

Free-Thinking, Free-Loading, Free-Basing, Free-Falling Or Ways to Heighten a Loss of Responsibility¹

A project built around a series of unofficial FM broadcasts, e.g. Sometime Instant brought sound works, performance and the potential of freedom of thought not only to the local airwaves, but also to a variety of Glasgow venues. A follow-up to a previous project, Wide General Vicinity² by Radio Tuesday, where for four Tuesdays in June 1999 artworks and ideas were broadcast from roadside and rooftops, e.g. Sometime Instant based Radio Tuesday at bars, clubs and Transmission Gallery. The latter provided a sound studio, a stage, and a couple of weeks focused upon making noise. This led to a prolific presentation of work.

Making sense of the specific content of e.g. Sometime Instant seems an irrelevant task. There was no apparent order, no clear or chronological relationships—many of the events were not art. Not that this is uncommon, but perhaps more fun than the usual not-art-project-in-an-art-gallery e.g. Sometime Instant appeared more like an encamped contemporary media-and-culture course, where the gallery location might just as well have been a student union bar/common room or small-town hall. The result was a magazine-like assemblage of exhibits and events: something boyish—like NME meets eye meets Which PC. Erratic publicity meant that events and broadcasts were happened upon randomly, through persistent curiosity, or through visiting the gallery website www.transmissiongallery.com/radiotuesday. Plus a sense of "point me toward the project, please" pervaded the gallery, substantiated by a displaced gallery office (replaced by the sound-proof studio) and a more than moderate display of exhibits pinned to the walls or laid out on tables.

The gallery material was in part obtained by artist Anne-Marie Copestake, presenting the first five years of Touch, an audio magazine initiated as a co-operative in 1982. Touch began by producing

editions such as Feature Mist which includes a dance mix by New Order (recorded specifically for the opening of the Hacienda Club in Manchester) and visual material (screenprints and texts) produced by designers such as Neville Brody³. Copestake also presented the initial gallery event⁴ of film and video screenings including six short 16mm films made between 1962 and 1972 by John and James Whitney, pioneers in computer-generated graphics, animation and sound. The extraordinary quality of the graphic content of these short films make the ongoing influence of the brothers' work unsurprising. The programmes developed by them (for IBM and others) have directly enabled graphic advances to be made—notably in film, with the production of sequences such as the infamous space-corridor sequence of Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey and credit sequences by Saul Bass for Alfred Hitchcock's Vertigo.

The live events also central to e.g. Sometime Instant diversified as gallery/studio/bar/club events.⁵ This included a talk hosted by Sarah Lowndes, teaming Graeme Beattie (Chemikal Underground), Hubby (El Hombre Trajeado) and Douglas McIntyre (Creeping Bent Records) in a discussion about the independent music scene. Live broadcasts emanated from the gallery studio by Glasgow-based artists/musicians/bands such as Robin Bagnall, Clare Stephenson, Cylinder, Tony Swain and Life Without Buildings. Plus, an abundance of pre- or specially recorded works were regularly broadcast including Beagles and Ramsay's Chicken Tonight, Geeza Gotta Flamethrower and We are from Scumland. Telephone interviews with individuals such as the artist Liam Gillick were also taped and edited for broadcast.

Gillick's lucid articulation of the engagement within his work with the structures of power and the semiotics of the built world simultaneously suggested possibilities in the "gaps in between"—in which a project such as e.g. Sometime Instant might be most appropriately contextualised.

There is a good story about China, but I cannot remember the precise details. The time of the 100 Flowers. During the late 1950s Mao Tse-tung continued to develop his sense of revolution. At certain points he invited intellectuals, artists, writers and film-makers to contribute an ongoing critique of the State. At first people were reluctant to speak out, but once a few had begun to talk there was no way to hold back a complex web of proposals and suggestions. Through this process certain people revealed themselves. They were happy to come forward with ways to refine the revolution. In turn they too were refined. Destroyed or re-educated.⁶

¹Liam Gillick, *Erasmus Is Late*, Book Works, 1995, p. 57.

²A comprehensive review of *Wide General Vicinity* (by Glasgow-based artist Alan Michael) can be found in [CIRCA 90](#), p. 52 or by visiting www.recirca.com, under [Back Issues](#).

³Designer/typographer for The Face, Arena and Fuse.

⁴Further gallery events included *Gift*, a choral artwork by Glasgow-based artist Ian Balch made in collaboration with composer Stephen Davismoon, chorus master Frikki Walker and the choir of St Mary's Cathedral.

⁵Outwith the gallery, Glasgow venues: the 13- Note Café, the Buff Club and the Cross Bar also played host to e.g. Sometime Instant with *Stilletto*, *Give the DJs a break*, *Gilded Lil*, *Capt K vs Pukey*, *Ideal Home DJs* and more. For more information visit www.transmissiongallery.com/radiotuesday.

⁶Gillick, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

Not that e.g. Sometime Instant made any claims to be radical or a site for revolution. Its self-acknowledged temporality was as gentle as it was potentially mischevious. The most abrasive contribution to the project was the closing party on Saturday, April 8 (this being the night following two consecutive nights of British Art Show 5-perusing and drinking in Edinburgh). The Saturday night set was Doktor Barnes Advocaat, a nightmare DJ concoction of decks abuse, broken records and insane noise. The all-day Sunday hangover that followed gave pause for reflection upon the extended and eclectic cross-cultural production of contemporary artworks, documentaries, interviews, texts, music, fashion, publications...with e.g. Sometime Instant representing the kind of project that is not simply fetishising art that gets mashed amongst these other guises but which is gratified by collaboration, experimentation and lack of complacency wherever it can be found.