

We have lived in the UK for quite a while now, perhaps some of that contrariness has left us.

We can already hear our friends laughing at that comment.

**Why are we doing what we're doing?**

Good question. Even to ask it sounds like a smart move, but somehow the response just seems too elusive. Why do we want to make films? Because we love films and love making films.

We love the very act of conceiving ideas for them. The challenges of producing them. OK, there are times when this fucks us off, but the mechanics we enjoy very, very much.

Making films. Literally the process of working with others to realise something on film. Working with others has to be loved. It's too collaborative an art form. The very process of creating (whatever the art form) must be hugely enjoyable for you to yield something out of it.

Something of the hobbyist must be in there. Doing it purely for the pleasure that doing it gives.

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# THE SHOW

desperate optimists

They didn't allow themselves to mature. Allow themselves to understand the form and the processes involved in that form to develop further. Let their vision develop under less harsh lights. Something to be said for being a late developer. Something to be said for the circuitous route. Or perhaps the vision is fine, but they lack the maturity to deal with the demands of others when collaborating. In film making it is notoriously difficult to head straight from your original idea to its full execution. Unlike the poem or the novel there are many, many people you need to filter this vision through, each one potentially redirecting your course. Trying (unintentionally mostly) to send you careering off the road.

**What motivates us?**

Haven't a clue. Would love to be psychoanalysed on that one. However, this could be tricky. Freud said the Irish are the only people who cannot be psychoanalysed – they are too contrary.

All very unpredictable, but then you remind yourself from time to time, that's exactly the reason you embarked on that journey in the first place.

The show, in a creative and specific sense for this publication, is you the artist in pursuit of the work you are creating or the work you feel you need to make. That's a very particular show to keep on the road. Sometimes you run out of it. Sometimes you have to change roads. Sometimes you hit a very nice surface and its nice to drive along for a while before you come to another stretch full of pot holes.

We admire people who can keep the show on the road. The show, of course, could be anything: a marriage, a business, a career, even an outlook or philosophical stance which might fly against the prevailing winds.

**Back to the road and the show.**

The answer is almost always in the specific thing itself.

Try looking at the images with a different type of music. Better? Worse? Just keep looking at the photograph. The answer is almost inevitably in the photograph.

Already we feel the pull to get into the minutiae of the politics, but that's not really what we want to dwell upon here.

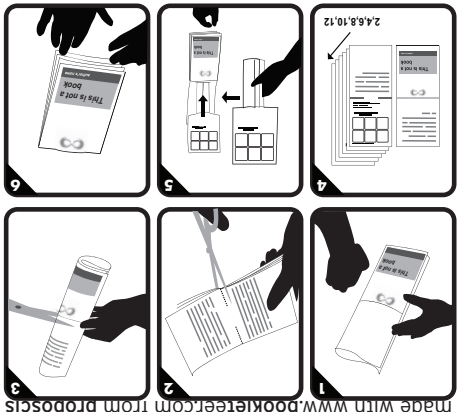
In this way perhaps, 'The Show' is really the process and not the end product itself. We sense it's more the process that's the thing as it is the process we spend most of our time working on. The thing we are trying to create takes up very little of the time comparatively. More of this road, this show and this process later.

But you really do have to know why you are doing it. There is, perhaps, no surprise in the fact that as artists and film makers we are seeking out a concrete justification for continuing along this road we have been on for around 25 years. Plenty of concrete reasons to abandon it but also (luckily) plenty of reasons to keep on going. We just need enough justification to keep the show on the road.

'Deserve that opportunity'? Go fuck yourselves!

we are working with.

say, but on the material we have put together with the team Or we think we deserve that opportunity based not on our Because we want and need to make a second feature film. answer was always very simple and straightforward. The We would ask ourselves this question along the way. The



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desperate optimists

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If we hit this deadline at all it'll be a minor miracle. We're waist-deep in preproduction on our second feature. In a strange way we're looking forward to January when we'll be up to our necks in it. We're not going to dwell on the various struggles involved in getting to this point. We're not even sure there's much to be learnt in starting that discussion.

Of course, the difficult process in pulling it all together does underscore the need to be tenacious. When Proboscis asked us to ponder 'what it takes and means to be a professional artist', our first thought was of tenacity.

There's a fine line between being tenacious and being delusional. We've come close to that line – may still be walking along it as we write this, for all we know. Being convinced that this project simply must happen may not necessarily be enough for it to actually happen. One has to work very hard to push that boulder up the mountain.

Even when we have enjoyed much 'traction' as they call it, things have been far from certain that this project will get the green light. All very precarious.

**Why are we doing it?**

Good question.

We're hoping they will inspire both him and us so we can move onto the next step of that creative process. These images must excite on some basic level. They must make us think. Speculate. Daydream. They must fascinate on a child-like level. You must be interested and curious.

It's the flip side of tenacity. Maybe tenacity is the guard dog to the openness that is curiosity. Once that goes, its game over. Pull over. Turn off the engine.

You need both but both also need protecting. Not sure what guards tenacity. Perhaps nothing. You are always exposed.

In our 25 year collaboration perhaps we have managed to guard each other. We sometimes speculate what would have happened if we didn't meet each other and start to work together. Dumb question.

The images we take must make us keep looking at them and trying to imagine what might take place there.

Instead...

We'd like to begin by answering the half dozen or so questions Giles and Haz have compiled. How did it go again... "What are the bedrocks of inspiration that enable people to continue piloting their meandering courses through contemporary society and culture?"

**What are the material conditions for being creative?**

Don't really know. An office helps. Having access to the best tools for the job. We're fans of 35mm film, and not just 35mm, but cinemascope in particular. Might need to change that addiction in the near future, as already we sense that this is a material format which will soon disappear.

Previously we felt that film was essential to our creativity. Stupid precondition really. No one material condition is truly essential. Is it?

We're tempted to say more financial resources and more time, but sometimes this has not helped us make better work. Have we really just said that? Really it's about the most appropriate tools for the job. This will vary on the job of course. And there's a skill to this too.

Clearly the real skill involved here is using the limited resources you have better than anyone else. Sometimes we muse on the fact that it would have been very useful to have been born into a filthy rich family, so the gaps between projects would not be so economically fraught. In fact, a part of us is convinced we were born into filthy rich families but there was a mix up at the maternity hospital. It does feel at times this art-making malarkey is a rich person's game. **How do we keep going?** A question we regularly ask ourselves. Particularly in the last 18 months since we started to very much up the ante. Ambition comes at a cost. After 25 years making work together we still foresee that one day we will have to get a proper job. But why create? Why be productive? Perhaps this is purely biological. We 'feel' there is little better in life to apply ourselves to. Really. We mean that. That he should take three different photographs of three different places that he is drawn to. That he should not ask too many questions about 'why' he is drawn to them. The fact he is drawn to them is good enough. All underlying reasons will come later. There are some things in this process which are very typical for us. The first is to focus on actual places. Perhaps this is a hangover from our art college days in when we were told about William Carlos Williams adage "In things not ideas" (or was it Wallace Stevens?). The ideas are what we are trying to get at but the way to get at them is through specifics. Through things. Spaces, places or in more filmic terms, locations are what inspire us most. Characters as well of course, but somehow they can come later, or if not later then more slowly. They will appear through the fog as we move further down the creative process. We're hoping Michael will come back with three very strong images which evoke something to us also.

Our main library is filled with artists who have managed to get an interesting balance between form and content. We'd put the perfect balance around the 70:30 mark. 70 being in favour of form.

We're mainly drawn to how people are expressing an idea or set of ideas. The idea is made fascinating for how its being expressed in form.

Repeating ourselves here slightly, but going over it twice will underscore its significance.

Slight digression this, but stay with us... we've recently been asked to mentor someone. A young man from East London. We've set him a task, as we feel the most productive form of mentoring is to focus on creating something specific, actual.

All the questions and speculations can be spoken in parallel to an actual goal.

Even if the questions and speculations are not forthcoming at least something is made.

We said to Michael (the mentee) that we think he should make a 90 second short film. That his starting point should be a specific place.

It's the most challenging but also the most rewarding activity we have ever done. Not sure we looked extensively elsewhere to see what other options there were.

When we were both young (around 18) we had regular jobs. It was clear the experience of doing 40 hours a week of something you hated is a great motivator to find something you actually like doing.

We'd go one further and say we both felt a great need to find something we loved doing, as to not do so would directly impact on our health.

Perhaps it's good to have this experience before you get locked into a scenario where you feel you have no options left – very common.

A good idea might be for students who leave school at 18 to go into factory work for a minimum of 18 months, whilst they work out what they are doing or want to do with their time (i.e life).

But wait – in the current climate, if you are 18 you stand less chance than ever to even get a job that you hate, only to go searching for one you love.

Walking stands out. We have solved many a creative problem on a walk.

Anything. Literally anything. The obvious of course – music, literature, photography and of course cinema itself. But also conversation and walking.

### What inspires us?

You hear from time to time in reference to cinema that the key thing is the story. We don't go with that. We visit the cinema or rent the DVD to see a film for the form of how it (the story or the idea) is being expressed and not for the actual story itself. If we really want a story we'll turn to the novel. Cinema can't compete with the novel for story.

That also what motivates us. Not the content but the form. Momentarily assumed you, the reader, will accept it's not to express a specific story, but rather the form. Never mentioned form.

So on another level, there feels like a real sense of continuity. Perhaps though, our methods are better suited to film. That took a while to realise. It's the art form we always loved more than any other. Not sure why this wasn't obvious all those years ago. Maybe that blindness to the obvious is also in our DNA. Maybe it also reveals how unplanned most things are. But being 'in it for the long haul' is worth valuing. We read somewhere that around 73% of first time feature film makers never make a second feature film. Shockingly high statistic. Clearly there's many reasons for this, but we wonder if that conspicuously high percentage is due to the fact that the film maker created their first feature film too soon.

At first glance our methods have radically changed over these 25 years. But then again, have they? The form we have used has varied, so in that regard we have kept moving in directions we didn't predict (but always a but) we have brought, inevitably, something of the same DNA to each one.