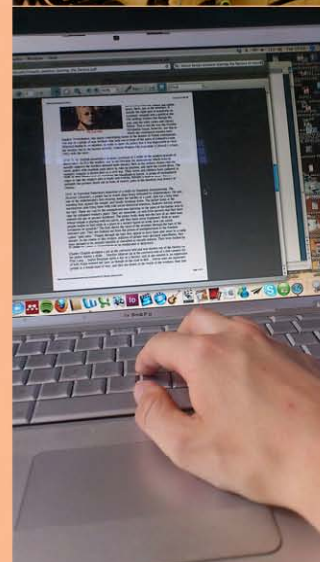
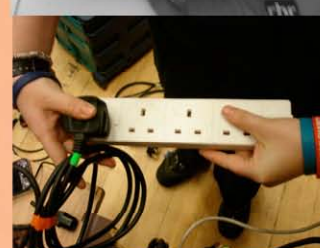


Manual Labours Manual



Issue 1



Budget for Manual Labours (8-12 April, 2013)

Income

<i>Centre for Media, Culture and Creative Practice, Birkbeck.</i>	<i>300</i>
<i>Sophie + Jenny</i>	<i>350.48</i>
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>650.48</i>

Expenditure

<i>Artists Fees:</i>	
<i>Marie Barrett</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Can Altay</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Kennedy Browne</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Pilvi Takala</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Sweet Sugar Rage (Cinenova fee)</i>	<i>70</i>
<i>Moira Zoitl</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Margareta Kern (waived)</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Jesse Jones</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>postage and packaging</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Marina Vischmit speakers fee</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Friday Lunch hot plate</i>	<i>39.99</i>
<i>Printing ink and paper</i>	<i>36.24</i>
<i>Friday public lunch food</i>	<i>34.92</i>
<i>Drink/food for cinema screening</i>	<i>59.58</i>
<i>cups, plates</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Cab (to meeting)</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Cab (SH to work with food for Friday)</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Other catering expenses for the week</i>	<i>29.84</i>
	<i>9.95</i>
	<i>15.98</i>
	<i>29.98</i>
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>650.48</i>

Manual Labours

Introduction

Welcome to the first issue of the 'Manual Labours Manual'. 'Manual Labours' is a long term research project exploring people's physical relationships to work, initiated by Jenny Richards and Sophie Hope in 2013. The project reconsiders current time-based structures of work (when does work start and end?) and reasserts the significance of the physical (manual) aspect of immaterial, affective and emotional labour.

'Manual Labours' started with a 35 hour 'working week'-long investigation into the embodied, sensory, emotional affects of work during 8-12 April 2013 from our temporary open office in the Peltz Room, School of Arts, Birkbeck College, 43 Gordon Square, London. During that week we held meetings with our co-workers, hosted an archive of films and publications, looked after a collection of office plants, did a very slow 9 mile walk to work, hosted a public film screening and fed 25 people during a Public Lunch Hour. The voices and thoughts shared during that first week are presented here in three sections.

The first chapter, *Clocking Out: Work + Time*, collects together strands of discussion around the transformation of time as it moves from the clock of the factory floor to today's networked time, fast and constantly accelerating. This section focuses on the blurring of work and life this brings, and includes experiences of the obligatory after work drink, the habit of getting to work early and being too busy go to the toilet. The second chapter, *Physicality: The Body + Environment* focuses on responses to questions about the physical effects of work before, during or after work, what your body is doing when you are sat at your desk, your physical proximity to other co-workers and how you care for your body at work. The third section, *Bad Management and Slow Tactics* starts with quotes referring to experiences of how the body is managed and organised at work and goes on to ideas and tactics for physically reclaiming the work environment and using work time and resources for non work activity. The Toolbox at the end of the Manual includes a list of readings and films from the Manual Labours Archive.

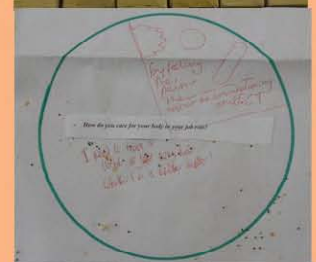
We are interested in exploring the transformation of labour processes through an investigation into the 'physical' (in its most expanded sense) relationship to work in order to map complex and overlapping experiences of work/life entwinement. We are currently developing the next steps of the research, which might take the form of a series of reading groups, lunch-time screenings in different work places around London and performative investigations into notions of bodily intellect and understanding.


The 'Manual Labours Manual' will be the ongoing vessel for publishing our findings, cumulating as the project develops. The 'Manual' is an evolving part of our research that offers shared ideas and knowledges and hopes to act as a tool to instigate further explorations into our study, framed around the different visceral everyday experiences of work such as the lunch hour, shift work, the aches and pains, the commute and the after-work drink. The research takes place in between our existing roles and responsibilities during planned, concentrated blocks of time. This first issue of the 'Manual Labours Manual' was produced by Sophie and Jenny over 17 hours on the weekend of 8 and 9 June 2013.

We would like to thank all the people we have met so far to discuss these issues. These conversations and contributions are shaping the evolvement of 'Manual Labours' and this manual is a space for us to explore the shared, collective concerns and tactics for reclaiming a critical and sensory experience of work/life.

Jenny and Sophie

<http://manuallabours.wordpress.com/about/>
manual.labours@gmail.com





*RECLAIM
THE TEA
BREAK*

"Life is but a motion of limbs.... For what is the heart, but a spring; and the nerves, but so many strings; and the joints but so many wheels, giving motion to the whole body...."

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651)

"...the fatigued worker performs with alternating periods of alertness and dullness. As the intensity of fatigue increases, so do the number and length of the periods of dullness—the involuntary rest pauses."

Howard Gage, *Fatigue Effects of Light Repetitive Work on Sensory Motor Coordination* (1974)

"Those employed in assembly-line manufacturing jobs like these, which are generally regarded as the most regimented, have an enviable freedom that most white-collar professionals do not: the freedom of emotional non-expression."

Michael Moffa, *Emotions for Hire: The Role of 'Emotional Labour' in the Workplace* (2011)

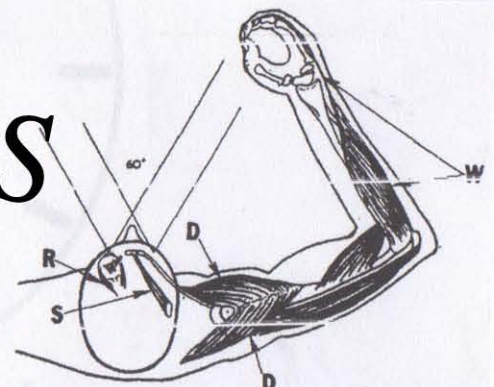


Figure 1. The kinetic chain (after Tichauer).

Muscle	Function
R, Rectus lateralis	eye movement
S, Sterno mastoid	head movement
D, Deltoid	abduction of the arm
W, Wrist extensor group	fine manipulation of wrist/digits

(Reproduced with permission of the author.)

Darwin, *The expression of the emotions in man and animals* (1872). Heliotype plate of photos illustrating the facial muscles used when smiling and laughing. Photographs 1 and 3 were taken by Rejlander, 2 by Wallich, and the remainder from Duchenne.

Howard Gage, *Fatigue Effects of Light Repetitive Work on Sensory Motor Coordination* (1974)

"The practice of management thus increasingly emphasised the management of one's self in order to create favourable interactions with others"

Broderick Chow, *An Actor Manages: On Acting and Immaterial Labour* (2013)

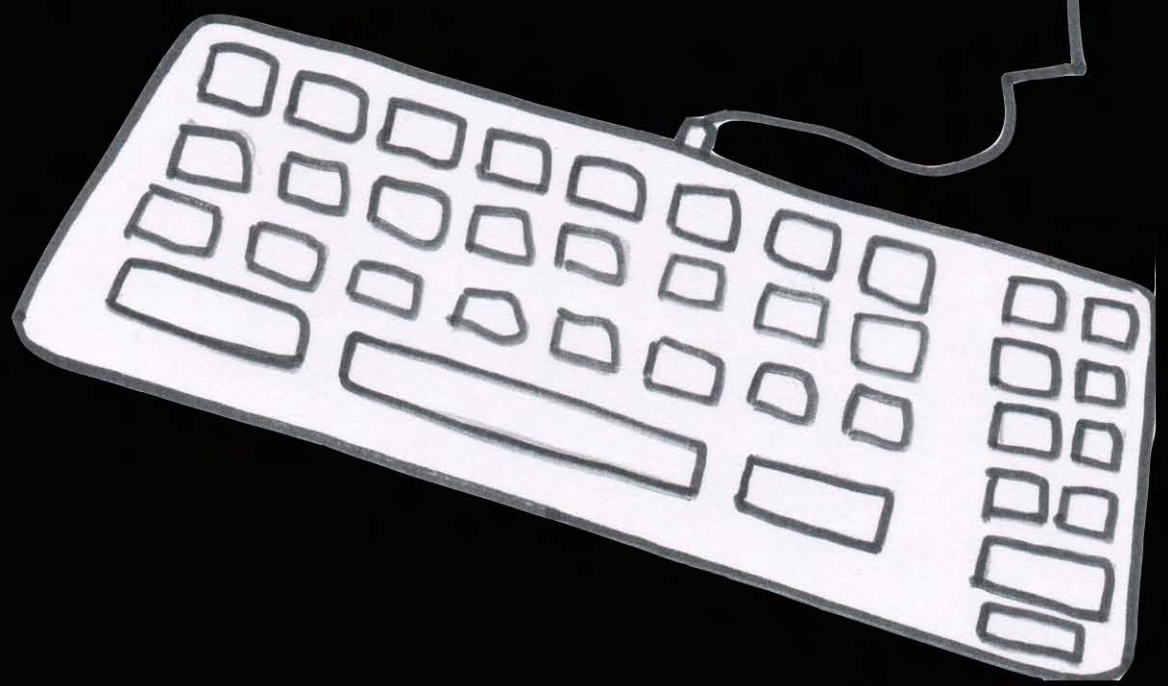
"[Capitalism] also attempts to break the barriers of nature by lengthening the working day beyond the limits set by the sun, the seasonal cycles, and the body itself, as it was constituted in pre-industrial society." Silvia Federici, *The Great Caliban, The Struggle Against the Rebel Body* (2002)

"By viewing time and duration in the context of numbers, modern cultures and societies developed a much-diminished relationship with the diversity of temporalities immanent in culture, in the body, and in nature."

Robert Hassan, *Network Time* (2007)



*CLOCKING
OUT :
WORK + TIME*





We had that weird thing about getting in early, that was a condition as well. Because it was so dangerous being late. My dad was sacked for being 45 mins late when my eldest brother was born. That was always drummed into us, in terms of, you must get to work at least an hour before, everyone did that...

I like to come to work early and settle down – I have no problems coming to work. I get home about 4.30/5pm it is a long day but not physical. It is harder during holidays – the days drag more.



We started at 7am, it was very strict and we went up for inspection every day to check our boots were polished.



The day is very linked to the clock – there is no clocking in but they trust us.



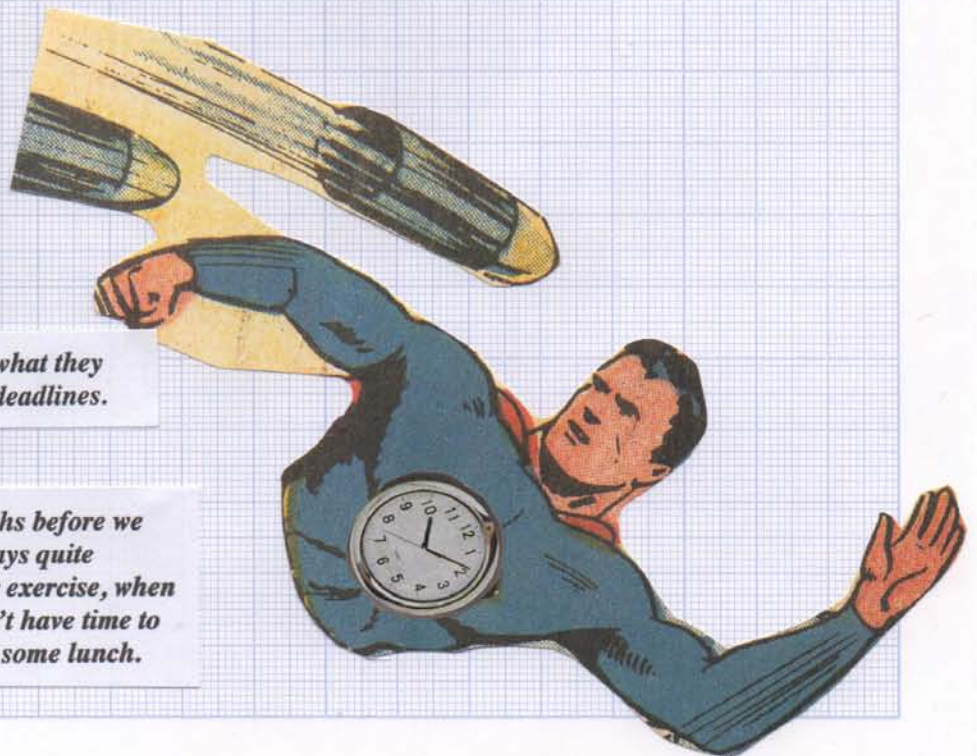
Everyone's hours are a fiction. The time thing is just a way for things to be qualified.



The people that were conditioned by the clock system are now the most rebellious and confused when it comes to flexible working hours.

Everyone is very hectic. People work what they need to work to meet the programme deadlines.

My hours vary massively; six months before we start on site I was doing 14 hour days quite regularly... you don't have time for exercise, when you are there you feel like you don't have time to go to the toilet or to go out and get some lunch.



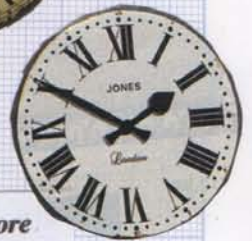


With the site team, they like to go out for beers a lot, a lot of relationships are built over going for beers, you don't have to but it's in your interests to go and do that. Sometimes it feels like work, depending on who it is... I get the drinks paid for...it's seen part of the course of a project that you build relationships...

...[we] find it easier to put our coats on and go. That is frowned upon [now]. There's a lot of guilt put on people. We have no problems come 5 o'clock, we're gone.

I never go out of the job and think about it – I can leave it behind – I don't have to worry about anything when I leave – I pass things on to the next colleague, we work on rotation.

I have one twenty minute break during the 8 hours I work. But there is a proviso that you take 1 hour unpaid.....so we get forty minutes overtime a day which we fought for.



Now I'm on site, it's 9-5. I've been working flexibly, if I need to finish at 3, I finish at 3 because I think I've done all those hours, this has got to work both ways. People appreciate that, as long as the work's getting done.

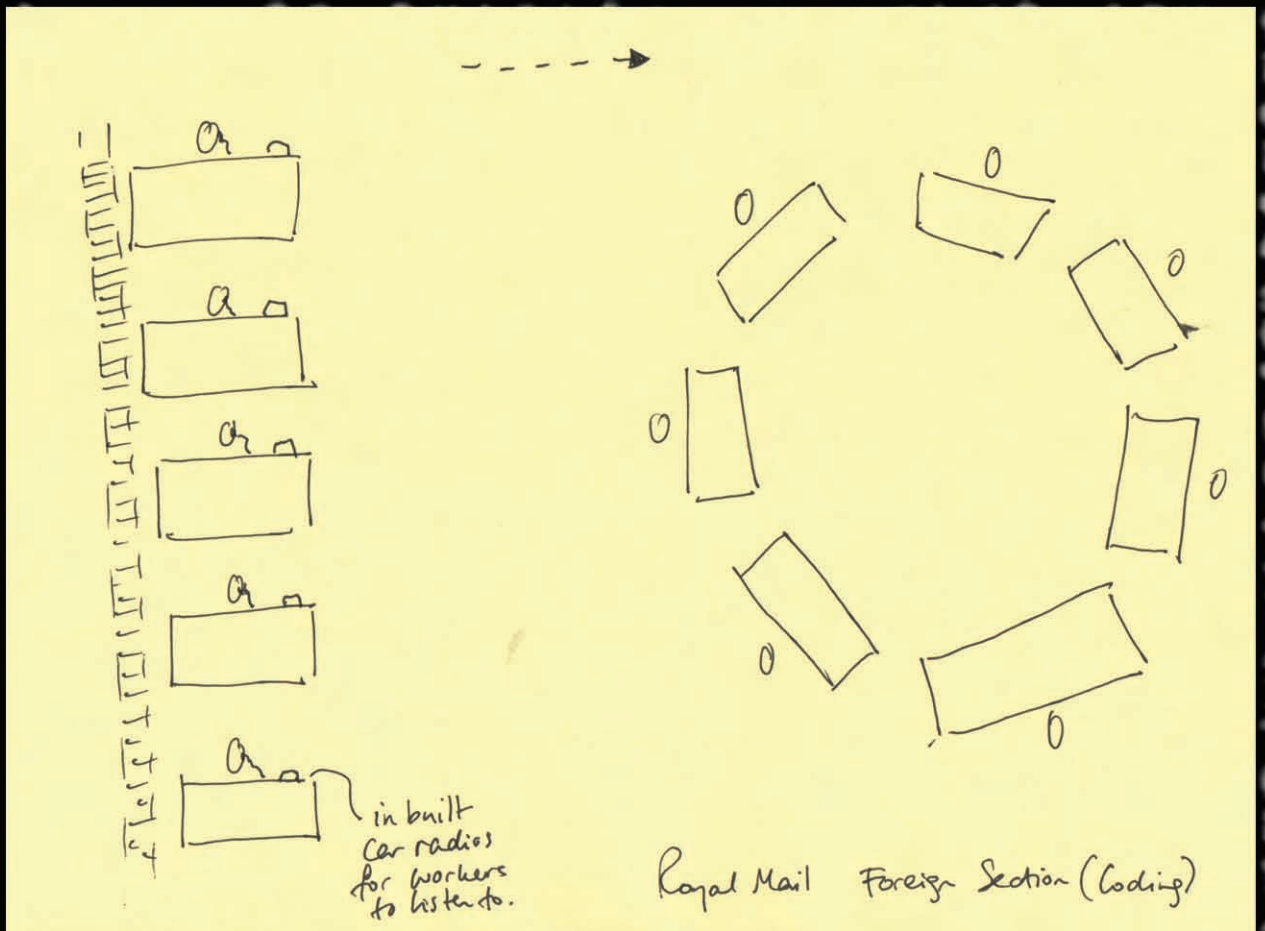
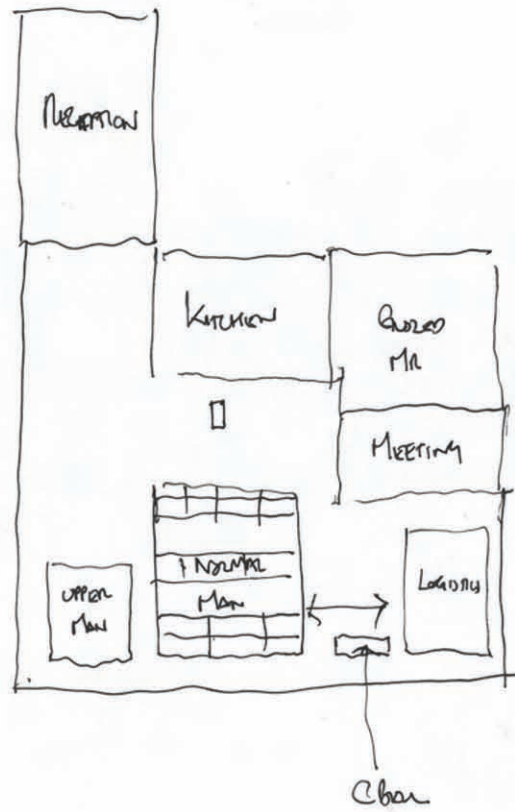
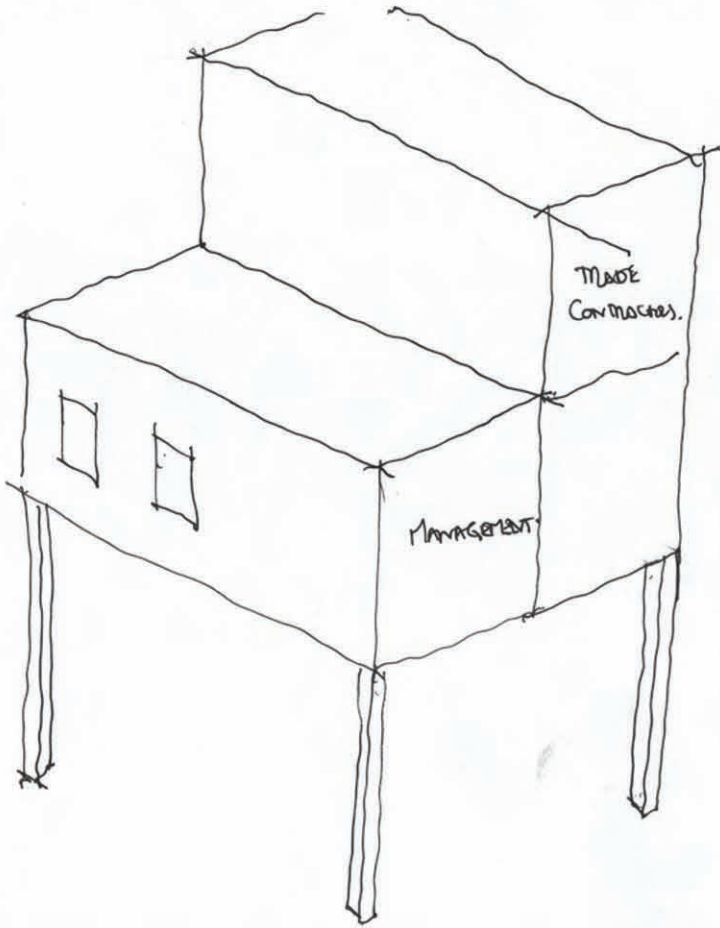
Very rarely I would work more but if I work more I take time off. We all manage our hours.

I've been working on the same thing for two years, that period of time working on anything I think you lose motivation, self-motivation. I've been working near enough solely on my own.

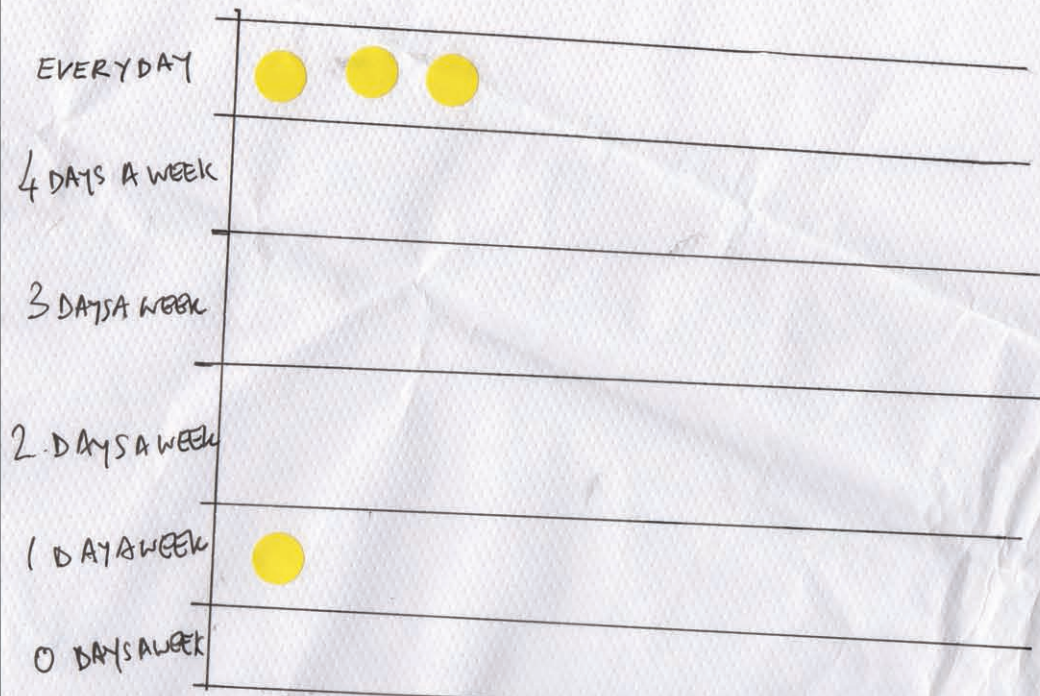


Because the project is so long, my job satisfaction is quite low, I'm so fed up with it.

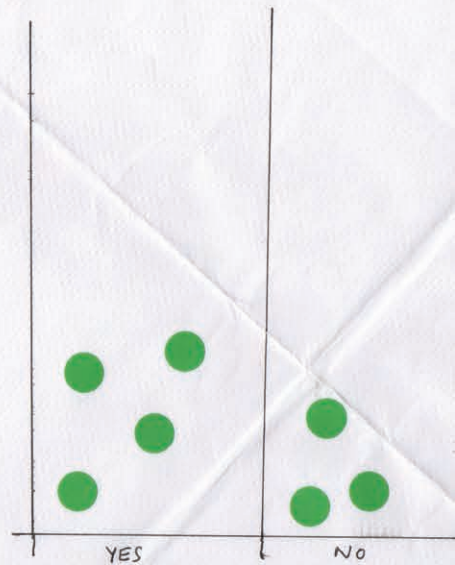
I realised recently that I feel guilty if I haven't accomplished at least 8 hours of labour, even if I don't have a lot of work to do.



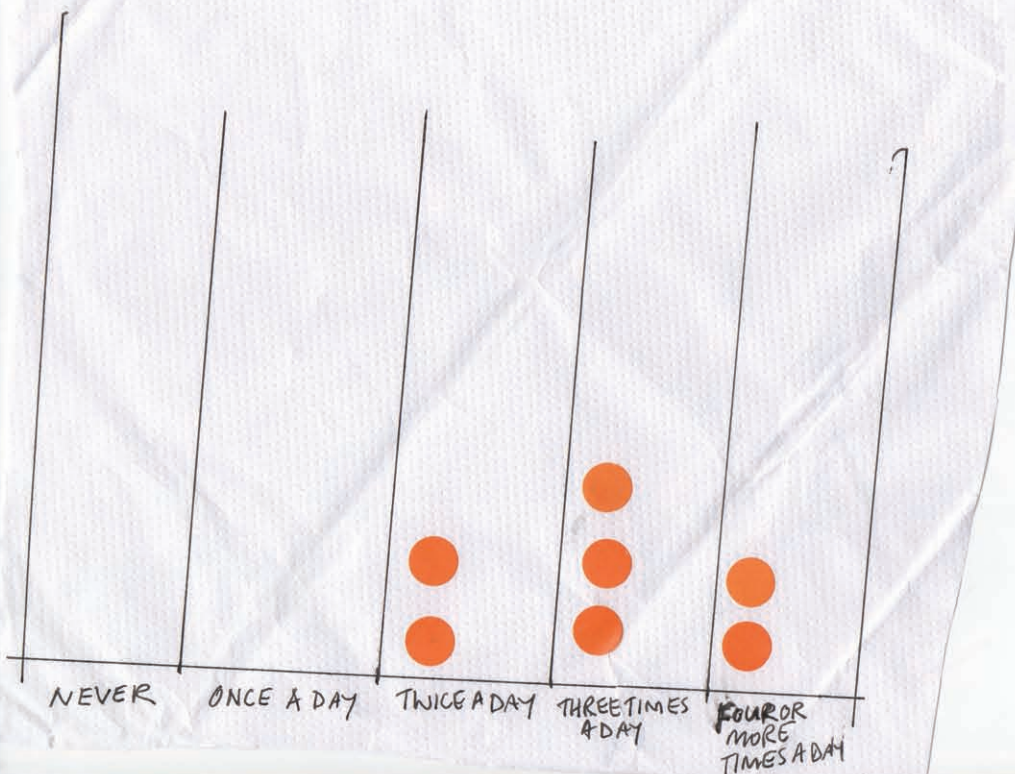
How many times a week do you take a lunch break?



Have you taken sick leave over the

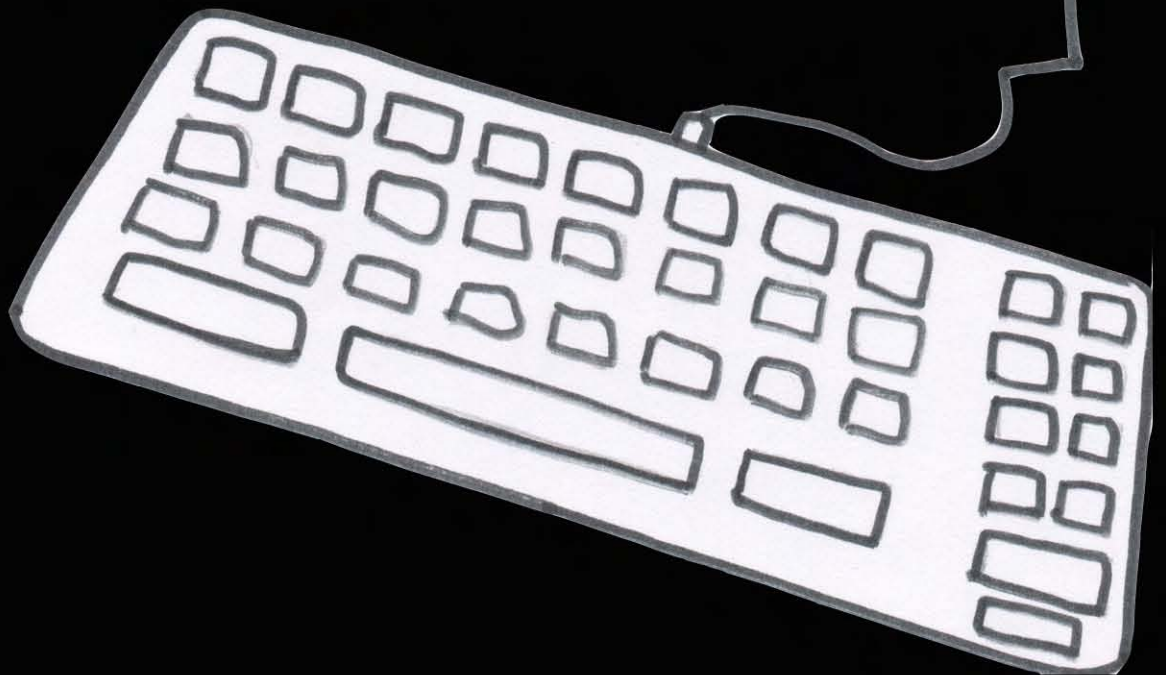


How much do you rely on caffeine &/or sugar hits to get you through the day?

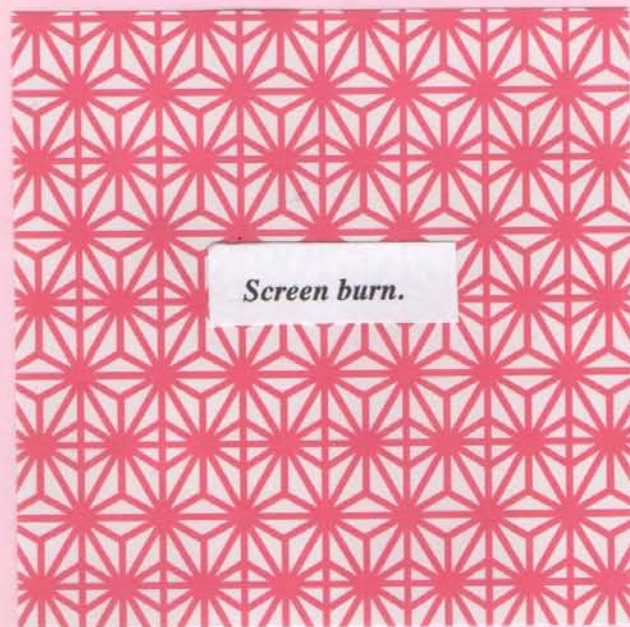




*PHYSICALITY
THE BODY +
ENVIRONMENT*



Do you experience physical effects of work before/during or after work?



Screen burn.

*Before: exhaustion and burning eyes
During: carbs for lunch, meetings coffee and biscuits
After: bum, eye and feet ache*

I was a postman for 28 years. Things got heavier. As you were expected to carry more around. To increase productivity the post office started to make the rounds bigger.

There's so much pressure everyday, it's really hard work and really tiring... people are frantic all the time... high stress, high pressure, all day, everyday...

You're meant to look like you enjoy your job... I did a project once and it literally nearly killed me.

There are now more mental affects of work.

I need physical activity to counter mental affects of work.

I am unaware of my body until pain shows that I am overworking, I don't think about what my body is doing because my mind is taking over.



What is your body doing when you are sat at your desk?



Slouching, sometimes legs crossed or slumped across keyboard. My body tends to be bored when I'm sat at my desk.

I get tension headaches from slouching in front of the laptop, had to visit osteopath, he said laptops increase cases of bad backs, ipads too (osteopaths are getting lots of work out of this). I had acupuncture in my neck.

40% hand 60% computer.



I often find myself lurching over my keyboard, with right left wrapped around my left leg. My head is pulled forward to read the screen, and I'm forever tapping on the keyboard with umpteen mistakes because I'm using my left hand. I work mostly from home, early morning till late at night and can't see the start or finish of the working day. Because of the long hours it seems my body is learning postures which are very difficult, uncomfortable and problematic.

I started on a production line in a plastic bag factory, it was really mundane, dirty and smelly. It was mainly women working there. They were really skillful, they learnt movements, in terms of pulling bags, it was like an art form that people don't see. The ability to collate envelopes, that doesn't come naturally, even if it looks as though it does, that takes years of doing the same thing.



I spend a lot of time in meetings. On public transport. Often meetings are away and I attend conferences and overseas working. I spend a lot of time out and about. So in a way it is a physical job.

How do you feel about the different things you do in a day? How do we acknowledge our emotions? We feel a certain way about work and often it isn't related to pay.

When do you feel productive – are they those moments when you have a better physical sense of what you are doing?

It's the physical work that proves you're working. The thinking part you can't control. You can't qualify. How to change your attitude towards new forms of work. Like reading?



BENEFITS:

Relaxes your tight neck muscles
Relieves tension headaches

Calms your nerves
Helps you fall asleep

What is your physical proximity to other co-workers?

You are left to deal with the stress and emotions on your own.



As an academic I feel dislocated physically and electronically from other non-academic staff, the cleaners, admin staff and technicians.



When you're producing calculations you can be sat at your desk doing calculations all day and you won't talk to anyone.



My job role is a mother and it takes physical energy. My internet on my phone helps me keep in touch and less isolated. I like the contrast that studying gives me in terms of using body and mind differently, sitting still, reading, using my mind.



We're very close, people everywhere, I'd be very sad if there was no one.



I have my own office and find that I talk to myself quite a lot. I'm like, Henry, you fucking idiot.



We're 30cm apart, we have to share a desk due to very limited office space.



Whenever everyone is in we need to hot desk – we are in a row of 3 and when the fourth is in someone has to hot desk.



Imagine yourself sitting in the centre of a large clock. Move your eyes to the top of your head as if you were looking at 12 o'clock.



I have an ergonomic mouse.

I need to move and stretch at least every hour, whether I do it is another matter.



Working for the post office is very physical and it meant I played football three times a week. When I left the post office that all went too.



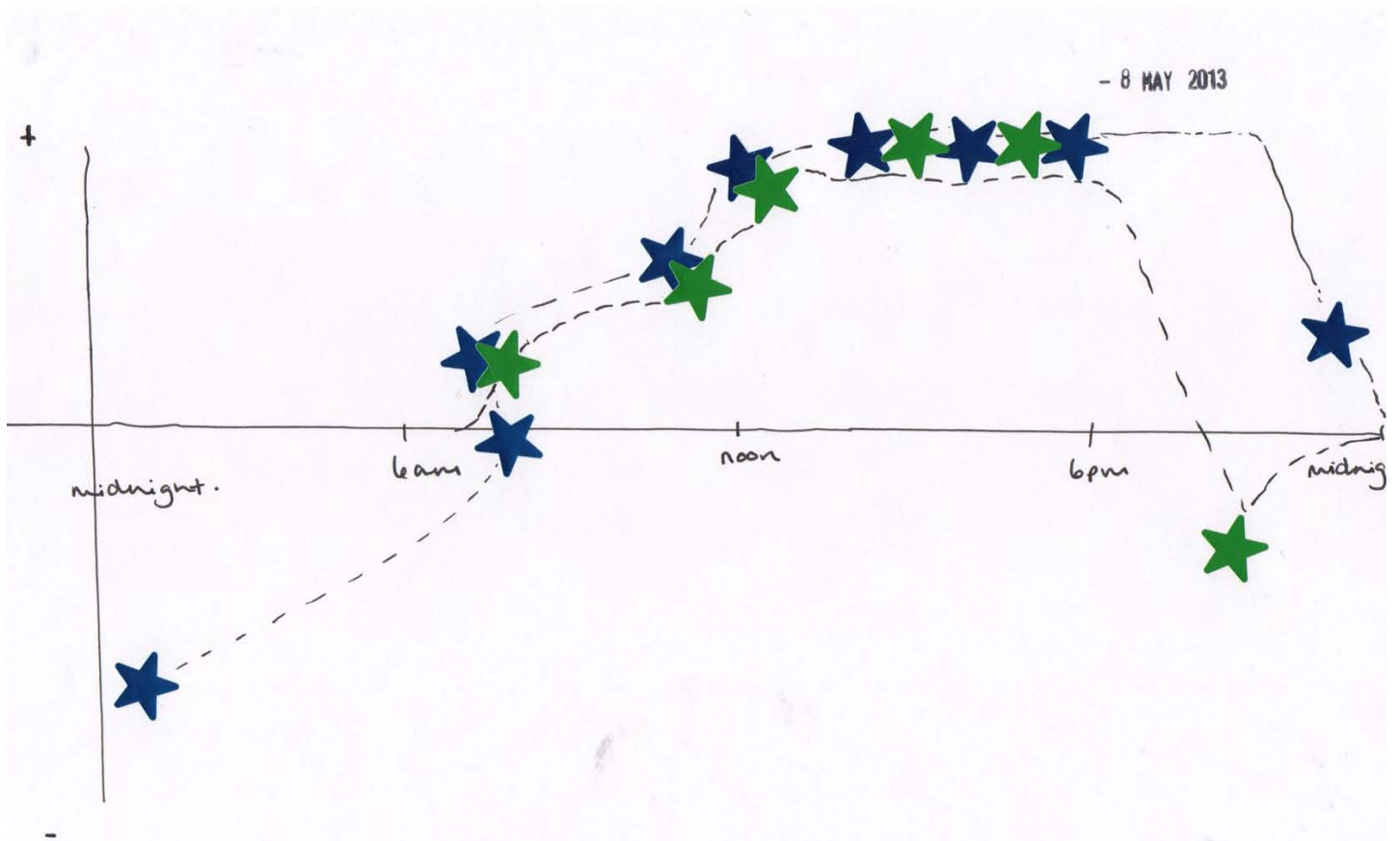
I use voice recognition software and have a special monitor, and RSI guard software, I also meditate on a regular basis and take breaks.

Every year you have to do a work station test. It is mandatory.

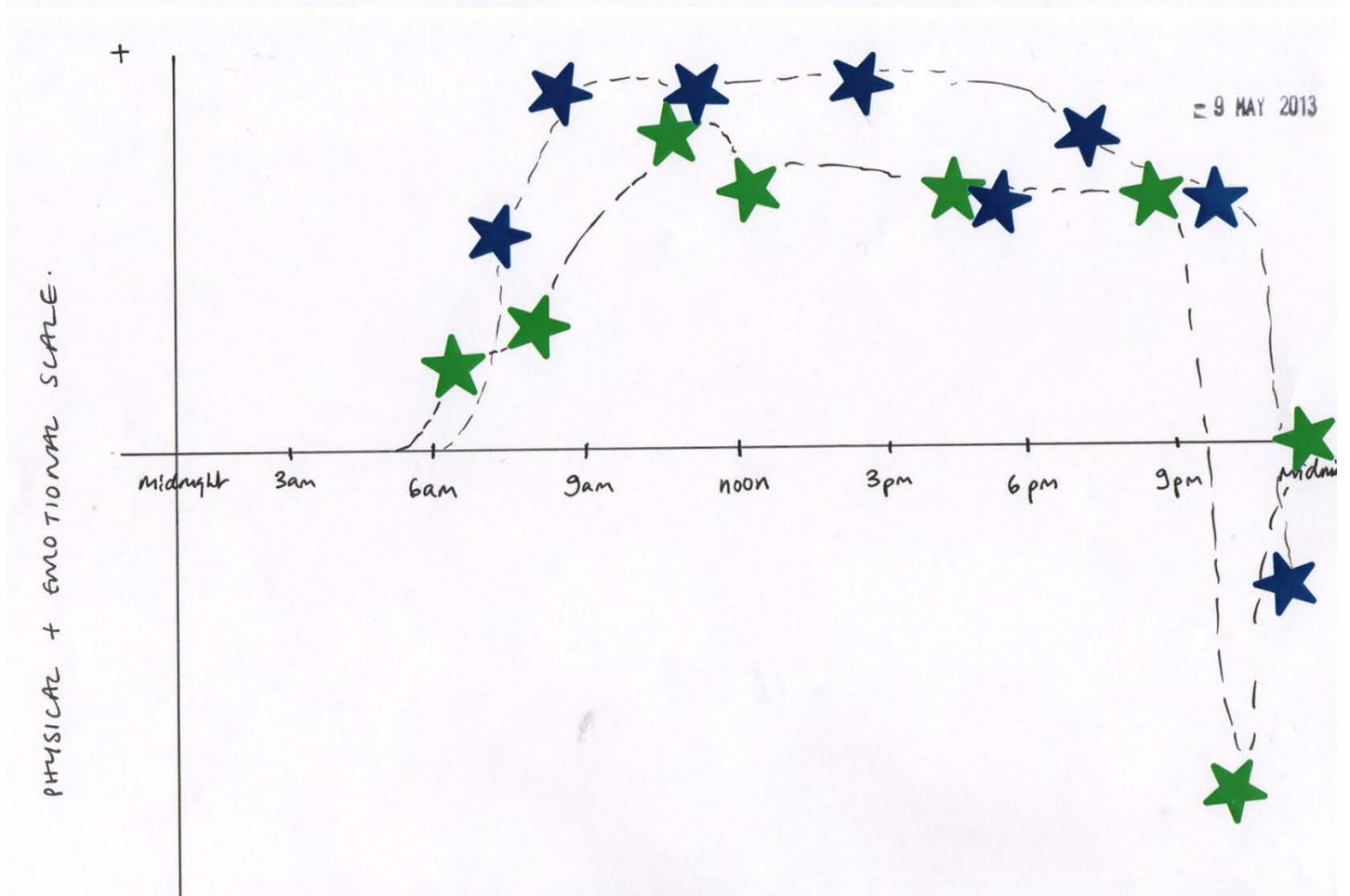


The feeling at the end of the day – getting out of the office.

How do you care for your body in your job role?



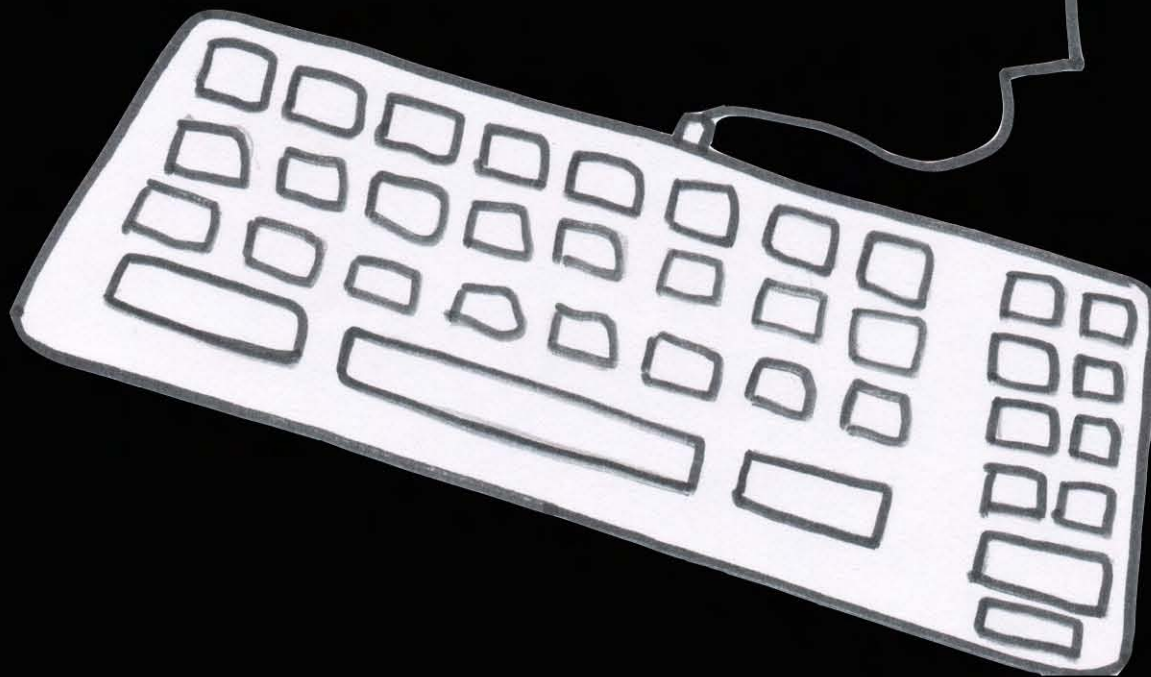
Two diagrams mapping the physical and emotional states of Jenny Richards (blue star) and Sophie Hope (green star) during 'Manual Labours' (8-12 April 2013).





*TAKE
YOUR
LUNCH
BREAK*

*BAD
MANAGEMENT
+
SLOW TACTICS*



Part of my role is to police how much people are working otherwise they aren't going to be happy in their role.

If someone is replying to emails out of work time I tell them to stop working – workers have to justify with me why they are working.

BAD SENIOR ASSISTANT MANAGER

Asking permission to use the toilet.

I needed to move up a pay grade so I got a new job title. Management is this weird job where you don't really do anything.

CHECKED

I don't let anyone work extra. Everyone works hard in the hours they do. If someone is doing over time it is a time management issue – I would send them on a time management course. Or they aren't giving themselves a long enough lead in time.

When you are outsourced there is no way you can make yourself visible if you wish to negotiate your working conditions.

You never complained, you never had any ambition, it stifled any ambition you might have had. I lasted a year in that particular job.

Humans are hierarchical, and this is mapped onto working structures. A horizontal organisation is a convenient fiction.

'Away days' are propaganda to make the worker love the company.

My job title gets in the way as I can't manage everyone day to day as we aren't all in on the same days. So people have to manage themselves but knowing there is a manager means that responsibility becomes an issue. In a small organisation having a hierarchy is ridiculous. Having a manager title means it gets in the way of people being independent.

CHECKED

There was no choice, certainly for the older generation, that was quite depressing.

Training yourself to lower the expectations of the working day. If I get one thing done, that is a good day. If you work part time you have to accept the longer time issue. The way I get round that is working in partnership.

How might you physically reclaim the work environment?



DO THIS

How do you bring a politics to the positions you are working?

When working freelance thinking about what economies or networks you are reproducing – the focus is on the individual, which fragments ways to support peers and a network

Probably creativity is the key to re-appropriation of the work environment. Organise the work environment in a way that makes work as convenient as possible for you.

Demand safe and healthy furniture.

Move tools, table, chairs around till it suits you.

There's a guy on site...he makes a point of going out and having lunch every day, part of the reason is because he goes to the mosque... he sits down somewhere outside work to have lunch, I've become quite good friends with him and I go out and have lunch with him, he's taught me that it's good to get out, I'm probably more productive afterwards...



Dance on the desks.

Take your lunch break.

Go home on time.



Do you use work time and resources for non work activity?



These questions are a bourgeoisie problem only if you atomise it to this group of workers – if you link it up to other struggles it becomes a political shift. The difficult thing is to link this up with other co-workers. Structures make this impossible.



Online shopping, banking, facebook, searching for holidays.



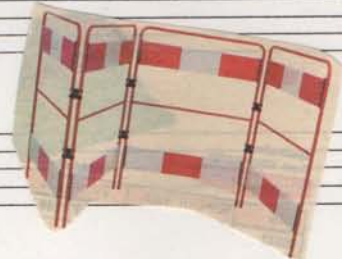
I always look after my body, doing yoga classes during work time.

I have sky on the computer, I watch sport all day



What is the definition of 'work time'? I'm at my desk every day for longer than I'm contracted to work, so I check personal email, order books on line in the course of my working day.

Because there's less pressure to get to work now, I run or cycle to work, have a shower and cereal at work. While I'm having my cereal I'll check my email.



I got the union to fight my case for redundancy – when I got it, I took two years off. No regrets – people said I should have invested it but nah I wanted to take the time off.

Feet on desks.



Refuse to adapt.



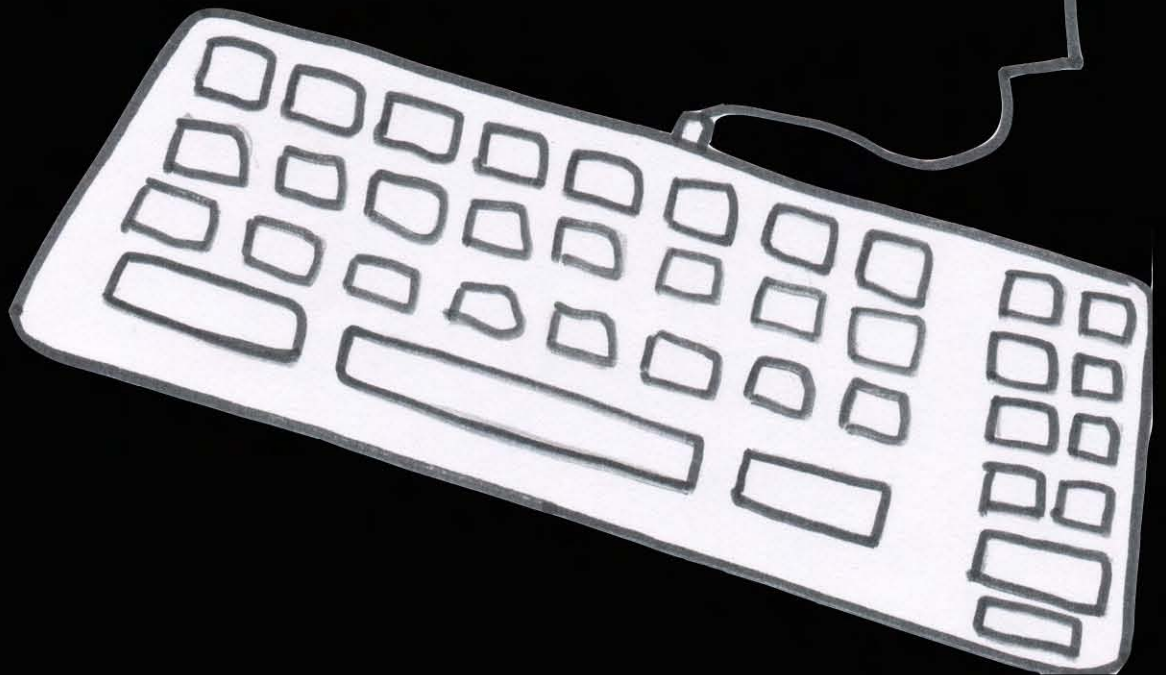
Talk loudly.





*DANCE
ON THE
DESKS*

TOOLBOX



Materials

Films:

'We're Papermen, He Said' by Can Altay (2003)

<http://www.zkm.de/istanbul/e/altay>

'How Capital Moves' by Kennedy Browne (2010)

www.kennedybrowne.com

'The Struggle Against Ourselves' by Jesse Jones (2011)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLINoTC1BTU>

www.spikeisland.org.uk/events/.../struggle-against-ourselves

'GUESTures | GOSTikulacije' by Margareta Kern (2011)

www.margaretakern.com

'Remnant' by North – 55 (2008)

www.north-55.com

'Sweet Sugar Rage' by Sistren Theatre Collective (1985)

<http://www.cinenova.org/filmdetail.php?filmId=192>

'The Trainee' by Pilvi Takala (2008)

www.pilvitakala.com

'Exchange Square' (2005/7) and 'fliehkraft flight strength/centrifugal force' (2010) by Moira Zoitl

www.moirazoitl.com

Texts:

Federici, Sylvia (2004) 'The Great Caliban: The struggle against the rebel body' in *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*. New York: AUTONOMEDIA

Gage, Howard (1974) 'Fatigue effects of light repetitive work on sensory motor coordination' in *American Industrial Hygiene Association Journal*, volume 35, Issue 9, pp. 525-37

Hassan, Robert (2007) 'Networked Time' in *Time and Temporality in the Network Society*, Stanford: Stanford University Press

Moffa, Michael (2011) 'Emotions for Hire: The Role of "Emotional Labor" in the Workplace' on *Recruiter.com*. Available from:

<http://www.recruiter.com/il/emotions-for-hire-the-role-of-emotional-labor-in-the-workplace/>

Vishmidt, Marina (2013), 'Manual Labours – A Presentation to Accompany the screening of Pilvi Takala's *The Trainee* (2008). Part of the Research Project *Manual Labours*'. Available from: <http://manuallabours.wordpress.com/resources/>



LOOKING
FOR
THIS?



Research, this project is the start of open ended face to face research. Whilst defining the research terms this is an open ended project that is shaped by co-workers contributions and the knowledge that informs some of the questions we are asking. *Manual Labours* perhaps should be followed by a question mark, as that is where we start, from a series of questions in order to help us understand the complexities of our work(s) and help find ways in which we can collectively work critical or politically within our positions. This project is not foreclosed but open and all contributions are extremely welcome!



Manual Labours is a term we wish to explore in order to recapture a new sense of manual labour other to that linked to the crippling work of the assembly line. Rather this historical alignment allows us to track a narrative of manual labour from the factory line to its position within current modes of work in so-called late/financial capitalism. The plural labours refers to the many different forms of work we are thinking around, with a particular focus on those forms that we insist aren't solely at the service of a purpose outside of our own wish, that critical, political, and fulfilling work which we wish to acknowledge and position. Importantly manual labour also references the hugely physical and manual workforce the Western so called immaterial labourers rely on. In our efforts to understand the complexities of work we aim to ensure a constant connection with the struggles of the global workforce in its many different manifestations.



Co-workers meaning those working in the locality of Birkbeck, working across different sectors including both informal and undocumented. The term co-workers we wish to carry no hierarchy between different roles or positions in work but rather address all as our co-workers, collective yet understanding each working under specific and particular structures of employment.



Physical we understand in its most expanded sense. From the body performing in the workplace to exerting force as one runs to work. We also link emotions to what we mean by physical, to grant emotions with a weight or physicality and render them part of our understanding of work and working processes. Questions around physicality we follow as a possible route to locating a sense of embodied understanding, or awareness of the structures as work and how one must negotiate them. It is traditional to split the mind (cognitive) and the body (manual) both hierarchically but within the individual. This split has complex relationships to alienation but also through exploitative processes of cognitive capitalism we are interested in the body as a site for a form of critical language or intellect that we might look to explore. Meyerhold and his research into biomechanics hoped to develop a physical form of intellect and expression, a new form of political language of the body. We are interested in what the often relegated body stores as a site of experiential knowledge and inherited gesture that cannot be quantified or read by current evaluative methods.

- 1 What is your body doing when you are sat at your desk?
- 2 How do you care for your body in your job role?
- 3 What is your physical proximity to other co-workers?






*FOR INFORMATION ON FUTURE EVENTS AND RESEARCH VISIT
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MANUAL.LABOURS@GMAIL.COM*



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WWW.MANUALLABOURS.WORDPRESS.COM
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*REFUSE
TO
ADAPT*

The 'Manual Labours Manual' was made on 8 and 9 June 2013 and required 21 hours of labour from both Jenny and Sophie.



www.manuallabours.wordpress.com