



IN PLAIN SIGHT

Hello,

I'm Olivia Johnson, the author of these poems.

I'm the daughter of two dirty scroungers who lived in a council house in a nice area, and now suffer from identity confusion. Or something.

This document acts as a record of the Liverpool City Centre outdoor poster installation that never happened.

Class is a funny thing, especially in Britain. A country that is so multi-cultural yet so traditional. So creative and yet lead by a government that values the creative industries so little. In 2021, I am writing about beginning a career in the arts, poverty and the anxious energy that can be seen everywhere in casual exchanges of cultural capital. I hope you recognized the Waitrose logo, and the GREGGS logo in my design. These two poles of consumer experience express just one of the absurdities of class.

Outwardly and proudly, I want to shine an uncomfortable spotlight on the greasy concept of class and wealth. This country is rotten at its core. I want to climb out of the mass of zombies like Jon Snow did, and I want a Range Rover too.

Navigate this publication as you would an exhibition. Stay longer at some pieces and disregard others completely. Think about one or two in the shower, or laugh at them with your mum

Humor is a powerful tool, and while the outlook for creative work and working class people seems to grow darker all the time, at least we can laugh about it.

Cheers,





*hanover street's Gostins Building used to be full of independant shops and spaces for art shows. it was bought and emptied in 2017 to make way for a new hotel, that was due to open in 2021. it's still as empty as the day the tenants were turfed out.



What's below that glooping working class vernacular?

And the icons of fish and chips and watching the game and having five kids.

Maybe they'd say:

The non working class, the ones who exist without shame, the lay abouts and the scroungers.

I pray to Channel 5 in the dark, and on my knees that those people are safe and warm.

That the laughs keep on coming and so does their state wages.

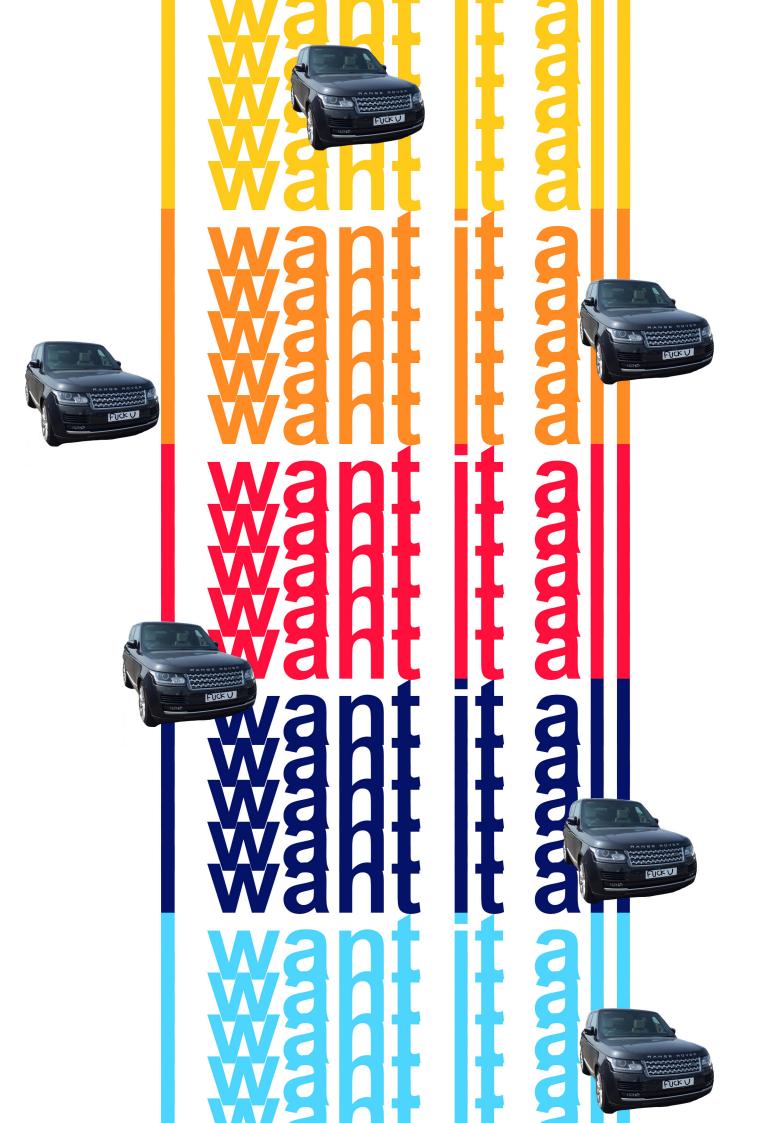
The telly glows with their proud faces in their subsidised council house, dwelling, domicile, estate. But only just.

Not much left over for fags and ale, but they get by, so did I.

I press lightly on the contact and ring her, hoping for a light update on the perennials. That Universal Credit doesn't change too fast, because she can't keep up with the website and the Journal and the phone calls and the passwords.

What's below the working class?
The mass below the earth of the landfill.
Relics from the fifties, sixties, seventies, eighties.
Perfectly preserved.

^{*} i use channel 5 as an example because they frequently air shows that make people on benefits entertainment. you will receive 10 olivia johnson points for every one you spot.



great british class survey (BBC) or just a chip on my shoulder? hold the bottom of the ladder for me

elite
established middle class
technical middle class
new affluent workers
traditional working class
emergent service sector
precariat



*in 2013 the bbc reported on the findings of its research study "the great british class survey". the public was encouraged to complete the questionnaire and find out their class. of the people whom did this 21.8% were "elite" (ceo, directors, judges) and 0.7% were "precariat", a new class that is defined by financial insecurity and unstable employment (cleaners, care workers, leisure and retail). the researchers admit that the data collected by this survey does not represent class in britain accurately.

i do wonder what that tiny ego boost felt like for the 21.8% though, maybe something like clocking off early and getting paid to time.

crazy idea number 38

fill the debenhams building

with artists



My millionaire

Would it be low of me, or high of me-To take in my millionaire and make his body comfortable.

I could feed him and dress him like a doughy doll. I could marry him and serve him and drive his car At the weekend.

My millionaire could make me forget, And I could have everything And tip 20 quid to Jerry who sits outside Asda. Thanks love! He would say back up at me

Don't thank me Jerry, thank my millionaire.

Would it be low of me, or high of me-To lay down in a puddle and let the worry Roll away like bouncy balls

Let the span in front of this melt from plexiglass Into lined velvet in my dry dry hands.

Because I know my millionaire owns his own home, And he owns his own car, And he goes on holiday once a year. And he's kind to his tenants.

Would it be low of me, or high of me-To browse in a dressing gown At some fair and kind arrangements,

My millionaire chose me, He owns his own home and I live in it. This mushy body an asset And I don't even have to pay rent.

Would it be low of me, or high of me-To take in my millionaire and make his body comfortable.

^{*}google rent for sex bbc. it's about landlords who offer free rent in exchange for sexual favours, mostly in london, one of the richest cities in the world. it's 2021 and i'm SICK OF IT

Ironic poem

Make art Pay tax Make art Pay tax Make art Pay tax

MONEY IN WRITING. ING. ONE # VAT. THERE'S NO MONEY IN WRITING, EVERY INO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERY VAT. THERE'S NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERY DNEA |AT. ONE A NO MONEY IN WRITING. IAT. **EVER** DNE A NO MONEY IN WRITING. **EVER** EP. IAT. ONE A IAT. NO MONEY IN WRITING. ONE A NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVER' łat. DNE A THERE'S NO MONEY IN WRITING. **EVER** IAT. NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVER' ONE A IAT. THERE'S ONE A NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERY IAT. THERE'S NO MONEY IN WRITING EVERY ONE ACCEPT THERE'S NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACCEPT IAT. NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACCEP WRITING. EVERYONE A NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACC NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE A CCEP **EVERYONE ACC** NO MONEY IN WRITING. HERRESSINCONVOONHEYTINNVVVRTTTINCG. EEXPERRYCONHE AACCCEHEPTISST TEAL EESSMONWOMERY INWARTTING EEXEERYOMEACCCHPTST HAAT THILLRESSINDONWONEEYI INIWWRTTINGG.EEXEERYOONEEACCCCEPTISTHAAT THERE'S NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACCEPTS THAT NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACCEPTS THAT NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACCEPTS THERE THAT NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACCEPTS THAT **THAT** NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACCEPTS NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACCEPTS THAT **THAT** NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACCEPTS NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACCEPTS S THERE' THAT THAT NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACCEPTS NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACCEPTS **THERE** THAT NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACCEPTS NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACCEPTS THAT **THAT** NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACCEPTS THAT NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACCEPTS THAT NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACCEPTS S THAT NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACCEPTS THAT THERE'S NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACCEPTS THAT THERE'S NO MONEY IN WRITING. EVERYONE ACCEPTS THAT

Art History, what's the punch line?

Be my cicerone. I'll be your pleb. And we'll count our trappings of the grand tour.

Wikipedia says that the young english gentleman is a studious observer, traveling through foreign lands reporting findings on human nature,

for those unfortunates who stay home.

Something about Biennials. Something about art fairs.

Be my tag along. I'll be your interpreter. We could save up, maybe get the time off work.

The Grand Tour - alright for some.



*the grand tour in art historical terms was the trip taken by upper-class men to expand their cultural horizons in the 17th and 18th centrury primarily, owing to new large scale rail transport. the trip would expose the men to classical and renaissance art, and new "exotic" culture. the grand tour has been replaced by the circuit of international biennials and art fairs that only individuals with a lot time, money or connections can attend. this poster is located behind bluecoat, a venue for the Liverpool Biennial, one of the largest and most diverse in europe. aren't we lucky?

did you go to art school?



Have you been a victim of of the white, western centric curriculum? Do you still enjoy the impressionists?
Then I can help!
Call 0151 231 2121 to claim back your fees, as they were wasted on you.

*universities have to accept responsibility for diversifying the curriculum of art based degrees. that being said, art institutions have to stop giving paid shows to established middle class white artists. COUGH. TATE.

TATE Liverpool

crazy idea number 39, 40 and 41

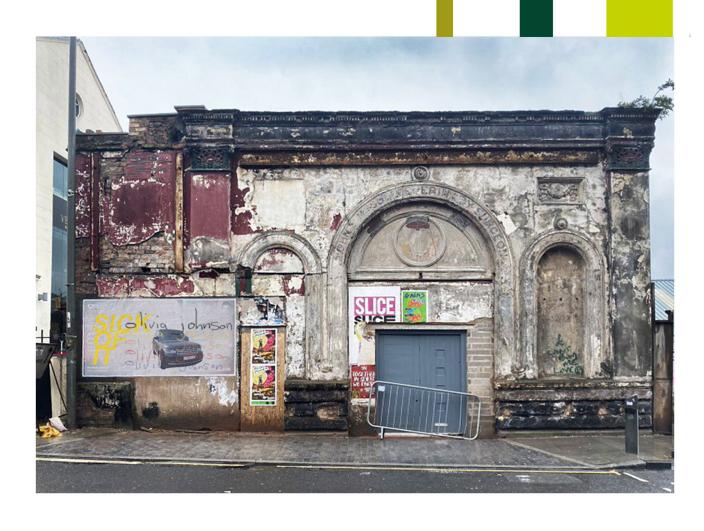
what you have defines you. sorry
the uk class system is a prison. sorry
museums deserve to be
pillaged by people on
universal credit. not sorry.

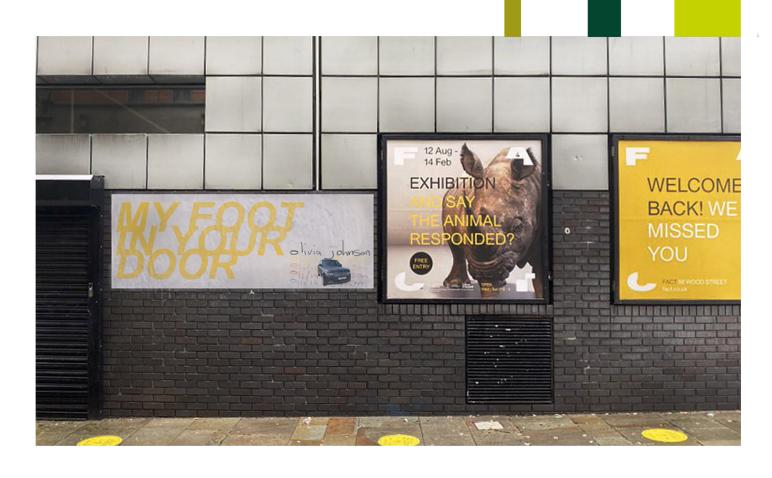


Seel St

^{*}especially the british museum, as they really need to give back a lot of what they have stolen. google "british museum stolen objects" to get started. while we're on the topic, they need to cut sponsorship from BP too.

@bpnotbp





free school dinners

i had quinoa and aubergine bake for dinner today i had vegan cheese because i believe in all those ethics and that treated myself to some sparks dipping bread and hummus

clicked send on another job application and sipped my freshly ground espresso the beans are Ethiopian and i grind them every morning, but it's worth the money for the gadgets and the gizmos, i feel like a proper person

not in line for nout, i want to work in the arts, get an apprenticeship and that

do they even do those?

my dinner's nice, didn't get this in school sometimes the system glitched and meant the credit didn't get loaded the tip of me finger was useless, and i used to be hungry until maybe i found a quid in my blazer

and got some chips for the walk home.



*the criteria for jobs aimed at working class or underprivileged people often ask you to state whether or not you got free school dinners. this may be effective for the employer, but always reminds me of the superiority of kids who paid with REAL money. their status was undeniable, pockets jangling with change, my revenge is eating food from m&s paid for with MY money.

phillip

forgot to watch the funeral on iplayer

forgot to pay me telly licence too





You are holding bags with rope handles from John Lewis, COS, Harvey Nics and Arket. You're asked by your hippy friend to see the new exhibition at Bluecoat.

Contemporary art?

My husband could do that! And he hasn't used his hands properly for 10 years! The girls laugh, bottomless brunch it is.

You experience deep and complete inner peace.



all blue no collar

rather be a window cleaner that reads rather be a till monkey that visits the tate and drinks good coffee than the landlord who owns a signed print from damien hirst

rather be a hairdresser that hates surrealism rather be a bin man who writes fiction, than the social climber, the ex ladder climber that made it and votes tory

rather be a cleaner who does poems for the little'un rather be a Northern artist who pushes thick roots through the ground under them and on to the next small town

rather be a volunteer sweating to meet criteria, funding bodies are all the same, than the bankrolled student who'll inherit nan's bronze cast

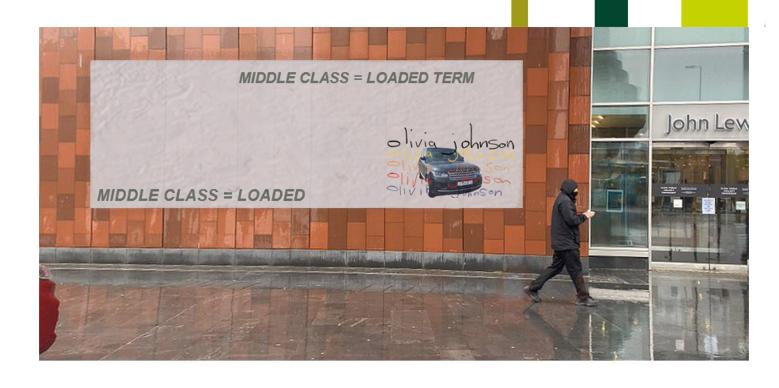
rather be a builder who wants better for his lot, and takes the wife to that art exhibition, and thinks about it hard



Aunt Margery,

I'm writing in today to say that my son came out as artist. There's no hope for him, and I don't want him to have to live like that.

^{*}Eileen, I feel for you, but I'm sure if he goes to a good university, (preferably in London) and works very hard he will make it.



Looking at your creative occupation as a whole, how important do you think each of these is in getting ahead?

- Coming from a wealthy family
- Having-well educated parents
- Being well educated
- Having ambition
- Hard work
- Knowing the right people
- Your gender
- Your class
- Your religion





River of Light

Did you like the lights? When you flocked to see them? Think about it hard, they were sculptures, they were art. You're going to Debenhams tomorrow, culture for the weekend.

But in some hallowed galleries, the stuff that anyone could do, those sleepy spaces, dusty galleries still dormant but this isn't art, the arts aren't that important.

The kids liked the lights, danced around them.
Dissolved candy floss in their mouths and thought about it hard.
He likes football, and builders and pissed on his sisters drawing once.

But there's nothing in the arts, fluff and self indulgent rich folk. That's what you think anyway, just a normal bloke. But you liked the lights, when you flocked to see them.

*The River of Light trail was an outdoor event in Liverpool made up of light sculptures, delivered by Culture Liverpool, with support from Arts Council England, FESTIVAL.ORG. GlobalStreets, National Museums Liverpool, Liverpool BID Company,Liverpool ONEand Royal Albert Dock.

**whilst it was very good i wish there was as much public and family exitement (which could translate into donations and funding) for traditional galleries and other contemporary art events.

Fish, chips, mushy peas, tomato sauce and curry sauce

Scum dressed up In eye for charity shopfinds Work ethic to Match Scum dressed up To a degree.

^{*} i wrote this poem with my own fair hand. i also have a degree.



Siren for now

I attract homeowners. Not homeowners yet, future homeowners whose grief will be made placid by inheritance. I can take on qualities and wear them like a second skin, but please don't ask me what my parents do over dinner. Not unless your dining table also yawns open on its hinges every Christmas morning.

I attract the ambitious ones. Who sleep easy on their back with gaping mouths, buoyant with identity and legacy. The bricks and the staircase and the garden and the loft conversion, and the broken promise to keep it in the family.

I attract the ones who pay. I can wear class like regalia. Not a type exactly. Just something to think about. Tate enterprises made 300 staff redundant overnight and it sparked weeks of protest and demonstration. In the North, the releasing of assets is quieter. Museums, galleries, libraries and studios might not have existed anyway. Sleep now, sleep every night in the corporeal detached limb of the state brain. Dry government eyes don't see art, they twist away and measure death tolls instead.

In the seats
the state brain
the grinding cogs in an echo chamber house
heads on spikes
like Blackpool rock, centred with good intentions
but filled with rotten experience.

In the seats starchy arms and legs make big decisions then the chairs move.

In the seats capital ambition and gallons of lost hope fills galleries to drain the purse a metaphor, surely.

In the seats something sticky trickles down the legs, but doesn't quite reach the North.



*one of many reports demonstrating the difference in funding and econmic opportunities between the north and south is "Cultured Communities" by Fabian Society. you can read it for free here: https://fabians.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Fabians-Cultured-Communities-Report-D4-1.pdf

**@tate united has more information about the redundancies and demonstrations

Unhinged artist/curator/researcher/marketing director///

I'm a kidnapper.

I'm arched out of a window sniper style, like Lee Harvey Oswald style, ready to eliminate the gummy face of democracy.

This new leisure arena, pumped back into life by those workers.

The ones who tipped the scale at essential,

but some not essential enough.

I'm gonna shake someone up and tell them to OWN UP.

The banner that streams out the arse of my plane will shout OWN UP.

And its tail will drag across the sky and everyone will look up and wonder. To what? It was my stupid choice to go freelance.

DO YOU ALL ENJOY ART?

I scream this from my Juliet balcony.

I'm a kidnapper.

I'm arched over a floor sculpture and I feel something for the first time in years. Like MD at the weekend style. Targets, plenty and swarming. I'm thinking about robbing a door fob and getting the DIRECTORS office, And screaming in his face OWN UP. Like Michael Fagan style, that fella who broke into Buckingham palace.

I take him back to my place and he talks.

He says 'Yeah, it was different back in my day. Art was for sale and white guys got the look in. Went to art school because my dad was a lawyer and fees cost nothing. My daughter never uses all her allowance and her first show's opening Monday. I work hard though believe me! Please don't hurt me!'

I'm a kidnapper, and now I'm asking politely. Weapons down and I'm angry. Trying to find the energy to compete.

that's all folks

