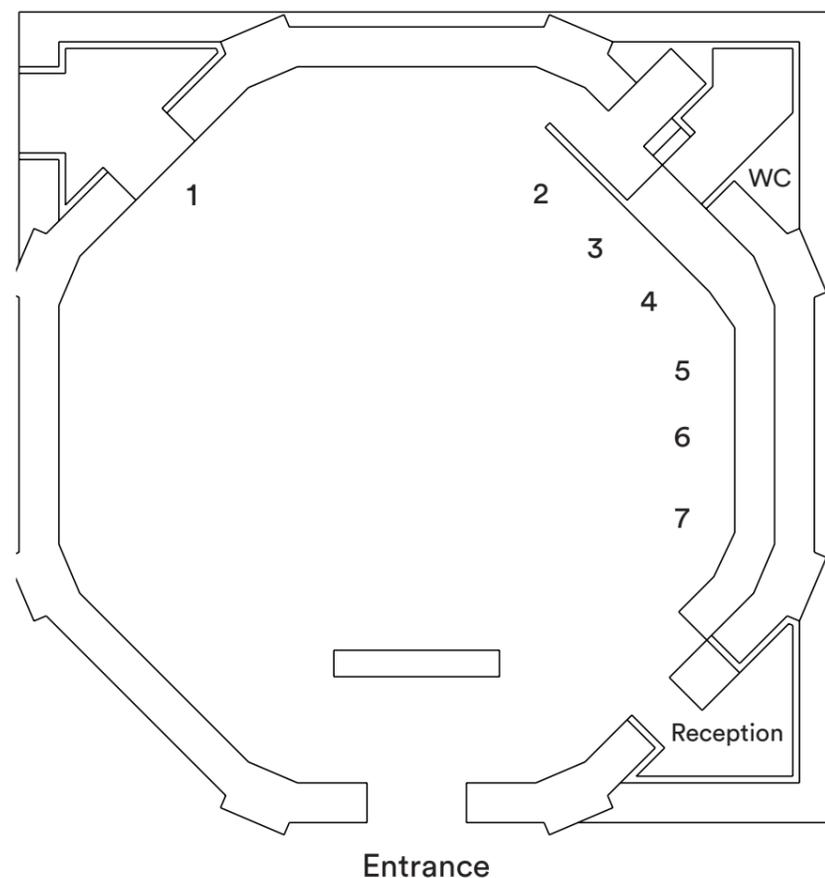


Floor Plan



1. *Faire le mur*, Video, 17mins, 2008
2. Banner 3, from *The Arcadian Shepherds*, Nicolas Poussin, 2008
3. Banner 2, from *Guardhouse wuth Woman Imploring the Soldiers*, Willem Cornelisz Duyster, 2008.
4. Banner 4, from *The Revolt of Ciaro* Anne Girodet de Roucy Trioson, 2008
5. Banner 5, from *Scene of and Exodus*, Ary Scheffer, 2013
6. Banner 6, *The Third of May*, Francisco de Goya, 2013
7. Banner 7, from *The Shipwreck of Don Juan*, Eugène Delacroix, 2013

Collective is a contemporary, visual arts organisation that delivers an exciting and ambitious programme of new exhibitions, commissions and projects.

Collective was established in 1984 to support new and emergent artists and exhibit their work in Edinburgh. Now Collective commissions new work by artists who are at a pivotal stage in their development.

Over the next two years, Collective will be making the City Observatory complex its new home, opening the whole site to the public for the first time, placing contemporary art in the heart of Edinburgh.

Factish Field Project 2

Bertille Bak

Faire le mur

18.01.14 – 02.03.14

Collective is pleased to present work by Bertille Bak for the second Factish Field exhibition. Bertille is an artist based in Paris who works predominantly in film; her work draws on her observations of the communities she has worked with, looking at their rituals, gestures and objects. Bertille portrays life within these communities with affection and humour, mixing truths and falsehoods and playing with the clichés and fantasies that we have.

Presented at Collective is Bertille's 2008 film *Faire le mur (To the wall)* alongside six new and old tapestries created by the participants of the film.

Faire le mur follows the inhabitants of Barlin, an old mining village in Northern France and the artist's familial hometown, through their last revolt against the development and subsequent raised rents in their town.

While plotting the rebellion, tapestries were passed from house to house and sewn by the community. These tapestries are based on famous paintings by old masters including Poussin and Duyster and all portray classic depictions of revolution and lost paradise.

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Following the development of Barlin in 2008, the old community dissipated and many of the former residents are now scattered throughout several different cities. Specially for the exhibition at Collective, Bertille asked the community to weave again. Unable sew collectively the canvases were again passed from house to house in the hope that this would revive the community and continue the story.

Factish Field has been a yearlong collaboration between Collective and LUX. Looking at artist film work and anthropology, it has included talks, screenings, commissions and exhibitions.

This project is supported by Fluxus.

Bertille Bak lives and works in Paris, recent exhibitions include: *Histories from Below*, Ygrec Ensapc, Cergy, France, 2012, *Circuits*, Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, France, 2012, *Nettie Horn Gallery*, London, *O Quatrième*, Les Eglises, Centre d'art contemporain, Chelles, France, 2012, *Biennial of Contemporary Art*, La Caravane, Rennes, France, 2012, *Interactions*, Galerie Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Montréal, Canada, 2012, *Intense Proximity*, La Triennale, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France, *L'Institut des archives sauvages*, Villa Arson, Nice, France, 2011, *Prospectif cinéma*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France, 2011.

Anticipated Geographies Angela McClanahan

Life under emergent capitalism was to be organised as a practice of denial of pleasure in the present for a set of specific (secular) rewards in the future. This is still the matter of bourgeois life today, but is embedded in a vastly different politics of temporality.... Instead of a stable, moral present which produces a future of certainty (even if it is one of utopia), we have a turbulent present which is pounded and produced by readings of potentially immediate futures of uncertainty... As the mechanisms of capitalist accumulation have developed into ever greater levels of novelty, preciseness and intensity, the nature of 'anticipation' has changed towards dystopia, catastrophe and feeble hopes of survival.... "[E]conomies of anticipation" assemble new publics and spectacular violence in the present in the name of "necessary adjustments" for the sake of attracting capital investments in the future.

— Kaushik Gosh¹, defining 'economies of anticipation'

The ubiquitous and formulaic processes of urban, town and rural 'development' in the neoliberal world are almost always characterised by stealth 'zoning' of land and buildings defined by the state as in 'decline', fractious 'top down' consultation encounters between local people and government and/or private development firms, usually accompanied by some form of protest and 'resistance', and subsequent community fragmentation and displacement.

Where speculative property value bubbles develop, out-migration of those with fewer financial choices tends hurriedly to follow. Although many development projects are no doubt underpinned by good intentions, as argued in the edited volume *Estate*² by Zimmerman and Johansson, geographers, urbanists and planning specialists from Jane Jacobs³ and Saskia Sassen⁴ to Colin Ward⁵

and Doreen Massey⁶ have long shown that 'regeneration' is ultimately the naturalisation of market values sublimated within bricks, mortar and land, and is largely a euphemism for 'pushing the poor out of town'⁷.

This kind of struggle is explored in the small post-industrial French community of Barlin in Bertille Bak's *Faire le Mure*, and is materially embodied within the tapestries referencing paintings that depict significant historic revolutionary moments, crafted by the town residents that accompany it here. Together, the film and tapestries convey elements of and references to the politics and poetics of the community inhabitants' relationships with each other, their modes of resistance to the impending 'renewal' of their formerly gainful coal mining town, as well as the seemingly inevitable end result of the process, which is of course portrayed in the film scene depicting the solemn, silent march of many of Barlin's inhabitants out of town, and dispersal to unspecified 'elsewheres'.

Employing an observational approach, the film is reminiscent of 19th and early 20th century 'salvage' anthropology and ethnography⁸, which attempted to document the practices and collect the material culture of 'dying' communities being colonised by 'outside' forces (in this case, of course, the 'culture' being documented is being colonised by the spectre of mythical value and finance capital rather than an ethnic and geographically defined empire), for both academic study and posterity. Its idealisation of particular tropes of 'community' - the representation of *the handmade* as an authentic embodiment of inhabitants' values, face to face engagements rather than technologically mediated modes of communication, and collective, ritualistic modes of resistance - all recall early anthropology's evolutionary interest in community structure and cultural change, as well as simultaneously evoking late 20th and early 21st century preoccupations with identity politics and ideas about the supposed inherently 'good' values of 'the local'. The town people, their rituals and practices, as well as the situation in which they find

themselves, are treated with humour and empathy, and there is a sense here that their 'defeat' in the face of the value-machine is ours, too.

Another reading of the film, though, implies a kind of call to action rather than a lament for or idealisation of, lost utopias. Rather than being seen as outmoded and irrelevant, the concepts of collective self-help and organisation and mutual aid, as advocated in relation to planning and housing initiatives by late activist Colin Ward, need to be harnessed and used in ways appropriate to 21st century life, in order to provide realistic alternatives. Urging updated employment of concepts of solidarity and mutual aid, he urged that 'new experiments in "housing enterprise zones", as advocated many years ago in the well-known paper by Peter Hall⁹ and others, "Non-plan: an experiment in freedom"¹⁰, which advocated complete DIY housing zones for residents to occupy and decide the planning design of their own territories.

After all, he remarked, 'the practice of town and urban 'planning' originally began as a *popular movement*, not as a library of legislation used to serve market interests. Its future and effectiveness would be much more trusted, assured and hopeful if it could recover its popular and populist image.'¹¹

Further reading on development, regeneration, planning, housing issues and anthropological engagement with these subjects:

Buchli, Victor 2013 *An Anthropology of Architecture*. Oxford: Bloomsbury/Berg.
Hatherly, Owen 2009 *Militant Modernism*. Zero Books.
Naik, Deepa and Trenton Oldfield (eds.) 2009 *Critical Cities: Ideas, Knowledge and Agitation from Emerging Urbanists Volume 1*. London: Myrdle Court Press.

Dr. Angela McClanahan gained a PhD in Archaeology from the University of Manchester, and lectures in Visual Culture in the School of Art at Edinburgh College of Art. Her primary research interests include examining how people engage with and construct meaning from the material world,

and she is currently examining 'contemporary' ruins and processes of ruination, as well as in ethical and sensual dimensions of ethnographic research and art practice.

Endnotes

- 1 Kaushik Gosh is an US based anthropologist with interests in emerging global economies.
- 2 Zimmerman, Andrea and Lasse Johansson 2010 *Estate*. London: Myrdle Court Press.
- 3 Jane Jacobs was a North American urban housing activist.
- 4 Saskia Sassen is an urban sociologist, and coined the term 'global cities'.
- 5 Colin Ward was a British housing activist and anarchist, who wrote and spoke frequently about housing issues.
- 6 Doreen Massey is a British geographer who writes critically on the concept of landscape.
- 7 Ward, Colin 1990 *Talking Houses: Ten Lectures by Colin Ward*. London: Freedom Press.
- 8 'Salvage ethnography' is a term coined in the 1960s to refer to 19th and early 20th Century anthropological practices of recording the cultural practices and languages of dying 'native' cultures that were changing both as a result of evolution, and the spread of Modernity associated with European colonisation. The concept is also associated with ethnographic filmmaking in the 1950s and 1960s that used documentary as a mode of recording cultural practices associated with cultures whose ways of life were changing rapidly as an explicit result of expanding capitalist markets.
- 9 Peter Hall is an influential geographer and town planner who writes about the relationship between freedom and spatial politics.
- 10 See 2.
- 11 Ibid.