

your curatorial vision than you had initially acknowledged or intended.

MK: Do you have any advice for young curators?

KG: Explore what you are interested in, curation is a very personal journey, reflecting very much your own interests and approaches. Like any creative process it doesn't work in isolation, but is always contextualised by what is around you. I would rather not offer specific 'advice' as such, as I don't feel curation should be advised on, but should be more of an experiential process.

MK: What's the current curatorial project you are working on?

KG: I'm working on our next Interval event which will be at the end of the year in Manchester. This will be an open call for submissions which I always enjoy as people come onto your radar who you wouldn't necessarily be aware of otherwise. I am currently searching for a large, dilapidated building, so the artists can really work with the space.

Curating.info Conversations: Karen Gaskill

Michelle Kasprzak

MK: Much of your recent curatorial work has worked with spaces that are non-traditional. Does the use of spaces that don't conform to the "white cube standard" influence your curatorial vision, or are you choosing spaces that speak to your curatorial vision? How does the use of alternative spaces impact your curatorial selections as well as become touchpoints within your curatorial thinking?

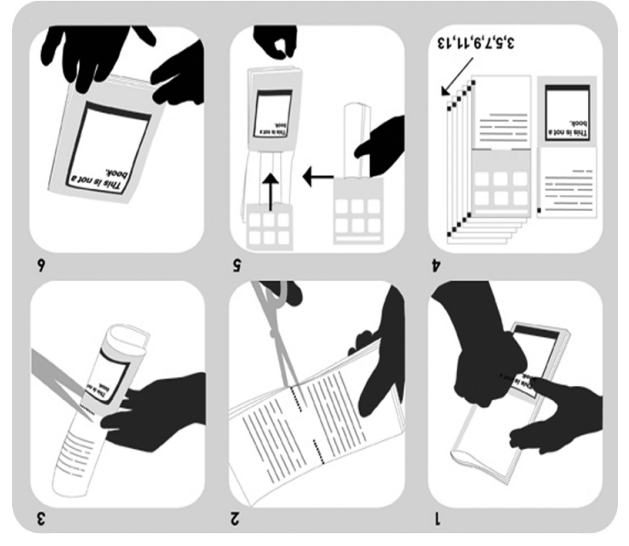
KG: This tends to vary, but I would say more often than not I initially select a space on its relevance to my curatorial vision, but this isn't to say it doesn't influence my working contexts. I mostly find that in working with alternative (usually empty) spaces, that they represent so much in terms of their history of use, the indications of the way they have been used, and even the objects left behind. It is difficult and I consider strange not to respond to the context offered by the space, and retrospectively the space often integrates itself much further into

critical debates surrounding curation and other aspects of socially engaged practices, contextualising by making manifest the otherwise intangible experiential and tacit processes through critical writing.

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Karen Gaskill is an artist, curator and researcher based in Manchester, UK. She is currently finishing her practice-based PhD in Digital Media and Social Practice at the Digital Research Unit, The University of Huddersfield. Karen works as a Researcher for FACT in Liverpool, and lectures in Contemporary Art and Media Practice at various UK universities. Karen is the director and curator of Interval, an arts organisation established in 2005. Interval acts as a critical springboard, offering exhibition opportunities to emergent and established artists





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 Michelle Kasprzak**

using technology in their work.
 [www.interval.org.uk]

Her art practice has been shown nationally and internationally, She currently has work in ArtTranspennine 08, and has recently shown work in Sheffield 08: Yes, No & Other Options.

Karen's website is:
 www.occasionallysomewhere.org

Michelle Kasprzak conducted this interview with Karen Gaskill over e-mail in June 2008.

Michelle Kasprzak: What was the first show you curated, and how did it impact your future direction as a curator?

Karen Gaskill: One of the first shows I curated was for the Bluecoat Gallery Window Box space in Liverpool in the mid 90s. At the time I would have defined myself as an artist rather than a curator, and in retrospect I think this conscious merging of roles over a prolonged period of time, in which both practices have been equally prominent, has imbued my curatorial practice with the investigative and dialogical aspects of an artistic approach.

MK: You have been pursuing independent curatorial projects as part of a collective (Interval) for the past few years. Can you comment on how this mode of collective working has worked to develop you (or not) as a curator? **KG:** I think working in this way has allowed me a lot of freedom to explore aspects of curatorial practice that I would otherwise not have encountered if I had worked more autonomously or commercially. I intentionally set Interval up with the aim of working in such an open way, and many of the curatorial approaches I have taken have drawn much from the social and participative practices of the 1960's and community-led practices. As a curator I find it fascinating to explore how these particular approaches translate from practice over to curation, how they function as open methodologies, and how the resultant dialogue contributes to the debates on social practice.

Image from *Turnstile: Single Use* exhibition at the Holden Gallery, Manchester.

All images courtesy Karen Gaskill.

The *Curation.info* Conversations series is a collection of interviews conducted with curators of contemporary art. Responses to the dialogues presented in these e-books are encouraged, and will be compiled into a companion e-book. Contact Michelle Kasprzak (michelle@curating.info) or visit the website to submit your response.



curatorial approaches, exploring the contribution of an audience or 'participant', and exploring the value of such open and relational practices. I don't really see exhibitions such as *Click* as opening up too far, but rather as an example of how curatorial practices are becoming more socialised and responsive to open source working methods. I think the curatorial role in such exhibitions places emphasis on the curation of a social context rather than on the artworks involved, and if anything opens up new lines of enquiry regarding the contribution of participants to a curatorial vision.

MK: You're not only a curator, but also a researcher and academic. How do you reconcile or link the tangible results of your curatorial practice with your academic research? Does your work in "the academy" (either as researcher, teacher, or mentor) impact on your curatorial work in significant and/or interesting ways and if so, can you explain how?

KG: My research is concerned with the critical aspects of curation as a methodology and as a way of thinking, so draws immensely on the contexts revealed through the curatorial process. In reverse my academic practice furthers the

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MK: You mention how the curatorial style you have developed as part of *Interval* was drawn, in part, from "social and participative practices of the 1960's and community-led practices". Do you think the influence of these practices are being felt in the curatorial field as a whole? Do you think that exhibitions that demand more input from the public, -- for example: the recent "*Click*" exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum, wherein the public "curated" the show -- open things up too far, or are the inevitable endpoint of this line of enquiry?

KG: I think the role of the audience is becoming much more central within curatorial approaches, not just as a recipient of the curatorial vision but as a key voice within the exhibition, rendering the event as something live and therefore temporal. This liveness is continuing to inspire new