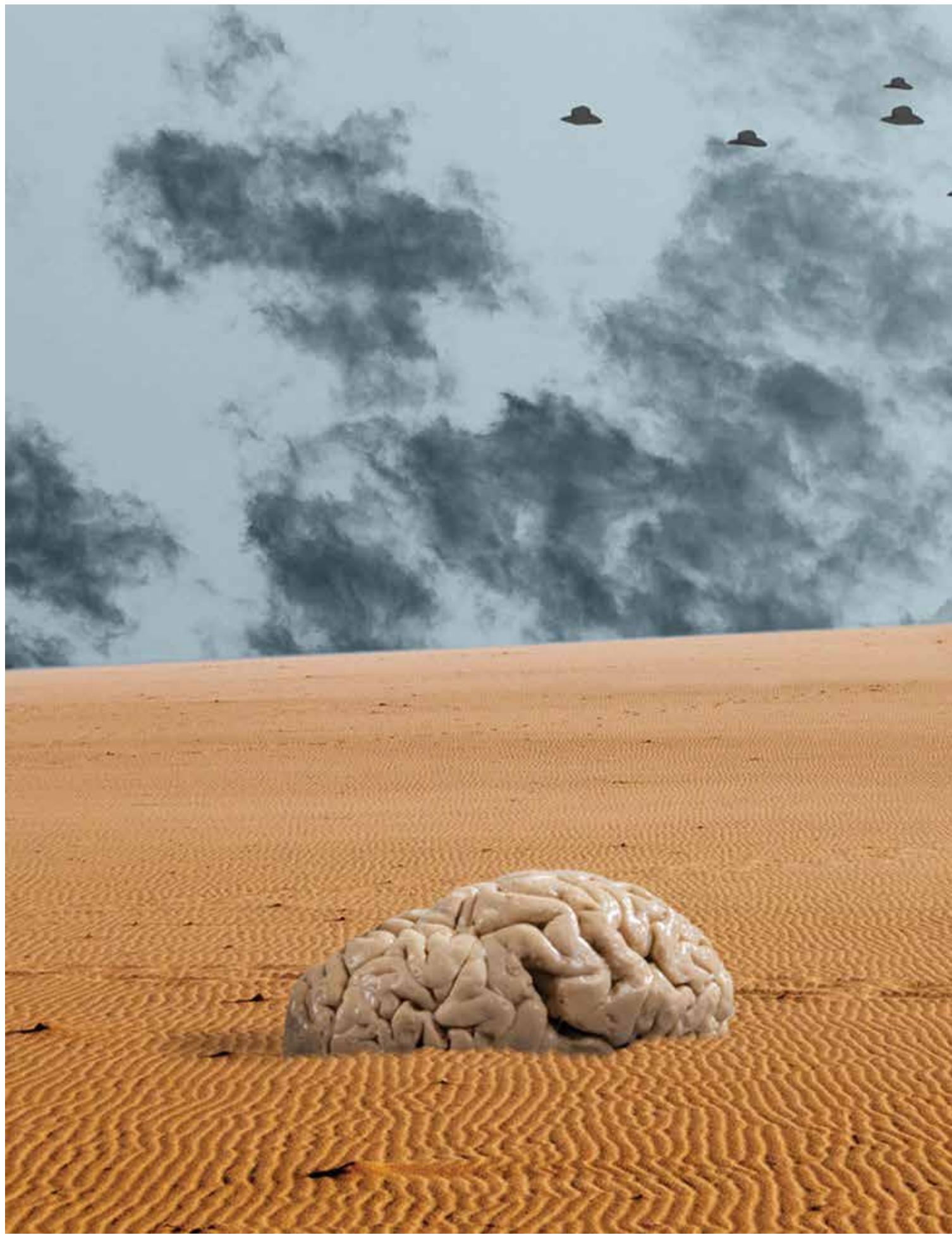


# 'Patastrophe!

CONTEMPORARY CUTS OF SURREALISM



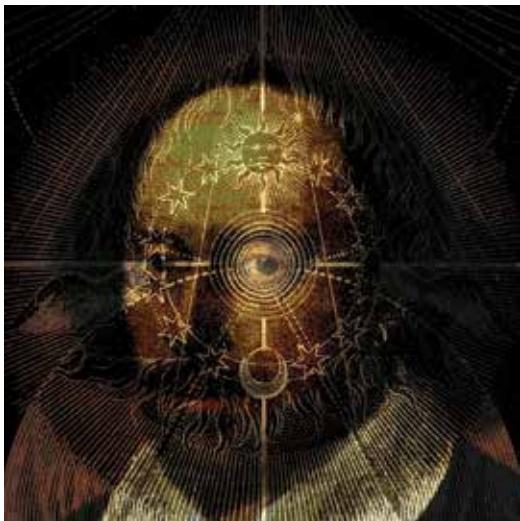
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Chris Furby  
*After the War*







## Alchemy, Surrealism and Shakespeare podcast

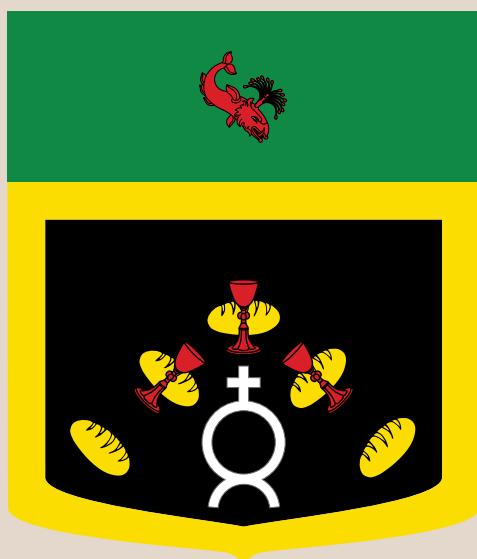
Shakespeare and Surrealism both interrogate power, explore the depths of the human psyche, celebrate love and Eros, and pursue the wondrous and the uncanny, and both deploy Alchemy as a dynamic of transformation to attain the Marvellous.

The podcast discusses how Shakespeare, in his later plays, uses Alchemy both as a symbolic language in the plays themselves, and to turn the theatre itself into an alembic to cast an Alchemical spell on the audience, creating for them a vision of the marvellous they can carry with them out of the theatre into the connecting vessel of the world outside.

Links to the podcast can be found at  
[surrealerpool.online](http://surrealerpool.online)

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### The Achievement of Arms of The Surrealerpool Collage of Alchymical, Flâneurial and 'Pataphysical Studies.

#### *Sable*

*a whale spouting bendwise reversed gules on a chief vert  
five breadloaf in chevron or  
oppressed by three chalice in chevron gules  
a bordure or  
in middle base an astronomical kerukeion inverted argent*

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Coat of arms: Hubert Huzzah



# Galloping Alopecia

## A look at the work of Eugène Ionesco

Kate O'Leary

Gradually, then suddenly, each inhabitant of your village turns into a rhinoceros – except you. An elderly couple stack the performance space with chairs – and more chairs – as they welcome invisible guests. A ‘terribly’ middle-class sitting room reveals characters reading newspapers, smoking, knitting and speaking in some kind of continuous, never-ending loop, using language that seems to have come from some English Primer, Level 1.

These form the plots of just three of the plays written by the Romanian playwright, Eugène Ionesco (1909-1994): *Rhinoceros* (1959); *The Chairs* (1952) and *The Bald Prima Donna* (1950). Described as an absurdist dramatist in Martin Esslin's seminal book *The Theatre of the Absurd* (1961), Ionesco is often linked to other writers of the period such as Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, Jean Genet and Arthur Adamov. Whilst Esslin's attribution of this label to all these complex writers has been critiqued since – and by the playwrights themselves – his definition of these new writers and their startling works is nonetheless worth noting:

“The Theatre of the Absurd strives to express its sense of the senselessness of the human condition and the inadequacy of the rational approach by the open abandonment of rational devices and discursive thought.”

In his 1957 essay on Kafka, *Dans Les Armes de La Ville*, Ionesco himself states: “Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose... Cut off from his religious, metaphysical and transcendental roots, man is lost: all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless”

And Albert Camus had earlier bewailed the post-war condition:

A world that can be explained by reasoning, however faulty, is a familiar world. But in a universe that is suddenly deprived of illusions and of light, man feels a stranger. His is an irremediable exile, because he is deprived of memories of a lost homeland as much as he lacks the hope of a promised land to come. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, truly constitutes the feeling of Absurdity  
*Le Mythe de Sisyphe* 1942

Born Romania and died in Paris, Eugène Ionesco became one of foremost writers in the French avant-garde theatre movement that wished to revolutionise accepted conceptions of theatre by breaking away from realistic traditions established in the nineteenth century, particularly in the novel and in plays. His works re-examine the accepted principles of 'real' life as portrayed on the stage. For Ionesco there is no such thing as 'realistic theatre'; it is a contradiction in terms as the very nature of theatre is illusory and any attempt to make the audience believe that what they are seeing is 'realistic' – or 'naturalistic' is 'a shabby piece of trickery'. And this is absurd!

For many writers and dramatists in the mid-twentieth century, the tumultuous horrors of two world wars had a dislocating and fracturing effect on the sensibilities of these artists and the 'comfortable' reliability of what we perceive as real is brought into contention. Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* might seem an amusing visual stage joke until we realise that each village inhabitant is turning into something alien, different, violent. What has happened to these people? Can we trust them? Whose side are they on? It is a visual inversion of Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, that 1915 novella of alienation where everyone is aghast at Gregor Samsa's change into something unrecognisable. The sense of fear and isolation on the part of the protagonist is, however, the same in both of these works.

At the end of *The Chairs*, the stage is completely over-run by chairs – but there is nobody there. These inanimate objects become signifiers for what we should see – people. But the people aren't there. It is a play about negation, about filling up a life with empty things; but it is also about those missing people, an idea that would resonate deeply in post-war Europe.

*The Bald Prima Donna's* constant stream of platitudes, non-sequiturs, clichés and ridiculous speculations reveal a world where listening is absent and only cacophony rules. Phrases that once might have made perfect sense begin to deteriorate into half-truths and then into caricature and parody until finally language itself disintegrates into disjointed fragments of words. So many utterances in the play will be embarrassingly familiar to us all – we have used them! – and their astonishing meaninglessness makes you cringe before you nervously laugh. Such expressions of failed communication will

be rehearsed in Beckett's work too. And, of course, the times we live in now cannot but come to mind when watching this play, which is still performed. Since 1957, there has been a continuous showing of this extraordinary play at the Théâtre de la Huchette in Paris, which received a Molière d'honneur for its performances. It is the world's longest running show, Mrs. Christie!

Ionesco as a child had a remarkable experience which he said changed his perception of how he saw the world. He was walking in a meadow when he suddenly felt a sense of euphoria and of being elevated away from the earth. On his return he realised that his perception of the 'real' world was not finite, that there was something more beyond this – a sense of the marvellous and the sublime.

His distrust of what we call the real world emanates from this moment and throughout his career he repeatedly remarked on its limitations and its corrosive influence: 'I have always thought that the truth of fiction is more profound, more charged with meaning than everyday reality. Realism on stage falls short of reality. It shrinks it, attenuates it, falsifies it; it does not take into account our basic truths and our fundamental obsessions: love, death, astonishment. It presents man in a reduced and estranged perspective. Truth is in our dreams, in the imagination.'

So how do we react to seeing such strange tales told on the stage? Our certainties are attacked, the rigidity of logic and a narrative drive is upturned, we are shocked, puzzled, full of incomprehension. Even the steady assuredness of genre goes out of the window. Instead, we are confronted by nightmare,

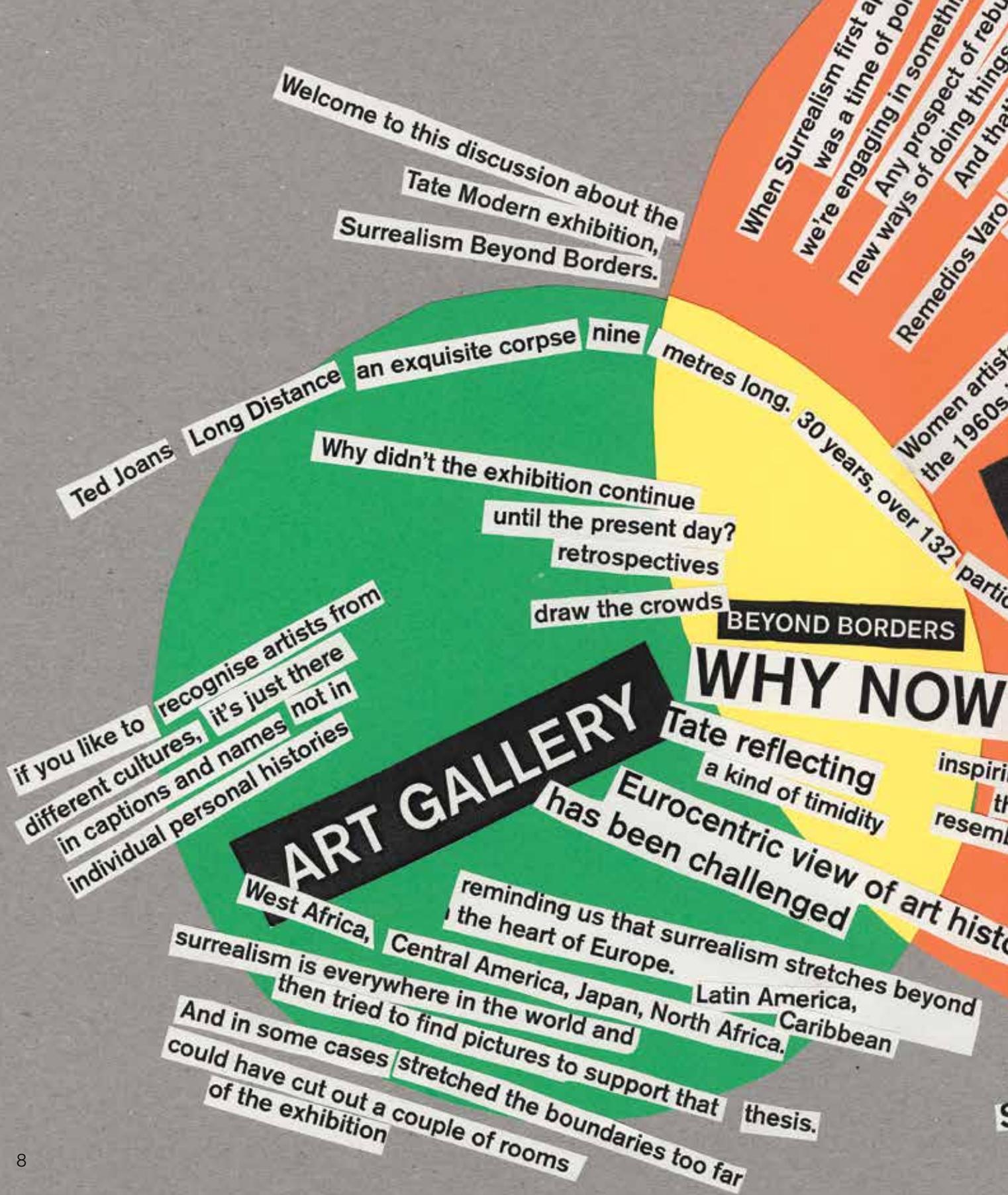


## *Our certainties are attacked, the rigidity of logic and a narrative drive is upturned*

dreams, chaos, the irrational nature of our environment. Arguably, Ionesco aims to bring us face to face with the harsh facts of the human situation. The world he creates is really just the unpredictable world that is our own, full of absurdities, inconsequences, bizarre happenings, despair – but also hilarity and exhilaration.

Perhaps by experiencing these plays we can face the challenges thrown at us in this non-sensical world and – just maybe – we don't feel quite so alone in what, for many, has become a daunting and unintelligible universe.

# Beyond Borders



# SURREALISM

Surrealism, uniquely of 20th century art movements, is still contemporary.

Surrealism is more than a movement in art. It's actually a real hydra of a movement, and it's expressed itself in many ways

Léopold Senghor was a Surrealist poet, he was also the first President of Senegal : 'We accepted Surrealism as a means, but not as an end, as an ally, but not as a master.'

the physical space was quite extraordinary.

It's almost as though the fabric of reality itself is coming up for question in a way that we haven't seen for a long time.

Surrealism is not an escape from reality, it's a challenge to reality.

now  
and new  
society requires  
ways of thinking,  
exactly at the heart  
of Surrealism  
trptych longing for the world outside and the  
creation of the world outside through imagination  
is adopted Surrealism very early on  
is where it gets art industry of  
focus on particularly  
the white men of surrealism and marginalise everybody else.

Impressionists wanting  
to ask questions  
about how light works  
Cubists interested in  
representations  
of three  
dimensions in  
two dimensional space  
Surrealists are  
interrogating conventions  
about how we actually live.

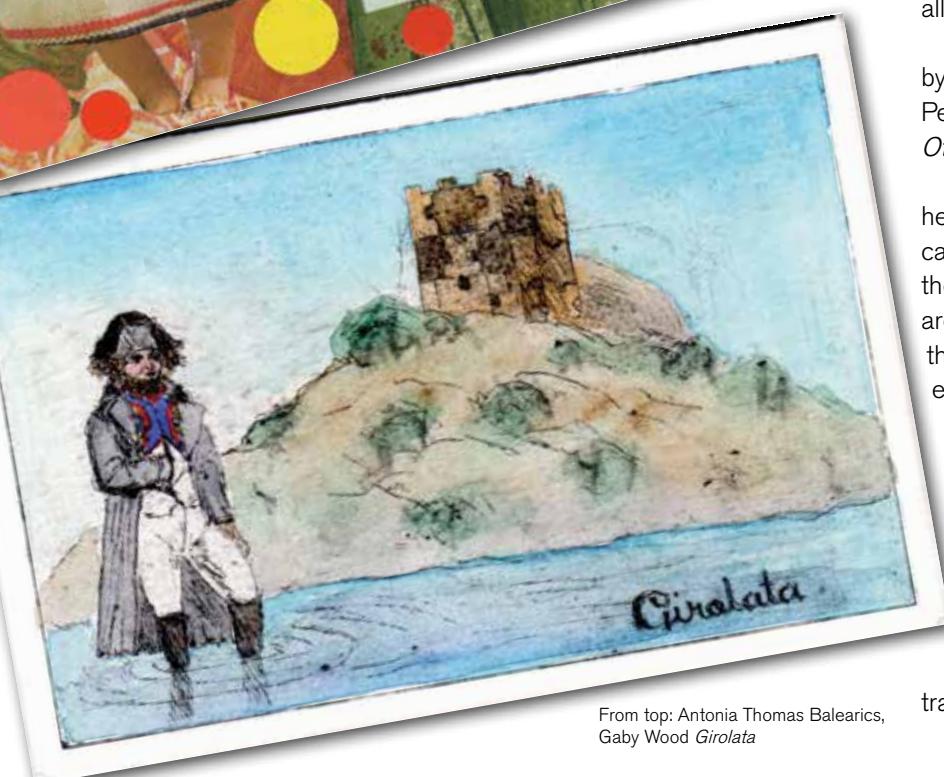
cipants, a corridor that joined two rooms  
ng cinematic presentations  
the art form that most closely  
ables the experience of dreaming

?

ory

Surrealism is not an escape from

# Two Hundred and Forty-Three Postcards in Real Colour



From top: Antonia Thomas Balearics,  
Gaby Wood *Girolata*

*Linda Parr*

Georges Perec's postcards were first published in a French magazine *Le FOU parle*, in 1978. Far from their description 'en Couleurs Véritables' (in Real Colour), they are only postcard messages, with no holiday pictures at all, and entirely in black & white.

The messages were translated into English by John Sturrock, and published in 1997 by Penguin Classics, in *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*.

The unnumbered messages describe hedonistic vacations of happy holidaymakers, careless about sunburn and with never a hint of the discomforts of travel, nor of the bills. There are so many messages that even if you took three holidays a year it would take a lifetime to experience them all.

The idea of the Postcards for Perec project was to respond to Georges Perec's 243 imaginary postcard messages by making the missing images, then sending real postcards. There was an enthusiastic worldwide response, catching the imagination of students and professors, artists and writers, Perec scholars, translators, mathematicians and architects.

The cards arrived at a Post Office

Box from twenty-two countries: Austria, Australia, Canada, England, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, South Africa, Sweden, Turkey, USA and Wales.

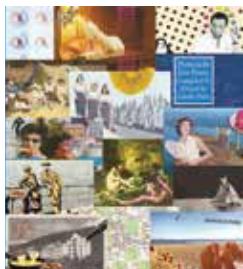
A batch of twenty-four cards rocked up late all together, as if returning from a party in a distant sorting office, in defiance of social distancing. The card from Mexico arrived a little dishevelled after a journey of three months. Only two were lost in the post, fortunately their images were able to be reproduced. Georges Perec's postcard messages + the images = 243 postal artworks.

The messages were dedicated to Perec's friend Italo Calvino, both men were members of OuLiPo, Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle (workshop of potential literature). This group of writers and mathematicians, based in Paris from the 1960s, explored the use of constrained writing techniques, and this is the first clue to unravelling the secrets of the messages.

Perec made lists of countries and regions, towns and hotel names, using all the letters of the alphabet equally three times, dropping in literary and historical references, to give each message a location. He then also listed numerous activities, entertainments, thoughts and greetings before mathematically shuffling and combining them all. A typical message would take the form, 'We're at the Pension des Glycines. Weather good. We eat well. I've got sunburnt. Back on the 17th.'

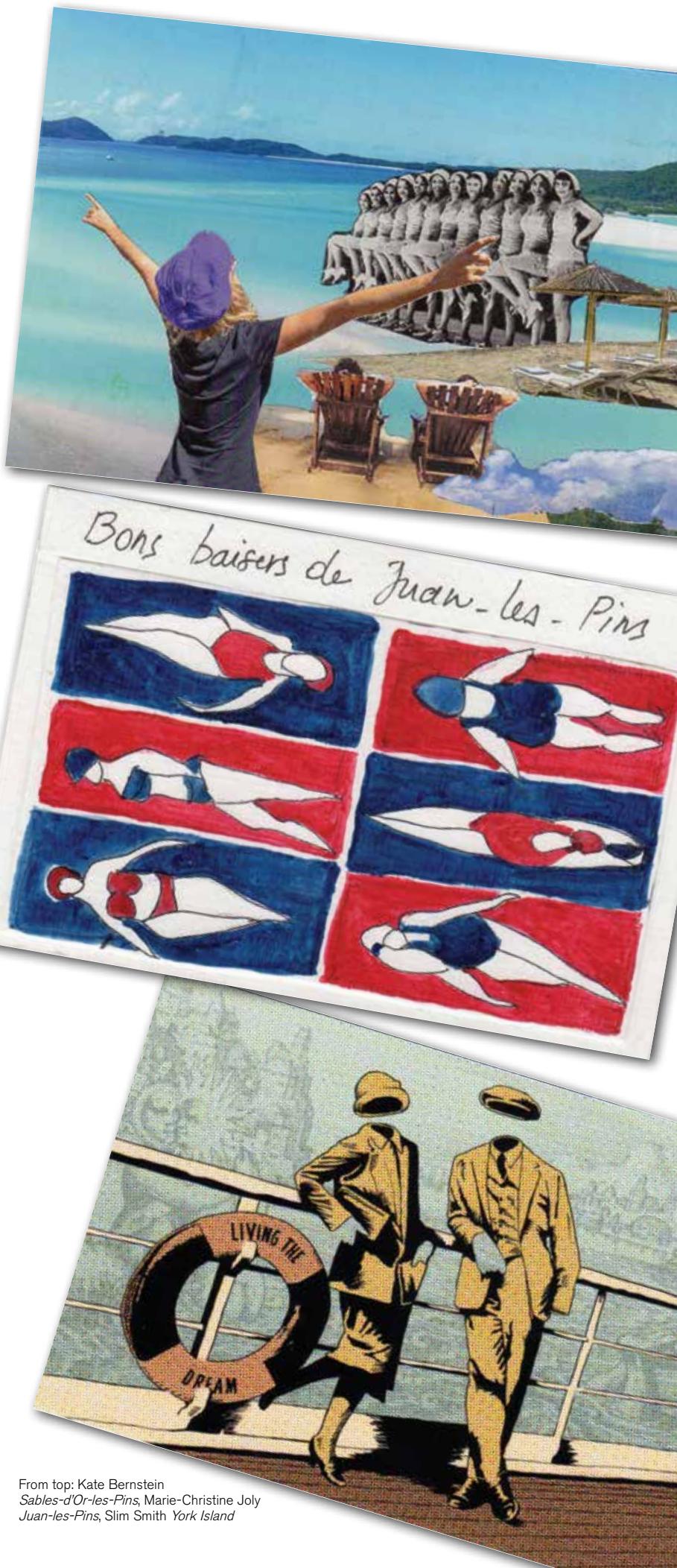
The postcard messages were allocated to their volunteer artists using Perec's own *knight's move* grid system, which was one of the methods he used to combine the elements of his messages.

In these years of staying at home we have travelled through the Republic of Postcards in a postal post-modernist Grand Tour. 40 years since Georges Perec's untimely death, his work continues to intrigue and inspire, and through these postcards his messages have come alive.



The cards were on display at the Bristol Artists' Book Event at Bower Ashton 23rd/24th April, and will be exhibited in Cardiff from May. The tour will continue in 2022 & 2023 to Paris and Sydney, completing return journeys for the postcards and their messages.

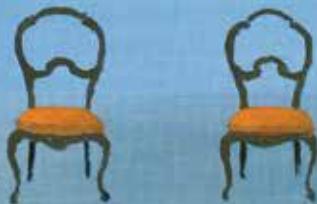
The *Postcards for Perec* book has been published. Foreword by Philip Terry and essays by Mireille Ribière, typography by Neil Crawford. 64pp in Real Colour of course, ISBN 978-1-906501-21-1 £20+p&p via [postcards.for.perec@gmail.com](mailto:postcards.for.perec@gmail.com)  
Instagram: [postcards\\_for\\_perec](https://www.instagram.com/postcards_for_perec/)



From top: Kate Bernstein  
Sables-d'Or-les-Pins, Marie-Christine Joly  
Juan-les-Pins, Slim Smith York Island

# What is (not) surrealism?

## On Stellan Mörner



Jonas Ellerström

When André Breton asked the question "What is surrealism?" in 1936, in a publication published in connection with the international surrealist exhibition in London, it was as a rhetorical introduction to his own clarification of the movement's ideas, direction and background. The text, originally a lecture, is to be regarded as a comprehensive description of the then current position of surrealism and its history. As so often, Breton gives both positive and negative definitions. It is just as important

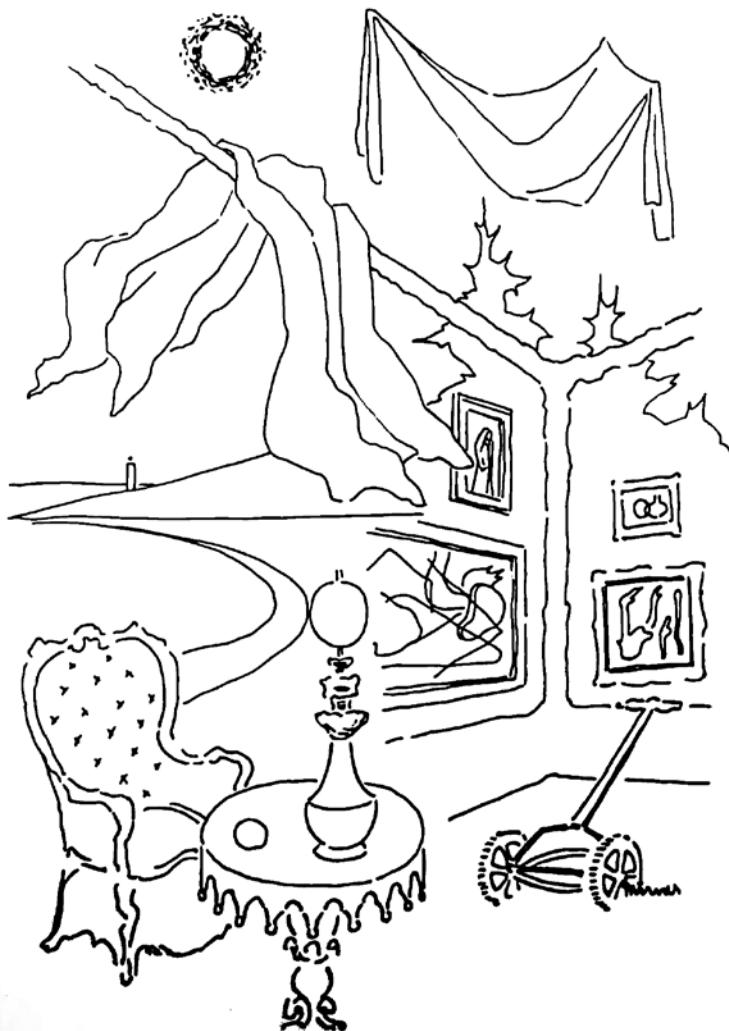
to talk about what belongs to surrealism as what does not.

The pattern is well known. Throughout Western society's modern history, radical groups have had a need to follow one course and to guard their ideological and aesthetic boundaries. From a contemporary perspective, it can be just as interesting to take note of what is excluded, as well as what is included. This is not necessarily a form of revisionism – for my own part it is about a widening of sympathies.

In the summer of 1936, the Swedish artist Stellan Mörner was in the absolute centre of surrealism. In the group photo from the international exhibition at New Burlington Galleries, he is standing in the middle, between Nusch Éluard and Eileen Agar. Mörner was invited to the exhibition together with his colleague Erik Olson; it was the Danish surrealists Vilhelm Bjerke-Petersen and Wilhelm Freddie who conveyed the invitation.

Mörner and Olson were part of the artists' association Halmstadgruppen (the Halmstad group), named after the city in southwestern Sweden where they were active. The other members were Esaias Thorén, Waldemar Lorentzon, Sven Jonson and Axel Olson. The group was active between 1929 and in practice until Stellan Mörner's death in 1979. All members were painters, several had a background in Cubism and had studied in Paris for Fernand Léger. In the 1930s, they became Sweden's only formation of surrealist artists.

It is easy to see influences from Giorgio de Chirico and Salvador Dalí in many of the group members' paintings from the 1930s, but more importantly, their palette and motifs clearly result from the light and environment on the southern Swedish coast where they were



based. Beach finds, boats and fishing gear are more realistic with them than with Yves Tanguy from Brittany, but always act as signs and symbols.

However, Stellan Mörner's visual world is very different. He did not grow up by the sea but in the central Swedish hinterland, and above all he did not come from the same simple living conditions as the others. It is not, even for a Swede, obvious from his name, but the family is old nobility and Stellan Mörner was in fact a count. Interiors and exteriors in his dreamy images are from family estates and castles with surrounding landscaped parks.

Of course, it can only be a hypothetical question how André Breton would have reacted if he, faced with Mörner's painting "Lady Macbeth" in London, had known this. At best, it would not have mattered. Isidore Ducasse's title, comte de Lautréamont, is a forgery but was accepted; that de Chirico's nobleman's prefix is probably genuine was not decisive when Breton took a stand against his later, neo-classical painting.

It is perhaps rather our own preconceived notions that we are confronted with. Is it painterly surrealism in itself or us spectators that have set the expectations for dark, shocking image contents? Is it possible to imagine another, milder surrealism, a surrealism in pastel tones?

Yes it is. Such are largely Stellan Mörner's paintings and drawings. I, who in no way share his background and experiences, have always liked them, but I have made some conscientious objections and have had to overcome my own prejudices. It has also been part of my objections that Mörner is by no means as skilled an artist as the others of the Halmstad group. Today, I think this is hardly relevant; rather, it increases my appreciation that Mörner's pictures are able to convince despite their technical shortcomings. Is his color scheme too sweet, is the image content too nostalgic? I may think so in individual cases, but overall his pictures – which certainly do not lack dark undertones, unrest and horror – are ones I want to step into. To put it simply, I want to be in Stellan Mörner's world of images, and right now I think that this is a final positive judgment.

After the Second World War, Mörner was successfully active as a set designer at large Swedish theaters and opera houses. It is not surprising, many of his paintings have something of theatrical about them. He also wrote two slim books of lyrical prose, which are good keys to his art and to his person. They take place entirely in the world of dreams and



the subconscious, and are deeply personal and autobiographical in an almost naive way.

The first and most interesting of them, *Timmarna innan* (The Hours Before), was published in 1948 and is illustrated with four full-page ink drawings. They form a concentrate of Mörner's motif circle and also make it clear how much the Swedish salon culture, dating from the 18th century, still meant during his upbringing. That the pictures are in black and white makes everything clearer: this is the world through which the boy moved and to which the adult man still belongs, while in his art he acts as an observer and interpreter of both the environment and his own inner life.

It may require that we pattake of the book's contents, lest the drawings appear too decorative. But only maybe. What the text confirms is that Stellan Mörner's inherited world, with its rococo furniture, candelabra, old relatives in ancient costumes, and paintings in gold frames, for him is an authentic and complete world. It is neither out of duty, nor birthright, nor because of parents' demands and expectations, that he lingers in it. Mörner's mansion environments are not an idyll, they are simply his world and he wants to be in it. We create a sense of belonging ourselves. The desire to exclude should be counteracted.



Doug Campbell  
*The board and the game*

# How Much Longer?

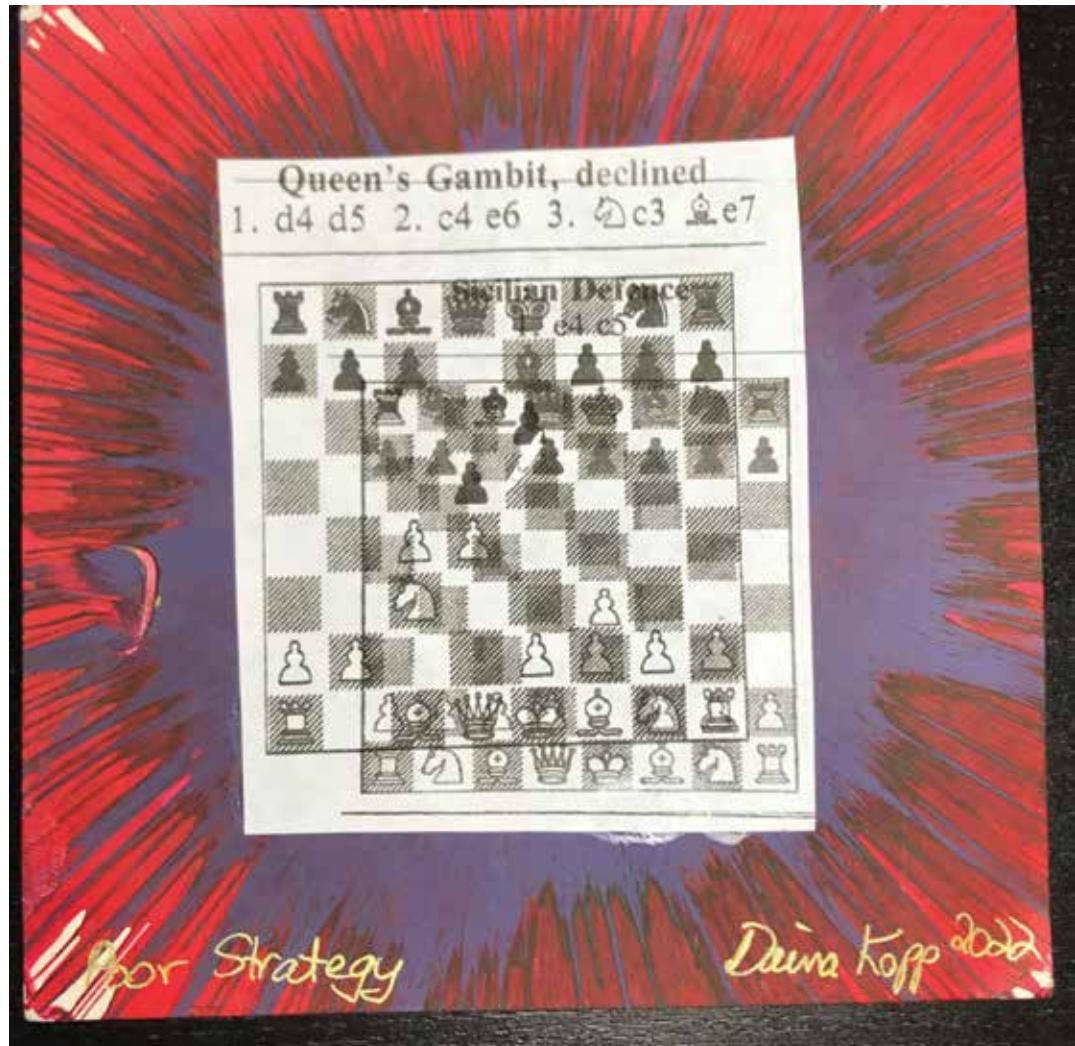
Collective poem:  
Doug Campbell,  
Taya King,  
Daina Kopp and  
Darren Thomas  
(*La Sirena*)

The torn map reveals the ghosts of the city  
Dreams of protesting with the Russian pacifists  
Pleased with war's dreadful and tumultuous roar  
The locomotive has taken them nowhere  
Roll the dice and take your turn  
The sunflower smiles through the blood of the rubble to greet the new day  
He who cannot play chess only uses brutality  
Butterfly children slaughtered by noblemen in the city  
Sugar the petrol, sell your guns and hide



Taya King  
*The Mad King*

The children roar in wild tears until they cry themselves to sleep  
Ghosts should rise up to drag the warmonger to hell!  
The desert queen serves the mad king  
The mad king is distended  
Avenging strife embitters human life  
What is invisible will light up the sky in incandescent colours  
The doll child hides in East Budleigh  
Ivan Bilibin and Pushkin should curse the mad king to hell  
A chorus of war cries from behind keyboards far from harm  
The alchemy of dreaming heals the broken hearts  
Screams and curses across myriad media apps  
Karkhiv can never sleep, can only dream of peace, can only endure in the  
hearts and minds of those who will carry hope to the highest mountains for  
all to see



Daina Kopp  
*Poor Strategy*

A half-hearted re-enactment of old mistakes, but with real deaths  
Extra points for the grim reaper for taking the mad king  
Workers and refugees captured and tortured in a celluloid prison  
The young woman took her revolver to bed and was prepared to use it  
Inferno awaits the mad king  
The boys in the field are bored, or afraid or just excited by the game  
My son is missing an eye and my mother's wing has been ripped  
Dante should pull him down there  
Inevitable as a pub brawl at closing time, last orders called  
The imaginary letter, Z, doesn't exist in Russian. Neither should the  
mad king  
The inferno takes them all to his heart until they march to the beat of the  
war drums, the death drums, the holocaust drums  
No one is leaving until we find out who really started it



Daina Kopp  
*My Prayers*

Every embrace is a sign of hope, of defiance  
Where are the angels now?  
The wind blows the shards of the silent mirrors across their broken faces  
and captures their death throes for all to see  
A world left blind and toothless by the law of revenge  
We suffocated on steam that turned into locks of human hair  
The mad king of antiquity belongs in the past, not now  
We run and burn and fall and run over and over again  
And midnight trembled to see such terrors  
The fighting leaves old men deformed in the streets  
May Baba Yaga escort the mad king to hell  
A stain upon another generation, damned to repeat the whims of their rabid  
masters  
All of this just to reset the board for the next time



Darren Thomas  
*In All This Light*

Blood stained the monochrome city of ashes  
We, the invisible demand to be heard even if we cannot be seen  
May the liar choke on his lies  
She hung up the remnants of shame like a ventriloquist's flag for all to see  
Criminals jostle to steal the clothes and words of the famous dead  
The mad king is fragile, just like a chess king. And like a chess king, I want  
to throw him to the ground  
The war is fought by actors and actresses, not by women and children  
Who pays the price?  
We bleed  
Spent  
How much longer?

# 75 The Fruit Of British Sovereignty (P.M.)

I

the fruit of British Sovereignty  
falls not far from Albion's Tree  
no matter where or when it be  
seed spaffed procures perfidy

**Do your duty**  
**Fly the flag**  
**Wrap yourself in glory**  
  
**Tug your forelock**  
**Lick your spittle**  
**Venerate the Tóráí**

III

strum a goitre on expenses  
coddle curate's eggs with gin  
consumate the might of lucre  
so solemn void might dwell within

**Do your duty**  
**Lick the flag**  
**Wrap yourself in glory**  
  
**Fly your forelock**  
**Tug your spittle**  
**Venerate the Tóráí**

V

pander debutantes at Whitsun  
rectal rictus lunarwise  
elevate the weasel mutter  
rollick on those fulsome thighs

**Do your duty**  
**Tug the flag**  
**Wrap yourself in glory**  
  
**Lick your forelock**  
**Fly your spittle**  
**Venerate the Tóráí**

II

hoik a mistress out bay windows  
wheek glum bastards down the stairs  
yeet some hirelings into attics  
catch rough traders unawares

**Do your duty**  
**Tug the flag**  
**Wrap yourself in glory**  
  
**Fly your forelock**  
**Lick your spittle**  
**Venerate the Tóráí**

IV

bugger Bognor and its regent  
wiggle Wodge at passing nuns  
celebrate the joys of wildlife  
boss top bros discharged of guns

**Do your duty**  
**Fly the flag**  
**Wrap yourself in glory**  
  
**Lick your forelock**  
**Tug your spittle**  
**Venerate the Tóráí**

VI

canter circumambulations  
widdershins about the place  
skipping jackboot harsh yet dainty  
over upturned servants face

**Do your duty**  
**Lick the flag**  
**Wrap yourself in glory**  
  
**Tug your forelock**  
**Fly your spittle**  
**Venerate the Tóráí**

## coda

pronk and scamper proud yet servile  
sing thee loud these flunkeys' songs  
never once to pause to ponder  
sovereigns' songs sing sovereign wrongs

The Standard New Hymnal  
122

*Take two six faced dice.*

*The first with black pips.*

*The second with red pips. Roll.*

*Recite black versicle and red response so indicated.*

*Repeat until all versicles are exhausted (or pataphysical insurrection and enlightenment).*

*Whereupon: recite coda.*

*Musical accompaniment: KV. 294d(K3) or KV. 516f(K6). Fipple flutes. No Trombones.*

Hubert Huzzah  
*The Fruit of British Sovereignty*



# Eros et la Vie

## A Surrealist/Feminist Tango

Reese Saxment

The words 'Surrealism' and 'feminism' do not sit easily together. The dominant view in the Anglophone world is that Surrealism was a sexist, even misogynistic boys' club, reducing women to 'muses' or sexualised objects, and only by repudiating Surrealism could women liberate themselves<sup>1</sup>. This article proposes a rethink of the Surrealist/feminist relationship.

In 2005, Alyce Mahon coined the term 'The Politics of Eros'<sup>2</sup> to define the direction taken by Paris Surrealism after 1945, when, far from fizzling out as its opponents like to believe, it reconstituted under the leadership of André Breton with renewed commitment to the struggle against the repression of Eros, the Freudian drive of Love and Life. The liberation of Eros motivated major Surrealist exhibitions, powered much of the counter-culture of the 1960s, and has fuelled the 'French Feminism' of Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous since the 1970s, with its focus on female *jouissance* – unchained erotic ecstasy. Although not themselves Surrealists, these theorists drew (critically) on the teachings of psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan who had moved in the same circles as Bataille, Dalí, Picasso and Dora Maar in the 1930s, and their writings chime in well with the ideas of women

Surrealists like Toyen, Leonor Fini, Lee Miller, Joyce Mansour, Dorothea Tanning, Annie Le Brun and many others. Not all who work in this field are Surrealists, but it is the Politics of Eros that provides the space for Surrealism and feminism to cross-fertilise.

However, in the 1970s, this psychoanalytic/Surrealist/Eros feminism was challenged by another feminist agenda arising in the USA (and, as is usually the case, instantly adopted in the UK). This alternative agenda grew out of trauma. The Women's Movement had been promoting the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), and this was derailed, not by the patriarchal political establishment in Washington, but by a dynamic right-wing Republican Christian women's lobby led by Phyllis Schlafly. The shock of this defeat led many American feminists to conclude, not that conservative women were the enemy, but that 'patriarchy' was to blame, and right-wing women, being 'empowered', were potentially worthy allies in a united women's struggle if a common cause could be found. That common cause presented itself as a war against the Erotic, which for conservative Evangelicals was sin, and for many feminists was 'pornography' (and therefore 'patriarchal oppression', 'degrading' women, 'objectifying' their bodies, and 'causing'

rape). This commitment to censoring and cleansing society of erotica (much as an earlier generation of conservative Evangelical women had fought to ban alcohol) has given rise to a new Politics of Prohibition which has been in head-on conflict with the Politics of Eros ever since. While some feminists have continued to struggle over the material conditions of women's lives, prohibitionist feminism has been remarkably successful in putting the war against images and words centre-stage in Anglo-American gender politics.

But the prohibitionists haven't had it all their own way, and one arena where women with feminist credentials and Surrealist sympathies have counter-attacked is literature.

In Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985)<sup>3</sup>, the protagonist, June ('Offred'), notes Serena Joy's role as chief propagandist for the religious coup, and her own (now condemned) mother's fervour for burning 'pornographic' books, and realises that both paved the way to Gilead, where no erotic display is permissible, books are banned, and women are treated with 'respect' in public (although confined to the home, and in the case of handmaids, ritually raped). In case any reader missed it, Aunt Lydia reinforces the point, lecturing the trainee handmaids that although pre-Gilead feminists were awful 'Unwomen' with their demands for education, birth control and abortion, nevertheless 'some of their ideas were sound enough' for Gilead evangelicals to 'condone'. Atwood's message is clear – progressives making common cause with reactionaries are strengthening those who will then turn on them and destroy them. [And just to remind us that Gilead is referencing American gender/religious politics as much as Iran under the Ayatollahs, in the sequel<sup>4</sup> the 'aunts' in Gilead meet to drink their warm milk at the Schlafly café.]

More overt in her assertion of psychoanalytic/Surrealist feminism, Angela Carter in 1979 released two books articulating the Politics of Eros. As advisor to the editorial board of Virago Press, she suggested that if Virago really was committed to Women's Liberation, it should stick its neck out and publish the works of the Marquis de Sade – in keeping with the Surrealist idea that true liberty for everyone will only be possible when Eros, in all its aspects, is freed. [Other 20th century feminists who were neither Freudians nor Surrealists also took Sade seriously, notably Simone de Beauvoir, whose essay *Must We Burn Sade?*<sup>5</sup> (published in 1951, two years after her magisterial *The Second Sex*<sup>6</sup>) insisted on Sade's importance as a moral thinker.]

Virago, understandably, was reluctant to face the prosecutions such publication would entail, and declined, but it did invite Carter to write a text on Sade's significance, and in her book *The Sadeian Woman*<sup>7</sup> Carter argued for 'Pornography in the service of women', and concluded that 'holy terror' of the erotic is 'the source of all opposition to the emancipation of women.'

More subtly, and provocatively, Carter's other 1979 book, *The Bloody Chamber*<sup>8</sup>, laid a trap for mainstream Anglophone feminism. The title story is a reworking of Bluebeard, with enough emphasis on the (nameless) bride's connivance in her own corruption to worry the sisterhood, but with a good 'feminist' ending to reassure them, as it is the bride's mother, not her brothers, who rescues her and kills

## *Prohibitionist feminism has been remarkably successful in putting the war against images and words centre-stage in gender politics*

her murderous husband. So all ends happily, with the bride living with her thoroughly heroic mother (no mean marks-woman, we are told twice that she shot a tiger in Asia), and her gentle new 'lover', a blind piano-tuner. And yet this ending raises uncomfortable questions. What kind of future is it for the bride to return to infantile symbiosis with the mother, and to have as a 'lover' an impotent boy? (Carter was fully familiar with Freudian symbolism, where blinded = castrated). Moreover, in the later stories in the collection we discover that wild beasts – wolves, lions and tigers – represent erotic dynamism... The trap is sprung. Those who see the mother as 'empowered' feminist icon have been praising a woman who co-opts phallic power to kill *jouissance*, and whose daughter is as dependent and sexless as any Victorian 'angel in the house'. In contrast to the bride in *The Bloody Chamber*, the female protagonist in *The Tiger's Bride* realises 'the tiger will never lie down with the lamb; ... The lamb must learn to run with the tigers', and being bold enough to face the Tiger's desire, she allows him to lick the skin off her to release her own 'beautiful fur'.

To conclude, a Surrealist feminism can certainly exist, but not by watering-down and sanitising Surrealism to make it palatable to the Politics of Prohibition, with its conservatism and 'holy terror' of the erotic. What is needed is a re-vitalising of the Politics of Eros, in all its glory, and danger – as Duchamp said: *Eros, c'est la vie!*

1. See Whitney Chadwick: *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement* (Thames and Hudson 1985); Penelope Rosemont in *Surrealist Women* (University of Texas Press 1998) by contrast insists that Surrealism was a liberating force for women

2. *The Politics of Eros* (Thames and Hudson 2005)

3. *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) (Jonathan Cape 1986)

4. Margaret Atwood: *The Testaments* (Chatto and Windus 2019)

5. *Faut-il brûler Sade?* (1951-52) / *Must We Burn Sade?* (John Calder 1962)

6. *Le Deuxième Sexe* (1949) / *The Second Sex* (Jonathan Cape 1953)

7. *The Sadeian Woman* (Virago Press 1979)

8. *The Bloody Chamber* (Victor Gollancz 1979)

But now, at last, I dare avow my terror  
Of the pale vampire by the cooling grass  
The enemy face that doubled every look  
My secret fear of him and his cold heart  
The meaning of the dream  
Which was so fraught with trouble for me  
And how, through this long autumn  
(Sick and tempestuous with another)  
His spirit, vexed, fluttered amorphous  
A bird returning to the darker  
The hard-eyed albatross  
And I would ask his name



Boy, starlit digging  
ound in gutters and  
drains with sticks and  
sellotaped  
together  
car  
aerial,  
says he's on to something  
knows where it is hidng,  
and where he harks it  
out, he'll eat  
it, wash it  
down with  
be forever  
changed

Rose unexpected from the mirrored pools:  
The trees had hands to clutch my velvet under  
And birds of fever sang among the  
Till the dark vine-boughs, b  
And dripping blood, cri  
ut with their own voice:



like a mages, like a  
DINER, NODDING  
at something gleaming  
only he can see. He  
speaks in AWE, like

animal  
like  
BIRD.

The  
secret  
of  
the  
UNIVERSE



# Act III Scene IV

Linda Bromilow

**1948**

James Lister, 9 years of age and dressed in his beige, summer scouts uniform, 'because it's smart', followed his mother into the seemingly large auditorium. Following James was Mr. Jones, or 'Uncle Fred', as his mother insisted he call him.

This, his first visit to the theatre, had him walking steadily down the sloped, red carpeted aisle behind the familiar navy blue mac, rhythmically swishing over his mother's backside. He looked up at her 'best hat', pinned to her head, grey curls springing out from underneath and bouncing on her collar.

Something to the right of her hat caught James' eye; the ceiling appeared to have flown away revealing glimmering, golden finials and cherubs waving at him from up on high. He stopped, gawping at the majestic lighting and decoration overhead.

"James!"

He looked to his mother. She was standing, one hand on her hip, the other gesturing down the third row of the stalls. "Come on," she urged. "Number six."

He scurried towards his mother and she ushered him down the row. He noticed each seat had stuck to its underside a black disc etched with a white number. He found number six and hovered, not knowing what to do. His mother and 'Uncle Fred' followed, pulling down their seats, parking themselves on numbers four and five.

James copied them, perching on the edge of the seat, the hinges rocking him up and down as his frame didn't have enough weight to keep it steady. As he gazed in wonder at his surroundings he enjoyed the sensation of being rocked and the red velvet gently rubbing the back of his bare thighs. This promised to be a good afternoon.

As the goosebumps rippled on his legs and arms, three large women, all wearing hats with the same curly hair poking out from underneath, sat down on the row in front of James. Most of

his view to the voluminous, stage curtains was blocked.

He cast a disappointed look to his mother; wrinkled nose and curling lip. She didn't notice as she was far too busy with 'Uncle Fred'.

The lights dimmed, the stage curtain rose and James shifted in his seat, attempting to gain a view round the three broad broads.

The play progressed; James couldn't see much and didn't understand most of it but, he could feel energy emitting towards him. The actors were projecting their lines and he snatched understanding of a murdered king, a ghost and madness.

Suddenly a sword was thrust and there was a cry, "O! I am slain!"

James moved swiftly left and right, trying to see what was happening. The actors were speaking quickly and he craned his neck in response to their emotions. He needed to see more – he gripped the arms of his seat and levered himself high above the three hats. There before him was the queen, pushed down on a bed by her son.

"O!", James exclaimed.

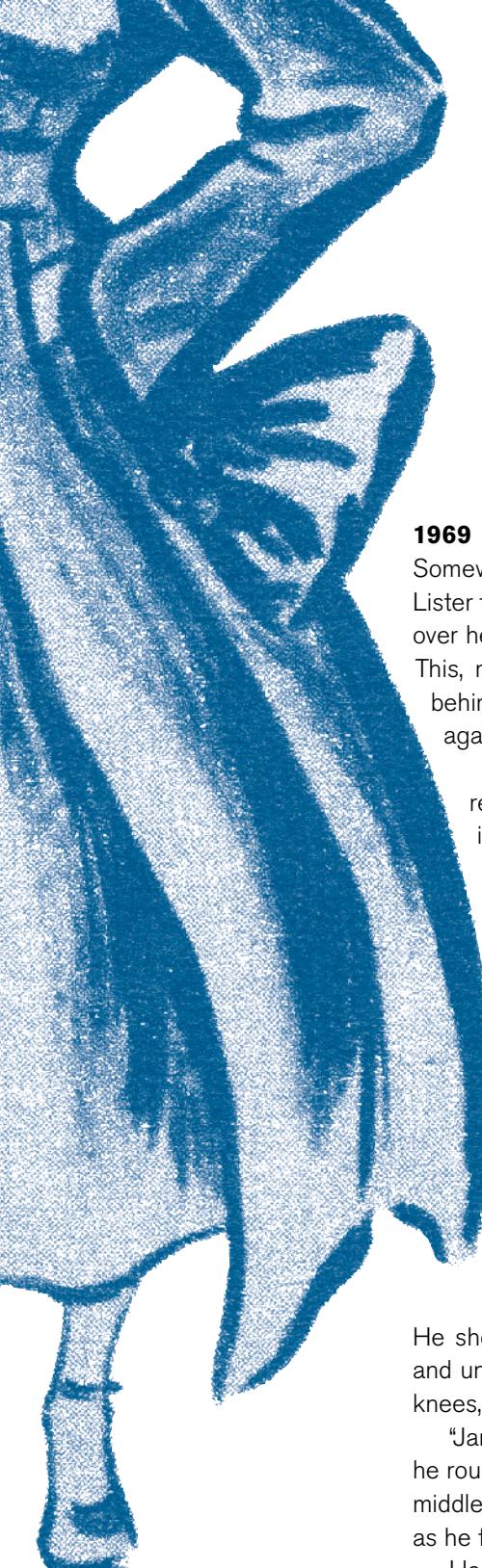
"Nay, but to live in the rank sweat of an enseamed bed, stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love."

"O!", James exclaimed again, causing the three hats to turn to him, tutting.

"For God's sake James," his mother impatiently whispered, "get down." She swiped her hand towards him as his grip slipped from the seats arms. Her hand connected with his bare thigh as the seat rocked back taking him with it, enveloping him in soft, red velvet. He instantly became aware of his cock, hard against his belly and thighs.

"O." James softly cried.

"I can't take you anywhere," his mother said through gritted teeth as she pulled him from his cushiony cocoon and pushed him up the aisle and out of the theatre.



## 1969

Somewhere off the Edgeware Road, James Lister followed the familiar navy blue mac, tight over her backside, up a flight of dimly lit stairs. This, not his first visit to the flat, found him behind the 'best hat' and grey curls bobbing against her collar.

"Every time James," she said as she reached the flat door and pushed her key into the lock.

They both made their way down the dark hallway, emerging into the spacious kitchen.

She stood facing him by the window, both hands on her hips, the sunlight almost bleaching her face from existence.

"You make a show of me every time."

"Every time?" James asked sternly and swiped his right hand towards her cheek.

She cried and stumbled to the floor, her hat falling over her eyes.

"Every time mother? Every time?" He shouted as he quickly unbuckled his belt and unzipped his beige trousers. He fell to his knees, pushing her all the way onto her back.

"James," she protested and struggled as he roughly pushed her mac and skirt up to her middle. He was acutely aware of his hard cock as he forced it into her.

He pinned her hands against the hard, tiled floor, putting all his might into thrusting out and in.

"But to live in the rank sweat of an enseam'd bed," he grunted into her covered face, "stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love. Over. The. Nasty. Styyyyyy." He slumped over her; done.

After a moment she gently said, "Alright, alright," and gently tapped a light rhythm on his back, "up you get!"

James slowly pushed himself onto his haunches and briefly paused, his forehead resting on his palms. He got to his feet and righted his clothing.

"O, don't mind me," she said, propping

herself awkwardly on her elbows.

"Sorry," James offered her a hand and helped her to her feet.

She made her way over to the other side of the kitchen and removed the mac, revealing a black mini skirt and tight red top.

James fumbled his wallet from his pocket and slipped out a five pound note.

"Uhm?", he asked, gently waving the money in her direction.

"Over here, on the dresser my dear."

She hung the mac on a wall peg and removed her wig, placing it on the faceless head at the end of the dresser.

"Same time next week?" she asked, smoothing down her black bob.

"Not next week," James shook his head, "I'm taking the family to Devon, but, but the week after, yes," he affirmed with a nod.

"Ok." She smiled, shrugged and gestured towards the door.

As they approached the hallway James stopped and turned to her, "I, er, I sometimes feel guilty about all of this."

"Better out than in Mr. Lister, that's what I say." She leaned against the kitchen door frame and looked at him sagely.

"Yes, but I do wonder how this affects my relationship with my wife and children," he said, earnestly.

"Now come on," she said, flinging her right arm up and pushing him down the hallway, "I'm a therapist of sorts but, if you want to talk about it that's three doors down, flat four."

"Ha," James smiled to himself, "Act three, scene four."

"What's that Mr. Lister?"

"O, nothing," he smiled.

As he left the flat she caught his arm. "Ey, be a dove will you and tell Mr. Metcalfe to give me ten minutes before he comes up. He'll be down there, hovering by the main door."

"Of course," said James and he skipped down the stairs, whistling.

# Ashen humanity

*Laura Kenyon*

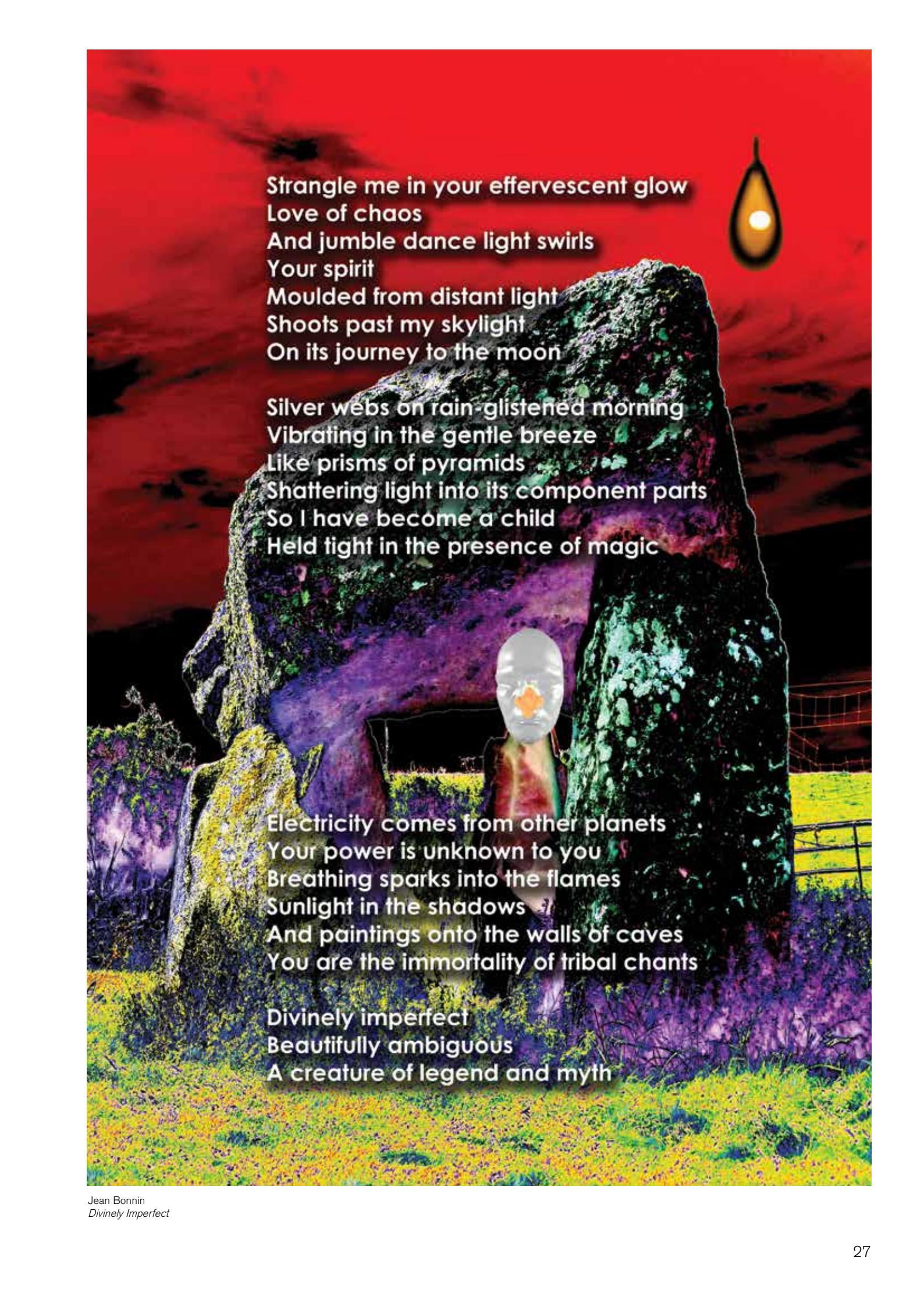
Ancient Humans perceived us as Gods and worshipped us as such.  
our distended limbs, pale with wordless grief did nothing to dissuade them  
  
we descended on them like vultures to a mass grave, and reaped our rewards  
they offered their souls to us unconditionally  
absolution pledged

Old Gods born anew  
but at what cost?

We took back that we were owed until nothing was left  
except charred bones still warm from the pyre

it is Death that completes a man! they cry

we are the mechanisms of heaven  
we loom like colossi  
until next time  
Humanity is ours for the taking

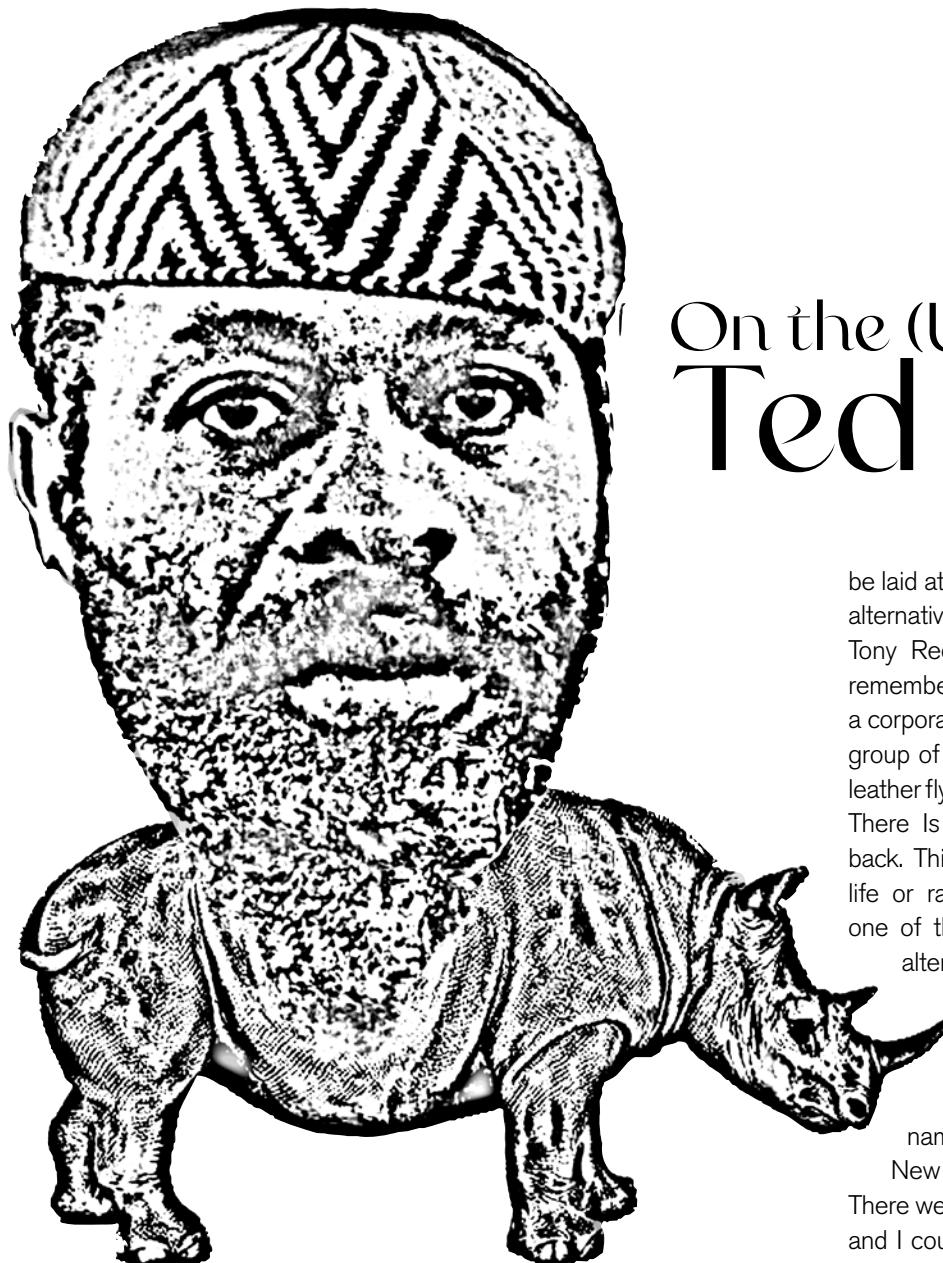


Strangle me in your effervescent glow  
Love of chaos  
And jumble dance light swirls  
Your spirit  
Moulded from distant light  
Shoots past my skylight  
On its journey to the moon

Silver webs on rain-glistened morning  
Vibrating in the gentle breeze  
Like prisms of pyramids  
Shattering light into its component parts  
So I have become a child  
Held tight in the presence of magic

Electricity comes from other planets  
Your power is unknown to you  
Breathing sparks into the flames  
Sunlight in the shadows  
And paintings onto the walls of caves  
You are the immortality of tribal chants

Divinely imperfect  
Beautifully ambiguous  
A creature of legend and myth



John Row

This story starts either in Orwell Books or Ipswich Arts Theatre with either my wife, Rose, Ian Callender, Tony Reeder or Sean Halpenny.

Rose had worked with Ian at the theatre in the early 70s. They had an old lighting rig which meant if there were too many cues Rose had to kneel on the floor working the lower row while Ian worked the top. Ian invited Rose to work on his show at the Edinburgh Fringe. Rose booked us into a B&B within walking distance of the venue but the show was cancelled. We'd never had a holiday together so we decided to go anyway. We rushed from fringe production to fringe production and hung around theatre bars in particular the Traverse. It was here I noticed a guy with an African skull cap in the corner holding court.

I turned to Rose and said: "That looks remarkably like Ted Joans." Glancing up to the posters on the ceiling I was astounded to see his name. I edged my way into the crowd around him.

That I even knew who Ted Jones was could

# On the (UK) road with Ted Joans

be laid at the door of Orwell Books in Ipswich, an alternative bookshop founded by local anarchist Tony Reeder. When I first came to Ipswich I remember looking down from the upper deck of a corporation bus at Major's Corner and seeing a group of four or five young men, one wearing a leather flying jacket with "Where There Is Authority There Is No Freedom" emblazoned across its back. This was Tony, who was to influence my life or rather him and his bookshop, stocking one of the most comprehensive collections of alternative and political newspapers in the country: *International Times*, *Red Dwarf*, *Ink*, *Oz*, the International Workers of the World (Wobblies) paper and *San Francisco Oracle* to name a few. It also stocked poetry from New Directions, City Lights and John Calder.

There were only twelve such shops in the country and I count myself lucky to have lived in one of the few provincial towns to have had one.

Sometime I had bought a copy of *A Black Manifesto of Jazz Poetry* by Ted Joans and now I was standing next to him in the bar of the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh.

Or this could have been a year later when I had driven up to Edinburgh by myself in the second Morris Traveller I was to own. This one had cost me twenty five pounds and for some reason always had its nose in the air making it look like a WWII aircraft about to take off. I headed back to the Fringe, no B&B this time. My road routes came from my beat days and now I had my own box to sleep in so every night I drove into Holyrood Park, parked up and slept until the fire engine came each morning to replenish its water tank from the lake. This alarm call allowed me to crawl out of my sleeping bag before being spotted by the park's officials.

Whenever it was, I casually slipped into the crowd around Ted as he entertained his crowd with anecdote after anecdote. We exchanged a few pleasantries planting the seeds of a relationship

which was important to me and probably only one of thousands he made on the road. The thing about Ted was he always made you feel good about yourself. Later I heard him being dismissed by university professors as a showman, as if it was all about his own ego. In fact he was one of the most generous men I have ever met always giving of himself and encouraging young pretenders like me to go for it.

That day I watched his set at the Traverse, Ted did his thing finishing with the lines "I got to read and run". He was appearing all over the Fringe that year.

After the show I begged a guest spot for the following day. I got one but was disappointed to find Ted had to read and run before I had a chance to impress him. However I had also managed to get a spot at a venue where Ted and Jeff Nutall were appearing. Jeff and Ted were sitting together as I started reading. I was on the last line of a poem about a bicycle "Shiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiit, I'd show them on the motorways" when a line from Ted's *Black Manifesto of Jazz Poetry* popped into my head: 'No white man can say 'shit". To my relief I heard a loud guffaw from Ted, after I finished I joined them on the side and our friendship was cemented.

Meeting him off the train in Norwich after I had persuaded the university to book him and pay him cash, he asked to be described as an Afro American Surrealist Jazz Poet, this was at least a decade before people began to name themselves African American but then Ted had always been like that. He said when he first started wearing African clothing in the U.S.A. his compatriots told him to tone it down as it attracted attention, later when such clothing was fashionable in the U.S. he came to the U.K and was told the same thing. As we walked through Norwich he was full of advice for a young poet. He was amused to have seen the Diss train station on the way to Norwich – "Diss must be de place" he quipped. Talking about poems he said: "Looking back at your own poems they are like children, some grow up to be generals, some really nice people". Talking to the student audience he always answered the most awkward and cringe-worthy questions with grace, never making the questioner feel small. He told us even where he grew up in the north in a town called Little Egypt he couldn't enroll in the local library because he was black so he used to pay a local tramp who lived under a bridge to go to the library for him.

He invited us all to Timbuktu where he wintered. "Bring Guinness" he said. When he first became interested in Timbuktu there was a denial of its existence, it was a mythical place

you said you were going to if you did not want to tell people where you were really going. Ted was the first person I had met who described it as an ancient city of learning. His ambition was to re-establish a university there.

My meetings with him were sporadic, he used a Covent Garden Bookshop run by Bernard Stone and his wife as a U.K. contact address. Hanging up in the shop was a fetish made up of Ted's poem 'Thye Truth' made of nails hammered into a piece of driftwood. I don't remember if I heard about Ted's appearance at the Commonwealth Institute as part of an evening of Black Poetry from there or whether Ted told me about it. I drove down with Frank Lyons a Trinidadian nurse I had worked with at Anglesea Road Hospital in Ipswich. We were late so we parked in a side street some way

### *Your poems are like children, some grow up to be generals, some really nice people*

from the Institute and walked. After the event we were walking back with Ted who said: "Only a poet would abandon their car because they were late." At that reading I also met Trinidadian poet Frank Johns who was to pop in and out of my poetry life in the eighties.

I last saw Ted in Edinburgh. I was up with Nick Toczek's *Stereo Grafitti*, a poetry and music show. I bumped into Ted who was doing lunchtime readings at Betterbooks, he invited us to join him. On the counter there was a cardboard box on which Ted had scrawled 'Pennies for the Poorets'. Each lunch time we would take the pennies to a local cafe and buy lunch with the proceeds. Ted was always broke and he had to get to Lagos for the First Pan African Arts Conference which I was later to discover, when I managed a bookshop of my own at Colchester Arts Centre was the final manifestation of the Negritude movement. We were in Betterbooks and Ted was wondering how he could get to London, from where he had a ticket to take him to Paris provided by the Paris students and from there he had a ticket to Lisbon paid for by the Lisbon students, it was the year of the Portuguese revolution. "Hell I'd be halfway to Lagos, if only I could get to London" he told the women in Betterbooks

"How many books is that" they asked

"Five copies of *A Black Manifesto of Jazz Poetry* and six copies of *Afrodisiac*"

They gave him the ticket money in exchange for the books.

Ted went off to the station. Going down south with a smile on his mouth.

I never saw him again, forever the beat.



Lucy Granville  
*The Dancing Devil*

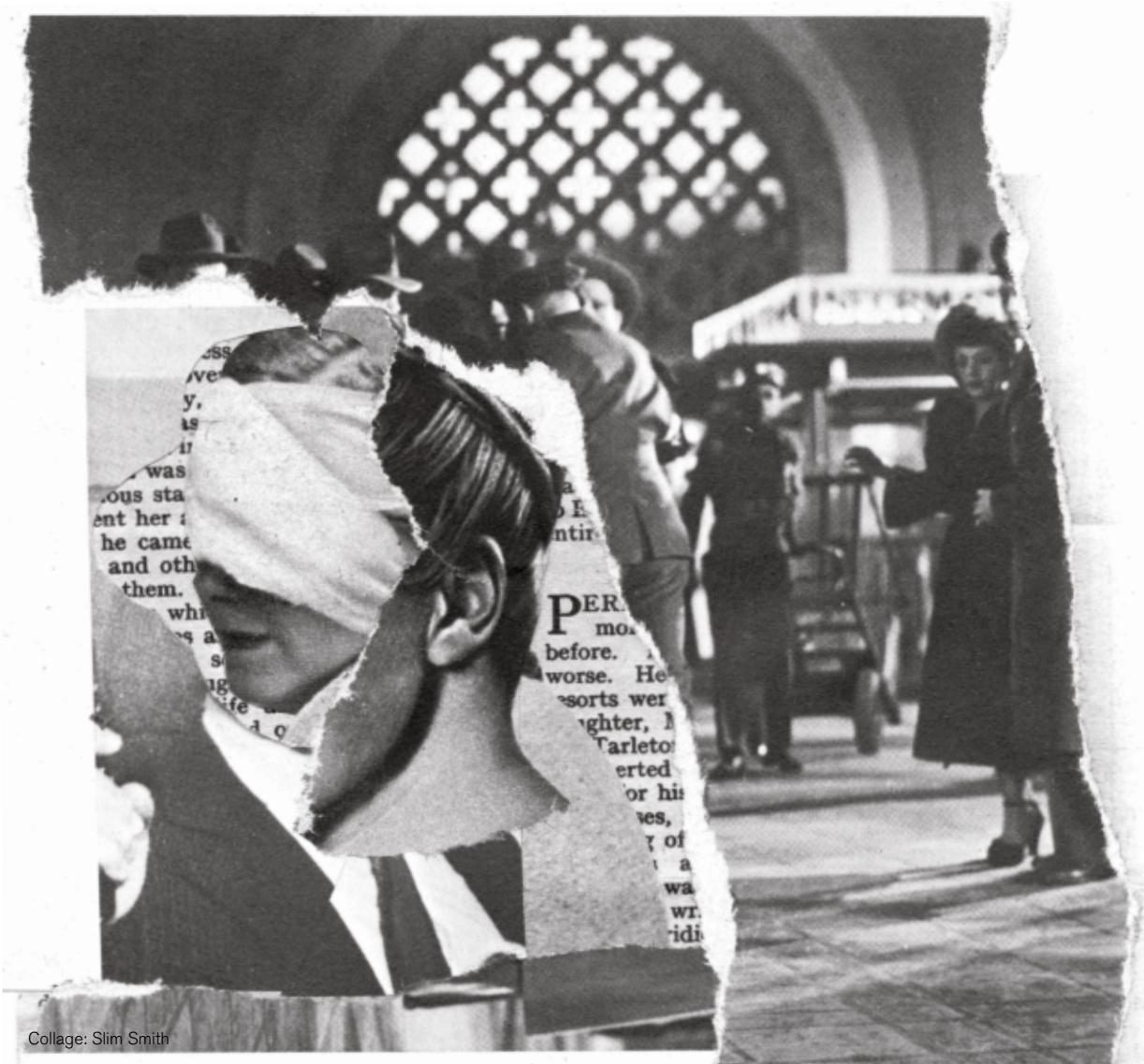
# The Shadow Song



Jeff Young

The station is in ruins, in widow's weeds of shadow, the dark overcoat of night always heavy on its shoulders. Listen to the wind – a funeral blues for the golden years. Listen to the silence – the aftermath of wonder. Old men emerge from dark corners, hand in hand with small children. This is the ritual of grieving and remembering, and yet grief's shadows are lit by sunbeams and ruins come alive with memories and dreams. Old men let the children run free, into the joy of long ago. Here, a boy in broken eyeglasses blows bubbles, chasing after them into a seaside trip one summer. Over there by the ticket booth, wild twins clutch their lucky bags on their way to a fairground by the sea. This is the thing about ruins – the eternal

secret wonder of the shadows – memories of better times, of golden years are always here, will never go away. Watching, always watching, the Bird Woman. Ancient, arthritic, she is made of paper. The rips and tears in her skin unfold sometimes, her fingers can no longer make churches or boats but sometimes hymns or shanties pour out of her - a quiet song in the waiting room, a hush coming out of her pale lips, the brown teeth making clicks, percussing – a gentle rocking as she sings for lost ancestors, ghosts. Small children disappear into her songs, fade into her shadows. This is what happens to our yesterdays - in ruined train stations the past comes to life on certain nights, then disappears into the shadow song.



Collage: Slim Smith



# Surrealist Architecture

## An Impossible Dream?

Simon Ryder

*In every dream home, a heartache (Roxy Music)  
In every dream home, a nightmare (Joe Jackson)*

### *What is Architecture?*

A generally accepted definition of architecture is the design and construction of structures. This includes buildings, but also bridges, ships etc. It is only in the specialisations developed after the Enlightenment that architecture is separated from construction, but this distinction won't be used here, as I want to explore whether architecture has been, or can be, built in the true spirit of surrealism.

The earliest known treatise on architecture is by Vitruvius, written in the 1st century AD. In it, buildings are said to have three essential characteristics: Durability, Utility, and Beauty. Contemporary definitions and descriptions of architecture vary widely, both within the architecture profession, and elsewhere. "121 Definitions of Architecture" by Becky Quintal provides a picture from within the profession.<sup>1</sup> Most are observations and reflections, rather than definitions, but they provide a great flavour of multiple perspectives.

*Architecture is not just one thing. It is not just an art. ... It has to deal with the real situation; it has to do something good for the society.* Xiaodu Liu<sup>2</sup>

On this reading, architecture consists of ideas brought from the imagination into the world to transform the world. Like Surrealism?

While I will refer to examples of architectural ideas, designs and drawings, if architecture is not built, what distinguishes it from other artistic works such as drawing, painting and sculpture? With the majority of the world's population living in cities and towns, the built environment shapes our worlds. The huge challenge for a surrealist architecture is to integrate the revolutionary spirit of surrealism with the functional/utilitarian purpose of architecture. *Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason* Andre Breton, First Manifesto, 1924.

### *Architecture in Surrealism*

Before looking at built architecture, it is worth taking a brief look at how architecture has been portrayed within surrealist artworks. Extraordinary buildings feature in surrealism's precursors, back to Pieter Bruegel the Elder's Towers of Babel (1563) through Giovanni Piranesi's Imaginary Prisons ((1750-61), to the Gothic and Symbolists, hence to de Chirico who was a major influence on many surrealists.

René Magritte's 'La Durée Poignardée (Time Transfixed)', in which a toy train emerges from

Above: Ferdinand Cheval  
*Palais Idéal*

a fireplace, is probably the best known relevant surrealist work. Xul Solar, the Argentinian painter, writer and sculptor (1887-1963), who lived in Europe during and after First World War, created many surrealist paintings with a focus on architecture.

In the late 1970s there was a rebirth of interest in surrealism in the architecture profession. One outcome was the surrealist paintings of Madelon Vriesendorp, one of the founders of the Office for Metropolitan Architecture, in which she took a radically different slant on the position of architecture within art.

### Possibilities for a Surrealist Architecture

Given surrealism's revolutionary spirit, one would expect a surrealist architecture to go beyond the accepted boundaries of architecture. So, what could that mean?

While Vitruvius' characteristics of durability, utility and beauty allow for a huge variety, does surrealistic architecture require something else as well? Roger Cardinal defined six Surrealist readings of the city: as a dream, as a love affair, as a palimpsest, as a poetic text, as a psychic labyrinth, and as a system of signs.<sup>3</sup>

Putting it another way, what is still architecture, but is genuinely surrealist?

It is worth noting that architecture is commonly seen as more relating to the external aspects of buildings, while interiors are the work of designers. Even some architectural language, such as 'facades', and the dominance of external views in designs and reviews, leads to creative speculation: is the interior the parallel of the surrealists' focus on the internal unconscious and dreams? Does this suggest a further divergence between architecture, as currently viewed, and surrealism?



Xul Solar *Pais Rojo Tetí*

### Surrealist Buildings

A brief survey suggests that no truly surrealist structure has ever been built. However, there are examples which point to potential ways forward.

Firstly, there is the Palais Idéal at Hauterives in France, created by a local postman, Ferdinand Cheval, over a 33 year period (1879-1912), using stones gathered on his rounds. It could readily be described as a sculpture – the interior only being large enough for Cheval's wheelbarrow.

In similar vein are the Watts Towers in Los Angeles, created by Sabato Rodia, a construction worker and mason, over the period 1921-1954. One can see a clear lineage to Grimm City, created by FleaFolly Architects in 2012 (but unbuilt).

Both the Palais Idéal and the Watts Towers are examples of 'outsider art' within architecture.

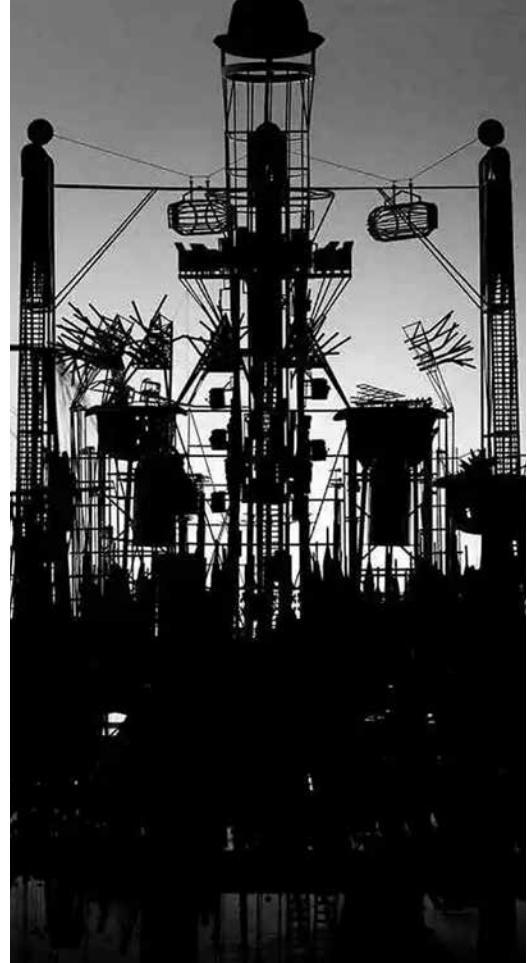
A different revolutionary approach was that of Zurab Tsereteli, the renowned Georgian architect of bus stops, who prioritized aesthetics over function: "I cannot answer why there is no roof, why is this, why is that – it's their problem. I, as an artist, do everything artistically"<sup>4</sup>

A further distinctive approach has been taken by Charles Jencks and John Outram, both of whom designed buildings with deep symbolism woven into their fabrics, many of which have been realised, including Jencks' own Cosmic House in London.

A major work 'Architecture and Surrealism' has been written by Neil Spiller<sup>5</sup>. It contains some fascinating ideas and designs, with a clear focus on how the ideas of surrealism have influenced the ideas of architects over the past hundred years. However, there is very little reference to buildings in the real world. As the review from *Aesthetica* states,



Madelon Vriesendorp *Flagrant delit, Delirious New York*



it provides 'a captivating portrayal of the beautiful, abstracted dreamscapes that are yet to be built'. Spiller himself says "The very best architects create works that often remain only on paper, works that speak of more than the simple transaction of materials and financial assets embodied in buildings... Architects can muster up poetics, cross-cultural hybridity, use myths and religion... to explore these more fundamental issues of architecture".

Spiller describes the work of Frederick Kiesler as probably the best-known application of surrealism to architecture. Kiesler emigrated from Austria to New York in 1926, where he became friends with Marcel Duchamp. His Endless House is a genuine attempt to address major issues of interest to the surrealists, but it was never built.

It is clear from Spiller's book that surrealism has influenced the thinking of a few individual architects from its early days. His survey suggests that this influence has grown in recent years, as new technologies widen the creative possibilities e.g. Nic Clear's 'The Gold Mine'.

### Prospects for a Surrealist Architecture

In the 20th and 21st centuries, architecture has developed ideas and building technologies hand in hand, each influencing the other. There are strong parallels with music, where performing and recording technologies helped

Above left: Sabato Rodia  
*Watts Towers, Los Angeles*  
 Above right: FleaFolly  
 Architects Grimm City

create new musical sounds and musical structures. In contrast, establishing surrealism required no such technological development.

Spiller's book leaves one with the question: what would it take for any of these ideas to be realised in the real world? Are we now at the point, after nearly a hundred years of surrealist thinking, where building and other technologies are capable of realising ideas for a genuinely surrealist architecture? I hope so, and look forward to seeing ideas of surrealist architecture finally being transformed into the real world.

#### References:

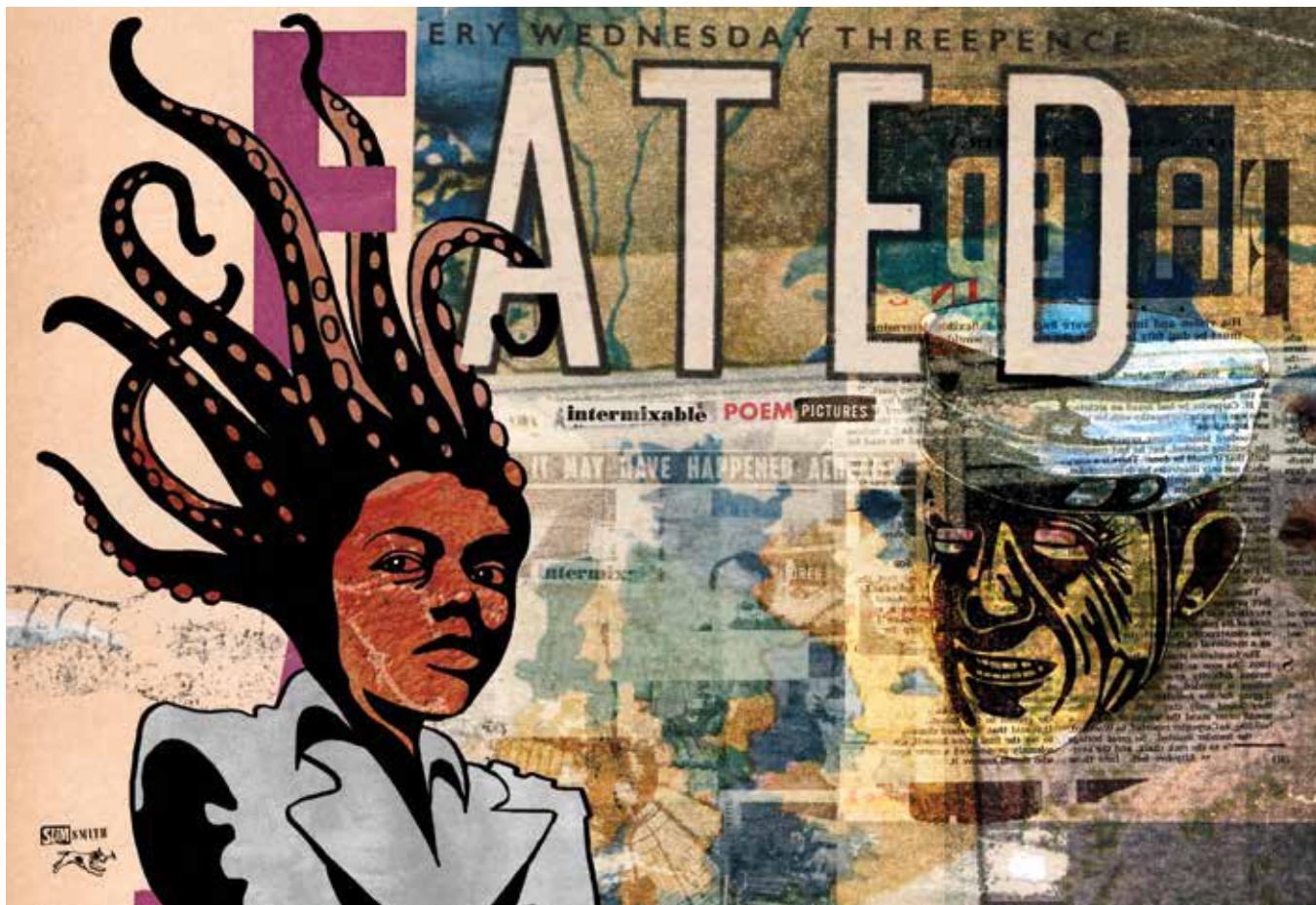
1. ArchDaily, Jan 12, 2019, available on-line
2. "What Can Architecture Do? An Interview with Xiaodu Liu" on ArchDaily, on-line
3. *The Soluble City: The Surrealist Perception of Paris*, Roger Cardinal, in *AD Surrealism and Architecture*, ed. Vesely, 1978
4. *Soviet Bus Stops*, Christopher Herwig, FUEL, 2015
5. *Architecture and Surrealism*, Neil Spiller, Thames & Hudson, 2016

Zurab Tsereteli *Bus stop, Pitsunda*



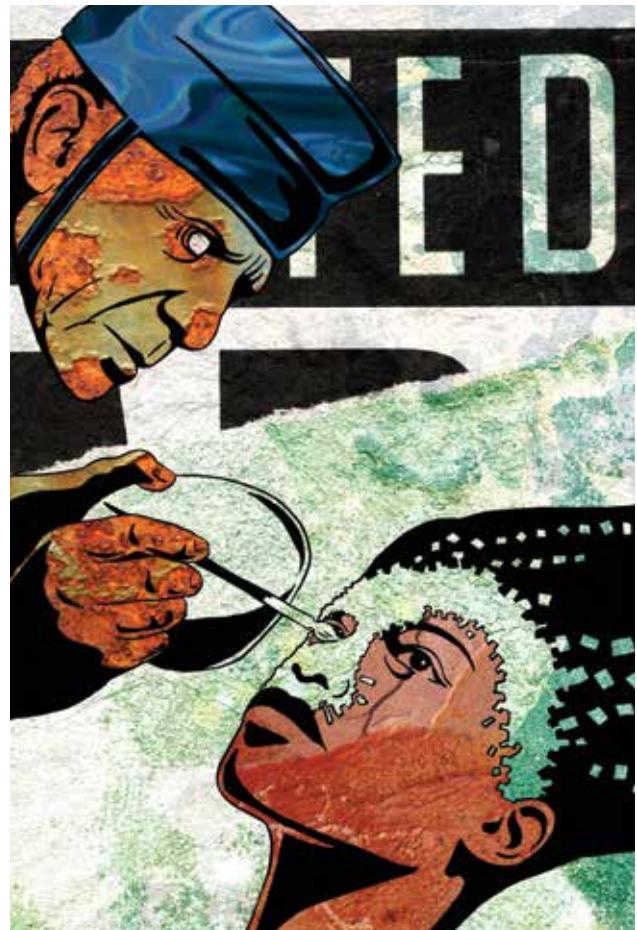
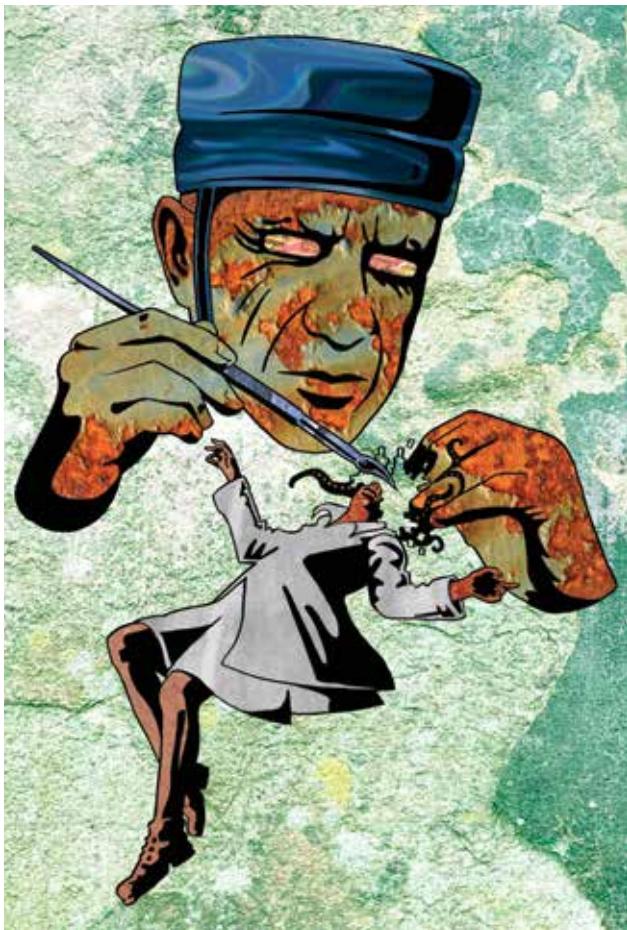


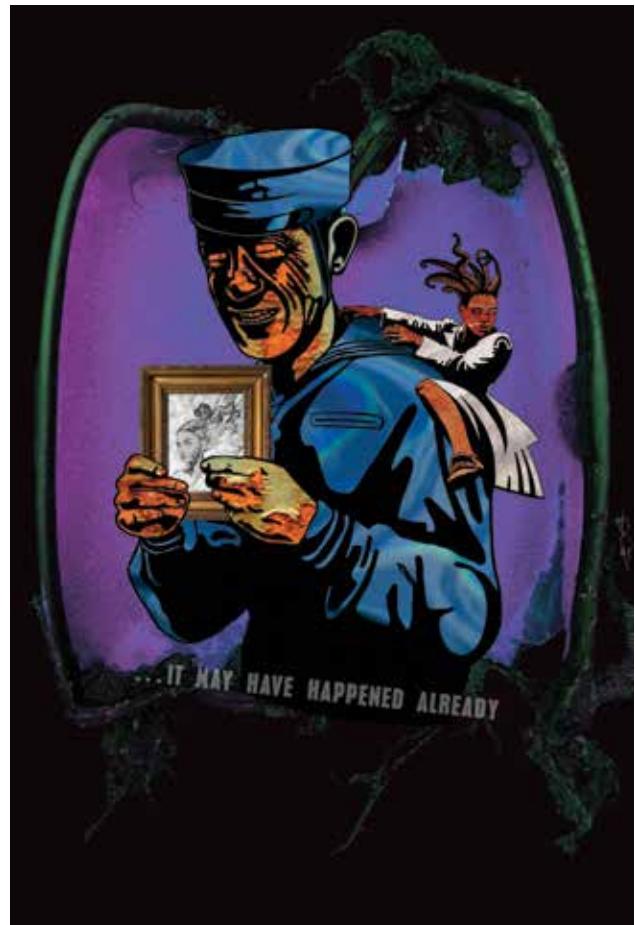
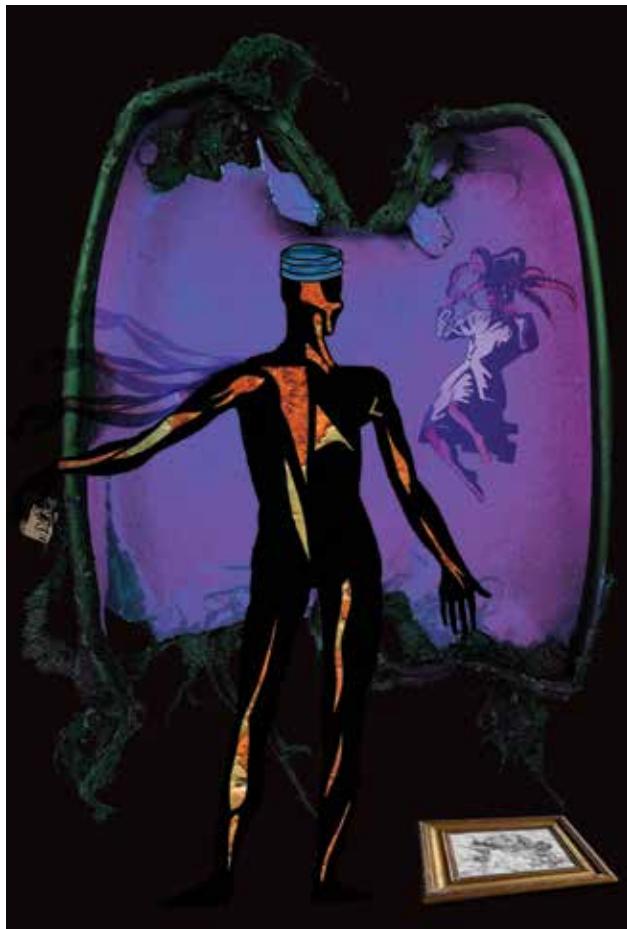
Jen Allanson  
*The Event Organiser by Madame Peacock's Dance Academy*

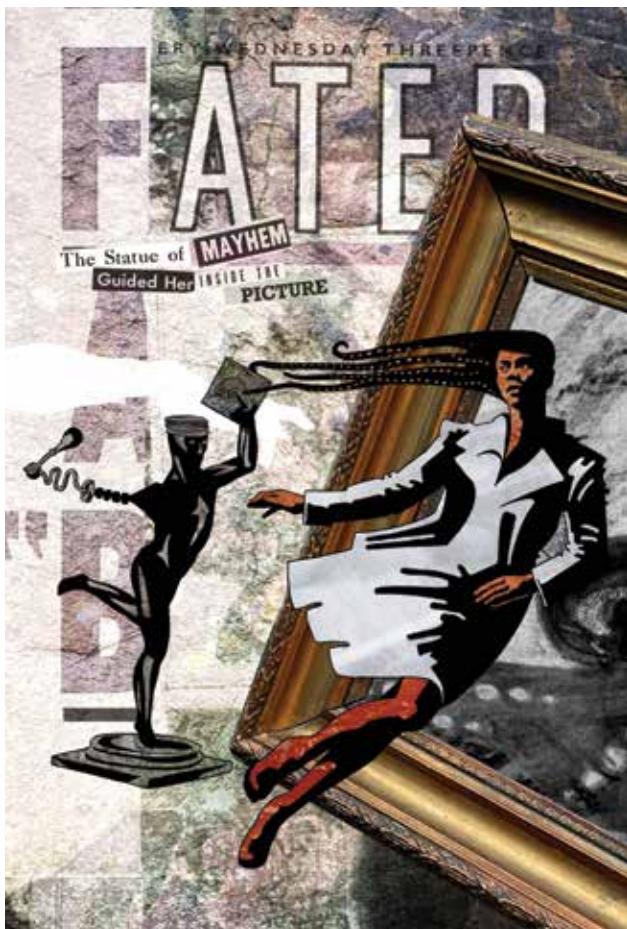


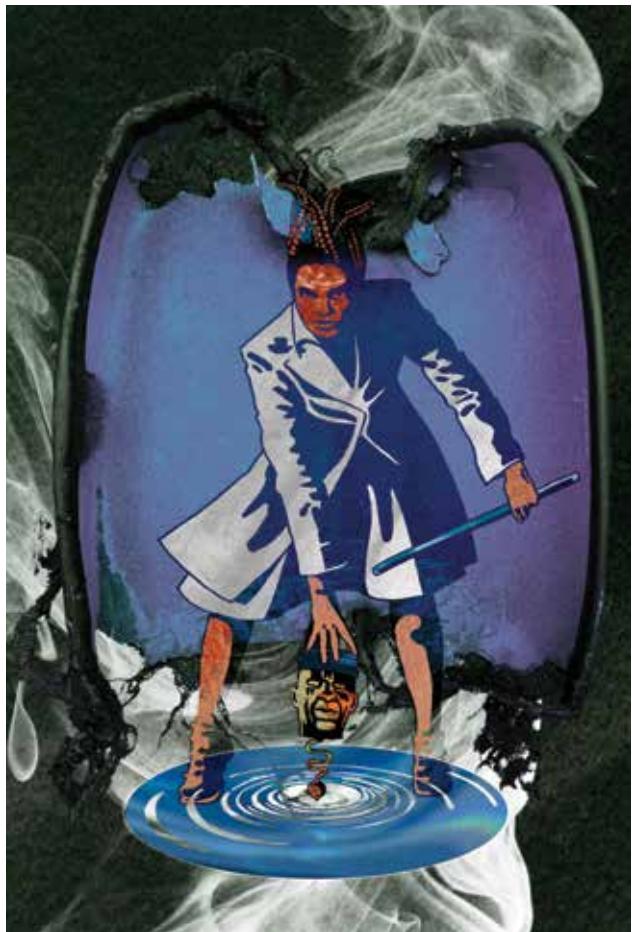
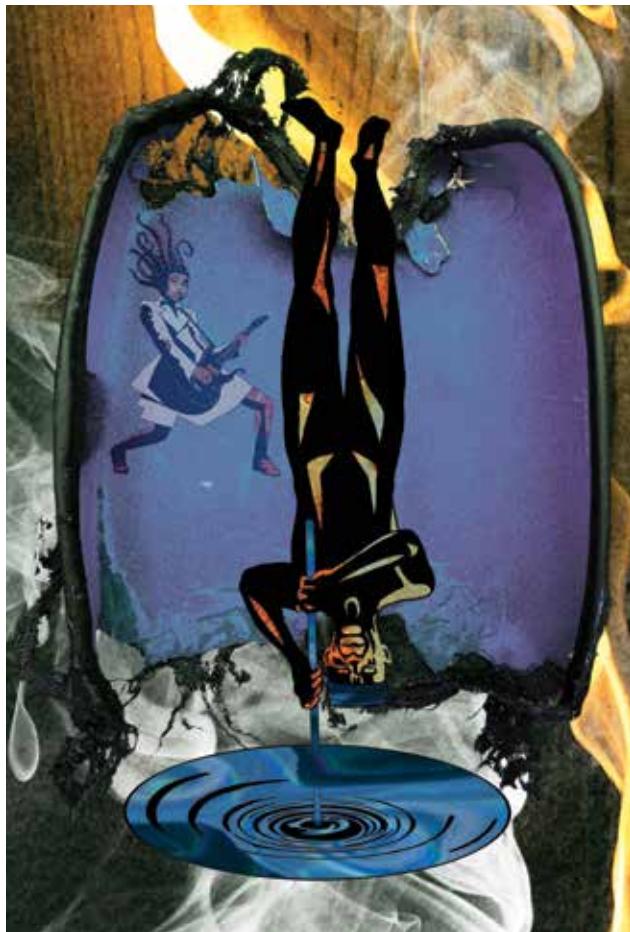
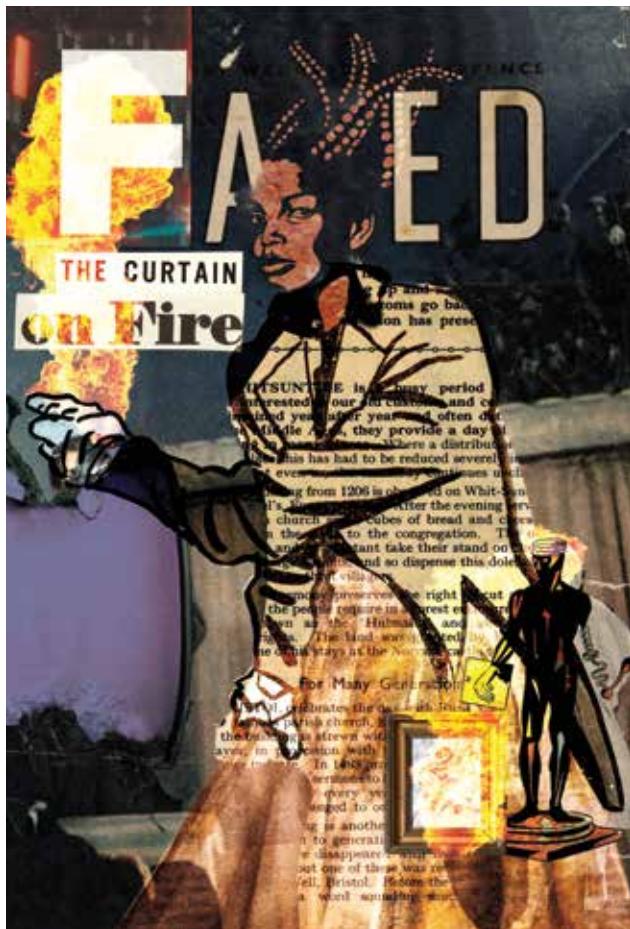
Slim Smith  
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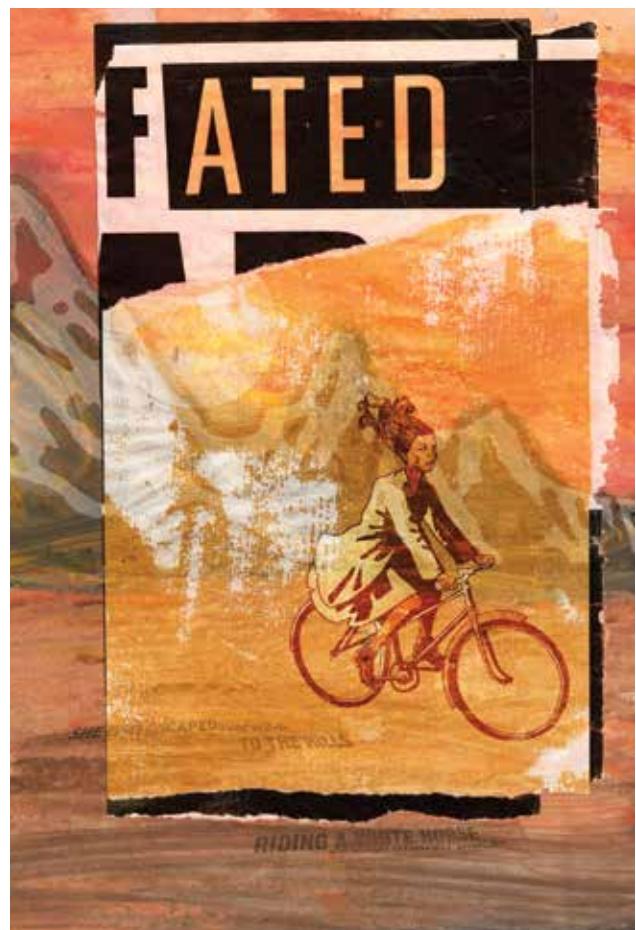














# 'Patastrophe! Contributors

**Jean Bonnin** is half French, half Welsh. He was born in Lavaur, in the Tarn in France, in the year of the deep snows... His studies were in the fields of government and politics and political philosophy respectively at Birmingham and then Hull. These days he is a novelist, poet, visual disturber, and translator of surrealist texts. Specifically, he is the translator of Malcolm de Chazal's 'Magical Sense' (Sens Magique) and 'Humour Rose'. He is also the inventor of surreal ping pong... He also has a small surrealist publishing company called Red Egg Publishing... He is a happy member-anti-member of the Tribe of Welsh Surrealists...

Through a combination of hard work and serendipity Jean Bonnin has achieved anonymity in New York, Paris, Berlin, London and Wales. He is a great believer in the following quote by William Burroughs: "The dream is a spontaneous happening and therefore dangerous to a control system set up by the non-dreamers"

Jean Bonnin has all his own teeth and finds unicycles and carrots amusing. [www.jeanbonnin.com](http://www.jeanbonnin.com)

**Linda Bromilow** is a busy mother of nobody. Her hobbies include quaffing champagne, idling and reading questionable novels. Changeling.

**Jonas Ellerström** is a Swedish writer and translator. He has published poetry books and essay collections, is an art critic and runs a small (11 square metres) art gallery in Stockholm, where he lives. He has recently published a book on Lewis Carroll and over the years many articles on Surrealism, taking a certain interest in British as well as Swedish artists and writers. As a musician, JE performs and records with post-punk group Blago Bung and electronica project Spektrum.

**Kit 'Ratty' Flemons** was once a thing, and by all accounts may still be. Sadly, requests for a more detailed biography were met only with vague requests for 'help' and 'mercy', leaving our editors to disavow all association. Whatever we present here is done so with no admission of recognition, permission, ambition or inhibition.

**Chris Furby** is an artist, filmmaker, and photographer. Art school – Camberwell. Community Art – Black E Liverpool - challenging. Assistant to a sculptor – went badly. Graphic design and photomontage – Better Badges and various magazines. Short filmmaker shown around the world, including The Luis Buñuel museum in Spain – properly surreal, also the One Minute in Aarau where you stay in a nuclear fallout shelter... Watch 'In the Dark' my experimental feature on Amazon Prime. Please send any spare hats you have for a current film project!!!

**Lucy Granville** is currently working as producer on a podcast by Liverpool art collective Surrealpool. I am currently more of a surrealism enabler than a surreal art fan... I have however, toppled into surrealism as a thing. Because the aspects of surrealism that are not a lobster toilet, or a Dali painting in my Dentist's waiting room, are a salve and a balm in this global yikesamarathon. They are something we personally and societally need, even if we do not realise it. Have a listen, you will see.

When surrealists get together and talk about surrealism as a tool for cultural resistance and liberation from the alienation and thought control of oppressive regimes, whether these are at a stage where they are acting out in an obvious way, or whether they are in a phase of discreet cultural insemination or assimilation, well it just makes me realise there is comfort in discomfort.

**Hubert Huzzah.** Born 5:15 p.m. Saturday 23 November 1963 and then proceeding towards Friday November 24 1848 where, along with Pope Pius IX, Huzzah fled Rome in disguise. Heading towards Naples there was an incident involving bear traps, absinthe, and unfortunate misunderstandings. Hubert Huzzah has remained belligerently neither living nor dead ever since. His Tartarean Shade

squatting in the vacant minds of passers by on the basis of capacity to rant. Huzzah has not taken his biography seriously for some time.

**Kate O'Leary** commutes regularly between the coast of Bohemia and the Forest of Arden.

**Laura Kenyon** is something discordant, living on scorched earth and borrowed time. Enjoys: seeking synchronicities, chaos, and something sweet before bedtime.

**La Sirena** represents an inclusive meeting space for all those involved in the surrealist adventure, connecting academics, researchers, writers, artists, filmmakers and all those who share our vision, cutting across lines of age, nationality, gender, sexuality and ethnicity and so on. We have been meeting virtually on a weekly basis, since March 2021. Difference and Otherness are celebrated and the figure of the siren, like other monstrous hybrid identities that we are drawn to, underscores our belief in the notion that identity is not fixed but fluid, multiple, contested, shifting, in a state of eternal becoming: convulsive.

**John Richardson** lives in Wales and edits & publishes the twice yearly Surzine, *Once Upon A Tomorrow/Un Tro Yfory - a sporadic shout from Surrealists in Wales* – available as a free PDF at [www.johnrichardsonsurzine.com](http://www.johnrichardsonsurzine.com). His latest publication, with John Wilson and an introduction by Michael Löwy, is *The Dialectical Phoenix* (Broken Sleep Books, 2022). Together with Ron Sakolsky he soon hopes to publish *Dreams of Anarchy Détouré*, a series of détourned comic strip images using text from Ron's *Dreams of Anarchy and the Anarchy of Dreams: Adventures at the Crossroads of Anarchy and Surrealism*.

**John Row** is a storyteller and poet. John spent most of his life in Suffolk attending Ipswich School Of Art in the early sixties and UEA in the mid seventies. Poetry has been a constant punctuated by bouts of scrap dealing, van driving, supply teaching and managing a book shop at Colchester Arts Centre. He was the first storyteller in residence in a British prison in 1999. For half a century he has told stories across the UK festival scene including over twenty years at Glastonbury. Throughout the pandemic he has been curating the [worldstorytellingcafe.com](http://worldstorytellingcafe.com) and was artistic director of the 2021 Marrakech International Storytelling Festival.

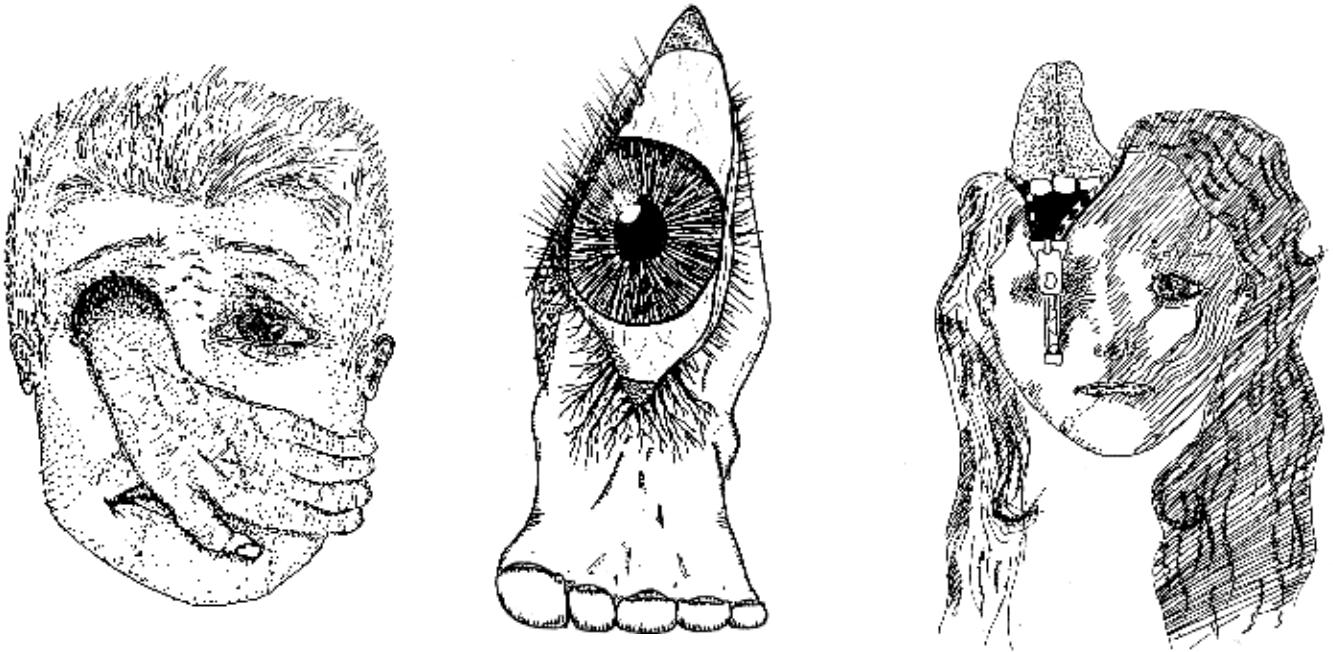
**Simon Ryder** has studied mathematics, philosophy, the history of science, and aesthetics as well as futurism and surrealism. He continues to be confused. He has recently moved to one of the Invisible Cities, for which his postman has not forgiven him.

**Ron Sakolsky** is a rain forest renegade whose lair lies deep in the entangled branches and estuaries of the Inner Island. His latest book is *Dreams of Anarchy and the Anarchy of Dreams: Adventures at the Crossroads of Anarchy and Surrealism* (Autonomedia, 2021).

**Reese Saxment** is the least identical of four identical triplets

**Slim Smith** is a graphic designer and visual artist. In 2034 he invented a pedal-powered time machine and hasn't been seen since.

**Jeff Young** is a Liverpool based dramatist for theatre, radio and TV. He broadcasts essays for BBC Radio 3 and collaborates with musicians and artists on audio installations and performance. As a writer and artist he has worked in a submarine dock, abandoned factories and warehouses, derelict houses and a cobblers shop. His memoir, *Ghost Town: A Liverpool Shadowplay* was published in March 2020 by Little Toller and he is now writing the follow up, *Wild Twin*.



Kit Flemons  
*Sketches*

## 'Patastrophe! back issues



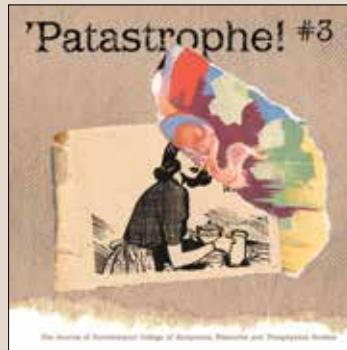
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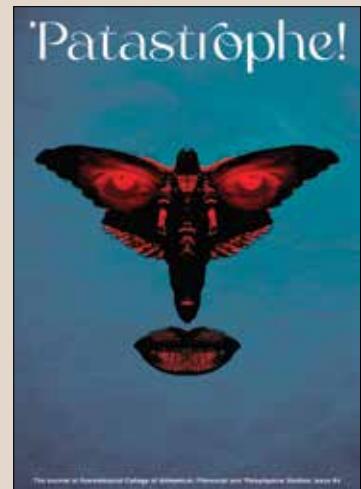
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