

The Gooden Gallery
Wednesday October 20th 2010

Dear Mr. Hugh Gilmour,

I am delighted to welcome you to be the next artist privileged to work in the 24/7 Gooden Gallery vitrine. For the last week this glorious space has been home to DOG MAN'S WEEK OF THE 10,000 STORIES. I originally wanted to make this space into a temporary fish stall, a perfect replica of Tubby Isaacs stall in Aldgate East, complete with Tubby himself, but, really, what would that have meant in the context of the Gooden 24/7 Vitrine and our unfolding exhibition? It was better things worked out this way.

My own arrival in this space seems a long time ago now (it was last Friday). I remember I was very nervous because Dog Man, I confess it now, has never before expressed himself so spatially. When I arrived there was a sculpture in the centre of the room, like a dead misshapen body under a white sheet, and a text on the wall informed me "Daniel Lehan fears for his life." So I acted quickly. A sleeping bag and pillow made the dead body into a bed. I also began covering over the text, leaving only words that could contribute to the act of resurrection I felt it was my Dog Man duty to perform.

Since the first week of this exhibition (because Dog Man often snuck down from his Watney Market hideout to look) there has also been, on the back wall of the vitrine, an arrangement of letters on bathroom tiles, hung from nails. Each artist has made a new version of this, adding letters, taking away nails, as suited their aims. Dog Man made his own text for this. You can see it, but I repeat it here:

WIT IS NOTW IMPOSSIBLE

My aim, as it seems to me now, was both to resurrect myself, and scare death from ever returning to Vyner Street. That explains my prominent central position in the window: my old broken boots, cardboard tube legs, coins, compass, all positioned on pages of the London Metro, with a text pinned to my right leg which says:

GRIMMICK
GRIMMICK
GRIMMICK
GRIMMICK

I have been asked the meaning of this text. I can only lie to you like I did to Della Gooden and say it is a combination of GRIM and GIMMICK. Oh, Hugh,

the deceptions we give in life with a smile, particularly where language is concerned, are many! There are also a few “sculptures” around the vitrine, mostly of things I had lying around at home and no longer needed. I won't spoil your pleasure by describing them, just observe that, as a life long West Ham supporter, it is delightful to discover the bliss of both small and large acts of appropriation and maneuvering.

On the floor I put the writing that I did here as part of resurrecting. If I was forced at gunpoint to say what these texts were I would say they were broadly humorous. They articulate just being Dog Man, but also Dog Man articulating Dog Man's Dog Man, which is not the same thing at all. Perhaps the same dilemma applies to being Hugh Gilmour? (I should add that I have not always been Dog Man, but that is another letter).

So in all these ways (getting quickly to the point because I have to go to Dalston within the hour) DOG MAN'S WEEK OF THE 10,000 STORIES took shape. The 10,000 stories are not things I have written down or spoken. The story is not *in* the Gooden vitrine but it is only possible to get to the story *through* the Gooden vitrine, which of course you can only view from the street, unless you are an artist like you, Hugh, are an artist (after me), who can go into the vitrine and do what he or she has to do.

There is another thing I must confess, Hugh. After I put all this work here I was nervous about coming here again. It was like I was worried about encountering my double. Maybe it would have all fallen down or been trashed, or something would have happened to it so that it was “ruined” (what would that mean?). So when I came here (because I did, I had to) it was furtively, like I was stalking myself, a tourist of myself in the darkness.

As a result of these trips, I wrote more. These texts seemed darker. Perhaps they also got closer to that casualness I was seeking. ~~I have come to the vitrine and replaced the original texts with these new ones. I have taken everything away. The reason for writing this letter is to tell you Dog Man has gone, taking his stuff with him, back to Watney Market~~

Hugh Gilmour! I have changed my mind. I was worried about leaving you a lot of stuff. I had been thinking about the rule we had for this project, that things could be added and changed but not taken away. (This was nothing new to me. My flat above Watney Market has filled up with SHIT according to the same restriction, albeit unconsciously).

I wondered if there was a way of being creative with the restrictions. That things could stay but become another form. Maybe - you see where I am going, Hugh! - they could all become part of this letter. Because the letter

wouldn't take up much room. You could put it on the wall or under something, or even just slip it in your pocket "by accident" and no would know.

I changed my mind because I found I liked the idea that the exhibition was a frozen moment, a body under a white sheet, something fearing for its life. By the end of making my installation I wanted to un-resurrect. I wasn't sure what further rearrangement of my materials would achieve. I was still hoping my mum would get along to see it, and this won't happen until Friday. Etc. Etc.

Importantly for you, Hugh, I don't think this changes the essential point about what you have to do. All this stuff can still take other forms. After all, Hugh, anything is possible at this point of magical metamorphosis from me to you, like one Doctor Who becoming another. Also, I would like back the sleeping bag, the Virginia Woolf mug, the pillow, the Argos catalogue, and any of the writings that you do not need. I also have plans for the sheets of paper folded on the bed in the rough shape of my own body with "S" "O" and "L" on them. If you could leave these at the gallery reception desk, I can come and collect them later.

I am aware that if you take away my actual writings then the specific importance and meaning of a sentence such as DOG MAN USED TO BE A JELLIED EEL might be lost. But, Hugh, do not panic! Through this letter - and through you, Hugh - my writings will remain in another form, as something further back in the brain than language, and perhaps that is more useful in the long term (as Tubby himself, I remember, said that terrible day when all the jellied eels had gone by 11AM). Perhaps, too, I know not what I am saying, I have invented money!

Dalston is imminent so Dog Man will now depart forever into the economic downturn of your creativity, Hugh, (don't misunderstand me - I mean FIRES) never to return, at least not until the end of project party. I don't want to limit in any way my ability to burn. As I give you my full, complete, total Dog Man, Hugh, I feel close to tears. Sorry if anything I have said or done here should cause you any inconvenience.

Dog Man's Week of the 10,000 STORIES is over.
Farewell Gooden Gallery 24/7 Vitrine
Good luck to you, Mr. Hugh Gilmour and
Much Love to everyone from

DOG MAN