

Yuck 'n Yum

FREE
SPRING 2012



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A wrong 9 looks better than a correct 6

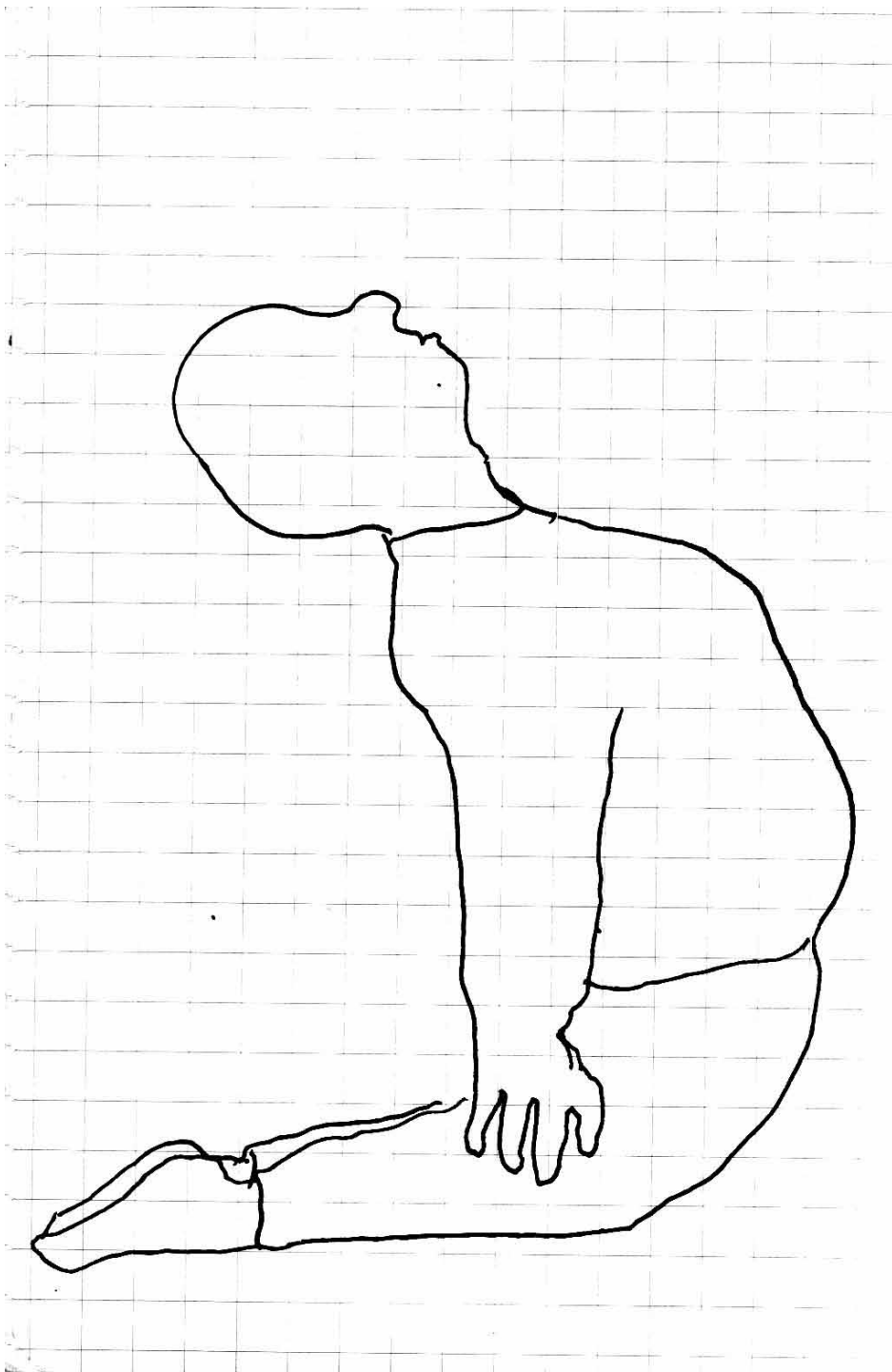
Yuck 'n Yum

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Cover by Helen Flanagan





The event has gone national with artists across Scotland joining in, including Dundee-based artists. On the 9th of March Edinburgh City Council announced that they too will be entering a consultation period and suspending the need to acquire a licence. In the Highlands the new amendment to the bill has led to a community group being charged £153 for an Easter egg hunt. The national outcry against the absurdity of this has led the Highland Council to also reconsider their stance on the licence regarding small events. However what constitutes as a small event? There is talk that the arbitrary sum of less than two hundred people will be considered as a small event. 'On Paper' had 250 guests over the course of one week; does that mean that in order to avoid paying a fee I would have had to close the door of the exhibition after the two hundredth person?

It is looking likely that even if community groups don't have to pay for a licence they will still have to apply for one, which is at the discretion of the Licensing Board. This fundamentally acts against the definition of the UN's cultural rights which will drive community-led cultural activity underground, and will ultimately lead towards an homogenised, corporate-endorsed view of cultural activities in Scotland. We must collectively stand up for this amendment to be scrapped. Lobby your local Councillor, sign the petition, stage an unlicensed event on April the 1st, but most importantly spread word of the amendment to friends and family; outline that it is not just the arts that are in jeopardy but ALL cultural activity.

Would I do another event similar to 'On Paper' after the 1st of April? Yes. I am in the process of establishing an organisation in the east end of Glasgow called 27. We, like similar organisations, are starting out on an ad-hoc basis putting on events and exhibitions whenever we can on a minimal budget. Like the majority of artists I know, I am on the lowest income bracket in the UK. If I had to pay a licence fee every time I wanted to stage an event in a temporary space I simply could not afford to do so - and, by definition of ad-hoc, the time constraint attached to applying for a licence negates the purpose. In short, the measures put in place by Glasgow City Council are temporary if after the consultation period is over the Council decide to reinstate the licence I will be forced to operate illegally and I won't be the only one.

Further reading:

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) (article 27)

Cultural rights are incorporated in article 27: "Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author."

Sign the petition: <http://www.change.org/petitions/the-scottish-government-scrap-public-entertainment-licence-fees>

Neil Mullholland's article which eloquently demonstrates why this amendment will quash Scotland's hope for independence <http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2012/03/03/can-play-wont-pay/>

Find out who your local Councillor is <http://www.writetothem.com/>

Join the Facebook group <http://www.facebook.com/scrapartstax>

*The artists involved in 'On Paper' were; Rachel Barron, Pete Fleming, Ross Hamilton Frew, Sarah Laing, Chris Hugh McKenzie, Ewan Manson, Callum Monteith, Jonathan Owen and Erik Smith.

27 is a new organisation set up by Gayle Meikle and Ross Hamilton Frew which amongst other things will help Scottish based artists realise projects. You can view documentation of the exhibition and keep up to date with news on 27 at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/27/252082284868908>.



A Call to Action in the Year of Creative Scotland

On the 17th of February I opened a pop up exhibition held in an empty shop in Glasgow, it was called 'On Paper', and it looked at how 9 artists from across Scotland used the materiality of paper. The exhibition attracted around 250 people, ran for one week and cost £196 to produce. This is not an unusual situation; in fact it happens most weekends somewhere in Scotland. Yet as we were installing, the story broke about the Public Entertainment Licence with particular focus on Glasgow City Council. Hailed as a 'Tax on Creativity' the amendment of the existing Public Entertainment Licence will come into force on the 1st of April. This new amendment extends the need for a licence for all events open to the public, regardless of whether they are free or not. Thus temporary exhibitions, screenings, readings, performances, fun days, workshops, gigs etcetera - whether staged in your flat, a café, an empty shop or outdoors - will have to obtain a licence. 'On Paper' would have fallen under this category. I would have had to pay a minimum charge of £120 and engaged in an application process which would take up to six weeks. The exhibition was arranged, hung and dismantled in less than 4 weeks.

Within days, opposition to the proposed amendment had gathered pace across social media platforms and in the press, with high profile ambassadors such as Franz Ferdinand and Alasdair Gray speaking out against the ridiculous amendment to the law and how it will stifle the Glasgow grassroots art scene: a scene of which curator Hans-Ulrich Obrist coined the name 'the Glasgow Miracle' and the Arts and Humanities Research Council has just awarded a sizeable grant to the Glasgow Art School to research. As little as two weeks passed and the Glasgow City Council had bowed to the increasing pressure and issued a statement that it has suspended the need to acquire a licence whilst they conduct a six month consultation period. What we didn't know but has now transpired is that this amendment affects all Councils across Scotland. So what of the other 31?

Although Glasgow's art scene was the first to react, Edinburgh swiftly followed with a bigger rally cry. On the 1st of April, Edinburgh-based artists will be staging a day of unlicensed activity entitled A Little April Foolery, initiated by director Jen McGregor. Jen encourages anyone to get involved:

"Edinburgh artists should stage as many unlicensed events as we can. Anything at all. As long as it's art. As long as it's entertainment. As long as it's open to the public and free of charge. Find a location and do your thing. Publicise it or don't. Show off your pictures, burst into song, wax poetical, make a scene, find an audience! Just don't apply for a licence."



Ben Robinson and Stephen Bloe - THE SHAPE



THE SHAPE is a group exhibition at Dundee's Generator Projects that opens on Friday March 23rd, the night before this very issue of Yuck 'n Yum is scheduled to launch. The names involved will be familiar to seasoned observers of this zine: Darren Banks, 2011 AGK Winner Lachlann Rattray and myself, Ben Robinson. I caught up with Stephen Bloe of Generator Projects to ask a few questions.

What is the concept behind the show?

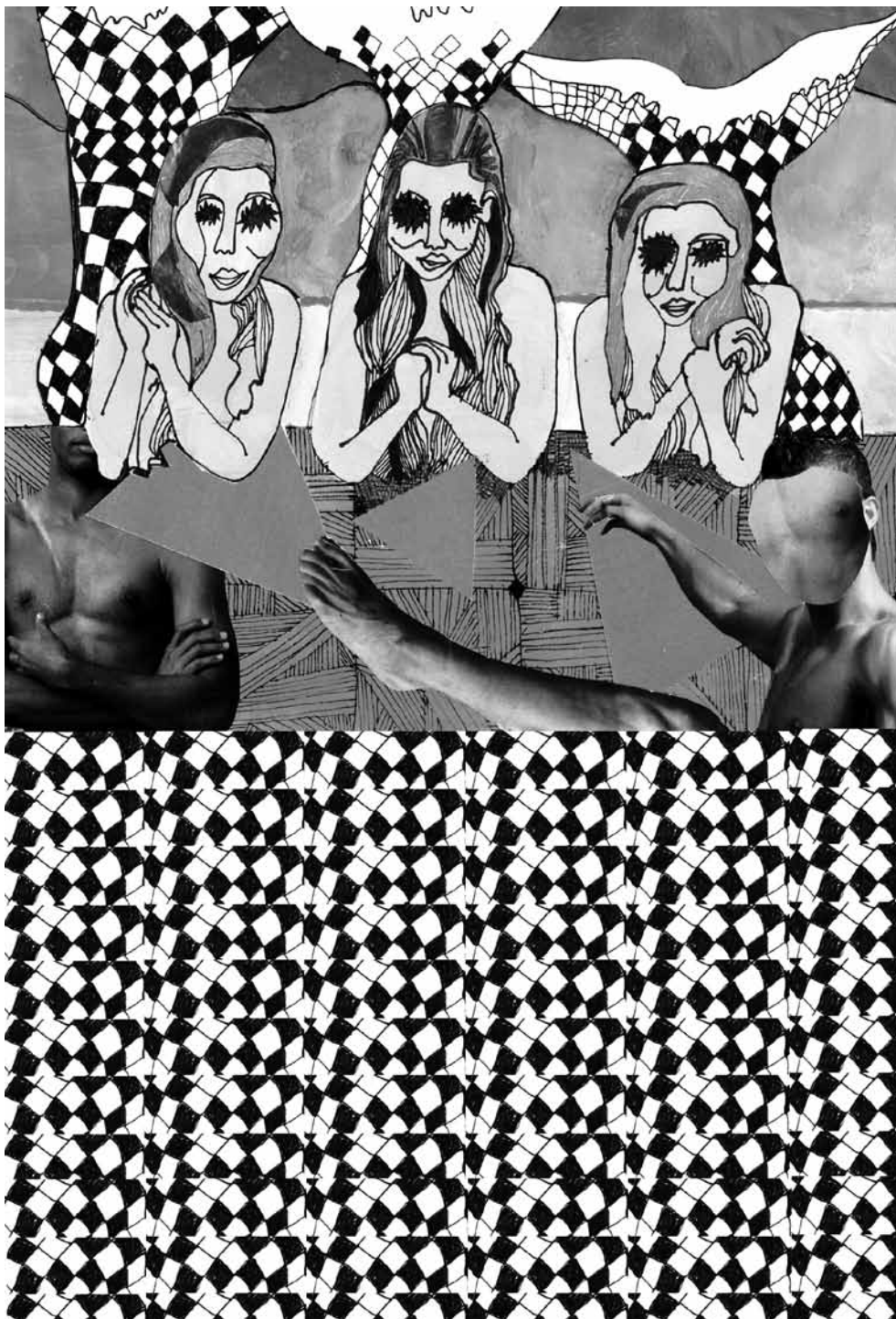
At its core, THE SHAPE is an exhibition that was put together to investigate the relationship between chance and determinism. More specifically, the compelling relationship between chance and determinism within the realm of Exploitation and European horror cinema. The idea came from an essay on Dario Argento's *Tenebre* by Chris Barber and Stephen Thrower. Using *Tenebre*'s antinomies as a framework, I wanted to assemble a show that'd capture the bewildering narrative and ultra-violent stylisation of Giallo cinema.

The name THE SHAPE is actually a deviation from the original template of the show but somehow it seemed particularly pertinent in the grand scheme of things.

Darren Banks suggested the name. In the original *Halloween*, the adult Michael Myers is referred to as The Shape. Michael is a Frankenstein of cinematic parts. Everyone loved the suggestion. It worked and it stuck.

THE SHAPE is a very relevant title, one that immediately makes me think about structure. Horror films have a specific structure, yet the genre can also be very flexible too. Sometimes, when artists and filmmakers have to work within these strict parameters, such situations are when the best ideas can happen. So how did you decide on these three particular artists?





I've been looking for an opportunity to work with Darren Banks since being made aware of his work centered around Palace Video, an early 80s VHS distribution company. Whilst researching the concept of the show, Darren's name kept emerging on "The Girl Who Knew Too Much", a blog that investigates the relationship between contemporary art and horror film. At this stage, THE SHAPE didn't exist but the convoluted narratives in Darren's found footage assemblages, within the horror genre, had a clear correlation with the ideas that were being discussed and, again, it made sense to approach him. I'd been familiar with Lachlann's work as a musician in Gay Against You in the mid 2000s. Again, having a long-standing interest in Lachlann's work, I'd been looking for an opportunity to exhibit him. His preoccupation with trash-culture and absurdist aesthetic seemed to correspond with some of the elements intrinsic to the Giallo genre. In like manner, your own involvement in the show was relatively organic. Working with such a distinct aesthetic, it seemed compulsory to have a Giallo aficionado and fearless artist on board.

There's been some great communication between artists and gallery on Facebook, sharing links and YouTube clips and forming a kind of online sketchbook. What's the schedule in the weeks leading up to the opening?

So far, everything is on track. The most beneficial thing at this stage is to maintain dialogue and idea swapping between the three artists. Logistically, the show will start coming together within the next few weeks when the artists begin to touchdown. We're well underway with the press and marketing of the show and have already designed a poster that draws heavily on some of the commonplace motifs in Giallo poster design - see The Bird with the Crystal Plumage.

I trust you've scheduled an appropriate after-event? I'd heard whispers about a legendary former Yuck 'n Yum interviewee.

Of course! We're very proud to be working in association with Zazou to bring the one and only William Bennett to Dundee. The Whitehouse and Cut Hands noise musician will be performing as the flamboyant DJ Benetti, one of the unsung pioneers of Italo Disco. This is a man whose first gig was at a Mafia-controlled pizza restaurant in Vigevano (Northern Italy) in 1980 and once lived in China for 18 months as a paid guest of the Communist town council. True fact... It's an absolute privilege to have William involved in this project, given that his body of work was an undeniable influence on the development of the show.

THE SHAPE is on at Generator Projects, Dundee from 24 March to 15 April.

I opened the door to the kitchen and a plate smashed above my head.
“FIX IT FIX IT FIX IT”, she screamed.

I stood in shock, briefly thinking that it couldn't be fixed. It was shattered on the floor, too many pieces. There was water boiling over on the stove and a dark sauce bubbled like lava in a separate pot. A crusty French baguette lay on the worktop, with two round slices that sat like wide surprised eyes bearing witness.

She swayed and stared madly into me, getting right in there, past the gates and the driveway and up again into the attic like there was desperate decorating to do up there. I stooped to pick some shards off the floor thinking 'maybe with enough glue'. A vicious growl rose up in her, so loud and base I heard fissures in the seams of me. As she let this torrent of rage go I felt the earth liquify and the air split across my ears. I had nothing for this, nothing like this existed to me and I froze as her yell melted icebergs and changed the seas. She roared low and high and registers unheard, eyes closed yet everything open, draining it all; on and on and on.

When finally it stopped she held onto the worktop heaving for breath, a half drowned mammal fighting for oxygen. I managed to rise and move toward her, I needed to hold her but in truth, more for myself and my own fears. As I moved to her she flung her legs at me and screamed me back. I stumbled, drink mixed with broken crockery and crashed to the ground. She lurched for the breadknife and lashed it across the air, growling again as the fight returned to her lungs. I lay motionless, watching her frenzied attacks, swiping and thrashing at the steam and the ghosts of despair...

And then it stopped.
We breathed for a while.

We drained the pasta, splashing in some olive oil, and ate spaghetti with puttanesca sauce. We looked at one another while we ate, looking more than the last few months combined. When we'd eaten I said “We should walk.”

“Okay”, she said, “I want to see the moon.”

We walked well, clean and almost weightless. I felt the bounce in her stride and we covered ground for hours. Each step was better than the last; it was there for both of us. Miles out, in the pitch dark, we started to run. We jogged and laughed and sprinted and screamed, breaking the silences and cheering not to be the broken. At last we fell to the ground, facing the stars as our breath cascaded like a haar across the universe.

We lay and watched a heavy blue canvas sky with button badge moon creep above us whilst we whispered over the sounds of sleeping mice. Our thick lambs wool blanket kept the cold soil from us and we murmured to one another of storms on Saturn and the mountains on Mars. I told her of a long lost life of ache and pity as she touched the scars in me with kiss and smile and we sang strong to Cepheus and Cassiopeia.



To Cepheus and Cassiopea (and back)

We fell in love on a grit box. We would watch the weather change and wave at planes, sing to the crows and throw wishes at the stars, our thoughts floating high through wind and cloud, across vacuum and galaxy and back down to grit. The seasons poured by us while the yellow lid of our box curved with our weight, our dent, our miniscule imprint of love on a widening world. We sang strong to the crows and wished the box was our home.

* * * *

First home again, I hit the switches; lights, kettle, cooker; on, on, on. The stillness could not be tamed.

I hated being in before her. The house had looked barren when I pulled up, the only one in the street with no lights on, a gap tooth in a smile. I tried to stay on at work but it was getting embarrassing. Too many emails and waiting on calls, it was obvious. People know these things.

As I'd sat in heavy traffic, slowly drifting home like a metal river slowed on rocks, the radio told of floods in Bangladesh. I drove past home after home with windows lit like square moons in the early dark of winter and glimpses of lunar life dripped into my dream; steam on kitchen windows and ties on the floor, hallway embraces and wagging tails, each moon its own world, static and grounded and alien to all comers, "...with almost one million displaced."

Steam pushed out from the kettle and pipes began to creak but the heat was slow. It was in deep, into the bones of the house. The rooms up the stairs were vacuous and all warmth was lost to them. There was no atmosphere, no life.

When she got back I was watching nothing on the telly. I'd eaten and the key in the door shot guilt through me. I tried to seem relaxed and cheery, put the look on my face for her, but she went straight to the kitchen. She stayed in there, she with her wine and I had mine.

Sitting in my house, staring at a Toy School newsreader talking of the monsoon through the square window, it occurred to me that maybe this wasn't my house at all. Maybe I was house-sitting, that I was playing a part and that maybe nothing could make me settle here again. There always felt something in here with us, a snowman lurking, a frosty dead eyed bastard sucking on us, a never crying, never giggling ghost, stuck solid in the midst of our lives. He wedged between us and in the vacuum of desire we suckled him on defeat and now we sat in the crosshairs of our own silence.

I shook myself, drink kicking in at last and heat in the bones. The news droned on of more dead and always more dead as I moved through the house. I wanted to say hello.

