

GET HERE

Editing: Imogen Stidworthy; 10.2 sound: Tim Lambert

With the voices of Basra Ahmed, Katra Ali, Helen Brady, Severin Domela, Pauline Downey, Charlotte Fortune, Heidi Garnett, Liz Griffiths, Asia Hassan, Jenny McKeown, Marion Parker, Beth McPaul, Joan Mulrooney, Liz Murphy, Jodie Kumlé, Pat Leyland, Jane McIntyre, Sue Osuji, Alison Powers, Victoria Thomas, Michelle Walker, Paul Win. Consultation: Terry Besson.

TOPOGRAPHY OF A VOICE

With thanks to Gary Seiffert and the Acoustics Research Unit, Liverpool University, and Salome Schmuki, Indesign layout.

I HATE

I HATE was commissioned by Documenta 12, Kassel 2007 (courtesy MuKHA, Antwerp). With Edward Woodman and Judith Langley; Camera, sound, editing: Imogen Stidworthy 5.1 sound: Tim Lambert; Architecture designed with Milica Topalovic.

BARRABACKSLARRABANG

With Donna Berry, Cliff Higgins, George 'Buster' Swaby, Christine Quarless; Camera: Ian Lysaght, Jacqui Passmore, Imogen Stidworthy; Sound and Editing: Imogen Stidworthy. With thanks to Al and Al, Mike Carney, Cliff Higgins, Buster Swaby.

Stidworthy is based in Liverpool, she is represented by Galerie Akinci, Amsterdam and Matts Gallery, London.

TYPEFACES

Typeface examples from the Dyslexia Project (work in progress) by Salome Schmuki
The typefaces used here, and for the wall text in Gallery 4, are from a series of different typefaces that have been developed to simplify reading for people with Dyslexia. The key characteristic of these typefaces is that they are designed with irregularities, based on feedback from people with dyslexia who get tired and distracted by text that is too regular and sharply printed. In some examples from the project, letter shapes are 'de-regularised' so that similar letters such as 'p' and 'b' cannot be mirrored, and therefore mixed up. In the fonts SA_NOT_MONOSPACE and SA_BOLD_MONOSPACE, white spaces between the letters are irregular. Many of the dyslexic people interviewed also stated that they prefer to read handwritten texts. Rather than imitating handwriting with the computer, the fonts have an aspect of 'imperfection' similar to handwriting and unlike the perfectly constructed and evenly-spaced typefaces normally designed by computer. At the same time they are far more open than handwritten fonts and their simpler shapes are more accessible to the eye.

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The Henry Moore
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STID WOR THY

SATURDAY 27 FEBRUARY – SUNDAY 25 APRIL

TALKS

Saturday 27 February 2pm, Free

Exhibition talk by researchers in the psychology of language from the University of Bristol, looking at language and personal identity.

Wednesday 24 March 6pm, 6 / 4.50 concs. Free for UWE staff and students with ID

Imogen Stidworthy will give a lecture about her practice.

INTRODUCTION

Imogen Stidworthy makes videos, sound works and installations that examine aspects of spoken language such as the sound of the voice, losing, gaining and regaining language, and acts or processes of translation. For Stidworthy, the voice is a social as much as an individual space. She uses it as material to question how we produce and locate ourselves in the social landscape.

This exhibition includes four recent works:

GALLERY 2

GET HERE (2006, 10.2 audio installation)

"Get here!" is a uniquely Liverpoolian phrase commonly heard from mothers calling their children. Like every local accent the Scouse sound invokes stereotypes which position the speaker geographically, socially and culturally. For GET HERE, the artist worked with people who have very different relationships to the accent: Scouse women, Somali immigrants and actresses training to mimic an authentic Scouse accent, each voicing the phrase in their own way. In the installation voices emerge unexpectedly from all directions. Any singular idea of Scouse is confounded as subtleties of accent and intonation colour the words and their address to the listener with rapidly shifting meanings.

TOPOGRAPHY OF A VOICE (2008-9, offset and copperplate prints)

These prints translate GET HERE into different forms of transcription. Each is partial, shaped and limited by its own particular terms. Sound in its cultural context is represented visually in waterfall plots charting decibels, wavelength and duration, transcribed into IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet), in the comments of Scousers and recent immigrants and through the analysis and descriptions of a professional voice trainer.

GALLERY 3

I HATE (2007, multi-media installation)

The installation I HATE is conceived as an acoustic landscape of speech sounds and structures. It focuses on the photographs and speech of Edward Woodman, renowned in the 80s and 90s as a photographer of art exhibitions and architecture. Woodman lost his ability to speak following a cycling accident in 2000. Unable to continue his professional work he began to photograph the building site of the new Eurostar terminal at King's Cross, and regularly documented the site throughout the seven years of its development. His roughly sellotaped panoramic images record the continually changing landscape of demolition and construction.

These images are re-presented in an interactive monitor display, Woodman's hands moving across the screens to point out details and support his laboured and minimal speech. A curved wall incorporating loud speakers plays a surround-sound composition of

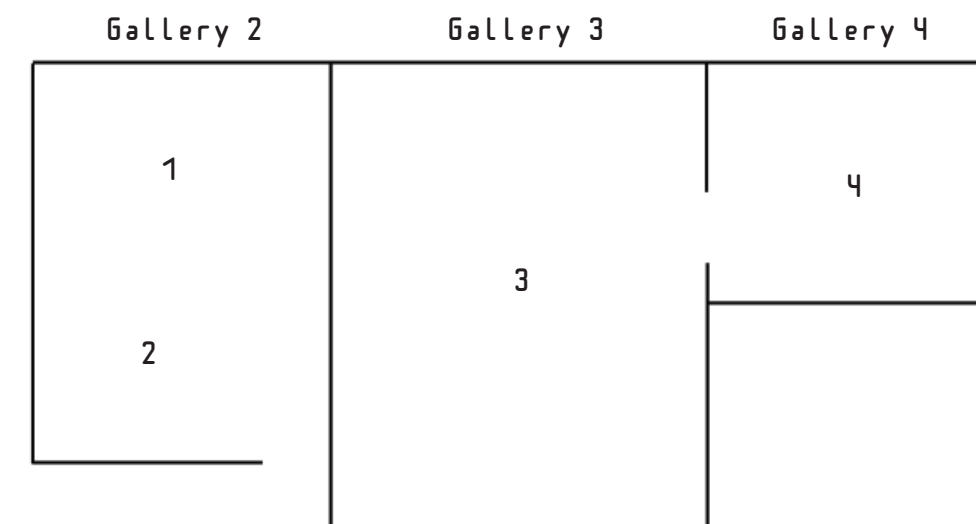
Woodman's voice as he struggles to describe the images, and his words are transcribed on two LED displays nearby. Partly shielded by an acoustic screen, a video projection shows Edward with speech therapist Judith Langley as they work on minute details of pronunciation. Words are attempted, broken down into phonemes and repeated with constant variation. The continually changing sound-forms echo on a micro-scale the changing forms of the King's Cross building site. In the mantra of repetition, words, sounds and concepts become dissociated and given meanings are destabilised.

GALLERY 4

BARRABACKSLARRABANG (2009-10, HD video 9'15)

In her video BARRABACKSLARRABANG, Stidworthy interweaves tropes of class and race, trade and desire in the hidden backwaters and idealised forms of the voice. One of these is the birth of the railway (at Liverpool's Edge Hill Station), which also arguably launched consumer capitalism as well as producing Standard Pronunciation, established to oil the wheels of trade as millions of businessmen travelling around Britain were newly confronted with accents they could not understand. Three of the characters in BARRABACKSLARRABANG speak Liverpool Backslang - the fourth speaks a Birmingham version - a subversion of standard English associated primarily with illegal trade. Designed to protect against being overheard, particularly by the ears of a law that didn't square with economic conditions on the ground.

In BARRABACKSLARRABANG the voice criss-crosses social boundaries to mirror structures and desires in ostensibly opposing spaces of language, legality and culture. Backslang grew out of poverty and criminality - oiling the wheels of illegal trade - but like all languages it is also a space of recognition, spoken proudly. It can be understood as a symptom of economic and social conditions, but also as a form of resistance and a possibility for different social paradigms.



1. GET HERE

2. TOPOGRAPHY OF A VOICE

3. I HATE

4. BARRABACKSLARRABANG