

FREEDUMB. WHY BOTHER? (by Simon Taylor)

Hello Chris. How are you? I enjoyed reading your thesis very much. It seems to be a direct conversation so I am going to respond in the same way. There is one point where you question how anybody can write a thesis. In my case I was 21 years old and did not know enough about myself to have an awareness of my motivations. I did really enjoy the subject matter though, which was the “Verbal overshadowing of Visual memory”. Quite appropriate to the discussion of visual art practice through language ... don’t you think? In essence it was suggesting that verbalizing a visual memory reframed that memory into a verbally biased version of the original. Thus losing the non-verbalisable aspects of its former self. You mention a fear of concretizing aspects of your practice in language and it is perhaps because of an intuitive feeling of this process. There actually are a lot of questions throughout your writing. This questioning is as you mentioned perhaps the basis of art – the constant question. I thought you also provided answers, especially in terms of shared perspectives and relationships through your art practice. I found, however, there is much doubt in your voice throughout your thesis. There is doubt of your language, doubt of your practice, and doubt of your intentions. This is different from the very confident person I know and work and live with. Thinking about these things, however, I suddenly realized that it is of course a choice of yours to include this doubt and to include it in a conversational monologue, and this in itself is a most confident step. This is what is known as a paradox. Confidence expressed through doubt. This paradox and the general feeling of your subject matter also trigger in my mind the wandering of Francis Alys, most relevantly his Paradox of Praxis I (1997). A wandering without destination. His many projects involving sign painters, volkswagons rolling down hills, the moving of sand dunes by 500 people. An adoption of art practice that has movement but with limited production. This practice, like your own, is very interesting in that it questions authorship and capitalism in general but in an inclusive and poetic way free of overt politic, hatred, and anger. There is in both practices a natural flow or entropy towards objects and people. An unrestricted self. I do get a strong FEELING from your writing independent from your subject matter. This is because of the worry, the doubt, the intimateness of your wandering and inventive monologue. There appears to be a frustration that your communication may not be received totally by other humans. You express a desire for an invention that could transmit your thoughts and feelings totally, without restriction to others. This desire I feel is your motivation for your art practice. This invention already exists because it IS your art practice. You are in fact the inventor. “Not all of my works are realized with someone else, but most of them are done in the prospect of an eventual collaboration... The way it happens is that , once the first scenario is set, I pass it on and watch it evolve, or die. If the concept holds, “it” will bounce back and forth (from the “other(s)” to me and vice versa), grow into something else or reinforce itself through the process of its multiple interpretation... If the concept is weak, it will have a short term live and disintegrate within the exchange process itself. It’s the test of the articulation, from an idea to a product. Not all ideas need to turn into products though, the best ones tend to become stories, without the need to turn into products”. Francis Alys. Coincidentally yesterday I opened to a random page in a book lying in our hallway ... the book by Kurt Vonnegut is called slaughterhouse five....What I did read on this random page is very relevant to the structure of your thesis and perhaps your larger art practice in general ... the following passage describes the main character Billy Pilgrim’s attempt to understand the writing style of a race of alien’s known as the Tralfamadorian’s. One of the alien’s tries to explain it to him ... “each clump of symbols is a brief, urgent message – describing a situation, a scene. We Tralfamadorians read them all at once, not one after the other. There isn’t any particular relationship between all the messages, except that the author has chosen them carefully, so that, when seen all at once, they produce an image of life that is beautiful and surprising and deep. There is no beginning, no middle, no end, no suspense, no moral, no causes, no effects. What we love in our books are the depths of many marvelous moments seen all at one time” I really enjoy your lists immensely and for me they do represent the passage of text above. The one on our bathroom wall that you and Matt Hinkley designed for Omnipresence describes exactly the feelings of reading clumps of symbols all at once and gaining great depth all at once. Perhaps the covers for your thesis could be one of your lists and again a giant poster list in the middle. Emotion encased in content. The lists represent your CONTENT; and your play with language, conversation and doubt present your EMOTION – it is a valid structure. Incidentally, that show was my first integration into your model of practice – playing music on the floor of GCAS – the best thing was you were absent on that day but still present as a projection above me dancing on the wall. (Include USB with mp3s and images as part of thesis?) I am yet to reach the point myself where I feel I have a definable art practice. I once sat with you in a park in the midst of Sydney, drinking coca cola, and discussing peoples art practices that involved journeying (either walking, sailing, driving, sleeping) – activities by human beings traditionally done outside of art practice. I argued on that day that I did not understand the motivation behind these posturings as I saw them. I now have reversed my thoughts – 180 degrees – it is a revolution from immaturity. I think I felt that way because I have undertaken many journey’s with personal similarity – the most influential being a solo hitchhiking walk journey from the southern border of Mozambique to the northern border of Mozambique – I saw the journey as completely personal - An exploration of ones life, confidence, exploration and self expansion I did not see the need to publicise it. Yet despite this I find myself on endless occasions recounting stories and tales of that journey as it was singlehandedly the most life affirming, freedom evoking, scary pursuit I have ever been on. Without realizing I am always publicizing it to anyone that will listen> if only I had have been wise enough to frame it within a realm where it could have also affected more people than just myself. An inclusive journey that was documented and encased in an open forum – perhaps as an art practice? I’m still not sure whether this would have changed the influence or effect it had on myself – would I feel the same way if I had an awareness of documenting and presenting the journey as it happened. Again this produces a paradox – the paradox of praxis. Still an art practice outside of producing objects is of great interest to me – also one that challenges my notions of absurdity and will. I always thought our curated backyard music shows were an important part of your practice – inviting people to your house, cooking food, making cider and having lots of people play music. No products or cost. That photo of snawkler playing is such a display of the energy of those shows. (also attach drawings of your flyers) Some important aspects of your physical practice I thought you failed to mention were:*Wall paintings – no end product, ephemeral, but also permanent installations as even when painted over they still continue to exist*Flyer drawings/Tape Covers – very DIY punk but with long history – easy distribution of ‘free’ art people can stick on there bedroom walls, fridges*Dancing – again as ‘slapdance’ evergreen launch at ACCA, projection on wall for omnipresence, out at parties, still a display but an engagement of movement* Blogging – you mentioned counterfitness and jahjahsphinx, but also satin masque mixtapes include (perhaps blogging is too ubiquitous)* Archiving – thoughts on archival practice, you did mention documenting all in B&W images but your recent use of contact over A4 paper drawings is interesting.*Also distinction (lack of? –chris) between studio practice, home production, collecting of objects, materials, the clock at home with the stickers on it which....has... been adding to is a great representaion of your consideration of time in practice (include this image), also time of bikeriding and walking where you are constantly thinking. Anyway I enjoyed writing to you as conversation when you are not here.....This writing to you is free for you to edit at will to include or not include, just use as feedback, hopefully seen as very constructive and positive from a close friend. Thanks for asking me to read it and respond and for including me in the many projects you seem to have going on. Your encouragement with my own art making is always invaluable. Thanks Chris! Well done on completing thesis. See ya soon. Simon

“Lazy-assed Menace” Joshua Petherick’s essay for Christopher L.G. Hill’s Thesis. As translated by the Wu-Name Generator, 2009.

- (Dot point, by Oliva Barret)..1Because there is very little which is determined and yet so much language to suggest that it is. The flux that may exist within any one thing is halted as soon as a word is used in relation to it. Its stillness is imposed - here we find conflict. And every argument between lovers that forgets what is at stake, that dissolves into that improbable world of semantics, of attaching what is said to some kind of truth, some kind of meaning, good luck... David Foster Wallace describes trying to explain experience through language as like trying to squeeze the universe through a keyhole. Dancing is different – dancing is untraceable and unaccountable, it only exists in precise confluences of time and space. As artists, to counteract the problems of walking around covered in layers and frames and things-which-already-determine-our-understanding, we must dance.
- 2That there is a word for love is a precise example of the failure of language. That we seek its constant articulation is a precise example of the failure of human beings to understand what is lost when we try to replace the indeterminable power of the senses with something that we think is better translated, more easily understood.
- 3Two soccer goals in a room facing the walls so their openings are concealed. No goals. Le Carré Vert.
- 4Slavoj Žižek chose to conduct an interview in a rubbish processing plant, convinced that ecologists should find this site beautiful. We live mostly within white walls which shit passes through. It is hidden from us and yet it houses us. The sanitation paradox of Modernism is how he describes it. Was the cleanliness of de Stijl really generated by the collective Dutch compulsions towards sanitation, as who had suffered for centuries from infectious diseases?
- 5The Higher Powers Command: Paint the Upper Right Corner Black!
- 6Alienation can be an effective form of engagement, not in that very neat way that everything contains its inverse, but because at least it is proximity and existence reverberates this way. Distances between. David Beckham was booed by 90,000 fans at the Rose Bowl when LA Galaxy played Barcelona FC last week. The head of Major League Soccer in America was pleased, he said: “The opposite of love is not hate. It is indifference.”
- 7The invisible fabric of the universe. A highly evolved layer of life that contains ideas with none of their material remainder. No detritus. Almost nothing, but saying it contains nothing would be contesting that only the material exists, when it is our internal worlds that we have built up, that dominate us, that enslave us and set us free and throw us in all possible directions and form the veil that we place over everything, especially art, the frustration that we can approach nothing without everything that we remember before this. The mind that can’t forget is so alive it’s dead, Sande Cohen recording that Nick gave me, receiving an education in critical studies while painting my toe-nails purple and cleaning my room. The present is perpetual.

All text taken from “Christopher L G Hill, Self governed Thesis, all art is problematic, Never werk. Clouds/ Evergreen publication”, thanks for the responses. Some editing by me also. Christopher L G Hill

James Deutsher’s Sponge-Bob response to “Christopher L G Hill, Self governed Thesis, all art is problematic, Never werk. Clouds/ Evergreen publication”, **on reverse.

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#Christopher L G Hill,
Never werk.
(Featuring sound by Judo Bronze)
#Masato Takasaka,
Post-structural Jam
(Shut up! We know you can play...)



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