

# **SENSITIVE CONTENT WARNING**

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**WE STAND FOR PEACE, HUMANITY, AND RESPECT FOR ALL.  
THANK YOU FOR UNDERSTANDING.**

# The Encounter

The Thought Experiment - MA Contemporary Dialogues 2026

# Recognition v Encounter

In his book *Art Encounters: Deleuze and Guattari – Thought Beyond Representation*, Simon O'Sullivan (2007) makes a précis of one of Gilles Deleuze's central tenets, that of the distinction between **recognition** and the **encounter**.

Quoting Deleuze (1994: 139) he explains the encounter to be:  
“Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object, not of recognition, but of a fundamental encounter” O'Sullivan (2005:1).

This is what we will consider today in the light of your Thought Experiment.

# Recognition v Encounter

O'Sullivan observes:

'An object of an **encounter** is fundamentally different from an object of **recognition**. With the latter our knowledge, beliefs and values are reconfirmed. We, and the world we inhabit, are reconfirmed as that which we already understood our world and ourselves to be. ... With such a non-encounter our habitual way of being and acting in the world is reinforced, and as a consequence no thought takes place.'

(O'Sullivan, 2005: 1)

‘With a genuine encounter however the contrary is the case, our typical ways of being in the world are challenged, our systems of knowledge disrupted. We are forced to thought.

The encounter ushers in the creative moment that transports us from a dependency on the comforts of a habitual past, into the multiple possibilities of the future.’

(O’Sullivan, 2005)

PLAY



**SID VICIOUS -**  
**MY WAY**

Leonard Cohen (1934 – 2016) describes this version:

‘I never liked this song except when Sid Vicious did it. Sung straight, it somehow deprives the appetite of a certain taste we’d like to have on our lips. When Sid Vicious did it, he provided that other side to the song; the certainty, the self-congratulation, the daily heroism of Sinatra’s version is completely exploded by this desperate, mad, humorous voice.

I can’t go round in a raincoat and fedora looking over my life saying I did it my way — well, for 10 minutes in some American bar over a gin and tonic you might be able to get away with it. But Sid Vicious’s rendition takes in everybody; everybody is messed up like that, everybody is the mad hero of his [or her or their] own drama. It explodes the whole culture this self-presentation can take place in, so it completes the song for me.’

# The application of theory to practice

Through unfamiliarity, the encounter should remove any ideological approach; that is, any approach that we know, or one we have learned.

This is creatively significant as when we encounter the familiar, our thoughts and ideas become derivative. We apply prior knowledge without question. Concepts become more contrived, less original and lack authenticity.

Philosophy can be an excellent springboard to challenge ideologies. This is the purpose of Pol-Droit's *101 Experiments in the Philosophy of Everyday Life*. Through his playful experiments he 'invites us to reconsider our most ordinary actions as unexpected philosophical events ... [and] ... invite us to experience the familiar in startling new ways.'

Claire Colebrook's chapter '*The Impact of Deleuze*' in her book *Understanding Deleuze* explains the relationship between contemporary philosophy and creative endeavour:

'We often think of philosophy as a purely academic exercise, a foray into abstract concepts and abstruse arguments. But there is a tradition of philosophy that rejects such a demarcation. Gilles Deleuze (1925–95) saw himself as part of a tradition of philosophy which challenged and disrupted life, such that new concepts and ideas would result in new possibilities for action and practice ...'

# Affect

It is important that we stay explicitly connected to what we see and especially what we feel during an encounter.

This can be described as 'affect'.

# What is affect?

Affect is a post structuralist critical theory deriving from psychoanalysis. It is described as:

‘a quantity of psychic energy or a sum of excitation that takes place in the life of the psyche’ – not a direct emotional representation but a residue’ (Dictionary of Critical Theory 2000: 5)

# Introducing affect theory

In *Understanding Deleuze* Claire Colebrook explains some of the terminology including affect as used by Deleuze:

‘In its most general sense, ‘affect’ is what happens to us when we feel an event. Fear, depression, laughter, terror or boredom are all possible ‘affects’ of art. Affect is not the meaning of an experience but the response it prompts. Deleuze refines this notion to argue that art is the creation of ‘affects’ and ‘percepts’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994). Whereas affections and perceptions are located in perceivers—we can say that I have a ‘perception’ of red or that I ‘feel’ fear—Deleuze argues that art creates affects and percepts that are not located in a point of view.’

(Colebrook, 2002)

# Francis Bacon

Gilles Deleuze's critical reflections on Bacon's work are well documented in his book, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. His analysis applies to Bacon's body of work and its affectual qualities:

'It is like the emergence of another world. For these marks, these traits, are irrational, involuntary, accidental, free, random. They are nonrepresentative, nonillustrative, nonnarrative. They are no longer either significant or signifiers: they are asignifying traits.'  
(Deleuze, Gilles. 1982: 100)

In his paintings Bacon dismembers, twists, contorts and displaces the human form as an evocation of the futility of human existence and the mortality of flesh, he invites the animal, ... the other.



Francis Bacon  
*Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*  
1944

# *Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*

Francis Bacon titled this work after the figures often featured in Christian paintings witnessing the death of Jesus. However, he said the creatures represented the avenging Furies from Greek mythology. The Furies punish those who go against the natural order.

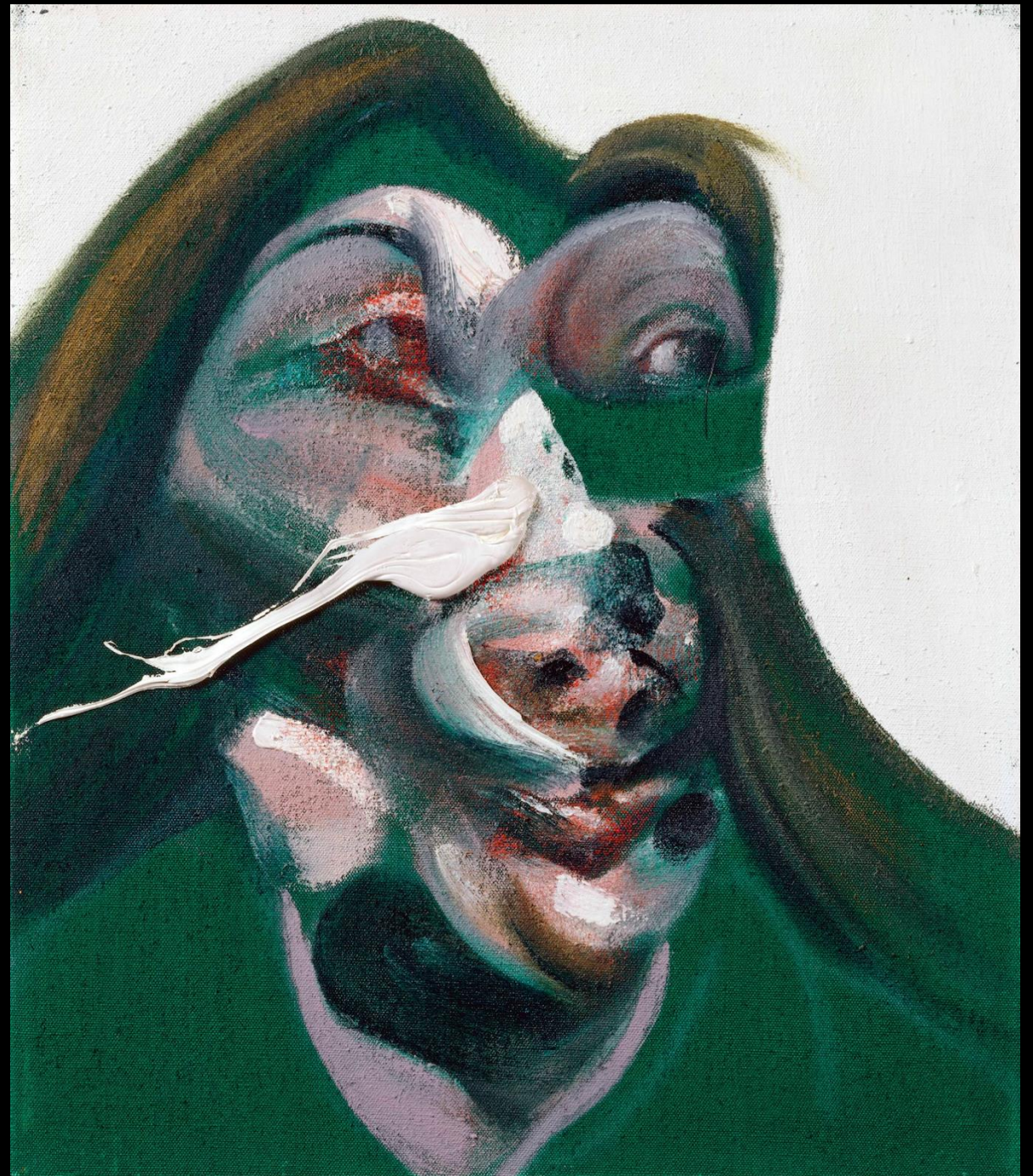
In Aeschylus's tragedy *The Eumenides*, for example, they pursue a man who has murdered his mother.

Bacon first exhibited this painting in April 1945, towards the end of the Second World War. For some, it reflects the horror of the war and the Holocaust in a world lacking guiding principles.

Bacon's portraits are equally visceral.



Francis Bacon  
*Head 1*, 1947 - 48



Francis Bacon  
*Study for Head of Isabel Rawsthorne, 1967*

# ‘Seeing a work by Francis Bacon hurts ...’

The affective nature of Bacon’s work means that every encounter has the potential to be personal and unique. Ernst van Alphen, Professor of Literary Studies at Leiden University, describes his affective encounter with the paintings of Francis Bacon:

‘Seeing a work by Francis Bacon hurts. It causes pain. The first time I saw a painting by Bacon, I was literally left speechless. I was touched so profoundly because the experience was one of total engagement, of being dragged along by the work. I was perplexed about the level on which these paintings touched me: I could not even formulate what the paintings were about, still less what aspect of them hurt me so deeply.’

(Van Alphen, Ernst. 1982: 9)

In one of his many interviews with David Sylvester, Bacon describes the process of painting:

‘It’s an attempt to bring the figurative thing up to the nervous system more violently and more poignantly.’

(Sylvester, David. 1980: 12)

Bacon always determined to: ‘... unlock the valves of feeling and therefore return the onlooker to life more violently.’

(Sylvester, David. 1980: 17)

Bacon seems to be describing an encounter.

# Marina Abramović

Serbian artist, Marina Abramović, investigates sensation and affect in her multidisciplinary art pieces. Known mostly for performance, she has also worked in the mediums of sculpture, sound, video and photography in her practice.

“The function of the artist in a disturbed society is to give awareness of the universe, to ask the right questions, and to elevate the mind, ...”

Her work often uses her body or its' corporeal presence as a medium to push physical and mental boundaries.

(Artnet.com: 2020)

## *The Artist is Present*

This was an extended performance piece in 2010 that lasted for 8 hours a day, for nearly three months in the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Abramović sat across from another wooden chair, where members of the audience were invited to sit and lock eyes with the artist.

This meant the audience were invited to encounter the piece of art, without this encounter there would have been no artwork.



Marina Abramović , 2010. *The Artist is Present* [Performance].  
At: Museum of Modern Art, New York.

“Nobody could imagine...that anybody would take time to sit and just engage in mutual gaze with me, ...” Abramović explained.

The chair was always occupied, and there were continuous lines of people waiting to sit in it.

“It was [a] complete surprise...this enormous need of humans to actually have contact.” (MoMA: 2019)

## Rhythm 0

A 2014 *Guardian* newspaper article Emma Brockes describes a previous Abramović performance, *Rhythm 0*:

“In 1974, Marina Abramović did a terrifying experiment. At a gallery in her native Belgrade, Serbia, she laid out 72 items on a trestle table and invited the public to use them on her in any way they saw fit. Some of the items were benign; a feather boa, some olive oil, roses. Others were not. "I had a pistol with bullets in it, my dear. I was ready to die." At the end of six hours, she walked away, dripping with blood and tears, but alive. "How lucky I am," she says ....”



Ulay / Marina Abramović,  
*Rest Energy*, 1980.

Performance for Video; 4 minutes.  
ROSC' 80, Dublin.

Courtesy of the Marina Abramović  
Archives

© Ulay / Marina Abramović.

# Laurie Anderson

The American artist originally trained in sculpture and the violin, and now practices in the areas of multimedia, performance, film and electronic music.

In the 1990's Anderson pioneered many musical inventions including the 'talking stick' a digital, six foot, wireless instrument that can access and replicate any sound.

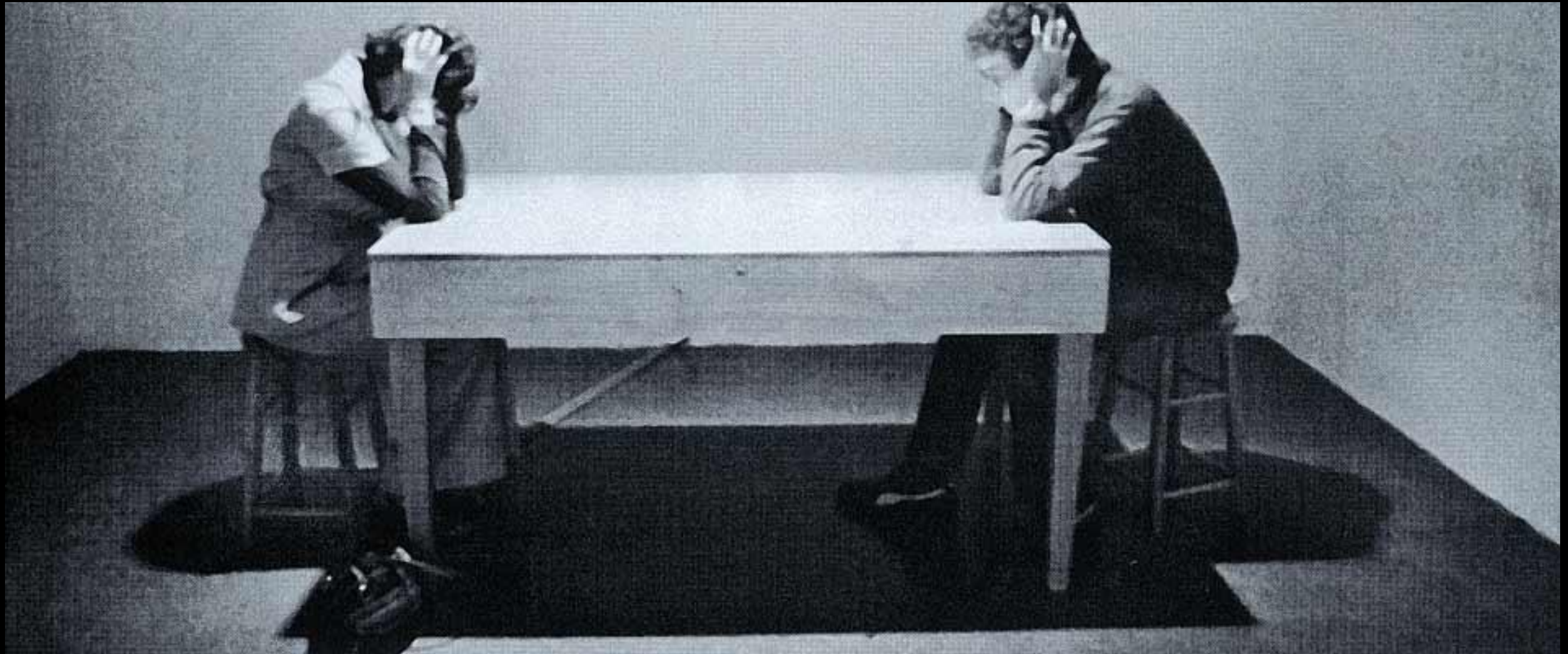
In 1981 Anderson surprisingly attracted mainstream attention in the UK with the record ['O Superman'](#)

Her 1978 installation the *Handphone Table* explored the physical properties of wood and bones, alongside the audible, combining sculpture and sound.

# The *Handphone Table*

The work is inaudible without the presence and engagement of an audience. Participants have to actively engage by placing their elbows on the table and hands over their ears. Both being porous, the properties of the table, i.e. wood, and the participants bones, serve as conductors for sound allowing the *Handphone Table's* music and poetry to be heard by the participant through direct engagement.

'the work achieves also something else: it breaks with a tradition wherein the object of art is something to be *looked at*. In a manner similar to Anderson's later performances the body is made to function here "as a working part of the machine"...' (theartstory.org)



Laurie Anderson  
*The Handphone Table*, 1978  
Installation.

# Stuart Brisley

Stuart Brisley's practice extends to painting, community projects and pseudo-curatorial installations. Mainly considered a performance artist his 20-minute film *Arbeit Macht Frei* (Work Makes Free) is the "bodily rejection" of the idea of the holocaust. It is a display of abject disgust of genocide. Brisley vomits for 18' 39"

It was conceived after a performance at Gallery House Goethe Institute in London in 1972. The words 'Arbeit Macht Frei' were formed as iron arches and placed on or above the entrance gates to many Nazi Concentration Camps. He saw his work as reflecting social structures back on to the audience and in doing so making us/them question ideologies.



Stuart Brisley  
*Arbeit Macht Frei*, 1973  
(*Work Makes Free*)  
Performance and Video  
18' 39"

MR Bingo is an ARTIST,

SPEAKER and TWAT.

This description is from his website:

### **In 4 seconds**

Mr Bingo likes drawing things and rapping and this is a website of some stuff that he's done.

### **In 39 seconds**

Mr Bingo was a commercial illustrator for 15 years, working regularly for clients such as *The New Yorker*, *The Guardian*, *TIME*, *CH4*, *The Mighty Boosh* & *The New York Times*. An archive of the thousands of illustrations from this period doesn't exist online because he got bored once in a motorhome and deleted his entire portfolio website. You can see a small selection of work from this period [here](#).

# Hate Mail

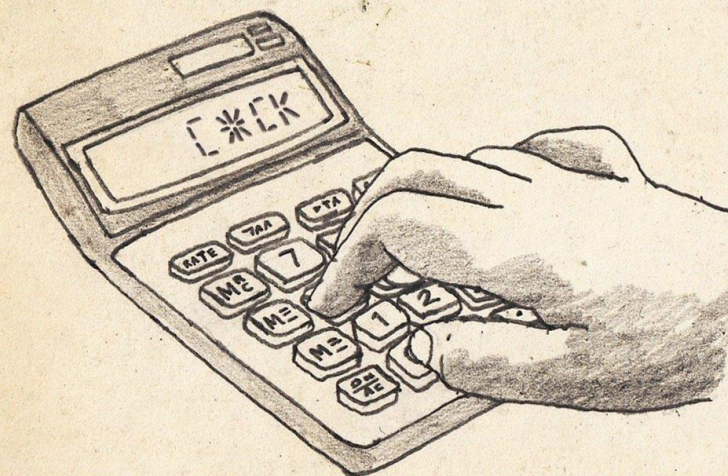
In 2015 he launched a *Kickstarter* to fund a book about his *Hate Mail* project. The campaign featured a rap video and a diverse selection of rewards including being trolled, having your washing up done, going on a date in *Wetherspoons*, being told to f\*ck off on Christmas Day and getting drunk on a train.

He decided around this period to never work for clients ever again and focus on being some sort of artist which he's done ever since.

Instead, people payed him to send them an insulting postcard ...

LIGNANO PINETA - Spiaggia

HATE



MR Bingo

RIPR. VIET. - R.D.L. 7-XI-1925 - N. 1950

Mail

5965 3938

'GORGEOUS AND FUNNY!  
LIKE A LABRADOR  
DOING STAND-UP'  
Noel Fielding

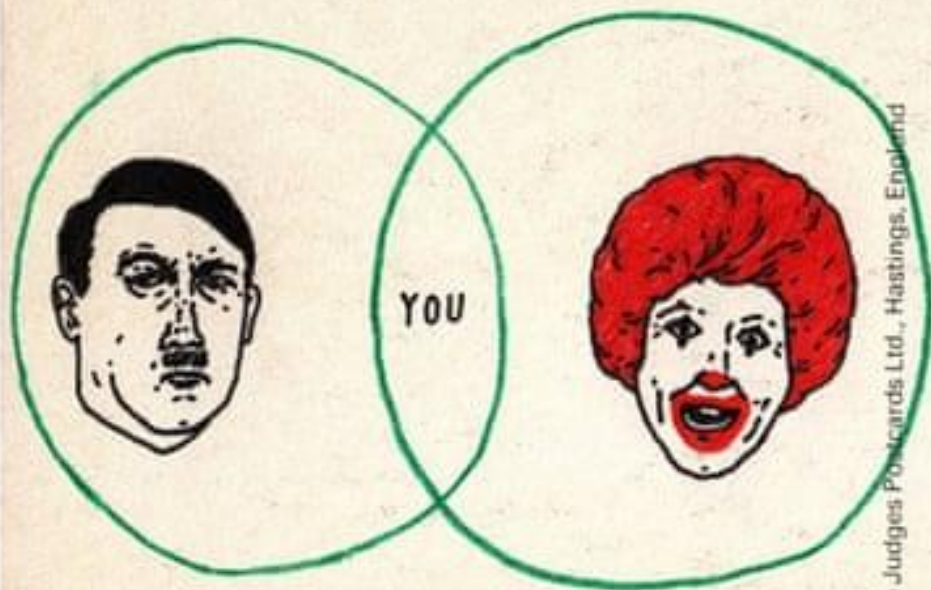
STAB. DALLE NOGARE E ARMISTTI - MILANO

Dear ALEX,

POST



CARD



© Judges Postcards Ltd., Hastings, England

ALEX Hudson

MR Bingo

Schweizer Alpenbahn-Grossrelief

„Morgensonne“ Zürich b/Zoo

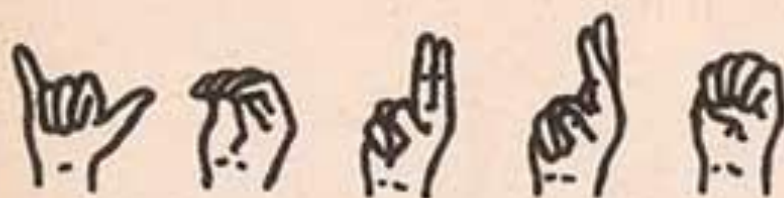
Exposition de modèles réduits de chemins de fer, Zürich

Model Railway with Swiss mountain scene

Bhf. Kandersteg



Dear DAVE



Y O U R E



S H I T

MR Bingo

Photo Willy Wallischleger — Offsetdruck H. Vontobel, Fribourg

DAVE Briggs

12 WARNERS Lane

LOUGHBOROUGH

LEICESTERSHIRE

LE11 1UL

UK

YOU BORE  
the FUCKING  
ARSE off me



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COVILLE POOL  
(Open to the Public)  
ELA, NORTH CAROLINA

Dear MARK  
FUCK YOU



AND FUCK YOUR CAT (CMT)  
MR Bings

Published by Thomas & Nelson, 11, rue de la Harpe, 75001 Paris, France

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

POST CARD

Address

Mark FERGUSON

218 RICHARDSON Road  
HOVE  
East SUSSEX  
BN3 5RB

Dear LAURA,



YOU LOOK LIKE GADDAFI IN A WIG

MR Bings



Published by D.C. Products, 10, Avenue de la République, 75011 Paris, France

LAURA Payne  
DRUMMOND Central  
70 JESMOND Road WEST  
NEWCASTLE Upon TYNE  
TYNE & WEAR  
NE2 4PR

W. MOORE  
Card maker  
Postcard printer  
Thomas & Nelson

Dear STEPHEN

YOU DISAPPOINT  
ME ON EVERY  
LEVEL

MR Bings

STEPHEN DRUMMOND  
DRUMMOND Central  
70 JESMOND Road WEST  
NEWCASTLE Upon Tyne  
TYNE & Wear

NE2 4PR

# Disruption TBWA

The value of disruption can be significant in the context of communication and entrepreneurship. In 1992 the chairman of advertising agency TBWA, Jean-Marie Dru, introduced the idea of 'creative disruption' to overturn existing conventions in advertising, communication and design. By breaking with convention Dru saw it as a progressive technique to accelerate change and transform/transport us more quickly into the future.

Many disruptive businesses are now considered the 'norm': Apple, Netflix, Uber, AirBnB, Amazon, Facebook and Google. They have achieved this notoriety and success by influencing the future by learning from the past. Your encounter with their brand/product is unlike what has been before.

# KFC apology

In 2017 the disruption technique was adopted by UK advertising agency, *Mother*, when KFC was confronted by an embarrassing chicken shortage that made the mainstream press.

This unwanted media attention put into sharp focus their poor business management.

A single page ad in the *Sun* and *Metro* newspapers reversed the damage done, with humour, wit and intelligence.



## **WE'RE SORRY**

A chicken restaurant without any chicken. It's not ideal. Huge apologies to our customers, especially those who travelled out of their way to find we were closed. And endless thanks to our KFC team members and our franchise partners for working tirelessly to improve the situation. It's been a hell of a week, but we're making progress, and every day more and more fresh chicken is being delivered to our restaurants. Thank you for bearing with us.

Visit [kfc.co.uk/crossed-the-road](http://kfc.co.uk/crossed-the-road) for details about your local restaurant.

# Burger King

Burger King has also caused a stir with a global campaign that showcases its prized Whopper burger decaying over a 34-day period.

McDonalds is their competition with a much larger advertising and marketing budget, so Burger King used their creative to get ahead.

The campaign entitled '*The Moldy Whopper*' was published in February, 2020.

The Whopper *DAY 28*



THE BEAUTY  
OF NO ARTIFICIAL  
PRESERVATIVES





The Whopper DAY 32



THE BEAUTY OF NO ARTIFICIAL PRESERVATIVES



The Whopper DAY 33



THE BEAUTY OF NO ARTIFICIAL PRESERVATIVES

# Rachel MacLean (1987)

For the last 15 years Rachel Maclean has exhibited internationally. She is a filmmaker and creates digital prints by using costumes, exaggerated make-up, green screen visual effects and electronic soundtracks.

‘Her artwork is both seductive and disturbing. It sucks the viewer into oversaturated candy-coloured worlds and repels them with unsettling themes and narratives. Until recently she has been the only actor in her creations, exploring issues of identity, class, nationalism and gender, whilst referencing narrative structures from pop culture and fairy-tales.’ ([nationalgalleries.org](https://nationalgalleries.org))

More recently her art has explored AI technology by utilising AI-generated 3D print, AI video, AI 2D engraving and deepfakes.

‘Her films combine a variety of references to popular culture, and of genres such as children’s television programmes, horror movies, British comedy, video games, reality TV and YouTube videos.’

‘Maclean’s work presents a critical and satirical view of the excesses of consumerism within Western capitalist society. Her films stage grotesque and stereotypical characters who live in a dystopian near-future dominated by global corporations. An example of this is the recurring presence of technology within her films and prints, which is a nod to our current reliance on smart phones and social media.’ (tate.org)



Rachel Maclean, *The Lion and The Unicorn*, 2012  
Courtesy of the artist

# Please, Sir... (2014) Short Edit



Rachel Maclean

# Please, Sir...

*Please, Sir...* is a darkly comic adaptation of Mark Twain's *The Prince and The Pauper*, exploring themes of greed, class and dependence within a cultural rhetoric of austerity and aspiration. Presented as a dual projection, the characters interact between screens, appearing to inhabit two distinct worlds.

Shot entirely using green-screen, the work creates a synthetic, shape-shifting realm in which an *Adidas*-striped Oliver Twist mugs a Tudor Prince at knifepoint, a pauper steals £10 from the pocket of Simon Cowell and a vagrant youth is offered heroin by a well-dressed servant. Maclean ... plundered from a myriad of sources, including *Britain's Got Talent*, *Jeremy Kyle* and *The Apprentice*. (rachelmaclea.com)

# 👁️ 👁️ 'They've Got Your Eyes' 👁️ 👁️

*They've Got Your Eyes* (2025) is one of her newly commissioned works. This series invites viewers into a hallucinatory space that questions the assumptions we project onto AI. Are we seeing things in it that aren't really there? And what happens when AI reflects our misconceptions right back at us?

It is the first work from *They've Got Your Eyes*, a new body of AI-generated work spanning film, sculpture and digital painting. Rachel has trained AI models on her back catalogue, creating replicas of herself and her distinctive visual style in the form of AI-generated 3D print, video and 2D engraving.

Known for starring as the sole actor in her films, in this work Rachel grafts her face onto a Victorian era 'gentleman bust' that spawns, breeds and regenerates across the sculpture. The work interrogates the tension between what AI is (a system of pattern-recognising algorithms) and what it feels like to interact with it.

It draws parallels with the Victorian microscope boom, where powerful lenses made visible unseen miniature worlds. These same instruments fuelled a renewed belief in pre-modern fairy realms, as invisible worlds took hold in the collective imagination. They also led to hallucination, with distortions in the lens causing scientists and amateurs alike to wrongly announce the discovery of new life. It is within this space of technological enchantment and misperception that the 'gentleman' of the sculpture emerges - both in command of, and yet lost, to the machine. His inflated ego distorts perception and casts the technology's power as an echo of his own self-importance.  
(@joshlilleygallery)



👁️ 'They've Got Your Eyes' 👁️

# Antoine D'Agata

Antoine D'Agata's photographic images manage to contort the figure to provoke an affective response. Their rawness is at once terrifying and intoxicating. He does this through the intimate relationships he has with his subjects.

With this approach the intensity of the images defy representation in many ways. They become visual manifestations that move us beyond linguistic expression and take us closer to what a piece of art can be. 'This is art's function: to switch our intensive register, to reconnect us with the world.' (O'Sullivan, Simon. 2001: 128)

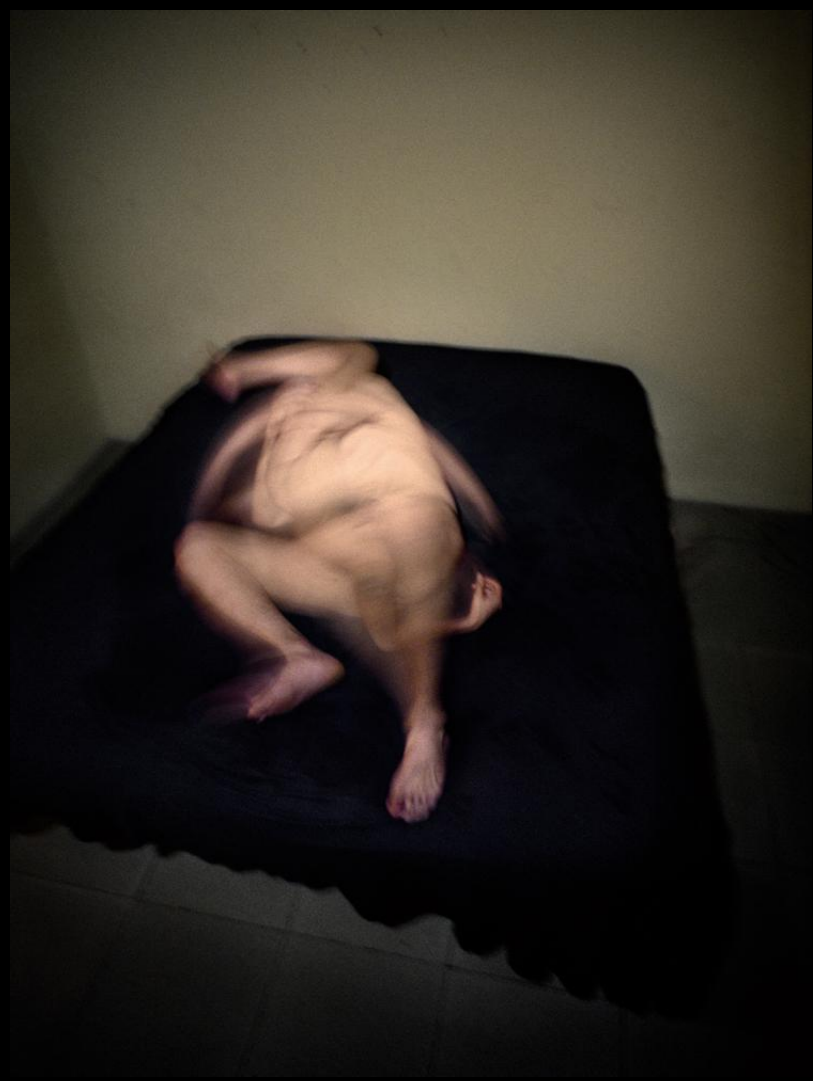
*Stigma*, published in 2004 contains a collection of D'Agata images, shot over the period of November 2003 to May 2004 in Las Palmas, Naples, Vilnius, Brest and Paris. The collection of photographs includes a haunting human form shot in Naples. This is a compelling example that can help us explore the affective nature of his work.

D'Agata photographs have parallels with Bacon:

'I think it's really because my work is linked so much with sensations and senses and trying to see with your nerves and not with your eyes,'  
(Glaviano, Alessia. 2013)







# *Camera Lucida*

Roland Barthes, the French literary theorist and philosopher, describes a particular type of photographic image in his seminal work *Camera Lucida* as having *punctum*:

‘... it is this element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me. ... for *punctum* is also: sting, speck, cut, little hole – and also a cast of the dice. A photograph’s *punctum* is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me).’

(Barthes, 1980.)

# No.13

Alexander McQueen's 13<sup>th</sup> show took place in a former bus station depot and the clothing he presented was a tribute to the Arts and Crafts Movement.

The finale of the show was Shalom Harlow, a former ballerina, dancing centrally on a rotating disk, between two metal robots hired from a car manufacturing plant.

A dying swan, sexual climax? McQueen later said he had been inspired by artist Rebecca Horn's 1991 installation, *High Moon*, for which two guns shot blood red paint at one another. Perhaps it is the awakening of technology, which once was enslaved to humankind, now growing in menace and aggression at its' captors, and marking the end of traditional craftsmanship.

# Alexander McQueen

No. 13

(Spring/Summer)

Gatliff

Wharehouse,

London 1999.

# The Basilica of the Sagrada Família

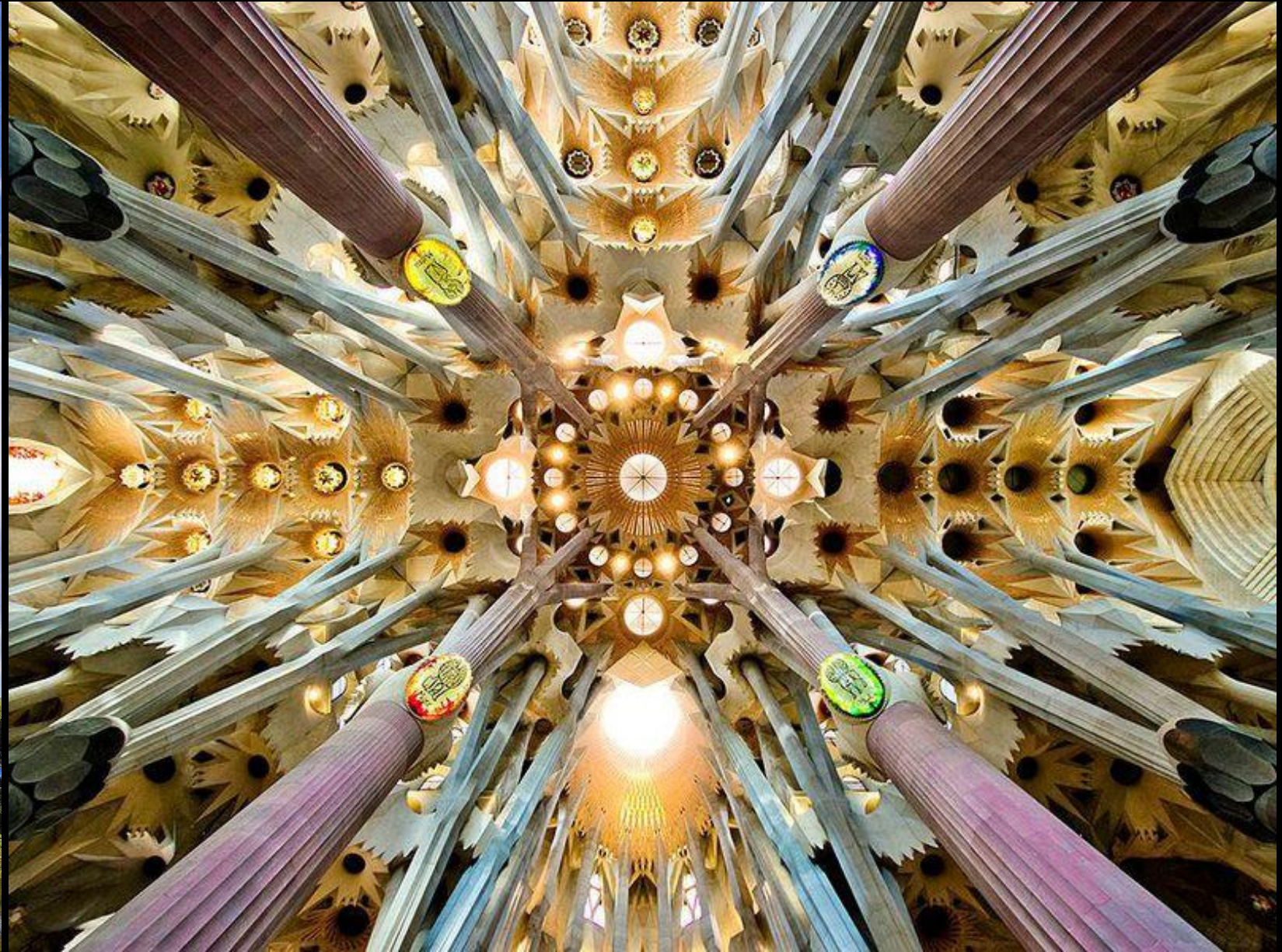
Spanish architect Antoni Gaudi began the project in 1883 with completion expected in 2026. The original neo-Gothic design was created by diocesan architect Francisco de Paula del Villar in 1882. However, Gaudi redefined the direction the building would take when he took over responsibility.

A UNESCO World Heritage site since 2005, the external and internal visionary design is profound. The current architect responsible for the completion, Jordi Fauli describes the process:

‘It was like learning a new language – we weren’t just learning the vocabulary, but the grammar as well’, the intention being to ‘express[ed] meaning not only through the sculpture and other decorations but through the architecture itself.’







# ‘To Fascinate and Unnerve’

In the article *To Fascinate and Unnerve* written for *The Nation* in August 2020, Andrew Marzoni recalls Deleuze and Guattari’s last collaboration, a book entitled: *What Is Philosophy?*

Deleuze reflects:

““Philosophy is the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts.” Like painting, architecture, music, or cinema, ... philosophy lays “claim to the new materials and means, that the future makes possible.””

This was Pol-Droit’s aim in his book *101 Experiments in the Philosophy of Everyday Life*, and this is your task.

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Next week ...

Speed Tutorials (23.10.26) 11am

Alex Reading Room

Following week ...

A.I (30.10.26) 11am

Alex Reading Room