

Issue 4

COMMUNAL LEISURE

Free



HELLO



...and welcome to the fourth issue of Communal Leisure; the open submission, free newspaper for music, art and politics in Glasgow.

Can you believe we launched Issue 3 in March 2018?! That time, we had a party in the upstairs of McNeils Bar, with various friends playing tunes: Cucina Povera, Horse Whisperer, Boosterhooch, Quinie, DJ Lanyard, plus some lads downstairs banging out country rock covers. It's hard not to get nostalgic.

This time, we're still in the midst of a 'lockdown' we've all experienced in a differentiated but familiar blur - whether grafting in essential work, blurring all divisions of the domestic / workplace, furloughed but nowhere near at 'leisure'- anxiously waiting to see what will come from the next round of 'easing'.

We'd like to apologise to anyone who submitted stuff back in 2018, or this time a few months back, for being so slow. It turns out doing a magazine in our spare time with everyone unpaid isn't always that sustainable.

We'd wanted to say something

clever here about the way this pandemic has had complex effects on our ideas about work, leisure and the state - but to be honest we're all just really exhausted and spent. Maybe better is to recommend three books that came out in the last three years that speak to a particular idea of organising that could inform such a discussion: AngryWorkers, 'a small political collective' (who featured in previous issues of Com Les) who published *Class Power On Zero-Hours*, an amazing insight into six years of workplace struggle in logistics and warehouse spaces on the outskirts of London; *Feminism Interrupted*, Lola Olufemi's incredible and very readable vision of a feminism that fights back against structural violence and injustice, and D. Hunter's *Chav Solidarity*, an autobiographical meditation on trauma, class and identity that was produced as part of the *Class Work* Co-operative project, who also put out *Lumpen*, a *Journal of Poor and Working Class* writing.

Such works unsettle a certain variation of 'leftism' that tends towards the academic, the exclusionary and the 'culturally superior' - whilst raising serious questions

for those of us in the 'precariat' who feel (perhaps subconsciously) wedded to such markers.

We chose to write this issue in the midst of the pandemic partly because it felt hard to find other ways to get together, share ideas and enjoy the often fleeting (but no less affecting) relationships that come from gigs, clubs, readings and hanging out (in groups of more than 4). For some of us, the strange new work-setups of the pandemic left us with time we wanted to use, or experiences of work and 'culture' that we wanted to reflect on. We hope you can find within these pages some of the forms of connection, amusement and (maybe even!) transcendence that such activities have often offered. Or at least, it's something to pass all this time we've not really worked out how to process.

Either way, let's all look after each other, and maybe see you in some strange pub backroom again sometime soon, or for another issue of this very infrequent magazine (in 2024? Or before!).

Take care, Communal Leisure

Illustration O.P



LONG LIVE BOABY'S BOTHY

Living Rent tenants union have been busy across the city, leading tenant-led consultation on rent rises, fighting cuts to services in their Lanarkshire branch, campaigning for better close cleansing in Govanhill, campaigning for rent freezes and reopening of libraries in Pollokshields (see the article later in this very issue), fighting GHA for new windows to offset terrible damp and mould in Castlemilk and Knightswood, campaigning against dereliction using a community app in Tradeston, and launching a new branch in Partick. At the start of the year Wyndford Tenants Union, another Living Rent branch, occupied Collina street aka "the Valley" - vacant land above the Wyndford. They have built a small hut (Boaby's Bothy) there and one person is there at all times. Glasgow City Council aim to sell the land to developers, but the union believe it should be redeveloped using a community buy-out, to build good quality, affordable housing. The site has grown and flourished loads since the initial occupation, with a mural, outdoor activities and a flower meadow. Everyone is welcome to get involved and Living Rent are looking for community members to assist them in their plans, which if they go ahead, would be the biggest ever community buy-out in Scotland! They need skills and support to achieve this ambitious dream: get in touch with nick.durie@livingrent.org.

PASSING GAS?

Tradeston's finest autonomously run venue, print studio, library, meeting space and community hub, GAS lease is running out, and COVID has meant that there isn't really a GAS collective anymore and, quote, "energy is loooooow." The individuals that are legally bound to GAS (named on lease and bank account) would like to step down. The lease is under an individual's name, and GAS is not a legal structure that could take on the new lease itself. GAS is hopeful that there are people out there who would

like to continue GAS and all that its community have built together. They have an open call-out for groups that could work independently of current GAS crew to take on the lease, insurance and bank account, manage bills, run the social centre, and take GAS on as their own while honouring the ethos under which it was started and running the space collectively. There is a timescale of 6 months for this transition (starting January 2021). If no group is able to take this on, GAS as a space will be closed, but GAS as a "spirit" will continue, and maybe rise again in another form one day... Continued monthly donations will help GAS in any potential transition, and if GAS closes with money to spare, they will donate it to Edge Fund, who funded them at the start and invest in radical projects across the UK. Email glasgowautonomousspace@gmail.com if you want to discuss the future of GAS. Watch this space!



TOOLS APLENTY

Glasgow Tool Library, your friendly local spot for borrowing tools and other tool-like things, is expanding! As they explain: "The general premise of GTL is that we lend tools like a traditional literary library lends books, we try to make projects and hobbies more affordable and reduce waste. We are currently open from 11.00-1.00pm on Saturdays (with the hope of opening another day mid-week come next month). We are based in the big

green shipping container on 26 Civic St, Glasgow G4 9RH. People can sign up online to become a member, make tool reservations on our website and pick them up on a Saturday when we run a door-stop click and collect service. Currently, we are looking for donations to help us to expand the library into a wider group of objects, including event & catering equipment, games, drones, textiles, camping gear, and any other misc stuff that falls into our laps!

With many people using furlough, or the long dark nights of 2020 to repaint that DISGUSTING hallway, the tool crew have been in high demand. As they go onto explain "In Dec-Jan we took a month out to ensure the service could be run safely in light of the new Covid strain. Now we have reopened we want to make sure that the library is serving people primarily within walking/cycling distance of us in North Glasgow." Remember: its cool to tool!

GIVE SOME CASH TO SUNNY G

Beloved community radio station Sunny Govan are fundraising in the wake of limited operating through the pandemic. Sunny G, known for its wide range of incredible community projects and radio shows, along with its infamously banging late-night dance shows, are looking for donations big and small to help them through. As they explain: "Since the closure of our studios in March 2020 as a consequence of Covid 19 [...] we were unable to deliver SQA training, our advertising and sponsorship income is down by approx 70%, we were unable to have our regular fundraising gigs and events. This has resulted in a deficit of approx £20,000." The team are well on the way to making that target, but could do with a boost from any not-too-skint Communal Leisure readers. You can donate to the fundraiser at: <https://uk.gofundme.com/f/lets-keep-sunny-g-radio-on-air> And tune in to listen at 103.5 FM or www.sunnyg.com

DELIVERPOO

Rumours abound about human poos being posted to various businesses in the southside area of Glasgow. Apparently some targeted parties fear this is part of an effort to literally shit on the more middle class bougie businesses that have opened up in the Queens Park vicinity, with one source (who heard it from a pal) saying they thought it might be about getting revenge on gentrifiers. Less fun for the harried barista who already has a queue of flat white aficionados waiting at the door at opening time to have to deal with bags of shite through the letterbox, but hey, this is the news not comment section. We'll leave it to you to decide if this is an hilarious piece of direct action, a complex revenge plot, a misspent jobbie, or simply made up.

HERE TODAY, GUM TOMORROW

Happier news here, from the world of community facebook posts, where a local man was reunited with a lost pair of dentures after a walk:

FOUND TEETH

**Update* The lost teeth have been reunited with their owner in exchange for a bottle of red! Poor guy lost them on his daily walk and has been looking for them ever since! Sounds like a joke but I'm dead serious. Thanks community for helping reunite an old man with his lost teeth :D"*



GPS START THEIR JOURNEY

A new prisoner solidarity group has formed in Glasgow, with a particular focus on supporting people inside prisons around Scotland, and raising awareness about the proposed new HMP Glasgow. The group is meeting twice a month and welcomes anyone to get involved if they are interested in working towards a future free

from prisons, whilst supporting those affected by the harms of prison and criminal justice. The group are doing Prisoner Pen Pal writing, explaining: "Glasgow Prisoner Solidarity is a community-based group formed to offer non-judgmental support, solidarity and friendship to people in any prison in Scotland. It is launching a pen pal project matching up people inside and outside for monthly letters of mutual support. The project came together out of a shared sense that the prison system can isolate people and cause harm, and a desire to do something to fight this. One member of the group said: "We have no agenda beyond offering support, keeping people connected to what's happening in the world, and learning how people are getting on inside."

GPS is open to new pen pals, and encourages anyone inside who is interested in learning more and potentially in being matched up to write to this address: GPS Pen Pals, c/o Category Is Books, 34 Allison St, Glasgow G42 8NN. Include your name, address and prisoner number."

The group is also working on researching and building campaigns against prison building, and has been writing about policing in schools (see this issue for an article they wrote with the Anti Racist Educator). If you are interested in getting involved with any of this you can get in touch with GPS via: glasgowprisonersolidarity@protonmail.com

PINK PEACOCK READY TO PLUME

pink peacock "a queer, yiddish, pay-what-you-can café in glasgow's southside" is on its way to being ready to open, with a premises on Victoria Road and an amazing menu and set of events in the pipeline. The café has been keeping up various activities through the Covid-19 crisis, including pay-what-you-can meal deliveries for the queer community and various online events, including a peysakh party with a 'fuck visibility' liberation seder on trans day of visibility. The café will provide an alcohol free late-night space with 100% vegan, kosher, and halal food, in yiddish and english and "focused on solidarity, accessibility, and queer liberation." Any last bits of donation or support would be really welcome to get the café ready for opening, with a donation page (and shop) on their website: <https://pinkpeacock.gay/>

NO EVICTIONS: TEARS FOR MEARS

Glasgow No Evictions Network started off April with a week of action against housing company Mears, as part of a nationwide week of action protesting against the use of institutional accommodation and the inhumane treatment of asylum seekers in the UK.

The network, which supports people in asylum accommodation in Glasgow against evictions, planted a commemorative tree and at a vigil for Adnan Walid Elbi, Badreddin Abedlla Adam and Mercy Baguma, who all died in 2020 while in Mears accommodation in Glasgow. The action comes amidst increasing scrutiny of Mears' role in the asylum system, and is organised as part of a national action alongside SYMAAG (South Yorkshire Migration and Asylum Action Group), Sheffield Against Asylum Evictions and MAJF Tyneside (Migration & Asylum Justice Forum), in a united display of anger at the despicable conduct of Mears and other privately contracted companies. The actions also include a tweetstorm, banner drops and a satirical property website drawing attention to conditions in Mears accommodation which can be viewed at: www.asylumlandlords.co.uk

Among the groups' demands are calls for the Home Office to: allow people in the asylum system to live in safe, own-door accommodation, in the community; end the use of so-called 'institutional' accommodation such as hotels and barracks; stop running asylum accommodation for private profit; and fund local authorities to properly support housing & services for asylum seekers.

Find out more and get involved at No Evictions' facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/noevictions>



HOLD TIGHT TO YOUR DOOM

it's been a really lonely lockdown. I spent the first lockdown, in the spring, in the countryside where doom and despair suffused everything. i went for long walks and cycles, read about states and corporations seizing the opportunity to increase surveillance and policing, and felt a loss deeper than i could express in words. this was not just about covid; covid was the disaster we knew was coming. it was somewhat affirming, the veil lifted and the brutality of our ruling institutions laid bare for all to see. this was the closest i'd felt to the climate catastrophic future we've been barreling towards (personally i mean; climate catastrophe is happening every day for someone somewhere).

This time around lockdown has felt different. im not in the countryside anymore i am back in the city. until recently climate doom had retreated again, as it tends to do, while i am concerned with how to survive in the city. i've gotten caught up again in thinking about jobs, about how i will secure some kind of stable paid work that will allow me to eat and rent a decent place well into the future. these bread-and-butter anxieties rely on my projection of the present into the future. i am not imagining a future absolutely different from the present, but a future where capitalism, as it does, absorbs crisis after crisis and emerges looking more eternal and inevitable than it did before.

I hate being anxious about work. i hate work. i want a world without work (you know what i mean). i actually don't live in glasgow now, i live in a city by the sea. i go to swim as often as i can because in the ocean these dismal everyday anxieties wash away and i become more attuned to the world roaring all around us. there's fight in everything. some people (white men) created this system that forces most of us to labor, the world is much bigger than this system; the past stretches far beyond it and there are many presents aside from it. as soon as i get home i've usually forgotten this.

I decided - just a few days ago - that my shortsightedness wouldn't do. like i said, i hate being anxious about work. so i decided to get back into reading 'apocalyptic literature.' apocalyptic literature is nothing new. collapse and catastrophe has happened countless times to countless communities already (see, for example: all the

ravages of colonialism). apocalyptic literature, writes one author i've recently been reading, "is resistance literature, a coded attempt to envisage some outside in a political present that has become unbearable, even if it means the death of the known world."

Sometimes i stop and wonder what if i am wrong about climate catastrophe. i know i'm not. the science is in! but i also know that i've come to need my climate doom. capitalism is unbearable and if it were not causing the destruction of the planet im not sure how i would cope with it. there's comfort in knowing that capitalism - work, rent, bills - is not just unbearable for me and most the people i know but is unbearable for the planet too. i need to hold tight to my doom and dispel any notion of a 'stable future' where i need a 'stable job.' there is no such future. what a relief.

- JV

MINIMUM WAGE FAMILY

'We are all a family here'

Classic pep-talk phrase your manager utters; usually when they want you to do something you are definitely not getting paid enough to do.

At first you think- how can they be so vile and compare work, which more often than not you hate and only do because you need to survive, with family, something supposedly safe and warm? But then you think, maybe work is exactly like family.

Managers, cruel mother and father figures that "understand you", "have been in your shoes" and

"just want to be your friend", while always telling you what to do and how to behave, expecting nothing less than perfect (of course!). Then comes the unexplainable fear of letting them down, even if you do not care. Do it my way or the highway they think, while telling you they value your opinion and will take it under serious consideration.

Can't leave out opinions about your appearance- it is a given. Maybe about your weight or your hair, maybe about the way you dress- the fatal mistake of wearing another brand's cardigan because you live in Scotland and you were cold and your uniform did not have one. I am deeply sorry, but I am

going to have to report you, it is the rules after all. What will people say?

Going to your room, or the break room, crying about something that has no real consequences outside the walls they have built around you- maybe only to your psyche.

Certainly there is always someone that you even slightly get along with, but it would cause too much distraction to keep you together, so you can work different shifts, sit at the other end of the table. Peace restored.

Semi-mandatory gatherings that you are forced to attend and mingle with people you wouldn't even say hello to otherwise- and can only get through when drunk. Trying to avoid the creepy coworker/ uncle who insists on telling you how things "were better in my time" and maybe "women have too many freedoms nowadays" but he was just drunk, it was just a joke, please don't take it personally- maybe you're just too sensitive, too..delicate, have you ever thought about that?

And we do care about your mental health, as long as you do not ask us to do anything about it.

Putting on your fakest smile- No worries, everything is going great, see you soon or later, thank you for waiting, thank you, thank you- I forgot about what but thank you.

Surely you can do some unpaid overtime for your family, you are dependent on us.

Yes absolutely do not forget to smile, why would you be sad? Have a treat.

- AS

PENPAL

Lewis Prosser, a 28 year old public sector worker and freelance florist living in the coastal town of Penarth, Wales, seeks correspondence from like minded individuals. His interests include folk crafts, film, gardening and food. Any mail addressed to 7 hill terrace, Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan CF64 1HA will be answered happily and quickly. (Physical post only please)

Mae Lewis Prosser, gweithiwr sector cyhoeddus 28 oed a deliwr blodau ar ei liwt ei hun sy'n byw yn nhref arfordirol Penarth, Cymru, Yn ceisio gohebiaeth gan unigolion o'r un anian. Ymhlith y diddordebau mae: crefftau gwerin, ffilm, garddio a bwyd. Bydd post a gyfeirir at 7 Hill Terrace, Penarth, Bro Morgannwg CF64 1HA yn cael ei ateb yn hapus ac yn gyflym! (post corfforol yn unig plis)

- LP

SOME THOUGHTS ON RECEIPTS

This piece has been written entirely on discarded receipts while at work. I do this so that I can get away with writing while making it seem like I am working. So if this piece seems a bit weird and disjointed and directionless, that's why.

I work in a fancy deli/wine shop/cheese shop. We are still open. We never closed for the pandemic. This is because we are classified an 'essential business' - because we sell bread, eggs, flour. Most of what we sell though is about as essential as designer clothing: truffle flavoured crisps, expensive charcuterie, pâté, insanely-priced fizzy water. Some customers spend over £100 pounds on such stupid things. Some of them spend it and don't ask for a receipt. Maybe it is silly to get annoyed about things like that but I do.

My Boss, boss (my manager's boss, the shop's owner) is here and for some reason she is painting the door frame. I'm unsure why; the shop is very busy, and the door doesn't need painted, at least according to my standards for doors. It is the start of the Christmas rush, our busiest time, and the only explanation I can come up with for her door painting is to make it look to us that she is also getting involved in 'the graft', as an act of solidarity or something. She is getting in the way.

One customer talks at me about how it is so hard for young people these days, how getting a job is so hard. What should I do? Why is she telling me this? She continues the conversation on her own, unaided, and begins telling me about how her son has just bought a place. She tells me how much it cost him. He is about my age, she says. My hands are freezing cold and red raw from the nasty chemicals that we use to wash our utensils, and I am utterly exhausted. Another customer - an old university tutor of mine from my undergraduate days - tells me I should be doing a PhD rather than working here. I am wasted in a place like this, he says. It is just small talk, but he should mind his own business.

Yesterday my boss threatened to fire me because I told her I have to self-isolate with my girlfriend for ten days. She says that if I voluntarily go into quarantine then I am voluntarily not going into work. My girlfriend lives in the US, and has to return to the UK to renew her visa. She has nowhere else to stay, so it isn't much a decision as it is a necessity that she stays with me. It is also Christmas, and we haven't seen each other in a year. Give me a fucking break.

I've been fired from jobs before. One place, a chippy (or 'Fish Bar', as they called themselves), low-key fired me by ghosting me after I fractured my elbow. Another place, a posh gastro pub, fired me because I was terrible at my job. That was fine by me.

The third time I got fired was from this dodgy* restaurant over on the west end of town. I had been hired as a chef, which seemed pretty cool at the time. But in reality it was unbelievably dull. I spent most of my days sitting precariously atop my station work-

top and reading books, pausing occasionally to chuck some pre-prepared dishes through a conveyor belt oven food-heater thing. The reason I got fired that time is too long and complicated to put down in detail here. In any case, it was a pretty high-octane affair that involved a full-on shouting match with the head chef in the middle of the restaurant. It was a very cathartic experience.

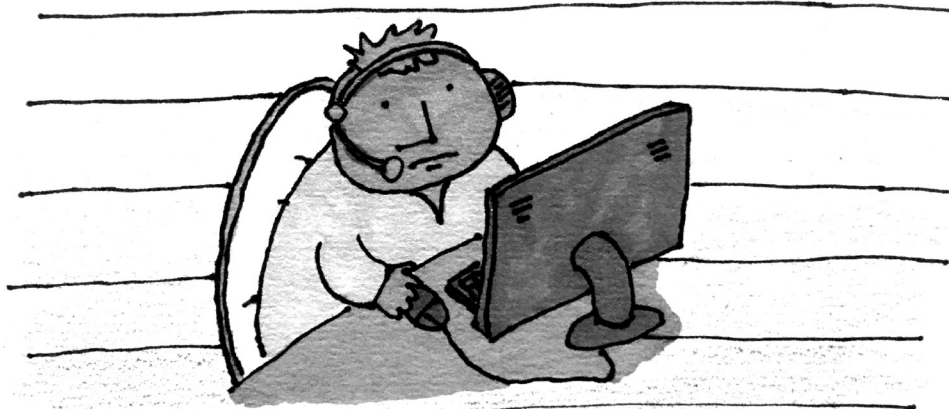
On my days off I sit in the kitchen and listen to radio call-ins talk about how they were made redundant because of Covid. One man begins to cry. Outside grey sleet is pouring down from the sky.

My boss is back and she is flitting frantically around the shop in really expensive-looking fitted designer clothing. I'm not really sure what is going on. I don't want to speak to her, so I say I need to go to the toilet and sneak into the staff room to make myself a cup of tea. I sit on the toilet and quickly down it, scalding my mouth in the process

Since March my wages have been increased to £9 an hour, up from the previous £8.70 or whatever it was. I have been told that this is as a thank you to all the staff ('essential workers') who have put themselves at risk during Covid, but the word on the shop floor is that this generous wage rise will simply mean no increase next time the national minimum wage is raised.

What is the point of this piece? I'm not really sure. As I said, it was written entirely on discarded receipts while at work.

- JG



WORK

A. Simpson 20

SELLING SUNSETS

My first real memory of a reality television debate is when some friends at school started arguing about whether it was ok to piss in the shower. This was in 2002, after a contestant on Big Brother Series 3 did just that, much to the annoyance of some other housemates. I had to look up the episode just now, to check the facts against my memory. The main protagonist was Jonny Regan, a county Durham fireman with sopping gel-spiked hair. The main complainant, Alex Sibley, was a male model from Essex (favourite band? Spiller, of 'If This Ain't Love' fame - *yes, it still bangs*), who managed to leverage his anger at 'piss-gate' and general fastidious cleanliness into an advertising deal with Domestos bleach, after leaving the BB house. This was the season where Jade Goody first made a dent on the public consciousness, ridiculed and belittled by a rabid tabloid press. It was also the year where the house got split into 'Rich' and 'Poor', with housemates separated by a see-through Perspex shield, and denied or granted luxuries depending on each other's whims. The producers rebranded this as 'heaven' and 'hell' in later seasons, presumably because pseudo-biblical damnation felt a little less on the nose. The writer Jason Okundaye characterises this era as one in which:

Gameshows, reality television, and comedies were the central genres of mainstream public broadcast which offered up those seeking fame, financial prosperity, or interventions in their personal lives for ritual humiliation to gratify middle-class attitudes towards lower social classes. Blairism's regular attacks on 'scroungers', 'chavs', single mothers, asylum seekers, and hooded youths provided a sheen of respectability to TV executives who made a career out of mocking Britain's most marginalised, allowing it to become a pursuit of popular culture.

We all sensed this during the playground 'piss-gate' and Big Brother debates, even as crushingly self-involved teenagers. Around this time one particularly nasty kid at school told everyone that on a visit to a friend's house he'd found the family's toilet seat 'covered in shit' and they 'didn't even have a toilet brush'. This was the kind of accusation you couldn't get away from through denial, or even violence, because it came from the intimacy of having let someone into your house in the first place. It built on the general, crushing accusation of being 'dirty' and the wrong kind of poor, puncturing the visions of material comfort we

all projected. Homes were supposed to be clean, off limits, and obscurely 'normal' - only a false friend could really upturn this. The fact that the vast majority of people at school had very little money was a contributing factor to such discernments, not a logical issue: to be a 'townie' as we framed it (never a 'chav', which was only ever used as an accusation that served as a distancing tool), meant a conspicuous newness of clothes, shoes and accessories, alongside pride in local and working class roots. A rejection of poshness was so implicit it didn't really need stating, though there was a memorable episode where a history teacher was ripped apart after telling us that she'd 'had to come to this school because you can't just do private for a good teaching CV'. At 13, most of us wore fake Rockport shoes, discount designer brands, and 'Dirty Donny' boxer shorts - and occasionally these were drawn upon in accusations of fakeness, but the point was more to hold yourself in such a way that the this didn't matter, and wouldn't be challenged in the first place.

I was never very good at that, and found myself around this time making the seemingly vast journey from the 'townie' football pitches at the front of school, to the small enclave of 'moshers' who hid around the back, near the ice cream van where everyone would spend their entire lunch money on shortbread fingers and sour sweets. Moshers (the equivalent to Sweaties in Scotland) cultivated a certain dirtiness, and sometimes this was formed through expensive shopping trips to fabled epicentres like Leeds Corn Exchange or Manchester Affleck's Palace, and the kind of zealous 'second hand' clothes that hint middle-classness. But the moshers were a wide mix of kids - many just 'didn't quite fit in', or came to mosherism through ex-punk relatives, second hand guitars and the fact that System of a Down were actually really good. Visiting both mosher and townie friends for sleepovers showed how similar most of our houses were, across the subcultures that I had suspiciously traversed. Mosher bedrooms might have fraying Kerrang posters of Brody Dalle from The Distillers, or a few postcards demonstrating the obsession we all had with being 'random' ('The badgers stole my spoons!!'), but otherwise the interiors were similar. Neat, minimal living rooms and kitchens with framed family photos, soft palettes of magnolia and beige, concaving sofas, big hefty TVs: this was before flat screens and full IKEA hegemony. Big brother, along with the lurid colours and DIY luxury of Changing Rooms, served as a shock to the domestic system. BB season 3's living

area looked like a dystopian EasyJet / Clockwork Orange waiting lounge, all sparkling plastic and glass, huge brightly coloured sofas, soft lighting, breakfast stools. But the novelty of the 'home makeover' was contagious: blow up armchairs and lava lamps became the top items on friend's Christmas lists, sponge-based wall stencilling started happening all over the place. It didn't really matter that much of this interior novelty was, as with the Pop Idol music that soundtracked the era, forged in a sanitised palette of 60s nostalgia (See Will Young's Light My Fire video, a full Twiggy / Sgt Peppers homage). Like a Sims expansion pack, houses started to feel somehow more upgradeable and customisable, from kitchen to teen bedroom, as part of a confusing blur of middle class aspirationalism. Surly teens could join in weekend B&Q trips to get the kind of practice run at adult home-making many of us would go on to be decisively denied through the tight confines of perpetual rental tenancies.

The gradual death of interior design shows (RIP Changing Rooms in 2004, DIY SOS in 2009) was simultaneous with the final melting of 'Cool Britannia' pretences in the years between the Iraq War in 2003 and Financial Crash of 2008. House buying shows took on the ascendancy, location over interiority. Newlyweds and urban families were replaced with retirees, small scale property developers and rich people 'escaping' to the country, with our own 'generation rent' condemned to the odd sanctimonious news report. This was also an era when the overt cruelty of early 00s reality TV became a point of discussion and push back in itself, though brutally exploitative talkshow formats like Jeremy Kyle barrelled on, only cancelled in 2019, following the suicide of former participant Steve Dymond. The sneering faces of Simon Cowell, Anne Robinson and Supernanny became steadily eclipsed by the sort of hokey, mum-friendly reality TV epitomised by Bake Off, and the dominance of 'scripted reality' shows like Geordie Shore and The Only Way is Essex. The latter provided glimpses of domestic space characterised by 'glam' and shining newness that tack onto the Changing Rooms era, but appear to the viewer perfectly formed and sculpted, like their inhabitants. This culminated by 2015 with the Love Island villa, an airbrushed vacation-photo backdrop full of plush blankets, pebble fire features and spaces to 'pull someone for a chat', in contrast to the way Big Brother designers would build surreal tasks, proximity and obstacles into the domestic environment itself. Love Island's genius is to position the drama firmly within debates

around relationship etiquette and personal transparency, in opposition to the overt ridicule and exposed social difference of earlier eras, reflecting this in the design of the villa. Rather than attempting to document a constructed 'private' sphere, Love Island creates a curated, blemish-free public space, with the villa functioning as a kind of constant holiday smoking area (cigarettes not allowed), rather than a home. Viewers are invited to join in, as many thousands apply to do, if they can demonstrate social media 'graft' and gym-honed bodies, or even temporarily through popular tourist 'Love Island' trips to the villa itself. The show still seeps into our domestic interior designs, but through vision of polished escapism, rather than processes of DIY or gradual 'home improvement'.

Such a partial, broad-brush reality TV history leads neatly to the surprise Netflix hit of 2020, *Selling Sunset*. A classic scripted reality setup focused on the statuesque employees of LA real estate brokerage firm the Oppenheim Group, the show adds two conceits to the format: people are filmed at work, in contrast to the majority of 'real wives' and TOWIE-esque shows, and a spotlight is put on the multi-million dollar Hollywood properties being put up for sale. These become characters in themselves, referred to by their 'price tag', occasionally linked to human sellers but more regularly anonymised through celebrity non-disclosure agreements. While the fallouts and rivalries of the various characters make up the drama of the show, it's the mixture of this with a kind of obscenely wealthy property speculation that hooks you in. One main job for the estate agents is 'dressing' the houses for viewings, with emphasis put on attracting particular clients: 'bachelors', 'young creatives', 'tech bros', through the right contemporary art, rug placement and ornamental vases. Other houses are being sold with owners still present, but must be presented as similarly 'lived-in' and yet untouched. One storyline follows resident mean girl Davina Portratz attempting to sell the home of Adnan Sen, a "real estate mogul" and apparent bond villain, who wants to sell his 9 bedroom, 12 bath, 18,000 square-foot estate for \$75,000,000, in three months. The fact that this is completely impossible at such a price, that and Davina is told as much by all her colleagues, is beside the point, the story arc serves to advance Davina's 'high level' connec-

tions and allows Adnan to publicise that fact that he is choosing to live in a constantly 'on sale' home, demonstrating a wealth and domestic liquidity that is never acted upon. As of January 2021 you can still check the Oppenheim Groups real, functioning website and see the house on sale, browse through its pictures, check its pin on the google map. This is a strange proximity to reality, completely removed from most people's lives, yet available at a price.

There is a peculiar attraction to seeing people choosing to position their domestic lives as constantly for sale, especially for those of us who don't get much say in when the next landlord house inspection might come. This is property, even in its domestic form, as pure asset, shorn of the individualised interior design of the early

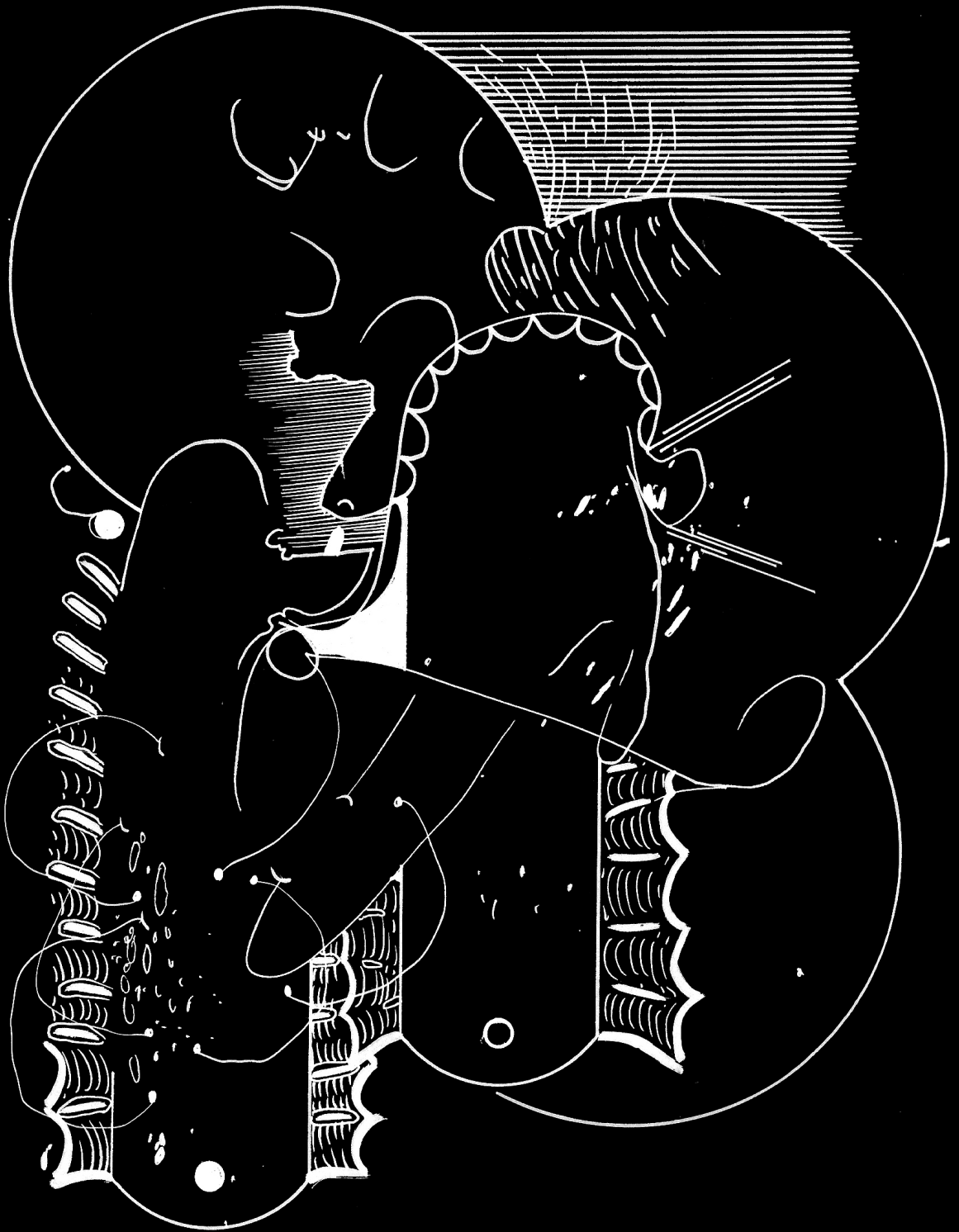


00s. The showroom becomes the end point. This isn't to romanticise that earlier era, with its 'wacky' design and 'wacky' people being subject to all kinds of strange cruelties, but to notice a shift in ideas of domestic space, even in the narrowest realms of mainstream pop culture. The surreal playgrounds and DIY experiments of early reality TV have been replaced by a homogenous kind of wealthy house, more familiarly 'real' but more removed than ever from the limited housing options most of us face. Some people try and sprinkle Love Island glamour into their Airbnb spare rooms, domestic space as pending sale, in the permanent vacation of a paying other. Rental agreements mandate against interior changes by those who actually live in a home, as landlords seek to maintain the barest possible basics, punish wear and tear, and ensure future profit. Even the stupidly rich end up living on hold, pending a sale, though we watch without sympathy and marvel at

their bad taste. Selling Sunset is a land where people argue over the biggest square footage and longest infinity pool, but its interiors are remarkably dull, in that way that only gleaming white and glass can be. They offer a compelling mirror to our own hastily moveable collections of chipped mugs, colour-ordered books, and wilting houseplants. Sometime's the show's weirder properties feel haunted by the spirit of an early Big Brother house, with a 'Real Wives' splash of bad art and Gucci bedspreads, but this is usually muted or painted over for sale. Most have pool gardens straight out of Love Island, and 'home offices' that look like a miniture Google HQ: permanent vacation, permanent work. In a distorted symmetry, we watch from locked-down bedroom offices, in rental flats that always prioritise the next buyer, over the current occupant.

Great reality television has always invited the viewer to question 'what about this is real'? *Selling Sunset* never hides that its interiors are completely constructed, temporary – or that many of its protagonists are precariously renting these opulent properties themselves, trying to maintain all the right veneers of wealth and lifestyle. In this way it feels weirdly resonant of my teenage school playground discussions, of keeping alive the idea that we all had nice, normal homes, without revealing what any of us meant by that. A few of my old friends went on to get mortgages, buy houses, get married. Many of us continue to rent, spending as much time documenting issues of mould, damp and broken furniture, as we do on making the spaces we live in feel like a home. No doubt the interiors of Love Island, TOWIE and the rest continue to creep into these attempts to personalise and improve these spaces, as do the judgements and hang-ups we have about bringing someone else into 'our' homes, of being seen in the frame of the domestic. It turned out that most people in that playground back in 2002 had pissed in the shower, and I'm sure still do. The overt cruelty and snobbery of early reality TV might have waned, but such shows remind many of us that we find ourselves more contained than ever within the ideas of beauty and dirt held by someone else, someone richer. For all the opulence, drama, and fun that *Selling Sunset* gives us, the show presents a vision of the domestic stripped of life. This is the kind of empty cleanliness of a morgue, rather than a home. Do they piss in the infinity pool? Would you?

- JW (Illustration SK)



SCENE CHECK IN

Illustration RC

At the end of 2020 we set up a Google Form and link for people to answer some basic questions about 'DIY' arts, music and organising in the midst of the pandemic. The following answers are presented basically verbatim from everyone who filled it in and got in touch. We don't pretend that it is in any way representative of the 'scene' as a whole, whatever that may be, but think it is nice to see what people have been up to and start thinking about what comes next. Thanks so much to all the respondents!

TOM WILLIS

Subcity Radio / Body Parts

HEY! How are you?

Great!

What kind of work / music / political organising / art / writing etc were you doing before the pandemic?

In June I took over the running of the local lovely community station Subcity Radio. I was also running a sporadic club night/radio show called Body Parts.

How was this affected by the lockdown?

It's been tough! At the station we haven't been able to safely use our studio or have an in person team meeting for the last 9 months. So as with every thing else post-pandemic, a lot of previously fun things have been reduced to email shuffling and zoom. We've been relying on people with shows to pre-record everything at home which is a big ask and quite a different experience to broadcasting live. But the resilience from the contributors has been amazing - we've had literally thousands of hours of radio since March and a lot of it has been incredible. From dark

soundtrackings of Daniel Dafoe's journals of the 1772 plague outbreak to a series of New-Age mixes from Japanese record store owners. We've also taken on around 15 new shows and about 10 new team members over the last couple of months. I think as people have gotten better at adapting to everything people have begun to feel a bit less anxious and a bit more creative, so that's been heartening.

Club nights were Subcity's sole source of income which has obviously vanished for the foreseeable. Luckily we have enough in the bank for now and with some plans for merchandise we should keep ticking into 2022 if needed.

How are you feeling about 2021, and a post-lockdown Glasgow?

A mixture of wariness and cautious optimism. Over lockdown exactly how grim, corporate and exclusionary a lot of the scene is became more obvious than ever. The money that Sub club raised over summer could have kept 10 far more valuable community/arts spaces like GAS or the African Arts Centre (RIP) going for years. There's hardly a large institution or venue left that hasn't been embroiled in some kind of racism, sexism, transphobia or homophobia scandal.

Recessions, like the one we are on the verge of, haven't historically been good for arts accessibility or the wellbeing of working class artists.

What's been giving you hope through all this? What gives you hope for the aftermath?

I think hopefully more than ever, assuming 2021 will see an end to lockdown, there will be a huge appetite for embracing culture in a social context. If the right people can make sure as much money from that as possible goes to the right places, I think 2021 could ignite something wonderful.

The opening of new queer spaces like Bonjour and Quto along with some rumblings from others looking to open venues gives me a lot of hope this could happen.

I think open-minded music spaces will play a big part in the next wave of talent that will also be needed for this to happen. Subcity Radio, along with the several other stations that have popped up this year could be a big part of this and that makes me really excited.

JULES AKA JOEY MOUSEPADS

FAST MUZIK

HEY! How are you?

I am feeling festive simply drinking bramble wine in my cow print pyjamas so i guess u could say i am 'living it large'

What kind of work / music / political organising / art / writing etc were you doing before the pandemic?

I was DJing a lot and mostly focusing on my party 'FAST MUZIK' which is a club night dedicated to rave, hardcore, trance, nightcore, donk etc !

How was this affected by the lockdown?

Luckily i have been able to keep DJing thanks to streams & radio, but obviously clubs and parties are out at the moment. DJ Tinyhandz and I had been planning a new bassline, bounce & makina party for May which I hope we can still make happen at some point. i love DJing but events are what I'm really all about so it's been tough! i have so many ideas for themes for the future; all I do is fantasize about future parties. get ur formalwear ready for FAST MUZIK "homecoming" !!! with FAST MUZIK, i get to take my fantasy

of what I think a club should be like and make that real for people. i really want to make a space where folk can just be themselves. i really think clubs, parties, and raves are very uniquely able to do that!! i love creating this totally all-encompassing sensory euphoric experience. I'm missing the FAST MUZIK community loads, can't wait to see everyone again.

How are you feeling about 2021, and a post-lockdown Glasgow?

while i'm not sold on WHEN exactly we will be able to come together again, i'm feeling VERY optimistic about the party landscape - I think people have a huge appetite for parties at the moment that's only getting stronger, and that might bring out people who haven't really thought of themselves as 'clubbers' before. i hope we will all realise that what's important about clubs and parties is not big name headliners, but coming together with our friends and our communities! sometimes the DJ best-placed to bring the perfect vibe is just a friend. i hope we all start to realise that everybody at any given party is a stakeholder in that party, and that the crowd is just as important as the DJ - I think usually more important!!

the only thing that worries me is whether the venues to host the parties will still exist by then.

What's been giving you hope through all this? What gives you hope for the aftermath?

my incredible household and our tiny private raves! also i know a lot of people kinda got tired of DJ streams but I never did - online dance music communities have been a proper lifeline for me this year. It's so incredible to me that rave music can continue to lift me up even when we can't come together, and i've met a lot of people through streams and stuff that i can't wait to meet at parties sometime soon. also i think stream culture has actually done more for my DJ rep than playing in clubs ever has.

gotta shout out CRUSH RADIO, subcity, doesitbang?, VIP MIX, clydebuilt radio, and the whole HSMMG posse

Any other thoughts or questions you have for us?

u know i gotta say it hardcore will never die

PHIL

HEALTHY

HEY! How are you?

Phhht. Starting with the hard ques-

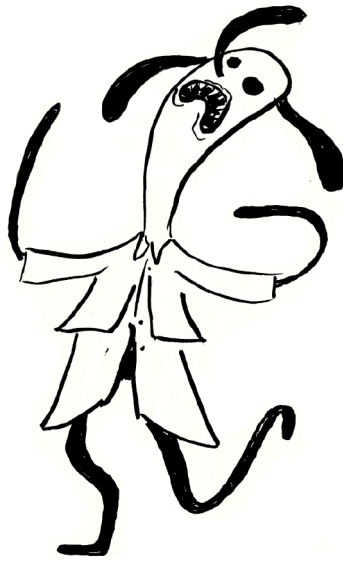
tions eh. I'm actually in a really lucky position with work and friends so pretty grand thanks. I mean I do miss old fashioned fun.

What kind of work / music / political organising / art / writing etc were you doing before the pandemic?

Running parties and events with Healthy. My day job is for a think-tank and involves trying to improve how democracy is done in Scotland.

How was this affected by the lockdown?

Well no gatherings allowed = no parties since March. And as much as I appreciate the efforts of people run-



ning events online, for me it doesn't translate. With work I was (blissfully) furloughed for 5 months and then we started back with everyone working remotely.

How are you feeling about 2021, and a post-lockdown Glasgow?

Depends what day you catch me on but usually it's positive. I'm hopeful people will more than ever seek escapism and to be close to one another, rather than this being a full stop on spontaneity and physicality. I'm fascinated by how this aberration of a year will change peoples' mentalities for the rest of their lives, though I'm less positive about these outcomes. I quite like to indulge in fantasising about the past and I'm already wistful for the past futures that would have come to be before this all happened. I'm not sure that makes sense but I know what I mean.

What's been giving you hope through all this? What gives you hope for the aftermath?

Pals and pipe dreams <3

Any other thoughts or questions you have for us?

I'd be interested in people's ideas for democratising the scene or different ways of communicating ideas to each other. Regular health check ups like this are needed x

ANDREW MILK

Bum Notes / The Pink Pound / Spite House / Current Affairs

HEY! How are you?

I am doing ok

What kind of work / music / political organising / art / writing etc were you doing before the pandemic?

I work in Music and Cultural Activism by which I mean I play in bands and organise queer feminist accessible events and create platforms for queer performance.

How was this affected by the lockdown?

Everything came to a screeching halt. I moved some of what I do to the online space like my online version of *Bum Notes drag karaoke* but pretty much most projects are on hold and I'm focusing on what I can do from home and what brings me the most joy/ satisfaction.

How are you feeling about 2021, and a post-lockdown Glasgow?

I am cautiously excited about it to be honest. I'm sure everyone wants to be able to get back out to events etc but I am also looking forward to a renewed and redefined cultural landscape. I think people have had a lot of time to focus on what matters to them and what they want to support and see grow- I know I have. My hope is that this will be reflected in the kind of venues, events and groups we support and that support us.

What's been giving you hope through all this? What gives you hope for the aftermath?

My solo music as The Pink Pound only got to appear on stage twice before lockdown but I'm happier now in what I've made and hopeful for *2021 shows*...maaaybe? Anyway, The Pink Pound will start this year off with a new monthly show on Clyde Built radio from 21st January.

I play drums in Current Affairs and we have managed to record half an album during this year. I know that we will finish that record soon and that should be released shortly after.

Spite House - the events collective I am involved with - will be launching a website soon. Queer-feminist gigs will be present in the Glasgow landscape and this gives me hope. New things are coming and I think a greater strength of community will emerge, we'll see wont we?

Any other thoughts or questions you have for us?

I feel like Jerry Springer- my final thought. If you spent a lot of this year playing video games and watching TV don't worry about it, me too. It won't be forever but if there's anything that alleviates your anxiety during this time grab it with both hands I reckon.

YVONNE

Migrants Organising for Rights and Empowerment

HEY! How are you?

Contemplative

What kind of work / music / political organising / art / writing etc were you doing before the pandemic?

I was doing organising around Migrants Rights and Racial Justice work

How was this affected by the lockdown?

We are unable to meet in person, this has limit our capacity to organise, learn and grow together significantly. On the positive side technology has enabled to reach a much wider section of our community and engage with other communities virtual that would have been inaccessible otherwise for example we had several zoom meeting with migrant rights activists and Climate Justice activists in USA and Africa

How are you feeling about 2021, and a post-lockdown Glasgow?

Positive and more self aware of my needs and limitations

What's been giving you hope through all this? What gives you hope for the aftermath?

First My Faith God unfailing love has been my anchor, my strength and my shield. Secondly the courage of fellow activists during the world wide Black life matter movement and the anti Sars protest give me hope because we have not stood on the sideline of history we have made history as will be remembered as change makers its an incredible feeling

Any other thoughts or questions you have for us?

What exactly is this about?

LEWIS LOWE

Redstone Press

HEY! How are you?

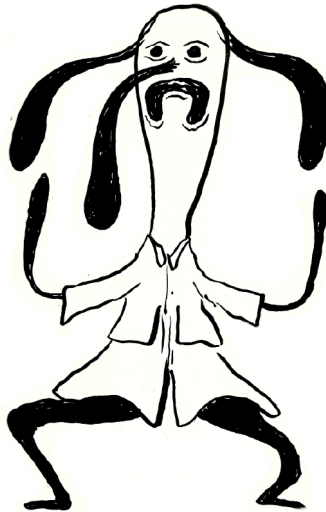
I'm okay, mix of being fine and feeling shite but accepting of it.

What kind of work / music / political organising / art / writing etc were you doing before the pandemic?

Music - djing and record label.

How was this affected by the lockdown?

Hugely, there is no djing and putting out records that won't be played in



their intended environment isn't any fun.

How are you feeling about 2021, and a post-lockdown Glasgow?

I'm feeling quietly hopeful but the reality is that things are going to get worse (maybe not covid wise but economically) before they get better. I'd be a lot more hopeful if Glasgow was closer to an all night license and was in a warmer part of the world to allow for lots of open air events haha.

What's been giving you hope through all this? What gives you hope for the aftermath?

100% it's got to be all the wee online radio stations. Clyde Built being the mainstay of my 2020 and now 2021. Having a place in which to access friends music and be interactive through the chatroom has given me hope that we are gonna bounce back with a new and invigorated community in Glasgow that can actual-

ly do some good rather than be an ego stroking exercise.

Any other thoughts or questions you have for us?

How are you doing?

EOTHEN STEARN

Spite House / Nightshift

HEY! How are you?

I'm ok thanks

What kind of work / music / political organising / art / writing etc were you doing before the pandemic?

I am predominately a visual artist who plays and loves music. I was volunteering / involved with SPITE HOUSE that put on gigs.

How was this affected by the lockdown?

SPITE HOUSE is on hold. My art practice is continuing but in a weird way, more crafts from my house - hard to make a mess and then live in it. I did record an album during lockdown with band NIGHTSHIFT which actually was a positive thing. But whole thing is very bad for mental health / wellbeing. Hard to feel inspired!

How are you feeling about 2021, and a post-lockdown Glasgow?

We are back in the lockdown now sadly and I feel very down about it. Winter is tough also so not good.

What's been giving you hope through all this? What gives you hope for the aftermath?

Music! Friendship, family. Seeing them all again. More social justice being on peoples minds. People having time to rest and deal with complex things is also positive. But there is ultimately a-lot of impending doom. I'm worrying about folk that are dealing with so much on top of covid - and our govt is a disgrace. Sorry went off, I am gaining hope through small acts of kindness. Just the idea of feeling safe again also.

Any other thoughts or questions you have for us?

Thankyou for doing this!

CATRIONA REILLY

Push It / Stereo

HEY! How are you?

Not bad!

What kind of work / music / political organising / art / writing etc were you doing before the pandemic?

I was/am the club booker for Stereo and run the night Push It. I also DJ and perform.

How was this affected by the lockdown?

It all stopped abruptly and I was/am furloughed, Stereo is currently shut.

How are you feeling about 2021, and a post-lockdown Glasgow?

Not sure - seems quite difficult to envision at this point in time but I think Glasgow has an incredible fortitude so I can see it bouncing back. Although I hope not with the same problems it had to before with inclusivity and crappy politics etc

What's been giving you hope through all this? What gives you hope for the aftermath?

The vaccine and the fact that people have been doing things like online club streams and radio shows to keep going

ALICE DE BOURG Supernormal Festival

HEY! How are you?

Hello! OK! Grateful to be in a relatively stable position, exasperated with the UK government and at the feeling that being able to meet my basic needs and stay safe feels like a privilege.

What kind of work / music / political organising / art / writing etc were you doing before the pandemic?

I'm a co-director of Supernormal Festival, and was working freelance on festivals in Glasgow and other parts of Scotland. I'd also been putting on performance nights with my friend Mattie and we had plans to make this more regular.

How was this affected by the lockdown?

Cancellations all round! Supernormal wise; months of seemingly endless back and forth on whether/ when to cancel, trying to imagine a time when events and festivals can come back without excluding people on their health status, trying to continue running a largely voluntary organisation while being stuck in some kind of limbo (and all ends of the UK) unable to do the thing that ordinarily brings us all together.

How are you feeling about 2021, and a post-lockdown Glasgow?

Optimistic-ish! Feeling like 2021 might be a long slog, but hoping that this downtime has provided opportunity to reflect on making festivals, events and communities safer and more inclusive. I'm hopeful that when we come out the other end people, venues and organisations will have survived. It's been nice to see charity auctions, fundraisers and mutual aid, although a bit depressing to see this needing to happen and the support not being a given. I'm also feeling very excited to see all the faces of people I miss.

What's been giving you hope through all this? What gives you hope for the aftermath?

Radio!!! Subcity, Clydebuilt and Radiophrenia have been definite highlights and a much needed reminder that there's still life and community out there! Mattie and I started a radio show on Subcity where we connect with people in and around Glasgow and play our favourite feel good songs. This was definitely born from our renewed love of radio and the way it's kept us feeling connected to the city/ living in hope!



TONY MORRIS Performer / DJ

HEY! How are you?

Determined.

What kind of work / music / political organising / art / writing etc were you doing before the pandemic?

1) Expressing my unconscious mental purposes in performance: as a solo vocalist and electronic noise maker. 2) Presenting programmes on Clyde Built Radio and before that on Threads.

How was this affected by the lockdown?

In a good way: it allowed me/forced me into filling the massive gaps that I was

aware existed in my knowledge of contemporary performance theory - from the role of politics and literary theory to that of drama and film making.

How are you feeling about 2021, and a post-lockdown Glasgow?

As an amateur, very optimistic. But rather worried that for professional Glasgow artists the road ahead might be very difficult and lacking in opportunities.

What's been giving you hope through all this? What gives you hope for the aftermath?

My faith. My faith.

Any other thoughts or questions you have for us?

Thanks for asking me and I hope my responses don't sound too egotistical or shallow.

MICHAEL KASPARIS Night School / Apostille

HEY! How are you?

Still working on still being here.

What kind of work / music / political organising / art / writing etc were you doing before the pandemic?

I was recording an album with my band, writing another one, had about 12 releases lined up with the record label I run and booking a European tour for another band I'm helping out. Ahhh I'm getting nostalgic for the stress.

How was this affected by the lockdown?

The band album ended up canned for unrelated reasons. The writing process stopped as I think psychologically I was finding it hard to feel motivated to write music if I was just going to sit in my spare room with it. I realised more than ever I do it to connect to people and being isolated and bunkered in I began to feel it was all pointless. I read books instead. As the new norm became the new norm I got back into everything again and I'm more excited than ever for everything.

How are you feeling about 2021, and a post-lockdown Glasgow?

2021 as an entity doesn't exist yet, it's just an extension of the mind jail we're trying to survive in for the time being. Lockdown has taught me a lot of home truths though, mostly personal stuff but also about this extended scene we were all part of once. Post lockdown Glasgow still seems so far away, temporarily but also psychologically. It's

no secret the city has had a turbulent year in loads of ways and it feels kind of fractured. I think as a scene or collective or group of disparate people we have to have a lot of truthful, serious conversations about what we want to build from here on in. If the lockdown and warped time it's given us anything, it's the opportunity to try and engage more politically and more kindly with the environment we are in.

What's been giving you hope through all this? What gives you hope for the aftermath?

As above, I think realising how much we need each other has been a saving grace. Of course the materialist, capitalist reality we live in atomizes people but when you're in a situation where the only way you can legally interact with people is to walk with them, it invites reflection. What's important to me, to us? What did I take for granted before and how will I avoid that in the future? So it's people, I would say. Even stuff like volunteering, which I've started doing, meeting people you'd not in your usual life, realising that all the superficial barriers between you are constructs put there by other forces. So people have been getting me through this. Hope for the aftermath? I'm hoping we'll see a post-disaster mentality, a communal joy from having collectively survived this by and large without the help of the state. I mean of course there's been furlough, but that fucking money isn't theirs anyway. I still have a lot of hope.

Any other thoughts or questions you have for us?

Thanks for all the effort you put in! xxx

ANONYMOUS
Unity Sisters

HEY! How are you?

I am ok

And who are you?

I am a Sister from Unity Sisters

What kind of work / music / political organising / art / writing etc were you doing before the pandemic?

campaigning for Leave to Remain for All asylum seekers in Scotland.

How was this affected by the lockdown?

Our plan was to start our campaign locally from our community. During the lockdown we were not able to reach out to people in the community.

How are you feeling about 2021, and a post-lockdown Glasgow?

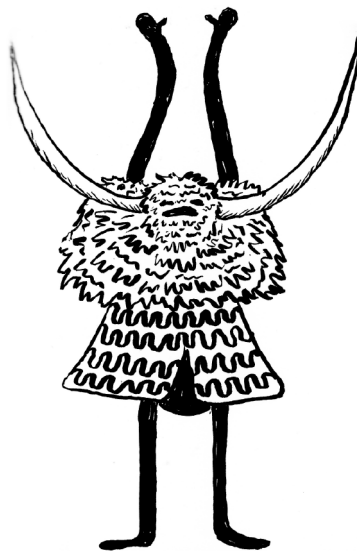
We hoped the best for the new year. But It came with a new lockdown. Glasgow is not the same Glasgow we know as people. People were trying to adapt to changes lockdown brought and copy with Mental health caused by Covid-19.

What's been giving you hope through all this? What gives you hope for the aftermath?

Some community organisations were supportive. I hope to see the community coming together and neighbours cherish each other.

Any other thoughts or questions you have for us?

Can you please help us with the "Leave to Remain" campaign?



ANONYMOUS
No Evictions Network

HEY! How are you?

Hard time with mental conditions caused by the home office hostile environment.

And who are you?!

I am an Asylum Seeker in the UK with my family.

What kind of work / music / political organising / art / writing etc were you doing before the pandemic?

I am a volunteer with the No Evictions Network.

How was this affected by the lockdown?

Very much. Before we can meet as a big group and working on strategy - how to stop mass eviction in Glasgow called by Serco (Home Office) but even in this Pandemic we also address that

a big number of people were kept in hotels where they're more vulnerable to get Covid19 - they are "hotel detainees". Being a grassroots campaign we can't neglect people in asylum seeker communities where home office left them worse conditions - like some without money, shelter, basically not treating them as human beings. We try provide people cash, food parcel, phone top-up, winter support etc with collaboration with other grassroots charities.

How are you feeling about 2021, and a post-lockdown Glasgow?

Very much appreciate the people of Glasgow as a community who welcome refugees, treat us like humans. But feel more isolated by the home office hostile environment.

What's been giving you hope through all this? What gives you hope for the aftermath?

I don't know. Being asylum seeker in this country I feel not very different in lockdown because we feel that we are in lifelong lockdown from beginning to end while seeking asylum, now whole humanity faces a similar situation as us. Just want to resist the hostile environment.

Any other thoughts or questions you have for us?

Being Asylum seekers from last 5 year I feel only grassroots campaign are only stand with us in every situation. So I want to urge that please support these Charities to we get direct support rather than big Charity who do limited work for us.

ANNIE

Unity Centre Collective Member

HEY! How are you?

I am relatively ok, thanks!

What kind of work / music / political organising / art / writing etc were you doing before the pandemic?

Before lockdown I would go into Unity weekly to muddle my way through casework, make cups of tea, chat to people, sort through some emails and admin (although this could often get pushed aside by the chaotic nature of the centre!). My favourite days were when the office was busy, people unexpectedly bumping into each other for a catch up, the phone going, samosas on the table, the door open. We also met fortnightly for collective meetings which were a time to catch up and discuss how things were going, as well as doing some forward planning. The skills and knowledge of Unity volunteers are super varied and I think

that's what makes it special - everyone brings something to the space including being able to listen to someone and empathise with what they are going through which members who have experience of the immigration and asylum system are especially good at!

How was this affected by the lockdown?

The work of Unity was completely transformed. We had to close the office, which remains closed aside from the distribution of food vouchers on Mondays and essential pre-arranged meetings. We had to learn to organise online, setting up zoom meetings and taking the phone on divert remotely. We realised that a lot of friends of Unity were worried about accessing food, so we made a plan to deliver food offered by foodbanks to people who had to self-isolate. This quickly extended to folk who were struggling in general as everyone experiencing the asylum system only receives around £35 a week (which was not topped up with an extra £20 like Universal Credit was throughout lockdown). A remote case-work team was also set up to provide information and advocate for people who had come to Unity for support, and to check in with people who were still in detention (although most people registered with Unity were released from detention during the pandemic). Despite the initial momentum, after several months the food deliveries stopped as people had work and other commitments and we realised the workload was not sustainable. The team created a signposting directory to refer people to appropriate places they could access food and other things, but I think really what folk need is access to the universal benefits system or the right to work so they aren't trying to survive on £5 a day. This need seems far from being fulfilled, but I hope campaigns can continue advocating for a change to asylum support, an end to all forms of immigration detention (including the hotel detention Glasgow experienced over summer) and to the hostile environment policies that make life for migrants in the UK so difficult.

How are you feeling about 2021, and a post-lockdown Glasgow?

Entering 2021 in a lockdown doesn't make me feel too hopeful, but I really look forward to the day Unity can open properly again, for drop ins. Not everyone has credit to call Unity to access support, and a lot of folk relied on being able to just turn up at the office. I am hoping we can come together physically to plan what we would like the future of Unity to look like, and meet up with the many or-

ganisations that we are connected to (No Evictions, MORE, Unity Sisters, LGBT Unity, Ubuntu) to talk about how we can work together to resist UK immigration policies. Personally, I would love to see a Unity community meal and more parties, as I feel it is so important to be together and do things we enjoy.

What's been giving you hope through all this? What gives you hope for the aftermath?

I think it will always be people that give me hope. The energy and tireless work of activists, campaigners and supporters throughout the pandemic has shown that even a lockdown won't stop the fight. People attending a memorial outside Maclay's hotel after the death of Adnan Olbeh, people turning up in George Sq to protest against hotel detention in an action organised by hotel residents, and people gathering outside the Home Office demanding change after Badreddin Abdallah Adam was shot dead at Park Inn hotel, gives us strength. We have strength in Unity!

Any other thoughts or questions you have for us?

Thanks for making such a brilliant publication! I hope everyone out there who has been engaged in this struggle is taking time to rest as well as to fight. Can't wait to dance with you all again.



IAIN FINDLAY-WALSH
Musician / Klaysstarr

HEY! How are you?

hey to you too! i'm alright - trying to work and home-school my two kids (they're 6 and 9) and treat people right and make stuff to stay vitalised and reach out. it's intense but ok for the moment and could be A LOT worse.

And who are you?

idk. iain? if this chat is related to the 'diy scene' then i'll self-identify as a sound artist, musician and scholar, working with and writing about sound, particularly relating to spatial experience, contexts of virtuality, and having a sense of self. currently releasing work as 'klaysstarr' and usually writing under the name iain findlay-walsh. he/him.

What kind of work / music / political organising / art / writing etc were you doing before the pandemic?

teaching at glasgow uni (experimental practice, composition and sound art), writing and making. occasional volunteering. all tangled up with parenting.

How was this affected by the lockdown?:

in some ways it has made things easier, and in others, more challenging. i'd been feeling trapped in cycles of overproduction and overconsumption. too much coming in and too much going out. symptomatic of precarious working. now i feel happier and more in control cos everything is in flux. i've become permanently exhausted and extremely reliable. developed new writing habits, partly through necessity, including writing a lot about listening during the pandemic. finished some small recording projects based on field recording and improvising done at home. teaching online has been interesting and rewarding - zoom has its benefits, in moderation. it has been great working with students on the practice-based courses, using sound and listening to try and make sense of our situation re. lockdown.

How are you feeling about 2021, and a post-lockdown Glasgow?:

2021 so far for me is a feel-your-way thing, an improvisation. in terms of the post-lockdown glasgow, part of what i think about when I think about glasgow is a bunch of buildings with people in them. but go into the city centre now and its a fucking relic - weirdly empty. the people remaining are mostly shoppers and people who can't leave. i don't know how those spaces will change as we move out of the pandemic. maybe the place of the city has changed forever, and there's an opportunity to find and make new kinds of place, new place-forms that are more useful or useful in different ways. In 2020 it became really clear how much indoor public space has disappeared.

What's been giving you hope through all

this? What gives you hope for the aftermath?:

Recent explicit and mainstream politicisation of music, music culture and discourse.

increase in local solidarity and local activism that's happened in the past year.

the pollokshields bowling green, save our libraries, positive action in housing, living rent.

leonard cohen, pauline oliveros, nina simone, the fall (esp. late fall), charli xcx, kanye west, liturgy, the old police house, votive offerings, amplify:quarantine, helena celle, julius eastman, radiophrenia.

new online music/art forms and modes of participating - watch parties, gigs on twitchtv etc.

bandcamp.

doing housework alone listening to noise and metal.

mad zoom parties with friends and family near and far.

Blue, Bon and LJ.

Any other thoughts or questions you have for us?

what are places now and what is the city? how does it sound?

where and how and with what should we do-it-ourselves together now and in the future?

MATTHEW WILLIAMS

Junglehussi

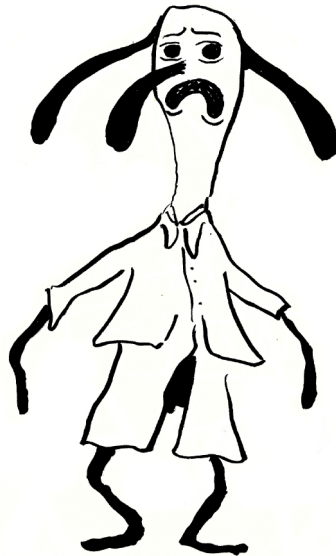
HEY! How are you?

Moving through the motions. Very much a rollercoaster at the moment.

And who are you?!

Southside gremlin

What kind of work / music / political organising / art / writing etc were you doing before the pandemic?



Lots of photos for people, for art shows, for myself! Was organising some parties, doing radio - also convincing myself I was doing supportive things

How was this affected by the lockdown?

Well, no more physical parties! However reflecting on how I thought I was being supportive before the pandemic versus how I am and can be more sup-

portive during and after it has changed

How are you feeling about 2021, and a post-lockdown Glasgow?

Not sure about 2021, trying to remain hopeful. The thought of anything post-lockdown is filled with lots of love. I want to give the city a big hug, because it is pretty special and I can't wait for the opportunity to release some endorphins sat shoulder to shoulder with friends and strangers in a warm pub with a alcoholic and/or non-alcoholic beverage.

What's been giving you hope through all this? What gives you hope for the aftermath?

In this turmoil a lot of bullshit has been exposed. I'm trying to remain slightly optimistic that people won't take on amnesia within 12 months... particularly on politics during this time, and will attempt to be more mindful by changing destructive, selfish behaviours that worsen our communities and our planet (no matter how big or small those actions are).

Any other thoughts or questions you have for us?

How are you doing!?

* * *

Spot Illustrations by SK
Below Illustration by MD



REDLINING

A hate letter to nightclubs

The public address sound system in the Glasgow school of art Students associations Assembly hall was a d&b rig, constituted of 2 Qi7s, 4 Qi1s, 4 V-sub, and 2 B2 subs in infra bass mode. It was powered by 5 D12 amplifiers with a total power output of 12000 watts. It spanned a frequency range from 32Hz to 17kHz. I don't think we ever bothered to measure its output in terms of sound pressure levels, but when it was pushed hard the backs of your eyeballs started to feel the pressure and it could make your trousers vibrate half way down Scott street.

The stage was over a metre high, so for any DJ who didn't want to feel like Tiesto we had to put the DJ booth on the floor. Only we couldn't put it on the floor, because the subs were on the floor and if we tried to play a record (on technics 1200s, with old Shure white label cartridges that lived in those horribles plastic tubes that Shure sold them in so they were always coming loose, damaging the styli) the tonearms would immediately fly out of the groove. We had to suspend the DJ table from the ceiling, hanging from the same trussing that held the lighting rig. We'd hang it from Spanset round slings that were never quite the same length on either side so we'd have to slide it around off axis until it sat level. We'd gaffer tape it to a spare set of Doughy Tank Traps to stop it swinging in the breeze. The added bonus of this system is we could raise and lower the entire lighting rig to get the table at perfect for any sized DJ.

The main smoke machine we used was a Martin Jem ZR-44. I think I loved that smoke machine as much as I've ever loved any person. We had a Le Maitre MVS haze machine that always smelled like burnt rubber which was able to create a light gauzey-ness in the Assembly Hall for gigs. One time I placed it in one of the project spaces and set it to full with just a pair of LED PAR cans in there. It felt like a James Turrell exhibition and we had a band in there playing singing saws and I think some people might have cut themselves because they couldn't see. But the ZR was the greatest machine I've ever had the privilege of using. I'd start it up at 22:45, after tromping downstairs to ask the bar's duty manager that night to make sure all the smoke alarms were isolated. Then I'd turn it on and wait for about 10 minutes for it to get warmed up. A lot of

smoke machines have fancy timers and sensors and all kinds of mechanisms, but we had the ZR set to one channel control. I'd set it to 100 percent output, and within about 90 seconds the entire room would be opaque. We had a good ventilation system in there and we could clear it out quickly if we had to, but for the start of the night especially I'd just let it hang in the air. I wanted everyone who came in to be as sensorily deprived as possible. I wanted people who were regulars who came in every night and who put events on in there and who worked in the space themselves to be totally disorientated, to not know where the space began or ended or where their friends were or where they were. I didn't want to know where I was or what I was doing but just to detach myself from the corporeal world and dissolve into the sublime. It made this hiss like a rattle snake when it pumped and it would jet the smoke out in a pure stream straight ahead out off the stage and into the middle of the crowd. At the start of the night it'd just be puffing into the security guards as they tried to set up the steel MOJO barriers that kept the crowd separate from the DJs. That was always the last thing to happen before doors opened.

As much as I wanted to lose the crowd in the smoke, the ideal density normally came about 5 minutes after a full power blast lasting around 20 seconds. Thick enough that no shapes or forms could be discerned past a metre of sight but just thin enough that the LED spot lights could cut through and create shapes.

The greatest lights we had were 10 Showtec Sunstrip Active MkIIs. You can see them nowadays on any daytime TV game show, fulfilling a role condescendingly referred to as "eye candy". They're one step above the simplest light imaginable, a strip of 10 halogen lamps in a single batten, no lenses or optics just a metal grille between the tungsten and your eyes. We would cover them up with filters sometimes, mostly congo blue (Lee 181) or primary red (106), but really we all knew that the best way to use them was unfiltered with the raw orange halogen glow filling the room and lighting up peoples faces. They were the most powerful tool we had and we could change the energy of an entire night and change peoples hearts and the course of their whole lives because they might catch the the wave and hit the crest of joy just as you pushed the fader up on the lighting desk and the whole crowd would surge like a plane taking off. I remember hanging out the edge of the big stupid cumbersome metal tech booth that we used to

wheel around the venue floor, talking to a friend and she asked how I felt and I said yeah pretty good watch this and I pushed that fader up and we had set the strips up in a big X shape behind Cooly G who had her daughter with her as she was playing and I hadn't had the strips above 10% all night and just for a few seconds it was like the sun had risen and everybody felt it at once and I've never brought any single person any real joy in my whole life but just then in that moment I lifted the entire room, not to any place they hadn't been before or better than any other night or even some other point that night, but right there and then they were all there, all together all feeling the same joy at once together

I never really had a strong desire to work in nightclubs, but I had put a few events on in them and learned how stuff worked and I needed to find work as my second stint at university really came crumbling around my ears. I didn't have any sort of qualifications to make me suitable for the job, just a desire to learn about gear and to throw good parties. There's a facebook group where venue techs moan about shit and swap shifts and when I saw one going I just messaged the guy and told him, yeah I reckon I can do that. I had no idea what I was doing and almost fell off a ladder and barely managed to get everything ready before doors opened but somehow no one called me out on it, and here I am five years later and no one ever did. I was suddenly self employed and responsible for expensive equipment and people's safety. I did what every young tech does - undercut people who actually know what they're doing in an attempt to get a foot in the door and let people know I'm willing to be exploited if it lets me work at cool events. Yes I might ruin your concert and lose you thousands when you need to give out refunds, but if I can muddle through then you save £20 on a cash in hand wage. I always managed to get away with it but I saw people who didn't and had their careers abruptly cut short because they oversold themselves. Maybe if they'd been given proper training and a clear path to employment they could've been good techs, but there's always another kid who's willing to put themselves on the line so why bother with all that.

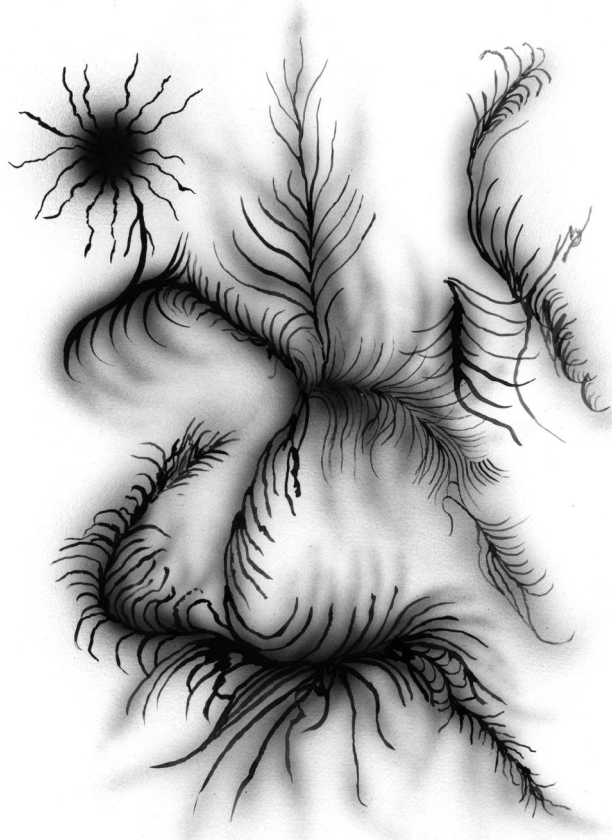
Eventually I was able to figure out what I was doing and make enough money consistently enough to pay rent. Like any other gig economy job, it was a constant scramble to get as many shifts in as possible to secure as much cash as possible before a bad month came along and decimated any savings that had accrued. There is no paid time off, no benefits, no holiday



pay. If you're lucky and you get in with the bar staff they can slip you some pints. Sometimes your invoices go unpaid for months. Sometimes you get a good festival gig that pays you £300 for a day's work pushing some buttons. Sometimes you help out with a party for some friends of a friend but end up blowing the power supply on a borrowed mixer and you lose money on the day. You will steal every item you can that's left over from the band's rider. If you're working any shift that you can get then you're going to be working every hour of the day. You're working til 4am at the club then working the conference at 10am then the gig at 3pm then the club again at 11pm. So is everyone else. The places that you're working in are filthy. The floors are covered in spilled drink and empty zip lock bags and you're going to have to roll around on it to figure out which cable isn't working. You might be able to transcend the earthly plane when you pump the room full of haze fluid but you'll regret it when you get home at 7am and your nose is clogged with thick black gelatine gunk (many smoke fluids aren't vegan). You get up late because you haven't slept so you don't any breakfast, so the only chance you'll get to eat all day is the short window between the opening bands soundcheck and the doors opening and when you drop your foot long italian BMT on the floor you have to piece it back together again and brush the dirt off because you're not going to get another chance to eat until you get home the next morning.

The Art School was the best venue in Glasgow. It was the dream job for a tech who wanted to do something different every night. Most of the bands who played there would either bring in their own interesting lighting rigs or would be keen to try whatever daft idea we came up with that day. We had enough equipment to experiment with but it was limited enough that we had to keep pushing ourselves to satisfy our creativity. We'd whip up lighting designs for support acts that were more interesting than the stuff big acts were headlining festivals with. Every day I'd come up with some kind of constriction or goal - light the sup-

port act with nothing but red lights, don't point anything at the lead singers face, go a whole club night without any movement. I probably made a lot of gigs worse than they had to be but most of the time there was no one to tell me not to and when there was I always seemed to pull it off. Since I spent most of my time taking care of the lighting I never really ran that much risk anyway, it's when the sound fucks up that people get upset. There's not a feeling on earth that's like the one you get when a whole crowd turns to face you and as one boos you and points their fingers at your face.



For all the faults it had it was the closest to a space that was truly diverse in its event programming and its crowd. When everything went well and all the people involved wanted to make something cool happen it felt like we were past the event horizon into a world that could only exist there and then. Sometimes we'd let the total sensory power at our disposal loose and try to melt the crowd down to their base elements with subs and stobes. Disorientation was part of the goal. Lighting control desks are normally additive in nature, when a button is pressed it triggers an event that's added onto the pile of already occurring sequences, but there's

an option on them to run in Swap mode rather than Add mode - when a lighting cue is swapped in, everything that was happening immediately halts and the new sequence is the only thing that's allowed to happen. It seems like a simple idea but it was the easiest way to create complete sensory whip-lash - lead the crowd along into a state where they've got their bearings and then drop them through a trapdoor where everything's changed. I wanted nights in the Assembly Hall to feel like a fairground ride with twists and turns and big showstoppers that would burn themselves into the deep strata of people's brains. The smaller downstairs

clubs in the Vic bar were a different idea, the most important thing was to turn a space that served as a restaurant during the day into somewhere people could get lost in. The Assembly hall had to be impressive but the vic bar had to be sexy. The best nights in there were inevitably the darkest, where you could barely see a foot in front of you but you could see the silhouettes of dancers standing on the stage between the tannoy PA stacks.

In February 2019 I was cycling in to a club shift in a venue I had just started working at and fell off and broke my elbow. There wasn't anyone else who could cover the shift and it didn't hurt that much so I powered through. The DJ equipment was stored in these chunky flightcases that were like briefcases that I had to swing up to

table height with one hand. The inside of a Technics 1200 is filled with a polycarbonate resin that's there to stop the turntable from resonating during playback, essentially added dead weight. I managed to get it all set up in time and then when the DJs came in one of them went to shake my hand and introduce himself (we'd met at least four times before) and it was one of those big stupid clapping handshakes that guys do and it felt like my forearm would come off at the joint. We didn't want to root around in the kitchen for a bag of something frozen so I filled a bin bag full of ice from the bar and held it against my arm in between

operating the lights. The manager on duty insisted I go to the hospital but I am a martyr for the bounce so I made myself stay until 4am. It was only a few days later that I admitted to myself that I was fucking myself up for a job that didn't care about me a fraction as much as I cared about it.

I've never been able to connect with people and I've resigned myself to the fact that I never will be. The closest I've ever come has been to try and at least facilitate them to connect with each other. If I can stand back and know that there was something there that I caused then that's enough for me. The real reason I kept doing the work for so long is that it provided the perfect opportunity to feel good about myself in the toxic ways that I love best. I was able to come into work every day and feel like I was better than everyone else, because I struggled harder and worked longer and solved the problems no one else could and was morally above them all because I saw it all for the petty sham that it was and only I could understand the transcendent possibilities that it could've maybe reached some day and it was me that made them all so happy because I suffered and them that made me so happy because they were having so much fun.

For the past month I've been sitting in a venue that hasn't had a crowd in it since February. It's the venue where I had some of my first misguided attempts at being a real person and trying to take drugs and talking to people and reaching out to them and failing but still being content and existing in the same space as them, at least not feeling threatened or in danger or entirely 100% misunderstood. At least there's a space for a loner in the club. I've been sitting rearranging lights and cabling to set the space up as a green screen studio, so bands can play in front of a virtual backdrop. I've decided that I can't do this anymore.

You can sit in your house and watch a movie or a TV show or read a book, and it might not be the ideal environment for that media but if there's a good story and good characters at the heart of it then you can still get something out of it. A DJ set is not, in isolation, good. It's just a catalyst for the stories and characters we find ourselves lost in when we go out. A good nightclub is a space of unknown potential, where you never know who you're going to meet or what you're going to hear or what you're going to take or where you're going to end up. There's no uncertainty in watching a livestream in your flat, no shadows to explore or dingy corners to meet in, no rendezvous or digressions. There's nothing sexy

about a green-screen, a presentation that sits right in the uncanny of flat lighting and fake backdrops, there's no mystery/allure, but also nothing real to know in the first place. It is immediately presented in its totality and that totality is a mirage. In the depths of the haze machine at least you can reach out and try to know something that might be there. A livestream is what someone with no depth-perception thinks a night out is. It's like a faulty memory or a cargo cult. Maybe if we get the music and the lights into peoples houses we can trick them into feeling like they did when they were in a real space.

My nostalgia is as badly misplaced too though; the idea that these spaces were ever actually truly good was an illusion. What they really were were fronts for selling drugs and bait to trap and exploit people. Any real good that came out of venues like the art school was in spite of the fundamental nature of the whole industry, one that felt like it was designed from the ground up to create awful situations where abuse could happen. I've hated this industry and everyone in it for the better part of five years now and I've seen it ruin peoples lives and treat them like shit all for the chance for some art kids who dress like poor people to have a place to take coke and talk about how unfulfilled they feel in their creative practice or for soft brained spice boys who spend £700 on an outfit to have a place to take coke and talk about how they're planning on starting a new collective with their mates (we'll mostly play techno but like, we like disco too and even a bit of grime sometimes) or for leery old heads to have a place to wear their warp shirts and take coke and talk about how really the scene peaked in 98 when the connection between Detroit and Paisley was at it's strongest or for crusty free party casualties to tie up their white dreads and take coke and talk about whatever the fuck it is they talk about (I don't know I've never let that lot get near me), and all the while in back offices and green rooms people are being abused - no matter how much I hate the punters it's the ego poisoned DJs and the monomaniacal road managers and the sycophantic promoters and the psychopathic venue owners, and yes, even the misogynistic, strung-out, dismissive, pretentious, incompetent, misanthropic technicians like me who are the real rot at the heart of the scene. The heaviest impact of COVID will be on the marginalised and underrepresented, the people who don't have their own spaces or capital but were trying to create scenes where all the idealistic nonsense I've just talked about might actually have been possi-

ble, and not just for people who look like me (white and straight and male) but for everyone. Their compassion and kindness, their understanding and selflessness, their desire just to create liberatory safe spaces and experiences where people can be themselves and enjoy themselves and enjoy others and get lost together or get lost alone and not have to worry about a single thing but the moment, all those wonderful qualities are going to be weaknesses in the somehow even more ruthless club landscape to come. I hope they're more hopeful than me.

I'm not sure if the small to mid sized venue is going to return to us after COVID is over and the touring economy is demolished by brexit. I am not expecting the arts council or creative Scotland or the alcohol industry to come and save us. I hope something will be able to survive and there might be a space where people can connect or disconnect but I can't bring myself to believe it. I always told myself and my parents and my partner that I would stop this and get a real job when it ceased to be fun. It didn't pay any money (the rate for skilled techs has stayed at £10p/h for years, maybe 12 if yr lucky) and it was stressful and I never slept and I never ate and I was drunk all the time and my ears were starting to go and I hated every coked up vampire who ever tried to set foot in a green room, but I loved it and when all the elements chose to align it was the greatest fun imaginable. It isn't fun anymore and it won't be fun again. I'm not fun anymore and I won't be fun ever again. I may as well not have fun in a job that pays OK and lets me take a holiday.

Last I heard all of the equipment is still sitting in the Art School. We never had a chance to strip the meat from the bones like I heard they did when the Arches closed down. I wish I could say that I made memories that'll last forever and that I'll cherish but the alcohol and the lack of sleep and the repeated head injuries (crawling around underneath a stage in the dark is risky) have blurred the five years together. Parts of it were bliss and most of it was bad. Parties are only ever any good with distance. Anticipation and nostalgia. I've gotten a couple of good stories out of it.

- RFT

*Illustration previous page RB
Illustration opposite page JF*

MO CHRAOIBHIN CNO

At a party at the end of 2019 my friend asked me if I watched *The Crown*. I said no, didn't think anything of it, was confused about why they were watching something so crap, something that seemed to clash with our politics so substantially! I have no love for the royal family. At school I argued so passionately against the monarchy in one class I cried.

People refer to the 'low-intensity' war that devastated Northern Ireland between 1969 - 1998 as the Troubles, a euphemism that obfuscates its reality. This makes it the perfect title for *The Crown* season four's opening episode. Centred around the murder of Lord Mountbatten aboard his boat in County Sligo by the Irish Republican Army in the summer of 1979, the episode touches on Margaret Thatcher's ascent to Prime Minister and her subsequent hardline approach on issues related to a united Ireland.

My mum grew up in West Belfast during the height of the Troubles. As a Catholic she experienced first hand the brutality inflicted by British colonial rule in a way many white people living in the UK won't understand. Scholars specialising in transgenerational trauma estimate it'll take three generations for the issues generated by the Troubles to be worked through. My family drew my attention to this after my mum's cousin was assaulted dropping her kids off at school. The assailant was an elderly unionist kingpin, in his sixties or seventies at the time of the attack. The school told her they couldn't be involved and not to call the police. This kind of thing still happens there. Loyalist murals on houses celebrate Billy Wright, regular people walk around the city with tattoos depicting his likeness; Billy Wright was implicated in the murders of over twenty Catholics and never charged for any of them.

I watched *The Crown* episode with my mum. As it reached its crescendo she recounted the family holiday she was on in England when the IRA killed Mountbatten. Aged nine, she was told

not to speak for the duration of the trip following the explosion because the anti-Irish sentiment in England was so rife her parents worried about the family being attacked. When I asked her how nationalists in Belfast received the news of Mountbatten's murder she flatly states that most people thought it was a good thing. If approval of terrorism seems repugnant maybe we should be reminded who Britain is and what it stands for.

Steve McQueen's *Hunger* details the torture Catholic political and non-conforming prisoners were subjected to. Penalties included 'running the gauntlet', a form of corporal punishment in which prisoners were forced to run naked between two rows of soldiers who would beat on them with truncheons. This era in Irish history is also one of the only known instances of British officers using waterboarding on their own prisoners.

My grandad's close friend spent 23 years in prisons including Long Kesh for republican and political crimes and was subjected to this humiliation many, many times. When I posted his Christmas card this year I wondered how he lives a normal life. I know he probably doesn't.

Forced to exist as second class citizens, Catholic communities in N.I. launched a civil rights campaign in the 1960s that declared "one man, one vote" in the hopes of overriding the legislation that was then in place stating that only local taxpayers could vote in elections. Because Catholics were largely excluded from work this prevented most of them from voting. In towns like Derry Catholic communities made up the majority but had little to no political representation. Inspired by the actions of Martin Luther King, the movement was largely non-violent, with much of the student population engaging in peaceful protests.

Season four of *The Crown* misrepresents the origins of the Catholic civil rights movement and the inception of the provisional IRA. It dodges

the death (murder?) of Bobby Sands and nine of his fellow hunger strikers under Margaret Thatcher's watch. Its timeline stops short of the era in which collusion between the British state and members of unionist organisations like the UFF/UVF was most common but no doubt this won't come up in any later series. Recognising the complexity of the issue and their ineptitude at handling it, the British secret service colluded with loyalist organisations to inflict a campaign of terror on Catholic communities. This involved passing the addresses of Sinn Fein family members to loyalist terrorists and turning a blind eye when they murdered them.

The Crown focuses on Thatcher making kedgerees, the loneliness of Princess Margaret, Charles's sun garden. *The Crown* gives us a hundred extra reasons to hate the royal family but it also fails to communicate significantly the evil behind the empire they represent. People in Britain live with very little understanding of how foul a colonial entity the United Kingdom is. When you watch interviews with Steve McQueen post-*Hunger* release, the presenter makes comments like 'The eighties, I think of Duran Duran, you know? But not Bobby Sands, I'd forgotten about him.' My family have stories of murdered schoolmates, friends who died on hunger strike, others who lost decades of their life in Long Kesh, living in their piss and shit and wearing only a blanket, all because the British state refused to treat them as humans. I want to reiterate this isn't a sectarian discussion but a firm reminder that if the British state thought they could do it to the Catholic community of Northern Ireland, they feel they're entitled to do it to anyone and no amount of charm on the part of Olivia Colman should make you feel otherwise.

For a more comprehensive understanding of the Northern Irish conflict, see 'Pat Finucane's murder; a pitiless act and a political storm' in *The Guardian* 30/11/2020

- DM

POSTCARD FROM WORK

In November, having quit my [redacted] job at [redacted] for [redacted] reasons, I got a job as one of those people who puts up commercial posters for people who are too big to carry a pack of blu tac around town for their own cause. I'd get the 90 to the warehouse in Ibrox, fill a splitting rucksack with 300 posters and eight packs of blu tac minimum, and head on my merry way to whichever subsection of Glasgow city I was to poster. There are a lot of technicalities to mass postering which I learned over the next few months - blu tac suppleness and ambient temperature management, poster replacement considerations, poster folding optimisation, blu tac placement, locations of the city recycling bins with the largest openings etc etc. I trekked about in the cold, glimpsing the working lives of barbers, shopkeepers, publicans, tattoo artists, waiters. The people who run the joke shop on Queen St gave me a box of Roses as a Christmas present. Aside from when my Reynaud's slighted hands would refuse to cooperate for hours on end it was decent, even the Friday night shift which would see me trudge it from Partick to the Barras, allowing for a halfway solo pint in the Variety if I was making good time with my Elvis tribute A3s. I was still doing this right up until the start of The Lockdown. Those last couple of weeks in March were bizarre. Putting up posters for events we knew wouldn't happen in venues that were basically no longer open. In the air: hysteria. In my bag: 300 posters for the Scottish Wedding Show, Susie McCabe, and Disney On Ice. I really thought that the Mogwai 2021 title would survive through to the other side, but my folly is laid bare to me now. RIP in peace, commercial events of the second to fourth quarters of 2020.

Unceremoniously made redundant, I decided that my best bet with regards gainful employment during a raging pandemic was probably to turn to healthcare. I got a job as a healthcare support worker, or healthcare assistant, or auxiliary nurse with the NHS as part of the COVID-19 Support Intake. I work whenever I want, in whichever ward or department across any of the hospitals in Glasgow requires extra help. It's a good old school contract - double time on Sunday, time and a half on Saturday, pro rata annual leave pay. Officially I can go 13 weeks without picking up a shift before getting struck off, but rumour has it that this is a figure that has been plucked from the ether. Maybe I could escape from this bleak rock for years and still return to a job. I have unsurprisingly met some excellent people, who deserve far more than a weird Thursday clap could convey in a year of weird Thursday claps. I get on my bike at 6:30 in the morning, and get back on it at 8 at night as many times in the week as I can manage. My small talk skills skyrocket and everything but bowel movements is wee: yoghurts, bumps, washes, slippers, scratches, rests, freshen ups, incontinence pads, gowns, ecg leads, cups of tea. With visiting hours axed people are lonely. Someone tells me that that they have 18 kids and they're all good looking, another I help into a shower for the first time since he's had his leg amputated. I realise that an elderly woman yelling gibberish is speaking Irish, and from the depths of my secondary schooling we manage a conversation as gaeilge. An acutely confused woman tries to give me a really nice looking M&S florentine and grows irate when I try to politely refuse it. I shouldn't, but I take it to placate her, put it into a blue glove so that it won't melt in my pocket, and eat it in the rain by my bike at the end of my shift. I tell new colleagues that I used to work in events. I'm starting to wonder if we'll get Mogwai 2022. - H x

POLICE IN SCHOOLS IN SCOTLAND

Campus Officers: The Background

Across Scotland, there is an increasing presence of police officers in schools: from 55 campus officers recorded in 2010 to over 87 officers working in schools in 2020 according to a recent FOI response. In Glasgow alone, 25 out of 30 High Schools have a dedicated police presence. A 2020 report from Manchester-based Kids of Colour and No Police in Schools highlighted the impact of police in schools in criminalising young people, exacerbating inequalities and creating a climate of hostility and low expectations. We support their demand for #NoPoliceinSchools and want to shine a light on the issue in Scotland.

This entails a number of questions: what is the role and purpose of Campus Officers (COs)? How did we end up with COs in Scotland? And, in the context of cuts to education budget and youth services, how are they funded?

What is the role and purpose of COs?

COs take different forms and names around the country, sometimes 'Community Police Officer', 'School Liaison Officer', 'Youth Engagement Officer' or 'School Link Officers', with a majority (though not all) based directly within the grounds of a particular school. Like their titles then, the role and purpose of COs is not entirely clear- are they for tackling crime? Educational purposes? Pastoral care?

When they first emerged in Scotland the stated aim of police in schools was to reduce truancy and improve behaviour, but more recently COs in Scotland became part of the 'educational' component of the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU). A Scottish Government evaluation in 2010 highlighted confusion over the actual role of the COs, with a lack of standardised job descriptions. The report highlights COs involvement in: widespread sharing of information between schools and police, delivering lessons (with limited or no educational training), accompanying teaching staff on home visits to address student truancy, handling student discipline in the case of 'potentially criminal behaviour'; and an increasing focus on "work with primary school pupils", particularly P6/7. The Educational Institute of Scotland

(EIS) teaching union's 2018/19 report found some similar involvement with cases of COs delivering PSE lessons and being involved in guidance and support.

Perhaps surprisingly, the 2010 Scottish Government report concludes that "it is not possible to directly attribute any reduction [in crime] to the work of the campus officer", but argues that they have "Improved the pupils' relationship with the police", with many interviewed students and teachers telling the researchers that the presence of COs had reduced 'disruption' at the school.

What is the history of COs in Scotland?

COs have been quietly introduced in schools across Scotland over the last two decades, with very little democratic oversight. This lack of transparency and clarity around the role of the COs makes charting a history of them tricky, but not impossible.

The 2010 Scottish Government report cites 2002 as the year that "campus officers were first deployed" in Scotland, with a BBC news article from July that year highlighting how Northfield Academy in Aberdeen would be "leading the way in Scotland by becoming the first to have a police officer on its staff". This coincided with a New Labour's 'Safer Schools Partnership Programme' south of the border, which proposed stationing police officers in schools to address truancy and discipline issues.

However, as the authors of the recent report 'Decriminalise the Classroom: A Community Response to Police in Greater Manchester's Schools' point out, policing in schools:

has a much longer history dating back at least to the 1950s, and gaining traction through juvenile liaison schemes in the 1960s and 70s. These earlier police-school relationships emerged as part of the State's dual concerns about youth populations and Britain's Black communities.

In Scotland, COs became part of the wider VRU program following its launch in 2005. The VRU is widely lauded for using a 'public health model' to 'holistically' treat violence as a 'disease' and was modelled on a similar scheme in the US, the Boston Ceasefire Project, which targeted gang crime. The 'educational' component of the VRU targeted schools across the country, seeming to initially focus on areas with high rates of knife crime, but quickly becoming more widespread: in 2010 there were "campus officers in 65 schools, across 6 police forces and 15 local authority areas" in Scotland.

How are COs funded?

The limited public debate around the use of COs in Scotland has largely focused on funding. In 2018/19 the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) teaching union published a Freedom of Information request and Report which found that while "the major part of the funding of Campus Police Officers is picked up by Police Scotland", significant sums of funding were being allocated to COs from council and education budgets. Most controversially, this included the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF), a Scottish Government fund to address poverty related attainment gaps. EIS found that, "three education authorities stated that their Campus Police Officers are paid (in part) by PEF funding". Green MSP Ross Greer told the Glasgow Times in May 2019 that:

The PEF is supposed to help schools tackle the poverty related attainment gap, but a lack of transparency means it is almost impossible to assess its impact. Paying for police officers on campus doesn't reduce inequality but it could make pupils feel like suspects, all while using money which could have been put towards other measures which do help close the attainment gap.

The EIS report found varying funding levels and sources, for instance "Falkirk Council's response stated that it and its secondary schools paid the salary of two police officers (£84K) out of the eight officers employed as Campus Police Officers" whereas other Local Authority responses "suggest that Police Scotland entirely fund School Liaison Officers" in certain parts of the country. The 2010 Government Report provides a slightly clearer, if outdated, overall picture:

Annually, it costs a little over £2 million to have 55 officers in 65 schools across Scotland. Campus officers were deployed based on an allocation of resources from existing police and local authority budgets. Around 64% of this funding is sourced by the police, 30% by local authorities and 6% by Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs), from the Fairer Scotland Fund.

It remains difficult to get a precise picture of current expenditure on COs. A similar picture seems to be the case in 2020, pulled together from the patchwork of FOI responses in the EIS report. Whilst scrutiny of the use of local authority and education funding on COs is vital, this scrutiny should extend to the wider lack of transparency, accountability and necessity of police in schools in Scotland.

However, what is clear is that in the context of austerity, including cuts to youth services and reduced educational budgets, policing inside schools has grown and continued to draw on funding that is supposed to be for

educational support. No doubt this is centred, as the original COs and VRU were, in areas that have been under-resourced and deprived of public funding more generally, with policing becoming a catch-all response to structural issues of inequality and economic marginalisation. Having police stationed inside our spaces of learning has quietly become the norm in Scotland, without discussion of the impact this has on students, educational workers and communities. This impact will be particularly felt by Black and POC students, against a backdrop of racism and violence within Scottish policing.

Policing and Racism

Just why do we have concerns about COs, and how does this connect with our anti-racist activism? Having overviewed the history of COs in Scotland, we turn now to issues around racial profiling, racialisation of children, and how this inform concerns around officers being in schools. These different strands of thought come together in deep ways to govern the lives of racialised others in school settings, and are what we need to grapple with to effectively interrogate the presence and potential oppressions brought by COs.

Before discussing the facts around racial profiling, it is useful to look first of all at what we mean by “racism” and just why we bring it up in this campaign around COs. Definitions of racism that emphasise interpersonal abuse or violence result in treatment which would involve “educating” the racism out of society (perhaps by focusing on unconscious bias or hate crime). But a structural explanation helps us get to grips with the deep racialised inequalities of daily life in a world where vanishingly few would openly call themselves racist. How does racism persist, and in fact get worse, when many avow that the effects of racism today are less destructive? Looking at a structure allows us to understand that racism is not just what shouts at us in the street, but also that which exists without a face and flows through life often without fanfare or acknowledgement. It is the slippery sense that things benefit those racialised as white (along with the multiple intersections of power that hold privilege in society). Structural or institutional racism is what we focus on here. This idea of racism as not simply name-calling but rather a system for sorting life outcomes according to how one is racialised forces us then to consider how schools fit into this (such is the purpose, after all, of this partnership between The Anti-Racism Educator and Glasgow Prisoner Solidarity).

If schools in Scotland are a pro-

ductive force (meaning not neutral or just receptive, but actively making material change) when it comes to maintaining structural racism, then how does this force us to examine the presence of COs in schools? To understand this we must look at how policing has disproportionate negative impacts on People of Colour outside of school, for which we have a great deal of data.

First, some facts on what racial profiling looks like in Scotland. We may speak and have heard about it more in other settings, but it is clear that People of Colour are routinely singled out for inspection by law enforcement at a disproportionately high rate. The Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER) have reported on this and shown how policing acts to add an extra burden upon the shoulders of People of Colour. They found that Black people are up to five times more likely to be stopped and searched by the police, to which the reaction of Police Scotland was less than accepting and grateful. The case of the killing of Sheku Bayoh is a concrete instance of how calls about institutional racism within Scottish policing have been routinely pushed back against both in public and in private. A cursory search through recent news coverage of the issue shows stories abound of People of Colour in Scotland being excessively policed. It is clear from the above that the institution of the police is often one that hampers, rather than protects, the freedoms People of Colour have in Scotland.

This understanding must be accompanied by accounting for the role of Prevent Legislation in schools, ostensibly targeted at countering ‘extremism’. Whilst reporting on suspicions of radicalisation is not a statutory duty here in Scotland, the logics underpinning the agenda are certainly not absent, and anti-Muslim racism is a firm part of school life right across the country. We should also account for the role migration status plays in structural racist violence, and that people in the asylum system are some of the most vulnerable when it comes to explicit violence and receiving inhumane treatment from peers and the state. Taking in these facts around racial profiling and the general ecosystem of racism in Scotland, we can now turn to what role schools play in all of it.

Taking structural racism to be a given, we should consider if and how Scottish schools serve to perpetuate and continue to give life to it. As previously mentioned, we should not think of schools as neutral receptacles into which racism is poured by the presence and actions of unpleasant individuals (whether they be staff, children, or families), nor as spaces

in which racism only lives to be challenged. This view furthers the cause of a liberal anti-racism which contends that racism exists in individuals, but not institutions and certainly not cultures, histories, or the hallowed spaces in which our children are taught. To go against this liberal conception, schools are very much a part of the wider culture previously discussed in which racism lives as a perfectly normalised part of our existence. As per critical race theory (CRT), racism is almost mundane. It exists and is central to how schools in Scotland work.

In appreciating the varied ways racism presents itself in daily life, in regards to children we need to consider how the very idea of childhood has from its conception been a racialised one. While childhood is often considered to be a time of freedom, play, and innocence, these apparent attributes are not often read on the bodies of racialised minority children, and particularly those who are Black. Frederick Douglass spoke of “white children [being] permitted to mature out of servitude” while Black children may gain an adult body but be condemned to a childlike mind forever, and therefore need to be policed and controlled as such. More recently Audre Lorde said that “Black children are often preoccupied with survival within a fundamentally anti-Black culture, and therefore ‘never allowed to be children.’” Black children are simultaneously stripped of and loaded with an autonomy that white children do not have to either lack or bear the burden of. If Black and other children of colour lead lives with racism forever clouding their vision and regulating their speech and movements, how might a CO who has moved from the street to the classroom fit into this?

If schools and the police both perpetuate racism in distinct and observable ways, what may the effect of the presence of COs be on children? What are the experiences of racialised minority children with them? While we can have hypotheses and are certainly guided by the examples set by activists challenging police presence in schools in other countries, we must investigate it in our settings here in Scotland and debunk myths around the effects of policing in schools.

Debunking the Myths around Policing in Schools

So far we have discussed the history of COs in Scotland and concerns around racist policing. Finally, we’ll unpack some of the arguments which justify police in schools and how these often

lack credibility, whilst considering the root causes of youth violence and alternatives to tackling this.

As we touched on earlier, the role of campus policing in Scottish schools has often been unclear. One of the justifications for employing COs in schools is that they serve an educational purpose by delivering sessions to pupils on topics related to their safety, e.g. keeping safe online, risks around drugs/alcohol. The likelihood of young people engaging in risky behaviours is often determined by factors such as mental health and past trauma. But concerningly, COs do not receive bespoke training around the issues that can increase the likelihood of young people engaging in unsafe and unhealthy behaviours. The Scottish Government's 2010 Evaluation of Campus Police Officers in Scottish Schools reported that:

The provision of training was generally felt to be limited and inconsistent, especially during the early stages of the initiative.

What is even more worrying is that almost all of the COs interviewed were involved in organising or delivering lessons with pupils.

The role of COs as educators in the classroom also poses a threat to young people who have had negative experiences of policing. Is this a safe and nurturing learning environment for such pupils? Young people from ethnic minority backgrounds are more likely to have negative experiences of the police – overall stop-and-search rates between 2018 and 2019 show that Black people are now nearly 10 times more likely to be stopped and searched by police than white people. The resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement this year, fuelled by the killing of George Floyd, led to worldwide protests which acknowledged the violence and harm of policing towards People of Colour. For a young Person of Colour witnessing this unfold, the mere presence of police officers in schools could mean classroom environments becoming spaces of threat and surveillance, rather than empowering and safe spaces to learn.

It is also claimed that police presence in schools can help to “build positive relationships” between the police and young people. This argument alone indicates an inherent flaw in policing – the fact there is already distrust between young people and the police. If the state is truly dedicated to building a more positive image of the police force, then surely addressing the underlying causes of distrust would be a more sensible approach, rather than merely embedding the police into learning environments and hoping this will bring about harmony. Historically, UK policing has been

found to be institutionally racist (see the case of Stephen Lawrence) which has amplified the distrust between People of Colour and the police over decades. As Alpa Parmar states:

Discriminatory police practice, evidence of under-protection towards Black and minority ethnic groups and the charge of institutional racism have resulted in a fractured and acrimonious relationship between the police and ethnic minorities.

This distrust has only been further entrenched by ongoing racist policing in this decade, such as increased levels of Stop and Search that disproportionately affect young People of Colour, and harsher sentences that see young Black and minority ethnic people more likely to be sent to prison for offences than white defendants who have committed similar offences. There are also substantial concerns relating to structural racism within the Scottish police system – a recent report from Dame Elish Angiolini calls for a fundamental review of the police complaints system within Police Scotland following the lack of transparency after the death of Sheku Bayoh. How likely is it that young People of Colour will trust a system that has consistently demonstrated its lack of care for people that look like them?

Part of the role of COs across Scottish schools involves “assisting in reducing anti-social behaviour and youth crime, including offending by and victimisation of young people within the cluster community”. Policing is considered to be a remedy for violence and crime, yet continues to neglect the underlying causes of violence. The root causes of violence are varied and complex, meaning punitive measures cannot (and often will not) provide a ‘quick fix’ solution. Young people may partake in “anti-social behaviour and youth crime” for a number of reasons – perhaps they are a victim of abuse, have experienced parental separation or witnessed domestic violence. Or maybe they just feel misunderstood. If young people have witnessed or been victims of violence and don't receive adequate support to cope with their trauma, it is likely they will re-enact the violence that they have experienced themselves. A reaction to trauma may result in more difficulty regulating emotions and behaviour, meaning anger and impulsivity can form as a response. Providing trauma-informed interventions, building emotional intelligence and ensuring young people are given the space to heal are just some of the ways we can overcome childhood adversity and address the root causes of violence.

We also can't ignore socio-economic impact on youth violence. Following the financial crisis in 2008,

the UK Government introduced their austerity agenda which saw youth services face some of the largest cuts to public services. Youth unemployment affected almost 1 million young people in the UK, and ethnic minorities were disproportionately impacted: in 2013, 45% of Black youth were unemployed, compared with 18% of the white population. The actions taken by the UK government only exacerbated the existing inequalities faced by young, working class People of Colour. With already limited opportunities in education and employment, this group of young people saw university tuition fees triple, jobs being scrapped and the nurturing, safe havens of youth clubs being demolished. After creating more obstacles to access employment and education and taking away safe spaces, can the state really say they are shocked by the increased levels of youth violence over the past decade? Opportunity and hope are key for young people entering and navigating early stages of adulthood, and even more essential for those that have grown up in adversity.

Initiatives set up by the VRU provide evidence of this. In 2005, Glasgow was named the murder capital of Europe, but the implementation of the VRU saw rates of crime reduce dramatically. The focus of the VRU was to treat the root causes of violence, which range from poverty and unemployment to substance misuse. One of the most successful initiatives of the VRU is the Street & Arrow project, a social enterprise that employs young people with convictions for a 12-month period. Since its launch, the project has supported 150 trainees, 120 of whom have gone on to land jobs. This initiative responds to an underlying cause of violence (lack of employment opportunities) and in turn improves job skills and confidence. The opportunity for employment is likely to prevent trainees from re-offending and help them regain a sense of hope for their future. If we want to reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour, it is essential that we acknowledge the root causes and underlying issues. Evidently, cuts to youth services and limiting opportunities for young people have only exacerbated the difficult circumstances they already have faced. There is limited evidence to show that policing in schools can effectively reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour, but it will have a damaging impact on pupils that have had negative experiences of policing, which is more likely to be young People of Colour and those from working class backgrounds.

There isn't a ‘quick fix’ solution to an issue as complex as youth violence. However, it's clear that harsh, punitive measures do not reduce vi-

olent crime. If we truly want to move towards a society free from violence, we must invest in young people by providing bespoke mental health services, trauma-informed interventions for those impacted by violence and building resilience among young people.

- This article was written collaboratively by The Anti-Racist Educator and Glasgow Prisoner Solidarity. It appeared first on the ARE website: theantiracisteducator.com/

Illustration MS



I WISH I WAS IN A COMA

Human Hibernation for Business & Pleasure

As everyone who is not T. S. Eliot knows, January is the cruellest month, and this January is crueller than most. Yesterday 1325 people in the UK died of Covid; we are not yet at the peak of this wave of the virus. The vaccine is being rolled out, but it will be some months before it takes effect. In the meantime we find ourselves in our harshest lockdown yet. Nothing apart from boredom and unhappiness is coming in the following months. No enjoyment in life; only extraction of labour, and the knowledge that beyond the walls of one's room terrible things are happening. In these miserable recent weeks, I have become increasingly obsessed with the idea of induced comas and of human hibernation, which seem like the best possible solutions to dealing with the coming period. As Florence Welch has rightly told us, it is always darkest before the dawn. This is, however, not something I am usually aware of, because when it is darkest (before the dawn) I am generally asleep. This is a principle I am keen to apply on a larger scale.

In Otessa Mosfegh's "My Year of Rest and Relaxation", the nameless protagonist sets about doing pretty much exactly what I'd like to be doing right now: hibernating. With the aid of a wide variety of tranquilisers and a self confessed pre disposition to-

wards "somnia", she holes up in her apartment and retreats from the world, watching movies whenever she happens to awaken, but for the most part simply skipping out of consciousness for days and sometimes weeks on end, until "reality detached itself and appeared in my mind as casually as a movie or a dream". The book is not intended to be feel good or aspirational, but if I could sink to slumber at length as the protagonist does until some time in early March, I'd jump at the chance. It sounds restful and relaxing. Another appealing proposal comes in Lionel Shriver's dystopia "The Mandibles", which follows the progress of a reasonably well to do New York family through the collapse of the US economy and the subsequent waves of societal turbulence. We learn that "when recreational drugs were legalised, regulated and taxed, they became dreary overnight. Only then did people get wise to the fact that the ultimate narcotic had been eternally available to everyone, for free: sleep". After this, it only took people to realise that an "indefinite coma" was only a small "pharmacological nudge" away, and putting yourself to sleep became the aspiration of many, who save up to become "slumbers", stacked peacefully in warehouses full of the likewise unconscious. Again, when I first read "The Mandibles", this seemed like an eerie detail, a note that made Shriver's dystopia more vividly disturbing. Now, however, when characters note that they'd "rather watch my own dreams than another fucking Korean TV series", I cannot help but agree. I'm contemplating re-watching The Witcher for a third time. I wish I was in a coma.

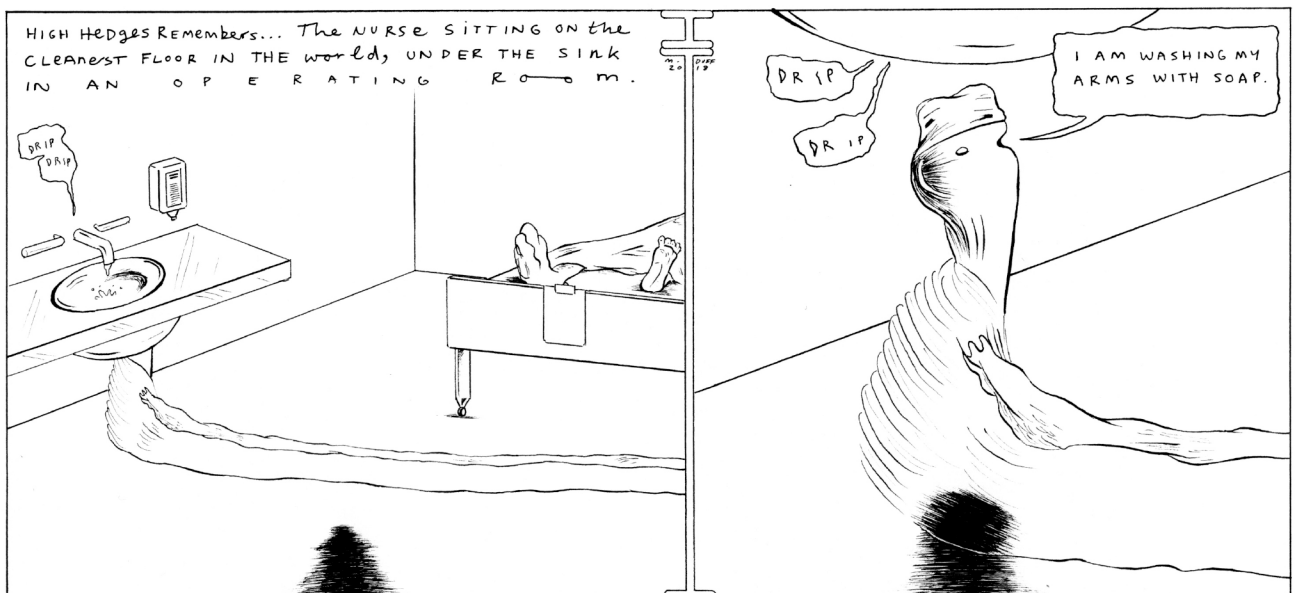
Jasper Fforde's "Early Riser" imagines a world where, over blisteringly cold winters (-40 is considered positively balmy), "from slumberdown to springrise, 99.99% of the population

submits to the dark abyss of sleep" and quite literally hibernates, aided by dream suppressing drugs and rigorous pre-hibernation weight gain regimes. This is exactly the kind of thing I am in the market for; I would like to eat a very large meal, take some drugs, and be woken up by someone jabbing a needle in my arm sometime in early spring. It turns out I am not alone in harbouring ambitions towards hibernation, and in this regard, at least, I have good news. Human hibernation is, in scientific terms, pleasingly viable. It's thought that our ancient hominid ancestors dealt with viciously cold winter temperatures by simply sleeping through it all, much in the way that many animals still do today. The thing that keeps contemporary humans out of the pocket of big sleep is our body temperature, which we foolishly insist at keeping at 37 degrees Celsius. If our bodies stray too far from this point in either direction (fever or hypothermia), we die. This is frankly pathetic. The arctic ground squirrel can set its body temperature to freezing as it hibernates over winter. If I were an arctic ground squirrel I would be in a coma right now.

If humans were able to lower our body temperatures in a controlled manner, slowing down our systems and inducing torpor (of the kind that is used in some medical procedures today), our chances of being able to profitably hibernate would go up. This is something being investigated both by medical researchers and by NASA, who are keen to see their astronauts sleep their way to Mars.

Unfortunately, it is unlikely that this technology will progress quickly enough to prevent me from having to experience February.

-MJ



GLASGOW'S LIBRARIES

Update on Campaign to Ensure the Reopening of Glasgow's Libraries

Libraries are an essential service, offering books, information, internet access and shelter to people in local communities. They are one of the only spaces in which a person can avail of much-needed services for free, but the COVID-19 pandemic has posed a serious threat to the reopening of libraries in Glasgow.

Libraries have historically been protected as necessary, democratizing spaces which allow people to autonomously access information and to exist freely and comfortably. During the pandemic the pubs were prioritised to reopen, but not the libraries. Coronavirus shouldn't be used as an excuse for austerity.

For the past two months Living Rent and local library campaigners have been running a campaign together to protest an ongoing lack of adequate information regarding the reopening of Glasgow's libraries: specifically in Langside, Govanhill and Pollokshields. We demanded a response from Glasgow Life, a charity organisation run by Glasgow Council - an arms-length strategy that appears to shirk the direct responsibility for the running of many of Glasgow's public services including libraries.

On November 28th Living Rent ran a day of action, which was very successful despite practical difficulties brought about by the sudden Tier 4 lockdown. We operated a rota system so two members of the union or of the library campaign stood outside each of the still-closed libraries, socially distanced and collecting signatures for a petition. We collected over 400 signatures, and spoke with local councillors, such as Archie Graham from Labour and Jon Molyneux from The Greens, to ask for a timeline as to when the libraries will be reopened. The day ended with a celebratory zoom event featuring speeches from campaigners and readings from Glasgow-based writers Shola Von Reinhold, Caspar Heineemann and Gloria Dawson.

One of the biggest frustrations we faced was the lack of clarity being offered by those who had the power to answer our questions. We heard many words of support from local councillors on the Day of Action, and although this was encouraging, these words meant little without a commitment to follow through and help us find out the answers we needed.

In the words of Glasgow Life itself 'libraries are a trusted guide at the heart of our communities'. If this is true, then why were the libraries in the most economically deprived areas closed for so long with no explanation. Why did we have to apply so much pressure to get the most basic answers?

Archie Graham and Maureen Burke (both Labour) brought a motion to the Glasgow City Council meeting at the beginning of December which stated that Glasgow Life is facing a funding crisis. The motion instructs the Scottish Government to immediately improve funding available to Glasgow City Council to ensure that all venues, including libraries, are reopened as

soon as it is safe. The SNP proposed an amendment to the motion which deleted the statement about Glasgow Life facing a funding crisis. It also deleted the demand for funding. This amendment was thankfully not passed, but a second amendment from Jon Molyneux and Kim Long of The Green Party was. This second amendment instructs David McDonald - who is the deputy leader of Glasgow City Council, the convener for culture, vibrancy & international co-operation, as well as the chair of Glasgow Life - to write a report setting out how Glasgow Life is engaging with communities about the reopening of venues and finding alternative ways to deliver services.

These are definitely very positive steps which we hope will lead to even more positive outcomes on a council and governmental level. We are certain that our campaigning had a lot to do with how these matters were discussed and debated. Living Rent is about more than renters rights. It's about building power rooted in the community for everyone in the community. We are living in extremely politically turbulent times and the people with the least are being hardest hit. Whether it's public service closures, eviction threats, people losing their jobs, or myriad more, the problems facing us right now seem huge and insurmountable. But when we all join together with a shared vision, we have so much power. The fight isn't over yet, but we have faith that the hard work put in by everyone now is going to make a huge difference. We need to continue to put pressure on the council and Glasgow Life to answer our demands and be honest with us. We will get our libraries open again.

- by Living Rent members RJ and LF

NOTES ON READING GROUPS

READING IS FOR EVERYONE. SHARE YOUR RESOURCES.

MAKE SPACE TO READ AND LEARN COMMUNALLY.

MAKE SPACE FOR MISTAKES.

LEARN WITH PURPOSE.

LEARN FOR LEISURE.

LEARN IN SOLIDARITY.

LEARN TO CIRCUMVENT THE PAYWALL.

INSTITUTIONAL ACCESS AFFORDS POWER, USE IT FOR GOOD.

FULL ACCESSIBILITY IS ALWAYS A WORK IN PROGRESS.

UNBIND YOUR MIND FROM THE ACADEMY.

LANGUAGE IS STICKY. SAY WHAT YOU MEAN. EXPLAIN JARGON.

NO HIERARCHIES, NO HAUGHTINESS.

BE GENEROUS IN YOUR APPROACH.

ALLOW YOURSELF TO NOT KNOW, BUT TO WANT TO.

ALLOW YOURSELF TO MISUNDERSTAND.

ASK AND ASK AGAIN. CURIOSITY IS A VIRTUE.

RESPECT YOUR FELLOW READER. BIGOTRY NEVER WELCOME.

THE UNIVERSITY SHOULD NOT HAVE A MONOPOLY ON KNOWLEDGE.

THIS IS A NOT A CLASSROOM.

START A READING GROUP!

Interested in reading Theory / Feminism / making friends? Join FEARY with Glasgow Zine Library. Last Wednesday of every month, 6.30 - 8.00pm @Zoom for now. Free but ticketed. Find out more at glasgowzinelibrary.com / @fearyglasgow

WAITRESS OWNS WHISPERS WISHES WARMS ON WAKAMOLE

A kornuit, 25 cl
A Portion of Mucver
A tzatziki
A piyazi salad
Chicken wings

~

Two women step into the restaurant
Together

One has a short hair cut
The other one too

Im serving them

Jean jacket

Surrounded by Turkish people
They tell me in a language that I don't understand

"Taste this
Also

I want to know if you like it"

They say they want a little something

I raise an eyebrow

They say 'to eat of course'

I raise the other

Sweet or salty?

Salty

Crunchy or smooth?

Crunchy

Maybe it is because I'm earning money

I feel
Like oh yeah
I can flirt
Maybe it is because I'm earning money
that a fireman truck just blocked the
road ~

I'm sorry,
I'm sorry for being a tourist
Im sorry and im very sorry
Im sorry for crossing your way
Im sorry
Im sorry for walking the bike lane
Im sorry im really really sorry
Im sorry for crossing your way

~

It is kind of a bad moment to realize
that I like you because you are just
asked for the bill and decide to leave.
But it is kind of a bad moment be-
cause im just realizing it and she is
beautiful and she is paying and now
we will both leave. But it is kind of
a bad moment to realize it because she
is leaving, already 5 meters away and
running to stop her to tell her that she
is very beautiful maybe is too much of
suuuuuuch a drama.

Just when they are paying I realize

Oh
She is
Beautitul

Then I remembered this time that this
guy came to tell this thesaurus that
there there to toast together that to-
night
That that night, that tonight tension
was thought tangible thought there
though there tonight that is at least
what he did and managed to make that
night

A moment to live forever on the edge
of time

He created space on the edge to invite
me over leaving my draft beer friends
pour down the other side of the street.
And for this and all the instagram
posts about houses that he continu-
ously sends me, I call him an architect.

He structured the time before I left in
such a way that he built steps to take
me to the edge of it.

The edge of time is the time of a last
minute change of mind towards some-
thing that you desire but scares you.

~

Chocolate melts at body temperature
Kissing is the leisure of sex
And im fucking lazy

Baba
Babaganoush
Kalamar
Lokanta fish
Cankaya
Leisure is melt in the right now
It isssssssssssss
Easy boy
I don't want to have sex
I want to be
horizontal

Is the horizon that doesn't want to
travel

The lack of desire,
The lack of hunger
Chocolate melting
Right at your touch

~

A customers hunger
Water for the dog

2 aperol spritz
One big bottle of san Pellegrino

~

The land of understandment sucks

Stand under
Under stand
Me me

It is just
Under
Under mining
Under rating under standing us
Understanding is under misundersta-
ding is a mis take
Dont take it
But stand
Stand
Stand
Standby
stand stand stand for how long can you
stand it? And can you stand goodbyes?
Misunderstanding, breaking the crust
of our tight fresh flesh
Of our facial role

We were talking politely when she
realized we both lived the same com-
plication She wrinkled her face to ask
how I dealt with it
Her face cracked
Your wrinkles, sprinkle your face
crack
Crack
politeness
Your wrinkles crack politeness
Politeness is the land of the poli
Of the politics
Of the police
Of the metropolis
Of the polyamorous?

Of the many
The land of the many who are ok
They are just ok

~

Morning frog
Hummus
Ask for mucver
Karides
Cappuccino per 2

One with less milk

Chavela Vargas sings on the back-
ground
I've dreamt of you sleeping
But wasn't this a Turkish restaurant?

Lahmacun kofte begendi
Mantar
Manti
Fresh orange juice
Espresso doppio
Black coffee
Decaf
Hot milk

Remember to buy apple juice!!!

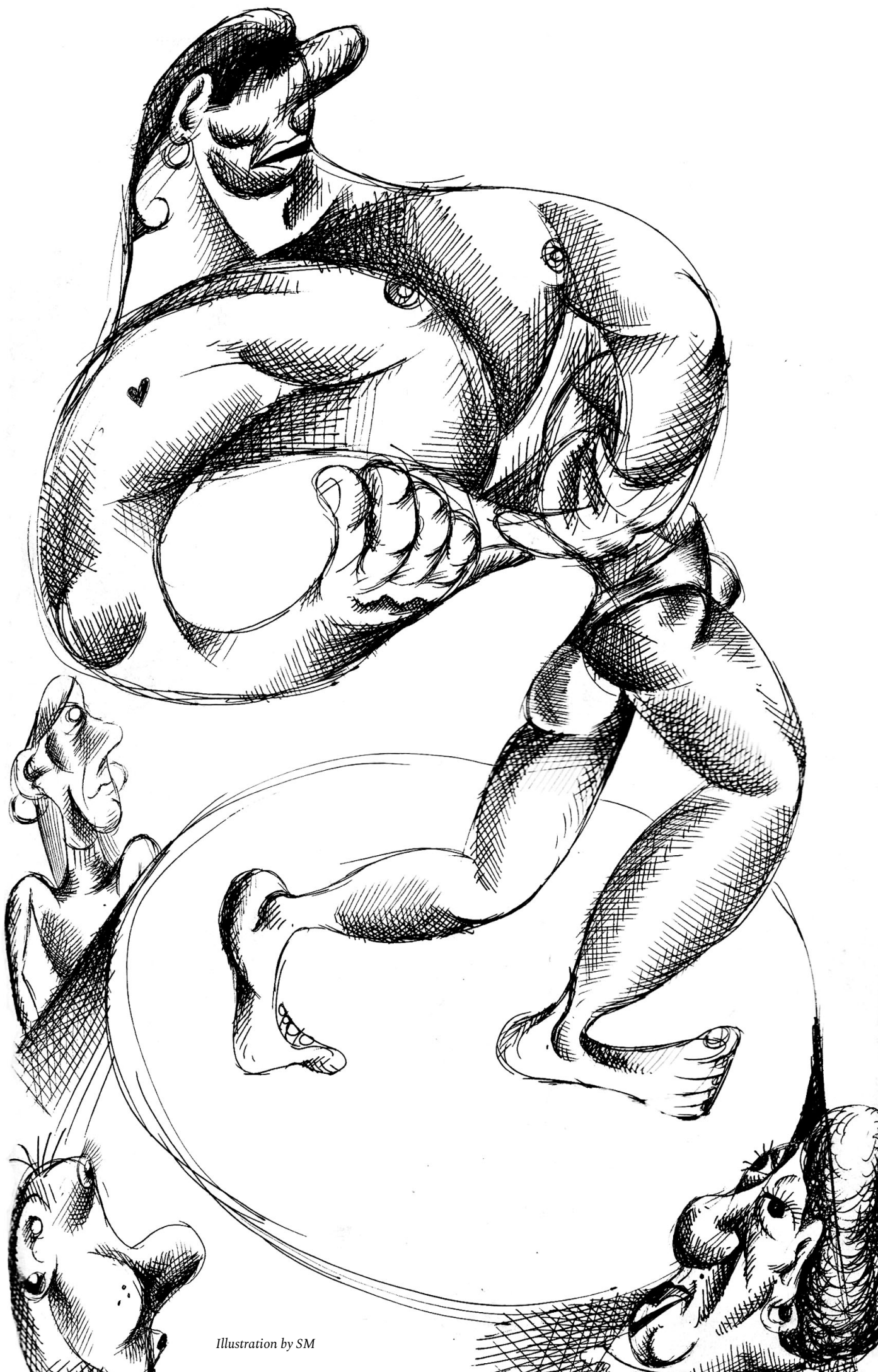
~

Chocolate melts at body temperature
Like these two guys who came to the
restaurant I saw one without shoes &
then I saw the other without shoes I
thought they were out for a day sharing
shoes. One pair of shoes, two friends.
Actually I asked and they said
Sorry to disappoint you
We are both wearing shoes
Touch
This is a shoe called skinner, it just
looks like a sock.

~

A customer entered And spoke to me
in dutch He said
Something
I didn't understand
I asked
What do you mean? His wife said
What do you think? I said
I don't know
and I thought:
Could be anything
His wife said:
We want to eat
Of course
Of course!
Main course
Side course
Of course
You want to eat
We are only
Your hungry customer?

- OI



Hello sweet beastly fiends. To mark the turning of the sun and the longest night of the looooooongest year we're sharing 13 affirmations for the future. We've dug these out of a shared online doc we've been making titled 'Dear diary, I feel like shit. LOL'. It's a deep dark and mucky pit of notes, screen-shots, and drawings we've dumped from the fires in our bodies and brains (and a shit load of memes) that have got us through 2020. ☒ It's ok not to be ok! We hope these affirmations can offer some love and laughs into our shared future.

HOW ARE WE GOING TO LIVE IN THE FUTURE?

1. FUCK MACHO BULLSHIT FOREVER
2. Recognise the power in caring for each other
3. If you can't get behind it, chuck it in the fuck it bucket
4. If you're isolating, take my advice; get more crisps than u think you'll need
5. "We've got to keep each other alive in any way we can because nobody else is going to do it."
6. If you forget everything else, remember these three things: hydration, meditation and masturbation
7. Make space for each other, find space for yourself
8. "You get more warm fuzzies by giving away all your own warm fuzzies"
9. If it's inaccessible it's nether radical nor revolutionary
10. Remember your immense capacity to dream
11. "All that you touch you change. All that you change, changes you. The only lasting truth is change."
12. Take a communal breath, we are with you
13. How are we going to live in the future? M.U.C.K. (Magic, Unity, Care & Kinship)

LOVE IS A

NOT A DESTINATION
You get more warm fuzzies by giving away all your own warm fuzzies

DESTINATION

THRESHOLD BOUNDARY
DITCHES SHIT

Affirmations have come from lots of memes, shared resources, conversations and specifically 5 & 8 are quoted from Women Wisdom, from 'Faggots and Their Friends between Revolutions' and 11 quoted from 'Parable of the Sower', - Octavia E Butler.



WEMS SKEW SMEW

There are birds in manchester,
Smells like toilet cleaner,
Away polishing endless,
Shoeless steps,
Reversed in time,
Racing marking,
Changes rotation,
Spinning,
Playgroundsick.

Lemony tekincinsate yellow,
cinnamon
realistic
DEPTH LESS
Always less,
Or more?
Less depletion
I'm still an optimist
Bopped by exploding eggs.

Distant fleecy fog,
Hovering,
Down, Down, Down,
Up all a round,
Spiral formation,
Starlight fortress,
Being battered by bugs,
Cicada calls tomoll,
Yesterday emerged.

My skin,
Expensive cocktail,
Hope a movie star,
Drinks me,
Makes me famous,
For something not related,
To my interests.

Original

The house smells,
I'm tired,
And the people,
Are abominable,
How do you find a way around it?
How do you feel about that?

- W,O & H



POEM

You always choose to be the Netherlands when we play Pro Evo, because you lived there for four years before being deported

You sound like you're from Streatham, because you grew there since you were two, but you don't have british citizenship

You tell your cousins back home that you're rich in the UK, cos you don't want them to think you're a failure, but the truth is the £3 a week you get for your toddler means she has no toys

Your Sudanese law degree means nothing here, so you take a job as a security guard, if a fight broke out you wouldn't know what to do

The boys from your street go in and out of prison because they're British, if you get in trouble you'd be sent to a country you've never known

The worst things that happened were actually in Libya, and crossing the sea when the boat sank and the water filled babies' lungs, but your lawyer says the asylum authorities won't care about that, you should just talk about happened in your home country

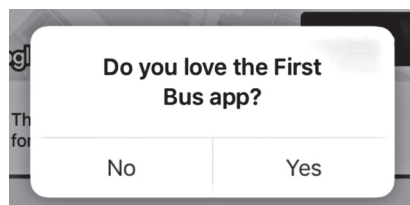
Your baby was born in Switzerland, so you want to go back there, but it was Swiss authorities who deported you, using cartoons as a cover as they put you on a plane full of police

You love him, but you don't know if your relationship will survive working a job that will satisfy the requirements of Appendix FM

You're struggling, without access to the benefits that everyone else is relying on to make ends meet, but inscribed on your BRP is the phrase "No Recourse to Public Funds"

- LA

Illustrations SM



SENSE OF PLACE

On the Megabus returning from Glasgow To Edinburgh (October 2009)
A 60 year old Irish man
Talks to himself. Odd thoughts
In the fug of the motorway
"A cowboy's breakfast
At the Wild Bean Cafe...

I always liked Glasgow"
Beaming drunk in lorry light,
Intermittent non sequiturs
Against the regiment.
We've grown too used
To alienation as a rule,
Restricting like a tight wrist watch.

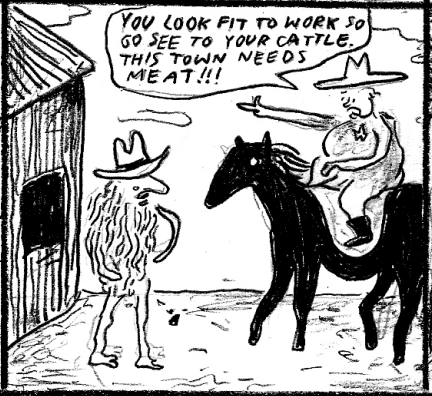
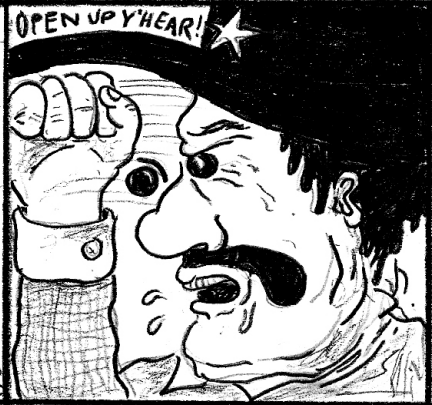
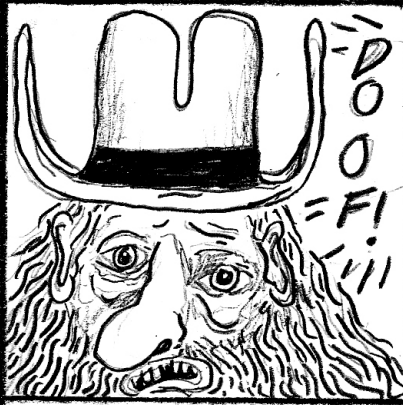
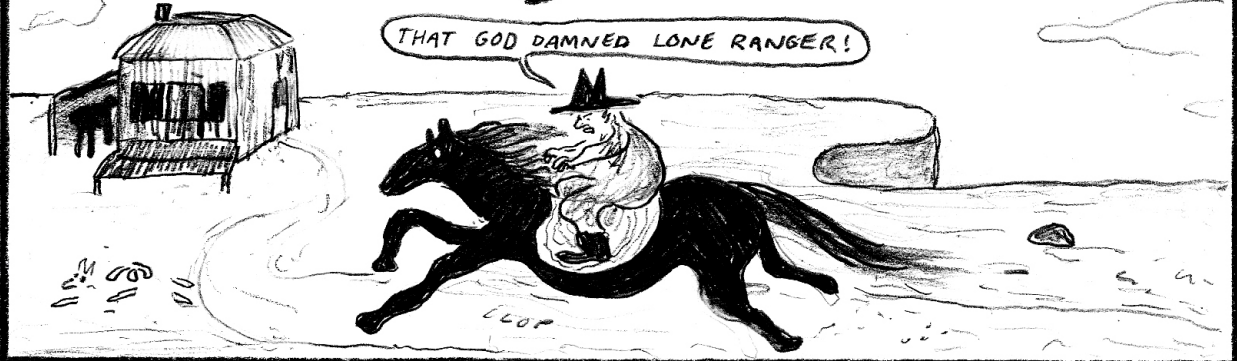
The fiery furnace (as ever) deferred.
This is the war of position,
As much a necessity as
A choice, reflecting my habitus
And nothing universal beyond
The fact that we can continue
To converse in the dark.

-KC



Wrath of the Law.

FEATURING...



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