



### 3. My kids could do this... | 2011 |

- (1) What is it that they could do; copy my ideas and reproduce them exactly!? Why would you be proud of that? Tell them to get their own ideas!
- (2) Viewers work backwards, artists work forwards.
- (3) ...

### 7. \*...collective groan\* | 2020 |

Early 2020 I attended a talk, Tate Britain: A History of British Art. Nearing the end I took in the collective groans of the audience at the slide of Tracey Emin's My Bed with a mixture of surprise and disappointment. The youngest member of an audience who were almost entirely around retirement age, having paid and settled in for a day's worth of culture between intermissions, this was the first sign of dissent. Intrigued by what the obviously experienced lecturer made of this reaction, I contacted her afterwards for her thoughts.

*'It was entirely normal with this sort of audience and was what I expected, as was the softened, even sympathetic, attitude after I had explained what lay behind it. I was a Guide at the Tate for 39 years and in 2000 when Tate Modern opened twenty new Guides were recruited and trained. One of them said to me that he was going to "challenge the audience by starting my tour with Duchamp's urinal." I advised against this and said that it was a good idea to start by showing something that they could recognise as art (Degas' Little Dancer in this case), gain their trust then gradually work up to the difficult stuff. Unfortunately, on his first tour he followed his plan and started the tour with 70 or so people and finished with 2. We later had a long chat and planned his future tours, which were and are very successful.*

*I give a lecture to [certain] audiences called Shits, Bricks, Beds - Is Modern Art Bananas? This starts with the carnage of WW1 and the DADA response. Before I am very far into the lecture the audience is perfectly comfortable with some of the bizarre art which emerges. When speaking to a[n] audience, more used to old masters and Impressionism than modern art, it is important to acknowledge the fact that they find it difficult to see some aspects of modern art as art. Young audiences have no problems with modernism, but very few of them are familiar with, say, Titian.*

*In the introduction to my lecture on Making Sense of Modern Art I start by saying something like "you will note that this lecture is called Making Sense of Modern Art, not How to Like Modern Art, and if you don't like it now, you won't like it any more when we get to the end, but you will understand it." Both these lectures are very successful, probably because I acknowledge the audiences' problems from the start. What seems to annoy people is if the lecturer just assumes that they accept that a pile of rubbish, or bed, is art. The lack of skill or even any hands-on effort on the part of the artist annoys them. My answer to that is along the lines of "Christopher Wren built St Paul's. No he didn't, he designed it and others built it." Come to that Rodin didn't carve The Kiss.'*

### 9. [Art is] for posh uns innit? | 2020 |

There's clearly a small irony here, villa4europe, in Bonn, Germany, but equally, the question is bitingly posed. Thank you. I was the first to go to college in my family. At senior school, sat opposite a teacher acting as careers advisor, I told him I wished to be an artist and he immediately took on a harassed and exhausted expression, and fixed me with a long, piercing look. Naturally I understand that this is cliché. The interesting thing here is that not only did I become unnerved by this look, but I also remember feeling sorry for him in that moment, embarrassed. There was an undeniable truth in his eyes. I only thought years later he could've explored any reasonable commercial route or mentioned college, but only that look. Perhaps he knew the type of stuff I'd go on to produce or perhaps he had my likely grades to hand. So I gave him a way out of the situation by explaining that the autocentre I had work experience with offered a job as a trainee mechanic as soon as the exams were finished. I didn't mention that I had zero interest in cars and felt I didn't want to be any such thing, but I did say that the place was in Solihull and my parents were pleased. In fact the only positive aspect I seized upon was the lengthy commute taking me considerable distance from my hometown. He looked relieved, impressed even, and wrote something considering the probable bus route perhaps and which numbers I'd need and the time this would take, as if this indicated something positive about my character he hadn't previously noticed.

The next pupil, one of the innumerable I loathed, looked on through one of the shabby hut's fragile windows at the head of the queue with his tie set in the fashionable but detentionable style, was motioned in by an indication of fingers without another word being said. Education has undoubtedly changed since the mid-late 80's/early 90's, but this general lack of ambition in the Midlands schooling system felt endemic. At junior school once a friend and I approached the music teacher, Miss Little, after the final hymn at morning assembly to express an interest in learning the piano. She looked at us with a near violent contempt, gently put the lid of the piano down, got to her feet and said, "Well I'm not teaching you," before walking away with the sheet music.

When I handed my notice in some months later, stating the trade wasn't for me, the area manager came along to the autocentre and asked how I could possibly know after such a short time. "I know without a doubt," I answered, looking at his long heavily pockmarked face, feeling a kind of lightness hearing these words spill from my mouth, as though they were the first adult words I had said. I took up a part-time job at a chip shop and made the single most important decision I have ever made, applying to Sutton Coldfield College of Art to study graphic design, where I felt life had finally begun.

My dad, less certain about this decision, simply couldn't say the word "artist" without adding the prefix "piss". The one thing you learn growing up in this environment is that you are on your own. I find it depressing that the working class have been spoon-fed such a miserable diet by the popular media for so long. John Carson, ex-professor at Central St. Martin's once said, "We live in a country that congratulates itself on its philistinism, where the tabloids like to whip up public indignation and suggest contemporary art is a con trick".

# Lunch Usually Consists of a Sandwich of Thin Bread

## THE DINING ROOM TABLE YEARS (2010-2020)

29 September—13 October 2021

### **Lunch usually consists of a sandwich of thin bread - The Dining Room Table Years (2010-2020)**

is a retrospective of visual, sound and live art containing 21 artworks taken from the body of work produced over the last decade, plus 2 new pieces situated amongst the collection of the Museum of Bath at Work.

A Bath-based artist, often found deconstructing before reconstructing ordinary objects, sound and photography in an attempt to explore human nature, communication and the incessant internal dialogue, ever listening, reinterpreting and reminding myself that I stand in the moment so to please act accordingly, these semi-autobiographical works deal with ideas of failure, time, loss and memory within the small poetry of everyday life.

Around 2009, a decade after leaving university, I had a conversation with a colleague about what I did with my life, and in calling myself an artist I suddenly felt a fraud, having destroyed or given away any such evidence through leading something of a peripatetic life. I determined to create a body of work over the next decade at least before describing myself in such a way again. The exhibition features many of the pieces of this endeavour.

Exhibiting widely across the UK, plus Germany and the USA in group shows, this is my first solo exhibition in 10 years.

PM BROWNE

Website: paulmichaelbrowne.com

Writing: thehymnofrepetition.substack.com

# LIST OF WORKS

## GENERAL FIRE NOTICE | 2014 |

AO poster, Arial fonts, glue dots  
Installation. 841 x 1189mm

## THE BODY IS NOT SHAPED FOR MAXIMUM HEALTH OR LONGEVITY

| 2021 |

Two commercial pedestal fans  
Kinetic sculpture. Dimensions variable

## TRAIN TICKET | 2012 |

Train ticket with prose poem  
36 tickets distributed on various train journeys  
across the UK  
Intervention. 85 x 54mm

## THE BRAIN SMELLED OF BITTER ALMONDS | 2012 |

Sticker on apple, originally placed on Alan Turing  
statue, Sackville Park, Manchester  
Intervention. 22 x 17mm (approx.)

## JUNK | 2014 |

Windsor chair, printed information on paper,  
found frames, pine cone  
Installation. 800 x 410 x 410mm

*Dining chair taken from a skip and appraised for  
its worth.*

## AN ACCUMULATION OF THINGS | 2011 |

11m 31s. Verbatim drama

*Deconstructing a recorded conversation  
between my dad, brother and I down to every  
pause, idiosyncrasy and inflection, I re-enacted  
each individual speech verbatim, before  
superimposing the recordings to reconstruct the  
conversation.*

## PLAY FOR A SINGLE VOICE –

*Nearing the end of a reunion after some time  
apart, 3 members of the Malough family sit  
watching a poor quality, illegally streamed sport  
with impenetrable foreign commentary. When a  
phone call takes the father temporarily out of  
the room, the brothers' awkward silence breaks  
down and they finally begin to speak with a  
greater honesty.*

## MY CARPET LOOKS LIKE CRAP AND I HATE IT | 2016 |

3x wooden boxes (various sizes), felt, speaker  
fabric  
Ephemeral sound installation

*Two people speaking about the British class  
system in front of silent speakers.*

## DISTRACTED | 2010 |

Concrete paving slabs, fake \$10 bills, foam food  
container, flyer, cigarette  
Staged photography. C-type print, 520 x 365 x  
40mm

## UNTITLED (WORLD'S GREATEST DAD) | 2019 |

Repurposed beech-effect office desk, broken/  
reconstructed cups and mugs, Perspex/mirror  
sheet aluminium channel/unequal corner/equal  
corner, metal eyelets, paper clips, spray paint  
Sculpture. Cabinet: 570 x 510 x 260 x 160mm  
(approx.)

## ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKING FURTHER OUT | 2018 |

Mixed metal powder coated pan, pop rivets,  
wooden brush, cord  
Sculpture. Dimensions variable

## AUTONOMY IN A DECLINING ENVIRONMENT | 2011 |

Vinyl lettering on aluminium composite board,  
orange barrier fencing, discarded food, security  
light, iron bars, basement  
Staged photography. C-type print, 650 x 470 x  
25mm

## I WISH THERE WAS A MANUAL ON HOW TO LIVE YOUR LIFE | 2014 |

Cubicle-less toilets  
Staged pinhole camera photography  
C-type prints. 245 x 145 / 515 x 405mm

## MACHINE NOT IN USE | 2020 |

Found nylon cover, Perspex mirror, underwear,  
nail varnish, person  
Performance art. Dimensions variable

## FAKE | 2011 |

Plug socket, nails & screw, dead flies, two gang  
extension lead  
Installation. Dimensions variable

## HI PAUL, THANKS FOR SENDING YOUR DRAWING. I ASSUME THAT IT'S CHARCOAL, BUT I'M NOT CERTAIN ABOUT THESE SORT OF THINGS. ANYWAY, I LIKE IT - IT'S A GOOD LIKENESS. BEST WISHES, W. | 2014 |

Pastels, card, plastic sleeve, Blu Tack  
Drawing. 110 x 165mm / 300 x 230mm

## ADULT LIFE SUCKS | 2010 |

Powder coated found metal lockers, zinc alloy  
cam locks, aluminium rivets, black acrylic paint  
Sculpture. 70 x 12 x 12 inches  
\*Dedicated to Jane Fisher (1952-2018)

## WET PAINT | 2021 |

Emulsion paint  
Signwriting. 3600 x 600mm

## PLAYGROUND | 2016 |

MP3 player, PA, exponential speaker  
Sound installation. Dimensions Variable

## OTHER PEOPLE ARE UNKNOWABLE

| 2013 |

Internal door, door viewers, sticker,  
knocker aluminium stand, silver acrylic mirror,  
circular rug  
Sculpture. Dimensions variable

## ONE WAY CONVERSATION | 2016\* |

Magazine \*10 year anniversary edition placed in  
Scruffs hairdressing, Cambridge  
Intervention. 203 x 253mm

## PREVIEW UNAVAILABLE | 2020 |

Wooden picture frame, board, chalk, pencil, ink,  
nylon stockings, semi-transparent spray paint,  
label  
Mixed media. 790 x 660 x 35mm

## TOY CARS AND DUMP BIN | 2011 |

Toy cars, bailiff calling card, PIR motion sensor,  
dump bin  
Sculpture and sound installation. Dimensions  
variable

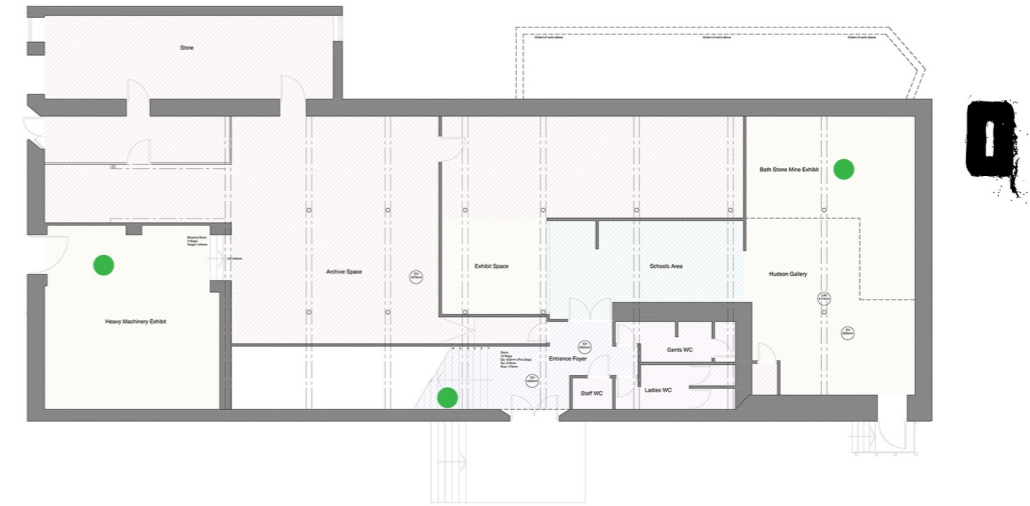
## WHAT IS LIFE FOR? | 2015-2019 |

Sound installation. Dimensions variable

*As if announced mid-conversation in a  
contemplative or exasperated tone, this  
awkward question sought no definitive answer,  
but to perhaps further explore the rationale of  
the question itself: What Is Life For?*

*The project remained open to the general public  
from 2015-2019, who were invited to take part  
anonymously by leaving any kind of response or  
interpretation desired, from light-hearted to  
deeply serious, on a dedicated answerphone.*

# FLOORPLAN



## HITCHCOCK

Extract from Dial D for Dinner, Edward White, published in the Paris Review, April 14 2021:

In 1972, [Alma] Reville's creativity in the kitchen turned up in parodic form in Frenzy, Hitchcock's penultimate movie, in which a Scotland Yard detective endures his wife's hideous attempts at cordon bleu cuisine—a humorous inversion of the situation at Hitchcock's home, though some critics would have us believe that the gag reflects the director's inner resentment of food and the woman who cooked it for him. After Frenzy, ill health stymied the couple's creative output in film and food. In 1976, Hitchcock told a relative in England of his worry for Reville, who had been severely debilitated by the effects of a stroke. Tellingly, it was through their daily menu—so much blander and more mundane that it used to be—that he expressed their unhappiness:

*Lunch usually consists of a sandwich of thin bread, one we enjoy most is a roast beef spread, and we always keep a ham. She has a toast breakfast, afternoon tea with a chocolate biscuit and then dinner. If Pat doesn't provide it, I go out and with the help of the day nurse usually prepare something like a fillet steak or half a chicken, which is easy to handle ... This is a very sad letter, but there's little else I can tell you. Naturally, she never leaves the house, but I try to take her out one night a week to our favourite restaurant, but manoeuvring her is quite a business.*

—Alfred Hitchcock