'The Madman came into the market square and said: “I seek ART. I seek ART. Where is ART?” As many of those who did not believe in Art were standing around, this provoked much laughter. “Why maybe it has got lost” one of them said ironically. “Or maybe it is hiding; Or maybe it is impossible to tell Art from anything else”. They yell and laugh.

“Whither is ART?” he cries. “We have killed him – you and I – all of us are his murderers. We have turned him into a SPECTACULARISED PARODY. But how have we done this? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away THE ENTIRE HORIZON? Who gave us the right to turn the world into this FILTHY, HUMANIST CESS-PIT? Who had the keys? Who has opened the door to allow this CLOYING SENTIMENTALITY to spew forth? Who gave us the right to collage our FILTHY LIBERALISM onto the world outside? We have opened Art’s petals and its seeds are spreading throughout the country. Art is covering the streets and the fields with a layer of slimy, filthy morality.

We were offered freedom ... we were offered FREEDOM, but we didn’t want it. We want to feel bad for all eternity.” (J.R. 2002)

At a time where the death of God has become obvious to all, this variation on Nietzsche’s famous ‘Death of God’ parable, seems useful in the way that it squarely places itself on what appears to be familiar territory. As familiar to us, in fact, as horror itself.

As a German gallerist in London there have been times when I have thought wistfully of another famous
translation from German: 'Whereupon there cannot be spoken, thereabout we must be silent'.

Like the ape writing about the 'terrified look of the animal' in the eyes of the mate who is proffered to him by the professors of the Academy, we find ourselves looking IN on this exhibition.

As John says: '... you can take pleasure in these works. These images are like an armchair for the mind of the tired psychotic hypocrite'.

The work never exceeds our expectations, yet it unsettles our sensibilities.

(Raymund Brinkmann, February 2002)

P.S. Although John has been at the root of many of the most cultish collaborations in Britain over the last decade or so, I have noticed that a large part of The Trade Apartment's wider international audience is unfamiliar with his name. He was a founder of the artists group BANK, a collaboration which resulted in 10 years of shows including amongst others: 'Zombie Golf', 'Cocaine Orgasm', 'Stop Short Changing us' and 'Fax-Bak'. Since January 2000, he has worked collaboratively with Fabienne Audéoud on paintings and filmed performances which were included in BECKS FUTURES II (2001, the ICA, London) and Art Crazy Nation (2002, the Milton Keynes Gallery).

This is his first solo-show.

The exhibition includes: 40 Chromograph/ hexachrome (eight-colour) laserjet archival prints on film & perspex, each 1M X 2M
Aesthetics have exploded beyond their traditional institutional confines and ART IS CALLING INTO QUESTION its own status. Works of Art have lost their aura. Art is NO LONGER SEPARATE TO THE REST OF EXPERIENCE. Art has seeped out from under the gallery door. WARNING: Boundaries are being blurred and audiences are WIDENING. It's a VAST AND TERRIBLE ARTISTS' PLACEMENT SCHEME out there. A cat which had been lying on the wall, spews forth a green torrent of putrescent AESTHETICISM, teeming with reflected images of TORTURE and child slavery, sex and the tears of the obsessed. The street is knee-deep in blood, patrolled by a thousand sculptures — huge obelisks with connected body parts and FEMINIST INSTALLATIONS. A group of YORKSHIRE MINERS are fighting mutant children. You look at one of the miners: his hat is covered in coal dust and a tear cuts a glistening path down his grimy but good-natured face — reflected in the tear are the faces of a thousand policemen — these policemen are welded onto horse bodies and the horses are charging across a plain. There are a thousand Richard Serra sculptures and Louise Bourgeois Spiders silhouetted against the sinking sun. The sky is black. "WE ASK FOR YOUR COOPERATION AT THIS TIME ... PLEASE REMAIN CALM ..." Our eyes watch the spectacle. An exact replica of Mona Hatoum's body filled with maggots is conducting traffic and organising contra-flow systems. More and more, boundaries are being blurred and ACCESS is WIDENING — Barriers are disappearing. Gangs of SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE ARTISTS are hunting in packs down the Marylebone Road. THE MELANCHOLIC, IRONIC, ROMANTIC ARTISTS are musing over images of what-cannot-be, and of what-never-was but talk of what-might-be-but-never-can-be, one of them is carrying a carefully protected WEAK FLAME OF HOPE which flickers IRONICALLY in the cold wind. There is a huge wall made of flesh in front of us and someone has cut letters into the flesh with a knife: 'OPPRESSION IS MY UNIQUE SELLING POINT' bleeds in front of us. And whenever you go for a shit, Nan Goldin's camera takes a snap. And your anus is transformed into an eye, an eye that sees everything moving slowly like Douglas Gordon's 24 Hour Psycho.

There is a flash of lightning. A decapitated head is propped on a wall. It is talking to you: "When you look at an artwork you cannot locate your desires in ANY WAY in the artwork itself — not physically in the paint or canvas or fibreglass or paper or text or film ... and so on. You have to imagine and then not-find-present-in-the-object. But this did-not-happen-ness would suggest you have some idea of what it was you did not find already, or what it was you did not want to find. And obviously this is not down to CONTEXT. Not in any simplistic sense. As a HISTORIED subject, coming into contact with a HISTORIED object, context is inevitable. Of course there's context! I'll give you context!" [NB: Do not blame the objects for your own stupidity]. And so ... and so, once you have cut up the bodies — once you have hacked up the LIMBS and CRIED TEARS OVER THE BODY OF YOUR GRANDMOTHER within the context of your TRANSWORLD IDENTITY? ... Or conversely, in consideration of your WORLD BOUND IDENTITY? ... And, taking into account the basic humdrum violence of your reality: the violence of your birth and of course your death. [NB: coughing up phlegm and blood in an OAP home]. Thrown into this world of base MATERIALITY and BRUTE CONTINGENCY there is no other solution. "Aesthetics is for the ornithologists" they scream campily — the screaming Zombie, undead, clapped-out, bloody eyed succopthans whose fingers reach up to us through the grill of language. We look down and we see them. We see the red and the black, and the flames, the screaming mouths - black - and the swollen, bleeding gums, crying out at their own PATHETIC, CONTINGENT OBSCHELENCE. And up above only a black sky ... only a black sky! Black — with lightning — and you raise your stubby hands and scream with your bloody gums: "Oh God forgive us! Oh God forgive me. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Please. Please. Please." And lying ... lying on the floor with your brain smashed out — watching your brains mix with the dogshit on the pavement. As some stinking retch staggerers over to you and waves his bloody stumps in your face and says: "My MOTHER is out there. Lying face down in the mud, soaked with TEARS AND BLOOD and MUCUS and PISS and SEMEN and VAGINAL FLUID and TEARS and BLOOD. OH GOD! OH GOD!" With a red sky, a wasteland, a red horizon, screaming figures run towards us but they will not be saved. "I'm not ashamed. I'm not ashamed."3 OH GOD I AM PROUD I AM NOT ASHAMED! Even now ...

YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED — YOU GOBLIN-SHAPED VERMINITES! You walk abroad consuming human entrails and laughing hysterically at the AAAAGONY. SPECTRES OF OUR UNCONSCIOUS. Concretions of our repressed desires walk abroad and infect these desires on ourselves — we don't know whether to laugh or cry. And, as the POETIC-LIZARD-ARTISTS scuttle across the ceiling, drawing random chalk lines and STRANGELY ENIGMATIC RANDOM NARRATIVES, SUDDENLY the lizard is captured by an OVERLY MUSCULAR DWARF who crunches off its head. As we look at a picture of HUMBLE FOOD-STUFFS covered in cockroaches. As the neon art piece fizzles off and on: RED TO BLUE: GOOD BOY; BAD BOY; GOOD BOY BAD BOY: EAT:SHIT, SHIT:EAT. The neon flashes; YES:NO, YES:NO, YES:NO, YES. NO. OO GOSH! No! NO! NO! YE:NO YES:NO. STOP. STOP PLEASE. NO! NO! ITS TOO MUCH! PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. DIE. SLEEP DIESLEEP DIESLEEP. NO! NO! PLEASE! NO! NO! NO! PLEASE STOP! OH GOD! OH GOD! OH GOD! PLEEEEASE! SUFFER GOOD. SURFER BLOOD! NO SUFFER GOOD SURFER BLOOD. SUFFER GOOD. SURFER BLOOD> SUFFER GOOD SURFER BLOOD. SUFFER GOOD. SURFER BLOOD. NO! SHIT. SHIT. SHIT.
Aesthetics have exploded beyond their traditional institutional confines and ART IS CALLING INTO QUESTION its own status. Works of Art have lost their aura. Art is NO LONGER SEPARATE TO THE REST OF EXPERIENCE. Art has seeped out from under the gallery door. WARNING: Boundaries are being blurred and audiences are WIDENING. It's a VAST AND TERRIBLE ARTISTS' PLACEMENT SCHEME out there. A cat which had been lying on the wall, spews forth a green torrent of putrescent AESTHETICISM, teeming with reflected images of TORTURE and child slavery, sex and the tears of the obsessed. The street is knee-deep in blood, patrolled by a thousand sculptures – huge obelisks with connected body parts and FEMINIST INSTALLATIONS. A group of YORKSHIRE MINERS are fighting mutant children. You look at one of the miners: his hat is covered in coal dust and a tear cuts a glistening path down his grimy but good-natured face – reflected in the tear are the faces of a thousand policemen – these policemen are welded onto horse bodies and the horses are charging across a plain. There are a thousand Richard Serra sculptures and Louise Bourgeois Spiders silhouetted against the sinking sun. The sky is black. "WE ASK FOR YOUR COOPERATION AT THIS TIME ... PLEASE REMAIN CALM ..." Our eyes watch the spectacle. An exact replica of Mona Hatoum's body filled with maggots is conducting traffic and organising contra-flow systems. More and more, boundaries are being blurred and ACCESS is WIDENING – Barriers are disappearing. Gangs of SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE ARTISTS are hunting in packs down the Marylebone Road. THE MELANCHOLIC, IRONIC, ROMANTIC ARTISTS are musing over images of what-cannot-be, and of what-never-was but talk of what-might-be-but-never-can-be, one of them is carrying a carefully protected WEAK FLAME OF HOPE which flickers IRONICALLY in the cold wind. There is a huge wall made of flesh in front of us and someone has cut letters into the flesh with a knife: 'OPPRESSION IS MY UNIQUE SELLING POINT' bleeds in front of us. And whenever you go for a shit, Nan Goldin's camera takes a snap. And your anus is transformed into an eye, an eye that sees everything moving slowly like Douglas Gordon's 24 Hour Psycho.

There is a flash of lightning. A decapitated head is propped on a wall. It is talking to you: "When you look at an artwork you cannot locate your desires in ANY WAY in the artwork itself – not physically in the paint or canvas or fibreglass or paper or text or film ... and so on. You have to imagine and then not-find-present-in-the-object. But this did-not-happen-ness would suggest you have some idea of what it was you did not find already, or what it was you did not want to find. And obviously this is not down to CONTEXT. Not in any simplistic sense. As a HISTORIED subject, coming into contact with a HISTORIED object, context is inevitable. Of course there's context! I'll give you context!" [NB: Do not blame the objects for your own stupidity]. And so ... and so, once you have cut up the bodies – once you have hacked up the LIMBS and CRIED TEARS OVER THE BODY OF YOUR GRANDMOTHER within the context of your TRANSWORLD IDENTITY? ... Or conversely, in consideration of your WORLD BOUND IDENTITY3 ... And, taking into account the basic humdrum violence of your reality: the violence of your birth and of course of your death. [NB: coughing up phlegm and blood in an OAP home]. Thrown into this world of base MATERIALITY and BRUTE CONTINGENCY there is no other solution. "Aesthetics is for the ornithologists" they scream camply – the screaming Zombie, undead, clapped-out, bloody eyed cyborgs whose fingers reach up to us through the grill of language. We look down and we see them. We see the red and the black, and the flames, the screaming mouths - black - and the swollen, bleeding gums, crying out at their own PATHETIC, CONTINGENT OBSCOLENCE. And up above only a black sky ... only a black sky! Black – with lightning – and you raise your stubby hands and scream with your bloody gums: "Oh God forgive us! Oh God forgive me. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Please. Please. Please." And lying ... lying on the floor with your brain smashed out – watching your brains mix with the dogshit on the pavement. As some stinking retch staggerers over to you and waves his bloody stumps in your face and says: "My MOTHER is out there. Lying face down in the mud, soaked with TEARS and BLOOD and MUCUS and PISS and SEMEN and VAGINAL FLUID and TEARS and BLOOD. OH GOD! OH GOD!" With a red sky, a wasteland, a red horizon, screaming figures run towards us but they will not be saved, "I'm not ashamed. I'm proud. I'm proud ... that I'm not ashamed." 3 OH GOD I AM PROUD I AM NOT ASHAMED! Even now ... YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED – YOU GOBLIN-SHAPED VERMINITES! You walk abroad consuming human entrails and laughing hysterically at the AAAAGONG. SPECTRES OF OUR UNCONSCIOUS. Concretions of our repressed desires walk abroad and inflict these desires on ourselves – we don't know whether to laugh or cry. And, as the POETIC-LIZARD-ARTISTS scuttle across the ceiling, drawing random chalk lines and STRANGELY ENIGMATIC RANDOM NARRATIVES, SUDDENLY the lizard is captured by an OVERLY MUSCULAR DWARF who crunches off its head. As we look at a picture of HUMBLE FOOD-STUFFS covered in cockroaches. As the neon art piece fizzes off and on: RED TO BLUE: GOOD BOY; BAD BOY; GOOD BOY BAD BOY: EAT:SHIT, SHIT:EAT. The neon flashes: YES:NO, YES:NO, YES/NO, YES. NO. OOH GOSH! NO! NO! NO! YE:NO YES/NO. STOP. STOP PLEASE. NO! NO! ITS TOO MUCH! PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. PLAY. LIVE. Died. SLEEP. SLEEP. SLEEP. SLEEP. NO! NO! PLEASE! NO! NO! NO! PLEASE STOP! OH GOD! OH GOD! OH GOD! PLEEEEEASE! SUFFER GOOD. SURFER BLOOD! NO SUFFER GOOD SURFER BLOOD. SUFFER GOOD. SUFFER BLOOD> SUFFER GOOD SURFER BLOOD. SUFFER GOOD. SURFER BLOOD. NO! SHIT. SHIT. SHIT.