



SAVAGE

ISSUE THREE

WAR & PEACE

Note

Spring 2016

Welcome to SAVAGE ISSUE 3 themed 'War & Peace'. This edition has come together in the context of the highest number of displaced people in the world due to conflict, second only to World War II. With this in mind, Rosie Hewitson discusses the Good Chance Theatre in the Calais migrant camp the Jungle (p. 42). Meanwhile, James Bennett considers the implications of traditional Russian masculinity (p. 8). The imminent threat of Putin's Russia is a topic to which Zsófia Paulikovics also refers, in her exploration of performance artists Pussy Riot (p. 14).

Joe Thompson recognises the ease with which we are liable to become sanitised to news stories and images of war in the re-appropriation of the *Women of World War II* memorial, by acknowledging how war and peace are often, misleadingly, represented as binaries (p. 38). Indeed, for most of us, our everyday lives pass unaffected by conflict, the focus being instead on our own concerns for internal well-being, as Lucy Rogers notes (p. 4), and to which Georgie Hurst alludes in her poem *The Sharp Legs of Ladies* (p. 61).

Alastair Curtis discusses how war and its aftermath have historically been an inspiration for art, in his investigation of the circumstances in which Dadaism came about (p. 34). Similarly, Nancy Heath looks at the dual role of the Somme in its intensity for both destruction and creativity (p. 50), whilst Ha Vu considers the return to objects of beauty and aesthetics during periods of conflict (p. 26). Hannah Binney's documentary *La Panaderia* meanwhile, makes use of testimonials to create an intimate depiction of the repercussions of the El Salvadorian civil war (p. 32).

Despite this edition's emphasis on war, the resonating emotion is one of hopefulness: the arts will always be a refuge in times of conflict, to which the collation of these pieces is testament.

All the best,

Sophie and Lauren



Sophie Meadows and Lauren Bowes
(President and Editor-in-chief)

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Alone in a Crowd

LUCY ROGERS asks if it is possible to find peace when faced with ever-increasing distractions.

The challenge of defining one's identity as separate to the rest of humanity is more complex today than it has ever been; the struggle to find a place in the suddenly expanded social sphere of the twenty-first century has left many unable to cope. Around eighty per cent of Britain's population now live in towns or cities, a number the *Guardian* predicts will rise to ninety-two per cent by 2030. Residents of London and other major cities increasingly have to deal with an environment so busy that the idea of finding any sort of 'peace' within the metropolis seems almost ridiculous.

We are crowded both by a physical multitude of human beings and the omnipresence of communicative media. At every opportunity we are bombarded with information: advertisements on the tube, notifications from social media sites, and incessant spam emails. Modern society has taught us to crave constant distraction and instant gratification, temporarily repressing our problems through easy-to-digest on-screen mediums and allowing us to find some sort of relaxation through mechanical scrolling of our smartphones.

Constant communication acts in opposition to the idea of finding peace in solitude. It is ingrained within us, a hangover from Wordsworth perhaps, that aloneness is essential to well-being and self-development. Without the peace that being alone can provide, can we 'discover' our true selves?

It is important to delineate between loneliness and the state of being alone. In the same way that it is possible to feel completely isolated in a huge city like London, being surrounded by the presence (virtual or not) of millions of strangers creates feelings of disconnection, not togetherness. Incessant trivial communication seems to prevent the type of real contact with others that drives away loneliness, as well as making it less likely that we spend calm, unharassed time in the company of our own thoughts.

Similarly, hundreds of 'likes' do not foster a sense of identity; they make it harder to switch off our consciousness of what other people think. Increasingly, we post anticipating a response: how, in this context, could somebody come to define themselves as an individual?

Contrary to what the Baby Boomer generation may think, 'Millennials' are concerned about being alienated from 'real life', genuine interaction, or their true sense of self. A worry about life being meaningless pervades our generation – that we will remain in a job we hate, for no real emotional reward. Added to this is the anxiety that our constant engagement with technology has alienated us from what is 'truly important' (although nobody seems quite sure exactly what this means). Despite these questions we are reluctant, or unable, to either fully reject or embrace a 'plugged-in' lifestyle: the popularity of mindfulness apps seems to epitomise this tension. We remain trapped in an unhappy limbo between all-out surrender to the joys of technology and a movement away from our modern habits.

However, this awareness, and the resultant anxious self-questioning of young urbanites, is actually heartening. It means that we, as a generation, are still forcing ourselves to search

for moments of peace or connection. Although peace remains elusive in day-to-day city life, this simply makes what we do find valuable more so than ever. It is possible to cynically view the health and travel industries as particular benefactors from our desire to escape the drudgery of the everyday; it's hard to visit any sort of lifestyle website without being bombarded with offers for discount spa breaks and beach holidays. The onus falls on each individual to find their own ways to experience fleeting moments of calm and contentment.

This may take the form of literally escaping from the city, or switching off all technology for a short period of time. Even within the confines of London, there are places to take time for self-reflection. Whilst a Romantic-inspired route may be to visit a park and take solace in nature, museums and galleries are more usual to visit and can be useful spaces to think.

6 This kind of sustained and conscious engagement with our own selves – as opposed to mindless and fleeting distraction – allows for a genuine sense of peace, which can counteract some of the chaos of the city.

Making a conscious effort to pause for a moment and reflect will prevent us from becoming overwhelmed: while most aspects of modern urban life are influenced, or even controlled, by crowd mentality, the search for peace remains the responsibility of the individual. This struggle to rediscover our own identity within a seemingly conglomerated mass, whilst difficult, will lead to a healthier relationship with those around us, and ultimately, with ourselves.

SHOW CASE



by JOE HARRIS

Putin the Sex Symbol

JAMES BENNETT explores the constricting Russian tradition of masculinity.

The Western media seems almost comically infatuated with President Putin; for Russian residents, this obsession pervades news and culture to an even further extent. Whether he is riding through mountains half-naked on horseback, supposedly ‘saving the life of a tiger’, or Judo training at the Top Athletic School (wearing a black belt), everything he does is televised – and it all seems constructed to build up a ‘macho’ image.

What is perhaps more surprising is that, conversely to the British attitude towards politicians which provokes mockery and distrust, most Russians look on Putin’s activities not with incredulity, but with admiration and respect. In a nationwide census by what NBC has called a ‘respected pollster’, Putin gained an approval rating of eighty-nine per cent. Some may argue these statistics show that Russian people believe his policies are actually improving their lives. Another questionable-sounding argument is that his popularity is due to his status as a ‘sex symbol’, an odd quality for a leader of a country.

To many, Putin resonates as a strong man, a beacon of traditional masculinity and someone who wants to keep the status quo – all ideas that his portrayal in the media strives towards fostering. Russia is obsessed with ideas of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’. Gendered expectations of men and women encompass different ways to behave, certain professions to choose, and particular pathways to follow. Russian ‘masculinity’ calls for an image of

‘strength’, one that does not make room for acknowledging faults, problems, or even emotions – and certainly not homosexuality.

Homosexuality also goes against the claustrophobic Russian conception of ‘tradition’. One objection during a discussion of human rights and Putin’s treatment of the LGBTQ+ community was the statement that in Russia they translate LGBTQ+ rights as ‘the promotion of non-traditional orientations’.

The traditions look very similar to those of pre-revolutionary Russia that Tolstoy brings to light in his diaries and literature. Tolstoy’s early journals note a physical attraction to men and a ‘spiritual attraction’ to women. Thirteen children later, he rejected the idea of sex altogether and joined many contemporaries in deciding that homosexuality was one of many symptoms of society’s moral decay.

Whether Tolstoy’s changing views can be regarded as symptomatic of a man grappling with his sexuality or not, what is clear is that the context in which gay relationships are spoken about has hardly evolved since his era. Much of what he wrote is still true in Russia today and repression of non-heteronormative sexuality is advocated today with exactly the same language. It is still the case that while homosexual relationships are possible, they are not allowed to reach the public sphere.

In pre-revolutionary Russia, homosexuality was technically illegal, but the hedonistic ruling aristocracy wasn’t deterred. Aristocrats were expected to marry and have children, but what they did behind closed doors was their affair. Today, members of the new aristocracy – celebrities, oligarchs, and TV stars – are rumoured to be leading a double life, hiding homosexual relationships from the gaze of society. There are stories of married politicians using gay dating apps with their location stat-

ing they are inside the Kremlin, the very seat of power – just as in Tolstoy’s time the governor of Moscow was known to conduct homosexual affairs from within the royal household.

It remains the case that for Russian citizens without fame or money diverging from sexual norms is fraught, even inconceivable.

Punishing otherness is one ‘tradition’ that has been upheld in Russia in the last 100 years. A war is being waged on anything that is not understood, or anything that could cause change.

The real danger of the brand of masculinity that Putin propagates is its emphasis on *appearing* strong and macho. The image of suited, powerful manliness that Russia’s ruling elite puts out to the public at large – one that denies the possibility of homosexual relationships – is even more intractable because it is a façade.

Consequently, for members of the LGBTQ+ community who do not conform to society’s expectations in regard to the appearance of gender norms, everyday life can be a struggle. Due to the link between power and a ‘traditional’ heterosexual manly appearance, openly gay men are forced to live in the shadows of society.

The problem is: how do you combat this crippling narrow depiction of gender stereotypes? Currently, embracing difference only serves to marginalize further. We can only combat tradition by integrating new identities into culture: perhaps, as in *War and Peace*, Russia’s connection to the West could be just such a catalyst for change. Rather than isolating Russia, the world needs to build connections to break the grip of ‘macho’ conformism.

Smokey Chimneys

AMY MACPHERSON calls for our reluctant politicians to combat air pollution.

A bus grinds to a halt. Passengers slam their Oyster Cards on the sensor and muddle up the stairs. The doors close, the engine growls to life and fumes belch out of its exhaust, mingling with the already very polluted air of Oxford Street. The smoke makes its way into the lungs of pedestrians who, thanks to recent media reports, are all too aware of the dirtiness of one of London's most popular shopping destinations.

Within the first seven days of 2016, London had already breached its annual EU pollution limits of nitrogen dioxide. Our city also consistently meets its EU limit for annual air pollution concentrations (PM10). This is not new information. During a presentation in 2014, David Carslaw of the Environmental Research Group, KCL, questioned why Oxford Street has the highest mean concentration of NO2 in the world. Carslaw's report identifies three hotspots where this limit is regularly exceeded, with Euston Road, home of UCL, being one of them. NO2 and PM10 are linked to respiratory problems, asthma, cancer, and reduced life expectancy; while it is not known exactly how many people die each year as a result, recent estimates range between 3,000 and 9,500. At the moment these forms of pollution are causing long-term unseen health problems. If we fail to fight back soon, we may also experience a tragedy such as the one that unfolded just over sixty years ago.

London has always had a problem with pollution. Peter Brimblecombe writes in *The*

and Black Clouds

Big Smoke that the burning of sea-coal in the Middle Ages led to such bad pollution that Henry III issued a ban on coal burning altogether. His son, Edward I, later set up a commission in the hope of resolving the issue. By the fifteenth century, the skies were black with smoke, and subsequent monarchs repeatedly expressed their irritation through documents such as King Charles II's gloriously titled 'proclamation concerning the sauing of fuell, materials, labour, and lessening the great annoyance of smoake.' Things did not improve in the Victorian era. Fans of Charles Dickens, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle will know of the great 'pea-soupers' that once engulfed London, swirling up and down the streets like living creatures; so thick that it was difficult for anyone to see even a few yards ahead of themselves.

These 'pea-soupers' killed thousands of people during the Victorian era. Despite this, few strong pieces of pollution legislation were passed until the mid-twentieth century, when a particularly shocking episode finally spurred the government into action. In December 1952, a thick smog settled over London; instead of moving up into the atmosphere it lingered over the city like a smothering pillow – and as a result more than 4,000 people lost their lives, less than a decade after Britain's devastating loss of life in World War II. Concerned about the economic costs of tackling air pollution, the government responded lethargically.



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Finally, four years later, they passed the Clean Air Act, introducing tough new restrictions on the burning of coal. Because of this, London air now looks a lot cleaner.

That particular battle may have been won, but the war is not over yet. Although the pollution is now less visible, it doesn't mean it isn't there. In place of coal we now have diesel, thought to be the main culprit behind the alarming rates of NO₂ and PM₁₀. Some steps have been taken by the government to tackle the problem: in 2010 the Mayor's Air Quality Strategy promised hybrid buses and stricter age limits for taxis; five years ago the government pledged £5 million towards installing diesel filters in cars and a No Engine Idling campaign for taxis.

London has been successful in lowering PM₁₀ and sulphur-dioxide emissions in the last few years, but not much progress has been made towards the reduction of NO₂ – and it is this chemical that poses the most serious threat to public health.

Worryingly, the response of the Mayor of London to the issue of air pollution has had a similar whiff of procrastination to that of the government in the years before 1952. In a 2014 Twitter exchange, Boris Johnson initially denounced David Carslaw's claim about Oxford Street's NO₂ levels as a 'ludicrous urban myth', stating that London air is 'better than Paris and many other Euro cities'. Fortunately, Johnson has since accepted the research on air pollution by King's College London, and Transport for London has since promised the creation of an ultra-low-emission zone where 'all vehicles driving in the centre of the capital during working hours would be zero or low emission'. But whether this will actually come into effect in September 2020, another four long years away, and how many avoidable deaths will occur before this measure is implemented, remains to be seen.

SHOW
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Riot Girls

ZSÓFIA PAULIKOVICS looks at the potency of Pussy Riot's mix of performance art and feminist punk.

Music is often overtly political, confrontational even: it can be used as a weapon. But rarely are the lines between performance and activism so blurred as in the case of Pussy Riot. The notorious punk-feminist protest group was founded in 2011, but gained notoriety in 2012 after five members staged a performance in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. The performance, entitled 'Punk Prayer – Mother of God, Chase Putin Away', aimed to criticise the Patriarch Kirill I, leader of the Russian Orthodox Church, for his endorsement of Putin's election campaign. It resulted in the Patriarch declaring that Pussy Riot was doing the work of the devil. Three members, Nadezhda 'Nadya' Tolokonnikova, Maria Alyokhina, and Yekaterina Samutsevich, were arrested on charges of 'hooliganism motivated by religious hatred' and sentenced to two years in prison. The remaining two who participated in the performance reportedly left Russia fearing prosecution, and Samutsevich was released on probation, with her sentence suspended. But Tolokonnikova and Alyokhina went on to serve a twenty-one month sentence, and were transferred to two different prisons in October 2012.

In 2014, following their release, a statement was made on behalf of Pussy Riot: Tolokonnikova and Alyokhina were no longer members of the collective. Indeed the two remained relatively silent, in the mean time setting up MediaZona, an anti-governmental news channel dedicated to exposing corruption in the Russian justice system. Their public withdrawal makes their newest single 'Chaika' all the more powerful. The song, recorded in

LA in mid-December, is more of a spoken-word track, delivered in Russian over mellow hip-hop beats. It is produced in a decidedly different vein to their previous music, yet still fits their ethos unexpectedly well. 'I think that the method of punk is that you always have to create something unexpected,' Tolokonnikova said of the song. 'Sometimes you have to transform your own, so as not to stagnate.'

The track is a sardonic, almost Orwellian take on Russia's highest-serving legal officer, General Prosecutor Yuri Chaika, who was responsible for Tolokonnikova and Alyokhina's imprisonment. It was made in clear support of Russian anti-corruption campaigner Alexei Navalny, who recently released a video implicating Chaika with covering up his son's connection to a bloody massacre, as well as the murder of a shipyard owner in Chaika's hometown of Irkutsk. The accompanying video features Tolokonnikova as Chaika himself, and a group of women all dressed in uniforms, delivering an ironic speech on how to be a patriot. It's laden with symbolism, with imagery reminiscent of Communist Russia. Scenes are smattered with red, Putin's photograph hanging on the wall like that of a dictator. Chaika (meaning 'seagull' in Russian) is referenced by bird arm motions throughout the video. Elsewhere, a woman is seen devouring an entire chicken: an allusion to the hypocritical modesty indicated in the lyrics: 'Live like a saint with holy simplicity / Don't eat too much, be humble when you shop'. But it is also a subtle threat, made more powerful by its playfulness, as if to say: 'You may hold all the power in this war, but there's nothing you can do to stop us from depicting you as fried chicken.'

Feminism as an ideology underpins Pussy Riot's performance, their entire existence: they rely heavily on the tradition of feminist punk collectives such as Riot Grrrl (not least in their choice of name). But they state that while they make politically-charged music, contribute to feminist discourse, and perpetuate a non-standard female image that they share with their predecessors, what sets them apart from bands such as Bikini Kill or Sleater-Kinney is

the complete absence of institutions to support their expression. While Western culture has all but transitioned to the 'fourth wave of feminism', focusing on women's issues and identity politics, in Russia the fight to abolish idealised notions of sexism, female duties, and family life that still permeate society is ongoing. Feminism, according to Patriarch Kirill I, has the potential to destroy Russia.

This is not an overt criticism of Riot Grrrl, nor a denial of their importance in the evolution of Pussy Riot, but rather a sober evaluation of the fact that Western cultural institutions – even something as simple as an alternative gig venue – are absent from Russian culture. Their unsanctioned, guerrilla-style performances have become a core principle of their performance, as several members have stated that the government is unlikely to take seriously something they have authorised themselves.

Fundamentally, what sets Pussy Riot apart from their Western forerunners, is an absence of choice, familiar only to someone who did not grow up with the privilege of a counter culture. Pussy Riot rebel not because they can, but because they must.



by WILL DE VILLIERS

Sentiment of Silence

SHOW CASE

ANJELICA BARBE talks to DYLAN TRENOUTH about his original song ‘Won’t Make A Noise’.

DYLAN TRENOUTH’S ‘Won’t Make A Noise’ weighs in on the tragedy of the Indonesian Genocide of 1965–66. Although the poetry of his lyrics poignantly depicts a denial of voice against a melancholy melody, his track ultimately proves hopeful in its interpretation of such a hopeless situation.

‘Won’t Make A Noise’ concerns the Indonesian Genocide of 1965–66: an anti-communist purge that attempted to silence the nation’s leftist population. In 2014, Joshua Oppenheimer documented an anonymous Indonesian man revisiting the men who killed his brother forty years earlier in *The Look of Silence*. The film became a critically-acclaimed, compelling piece that depicts both the detachment of the murderers and the stifled silence of the victims’ families involved. Trenouth was inspired to write in response to Oppenheimer’s account of the remnants of this tragedy – an event where the motive for genocide was concealed behind the government’s fear of communism.

The documentary focuses on a complete denial of voice that resulted in the ultimate silencing of human expression: mass-killings of up to one million deaths. Oppenheimer’s film attempts to give back the freedom of expression of those who survived the genocide, the sentiment of which is echoed in the lyrics of ‘Won’t Make A Noise’. Whilst the genocide denied people their voice in terms of physicality, Trenouth presents the concept of voice as greater than that: ‘not to do with words, / To do with lips or to do with mouth’. He explains that ‘the fascists’ attempt to silence the ‘communist’ demographic actually immortalised their

victims, and now ‘their voice reverberates on a global scale’.

Trenouth’s songwriting takes influence from a range of artistic modes: historical events, film, and documentary, and a range of musical genre. His process is organic yet immersive, translating themes and ideas that affect him into a message he wishes to convey through song. He tells me he is currently listening to Brazilian Bossa nova, soul, and Bob Dylan’s songs of social unrest and anti-war movements. These genres certainly filter through into the chord progressions and construction of his melodies. ‘Won’t Make A Noise’ opens with a procession-like drumbeat, a sound that replicated the slow, laboured footfall of the victims, reluctantly moving ‘single file through the streets’ of Indonesia.

Trenouth admires the lyrical prowess of Amy Winehouse; an artist who he feels incorporates rhyme and metaphor effortlessly with a conversational tone. He hopes to replicate her style throughout his own original work, dealing with what might be perceived as ‘elevated’ ideas in a personal way. However, ‘Won’t Make A Noise’ proves to be one of Trenouth’s more empathetic pieces, as he rejects the victims’ unanimous silence and instead aligns himself with the documentary in his relating of these events.

The alteration in the final refrain, from ‘I won’t make a noise’ to the rousing ‘They’ll make a noise’, is Trenouth’s attempt to grant back a loss of voice, shifting from the silence of the past to the retrospective yet progressive view of the present day.

Lyrics to ‘Won’t Make A Noise’

I suppose there's a charm
In the way that you and I
Can hurt, and kill, and steal and harm,
And take the deed and justify.
But can you truly free the mind, of the doubt, and of the choice.
Well if one's to die for having a voice, then I'll go tonight.
And I won't make a noise.
Single file through the streets
Of a dusty town reborn
Say goodbye to all the cheats,
And all the girls who don't conform.
Anyway they're all the same those who think independently
Well if ones to die for having a voice then I'll go tonight.
And I won't make a noise.
Vigilantes of Jakarta,
Of the North and of the South.
A voice is not to do with words,
To do with lips or to do with mouth.
And you will have to do more
As for everyone who dies for their voice, one's born tonight.
And they'll make a noise.

Words by DYLAN TRENOUTH.



18

The Path to Tranquility

TOM BROADLEY investigates New Age music and our relationship with peacefulness.

Listening to New Age music might cause several images to come to mind: maybe Western yoga studios with an emphasis on faux-spirituality; wiccan-ish shops selling 'healing crystals'; or cheap CDs playing endless whale noises and 'autumn rain.' It is a genre whose express purpose is to soothe and calm by creating an ambient atmosphere – or at least that is what its fans claim. For most, however, its blunt tranquility is toothless and more stressful than soothing. While in its unadulterated form New Age music might be largely unsatisfying, it has influenced artists who have taken its core aspects in a new direction. Together, they suggest that in the twenty-first century the path to peacefulness is not direct but rather more convoluted.

The Antlers are a Brooklyn-based trio whose career trajectory so far has taken them to

some dark corners of the human psyche. Their 2009 album *Hospice* is about a doomed and traumatic romance between a terminal cancer sufferer and a medical orderly. The follow-up album *Burst Apart* followed a similarly depressing path, with song titles like 'I Don't Want Love' and 'No Widows' giving a firm impression of the album's tone. Their latest album, *Familiar*, is less heavy-going than the previous two, and the elements of New Age, incorporated into the usual mix of American indie-rock, parallels the lyrics of frontman Pete Silberman.

At the time of the release, Silberman spoke about the influence of the Tibetan Buddhist idea of *bardo*, a complex theological notion that, roughly summarised, is the transitional period between death and reincarnation. Silberman elaborated, saying, 'I don't really claim any understanding of it *but* I started thinking ... about what an intermediate state of reality might be. Eventually, it evolved into the idea of an imagined meeting with a version of you that transcends death.' Perhaps something in the stillness and reflective nature of New Age makes it the ideal medium for exploring the transience of our personalities and existences. The mellow, hypnotic guitar of 'Hotel' and the creeping piano of 'Doppelgänger' instil a drowsiness over the album, encouraging reflection on the darker side of human emotions.

Jhené Aiko, an LA R&B artist, engages with the sounds of New Age music on her album *Souled Out*, an album that charts a woman's path to enlightenment through the difficulties of change, heartbreak, and grief. Strikingly, the album opens with a song entitled 'Limbo Limbo Limbo', the Christian transitional state that is analogous to the Buddhist *bardo* that fascinated the Antlers so much. While the track 'Spotless Mind' perfectly evokes the blissed-out, utterly peaceful state that New Age music often tries to reach, the genre's influence is most audible elsewhere. The tranquil piano lines and spaced-out atmosphere of 'Endless Sunshine' accompany the lyrics of contrasting childhood reminiscences with adulthood realisation and, most importantly, finds peace with the tension there: 'The more that I see / the more that I know / I don't know anything

at all.' 'Wading' uses déclassé New-Agey synths to beautifully dramatic effect as the lyrics once again deal with how changeable both the world and humans themselves are.

It is significant that artists choose to engage with New Age music at moments of personal crisis and transformations, moments that are miles away from the kind of transcendental bliss that it usually promises. To find peacefulness, then, we might have to look outside of New Age and into the ascendant genre of Sleep Music. The artist R.I.P Hayman created a precursor to the modern trend in his 'dreamsoundevents' of the 1980s: he and his assistant Barbara Pollitt played flute and harp as everyone slept after a midnight snack of milk and cookies. Hayman continues to investigate the somnolent world today, but perhaps the most significant creator of Sleep Music is composer Max Richter. He released his album last year in a live listening event in London: the audience slept all night long. The album is eight hours long and, while soothing and a probably cure for insomnia, it does sound something like Sigur Rós' quieter songs slowed down to the nth degree. And while sleep is the great restorer, listening to music of which you are not even conscious seems a misleading way to a peaceful mind.

Janelle Monáe's 'Yoga' suggests a new path to peacefulness. Rather than emphasising passive, meditative reflection, Monáe champions complete confidence and joy with oneself as the ultimate peaceful state. Over its flexing beats and synths, she sings about self-empowerment and the power of music: 'I ain't got no worries, I'm my own private dancer.' Something as simple as enjoying dancing by yourself in your room means absolute liberty in a difficult world for Monáe. The uplift and freedom she encapsulates in one three-minute long song suggests that you don't need some quiet synths and an insipid tempo to find peacefulness; the best way is just to surrender to the beat.

Artwork by WILL DE VILLIERS

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From Pop to Politics

LAURIE CHEN looks at the importance of music for black American politics.

Earlier this year, at the Super Bowl half-time show, something extraordinary happened. Clad in militaristic outfits of black leather, Beyoncé and her troop – for there is no better word – of perfectly choreographed dancers stormed onto the playing field and made the most visible political statement to have been broadcast in the history of the Super Bowl.

Lest we forget, this is the most-watched television event in the US every year: we can only imagine the shock with which thousands of suburban families in Middle America watched as the dancers, uncannily reminiscent of the 70s Black Panthers, formed into a giant ‘X’ (à la Malcolm) whilst their ringleader sang ‘My daddy Alabama, Momma Louisiana / You mix that Negro with that Creole make a Texas bama’.

As if the message weren’t clear enough, backstage photos later surfaced of the dancers making the familiar Black Power salute, whilst the video for ‘Formation’, released the day before, featured a young black boy dancing in front of a line of white riot police, interspersed with shots of the words ‘STOP SHOOTING US’ graffitied on a wall. Two minutes of the song’s performance at the Super Bowl were enough to shock white audiences, and squarely placed the Black Lives Matter movement at the forefront of the pop-culture agenda again.

This goes far beyond pop music, or even pop culture. Nowadays we take it for granted that music can be, and often is, a powerful agent for social change. Its ability to transmit a neatly distilled message across the borders of nations, cultures, and even time periods, has meant

that certain songs and performances have come to symbolise entire social and political movements, with all their attendant values and beliefs.

However, the flipside of aligning pop music with politics is clearly evident in the trite musical maxims that are churned out by the pop industry on a regular basis. For every Beyoncé reaffirming the Black Power movement, there is a Bob Geldof or Bono imploring us to ‘Feed the World’ – a world inevitably represented by stock images of starving African children. Famine and malnourishment in developing countries are worthy of the public’s charitable support, but it is, quite frankly, preposterous for ageing white men to position themselves as the saviours of an entire continent, all the while silencing those whom they purport to be helping.

Instead, consider how Beyoncé and other artists of our generation are continuing a long tradition of black protest music that extends back to the civil rights anthems of the 1950s and 60s, and perhaps even earlier to the Jazz Age. These songs noticeably embody the defiant voice of the era’s countercultures, even when enjoyed and appropriated by white audiences. For instance, we immediately associate jazz legend Billie Holliday with ‘Strange Fruit’, but the song itself was notably described by Nina Simone as ‘the ugliest song I ever heard’. Holliday evidently made no attempt to appease her privileged audience, but proved that protest music is also a form of high art.

Jumping forward a few decades, black artists continued to draw from their musical heritage to soundtrack the American civil rights movement. Soul and Motown singers including

Aretha Franklin (‘Respect’) and Nina Simone (‘Mississippi Goddam’) boldly incorporated identity politics into their music, paving the way for others to do the same in rap and hip-hop. These include the defiantly anti-establishment Public Enemy (‘Burn Hollywood Burn’), NWA (‘Fuck Tha Police’), and Tupac Shakur (‘Changes’). In the light of Ferguson and the epidemic of police brutality sweeping black communities across America and elsewhere, recent material by artists including Lauryn Hill (‘Black Rage’), Run the Jewels (‘Close Your Eyes (And Count to Fuck)’), and Kendrick Lamar deliver the anger, introspection, and radical self-love that is so evidently needed.

There is no suggestion by any means that music needs to have a political purpose in order to be worthy of artistic merit. But, by making the choice to educate ourselves on the struggles represented in the pop music we consume on a daily basis, we are thinking critically about the way the world around us is presented in the modern-day hall of mirrors comprised of the media, pop culture, and technology. After all, music doesn’t exist in a cultural vacuum: it is inevitably informed by the experiences of those who produced it. And by choosing whose voices we privilege above others, we are sending a clear signal to the anonymous industry executives that we won’t settle for anything less than intelligent pop music that relates to the many struggles and triumphs we experience every day.

Cinema's Cold War



NICK MASTRINI asks if film can provoke war.

No film has ever caused armed conflict, but cinema has always indirectly influenced war through propaganda. During World War II, Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1935) promoted Nazi ideology; on the other side of the world, Frank Capra's *Why We Fight* (1942) series patriotically outlined the reasons for American intervention. But films can, at one remove, mirror global politics to depict the fractious world in which we live: a film can contribute to, even create, the narrative of war. Cinema and war are, therefore, closely linked; both rely on mass participation and both are created by those in power, intent on pushing an ideology forward.

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In June 2014, Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg filmed *The Interview*, an irreverent and satirical attack on North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un. The trouble the film caused should have been expected: when you mock a country's values and beliefs, and imitate the assassination of its beloved leader on screen, retaliation is almost inevitable. But rather than react violently, North Korea threatened America verbally, in an act of *quid pro quo* – 'you fictionally attack our country, we'll feign an attack on yours'. This is the cold war between cinema and reality: whether constructed by satirical filmmakers or national leaders, the very real danger of nuclear war is concealed beneath fictional words and images.

'If someone is able to intimidate folks out of releasing a satirical movie, imagine what they start doing when they see a documentary they don't like.' These were Barack Obama's words in response to North Korea's threat. By separating fiction and non-fiction, the President suggested that *The Interview* cannot be considered a propaganda film, like the documentaries made during World War II.

SHOW
CASE

But Obama acknowledges that the film was able to 'intimidate' because it put forward America's culturally antithetical perspective of North Korea. At least indirectly, *The Interview* functioned as propaganda from an outsider's point of view – and point of view is vital when deciding whether a film's satire promotes a war of weapons as well as words.

What makes Obama's comment contentious is the one-sided nature of the comedy in *The Interview*. The film finds comedy in criticising the politics of a foreign nation, concluding with Kim Jong-un's assassination, set to Katy Perry's 'Firework', and North Korea's consequent transition to democracy. But the film does not turn its satirical attentions towards America. Instead, it uses its crowd-pleasing veneer to promote Western values and the use of violence to transform the beliefs of others. Not merely a light comedy, *The Interview* cultivates a biased political stance, which led to the closure of many cinemas across America in case of a terrorist attack by North Korea.

The Interview's Kim Jong-un argues: 'you know what's more destructive than a nuclear bomb? ... Words.' Any cold war – where real violence never occurs – revolves around the spreading of panic. Cinema, as a mode of mass-communication, has the power to proliferate the fear of a foreign threat, characterised as a stereotypical villain in films like *The Interview*. It also has the power to avoid the reductive, binary opposition between 'good' and 'bad' – but *The Interview's* partial storytelling satirises the follies of a clear opponent, therefore causing a greater gulf between friend and foe.

Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* (1964) lampooned the Cold War fears of a nuclear conflict between the USSR and the US. It led to no real life diplomatic problems like *The Interview*, because its sharp comedy is not directed at the ideology of the 'other', but attacks Western

behaviour too. Unlike *The Interview*, the film also shows an awareness of its fictional status, which helps remove itself from reality and therefore from the potential for offence. Both *Dr. Strangelove* and *The Interview* conclude with violent images set to contrapuntal, joyous music; but while *The Interview* sets its target on an individual enemy, *Dr. Strangelove* ends with the sight of total nuclear annihilation, confirming the senselessness of a conflict which, if it came to fruition, would make us all victims, regardless of our political stance.

Today, films are made for an explicit audience, as demographics are identified and attracted. In the same way a Hollywood film might target young adults, a video put online by Islamic State might target vulnerable teenagers: both have the capacity to install fear and ideology in their audiences.

What the fallout from *The Interview* shows us is that, in the twenty-first century, moving images, whether factual or fictional, can cause an immediate international reaction. If these images are constructed to offend and attack, then a war of weapons, rather than words alone, might be incited – and a cold war could burn dangerously hot.

SHOW
CASE



by WILL SPRATLEY

Beauty Conflicted

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HAVU reflects on what beauty and the aesthetics of film can mean in times of conflict.

The need to hold onto beauty is most powerful during war. ‘No lipstick – ours or anyone else’s – will win the war. But it symbolises one of the reasons why we are fighting’, reads an old Tangee advert. Beetroot lip stains and party frocks made of parachutes were psychological weapons behind the front lines of many twentieth century wars. In George Orwell’s *1984*, Winston Smith began his acts of rebellion against Big Brother using ‘a peculiarly beautiful book, with a marbled cover and smooth creamy paper’. Beauty, then, does not just distract and distance people from warfare: it allows people to cling to a sense of dignity and normality in times of turbulence and change.

During war, devoid of the more tender aspects of life, it is possible for people to become lost in a whirlwind of hatred and destruction. Film, therefore, repeatedly juxtaposes stories of conflict with idealistic alternatives. Beauty often manifests itself in the depiction of an antebellum period. In Wes Anderson’s dreamlike *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014), nostalgia for a peaceful period is attached to intricate pastries, Renaissance paintings, and pastel-coloured scenery from the fictional Republic of Zubrowka prior to World War II. Anderson’s depiction of beauty defies the hideous sorrows of war, empowering us to believe in a future that entails otherwise.

The concierge of the eponymous Grand Budapest, Monsieur Gustave H. (Ralph Fiennes), becomes deeply involved in a murder accusation when Madame D is suddenly found dead. Regardless of his imprisonment for murder,

and though the country teeters into war, M. Gustave fills his world with romantic poetry and L’Air de Panache. He longs for the grandeur of aristocracy to persist, in spite of his humble beginnings as a lobby boy. ‘You see, there are still faint glimmers of civilisation left in this barbaric slaughterhouse that was once known as humanity’, Gustave says: politics change, the aristocracy fades away, beauty makes room for practicality and the utility of war, but the Grand Budapest, and the manners and morals associated with it, remains.

The abstracts of art and tradition cannot fall with buildings and soldiers. Rob Marshall created a visually enchanting world in *Memoirs of a Geisha* (2005), using Sayuri’s fresh innocence and Kyoto’s deep-rooted traditions of geisha houses to distract from the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War. Hidden behind the beauty and allure which the geishas exude is a dirty world green with envy and blue with rage in which the women are trained to desperately undermine each other in order to gain dominance. Yet when the war forces their world to slowly fade, the politicians realise the need to retain sanity by preserving their profession, defined as ‘a moving work of art’. Like in *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, characters in *Memoirs of a Geisha* hold onto a world disappearing faster than they are aware. Beauty becomes a necessity so that M. Gustave and Sayuri do not lose hope altogether. They continue to live and breathe their practices, refusing to give in to militarism; to let go would mean being rid of the fibres that makes up their person.

When a country has been stripped of its identity, its people turn on each other, passing the blame for the devastation onto someone

else. The deep romanticism associated with purity and moral goodness is juxtaposed with death, unfaithfulness, and greed in Tran Anh Hung’s *The Scent of Green Papaya* (1993). Much like Sayuri, Mùì arrives in a city, orphaned and alone. She is antagonised by the sons of the family for whom she works. Their troubled father gambles their fortune into the dust and abandons his wife for weeks on end. Mùì becomes a scapegoat for all their problems, but she manages to keep her elegance. Her plight becomes a microcosm for the struggle of the colonialist regime in Vietnam; Tran Anh Hung’s portrayal of 1953 Saigon reflects the vibrancy and lushness of a lost country so devastated by war that it now only exists within Mùì.

These films transcend their physical and temporal limitations, showing how beauty can be manifested in incredibly diverse forms. In spite of her mild manners and plainness, Mùì is testament to how beauty can empower the human spirit. At one moment, she reads poetry to her unborn child, gazing directly at the camera with a smile that says she will not only survive the war, but will stand in the face of it to watch it crumble. *The Scent of Green Papaya* shows that beauty can undermine and destroy in its own way, therefore counteracting the horrors of wartime.

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Couchtime Stories



SHOW CASE

LUCIE TRÉMOLIÈRES talks about her first web series.

The cast and crew of *Couchtime Stories* have brought a new meaning to the supposedly peaceful concept of 'the couch potato'. On a six-day shoot, filming two episodes per day, plus a twenty-five take fight scene shot at multiple angles, things got crazy: writer, director, and actress, Lucie Trémolières explains that it all boiled down to a battle against time on the set of her eleven-episode web series.

Couchtime Stories centres around six people of different nationalities living together in a London flat: German, English, French, Italian, Belgium, and Irish roommates come home from their various, exhausting days to hang out on their living room sofa. All manners of activities ensue, be it card playing, yoga, a blowout cat-fight, or an existential crisis. The Friends-esque setup coincides with Trémolières' penchant for Chaplin, having said that, 'comedy is the most serious study in the world'.

As a third year History student, Trémolières hopped over La Manche for a student life in London, encountering a copious amount of international students; fellow fish out of water as it were. With an affinity to our multicultural metropolis, Trémolières' *Couchtime Stories* became an exploration of young London living. Her flat in Camden Town was an ideal location to shoot these busy and diverse characters converging upon the seemingly stable and relaxing space of the living room sofa.

Couchtime Stories started life as a play called *Ah Les Voyages*, which Trémolières rewrote into the script of the web series, moving not only from stage to screen, but also Paris to London, and consequently French to English. Translation ultimately became a large part of the creative process. From all of the dispersed

nationalities, everyone on set had a mutual interest not only in film and theatre, but for modern languages and culture too. The cast members, including Octavia Derossi from Germany and Florent Simon from Belgium, had all grown up with very different acting styles and ways of approaching performance. Getting lost in translation lead to hilarious mishaps on set: one such occasion was when actress Aurora Cominetti got muddled over her lines. Her character, Laura, post-break up and in a state of despair, accidentally ends up saying 'he cheats on me, then he bumps me' – not quite what the script intended.

The negotiations between the different on-screen nationalities are also central to the web series' comic effect: Trémolières explores how the often mundane, domestic sphere of living room life may be hilariously disrupted by intercultural clashes. When French student, Valentine (Trémolières) loses her cool about the mess in the flat, Laura hits her with a towel in response to, what are for her, incomprehensible French insults. A petty argument then descends into a farcical all-out war of cat fighting and yelling, with the characters' different languages merging into an incoherent jumble. Peace is eventually restored and communication between them reestablished.

The different languages and cultures, which invaded the set, were a recipe for separation and confusion. This was also the very ingredient however, which generates the unique, international force behind *Couchtime Stories*. It's a web series full of character, perfectly capturing both the strife and the effervescence of student living, whilst considering both the alienating and cohesive possibilities of different languages and cultures.

Words by REBECCA SPEARE-COLE.

Hollywood

THOMAS HETHERINGTON looks at the struggle of self-distribution.

Kevin Smith emerged as part of the 90s wave of indie filmmakers that included Robert Rodriguez, Richard Linklater, and Quentin Tarantino. His debut, *Clerks*, was released to critical acclaim in 1994 and has since become a cult classic. But unlike his contemporaries, Kevin Smith has declared an all-out war on the film industry: film critics, film studios, distribution companies, and filmmaker Paul Thomas Anderson have all suffered his wrath, as well as – most memorably – Bruce Willis, who was at constant loggerheads with Smith while they filmed *Cop Out* (2010).

Smith possesses a rare honesty for a man who has spent twenty years in the movie-making business and, crucially, this honesty extends to his work. After the Hollywood disaster that was *Cop Out* (2010) – the product of a tortuous, studio-dictated filming process Smith describes as 'soul-destroying' – Smith insisted that he would only make films written by him, directed by him, and, essentially, for him. The declaration was a major one: a two-fingers-up to the industry professionals and film distributors, both of whom he believed had dogged his career until now. The first of these films was the demented *Red State* (2011), a grim horror film tackling the religious extremism of America's right wing politicians. This was followed by his 'art film' *Tusk* (2014), a flight of fantasy featuring Johnny Depp in prosthetics and Justin Long being sewn slowly into the skin of a walrus.

His films are not perfect, but when he fails, he fails on his own terms. Smith cannot take criticism though, or admit to his mistakes. After *Cop Out's* negative reviews, Smith attacked

Martyr

film critics from his Twitter account, claiming that 'writing a nasty review for *Cop Out* is akin to bullying a retarded kid. All you've done is make fun of something that wasn't doing you any harm'. Smith also insisted that critics should pay to see his films, and he memorably picketed outside Westboro Baptist Church when they criticised *Red State*. But nothing can beat his sheer crassness when presenting *Red State* at Sundance in 2011. After a successful screening of the film, Smith promised to auction the film off, which he duly did – but after ten minutes of bidding he sold the film to himself for a meagre twenty dollars. In that moment, it was as if Smith had lopped off the head of Hollywood.

'True independence isn't making a film and selling it to some jackass. True independence is schlepping that shit to the people yourself', Smith said after the auction. Though his monumental severing of ties has not launched a new generation of guerrilla filmmakers, working independently and off the map, it hasn't exactly left Smith's career dead in the water either. The maelstrom many predicted after the event has failed to come to pass. This is undoubtedly due to Smith's immense popularity amongst his loyal fan base. He is a cult figure: a perpetually cussing, weed-puffing, one-man roadshow of a filmmaker – the messiah of the indie film world. If he self-distributes by touring around the country, people come to see him in their droves.

What is questionable is whether self-distribution is a viable option for filmmakers less popular than Smith. With the right kind of buzz, a film of humble origins could succeed independently of Hollywood and its distributors, but it would require a large amount of press coverage and an extraordinarily

proactive word-of-mouth: the sort of thing that Smith, a shameless self-publicist, can easily acquire. But without the platform of a major festival like Sundance, there is no way anyone could launch their film the same way as Smith. It is also hard to imagine that a first-time filmmaker would want to risk their debut, and their future career prospects, by antagonising their distributor. What the process of self-distribution really needs is a figurehead. Smith and others should support the budding filmmakers coming through, like Trey Edward Shults. By doing this, however, Smith immediately becomes part of the problem by essentially creating a new studio.

In the end Smith presents a temporary solution to an ever-growing problem. Smith took up the flag and charged mercilessly into the amassed ranks of the studio system. Unfortunately his route has not cleaved open the ranks in the way he had hoped it would. Cinema audiences resist taking a punt on first-timers who do not have the stamp of studio approval; Hollywood still rules the roost, and for first-time filmmakers it continues to prove safer and easier to stick with the dark side.

La Panaderia

SHOW CASE

HANNAH BINNEY's new documentary considers the aftermath of the El Salvador civil war.

'It's not so easy to forget what happened.'

Spending ten weeks in Santa Marta, a rural community in the north of El Salvador, was only enough time to gain a mere snapshot into the lives of a community living in the wake of a twelve-year civil war (1980–1992).

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From January to March last year, Hannah Binney spent time in Santa Marta working on an eco-project with a group of national and international volunteers. During this time, a Restorative Justice Tribunal arrived in Santa Marta, offering an important opportunity for residents to talk about their wartime experiences. This allowed Binney, together with Ana María Gonzalez, to interview locals and film the community. The tribunal contributed to the fact that many people were willing to talk and share their testimonies with Binney, which she has since compiled into a twenty-two minute documentary *La Panaderia* ("The Bakery").

La Panaderia offers a heart-rending and masterful portrait of Santa Marta, as the residents rebuild their community and search for an end to impunity: *La Panaderia* gives these heroic people a voice and delves into personal experience beyond the historical backdrop of the civil war. The idea for the film's title and structure came after Binney asked to film Santa Marta's bakery, which is run by one of the interview subjects.

The bakery was founded as a women's project in the nineties, after the end of the war. Camera shots of the café are warm and tactile, saturated with deep colours and luscious dough, and suggestive of new life and a nurturing, sharing neighbourhood. Opening and closing with the bakery, the documentary's cyclical structure takes us through the tragic stories then back again to this little emblem of hope. *La Panaderia* illustrates how the community is overshadowed by scars of the past: Binney brings us their stories of challenging conditions in Honduras refugee camps, where residents were enclosed and unable to return to their homes; the 'disappearances' of family members; and the massacre which took place when El Salvadorans attempted to flee military invasion by crossing the River Lempa, many of which were shot or drowned in the process.

The community is inevitably different to the one that existed thirty years before, both practically as well as psychologically: technology and transport links have improved and Santa Marta now seeks out international charity aid from Europe and US organisations to help with its development. Upon returning to their community after the war, the residents found that the land was overgrown and the rebuilding of the community made it become physically, if not metaphorically closer. Politically, the town is united in its support for the left wing FMLN. The community is full of colour and life. Violence and gang culture remains an endemic problem across El Salvador however, and while gang activity takes place in and stems from primarily more urban areas, the largely peaceful rural community of Santa Marta is both conscious of, and affected by, the violence.



El Salvador and its history of civil war is largely neglected by the Western consciousness, something which Binney felt after being immersed in the world of Santa Marta for ten weeks and then returning to Europe. Films such as *Cartel Land*, a documentary nominated for this year's Oscars, demonstrate an increasing awareness and interest in the West of the drug and gang culture that exists in Central America, however.

La Panaderia succeeds in bringing accessible snapshots of personal human experience to the screen, which Binney hopes will give people a greater understanding of the suffering that those who endured the pain and destruction of the El Salvadorian civil war underwent. Even if it is not the whole story, like the bakery, *La Panaderia* becomes a hopeful means with which to share and communicate with other human beings.

Words by REBECCA SPEARE-COLE.



**SHOW
CASE**

Gauchos have been living amongst Uruguay's grasslands, or Pampas, since cattle were first introduced there by the Spanish Major of Buenos Aires in 1630. Peace and war have defined the formation of the Gauchos' national identity, splitting their time between fighting for Colonialist militias in the bloody battles between European countries, and breeding cattle for the wealthy owners of estancias. These images are taken from an estancia in Northern Uruguay.

by **FLORA HASTINGS**

ALASTAIR CURTIS looks at the history of Dadaism in its centenary year.

On February 2nd, a hundred years ago this year, a small but not insignificant notice was slipped into the Zurich press: 'Cabaret Voltaire: under this name a group of young artists and writers has formed with the object of becoming a centre for artistic entertainment'. A terse announcement, more discreet than declamatory, it was an invitation to a chaotic performance of poetry, music, and art. The evening proved popular; the group of artists met more regularly at the Cabaret; the initial groundswell of artistic energy – ruled by an anything goes, free-for-all mentality – was eventually pared down and codified into the *Dada Manifesto*, released by artist Tristan Tzara a year later.

So Dada was born out of chaos – and into chaos. Not far from the Cabaret, millions of Europeans were dying in the fields of Belgium and France. Though the *Dada Manifesto* does not refer to World War I, the Dadaists were, of course, alive during the horrors of war. Many in the Cabaret were refugees, like Tzara or Hans Arp, in flight from conscription. Max Ernst experienced the War from the front line. Their collective experiences contributed to Dada's heady mix of anger and rebellion: Dadaists shared a disgust for the bourgeois nationalist and imperialist interests that had plunged an enlightened Europe headlong and heedless into war. The early Dadaist Max Ernst captures the estrangement caused by the war in works such as *The Elephant Celebes* (1921) and *The Ubu Emperor* (1923). *Celebes* and *Ubu* both feature dreadful anthropomorphic monsters – half human, half machine – wandering blindly across vast and empty landscapes.

Though Ernst's output after the War is diverse, eluding definition as eagerly as it does meaning, art historian Fred Kleiner encapsulates the spirit of Ernst's work when he suggests it was a 'reaction to what many of these artists saw as nothing more than an insane spectacle of collective homicide' (*Gardner's Art Through the Ages*).

Dada rejected pre-war artistic movements, such as Futurism and Cubism, as symptomatic of the intellectual and cultural conformity that had led to this 'collective homicide'. Pre-war

Dada: The Anti-Art of Peace

art, says the *Manifesto*, was made to 'cajole the nice nice bourgeois' – but no more. Dada art defied the received thinking that art should be aesthetically pleasing, realistic, or logical. The German Dadaists Otto Dix and George Grosz used their early work, both cartoonish and horrific, to upend the establishment they believed had marshalled Europe into war. Dix's *Pragerstrasse* (1920) and Grosz's *Down with Liebknecht* (1920) tend towards the grotesque: war veterans turned filthy beggars appeal to fat-cat capitalists while the distended bodies of prostitutes traipse behind surly, hat-and-tailed politicians. Their work reveals their disillusionment with post-war Germany: its pervasive immorality and hypocrisy; its extreme poverty and wealth; and its growing extremism.

Dada was 'anti-art'. It invented new methods of composition, with Hans Arp and Hannah Hoch pioneering collage to create satirical snapshots of life in post-war Germany. In her momentous *Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser* (1919), Hoch collages yellowing cuttings from printed broadsides, rearranging them into a seemingly chaotic but carefully planned display attacking figures of the late Empire, such as Kaiser Wilhelm II, and the portly plutocrats of the recently declared Republic.

While Arp assembled his collages entirely randomly, Hoch is fastidious, exploiting the tension between the low and highbrow in her work. *Staatshäupter* (1920), for instance, has a photograph of the half-naked German president implanted into an embroidered

backdrop of a naked woman. Hoch was one of the only women in the movement and her art foregrounds the 'New Woman' and her struggle, in various guises, with the patriarchy. Where Hoch went, others followed: the work of Suzanne Duchamp and Toyen are cutting-edge explorations of gender and femininity. A recent retrospective at the Whitechapel Gallery will hopefully restore Hoch to eminence.

Hoch's later works anticipate the merger of Dadaism with Surrealism, but the spirit of Dada persists. Successive twentieth-century wars prompted isolated but influential outbreaks of Neo-Dadaism in Europe and America, with artists like Jasper Johns and Allan Kaprow using Dada techniques to protest the century's cycle of devastation. Modern Neo-Dada movements flourish on the Continent. Neither should it be forgotten that it was the Dadaists who pioneered the idea of conceptual art. Dadaists may attack bourgeois hypocrisy, but their movement was built on the biggest hypocrisy of all: though a send-up of logic and reason, Dadaism provided the only way to respond rationally to emotions that could not otherwise be put into words after the War. The Cabaret Voltaire has fallen into disrepair in recent years, but the movement it began remains to be the primary method by which artists can interrogate our place in an ever-changing world.

Undressing

JOE THOMPSON discusses London's memorial to the women's war effort in light of its recent vandalism.

When 'FUCK TORY SCUM' was daubed on the black marble of the *Women of World War II* monument as a protest against the newly elected Conservative government last year, a number of manic and ill-considered reactions were posted online and in the press. Screams of 'vandals' swept through the mass media, with accusations flying that the protesters were disrespecting the memory of women's contribution to the war effort, and therefore issuing an affront to all women everywhere.

In the minds of most, 'war' and 'peace' exist in binary opposition; they are locked in an Apollonian / Dionysian struggle between order and disorder, rationality and irrationality. One may quickly and without warning, it seems, collapse into the other. Certainly peace endures as the paradigmatic norm to which we all must aspire: that of Lockean utopianism, of harmony and equality. Contrastingly, war exists as the state during which peace is corrupted, actions regress to barbarism, and we are forced to yearn for those times of relative stability, however few and far between.

We are taught this belief – that war and peace are mutually exclusive expressions of the bad and the good – in history lessons. Take a walk in London, however, and you will notice that lining (and sometimes even blocking) almost every vast boulevard, is a form through which this dichotomous relationship between the two is thrown into confusion: here, placed on pedestals in London's most central spaces, are statues dedicated to war, created in a time of peace. Our publicly funded memorials have continued to stand through countless bouts of unrest; a series of problematic couplings between those opposing values made manifest.

the Women's Effort

There are not enough words allocated for an art historical digression on the war memorial. I would, however, like to focus on one striking aspect of these larger-than-life statues: despite being an integral part of our urban landscape, they, and their meaning, often go unnoticed. This aspect is one of gendered destruction: the violence of attacking a monument fits into this theme of war; yet the response to the recent repurposing of the *Women of World War II* monument, which sits in the centre of Whitehall in front of the entrance to Downing Street, raised interesting questions about how we represent and respond to the historical roles and impact of women in the present day.

The graffitied message spurred on many to take the time to analyse not the red spray paint, but the statue itself: female workers' empty clothes, sculpted in relief, hung up as if at the end of a day's labour, with the words 'THE WOMEN OF WORLD WAR II' in gold lettering underneath. There are no names, no faces, no additional text, and of course, no stories. What 'FUCK TORY SCUM' represents is not its written sentiment, but rather the ability for one anonymous individual's violence to draw attention to, and to allow for a critique of, the systemic violence imposed on those who are supposedly commemorated.

Indeed, the words were perhaps uncouth, but their timing and placement could not have

been more perfect; most important graffiti is quickly removed without an utterance from the press. The graffiti, reproduced in the press, created and inspired a long-overdue debate on the memorial's implications. Indeed, 'THE WOMEN OF WORLD WAR II', albeit inadvertently, actively removes female narratives from history: it reduces women to the clothes on their backs, to symbols that have come to replace actual bodies. Whilst intended to honour the efforts of women during and after World War II, the statue is deeply problematic as it exposes in its depiction of those women, an attempt to erase both them and women today from our public spaces. The monument is surrounded on all sides by individual sculptures of men wielding, in almost perverse anxiety, the weapons and stiff upper lips with which they conquered distant lands. The placement of these different, distinctly gendered monuments in such close proximity, only serves to further illuminate the shortcomings of the *Women of World War II* memorial.

Peace brings with it the ability to harmoniously represent all those who contributed to it. In the context of Henri Lefebvre's comment that a monument should be understood as a 'singular spatial representation of collective identity', London's treatment of the experiences of the women who gave their lives for the war effort is troubling.

Painting

MARINA SCHOLTZ discusses why politicians cannot stop painting.

40 I recently discovered George W. Bush's art on the internet, and I laughed. It seems Bush has been painting since the conclusion of his presidency. Bush's brush is most often applied to kitsch paintings of pets, and his favourite subject (now sadly deceased) was his Scottish Terrier Barney.

In an interview with the BBC, Bush cited Churchill's essay on amateur painting 'Painting as a Pastime' as his motivation for whipping out the easel. Bush is not the only American President to have been prompted into amateur art by Churchill; Dwight Eisenhower took up painting in 1948 after Churchill suggested it. History is full of politician-painters: Hitler was famously rejected from the Vienna Academy of Fine Art, and after being denied a career in the arts opted for one in politics instead.

Painting and political power are not always linked. Despite being a constitutional monarchy, and therefore having almost no political power to speak of, the British Royal Family also seem to have caught the art bug. Prince Charles is an avid amateur watercolourist and his son William (a former art history student) presumably favours theory over practical ap-

plication. The Royal Library at Windsor Castle holds a large number of Da Vinci sketches and is arguably the finest collection of its kind.

Notably it is painting rather than drawing or sculpting which seems to be favoured by politicians. Painting was the chosen artistic method of Churchill, Eisenhower, and Hitler. In the present day Prince Charles and George W. Bush continue to prefer this medium. Also notable is the style in which these politicians paint; none of the above politicians are modern or contemporary artists. At best Churchill and Prince Charles can be considered Impressionists. Bush, while trying valiantly to establish a realistically portrayed, no-nonsense, peculiarly American sort of Pop art can best be described as being a practitioner of 'art-naif'. Crucially, however, all of these politician-painters endeavour to make their final painting recognisably represent their chosen subject.

The exception to this rule is former Iranian Prime Minister Mir-Hossein Mousavi. A genuinely accomplished abstract painter, Mousavi's work is rooted in Persian calligraphy and traditional Islamic forms. Mousavi, appointed Prime Minister in 1981, two years after the Iranian revolution, was the last Iranian Prime Minister. In 2009 Mousavi came out of retirement in an attempt to run as a Presidential

candidate, but his opposition to the current Iranian system of government and its Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei (successor to Ayatollah Khomeini) have had him placed under house arrest. Presumably the politician has plenty of time to experiment with abstraction and the constraints of his canvas.

Mousavi trained as a painter and architect, and this too makes him an exception to the rule. For most of the other politician-painters art was, or continues to be, an amateur pursuit. Churchill, in his aforementioned essay 'Painting as a Pastime' extols the virtues of painting as a hobby. Churchill found painting therapeutic and claimed it helped to keep the 'black dog' (his term for his consistent bouts of depression) at bay. His hobby was put on hold during World War I however; he produced only one painting during this time.

The physical act of painting has long been held to be therapeutic. Arguably, one reason to paint, draw, or sculpt is the satisfaction that can be found in the process. This could well explain the popularity of painting as a pastime for politicians — their careers are undoubtedly extremely stressful. Mousavi, one begins to suspect, is a bit of an artistic maverick. The psychoanalytic practice of 'art therapy' involves arming the patient with paint and

letting them run wild. Often what emerges is abstract in scope. Under house arrest in an Iran whose politics are undoubtedly a cause of mental trauma for the former Prime Minister, perhaps Mousavi, by abstracting traditional Persian forms, is attempting to make sense of a political, as well as internal, conflict.

Another explanation for the ongoing popularity of painting amongst politicians is the difficulty of undertaking any other artistic hobby. Music seems a problematic choice. Nero is said to have played the lyre while watching Rome burn, and indeed after Johnny Marr banned David Cameron from liking The Smiths, it seems our current Prime Minister would be well advised to pick up a brush instead. Whether or not the art made by politicians can shed any historical light on their political careers seems a problematic question. A psychoanalytic reading of Bush's paintings sheds almost no light on a man who holds the accolade of being the most unpopular American president of the last hundred years. The only conclusion I was able to draw is that he hasn't learned how to mix his paints properly, and that he really, really, really liked his dog.

Politicians

ROSIE HEWITSON examines the therapeutic role of theatres reaching out to refugees.

'All the world's a stage'. It's one of Shakespeare's most famous lines, and four hundred years after his death it's taken more literally than ever. Innovative work by companies such as Punchdrunk, Grid Iron, and You Me Bum Bum Train has caused an explosion in performances staged outside of traditional theatre spaces. From airports and hotels to crypts and abandoned warehouses, audiences no longer bat an eyelid at unusual venues. *Hamlet* in a Peckham high-rise doesn't raise an eyebrow ... but *Hamlet* in the Good Chance Theatre in the Calais Jungle just might.

42 Among the portaloos and makeshift schools serving the 6000 or so inhabitants of the sprawling camp is a large geodesic dome that looms over the rows of smaller tents alongside it. At first glance the Good Chance Theatre could be one of the smaller stages dotted around Glastonbury Festival, but instead of playing host to secret sets from old rock legends, its performers are an ad hoc assortment of refugees and migrants, many of whom have fled some of the most conflict-stricken and violent countries in the world.

Organized by co-artistic directors, Joe Robertson and Joe Murphy, and a small group of volunteers, the theatre hosts a full and varied programme of activities. Writing workshops, music groups, and art classes take place over

The Refuge

the day, with evenings devoted to plays, poetry readings, rap battles, and a weekly disco. With ventures across all forms of art, Robertson describes the theatre as a kind of 'town hall', offering something for everyone who wants to get involved.

Since Aristotle theorized the cathartic experience of watching tragedies in *Poetics*, people have recognised the potentially therapeutic nature of theatre and the performing arts. For performers and audiences alike, theatre operates as both a safe space in which to confront trauma and hardship, and a means by which to escape the difficulties of daily life. When the two Joes first arrived at the camp last year, they found that 'everyone wanted to talk and tell their stories', and the Good Chance Theatre provides a space in which this is possible.

The Theatre's activities often respond to what is happening in the Jungle. In late February, a mock trial was staged and, having waited upon the judge's verdict, inhabitants saw the demolition of the southern part of the camp. Other participants filmed 'Junglevision', stepping in front of the camera to report on the progress of

the disassembly. As Murphy explains, 'We have to have a place where we can reflect upon our situation. Sometimes churches can provide that, sometimes mosques. But this space is open to all.'

Yet reflection isn't the only function of the Good Chance's activities; the theatre also provides a safe, warm space in which the camp's inhabitants can escape from their personal situation, if only for a few hours. 'The basics of food and water and shelter are important obviously,' says volunteer Amy, 'but you have to let people have a space where they can be human, where they can laugh, be positive, forget about where they are.'

It perhaps isn't surprising, then, that there are similar projects in other refugee camps across the world. Since 2010, Olive Branch Arts has been making annual visits to the Saharawi refugee camps in South West Algeria, devising original work with the youths and young adults situated in the camps. The Freedom Theatre, situated in the Jenin refugee camp in occupied Palestine, has been up and running since 2006. Despite the assassination of the

Theatre's founder and Artistic Director Juliano Mer-Khamis in 2011 and his successor Nabil Al-Raei's detention in Israeli prisons, the Freedom Theatre continues to thrive and has sent several productions on international tours, including a successful UK tour of *The Siege* last year.

Other recent productions by refugees and migrants include Paper Project's *Life Boat* at Ovalhouse and Zimbabwe-born Zodwa Nyoni's *Nine Lives* at Leeds Studio, whilst the programme for this year's LIFT Festival features numerous works responding to the refugee crisis. These productions are part of a cultural exchange working in both directions. The Good Chance has hosted residencies from the Young Vic and the Royal Court, and has the backing of various giants of British theatre, including West End producer Sonia Friedman and directors Christopher Haydon, Vicky Featherstone, and Stephen Daldry. As part of their two-year tour of *Hamlet* to every country in the world, Shakespeare's Globe have performed to refugees in Calais, the Zaatar camp in Jordan, and the Mirkazi camp in Djibouti.

There are currently an estimated fifty million refugees worldwide, a figure only topped by post World War II numbers. At a time when many of the richest countries in the West are determined to ignore their plight, the theatre remains a place in which compassion prevails and their voices are heard.

of a Good Play

Olive

REBECCA BAINBRIDGE discusses Rufus Norris's war on gender inequality at the National Theatre.

This March marks one year since Rufus Norris took up the formidable office of Artistic Director at the National Theatre. Bold from the outset, he immediately articulated an intention to reinvigorate the National's image with a clear vision of widening its appeal as 'a broad church' for the 'everyman'. Culminating in January's announcement of the programme for 2016 and beyond, Norris unveiled the unprecedented: in April every stage at the National will be occupied by plays written exclusively by women.

Building upon a feeble legacy, Norris is making defiant strides away from the androcentricity of his predecessors: Peter Hall's fifteen-year tenancy saw just four plays by women staged; Richard Eyre a mere, but improved, seven per cent in ten years; and Trevor Nunn's five years saw a rise to almost ten per cent. Most remarkably, having taken up the reigns from Nicholas Hytner, Norris' outlook could not be further from that of the former Director who, back in 2003, claimed that the vast Olivier stage was only suited to the works of 'very senior writers, and they're either called David, Tom or Alan.' Although by the end of Hytner's residency the National was housing significantly more plays authored by women, over seventy per cent of these were performed in the Cottesloe (the new Dorfman) and the Shed (renamed the Temporary Theatre) – smaller venues that are associated, perhaps unflatteringly, with radical and experimental theatre. Norris, however, wholeheartedly embraces the recent proliferation in the works of female playwrights and directors, placing an emphasis on the National's

Branch

'responsibility to encourage that and reap the benefits.'

At the forefront of Norris' war on gender inequality is his pledge that 'by 2021 we get to a stage with directors and living writers where we have a 50:50 gender balance.' By extending an olive branch to women once excluded from the National's main stages, Norris has opened the gateway to female playwrights who are still writing, such as Caryl Churchill whose *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* and *Here We Go* were performed in the Lyttelton, the National's second largest theatre. Yet Norris' long-term sights are set even higher, with his attention turned to gender equality on-stage as much as it off-stage. It is no coincidence that he should choose to stage *As You Like It*, perhaps Shakespeare's most feminocentric play, in the National's main Olivier theatre, using the face of actress Rosalie Craig in its promotional materials. Similarly, Londoners on the Underground will be familiar with the poster image of Sharon D Clarke, who is currently playing the eponymous blues singer in August Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*. Norris' programming of female-oriented productions has met with great critical success, from Bristol Old Vic's feminist stage adaptation of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, to the more recent Welsh production *Iphigenia in Splott*, the harrowing one-woman monologue performed by the dexterous Sophie Melville who, like the protagonist Effie, gives a voice to the often ostracised working-class, small-town Welsh woman.

Norris' peace offering to women in theatre reaches realms unparalleled in the industry. His new season is an unflinching statement against the historically all-male profession of stage-acting on which modern theatre is built. His gender-blind casting of Tamsin Greig as Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* – with its suggestions of gender as a fluid social category – and the promise of a female Captain Hook in a production of J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* are a testament to this. Amongst other burgeoning female playwrights – Nina Raine and Gillian Slovo – in the coming year Norris will be showcasing the talent of Bryony Kimmings, who he champions as 'one of the most arresting performance artists of the moment', debuting her musical *A Pacifist's Guide to the War on Cancer* in the Dorfman this October. Norris will also have a personal hand in Lucy Kirkwood's *Mosquitoes*, directing her first play since the success of *Chimerica* in 2013.

In his most decisive move towards reforming the National's gender politics, Norris merged the Studio with the literary department to

create 'a resource no one else in the theatre world has got', a claim cemented by the appointment of a female Writer in Residence, Suhayla El-Bushra. With her transposition of Nikolai Erdman's *The Suicide* – supposedly the greatest play to emerge from communist Russia – into a contemporary urban Britain setting, El-Bushra's pioneering work is to be staged in the Lyttelton from April. Alongside this will be Lorraine Hansberry's *Les Blancs* in the Olivier, Sarah Kane's highly controversial *Cleansed* in the Dorfman and Emily Lim's co-written *Brainstorm* in the Temporary Theatre. With the glaring absence of female playwrights in 2013's fiftieth anniversary gala still in recent memory, Norris is making peace with the National's past and is carving out a bright future for women in theatre.

by SOPHIA SIDDIQUI



SHOW
CASE

Staging a Revolution

NICKY WATKINSON asks whether politics and theatre belong together.

From the political satire of Athens’ amphitheatres to Caryl Churchill’s Thatcherite Britain via Middleton’s London, great playwrights have always been inspired by the social, political, and religious climates in which they lived. Yet in the modern, Western world, where pluralism is encouraged, artists are freer than ever before to create politically engaged work without fearing either censorship or censure.

Festivals such as the Young Vic’s recent *Staging a Revolution*, and the work of companies like *Theatre Uncut* — who formed in response to arts cuts and commission short political plays for an annual ‘mass action period’ — demonstrate that much of the new writing currently being produced in Britain is self-consciously political. Indeed, theatre is being created with the overt intent of challenging audiences to consider highly contemporary political and social developments, so as to effect change. As advances in technology give us greater access to news from around the world, there is a greater demand for politically-influenced performance art from audiences and artists alike. This is evidenced by the success of plays like Mike Bartlett’s satire *King Charles III* and Laura Wade’s *Posh*, the latter of which condemns the practices of Oxford University Bullingdon Club, a breeding ground for Tory politicians. Although this isn’t a new trend, an increased emphasis on freedom of speech in recent decades has led to much more overtly political theatre than was previously permit-

ted. The Theatres Act of 1968 abolished censorship of theatre in the UK; as demonstrated by Pinter’s *One for the Road* — about totalitarian governments — or David Hare’s *The Absence of War* and *Gethsemane* — both about the inner workings of the Labour Party — many of our most successful playwrights have since been producing explicitly political theatre.

This trend is not just seen in new writing, but adaptations of our most beloved classics too. *King Lear*, for example, takes on a whole new meaning when the action is transplanted from Medieval England to the Vatican, as in Jan Klata’s 2015 production at the Kraków Stary Theatre. When *Lear* is reimagined as the Pope, the play becomes not a domestic tragedy, but a highly-charged comment on corruption within the Catholic Church. It’s fair to say that there is no single way to create politically-engaged and engaging theatre: it encompasses everything from Immersion Theatre’s recent 80s mining town adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* to Brecht’s absurdism and Beckett’s existentialism. But in such a cynical age, we’re left to wonder if there is any point in trying to politically challenge audiences.

With censorship of performance art widespread across the world, it would be easy to assume that theatre is banned because it does have the power to effect change. Yet in twenty-first century Britain, theatre is thought of as an unequivocally liberal art form, with both creators and audiences — particularly those of independent and fringe shows — typified as brashly left-wing. The condemnation of Thatcher in shows like *Billy Elliot* and Ayck-

bourne's *A Small Family Business*, and the more recent castigation of Cameron's government in #TORYCORE – Osborne's budget providing the lyrics for some undeniably evil-sounding heavy metal – seems pretty futile if audiences can be expected to be largely comprised of lefties. Overt political stances run the risk of alienating, rather than converting, people of other political persuasions. If political theatre will not affect meaningful change, we're left to wonder if there's any reason to perform it.

Moreover, while some people enjoy having their ideas challenged, others go to the theatre simply to be entertained and aren't looking to be shocked or pushed out of their comfort zone. The role of art as a form of escapism has long been debated, and it is a question that is integral to the issue of political theatre. It is worth asking whether art has a responsibility to be socially and politically engaged, and whether we, as an audience, have the same responsibility.

In recent years, we have become used to the idea that political theatre serves only to challenge the reprehensible, not to apologise for it. Yet a good writer and actor working together can make almost any political stance seem reasonable; take Roger Allam as Hitler in the National Theatre's 2000 production of *Albert Speer*, or the use of plays as propaganda in Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia.

Whether theatre can effect change is debatable, but like other forms of protest it must be used appropriately and responsibly. Yet in a climate of austerity, as the arts are being cut at an alarming rate, the commercial and critical success of political theatre is set to continue.



SHOW
CASE

by PHYLLIDA JACOBS

The Poet as (War) Hero

NANCY HEATH discusses the Battle of the Somme and its mark on our literary landscape.

This year marks the centenary of the most devastating battle of World War I: the Battle of the Somme. The battle is still taught and remembered today due to its futility, its extended length, horrific casualty counts, limited territorial gains, and lack of decisive victories. The poets who lived to see (and died for others to see) victory in the war were faced with some of their greatest psychological challenges at the Somme. It would be easily excusable for the poetry of this period to be defined by disillusionment and loss of faith; much of the verse counters this idea, however. The poems are often extraordinarily filled with conviction in the face of casualties, and faith in the face of fear.

The Somme was a four-month battle that claimed and captivated poets and their imaginations across Britain, for those who wrote about it, fought in it, were forced to flee from it, and lost their lives in it. They were all part of something that, coming out of the trenches at the other end, ensured the world would never be completely the same. More published poets fought in and died in the Battle of the Somme than in any other singular offensive during World War I. Between July 1st and November 18th 1916, we learned how much life could be lost to gain so little, and our poets were there to document the terrifying revelation.

A generation of poets and authors were present for the battle which, for many of them, determined the rest of their lives and literary careers. A. A. Milne was sent home early in the Battle of the Somme due to injuries and, if not for this, could have been killed long before the

Hundred Acre Wood came into being. J. R. R. Tolkien served as a communications officer throughout the battle – had he been in the first rush on July 1st, the map of British literature would truly be different. Acknowledging this, it's difficult not to consider what other masterpieces and marvels of literature were lost along with the casualties – sixty thousand on the British side alone.

Literature was not only lost, but also created out of the battle. The influence of this catastrophic event cannot be overstated: it shaped the creative ideas of a generation. The artillery and the weapons used during the battle were anthropomorphised and the poetic imagination lavished them with rich imagery, not just of destruction, but of hope for victory. Siegfried Sassoon, who won the Military Cross on the first day of the Somme Offensive, wrote a poem entitled 'The Kiss', detailing the fighting and the rush of face-to-face combat. Sassoon describes the sharp steel end of a bayonet as a 'downward darting kiss' and narrates how a bullet 'splits a skull to win my praise'. This dichotomy between the pain of killing and the desire for victory fuels war poetry, and especially the poems of the Somme. As Sassoon writes in 'The Poet as Hero': 'I've said good-bye to Galahad'. In the wake of the war, a new type of hero must be defined.

Sassoon survived the Somme but some were not as fortunate. William Noel Hodgson was a British poet who wrote his most famous poem 'Before Action' two days before the battle on 29th June. The poem perfectly encapsulates his personal journey to become a soldier and to get to the battle, and to go to his death. Lieutenant Noel Hodgson never wanted to be a soldier: he said he wanted to be a writer, which this poem makes evident. He prays for this to

change and for 'blessings carelessly received, by all the days that I have lived, make me a soldier Lord.' Lieutenant Hodgson went into battle and was killed in action on the first day of the Somme Offensive. It is believed that, due to the position of the German's machine guns, certain men and regiments 'predicted' their deaths would come on this first day of the battle, and that Hodgson thus wrote the poem as a premonition and a prayer for succour and bravery: the poem closes on the plaintive plea 'Help me to die, O Lord'.

This was a battle which shocks us when we see its breadth and casualty count in history, but one which the soldiers on the ground could see as an impending disaster from the offset. Yet they kept fighting, and they kept creating and writing even when they had mere days left to live. Poems created in such conditions are unique and cannot be replicated. Looking back from the vantage of a century of hindsight, the poems of the Somme still sing out their emotional authenticity, connecting modern readers with the experiences of long-dead soldiers.

The raw sentiment, born from the situation of such war poems, is uncontested in other poetical works. The Somme was a horrific and unrepeatably battle, but even out of such inhumane destruction, powerful and beautiful poetry was born, ensuring that we would remember not only the magnitude of the casualties and these battles, but also the lives and the emotions of the individual, captured and preserved in poetic verse.

The Summer of Frankenstein

DANA MOSS considers the tensions in post-war fiction following the French Revolution.

Literature has always been one of the best ways of assessing the social and cultural impact of war: it is most notable during World War I and II, but also apparent in twenty-first century writings on Afghanistan and Iraq. Yet literature struggles just as openly with the concept of peace in the wake of devastating wars, and some of Britain's most renowned authors and poets have been a part of a post-war generation, from the 1920s 'Lost Generations' to the Beats in the 1960s – and, intriguingly, the Romantics.

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In 1816, exactly two hundred years ago, the French Revolution had been resolved and almost forgotten, and owing also to Napoleon's final defeat at the Battle of Waterloo the preceding year, a tentative impression of peace was created across Europe for the first time in years. The 'summer of Frankenstein', to which the meeting of Lord Byron and the Shelleys at Lake Geneva is retrospectively referred, was not a summer at all. The effects of a volcanic eruption had led to eerily apocalyptic weather with summer snows and constant rain, which some viewed as a consequence of the constant warring. With the anniversary nearing, it's interesting to now look back at the summer with this perspective – one that takes into consideration its historical and social context in a renewed and yet cautious 'peace', and how this affected the writings of the people involved.



by KATE KINLEY

The First Generation Romantics, whilst not embroiled in a war on the scale of the twentieth or twenty-first century, were intimately connected with the French Revolution. All of them, in some form, used the Revolution as a grand focus for their writings: Wordsworth's *The Prelude* is, in part, centred around his defining experiences as an initial supporter of the Revolution; William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft became renowned for their political publications on the Revolution and its politics; the *Lyrical Ballads* can be viewed as a response to the Revolution's corruption and an attempt to instil the ideals in a more domestic sphere.

During the summer of 1816, there was no big, sweeping war around which to structure a narrative. Instead, buoyed by Byron's challenge to write a 'ghost story', each writer in turn found inspiration in the introspective – the mental landscape instilled into a generation born in the wake of the Revolution's failure. Much like Fitzgerald, Joyce, et al, the Second Generation Romantics were disillusioned by the state of human nature, a grievance perfectly represented by the success story of that summer, *Frankenstein*.

Frankenstein is an introspective take on the nature of monstrosity. Whereas during the French Revolution, the monster was the destabilising effect of the Revolution's degraded ideals and an exterior force corrupting human nature, in Shelley's *Frankenstein* the real monster is the interior of the human mind. It is human ambition, it is scientific developments, and it is Victor Frankenstein's overpowering greed that are the true evils of the novel, whereas in earlier works – such as *The Prelude* – the monsters are distorted versions of infamous Jacobins such as Maximilien Robespierre, or figures symbolic of the Ancient Regime on which the monarchical French society was founded.

The other notable creation that took place during the 'summer of Frankenstein' was John Polidori's *The Vampyre*, a forerunner to *Dracula*. The supernatural bent of the story is undoubt-

edly drawn in part from Byron's challenge to form a ghost story, and yet it is intriguing that all of these writers turned to terror in order to channel a discontent and disillusionment that cannot be adequately exemplified through a wartime narrative. In the wake of new peace, the works that come out of this summer were all supernatural, and grappled with internal dilemmas rather than the exterior conflicts of war.

The Romantics are known for their introspective writings, perhaps freed from the political and cultural contexts that wars provide. Unlike the Beats and the Lost Generation, it is easy enough to view *Frankenstein* as separate from the French Revolution for the sole reason that it was not written during the time period, but rather in a classified time of peace. But it is entirely Shelley's attempts to reconcile the notion of peace with the continually strained political and social landscape in England that creates *Frankenstein* and makes it such an enduring and captivating catalyst for the science fiction genre.

It is important to remember how young the Romantics were at the time of writing, to fully appreciate the disillusionment they must have felt, born in the wake of the Revolution's failure. Lord Byron was the oldest at twenty-eight; Mary Shelley was sixteen. No wonder, then, that when she did choose to write her 'ghost story', it was crafted around transgression, of aiming too high and failing catastrophically, on both a private and public level. It was all she knew of war.

The Lion, the Witch

BETH HINE discusses whether children's literature can effectively tackle the theme of war.

An emotive and difficult topic, war is nonetheless present, though occasionally hidden under the surface, in many of our best-loved children's novels. Narratives like Morpurgo's *Private Peaceful* and Magorian's *Goodnight Mister Tom* are specifically set during the World Wars and, though fictional, tell realistic stories of wartime experiences. War is also a frequent theme in children's fantasy literature; but can stories featuring talking beavers, magic wands, and nose-biting teacups deal seriously and sensitively with this dense subject?

C. S. Lewis' series *The Chronicles of Narnia* was published in the 1950s, in the wake of World War II. The first of the novels that Lewis wrote, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, begins when the four Pevensie children are evacuated from London – most likely inspired by Lewis' own experience of having four evacuees stay with him at his country house during the war. Through the magical wardrobe, the children find themselves in Narnia, a country also at war. Despite being sent away from war in their own world, in Narnia they are to play an instrumental role in the conflict as the prophesied Sons of Adam and Daughters of Eve, who will bring about the end of the evil White Witch's reign. The children fight in several battles and, following their victory, live on in Narnia as kings and queens for over a decade. At the end of the novel, the fully-grown Pevensies stumble once more upon the wardrobe and find themselves back in England – children again. This process of aging and de-aging perhaps reflects the experience of children living through real

war, forced to grow old beyond their years when required, only to return to the regular life of a child in peacetime.

The Narnia series has been criticised for, amongst other things, its perceived glorification of war. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the character of Father Christmas tells Lucy that ‘battles are ugly when women fight.’ This statement is problematic not only for its misogynistic undertones – for which Lewis has often been criticised – but also for the implication that battles are not inherently ugly in themselves. In the final Narnia novel, *The Last Battle*, the young protagonist, Jill, whilst discussing her fears about going into battle, says that she would ‘rather be killed fighting for Narnia than grow old and stupid at home and perhaps go about in a bath-chair and then die in the end just the same.’

War is presented as a noble undertaking throughout the series, a presentation that is made easier by the fact that good and evil are defined in a clear-cut way: Aslan and the human children are ‘goodies’ whilst the White Witch is a ‘baddy’. Lewis does show complexities in individual characters – such as Edmund, for example, who betrays his siblings by working for the White Witch in the first novel – but the sides of good and evil are clearly marked in a way that is not possible in real life. The glorification of war in the novels is easier to accept, as it is always a war of good against evil.

J. K. Rowling's immensely popular Harry Potter novels also focus on the battle of morals. In this series, evil, personified by Lord Voldemort and his followers, is clearly allied with fascism. Parallels can be drawn between the Death Eaters' obsession with the purity of wizarding

and the Warzone

blood and the ideals of Hitler and the Nazi party. Late in the series, when Voldemort gains control over the wizarding world, a Muggle-Born Registration Commission is set up in order to root out wizards deemed to have impure blood. This process of cleansing, and the idea of ‘polluted blood’, is disturbingly reminiscent of the Nazi's rounding up and persecution of Jews and other minorities during World War II.

Far from being merely children's books, the Harry Potter novels have had a considerable impact on many readers, influencing the ways in which they think about the world. Rowling herself has commented that ‘The Potter books in general are a prolonged argument for tolerance, a prolonged plea for an end to bigotry.’ She appears to have made a successful argument. A study published in the *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* found that children and young people who had read the series had more favourable attitudes towards marginalised groups such as LGBTQ+ people and refugees.

Though the Potter and Narnia novels deal with war in very different ways, ultimately, the focus for each author is on fighting for what is ‘right’. Through the lens of their magical fantasy worlds, Lewis and especially Rowling introduce young readers to important issues related to war: prejudice, grief, and justice. Although moral dilemmas in the real world are not always so clear-cut, these authors have provided generations of children with the tools to understand what is right. The power of fiction – and particularly children's fiction – should never be underestimated, fantastical or otherwise.

Baby Steps



SHOW CASE

You say to me,

'In Romanian,
what you call jumping,
is also falling down.'

Is that so?
When you said feelings
got the better of you

and your blows had meaning
to make me 'love you true'.

You hide hits with kisses
and sugarcoat curses.

Your strike never misses.
Your words are barbed, merciless.

It was five years ago
since I started taking crap
and allowing abuse.
Well now I refuse.
I've done my baby steps,
now it's my go.

Time for a new leaf. Leave or I'll make you.

Romanian or not
When you're falling down
You're also jumping
Out of my life.

by CALVIN LAW

by DILRUBA TAYFUN

The Sharp Legs of Ladies

SHOW
CASE



by WILL DE VILLIERS

These sharp legs of ladies
that i've grown to know so well.
That, as a girl child, i did sit
to watch dance above my brow.

The curtains about my face,
grown unruly, are swept neatly by
the sharp legs of these ladies who
are not as careless as i.

These sharp legs of ladies,
they depend upon my hands,
to guide them through the shapes
i make, the mystic wonderlands

of snowflakes and angels, but
love notes and goodbyes too.
The sharp legs of these ladies that
Would help separate my life in two.

These sharp legs of ladies
their future task to them unknown.
Their creative purpose once possessed
is now to them long outgrown.

How i should use their innocence
for the task of my abuse. Choose
the sharp legs of these ladies
over any other noose.

These sharp legs of ladies,
sharper now i know the score.
Sharper when i hold them thus for
they feel sharper than before.

But is this wrong? Do i deceive them?
i'd never tell a lie. Oh my sharp legs of ladies, see:
i'm not afraid to die.

by **GEORGIE HURST**

Macaroni Sunrays

Suspect A: 4.10", comb-over (blond, neat), teeth subjected to regimental brushing routine, smirker.

Suspect B: 4.8", wild brown mop, sad eyes (perpetually sad), mud-splattered Spiderman lunchbox.

The unhappy judge: 5.5", scrunchy slipping down ponytail, bra stabbing underside of left breast, so very, very tired.

Miss Achebe compensated for primary school classroom inexperience by working her arse off for these kids. She held no reservations in declaring she worked far too hard for pups so spoiled. And Class 6A were particularly ungrateful – possibly the most ungrateful litter in the entire Borough of Camden, certainly so when compared to Classes 6B-E.

The day's trip, for example, had been all about the younglings. Personal Promotion Aspirations aside, Miss Achebe's day was almost completely pup-centric.

Yes: a Learning Assistant leading a midweek sojourn for an entire day was – in this tiny, inconsequential semi-sector of the city, at least – entirely unprecedented and particularly unusual (a brave, promotion-worthy move perhaps).

Yes: on her wage, Achebe could not quite afford the Learning Through Leadership day course, which Full-Time Members of Staff were encouraged to undergo before organising school trips, resulting in a slight fabrication of the truth when she had requested a Triple M

(Monday Morning Meeting / Monday Malice Management) with the headmistress, shoes thoroughly polished and shiny brochure for Affordable Bob's Interactive Farm and Petting Zoo in hand.

Yes: persuading the 'old-school' headmistress – who only hired Achebe (on a Provisional Six Month Contract) in order to tick the council's Equal Opportunities box and keep the Chair of Governors off her back – had been a ghastly interaction of nightmarish proportion.

'You, above all, Miss Achebe, must work very, very hard.'

Something vaguely threatening resonated ominously as Achebe sat at the desk, weighing up the two miscreants. If the headmistress caught wind of the trip's dramatic incident, the tantalising offer of quick promotion that had initially enticed, well, *propelled* Achebe to the job (that, the low Qualification Requirements, and her general need to pay a Terrifying Amount of Rent which, alongside her Dwindling Social Life, even with the semi-sanctity of Provisional Full-Time Employment, she could not quite afford) might be slashed, lacerated, cast into the sea!

Cameron and Jamie, I suppose, were to blame. A and B now sat opposite each other, frowning at the Learning Assistant. This meeting was taking place five minutes beyond Home-Time and, therefore, exuded a certain severity that dwarfed typical, common-as-coppers Lunch-Hour remonstrations. All this fuss over a silly, squealing pig!

Cameron coughed and narrowed his snake-eyes at the teacher. As arrogant shits go, Cameron's serpentine mannerisms exacerbated all the unlikable factors, which culminated in Him: his smarminess, his blatant rudeness, his impenetrable haughty air. Jamie was the kind to cut himself with Play-Doh. The Sad Child, sitting opposite Basilisk Boy, was an altogether unfortunate little thing, meaning well and trying his best – though the endeavour never quite sufficed, never quite added up. Achebe deeply regretted picking Affordable Bob's half-starved creatures over something less susceptible to disaster, like the Science Museum or an aquarium.

64 'Why did you punch Cammy, Jamie?'

'He fed my carrots to the piggy...'

'This does not warrant a punch to the sternum, Jamie.'

'Then h-h-he...'

'What? Spit it out, Jamie.'

'He fed the piggy his PINK CARROT, Miss!'

Cameron was smirking, a momentary hiatus from picking his nose.

As Miss Achebe silently assessed the situation



SHOW
CASE

by CHRISTIE DODMAN LEAR

– glaring from one little boy to the other – she heard the distant creak of the playground swing.

'If you want this position, then you - especially you – have to work hard. Very, very hard.'

The boys were dismissed without further punishment. Achebe went on a Tinder-date that evening: at Gourmet Burger Kitchen, her companion gorged on a dish called The Old Colonial, ordered extra Skinny Fries, forgot to cloak his small talk with even the faintest facade of grandeur.

Miss Achebe lost her appetite, ordered something anyway, felt sick-sick-sick for the rest of the weekend and worked very, very hard, wondering if her contract would veritably terminate if the headmistress retired tomorrow or, say, all the naughty boys ran away.

by JOE JACKSON

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