

MIRCRO-RESDIENCY 2
OPEN PLAN, 55 GRACECHURCH STREET

DEPARTURE FOUNDATION
LONDON 2013

OPEN PLAN MICRO-RESIDENCY 2 DEPARTURE FOUNDATION



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The Departure Foundation's 'Open Plan' residencies are an experimental arena for artists to reflect upon the character and culture of non-art sites and to consider how they might be deconstructed, reconstructed and reinvented.

To an extent, the image of the artist as a marginalised genius working alone in the studio still endures. An 'open plan' office and the company (collective) which conventionally inhabits this kind of space could be seen as the polar opposite of the traditional image of an artist at work in the studio, in terms of their aesthetics, processes and outcomes.

'Open plan' is the terminology used by architects and designers to describe spaces which do not have boundaries. No cubicles, no walls. The open plan office is the archetypal interior of our times; many people spend their whole lives in one! Practically but also metaphorically its openness is supposed to encourage free communication and fluid interaction. Studies have also found that the lack of private space can give rise to territorial behaviour, noise and high stress levels.

55 Gracechurch Street is a large, empty, ground floor space bang in the middle of London's financial district. I have been curating exhibitions and residencies in this building (which is also home to a company that insures private yachts) for over a year now

It has grey carpet, automatic lights, a dull humming sound and cool, dry air conditioning.

Operatic in its intensity, yet brutally stark, each of its stylistic components combine to alter our behaviour through immersion, like high catholic church.

Day by day we've got a very specific type of audience. Suited passers-by who stare in through the glass walls on their way to the gym in the basement (each lunchtime) or the pub next door (after work). A new kind of art viewer who experiences the work peripherally, curiously, out of the corner of his eye as though he thinks he shouldn't be looking.

So, what if a group of artists were to work together in an open plan office space for a couple of months? What tensions and exchanges might occur and how would it affect the art making? Would they begin to co-operate or create hierarchies? Would the works begin to spill into one another and spawn offspring? Would it be interesting/ useful/ surprising?

This publication, which documents the second of the Open Plan residencies, hopes to answer some of these questions and pose a few more...

Louise Ashcroft
Lead Curator / Project Manager

Text by George Major to follow

OPEN PLAN MICRO-RESIDENCY 2

Resident artists

Carol Mancke

Charlotte Young

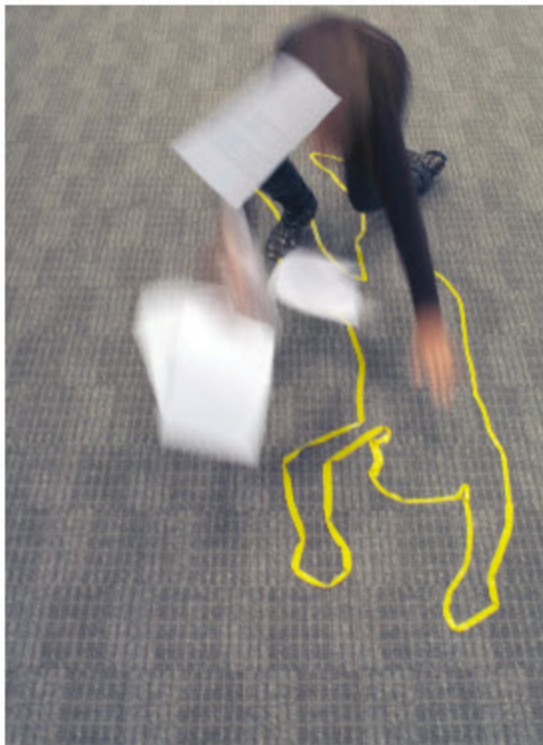
Robin Gardiner

Marg Duston

Natalie Sanders

Alex Chalmers

AnnaMaria Kardos



CAROL MANCKE

My initial response to the space in Gracechurch Street was sadness. I worked for many years in that kind of space - gridded ceilings, bland grey carpet tiles, the drone of mechanical ventilation. I recalled the sharp aftertaste of missed opportunities, thwarted promises and petty humiliations. If I were to work in such a place again, would I foresee the hazards invisible to my younger self?

Fallen records traces of the tripping and faltering that take place at work. In **Falling**, I performed the action of walking confidently, encountering an unseen hazard and sprawling ungracefully with papers flying- a shambles. Then, gathering everything up, walking and falling again, and again....

www.machinaloci.com





CHARLOTTE YOUNG

The space that we occupied, as with any office space, is not conducive to creativity. It is not desirable for workers to be distracted by their own ideas, hence the almost intolerable design: the dropped ceiling, the neon lighting, the loud air conditioning, windows that look out onto brick walls. A grey world built to cultivate grey thoughts. BBC News 24 was on all day in the lobby; bombastic reportage loops, stories that never develop. This seeped into my work: The illusion of choice, ideas, personal development; of wage-labour as the only necessary article of desire.

One Big Society Nation.

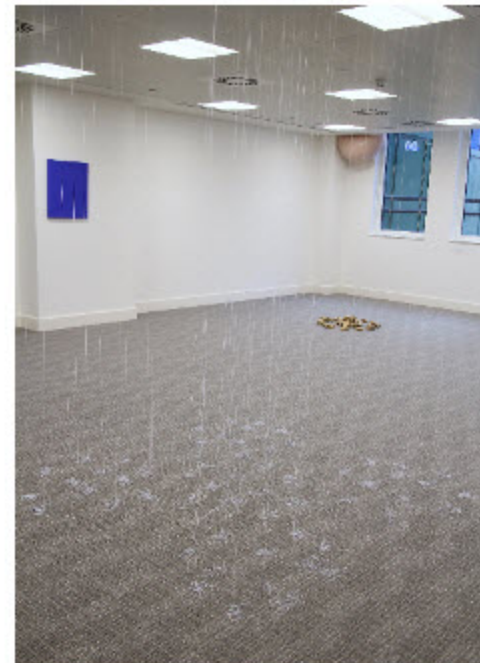
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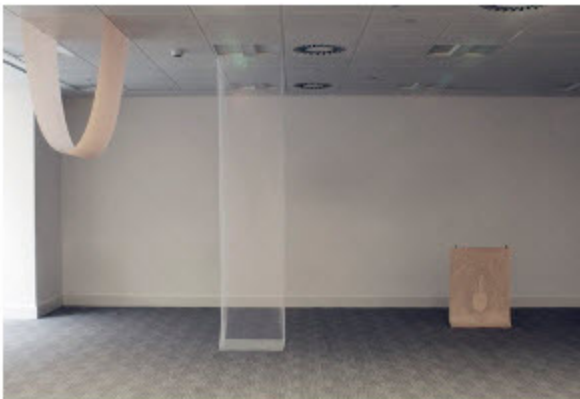
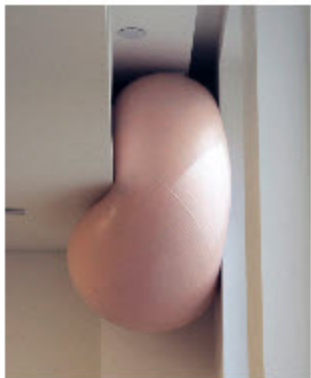


ROBIN GARDINER

A quartet of works which respond to the empty workspace and the broader idea of the City as a centre of employment, manufacture and exchange. *'Gathering'* uses shirring elastic to link grid patterns on the ceiling to those on the floor, creating both a connection and new structure. *'Felt'* plays with cruciform shapes and the linkage between planes, but here the black felt creates a monumental structure. *'Interiority'* extends the pattern of holes in the acoustic ceiling tiles and creates new drawings on lining paper that reach from ceiling to floor. *'Twine'* wraps jute rope around the base of a pillar- an echo of a mooring post in the Port of London, perhaps, anchoring this transient 21st century workplace.

www.robingardiner.com



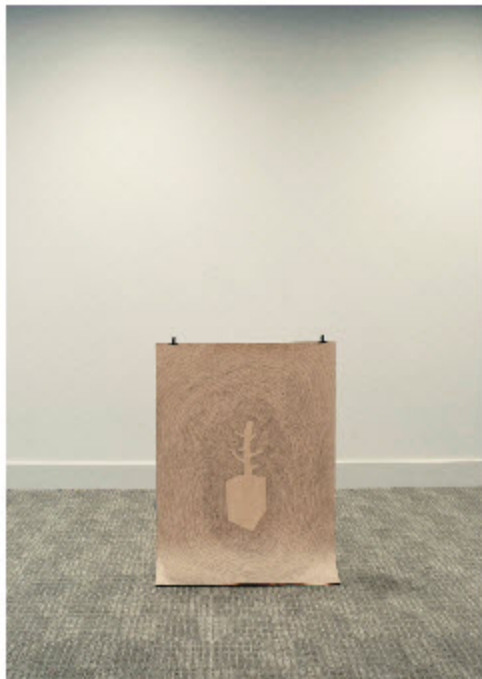


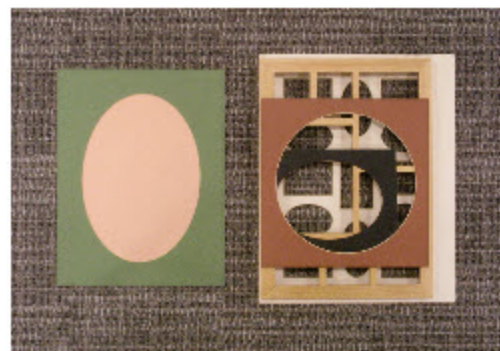
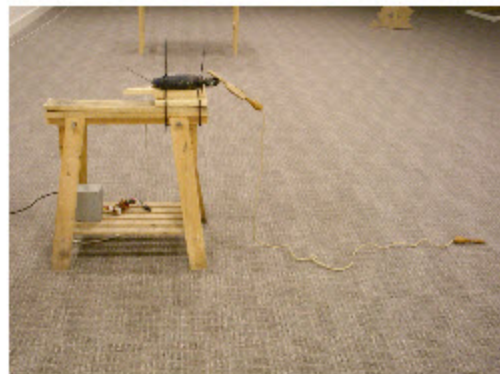
MARG DUSTON

The space was bland and repressive and the resulting physical and emotional effects became my line of enquiry.

A flesh-painted gym ball is discretely stuffed into the soffit of the ceiling. In the adjoining space a translucent column descends from the gridded, fluorescently lit ceiling. The adjacent fleshy form, draping down like a hammock quivers intermittently from the air conditioner's icy blasts. Suspended close by is a large sheet of dull pink paper, which curls onto the grey carpet. Mapped out is the shape of something like a stunted tree. Pencil marks resonate from the absent image, describing a lost thing, and as if reacting to a magnetic force, as they radiate outwards the traces become less descriptive as the memory begins to disperse and fade.

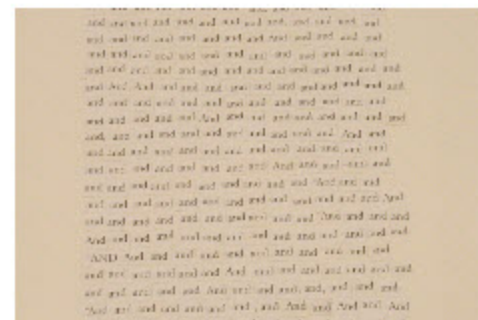
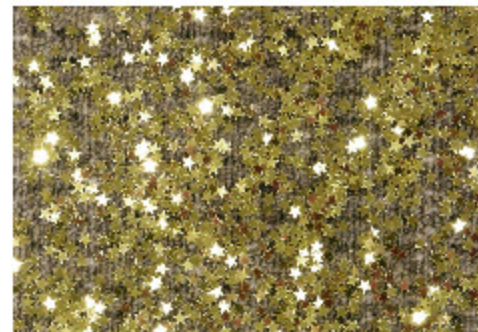
www.margduston.com

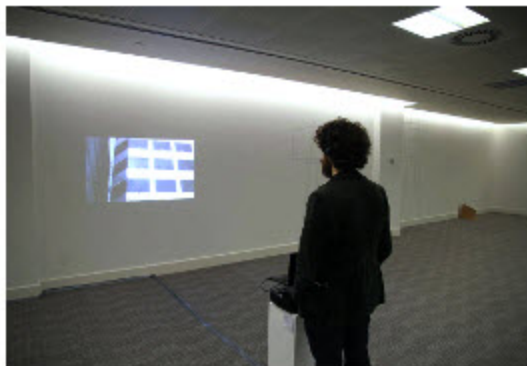




NATHALIE SAUNDERS

www.nataliesanders.co.uk

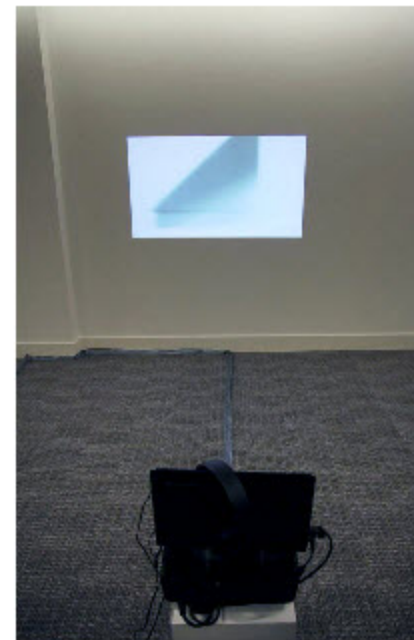




BIRGITTE AASEN

Birgitte Aasen works primarily in video and photography. Her practice began sculpturally, and over a number of years she began to explore the relationship of the moving image to objects and to the photograph. Some of her videos could be mistaken for photography and often show familiar objects - aeroplane wings, buildings - transmuted into sculptural forms by the steady gaze of the camera. In her video for *Open Plan* she communicated her reaction to the bare office space, which chimed with her interest in the principles of minimalist art and architecture, and the alienating aspects of the City environment.

www.birgitteaasen.com





ALEX CHALMER

I have sited my practice over the last seven months, in a self-contained portable studio adrift in an office space in the City Of London. I have been using and adapting the space for the duration of this time as a response to this unusual location. This 'residency within a residency' has enabled me to unearth a narrative of occupation and experimentation. Through the making of a series of performances, drawings and objects, new possibilities have emerged from a space that was in fact set up to control them.

www.alexjameschalmers.com





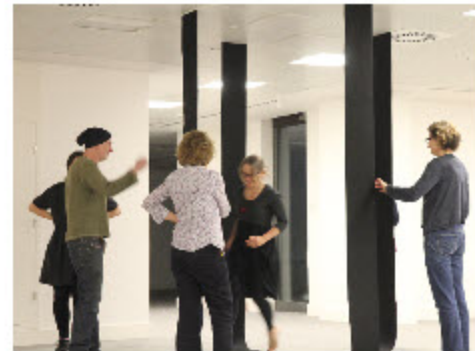
ANNAMARIA KARDOS

In occupancy, Open Plan space would be frequented with obligations, consent and disagreement. Yet it is an empty office floor left with the language of functional layout and corporate aesthetics. Responding to this site felt like negotiating interruptions. 'Cutting corners' draws on bypassing set instructions. Here, average skirting boards resolve the orthogonal. A minimal set of taped lines make viewing platforms appear on the wall as an illusionistic shifting of perspectives. Twisted in angles, a group of veneered boards expose raw edges and budget material - there is no hiding from economy.

www.akardos.net



RESIDENCY GROUP CRIT



PRIVATE VIEW 8 JUNE 2013

