

# ART LICKS

**A NEW CONSCIOUSNESS**

Artist run spaces, original work,  
emerging artists, collectives,  
experimental art writing

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**LAURA VENT  
AND JAIMIE BARKER  
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# BANNER REPEATER

VALENTINA RAVAGLIA

*Banner Repeater* is a project space and reading room located on Platform 1, Hackney Downs Station, London. Opened in October 2010, it is run by artist Ami Clarke.

Valentina Ravaglia, freelance curator and gallery assistant at Banner Repeater, spoke with Ami Clarke about BR's programme of activity.

**VALENTINA RAVAGLIA**

What is BR, and why did you choose the banner repeater to symbolise it?

**AMI CLARKE**

Location is integral to the project, deliberately sited at the natural interstice the railway provides with the incidental footfall of passengers; a network for the dissemination of material, connecting with the city, the underground network, overground to the east of London and East Anglia, and internationally via Stansted airport.

The reading room is dedicated to artists' printed material, and the deliberately broad term 'material' touches on a shared concern with the project space in ideas of the performative object.

These relate strongly to a sense of being sited, and the relationships between works being of importance, acting as a set of coded signs that I would hope correlate through an experiential awareness of being in the works, viewing, reading, and working towards meaning, a diagram if you like, of sorts.

The sign that the name is taken from is a STOP / GO sign on the railway, mostly seen at night as it consists of small bulbs of light in two configurations that flip from Stop to Go. I liked the idea of this in relation to us producing banners, of a sort, that are distributed repeatedly. Simple stuff really.

**VR**

Do you consider running BR as part of your practice as an artist, or do you prefer to keep the two distinctly separated?

**AC**

That's an interesting question and a difficult one to answer. The sited nature of the project relates strongly to previous works of mine where problematic conditions relating to 'participation' were considered, such as: 'This Way Up', 'the diagram works', and to an extent 'Folly'.

I consider the project space in the sense of the critical framework that it might provide. I am keen to draw attention to concerns that might exist outside of the project space whilst operating within this framework, and I feel that the location provides an ideal site for this.

There is a footfall of around 4,000 a day through Hackney Downs and we have around 200 people visit us a week, often in transit. The everydayness of this appeals to me.

**VR**

Your first exhibition, 'The Diagram', refers directly to your interest in schematic representations and simplified structures as visual models of thought processes. Would you say that it was meant to set a tone for all forthcoming curatorial projects? And what is, in general,

the rationale behind the programming of the exhibitions in the project space?

**AC**

The diagram provides a framework that interests me due to its state of being in process. The experience of a diagram is one where the correlation of several different forms of representation: text, illustration, graphic symbols, and so on, are read in relation to one another.

The inclination to work towards some kind of meaning that comes of this experience touches on a number of interesting questions with regards to the complexities of participation and potential agency.

**VR**

What are your plans for the reading room, besides the accumulative library project?

**AC**

We publish a pamphlet with each exhibition distributed via the rail network, and this is primarily the purpose of the project as a whole: the dissemination of material.

The reading room often merges with the project space, with launches of journals and zines, performances and events, whilst small publishing projects occur in the reading room.

**VR**

You seem to be especially fond of the replica of the Xerox book on permanent display in the reading room; again, it seems to function as a manifesto for the archive you are putting together...

**AC**

I saw the Jack Wendler exhibition 'Dematerialised' at CHELSEA space and was flicking through the 'Xerox' book, and it occurred to me that this was unusual, the 'Xerox' book being a highly collectable item.

Common to much art of this time, the political agenda of de-commodification was key to many artists' practice, but seemingly failed as the market integrated even the most ephemeral of activities.

During the curating process the book had been reproduced as a photocopy of the original litho-type.

Finally, the original intention of producing a work accessible by nature of its being a photocopy had been achieved, via the activity of archiving. It was now available to all. It flipped ideas of the archive on its head for me.

I was interested in this particularly as there is so much archival activity today. It wasn't so long ago this was regarded with some suspicion, which is why I choose to see the library as a resource •