



Alex Schady & Hadas Kedar

61

Camden Arts Centre / April—June 2011
File Note #61 Alex Schady

Nick Stewart interviews Alex Schady & Hadas Kedar,
Wednesday 6 April, Royal Festival Hall, London

Alex Schady & Hadas Kedar

Nick Stewart

What is the project you've been working on at Camden Arts Centre?

Alex Schady

We're working with a group of students from South Camden Community School. We have a script that is a section from *Lord of the Flies* which we're interested in it, partly as it's a familiar school textbook, partly as there are two film versions of it, and wanted to make a series of films using this script. We've altered it slightly by removing names, locations and anything else that's specific to it, so it becomes a fairly abstract text about order breaking down. The students will be asked to read the text, think about it, make costumes and props for it, and to decide where to shoot it around their school. The shoot will last a whole day.

NS A school is a somewhat *Lord of the Flies* environment anyway. So this text won't perhaps be that radically different from what they are used to?

Hadas Kedar

I was thinking how the project will create a community but a community thrown together without choice of who you might be with. This text is a platform for the students to bring their issues to. It has to do with social structures, relations between people. Who's the leader and who's being led.



Cover: Alex Schady and Hadas Kedar *Rulers* 2009
Film stills / Courtesy the artists / © the artists

AS The text represents the moment at which order breaks down. The moment at which they start discussing why things aren't working.

NS **That seems very topical given the ongoing news of revolutions and uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa.**

HK Yes, this bubbling up of anarchy and revolution is something that interests Alex and me. In different ways we always address this issue.

NS **I watched the video of *Boulder*, the piece you did in Norway last year. It has echoes in cult behaviour, children's games and alien invasion films. Is it a precursor to this project?**

AS Definitely. For this kind of art work there are complicated ethical concerns regarding the responsibilities you have for those you are working with and what control you have over them. We play with that.

NS **If the students ask you, "Why are we doing this?" what do you say?**

AS They do ask. It's important to be up-front with them. We tell them it's our work and we've invited them to take part in it. They aren't forced to take part. I talked about the project with them and they volunteered.

NS **I suppose, in the spirit of *Lord of the Flies*, what should happen is that they take over the project from you?**

AS It is all about giving and receiving power. To what extent you allow things to happen and to what extent you become a 'teacher' is what's interesting about such interventions in schools. We don't have the authority of teachers but, equally, we have much more freedom to allow things to happen.

NS **So, if the teachers ask, "what are the learning outcomes", and so forth, what do you say?**

AS I say they learn from participation.

HK Our project is a 'one-off'. It's an extra experience. It's not about mastery, it's about doing, about hands on experience with film, but not a text-book process.

Cover: Alex Schady and Hadas Kedar *Rulers* 2009
Film still / Courtesy the artists / © the artists



NS **Why did you decide a text was necessary to work from?**

HK It was helpful. You need something to help the students open up. The text provided them with an anchor for the whole activity and yet it can be adapted in different ways.

AS I was wary of going into the school and using the camera to explore the students as subjects. You know, "aren't they fascinating" and we just observe them like in a zoo. Theatricalising it prevents them from becoming the subject. Paradoxically, restricting their activities through this text opens up the project. It means they are less likely to revert to things they've done before.

NS **It's an activity they undertake that, while seemingly unrelated to their life, actually they can project into. It might be a displacement activity?**

AS A lot of what we do together references science fiction. I think sci-fi is really useful for that as well. They can project into it.

NS **Hadas, given you are an Israeli artist, this island in *Lord of the Flies* could be viewed as Gaza or the West Bank. Issues of**

power and control are common to both your personal identity and your artistic identity for this project.

HK What's interesting and depressing about this text is that it is disastrous and this disastrous feeling is, I think, something you could say about the Middle East.

NS I imagine collaboration such as yours would be rather like a forced marriage. How does it work? How do you disagree?

HK We have the advantage of being at a distance from each other. 'Absence makes the heart grow fonder!' The idea of collaboration is that you 'check it out' all the time. It's never perfect harmony. We look for the middle ground if there is conflict. We agree on the important issues. These moments of disagreement are the most interesting because you have to talk through everything and you realise a lot of details that you wouldn't otherwise pay attention to.

AS As the work gets closer to resolution there are moments when you are fighting your corner. But that's what makes it so interesting. It can feel like the whole thing is going to collapse. There is both the possibility of the mutual support, but also of destruction.

HK There is a belief that art might be therapeutic. That the artist can make the school good and help the pupils be good. We want to work with art without this belief. We want art to be a more everyday experience.

NS One of the virtues of art education, that's different from other academic subjects, is that it's experiential. Which relates to early education: how education begins through experience of the world, through play. Later the idea of play becomes confined to non-institutional space and time. There's a huge amount of potential learning in that but it's not recognised, officially. Maybe a project like this can bridge these realities?

HK It started very early in our collaboration that we were involved with these two ideas: play and work. What we should do and what we want to do. In this project we are playing ... with serious things, serious ideas. We were both reading J. G. Ballard's *High Rise* when planning this project.

Nick Stewart is an artist.

Alex Schady (b.1974, England) studied Fine Art at Middlesex University (1993–96) and received an MFA in Fine Art and Critical Theory in 2001. He has exhibited nationally and internationally including 'Sandnes Vitamin', Vitenfabrikken, Sandnes, Norway (2011); 'Edukation', Darom, Tel Aviv (2010); 'Dumb Waiter', James Taylor Gallery, London (2010); 'Free Association', Area 53, Austria (2009); 'Shorts', Carel Gallery, New York (2008); 'Videoart', Prague (2007); 'I can't help you', (with Kate Rose Carrick) Coleman Project Space, London (2005) and 'Woken by a greenish light', (with Hadas Kedar) Luftraum, Frankfurt (2003). In 1998 he co founded the artist run gallery space Five Years to consider the relationship between the production and exhibition of work, and the discourse which informs. Alex Schady lives and works in London.

Hadas Kedar (b. 1963, Jerusalem) studied Fine Art at Bezafal Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem (1992–96) and at Middlesex University (1999–2000). She has had solo exhibitions at Five Years Gallery, London (2001) and Sipookation, Gallery No. 16, Tel Aviv (1997). She has also been included in a number of group exhibitions including 'Century Cities', Tate Modern, London (2001); 'Refried', Cubitt Gallery, London (2000) and 'Summer Harvest', Israel Museum, Jerusalem (1999). She lives and works in Tel Aviv.

Reading/Viewing List

- Pieter Breugel *The Land of Cocaigne* Oil on panel (1567), Alte Pinakothek, Munich
- William Golding *Lord of the Flies* Faber and Faber (New Edition, 2002)
- Robert Walser *Serpent's Tail* Institute Benjamenta (1995, first published 1909)
- Jack Clayton (Dir.) *The Innocents* (1961)
- Jerzy Skolimowski (Dir.) *Deep End* (1970)
- Werner Herzog (Dir.) *Land of Silence and Darkness* (1971)
- JG Ballard *Concrete Island* Harper Perennial (2008)
- Paul Thek *Teaching Notes* (1978–81)
- Artur Zmijewski *Them* Documenta 12 (2007)
- Clown Army: <http://www.clownarmy.org/>
- YouTube School for Social Politics: <http://www.red76.com/theytssp.html>

Published to accompany Alex Schady and Hadas Kedar's off site residency with Camden Arts Centre at South Camden Community School
11 April–26 June 2011

ISBN 978 1 907208 18 8

‘Things are beginning to break up.
I don’t know why. It all began
well. Then people started forgetting
what really matters.’
— William Golding Lord of the Flies

Cover: Alex Schady and Hadass Kedar, *Rulers*, 2009
Film still // Courtesy the artists / © the artists

www.camdenartscentre.org
Registered charity: 1065829
Registered company 2927191
VAT reg. no. 586 9041 03

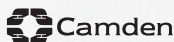


Camden
arts centre

T +44 (0)20 7472 5500
F +44 (0)20 7472 5501

Arkwright Road
London
NW3 6DG

Supported by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Funded by Camden Council



www.camdenartscentre.org