

Thank you for coming. Ill start as soon as the lights are down.

[1]

The Cube has at least 2 layers of history, one of which is bound up in the building and the site itself and which I'll touch on briefly later.

The second is represented here by this negative image of the Club Rombus space in Easton. Club Rombus was a film screening and live music social event that ran from 1996 to 1998. Essentially the Cube was founded on this project and continued with some of its core experimental aims.

My interest since then has been in social networks and what groups of people can achieve together rather than apart.

Although I'm generally unhappy using the term 'underground', Rombus **was** underground and operated without any kind of licence or permission and never advertised to the 'public';

It was an invite only affair, people who came were 'thought' up by myself and the other organisers. They were picked out from knowledge of who certain creatives were at the time and then left to organise themselves in terms of who they told and why.

If anything an underground activity is one which eschews the unknown public in favour of a stronger notion of audience.

The Cube was often accused of [2] obfuscation of its activities (and here I mean in formative years) but this hardly effected us. Bums on seats was not important, at least it was not our main concern. We didn't want to give Bristol yet more *events* to consume. We didn't want to *provide the culture for punters to suck up*. More simply we wanted **you, your interests, your input and your ideas**.

The people who made the effort to find **it** were the people who made the most effort [3] and often did the most work.

Pause

[4]

The Cube **too** did some ducking below the legal system. In the early days it operated an illegal bar shown here as the office you may of seen earlier. Part of its success perhaps is down to this putting out of **deep roots**. Operating under freewill, *trusting and asking for trust* places a great emphasis on participants sense of loyalty. They feel they are 'in on something'. They form part of it and this encourages people to contribute freely rather than wait and be told what to do.

Pause

[5]

At the time (1998) Bristol was simply bereft of events which showed more than one film at the same time. Multiples of anything look good, [6], especially on a proper cinema screen.

[7]

The Microplex was a response to the absence of everything it did and [8] does. [9]

Pause

[10]

Just as important is the 'way' things are done.

Typically a volunteer exercises their 'vol' , their 'will' to help. But we can see that 'enthusiasm' emerges as a key characteristic in such an open environment. Perhaps I should remind you that an enthusiast has an **extravagant religious emotion**, and *as well as* being **inspired** he or she is a **visionary and possessed by a god!** However the dictionary also says [11] 'a self deluded person' or persons in this case.

Pause

[12]

If cube volunteers are self deluded then so are its audience, who frequently make the transition from

[13]

the auditorium (where you are) to the stage.....

[14]

.....Where I am. This idea of the 'public' making its own entertainment has always been central to my concerns for the way the programme develops and shapes itself. The '**stage**' is literally a '**home**' for people to experiment **in** as it comes from the OF 'estage' which means a 'dwelling'. [16]

[15]

Pause

[17]

To what extent the Cube experiments with its material concerns perhaps rests on what degree it differentiates between the 'staged and presented' [18]...

.....and the embodied material of its own mechanism [19][*pause*] and apparatus [20] *pause*

We needn't stop at the obvious notion of facility or use of tools.

We could mean the organisation as a whole [21] *pause*

How it advertises to or *addresses* the public [22] *pause* or

how it lays out its administration or office area. [23]. Or any of its spaces for that matter.

Pause

[24]

My **chosen** definition of experimental is '**a project where no teleology is inferable.**'

Ie, we never know what final cause or design serves the various developments that take place.

OR the view that for any creative undertaking to be experimental, it must essentially have

' **No previously decided purpose**'.....

(a bit like this picture)

Pause

[25] (blank, no slide so light spills over)

This brings me onto another layer or factor at play here. Which is amateurism and by amateurism I mean 'a lover'.

It was once said of the Cube and meant, I believe as a criticism that ;

'It was run by amateurs for amateurs.'

We've already seen how enthusiasm can manifest once people are free to choose their roles but I wonder if *infact* the amateur is the **enthusiast 'par excellence.'** And **is** enthusiasm an absolute prerequisite of the amateur?

pause

This missing slide could be seen as an act not befitting a professional and a professional would maybe receive some kind of comeback. This isn't to say that the amateur is free to make mistakes willy nilly. But the difference between the inherent conduct of amateurs and the expected outcomes in professional environments is clear. Personally I would like to believe that the Cube 'strives' **towards** a professional level of work but essentially bungles its way *and* must bungle its way because the enthusiasm for experimenting is so great and (**true to the word bungle**) it will *fail to accomplish* a paid worker environment.

In this is the double pincer of *God as a Lobster*. The struggle to be professional and the resistance and rejection of its professionalism.

I suggest professional environments should strive to be amateur.

Infact its common for people to be surprised when they learn that the Cube is entirely volunteer and therefore amateur run. So great is the public's perception of the Cube as 'professional'.

The play offered between these extremes, the unskilled amateur and the salaried professional is represented by this light spilling everywhere, but *done here deliberately*.

We can move slightly away from total chaos and I'll illustrate this by the next slide [26] where at least we have a slide frame now although the picture seems to have been forgotten.

Notice the very slight **restriction in light** compared to the freedom of the non existent frame.

I mentioned the history of the building earlier. What we do know is that the main conversion from a derelict workshop to what we have now was undertaken in 1964 by a group of amateurs.

The Cube in many ways then is actually a continuation of the 'spirit' of these times. An extension of the approach to **perform ones tasks with love, and as a lover of them.**

[27]

Defying peoples expectations is central in keeping ideas alive and reflexive. A constantly shifting programme, in style and aesthetic as well as content is paramount I believe to what the public expect from an Arts Centre or 'provider of the arts' OR at least should expect.

Turning things on their heads is one of several strategies towards this. We decide we cant ethically buy and sell Coke Cola. Instead of dropping it we reverse engineer the recipe and manufacture our own!

Pause

[28]

As far as possible, never repeat yourself.

[29]

As far as possible, never repeat yourself.

Pause

The Cube will hopefully survive for many decades. It will constantly change and shapeshift itself. It knows that **it is not things which change, but people that change.**

And the Cube is run by **[30]** peoplefor people

Pause

[31]

Id like to end on a quote from this film over which some slides will play.

[2 slides per line!!]

We wanna be free! We wanna be free to do what we wanna do. We wanna be free to ride.

We wanna be free to ride our machines without being hassled by The Man! ...

And we wanna get loaded. And we wanna have a good time. And that's what we are gonna do.

We are gonna have a good time... We are gonna have a party.

