



ARTZINES
.INFO



All the photographs of the Dial House and its garden were taken for this issue of ARTZINES on the day of the interview.

All the other images are works by Gee Vaucher, from the Crass era artworks until recent works.

On the cover:

Oh America, reworked gouache painting, 230 x 230 mm, 1990. The first version of was made in 1989 for the cover of an LP by Tackhead.

There is no Authority but Yourself

One year ago, when Donald Trump was elected, former Crass member and artist Gee Vaucher was installing her first retrospective exhibition covering 50 years of her work at FirstSite in Colchester near her hometown. Once again, her work was under a lot of attention, even if most the people using her image of the Statue of Liberty to express how they felt didn't know they were using the work of an artist created in a completely different setting. Ever since she was part of the legendary punk band Crass, Gee has been used to get a lot of unwanted attention, so when everybody started to post her image, she just kept on gardening, as she has always been doing. One of the most striking thing when you meet this punk legend is the way she seems completely at peace with herself, but don't you start her on politics or you will see the true face of someone who deeply cares for other people.

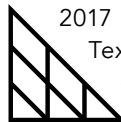
Gee Vaucher can't sing or play any instrument, but yet she was part of a punk band in which the art and the attitude was as important as any aspects of the music. Crass has been known to have introduced anarchism to the punk subculture and will remain as one of the groups that put the Do It Yourself ethos in action. In 1977, known as the great year of punk, the different members of Crass were at least 10 years older than the average punk kid, and as they were all dressed in black to avoid the cult of personality, they were quickly identified as this guru-like band, which

shows were also a place to exchange zines and to collect hand-outs made by the band about different subjects such as veganism, anarchism, anti-militarism, etc.

In the context of ARTZINES and my on-going research about zines made by artists, it was very important to meet Gee Vaucher to talk about *International Anthem*, the zine that she started making in New York in 1977, but also about the work that she did during the Crass years. Somehow, she seems to get bored answering over and over the same questions about works she did for Crass more than 30 years ago, and she seems much more interested to talk about more recent works, like the painting series *Children Who Have Seen Too Much Too soon* (2006), which better expresses her on-going concerns. This issue attempts to show the different facets of an artist that people always liked to reduce to one work or one era. As her garden and the house she has been living in for more than 50 years are a very important part of her life, the images that compose this issue are split 50% for her artwork, and 50% of pictures of her garden taken on the day of the interview.

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On the opposite page:
INTERNATIONAL ANTHEM #1 - Education,
offset on newsprint, 270 x 350 mm, 1977.

"In 1977, whilst living in New York, I started to work on the first *INTERNATIONAL ANTHEM - A Nihilist newspaper for the Living*. Profiting from the illustration work I was given, and aware that what I produced was becoming too extreme for mainstream American tastes, I decided to create an alternative vehicle for myself and friends who I felt had something to say. *INTERNATIONAL ANTHEM* was never intended to be a regular newspaper, it was produced when and if I had the inspiration and had earned enough. So, although I compiled five editions, only three made it into print."

I don't know about other places, but zines in the UK became a big movement when Crass started. People would travel to see Crass on tour, bringing with them their fanzines knowing, it would also be a gathering place to exchange and share their work and ideas. We encouraged people to make a fanzine as a place where they could share their interests and just say what they wanted to say. You didn't have to be an artist; you didn't have to be a writer, just put down what you felt, what interested you. The variety of and number of fanzines produced was amazing. Some of fanzines went on to become something else, something full colour. Some were very personal. Some were just a one off, just for the members of crass, those ones I kept.

A friend of ours who was very young at the time made a very different fanzine from everyone else, his was always about growing food. He has never changed his subject and his fanzine finally became a book about how to grow food and be vegan, the book sells very well. It's interesting to see how some of the individuals have moved on from that first effort. I think it was a big blossoming time for the fanzine and for the young people who made them.

When was that?

That would be the seventies and eighties, from 1976 onwards.

You mentioned that you would facilitate the sharing of fanzines. Would there be place for zines in every one of your gigs?

Yes, as I said, gradually as crass became more popular, people would come to the gigs from all over the country and they would always come with their fanzines. So those fanzine makers got to know each other in a very friendly and supportive atmosphere. They would either exchange or sell their fanzines, it was very interesting. Every gig or every tour, we would come back with masses of fanzines that people would give us.

So it was more informal than today, just people talking and sharing fanzines?

They were producing them in any way they could. That's before the digital age, some of them were even before Xerox, some handwritten some just collaged. The early ones were printed using a Gestetner,

INTER NATIONAL ANTHEM

NIHILIST NEWSPAPER FOR THE LIVING

1



HISTORY IS HIS STORY. MANS LAUGHTER, THE PRIMEVAL PRIME EVIL. AN ILLITERATE AGE WHERE THE ELITE RATES HIGH. THE REBELLION THE REBEL LION.

INTER NATIONAL ANTHEM

NIHILIST NEWSPAPER FOR THE LIVING

521984



which is what we did as well for the first Reality Asylum release. Then suddenly the Xerox came along and that completely opened up possibilities. With Xerox, you could copy anything, because you couldn't really do images well with Gestetner. Plus, Xerox was cheap. It really made the whole fanzine scene blossom and more visually interesting.

When did Crass start making fanzines?

We didn't. People would always know that there would be new handouts made by different members of the band at our gigs, but no actual bound fanzines as such. What we did were informative handouts, about all sorts of things, Subjects that could help people, from 'What your rights would be if picked up by the police'. 'How to make bread', to 'Information about nuclear bombs and nuclear power'. 'How to get out of the army once you'd signed up'. They would be about a whole range of ideas and topics. I did a handbook on how to squat, because it is legal in this country, so I wrote about how to do it properly and not break the law or be accused of it. Every member of the band would go out and produce something on a subject that they thought was important at the time. We would print loads and hand them out.

So you just produced them when you had content that you wanted to share on topics that mattered to you, like an information letter then. But you did some on your own before Crass, as you said?

Not handouts or a fanzine but a newspaper. I started 'International Anthem' slightly before Crass and I did a couple within the period of Crass. The first one would be in 1978, in New York, I'd earned enough money to pursue a dream, which was to create my own tabloid format newspaper. It was a vehicle for my work and friends whose work I respected, Penny Rimbaud and Steve Ignorant contributed to the first issue.

Let's go backwards, can you tell us about where you grew up and were you studied? I think you studied art.

I grew up in Dagenham, which is a suburb of East London. It was a housing estate built to house the workers for Ford's Cars, everybody that lived on that estate worked just down the road either for Ford or Allied Trades, I loved it there. People had been moved out

On the opposite page:

INTERNATIONAL ANTHEM #2 - Domestic Violence, offset on newsprint, 270 x 350 mm, 1979.





On the opposite page:
INTERNATIONAL ANTHEM #3, offset on
 newsprint, 300 x 370 mm, 1980.

from the centre of London during the war where it was dangerous and given a job, my parents had moved out as they lived near the river Thames in London and they had three other children. The house on the estate was tiny but it had a garden. You've got to have a garden! Even then I needed to get my hands in the dirt, that's for sure! It was very much a community in Dagenham, due to the circumstances. The war may have finished the year I was born, but people were still suffering from it and would continue to on a practical level for another 5-6 years, with ration books, bomb sites etc. People were coming out of pain, out of losing people; you could feel it in the air. Everybody on the estate had nothing, and as usual when you have nothing, you share, so everything was shared. It was a real community for me; I loved it and enjoyed growing up there. People were kind and attentive.

It has changed now. It was a council estate, everyone on the same level more or less, but Thatcher started selling the estates off, 'right to buy' but no replacement council homes. People started owning their own council house and feeling superior to the next neighbour. If you bought your own house, it meant you could paint it a different colour or put up a big fence if you wanted. I'm not saying that people don't have the right to own their own houses, but it definitely changed the quality and community of Dagenham that I had known.

Did you study art there, near your community?

Yes, I went to the local art school, that's where I met Penny Rimbaud. He came from a very different family than mine. My parents were financially poor with four children and Penny came from the financially rich. I studied printmaking, illustration and painting. It wasn't really a fine art school, even if we did manage to turn it into one in the end. As an artist I like to try everything and the opportunity to try everything was on offer. When I went to art school you went for five years in one art school and then continued for another three at the Royal College or Slade. I started art school at 15, there were lessons in many subjects related to the arts, art history, colour theory, heraldry, perspective, typesetting. The life room which was really the most important place of all for me taught me all those subjects, but we had other departments: printmaking, pottery, sculpture, textile and you could walk in and out and try everything. That's how I really discovered

WINTER NATIONAL ANTHEM

NIHILIST NEWSPAPER FOR THE LIVING

Vol. I. No 3. 30p. 421984

BECAUSE I LOVE YOU SO MUCH
HAVE CREATED YOU TO EMBRACE
EVERY LITTLE PART OF YOU

THEY sever the cord brutally
in their life-giving hands.
A filthy habit.
Red-hot, it is thrown to the
side and slides, clammy-hot,
beneath the table.
The knife is placed between
us.
The initiation rite is com-
plete. Only the cry cuts the
head, to bury deep and linger.
They have laboured long to
separate the other. In their
duty, we are left to lie
alone, gently breathing.
It lays pulsating beneath
the table. It was never de-
tached enough.
It hangs, parasitic, to the
body.
The serpent moves, to embrace,
it is the death knot of our
dutiful love and obedience.
The shedding was an illusion.
In their eagerness to give
us life, they gave us theirs.
The initiation rite was
wrong, was death.
The baby drops into the bin,
beneath the table.
The serpent lives, to define
our death. It grows so pale,
it is hard to distinguish.
The teaching is complete
when all trace has vanished.
Only the marks remain.
Only the remains are felt.
Joyfully we step from the
room, to celebrate our loss.
The serpent grows warm. It
fattens and pulls us closer.
The FAMILY.
The room.
We are all contained within
its walls. The conditions
are set. There is no escaping
the blood. It is thicker than
water. Thick, sticky and black.
We are forced to kneel
through the weight of it.
YOU are MY mother MY father.
YOU are MY son MY daughter.
YOU are MY husband MY wife.
YOU are MINE.
I am YOURS.
The serpent is not dead, it
is only sleeping.
The nightmare is the force
of its reality. We are
tightly bound by the vision.
We must learn to submit, not
to survive.
The serpent pulls tighter.
We must be willing to

THE BIRTH OF A NATION



possess and be possessed.
Beneath the table, the
withered cord pumps, cold,
laying like some discarded
snakeskin.
The air thickens. The density
is suffocating. There is no
room to see.
Life is life never realised.
Tighter. Tighter.
We must, finally, sublimate
all love and life for theirs.
There can be no meeting.
The serpent writhes in its
joy of life. We can not
breathe. It pumps a sickening
air in its attempt to regain
the submission. It tightens
still and the cry is heard.
The knife is between us.

WORLD EXCLUSIVE



INSIDE: EVEREST, SINGLE-HANDED, AN
ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST SOLO ASCENT



printmaking especially etching. You really learned your trade at art school then and by doing so you had the opportunity to destroy it after. How can you attempt to destroy something that you don't really know about?

So when did becoming an artist become a possibility?

I have to say the journey between the child making marks and what I do now was seamless. It was and still is the way I best express myself. Before the breakup of art schools in the late 60's the government used to pay you to go to art school if you were from a poor background and materials were free, otherwise I would never have been able to attend. That's unheard of now! In the etching room if I had an idea and wanted to work on copper, they would just give me a piece. If I was that young person

leaving school now from the same family there would be no way I could go to art school without incurring a financial weight around my neck.

There were no exams at my school; it was a working class school where you were expected to go to work in the factories. I only had my folio of work when I applied to go to art school and I was accepted, exams or no exams. I think that is still possible now if your folio is good, I certainly hope so.

You came out of this school five years later?

I did, and I applied for the Royal College of Art to continue for another 3 years. I got short listed, and had to go for an interview and classes. I was very young, I had never really been to London on my own,

and when I go to somewhere new, I only want to get out and look around me. So I spent half of my time walking around outside the Royal College and not doing what I was supposed to do. Plus, I was really disappointed with the whole set up of what was said to be a very radical school in the sixties. I can clearly remember walking into a room where there was a long table with my work laid out and all these people sitting there. I was a working class kid, I had never spoken in front of people, I could hardly eat in front of strangers at the time! And I was expected to answer questions I didn't really understand. I had nothing to say. I didn't get in.

What did you do then?

I worked in an art centre in Dagenham. A lot of schools in that area didn't have an art room. So there was a central place in which all the children would be brought to do some art. By this time I was travelling to work as I had moved out into the countryside.

On the next pages:

Inside poster for Crass single *Bloody
Revolutions*, gouache, 430 x 290 mm,
1980.





WHOEVER YOU VOTE
FOR, GOVERNMENT
WINS

GROTESQUE

ALL
NEE
LO

Underneath the
all Lovable





Can you tell about why you moved to NY, how you lived there? What did you do and why you came back?

I had been doing a lot of commercial illustration work for various publishers and magazines but it was pretty boring illustrating someone else's ideas. I decided for various reasons I'd go to the belly of the beast and try working there for a while. I was very lucky; I was seen as a political illustrator and picked up work straight away. I had only meant to go for a short time but ended up living there for two years. I came back when my work was becoming unacceptable, I found it hard to leave my own feelings out of the illustration and the fact that Crass had just formed. I'd booked gigs for them in NYC and when they left I felt the need to return home to Dial House and work with others again.

Going back to Crass, when it was created in 1978, you designed the logo?

No, it was Dave King, a friend from art school. He didn't actually create it for Crass. Penny Rimbaud had asked him to design something for a book he had written 'Reality Asylum'. I was in New York at the time and Penny had sent me a copy. For some reason when Penny next wrote about getting a band together I just assumed that was going to be the logo and

connected it with Crass and it stuck. I used it on the first International Anthem by stencilling it on the front cover.

When Crass started, you created all the art for Crass, for the album covers and the handouts?

They were paintings that I made, gouaches. In the beginning, Crass was just a group of people getting together, just making music and writing songs. It was a surprise that it became so popular. The driving force was really Penny's words. Penny has always been a wordsmith. Other people joined in that, Steve wrote some of the first songs, other members of the band eventually contributed. Penny would help with the graphics, but basically the illustration work would come my way. As I didn't like to be on stage I would do the artwork, make the films, sound loops and do the lighting at a gig. As I said earlier, everyone in the band contributed to producing handouts.

I like the idea that you were a part of the band that was not on the stage, working on everything but the music.

A typical Crass stage was very multi-media. There would be banners hanging across the back of the stage, something bands hadn't done before. Then there would be two big TVs on top of the speakers. When video came out I began making videos. Before that, making a film was way too expensive. The two TV screens on the speakers would be showing the same video I'd made. Then above the stage, in the front, would be a screen with super-8 films made by Mick Duffield showing. On the stage itself would be two other TVs, one showing a loop film by Mick, and the other one turned onto anything that might be showing on TV that night; adverts, Coronation Street etc.

So you can follow the football match while at the concert! (Both laughing)

What we did on stage was very confrontational. Being much older than the average punk, it was very important to us that the band members were around at the end of every gig. We knew it could be very intimidating for young kids to see all these people dressed in black on stage, all the banners, an overload of sound and images. We always allowed

an hour after the show to sit with the audience and talk if they needed to.

On the next pages:

Inside poster for Crass boxed set Christ the album and details, gouache and collage, 630 x 450 mm, 1981.





Was it staged on purpose as something that would look like a political rally?

Naturally the stage was designed. The dressing in black was because we wanted to appear as a group and not as individuals. Nobody stood out. It was important to have that moment on stage, because that was our space. The idea was really about information: pointing out the hypocrisy; pointing out that you actually have the power to say no; showing that you can work together, form some sort of group where you think your interest lie and working together. It was more about sharing information and experience. In time, people started pushing us into a guru-like band that was going to tell them what to do next; it isn't something we wanted and one of the reasons we stopped. It got too much, it became about 'what is Crass going to say next?' we were going to stop in 1984 anyway because we felt that we could say what we wanted to say in the time given, the rest would be repeat.

You knew from the beginning that you were going to stop in 1984?

All the numbers on the covers are a count down to 1984. *The Feeding of the 5000's* catalogue number was 521984; five years to 1984.

Both the lyrics and the cover art were very political?

As I think all art is political, yes. It was us trying to change the world with words music and imagery. We tried to change things by turning and

confronting the hypocrisy, pain, despair and greed felt and seen around us, by sharing our experiences and any lessons that we might have learnt.

Now I'm much more interested in understanding things closer to home, like the family than trying to change the world. The family is where everything begins; it is what drives people, forms who we evolve into. We are all affected by the family, church, state, school. There is always something more than what is offered. Many people are severely injured by the family and never come to terms with its affects. The recent shooting in Las Vegas is very interesting, they say they can't find the motive, why a guy wanted to kill so many people. Looking at the killer's background I would have thought it was obvious? He was the son of the most wanted man in America, apparently a narcissistic murderer and this child grew up with this. That has to have some bearing on the character of this child doesn't it? I am not excusing what he did of course but it seems to go back to his early childhood again.

There was a strong pacifist dimension in Crass?

Yes, there was, but that didn't mean you didn't stand up for your rights. There were extreme pacifists that would never raise a fist but I've never been one of them. I wouldn't raise my fist unless it was absolutely, utterly the last straw, an extreme situation. I've had the privilege, the luxury to be pacifist, to be vegan, to be vegetarian, to be any way I liked. But in some countries you don't have that luxury, you just want food, to eat. In some countries you don't have the luxury to pick and choose who comes knocking on your door to 'disappear' your family, they just do.

But you were definitely anarchists?

No. It was a label that was given to us. So we sort of run with it. If people ask me personally what anarchism means to me, I would say that anarchism is about turning everything upside down in yourself. It has to come from within first. Everything that you believe, you think you know, you have to question again, everything. You have to ask yourself: Is that something that I really think, or is that something that my parents might have believed, or something that my school shoved down my throat? You might end up with the same reasoning, but you might also feel that there are things that you have never been comfortable





with and that you need to reinvestigate or rethink. In that sense, I can be considered an anarchist.

During the Crass years, you were what we would call today an art director...

Ugh... No not an art director, No!

We would call it that today, but that certainly feels sort of an anachronism. What I mean is, compared to all that you studied and experimented with during your art school years, would your role as an artist being part of the band fulfil what you expected from art and art-making?

I didn't and don't expect anything concerning my work. My work with crass is a small part of my creative life. I don't do what I don't want to do. I can't. In my work, I have to do it as I think it works. The band members would leave me alone to create an image. I would get the songs, the idea for the next album, I would be given the lyrics and work it out my way. I wasn't an art director, none of us were songwriters, but everybody could contribute. It was

just an ability that I had, and I just shared it with everybody.

I wasn't doing more or less than anybody else.



On the opposite page:
You're already dead, 1984.

So maybe it was more like an artist in residence, like the arty part was for you?

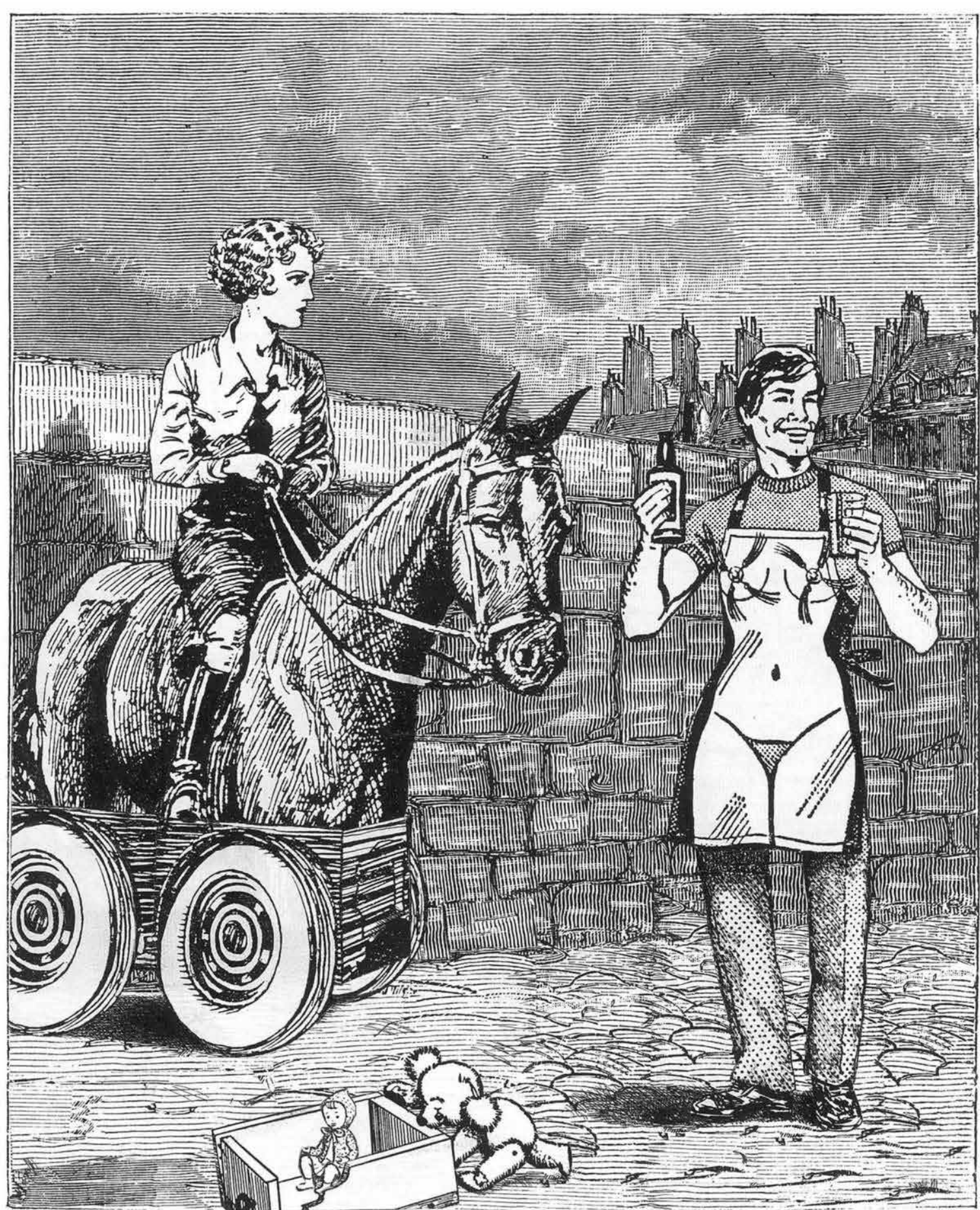
The whole band lived here at Dial House so there was no artist in residence; we all contributed and created something. Dial House is a house of creativity, life is an art.

What kind of art did you do after Crass finished?

After crass I concentrated on caring for my mum for the next two years. When I started working again my paintings were a lot bigger. The pieces I did for Crass were very small and I couldn't, didn't want to do such fine work like that anymore. It was 7 or 8 years of really intense work with crass, I had worn myself out a little bit and I had to get myself back together again. When we would return from a tour, I would have to work on the next image and if I wasn't writing a song, I was doing the art-works and various other things around the house, there didn't seem much space to rest. It was my choice and I enjoyed doing everything but I had to get myself right after Crass. After crass stopped playing several



**YOU'RE ALREADY
DEAD**



members of the band needed to deal with ageing parents and somehow dealing with the politics of the world became less important than dealing with the politics of our own families. We all wanted to be close and look after our parents.

Now I'm back working and just had my old studio redecorated. I had a friend over and he really made it damp-proof, no rats! When I was preparing for the recent 'Introspective' exhibition at Firstsite in Colchester, I had to go through all my stuff to find originals and one day I opened a drawer and a rat jumped out! They pissed on and ruined a lot of negatives and I thought enough is enough. I saved some money and my friend made me a lovely new studio but I haven't had a chance to work in it yet! (Laughs).

I think you said that you don't sell the originals; why is that?

I like to look at my old artwork now and again. I like to put a show on with no fuss. I like to share my work with the public. My work is not for private collections.

SO you want your work to be seen by everyone, not just a collector?

I wouldn't like to split the children up. To sell one of them wouldn't be right. '*Children Who Have Seen Too Much Too Soon*', are newish paintings each seven feet high. When they are all hung in one gallery room they have an extraordinary resonance, a demanding presence. I am very proud of them. I do a painting to the best of my ability; ostensibly they are for me, for me to understand something that is in my head. They are about what I am feeling and if I think that I have managed to capture the essence of whatever that is, I like to share the result. I don't what to have to write to someone to ask to borrow my own picture back. They are a part of my soul, and I don't want to sell that. Picasso said:

I am not a squanderer. I have what I have because I keep it and not because I save it. Why should I throw away that which was kind enough to reach my hands?

You don't care if other people like them as long as you like them?

I don't work for other people. I come first and then I like to share what I have done. It doesn't bother me that people might like what I do or not. I have to work from



On the opposite page:
A Week of Knots, Sunday, The, Family,
collage, 2013.

Published in Gee Vaucher, *A Week of Knots, SUNDAY - THE FAMILY*, Essex, Existencil Press, 2013.

The on-going publishing project *A Week of Knots* is a series of zines published yearly by Gee Vaucher as an homage the inspiring words of 'Knots' by R.D. Laing and to Max Ernst *Une Semaine de Bonté*, which was a great inspiration for her collage works. This is the first of seven in the series and represents *SUNDAY - THE FAMILY*.

my own heart and only slowly do I understand what I have done if I'm lucky.

I rarely understand what I am doing at the time.

If you don't consider your art contemplative, what kind of reaction are you expecting?

Actually, I think my work is contemplative. Some of the old work is an exercise in the image meaning only one thing, the same thing to all people. Like the poster *Your Country Needs You*. It can't translate any other way than what it is. Same as *Still Life with Nude*, dig for victory. But with work like 'feeding of the 5000' and the 'children' they are open to interpretation, for contemplation.

If the originals always stay with you, then your works only circulate through reproductions?

Through reproductions or a show, I only have reproductions of the obvious Crass stuff; I have very few prints of anything else.

...because the Crass era works were made for mass circulation?

Obviously the crass prints sell the best, but this enables Existencil Press to publish other works by other people less known. We just published *Out of Space* by Pandora Vaughan, it's a beautiful piece of work and we haven't sold very many because it's by an unknown artist, but that doesn't bother me, it's out there now which is more important.



The first issue of ARTZINES that was dedicated to only one artist was about Marc Fischer. I asked him which question I should ask you. He was curious about how you feel about the constant appropriation of the Crass logo and the artworks that you created for Crass?

There's nothing I can do about it. When people write warning me about this or that appropriation, I just don't care. I can't stop it, it doesn't upset me. What does annoy me is when people bastardise one of my images, which is annoying and disrespectful.

Did some people ask permission to use Oh America? Because a lot of people used it when Trump was elected.

I really didn't mind the image being used, that's work that is out there. The Daily Mirror, a national newspaper here in the UK, was a different story as they wanted to use the image for their front page and I said that they couldn't. It was during the hanging of the *Introspective exhibition*. As people at the gallery where urging me to give permission, I reconsidered and said yes but on two conditions:

1. I don't want my name credited.
2. It has to be the only thing on the front page.

Having agreed, what did the newspaper do? They put my name on the front page and they put something about Trump on the top of the front page. Why should I have been surprised!

Why didn't you want your name on it? After all it is your work.

Because this image was never about me, nor was the reason it was being used.

Now I get why you prefer if people don't ask, this way, they won't do the exact opposite of what you requested.

No. I prefer if people have the manners to ask. If we didn't have Internet it would be different, but now everything is easier so there is no excuse. All of my work is probably on line now and no doubt there are hundreds of people putting it on t-shirts, socks, knickers, ties, whatever they can think of.

I thank people for letting me know when that happens, but I have got a life and I won't spend it chasing people who run with my work.

Then is it because it belongs to every one, because it belongs to popular culture?

It belongs to popular culture, that's for sure. 'Oh America' was also used a lot for 9/11 too. That time it was to illustrate the pain, the suffering of people. This time it was used to express embarrassment and shame for electing Trump. What is it going to be used for next time? She could be laughing behind her hands for all you know.

So what did it mean to you at the time you created it?

It didn't mean much. I did it to illustrate an LP for the band Tackhead in 1989, the group had used the Liberty theme before. Anyway I read their words, and 'Oh God' came into my mind. I reworked the image in 1990 for my own satisfaction and use.

But now it has become an image that people use every time America fucks something up, which happens quite a lot!

Maybe, trumps right though when he says that the American system is corrupt. Do you really think there has been a completely honest and open politician in such a powerful position? I don't think so. He may be ignorant and arrogant but he is right, they are all shits in various degrees. This name calling with North Korea is just so childish on both sides, dangerously so. Trump seems to think he is running his company, doesn't quite understand his position that's for sure.

What did Thatcher do that made Great Britain so different from the country you knew as a child?

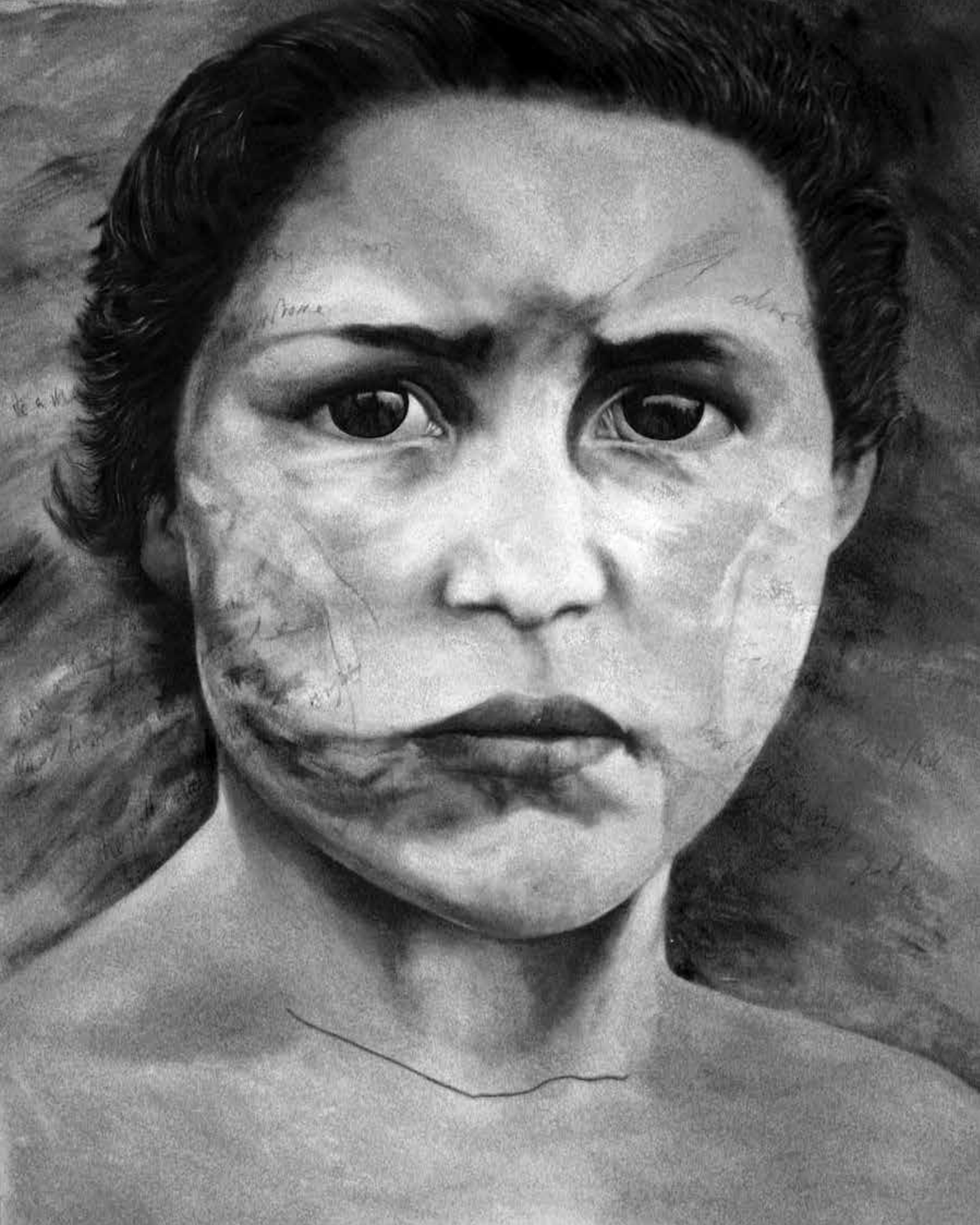
I don't think the rest of Europe understands what she did to this country spiritually. You would have to be born here to understand. She ripped out the soul of this country. What she did was unforgivable. She privatised the assets that belonged to the people and the repercussions are still being dealt with.

In Italy, Spain or France, things have not been privatised, like the trains, which are run for the people, not for profit. Since thatcher, it has been a continuous sell off of this countries assets; the post office, now the National Health Service is being attacked. Once, everybody would know where to go to if they had a problem, who was responsible, who had the information you needed. How do you un-privatise what should belong to the people?

How do you introduce a world where people come first, not enormous, out of control profit?



Details from two paintings of the series, Children Who Have Seen Too Much Too, acrylic and oil crayon on canvas, 2750 x 3000 mm each, 2006.







Would you say that it changed the culture, and how people interact?

It did and continues to do so. Before it wasn't about 'me,' and the sign of success wasn't 'money.' She forced a lot of those selfish issues. Who would disagree when she said that 'Everybody had the right to own their own home?' So a lot of young people put their money into buying their first home and in about three or four years, up went everything, mortgages were worth more than the houses, people lost their homes all over the country, it was insane. People suffered a lot.

You mentioned earlier that you don't have time to chase people, who appropriate your work. What is important to you today?

People and the garden are very important to me. The garden is where I think, where things come together. It's also important for my health, I just feel good when I am touching the earth. It is also a place I love to share with others.

Can you tell us about the history of the house, I think you said it was built in 1682?

Something like that, yes. Originally, historians think it was a single story granary. The house is very damp. In the next room, the floor has gone through after years and years of kids jumping up and down. We ripped it out and a friend has laid a beautiful oak floor. We are getting 'très moderne'.

When did you move in?

Penny and I found the house in 1966, but we only bought the house in the eighties, we had to fight for it. Crass came along in the seventies and we all lived here together during the Crass period. [We climb a narrow staircase to go to the first floor were a small vestibule opens to 4 small bedrooms. The top floor was really sloping.]

Indeed, nothing is straight in this room, I feel like I am drunk! [Both laugh]

This is the oldest part. You can see the original pieces of oak wood that connect here and hold the entire house. There is another staircase here that goes down to the print room. [We go back to the ground floor.] It is a funny old house... And here is my new studio that I am very proud of. I'm still trying to get in there to work.

Where did Dial House get its name?

We don't really know. We didn't name it. It could be to do with the post office whose head office was called Dial House. But I don't really know. The post office used to run the phone company before Thatcher privatised it and it became British Telecom, a company that everybody hates and who we had to fight to stay in the house, as they owned the house and land.

We talked about anarchism, pacifism and Zen Buddhism, but when I talk with you, all this seems less important to you than it used to be, is that the case?

No, it's all part of me still. I'm interested in a lot of things and I like to take things in and squeeze out the bits I don't need, rather than block things from the start. Many a time I might go back to a subject and look again. All of these things are an integrant part of me, but I wouldn't give myself a label of a Buddhist, anarchist or a feminist, even if people often call me a feminist. For me, it is about how we are all interlinked, the morality and kindness we might be able to share.

So does that moral structure influence your everyday life?

This is how I live my life, this is an open house, people can come in and visit even though it is not always convenient. Sometimes the last thing I want is another visitor. But this is what this house is, so I take a deep breath and know that once I sit down with our new visitor and start chatting, I'll learn something and have a laugh. I have always lived communally, but I also love time on my own. I am very comfortable on my own, Penny is the same, even though he likes talking a lot, he can talk for hours, I quickly get filled up with words, ideas and things and need time to process everything so usually disappear for a while if a talk goes on for a long time.

How do you think real change can happen?

You have to look at yourself, because nothing else can change unless you do. It's no good pointing a finger and shouting at something when, if you look at yourself, you are doing the very thing you are attacking. You have to look at where your pain and discomforts hide, where is the confusion, where are the

lies you sense within. Only you know and only you can make that journey. I think it's really important to seek within, to see what is stopping you really flying. A lot of people are tied down by their histories, by their experiences. Sometimes with good reasons because their experiences have been SO extreme, whether they have been molested as children, been unloved or seen things no one should see. It's a painful journey sometimes to look within but I do believe that's where the hope for the future lies. That's what my series *Children Who Have Seen Too Much Too Soon* is about. You can see it written on the faces.

Are those children that you met?

No, they are children I have seen.

So were you thinking about specific stories that you heard?

Not really, I like watching people. I especially like finding a little café where I can sit and watch. Taking the train up and down to London I felt that so many of the children I saw were somehow injured, that something had happened to them. It may not have been a traumatic experience per se, but there was already something innocent being lost. It set me thinking about how children cope in war, domestic violence etc. I'd met with Syrian families in Colchester, I had asked them to run a pop up cafe during the exhibition, which they did with great success. There was one child who came and for whom



On the opposite page,
Collage from *Animal Rites* series,
2003.

On the back cover:
Self-portrait, collage

it seemed locked up inside, god knows what he had seen, what he had been scarred by. Children have a great capacity to overcome extreme stuff, but some people don't. I look at grown up people who are still suffering; they are still carrying the pain and are unable to shake it off. Sometimes, you don't know what the particulars are, but you know there is something, in the eyes especially or in the way the body is held. I teach Tai chi, and it is interesting to see where people are blocked and incredible when you can unlock something in that person.

Did you learn about yourself organising the show or more about your work?

It was very interesting to prepare *Introspective* at FirtsSite in Colchester, because it was the biggest show I had ever done, covering a span from the 1960s until 2016. It was interesting to see the journey, and how all of it was about people.

It was all about the predicament of being human, I suppose. Everything was really about people, about the mess that we get ourselves into. There weren't any painting of flowers, gardens or landscapes because I don't have a problem with that, it's all perfect to me, I also think humans are perfect even though they are not. Inside, we are all really good people, that's my basic belief and we have to try and tap into that. I have met people where the pain, the hurt is too deep, that it is difficult if not impossible to touch. You look at their faces and know that you could never reach them. What do we do to each other?



