

waterside
contemporary

2 Clunbury Str, London N1 6TT
info@waterside-contemporary.com
waterside-contemporary.com
tel +44 2034170159

Karen Mirza and Brad Butler

waterside
contemporary

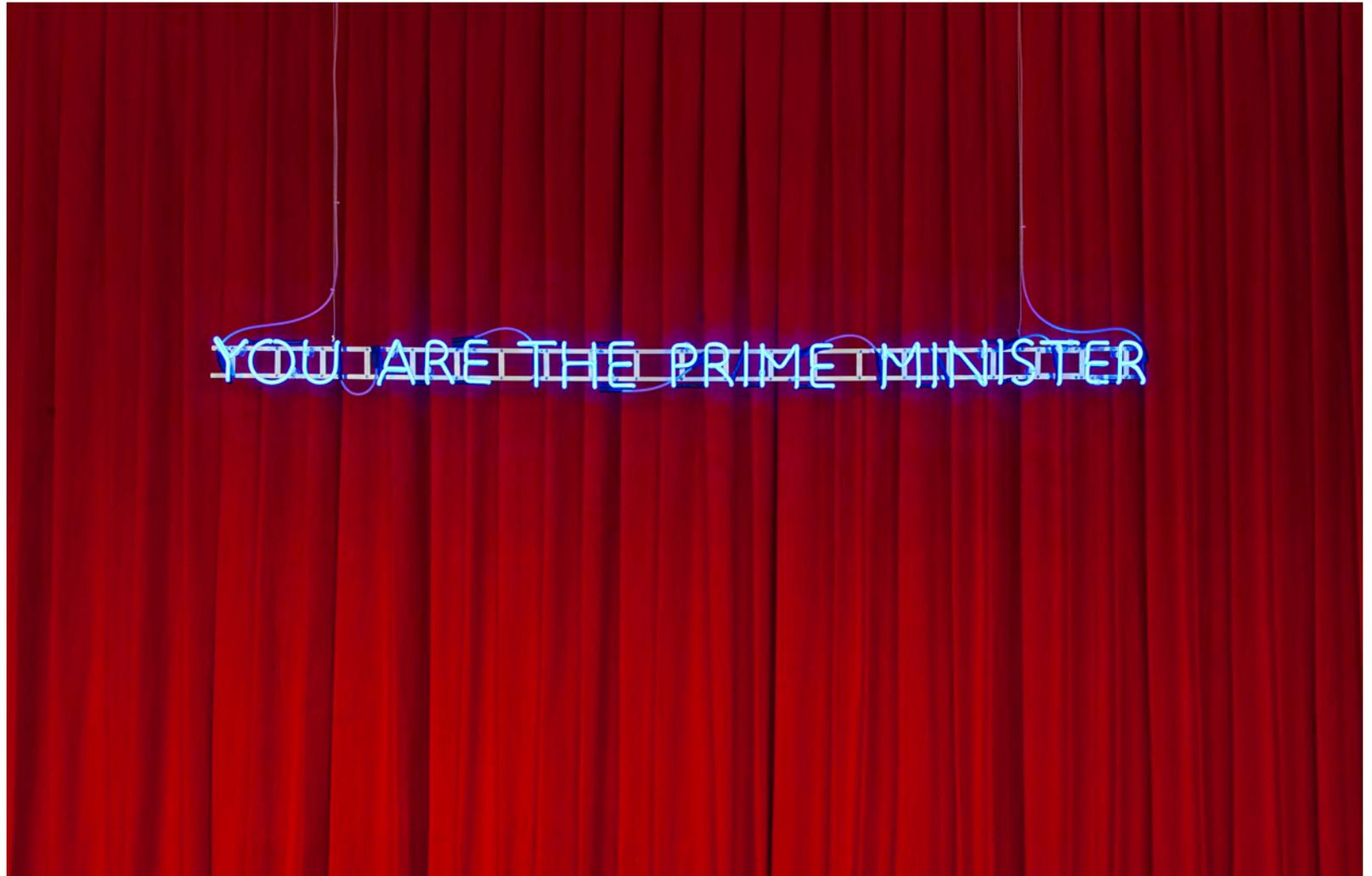
**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*You Are the Prime
Minister (neon sign)*
2014

installation
neon sign
220x12cm

installation view at waterside
contemporary

MBU026/1



**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*You Are the Prime
Minister (neon sign)*
2014

installation
neon sign
220x12cm

installation view at waterside
contemporary

MBU026/1



Eton College King's Scholarship Examination 2011

CANDIDATE NUMBER: _____

(One and a half hours)

You need not answer the questions in the order set, but you must start each one on a separate piece of paper.

The year is 2040. There have been riots in the streets of London after Britain has run out of petrol because of an oil crisis in the Middle East. Protesters have attacked public buildings. Several policemen have died. Consequently, the Government has deployed the Army to curb the protests. After two days the protests have been stopped but twenty-five protesters have been killed by the Army. You are the Prime Minister. Write the script for a speech to be broadcast to the nation in which you explain why employing the Army against violent protesters was the only option available to you and one which was both *necessary* and *moral*.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*You Are the Prime
Minister (print)*
2014

print
letterpress on paper
26x36cm

waterside
contemporary

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*The Unreliable
Narrator*
2014

video
2-channel video
installation, audio
16'20"

video still

MBU025/1



**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*The Unreliable
Narrator*

2014

video
2-channel video
installation, audio
16'20"

installation view at waterside
contemporary

MBU025/1



waterside
contemporary

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*The Unreliable
Narrator*
2014

video
2-channel video
installation, audio
16'20"

video still

MBU025/1



waterside
contemporary

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*The Unreliable
Narrator*
2014

video
2-channel video
installation, audio
16'20"

video still

MBU025/1





**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

Act (s)
2014

installation
neon sign

MBU028/1

Act(s)

The revolution won't be led by red flags and the sound of "Bella Ciao"; it won't be written about by approved academics whose careers we've followed and trusted; it won't elevate the voices of those we long to hear more of, who affirm us and raise our spirits; it won't fill our airwaves or our ears with solidarity and the justice for which we stand. It won't happen between respectable hours and in designated areas, and it won't have an allocated tea station, information board, or "quiet zone." There will be no training and organized occupations, no sign-up speaking platforms, no "burn out" support group, no PA system fueled by pedal power, no press photos, no high-visibility vests, no polite unauthoritative signage.

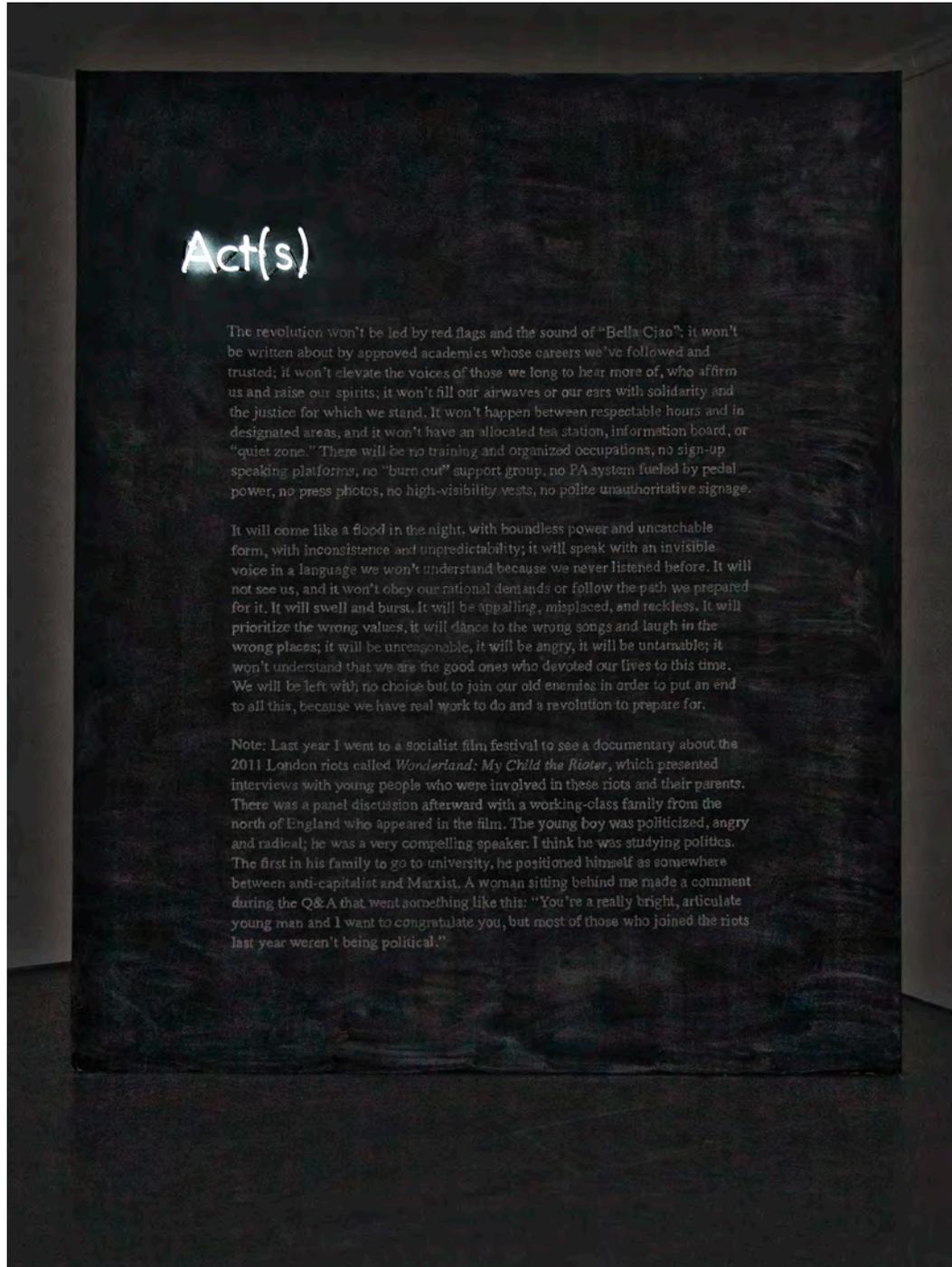
It will come like a flood in the night, with boundless power and uncatchable form, with inconsistency and unpredictability; it will speak with an invisible voice in a language we won't understand because we never listened before. It will not see us, and it won't obey our rational demands or follow the path we prepared for it. It will swell and burst. It will be appalling, misplaced, and reckless. It will prioritize the wrong values, it will dance to the wrong songs and laugh in the wrong places; it will be unreasonable, it will be angry, it will be untamable; it won't understand that we are the good ones who devoted our lives to this time. We will be left with no choice but to join our old enemies in order to put an end to all this, because we have real work to do and a revolution to prepare for.

Note: Last year I went to a socialist film festival to see a documentary about the 2011 London riots called *Wonderland: My Child the Rioter*, which presented interviews with young people who were involved in these riots and their parents. There was a panel discussion afterward with a working-class family from the north of England who appeared in the film. The young boy was politicized, angry and radical; he was a very compelling speaker. I think he was studying politics. The first in his family to go to university, he positioned himself as somewhere between anti-capitalist and Marxist. A woman sitting behind me made a comment during the Q&A that went something like this: "You're a really bright, articulate young man and I want to congratulate you, but most of those who joined the riots last year weren't being political."

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

Act(s)
2014

installation
neon sign
installation view, waterside
contemporary
blackboard text by Rachel Anderson



waterside
contemporary

'Deep State' is a film by Karen Mirza and Brad Butler that has been scripted in collaboration with author China Miéville. The film takes its title from the Turkish term 'Derin Devlet', meaning 'state within the state'. Although its existence is impossible to verify, this shadowy nexus of special interests and covert relationships is the place where real power is said to reside, and where fundamental decisions are made - decisions that often run counter to the outward impression of democracy.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

Deep State
2012

video
Full HD video, Apple Pro
Res 422 (HQ).mov PAL
45'

MBU006/EXH



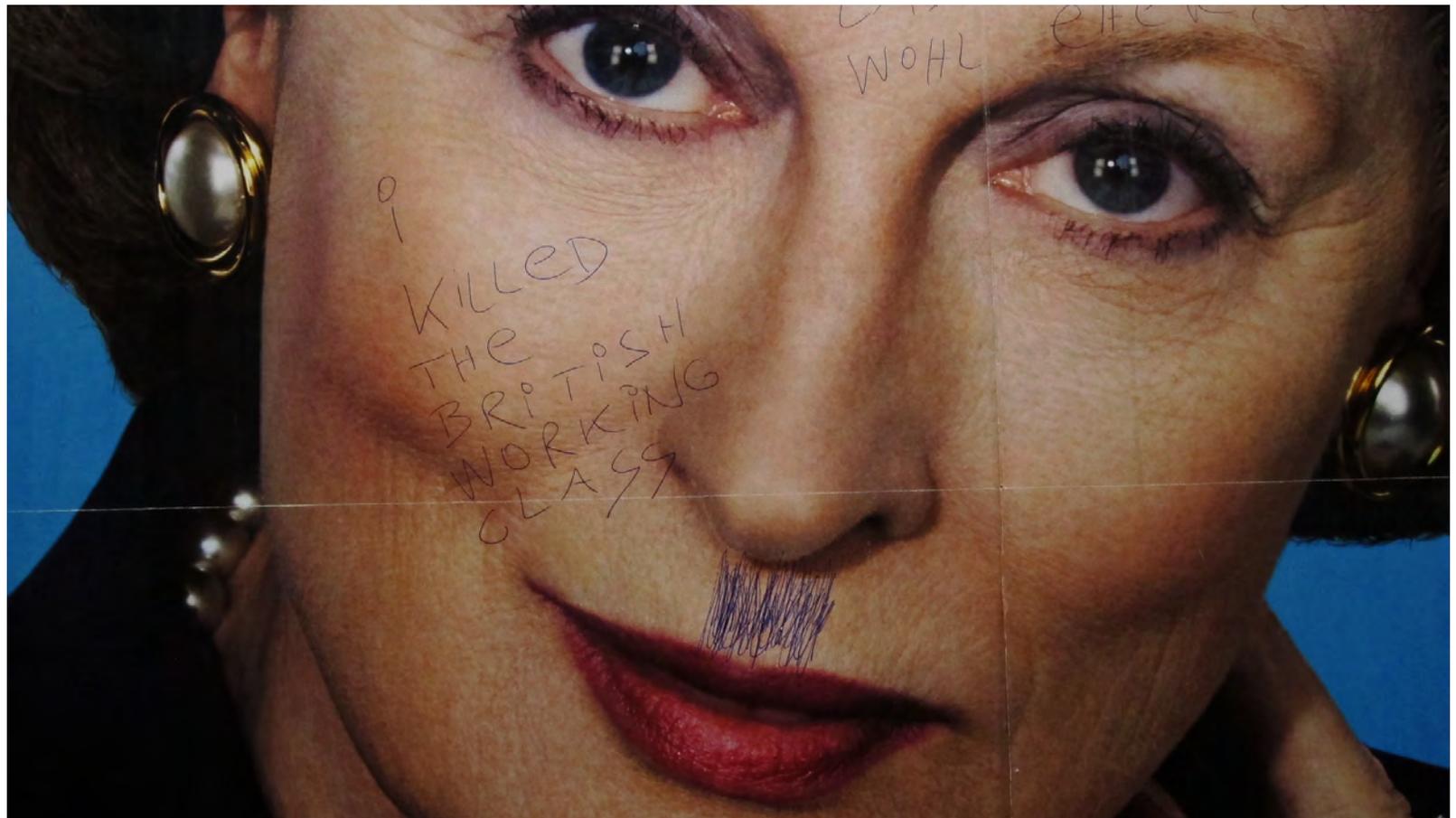
'Deep State' is a film by Karen Mirza and Brad Butler that has been scripted in collaboration with author China Miéville. The film takes its title from the Turkish term 'Derin Devlet', meaning 'state within the state'. Although its existence is impossible to verify, this shadowy nexus of special interests and covert relationships is the place where real power is said to reside, and where fundamental decisions are made - decisions that often run counter to the outward impression of democracy.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

Deep State
2012

video
Full HD video, Apple Pro
Res 422 (HQ).mov PAL
45'

MBU006/EXH



waterside
contemporary

'Deep State' is a film by Karen Mirza and Brad Butler that has been scripted in collaboration with author China Miéville. The film takes its title from the Turkish term 'Derin Devlet', meaning 'state within the state'. Although its existence is impossible to verify, this shadowy nexus of special interests and covert relationships is the place where real power is said to reside, and where fundamental decisions are made - decisions that often run counter to the outward impression of democracy.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

Deep State
2012

video
Full HD video, Apple Pro
Res 422 (HQ).mov PAL
45'

MBU006/EXH



Hold Your Ground is a companion piece to a larger film work by Karen Mirza & Brad Butler, scripted in conjunction with the author China Miéville. Inspired by the events of the Arab Spring, and triggered by the artists' discovery in Cairo of a pamphlet of instructions for pro-democracy demonstrators, called 'How to Protest Intelligently', the piece dissects the 'semantics' of the crowd, and the resulting performative 'speech act'.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

Hold Your Ground
2012

video
full HD video
7'57"

MBU005/EXH



waterside
contemporary

Hold Your Ground is a companion piece to a larger film work by Karen Mirza & Brad Butler, scripted in conjunction with the author China Miéville. Inspired by the events of the Arab Spring, and triggered by the artists' discovery in Cairo of a pamphlet of instructions for pro-democracy demonstrators, called 'How to Protest Intelligently', the piece dissects the 'semantics' of the crowd, and the resulting performative 'speech act'.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

Hold Your Ground
2012

video
full HD video
7'57"

MBU005/EXH



waterside
contemporary

Hold Your Ground is a companion piece to a larger film work by Karen Mirza & Brad Butler, scripted in conjunction with the author China Miéville. Inspired by the events of the Arab Spring, and triggered by the artists' discovery in Cairo of a pamphlet of instructions for pro-democracy demonstrators, called 'How to Protest Intelligently', the piece dissects the 'semantics' of the crowd, and the resulting performative 'speech act'.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

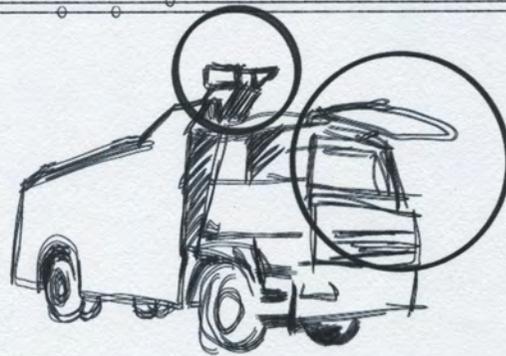
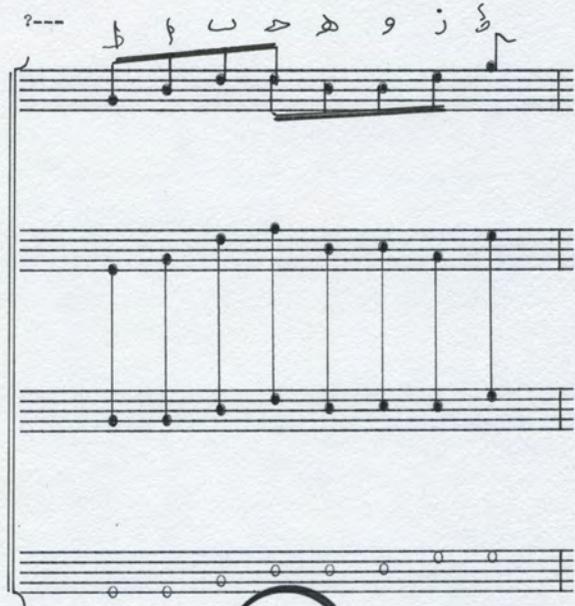
Hold Your Ground
2012

video
full HD video
7'57"

MBU005/EXH



كيفية استخدام الأدوات - تكملة
٢- إستخدامات أخرى للدوكو:
على زجاج العربة المدرعة وكاميرا المراقبة العليا.



3. You can also stick a wet towel
in the vehicle's exhaust to stop it

4. You can also throw plastic bags filled with
liquid soap under the wheels of the armored trucks
to disrupt their balance as they're moving.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*How to protest
intelligently*
2013

drawing
ink and pencil on paper
21x29.5cm

The neon sign acts both as a verb and a noun, a doing and a naming of the temporary and nomadic site of the Museum of Non Participation. Text becomes image, image text, text action to open a discursive space of the Non. The sign invokes a language of resistance that questions our paradoxical, contemporary condition of participation and withdrawal. Its literal reading juxtaposes the Roman English and popular Urdu translation *larta lucki ka ajib ghar*, which when translated back into English reads: "the museum of non participation, the house of the unexpected". Thus hidden within both the language and the sign itself is praxis of intervention and disruption. The blackboard ground on which the neon sign performs itself is a pedagogical tool in which the pamphlet *The Aesthetics of Resistance* rests.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

Act 00136
2009

installation
neon sign
130x80x8cm

Installation view at ZKM, Karlsruhe

MBU002/1



waterside contemporary

The neon sign acts both as a verb and a noun, a doing and a naming of the temporary and nomadic site of the Museum of Non Participation. Text becomes image, image text, text action to open a discursive space of the Non. The sign invokes a language of resistance that questions our paradoxical, contemporary condition of participation and withdrawal. Its literal reading juxtaposes the Roman English and popular Urdu translation *larta lucki ka ajib ghar*, which when translated back into English reads: "the museum of non participation, the house of the unexpected". Thus hidden within both the language and the sign itself is praxis of intervention and disruption. The blackboard ground on which the neon sign performs itself is a pedagogical tool in which the pamphlet *The Aesthetics of Resistance* rests.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

Act 00136
2009

installation
neon sign
130x80x8cm

Installation view at Walker Art
Center, Minneapolis
Photo: Gene Pitman

MBU002/1



**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

The New Deal
2013

drawing
drawings on paper (12
framed, 48 not framed)
various up to 21x30cm

Installation view at Walker Art
Center, Minneapolis
Photo: Gene Pitman

MBU013/16



**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

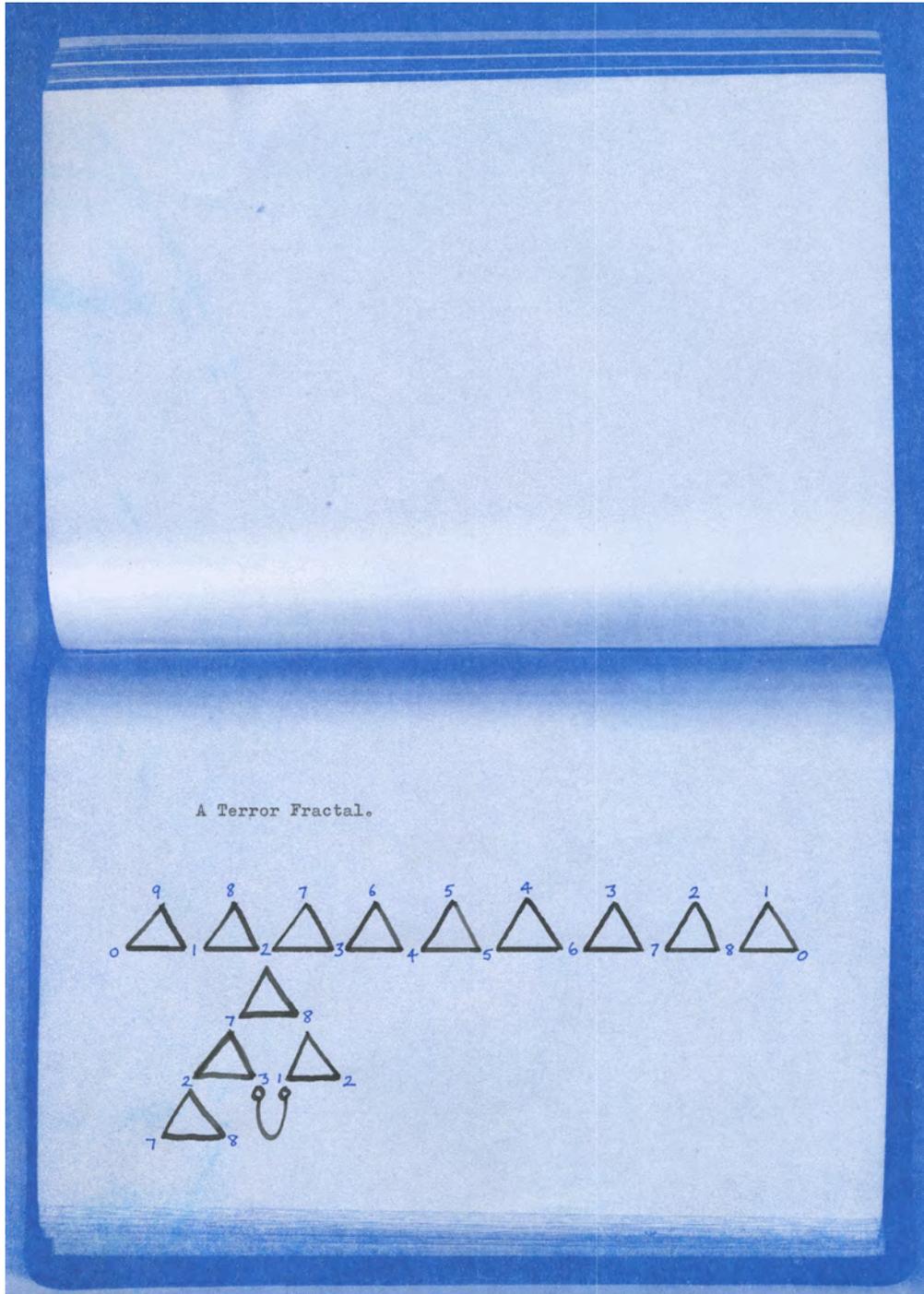
The New Deal
2013

drawing
drawings on paper (12
framed, 48 not framed)
various up to 21x30cm

Installation view at Walker Art
Center, Minneapolis
Photo: Gene Pitman

MBU013/16

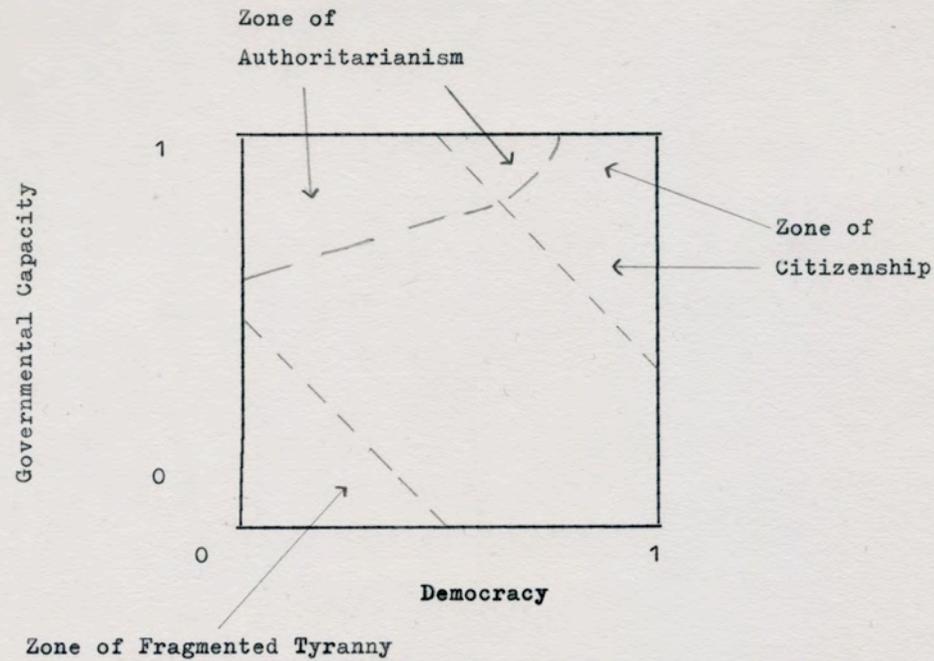




**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

The New Deal
2013

drawing
on paper
28x20cm

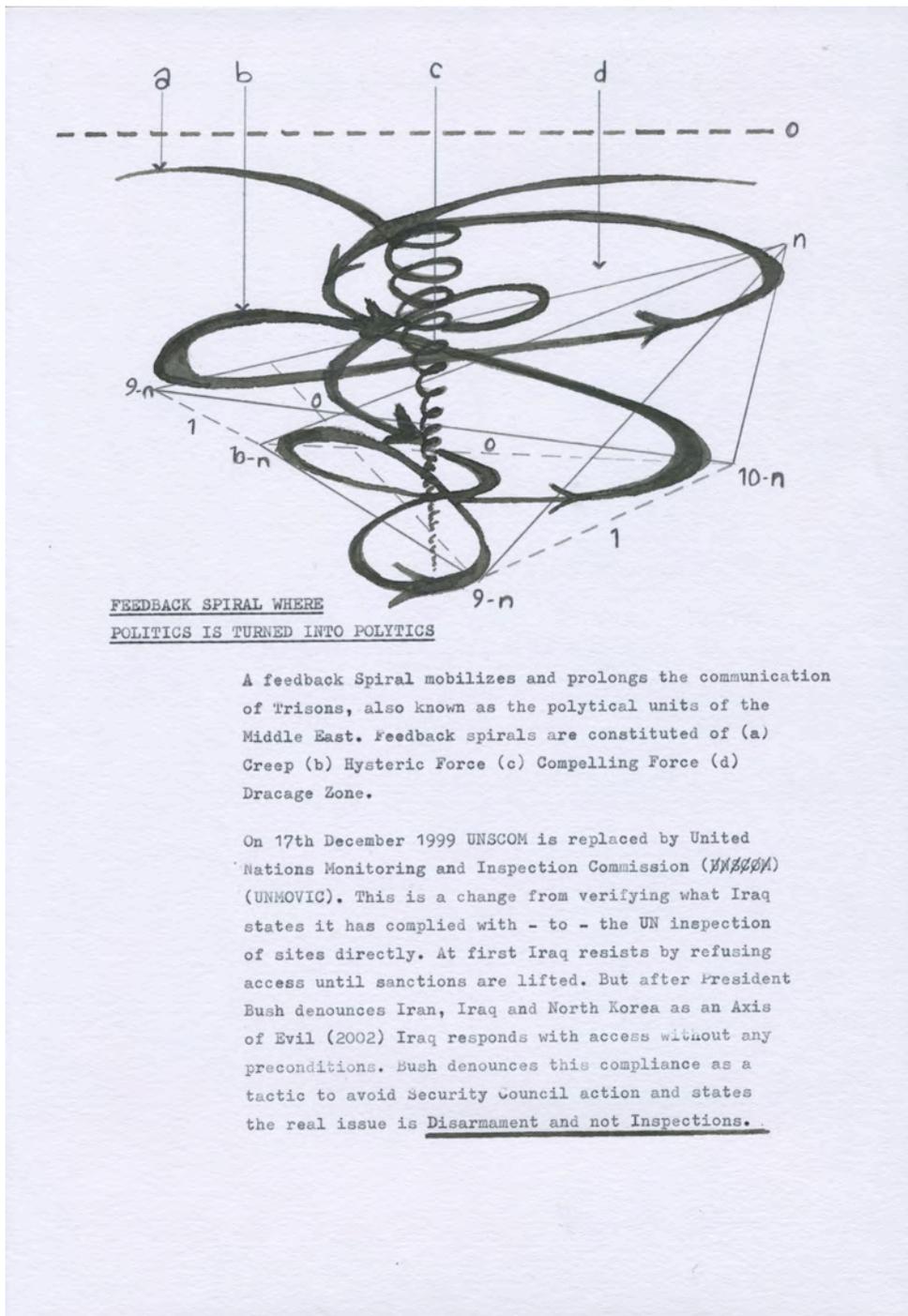


After abstaining from voting on Resolution 661, the Yemeni ambassador was informed "That will be the most expensive 'No' vote you will ever cast". Three days later the U.S cancelled its entire aid programme to Yemen.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

The New Deal
2013

drawing
on paper
20 x 22cm



**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

The New Deal
2013

drawing
on paper
21 x 29.5cm

In the commission for Performa 13, Mirza and Butler invited local residents to work within the Museum of Non Participation to create and intervene in the Brechtian short 'learning' play, 'The Exception and the Rule.' The rule referred to in the title implies a legal language or a directive, while the exception evokes being ungovernable, or searching for an alternative to either the state or the free market. Together, they suggest that the rule cannot exist without the exception; the terms also pose a question as to what qualifies as a state of exception. Through the story of a merchant and his servant, 'The Exception and the Rule' explores themes of capital and petropolitics, labor and hierarchy, and legislation and state ideology.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*The Guest of
Citation*
2013

performance
participatory work
staged at Museum of Art
and Design, New York,
within Performa 13



We are about to tell you the story of a journey. An exploiter and two of the exploited are the travelers. Examine carefully the behavior of these people. Find it surprising though not unusual. Inexplicable though normal, incomprehensible though it is the rule.

Bertolt Brecht, extract from
The Exception and the Rule

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*The Exception and
the Rule (Act 0165)*
2013

performance

performance at Walker Art Center,
Minneapolis
Photo: Olga Ivanova

MBU011



We are about to tell you the story of a journey. An exploiter and two of the exploited are the travelers. Examine carefully the behavior of these people. Find it surprising though not unusual. Inexplicable though normal, incomprehensible though it is the rule.
Bertolt Brecht, extract from
The Exception and the Rule

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*The Exception and
the Rule (Act 0165)*
2013

performance

performance at Walker Art Center,
Minneapolis
Photo: Olga Ivanova

MBU011



On Collections and Collectivity is presented as part of the Arnolfini's 'Museum Show' which across its two chapters presents museums by approximately 40 artists. The exhibition looks at the different interpretations of what a museum can be, whilst charting the methodologies and reasons used by artists for creating their own institutions - ranging historically from critique directed towards institutions of art, to more contemporary examples that focus their attention towards wider social and political realms of cultural hegemony.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*On Collections and
Collectivity*
2012

installation
exhibiton in The Museum
Show, Arnolfini, Bristol
installation view at Arnolfini,
Bristol



On Collections and Collectivity is presented as part of the Arnolfini's 'Museum Show' which across its two chapters presents museums by approximately 40 artists. The exhibition looks at the different interpretations of what a museum can be, whilst charting the methodologies and reasons used by artists for creating their own institutions - ranging historically from critique directed towards institutions of art, to more contemporary examples that focus their attention towards wider social and political realms of cultural hegemony.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*On Collections and
Collectivity*
2012

installation
exhibition in The Museum
Show, Arnolfini, Bristol
installation view at Arnolfini,
Bristol

MBU019



On Collections and Collectivity is presented as part of the Arnolfini's 'Museum Show' which across its two chapters presents museums by approximately 40 artists. The exhibition looks at the different interpretations of what a museum can be, whilst charting the methodologies and reasons used by artists for creating their own institutions - ranging historically from critique directed towards institutions of art, to more contemporary examples that focus their attention towards wider social and political realms of cultural hegemony.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*On Collections and
Collectivity*
2012

installation
exhibition in The Museum
Show, Arnolfini, Bristol
installation view at Arnolfini,
Bristol

MBU019



waterside contemporary

Conceived across three monitors, these (speech) acts perform utterances from the voice to the body, the body to voice as an exposition of voice, silence, gesture, and authority. Each performer is cast in relation to their own interests. They include: actor and activist Khalid Abdalla in Cairo; an interpretation of the exhibition Act of State curated by Ariella Azoulay; artist Nabil Ahmed speaking on labour issues and the language movement from Bangladesh. While each work is a speech act that is self-contained, the accumulation of the voices speak to each other and the exhibition as a whole through the spatio-temporal strategies of adjacency and (off)setting of timing. A choreography of images and temporalities collect a collective practice.

Karen Mirza and Brad Butler

*Direct Speech Acts
(Act 00157)*
2011

video
three channel video on
monitors
installation view at Arnolfini,
Bristol

MBU008/EXH1



waterside contemporary

"The Government Art Collection showcases British art in Government buildings including Downing Street, the Home Office and British Embassies and Residences in nearly every capital city across the world, and this is the first exhibition dedicated to this collection held in a public gallery in its 113 year history. This 2011 exhibition entitled At Work is curated by seven public figures: Lord Boateng, Nick Clegg, Samantha Cameron, Lord Mandelson, Dame Anne Pringle, Sir John Sawers and Ed Vaizey." [The Government Art Collection: At Work Exhibition Catalogue]

Here the Museum of Non Participation effaces the official exhibition catalogue for the Whitechapel's 2011 exhibition At Work. Covering up all information about the artworks and leaving only the commentary by the public figures intact, this act of concealment intervenes to reveal the complex conditions within, and precarity of power and labour, that surround and permeate, the arts. It foregrounds the social relations and apparatus behind the distribution, ownership and purchasing of works and state responsibility to art. Shown here in dialogue with a pamphlet protesting the Whitechapel exhibition, the double-paradox of economic laundering is ushered forth.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**



waterside contemporary

"The Government Art Collection showcases British art in Government buildings including Downing Street, the Home Office and British Embassies and Residences in nearly every capital city across the world, and this is the first exhibition dedicated to this collection held in a public gallery in its 113 year history. This 2011 exhibition entitled At Work is curated by seven public figures: Lord Boateng, Nick Clegg, Samantha Cameron, Lord Mandelson, Dame Anne Pringle, Sir John Sawers and Ed Vaizey." [The Government Art Collection: At Work Exhibition Catalogue]

Here the Museum of Non Participation effaces the official exhibition catalogue for the Whitechapel's 2011 exhibition At Work. Covering up all information about the artworks and leaving only the commentary by the public figures intact, this act of concealment intervenes to reveal the complex conditions within, and precarity of power and labour, that surround and permeate, the arts. It foregrounds the social relations and apparatus behind the distribution, ownership and purchasing of works and state responsibility to art. Shown here in dialogue with a pamphlet protesting the Whitechapel exhibition, the double-paradox of economic laundering is ushered forth.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**



What will the next revolution look like? is a site conditioned performance lecture that leaves its presence as an installation. Through both recorded and performed texts each performance starts with the story as to how the Museum of Non Participation came into being to introduce a meta-narrative seeking to embody representational politics of this social and political experiment to define the boundaries of non-participation and resistance.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*What will the next
revolution look
like?*
2010-12

performance



What will the next revolution look like? is a site conditioned performance lecture that leaves its presence as an installation. Through both recorded and performed texts each performance starts with the story as to how the Museum of Non Participation came into being to introduce a meta-narrative seeking to embody representational politics of this social and political experiment to define the boundaries of non-participation and resistance.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*What will the next
revolution look
like?*
2010-12

performance



Every morning in Karachi we read the local newspapers. This became a pattern. The front pages of the International and Local news told us how our day might go. In these troubled times news headlines had direct impact on our sense of freedom around the city. The distance we were prepared to go from home. Most articles were lucid, intelligent, balanced and current, but as the days and opinion cycled past so our interest in these articles waned. After all, even a cursory look at a map would raise an eyebrow as to the complexity of Pakistan's neighbours. This is a country where so many [geo-]political points converge that their tides are directly played out in people's everyday. The pace of daily change piled thoughts on top of one another. When we put this to a learned friend active in Pakistan he laughed and told us that: To understand Pakistan you must first understand that you cannot rationalise the non-rational.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*The Exception and
the Rule*
2009

video
37'

MBU007/1

The file cannot be found:
The Exception and the Rule still 8.JPG

Every morning in Karachi we read the local newspapers. This became a pattern. The front pages of the International and Local news told us how our day might go. In these troubled times news headlines had direct impact on our sense of freedom around the city. The distance we were prepared to go from home. Most articles were lucid, intelligent, balanced and current, but as the days and opinion cycled past so our interest in these articles waned. After all, even a cursory look at a map would raise an eyebrow as to the complexity of Pakistan's neighbours. This is a country where so many [geo-]political points converge that their tides are directly played out in people's everyday. The pace of daily change piled thoughts on top of one another. When we put this to a learned friend active in Pakistan he laughed and told us that: To understand Pakistan you must first understand that you cannot rationalise the non-rational.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*The Exception and
the Rule*
2009

video
37'

MBU007/1

The file cannot be found:
The Exception and the Rule still 10.JPG

waterside contemporary

Every morning in Karachi we read the local newspapers. This became a pattern. The front pages of the International and Local news told us how our day might go. In these troubled times news headlines had direct impact on our sense of freedom around the city. The distance we were prepared to go from home. Most articles were lucid, intelligent, balanced and current, but as the days and opinion cycled past so our interest in these articles waned. After all, even a cursory look at a map would raise an eyebrow as to the complexity of Pakistan's neighbours. This is a country where so many [geo-]political points converge that their tides are directly played out in people's everyday. The pace of daily change piled thoughts on top of one another. When we put this to a learned friend active in Pakistan he laughed and told us that: To understand Pakistan you must first understand that you cannot rationalise the non-rational.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*The Exception and
the Rule*
2009

video
37'

Installation view at Walker Art
Center, Minneapolis
Photo: Gene Pitman

MBU007/1



**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*The Museum of Non
Participation -
Barber Shop*
2008

installation
events, installation,
newspaper, performances

MBU017



**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*The Museum of Non
Participation -
Barber Shop*
2008

installation
events, installation,
newspaper, performances

MBU017



waterside
contemporary

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*The Museum of Non
Participation -
Barber Shop*
2008

installation
events, installation,
newspaper, performances

MBU017



**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*The Museum of Non
Participation -
Barber Shop*
2008

installation
events, installation,
newspaper, performances

MBU017





**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*The Museum of Non
Participation -
Karachi*
2008

waterside
contemporary



**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*The Museum of Non
Participation -
Karachi*
2008



**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*The Museum of Non
Participation -
Karachi*
2008

waterside
contemporary

Mirza and Butler have collapsed over 35 performances with passerby's set in India, Pakistan, New York and London into a boxed object. This object contains an invitation to interpret the work in response to: the changing site of each exhibition | the perceived thinking behind the work | and the screens, surfaces and props in each performance. Each film performance returns to the Modernist concerns within 'Mirror Film' by Robert Morris (1969) viewed through postmodern concerns that problematise the location of the performance and the issue of authorship. Perceiving both anthropology and art from this direction Mirza and Butler are suggesting new ways of positioning structural film within revisionist anthropology. This playfully questions whether the camera and or/ its subject matter is acting as the agent, mediator and/or the performer as articulated within the language of contemporary art.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

*The Autonomous
Object?*
2008

video
11'34"

MBU024/1



waterside contemporary

Mirza and Butler have collapsed over 35 performances with passerby's set in India, Pakistan, New York and London into a boxed object. This object contains an invitation to interpret the work in response to: the changing site of each exhibition | the perceived thinking behind the work | and the screens, surfaces and props in each performance. Each film performance returns to the Modernist concerns within 'Mirror Film' by Robert Morris (1969) viewed through postmodern concerns that problematise the location of the performance and the issue of authorship. Perceiving both anthropology and art from this direction Mirza and Butler are suggesting new ways of positioning structural film within revisionist anthropology. This playfully questions whether the camera and or/ its subject matter is acting as the agent, mediator and/or the performer as articulated within the language of contemporary art.

Karen Mirza and Brad Butler

*The Autonomous
Object?*
2008

video
11'34"

MBU024/1



The Space Between is an open structure based on a relatively small set of input materials. The live sound (generated from a single electric guitar) uses a series of simultaneous delays to create spatially separated long repeating loops and very short delays. The harmonic input is restricted - all complexity arises from the overlapping delays, a parallel structure which mirrors or coexists with the multiple time bases of the repeating film loops and the multi-screen edit/flicker.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

The Space Between
2005

video
16mm film transferred to
HD video
12'



The Space Between is an open structure based on a relatively small set of input materials. The live sound (generated from a single electric guitar) uses a series of simultaneous delays to create spatially separated long repeating loops and very short delays. The harmonic input is restricted - all complexity arises from the overlapping delays, a parallel structure which mirrors or coexists with the multiple time bases of the repeating film loops and the multi-screen edit/flicker.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

The Space Between
2005

video
16mm film transferred to
HD video
12'



waterside
contemporary

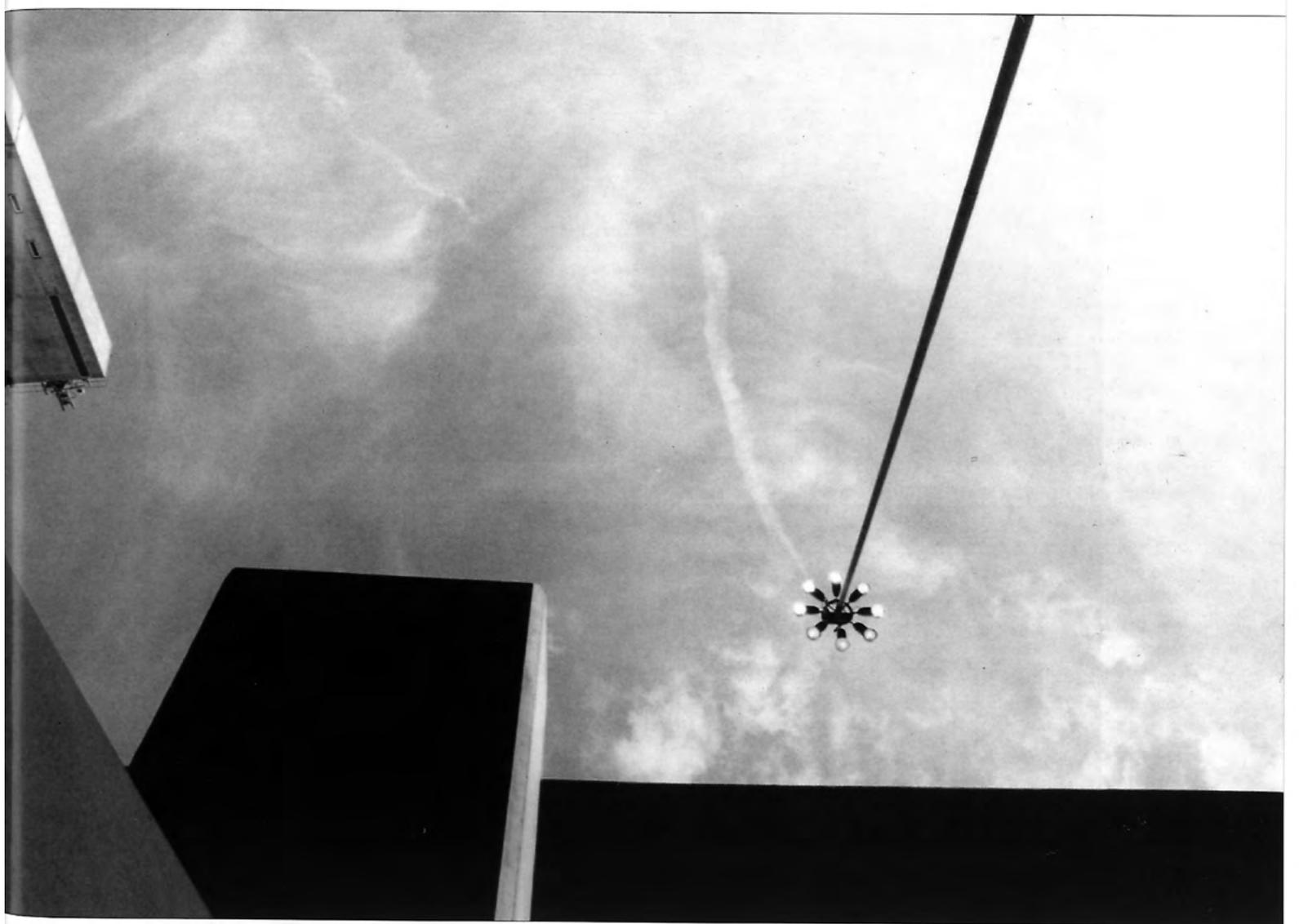
We are ever increasingly in transit through 'non places'. Corners that lurk at the edge of activity. Passageways where activity occurs but the relationship between use and place remains unnamed. Places where names are incidental, meaningless because the need for communication - or the passage of time spent - is already deemed to be transient, insignificant, minimal, empty. Street corners, bus stops, shopping malls, motorways, airport lounges - new forms of solitude.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

Non Places
1999

film
black & white 16mm film,
sound
15'

MBU010/1



waterside
contemporary

We are ever increasingly in transit through 'non places'. Corners that lurk at the edge of activity. Passageways where activity occurs but the relationship between use and place remains unnamed. Places where names are incidental, meaningless because the need for communication - or the passage of time spent - is already deemed to be transient, insignificant, minimal, empty. Street corners, bus stops, shopping malls, motorways, airport lounges - new forms of solitude.

**Karen Mirza and
Brad Butler**

Non Places
1999

film
black & white 16mm film,
sound
15'

MBU010/1

