

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: Liverpool Hope University
Unit of Assessment: Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts (D35)
Title of case study: The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home (The Institute)
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The Institute's impact is in taking a national lead on alter-institutional approaches to social change through art activist practices by connecting art-making with political action, in particular through the re-figuration of the nuclear family unit within larger civil society and the family home as a site of dissent. The Institute impacts social justice initiatives and the live art scene in the UK, enriching cultural life and influencing public discourse around live art, art activism and social change. The Institute is a much called upon example for participatory and socially engaged arts practices which was demonstrated through its invitation to be a panellist of Roundtable Discussion about Participatory Arts and the way they can be implemented in organizations and taught in HE, run by engage and a-n (funded by Paul Hamlyn's Foundation), Government Art Collection, London, 2012, and also by its featuring in the national media, the Guardian and the BBC.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home is an arts activist initiative set up in the home of two lecturers and their three children in 2007. The initiative is financed by 10% of the family's income (salaries, child benefit, freelance work). As part of a reflexive methodology which focuses on the lived experience and blurring of boundaries of the private and the public (in line with feminist and Marxist theoretical frameworks) Anderson and Simic have combined their professional and domestic life through this innovative research-informed performance practice. The Institute runs a series of events (performances, artist residencies, roundtable discussions, reading groups). Substantial documentation of the Institute's activities can be found on the website (www.twoaddthree.org). Some of the Institute's activities have been framed as practice-based research projects focussing on the politicisation of family life, heteronormativity, complicity in consumer capitalism, financial transparency and the environment. These have been submitted as practice-based research outputs by Dr Gary Anderson and Dr Lena Simic.</p> <p>The Institute's practice-based research 'Performing Family' and 'Performing Environments' underpin this impact case study. 'Performing Family' consists of innovative performance making methodology in the form of family picnics and interruptions through which heteronormative family constructions are exposed and critiqued (the father makes political speeches, the mother takes care of the food and children). 'Performing Environments' practice-based research utilizes the already developed family performance making methodology and tackles issues of climate change and sustainability. Furthermore, this practice-based research involves 'slow travel performances' and home movies. The Institute's particular performance making methodology was presented at various venues and festivals across the UK (Artsadmin, Arnolfini, the Bluecoat, Live Art Development Agency, Hazard) and abroad (Kunstraum Lakeside, Klagenfurt, Austria).</p> <p>Both examples of practice-based research are theorized and contextualized in relevant academic and artistic peer-reviewed publications (see references to research section). 'Negotiating a Domestic: Cultural Agency and the Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home' attempts to deconstruct the artworld's signifiers of value ('regional', 'national' and 'international') and situate the work of the family 'at home' arguing for internationally significant domestic agency. 'Live Art and the Domestic: Abusing the Monogamous Heteronormative Nuclear Family Unit' in <i>Contemporary Theatre Review</i> looks at the nuclear family unit's position within larger civil society and seeks to identify political agency in refusing that position and building an alternative to the heteronormative nuclear unit. 'The Hazardous Conversation: The Practice of Intimacy in Performance at the Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home' explores the theoretical constructions of the public and the private through the lens of the familial as a performance script. 'Mum, is this all we came here for?' in <i>Research in Drama Education</i> reflects on family's activist trip to COP15 in Copenhagen whilst 'Anti BP Song' in <i>Not If But When: Culture Beyond Oil</i> contextualizes the work of the Institute amongst other artists concerned with ecological matters and climate change.</p>
<p>3. References to the research. Published work was subject to editorial and peer review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anderson, Gary and Simic, Lena; The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home www.twoaddthree.org consisting of practice-based research projects 'Performing the Family' and 'Performing Environments' Anderson, Gary and Simic, Lena; 'The Hazardous Conversation: The Practice of Intimacy in Performance at the Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home'; <i>Intimacy Across</i>

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Visceral and Digital Performance, edited by Maria Chatzichristodoulou and Rachel Zerihan, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, 51-60, ISBN-13: 978-0230348868.

- Anderson, Gary and Simic, Lena; 'Live Art and the Domestic: Abusing the Monogamous Heteronormative Nuclear Family Unit'; *Contemporary Theatre Review*, edition on Live Art; 2012, 182-183, Volume 22, Issue 3, ISSN 1048-6801.
- Anderson, Gary and Simic, Lena; 'Negotiating a Domestic: Cultural Agency and the Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home'; *Culture and Agency: Contemporary Culture and Urban Change*, edited by Monica Degen and Malcolm Miles; University of Plymouth Press, 2010, 162-174, ISBN: 978-1-84102-1-652.
- Anderson, Gary and Simic, Lena; 'Mum, is this all we came here for?': COP15 and The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home; *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*; 2012, 290-293, Volume 17, Issue 2, themed edition Environmentalism, ISSN 1356-9783.
- The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home; 'Anti BP Song'; *Not If But When: Culture Beyond Oil*, 2011, 68, Published by Art not Oil, Liberate Tate and Platform, ISBN: 9780956736536.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

According to Judith Knight (Director of Artsadmin) the Institute is 'one of the leading examples of an alternative model of artistic and political practice in the UK, bringing together informed and radical thinking about education, political change and family life with humour, modesty and a strong playful touch' (full testimonial available). The Institute operates several distinct strands all of which have impact on enriching cultural life and influencing public discourse around live art, contemporary performance, art activism and social change.

Family Performances and Family Residencies

The work of Anderson and Simic has had an impact on changing perception of the nuclear family in the community as well as the live art scene in the UK, and activist practices nationally and internationally. The Institute have performed a number of **family performances** across the sites, festival and venues in the UK:

- *The Hazardous Family* at Hazard 08 festival, Manchester, UK (2008)
- *A Promising Family Picnic* for Two Degrees event at Artsadmin, London, UK (2009)
- *A Performance Report* at C words exhibition at Arnolfini, Bristol, UK (2009)
- *Bed-In CUT PIECE* at the Bluecoat, Liverpool, UK (2010)
- *'Mother & Son: that just sounds really sad'* artist residency and performance at 25SG, Newcastle, UK (2011)
- *The Family Cut Out* for Two Degrees event at Artsadmin, London, UK (2011)
- *Anti-Oedipus Home Movie* video film and performance, Lakeside Arts Centre, Klagenfurt, Austria 2013
- *Families in Transit* for Two Degrees event at Artsadmin, London, UK (2013)

The Institute have also hosted a special programme of **family residencies** in 2011 with the aim to raise awareness about critical parenthood and arts making:

- Helena Walsh, Kevin Biderman and Ella
- a place of their own (Paula McCloskey, Sam Vardy, Fionn, Oisin, Roma and Mala) Townly and Bradby
- Reverend Billy, Savitri D and baby Lena

According to Jane Trowell, campaigner and educator with PLATFORM, a London-based organization which combines art, activism, education and research: 'This practice of the Institute is never predictable and always usefully uncomfortable. It is provocative and fascinating. They have made an impact with the most everyday of means - a family. Yet through the ethics and transparency of the practice, and the humour and humility with which it is created, the Institute has created a highly sophisticated contribution to how we think about the family, and how live art in particular includes, excludes, or bypasses one of the biggest and most potent forces in many adult artists' lives' (full testimonial available).

Artist Residencies and over 200 Visitors from 2008 through to 2013

The Institute have hosted a number of artist residencies and visitors from 2008 to 2013. Residencies and discussions were informed by the notions of cultural activism, financial

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transparency, social and ecological justice, DIY aesthetics and the relationship between capitalism and culture.

2008: PLATFORM and Remember Saro-Wiwa (April 2008), Anna Francis (May 2008), Pete Hindle (June 2008), Michael Pinchbeck and Julian Hughes (July and December 2008), Tom Robinson (July 2008), Branka Cvjeticanin (July 2008), Ruth Beale and Karen Breneman (July 2008), Simon Bowes (September 2008), Ania Bas (September 2008), Nicola Kirkham (November 2008), the very cooperative (November 2008).

2009: PLATFORM and Virtual Migrants, Abi Lake, Sam Vardy, Cathy Butterworth

2010: Branka Cvjeticanin, Maresa MacKeith

2011 (family residencies): Helena Walsh, Kevin Biderman and Ella, a place of their own, Townly & Bradby, Reverend Billy, Savitri D and Lena

2012: Stuart Watson, the vacuum cleaner, Pete Hindle, Cinderella Residency: Dr Persilovsky

Public events at the Institute between 2008 and 2013

This particular strand opens up the family home as a site of cultural activity and dissent.

- *Miss Julie in Utopia* (2008), a reworking of Strindberg's classic
- *Macbethmachine* (2010), a specially commissioned performance for four heterosexual couples exploring ambition, violence and failures of capitalism
- Workshop Facilitators for DIY5: First Retreat Then Advance (2008)
- The Politics and Aesthetics Reading Group (2010 – 2012) monthly meetings
- Reading Group on Ranciere (2012)
- Reading Group on Levinas (2012)
- WAG – Women's Ageing Group meeting (2012)
- Screening Group on Deleuze (2013)

Both Lois Keidan, co-founder and director of the Live Art Development Agency and Cathy Butterworth, Live Art Producer in Liverpool are keen to stress the importance of artist led initiatives in the UK and internationally. The Institute's work is firmly situated within this framework of DIY artist led initiatives. According to Lois Keidan 'Artist led initiatives are the lifeblood of Live Art. Working beyond the restrictions of the museum, the gallery or the theatre they are not dependent on the permissions of others and do what they want, how they want, when they want, and where they want. Driven by passion, generosity and energy, and responsible only to themselves, their collaborators and their constituents, they are the spaces where different kinds of questions about the role of art and artists are asked, and where new ways of working are tried and tested. They are critical and essential catalysts for action and for change, and the Institute has, since 2007, been one of the most critical and essential we have.' Cathy Butterworth, Live Art Producer in Liverpool writes: 'One of the key and most important qualities of the Institute is its longevity and sustainability. The Institute is a blueprint, not only for artist led initiatives, but also for all arts organisations that aim to present, foster, support and develop radical practice. In my experience there are many arts organisations that could learn many vital lessons from the Institute: how to genuinely and meaningfully collaborate; how to consistently innovate and develop forward thinking, relevant and powerful projects; how to communicate and disseminate ideas and strategies; how to inspire and how to continue to be inspired.' Full testimonials are available.

Environment and Climate Change

The Institute have been a part of wider contextual framework of artists who are working within the discourse of environment and climate change. Their work has been commissioned for Two Degree festivals organized by Artsadmin (2009, 2011, 2013), PLATFORM's exhibition 'C Words: Carbon Climate Capital Culture' (Arnolfini 2009), The Ashden Directory (2010). The Institute have also been hosts to Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping during their UK tours in 2009, 2011 and 2013, which focused on sustainability and climate change.

According to Judith Knight, director of Artsadmin 'Through our programmes on art and activism we try to have an impact on our wider sector in the UK and Europe, to be part of a wider movement of artists, venues, and festivals who are confronting the politics of climate change and social change. We think that the Institute are a great example of how to do this, and will continue to invite them back to London. We are currently trying to support them to take their work and ideas across Europe, through the Imagine 2020 Network of European arts organisations who present work about climate change, to give their model of working an even greater impact' (full testimonial available). Reverend Billy, one of the world's leading art activists from New York, states: 'Lena and

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Gary will lead us to the artists who should have been and now will be our influences, while simultaneously bringing neighborhood mothers into their living room to discuss climate change' (full testimonial available).

Financial transparency and support

The Institute's work is furthermore activist and political – financial resources have been diverted from the family income (10%) to support activist practices. This has impact on live art economies, as referenced by Lyn Gardner in the Guardian (2009). In addition to creating its own art activist practice of family performances, the Institute is facilitating artist residencies and providing an alternative space for cultural activism in the city of Liverpool post Liverpool08, European Capital of Culture year. The Institute is furthermore a regular funder of London based arts activist collective PLATFORM, Rev Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping, Guillermo Gomez Pena and La Pocha Nostra Conceptual Live Art Credit Union and local grassroots radical political magazine NERVE.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- **The Institute website** www.twoaddthree.org
- **List of visitors:** approximately 200 and still counting <http://www.twoaddthree.org/visitors/>
- **Residencies at the Institute** <http://www.twoaddthree.org/residencies/>
- **Website analytics:** Monthly report from 1&1 Site Analytics for www.twoaddthree.org (available from 2011 to 2013). Average number of monthly visitors in 2013: 5455
- **Videos** made by the Institute including documentation of performance events <http://www.youtube.com/user/dissentathome>
- **List of Testimonies supplied for public endorsement purposes**
Cathy Butterworth, Live Art Producer, Liverpool
Jane Trowell, Co-Director of PLATFORM, London
Lois Kiedan, Director of the Live Art Development Agency, London
Judith Knight, Director of Artsadmin, London
Rev Billy, International Performance Artist, New York
- **Printed/broadcast journalism**
Lyn Gardner, *Theatre Blog With Lyn Gardner: Artists are doing it for themselves*, The Guardian, 27/03/09
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/theatreblog/2010/mar/27/artist-led-projects-funding-forest-fringe>
Bibi Van Der Zee, *The Activists' Circus Comes to Town*, The Guardian, 30/11/09
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/nov/30/copenhagen-activists-circus>
PRI The World, BBC Climate Activists Get Creative:
<http://www.theworld.org/2009/12/climate-activists-get-creative/>
BBC 5 live Interview (included here)
<http://youtu.be/9nW5r1Trkxg>
- **Artist Talks and Presentations**
Arnolfini Bristol (2009), Artsadmin London (2009, 2011, 2013), Birkbeck University London (2009), the Bluecoat Liverpool (2009), University of Cambridge (2010, 2011), Cecil Sharp House (2013) Chelsea Theatre London (2011), Chester University, University of Copenhagen (2008), East Street Arts Leeds (2011), Edge Hill University (2013), the FACT Liverpool (2008), greenroom Manchester (2008), Live Art Development Agency London (2009, 2011), Loughborough University (2010, 2012), The New Art Gallery Walsall (2009), Plymouth University (2009), Stanley Picker Gallery at Kingston University (2010), Tobacco Factory Bristol (2010), Queen Mary University of London (2010), Wysing Arts Centre Cambridge (2009), York St John University (2012), University of Zagreb (2009).
- **Publications**
the Ashden Directory, The Concept Store journal, Contemporary Theatre Review journal, C-Words newspaper, Culture and Agency: Contemporary Culture and Urban Change book, Intimacy Across visceral and Digital Performance book, IN TIME: A Collection of Live Art Case Studies, Meta Mute magazine, Liverpool Art Journal, Nerve grassroots Merseyside magazine, Newspaper! Future Visions of History, Not If But When: Culture Beyond Oil publication, Nutopia: A Critical View of Future Cities book, Salon revolucije catalogue, Studies in the Maternal journal, Research in Drama Education journal.