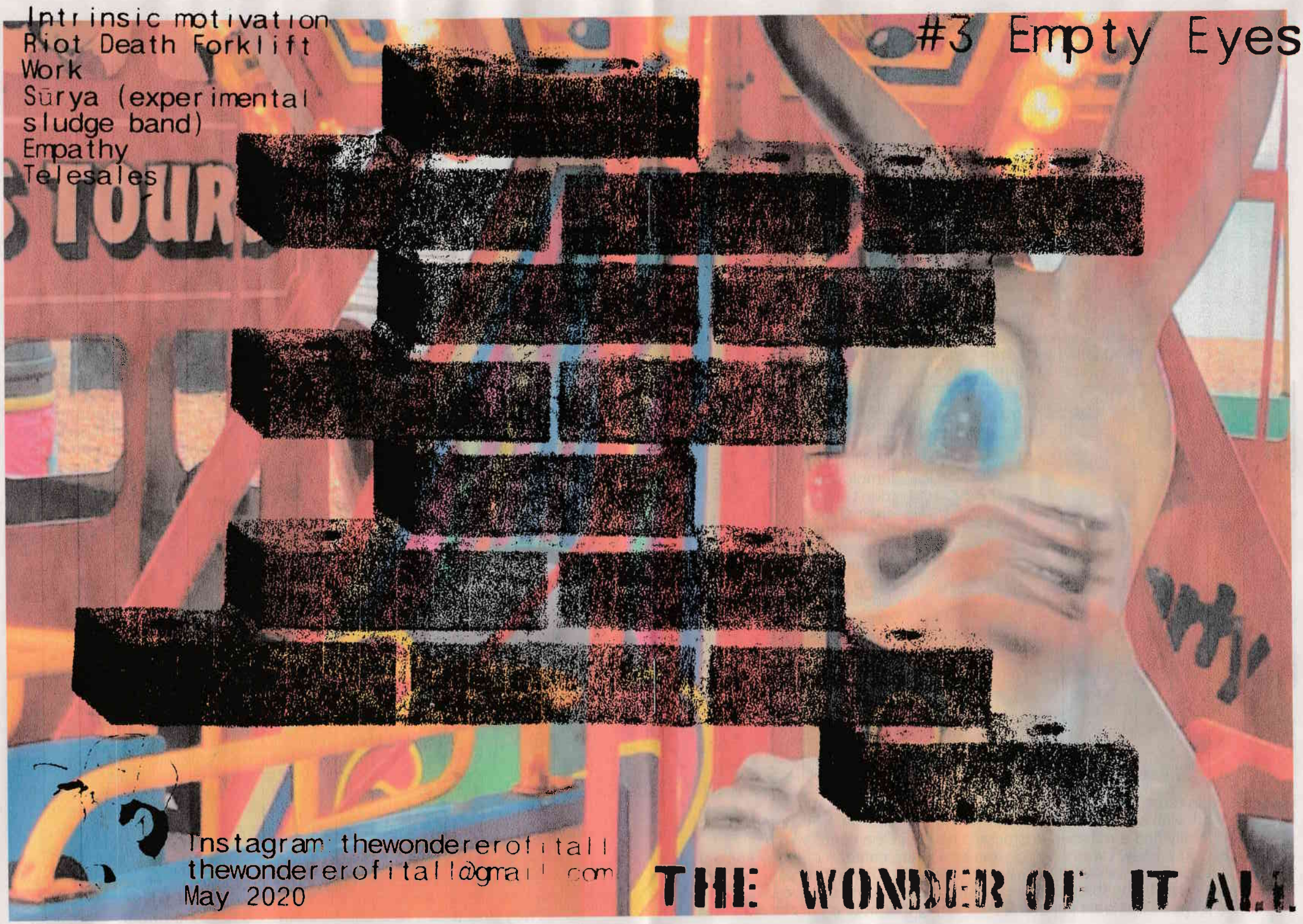
Intrinsic motivation
Riot Death Forklift
Work
Sūrya (experimental
sludge band)
Empathy
Telesales

#3 Empty Eyes



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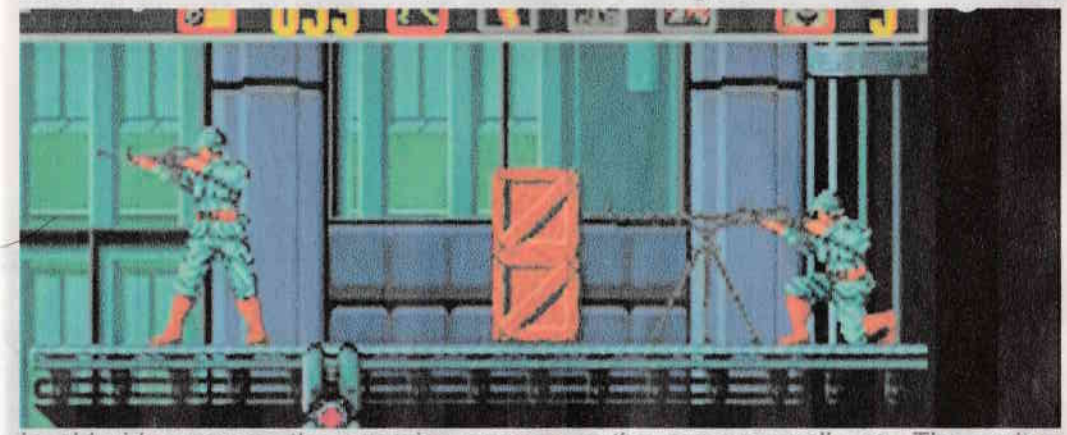
THE WONDER OF IT ALL

"I had a change of heart the day fucko the clown got elected. I've always had a strong work ethic. If I'm being paid to be somewhere, I'll always get on with the job, to pass the time quicker if nothing else. As I get older my back aches more, and our leaders become more deranged and/or less competent. These days it's pointless putting in the effort at work because no matter how hard and smart we work, the govt. is putting everything they have into gumming everything up. The stubborn work ethic that had always been a part of my character has died a death (at least as far as employment/real work goes). I feel sorry for healthcare workers, social workers, teachers; jobs where there is a direct effect on people who actually need help. Those workers tend to be motivated by empathy for their patients/clients pupils etc. No matter how much top-down-industrial-scale-suffering the govt. inflicts on struggling people, it's felt by you if you try to get out for a cig break while someone's in distress in front of you. No matter how little I care about any 'project' at work, the reason I don't drop the ball like a sack-of-shit-covered-hot-potatoes is because I don't want to let down my colleagues and drop them in it. I think most workers are the same- empathy, or at least some sort of human relationship, is more motivating than the actual purpose of their work. The reason McDonalds employees don't spend their shifts frisbeeing burgers around the shop isn't because they are concerned with profits or brand reputation, it's because the manager will give them a bollocking and/or maybe break down in tears. It takes a lot of work to sack someone.

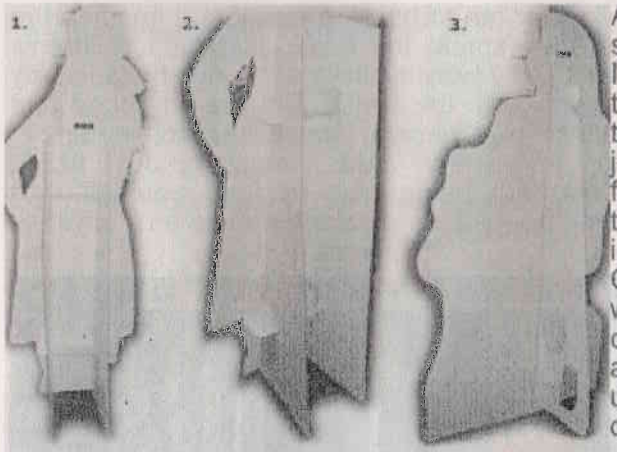
"Go the extra mile" is an adaptation of a commandment in the Sermon of the Mount (Matthew Ch 5 v 41) : "And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." Under the Roman Impressment Law, a Roman soldier passing by a Jew could order him to carry his pack for one mile. Jesus asked his followers to go two miles instead of one.

Half the time, it doesn't matter if a job gets done properly or not, half the stuff we do is to keep the boss happy and serves not much other purpose. And a lot of industries are just about making someone feel better. This person has to have enough disposable income to pay you for making them feel better, otherwise it can't be an industry. It's

I used to work with someone who described herself as a 'horsey' person, which meant her family had a massive aristocratic house in the country with stables and horses. She knew I was a vegetarian and in the canteen one day she said, "I imagine it would be awkward for you go fox hunting being a vegetarian"... Suppose she was trying to empathise with me, just missing a few beats. The most most obvious but least important beat being that noone eats the fox. She was correct that it would be awkward for me to be on a fox hunt. I imagine the most awkward bit would be when they smear the foxes' blood on children's faces to commemorate their first hunt. Jolly Hockeysticks. It's funny because my posh colleague was thick as fuck/away with the fairies. But the privileged and powerful incessantly fail to empathise with people, and it has consequence; Theresa May called people living in poverty 'JAMs'- meaning Just About Managing; she couldn't accept that not being able to feed yourself isn't 'managing'. Dominic Raab describing benefits for disabled people as a 'childish wishlist'... It goes on.



In old video games the enemies appear as the screen scrolls on. The sprites represent creatures or people, and they have a simple movement/attack pattern which may or may not react to your movements. Running back and forth on a ledge or firing across the screen, 3 shots at a time, repeating. They don't exist before or after the edge of the screen and there is no 'what it's like' to be them. They have no brain or feelings, just a few lines of code floating in a black background to make them move. That's how Theresa May imagined her impoverished citizens, and that's how Raab imagines struggling disabled people. And it's catching; it's also how I imagine what it's like to be a Raab or a May. When I try and put myself inside the mind of powerful people who have the ability to help struggling people and don't, it's like groping shoulder deep behind some kind of skin in the black background. Also, similar thing for fans of Ed Sheeran, Coldplay and Nickelback etc. I get that it's popular because of the marketing campaigns and I get that it's 'middle of the road' music that is designed not to put people off. But I can't imagine what it's like to be someone who really loves Coldplay etc. You'd have to be really fucked in the head.

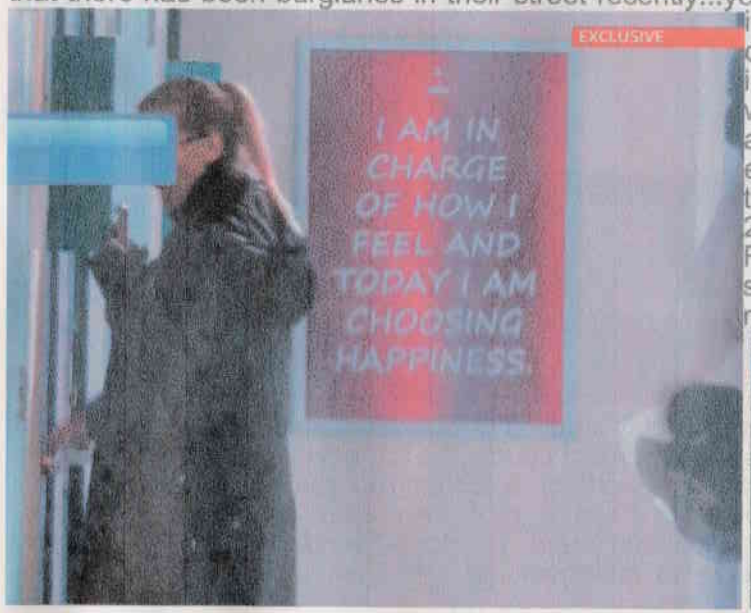


As well as having a work ethic, I suffer from chronic feelings of Intrinsic Motivation. This means that if I've got a job to do I'll tend to take pleasure in doing a good job of it, just for it's own sake, or for the satisfaction of going thru the process. I first heard the term in a book on outsider art. Madge Gill, Adolf Wölfli, Nick Blinko etc. will make up a general composition on the paper/canvas and then tend to fill in every unused part of the surface with details/patterns. The art term for filling space like this is horror vacui. It's like a way of doodling to pass the time. Rather than helping the composition or conveying something to the viewer, it serves to relieve boredom or something heavier in the artist while they're doing it. This is the opposite of Extrinsic Motivation where you do something in order to benefit in some other way outside of the task itself, like doing a job cause you get paid for it.

This outsider art book also mentioned that people with high intrinsic motivation make good employees.

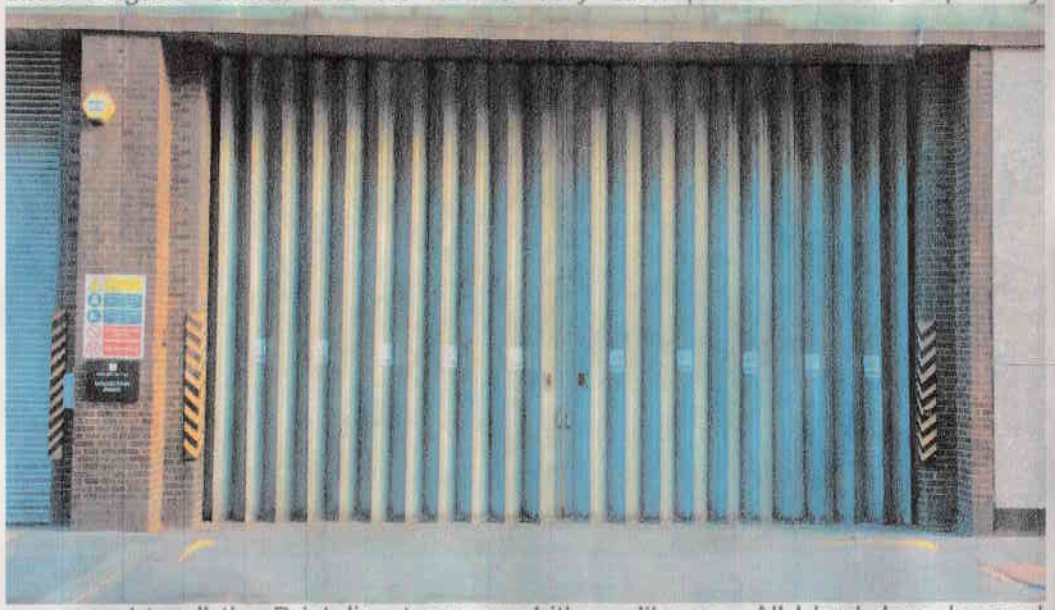
When I was about 18 I got a job in telesales. The job was the one always advertised in the job centre and anyone could do it, so it was where everyone went to after dropping out of college, school etc. and a lot of my friends had worked there at some point. I was there for a month, tops. You got paid some peanuts

hourly rate with commission for getting 'leads'. You'd go thru these photocopied books of illegally obtained numbers and a lead was where you persuaded some vulnerable person to book an appointment for a salesman to come round to push them into buying an overpriced alarm system. "You might want to mention that there has been burglaries in their street recently...yeah... don't worry about it". In those good old days, you could smoke in the office, but I would still use smoking a cigarette as an excuse to get out of the building.



2 or 3 weeks in on the Friday afternoon, a smartly dressed middled aged guy who

sits over in the corner slams his headset down on the table and storms out of the office. Then the greasy chap who runs the office comes over and tells me I've won the £50 bonus for getting the most leads that week. Turns out that was the first time in years the middle aged guy hadn't won it. He had pride in his silver-tongued charm and he had a very slick phone manner, especially



compared to all the Bristolian teenage shitbags like me. All I had done beyond learning the basics was to just sit there and go mindlessly thru the numbers. I just found the day would pass quicker if I kept my head down and got on with it, but apparently noone tried this before.

Remembering that office, it was open with lots of big empty tables with just phones and teenagers lounging around. No computers, no branding, not much paperwork, no inspirational quotes, just the odd ashtray. Weird and dodgy looking.

Years later, better job (which only smelled of cigarettes in the designated areas) and I'm sent on a 3 day management course, as I'm now technically a manager and expected to motivate the workers. According to studies, as long as your workers are paid enough to have a roof over them, buy food, pay bills, increasing pay won't motivate them to do a better job. That is why managers/employers have to communicate with them in such a way as to

motivate them. There are a load of techniques and they teach you to do this: You must give 5 pieces of praise for every 1 piece of criticism, How could we make that better? I'd like to hear how you feel when we look at the bigger picture (adapted from 1950's door to door sales techniques), On a scale of 1-10, where would you say you are? What would it look like to move one notch up to the next number? And the shit sandwich. First reaction is that its just a lie that workers can't be motivated by more money, it's just a way of justifying low wages. Think about it: does anyone suddenly start working harder the day they get a raise? Corporations spend a lot of money on these creepy management courses, and that isn't to make themselves feel better about their wage scales. The really scary thing about these approved communication techniques is that they work. They've worked out what to say and how to say it to give the best chance statistically of getting the result you want, so the mechanics function; no companies would shell out for this training if it didn't work. Being authentic is a highly prized quality in managers/leaders these days. In diversity workshops you will be told about the business case for diversity. The labcoats have researched and found out that diverse workforces get better results. No matter how cynical you become, it's never enough to keep up but don't stop trying.

Another one: When I was a young lad working loading recycling trucks, I met a young lad who worked loading recycling trucks. He was

always haggard because he'd been up really late playing Resident Evil. And I was (am) jealous of him, because getting some exercise, sun on your face if you're lucky doing work that you won't take home with you, and managing to soak up your spare mental energy with video games seems like heaven. It's such an innocent way to get black patches round your eyes. If I could convince myself to be mentally satisfied playing video games, I would just do that and get on with life. Also, if I could convince myself not too, I wouldn't work too hard at work either, I promise.

I'm
Sorry

This was in a Health and Safety Executive bulletin email I got the other day:

Association between objectively measured physical behaviour and neck- and/or low back pain: A systematic review.

Abstract

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE:

Clinical guidelines recommend physical activity to manage neck pain (NP) and low back pain (LBP). However, studies used to support these guidelines are based on self-reports of physical behaviour, which are prone to bias and misclassification. This systematic review aimed to investigate associations between objectively measured physical behaviour and the risk or prognosis of NP and/or LBP.

DATABASES AND DATA TREATMENT:

Literature searches were performed in MEDLINE, Embase and Scopus from their inception until 18 January 2019. We considered prospective cohort studies for eligibility. Article selection, data extraction and critical appraisal were carried out by independent reviewers. Results were stratified on activity/sedentariness.

RESULTS:

Ten articles out of 897 unique records identified met the inclusion criteria, of which eight studied working populations with mainly blue-collar workers. The overall results indicate that increased sitting time at work reduces the risk of NP and LBP while increased physical activity during work and/or leisure increases the risk of these conditions among blue-collar workers; however, associations were weak. Physical activity was not associated with prognosis of LBP (no studies investigated prognosis of NP). Most of the included articles have methodological shortcomings.

CONCLUSIONS:

This review indicates that, among blue-collar workers, increased sitting at work may protect against NP and LBP while increased physical activity during work and/or leisure may increase this risk. There was no evidence supporting physical activity as a prognostic factor for LBP. Findings should be interpreted with caution due to the weak associations and few available studies with methodological shortcomings.

SIGNIFICANCE:

Based on prospective cohort studies with objectively measured physical behaviour, this review questions the common notion that increased physical activity is associated with reduced risk or better prognosis of NP and/or LBP. We found that, among blue-collar workers, increased sitting time at work reduces the risk of NP and LBP, whereas physical activity somewhat increases the risk. Despite methodological shortcomings, there was consistency in the direction of the results, although high-quality articles reported the weakest associations. Systematic review registration: PROSPERO CRD42018100765.

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Sūrya The Dev, Camden Feb 29th

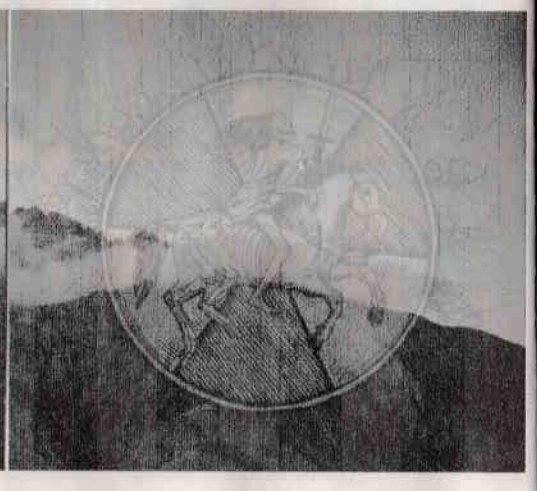
This was the last gig I saw before the COVID19 cancellations started. I love an excuse to go to the Dev and marvel at the 90s goth/metal etc. posters pasted all over the place. I don't know how long they've been there but that Crow poster on the ceiling is looking pretty yellow. Actually gigs there are a logistical nightmare in that the route to the ladies toilets is via the area right in front of the stage, and the layout of the horshoe bar means that only about 30 people can actually stand in front of the stage sensibly. But it is nice and quiet earlier in the day. Quiet meaning they play a lot of death metal, keeping the number of punters to a minimum.

The gig was headlined by Sūrya, who describe themselves as experimental doom/sludge, and get called 'eco doom' quite often. Going by their bandnames, the rest of the bill could all be types of real ale and they all played stonery doom in the pentatonic scale (it was

Everest Queen, Son Of Boar, Old Horn Tooth). Sūrya have bass, drums, and 2 guitars, only a couple of tracks with vocals. What I've always liked about them is the way the instruments are orchestrated to build scale and atmosphere, but keeping a dirty, down to earth heaviness. It has a touch of 'post metal' (sometimes I think of Godspeed) but there is a steady sludgey swing to it. I think this comes from keeping the drums and riffs fairly straightahead- once the head starts nodding that'll be it for the song, and the guitar parts are built around letting things ring out and resonate. I think the bass chords are often played up the neck to let the bottom string ring open to give this insistent drone. Their second album has a slightly slicker

production than the first, and I hope they never lose the rougher sludge edges, as that balance is quite unique I think. Sūrya use samples and projected visuals to get their ideas across. They support cruelty-free, vegan lifestyle and the idea of human, animal and earth liberation. I can't imagine the songs having their ominous presence without these real world themes. Despite the band's strong ties with the DIY punk scene (South London Scum collective), they share a record label with a load of doom bands singing about weed/wolves/wizards etc. For me the intersection of doom/sludge and punk/DIY in general is an interesting history but I'll save it for a future bit of ranting and raving.

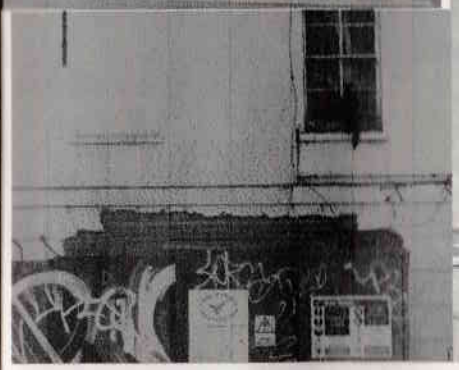
Guitarist Greg in an interview with sanctuspropaganda.com:
...Adorno in his often misunderstood writing on musical aesthetics thought that musical structures, rather than lyrics, can actually challenge society. I like instrumental songs because I think they encourage us to become reflective rather than just passively receiving the music.



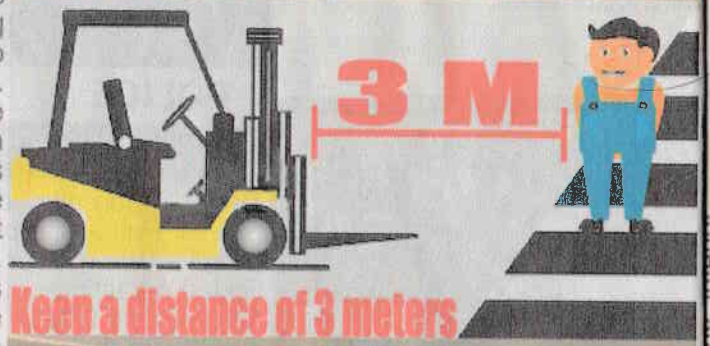
The projected footage includes buildings being destroyed, environmental ruin, and a lot of flyovers of forests and natural landscapes. Some of this might be a bit subtle for a Saturday night Camden crowd, but the way Sūrya carry it all together is solid and intelligent, and it's always a pleasure to see them live.

One thing that caught my eye in Sūrya's projections was marketing footage for a riot forklift truck designed to crush humans! It's basically a blue 12000kg forklift truck adapted with a steel wall where the forks would be. This wall has side panels which let it extend out to 7.5m. You can look up the spec for yourself on www.bozena.eu.

They apparently developed this with the Slovak Police Corps for use against rioters. Despite the horror of the fucking thing, it tickled my lifting-equipment-health-and-safety-nerd-parts a little bit. It's shown driving down a street with the wall extended right out against the buildings on either side. Apart from the fact it would cause massive damage to the buildings, the driver wouldn't be able to see anyone in front of it; with a pallet on a normal forklift, you drive it backwards because the load blocks your view, let alone a 7.5m wide, 3.7m high steel wall. Also, with it being 12 tons, the driver wouldn't get any feeling of impact when it hit a person. It would be like driving a car over an empty beer can. Oh, and the cab is armour plated and has bullet proof glass, so the driver won't hear much either.



On the plus side this probably helps the operator's risk of PTSD. If it was a tank, painted in camo, it wouldn't have made a dent but because it's a familiar piece of civilian/industrial equipment that's been modified, it gives me the willies. It's a brutal example of militarised police tactics to be used against a populace, and on the other side of it's steel wall, I'm imagining the forklift driver having to be trained to operate it. How does it work? I've been trained to operate a load of different forklifts and the instructors were always very clear about not running people over. Pedestrians and forklifts must always be segregated, ideally with physical barriers. You have to stop and put on the handbrake if pedestrians come too near to you. Also, you must reduce speed and sound your horn if your coming up to a blind corner. Because you must reverse when the load is blocking your view, does this mean the Bozena is only used for retreating from the crowd? Quite honestly, it might be that these safety procedures (or a version of them) would apply to this thing's use. Remember that training is always an idealized version of how a task is done in real life, so the official line might be "the Bozena Riot is never driven towards people, it is only used to position the wall". I've emailed the manufacturer's technical department for some clarification...



The Royal Air Force museum has loads of fighter planes on display which stink of old oil. You can go up some steps and look into the cockpit and put your kids in there. There's not a lot inside them to keep the pilot comfortable, a bit like a

F1 car, it's just something to strap a human body into so they can keep the machine running. The cockpit is the least important part. The plane isn't built to carry people, it's made to deliver missiles and the pilots are just another part of the fuselage. It's one step away from being a kamikaze pilot, better odds. Another thing I remember from the RAF Museum was the Runway Bombs. These are dropped onto runways, breaking up the concrete when they explode and they also include landmines which sit there so noone can repair the runway. No matter how cynical you become, someone has always engineered a new pathetically-disguised-industrial-scale-human-meat-grinder, and it's never enough to keep up.

An Old Buddy Hackett joke:

There's a guy and he's got a lot of projects, he's building apartments, he's doing all this sort of stuff, and he goes out in the field with a psychologist to find out why some men work so much better than others and they see one guy, he's laying bricks and he's going like this....(acts out slow, resentful bricklaying with a pissed off frown). He says, "what're you makin'?" "What am I makin'? I'm making 6 dollars 73 cents an hour, that's what I'm making." He says "You know who's makin'? The guy who owns this job, he's 'makin'. He's makin' on me, makin' on my labour, he makes on that cement I'm usin', on the sand that comes in, he's makin' on the plans, he makes on the architects. He's makin', that's the guy who's makin'!!!" They go onto another guy, he's goin' like this (cheery humming, rapid bricklaying) "What are you makin'?" "What am I making, I'm making a church, a place of worship where anyone can come and worship whatever they want, a place of freedom and..." They had to fire him cos he's supposed to be makin' a garage.

feeling way. Service industries, homeopathy, interior design, yoga, sales, PR, marketing, drug dealers, bar tenders, chemists, sex workers, personal trainers, massage, hairdressers, conmen, nail technicians, florists...