

Stream of (self-) consciousness

//Alex Herod

Saturday 17th July 2010. Early start, still end up late – distracted by the internet and shared excitement about the day //

I am to respond to **Hazard MMX**, a festival of mischief, random discovery and playful encounters. I am to experience it, and *respond* to it.

But I am to do this in a planned and structured way. Very much *not* in keeping with the spirit of Hazard...

Whilst wandering, experiencing, responding, I'm also going to be reviewing and documenting for a magazine article. I have organised a photographer, interviewed people, scrutinised the programme for the day. Forgive me Father for I have sinned.

I have made a plan.

Where to be, what to see, what I (or Rich) *must* get photos of. The bloody thing hasn't even started and I'm ruining it. From the outside.

// Nervous about what I might miss, what I might find, whether the rain will stop, how I'm going to make sense of anything if I start the day confused.

My thoughts start to split, a many-headed monster making its way to the playground of Manchester City Centre.

Feel (hope?) the day will lie somewhere between The A Team and South Bank Show.

Dictaphone, check. Notepad, check. Camera, check.

All the Demos I've ever been on (II). Lines blurred, confusion of sight and sound as an actual protest makes its way past St Peter's Square. Are they coming this way? Perhaps a Congolese protest. Strangely, spend my time reading the 'exhibited' placards than going to read theirs...

To St. Ann's Square. Rich already there, armed with camera. He has just been dumped (*Out of Hand Theater*)

Catch the end of the Apollo 11 Mission. Lots of photographers. People watching people watching people perform.

Coffee, check. (Tastes like cardboard)

Rich "We had one beautiful night, she told me. Painful, but I guess she was nice about it. I want to go back in."

Arndale. Freezechester magnets. Curious, people look unsure if they can take one.

(Waiting for friend to arrive. Sneak a look at the programme. Where to next?)

Check in with Larkin' About. A group of bees are on the loose. Pick up a postcard so I can collect smiles from strangers. Such a simple idea, full of possibilities. Intrigued by geographical mapping. Anonymous connections in a busy city centre. Interactions, defenses down.

Name of French bloke? Relational Aesthetics.

Human relations, social context of art, etc – *look up!*

People seem reluctant to 'play'.

//

Try to convince friends to get involved so I can get their feedback. No takers.

If I find the idea so much fun, why don't I go and do it?

Watching people. See if I can guess which magnets they will choose.

I take one pronouncing 'Certian Doom' (sic).

Text from friend: There's people dressed up doin' weird things in town. I'm guessing u're around?

Ha!

How do we receive interactive/playful work as audience, when the barriers are down?

*What do we receive?**

**Magnets, smiles.*

Outside of comfort zone? Strange to be 'allowed' to play? Is the nature of 'play' spontaneous? Do we place pressure on ourselves as soon as we sign up – yes, we're in. We'll play. And we'll play *properly*.

I need to go to xxx and see xxx, and I'm trying to stay a bit removed. Not sure why yet.

To Piccadilly Gardens to meet Sam who's taking part in the flash mob. Recap what I've seen so far.

Garbled notes into Dictaphone. Will I even listen to them back?

(Where's Rich?

- Chasing a mouse 'round the Arndale. Loving the energy of the day, capturing images and people's reactions. A document of discovery.)

Just enough time to go to the train station and get back to Canal Street for the March of 100 Dorothys.

Concerned by my quick/sharp response to friend when she asks if the mime artist on Market Street is part of Hazard. How many people think the buskers must have something to do with the girl dressed as a post box which must have something to do with the mime which must have something to do with the 'bees', the preachers, the strangers smiling...? Manchester is a natural playground. The perfect setting for Hazard or does it get lost?

Piccadilly train station. Busy. A good place for smiling.

Collect 17 smiles. Feel lifted.

(Even when asked what my problem is.)

Text to many: Missed the Dorothys. Where are you? I need a sandwich. Just going to head to 'gardens for rainreminds. See you in a bit x

Text to many: actually, will head back to St Ann's Square. See what's happening.

Woman under fabric boulder (*Vickie Fear, 'Oh Hell'*)

People seem perplexed. Comments nearby: *That's not a "performance"*

Isn't it?

Well she's not moving, she hasn't learnt any lines, it can't take much rehearsing...

What if it was described as 'live sculpture'? Would people consider her relationship with the material she used, the idea of a person being trapped beneath a weight, the relationship between her < > space < > people, whether anyone tries to help her up, etc...

Why does it need a name?

People want to know what The Point is.

These pesky words, labels.

Signs.

Action, gestures, the performed.

People still watching, she's still (trapped) beneath the boulder. It is her space. And theirs.

//Everyday spaces, public spaces.

Interruptions of the norm make us see these spaces differently for a moment. Beautiful and important.

Need to head to Piccadilly Gardens for the flash mob.
Sam (participant), Rich (photographer), Laura and Matt ('public response'), me (confused/fired up)

Child: Mummy, is she dead?

Mum: No, she's just playing.

Just want to sit down and think about this.
I write a letter to the Big Red post box.
We have the same shoes.

Flagging. Market Street is so busy.

How many people visit Manchester on a Saturday in July?

How many of them JUST WANT TO SHOP?

Move out of MY space, I didn't ask for a man in a zebra suit, where are my new shoes?!

We settle on a bench.

There are a couple of people milling around with the white greenroom umbrellas.

The sun is shining, people glancing around. No one wants to miss the start.

The Smell of Rain Reminds Me of You

When's it going to start?

When Hannah sounds a horn blast.

That boy over there has a horn.

That's not Hannah.

So, he could make them start?

I guess.

I hope he does

A little girl with red umbrella joins in. Then she chases a pigeon, smiling, giddy.

Suddenly sad.

I wish I was listening to the mp3, holding an umbrella, being part of it, sharing. Jealous of Sam, of all these personal moments, the secret smiles, the lady dancing on the grass.

That's it.

I should have surrendered.

I should have played.