

La mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même.

Short statement

In the essay 'The Uses of Democracy' (1992) Jacques Rancière observed that participation in what can refer to as democratic regimes is often reduced to simply filling up the spaces left empty by power. He claimed that *genuine* participation involves an 'unpredictable subject'.¹

The unpredictable subject in this case is the Offices of the Art School.

Named after Duchamp's famous work from 1915–1925, this proposal represents a six-year project – the relocation of Lincoln School of Art.

The project was to move the School, offices, studios, workshops etc, from the various idiosyncratic buildings in various parts of Lincoln's Cathedral Quarter that the School had inhabited and 'grown into' over many years, into the new purpose-built building in September 2013.

My participation in this project and documenting the process, became a 'living as form' and there emerged a new strand of my practice and the most remarkable images that came out of it are those taken *after* the tutors and students moved out, leaving vacant office spaces – emptied out save for those few remnants of our collective endeavours.

The strange 'institutional hilarity' of these images (Duchamp referred to his Bachelors picture as hilarious) goes some way to depict the apparatus of the Art School Office *stripped bare* – they are at once alien and yet entirely familiar.

These offices are places where the world of the Art School (and the labours/ideals of its artists, students and studios) meets the world of 'the Institution' and *its* imperatives.

Often forgotten or overshadowed by the studio culture, the offices are to many the spaces where we encounter a continuous 'dialogue of tensions' between these two worlds – a place to resist and to broker / nurture the continued richness and vigour of artistic practice. These are the places where we maintain 'visuality' the right of art to fail² – often seen as anathema to the success and results culture of business and commerce.

¹ Jacques Rancière *The Uses of Democracy* in Rancière, *On the Shores of Politics*,

² See also: *The Importance of Failure – a Bettakultcha Experiment*, <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-importance-of-failure-a-bettakultcha-experiment>

To paraphrase Claire Bishop, these spaces offer alternative frameworks for thinking the artistic and situation simultaneously; for both art and institution are not to be reconciled or collapsed, but sustained in continual tension.”³

This small group of images form part of an on-going and broader Artistic Research project.⁴

The call for proposals speaks of the office as often seen in opposition to the studio: industrialised tasks, the management of data, hourly pay, and rarely as the site for ‘ultimate’ creative freedom. The banal or ‘everydayness’ of these office images belies the dynamic tension beneath and in that spirit I would like to propose the inclusion of these often forgotten spaces in this exciting looking exhibition.

The intention is for this piece to speak to the creative friction and add to the sense of *myse-en-abyme* by situating it within *Overtime*.

The work

The work would comprise nine photographs (selected from those included in this submission) the intention being to install them as they are, with minimum interventions e.g. as a slide projection, or on paper with each image about A2 or A3 in size depending on your space requirements etc. The slide projector is an interesting idea as this technology sort of ‘fits’ the period of these images. (Each of the nine images may include one of the nine words from the title ‘La mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même’.

I have a 35mm Kodak slide projector if required.

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³ Claire Bishop 2012, *Participation and Spectacle: Where Are We Now?* in Nato Thompson (Ed.) 2012 *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art From 1991–2011* Creative Time

⁴ NB the choice of the French over the English in the title simply speaks to the recent and numerous calls for a new politics in the world