

*[Faded, illegible handwriting]*

**Elle Evelyn Orrell**

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*"For better or worse  
[the white cube] is the  
single major convention  
through which art is  
passed. What keeps it  
stable is the lack of  
alternatives." \**

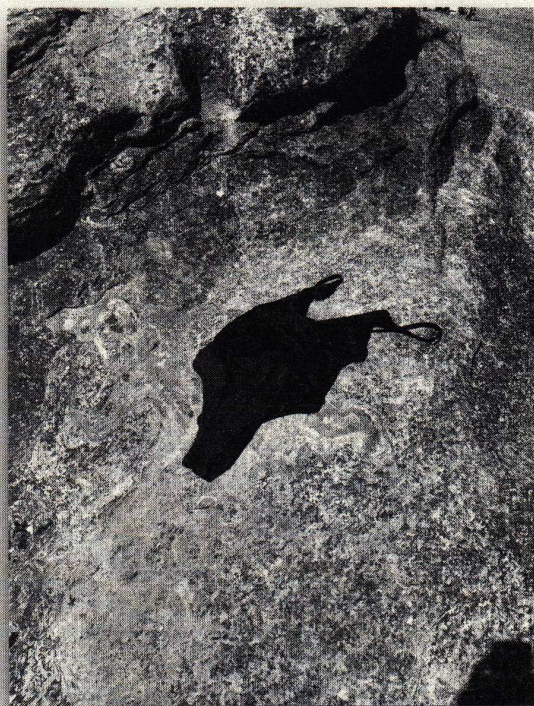
*"Common sense seems to  
tell us that we all live in  
one and the same world.  
And yet ... other worlds  
appear not only possible  
but far more plausible  
and desirable than the  
hegemonic version that  
continues to pass itself  
off as the only one." †*

*\*[Brian O'Doherty, Inside the White Cube, 1986]  
†[Stephen Wright, Toward a Lexicon of Usership,  
2013]*

Hands almost touching as we leant back on our elbows, legs crossed atop an Ikea blanket. The air was still, it was one of those September days which hovered on the boundary of being warm enough to sit out and too cold. Grey clouds interspersed with brushstrokes of blue sky. No rain, to our relief. Every once in a while, a light breeze would rearrange the edges of the blanket and we would look nervously over to the two piles of Youth Assembly flyers which sat, paper-weighted by painted stones at the centre of the gathering. This was how it had been imagined.

A gallery without walls.





To sit within the imaginary boundaries of the gallery, their ghostly forms defined in chalk along the grass. What can we do now that there are no white walls on which to hang the art? Make new art which doesn't require walls. Invite in those who may have felt that the walls of the gallery were not welcoming to them before. That was our hope. To make things which moved beyond the defined exhibition spaces of the gallery and reached out to the community beyond, and to discuss these within a chalked outline of space. From lumps of clay, walks and meet-ups, words typed in emails and over text, we resolved to assemble a new gallery which would move beyond its bricks and mortar boundary and would locate and highlight some of the many elements of our community's distinctiveness. Who could have known then that this would be so necessary? Now, as we sit—socially distanced—no longer almost touching, but instead barely able to hear one another through mouths swaddled in fabric. Meeting outside is no longer a choice, but a requirement. Looking for the points at which our lives connect seems more important than ever, after focusing on distancing ourselves from others for so long. To find common ground between strangers with whom we share this space, 'the community', and to allow the gallery to become a place within the town which speaks with its many voices.

On remembering that first lockdown: when I swam and walked and made secret suppers with friends in a Scottish coastal town, somehow these distances seemed unimaginable to observe. Now, I have not sat down in a room with a single person who was not my mum or dad in months. A plan to escape to Copenhagen was foiled by tests, borders and Brexit. Now, I can only imagine the need to make art! To draw, and draw, and write my way out of whatever it is the world is experiencing right now. Producing physical symbols to prove my existence, my activity, my productivity. This time feels as if we are all living in separate worlds, disconnected from others in our own 'bubbles'. My friends from university are now scattered across continents, and no meetings or events or spaces in which to meet new people exist in this fragmented Covid-World. I can only hold onto the hope that in warmer weather these initial ideas can be realised. And in the meantime, spend days creating cryptic poems on a scrabble board as each afternoon seems to pass more slowly than the next.



When we can meet once again, it will undoubtedly be outdoors. Perhaps within a chalked outline of sorts, a map defining the meters between us which we carry around in our conscience. I hope that in spite of these boundaries, communities will be able to recover and we'll meet once more with strangers whom we share geographies with.

*"People  
in small towns,  
much more  
than in  
cities, share a  
destiny." ‡*

‡ [Richard Russo, Interview with the New York Times, 2004]

