

Mercy Flatline: minusSEVEN



WOT CHA MIS SUS

Featuring:

- + Doug Kerr
- + Nathan Jones
- + Eva Datta
- + Gary Daly
- + Nick Holloway

ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

**THERE IS
NOT FINER
MATERIAL
TO BE
FOUND
ANYWHERE**

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*Selections from a series of 12 Nick Holloway illustrations
(also on the front cover)*



Club

8 Club

A Google Poem

THIS IS NEW

+ Words by Nathan Jones

+ Picture by Doug Kerr

Instead of the pressure of a one-on-one,
each psychic phenomena takes on a life of its own.

They ascend in the glass lift directly to the 8th floor
which the rain proves to be made of tin.

Eight knives arisen from the ruins of the heart
clarifies their objective:

there is not finer material to be found anywhere
but it must be guarded and it must be guided.

Brown of New York performs an eight racket flash,

Shimon Ben Gamaliel takes eight flaming torches
and throws them in the air to produce a scarlet blouse for the Rabbi.

Through the power of knowledge, which is their heritage,
they overcome all obstacles and become all desires.

Jian Ping Qian dons a black necktie in the shape of an eight
and a bullet-proof cape with Tartan plaid lining

before stepping from the ceiling:
Protection surrounds 8 in all departments of life.

Eight is far-reaching and can never be broken.
It is impossible to turn down the advances of an incredible eight.

The finest players use eight:
Eight champagne bottles and ball against a stock of clubs.

But we must not allow their strong emotions, their fixed ideas,
or their tendency towards the temperamental tamper with our lives.

We descend the stairs to the The Lounge in the small hours
of the morning when bottles and brains are light,

risk experiencing unpleasant psychic disturbances
require a horse and wagon within.



Angel Food Is Not For Eating

A very brief philosophy of gay slang

Some perceive slang to have two purposes: (a) to define a particular group and (b) maintain its ideologies. Slang is neither dialect nor technical jargon. Perhaps it could best be described as a series of lexical innovations originating outside mainstream culture, a parallel language that embodies attitudes and values where whole meanings are understood only by the initiated. When employed by a group that fears persecution by society at large, slang becomes a code. Whether we know it or not, we use gay slang every day. Blag, bitch, cottaging- these words meandered into the common vernacular over the last fifty years, with origins that would make even Catullus blush.

From a historical perspective, the English Criminal Cant that developed through the 16th and 17th centuries was acknowledged as one of the first instances of mass slang use. Banded about by sailors on shore leave in the brothels, saloons and gambling houses of Old

England, the Cant was initially presumed to be foreign by the governing classes. The Cant split and mutated and over the next century and proliferated to other English speaking countries with the aid of burgeoning Colonialism. In the early 1920s, slang gained the interest of popular writers and was no longer the reserve of thieves and outsiders.

Today's gay slang words evolved from Polari - the 19th century bastard offspring of Italian, Romany, lingua franca and many others - again, helped by merchant navy movements. Polari proved popular with the predominantly homosexual theatre community in London's West End, stretching right through to the grimy fishmarkets in the East. At this time, it was still considered unthinkable to utter anything other than Queen's English in polite circles, so gay slang effectively did operate as a code. A spectacular code in fact, given that during WWII, US Army intelligence thought that the "friends of Dorothy" were a pro-Nazi spy ring.

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+ Words by Eva Datta

Kings College London house an Archive of Slang and New Language. They accept submissions via their website. Sadly lacking in rainbow flag phrases, I recommend turning to the Internet instead. The best one I stumbled across online was the Gay Language Guide - available in a variety of languages. It starts off innocently enough e.g. how to order at the bar, what time it is etc. Then it moves onto the cruising (cruisen) section. To cut a long story short, Komm auf mich is "come all over me" in German. That's probably all you will need to know. And if you can't tell your dutch girl from a diesel dyke, Rebecca Scott's dictionary is a nice one for the ladies. The Polari roots are still traceable, but the slang has evolved to depend more upon rhyming and acronym.

Slang is essentially, language abstracted and this was a key factor in the efficacy of preserving gay identities in the pre-Stonewall age. Which is worth thinking about next time you use a colloquialism. God bless The Empire.

Eva Datta has worked for FACT, Liverpool Biennial, Arena House, Polished T, Bluecoat, Outsiders Film Festival and Picturehouse in Liverpool. Currently residing in London, she has made a terrible mess in both the publishing and architectural sectors and does marginally better as a freelance writer / researcher. Her only entry criteria for a man is someone who is as clever, or more clever than her. Eva is single.

Dictionary Corner

That next game
of Scrabble could
be interesting ...

Cafe Curtains

A short foreskin

Dykon

Lesbian icon
e.g. kdlang

Donald Duck

Dishonourable
discharge from US
Navy for being gay

Face Artist

A fellator

Gravy Giver

19th Century slang
for an erect penis

Twink

Under 21, skinny,
blonde highlights,
vest i.e. Soho gay.
You know the type

Vagitarian

A lez

Yestergay

Someone who
magically went from
gay to straight

My Gepetto

What artist / human / thing(s)
are you most influenced by?

The TEAC / Tascam 144/244
portastudio..... a4 track recording
machine, format: audio cassette tape.
Circa 1979 / 82.

What is it about this 'thing'
that you find intriguing?

Absolutely everything about this little machine was / is fantastic. It was no bigger than a record player, which made it incredibly portable. It was a massive revolution in our heads. This was circa 1979. We are in Kirkby, Liverpool, 17 years of age. Punk had mutated into New Wave. Edmund (Eddie Lunden... school buddy and my partner in the band China Crisis) and myself - having escaped the horrid / torrid world of local cabaret gigs - got ourselves involved with some local like-minded music folk, and formed a collective. The idea being we would all share the instruments and recording equipment, the little we had.

It worked like so: we had electric guitar/ bass guitar, vocal microphone, a little drum machine (DR 55), and our friends had a Tape echo machine, various effects, and a Tascam 144 portastudio. Basically, we got to have all the equipment for a period of three / four days / nights each, and worked as much as we could, writing and teaching ourselves how to record.

The Portastudio with its cassette format was brilliant - us having no studio experience did not matter one jot. The actual layout of the machine was incredibly basic: 4 channels / inputs / treble / bass / stop / play / record / pause / stereo out into a hi-fi system... and low and behold, we have a studio in our bedrooms. Which, to use the vernacular of the day, was “custy la...”

After struggling to play other peoples songs (not being the most gifted of musicians.....), we now had the key to pursuing our own. This for me is the magical part of the portastudio: learning to write songs by writing and recording almost instantaneously. It was very punk rock infact, as in do it yerself. And we did - whilst a lot of our contemporaries were busy thrashing about local stages, or busying themselves learning other folks songs to play in various cabaret hot spots, we got on with the business of writing, and quickly learning the basics by trial and error. Trk 1...synths /guitars.. trk 2...vocals trks 3 and 4... and then all manner of tricks: messing with the speed of the tape; turning the cassette over and getting reverse effects; recording the vocals in the bathroom/bedroom/kitchen. Eventually we learnt that our little machine could act as a backing tape for us live, with no band: just our tapes, with live synths and guitar and vocals. It was - without us really knowing it - very very Modern..... hip hep happening... which is what pop music is / was / will be....

If you were to pick the most important
work what would it be? Why?

A great example of the portastudio in action is Beck's Mellow Gold. All the things we learnt....slowing the tapes.... reversing them... Beck does to great effect on this recording.

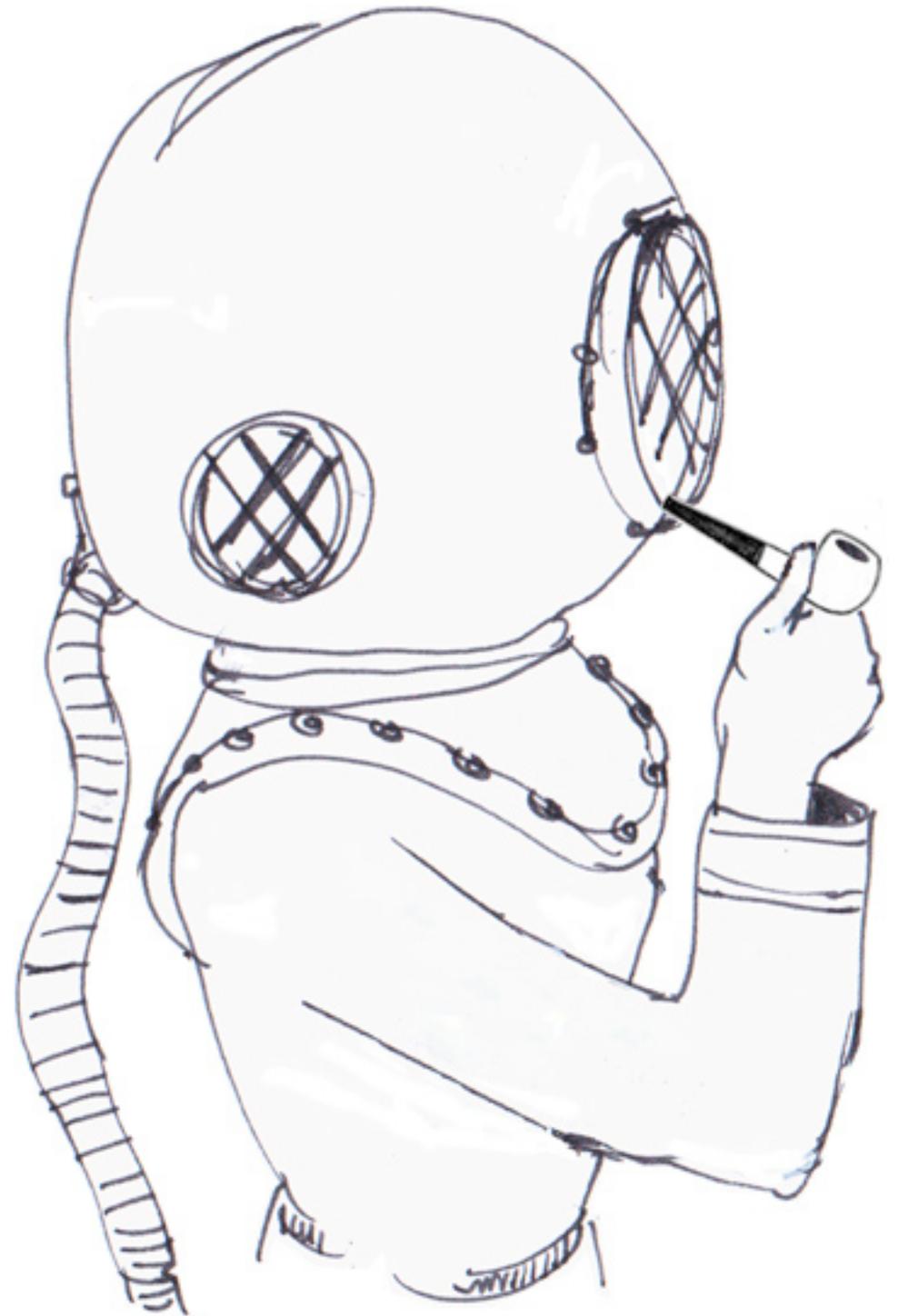
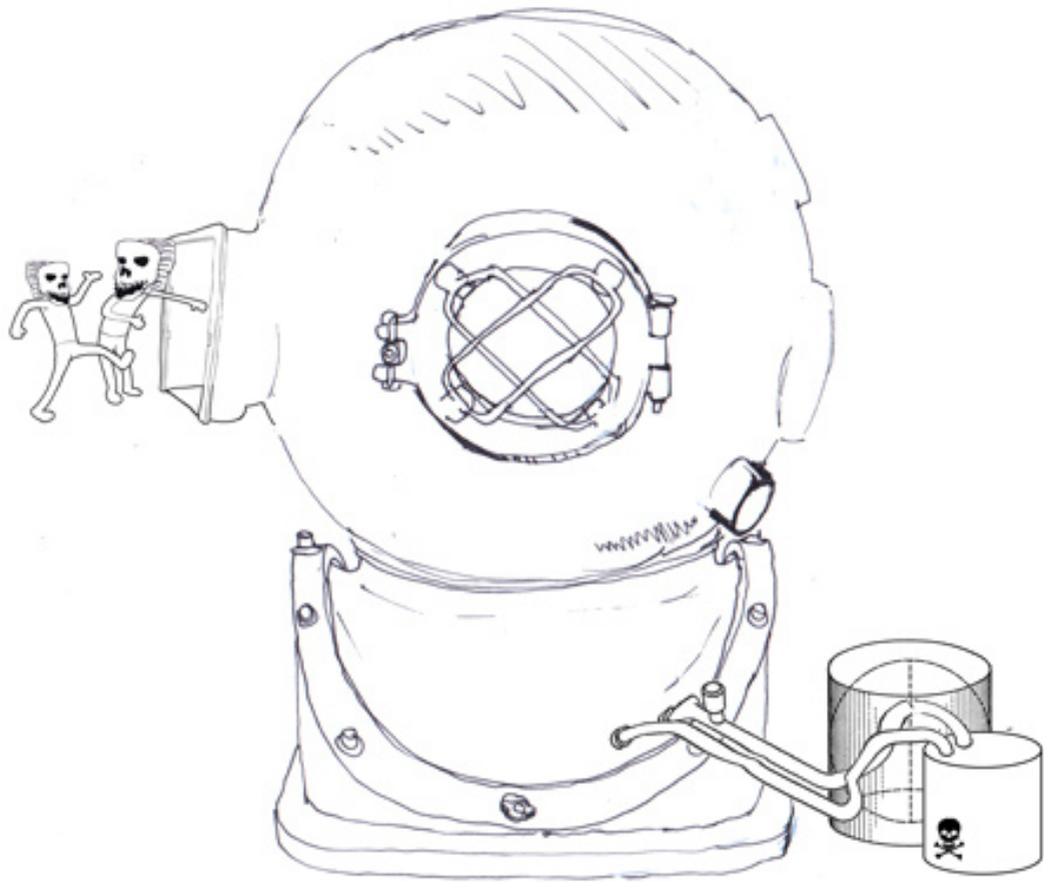
I suppose for me personally, it would be our early recordings of songs like **African and White**, and Christian. Both the little recordings of these songs got us our record deal.

*A series of interviews
exploring the influences
of some of our favourite
artists and clever clogses.*

*This week: Gary Daly,
China Crisis singer
and illustrator*

THIS IS NEW

+ Pictures by Nick Holloway
(also on the front cover)



Illustrations created for [Ross Sutherland's](#) show, *The Dead That Never Lived*

END

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