



# Art

MONTHLY

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**James Richards**

Interviewed by Andrew Hunt

**The Waiting Game**

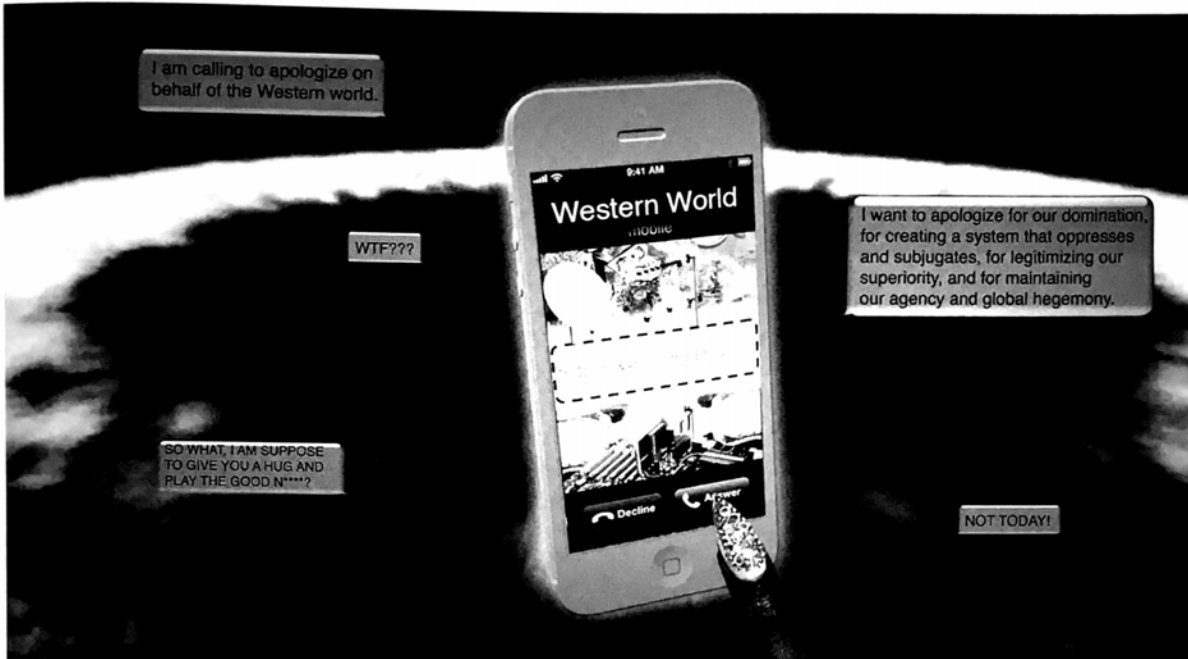
Marcus Verhagen

**Black Art UK/US**

Richard Hylton

**Hysteria**

Rose-Anne Gush



**Tabita Rezaire**  
*Sorry for Real* 2015  
 video

tears!' and 'So what now? Should I give you a hug and play the white n\*\*\*\*?' By the end of the series the announcement 'For all this and more to come I wish to apologise' is greeted by 'WE DON'T NEED YOUR PHALIC RHETORICAL APOLOGY!!' and 'People will f\*\*\* u up, then claim to be ur saviour! LOL'. The series, glowing away in bright colours, cleverly connects globalisation with postcolonialism, ecological and psychological unease and illness.

In a UK where post-referendum division and fragmentation are now giving way to a suffocating inwardness and increasing governmental xenophobia, this exhibition acts as a breath of fresh air. Bury – and everywhere else – needs foreigners. ■

**BOB DICKINSON** is a writer and PhD researcher based in Manchester.

## In Quotes

East Gallery NUA Norwich

30 August to 7 October

Now a century has passed since the first experiments with collage by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, it would seem a good time to evaluate the medium's present currency. 'In Quotes' is a group exhibition of eleven artists that addresses this very task. The exhibition's accompanying text proposes that collage has become especially relevant against the backdrop of the internet, where it has become commonplace to agglomerate diverse cultural forms from innumerable sites. To that degree, the internet has seemingly made collagists of us all.

Bookending the exhibition are works by John Stezaker and Linder, probably the most well-established collagists here. Stezaker is represented by four examples from 2007 of his 'Masks' series in which publicity photographs of film stars have their faces obscured by the imposition of postcards showing landscapes; and Linder has three works in the exhibition, all of which cloak women's identities by hiding their faces behind cut-out flowers. The presence of Stezaker and Linder here is a thoroughly logical, though somewhat

predictable decision. That predictability, nonetheless, flows from the fact that their oeuvres have largely exemplified collage in the past few decades.

Undoubtedly the strongest aspect of 'In Quotes' is the inclusion of works that challenge or expand our customary definitions of collage. If Stezaker's or Linder's practices fall squarely under the banner of collage, then what are we to make of *Undue Flexure*, 2015, by Rowena Hughes or Cornelia Parker's *Shared Fate* from 1998? Hughes's piece comprises reference books, rolled up so that their text is inaccessible, which are then fastened by primary-coloured elastic bands and arranged into a sculptural pile on a plinth. Parker's work displays five objects – a rolled-up newspaper, a bread loaf, a tie, gloves and a deck of cards – that had been cut by the guillotine that decapitated Marie Antoinette. Neither work, at first glance, is immediately redolent of collage.

In a similar fashion, it is legitimate to ask what specifically qualifies Susan Hiller's *Towards an Autobiography of Night*, 1983 (the show's oldest work), as a collage, with its C-Print enlargements of old postcards that have been sparingly over-painted with gold ink. Christina Garrido's *Veils of Invisibility*, 2011, follows a trajectory akin to Hiller's piece by altering gallery postcards intriguingly by painting over the depicted artworks so that they blend into the display context. If one generally imagines collage as pasting paper or objects onto a surface, is painting over an appropriated surface the same type of operation? Tim Davies's quietly fascinating series 'Bridges', 2009, functions inversely to these works by sanding away everything from each postcard's surface apart from the architectural form of the bridge.

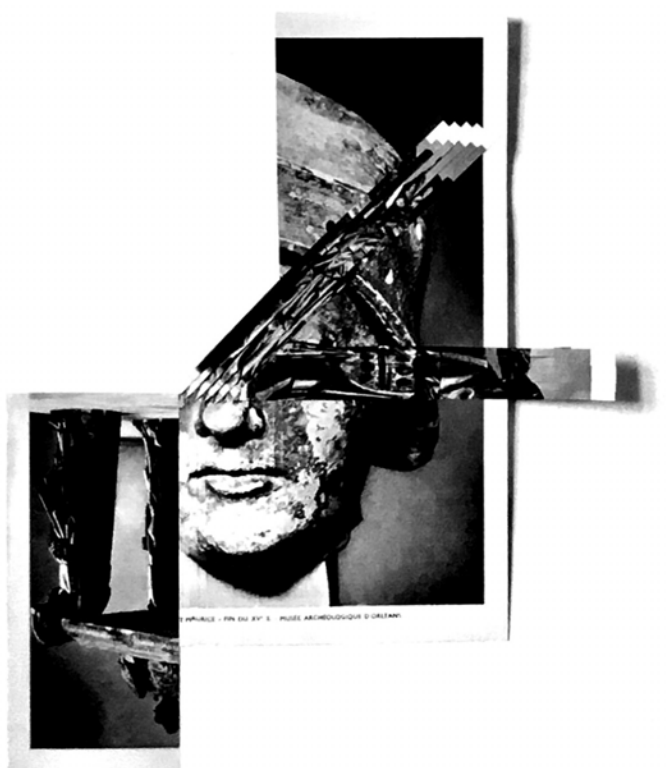
Our willingness to get to grips with these works as collages fundamentally depends on us comprehending how the exhibition posits an inventory of processes that emblemise collage as such. These include, for example: selections of pre-made artefacts; modes of displacement; acts of physical incision; layering of surfaces, thereby generating effects of concealment and thickness; and attentiveness to materiality. In effect, it is clear that the exhibition is building an argument about what processes, singularly or interwoven, can be said to constitute collage in all its irreducibility, which is why Clement

Greenberg's 1959 essay 'Collage' serves as its touchstone. Whatever qualms we continue to have over Greenberg, this essay demonstrates how powerful his critical analysis can be, especially his examination of the material or sculptural qualities of collage as a dialectical process emerging from problems found within Cubist painting.

Given that 'In Quotes' presents contemporary approaches to collage in order to question the current relevance of the medium, one pressing issue concerns collage's almost total dependency on nostalgia in the works displayed. In pieces by Jorge de la Garza, Hiller, Ann-Marie James, Linder, Alex March, Holly Stevenson and Stezaker the visual material used not only pre-dates the 1960s but some also reaches back to the late 19th century, as is the case with March's use of *cartes de visite*. This, to be sure, might stem from curatorial selection; yet if Greenberg identified Cubist collage as marking an epochal transformation within Modernism, then the abundant presence of backward-looking motifs cannot be left unexamined. Do they signify nostalgia for mechanical reproduction in an era where the immateriality of digital reproduction has become predominant? Or do they confirm that collage's epochality has long since passed, meaning that the medium is now locked into the past, outmoded? Are they to be taken as evidence that, as Fredric Jameson proposed apropos postmodern culture's fascination with the past and intertextual pastiche, we are no longer able to think historically? Does the use of old postcards and photographs signal a retreat from the image explosion of the internet rather than an effort to tackle it critically?

These are big questions, and ones not really addressed by the exhibition even though they do underpin its rationale.

**Ann-Marie James**  
Plate 591, 592 2015  
from the series  
'Musée Imaginaire'



What we can say, however, is that the exhibition asserts collage as an inescapably material endeavour. We perhaps forget in the digital age that photographs are, or were, objects rather than merely images. They possess a front and back, a minimally thick surface that can be incised. This materiality matters for collage and marks a distinction from photomontage; a collage may use photographs but cannot be reproduced photographically, unlike photomontage that has reproducibility built in. James compellingly makes this point in her 'Musée Imaginaire' collages in which she appropriates plates from the first edition of André Malraux's book (itself a kind of collage juxtaposing photographic reproductions). These plates are painstakingly sliced into strips, interlaced with other plates from the book or presented with the edges of the strip raised so that the space underneath becomes visible. In one way or another, all the works in the exhibition emphasise materiality, whether it be Sharon Kivland's texts written on Ruscombe Mill paper or Stevenson's gluing of kitschy objects onto old linen postcards. The gold handprints, suggesting tactility, in Hiller's work are distinctly emblematic in that regard. If the internet has transformed us all into collagists, then this exhibition successfully demonstrates that focusing on materiality is a necessary step towards maintaining collage's critical potential in the cut-and-paste universe of digital media. ■

**MATTHEW BOWMAN** lectures at University of Suffolk and Colchester School of Art.

## Folkestone Triennial: Double Edge

various venues 2 September to 5 November

Curating his first Folkestone Triennial in 2014, Lewis Biggs's theme of 'Lookout' suggested possible structures while implying external threats (Reviews AM380). That tied the works together effectively in the context of a declining coastal town which had lost its ferry link but retains a view of France. What has changed since? Most obviously, the prospect of Brexit, which that loss of a ferry might parallel. The 2017 theme 'double edge' evokes psychological anxiety as well as questions about how boundaries are applied and what is marginalised as a result. That could trigger political content, but the 19 artists' works tend towards the double edge of what is and is not art. What comes across isn't change but the continuity which has developed over the four Triennials held since ex-Saga boss Roger de Haan's charitable efforts kick-started Folkestone's culturally led regeneration plan. There is a continuing focus on art's place in Folkestone, and Folkestone's place in the world; 28 of the works commissioned for the first three Triennials remain, and three of the 2014 participants show again this year.

Four artists dot the town with recurring motifs: two sets of works you have to hunt for, two sets you can hardly miss. Jonathan Wright's *Fleet on Foot* (all works 2017) unobtrusively raises gilded 3D-printed models of the remaining ten boats in Folkestone's fishing fleet on poles at the level at which the now-culverted River Pent once ran. Amalia Pica picks at the edges between art and craft, and between public and private, by making sculptures out of shells. She has loaned them to Folkestone residents to show in their windows as they might