

## Excerpt from “All of the Art I Experienced 1.11.18 to 8.11.18 (and How it Made Me Feel)”

A Zine by Megan Vaughn

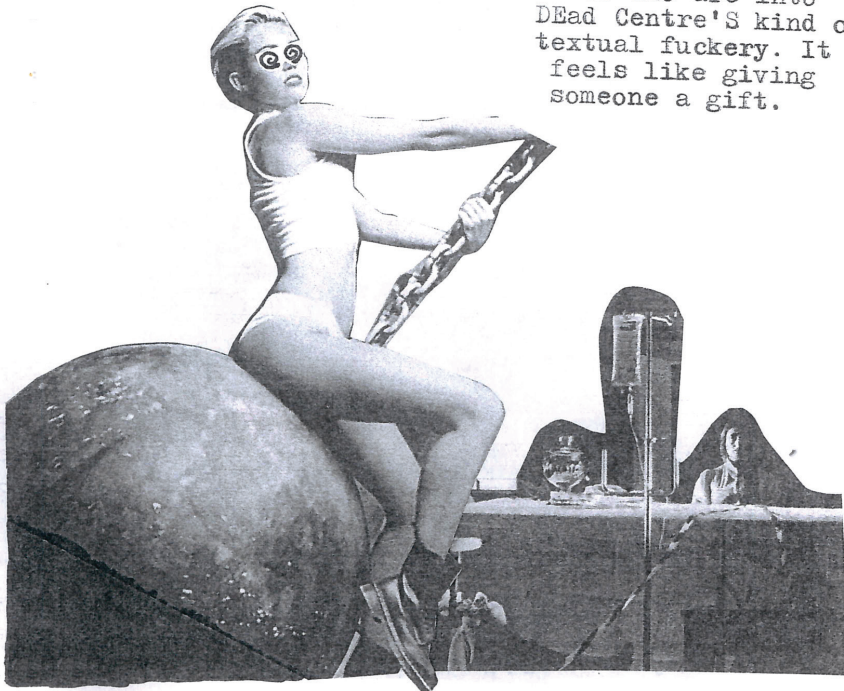
### CHEKHOV'S FIRST PLAY

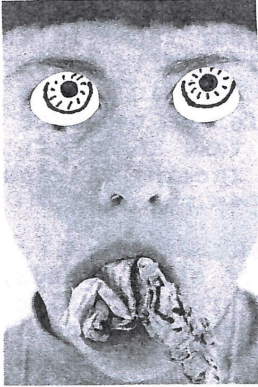
### Dead Centre

This was my second time at Chekhov's First Play but the first time was 3 years ago so it was a weird neadspace to be in: remembering so many key images but only having a very tenuous grasp of how they all fitted together. I think if I could advocate for anything in this world, it would be for some kind of device which could ensure you always remained as surprised and delighted as you were the very first time you encountered something. Chekhov's First Play is one of the greatest shows of all time, but now I have a better sense of what they were trying to say, I'm not nearly as impressed.

Perhaps the nicest thing about the show getting this new London run is the warm fuzzy glow that comes from being able to recommend it to friends who are into

Dead Centre's kind of textual fuckery. It feels like giving someone a gift.





I'd wanted to see Libby Norman's work for ages, mainly because I find the phenomenon of fandom to be the most fascinating and joyful thing of all time, and this piece, *Breaking Up With JK Rowling*, captures all the heartache and disappointment that is felt when one of your faves becomes problematic.

There's a v funny and honest text - about the magic of escapism slash escapism of magic for a queer teenager - but it was the 2nd half of this show that really made it. Libby opens up ~~a~~ a conversation about Harry Potter, love, identity, and liberal politics but does so in such a lowkey way that the show could really be over, with this an optional extra for the most dedicated. It makes me think of how documentary filmmakers keep the camera running after the end of an interview: Libby was getting to the real meat of her ideas by inviting us to relax together and help her tear apart her old Harry Potter books, the memory of which had become tainted by Rowling's centrist politics and her revisionist takes on her characters' histories and identities. As we tore pages and crossed out words, we could talk without the pressure of being In A Discussion.

I do also wonder if my own personal sense of comfort in that space also partly comes from no longer having a professional connection to the live art community ~~and~~ also feeling somehow freer and less socially-awkward about work friendships.

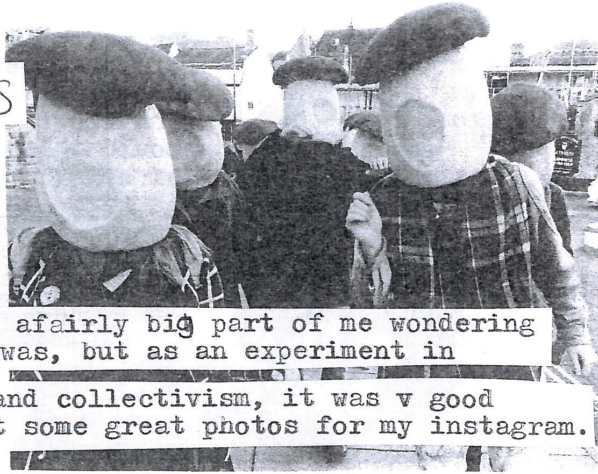
LIBBY  
NORMAN  
*Breaking up  
with JK Rowling*



You wear a foam nat with gauze over your face; it's designed to look like a mushroom. It's quite hard to get it on over the headphones. The whole thing feels totally stupid. A snow which is less for us and more for the rest of Ipswich, who get to take loads of videos for their insta stories of the fucking weirdos dancing round the town centre dressed as mushrooms.

Something cool happens though. I mean, all that silly/irritating/crowd-pleasing stuff still stands, but the impact of having your face covered in public is that you develop this wonderful bravery. I don't think I can remember a time when I've been less self-conscious. I could've run through the streets naked. Well, maybe not quite naked, but I was certainly much happier to be performing so ostentatiously in a group of strangers. We had become a gang of mischief-makers, so not only were we protected by our relative invisibility, but by our gang mentality. By the time we got to the library, I would have happily started pulling books off shelves and being a total asshole while people tried to work/read. It didn't matter that I had no idea who anyone else in the mushroom heads were (other than my friend Rhiannon), there was strength (and safety) in numbers.

BY  
MUSHROOMS  
Yao Liao



There's still a fairly big part of me wondering what The Point was, but as an experiment in disassociation and collectivism, it was v good fun. Plus I got some great photos for my instagram.

It is a truth universally acknowledged that (apart from Quizoola) it is preferable to have the works of Forced Entertainment described to you by a knowledgeable friend than it is to actually sit through them. This makes their table-top retellings of Shakespeare's stories somewhat self-referential. He, too, is improved greatly by simply reading or listening to a synopsis.

The story I saw was *The Tempest*, and I knew already that there would be a storm and a shipwreck and a monster, but I have to admit I was surprised by how much flirting was going on when presumably everyone wants to, y'know, get home and Not Die and things like that. Most of the characters were played by alcohol too, so I guess it was a bit of a party island, like Ibiza or somewhere.

Interestingly, Caliban was an aubergine. Aubergines are now officially the sexiest fruit/vegetables, superseding early successes the cucumber and the cherry, so I am left wondering if Caliban was always a mega-horny monster, or if that is just one of those beautiful contemporary interpretations that only internet culture can deliver.

THE TEMPEST  
Forced Entertainment

