



**The utilitarian poetic - An installation by LoneLady
in association with the Manchester Modernist Society.**

A discrete intervention in concrete. A rumination on how the built environment affects the psyche; redefining sites of beauty. Premiering the new track 'Good Morning, Midnight'.

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This towerblock is a fortress, a bunker, a submarine, a cell, in which to experience differing states - hermetic, embattled, invigorated, transcendent. I'm both part of and apart from my surroundings, lifted to consider a seventh-floor perspective from the ramparts of my concrete cube bolt-hole. Situated directly beside a dual carriageway, the towerblock is engulfed by the permanent white-noise tone poem of countless vehicle engines. There is no groundfloor connection save through the portals of lift and stairwell. A triptych of upvc windows frame the coruscating skies. Some think buildings like these are "cold-hearted, inhuman, monstrous"¹.

At times, this environment seems to "bespeak incredible pressures, like those to which a submarine is submitted"². Here, aggression and anonymity exiles the self from self; tideless canals weave between buildings in slow ceremony, opaque and secretive; the climate is fractious, unpredictable; all seems portentous and stern.

All of which permeates and re-forms the inhabitant over time. I have come to internalize the hard, reciprocal echo of space and structure, the crumbling outskirts and overlooked wastes between the glittering facades: it has colonised me, and me it.

And now I find it possible to perceive my environment differently; together we co-create and re-define. There is magic transformation to be found in the alchemical concrete. Utility and belonging in the rag and bone of the imagination. In this mutable terrain I can crouch and curate missives to the Outside. Psychic life leaps into something you might touch...Compelled to invoke it in sounds, words, drawings, dreams, this landscape is full of gateways to the hinterland.

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The music is accessible via a headphones input; the participant supplies her/his own headphones. Entombed in the structure, the music falls silent when the battery dies, and becomes an artefact / a relic / a piece of rubbish. It will remain there for an unknown length

of time / until the structure is demolished; an installed topography of the interior, temporal and material in our "fleeing present"³.

Julie Campbell

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1 *The architect As Totalitarian* by Theodore Dalrymple, *City Journal*, 2009

2 *Bunker Archaeology* by Paul Virilio, Princeton Architectural Press, 1994

3 *Ruinophilia*, *Cabinet Magazine* issue 28 2007/8

EDITORS NOTES

Julie Campbell was born, lives and works in Manchester, and is a Warp Records recording artist under the name 'LoneLady'. <http://warp.net>

The **Manchester Modernist Society** is an interdisciplinary project that aims to raise awareness of the built urban environment and help foster and develop a greater understanding of the rich and complex relationship between architecture, art and design and public space. It has a record of delivering arts based interventions and commissions inspired by modernism, including an A-Z gazetteer of modernist Manchester and a musical composition for a telephone kiosk. It also publishes *The Modernist*, a quarterly journal of the vernacular twentieth century cityscape and related occasional monographs.

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