



REF 2021



MARK GUBB

PUBLIC WORKS

Gubb_01

UoA 32

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300-WORD STATEMENT

This multi-component output consists of a selection of approaches to the creation and dissemination of art in the public realm.

These works were realised across a six-year period (June 2014 to August 2020) and incorporate multiple forms – permanent public works ('Alight', Cardiff, and 'Wassail', London), public performance ('God So Loves Decay', Luton and L.A., 'Metal Militia', Berwick-upon-Tweed, 'It All Began with Richard Burton', Whitstable), and site-specific graphic works ('Even in Exile' album cover, 'The Murenger and Other Stories' book cover).

This diverse approach to ideas of site and the public realm reflects my research interests in an artwork's capacity to exist autonomously and coherently outside of any additional framework for its designation as an artwork.

From a practice-based research perspective, a key question these projects examined was:

How can an artwork co-opt the physical surroundings in which it is sited in order to intensify the viewer experience and extend its dialogues beyond that of simply being considered an artwork?

The key methodology was in the creation and the dissemination of the works and artistic objects themselves – through this process a physical space was created in which the identified research question could be examined, individually, and then collectively as part of the wider portfolio.

In submitting these works as a multi-component output, it provides an accurate reflection of my interest and research in to working in this way. I am equally interested in permanent public works – how they function, their relation to architecture and people's use of the space, their ability to engage in a wider narrative – as I am in the transient use of space or the co-option of recognisable sites; the shorthand of understanding this can create for an audience, that extends beyond a visual arts audience, when introducing a work in to that site or space.

This multi-component output consists of the following works, presented in chronological order:

- **Metal Militia (2014)**
- **It All Began with Richard Burton (2014)**
- **Alight (2014)**
- **God So Loves Decay (2016)**
- **Wassail (2018)**
- **The Murenger and Other Stories (2019)**
- **Even in Exile (2020)**

Key connections between these works, and the reason to present them together are their engagement with site and audience.

Whilst diverse in their media, scale and approach, each represents part of my ongoing practice-based research in to the relationship between site, audience and artwork; how these three things triangulate in the activation of an artwork and, very particularly, an artwork's ability to function autonomously outside of a formally acknowledged visual arts arena and space for exhibition.

Due to the nature of public works and their presentation it is almost impossible to collate accurate audience/viewer numbers. Where any of the projects contain a tangible metric – such as an on-line video or ticket sales – I have included those numbers.

This research builds on my interest in the research of Alfred Gell, specifically his *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (1998), where Gell discusses art in relation to his anthropological research, stating, "In place of symbolic communication, I place all the emphasis on agency, intention, causation, result and transformation. I view art as a system of action, intended to change the world rather than encode symbolic propositions about it" (Gell, 1998). This position is something I have examined extensively through my work, particularly the exchange between site, audience, artist and artwork, often outside of traditional frameworks for the dissemination of artworks.

RESEARCH OUTCOMES AND DISSEMINATION

Metal Militia (2014)

Public performance

Commissioned by Berwick Visual Arts

This was a live, public, performance that consisted of pipers from the Berwick RBL & Eyemouth RBL Pipe Bands playing traditional piping tunes, accompanied on the drums by Nicholas Barker – one of the world’s leading extreme metal drummers – playing original drumbeats he had written for the performance. The work developed from research undertaken in the town, focusing primarily on its military history and the former residence of the Kings Own Scottish Borderers regiment. The one-off performance took place on Friday 6th June 2014 at The Maltings, Berwick-Upon-Tweed, in front of a live audience. The performance had been promoted equally, and without bias, to an arts audience – through the venue – and also a rock/heavy metal audience using a specialist rock and heavy metal marketing/promotion company.

Further documentation

<https://www.smarkgubb.com/metal-militia>

Video Clip 3mins

<https://vimeo.com/97860566>

Full Performance 25mins

<https://vimeo.com/99119101>

Further Information

Host venue information:

<http://www.berwickvisualarts.co.uk/whats-on/35/s-mark-gubb-metal-militia>

<https://www.maltingsberwick.co.uk/events/visual/1494>

Blabbermouth blog feature:

<https://www.blabbermouth.net/news/former-dimmu-borgircradle-of-filth-drummer-nicholas-barker-in-unique-musical-collaboration/>

Guardian Guide preview:

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/may/30/the-weeks-art-shows-in-pictures>

Tangible Audience Metrics

Audience on the night: 50

Blue Bonnets – Video clip: 22,400

Full Performance – Video clip: 424



*Metal Militia (2014)
Images from the performance at the Maltings
Berwick-Upon-Tweed, Friday 6th June 2014
Image credits Mark Pinder*

It All Began with Richard Burton (2014)

Commissioned by The Whitstable Biennale



It All Began with Richard Burton (2014)
Image from the coach tour. Whitstable Biennale
Sunday 15th June, 2014

Further Information

Host organisation information:

<https://whitstablebiennale.com/project/it-all-began-with-richard-burton/>

Guardian Guide preview:

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2014/jun/14/this-weeks-new-events>

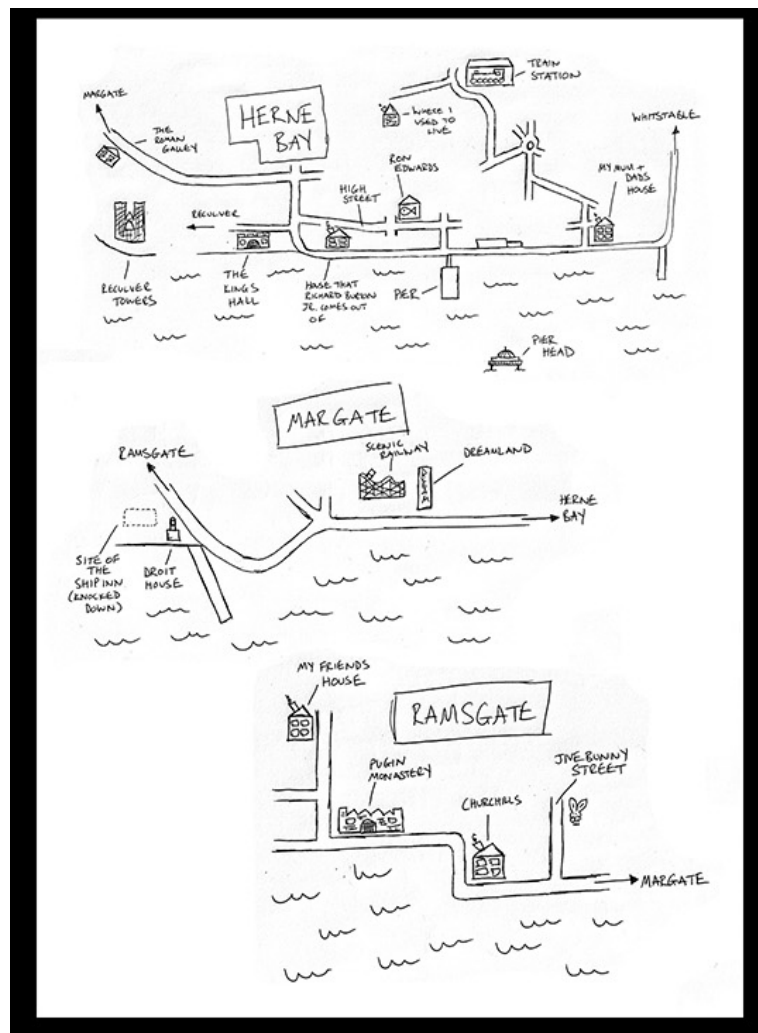
Uncle Chop Chop publication:

<http://www.unclechopchop.com/4th%20edition.htm>

Tangible Audience Metrics

Audience on the coach: 50

Video clip: 95



*It All Began with Richard Burton (2014)
Image used to illustrate original essay in Uncle Chop Chop issue 4 that
formed the basis of the map for the coach tour*

This was a one-off live event that took the form of a guided coach tour along the North Kent Coast, from Whitstable to Ramsgate. The coach tour was based on my own recollections of growing up on this coast – a mixture of autobiography, local knowledge, gossip and hearsay – an informal and conversational unpacking of my relationship with the place where I grew up. The performance was developed out of an essay I wrote for the fourth of issue of the publication 'Uncle Chop Chop', which is commissioned and compiled by the artists Beagles and Ramsay.

Further documentation

<https://www.smarkgubb.com/richard-burton>

Video version of original essay text – 9mins

<https://vimeo.com/73441809>

Alight (2014)

Permanent public sculpture

Commissioned by Stoford Ltd and Admiral PLC for Cardiff city centre

'Alight' was commissioned to be sited alongside the newly built Admiral Insurance offices in Cardiff city centre. The brief was simply to develop a permanent sculptural piece for the site.

I was interested in the architecture of the site, both in terms of its history – or lack of it, as the entire area had been redeveloped – and also its position within the city – this area could be described as an entertainment district, housing a cinema, a live music arena, shops, restaurants and bars. Also, where the work was sited was, formerly, not an area of high foot-fall due to it being at the back of a shopping centre.

Through this work I was proposing a conversation between it and the very large architecture that surrounded it, at the same time attempting to create a landmark and reference point in people's navigation of the city.

Further documentation

<https://www.smarkgubb.com/alight>

Further Information

Cardiff TV Interview/Feature:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_0UnA_kWy4

Admiral TV Interview/Feature:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etJ1N4Y4heA>

BBC News Article:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-east-wales-30316587>

a-n The Artist's Information Company News Article:

<https://www.a-n.co.uk/news/lightening-bolt-strikes-cardiff-city-centre/>

Wales Online News Article:

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/bolt-blue-new-33ft-lightning-8237195>

Architects Journal Feature (scroll down):

<https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/astragal-welcome-to-cambridges-latin-quarter>

Your Sculpture – Sculptural Heritage Project:

<https://yoursculpture.wordpress.com/tag/wales/>

Tangible Audience Metrics

Cardiff TV video: 68

Admiral TV video: 286

This work has also featured in two BBC programmes that I am aware of, and one Welsh tourism advert.



*Alight (2014)
Permanent public work sited in Cardiff (UK) city centre
Image credit Jamie Wooley*

God So Loves Decay (2016) Public Performance. Commissioned by Sunridge Avenue Projects, Luton.

This was a one-off performance in Luton Town centre that took place on Saturday 4th May 2016. The work consisted of punk musician, Russ Crimewave, 'preaching' the collected lyrics of Luton-based post-punk band, UK Decay. The site of the performance was outside of Luton Town Hall; a town hall burned to the ground in the Peace Day riots of 1919, and a regular site for a range of religious preachers. For around 4 hours, Russ preached from a specially printed publication containing UK Decay's collected lyrics. Free copies of the publication were available for distribution to the passing audience. The work was commissioned by Sunridge Avenue Projects, which was a 9-month programme of arts activity that happened across Luton, commissioned and curated by the artist Dominic Allan a.k.a Dominic from Luton. This work was then re-presented at the 'Curating Resistance: Punk as Archival Method' conference at UCLA, Los Angeles, in February 2018.

Further documentation and audio recordings

<https://www.smarkgubb.com/god-so-loved-decay>

Further Information

'Curating Resistance: Punk as Archival Method' conference information:

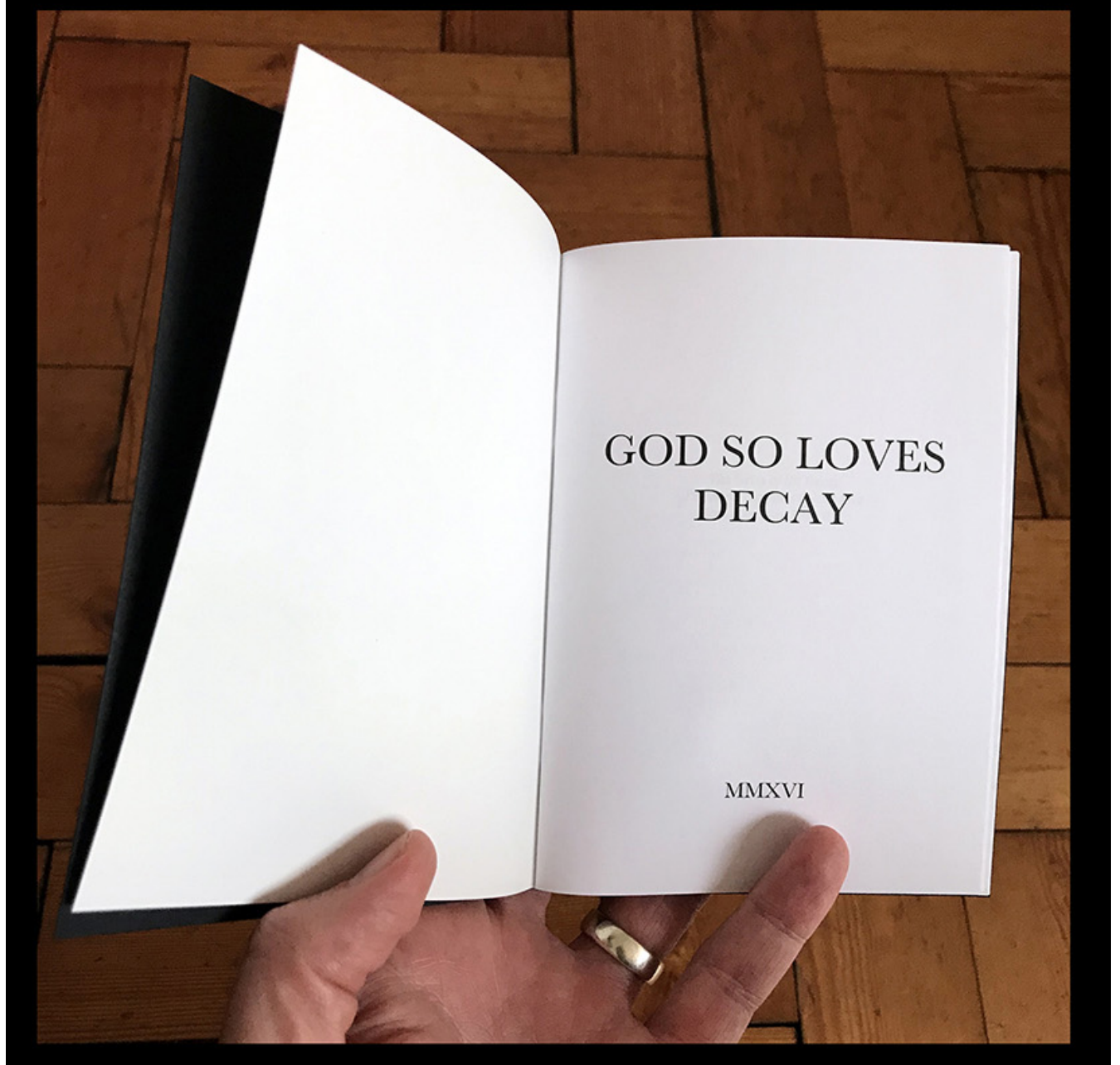
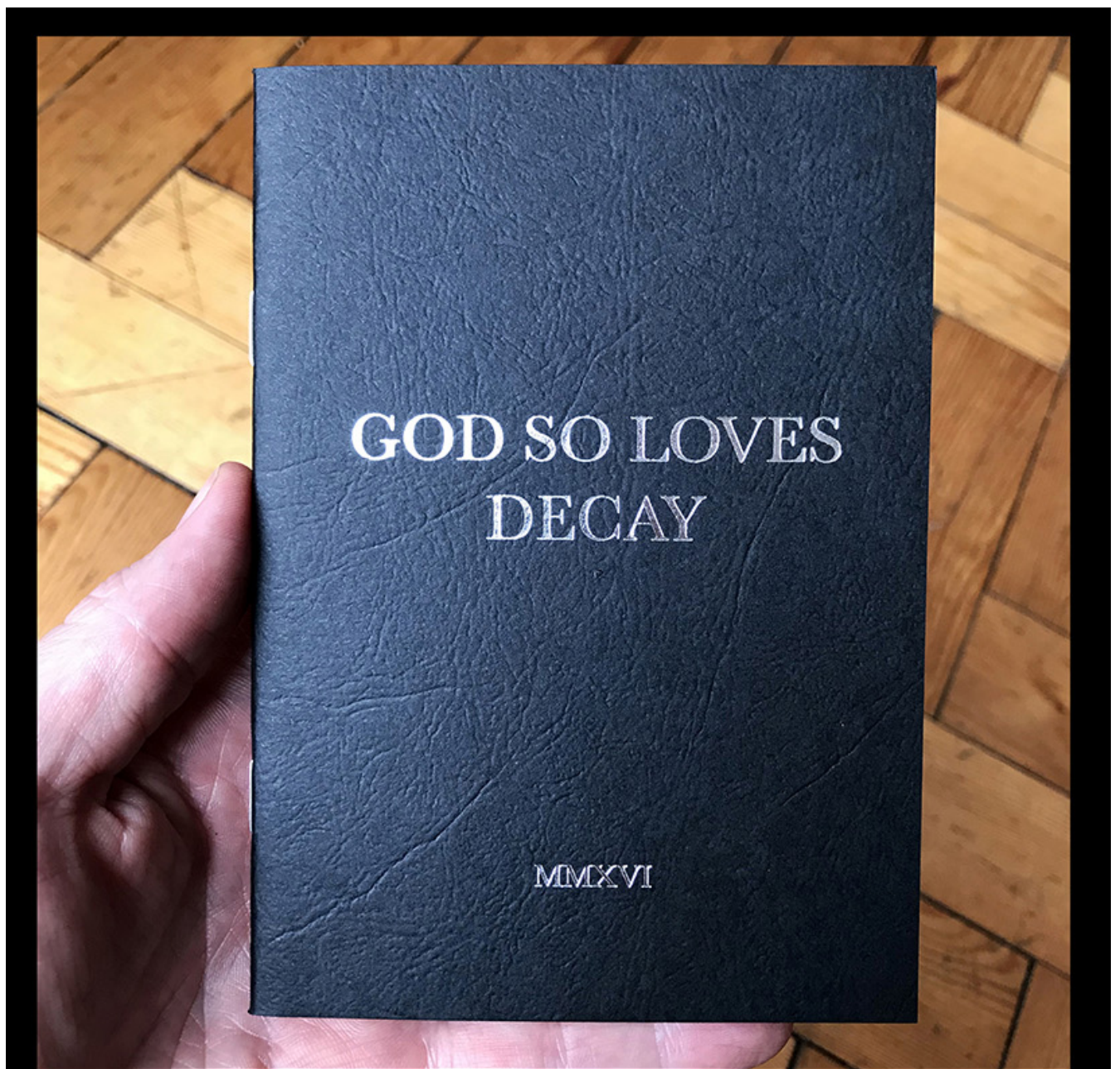
<https://schoolofmusic.ucla.edu/resources/curating-resistance-punk-as-archival-method/>



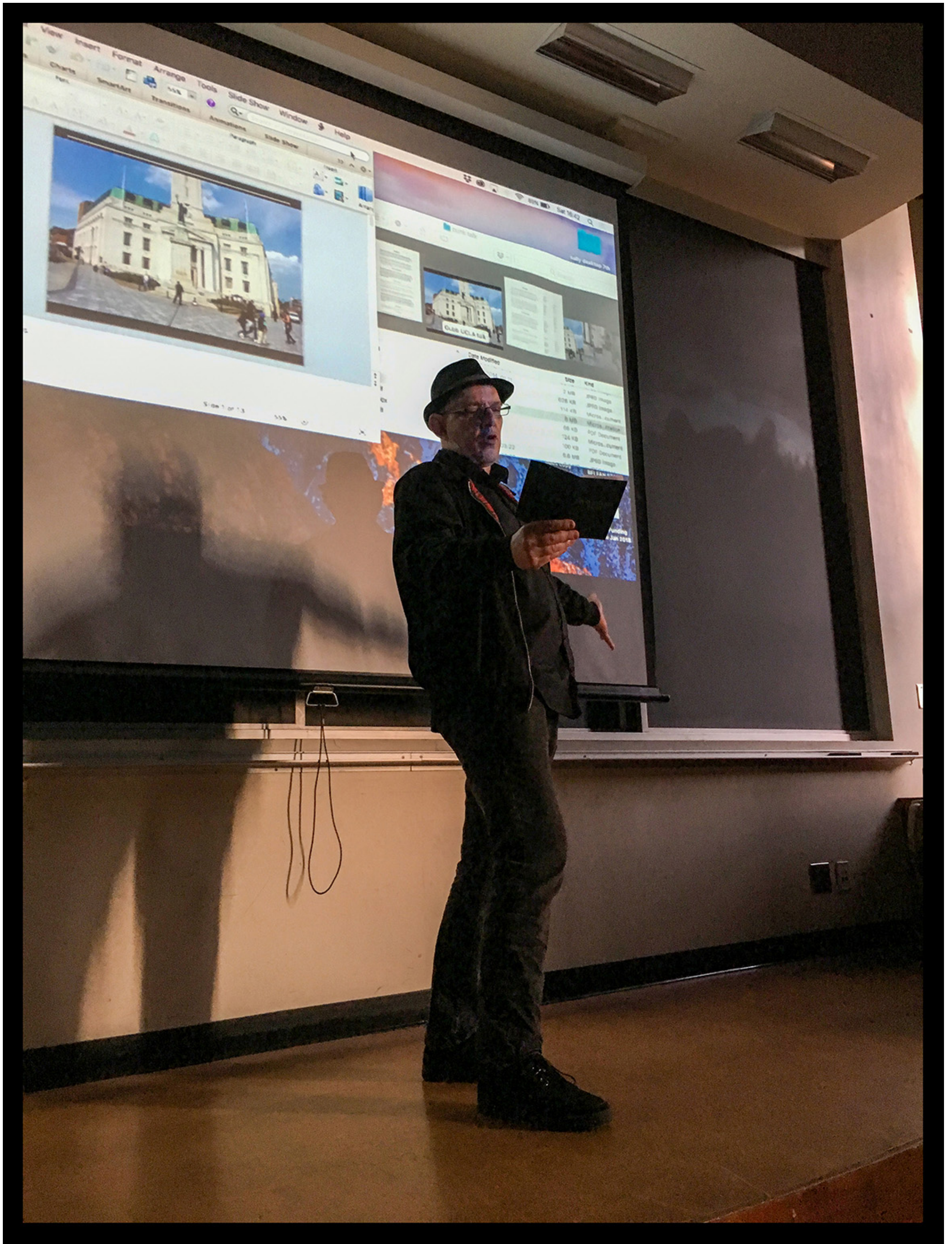
*God So Loves Decay (2016)
Image from the performance, Luton Town Centre, Saturday 7th May 2016*



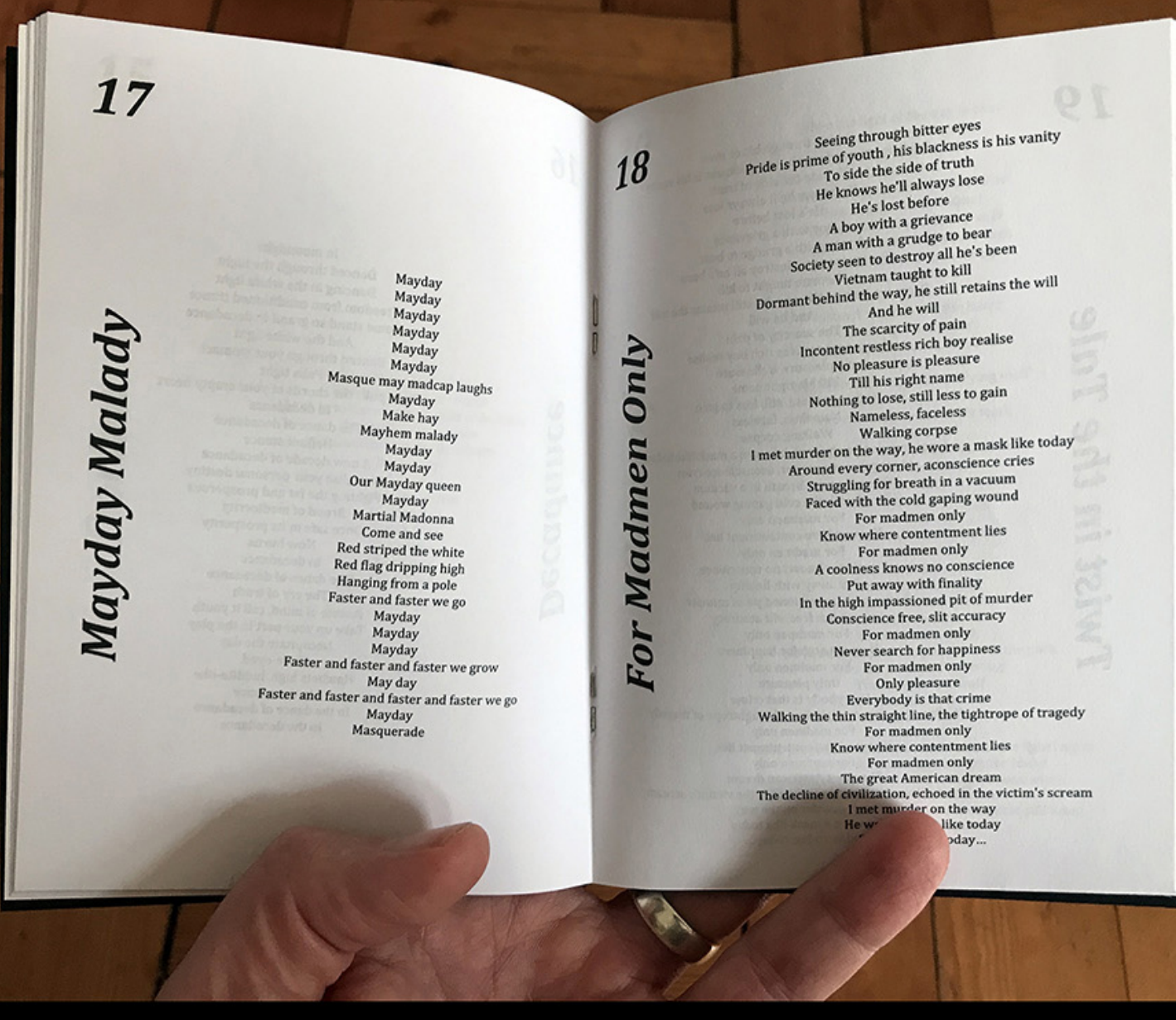
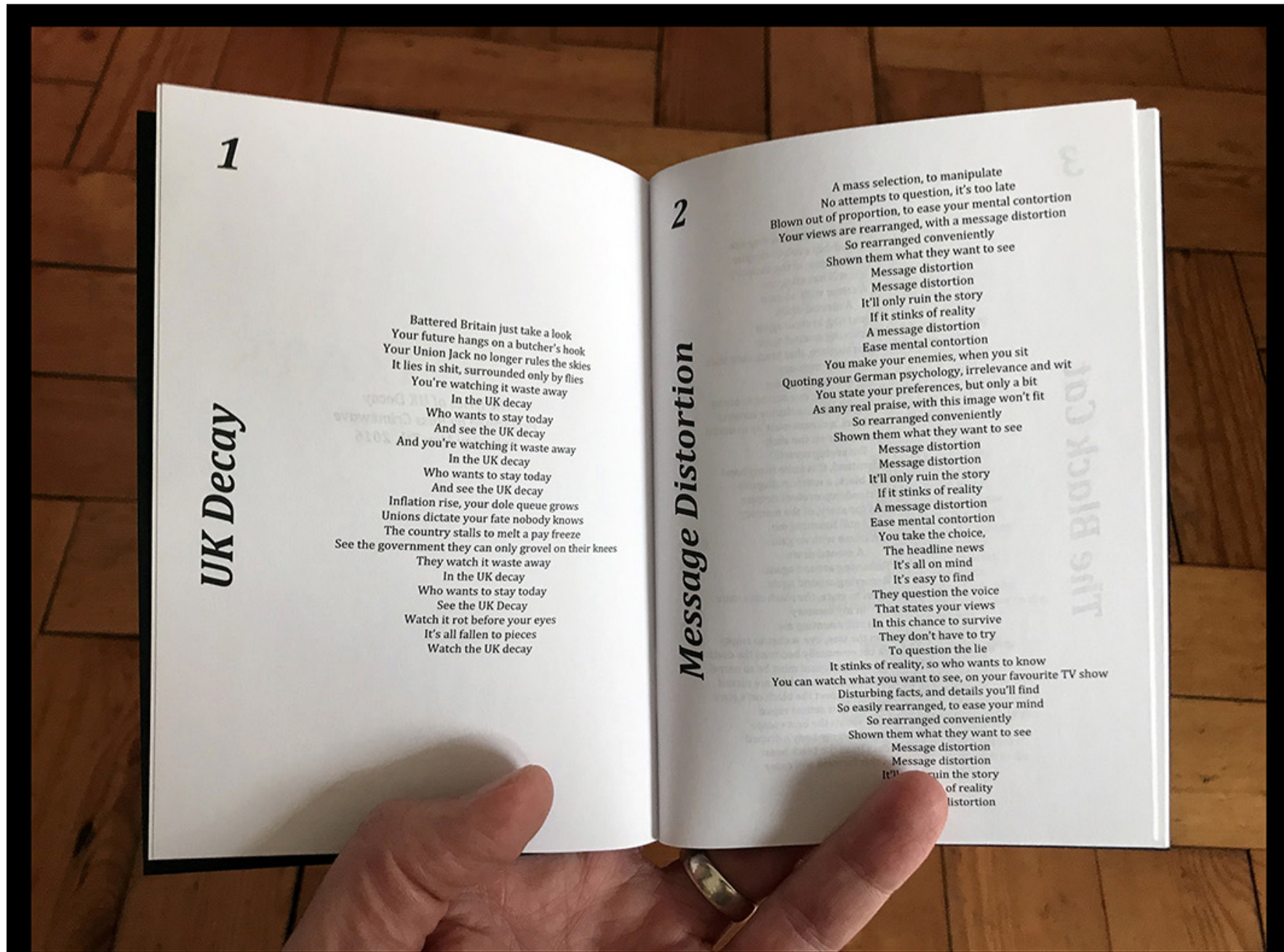
*God So Loves Decay (2016)
Image from the performance, Luton Town Centre, Saturday 7th May 2016*



Pages from the free publication distributed during the performance, God So Loves Decay (2016), Luton Town Centre, Saturday 7th May 2016



*Re-Presentation of the performance God So Loves Decay (2016)
at Curating Resistance: Punk as Archival Method conference, UCLA,
Los Angeles, Saturday 10th February 2018*



Pages from the free publication distributed during the performance, *God So Loves Decay* (2016), Luton Town Centre, Saturday 7th May 2016

**Free For All Forever (2016)
I-70 Sign Show, Missouri, USA**

+

**Free For All Forever (2016)
British Art Show 9 fringe programme, Southampton, UK**

These two billboards can be considered as separate works, but also can be viewed in terms of their relationship with each other. The two versions of the same work were shown concurrently – not overlapping time- wise, but with a considerable overlap of a few weeks. In doing so, something of a transatlantic conversation was established between the two iterations in that moment. The 'I-70 Sign Show' is an existing programme of artists billboards exhibited along the I-70 in Missouri, USA. As such, they were a collaborative partner in the exhibition of this work. The other iteration, in Southampton, UK, was commissioned by the organisation UGO and programmed as a part of a temporary billboard project within the fringe events attached to the British Art Show 8.

Further documentation

<https://www.smarkgubb.com/free-for-all-billboard>



Free For All Forever (2016)
I-70 Sign Show, Missouri
Image credit Anne Thompson



Free For All Forever (2016)
UGO, Southampton
Image credit Jonathan Kelham

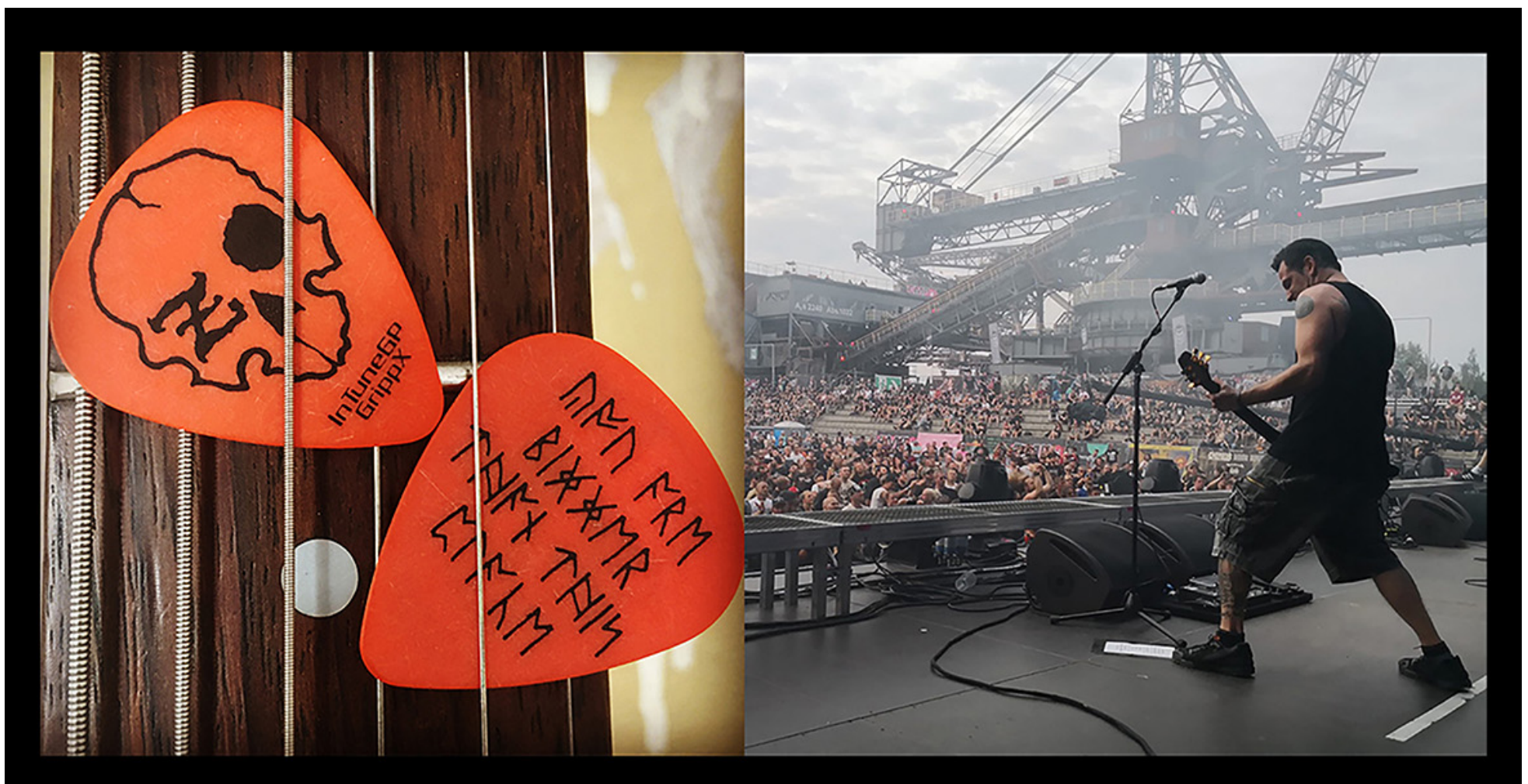
Ganas de Vivir (2016)

Artwork sited on a plectrum, used by Joey Z of Life of Agony on their Fall/Winter world tour.



This work was the introduction of a text, in the form of Anglo-Saxon runes, on to one side of the plectrum used by, musician, Joey Z. His band, Life of Agony, were undertaking a world tour in the latter-half of 2016. The runes are a literal translation of the phrase, 'You are bigger than this place'. It is standard practice for guitarists in rock bands to get plectrums printed with their name, band logo, or something else that identifies them. This is not to identify ownership in terms of capital protection, but ascribes some cultural value to the object – in a small way, like a certificate of authenticity. It identifies the plectrum as having been owned and used by that specific guitarist in that specific band, which carries cultural value amongst their fan base. These plectrums are thrown in to the crowd during concerts, after being used by the guitarist. So, whilst on one level the use of the plectrum by Joey provided a context for its existence and exhibition, at the same time it was also a distribution method for the plectrums themselves.

Main tour dates for which Ganas de Vivir (2016) plectrum was used and distributed by Joey Z



Ganas de Vivir (2016) plectrum, front and back, alongside Joey Z performing with Life of Agony, Performance image used by kind of permission of Joey Zampella

Man of Ice (2016)

CCQ Magazine - Issue 11

Public work sited in a magazine.

This was a collaborative work made with the writer, Jon Gower, and sited in the pages of CCQ Magazine. The work took the form of a fictitious account (told as fact, with no indication it was anything other than the truth) of a journey we had taken to bury a time capsule in Siberia.

Further documentation:

<https://issuu.com/ccqmag/docs/ccq11/28>

Further Information

CCQ Magazine website:

<http://ccqmagazine.com>

Tangible Audience Metrics

Print copy readers: 9300 approx.

Online readers: 10,000 approx.

issuu.com

Email - Mark Gubb - Outlook CCQ11 by CCQ magazine - issuu

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Man of Ice
 Author and journalist, Jon Gower, writes how he and his research team...
 The photo on the left shows a man in a dark, hooded jacket standing in a dark, industrial-looking space. The photo on the right shows a man in a dark, hooded jacket standing in a dark, industrial-looking space. The photo on the left shows a man in a dark, hooded jacket standing in a dark, industrial-looking space. The photo on the right shows a man in a dark, hooded jacket standing in a dark, industrial-looking space.

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Development Bank of Wales SHOW

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Earrings SILVA KEGULIAN

Collaborative work with Jon Gower, sited in CCQ Magazine, Issue 11

Wassail (2018)

Permanent public sculpture. Commissioned by Berkeley Homes.

Commissioned by Berkeley Homes to be sited around their 'Vista' development on the Nine Elms, Battersea, the specific focus of the commission was to create way markers for the site. The logic to my approach was that anything can act as a way marker – a tree-stump, a bent lamppost – essentially anything that's specific and unique to a site. Seven works were developed for the site, to be set in to the hardscaping at specific points, each of which was thematically developed from research in to the history of the borough. An eighth work was also commissioned to be sited on a railway arch at the rear of the site. This was developed, thematically, from the same research that was undertaken in to the history of the borough. The specific things being referenced through the works are:

- Battersea formerly being a lavender-farming area, pre-industrial revolution.
- Pink Floyd's classic 'Animals' album cover, featuring a pig flying between the chimneys of Battersea Power Station (which is directly to the rear of the site).
- The work of Battersea Dogs and Cats Home.
- The formation of the Workers Educational Association in a terraced house in the borough in 1903.
- The aviation history of the Short Brothers, formerly based on the gasworks the rear of the Vista site.
- The filming of The Clash's 'London Calling' video on a pier of Battersea Park.
- The presence of the 'Pleasure Gardens' in Battersea Park during the 1951 'Festival of Britain'.
- The discovery of the Seax of Beagnoth in the River Thames at Battersea – a 9th Century Anglo-Saxon knife containing the only known complete inscription of the twenty-eight letter Anglo-Saxon runic alphabet.

Further documentation

<https://www.smarkgubb.com/wassail>

Further Information

Berkeley Homes Cultural Strategy:

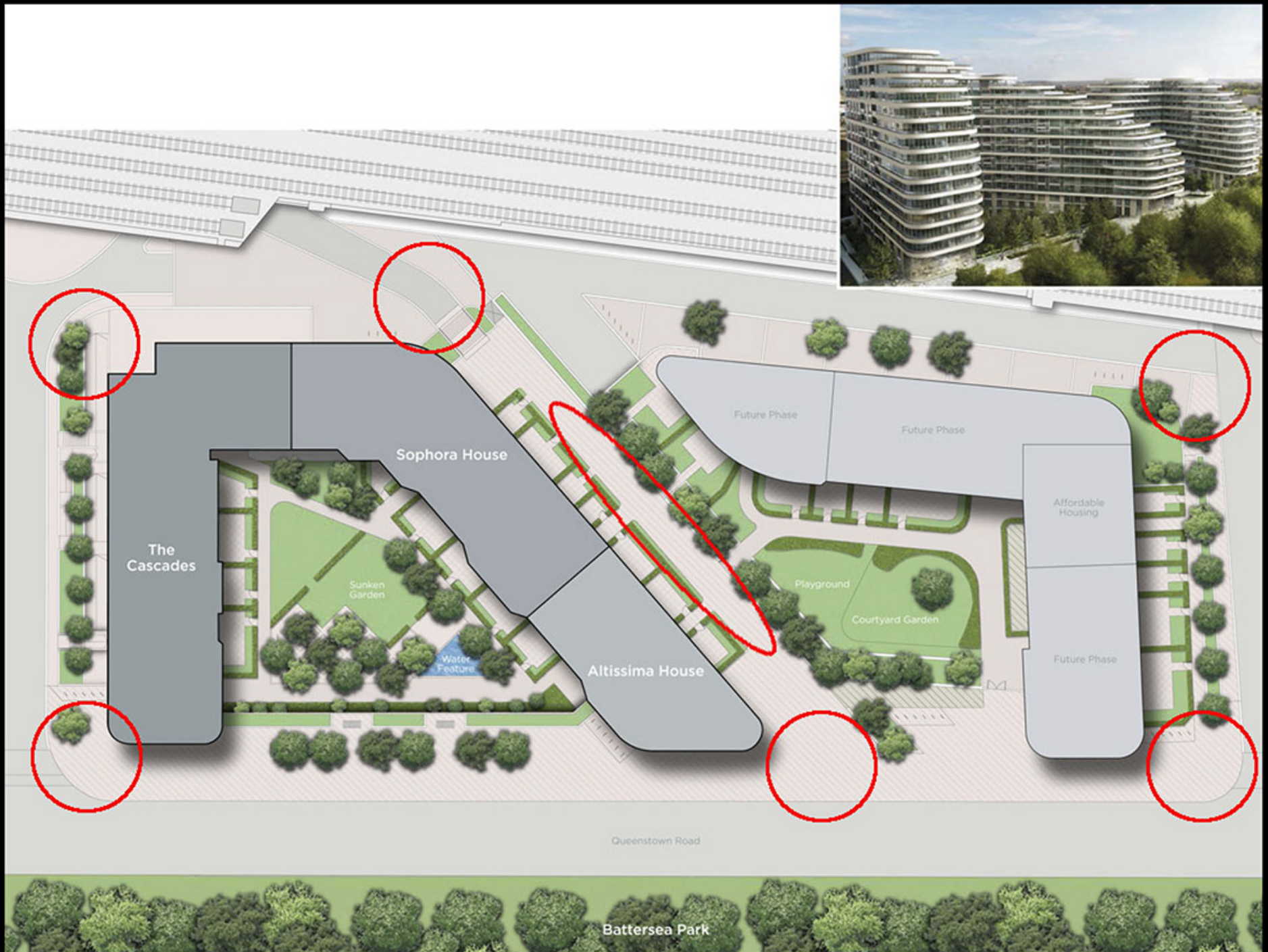
<https://www.berkeleygroup.co.uk/media/pdf/e/r/Cultural-Strategy-Info.pdf>

Nine Elms London 'Winter Highlights':

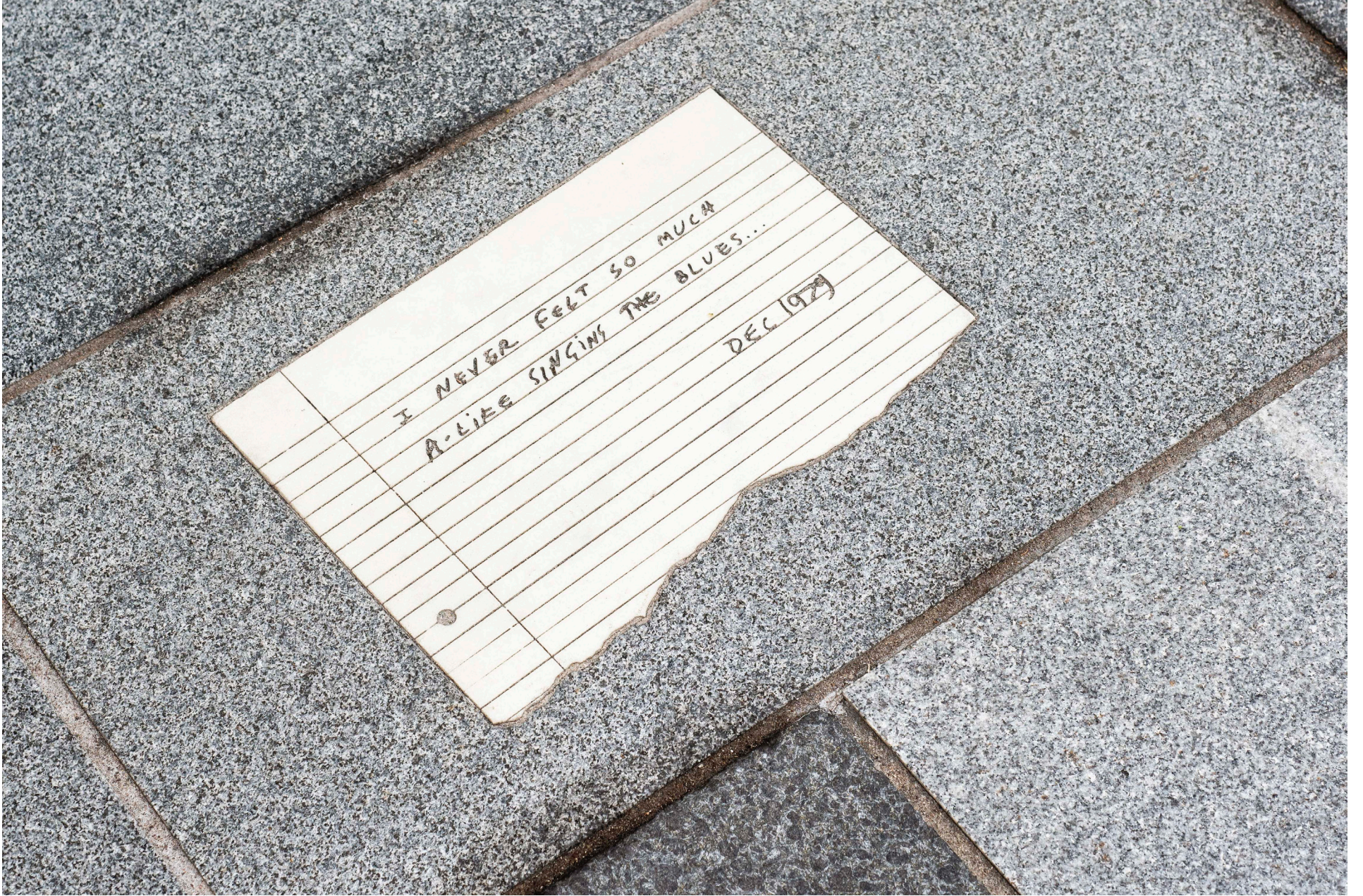
<https://nineelmslondon.com/features/highlights-from-winter-in-nine-elms/>

Public Talk Event/Information:

<https://nineelmslondon.com/events/winter/up-project-artist-commissions-launch-event-in-nine-elms/>



Positions of the seven works set in to the hardscaping around the vista development, Nine Elms, Battersea, London (2018)



*Singin' the Blues (2018)
Laser-etched white marble set in to a granite plank
Vista development, Nine Elms, Battersea, London*



*Pleasure Gardens (2018)
Engraved text in granite plank
Vista development, Nine Elms, Battersea, London*



*Weight of the Stone (2018)
Stainless steel letters set in granite planks
Vista development, Nine Elms, Battersea, London*



*A Dog Needs a Home (2018)
Stainless steel letters set in granite planks and dog paw prints in concrete slab
Vista development, Nine Elms, Battersea, London*



*Balloons for Sale (2018)
Engraved granite blocks
Vista development, Nine Elms, Battersea, London*



*2s 6d (2018)
1903 coins set in granite slab
Vista development, Nine Elms, Battersea, London*



*Lavender (2018)
Neon and powder-coated metal case
Vista development, Nine Elms, Battersea, London*



*Wassail (2018)
Stainless steel letters set in granite plank
Vista development, Nine Elms, Battersea, London*

The Murenger and Other Stories (2019)

Site-specific graphic work.

Commissioned by Jon Gower and the *Three Impostors* publishers.

This was an invitation from the writer, Jon Gower, to make a series of works in response to the content of a new collection of short stories, which would then be sited on the cover and inside the book. Very specifically, the invitation was not to 'illustrate' the book, but to take it as a point of influence or research, in the same way I would develop a work in response to any other proposed site or point of reference. Ultimately, this took the form of digital drawing on the front cover and a series of photographs that were introduced alongside each of the stories inside the book.

Further documentation:

<https://www.smarkgubb.com/murenger>

Further Information

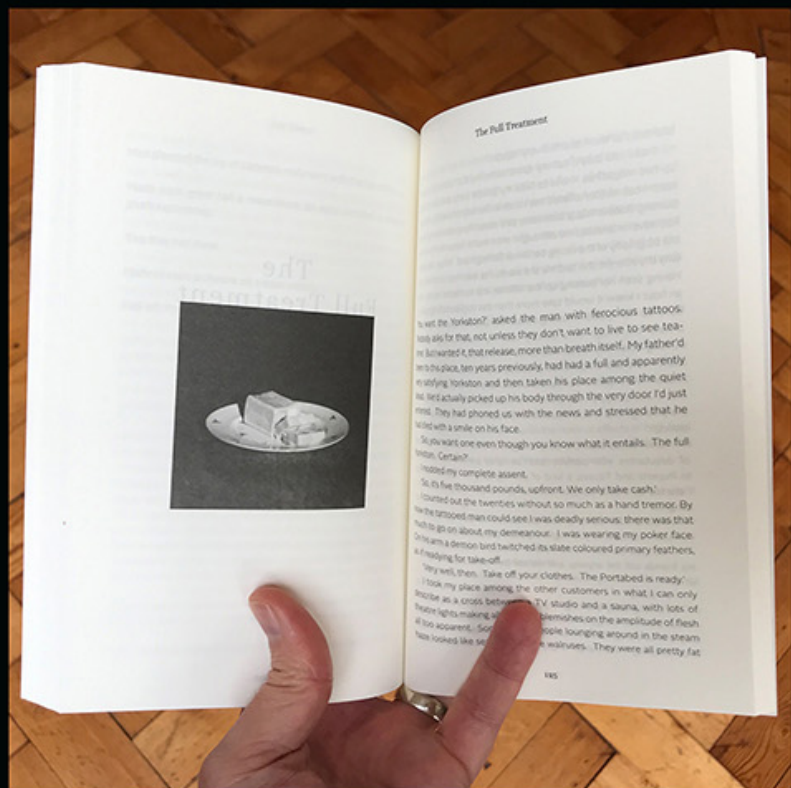
Three Impostors Website:

<https://www.threeimpostors.co.uk/THE-MURENGER-AND-OTHER-STORIES>





The Murenger and Other Stories (2019)
Original cover illustration and in-situ as the printed book cover



The Murenger and Other Stories (2019)
Original photo works (L) and in-situ inside the book (R)

Even in Exile (2020)

Site-specific graphic work.

Commissioned by James Dean Bradfield and Orchard Records.

Similar to the invitation for 'The Murenger and Other Stories', this was an invitation from the musician James Dean Bradfield (Manic Street Preachers) to develop artwork that could be used for the cover of a solo album he had written inspired by Victor Jara; a Chilean musician and political activist who was murdered in the first days following the Pinochet coup d'état. Beyond that, the invitation was extended to include the design and layout for all elements of each format of the release – vinyl LP, CD and tape; the covers, the lyric sheets, and booklets, the case inserts, the CD/tape/vinyl stickers etc. This allowed me to approach these spaces as a site through which I could consider the entire visual experience of the audience.

Further documentation

<https://www.smarkgubb.com/even-in-exile>

Further Information

The Guardian – James Dean Bradfield Interview – featuring images of engraved guitar:

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2020/jul/26/james-dean-bradfield-im-not-sure-musicians-telling-people-who-to-vote-for-helps>

The Guardian – 'Even in Exile' Review – featuring images of wall engraving/painting and engraved guitar:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/reviews/james-dean-bradfield-review-even-exile-manic-street-preachers-a9667226.html>

Q Magazine – 'Even in Exile' Review – featuring images of wall engraving/painting and engraved guitar:

<https://archive.org/details/q-magazine-august-2020-user-upload.-net/page/106/mode/2up>

Manic Street Preachers Web store:

<https://store.manicstreetpreachers.com/>

Tangible Audience Metrics

Physical copies of the album sold (all formats): 8000 approx.

Q Magazine circulation: 44,050

Observer circulation: 110,438

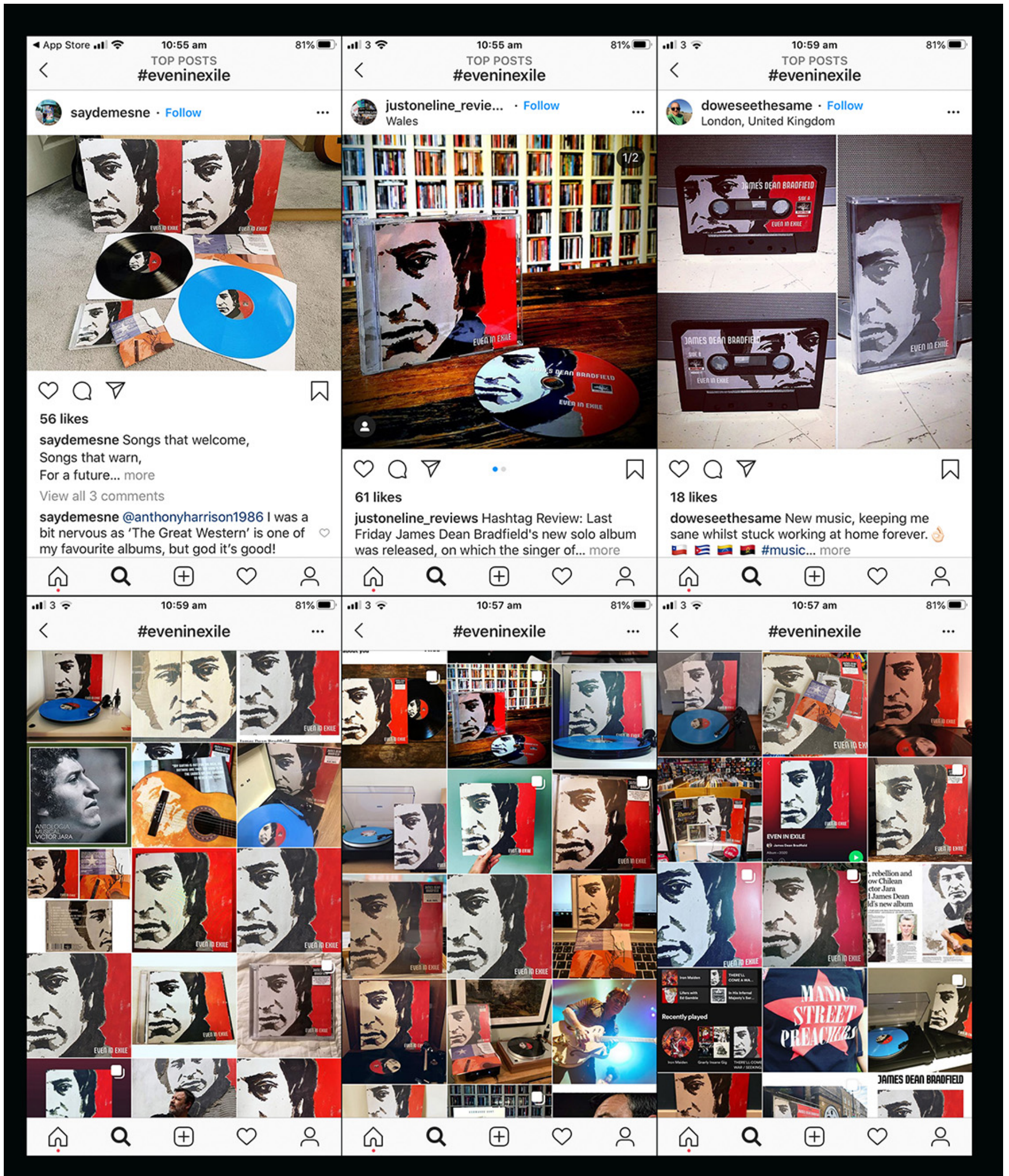
The Guardian circulation: 140,100



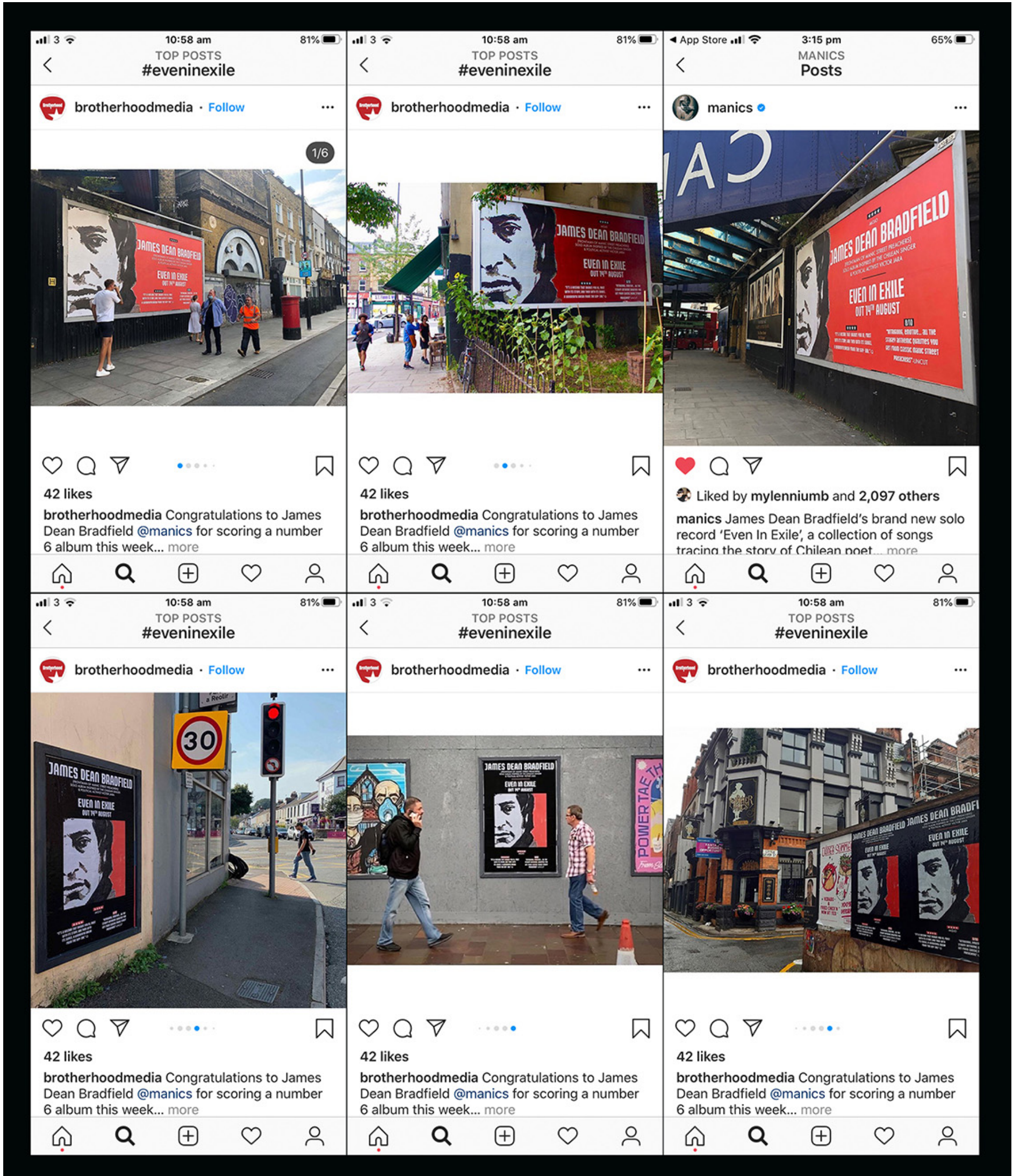
*Portrait of Victor Jara carved and painted on concrete wall (2020)
Original artwork created for James Dean Bradfield's Even in Exile Album cover design*



*Hand engraved portrait of Victor Jara on Spanish guitar (2020)
Original artwork created for James Dean Bradfield's Even in Exile album cover design*



*Even in Exile (2020)
Promotional materials installed at various UK sites*



Even in Exile (2020)
Screenshots from a range of public instagram accounts

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