

# COUNTER+POINTS

An exhibition of work by Paul G. Hughes, plus archive materials from 40yrs of Hull arts scene, as prompts to a discussion & events programme

## The University of Hull Art Gallery

MID APRIL–END MAY 2024

Hull Artist Research Initiative: HARI [www.hullartistresearchinitiative.com](http://www.hullartistresearchinitiative.com)

HARI is a not-for-profit artist-led project by Sarah Pennington with Thomas H. Robinson, and Jay Moy, with a remit to support artists' idea exploration and new work through research and experimentation opportunities, and discussion and event programmes of engagement. We are excited to organise COUNTER+POINTS as an opportunity to see Hughes' fascinating work again, but also as an instigation to artmaking and ideas exchange, including discussions around Hull's arts and culture – past, present, future.

HARI recognises the influences upon us of great things that have gone before, and believe the skills and ideas are here for exciting and impacting artworks to be made and shared if we work collaboratively to make things happen. Email us at [hullartistresearch@gmail.com](mailto:hullartistresearch@gmail.com)

### INTRO TO PAUL G. HUGHES



Paul G. Hughes (b.1966-d.2023) came to Hull from Stockport in 1994 to study Fine Art at Hull School of Art & Design, graduating in 1997. During his time at HSAD, he began making large scale minimalist paintings which pursued an understanding of 'grey'. He explored this in parallel in his dissertation, through lenses as various as neurology and philosophy for *A GREY EXPERIENCE [Meanings and Metaphors]*.

For his Degree Show, Hughes utilised a defunct Fruit Market warehouse space to exhibit his grey canvases, including the 5m long *Tank* – in the area which has since been developed as Hull's Cultural Quarter, for the arrival of Hull2017, and now houses Humber Street Gallery.

Upon graduation, Hughes founded RED Gallery of Contemporary Arts (1997-2016) with three fellow HSAD graduates. RED was based in a 4 room semi-derelict Council owned meanwhile space on Osborne Street, Hull City Centre. The space was sparse and utilities were limited, but that allowed for experimentation, and RED's remit grew from contemporary arts shows to providing space for experimental / site specific / performance work, particularly to emerging artists. He was also involved in HART and other arts events/initiatives, and held education roles including Critical Arts Theory Lecturer, and Theatre Studies Technician.

## **INTRO TO COUNTER+POINTS EXHIBITION CONTENTS**

**Always filled with humour and humanity, and passion for art, Paul sadly died in 2023 due to ongoing health conditions. With his family's kind permission, HARI is sharing his remaining artworks, and materials pertaining to the research and development of his work and to RED.**

**We hope the University exhibition and interventions elsewhere will enable us to prompt discussions and new works across different audiences/perspectives.**

**We are interested to see art that was originally exhibited in defunct industrial settings shown in the respected formal art gallery of the university, and also to consider how it might sit in a meanwhile shopfront space, which is the new artists' realm led by economy/austerity and the changing use of High Streets – and was HARI's home until recently (with 21 days notice). This precarity of property for artists is one area we are keen to explore.**

**The artworks by Hughes being exhibited at Hull University Art Gallery include:**

- + Large grey paintings, including *Tank*, shown in context with Hughes' dissertation**
- + Various Cross constructions, complex in structure but minimalist in outward appearance**
- + Small sculptures with dolls poetically bound using cut-up text found in a paperback of Aldous Huxley's 1928 novel *Point Counter Point***
- + Teach Yourself book collection display**
- + Archived ephemera such as sketchbooks which illuminate the research and thought processes behind Hughes' making of these works.**

**These exhibits will be accompanied by promotional materials and anecdotal documentation of Hull's shifting art scene over the past 40 years (10 years up to Hughes arriving in Hull, and 30 years on to today), including information about RED Gallery of Contemporary Arts' development and use, and the conditions – e.g. dynamic HTBA and The Ferens Live Art Space, vibrantly experimental Hull Art School, warehouse studio spaces, thriving live music, theatre, literature, etc. – that inspired and enabled DIY initiatives RED, HAL, Slack Video, etc. etc. etc.**

**We invite people to send us archive materials – whether official or personal, actual or digitised – and reflections on moments of inspiration for their practice, or new relationships made which led to further activity, that grew out of an arts encounter in Hull. Visitors will be encouraged to contribute their memories to the collection, as we map these connections.**

## **SUGGESTED (EN)COUNTER+POINTS PROGRAMME THEMES**

**HARI is inviting your collaboration in devising an enrichment programme for artists, students and publics, inspired by the artworks and archives. Starting point themes include:**

- + The importance of grey areas, crossroads and not knowing in research and practice**
- + Exploring how we document and preserve artists' work, thinking and impacts**
- + Arts education, arts in education, lifelong learning, and cross-disciplinary collaboration**
- + How/where/why artists work, and what they give to a city/society – and need in return.**

## DIFFERENT LENSES

HARI is interested in where artists find their inspiration, and how they research and develop their ideas. We are also passionate about sharing the processes that they use to make work which is distinctly their own.

This show is an opportunity to celebrate the work of an enquiring Hull-based artist, but also to use the lenses of his personal and practice passions – like his fascination with space, joy at 'Either/Or' pondering and psychoanalysis, respect for craft, extensive shelved 'Teach Yourself' book collection-cum-artwork – to probe how what we experience informs how we make. We will also be considering how we treat artists and their work/legacy, how the city can support access for artists to situations for making and exhibiting throughout their life's changing situations, including disability or illness.

## SUGGESTED (EN)COUNTER+POINTS EVENTS & ACTIVITY

We envisage a programme of talks, discussion, debates, workshops for artists and arts professionals, academics and students, and the public across the duration of the exhibition. We are also proposing a 2-3day seminar event, to unpick the conditions required for a healthy and inter-connected creative ecology in a Northern town, through looking at and learning from what went before to reflect on where we want to be now as a community of practitioners, and what we need now to drive improvements which make this possible.

We hope that this programme will also inspire new works to be made, and other exhibitions. See the list (p4) for some of our initial suggestions for potential conversations and activities.

## GET INVOLVED
















HARI has many more ideas and suggestions for collaborations, debates and activities inspired by the artwork & archive themes of the show, but we want to hear yours too, and we need your input to make it happen!

- + What do you think should be part of this programme?
- + Do you have material or memories to share?
- + Is there a debate you'd like to be part of, or an event you'd like to lead?
- + Did you make/show work in Hull, and did this help your practice/career?
- + Who else should we invite?

Whether you knew Paul Hughes personally, came to Hull School of Art or have other links with Hull, historic or current, we would love to hear from you.

Please get in touch by emailing us at [hullartistresearch@gmail.com](mailto:hullartistresearch@gmail.com)

You can find out more about HARI and the work it has done since it began in May 2021 at

-  **Cross-pollination Conversations**  
Inter-disciplinary artist/academic 'in conversation' events around research and practice  
e.g. the value of grey areas / crossroads & conflict / cross-disciplinary collaboration
-  **Cross-contamination Conversations**  
The benefits of International Exchange, from HTBA to Freedom Festival, the value brought by foreign exchange arts students, and how do we make it 2-way?
-  **Abstractions Analysis**  
A conversation between painters, led by Matt Midwood - what made Hull a great place for abstract and large scale painting?
-  **Thinking, Talking, Doing**  
Panel discussion(s) on the cruciality of arts in education and arts education, including reference to Hull Independent Art School and Feral Arts, & HSAD's Phonic Arts course
-  **Pass It On**  
Current students & emerging artists interviewing artists who taught, studied or had early career shows here
-  **Cross-examination Conservation Conversation**  
How do we preserve artists' works, thinking/process knowledge, & effects upon others? What is important to keep? What is lost if we don't?
-  **HARI's Monday Musings (x2)**  
Group readings of Hughes' dissertation excerpts and discussing texts and artworks that informed his research, with Art Writer Alexander Stubbs
-  **Cross-referencing Activity**  
Hijacking the Archive with what is it we want remembering about organisations, events, artworks & individuals, and how we want to represent them
-  **On Point**  
Panel and debate around what we need now to build a thriving cultural ecology & artistic community, with strong links to other disciplines, and to artists beyond Hull
-  **Open Studios / Empty Space Exhibitions**  
An opportunity for current artists to share what is happening now, in individual and group studios such as KAG and Feral Art School students, and in pop up spaces
-  **A Point of Counter Point**  
Group readings of Huxley's Point Counter Point, to inspire Creative Writing responses and new counter point music compositions
-  **HARI's Phygital Phonics 4.**  
Our forth Phygital Phonics project, asking people for field recordings for sound artists' compositions, will take its theme from COUNTER+POINTS
-  **Teach Yourself & Others!**  
Exploratory discussion and Zine making: What are you learning about? What would you like to learn? What lesson would you share? Who would you collaborate with?
-  **Remaking & Rethinking Live Events**  
Walks with Yol around sites of historical interventions/occurrences, (RED, HAL, Boathouse, now HARI@47, etc.) and an invitation to repeat historical art works/performances or respond to ex-sites; Sonic/Live Art Event/Short Film Screening @ The Adelphi (40 this year)
-  **Hull Hues**  
A publication of recollections, both of conversations with Paul G. Hughes, and of inspirational happenings in Hull that affected your outlook or practice