

I think it was a pretty good piece of work.

It was in a gallery in Bethnal Green, the top end somewhere towards London Fields. The 1st-floor unit on a small industrial estate was reached by outside stairs and a walkway (though there was a lift as well I think.) The gallery was called *Another Roadside Attraction*. The gallery director used to work for someone important – Maureen Paley, maybe, or it might have been Benjamin Rhodes.

Actually, I think it was Benjamin Rhodes.

On the night of the opening, they'd got in quite a good crowd – not a lot of people I knew, but that seemed all for the good. That's what you want, is it not? I think they were a bit disappointed when they went in initially. Or I'd like to think so. That would be *what I had intended*.

There wasn't a great deal for them to see. Not initially. At one end was an empty plinth about a meter high. It was just in front of a blank, freshly painted (and plastered) wall, slightly off-centre. The ceiling-mounted spotlights seemed to pick out some sections of the blank wall in the central area but there was nothing on the wall.

Nothing to see.

In front of the opposite wall some 5 metres away was a large, quite unusual-looking glass display case: it was like a table - a heavy rectangle of laminate-covered wood with stout but foldable tubular metal legs. The glass sat on the table-top and was of a size that set it in around 10 centimetres inboard of the table-top's edge. It had very slim steel frame. The whole thing was around 180 centimetres high. I'd rescued it from a skip in the University. It was full of small things, a mix of objects; some objects were recognisably "sculptures" in familiar materials – bronze, plaster, ceramic, wood. There was also an equal number of things that might be described as *functional* - some tools, a small saucepan, five mugs on a "tree", a pair of sunglasses, a carefully-folded shirt, a small saw, two plastic water bottles grafted together double-ended, a tin of beans... etc nothing was very big the largest object was a roll of razor-wire coiled and secured with ties. Each object had a small card tag tied on with some kind of description – where the thing came from, a maker perhaps, some small identifying piece of information.

None of them were anything I had made.

It was a warm night; people were standing around on the walkways as well as in the gallery – maybe more of them. They would have seen a van pull up in the yard, seen three men get out dressed in black boiler suits with woolly hats pulled down low; two of them running up the stairs, one carrying an object about 80 centimetres long, a stretched-out polyhedron faceted like a crystal coming to a point at one end. Two long handles either side sleeved in leather. The first two men pushed through into the gallery – parting the audience firmly but carefully. A third man had followed them in by now and kept the audience back as the other two swung the faceted object between them using it as a battering ram, smashing it repeatedly against the freshly painted end wall just next to and behind the plinth. They broke through the layers of skim and plasterboard quickly to reveal a gap a bit over a metre deep to the original wall of the gallery. On that wall was a text in cut vinyl; words were arranged in a circle around some central, horizontal lines, written in a cursive script enlarged from handwriting; overall it was about 150 centimetres in diameter.

The circular text around the edge read:

To reach a goal involves more than just a WISH or a DREAM, hard work alone or the courage to start. You need to integrate AND put into practice all three strategies for true and lasting success.

In the circle formed by these words and in the same enlarged handwriting was the following:

DO I BELIEVE

THAT TO REACH MY GOAL I MUST MAKE A CLEAR VIVID **MENTAL IMAGE IN MY MINDS' SEYE OF THAT GOAL **AS IF** ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED?*

THAT **HARD WORK IS A NECESSARY INGREDIENT OF SUCCESS?*

THAT IF I CAN **START MY PROJECT WITH COURAGE AND WITHOUT PROCRASTINATION OR EXCUSES I WILL SURELY*

ACHIEVE MY

DESIRED

GOAL?

Next to each paragraph was a similarly hand-drawn rectangular box and over these in bold red capitals was the word **YES**.

With much of the wall now removed (and left in scattered on the floor) the spotlights which had washed haphazardly over the blank wall now picked out sections of the text for emphasis. The hole was roughly circular, and its shadow left a further tondo of light to frame the text.

The two figures who had made the hole in the wall stepped back still holding the battering ram, which they carefully laid on the plinth.

They, we (because one of them was me, the other my friend Vincent) pulled off our hats and gloves, smiled and applauded ourselves (with most of the audience joining in) and went over to get ourselves a drink.

We'd had a third member of the team in the gallery filming; she'd got footage of the van arriving and of us coming up the stairs, as well as our smashing through the wall; someone from the gallery had been filming as well with a camera I'd lent them. Vincent had had a chest-mounted Go-Pro. This was all about 2009, remember, and while most people had mobile phones the percentage with video-enabled smartphones was way smaller. Which is to say that we, I, had pretty much got the monopoly of the documentation of the event.

I spent a few hours after I got home that night and a couple of hours the next morning editing it. They screened the footage in the gallery for the three weeks the show was on (from a DVD I gave them). At the end of it I took the DVD back and destroyed it – having by then deleted all the original footage, the edit files, clips and previews... Everything. While it was possible by then to upload live video to Facebook, as well as video files to YouTube or Vimeo, people hadn't yet picked up the habit. Maybe there were, are still, a few fragments kicking around but I managed to get rid of anything of any substance.

The gallery closed later that year – probably because the rent doubled or something – that's usually the reason.

Or maybe I've got it wrong. Maybe the gallery closed *before* I had a show there. Maybe none of it happened.

Which would be worse – to remember something that didn't happen or to have forgotten - suppressed, even – something that did?

