

Bed-In CUT PIECE

by the Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home

28th Oct 2010 – the Bluecoat

Performed for the students of Liverpool Hope University
11 am Contemporary Performance Studies (2nd year)
1 pm Contemporary Performance Practice (3rd year)
and visitors to the Bluecoat who happened to be there at the time

Mother (Courage) and (Her) Children sit still, wrapped in large white sheet on the bed.

Mother: Children, it's time for cuts!

Father checks on the children and mother and takes place on baby stool at the side of the bed with two pairs of large scissors in his hands. He performs a performative cutting action (waving the scissors in the air) before he begins.

Father: It is time for cuts. Yoko Ono first performed her seminal piece 'Cut Piece' in 1964 in Tokyo and later in different cities and venues such as Carnegie Hall in New York. She re-enacted it in Paris in 2003. 'Cut Piece' is about Yoko Ono sitting motionless on the stage after inviting the audience to come up and cut away her clothing. There was one instruction: CUT! Kristine Stiles, professor of art history, says: 'Cut Piece' entailed a disrobing, a denouement of the reciprocity between exhibitionism and scopic desires, between victim and assailant, between sadist and masochist: and, as a heterosexual herself, Ono unveiled the gendered relationship of male and female subjects as objects for each other.

The piece changed each time with new locations and new members of audience. It is said that in Japan, the audience was shy and cautious, in London the audience were violent and in Paris, somewhat too courteous. Com'n Liverpool, It's time for cuts!

We will now perform a re-enactment of Yoko's piece with a contemporary twist.

Mother, children are you ready?

Mother and Children: No! Nearly! Yes...

Father: The government is a public body, an executive that decides how money from taxes (and other things) will be spent. 669.62 billion pounds was spent last year on the public sector. See the Guardian chart behind us. The government, in order to spend all of this money, is organised into departments. For example the Department for Work and Pensions or The Department of Communities and Local Government or

The Department of Health or the Ministry of Defence or the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

The Spending Review 2010, as delivered by the Chancellor (who is in charge of all the money) George Osborne on the 20th October proposes many many cuts to the government's spending. Here are some:

490,000 public sector jobs – CUT!

Wife, who will do the cutting?

Mother calls the name from register. Each called student makes a cut into the white sheet with a pair of scissors and signs the register. Over the time, with each new cut, mother and children emerge from underneath the white sheet.

19% of all departmental budgets – CUT!

Mother calls the name from register.

The Department of Communities and Local Government

Social Housing 60% - CUT!

Mother calls the name from register.

Council Budget 7.1% - CUT!

Mother calls the name from register.

Capital Spending on Local Government 100% - CUT!

Mother calls the name from register.

Capital Spending on Communities 74% - CUT!

Mother calls the name from register.

The Department for Work and Pensions

Welfare Benefits – 7 Billion ON TOP OF 11bn already announced – that's 18 billion pounds – CUT!

Mother calls the name from register.

State pension age to rise from 65 to 66 for men and 60 – 66 for women by 2020. – Women’s Pensions – CUT faster and harder than pensions for Men. Overall, this is 5 billion pounds – CUT!

Mother: Intervention! Intervention! There are and will continue to be massive riots and protests in France because the government decided to raise the retirement age from 60 to 62. Outside the senate (where pensions reform bill was decided) school and university students led a demonstration, and were joined by train drivers, public sector workers and museum staff, who vowed to continue to protest. Their next massive day of action and strike is today Thursday. Half of airplane flights to Paris are cancelled, 7 out of 12 oil refineries in France are blocked, an incinerator near Marseille is blocked, 10 000 tonnes of rubbish are on the streets, bus depot at Tours is blocked... The country has stopped.

What are we going to do? Work ourselves to our graves... all the way to 66.

Father: Thank you for that. Name from register to cut and sign 5 billion cut in State Pensions, please.

Mother calls the name from register.

Council Tax Benefit – 10% CUT!

Mother calls the name from register.

Mother: Students need to know that under 35’s will only be able to claim housing benefit for a room rather than a whole property – they’re all under 35. Most of them.

Father: Child Benefit 2.5 billion – CUT!

Mother: Intervention! Intervention! It is not children but bankers that got us into this mess! All mothers need child benefit. Actually, all mothers perform invisible labour every day – no one is paying them for the fact that they are upbringing the workers of tomorrow. Mother's work is all for love, a bit like artists'. In 1972, Selma James set up the International Wages for Housework Campaign, which argues that running the home should be recognised as work in official statistics and that people doing this labour should be paid a wage by the government. According to Selma James, housework should be paid £500-£600 per week. Now, Child Benefit is being cut!

Father: Name from register, please.

Mother or children call the name from register.

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport

The Arts Council England 29.6% - CUT!

Mother calls the name from register.

Let's cut to the chase.

RFO's (Regularly Funded Organisations) which get desperately needed money from the Arts Council every year will be...you guessed it - CUT! (goodbye Bluecoat?) RFO's to suffer even further cuts of an extra 10% (this is on top of the 33% cuts to fund the Olympics). This means Arts Council 43% - CUT!

Mother calls the name from register.

Within The Arts Council, Creativity, Culture and Education (CCE), which focuses on children and young people, will see its budget reduced from £38m to £19m whilst Arts and Business, which encourages philanthropy and commercial partnerships, will see its budget halved, down from £3.8m to £1.9m. - CUT!

Mother calls the name from register.

The Arts Council's development funds, including money to support touring and cultural leadership 64% to a meagre £21m - CUT!

Mother calls the name from register.

Mother: Intervention! Intervention! Artists are a bit like mothers and housewives - they also work for free. The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home are not being paid to participate in this event by the Bluecoat. We are only getting our lunch. Moreover, when we asked for the props to be provided: meaning two sheets and two pairs of scissors, we got this reply:

We've made it clear to people that if they want to distress the bed-linen they need to bring it themselves. With regard to the scissors, I am sure I can arrange that although they may be blunt. Will that be okay?

Can you sort out the white sheets yourselves?

There is no money in the arts, not for artists!

Let me do a short advert for The Paid not Played Choir:

Fed up of working unpaid in the name of love? Then we invite you to join The Paid not Played Choir.

The Paid not Played Choir brings together cultural workers in a stand against the practice of free labour within the arts sector. As part of an ICA residency we welcome you to join the choir in creating, rehearsing and performing a piece of protest music to be staged in the ICA itself and venues and events across London.

No singing skills required, just a desire to fight free labour!

Now, we are being paid by Liverpool Hope University. We decided to get paid for this event by disguising it as a lecture – inviting the students to learn something relevant to the course they are currently studying – namely Contemporary Performance. However, we are not sure there will be any money in higher education after the CUTS.

Father: The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills 25% - CUT!

Mother *calls the name from register.*

This is the department that covers further and Higher education. The Department of Education does not exist anymore. It was replaced by all sorts of other departments. This makes it easier to – you guessed it – CUT!

Universities teaching budget 40% - just let me repeat that 40% - CUT!

Mother *calls the name from register.*

This means that university education is only for the privileged. For those with private means – meaning lots of money. The government will not pay teaching salaries anymore the students will. Tuition fees are set to skyrocket and students will not be seen as human beings with ideas to learn but as customers with products to buy. We, the lecturers will be your customer services providers.

Mother: Intervention! Intervention! Calling all students, calling all students – at least those who turned up today – I have kept the register. Calling all students. This is a message from the President of the National union of students Aaron Porter and the General Secretary of the University and college Union, Sally Hunt:

Father, read the letter please.

Father *reads the letter.*

Mother: Sign up! Sign up! All those who have not signed the register – or cut the sheet, please do so.

Father *calls all to sing together.*

All:

They say CUT BACK we say FIGHT BACK
No ifs no buts, no public sector cuts!