

THE
response



Vol XI

THE RESPONSE VOL XI

GATHERING Melanie Manchot

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produced by
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and
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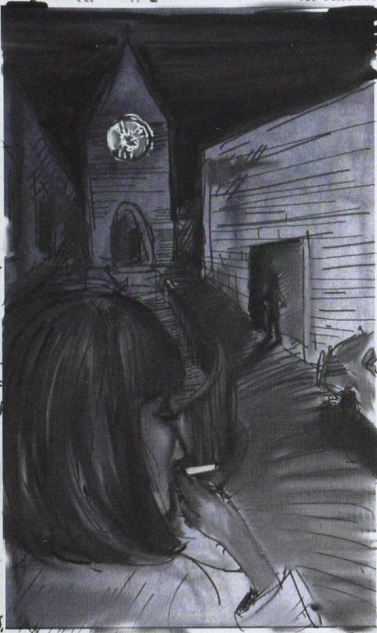
(cover image)

A. C. Godliman,

Untitled, 2010. Pen and digital media.

A MAP

St Bartholomew's



there's a guy completely naked.

MARY PETA

excuse me!



are you on your own?
are u ok?

maria José Martín Olmedo
<http://mariapedraza.wordpress.com>

JUNCTION ROAD
Dart Scooter



Yasmin Booker,
Amusement, 2010.

(previous page)
María José Martín Olmedo,
A Map, 2011. Pencil and digital media.

Lives of the Poets

I

They come. Laughing amongst themselves. Smelling of wine and tobacco. Shotguns cradled easily in their arms. The hunting party. He looks up at the night sky. It is thick with heat. Pierced with innumerable points of light. The cicadas are frantic with the itch of desire. Remember. The sound of glass. The taste of rosemary. The boy's strong arms (why can't he recall his name, now, when the shape of it in his mouth might help push down the fear?) reaching round from behind to grip his – idiotic, really, to have felt ashamed – the laughter lighting the bars; the joyous, driven gypsy guitars. Such wonder to have been young and acknowledge it in the open leanness of one's line. Remember. Do not be afraid. The air is scented with honeysuckle and almond. Will it burn? The buckshot when it pierces him with a thousand hard points of light, like Sebastian; the light erupting out rather – he a punctured black curtain behind which a white sun is concealed. He cannot help it. He is afraid. Gulping at the air. The stars, the stars. They are terrible. The summer is too long, the night too beautiful – if only there were someone to hold him he might not tremble. Do not weep. The soil beneath his feet is dry, friable, ancient – his father's land. It will slurp, greedily, the crimson flower of his blood.

II

Beetle-browed, black-prowed, cutting through the sea spray of small town summer sown dream all the way to fame by way of radio play and here now in NYC. The high cresting wave of words, women, whisky. To lie shaking beneath sodden sheets weeping, wet-brained, half-mad. Unable to get up let alone lecture. Only drink, then, in the end, the last remaining truth when the words dry up, the women dry out. He laughs to himself at this. Declares he needs a drink and finds a 2am bar in the village. Eighteen straight whiskies – a record or so he says; then: I love you, but I'm alone. The death agony. He burns with it. Raving, raging. Sees things at the corners of his vision. Brilliant bright light swimming. The surface of the sea seen from beneath. Fading as he slowly sinks.

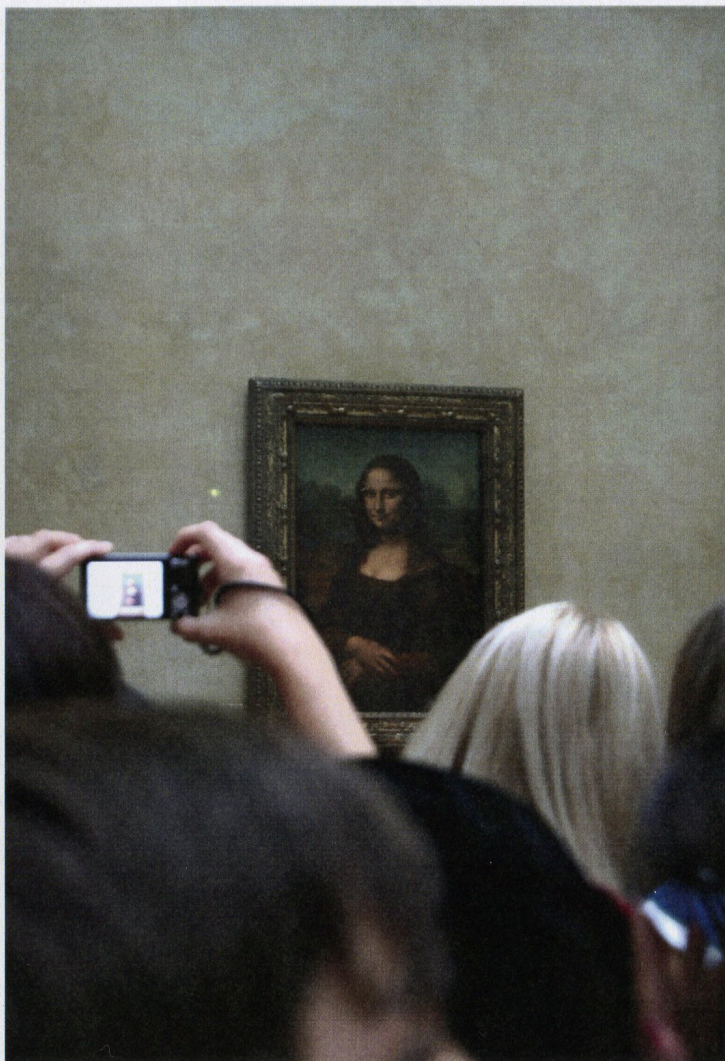
III

Wracked with the burning cough, the apple of his father's indifference lodged beneath his carapace, he scuttles back and forth – from desk to desk. The words he writes at night are all he is. They are the words of a cockroach. He finds small talk excruciating. People think him odd; a cold-fish. He suffers from this. With women, particularly, the awkwardness is most acute. There is a veil he cannot pierce. He wants to lean in; talk about ultimate things. The indifferent universe unfurling about them without dictation. But what's the point? It's just words, words, words. No more significant than the sound of the insects at night as he writes: a grubby aching after sex. He wakes from a nightmare unable to breathe. Knows it is the beginning of the slow decline. Carries the dream about with him for days after. The stranger beckoning him. In her eyes he sees love and an understanding he has never known. Come with me she says. He tries to tell her about his father, but really it is the absence where god once was that he is trying to talk about. Yet, as he opens his mouth to speak there is no language. All he can do is let forth an anguished howl. It is the sound of the void – a wordless, silent scream emanating eternally. This is all that, truly, can be said. He summons his friend to his bedside; barely able to breathe now. Burn it all he whispers. The diaries, the stories and the letters – no single word must remain. This will be his poem – an act of absolute silence – the only poem.

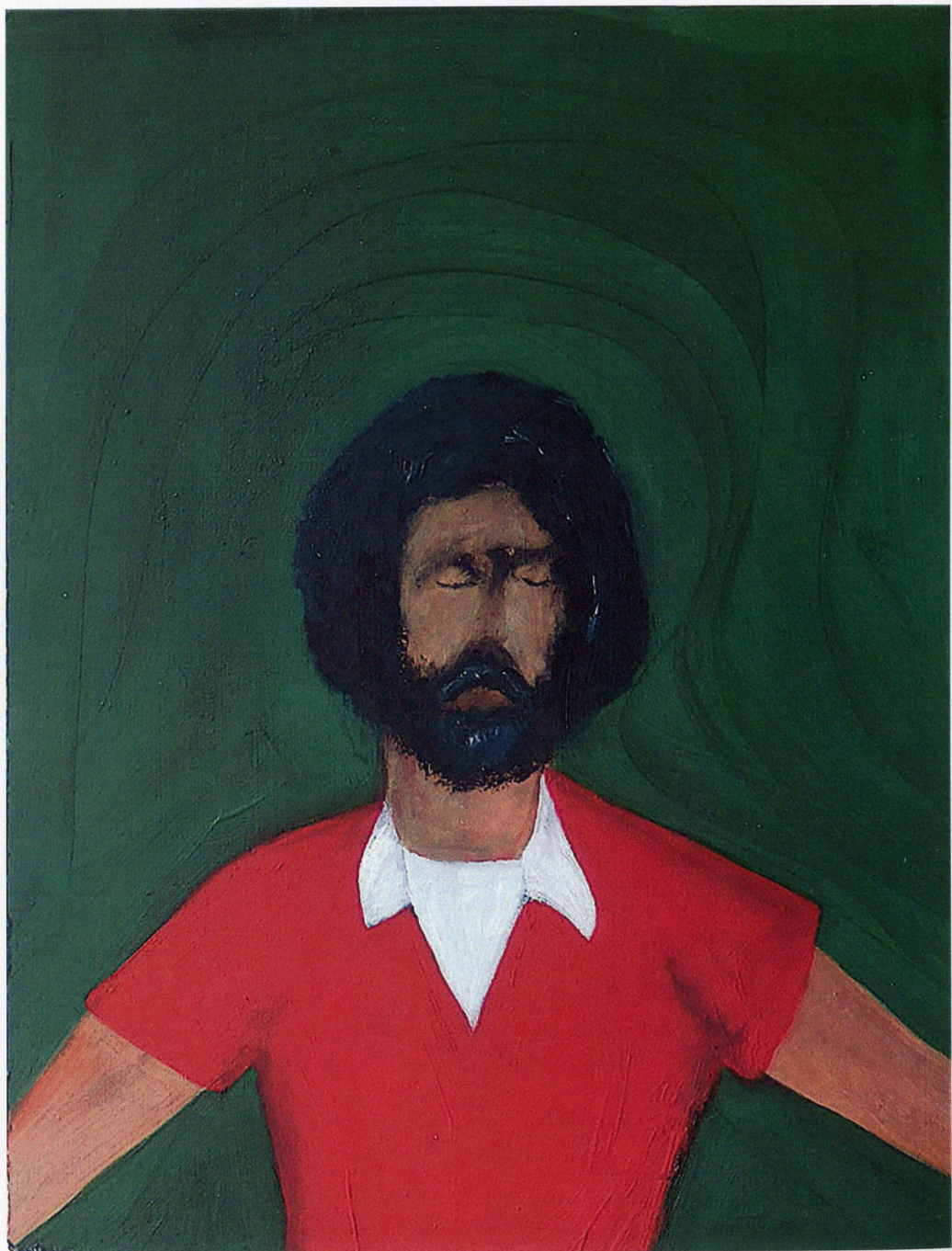
IV

Do you not feel it? You too are being gathered up. When you were a child you scraped your knee and, weeping, ran to your father who swept you into his arms. Smelling of wine and tobacco. Laughing as he hushed you. Gentle and terrible. It is not like that. The diffused interstices of your self are being drawn together. Pulled inexorably by the unseen thread toward a single point of light. It will burn for the briefest moment with a horrid glittering brilliance before winking out forever – and nothing – not even an after-shadow on the iris of the future – will remain. Tend the flame that burns within you. Tend the laughter and make it kind. Tend the light. Its refractions, reflections, everything that shines; the brilliant burnished copper domes of the ancient places. Hymn these. Hymn yourself. Sing your poem into the void. Burn, burn, burn. Burn bright.

Dorian Vaughan



Margarita Mompeán López,
Mona Lisa, 2011.
135 x 90 mm.



Paul Griffiths,
70s God, 2009.
Oil on board, 400 x 300 mm.

Going Down the Valley

Memories of past glory fill my head
as I drink my morning coffee
Here I am deep in enemy land
a speck of red in a sea of blue and white
Thoughts of matches past creep into my head
Defeated 7-1 at the Goldstone, painful!
It can never be as bad as that
3-2 to us at the Valley
Peter Ward missing two penalties
Projects onto my mind's eye
What a night that was

Full of anticipation I'm London bound
To meet my dad and reminisce
Sandwiches and off we go
Down the Valley

We used to walk through Honfair and Charlton Parks
into Charlton Lane up the little alley
which I can't remember the name
But now my sister drops us at Harvey Gardens
Because my old dad just can't walk that far
We take our seats in G block in the steep East Stand

Our heroes in red and white charge onto the green-velvet
a proud roar goes up as they take the field
A ray of warm autumn sun dissects the pitch
The battle will soon begin
Hearts are pumping
The fans are singing
A win today and I'll have joy to share
With dad

A cross from the left
Like a flock of starlings we rise as one
For a split second we think it's in
a frustrated roar swells around the ground

We're looking good
I feel it; It's going to be a good day
I say to dad
Minutes later disaster strikes
a defensive mix-up 0-1
Bollocks
Half time comes
Still optimistic we go for tea

We take our seats as the ref blows
Bang a quick one in
and we'll win
Goal
Fuck!
Wrong end
Gutted are dad and me

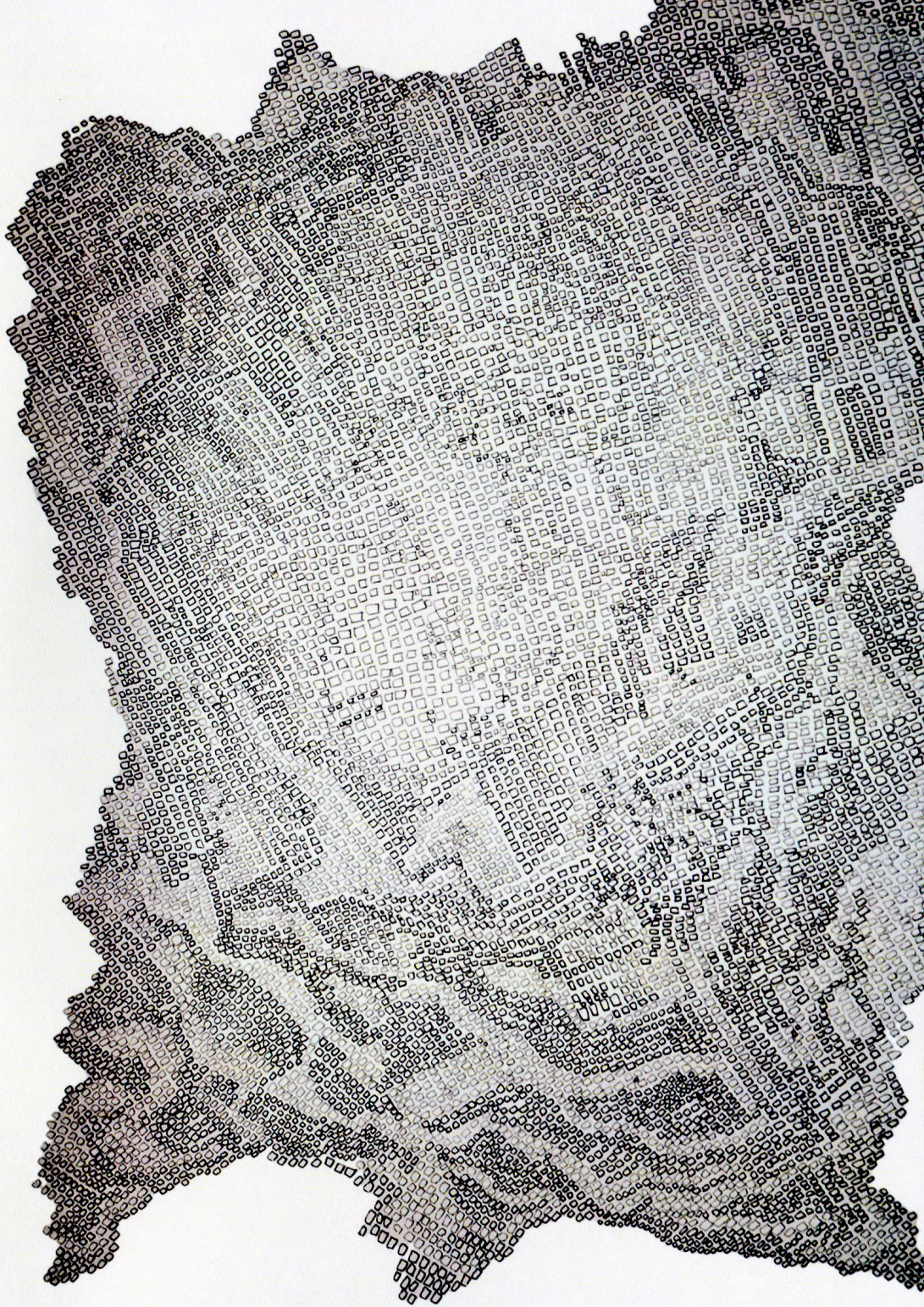
A quick reply and we're back in this
Dad says
It didn't happen and then it's three
Now it's clear it ain't our day
We leave shortly after
With Albion fans mocking
and tails between our legs
Gutted are me and dad

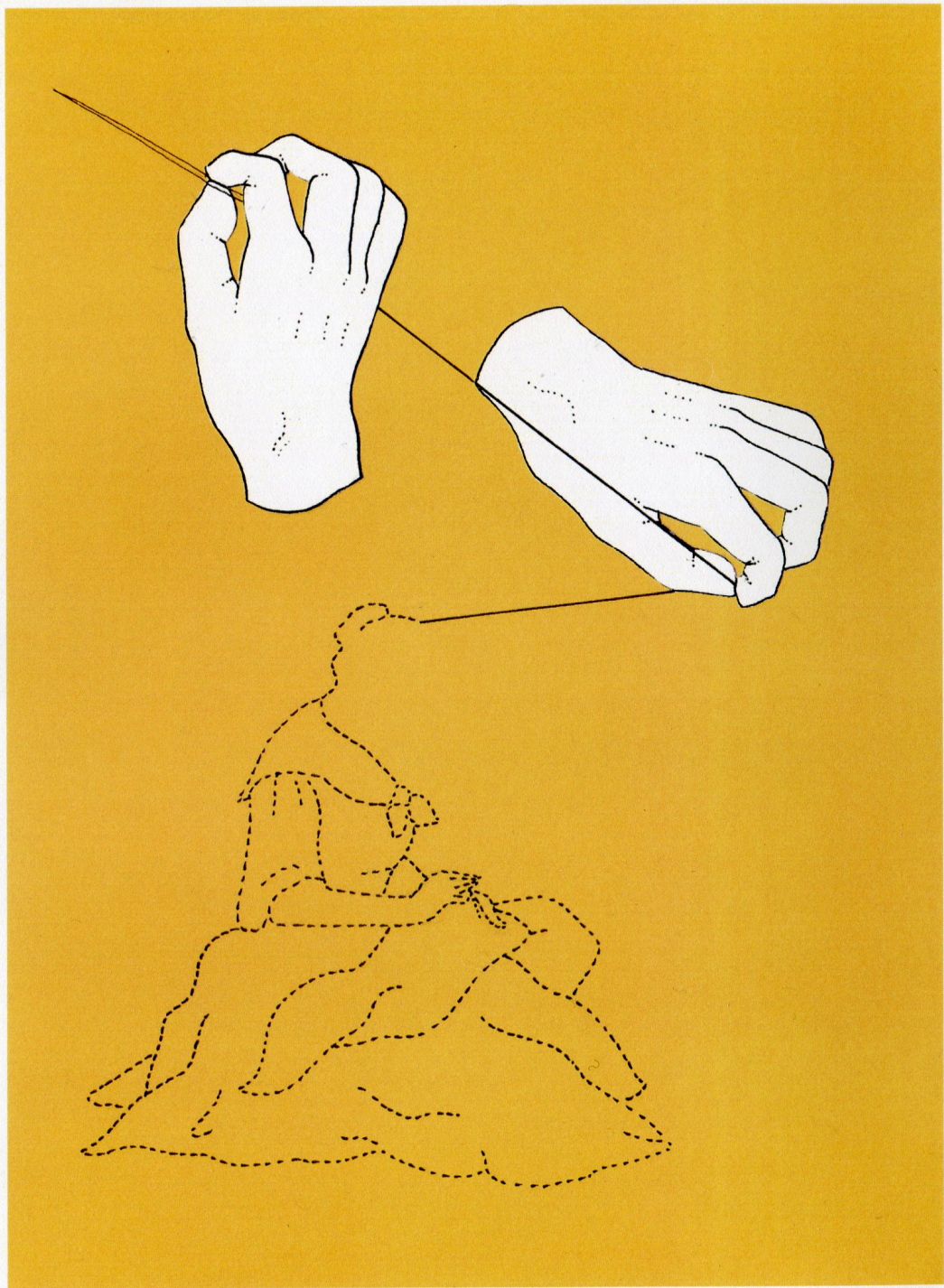
As we walk through the car park
a roar from the South Stand
It must be four
Gutted are me and dad
But d'ya know-what, I don't care
because I'm with my dad
And today that's all that matters

Paul Griffiths

(opposite)
Lizzie How,
Untitled, 2011.

Biro on paper, 420 x 594 mm.

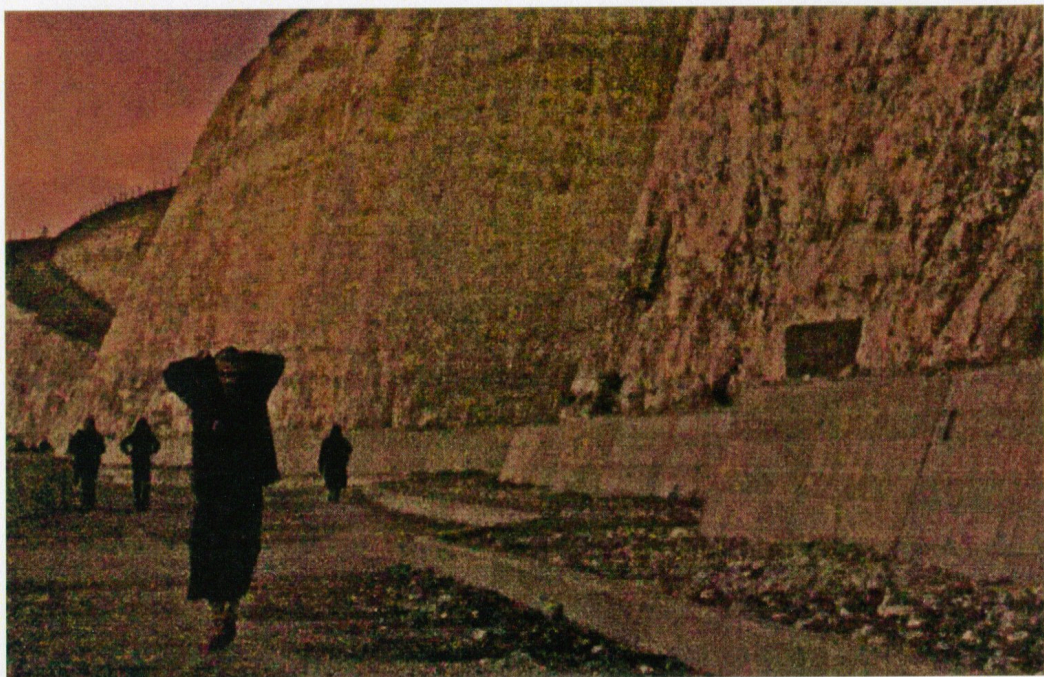






Elin Karlsson,
Untitled, 2010. 310 x 310 mm.

(opposite)
A. C. Godliman,
Ritual, 2010. 208 x 147 mm.



Lauren Schneider,
Untitled, 2009.
262 x 174 mm.

Walking

The problem with writing about walking is that, compared to other leisure activities, this most simple of pastimes has received more than its fair share of impassioned tribute and loving homage. So instead this will be a very quick stroll, a mere promenade, around the importance of walking.

Walking is a solace to the lonely, a feast to the observer, and an endless challenge to those with enough imagination. It is so easy to exclude oneself, with the use of headphones and earbuds, with our routine treks between home and work, to friends' homes, to the pub. But there is so much pleasure to be gained from the tiniest delay to gaze more closely at the way the light catches a piece of broken glass, to giggle at overheard conversations, to smile at elderly gentlemen wearing flatcaps non-ironically. At street level the world can seem grim and dirty but it also throws at us the full variety life can have to offer, and those who extol its benefits are only too aware of this. Walking is not - cannot be - relegated to rolling hills and craggy countryside.

'What a lark! What a plunge!' So begins Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway*, as it opens the door and life of protagonist Clarissa Dalloway, about to begin a walk on a June day in 1920s London. Woolf herself, in typical manner, was mocking Clarissa's own small-minded ideas of freedom: while Clarissa roams a relatively small area of Whitehall, Woolf herself typically marched the length and breadth of London, and later the South Downs from the Bloomsbury Group's retreat of Charleston. She describes in many different essays the importance of not only walking for the purpose of exercising (or exorcising), but also of 'street haunting'. This brings to mind the flâneurs of the '20s, dandy-like figures who were re-defined by Charles Baudelaire as 'a person who walks the city in order to experience it'. Flâneurs were potentially the proto-hipsters, but also eerily exemplified by Edgar Allen Poe's story 'Man of the Crowd', in which a nondescript figure stalks relentlessly through the night, searching for any gathering into which he can blend and almost ritualistically feed upon the energies of. In these senses, walking is not a solitary, fresh-air-inhaling tramp through fields, but a soul-

testing affirmation of life, or a desperate search to find it outside of the self. Recommended reading includes Charles Dickens' 'Night Walks' and any of Virginia Woolf's many essays about her movements through London.

In fact, a great piece of writing and a long walk are often inextricably bound. The pace should be steady, should explore an area thoroughly, should print an indelibly clear image on the mind. The action should drive towards a destination, or if not, should allow the space for exposition, for investigation. And within that, a time for reflection, for meditation on the self. There is never a line of thought which has not been brought to fruition by a good walk. As Rousseau once expressed, 'my mind only works with my legs'. So, take to the streets.

Nicole Holgate



Helen Goodwin,
Art Workshop, China, 2007.

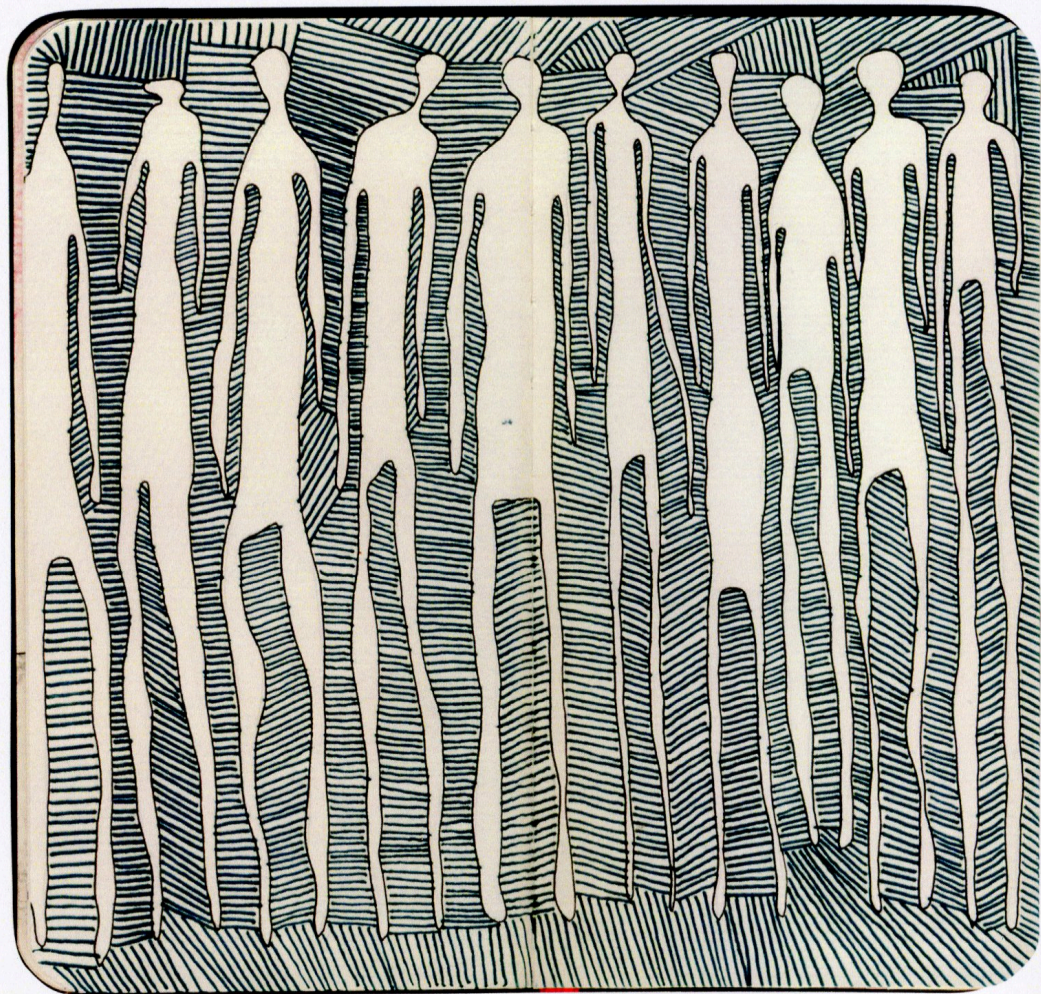
This photograph is of an arts workshop I ran in Xinjiang, China, in 2007 for thirty children. Word got out and over a hundred turned up!



Daniel Yánez González-Irún,
The Informant - A street gathering, 2010.
250 x 190 mm.



Matt Redman,
The Disappointed Isles, 2011.
Acrylic and pen on canvas board, 250 x 200 mm.

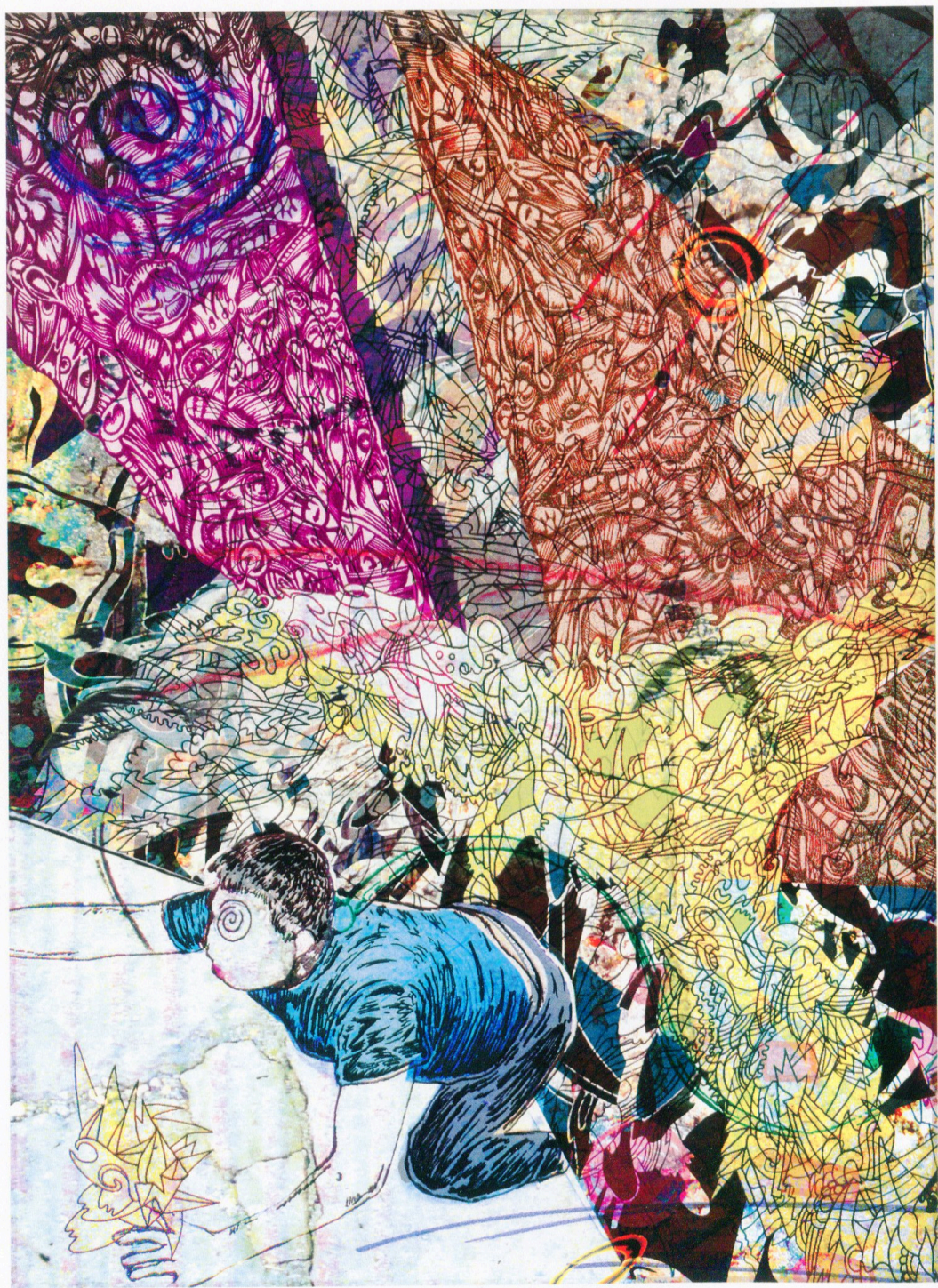


Margarita Mompeán López,
The Curious, 2009.
Ink on paper, 180 x 175 mm.

(opposite)
Eva Kalpadaki,
Still Moving, 2011.

(overleaf)
Scott Nellis,
The Chasm, 2011.
Mixed media, 210 x 297 mm





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GATHERING

Interrogation.
Reflection. Imagination.
Thought.
Fabrica's reply to
Melanie Manchot's
installation.

FABRICA

£2