

THE

We Are Eastside

Leading independent arts in Birmingham

www.weareeastside.org

MAGIC

Capsule

Eastside Projects

Flatpack Festival

Fierce Festival

Grand Union

Ikon

CITY

CONTENTS

3	Welcome to Birmingham	Presented as part of
	Organisations	Liverpool Biennial
4	Capsule	The UK Biennial of Contemporary Art
6	Eastside Projects	<i>City States</i>
8	Fierce	
10	Flatpack Festival	15 September – 25 November 2012
12	Grand Union	10am–6pm, daily
14	Ikon	Free entry
18	<i>Eastside, Digbeth and 'Upper Eastside'</i> Ben Waddington	Liverpool John Moores University Copperas Hill Building L3 1AA
	Sponsors	Liverpool Biennial 2012
20	Visit Birmingham	
22	Birmingham City University	
23	Millennium Point	
26	<i>Social Practice: Fo(u)r Shades of Grey</i> Dr. James A Hellings	We Are Eastside is a consortium of cultural leaders representing independent arts within Birmingham's cultural sector. The consortium consists of Eastside Projects, Capsule, Flatpack Festival, Fierce Festival, Grand Union and Ikon and was formed in 2010. www.weareeastside.org
30	Information and map	Thanks to Sally Tallant, Paul Domela, Vanessa Boni at Liverpool Biennial; Chris O'Neill, John Butler, James Hellings at Birmingham City University; Philip Singleton at Millennium Point; Neil Rami at Marketing Birmingham; BAZ for the title; Ben Waddington.
		Lead sponsor BIAD, Birmingham City University

WELCOME TO BIRMINGHAM

We Are Eastside presents *Birmingham The Magic City* as part of *City States* at the 7th Liverpool Biennial — welcome to the hidden undergrounds, blushing civic pride and future visions of our 'magic' city. Our title *The Magic City* is borrowed from a proposed artwork by Birmingham collective BAZ (Birmingham Art Zine), themselves inspired by a sign that originally welcomed visitors to Birmingham, Alabama, USA. BAZ want to build a new version of the sign next to the planned terminus for HS2, the hi-speed rail network destined for Eastside, Birmingham. BAZ, like Sting, believe everything Birmingham does is magic and want the world to know about it, especially people in Liverpool!

Eastside and Digbeth are the oldest parts of Birmingham and the heart of what the city represents. Birmingham's reputation as an industrial city started here, with foundries, metal workshops and tanneries dating back to medieval times. The area's factories and warehouses now contain galleries, studios and creative organisations working together to create a visionary cultural programme for the city of Birmingham.

Birmingham The Magic City is a snapshot of overlapping perceptions of the city combining — an exploration of the unknown underground sub-infrastructure of the city — a collage of 1980s Grindcore fanzines from the birthplace of heavy metal — a day in the life of walkers in Birmingham — an orgy of civic boosterism, ranging from 1940s to the present day, exploring how Birmingham has sold itself over the years — and a reconstruction of a 'creepy' wooden lath room!



Any track more than twenty seconds long was greeted with derisive cries of 'too long, too slow' ... John Peel

Impassioned by the social conditions of the time and inspired by anarcho-punk bands who were taking an anti-capitalist stance through their music, Nicholas Bullen and Miles 'Rat' Ratledge formed Napalm Death in 1981. At only fourteen years old, they were motivated to play gigs, create fanzines and swap music via cassette tapes with the wider punk community. This work gives you an exciting insight into this period of music history — the formation of Grindcore. Alongside a selection of their zines the song *You Suffer* by Napalm Death will be played intermittently. *You Suffer* is a one second song from Napalm Death's 1986 debut album, *Scum* (written by Nicholas Bullen and Justin Broadrick).

Home of Metal is a project created and produced by Capsule that celebrates Birmingham and the Black Country as the birthplace of Heavy Metal. The project is ongoing and you can contribute to the digital archive and learn more online at www.homeofmetal.com

CAPSULE

**PRESENT HOME OF METAL
AND NAPALM DEATH**

κ Home of Metal
Grindcore cut 'n' paste zines
Courtesy of Nicholas Bullen
and Mick Harris

Capsule craft extraordinary events for adventurous audiences, identifying some of the otherwise indescribable connections between contemporary music, performance and art. As an organisation, Capsule create a platform for creative works by curating, commissioning and producing both sonic and visual projects in the UK and internationally.

October 2012 marks the tenth anniversary of Capsule's dynamic experimental music festival, Supersonic. The yearly programme incorporates performance, sound, visual art and film along with a growing strand of workshops, talks and panel discussions.

WWW.CAPSULE.ORG.UK

Eastside Projects is a free, public space that is being imagined and organised by artists. We commission and present experimental contemporary art, and propose ways in which art may be useful to society.

ESP is Eastside Projects' associate members scheme supporting the development of work, connections and careers.

Autumn 2012 brings Stockholm based curator Maria Lind to Eastside Projects to curate *Abstract Possible: The Birmingham Beat*. In Spring 2013 Mike Nelson presents *M6*, his first major exhibition in the Midlands, his home region, using materials from the M6 motorway that feeds Birmingham via Spaghetti Junction.



EAST-SIDE PROJECTS

**PRESENT HELEN BROWN
AND DAVID ROWAN**

✓ Helen Brown
Novelette (2011)
Installation view,
Narrative Show (2011)

→ David Rowan
Pacha Kuti X (2012)



Eastside Projects presents *Pacha Kuti X* (2012), a moving image work by David Rowan which explores the unknown underground sub-infrastructure of Birmingham, and Helen Brown's *Novelette* (2011), an audio guide for 'the magic city'. Both artists live and work in Birmingham.

The name Pacha Kuti refers to an Inca apocalypse legend, a time of duality and change and roughly translates as 'the time when the world will turn upside down'. Pacha Kuti X is the tenth end of the known universe according to the Inca legend. Rowan's work is an intervention in the underground tunnels of the Eastside and Digbeth area as a fixed position video with a rich, subtle soundtrack. Rowan redefines the dark spaces of the tunnels with customised lighting dropped into the space like alien beacons, capturing the slow secret environmental and architectural change occurring below. This new video work was developed for Eastside Projects after Rowan received the first ESP exhibition award.

In 2011 Helen Brown created a fictional character called Novelette during *Narrative Show* at Eastside Projects. *Novelette* subtly re-interprets the life of the gallery as a fellow spectator, a monologue voiced by an actor available on wireless headphones, a narrative made up of edited quotes taken from recordings of visitor descriptions of shows at Eastside Projects between 2009 and 2011. Although Novelette's words still resonate with certain artworks or shows, through editing they have become abstracted and take on new, more poetic meanings in relation to their new context.



Dominic Johnson *Departure* (2010).
Photograph by Manuel Yason.
Performed as part of *Departure*
(An Experiment in Human Salvage)
at Fierce Festival 2011.

WWW.WEAREFIERCE.ORG

FIERCE

PRESENTS PLAN B

plan b (Daniel Belasco Rogers and Sophia New) are a duo based in Berlin who make performance and interdisciplinary work. They are also a couple. They have been recording everywhere they go with GPS since 2007.

In 2010 plan b invited the population of Birmingham to help them make a living map of the city. People were invited to carry a GPS tracking device with them as they moved through the city's streets, parks, tow paths and waste grounds.

Using GPS technology and a specially developed animation (by avp::ptr), the daily movements of people going to work, shopping, picking up their children, walking dogs or coming home from parties, were transformed into traces which illuminate the ways in which people define Birmingham through their movements. The voices that accompany the animation are people looking at their lives in this way for the first time, telling us what stories lie behind the lines.

A Fierce Festival and mac Birmingham co-commission *A Day in the Life, the Walkers of Birmingham* was initiated in 2010 and continues in Birmingham in 2013.

Fierce Festival is an annual international festival of live art and performance based in (and shaped by) the city of Birmingham, UK. Joint Artistic Directors Harun Morrison and Laura McDermott curate the festival. Fierce is a contemporary collision point for live art forms, people and radical ideas. The festival aims to bring people together for charged, memorable moments that spark conversation and debate. Live art. Collision. Hyperlocal. Supernow.



FLAT- PACK FEST- IVAL

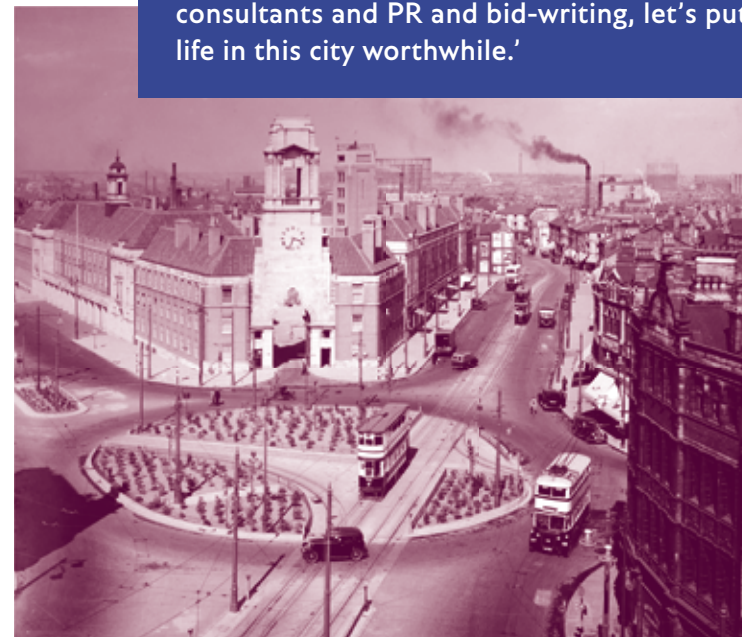
**PRESENTS
A BETTER LIFESTYLE**

Established in 2006, Flatpack Festival grew out of the monthly film-nights put on by 7 Inch Cinema and has become one of the most respected and unpredictable film festivals in the UK. Using the full range of Birmingham venues the programme ranges across animation, documentary, artists' film and live cinema, with a particular focus on multidisciplinary work. As well as the annual jamboree in March Flatpack is responsible for activity through the year, from children's film tours to archival research, and they are currently embarking on a project to map all of Birmingham's cinemas past and present.

Flatpack presents a series of archive Birmingham promotional films: *Midland Journey* (Barralet Productions, 1947); *The Bull Ring Shopping Centre* (Laing & sons, 1965), *There is a Better Lifestyle* (dir. John Caine, 1989) and *Brilliance* (dir. Duncan Humphreys, 2005).

Sixty years worth of films hawking Birmingham, in about half an hour. An orgy of civic boosterism, with each era exhibiting its own particular obsessions. Just after the war we were still fairly preoccupied by manufacturing, and a good half of *Midland Journey* is devoted to production lines. By the 60s it was all about shopping, but in the 80s apparently all anyone talked about was journey times. The city's principal selling point in *There Is A Better Lifestyle* seems to be that it is within easy reach of many other places, with an underlying theme of 'it's really not as hideous as you might think.'

One of the eminent interviewees is Simon Rattle in a fetching green jumper, then at the helm of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and part of a long tradition of cultural ambassadors banging the drum for tourism, graduate retention or inward investment in their town. More than ever artists and arts organisations drive the place-making agenda, and if you squint hard enough perhaps *City States* is a warped form of trade-show. Our role in this agenda is up to us, but the philosophy of Graham Vick (artistic director of Birmingham Opera Company) is worth repeating: 'Rather than devoting our resources to consultants and PR and bid-writing, let's put that effort into making life in this city worthwhile.'



↖ Flatpack audience at St Paul's Cathedral
Photograph by Chris Keenan

↖ Birmingham Fire Station
Courtesy of Birmingham Central Library

WWW.FLATPACKFESTIVAL.ORG

GRAND UNION

PRESENTS BAZ

Welcome to The Magic City. Grand Union studio holders BAZ present their vision to build a UK version of Birmingham, Alabama's 'Magic City' sign.

Their billboard-sized proposal and accompanying publication satirises clichés of local authority marketing, tensions within public funding and the trend for cities to build bigger and bolder 'starchitecture'. Bored by misconceptions and 'Second City' status, BAZ propose a new approach, instigated by a cultural exchange with its American cousin.

Birmingham, Alabama was founded in 1871 and named in a direct reference to the industrial might of Birmingham, UK. It became known as The Magic City because of the seemingly over-night growth of its iron and steel industry. The original 'Magic City' sign was erected in 1926 at the city's Terminal Station, but was dismantled in the mid-1950s in a state of disrepair.

BAZ hope to reclaim the sign's original aspirations and intend to unite the 31 'Birmingham's' worldwide to celebrate their joint twenty first century 'Magic-ness'.

Grand Union is an artist-led space that provides a professional studio environment for some of the best artists in the city. Grand Union is committed to commissioning new work by young artists and hosts an experimental public programme of events and exhibitions, produced by a team of emerging curators.

BAZ are a semi satirical think-tank sporadically documenting the Birmingham art world and beyond. Produced by Chris Poolman and Matt Westbrook.

WWW.GRAND-UNION.ORG.UK



↑ Found postcard illustrating the original Magic City sign in Birmingham, Alabama.



IKON

PRESENTS
BEDWYR WILLIAMS

Ikon presents the work of artist Bedwyr Williams. Following his recent exhibition, *My Bad*, at Ikon (16 May to 8 July 2012), Williams shows *Lath* (2012) and *The Hill Farmer* (2011), two works which represent his unique observations of the world. Williams' artistic practice includes a wide range of media, including performance, sculpture, painting and photography. Drawing on his own personal narratives and family histories — from school days in a North Wales farming community to his experiences as an artist-in-residence — Williams has become known for work which is shot through with humour, reflecting on rural life, loss, memory and the folly of ambition.

Describing *Lath*, Williams states 'Before plasterboard all our walls used to look like this under the plaster. If you smash a hole in most walls now you just make a hole but in the past you smashed and found these chalky ribs underneath and the horsehair that was mixed in with the plaster. You often see lath exposed in horror films or when a bullet tears through a wall. I find it creepy.' In *The Hill Farmer* Williams shows himself as 'a hill farmer contemplating the wilderness or maybe just looking for missing animals or inspecting a gap in a fence. Farmers have the ultimate office environment.'

My Bad tours to Mission Gallery, Swansea, 17 November 2012 to 6 January 2013. Williams will represent Wales at the Venice Biennial 2013.

Ikon is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art venue situated in central Birmingham. Housed in the Victorian Oozells Street School, it is an educational charity with free entry and works to encourage public engagement with contemporary art through exhibiting new work in a context of debate and participation.

The gallery programme features artists from around the world. A variety of media is represented, including sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation. Ikon's off-site programme develops dynamic relationships between art, artists and audiences outside the gallery. Projects vary enormously in scale, duration and location, challenging expectations of where art can be seen and by whom.

← Bedwyr Williams
The Hill Farmer (2011)
Courtesy of the artist
and Ceri Hand Gallery

WHAT OF
IS OUR
THE CITIES
STATE ?

Eastside, Digbeth and 'Upper Eastside'

Eastside and Digbeth are the oldest parts of Birmingham and the heart of what the city represents. Birmingham's reputation as an industrial city started here, with foundries, metal workshops and tanneries dating back to medieval times. The River Rea was the original source of power and windmills dotted the land. But when Boulton and Watt introduced the steam engine, it revolutionised mechanical production in the factories. The industrialists' famous Lunar Society brought together scientists, creative thinkers, philosophers and craftsmen and forged connections around the world. Canals and railways further fuelled production and the rapid growth of the city.

An area can be described by its extremities but Eastside's boundaries have changed over the years as economic and political ambitions shrink and grow. Once contained by the triangular border of Lawley Middleway, the Birmingham to London railway line and a section of the city centre, it now strictly adheres to the future desire line of HS2, the UK High Speed Rail network planned for 2026. Its new boundaries contain Millennium Point, Aston University, a number of Birmingham City University campuses and Matthew Boulton College.

Old Eastside becomes plain old Digbeth again or perhaps 'Upper Eastside'! It is clear that this is an area of change: huge tracts of rubble or grassed-over industrial zones await new architectural renderings. The industrial buildings that line the canal networks have long since stopped manufacturing, giving way to new forms of production and innovation. Eastside is a utopia — possibly a 'magic city'.

Accordingly Eastside and Digbeth's factories and warehouses now contain galleries, studios and creative organisations rolling out at a rate that's difficult to keep up with. The Custard Factory was one of

the first; a firebox mirroring the 'thousand trades' that Birmingham was internationally famous for, now in the form of digital media, creative enterprises, galleries and cafés. Capsule's internationally renowned Supersonic Festival takes place in the area and celebrates its tenth anniversary in 2012. In the surrounding streets creative energy appears in unexpected places. Ideal's skateboard ramp is hidden away under the vast viaduct arches, while the city's newest music studios are in the music college Access to Music in Heath Mill Studios.

Artist led activity on a large scale is found further down Heath Mill Lane where Eastside Projects occupies an old cabinet-maker's factory and fills it with 'extra special people'. Elsewhere, Grand Union's bespoke studios and project space is housed in a refurbished canalside hangar, Edible Eastside grows, prepares and cooks in a concrete making yard and K4 Architects plan and design projects. Opposite you can 'fine dine' in the Fazeley Social within Fazeley Studios and the adjoining streets are home to Fierce Festival, Flatpack Festival, Birmingham Jazz, Craftspace, Punch Records and Tindal Street Press. On the other side of Digbeth High Street sit other vital artist led spaces The Edge and The Lombard Method.

Ikon's project space, Ikon Eastside (located in various industrial buildings during 2005–10), has set its sights on Curzon Street Station, a monumental neo-classical building. From 2013 it will be the new Ikon Eastside before evolving into a museum of photography, part of the twenty first century museum quarter envisaged for Birmingham.

Echoing the Lunar Society of the eighteenth century, there is a sense of a creative and productive renaissance taking place here: distinct individuals with their own research and goals, but acting collaboratively and advancing in a common direction: upward.

Ben Waddington, 2010 (upcycled August 2012)

VISIT BIRMINGHAM BE AT THE CENTRE OF IT ALL IN BIRMINGHAM

Whether you're a culture vulture, shopaholic, food enthusiast, party animal or sports fanatic, Birmingham is a destination of limitless opportunity, offering visitors an eclectic mix of things to do. Attracting over 33.5 million people a year, it's a must-visit city for all.

CULTURE VULTURES

With a compelling and varied arts scene, Birmingham is home to world-class, inspirational organisations and venues right across the cultural spectrum. For art lovers, there are plenty of places to explore in the city, from the more traditional Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, which hosts the largest collection of Pre-Raphaelites in the world to The Barber Institute of Fine Arts which is home to classics like Degas and Magritte.

Birmingham is also a home of gig venues and exquisite theatres and cinemas, with one of the city's finest gems, the Birmingham Royal Ballet often performing in the Hippodrome theatre, offering visitors a truly spectacular experience.

SHOPPERS PARADISE

As the bold new shopping capital of Europe, the city definitely lives up to its name, from designer-label heaven, The Mailbox, and the iconic Selfridges and Bullring, to local markets and quirky independent shops. Not to forget the world-famous Jewellery Quarter district where an estimated 40% of all UK jewellery originates from.



FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD

For the foodie crowd, Birmingham boasts over 200 mouth-watering restaurants in the city centre, serving cuisine from 27 different countries. It's also the only UK city outside of London to have three Michelin star restaurants, Simpsons, Purnell's and Turners of Harborne, proving its worth as a destination on the 'foodie' map.

AFTER DARK

Night owls will love the buzzing city centre atmosphere that Birmingham has to offer. No other city in Europe has a younger population than Birmingham and with over 65,000 students it's party-time every night of the week! But if clubbing isn't your scene, there are comedy clubs, theatres and cinemas a plenty.

SPORT-MANIA

Birmingham is at the heart of the sporting action, making it a great destination for those with a competitive streak! The likes of Premiership and Championship football teams, Aston Villa and Birmingham City, both have stadiums in the city centre, and Edgbaston Cricket Ground attracts fans from across the UK for test cricket. Plus, with world-class ladies tennis held at the AEGON Classic and The Belfry (which hosts some of the top golf tournaments) just down the road, as Usain Bolt says it's 'big up' Birmingham.

BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY



With around 25,000 students from 80 different countries, Birmingham City University is one of the largest universities in the UK and our popularity has grown significantly in recent years.

Birmingham Institute of Art and Design (BIAD) is one of the largest, most established, and most significant centres for art, design and architecture education in the world. We were founded in 1843 with a mission to serve industry and culture in and around the city of Birmingham.

A flagship extension of our existing City Centre Campus in Eastside is our latest ambitious venture. This new 'Phase I plot' will provide a state-of-the-art home for BIAD, incorporating a Media Hub, and marks the first step in creating a

multi-million pound centre of excellence. It will be ready for staff and students in September 2013. Phase II will be created in addition.

The project — part of the Big City Plan for the wider regeneration of Birmingham — is also part of the University's overall £180 million investment in new facilities to help create the skilled graduates of the future. The University has teamed up with Birmingham-based Associated Architects and city construction firm Willmott Dixon for the 18,310 square metre building, which will house cutting-edge media facilities including television and photographic studios.

MILLENNIUM POINT



Millennium Point is a place with 'wow factor'. It is both huge and inspiring, not just in terms of its appearance, but also because of its prime location and sophisticated blend of ingredients.

Firmly established as Birmingham's landmark Millennium Project, Millennium Point is now entering its second decade and expanding its ambitions to become increasingly of national importance with refreshing new ideas, centred on technology and change.

At the centre of Eastside, Birmingham, just a stone's throw from the city's major transport networks and bustling commercial districts, Millennium Point is ideally placed to meet the needs of a wide-ranging clientele.

It is already home to two of the City's most unique visitor attractions, Thinktank museum (which is celebrating its recently opened outdoor Science Garden) and The Giant Screen, which has the largest cinema screen and Dolby 3D digital projection system in the Midlands!

Millennium Point is also home to faculties of Birmingham City University and the fashion and design hubs of Birmingham Metropolitan College. The thriving student community of the future sits within the very heart of Millennium Point, which reflects its ambitious plans for the future.

Millennium Point is a venue to showcase, celebrate and inform.

MAGIC
IS
SOME-
TIMES
CLOSE

TO
NO-
THING
AT
ALL

Social Practice: Fo(u)r Shades of Grey

Dr James A Hellings

‘What artist isn’t socially engaged?’ Globally, since the 1990s, we’ve witnessed an ‘Today [artists] deny using the stage to dictate a lesson or convey a message. They ‘Of no artwork is it possible to determine its judgment or what its so-called message In case you disbelieve in aesthetic cultivation, distrust value judgements, and deny artistic turn toward participation and collaboration. ‘This expanded field of post-simply wish to produce a form of consciousness, an intensity of feeling, an energy for is. It is therefore questionable whether artworks can possibly be engage, even when consciousness-raising through art — an aesthetic experience achieved through non-studio practices currently goes under a variety of names: socially engaged art, action. But they always assume that what will be perceived, felt, understood is what they emphasize their engagement.’² Art engages society by disengaging from society, participation and disengagement — I give you the following extract from this years community-based art, experimental communities, dialogic art, littoral art, they have put into their [artwork].’³ Social art practice can be didactic, when it gives but, ‘even in the most extreme refusal of society, art is essentially social and not best-selling book: “Kiss me,” I breathe, and I watch his lips part as he inhales interventionist art, participatory art, collaborative art, contextual art and (most lessons aimed at emancipating spectators. But, art audiences aren’t passive, they don’t understood when this essence is misunderstood.’⁴ To talk of social practice is to over-sharply. Leaning across me, he takes the Blackberry out of its cradle, and tosses it recently) social practice.’⁵ Social practice is a form of art whose medium and material need to be activated by social practice into co-producers and participants. Brecht’s essentialise society’s impact on art. Art has a double character, it is both ‘autonomous onto the driver’s seat beside my sandaled feet. Then his mouth is on me as he moves is people. Artists increasingly produce situations wherein people participate. The learning plays and Artaud’s theatre of cruelty miss the point entirely. Alienation and and fait social.’⁶ Art is a social fact but it’s also an artefact. It is society’s excess. Art his right hand into my hair, holding me in place, and lifts his left to cradle my face. economy of art has changed. Artists no longer make art (objects) for art audiences ‘vital participation’⁷ are anachronistic forms of Marxist Ideologiekritik. Social frees itself from society. By becoming free, strategically autonomous in ‘splendid His tongue invades my mouth, and I welcome it. Adrenaline turns to lust and streaks (subjects). Social practice reconfigures art audiences as co-producers or participants. practice all too often assumes that art must become more real than reality, more social isolation,’⁸ art may offer a new perspective on society. Art doesn’t participate and it through my body. I clasp his face, running my fingers over his sideburns, relishing the This constitutes a Marxian effort to ‘place pressure on conventional modes of artistic than society. But, art’s socio-political impulse is witnessed in aesthetic experience. It

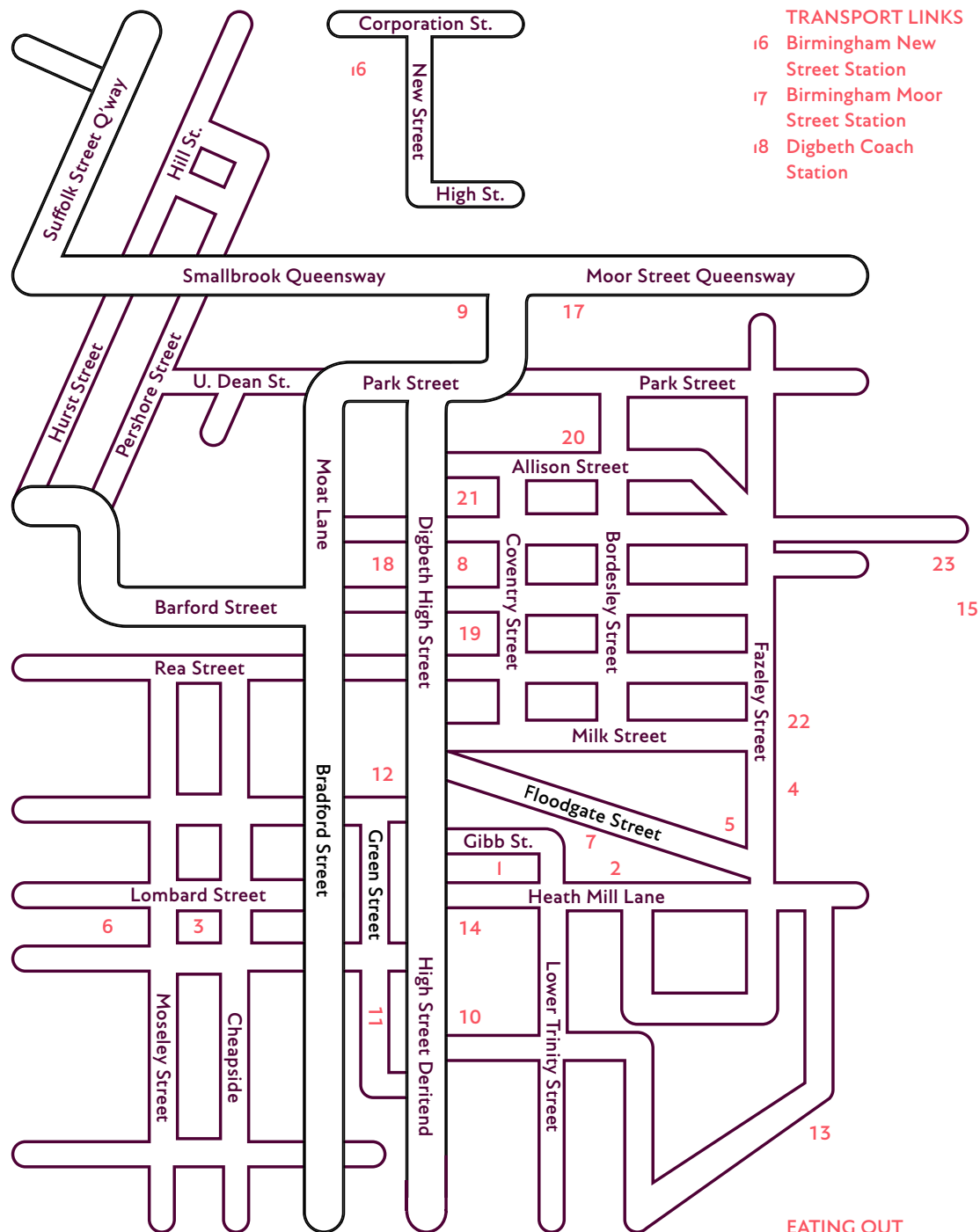
doesn’t organise. Art doesn’t have a social purpose, function or use. Art that is free taste of him. He groans at my fevered response, low and deep in his throat, and my production and consumption under capitalism.’⁹ Ideally, advanced art must resist the provides opportunities for people to appear. In appearing they disrupt and challenge harnesses the revolutionary potential barred to politics and sets about envisaging, belly tightens swift and hard with carnal desire. His hand moves down my body, marketisation of art, the industrialisation of culture, and the spectacularization of the social distribution of roles.’¹⁰ Marx’s division of labour collapses ‘when those who imaging and constructing — if not realising — a better world. An art ‘that left social brushing my breast, my waist, and down to my backside. I shift fractionally. “Ah!” he society. Social practice reflects an unceasing effort to realise this ideal. ‘Along with “cannot” do something show that in fact they can.’¹¹ ‘The claim to visibility, a will to reality unscathed is nothing but commercial art. Only those works of art that adopt an says and breaks away from me, breathless. “What?” I mutter against his lips. “Ana, ‘utopia’ and ‘revolution’, collectivity and collaboration have been some of the most enter the political realm of appearance, the affirmation of a capacity for appearance,’¹² antithetical stance toward society contain truth.’¹³ ‘Almost all daring works that are we’re in a car lot in Seattle.” “So?” “Well, right now I want to fuck you, and you’re persistent themes of advanced art and exhibition-making of the last decade.’¹⁴ ‘Given is how art and aesthetics revitalise life. Social practice must not dictate lessons and ever finished at all are commercially unsalable but, instead, are paid for by patrons or shifting around on me ... it’s uncomfortable.” My craving spirals out of control at his these avowed politics, and the commitment that mobilises this work, it is tempting to convey messages to raise consciousness. Intense feelings and energy for action get us institutions.’¹⁵ Art practice that is social by being asocial does not sell. Social practice words, tightening all my muscles below my waist once more. “Fuck me then.” I kiss suggest that this art arguably forms what avant-garde we have today: artists devising nowhere in isolation. Against ‘the dominant “myth of pedagogy,”’ of much social transforms artists into employees (entrepreneurial freelancers), who compete for (and the corner of his mouth. I want him. Now. That car chase was exciting. Too exciting. social situations as a dematerialised, anti-market, politically engaged project to carry practice, my lesson-which-is-not-a-lesson is this: ‘the incapable are capable.’¹⁶ Social administer), the grants and awards neo-liberal capitalism forces upon them. ‘The Terrifying ... and the fear has jump-started my libido. He leans back to gaze at me, on the avant-garde call to make art a more vital part of life.’¹⁷ Social practice is a form practice, as a form of art committed to making social issues visible, presupposes the image of the artist, as one of the tolerated, integrated as a neurotic in a society sworn eyes dark and hooded. “Here?” His voice is husky. My mouth goes dry. How can he of art that owes a debt to popular theatre. But, artists engaged in social practice aren’t existence of the invisible. Making the invisible visible (the *modus operandi* of social to the division of labour, is distorted. Among artists of the highest rank the sharpest turn me on with one word? “Yes. I want you. Now.” He tilts his head to one side and art-facilitators like dramaturges, curators, critics, gallery education departments, or

practice), actually instrumentalises people, turning them into tools (material). But, sense of reality [is] joined with estrangement from reality.’¹⁸ Limp realism opposes stares at me for a few moments. “Mrs Grey, how very brazen,” he whispers, after community arts projects. Social practice is still art practice. The authorial voice of the people are not tools. Biennales suffer the same fate as social practices. Let’s not real estrangement. This limp realism is witnessed in artists whose intensity for social what feels like an eternity. His hand tightens around my hair at my nape, holding me artist is certainly put into question but not expunged. Artists have become ‘directorial pretend either meaningfully resist the total administration of culture or society’s engagement actually commit them to practicing a form of mutilated — albeit militant — firmly in place, and his mouth is on mine again, more forcefully this time. His other instigators,’ who ‘trigger’ ‘event[s] that would otherwise have no existence.’¹⁹ Art has distribution of roles. What we’re presented with here are those that “can,” speaking on aesthetics. Committed art: art with avowed messages; art exhibiting tendencies; thesis hand skims down my body over my behind and lower still to my mid-thigh. My become the privileged site wherein ‘idiosyncratic and controversial’ events can be behalf of those who “cannot,” making the “invisible” “visible.” But the “invisible” are -art; and socially engaged art relinquish all claims to being art. These forms of art — fingers curl into his overlong hair. “I’m so glad you’re wearing a skirt,” he murmurs staged which ‘socially responsible institutions’ would not tolerate.²⁰ Social practice as here. You’ve just not seen them or returned their gaze. They clean the galleries, they like those produced and reproduced by the Culture Industry, which they oppose and as he slips his hand beneath my blue-and-white patterned skirt to caress my thighs. I art practice is, therefore, caught in a productive paradox: it is both autonomous and make the machines that produce your skinny Lattes, they wash the cars you arrived in. attack — instrumentalise art. Art’s wielded like a (power-)tool. Art’s made to take sides squirm once more on his lap and the air hisses between his teeth. “Keep still,” he heteronomous. I mean, it’s ‘removed from the real world,’ as (autonomous) art and, It is not the “invisibles” that are in need of a lesson — it is “You,” with your biennales, and serve a cause. But, art’s constitutively enigmatic: it can’t be directed or intended. growls. He cups my sex with his hand, and I still immediately. His thumb brushes my yet only by being removed can it find the space and time necessary to experiment and chit-chatting about: out-reach programmes; inclusivity; the state of “our” cities; and (Mis-)educating spectators into the mysteries of an aesthetic experience of ‘artworks, clitoris, and my breath catches in my throat as pleasure jolts like electricity deep, engage with society.’²¹ Social practice is, therefore, ‘a sphere both at one remove from social practice. Fucking do-gooders. Let’s get back to Art Practice, as that is the only correspond[s] to the objective need for a transformation of consciousness that could deep, deep, deep inside me. “Still,” he whispers. He kisses me once more as his politics and yet always already political because it contains the promise of a better meaningful way to oppose society. ‘Art is not (...) political because of the messages become a transformation of reality.’ People are transformed or cultivated by art and thumb circles gently around me through the sheer fine lace of my designer underwear.

world.’²² Social practice privileges an aesthetic experience, which is radically open and sentiments it conveys concerning the state of the world. (...) It is political culture into new attitudes, new passions, and new forms of consciousness which Slowly he eases two fingers past my panties and inside me. I groan and flex my hips and undecidable. It is a form of experience that engages the political through because of the very distance it takes’ from the world.²³ ‘Art is political provided that it challenge the division of labour or distribution of roles in society. Biennales and art-toward his hand. “Please,” I whisper. “Oh. You’re so ready,” he says, sliding his questioning ‘how the world is organised, and therefore the possibility of changing or is art,’²⁴ that is to say art’s (micro)political turn or (non-)participation (social practice) fairs — the travelling-circuses of the Culture Industry — are not challenging. Submit to fingers in and out, torturously slowly. “Do car chases turn you on?” “You turn me redistributing that same world’²⁵ is always addressed in art. But, art isn’t a judgement. is best witnessed in art’s resistant form and broken promises of social transformation. the discipline of the artwork, cultivate aesthetic experience and you’ll appear political. on.” He smiles a wolfish grin and withdraws (...), suddenly, leaving me wanting.’²⁶

Dr James Hellings is Lecturer in Fine Art Theoretical and Contextual Studies at Birmingham Institute of Art and Design, Birmingham City University

¹ Claire Bishop, <i>Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship</i> (London: Verso, 2012), p.2. Hereafter referenced AH.	⁷ ES, p.5. ⁸ Rolf Wiggershaus, <i>The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories and Political Significance</i> , trans. Michael Robertson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), p.2.	¹³ Stefan Müller-Doohm, <i>Adorno: A Biography</i> , trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), p.472.	²³ Jacques Rancière (2004), <i>Aesthetics and Its Discontents</i> , trans. Steven Corcoran (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), p.23. Hereafter referenced AD.
² Theodor W. Adorno (1970), <i>Aesthetic Theory</i> , trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: The Athlone Press, 1997), p.123. Hereafter referenced AT.	⁹ AH, p.2. ¹⁰ See: Hallward, P., and Rancière, J., 2003, ‘Politics and Aesthetics: An Interview,’ in: Angelaki: <i>Journal of the Theoretical Humanities</i> , Volume 8, Number 2, August 2003, p.208. Hereafter referenced PA.	¹⁴ AH, p.2. ¹⁵ Theodor W. Adorno (1949), <i>Philosophy of New Music</i> , trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 2006), p.20–1.	²⁴ AD, p.96. ²⁵ AH, p.27. ²⁶ E. L. James, <i>Fifty Shades of Grey</i> (London: Arrow Books, 2012).
³ Jacques Rancière (2008), <i>The Emancipated Spectator</i> , trans. Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2009), p.1. Hereafter referenced ES.	¹¹ PA, p.202. ¹² PA, p.202.	¹⁶ ES, p.48. ¹⁷ AH, .p.13. ¹⁸ AT, p.9. ¹⁹ AH, p.37. ²⁰ AH, p.37. ²¹ AH, p.27. ²² AH, p.27.	
⁴ AT, p.349. ⁵ AH, p.1. ⁶ AT, p.5.			



TRANSPORT LINKS

- 16 Birmingham New Street Station
- 17 Birmingham Moor Street Station
- 18 Digbeth Coach Station

WE ARE EASTSIDE

CAPSULE

Unit 302, Custard Factory
Gibb Street, Birmingham B9 4AA
www.capsule.org.uk

EASTSIDE PROJECTS

86 Heath Mill Lane
Birmingham B9 4AR
www.eastsideprojects.org

FLATPACK FESTIVAL

7 Inch Cinema
118, Scott House, Custard Factory
Gibb Street, Birmingham B9 4AA
www.flatpackfestival.org

FIERCE FESTIVAL

Unit 57, 27 Colmore Row
Birmingham B3 2EW
www.wearefierce.org

GRAND UNION

19 Minerva Works, Fazeley Street
Birmingham B5 5RS
www.grand-union.org.uk

IKON

1 Oozells Square, Brindleyplace
Birmingham B1 2HS
www.ikon-gallery.co.uk

GETTING TO EASTSIDE

ROAD

Travelling to Eastside by road is simple. The easiest way into the city is on the M6 then follow signs to City Centre, the A38 will take you into the heart of the city, go clockwise round the inner ring road (A4540) then follow signs to Digbeth.

RAIL

Birmingham New St (B2 4ND) is one of the UK's busiest train stations and Digbeth is about half a mile walk from it. Even closer is Moor St Station (B4 7UL), which operates Chiltern Rail trains.
www.thetrainline.com
www.chilternrailways.co.uk

BUS

The newly renovated National Express coach station is in the heart of Digbeth and services most of the country. Megabus from London to Birmingham stops on Priory Queensway about one mile away.
www.nationalexpress.com
www.megabus.com

ORGANISATIONS

- 1 Custard Factory
- 2 Eastside Projects
- 3 The Edge
- 4 Grand Union
- 5 Fazeley Social
- 6 The Lombard Method
- 7 Project Pigeon

SHOPPING

- 8 Cow Vintage
- 1 Custard Factory (Ideal Skate, Fragile Design, Studio 4, Sauce, Sara Preisler)
- 9 Selfridges

ENTERTAINMENT

- 10 The Rainbow
- 11 Spotted Dog
- 12 Irish Centre
- 13 Wagon & Horses
- 14 The Old Crown
- 15 Millennium Point

EATING OUT

- 1 Bay Leaf
- 19 The Big Bull's Head
- 20 Warehouse Café
- 21 Manzil's
- 22 Edible Eastside

OTHER

- 23 Former Curzon Street Station

WIELD

ART

LIKE A

POWER

TOOL