

## **Appendix 2 OS – interview**

Title: OS - interview with S K I N N Y etc. 'We are a Bastard Society'  
Event: Pre INSTAL 10  
Category: Definitions  
Format : Email/ Online editable document  
Contributors: \_OS and SKINNY correspondent  
Date: October 2010

# SKINNY etc.

GV Vile at The Skinny ([www.theskinny.co.uk/](http://www.theskinny.co.uk/)) is doing a bio-style piece on contributors to INSTAL. He has asked us to answer some questions. The deadline is Sunday 17th October 2010. (We have missed it; perhaps it doesn't matter. *document now submitted, see foot*)

## Everything free has an unseen entry-price.

1. Q. What is \_OS all about?

**Answer(S):** Making the simplest questions the most complicated, for a start. It is tricky to give a definitive answer, as anything an individual says can never be accepted unmediated by the group (and amongst our contradictions we are certainly a 'grouping' of some sort, however much we try to resist that grouping) in a totally satisfactory manner\*. Our nearest thing to a manifesto is a 'statement', which is a time and situation-dependent document that expires in validity ~~almost~~ before as it is written. The fact that we have written ~~three~~ four\*\* of these statements is the nearest thing we have to a codified 'process' as of yet. We set off from a general feeling of 'uneasiness', which is a term we have never rejected, but have allowed to recede.

'We' are a collaborative investigation/creation of ideas/situations/events/.

The best way to understand us is perhaps with phrases:

## 'We are an open invitation'.

This may sound non-committal, but as we have tried to make no assumptions, we cannot rely on our own experiences as individuals concerning what happened in a group to make a definitive statement about what we are.

## 'We are a Bastard Society'.

- \* Each meeting is made through the single action of attending.
- \* Each meeting contains different people.
- \* Each meeting (or class) concerns a different concept, problem, event, feeling, aim, need.
- \* Each meeting (or class) (or situation) has its own politics.
- \* Each meeting (or class) (or situation) (or interception) has its own matrix of incisions (bludgeonings).
- \* Each meeting (or class) (or situation) (or interception) (or deschooling) has its own problems.
- \* Each meeting is allowed to die.

The best way to gain an impression is to attend.

These responses have been created in/as an open school situation/event/investigation. This

**Commented [steff1]:** this means we are somewhat similar to what deleuze/guattari call an *assemblage*. "ad hoc groupings of diverse elements... living throbbing confederations that are able to persist despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within... no one has sufficient competence to determine consistently the trajectory or impact of the group" -JB - tcs

HA! I was thinking exactly the same thing when I read that stuff for theory group today! - Mark

document has been created during a week in October 2010 by various hands belonging to the \_Open School.

\*\*This may be the fifth.

I agree with all of the above. I also like to think of the school in this “invalid as soon as it exists” way - that the school re-materialises itself in different ways at every meeting/class/situation/interception/de-class, that it is not beholden to a “mission statement” or “statement of objectives” that certain organisations are because it does not demand funding, encouragement or authorisation from any person or body outside of those present at the current materialisation.

2. Q. What made us team up with INSTAL and/or ARIKA. Is it a positive step?

**Answer(S):** We were initially approached by ARIKA. As part of their attempts to create a ‘non-festival’ they were looking for groups interested in self-organised educational and musical projects, and due to previous members’ involvement (unINSTAL and the Dundee arrangement) we were approached as a ‘collective’ (an external classification which gave us immediate worries) in order to bring our own methods to their project. **We decided to treat INSTAL as a ‘class’ for which we would produce external ‘artefacts’: these will range from performances, pre-agreed tactics, interventions, pre-chosen ‘stances’, as well as our agreement concerning becoming part of a development and organising group with O1—, O2. and others.**

An action (as this decision is) is usually a positive step, as consensual action is rare these days (and the basis on which we gave consent/consensus is dubious). On this wary basis we accepted. However the school has continually debated whether we should be involved with a project that, for example, receives Glasgow City Council, National Lottery (a ‘tax on hope’) and Arts Council funding; we were worried about the implications and the positioning within the material outgrowths of ideology that this would place us in. It is not that we suspect ARIKA, but perhaps we are worried that if they were truly able to change the nature of the art-factory/market/totality they would not be allowed to exist. That they do is simultaneously a marvel (for the subversions they achieve) and worrying (for the attacks they haven’t received). **Based on recent experiences with groups that claim that ‘consciousness’ and ‘awareness’ are suitable and sufficient balms to corrupting effects of market forces and patronage we have rejected (thusfar) all material support from ARIKA, preferring to attend much like a collective ‘member of the public’.** This is not to say we are satisfied with the position, and our involvement and our actions at INSTAL will hope to take this into account and attempt to denature the assumptions of this arrangement.

Again in broad agreement with the above. As with my comments above, I think the refusal of material support is important. I also have (growing) (personal?) problems with certain “aims” of Arika/Instal re: a debate

between “emotional” and “intellectual” aspects of music and the potential intellectual posturing/simplification that this encourages/engenders/allows.

3. Q. What is the structure of our participation?

**Answer(S):** Much as above: we are attempting to be awkward, intransigent and violent participants within not just INSTAL, but the concept of festivals as a ‘free’ space for expression. Rather than viewing the festival situation as some sort of blank ‘tabula rasa’ of any sort, much less a neutral space for enjoyment, we think such spaces are probably *much more* clearly filled with the contradictions of modern living and especially art/music production than is everyday life. They are interesting for the *extremity of their unfreedom* rather than the extent of their freedom: they are so dramatically against the culture industry that they are counter-intuitively *closer* to it than perhaps any other situation. The structure of our participation is necessarily non-committal (because of what we are, and because we are as contradictory as anyone): though we are also reacting against the sense that choosing loose association from a power is some sort of excuse. It is not. We worry that artists *take a stance* rather than *taking the issue seriously*, refusing to act within a context not of their choosing, and therefore *not acting*. Loose association is perhaps only of benefit when it takes place within an insurrection-type situation.

Importantly, what is the structure of any inclusion in the Skinny? To who is the Skinny beholden, and what are we giving up/into by our association with it? After all, it was before 2007 a non-commercial enterprise, now it has shareholders, it has advertisers: in what way is this ‘underground’ except in aesthetic? It is integrated into a system of market capital. (Money is neutral they say, all it cares about is profit/reproduction they say. These (profit, reproduction) are not neutral concepts *except when you accept the current state of the world as permanent*. And therefore abandon the possibility for change.) Similarly for INSTAL, in what way is ‘experimental’ music anything other than a different flavour of production of value on behalf of the art market? Are these organisations *kicking down an open door*? It may have a different relationship to power and dominant cultures, but it still has a *relationship*. It is impossible not to have a relationship with the world, but that doesn’t make it acceptable, merely more fraught.

In what ways do “outcome-based” events - like Instal, like the Skinny even (a publishable issue etc) - threaten the exploration/free flow of ideas with a monetary valuation of that event - you pay a ticket price. What does the Skinny being free mean for this? Does it mean it is not measured by value? Probably not if it needs circulation figures in order to attract advertisers etc. It still needs to put a value on its existence in order to legitimise its further existence.

An event with an entry price positions itself prior to the performance: e.g. the true *valid/primary* ‘event’ (from the perspective of a economy-driven politics) of a

entry-priced<sup>1</sup> performance is the economic event of the transaction. Beyond that is only a plateau of irrelevance - the performance become a void within a shell created by this financial relationship: it could be filled with anything, as long as that anything fills basic criteria of value based on the norms of the culture industry.

4. **Q.** How do we respond to the other aspects of the festival?

**Answer(S):** We hope to view the other aspects of the festival as equally disturbed members of society who are hoping to emerge from the sublimation processes of 'art' and 'festivals' in general to engage with an unmediated -- as far as that is possible -- relationship to politics (~~crossed out because 'politics' is either everything or nothing~~) and the common antagonisms of \_\_\_\_\_. [Whatever you wish to term it || post-modernism || late capitalism || neo-liberalism || liberal democracy || multiculturalism || cultural relativism || professionalization || marketization, ghettoisation || the loss of civil society || gentrification (of cities and of culture) || the politicisation of 'community, you and i and us and we, etc || the betrayals of the older on the younger || the cruelty of the younger toward the older, the lack of courage that defines daily life, the sublimation of human qualities into market values, a life as curriculum vitae, creativity as 'entrepreneurship']. Of the general subject-making effects of group living under current conditions.

5. **Q.** How does the process inform our continuing project?

**Answer(S):** We hope that our experience will give us tactics for entering systems of relations and production whilst managing to change them in our own image. By this I mean the ability to engage with society and its institutions (including those that claim, especially through their luxurious positions of professional critics, to allow certain freedoms not usually available to the general) without being submerged, integrated or co-opted. Our initial aim is pedagogical.

Hopefully the relationship with INSTAL will help us further delineate our position to funding bodies, the "culture industry", councils, populations etc.

**Our initial aim is pedagogical.** Hopefully the relationship will help us to engage with/experience/act on the ways various artistic/societal/political initiatives are co-opted (or resist that co-option) by other organisations who are often ruled by different desires - ie: production of cultural, political or economic capital. It is possible this relationship with INSTAL will act as a "case study" of how relationships between different types of groups/organisations/initiatives work, and give us tools with which to resist our own co-option/definition by other groups.

this document was submitted to [GV@theskinny.co.uk](mailto:GV@theskinny.co.uk) in the state it had accomplished at noon on tues 19 oct. He received both a pdf 'concrete state' form, and a link to this editable document. the discussion is still very much live (T.C.).

<sup>1</sup> 'entry-price' what a term.