**Artist:** Matthew Darbyshire  
**Commissioning body:** Kettles Yard  
**Production Budget:** 4,000 GBP  
**Working Title:** ukfun-ky

A 3D model of the ukfun-ky building wrap in situ.

**Introduction.**

My proposal for the hoarding commission would assume the form of a typical building-wrap, occupying the entire left-side of Kettles Yard Castle Street entrance whilst renovation works for the new education wing take place. Depicted on the perforated building-wrap would be a fictitious “coming soon” development under the current working title ukfun-ky.

Some examples of existing building wraps in London and Glasgow.
The trompe l’oeil building wrap, as is usually the case, would aim to insinuate what might be under construction behind it. While of course Kettles Yard isn’t really planning a dire regression into Nineteen Eighties, Thatcherite, low-cost vernacular - nor is it really planning to become the mixed-use One Stop Shop more typical of our current times that it implies - ukfun-ky wants to comment on the unnerving plausibility of such a situation arising.

*ukfun-ky* sees architecture as one of our most reliable signifiers and believes that from it’s detail, stylistic tendencies and materials we can make our most accurate judgments as to where we might be heading socially, politically, economically and culturally.
Form.

Owing to the early stage of this proposal, the exact form and content is of course very open and neither are by any means resolved. The renders attached however do provide some indication as to the direction I could see this intervention going if Kettles Yard were to support it. Recent London Metropolitan University graduate Bob Hobbs has kindly assisted me in producing these mock-ups and has agreed to make himself available if I we were to go forward with this commission.

These are very low-res renders at this stage intended only to convey the general idea. I anticipate many changes and developments might take place if we were to embark upon this research project and suspect it’s texture and complexity would be further enriched through site visits, conversations with the Kettles Yard curatorial team and off-site studio research.

Budget and Practicalities.

The banner would be produced by Universal Image Solutions in Colchester, Essex and it has been estimated would cost approx £2,300 to print the 120 square metres necessary. Architect Bob Hobbs has agreed to collaborate, produce and render high-res image files that are suitable for printing at this large scale for a set fee of £1,000. I estimate the installation and fixings would cost around £700.

These prices would of course all be confirmed in due course if we decide to take the proposal to the next stage.

With regards to the installation of the piece, practicalities and logistics would of course need to be negotiated with the contractor but I suspect it would be best to simply hang the perforated banner either directly against the buildings façade from the top coping to the pavement, or upon any scaffolding that is intended to be there anyway. Being perforated there will be no obstruction to views from inside the building and no significant reduction in light coming in.
Premise.

While playing on the name of the UK’s most popular urban dance genre, *ukfun-ky* obviously incorporates the Kettles Yard acronym in a painfully telling attempt to re-brand and rejuvenate itself, as so many institutions do, from art museums to job centres and from political parties to management consultants.

Playing on the reality that what is in fact being built on Castle Street is an education centre, *ukfun-ky* deliberately infantilises itself by way of trying to mask it’s dusty, right-wing appearance with cool rhetoric and zing that hopes to access and appeal, while of course only actually serving to patronize and offend, those it’s trying to draw in.

Whilst *ukfun-ky* will deliberately instill confusion momentarily, incorporated within the installation would be a conventional information plaque detailing the art works captions (ie. artist, title, media etc.). This initial confusion however is an important part of the work as it wants to play on the bland, soulless, interchangeability of our built environment that makes it increasingly difficult to differentiate one use, service or amenity from another, and wants to warn of the perils of surrendering such autonomy.

While Cambridge enjoys some of the most celebrated examples of authentic Gothic, Tudor, Georgian and Modernist buildings in the country, *ukfun-ky* begins by stating that here in the UK we are witnessing a terrifying social and political relapse reminiscent of the times, when much of Cambridges less popular low-grade postmodern architecture crept in and discretely butted itself against it, under the deceitful guise of economic efficiency and pragmatism. *ukfun-ky* highlights the similar arguments being repeated today as we watch the authorities shoehorn mass developers ill conceived master plans through planning in hope of achieving short-term, ‘band-aid’ solutions to some of the most pressing and neglected social concerns of our time.

Some examples of the more abject yet pervasive identikit housing around the Kettles Yard area.

*ukfun-ky* calls to mind the regrettable mistakes of the 1980’s and evokes fear at the potential replacement of an institution as auspicious as Kettles Yard with a *One Stop Shop* style mixed-use cultural hub with adjacent *Costa Coffee* and *Tesco Express* style concessions. By doing this *ukfun-ky* wants to talk of the thoughtless and insensitive developments we saw in the Eighties incentivised only by profit, and through it’s uncomfortable plausibility wants to remind us just how close we are to a revival.

Still not yet fully passed through the House of Commons we are all admittedly still guessing at the full impact of Grant Schapps localism agenda but the evidence so far suggests a complete regression to the troubled times of the Eighties and with that, I predict, an inescapable return to it’s stylistic tendencies too. Localism it seems doesn’t necessarily mean ‘arrived at through local consensus’ but rather local to clichéd notions of national heritage and misinterpreted via a mass developers checklist of architectural faux pa’s that has now become what I refer to as ‘developers vernacular’.
Various examples of developers vernacular – some built in the early 1980’s and some in the last two years.

Alongside mock tudor beams, meaningless patterns in brickwork, bare breeze blocks pretending to be sandstone, ugly oversized pvcu porticos, plastic pediments, faux-lead roof flashings, mock steeples, high paranoiac parameter railings, bulbous romanesque cast-concrete columns, token miniature gardens out front, faux obelisks on either side of entranceways etc. we’ll no doubt also continue to see one or two of the sturdier remnants of the new labour legacy such as the tokenistic cedar clad thrown here and there to tick the ‘sustainable’ box; the randomized geometry in the hermetically sealed and unopenable window panes that wink at modernisms socialist convictions whilst of course not over-committing; the light-hearted pop-feel aspects introduced by Alsop, Urban Splash et al to distract from the dubious financial structures beneath them; the incompetent design and the ultimate dysfunction of what ever it was they were permitted to build on behalf of the government; and the symbol of the phoenix of course being reborn from the flames and regenerating all in its path through impotent outreach initiatives executed by service providers up and down the country.
Conclusion.

As demonstrated above, at this stage I’m very much in fear of the likes of Wimpey, Bovis and Barratt returning to their old tricks and am quite keen to entertain the idea of a complete revival of low-grade ‘neo’ based on the terrifying regressions we’re seeing across both the architectural world and beyond (ie. the tories being back in, Prince Charles regaining the ears of whoever those people are that have the final say on what gets built, the public sector striking, Duran Duran back on the radio, trade unions and the welfare state doing a Houdini, economic austerity replacing any vague hope of happiness, Gaddafi showing his true colours and everyone happier than Larry ‘cos once again we’ve got a new princess to wow over).

Yes my money’s on a return to a flimsy version of whatever was there before, steeped in community-up rhetoric that thinks a half-hearted backward glance is somehow more sensitive and sensible than our last governments deterritorialized frivolity.

*ukfun-ky* marks the end of the candy-coloured noughties icon project and the beginning of the ConDems more right-wing and sentimental approach. Norman Fosters out and HRH Prince Charles is firmly back in the driving seat - only without the budgets for a true Pondbury-style backward glance, I dread to think what low-grade renditions Clegg and Cameron might have up their sleeves.

In a recent *Building Design* article on the subject of the so-called Big Society, Fran Tonkiss speculates that “the signature building of the new localism bill could be equal parts Tesco Express, open prison, police station and sorting office. A sort of one-stop clink-cop-post shop….with allotments”.

…I worry she might be right!
Selected Previous Works.

Blades House, Gasworks 2008

Elis, Herald Street 2010

Everything Everywhere, Frieze Projects 2010

Funhouse, Hayward Project Space 2009

Palac, Tate Britain 2008

Woolworth Tower, Zabludowicz Collection 2011
Selected Press. Selected Press.

Scott King, Matthew Darbyshire
Herald St, London
9 April – 15 May

With largely coloured brickworks adorning tastefully sparse furnishings and what at first appear to be insightful and inspirational quotes from artists and famous figures lining the walls, Scott King and Matthew Darbyshire’s dual exhibition could easily be imagined as the reception for some 1990s yuppie executive. While we duly await our meeting, Darbyshire’s Untitled Homewares No. 14 (all works 2011) has the crucible-jockey’s framed-glass-and-polished-steel coffee-table present us with a flaked-plastic fluorescent-pink elephant vase holding a set of plastic orchids. In the second room is Untitled Homewares No. 15, a yellow Buddha with a blue Union Jack tied around his neck – another hipster phenomenon summoning that particular sincere ironic cool of recent decades. The unattributed quotes, through six off-kilter to your typical corporate aspiration wall texts, plans for a fleet of Taiton Library Van, or the artist of a certain Angel of the North describing how in preparation for creating work he would “drink heavily, take coke, crack, LSD, heroin – anything to reach the right transcendental state where one can see right through society. It’s right at the back of the exhibition that you find Art and Politics: A Requiem, a tautly strung, an unspoken, an unspoken kind of ‘Wiki Art’ where ‘rare’ but ‘cool’ information is reappared as art commodity. The texts certainly seem to be just such a beast, chosen quotes unrehearsed and proudly held up – and all of a sudden it’s possible that the whole installation is somehow the texts, as if Dahle both found online images of the inner sanctum of the chief executive of Urban Outfitters and replaced it here.

The title of King’s text comments with a broad brushstroke of criticising the reconstitution of a spread of lists, titles and words, but the quotes are King’s imaginary inventions and addled into the lives of Victor Borge, Irving Kristol, GG Allin, Anish Kapoor and Antony Gormley. King’s trail of references is both readable list and the list, some are whimsical, others at historical heavy hitters, such as US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger decluttering, in his 1993 memoir, Years of Living Apart, accidentally wearing one red sock and one yellow sock to a meeting with Chinese premier Zhu Rongji, or the darkly comic image of French Marxist philosopher — and sexual-wielding strangler — Louis Althusser, in his The Futurebus a Long Time (1992), hopping across his amnesiac freshly mopped kitchen floor on one foot. The texts could appear as the sort of private jokes that run through your head while you’re reading, but instead of making the works more personal, their status as fake found quotes posing as conceptual Pop art increases their displaced self-conscious hipster status.

Darbyshire and King share the method of inhabiting the gunk of commodified Pop, using its remarkably easy back-end forth absolution and reabsorption of a range of different ideologies. This gives a sense of easy one liner and quick paraphrased, but it is this fluid surface they are willingly skating on and mapping, in the way Darbyshire. Furthermore, for all their shrewdly colour, fade quietly into the background, or how King’s texts, even once they slowly unfold, still manage to feel like quick sentences. Here they provide the decoration for the braintrust where the terms and conditions for how Pop will continue to exist itself are endlessly negotiated. Chris Fitz-Maurice
"British Art Show 7"  
HAYWARD GALLERY

"The best British art since World War II," claimed The Guardian when "British Art Show 7: The Decade of the Cool" opened last year at Nottingham Contemporary, could the London outing of Jerry Ashby’s work be attracting fans in the UK in 2013? The answer is yes. The exhibition, featuring 14 artists, is displayed across two floors, each with a different focus. Ashby’s work is displayed on the top floor, where the viewer is greeted by a large painting of a landscape. The painting is done in a realistic style, with the colors predominantly green and blue. The viewer is invited to consider the beauty of nature and the tranquility of the landscape. The painting is followed by a smaller work, a still life of fruit, done in a more abstract style. The viewer is invited to consider the beauty of the simple things in life.

The exhibition continues on the bottom floor, where the viewer is greeted by a large sculpture of a human figure. The sculpture is done in a realistic style, with the colors predominantly red and black. The viewer is invited to consider the beauty of the human form and the complexity of the human experience. The sculpture is followed by a smaller work, a wall sculpture of a bird, done in a more abstract style. The viewer is invited to consider the beauty of nature and the mystery of the universe.

Overall, the exhibition is a celebration of the beauty of the world around us, inviting the viewer to consider the beauty of the simple things in life and the complexity of the human experience. The exhibition is a testament to the power of art to inspire and to challenge the viewer to think deeply about the world around us.

"British Art Show 7" is on display at the Hayward Gallery in London from May 27 to September 1, 2013. The exhibition is open daily from 10 am to 6 pm, with extended hours on weekends. The gallery is located at 38/40 College Green, London SE1 9NU. For more information, visit the Hayward Gallery online.
Ned Beauman

A work of a kind in London. His novel, Stutter, Berthe Gély (2007), was nominated for the Guardian First Book Award. His second novel, The Telephone Accident, will be published in 2012.

In Matthew Darbyshire’s An Exhibition for Modern Living (2010), taste is the bait and class is the snare. Installed in Nottingham Contemporary’s large street-side window like a display of merchandise, the work brings together dozens of items of colourful mid-price interior design – lamps, bookends, bat-stands, telephones, curtains and so on. They are all expensively and depressingly, and the effect of being surrounded by such a dense cage of them is unexpectedly powerful. As the narrator observes in Elizabeth Price’s video Sur Group Disco (2009), which is shown at the New Art Exchange: “We are aware that works of art can shock the unawary by their resemblance to accumulated domestic annihilations.” But what makes an Exhibition for Modern Living so much more vicious is the text Darbyshire puts next to it.

With thanks to the following lenders, “it reads, “without whose production of this work would not have been possible” followed by a list of names. This is, of course, disingenuous - Darbyshire could just have bought all this stuff if he needed to. The lenders participate unwittingly in their own humiliation. But if they aren’t on the joke, you start to think, who else isn’t? British Art Show 7 stars off in Nottingham. Not everyone that needs it is going to realise that the invitation is supposed to be grotesque: a lot of them probably love this kind of trash. They don’t know any better. No, that’s not an excusable thought to have, but if it goes through your head just for a second, then Darbyshire has you. And even the surrounding priced matter seems to be caught in setting up a notional class divide around the interpretation of his work. The free exhibition booklet goes so hand in hand, An Exhibition for Modern Living’s satirical intentions, observing blandly that the work explores the mass availability of design classics and the pervasive idea of achieving “tasteful” living through field acquisition, and alluring to an anonymously framed exhibition at the Detroit Institute of Arts that well-meaningly set out to showcase “modern taste”. It’s only in the exhibition catalogue – priced at a distinctly un proletarian £14.99 – that we get any whispers of “kitsch” and “kitsch” and “nonsense”.

Inaugurated in 1979, the British Art Show’s original mission was to bring contemporary art to the provinces, and Darbyshire – like a more devilish Pierre Soulages – begins an interrogation of class, taste and the regional art-going public that seems to take these good intentions almost indefinitely. Apart from a barely noticeable reference to H.G. Wells’ 1939 novel, why is it, one wonders after seeing his work, that curators Lisa Le Feuvre and Tim Morton have tilted their show “In the Days of the Comet”? Is it a comet like this five-yearly survey not only in the sense that it blazes across the country at regular intervals, but also in the sense that it establishes a divide between the astronomers, who recognize it as a celestial phenomenon, and the yokels, who see it only as an omen, a prodigy, an enigma? In Nottingham, to obtain the ‘art passport’ that allows you to get into the Castle Museum & Art Gallery sections of the exhibition free of charge, you first have to get the train across town to the New Art Exchange, where Duncan Campbell, Christian Macleod and Elizabeth Price are showing. It is almost as if the curators, in a strategy that could have come straight out of David Cameron’s party’s ‘nudge unit’ were having the masses £14.99 each to see the part of the show that makes the greatest demands on your curiosity and spare time.

Such speculations might seem mean-spirited, but the alternative is to subscribe to the British Art Show’s brief as a sincerely democratic optimist about its missionary activities. Well, the products in, An Exhibition for Modern Living are full of optimism – they’re cheerful, affordable, panegyrically inscribed with sparkly Union Jacks. They’re also dismissible. If this is democratic optimism, Darbyshire suggests, perhaps it would be a good thing if curators did have at least a measure of kitsch pessimism about Nottingham, Glasgow and Plymouth. Or at least seem to suggest that. The installation itself, again, is too deadpan to take any position of its own – it’s just stuff on some shelves – and all the wrangling above is conducted to the reluctant brains of its visitors. When it next moves to the metropolitan surroundings of London’s Hayward Gallery in February, many of these frames will inevitably fade from view, and that’s something to regret, because An Exhibition for Modern Living subjects the survey to the sort of ideological stress tests that you won’t find anywhere in the catalogue.
The gallery space was designed by contemporary designer, the late Michael Collins. His work was characterized by a blend of modernist aesthetics and unexpected materials. The gallery features a series of minimalist sculptures, eachone meticulously crafted to reflect the artist's attention to detail.

The exhibition space is divided into two main sections. The first section, located on the lower level, showcases work by emerging artists, with a focus on sculpture and installation. The lighting in this area is soft and diffused, allowing the artworks to stand out without distraction.

The second section, located on the upper level, is dedicated to more established artists. Here, the gallery space is more open, with high ceilings and large windows that let in natural light. The artworks in this section are more varied, ranging from large-scale installations to smaller, more intimate pieces.

Throughout the gallery, there are interactive elements that encourage visitors to engage with the art. These include guided tours, workshops, and interactive installations that invite visitors to explore the materials and techniques used by the artists.

Overall, the gallery space is designed to be a dynamic and engaging environment that celebrates the artistry of contemporary artists. Whether you are a seasoned collector or a first-time visitor, there is something for everyone in this space.
Tate Triennial 2009
TATE, BRITAN, LONDON
Edgar Deitch

TRE TO ITS FUNCTION as a naming ceremony of sorts, Niall Bourriaud's Tate Triennial aimed at nothing less than inaugurating an alternative modernity. It understood itself as both harbinger and incarnation of this new cultural constellation and was premised on what Bourriaud calls "the emerging and simultaneously irrevocable will to re- create a form of modernism for the twenty-first century." Pragmatically for an exhibition predicated on a rigorous declaration of a new epoch, "Stereomodern" was surrounded on all sides by genres of initiation, programmatic statements, and declarations of intent that ossified buttressed Bourriaud's assertions. The exhibition was preceded by not one but four "prologues": fetish events featuring lexicons of artists, critics, and theorists and achieving the theme "Stereomodern." "Kunst auf der Gegenwart," "Fuck Art," and "Kurier" - serving as yet another prologue of sorts was a survivalist monstrosity posted on the Tate's website as a primer for the mediated "POSTMODERNISM IS DEAD," bourrian declares melodramatically in the essay: "A new modernity is emerging, reconfigured to an age of globalization—understood as economic, political, and cultural aspects of an "anterior" culture." This greathow tone is echoed by the ambitious exhibition catalogues, which elaborate the idea that our new modernity is coalescing under truly global terms—meaning that the Western biases of both stopgap modernism and the cul- tural history condition of postmodern melancholy are being swept away. On it, an unsigned catalogue blurb states: "Art made in the times we live in... is conceived and produced in a reaction against standardization and nationalism. The art is characterized by artists' 'cross- borders, cross-cultural negotiations'—negotiations reviv- ing a dynamic of creation that, Bourriaud states, may finally subsume the sanitized paradigm of homogenous multiculturalism. (True to the notion of the active viewers, the category of Britishness was erased from the triennial's organizational logic; the twenty-eight artists in the show were from all over the world.)

Physically, too, the viewer's entry into the exhibition was carefully orchestrated via a trio of works that func- tioned as a kind of prelude, greeting visitors before they passed through the triennial's ticket barrier. The first of these, encountered on entrance to the museum, was Pascale Marthine Tayou's Private Collection, Year 3000, 2008. Fusing Miranda and Euphemus pop-cultural references into a display set up to evoke a private museum of the next millennium, this arrangement of fiction-fakery arti- facts collapsed the distance between recent past and imagined future, as well as between Cameron and London. Nearby, in the Tate's Davies Galleries, was Matthew Darbyshire's Taxi, 2009. This architectural mash-up of a concrete elements of Wirou's 1973 Palace of Culture and Science and a new W.I. Area: designed community center in England's West Midlands. Here, what was found were Kosovo pumps, echoed in the architec- ture of the Davies Galleries (built in 1977) and the modern avant-garde of New Liberator's built environment. Against the background of Sabatini Capito's tower- ing mushroom cloud of stainless-steel dining animals, Tayou's and Darbyshire's works indicated a vast multi- tythiadoll (in London and Cambridge, in Poland and England, in past and the future). Significantly, a per- sonal sense of multiplicity or noncoherence is central to Bourriaud's current thinking. In his most recent book,

The Radiant (Rizzoli, 2009), he defines this new philosophy: "To be radiant means setting one's name in motion." To Bourriaud, radiant art means reapp- nant the present as a field of temporal and spatial dispa- rities. It is in this paradoxical notion of preracted reali- zability, perhaps, that Bourriaud's concept of the altermodern projects as cultural norm—a global time line constantly moving across time, space, and signs—requires whatever actual novelty it may process. And yes, the almost too precise correlation between these concepts and Tayou's and Darbyshire's installations underscored the degree to which the exhibition's elabor- ate discursive apparatus aided the effect of pre- determining readings of the works. (According to Bourriaud's logic, it was supposed to happen the other way around, with art generating both the discussion and, in a great extent, the shift toward altermodern itself.) More broadly speaking, all three presentations and perfor- mances of artists, curatorial, and theoretical concerns had an almost manic focus on the show. On the one hand, formally, the show dramatically expanded the remit of the triennial, whose previous three editions were considerably less ambitious, by appropriating the kind of discursively expanded exhibition format formulated in 2002 by (Chris Wigglesworth, the exhibition director) which placed an artist or group of artists in the role of gallerist and provided them with an exhibition- like platform, though on the other hand, however, there was a kind of knowingness, or detailing. Bourriaud's very insistence on inventing a new paradigm ended up problematizing the altermodern, qualifying its position as a chronological successor to modernism and postmodernism. Bearing in mind this genealogy was the fact that the curator's choosing of altermodernism itself lies keys tropes from modernist modes (the muni- ments, the image-fracas, and of course the metaphoric notion of the new and its constituent moments) and post- modernism (with the 1990s figure of the nomadic artist standing out as the most prominent and the most consistently discussed).