

The Last Days of Jack Sheppard

Interview with Anja Kirschner and David Panos

The Last Days of Jack Sheppard (55 mins, UK, 2009), by Anja Kirschner and David Panos, follows on from their recent films: *Polly II – Plan for a Revolution in Docklands* (30mins, UK, 2006), a dystopian take on the pirate adventure which is part satirical sci-fi, part soap opera, and part Brechtian ‘teaching play’; and *Trail of the Spider* (53mins, UK, 2008), a ‘western’ filmed in Hackney and Essex which transposes western frontier motifs and the suppressed racial history of the American West onto the gentrifying landscape of East London.

The Last Days... is based on the inferred prison encounters between the 18th Century criminal Jack Sheppard and Daniel Defoe, the ghostwriter of Sheppard’s ‘autobiography’. Set in the wake of the South Sea Bubble financial crisis of 1720, the film explores the connections between representation, speculation and the discourses of high and low culture that emerged in the early 18th Century and remain relevant to the present day.

Filmed in the Chisenhale Gallery space, *The Last Days...* was co-commissioned by CCA, Glasgow, and Chisenhale Gallery, London. It was presented at the CCA within an installation fabricated from elements of the original set and a display of archival material, laying bare the film’s structural elements.

Their three films represent a body of work that engages with a plethora of historical, literary, and popular sources, digging out and radically re-working hidden or obscure narratives in a range of different registers. Each film brings to bear a host of allegorical associations and narrative forms, but re-fashions them to create uneasy resolutions that probe into the problems and possibilities of class politics, the boundaries of different genre styles, the false division between high and low art, and the vexed question of ‘political art’.

Admiring the integrity of their approach, the intelligence and depth of their research, and their consciously radical re-deployment of these resources (as opposed to the “mindless citation”² which is such a constituent feature of much contemporary art), Neil Gray asked the film-makers to discuss their work.

Your work together has consistently dealt with the construction, mediation and representation of working-class subjects as well as the relationship between fiction, myth and historical possibility. How have these themes developed from your previous work?

Many of the themes we dealt with in *Polly II*³ and *Trail of the Spider*⁴ were raised by a longstanding engagement with the urban politics of East London. From 2000, David had been involved in *The London Particular*⁵ documentary and research project with Benedict Seymour and others, trying to understand what was driving the millennial regeneration strategies in the area and getting involved with the struggles around a massive sell-off of public assets. *The London Particular* made two films as part of that project – ostensibly documentaries but more like film essays. One of the biggest problems was that of ‘representing’ working class life in the area whilst avoiding voyeuristic clichés of ‘urban deprivation’, working class ‘authenticity’ or ‘local colour’. The essay film form seemed like a way to show local politics as a systemic process, but this ultimately meant that the films felt quite detached from the social processes they were describing. As the project went on, representing what was going on felt less urgent than becoming directly involved in it, so David got more and more engaged with activism and local working class politics, putting filming



aside.

Anja had already established an interest in colliding research and fictional narrative that set the stage for our later films in her work *Supernumeraries*, which used a Joseph Conrad story and contemporary reportage on the murder of stowaways on container ships. Whilst filming on board a container vessel, she’d been facing similar questions on how to deal with the inherent voyeurism and artifice of filming the crew at work and inserting them into a hypothetical narrative. She ended up training her camera on the architecture and objects on the ship, not the crew, and constructed a narration, partially based on conversations that had remained unrecorded, but ultimately closer to the dream logic of nightmares. Paradoxically, towards the end of the shoot she realised that many of the crew would actually have been happy if she had filmed them, but preferred to remain anonymous where statements on shipping conditions were concerned.

These experiences prompted us to try and explore some of the problems from a different direction—one that might be less earnest, more, dare we say, ‘fun’ and also would allow us to explore situations and histories through recourse to popular genres. The fictional scenarios would act as a screen; participants could be released from their ‘normal’ identities, yet their experiences could be reflected through narrative—perhaps more accurately than documentary form would have allowed.

That said we didn’t go down an open-ended ‘participative’ route. With the films we’ve made together we’ve always worked from a script as a way of making our intentions transparent to whomever we’re working with, although this has often been subject to changes following rehearsals and discussions with those involved. In a way, we found that being clear about where we are standing, and reflecting on actual events in the form of fiction, set certain limitations that were in fact more liberating than a recourse to improvisational and documentary practices. These practices can easily slide into a parasitic relationship with collaborators, who are expected to ‘be themselves’ or offer their creativity up

to ‘facilitating’ filmmakers – often with little purchase on the way their contribution will be edited and represented. We would also argue that fiction, allegory and satire were always the more useful and sophisticated tools for political expression and subversion.

How do you see the development of your work with regard to an ethics of representation?

After *Polly II* and *Trail of the Spider*, we felt that we were being categorized as having ‘participative’ practice, chiefly one that involved working class communities. Yet we don’t really recognize the idea of ‘community’ as particularly meaningful (outside of dubious ‘regeneration’ discourse). We were aware that in some instances our work was being fetishised by ‘official’ participative art practitioners, and worse, those most comfortable with the pernicious ideologies of ‘inclusion’ and ‘participation’. We ended up turning down some exhibition and commissioning offers because we refused to have their frameworks imposed on what we do.

Ironically, an increasingly public discussion around the instrumentalisation of socially engaged art has made people very cautious about how they speak about it. We had funders insisting that we would not be fitted into some prescribed way of working. However, these supposedly ‘open-ended’ processes tended to obscure ideological assumptions about how one should ‘engage’ or ‘interact’ with ‘ordinary people’. Ultimately the same processes at work in contemporary urban regeneration discourse can be seen in the social art field; agencies often emphasize choice, freedom and experimentation in contrast to an older ‘bureaucratic’ box ticking approach (i.e. you must work with a particular community and achieve particular aims). But in our experience this phoney discourse of openness always tends to obscure reactionary assumptions without being transparent about it. This pseudo-democracy, with all its ‘creative’ posturing, tends to be a way to push through a very pre-set agenda about what could be possible, and what subjectivities are at stake in the process.

In the first two films we were quite careful not

to create an over-determined or overly procedural process, and in many ways our methodology has been very ad hoc. We feel that the structured approaches ('workshopping' and whatnot) that you see as part of many social art practices tend to resemble the layers of mediation that middle class 'professionals' working for the state put between themselves and so-called 'ordinary' or working class people. The 'consultation session' ends up being a false version of a de-hierarchised space where power discourses and expertise are hidden behind an artificial levelling.

With *Trail of the Spider*, which essentially dealt with our experiences with Hackney's politics, we worked with actors, friends and people from the campaigns we'd been involved with. With *The Last Days of Jack Sheppard* we wanted to shift our focus towards 'acting' and representation as a process per se, rather than the productive tensions between an amateur cast and an 'epic' genre, so we worked mainly with professional actors, some of whom were highly skilled in 18th Century commedia dell'arte and rhetorical gesture. *Polly II* and *Trail of the Spider* had a very organic relationship to what was going on in our political lives at the time. It felt wrong to extend the methods we'd used on those films into some situation that we had no relationship to.

This is a broad question I know, but how do you see your work with regard to aesthetic discourses around realism, modernism and post-modernism?

We were interested in non-documentary approaches to contemporary social problems, and not particularly interested in the increasingly worthy or wearing clichés of realism. We are dealing with a social reality where people's identity and desire is mediated via popular culture, but one that increasingly reflects a dominant (petit) bourgeois view of the world. We wanted to re-appropriate the epic discourses of cinema and television, and the layers of allegorical associations of certain figures and narrative forms, but re-fashion them to create outcomes that probe into the problems and possibilities of class politics.

We don't necessarily have a clear idea of where we are heading... In many ways we've tried to make work that pleases us, that feels like it's not entirely bound up with many of the conventional formal approaches in the art world. We feel that a lot of formal approaches to film have kind of become empty vessels: no longer really able to function as critical, but now merely repeated as ossified gestures. In a way, re-opening questions around drama, narrative and performance puts us back within a more mainstream tradition but one that seems less resolved and with greater potentials today. These areas provide a fruitful battleground with many new questions and possibilities, but also they form a path that can lead you away from increasingly introverted or rarified art discourses.

The question of novelty also raises itself here – the contemporary artistic injunction to innovate. Maybe our retrenchment with forms that have been torn up by the trajectory of the avant-garde and have been off limits for a lot of what 'contemporary art' sets as its agenda is a symptom of the limited horizons of formal play under capitalism. Art is largely trapped in the same aporias that shaped the avant-garde of modernism – art is anti-art. Since Dada, many of the same fundamental problems seem to recur and delimit a limit-point for bourgeois art. To us, art must proceed with a knowledge of its own supersession, and of the supersession of the categories and social spheres that shape the art world in general. But rather than get endlessly snagged on the impossibility of art à la conceptualism, or sinking into a formalism that has always been the art-market's default position, we are trying to create work that circumnavigates this. We don't want to retreat into formalism or 'culinary' prettiness but neither do we want our practice to merely announce its own problems and 'impossibility'. That lends our films a degree of earnestness that makes us uncomfortable, but we would like to make work that could function in competition with 'popular culture', and find a broader resonance.

As with your other films, *Polly II - Plan for a Revolution in Docklands* (2006) and *Trail of the Spider* (2008), there is a rich seam of research behind Sheppard, which manifests itself via a plethora of textual appropriations, citations and 'quotations'. This textual analysis runs with the currents of post-modernism in many respects, yet the film is distinguished by a heightened appreciation of the 'play of signs' within a world over-determined by capitalist relations (indeed, the conflation of Jack Sheppard's narrativisation within the context of the South Sea Bubble suggests that this may be the central theme of the film). What is your method of working with archival and historical sources?

We tend to put a lot of different elements into play in the films – we take pleasure in opening up the connections between different orders of material but also enjoy a certain depth of research. These tensions might not be fully legible in the final work but give it a certain integrity which allows discussions to form about the ideas in the piece. We think that the films are entirely legible without accompanying notes, but we've always published pamphlets that explore the references for anyone who is interested. Publishing the script for *The Last Days of Jack Sheppard* was a way to lead back to the historical research – revealing the extent to which the film is almost entirely woven from direct citations and visual references from the period.

We have a certain fascination with fiction and with historical narrative and the way that these can shed light on situations in contemporary politics. We take pleasure in the contradictions between speculative (pulp?) fictions of history and 'empirical' or 'factual' research but we aren't trying to draw simplistic relativistic conclusions from this tension between 'fact' and fiction. Rather we're interested in the construction of political discourses, and the mythological dimension to progressive struggles, challenging the authentic bent of many 'left wing' ideas. But also, we're trying to deploy history in a way that is appropriate to film per se, that is, to be aware of the layers of mythology, genre clichés and visual cues available to us, and how these can be recombined to ask new questions.

To what extent, if at all, is your work informed by the Situationist Internationale (SI) practice of 'detournement'?

We do tend to re-deploy archival material in textual form or through scenarios. We have appropriated images and music as part of a collaging process, but these elements tend to be used in order to create a contrast with our own footage, and to create a tension with our own 'amateur' and slightly clunky reconstructions. Increasingly, a lot of artists seem to trade on

the nostalgic aura of archival or appropriated footage rather than actually detourning it. Our 're-enactments' try to preserve the fictional veil between history the present, but also ask whether things could have been otherwise. History is mutable, contingent, subject to change, and we do see it as a struggle for the present.

Many SI practices (like many of Brecht's practices) are no longer particularly novel and are widely deployed. I suppose we might have more in common with the SI tradition (rather than the general post modern re-purposing and re-contextualising of cultural material) in that we bring certain economic/political questions to bear on our work informed by questions around the legacy of Marxism and class politics. Not that we see our work as 'political' per se. In fact, we tire of the 'political' claims for contemporary art works. Most often there's no indication of what the 'politics' are. The term is more often used as an empty signifier of some assumed radicalism or vague anti-capitalism, or suggests some variant of discourse/identity politics.

That said, we feel as vexed about many political questions as we do about aesthetic questions. For better or for worse 'committed' artists in the past applied themselves in reference to the general presence of class politics in broader society, and also tangentially to politics at an organisational level (even if only through the membership of parties, public support for strikes, etc). In a 'post-political' world we have been heavily involved with local struggles and theoretical debates but these have often lacked a broader social movement to back them and give them continuity. If during certain periods we can't act politically in broader society or feel that we are in a pre-political situation of grounding a new politics, how can our work be said to be 'political'? Recently we feel that we're more concerned with the problems of representation per se – in particular the intractable problems that we've got ourselves into through trying to explore the class relations of art production and reception in our practice.

In your notes to the script, you cite Christopher Hill and Peter Linebaugh – key figures in the 'history from below' school – what influence did their work have on your approach to the Jack Sheppard story?

They have led us to material rather than necessarily shaping our approach. With *The Last Days of Jack Sheppard* we wanted to pit Linebaugh's passionate, somewhat romanticized account of the emergent working class of the early 18th Century⁷ against empiricist history, via a discussion of fiction and representation.

Linebaugh in particular has some problems in terms of projecting certain ideas and ideals



that weren't yet historically possible onto the periods he describes. However, he does deploy theory to create a class history that demonstrates certain potentials and possibilities. The empiricist historians we spoke to during our research were snippy about Linebaugh's 'committed' and passionate approach, but they also tended to have a somewhat reductive approach to history and lots of hidden baggage attached to their apparently 'common sense' position. So the film staged a battle between these two positions. We rooted many of our scenarios in empirically verifiable facts (dates, places, actions, etc. are very accurate), but created a fantastical, speculative mythology that would raise the political questions through theatrical spectacle.

Rather than singling out particular historians and the pros and cons of their perceived tendencies, what really interested us was the contestation between camps and the way history is mediated and constructed more or less consciously around ideological positions. The problem with "common sense" is that it sides with the status quo, and frequently tends to eschew critical analysis in favour of the atomized minutiae of 'facts', themselves manipulated by the system that recorded them in the first place. While dreading the romantic idealism that can creep into some of the 'history from below' approaches, they are operating against history as 'written by the victors', and as such form crucial antidotes to historic and political amnesia.

I suppose Hill's work on the emergence of British capitalism as a battle of several forces also interests us, as it does ask questions about possibilities, lost traditions. But our interest in history is probably as much to do with understanding the origins of antagonisms that still shape the contemporary world.

Accepting these provisos, did you see the Jack Sheppard story as a chance to contest the naturalized narrative of the inception of high-finance from the perspective of a 'history from below'? Jack's irreverent refusal of labour seems to cut right to the origins of capitalism – the attempt to valorize itself through the regulation of the poor and the formalisation of the wage-labour construct...

Yes and no... We definitely enjoyed the idea that the public's reaction to Jack's final escape was a form of refusal; a week of idleness where historical accounts tell us that the gentry couldn't get workers to lift a finger, so involved were they in speculating on Jack's future. However we didn't want to portray an 'authentic' grounded Jack against a mendacious 'speculative' Defoe. Rather, we wanted to show the historic limitations to both their positions. As part of a proletariat in becoming, without the scope to get a sense of itself and its power, Jack represents a set of desires that cannot find a clearly articulated expression yet. Defoe might even be seen as part of the progressive phase of bourgeois endeavor – opening up new possibilities and problems...

The question of didacticism might be raised in relation to your work. There is a consistent position of engagement with autonomous class resistance and struggle against capitalist relations. Frederic Jameson long ago discussed the way that postmodernism tends to reflect and reproduce the de-politicised cultural logic of advanced late capitalism. In this context, an overtly political practice – one that attempts to take a critical distance from the fragmented flux of the present in order to posit a hypotheses linking various historical phenomena under an abstract concept, e.g. the notion of commodity relations, a mode of production, or capitalism – tends to run the risk of falling victim to what Jameson presciently called "the taboo on totality"⁸. To what extent are you consciously dealing with such criticism?

There's obviously a need to critique 'vulgar' Marxism, however the critique of 'totality' tends to base itself on the crudest possible, un-dialectical reading of what a concept like 'totality' might mean within a Marxist approach. Contemporary relativism is the cousin of the 'totalitarianism' implicitly assumed within (bad) Marxism. They're both un-dialectical approaches that produce



a sclerotic view of social relations and have terrible consequences. But that aside, although we certainly deal with class political themes we don't feel – particularly in this rather bleak and uncertain period of history – that we can even begin to do more than raise them as questions. None of our films can do much more than outline the contradictions and problematics of these categories in the present period.

Obviously this puts us in with the dominant current of contemporary art – the perpetual process of 'asking questions' and 'getting interested in...' in an open ended, relativistic kind of way. But the fact that our questions are couched within a particular set of concerns associated with the political as we've known it in the 20th Century, seems to set us out as downright didactic in a period where most art has no relationship to radical politics. However, we also reject the flipside to the lack of radical politics in the mainstream art world – the domination of what passes for 'radical politics' by aestheticised practices (e.g. carnivalesque symbolic protests, activism as art, etc.). Faced with this situation we tend to end up agreeing that aesthetics and politics make very poor bedfellows. We've always liked Shklovsky's inversion of the old dictum, "for the sake of art keep politics out of it". He proposed instead: "in the name of propaganda, take the art out of propaganda"⁹. That statement kind of echoes our feelings when we've been involved with political struggles at a local level – that artists and media types are particularly quick to try and leverage authentic struggle for their own ends rather than to actually engage with the particular issues of organization and resistance. In those periods we've definitely set aside our artistic identities.

Finally we've become interested in the way that 'political art' has tended to fail because it cannot accurately apprehend and represent the complex abstractions of capitalism, reducing complex mediations to crude allegories or moral categories. Maybe this problem is inherent to the nature of representation per se. This problem has emerged as a dominant concern in our work and to some extent is one of the themes behind *Jack Sheppard*, where we tried to put a number of terms in play so that the viewer might begin to tease out the mediations between them. But it is also one of the principal concerns for dealing with Bertold Brecht in a forthcoming film. Brecht was very aware of the pitfalls of representing the abstract relations of capitalism in a concrete form but he still fell foul of Adorno's charge that his plays often fail to adequately articulate the processes they claim to depict and reveal.

Talking of Brecht... the non-naturalistic performances in the film are excellent. Can you discuss your pronounced use of gestural modes in more detail? Also, how does your work with professional actors in this film differ from your previous work with predominantly non-professional actors?

We've taken different approaches with different films: *Polly II* was all about soap opera modes of acting combined with Brechtian devices; *Trail of the Spider* introduced a short circuit between the players' own lives and experiences and the characters they were playing in a very intuitive way that was very untutored (whilst also parodying styles of deadpan and melodrama in 'Western' forms). With *Jack Sheppard* we were much more conscious about performance and acting. We haven't self consciously followed Bressonian or Brechtian methods, or, for that matter, fully developed our own way of working with actors, but we were definitely after a non-realist, non-psychologised, 'epic' form of acting. We wanted to create a sense of historicity but also a sense of artifice, and we did look at Bresson's shooting methods to highlight gesture and instrumentality. We tried different means to achieve that: working with actors trained in commedia dell'arte, 18th Century gestural acting, and in the case of Mark Tintner who played Jack Sheppard – boxing. We worked hard to purge all learnt theatrical flourishes from actors' performances, introducing archaic language but also anachronisms. We are not obsessed with a phoney re-creation of 'authenticity' but rather wanted to highlight that while the subjective/affective experience of a particular historic period will be forever closed to us, this does not mean that it's lost its relevance for our critical understanding of our contemporary condition.

What I was trying to get at was the bodily relationship between subject and history. The way that hierarchical social relations embed themselves in gesture...

We were interested in the two extremes of Gesture. Jack Sheppard had a stutter and was said to speak with 'the motion of striking' and we speculated that the social convulsions of the early 18th century would have produced chaotic physical manifestations in the emerging proletariat (something similar happened during the early 20th century in response to the new velocities of mass industrial society). We then recognised this could be contrasted to the highly choreographed gestural language of the elite.

We were fortunate enough to find the actor Rufus Graham to help us incorporate this. He had trained in the classic rhetorical gestures that would have been part of the basic education of anyone from the upper classes in that period. These gestures were based on Roman figures, revitalized in the Renaissance and dominant till the late 19th Century. Movement and deportment would have been a crucial part of 'grammar' – and Rufus demonstrated how the same gestures can be seen in paintings and drama as well as politics of that period. He gave a talk at the CCA in September that really shed light on the gestures embedded in the film, particularly in Guy Henderson's performance as Applebee. We allowed these social protocols to dictate his motivations rather than a modern 'psychologised' approach.

In 1970, Brian Henderson, posited the lateral tracking shot deployed by Jean-Luc Godard as an aesthetic tactic with the potential of moving cinema, "towards a non-bourgeois camera style". Of course nothing of the sort has occurred, but I think what he meant was that Godard's cinema tropes, like Brecht's theatre techniques, attempted to block an audience's easy identification with the characters as individual heroes, in order to reveal more of the material conditions of their life. To what extent did Brecht's influence, and cinematic appropriations of his methods, have on your overall aesthetic approach?

Ironically, it's only now that we have been poring over Brecht's writing in preparation for a film project about him that we realize how much we have re-trodden similar ground. Perhaps this is because Brecht is already fully incorporated into our culture, or because we share a similar set of

interests and dispositions. Either way, our new film looking at Brecht is a vehicle for us to confront the problem of acting whilst also dealing with his methods as historically situated. Acting has been a real difficult area in past films – in terms of getting good performances that feel new, different, assured but not too professionalised or slick – and this is really because we are still working through these problems in a directorial sense. By confronting Brecht head on, we want to make our selves more conscious of our own process, while also asking questions about the relevance of his approaches today.

The idea of a “non-bourgeois camera style” for us leads back to once radical but now ossified formal gestures – is this really an intrinsic formal operation? In *Jack Sheppard* the way of lighting, framing and tracking originated more specifically from the idea that the ideologically motivated separation of high and low culture performed in the 18th Century imposed certain conventions on performers and audience. These conventions, of course, included the ‘fourth wall’, the imposition of silence, and a move away from the collective workshop, ‘troupe’, and anonymous authorship, to a more centralized concentration of power in the hands of the author or director. To some extent these conventions could be seen as rarefying and reducing culture to the status of a commodity for consumption. Meanwhile, refusing the idea of the individual hero in favour of a whole visual and social mis-en-scene, or vignette, is something that drew us to Hogarth and Breughel – whom Brecht also loved.

The remnants of the set – installed together with the film – and the deliberate decision to make actors address the camera directly (rather than using more mainstream over-the-shoulder & point of view shots) were meant to function to some extent as reminders of older forms of dramatic representation prior to the ‘fourth wall’ being drawn up and silence falling over the auditorium.

It’s interesting to us the way that Brecht has been kind of absorbed by mainstream theatre and film and then forgotten. So many of his methods are unconsciously adopted yet ultimately there is little sign of his influence anywhere today. We’re trying to hold out against the naturalist approach that you see in most contemporary arthouse films. A recent example is Alexander McQueen’s *Hunger*, which seemed very conservative in its use



of standard ‘humanist’ art-house tropes, and its reference to interior states or transcendent modes of being. However, many attempts by independent cinema to escape naturalism just come off as kooky and affected, probably because of their lack of any relation to a political register. It’s curious to us that today Hollywood seems to get closer to the kind of epic, non-naturalistic modes that interest us, for instance in the films of Paul Verhoeven.

In many ways ‘epic’ theatre just gets you out of the rather unpleasant assumptions that are bound up with humanism – its reassuring positing of a centred human (bourgeois) subject, and psychological responses. Psychologised, sentimentalized states are part of the post-war era – a creation of the subject of liberal, consumer capitalism. Surely at some level epic is just the mode of late-capitalist subjects, and serves them more faithfully now that we are all ‘decentred’! Brecht even realized that at the time he was writing – he was seeking dramatic modes appropriate to the ‘New Man’ and new times.

Your first two films seemed more explicitly ‘popular’, working their way through radical politics, sci-fi, western and television genres. This film seems more explicitly bounded as an ‘art film’, shown as an installation within art institutions. Yet it retains a strong political content. Can the projection of the film within the gallery/art institutional context be seen as a retreat from a shrinking screening circuit? What do you hope for in the future?

We actually felt that each film developed and commented on the previous works. *The Jack Sheppard* film is to some extent a meditation on the problem of ‘collaboration’ and ‘participative art’ in a situation of inequality (see above) and the origins of contemporary art discourses. As such, it did address itself more to the gallery. Of course we’d like our work to be more widely available but

broadcasting is a very closed world these days and the ‘film’ world is increasing conservative in its ‘populism’. We are interested in those contexts but only if we don’t have our hands tied. The gallery and art context still represents a space of immense freedom compared with anywhere else, but we’ve never been 100% comfortable with playing exclusively to that audience.

Some work tries to deal with the politics of distribution but at the end of the day we are quite content-led in our approach. *Trail of the Spider* did have some extraordinary public screenings in Hackney and we felt we’d really achieved an audience for the film that we wanted – however that was very bound up with the themes and context of the film and we don’t feel that we can repeat that every time. At the moment, certain lines of enquiry are informing our work – the Brecht film is also not so ‘explicitly popular’ but allows us to work through specific questions about performance. However, we want to return to some other strands in our work in the future, and there are other ‘genres’ that we are interested in mining.

Notes

1. Cited in, Benjamin, Walter, ‘Illuminations’, Pimlico, 1999, p.251.
2. For a stinging critique of this tendency, see, Home, S, ‘Bubonic Plagiarism: Stewart Home on art, politics & appropriation’, pamphlet, Sabotage Editions, London, 2006.
3. See: <http://www.metamute.org/en/Polly-II>
4. See: http://www.metamute.org/en/content/duck_you_regeneration_sucker
5. <http://thelondonparticular.org/items/video.html>
6. *Detournement* is defined in the Internationale Situationniste (1959) as, “the reuse of preexisting artistic elements in a new ensemble”, and “a negation of the value of the previous organization of expression”. <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/3.detourn.htm>
7. Linebaugh, Peter, ‘The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in Eighteenth Century’, Verso Books, 2006.
8. Jameson, F, *Marxism and Postmodernism*, in, ‘The Cultural Turn: Selected Writing on the Postmodern, 1983-1998’, Verso, p.33-49.
9. Shklovsky, V, in *Pounding Nails with a Samovar* an essay from ‘Knight’s Move’, Dalkey Archive Scholarly Series, 2005.