

*Uniform*magazine

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Editorial

Uniformbooks began in 2011 as a flexible and open imprint for the visual and literary arts, cultural geography and history, music and bibliographic studies.

Since the turn of the century models for independent publishing have changed markedly. In addition to bookshops and bookfairs, publishers can now reach readers direct through online networks of targeted information and focus.

Strictly speaking, publication is always to do with exchange; either by commerce, as in the traditional production and sale of physical books, or now by making online content available to view and to take—a radically different quality and scope to the connections between publisher and reader. With these two modes, online publishing and printed books, the uncertainty about what publishing now *is*, what it has become through these parallel tools, is often characterised as undergoing some sort of uncertainty, even crisis.

During its first few years of activity, Uniformbooks has attempted to keep a momentum of publication, and while online platforms and social media provide formats for posting regular announcements and fresh content, the actual books appear somewhat erratically. The diversity of the titles we publish results in several arriving at once, and we go to press as soon as possible, without the planned marketing schedules of trade publishing.

The plain form of the pamphlet has persisted throughout the history of publishing, its flexibility and limited extent perfectly suited to a single subject or to simple gatherings of text and imagery. The *Uniformmagazine* is intended as a quarterly occurrence alongside the books, for the variety of writers, artists and contributors that we work with and publish, as well as for slighter or peripheral content; not necessarily thematic, but with that possibility.

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“The essential mechanism of the hide: a simple and straightforward box-shaped shelter, with a small aperture on one side.”

The cover shows *Duplicator* by John Bevis, photographed *in situ* by David Bellingham, December 1995. The work was part of ‘nonnonstop 1895–1995’, a selection of books, objects and works on paper by Colin Sackett and John Bevis, shown at the Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, December 1995 and January 1996.

The chronologically-arranged exhibition included various items relating to the work of the early natural history photographers Richard and Cherry Kearton. John Bevis’s definitive study: *The Keartons: A partnership with nature and photography* will be published by Uniformbooks in 2015.

An Extra Box for Les Coleman

Chris McCabe

In June 2013 John Janssen wrote to me saying that Les Coleman had requested that his poetry collection should go to the Poetry Library after his death:

As you may recall Les had become fascinated by the American poetry of the period of the Mimeograph revolution, broadly 1965–1975, and he had built, what, by the time he died, had become almost certainly the finest private collection in this field in the UK. Les’s last wishes were that his collection should go to the Poetry Library.

On 29th April 2014 I went to collect the books and magazines in an Addison Lee taxi. There were nine boxes, each numbered and labelled.

The following pages are written as a tribute to Les Coleman and form the contents of a 10th box of poetry.

Tooting, Tooting: it is Spring again.

Les didn’t email. He would ring, checking which holdings we had of certain magazines. Lower East Side was his remit; St. Mark’s Project: New York Scene. The minimalist Aram Saroyan looms large.

I realise when collecting his books for the Poetry Library 18 months after Les’s death that a lot of minimalism makes for a heavy load.

The first artwork of Les's I ever saw was a photograph of a deck of cards swirling about in a pan of boiling water.

Opposite Les's old flat is a school: children chatter & clap in the late April heat.

I am being couriered by Addison Lee back to the Southbank Centre. Les's poetry collection is behind me in the boot, labelled in boxes 1–9. There is a tube strike in London today. The roads are busy. A member of TfL staff stands outside the Clapham South station, looking down Nightingale Walk.

POETRY 1: MIMEO

(*Adventures in Poetry* No.12 etc.)

POETRY 2: MIMEO

(*Juillard* Summer 1970 etc.)

POETRY 3: MIMEO

(*The Friendly Way* by Joe Brainard etc.)

POETRY 4: CITY / CORINTH / LOCUS SOLUS

(*Seventh Heaven* by Patti Smith etc.)

POETRY 5: KULCHUR / Z PRESS

(*29 Mini-essays* by Joe Brainard etc.)

POETRY 6: PB MISC PUBLISHERS / SAROYAN

(*cloth: an electric novel* by Aram Saroyan etc.)

POETRY 7: MODERN ED'S / HARDBACKS

(*Great Balls of Fire* by Ron Padgett etc.)

POETRY 8: REFERENCE

(*Homage to Frank O'Hara* ed by Bill Berkson & Joe LeSuer etc.)

POETRY 9: LES COLEMAN BOOKS

As the taxi crawls along Belvedere Road I recall discovering that Les knew a lot about comics & wrote texts for the Hayward Gallery's catalogue *Cult Fiction*.

I've never seen anything less poetic than the London Eye.

Les said to me in 2011: it's the work that keeps you going.

I have a few favourite postcards by Les, the bunch of Ever Ready batteries under the title *Live and Dead Batteries*. A card that says POST OFFICE PREFERRED: AFFIX STAMP HERE. And one of Les himself, wearing a green visor, an eyepatch & a plaster. He is sucking on a dummy.

I have worked at the Poetry Library for 12 years, yet more & more these days I find myself thinking:

What

Actually

IS

Poetry?

Les wrote: *We walk in the sky closest to the ground.*

Les's last reading, or maybe his penultimate, was in the Poetry Library just a month or so before he died. I was reading my own poems in another venue of Southbank Centre (with a poet who is often described as 'mainstream') & missed Les's performance. The poetry scene is full of fastidious bureaucrats. In the bar afterwards, the two sets of poets & small trickles of audience merged & I heard someone say that Les read for too long.

He read for as long as he had to.

I'm standing under a tree at the back of the Royal Festival Hall, waiting for a colleague to come back with the trolley to help move the boxes into the Rare Books room behind the library. A man pulls over in a silver car & asks for the way to County Hall. A bird *tsisks* in the tree above.

I move the boxes away from the tree.

Tooting Tooting: it is Spring again.

Chris McCabe is poetry librarian at The Saison Poetry Library, Southbank Centre, London, his *In the Catacombs: A Summer Among the Dead Poets of West Norwood Cemetery* was published this year by Penned in the Margins, who will also publish his next collection *Speculatrix*, in December.

There will be an event celebrating Les Coleman at the Poetry Library on 11th December 2014, with readings and displays from the collection.



Les Coleman *Shuffle*, stockpot, boiling water, playing cards, 2007

The last title published by In House Publishing, the imprint started and shared by Les Coleman and Charlie Holmes since 1988, was titled *Another Book*, the content of which was a compilation of colophons—the publication and edition dates from the reverse of fifty-three title-pages. The sources are unstated and the book is printed only on the left-hand pages.

Uniformbooks plans to publish *The Unpublished Works: In House Publishing 1988–2013*, the main content of which will be the remaining unused ISBNs of the one hundred allocated to the imprint. Many of the small books and booklets issued by Les Coleman didn't include ISBN details, and each of the ninety or so 'unpublished' titles will be recorded one per page, represented just by its ten-digit number.



A clear view—June 2007

By 2010 the practicalities of access and shelter became so pressing that I had to cobble together a temporary scaffold. Working life became much improved although with one unintended consequence. The chimney, now dressed with skirt and canopy could no longer be seen in its entirety. For builders this may be a familiarity, but for me old art habits die hard. I want to stand back, look and assess each small change in relation to the whole—a pleasure withheld. Ultimately though it doesn't really make any difference, since what has to be done has to be done and a full reflection will have to wait until I have finished the pointing and the site workings are removed.

Local History Sculpture

Tim Staples

My discovery of the Sergeants' Mess began with a chance encounter on an unfamiliar road in February 2004—a modest red brick structure caught at the edge of vision through the window of a moving car. Immediately intrigued, I subsequently embarked on an extensive period of historical research and, two years later, found myself slipping into the role of self-appointed guardian or caretaker.

The chimney was all that remained of the Sergeants' Mess. Constructed in 1884 from wood and corrugated iron, it had once been part of a now-lost camp used by the Somersetshire Militia between 1873–98. Shorn of the protection offered by the building itself, the ravages of the elements and human intervention had taken their toll on the chimney. Viewed from close quarters, the brickwork was perilously close to collapse and yet the structure had miraculously retained its frontal symmetry, albeit in a revised form.

The site of the former camp is exposed. Set on a plateau 260 metres above sea level at the edge of the Blackdown Hills, its north-facing border is defined by an escarpment. Prior to enclosure in the nineteenth century, the land here formed part of Pitminster Common, although today public access is not permitted as the area is privately owned farmland and there are no public rights of way near by.

The predominant rock of the area is sandstone but there is also chert—a hard, flint-like stone frequently used by local builders in the construction of houses and barns. Also present are pockets of soft sand, usually green in colour due to the presence of particles of glauconite. Occasionally the sand can be a deep yellow-ochre colour, known in some parts of Somerset as Foxmould. This is what I found in an old gravel pit close to the chimney. I excavated about a ton of it for use in a new mortar mix.

My intention has always been to conserve the chimney structure in the form that I first encountered it.

To achieve this, complete re-pointing is necessary and the top ten courses of bricks taken down and re-laid. Bricks that are heavily damaged or broken need replacing with sound ones that I have found buried in the ground adjacent to the chimney. Finally, like the original builders, I'm using lime mortar, which in this case is mixed to my own recipe. It includes some of the Foxmould, and the aim is to get a match with the original mortar in terms of colour and texture.

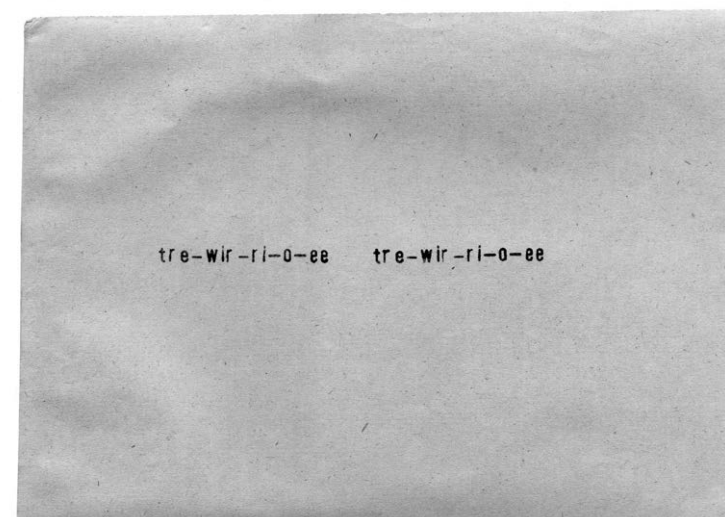
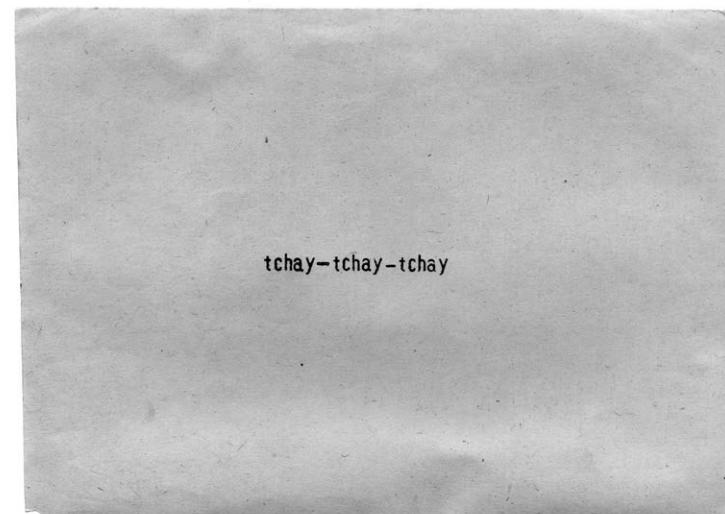


Brick-making was a major industry in Wellington from the mid-nineteenth century until its final demise in 1996. The town was therefore the obvious source of supply for the builders of the chimney and while most of the bricks are unstamped, some do have the manufacturer's imprint. All the chimney bricks have suffered from years of weathering, which has obscured their original colour and markings. I have been cleaning them as I go, revealing their original luminosity, but I am aware that nature will soon enough reassert itself and the lichens and mosses will re-colonise.



The former quarry that yielded the Foxmould held other treasures. A little spadework soon revealed it to be a camp midden, full of detritus thrown away during and at the end of each summer's encampment. Many hours have been spent sifting through as much material as could be managed. The quarry has now been filled in and the land returned to grass.

Buried alongside the artefacts in the midden were lumps of coal—presumably fuel for the fireplaces of the camp buildings. Coal may also have been used, together with wood, for the Soyer's field kitchens used by the catering staff. In all, I collected two sackfuls of this 'archival' coal, and when the repair work is complete there should be enough for a good celebratory fire in the hearth of the Sergeants' Mess chimney.



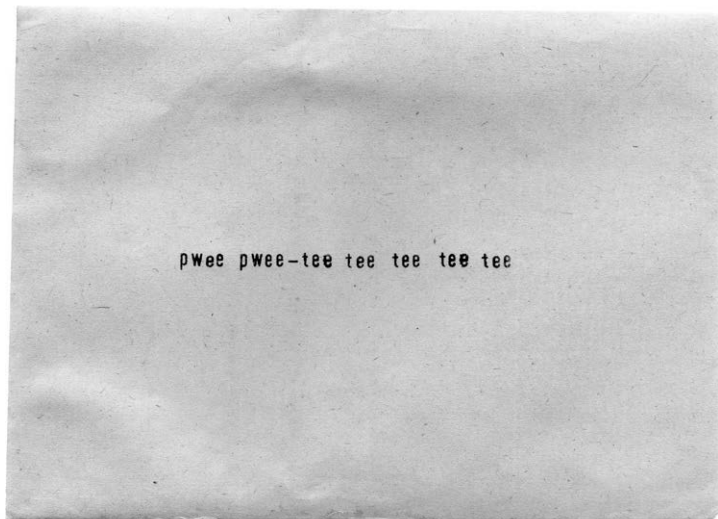
Rebecca Chesney *Language of Birds*, rubber stamp on paper, 2014
Translations by E. M. Nicholson, from *Songs of Wild Birds* (1936).
pp.11–14: Willow Tit, Mistle Thrush / Pied Flycatcher, Great Tit / Coal Tit, Marsh Tit / Blue Tit.

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.....

"I am interested in how we perceive land: how we romanticise, translate and define urban and rural spaces. I look at how politics, ownership, management and commercial value all influence our surroundings and have made extensive investigations into the impact of human activities on nature and the environment. Exploring the blurred boundaries between science and folklore, my work is also concerned with how our understanding of species is fed by this confused mix of truth and fiction. My projects take the form of installations, interventions, drawings, maps and walks and are underpinned by research into the protection of the environment, conversations with scientists and a desire to make work specific to chosen locations."—Rebecca Chesney

Reading (story of) O

Emmanuelle Waeckerle

To a greater or lesser extent, everyone depends on stories, on novels, to discover the manifold truth of life. Only such stories, read sometimes in a trance, have the power to confront a person with his fate. This is why we must keep passionately striving after what constitutes a story. —George Bataille, Blue of Noon (1957)



Thirty-minute readings of the *Story of O*, for five days, heim.art, Neufelden, July 2012

This project involves successive reworking of Pauline Reage's notorious novel *Story of O* (1954), which was originally written as a series of daring love letters to her lover Jean Paulhan, famous literary critic, publisher, and director of the literary magazine *Nouvelle Revue Française*.

I came across *Story of O* as a teenager when it appeared as a weekend supplement in *L'Express* magazine in 1974. For the past few years I have made sporadic experiments and preliminary research into this loaded literary work, trying to make sense of it as a woman and as an artist.

The outcome, *Reading (story of) O*, to be published by Uniformbooks, will contain a graphic and semantic reworking of the original text, highlighting words containing the letter o, all others barely visible on the page. The French text is included as a footnote and treated similarly; an example of the beginning of the English translation of the novel is shown on the following two pages.

Her lover one day takes O for a walk in a section of the city where they never go—the Montsouris Park. After they have taken a stroll in the park, and have sat together side by side on the edge of a lawn, they notice, at one corner of the park, at an intersection where there are never any taxis, a car which, because of its meter, resembles a taxi.

“Get in,” he says.

She gets in. It is autumn, and coming up to dusk. She is dressed as she always is: high heels, a suit with a pleated skirt, a silk blouse, and no hat. But long gloves which come up over the sleeves of her jacket, and in her leather handbag she has her identification papers, her compact, and her lipstick.

The taxi moves off slowly, the man still not having said a word to the driver. But he pulls down the shades of the windows on both sides of the car, and the shade on the back window. She has taken off her gloves, thinking he wants to kiss her or that he wants her to caress him. But instead he says:

“Your bag’s in your way; let me have it.”

She gives it to him. He puts it out of her reach and adds:

“You also have on too many clothes. Unfasten your stockings and roll them down to above your knees. Here are some garters.”

By now the taxi has picked up speed, and she has some trouble managing it; she’s also afraid the driver may turn around. Finally, though, the stockings are rolled down, and she’s embarrassed to feel her legs naked and free beneath her silk slip. Besides, the loose garter-belt suspenders are slipping back and forth.

“Unfasten your garter belt,” he says, “and take off your panties.”

That’s easy enough, all she has to do is slip her hands behind her back and raise herself slightly. He takes the garter belt and panties from her, opens her bag and puts them in, then says:

“You shouldn’t sit on your slip and skirt. Pull them up behind you and sit directly on the seat.”

The seat is made of some sort of imitation leather, which is slippery and cold: it’s quite an extraordinary sensation to feel it sticking to your thighs. Then he says:

“Now put your gloves back on.”

The taxi is still moving along at a good clip, and she doesn’t dare ask why René just sits there without moving or saying another word, nor can she guess what all this means to him—having her there motionless, silent, so stripped and exposed, so thoroughly gloved, in a black car going God knows where. He hasn’t told her what to do or what not to do, but she’s afraid either to cross her legs or press them together. She sits with gloved hands braced on either side of her seat.

“Here we are,” he says suddenly. Here we are: the taxi stops on a lovely avenue, beneath a tree - they are plane trees—in front of some sort of small private home which can be seen nestled between the courtyard and the garden, the type of small private dwelling one finds along the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

The street lamps are some distance away, and it is still fairly dark inside the car. Outside it is raining.

“Don’t move,” René says. “Sit perfectly still.”

His hand reaches for the collar of her blouse, unties the bow, then unbuttons the blouse. She leans forward slightly, thinking he wants to fondle her breasts. No. He is merely groping for the shoulder straps of her brassiere, which he snips with a small penknife. Then he takes it off. Now, beneath her blouse, which he has buttoned back up, her breasts are naked and free, as is the rest of her body, from waist to knee.

“Listen,” he says. “Now you’re ready. This is where I leave you. You’re to get out and go ring the doorbell. Follow whoever opens the door for you, and do whatever you’re told. If you hesitate about going in, they’ll come and take you in. If you don’t obey immediately, they’ll force you to. Your bag? No, you have no further need for your bag. You’re merely the girl I’m furnishing. Yes, of course I’ll be there. Now run along.”

Another version of the same beginning was simpler and more direct: the young woman, dressed in the same way, was driven by her lover and an unknown friend. The stranger was driving, the lover was seated next to the young woman, and it was the unknown friend who explained to the young woman that her lover had been entrusted with the task of getting her ready, that he was going to tie her hands behind her back, unfasten her stockings and roll them down, remove her garter belt, her panties, and her brassiere, and blindfold her. That she would then be turned over to the château, where in due course she would be instructed as to what she should do. And, in fact, as soon as she had been thus undressed and bound, they helped her to alight from the car after a trip that lasted half an hour, guided her up a few steps and, with her blindfold still on, through one or two doors. Then, when her blindfold was removed, she found herself standing alone in a dark room, where they left her for half an hour, or an hour, or two hours, I can’t be sure, but it seemed forever. Then, when at last the door was opened and the light turned on, you could see that she had been waiting in a very conventional, comfortable, yet distinctive room: there was a thick rug on the floor, but not a stick of furniture, and all four walls were lined with closets. The door had been opened by two women, two young and beautiful women dressed in the garb of pretty eighteenth-century chambermaids: full skirts made out of some light material, which were long enough to conceal their feet; tight bodices, laced or hooked in front, which sharply accentuated the bust line; lace frills around the neck; half-length sleeves. They were wearing eye shadow and lipstick. Both wore a close-fitting collar and had tight bracelets on their wrists.

I know it was at this point that they freed O’s hands, which were still tied behind her back, and told her to get undressed, they were going to bathe her and make her up. They proceeded to strip her till she hadn’t a stitch of clothing left,

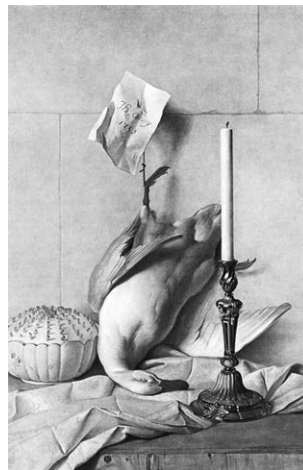
The White Duck

Michael Hampton

Perhaps all stories and art begin with a need to deceive embedded both in their formal structure and narrative content. “Suspension of disbelief” despite being an expression coined as recently as 1817 by Samuel Coleridge in *Biographia Literaria*, makes a call on readers that is older than the hills, and certainly since the muralist Zeuxis (5th century BC) performed his famous optical trick with a bunch of painted grapes. So why not go further and announce that in the beginning was the rhetorical deception?

Jean-Baptiste Oudry’s masterful oil painting *La Vie Calme avec le Canard Blanc* commonly known as *The White Duck*, 1753, dates from the tail-end of a career in which he had risen from being a competent portrait limner into court painter to Louis XV. A superb draftsman Oudry’s designs were frequently used as the basis for royal tapestries produced by the legendary Gobelins workshop; but it is as a painter of animals that he is best known, more especially hunting scenes and still life *buffet* pictures, some of the latter so brilliantly executed in his studio at the Tuileries they must be regarded as belonging to that denigrated sub-category of art history: *trompe l’oeil*. *The White Duck* is a meticulous exercise in the use of white, or *fond blancs*, “a pedagogical demonstration of the relativity of whiteness and the achievement of tonal relief without strong contrasts of value” to quote *The Grove Dictionary of Art*, 1966, and so when it was stolen in a raid at Houghton Hall, Norfolk in 1992, not only was a majestic composition lost from view, but also an important example of Oudry’s conceptual skill, the dust outline which must have been left by the missing canvas, its only palpable trace.

Since its appropriation the painting has disappeared, cropping up occasionally in the press, its whereabouts and guardians the subject of journalistic speculation. Jason Burke (*The Observer*, 3 September 2000) relates how a Philippines based informer had tipped off the newspaper as “he believed *The White Duck* was being hidden in the attic of a remote and rundown house on moors near Newcastle”. Gypsy gangs are the main suspects in the Houghton Hall burglary along with a string of others in the UK, including the trademark theft of Cézanne’s *Auvers-sur-Oise*, 1879–1882, from the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford on millenium night.



The Oudry has been ‘laid down’ to use the criminal parlance, the suggestion being that the item was ‘artnapped’ probably by savvy thieves using *Country Life* magazine as an Argos catalogue to scan loot, either to be sold back to its owner through a middle-man, used as collateral in drug deals or more improbably a ‘get-out-of-jail-free-card’. Historically it joins a select group of pictures that have undergone this fugitive phase, the *Mona Lisa*, 1503–6, for instance, kept concealed under his bed for two years by Leonardo Peruggia, alias Leonardo Vincenzo after being pinched from the Louvre in 1911, Gainsborough’s society portrait *Georgiana, The Duchess of Devonshire*, 1783, stolen from Agnew’s Bond Street showroom in 1876 by the Victorian cracksman Adam Worth, fingered incidentally by some as the real life model for Arthur Conan Doyle’s Professor Moriarty, and lastly Rembrandt’s much stolen, much travelled *Jacob De Gheyn III*, 1632, commonly known as the “takeaway Rembrandt”. All these works were recovered either through stupidity, negotiation or luck.

Turning to *The White Duck* as an internet image raises a new set of issues, and Googling it reveals an array of digital versions, either ruining or reinventing the picture depending on your viewpoint, even implying that Oudry may have produced copies. Not so. These low-resolution thumbnail images, subject to copyright, are ads for online galleries that will sell you a 100% handmade oil reproduction of the work, rolled or stretched. One company even offers a craquelure option for a small extra charge. Nowhere in the description is the theft mentioned, although it is stressed somewhat optimistically that the work belongs to the Collection of the Marquis of Cholmondeley. Such are the paltry commercial substitutes then for this stolen masterpiece. After the 1994 theft of two Turner’s loaned from the Tate: *Light and Colour*, 1843, *Shade and Darkness*, 1843, Sabine Schulze, curator of the Schirn gallery in Frankfurt recalled how “I stood before the empty wall. I couldn’t believe it. It was the darkest moment of my professional life.” (*The Sunday Times*, 26 January 2003).

Since 1997 the German artist Ralph Bageritz has also addressed this void in his ongoing conceptual cycle ‘The Metaphysics of the Vanishing’, a project that uses the Art Loss Register as its source, installing surrogate photos plus inscriptions as stand-ins for nicked works of art. The Art Loss Register, a database set up in 1991 by a partnership of leading auction houses, insurance companies and the International Foundation for Art Research, sounds reminiscent of Lloyd’s Register of sunken shipping, and many of the pictures and antiques on its list are probably just that, wantonly destroyed or metaphorically lost beneath the waves. For Bageritz though this is where his melancholic investigation of vanished art begins, theft being the pre-condition for many works. Andy Warhol’s acrylic painting *Lenin*, 1987, was reproduced by Bageritz as a Lamda print in the 2009 group show ‘Portrait’ at G.A.S.–Station gallery, Kreuzberg, Germany. It came with a superscription announcing that the original was stolen in 2001 during “short storage in a Cologne warehouse”; (recovered by ALR in 2002). This is typi-

cal Bageritz exploring the dynamic of absent presence, metaphysical vanishing expressed as a slick surface double accompanied by sparse information, the effect being to generate both a commentary on individual lost paintings, and also cast doubt ipso facto on the very principle of legal ownership.

Bageritz's cottage industry depends on people such as serial art thief Stéphane Breitwieser, responsible for a string of brazen thefts from museums and galleries across Europe. Using his girlfriend Anne-Catherine Kleinklaus as a decoy and look-out, Breitwieser, a restaurant waiter, stole approximately 240 paintings and artefacts between 1995 and 2001, turning his bedroom in his mother's flat into a shadowy private museum, a cache valued after his arrest at around \$1.5 billion. In court he pleaded "fraudulent removal" rather than theft, as he had never made any attempt to sell on his haul, but did gaol time both in France and Switzerland, releasing his celebrity biography *Confessions d'un Voleur d'Art* in 2006. Nevertheless 60 works stolen by Breitwieser are still missing, presumed trashed by his mother in the waste disposal unit of their building, amongst which were canvases by Watteau, Breughel and Boucher, not to mention the blue chip *Sybille, Princess of Cleves*, 1526, by Lucas Cranach the Elder, stolen from a Sotheby's auction at Baden-Baden in 1995. Now images of this exquisite painting function as memento mori too, its wanton destruction attended by a sharp sorrow.

Recalling his very first theft in 1995 from the castle at Gruyères (an 18th century painting by Christian Wilhelm Dietrich), Breitwieser stated "I was fascinated by her beauty, by the qualities of the woman in the portrait and by her eyes", as if hypnotic suggestion were behind the act. Likewise trompe l'oeil artworks appeal to the haptic, as if inviting the viewer to touch them to test their truth, a temptation just one step away from theft itself. Diabolical powers have also been ascribed to trompe l'oeil practitioners. Two 19th century American trompe l'oeil painters William Harnett and John Haberle were both warned by the US secret service, a body established in 1865 to suppress fake currency, to stop depicting bank notes. Harnett complied, but Haberle continued with impunity. Described by the critic Alfred Frankenstein in *The Reality of Appearance*, 1970, as "wry and wacky", Haberle himself called his work "artistic mechanics", incredibly skilful representations of frayed dollar bills that took the art to a new level. Titles such as *Reproduction*, 1886–7, *USA (the Chicago Bill Picture)*, 1889, and *Can You Break a Five?*, c1888, gave the game away, and brought him notoriety. The *American Arts Quarterly* (Vol.27, No.2) notes of *Can You Break a Five*, that "Haberle positions the five dollar bill diagonally across a partial one-dollar bill, and the visible reverse includes a government warning about counterfeiting". However, rebel that he was, Haberle still worked in a pre-Duchampian universe, unlike modern bad boys the Chapman brothers, J. S. G. Boggs and D*face, practitioners who have featured money, real or otherwise in their practice in order to test out the viable limits of transgression.

In 2007, the Chapmans were investigated by the Bank of England following the latrinalia style defacement of currency at the Frieze Art Fair. That same year D*face connived a piece, *United States of America Dollar*, featuring the head of George Washington morphed into a winged skull, while Boggs has finessed counterfeiting so that his fakes, known as 'Boggs bills' have been accepted as legal tender in that most conservative country Switzerland. Money as art. Money from art. Art money. However you configure the terms their impact is hard edged and brutal.

It was a trip to Switzerland that proved fatal for Cornelius Gurlitt, son of Adolf Hitler's art dealer Hildebrand Gurlitt, after customs officials discovered the elderly recluse carrying a large amount of currency back into Germany. In March 2012, a police follow-up raid on his flat in Munich led to the discovery of a hoard of over 1400 drawings and paintings by the likes of Picasso, Matisse, Chagall, Dix, Renoir and Böcklin, a stash of works either bought at knock down prices from individual artists deemed to be "degenerate" by the Nazis, and Jewish dealers such as Paul Rosenberg & Co, Paris, or looted from galleries and museums Europe-wide. Faced with steep medical bills the hoarder had been forced to sell Max Beckmann's gouache and pastel *The Lion Tamer*, 1930, via the auction house of Lempertz, Cologne, an act automatically raising an ALR red flag. Gurlitt himself has since died, but subsequent to the raid, German Federal authorities have been criticised for not releasing a detailed inventory of the expropriated works, hampering claims for restitution by rightful owners.

Since 2005, there has been a boom in the price of metals such as brass, bronze, copper and nickel that combined with easy cash turn-over from dodgy scrap metal dealers has fuelled the rise of a new kind of robbery: premeditated theft of public sculpture. In 2006 alone, a one-and-a-half-tonne bronze statue of a soldier was taken from a Nuneaton war memorial, two sculptures by Lyn Chadwick vanished, and most notoriously Henry Moore's *Reclining Figure*, 1969–70, was removed from Perry Green at night by flat-bed Mercedes. Speculation has it that the Moore was shipped out to China and melted down, destined to find its way into electronic circuits. In 2007 abstract works by the impresario Jonathan Miller were taken from his Camden garden along with a rusty tin bath. Even Tehran has been affected by this sinister Philistinism, with "ten bronze statues" of various cultural icons lately heisted (*The Jackdaw*, July/August 2010). This

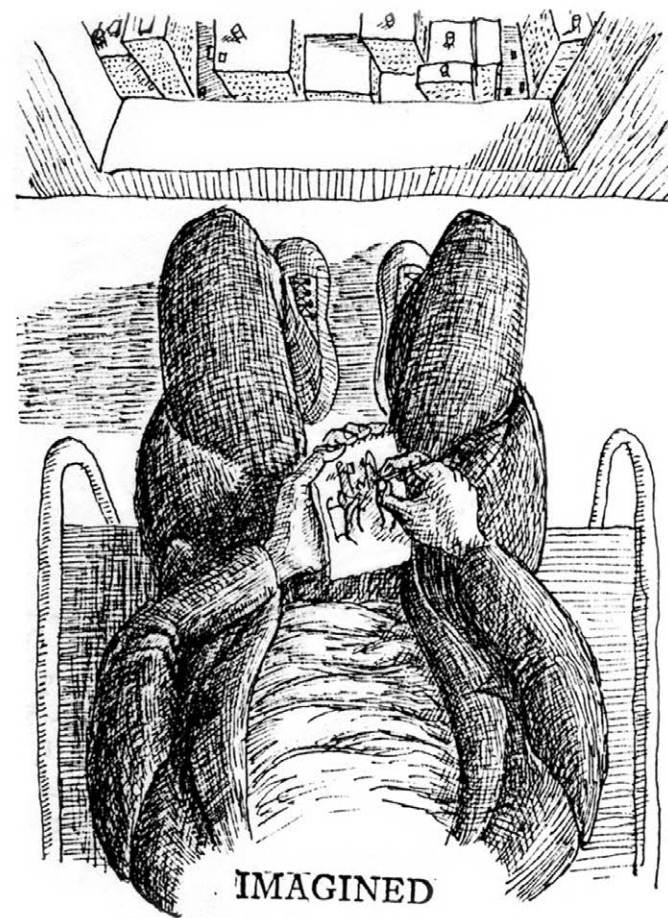


metal-hungry crime wave has also seen UK streets stripped of their manhole covers and brass door-knockers ripped off. Thus stolen art has been reduced to the same level as municipal road signage, undistinguished scrap on the back-street commodities market, provenance terminated, aesthetic value obliterated. If Leonardo Peruggia were stealing the *Mona Lisa* today he might have also gouged out the four iron pegs in the wall left behind after its removal.

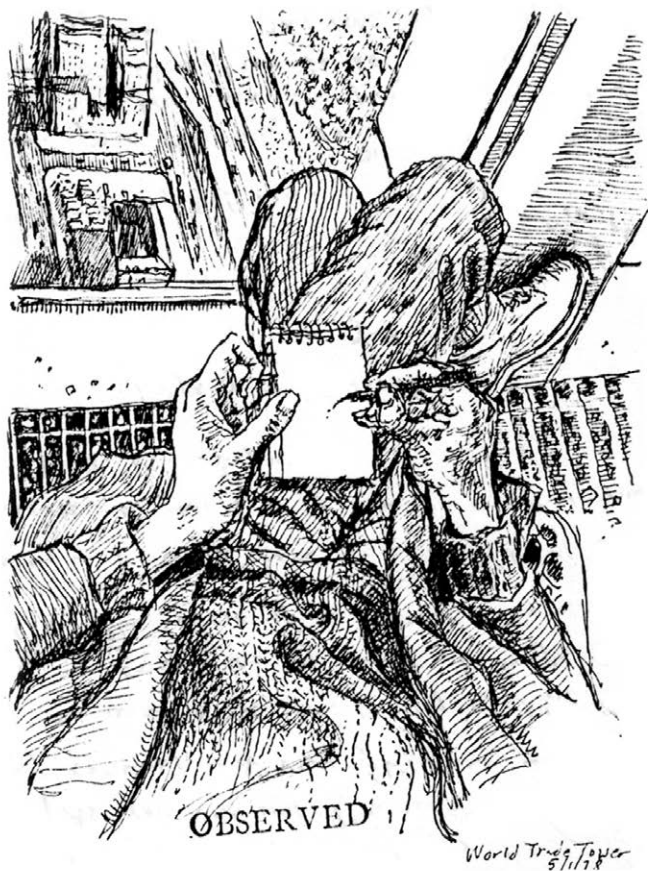
Yet more bizarrely, art theft reached a new low when *Ghost*, a Nissan Sunny car, modified by Clara Ursitti for the 2010 Tatton Biennial was stolen from outside her home in Glasgow. Ursitti had “soundproofed” and “imbued the 1994 car with the luxurious whiff of a Rolls Royce, carefully recreated from an 1980s scented magazine advert” (*The Independent*, 29 April 2010). She remarked that “The sound was so much smoother, and then there was the smell as well”, and although such subtleties may have been lost on a feral thief, this is a case of an artwork entering the public domain by accident, and with a perverse stealth. The incident could be classified as the de-materialisation of the object by person or persons unknown, an unwitting jest in the of roll of late conceptual art.

Unfortunately *The White Duck* remains unrecovered. Ironically J-B Oudry was renowned for giving a *beau terminé* to the surface of his oil paintings, literally a happy ending, glazes that brought out the “delicate nuances of pelt and plumage” (*Grove*, op cit). Will the work itself ever be returned to the public gaze after its illegal detour is ended, or remain a significant gap in the fossil record? The prognosis is unclear as in the words of former FBI special agent Robert K Wittmann “Art and antiquity crime is tolerated in part, because it is considered a victimless crime” and “Art thieves steal more than beautiful objects; they steal memories and identity. They steal history” (*The New York Times*, 7 June 2010).

Michael Hampton is a critic, poet and commentator whose work has appeared in many magazines and journals including *3:AM Magazine*, *Art Monthly*, *Frieze* and *The White Review*. He has a particular interest in destruction in art, and is currently completing *Unshelvedmarked: Re-conceiving the Artists' Book*, a revisionist history for Uniformbooks. In partnership with Christina Mitrentse, he recently won the commission to design a new flag for Swedenborg House, London.



Peter Blegvad *Three views—Imagined, Observed, Remembered*—looking down from the top of the South Tower, World Trade Center, NYC, 1978.



From *Kew. Rhone.* to be published in autumn 2014 by Uniformbooks. The songs on the original album (with John Greaves, 1977) engaged lyrically with three interrelated themes: *Omen* (the reading/interpretation of signs), *Nomen* (the power of names, the pros and cons of identity), and *Numen* (the spirit in matter, the numinous). The book—an illustrated exegetical memoir—likewise engages with those themes in an experimental reading and interpretation, an attempt to name and identify some of *Kew. Rhone.*'s sources, and to imaginatively invest the material with something like a 'spirit'.

Licence to Borrow

John Bevis

Four or five years ago, I began a routine of driving to locations around the country, on trips of a day or sometimes two at a time. These visits gave me time to spare, which I thought I could spend usefully writing. I tried cafes at first, but found the ambience too clattery, and felt an obligation to keep ordering cups of coffee that I didn't particularly want. Then one day in Newport, only 20 miles from where I was then living in Shropshire, I tried out the local library. Better atmosphere, no coffee, even, once I'd joined, free use of computers.

On subsequent excursions, it struck me that I could go on doing what I had done in Newport, joining libraries, wherever I went, building up, one at a time, a network of offices, as it were, across the country. A notion that became more urgent with the growing rumours of library cutbacks and closures. In voting, on petitions, we measure endorsement with a head count. What better way of registering support for libraries than by signing up to as many as possible?

Only one problem. Would I be allowed to join a library where I didn't live? I tried it out in Norwich, where my opening gambit of "Hello, I'd like to join the library, although I'm not a resident", provoked in the librarian such reluctance that I nearly gave up. Next time, in oddly enough another Newport library, this one on the Isle of Wight, I let them locate a blank membership card, call up an application form, and ask to see ID, before letting on that I wasn't local, but was "a regular visitor".

It turns out that commonly, membership is open to anyone who can prove they are "living, working or studying locally", but there are exceptions. Staffordshire didn't even want to see ID, *because we can check you against the computer*, in that convenient Big Brother way. On the other hand, Belfast Central Library insisted on sending a postcard to the guest house I was staying in, which I had to persuade the landlord to forward to my address in London, so that I could produce it as evidence of residency next time I was back in Northern Ireland.

But it was Northamptonshire that gave me the hottest grilling, on the coldest day of the winter of 2010, eleven degrees below freezing, crawling up the M1 on twin tramlines of black ice, passing here an abandoned Transit facing backwards in the fast lane, there a Mini on the hard shoulder, upside down. Finally, the bleak, unheated tundra of Wellingborough Public Library where I posed my simple request to a member of staff. She was having none of it, and went to fetch the chief librarian.

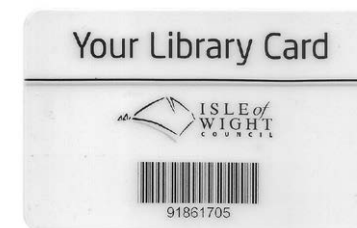
Had I ever been a member of any Northamptonshire library? Had I ever lived or worked there full time? Had I any permanent address within Northants? Was I aware of the consequences of taking books *out of the county*? What if I couldn't

get back, the scale of overdue fees being punitive? I made the mistake of saying that my main purpose was to use the PCs; and that settled it. Internet access was available to all visitors, members or not, on payment of a small fee. No membership needed. Whatsoever.

So I didn't get a Northamptonshire card, but have, so far, managed to collect cards for around two thirds of the one hundred and fifty-three public library authorities in England, and a few beyond. This entitles me to borrow up to 30 books, from each of somewhere over two thousand individual library branches, at any one time. And sometimes I'm tempted to do just that, in a sort of *Guinness Book of Records*, round Britain mass accumulation of books, enough books, shall we say, to make a substantial donation on the doorstep of Northamptonshire public libraries.

But to be honest it's more in my nature to browse occasionally through the Jumbo credit card wallet in which I keep my collection. And what interests me is the way the surface of the card is used. In this non-competitive market, of course, there's no call for persuasive or attention-grabbing graphics. This liberty has been embraced nowhere more radically than in East Sussex, whose card has all the élan of a Soviet-era parking ticket, dotted as it is with the title of the issuing authority, their logo, barcode, membership number, signature strip, another strip for *name in block caps*, and the small print of no fewer than nine rules and regulations, including the ever-handly "What to do if you have lost your library card".

But outside the diktats of the East Sussex collective, we generally notice an attempt to engage with the way we think about libraries. Often, with a slogan: "Discover libraries"; "Get more out of libraries"; "You'll be surprised what's in your library". For others, what matters is kinship: "Putting residents first"; "At the heart of your community"; "Making Surrey a better place" (as if that were possible). Some depict local images: the beach huts of West Sussex; the red squirrel of Cumbria; and for Stockport, *Viaduct over the M60 at night*. Or, at the furthest extreme from the East Sussex model, a card with the Liverpool FC logo, the inscriptions "Love the Reds", and "You'll never walk alone", and, almost as an afterthought, "Liverpool Libraries". But if I were to choose one favourite, it would have to be the Southwark card, with its quotation from the novelist and librarian Jorge Luis Borges: "I have always imagined that paradise will be a kind of library".





Charmouth Forest, facing west, high sea, W. Dorset, 26.VI.71, 178 x 253mm



Landscape, 2003

Michael Upton's 'Landscape Burial' (1971) was made up of around two hundred watercolours executed mainly in and around west Dorset. Many of the locations represented were chosen at random with the aid of Ordnance Survey maps and a pin. The pictures were gathered together in a wooden box with the intention of burial in the landscape so "only their memory would remain".

"Eric Watier's *Paysages avec retard* (latescapes) appear to show a selection of beautiful pastoral scenes—open gates leading into fields and meadows, forests or dells. What they actually consist of, are photographs of plots of land offered for sale, that have been photographed through estate agents' windows in Montpellier, France; swathes of the countryside offered to those who can afford to purchase it."—Sarah Bodman

at least it moves
forward the absent
narrative towards
some future moment
its rhythm
its signature

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some further moment
its rhythm
its signature

From *Letterpress: New & material poems* by Simon Cutts published in 2013 by Uniformbooks.

Walt Whitman once wrote, "This is no book; Who touches this, touches a man," and yet Cutts has shown us that the book is also a book, and what that entails is something we all take so much for granted we have forgotten that it remains a form with which we must also contend. The eye moves over and across poems that are visual in the ways that all words in print are visual entities—black marks on a page that we arrange with our experience, our imagination, and even our hope for a meaningful world. (Richard Deming)

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