

Episode  
2

Fri 24 – Sun 26 Feb 2012  
Tramway, Glasgow

Arika

A  
SPECIAL  
FORM  
OF  
DARKNESS

In *The Last Messiah*, Peter Wessel Zapffe, in a state of bleak dread, concludes that consciousness is “a biological paradox, an abomination, an absurdity, an exaggeration of disastrous nature”. Could our self-awareness be an evolutionary mistake? After all, animals feel pain: conscious humans suffer.

OF  
DARKNESS

Malin Arnell from *Spurring Lips of Transposed Desire*  
(from 2011 with Pablo Zuleta Zahr)



In *The Conspiracy Against the Human Race* the horror writer Thomas Ligotti, confronted with our complete cosmological insignificance (and so the inanity of any thing we might do), and inspired by Zapffe's realisation that the only right consciousness seems to bestow on us is the right to suffer, suggests that we should classify our existence as **MALIGNANTLY USELESS.**

But is there anything positive in this? Could a suspicion of our own consciousness be a necessary step in the furthering of thought, and indeed life?

# THE WORLD- WITHOUT- US





The literary critic Fredric Jameson has argued that neoliberal culture is full of the language of innovation and novelty, but culture has never been more standardised and homogenous...the only real novelty is in the way our realities and identities are upgraded like software, so that a settled sense of self becomes impossible.

What if he's right: that our language, habits and desires, the ways we experience the world, our ideas of *ourselves* come to us pre-packaged? Are we all performing ourselves?

**REALITIES  
AND  
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In *Powers of Horror* Julia Kristeva defines *abjection* as the state of being symbolically spat out or discarded: disgusting, excluded, repellent. Is our revulsion at bodily fluids, or our unease at seeing a corpse, a symbolic revulsion at the flimsiness of our own borders as a living being, as a self?

Is this a useful allegory to understand the disgust of people in power: revolted by or treating as inferior (not quite fully alive) any groups that threaten their own borders or identity? <sup>1</sup> And is art the place that explores the abject <sup>2</sup>, a place where boundaries begin to break down, a place before distinctions such as the self and the other, existence and non-existence?

1 – For e.g.: women and femininity, convicts, the poor, the queer, rioters in Tottenham...

2 – The spit, piss or blood in Genesis P. Orridge or GG Allin performances, the used nappies in Mary Kelly's Post-Partum Document...Artaud's identity horror...

I SPIT  
MYSELF  
OUT





What's powerful in these ideas of distrust, pessimism and disgust? How do we make sense of experimental musicians, performance artists, cultural critics, philosophers and scientists who doubt identity, existence and experience?

Is it OK to be suspicious of the blind love of what it is to be human? Or of how our identities are constructed? What if our naivety about those identities leads to a special form of darkness: if much more is going on than we're aware of, are we in the dark exactly because we look right through what we should really see?

# A SPECIAL FORM OF DARKNESS





## FRI 24

### **Abject Music**

#### **Deflag Haemorrhage/Haien Kontra**

Friday 24 Feb | 7.30pm |  
Day or Festival Pass |

In which “ ” [sic] Goldie and Mattin try to accelerate out of the other side of noise music, free improvisation, and rock by amplifying and taking deadly seriously all of those music’s tropes (Cf.: self-expression, signature sounds or moves, transgression). In doing so, they seem to be both one of the most ferocious live noise acts around, and a necessary, ludicrous parody.

#### **Only Your Pre Formance Is Cult**

##### **Iain Campbell F-W**

Friday 24 Feb | 8.45pm |  
Day or Festival Pass

If consciousness is a performance of approval then can’t we all have a go? Critical awareness and creative skills serve us well in the workplace and look great on our CV. Watch someone build a hyper-me using funding, experiences and masking tape. Then produce your value response and add beliefs to yourself, simple... (with director/dramaturg Amanda Monfrooe) There will also be a number of further short performances during the weekend

#### **De Musicorum Infelicitate**

##### **Walter Marchetti – performed by**

##### **Esther Ferrer**

Friday 24 Feb | 9.15pm |  
Day or Festival Pass |

What can a composer disgusted with composition compose: exhausted and unhappy, revolted with every note? Maybe score ‘10 painful variations’ for piano, and pen a text of coruscating self-criticism and self-parody as a kind of an anti-composition. For 50 years Walter has been Europe’s great self-effacing, anarchic, conceptual composer. He has said this is his last composition. He’s asked the great Spanish performance artist Esther Ferrer to perform it, along with Gabriele Bonomo.

## SAT 25

#### **The View From Nowhere – part 1**

##### **Ray Brassier & Thomas Metzinger**

Saturday 25 Feb | 2:30pm |  
Day or Festival Pass |

What if what we consider as our self is just a process: an evolutionarily solution whose efficiency causes us to think we experience reality, naively mistaking experiences as ours; if where we think there’s a ‘self’, really there is no one? Could this ‘no one’ be constructed elsewhere, or manipulated? Can we trust what we feel? Philosophers Ray Brassier and Thomas Metzinger (by video) discuss how cognitive neuroscience is unlocking the physical basis of personal experience.

#### **The View From Nowhere – part 2**

##### **Ray Brassier, Alexi Kukuljevic**

##### **& Mark Fisher**

Saturday 25 Feb | 4:15pm |  
Day or Festival Pass |

We’ve privatised stress, pseudo-markets are apparently the only way to care for the sick or educate the young, we’re all self-surveilling bureaucrats who need to inject ‘creativity’ into our work ...is there no alternative to the language of business? Are our seemingly subjective desires, our identities, pre-packaged by dominating social structures? And if they are, what capacity do we really have to act in a world? Three leading, radical philosopher / cultural critics discuss how neoliberal capitalism has locked down social experience.

*A further performance by Iain Campbell F-W*

#### **Rehearsal after Reflect Soft Matte**

##### **Discourse**

##### **Malin Arnell, Clara López**

##### **& Imri Sandström**

Saturday 25 Feb | 7:30pm |  
Day or Festival Pass |

Being a kind of re-enactment of the re-enacting of a super influential landmark of performance art (Gina Pane’s *Discours mou et mat*: an allegorical performance of alienation, abjection and the figure of the

mother). What is to be gained from this repetition, this concern with her body, their body, our body? Is performance a means to think with the body?

#### **Become What You Are**

##### **Dawn Kasper**

Saturday 25 Feb | 9:00pm |  
Day or Festival Pass |

Having something to do with “The evidently paradoxical task of ‘becoming what you (already) are’” to quote Nietzsche; a series of characters and the re-enactments of death scenes; slapstick comedy, monologue, props, make-up and a kind of live sculpture from an artist we’ve had described to us as the performance artist every performance artist in New York wishes they were (even if they don’t know it).

#### **Junko**

Saturday 25 Feb | 10:30pm |  
Day or Festival Pass |

Junko is one of the founding members of the defining Japanese Noise band Hijokaidan (whose early take on Noise involved no small amount of disgust and bodily fluids), and owner of the most intense voice in music. Her solo vocal performances are incredibly musical and harrowing confrontations with the very real, physical and aural trauma of a woman screaming.

## SUN 26

#### **All the Colours of the Dark, Except**

##### **Black Socialism and/or Barbarism**

##### **Evan Calder Williams**

Sunday 26 Feb | 3:30pm |  
Day or Festival Pass |

In which Mute and Film Quarterly’s correspondent on ornament, dialectics, melodrama, and pessimism, Evan Calder Williams argues that horror, especially the horror of darkness, is not a depth lurking under the surface of our banal, repetitive lives, as maybe H.P. Lovecraft or Hammer Horror would have it. The real darkness is in coming face to face with what has no profundity whatsoever: there is no depth, just layers and layers of surface...

#### **Cosmic Pessimism**

##### **Eugene Thacker**

Sunday 26 Feb | 5:00pm |  
Day or Festival Pass |

On a planetary scale, over deep time nothing could be more insignificant than the human: is reality then un-human? Is this the horizon of thought as it confronts the unthought? Does this relate to Renaissance occult (musical) thinkers of the cosmic and the “disharmony of the world”? Can we rethink the world as unthinkable, and without us? *Mute Magazine*’s “Occultural Studies” columnist, philosopher and occasional noise artist Eugene Thacker attempts to avoid the usual philanthropic pep-talk...

*Performance by Iain Campbell F-W*

#### **Inhuman Grand-Guignol Theatre**

##### **Taku Unami**

Sunday 26 Feb | 7:30pm |  
Day or Festival Pass |

Inspired by the supernatural horror of H. P. Lovecraft, black metal and philosophical horror as much as his routes in minimal Japanese improvisation, Taku’s performances seem to increasingly be about a kind of existential absurdity. Life is cosmologically meaningless, and action, any action, seemingly pointless; but (pompously, absurdly), we still do stuff. Why?

*Performance by Iain Campbell F-W*

#### **Keiji Haino**

Sunday 26 Feb | 9:15pm |  
Day or Festival Pass |

Wherein one of the greatest experimental, noise, rock musicians of the last 30 years collapses his performance down to a vocal introspection, (both whispered and horrific). And during which you are welcome to join us in thinking about Haino’s interests in the half-spaces between life and non-life, existence and non-existence, Cf.: *nijiumu*, a term coined by Haino, which means something like “the blurring of that which is and that which is not”.







# VENUE

**Tramway**  
25 Albert Drive, Glasgow, G41 2PE  
0845 330 3501  
[www.tramway.org](http://www.tramway.org)

# TICKETS

**Early Bird Festival Pass** – £12  
(to be purchased by Fri 10 Feb)

**Festival Pass** – £14  
Access to all events at the festival

**Friday Day Pass** – £6  
Access to all events on Friday 24

**Saturday Day Pass** – £6  
Access to all events on Saturday 25

**Sunday Day Pass** – £6  
Access to all events on Sunday 26

**Online:**  
[www.tramway.org](http://www.tramway.org)

**In person:**  
Tramway, 25 Albert Drive, G41 2PE

**Phone:**  
0845 330 3501

**Box Office:**  
Open: Mon-Sat 10am - 8pm  
(Monday telephone bookings only)  
Sun 12noon - 6pm

*There is limited capacity on Sunday during the afternoon. Access is first come first served.*

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**Episode 2**  
Co-produced by:

# Arika

## TRAMWAY

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 **Glasgowlife**



**THE SKINNY**  
INDEPENDENT CULTURE JOURNALISM

Design by Julia  
[www.julia.uk.com](http://www.julia.uk.com)

Arika used to organise INSTAL and Kill Your Timid Notion, two of the UK's leading experimental music and / or film festivals. This year we're replacing them with a kind of expanded festival, in three weekend-long Episodes, spread over 10 weeks. Each episode will be just as long as INSTAL or KYTN was, but it'll have more room: more space for challenging performances, screenings and events, and for the ideas they propose.

# EPISODE 3: COPYING WITHOUT COPYING

*Tramway, Glasgow 23—25 Mar 2012*  
By repeating a situation word-for-word (transcripts from Guantanamo Bay, the trial of Adolf Eichmann, eyewitness accounts from Hurricane Katrina) can we embody that situation? Or: if you repeat something, do you reanimate it, and understand it? Performed installations, film-lectures, learning plays or readings from activists and major international visual artists, incl. Andrea Geyer, Ashley Hunt, a new learning play by Chto Delat? And *Combatant Status Review Tribunal pp. 002954–003064: A Public Reading* (Geyer, Hayes, Hunt, Sander, and Thorne).

**This is kind of a festival or salon  
of experimental music, performance and  
discussions, variously concerned  
with the usefulness of nihilism, pessimism  
and negativity; it's about the limits  
of thought and experience, and what we  
might consider to be 'ourselves'.**

**More information at:  
[www.arika.org.uk](http://www.arika.org.uk)**