so close it is still in their memories and every day life. For some it is still difficult to cross to the once forbidden side of the road, so engrained it is in their habit. After seeing some of the Belfast photographic archives at the red barn gallery, it really inspired me to try to develop a JUNGLE FEVER / body thought body talk project with local communities and photographers there. I have mentioned it to a few people, it looks like there might be possibilities with Belfast Exposed. Various riots are sparking off in London and other cities. I came back after midnight last night and didn't notice anything special in Brixton, yet buidings were boarded up this morning and the underground and buses diverted. I slept through it all. More is expected tonight. Mounting frustration and discontent is finally erupting, yet the ones in power refuse to acknowledge the causes of it all. *Tuesday 9th August 2011, 20.20pm*



Week 44 45 46 Summer endings

Atmosphere; stormy. News; Muammar Gaddafi has abandoned ship, France credit rating is in trouble. Book; Guy de Montherlant, Le songe. Robert Filliou, enseigner et apprendre, arts vivants.

Tip; Art is a living process unlike the relics spurt out on the way.

-- Cameron and his government have shortened their holiday: in retaliation and frustration they are falling hard on rioters, prosecutions are plenty, over a thousand, and sentences are heavy, disproportionate some would say. As if this could make it stop or make everybody forget - victims, perpetrators, spectators and the police that stood by - the real issues causing a whole generation of youth to behave like anarchic rebels without a cause. It is hard to be invisible, in fact much harder than to be rejected, where at least you are being acknowledged as existing. Then again it allows you to act completely freely without the need of a reason. It is hard to be invisible and bored in summer, school is over, youth centers and libraries have closed down, and you have nothing to do. It is hard to be invisible and yet see clearly all around you and in the media, that everybody is out to make it rich, fast, minimum effort for maximum reward. The government, banks, big businesses, small businesses, MPs, local councils, traffic wardens, train companies, the underground, speed cameras, pop stars, sports stars, gangsters, celebrities, everybody is at it.

It is the rule of the game, it is what you have to do in order to be (visible or successful) or to survive. Everyday I moan about all the legalized thefts imposed upon me for no other reasons than for the perpetrator to make money at my expense; car towed away in my courtyard because my tax disc is one day out of date, £250, ticket for stopping to pick up someone at Clapham station on a Saturday morning engine still running me at the wheel, £60, parking ticket at 11pm in a small mews in Hackney one a single yellow line, £60, car rental company making you pay 25 pounds in taxi to reach their office while your voucher clearly say 'pick up from station' then charging you 8 pounds to make a phone call to DVLA to check your driving record, because you forgot to bring the paper part of your driving licence, Lambeth council raising services charges by 40 % from one day to the next, not because they are providing more services but because in their own words 'they have changed the way cost is calculated', Ryanair charging £6 for online checking but there is no alternative. Almost everyday, I feel riotous at the unfairness and injustice of it all and at the self-righteous impunity of those that create and perpetuate such system. But I am not invisible and I have a lot to lose so I don't. As one journalist mentioned, it is obvious why the riots happened in Henley and not Finchley.... They took place where inequalities are the biggest, as in Clapham. I can see plenty more riots on the horizon if Cameron keeps one behaving like Sarkozy did after what happened in Paris suburbs a while ago. The police are now totally powerless to control most deprived French suburbs which have become real ghettos where they do not dare venture unless in force. I don't think Sarkozy will include any visits in his coming presidential campaign as he did five years ago, and rightly so, nobody could guarantee his safety.

-- A few days after my Belfast trip I went up to Inverness to tie up loose ends of the "is a thing lost if you know where it is" project, hard to call it a collaborative one anymore. I went to sign the wonderful edition of intaglio polymer prints that John Mc Naught at Highland Print Studio did for me. The exhibition is still touring various galleries and art centers in the Hebrides until Christmas, it is doing well and I hear great feedback about the three prints I have contributed among other works made in collaboration with Ian Stephen.



There will not be any major show in Edinburgh, sad in a way, and a relief too as it is finally putting an end to the project and the unrealistic demands often put upon me. Strangely enough I looked at Ian's website and our collaboration as well as my conceptual and funding contribution to the project as a whole have been written out of history. It makes one wonder about History with a big H when you consider how different our little stories can be depending on who writes and who reads. I do think that what truly happened in this tumultuous but highly creative collaboration, the time spent thinking and making, the numerous exchanges, dialogues, monologues, misunderstandings, excuses, harsh decisions, negotiations, battle of egos, unfairness, pains and stresses of all kind, is what makes the project interesting and alive, much more than the works on the wall or the names on the posters (or not) and what truly gives interesting answers to the fantastic question used as a title; is a thing lost if you know where it is? The question may have been addressed to a skipper by a clumsy crew who had just dropped the cutlery overboard while at sea, one of Ian's stories, it could equally apply to collaboration, understanding, respect, friendship and wounded egos and also to storytelling and the words we use to transform, disguise, hide, accept, make sense of our little epics of the everyday. I might, I should one day compile a record of all our exchanges as a possible answer to this tricky question, the short answer being yes of course.

-- I used the occasion for a few days excursion in the highlands with Roz, wanting to explore further some of the places I had discovered last year while working on the project and introducing her to a part of her country she didn't know being from Paisley: I use the work country intentionally. We are friends since the 80's but it was a first to go away together, it felt somewhat special. It was a fantastic if not almost sleepless five days. We decided to go up and come back overnight with the Caledonian sleeper train but all berths were occupied so we had to make do with hardly reclining seats in a packed compartment, resulting in painful almost sleepless nights on the way up and back. We picked up a hired car in Inverness, after a wonderful morning and lunch with John and Alison at HPS, signing prints and listening to John's many stories and gathering advice on where to stop on our way to Rieff and Cape Wrath, the two ends of the world, end of the map we were aiming for. A Fantastic road trip followed, best weather, best company, hardly any rain and fantastic skies, we stopped two nights with Diyanne in her ancient family croft house at the edge of the world, thick walls of stones, incredible changing views out of each small window. Sailing in her wee 'Hector' wooden open boat was off, too windy for Roz who suffers from serious vertigo triggered not by height but by movement; it would have been ok if we had spent less time chatting around the kitchen table, hours of great banter, laughter and a few drinks, in between a few walks on the sea rocky edge among the wild badly sheered sheep in wild winds. Great food, venison stew, fresh crab, the best cauliflower cheese I have had for a long time... very special indeed, a stretch of suspended time in an overwhelming landscape at the end of the road, at the end of the map.

-- I met Dyhanne last year in Stornoway, she is a regular crew, and often only female, on many of Ian's arduous sailing trips in the Hebrides, often on open wooden boats, she was part of the crew of 4 that sailed on Jubilee, a 70 years old skiff, from port of Ness on the isle of Lewis to Stromness on Orkney, for our project; a difficult voyage that few sailing boats undertake in one go. Furthermore there is no record or knowledge of a skiff having ever done such a voyage in the past, or of Stornoway and Orkney sailing communities having had much to do with each other.

Soon Diyanne will be off around the world for a few months or years who knows, family home put in order, daughter at university, time to jump into the void as she referred to her newly found freedom. We witnessed a trip to pick grapes in France and a trip to Thailand becoming concrete plans almost out of the blue, it made us feel like witches. She has invited us to come up and stay whenever we want. Plans were made and some will be kept for sure.

-- It was hard to leave on Sunday morning, but we had a mission, reaching Cape Wrath and sleeping in the wild, before having to drive back down to civilization and catching the sleepless sleeper back to London on Monday night. We took the smallest roads possible. Looking at the map, I had an hitch since the morning, it happens to me regularly when I travel, I saw on the map a tiny end road among many others, leading to the sea, 10 miles south of cape Wrath and I knew this is where we should spend the night, on another edge of the world; instead of continuing as planned to Durness, which despite its remote location as the furthest north you could go, felt way to urban for my liking. I had no trouble convincing Roz and I wasn't wrong. Following my instinct, we arrived at the end of nowhere three miles after a few houses and a cemetery named Seiga, a small field with wild sheep before a small bay of big stones and pebbles. We were happy, sang and drunk a gorgeous Rioja staring at the sea and the birds and the rocks and the wind, before a cold and dump sleepless night. The tent was great but we only had our two sleeping bags with nothing to put between them and the cold rising dump, and nothing to cook or make tea with in the morning. We loved it still and were packed, gone and sitting in the closest café 10 miles away, by 9am. More great skies, great landscapes, great open spaces with no trees, no cars, no houses until and after Cape Wrath and Durness, no time for the small ferry and bus that take you to the cape itself. Then slowly back to the real world, Inverness felt like a huge buzzing city, which is clearly not the case. Followed another sleepless night, I had caught a cold in the wild. I slept for almost 24 hours when we got back to London, but I felt happy, head full still of wild open spaces. A perfect end to an imperfect Scottish adventure. Like what as Cornelius Cardew says, you cannot fail with Nature.



Nature is and has no goals, we, human beings, have goals and we can only fail to achieve them. In that sense failure is something to embrace rather than avoid, it is our way of being in the world. To have goals in itself is to fail. Or is this going a bit far? Is it better to have no goals then? Or perhaps better to have goals but not expect to succeed. Is a goal lost if you know where it is? is a goal failed if you know what it is?

-- I am finishing these words in St Yrieix, sitting at the desk of the centre des livres d'artistes after finishing to read Robert Filliou's French translation of "Teaching and Learning as performance art", borrowed from the collection. We also have a copy of the original English version but it is too valuable for me to read freely and comfortably, ironic isn't it for the creator of the Poetic economy. I might be able to get hold of a copy of the French re-edition for myself. Tonight and tomorrow lunch time various family celebrations and reunions before I fly off to Neufelden, via London, for the annual Wandelweiser meeting / week of exchanges, concerts and feast for all senses, well almost, in Joachim's Eckl wonderful Lagerhaus / artist heaven. This year is a bit different as it is the launch of Michael's Pisaro's new project FLUSSAUFWARDS which will continue over the next few years. A perfect end to the summer, filling up on good vibrations, inspiration in the company of like minded and understanding human beings that I am happy to consider as friends, fellow artists and seekers of whatever it is we seek. I am getting old but life is good, even if it is crap or because... *Sunday 28th August 2011, 22.27pm*



Week 47 to 51 My ears are alight

Atmosphere; stormy. News; Muammar Gaddafi has vanished. Europe is close to bankruptcy. Book; Habiter poétiquement le monde; L.A.M exhibition catalogue 2011.

Tip; one minute in your mouth, ten years on your hips.

-- This is the last entry of the 5th year of my blog chronicle. Autumn has already started, I am 12 days behind, I have also lost a week on the way, finishing on week 51 instead of 52, but hey shit happens, I am not perfect and it is not like I have been sitting on my comfortable behind doing nothing. The Wandelweiser week in Neufelden was a success, it is getting more interesting every year, and while concentrating on one project for the whole week, Michael Pisaro's Flussaufwärtstreiben # 1, changed the dynamic slightly with a focus on one particular individual which ruffled one or two egos, the work itself was truly fantastic in the way it opened up new layers of meanings and experiences day after day. My ears have grown and become so sensitive that I am sometimes aware of and disturbed by the air brushing them when I walk, still the case two weeks later. The project itself is quite simple in structure, at the same time quite complex in the way it has come alive;

Michael has chosen six 'stations' upstream along the river Mühl, equal distance between each, roughly ten minutes walk, the first one in the yard of Die Station, the last one on the shores of the artificial lake beyond an impressive Russian built dam. At each station Joachim and Marcus have designed and build a sort of shelter made of a wooden structure wrapped with plastic film, one of Marcus trademark, it looks like a sort of minimal bus stop with one bench supporting two big speakers and sometimes a musician. The structure provides a point of visual focus for the audience of what is in effect a listening experience. Every day for six days, from 3 to 5pm, a similar ritualistic process takes place. Michael does a twelve minutes field recording of the location, positioning himself and his imposing furry friend 2 to 3 meters in front of each wooden structure. Whatever audience there is sits around him on wrapped up hay bales or on grass, staring into nothingness or eyes closed; a strange sight to see from a distance, a small and still congregation around a strange man holding a giant mic and wearing a safari hat, all staring at an empty stage. This is the recurring action at each station followed by a walk to the next one.

The whole process of sitting/listening/recording followed by walking from one location to the next takes around two hours, not including the walk back to die Station, which for me became an important part of the experience, as a slow meditative and reflective rewinding of the whole process past each location in reverse. For me, this could only be done in silence and alone, all senses alive and alert. The fact that this was usually followed by a delicious diner get together at the wonderful Mülthalof, with plenty of liquid and solid delicacies, good banter and laughter, made it even more special. Each day brought its own variation: on day one, a field recording of and a first close listening to nature and culture in action at each station with various combinations of birds, planes, car passing by, water flowing, bees and bumblebees, wind, church bell, while trying to make sense of the whole idea. On day two, the corresponding field recording of the previous day was played back at each station, at such levels that the difference between live and recorded was mostly imperceptible.

-- On day 3 recording of the previous day were played back and a different musician at each station played minimal yet audible notes. Strangely after the experience of the two previous days, this somewhat artificial addition felt almost too much and sometimes came in the way of the listening. What was interesting is how well each instrument and player suited the growing nuances and character one could attribute to each station, despite their being so close to each other along the same river bed. Station 1 in die Station yard was the most neutral and least atmospheric, perhaps as it was the most urban and the noisiest one but as such a perfect warm up for both mind and senses. André O Muller and his guitar suited it perfectly, his cool contemporary, almost rock and roll appearance, managing to overcome the clutter and calm it down a little. Radu Malfatti and his trombone at station 2 fitted perfectly the raucous sound of water dropping down a level or two to reach the nearby bridge behind him. Antoine Beuger and his flute at station 3 blended in perfectly with the wide, still and peaceful landscape of the field around him, a wall of tall pine tree as a backdrop on the hill on the other side of the river. At station 4 Marcus Kaiser and his cello were among trees and small bushes, the river just behind, he looked at home there, as if in the middle of his beloved jungle. Kathy Pisaro and her oboe were at station 5, near the dam, imposing architecture and loudness of the water gushing out of it to rejoin the river below required the confidence and loudness of her instrument's voice.

Finally at station 6, Jürg Frey and his clarinet, looking unassuming and blending in at the end of the path on the edge of the forest with the lake and another pine trees covered hill as a backdrop. The subtle textures and harmonics of his sounds felt just right and were a real treat for ears and mind which had become totally in tune and well adjusted to the listening exercise, and had perhaps become more demanding. I wished for it to continue for much longer. I have walked along that same route many times over the past 5 years, I have taken many photographs, made a few videos, a brief encounter between a snail and a fly and Bohemian trip, yet it is the first time I am able to notice so many nuances within the landscape, almost as if the stations were a few miles apart.

-- Day 4 followed the same process than day 2, the field recording of the previous day was played back at each location, this time at higher levels that made it possible to identify the recorded sounds with the effect of amplifying ambient ones and sometimes overpowering them. Day 5 was with musicians again, playing over the field recording of their previous playing. The rain was with us for the whole time, it didn't stop any of us, field recorder leading his flock of musicians and listeners. I was filming each day's proceeding so had an umbrella to protect both equipment and myself.





I have never listened to rain so intently, I was amazed at discovering the multitude of tones that constitute what we call rain, almost each drop has its own sound, according to the distance and the various tightness of the surface on which it falls and the distance between that surface and my ear, providing endless possibilities for 'composing' and mixing this weather channel with what was happening at each stage/shelter with various raising and lowering of the umbrella. Nature had decided to remind us that field recording or no field recording, project or no project, she prevailed. Something that was discussed on a few occasions that week, something that I was really interested in. Did we need each station and the daily walk to really listen and observe nature? Could we do it equally well and intensely if we didn't have the structure of the project and furthermore the visual focus of the shelter/stage to concentrate on? Where did the essence of the project lie? In the field recordings? In their interaction or blending in with ambient sound? In the repetitive experience of us the listeners? In the collective experiment? Would it be as intense and powerful if we were alone? What was Michael's intention with this work? Which were quite possibly different to my understanding and enjoyment of it that went far beyond my interest in the interplay between ambient and recorded sound or experimental electro acoustic music. It became a meditative and introspective experience where walking and listening and the interaction between the individual and the group played a big part.

-- This became quite clear on day 6, where the daily ritual of walking/recording and listening was replaced by an indoor sound installation recreating the archeology and experience of the 6 stations over 6 days; 6 sets of speakers placed in a circle were diffusing one after the other for two hours a mix of all recordings, the audience sitting inside a circle on hay bales, following the sound as it evolved from one station to the next, as sunflowers in the sun. The installation looked beautiful but for me the work had lost its indexicality in real time. It was hard to connect with on any other levels than purely aesthetic. It probably worked beautifully for those who hadn't experienced the previous 5 days as they had nothing to refer to, but for those who had it could neither sum up or live up to what we had seen and experienced, which didn't necessarily need recalling or reminding. Perhaps this is the mark of a truly successful work, the fact that it operates on so many levels. Michael might have chosen the shelter to house and protect speakers and musicians rather than to provide a visual focus for our ears, and a particular daily repetitive structure as a means to an end - for recording or composing purposes - this may have included walking as a way to go from one station to the next rather than as a form of meditative winding or rewinding; the final walk necessary to come back may not have been considered as part of the work, yet the openness of the structure allowed me and others to bring what they wanted to it.

-- The work concluded with a concert bringing together, Michael's installation with one of Radu Malfatti's new work, which happened to share a similar structure, 6 parts for 6 instruments of 12 minutes each, as if the two works had been planned for each other, blending perfectly to allow us to immerse ourselves one last time as deeply as we had in previous days at each station, so familiar had we become with the rhythm of the piece. Yet we were taken somewhere else entirely by Radu's composition translated by the same 5 instruments, Kathy's oboe having been replaced by her perfect pitched humming, a practical choice to start with since the oboe was way too loud for the circumstance, but the addition of this primal instrument worked a dream, connecting the instrumental layer further with the ordinariness of the field recordings. The two hours felt like a natural conclusion to the whole week; another combination of Nature and Culture not yet explored in previous days, a more controlled encounter

allowing for a more intense and focused experience perhaps, but an experience that liberated the work from its site specificity, something that the installation didn't manage to do. A lot more happened around the work, some of us responding to it in our own way.

-- The stations became the focus and pretext for 2 or 3 of my 'poor' videos as Antoine refers to them, the little epics of the everyday I record with my Lumix camera, with minimal intervention on my part apart from my ability to recognise and listen to the fluttering tension of my index on the shutter, prompting me to switch to video mode. Marcus and I also shot the footage for a little idea I had which if it works would allow for a continuous record of all stations used; a video recording of each station similarly framed with Marcus playing the same continuous note on his cello; wood structure, musician and single note providing focus and continuity for the changing landscape as we fade from one location to the next. This provided the occasion for a little impromptu herculean comedy. Marcus, in between two subtle playing for the camera in his best shirt, suddenly, without any explanation and in complete silence, started to throw a dozen of heavy wrapped hay bales along a small path crossing the river hundred meters downhill before climbing back 100 meters or so uphill on the other side to rejoin a small road leading to Die station, where our truck was parked.

I may add that it was very hot and that Marcus was quite feverish with a cold. I was speechless and in stitches yet decided to record this peculiar little ballet, bales flying in the air, a bare chested man running behind, one or two escaping downstream before getting stuck, unlike one of his shoe that continued and got lost for ever. Then, his attempt at saving both shoe and bales from the water, horse riders passing us on the narrow path, horses and riders unhinged by the peculiar sight of a sweaty man with a big afro, rolled up wet trousers and one shoe, solemnly carrying 2 bales on his shoulders, a potentially dangerous situation, the 3 horses started to get nervous as there was little room to maneuver, I was there also, filming while carrying tripod, Marcus Sunday shirt and cello case on my back. I am hoping this will make a great little silent movie. There was a purpose, a mad purpose perhaps, to his actions. We were supposed to bring back the bales to Die Station by truck, the gate leading to them across the dam was locked, so Marcus decided to do it by hand, down the small valley, across the river, and up again until all were loaded and we could drive off to the next filming of a rather sweaty and disheveled Marcus playing the cello at the remaining four stations. He was exhausted, I was completely thrown and disconcerted by his fit of madness and display of herculean strength. We might need a lot of clever editing to compensate for the lack of continuity at shooting stage.





-- I also had a chance as I hoped to discuss and work on my reading of *Story of O* with both Antoine and Sandra. Antoine feedback on the recording of the reading I did was useful as he managed to put in words what I felt was wrong with it but couldn't articulate in other than negative terms or criticism without being able to come up with solutions. His suggestions made a lot of sense and at the same time revealed his way of working with Sandra for her readings. I really liked his use of metaphors and images to inspire the right tone or mode of enunciation of words and phrases. Working with Sandra brought another interesting dimension, her suggestion of bringing some sensuality to the reading, loading the now insignificant and meaningless words with a bit of the desire and lust inherent to the work. I really appreciated her attempt at reading the prepared text, most inspiring indeed, I feel that I know where I am going with it now and have the few recordings we made of both our readings as reference.

-- I have been back for three weeks now, a lot has happened, start of the academic year and the planning of teaching with increasing numbers of students and decreasing teaching of hours and resources, finishing two new artists books, the Whitechapel book fair, a week in France, yet this week in Neufelden, Joachim's and Hani's generous set up with Die Station and the Mülthalof hotel which allows for it to happen every year for the past five years, Michael's project and his collaboration with Joachim and Marcus in order to bring it alive, the numerous experiences, exchanges and discussions that took place around delicious food and wine or a fire,

the way our creative and intellectual minds, all quite different from each other, share that *je ne sais quoi* difficult to articulate in fear of being wrong or killing it; an inquisitive passion for truth, authenticity, simplicity, clarity, harmony in art and in the every day and in the way they connect, perhaps. Those are big words and tentative ones flowing out of my keyboard to say that I am still under the influence and feeling connected, despite our wide geographical spread and the various little tensions caused by our demanding and fragile egos. Joachim and I discussed a few times our need to define and visualize in words or on paper what is developing or growing over the years between all of us as a loose group and individually, around the Wandelweiser connection that brings all of us together every summer, since all of us have other creative ventures and interests and networks. At the same time I am weary of losing the organic and flowing nature of our connection by giving it a name and an identity, which will inevitably create boundaries, insiders and outsiders, but also responsibilities and expectations. I know that it has worked for me because I feel like a guest and as such I have little expectations and responsibilities apart from feeling very grateful and fortunate and hoping to remain appreciated and welcomed. Yet I feel more and more included in the ups and downs and the various dynamics that take place, not always comfortably of course, I always find it so much easier and safer to remain the outsider... eternal and recurring motto in my little life; reconnection with France and family, moving up on the academic ladder, development of bookRoom. The outsider in me is receding.

-- I wish to finish this last entry of the 5th year of this chronicle by a little revealing anecdote that took place the week after I came back from Neufelden. Jochen and I went to see an evening of John Cage's compositions by Apartment house at the Queen Elisabeth Hall. I have had little experiences of live experiences of John Cage's work, so I had little or very high expectations. But nothing prepared me for what I experienced. It was sold out, no surprises there but the auditorium was full of inflated egos, everybody who think they are somebody of the poetry, music and art world was there and wanted everybody else to know they were.

You could feel and almost touch the smog of self-importance; I have never experienced anything like it. It was so ironic really considering what was happening on stage and the nature of the work. There was also all kinds of heckling and annoying interventions; quite a bit of uncontrollable laughter and puffing and huffing during 4'33, some very precise clapping in time with the last note of a work to show how well connected one was with the work, one person going to sit on the edge of the stage facing the audience, not sure if as a form of homage or heckling or else, he had to be escorted out. Very little humility or genuine pleasure at being there it felt, more of a social occasion where one had to be seen; strangely enough it made Apartment house appear blend or completely out of place. I was hugely disappointed. I am in France finishing these words, the sun is blazing outside still, I have been swimming every day, making the most of it while trying to get rid of the excess calories amassed over the summer on top of last weekend double birthdays celebration excesses of nephews Maud and Gregoire. My mind is racing with too many projects on the go, too many things to get done, and the impossibility for now to trim it all down. End of a good year though. *Monday 3rd October 17.51pm*



IF YOU

Reality narrated as it happened

CAN'T

stories of sheer survival

PRETEND

read all about it

IT'S OK...

YOU CAN

