Editor's Letter

In this issue e/labels will address a characteristic common to many forms of artistic practice: that of collectivity and collaboration and the marks they leave on the story of place and the solitary gaze. In pursuit of creative goals or as a response to pragmatic needs, collaboration is a strategy that can bear unexpected and thoughtful fruit.

The reasons behind adopting a collective or collaborative approach are as varied as their results. In Notes from the Studio, Anne Bean, who is currently exploring collectivity and collaboration in an ongoing multi-authored project: TAPS: Improvisations with Paul Burwell, states that her collaborative work with Richard Wilson and Paul Burwell developed 'through friendship and shared enquires, zest and dynamism'. Speaking of one of Paul Burwell's projects Bird Proximity Piece, Anne Bean explains that 'we are parts of different networks' and that a process of creative 'being and doing' operates as a collaborative social act in which we become 'those others who were ourselves'.

In his essay for Under Consideration, Guy Brett considers this slippage of identity and authorship, and how it can disrupt conventions of artistic value. Through exploring the process and form of David Medalla’s A Stitch in Time (1968–) Brett depicts Medalla’s project as a 'dialogic, kinetic, transformative structure' capable of dismantling common understandings of authorship.

Medalla’s A Stitch in Time (1968–) began during a moment of social unrest and collective action on the streets of Paris. For some the potential of collective action has been in decline since then and this apparent loss has generated a nostalgia for an imagined but never realised better place. In Simon & Tom Bloore’s collaborative practice, this loss echoes in the innocent joy of childhood set among modernist playgrounds of swings and climbing frames: a subversive space in which the world can be turned upside down.

Interviewed for e/labels by Andrew Hardman, they discuss their exhibition for Cooper Gallery, The Fascination of Islands, and the issues and benefits of working collaboratively and how this impacts upon their choice of subject matter and formal strategies.

And so to finish with a thought from Paul Burwell, which is apt for the words, sentences and delighted grammar held fast in the coming pages: let e/labels be THE WAY FORWARD: (or if not forward, at least SOMEWHERE ELSE).

Sophia Yadong Hao

In our regular column What I’m reading now... which for this issue is penned by Guy Brett, the solace and comfort of words is laid bare. Brett demonstrates for us how the tangle of meanings that take root around words can "help to lift life out of its mediocrity" and elevate language to the condition of art.

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