



## UOA D32

ART AND DESIGN:  
HISTORY, THEORY AND PRACTICE



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**RESEARCHER**

John Beagles

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**OUTPUT TITLE**

*ToDoJoyComplete*

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**OUTPUT TYPE**

Digital or Visual Media

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**DATES**

2017 – 2019

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FIG. 1  
Beagles and Ramsay  
*ToDoJoyComplete*, still, 2016.



## 01 / STATEMENT

*ToDoJoyComplete* is a short 3D digital film (approximately 6 minutes) by the collaborative duo Beagles and Ramsay.

A speculation about digital aesthetics, the film combines the experimental use of 3d animation software with insights from Beagles' published research on the impact of digital culture.

The film shows a number of disconnected figures moving and occupying an anonymous artificially-lit and disorientating interior that is reminiscent of a contemporary art installation. A dehumanised voiceover comprises the key feature of the soundtrack.

Since its first presentation in 2016, at *The Scottish Endarkenment: Art and Unreason 1945 to the Present*, Dovecot Gallery, Edinburgh from 13 May – 29 August 2016, the film has been shown in different iterations in 5 national and international venues including London, Glasgow and Copenhagen. See Significance, page 17 for full list.



Film available at:

[https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/To+Do+Joy+Complete/1\\_7adq1xm7](https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/To+Do+Joy+Complete/1_7adq1xm7)

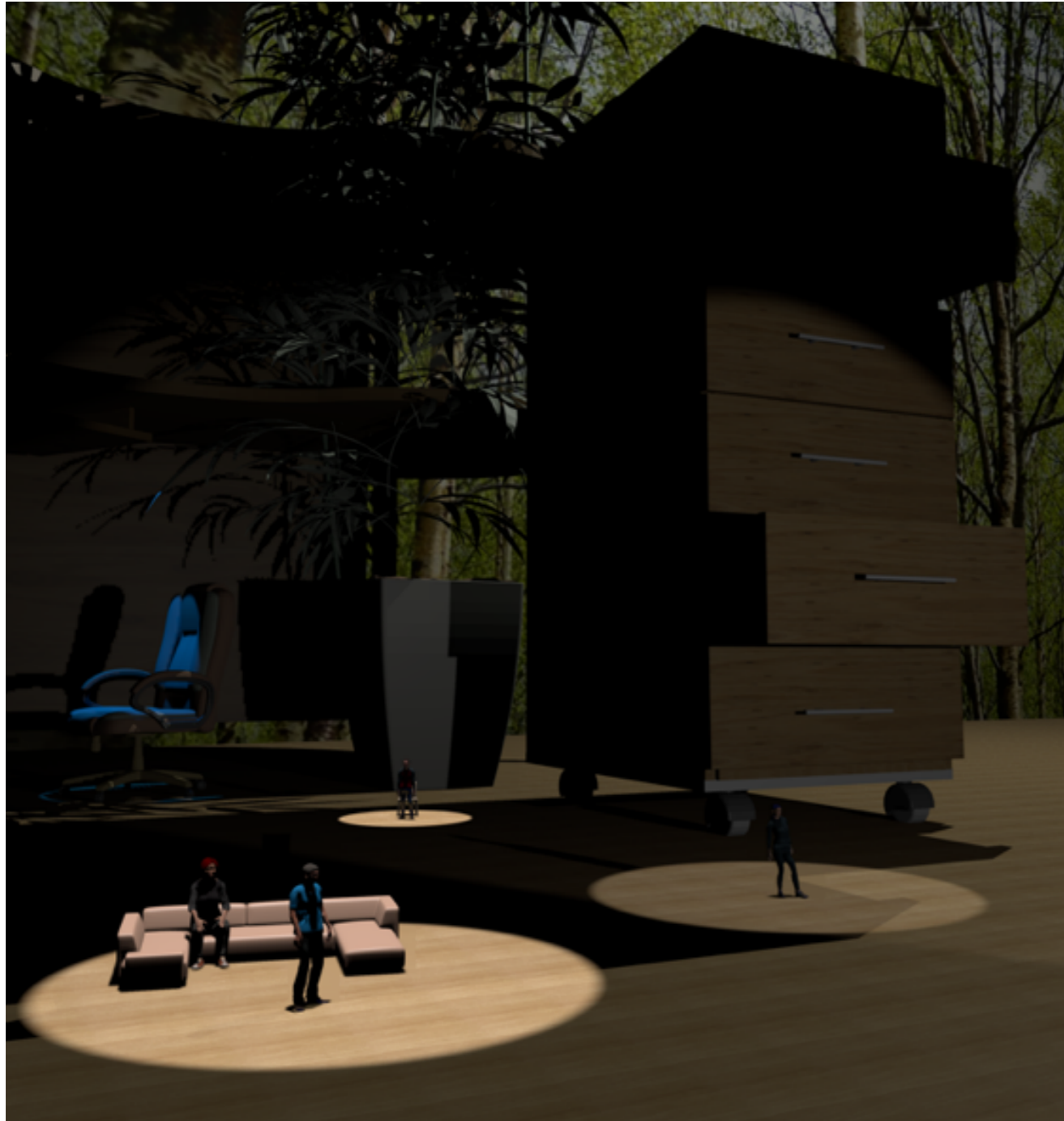
DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.7488/c8eb498d-df94-413a-a09c-4bfc40642a1d>

## 02 / RESEARCH DIMENSIONS

FIG. 2

Beagles and Ramsay  
*ToDoJoyComplete*, still, 2016.



The softwares used to make the film – *Blender*, an open source 3D modelling programme and *Fuse*, a software resource – are primarily used within the commercial sector for the production of games.

By employing this software without progressing to the development of a game, the film proceeds from and prompts reflection upon the relations and boundaries between contemporary art and commercial entertainment, spectatorship and participation, and the genre of contemporary video art.

Extending a long-standing interest in situationist strategies of detournement, Beagles & Ramsay used and then ‘infected’ an established mainstream commercial medium with unconventional and illegitimate content.

This output extends Beagles & Ramsay’s longstanding interrogation of the themes of labour, consumerism, exploitation and the transfiguration of human relations, and the human condition itself, within the digital society.



## 03 / ORIGINALITY

FIG. 3  
Beagles and Ramsay  
*ToDoJoyComplete*, still, 2016.



The film challenges the view that contemporary video art is incompatible with the entertainment forms of popular mainstream entertainment.

It retrieves the tropes of the latter to stimulate critical and reflective thought. It contributes new knowledge with respect to the relation between contemporary art, digital aesthetics and mass culture.

The film seeks to be 'radically entertaining', as opposed to attempting to be radical by refusing to be entertaining. This subversion of the customary binary between critical radicalism and popular entertainment situates the work within recent theoretical interest in expanded notions of the popular within political theory (Chantal Mouffe) and cultural theory (Mark Fisher).



## 04 / RIGOUR

FIG. 4

Beagles and Ramsay  
*ToDoJoyComplete*, still, 2016.



The work was produced collaboratively over 3 years. 3D scanned objects and digital models of the artists and friends were animated using gaming software for the digital animation.

Using *Blender*, these animations were then placed in constructed 3D landscapes and interiors, which also featured familiar motifs from Beagles and Ramsay's work – chopping boards, cardboard boxes, and so on. The animations were finally edited in *Adobe Premiere*.

A parallel and complementary experiment in digitalisation, the soundtrack for this animation was developed using a combination of recorded live sessions with a range of musicians and studio-based work performed by Beagles.

In these sessions live vocals were spoken and sung using edited versions of Beagles and Ramsay texts. In postproduction all the live vocals were removed and replaced with synthetic robot voices produced by the Edinburgh based company Cereproc. This was then combined using familiar domestic music software – *GarageBand* and *Logic*.

The final video was, in part, edited to the songs *BlahBlahBlah* and *Mush* – a reworking of Robert Wyatt's song *Pigs*.

FIG. 5  
Beagles and Ramsay  
*ToDoJoyComplete*, still, 2016.



FIG. 6  
Beagles and Ramsay  
*ToDoJoyComplete*, still, 2016.





FIG. 7  
Beagles and Ramsay  
*ToDoJoyComplete*, still, 2016.



FIG. 8

Advertising poster for *Triumph of Zero*, VoidoidARCHIVE, 2016.



FIG. 9

Poster *PingPingJerkSpasm*, at the Pipe Factory, Glasgow, 2017.



FIG. 10

Flyer *Sick Monday*, 2019.

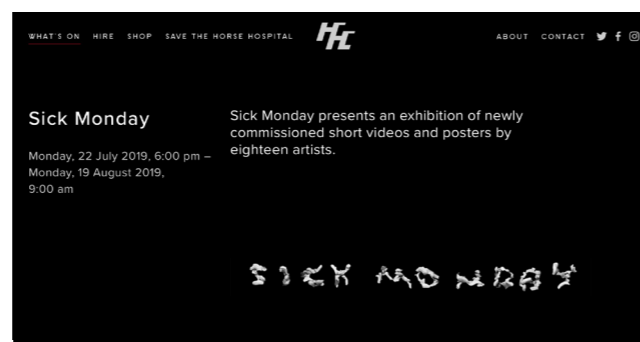


FIG. 11

Online advert *Sick Monday*, 2019.

## 05 / SIGNIFICANCE

The work engages with and contributes to practices and discourses around contemporary art, media, mass culture and the digital.

It was invited to be part of 'The Scottish Endarkenment. Art and Unreason 1945 to the Present', an exhibition curated by Bill Hare and Andrew Patrizio, at the Dovecot Gallery, Edinburgh, 13 May – 29 August, 2016. The exhibition explored major themes in Scottish modern and contemporary art since the end of World War Two. The film was subsequently selected for exhibition at a number of different venues:

– Voidoid Gallery, Glasgow.

A group show featuring work by Erica Eyres, John Russell, Andy Warhol and the Dennis and Debbie Club, 29 October – 13 November 2016.

– *PingPingJerkSpasm*.

Solo exhibition, The Pipe Factory, Glasgow, 21 October – 5 November 2017.

– *The Alchemy Film Festival*, Hawick, Scotland 2 – 6 May 2018. See Appendix, page 20.

– *Sick Monday* at The Horse Hospital, London. 22 July - 19 August 2019. An exhibition of newly commissioned short videos and posters by eighteen artists. Curated by Dean Kenning, Liam Scully and Vanessa Scully featuring works by Antoine Catala, Sophie Carapetian, Dean Kenning, Beagles & Ramsay, Lee Holden & Josephine Wood, John Russell, David Burrows, Vanessa Scully, Birgit Ludwig, Anita Delaney, Noor Afshan Mirza & Brad Butler, A.K Bindsbøll & Ava Fersi, Laure Prouvost, Ada Wesolowska, Ben Rivers, Jason File, Liam Scully and Paul McCarthy. Supported by Arts Council England.

*Sick Monday* presented eighteen newly commissioned short videos and posters, from a series of three screening programmes presented in 2018. The exhibition was accompanied by a DVD publication and poster launch, plus commissioned text by horror film scholar, Dr Lindsay Hallam.

The Horse Hospital is a central London independent arts venue celebrating the work of underground and avant-garde artists through exhibitions, events, talks, film and music and performance.

– *Sick Monday* travelling film screening programme, 2018-2019. Curated by Dean Kenning, Liam Scully and Vanessa Scully. Supported by the Arts Council England.

Various venues including Deptford Cinema, Genesis Cinema Brixton, C.C.A Glasgow, 22 July – 19 August 2019.

– *OkCorral*, Copenhagen, 7 – 28 September 2019. Funded by Danish Arts Council.

A selection of images from the film were featured in a special issue on 'work' of the journal *Parse* Issue 9, Spring 2019 – Work, edited by Dave Beech, Benjamin Fallon, Kirsteen Macdonald, Marina Vishmidt. Peer reviewed by Dr Stephen Wilson. See Appendix, page 20.

The video and music from *PingPingJerkSpasm*, were also exhibited as part of Ross Sinclair's curatorial project 'Artist Who Make Music, Musicians Who Make Art' at the Queens Park Railways Club, Glasgow, 2018. See Appendix, page 20.



FIG. 12  
Beagles and Ramsay  
*ToDoJoyComplete*, still, 2016.

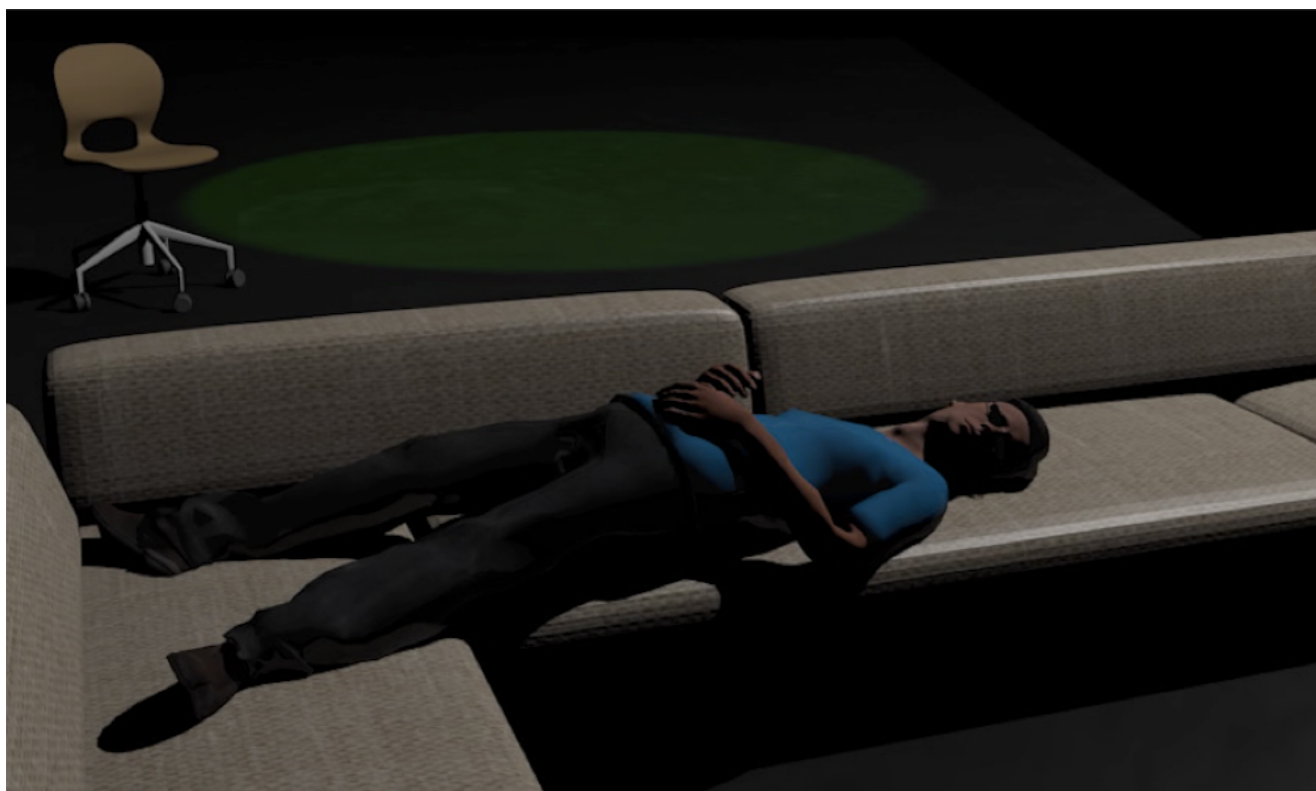
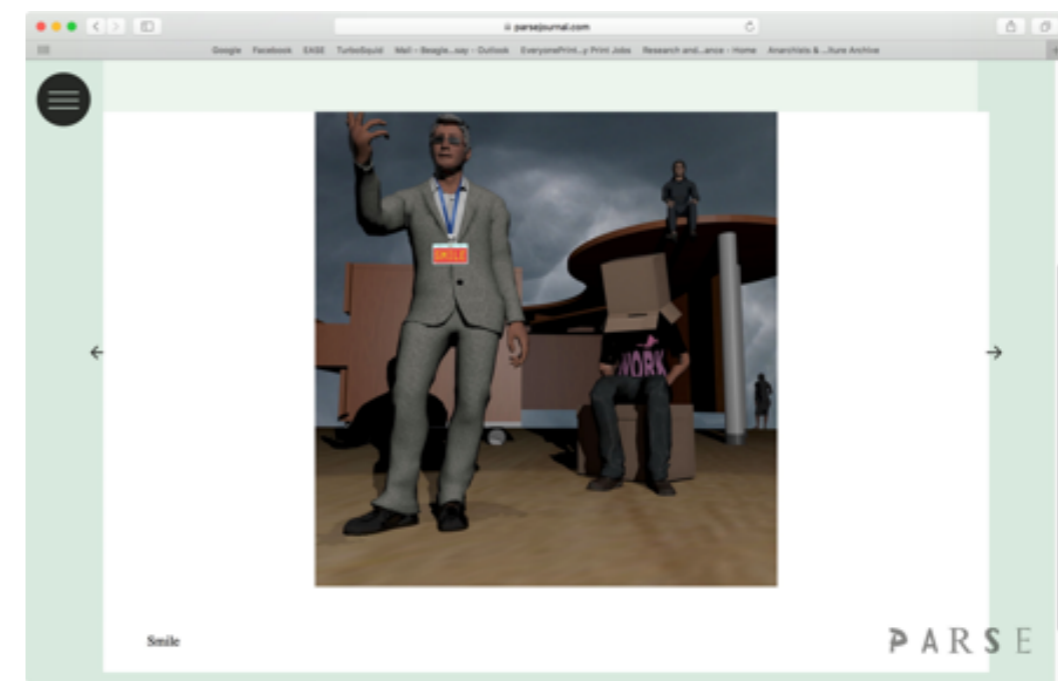
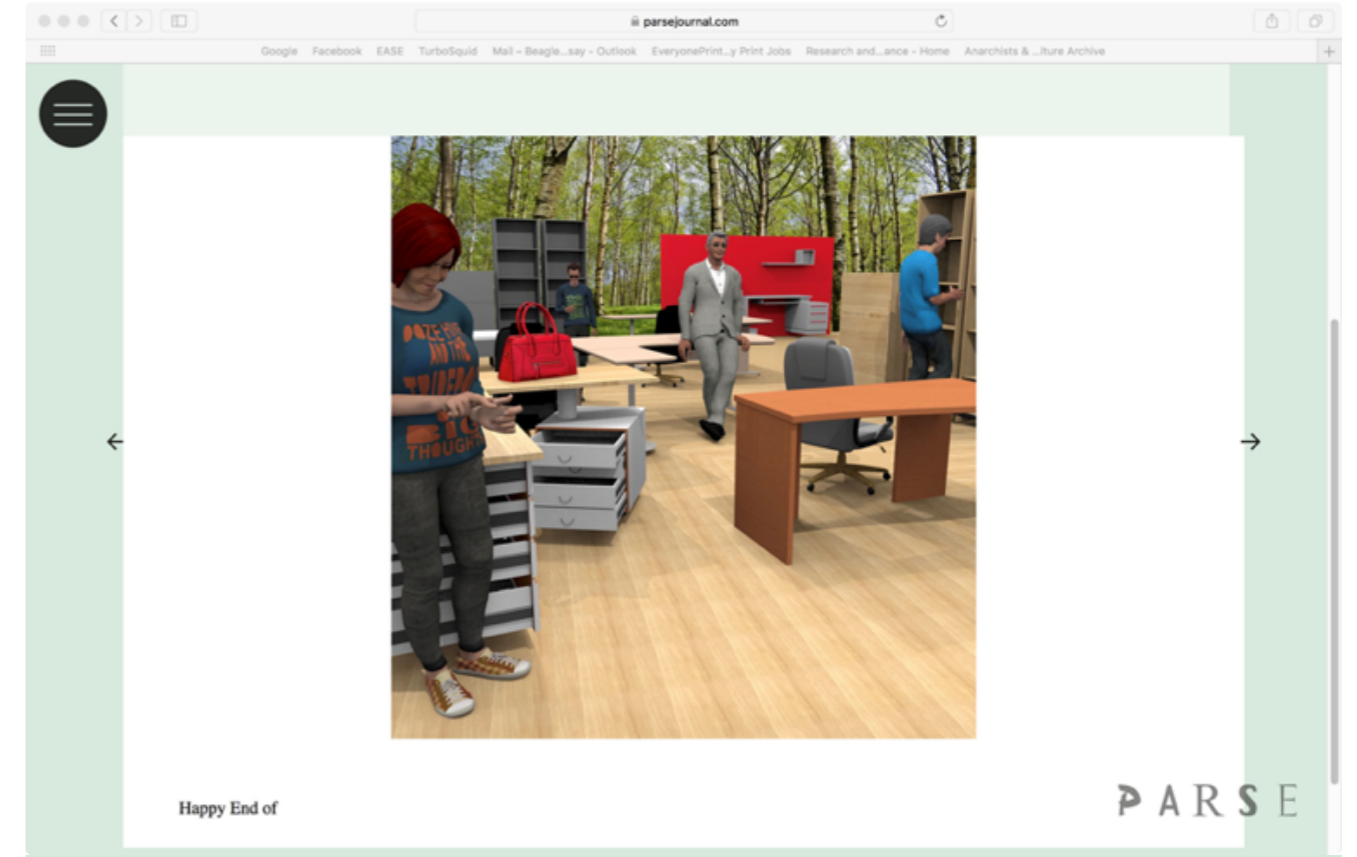


FIG. 13  
Beagles and Ramsay  
*ToDoJoyComplete*, still, 2016.

FIGS. 14–15  
Images of *PingPingJerkSpasm*  
featured in *Parse*, Issue 9,  
Spring 2019.





## 06 / APPENDIX

**Film**

The Alchemy Film Festival, Hawick, Scotland 2 – 6 May 2018.

[https://alchemyfilmmandarts.org.uk/2018\\_archive/2018/dystopian-disco/index.html](https://alchemyfilmmandarts.org.uk/2018_archive/2018/dystopian-disco/index.html)

**Other exhibitions**

<http://queensparkrailwayclub.co.uk/Artistswhomakemusicmusicianswhomakeart.html>

<http://okcorral.dk/filter/past/This-Exhibition-is-Inspired-by-Real-Events>

<http://okcorral.dk/filter/past/This-Exhibition-is-Inspired-by-Real-Events>

**Journals**

<https://parsejournal.com/issue/work/>

<https://oa.journals.publicknowledgeproject.org/index.php/oa/article/view/150>

**Reviews**

'*ToDoJoyComplete* brilliantly conveys the saturated neurodiversity of today's compulsive screen technologies. The title alone is unsympathetic, it combines various perspectives such as the widening sense of isolation linked to many working professional relationships. Importantly, this includes how today's creative sector (alongside art education) is positioned within a start-up/fintech mentality. What creative productivity implies to a working office environment is reconsidered in *ToDoJoyComplete* – not just because it is full of today's despair or because it is produced within the autonomy of an art collective but because it questions what 'knowledge' we are working towards. This is a vital distinction that permits a timely place for the project in today's consciousness. We are all attempting to improve our shared circumstances while equally addressing new ways to envisage our working lives – *ToDoJoyComplete* is a carefully crafted comment on workspace brutalities.'

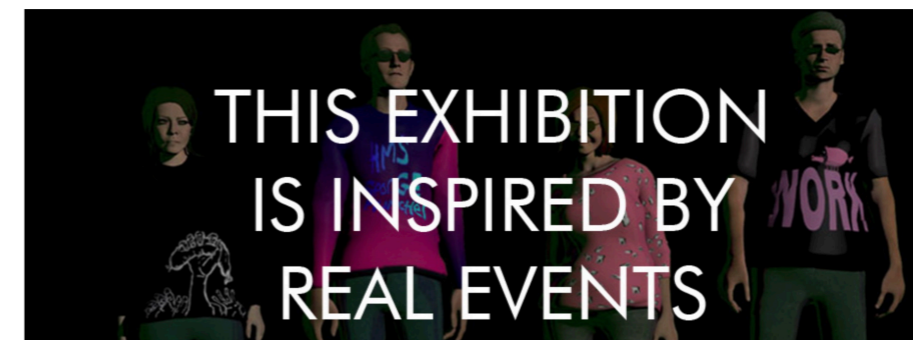
Dr Stephen Wilson,  
*Parse Journal*, 2018.

'The graphic and animated infrastructure of *ToDoJoyComplete* renders the subject to a vacuous world state – this maybe equal to any deeply unsatisfied working environment. Collectively, individuals are scattered with social insignificance. What Beagles and Ramsey's project does so well is question how a culture of 'open source spirit' represents collective concerns in today's labour-based ecologies. The JPEG images develop independently various existing methods (such as those in William Davies's book titled: *The Happiness Industry: How the Government and Big Business Sold us Well-Being*; Verso, 2016) that have sharply increased within the disappointments of everyday online neoliberal living. The JPEG images relay titles such as: *Smile; On the Beach; Happy\_Ending; Ceiling\_the\_Cosmos; Pause\_Relax\_Insert; and Circular\_Holding\_Pattern* – whereby visions of a Western demise occupy and filter a post-Fordist agenda. These suggested titles unwittingly interpret and put forward a presence on today's employment workplace environments such as *WeWork* – "a multinational company that provides membership, shared workspaces for technology firms, subcultural communities, and services for entrepreneurs, freelancers, start-ups, small businesses and large enterprises". While today's artists increasingly fall prey to corporate instrumentalism under a similar banner of state inclusivity, art organisations openly engage with processes of gentrification – artwashing – that are often "encouraged by the state in public-private-third sector partnerships" (Pritchard). Mental health, wellbeing and social impact and social capital are considered and noted in the visually enhanced compositions of each image.'

Dr Stephen Wilson,  
*Parse Journal*, 2018.

# OKCORRAL

Exhibitions Events Open Call About



*This Exhibition is Inspired by Real Events*  
Rachel Ara, Beagles & Ramsay, Philip Glazer, Fintan Ryan

Opening: Friday September 6th 5-9pm  
Exhibition Period: September 7th - September 28th 2019  
Opening hours: Wednesday - Saturday 1-5pm

*Priests tell us God exists and we rightly mock them. Why do we treat physicists any differently?*  
- Theodor Adorno

FIG. 16

Invitation for *This Exhibition is inspired by real events* at OKCorral.

FIG. 17

Excerpt from Simon Willems, and Samantha Warren, *Presenting whilst retreating in the age of the corporate lanyard*, *Organizational Aesthetics*, Vol 9, Issue 1, Jan 2020, pp6-7.

Curator's note: But the power of the lanyard as a fashion accessory is not lost on Glasgow-based collaboration, Beagles & Ramsay. Integral to their 2017 Headstiff Collection and NEW HEADS ON THE BLOCK & ROPE A DOPE T-shirt range, variously captioned ID badges complete the look. Available in a heady mix of colours, a straight-faced smiley features on one, where "WHO OWNS THE CHEESE?" can be read on another. Part of their 2017 exhibition PINGPINGJERKSPASM at The Pipe Factory in Glasgow, Beagles & Ramsay's high-octane graphics resonate with a late Nineties rave vibe. They are reminders of the role that dance music and festivals have played in the lanyard's post-millennial evolution. Yet the nature of this aesthetic appropriation serves a purpose. The icons and slogans rifled off here, whilst playful, point towards the pathological. Work and organization – like leisure – are presented as late-capitalist fodder; elements within what Maurizio Lazzarato describes (after Deleuze & Guattari) as capitalism's "machinic enslavement" (Lazzarato 2014). Lanyards read like tics, markers of touretic release that chart the dismantling of the individual subject within the production of human capital. This is no less apparent than in the sequence of still images that the two artists generated using 3D animation and gaming software. In what looks like a desert of oversized office furniture, "On the Beach" presents a family caught at dusk; the father fronting the scene with a lanyard around his neck, from which a loud red label reading "MUSH" spars out with the fading sky.



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*Edinburgh College of Art*

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