

REIMAGINING THE NIGHT

URBAN PAMPHLETEER #9

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Urban Pamphleteer #9: Reimagining the Night

Kamila Krakowska Rodrigues, Laura-Solmaz Litschel, Derek Pardue,
Jordan Rowe, Katie Young

We are delighted to present *Urban Pamphleteer* #9

In the tradition of radical pamphleteering, the intention of this series is to confront key themes in contemporary urban debate from diverse perspectives, in a direct and accessible – but not reductive – way. The broader aim is to empower and inform citizens, professionals, researchers, institutions, and policy-makers, with a view to positively shaping change.

#9 Reimagining the Night

The advance of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to the imposition of unprecedented emergency measures: night-time curfews, the closure of after-dark venues, and laws designed to prevent nocturnal activities and control the movement of populations. Across Europe, the pandemic has coincided with multiple political crises, amounting to the greatest set of restrictions on public life since the mid-twentieth century.

Emergency measures have interrupted the growth of policy initiatives supporting night-time urban cultures in many European cities. The devastating consequence of lockdown measures on nocturnal economies has been well reported, but to what extent have social practices, and spaces, been impacted and adapted amongst communities who have mobilised around migrant identities or histories?

Urban Pamphleteer #9 is initiated through a research project 'Night Spaces: migration, culture and integration in Europe' (NITE),¹ which asks how night spaces are imagined, produced, experienced and narrated by migrant communities in Europe. Taking into account recent attention to the urban night at the policy level, as well as the impact of COVID-19, this issue engages perspectives from nightlife cultural organisers and associations, artists, industry representatives, policymakers, scholars and others who share their experiences and ideas on the future of night spaces. What is being done to create, protect, or sustain night spaces, scenes, and economies for migrant communities across Europe, and what is being overlooked? How has the pandemic altered the parameters of public/private space at night and notions of home? How have migrant communities, in particular those who face intersectional vulnerabilities and oppressions, been impacted by changing legal and policy frameworks? What grassroots social responses have emerged to address the impact of lockdowns on migrant groups? These are some of the questions that contributors address.

The pandemic has brought to attention inequalities that have long existed across Europe's multicultural urban landscapes, including the devaluation of night-time labour, often undertaken by those from migrant backgrounds, and the demonisation and disproportionate criminalisation of people of colour. This issue seeks to demonstrate the practical changes that are taking place as a result.

1 www.nightspace.org. The NITE project (Night-spaces, Migration, Culture and Integration in Europe) is funded by Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) [2019–2022].

IRELAND, DANCING AND GIVE US THE NIGHT

The popularity of music venues and nightclubs in Ireland can be part of the solution to concerns surrounding public order.

Irish people love to dance, but the state has traditionally held a different view. In 1930s Ireland, rural youth would gather in homes or meet in public settings at crossroad dances, sharing stories and building communities through music and dance at night. The Catholic church perceived crossroad dances as immoral and indecent, and used their lobbying influence to shape the legislative direction of the state on this matter.

Nocturnal community dances were subsequently targeted and curbed through a series of legislative acts. For example, the Carrigan Commission, set up in 1932, stated that 'In the course of the Inquiry no form of abuse was blamed more persistently for pernicious consequences than the unlicensed dances held all over the country'. Arising from this commission, the Public Dance Halls Act was introduced in 1935, requiring anyone organising a dance where members of the public were entitled to participate actively – in either a licensed or unlicensed premises – to obtain a dance licence. The law is still in effect today.

In contemporary times, the Irish state continues to inhibit the ability to dance at night. For example, in 2008 the state introduced the Special Exemption Order system (SEOs) under the Intoxicating Liquor Act. While the act intended to address underage and binge drinking, this legislation has impacted late-night music venues' ability to stay open. Before 2008, nightclubs and music venues with a DJ or live music were able to apply for an annual theatre licence, which would allow them to operate until 4am, for about €270. Today, venues must make an application within court every time they wish to stay open late (until 2.30 am from Monday to Saturday or until 1am on Sunday) and must also pay a €410 fee for each late night. The procedure of having to go to court to receive permission to stay open past 12.30am – and the idea that a late night out requires *special* exemption – suggests that citizens are not trusted to be out at night without the regulation of the state.

The Give Us the Night campaign emerged in 2004 out of concern for the extended control of the state over Irish nightlife. Led by DJ Sunil Sharpe, Give Us the Night works to reframe the conversation around nightlife in Ireland. As a small, voluntary group with no resources or positions of influence, we seek the perspectives of Gardaí, fire safety officers, taxi organisations, residents and community groups, legal professionals, local authorities, club and pub owners and many others on state-led legislation regarding nightlife. Our campaign sheds light on the inefficiencies of current state laws affecting night venues and events. We show how the popularity of music venues and nightclubs in Ireland can be part of the solution to concerns surrounding public order, and how their function could be used progressively to help alleviate the stresses on public resources dealing with the impact of

social activity at night. For example, SEOs have resulted in all venues closing at the same time, with patrons of nightclubs, music venues and bars pouring

The Irish state lacks a long-sighted view of the potential positive societal and economic contributions that can be made by individuals coming together and exchanging creative ideas in social settings at night. This is what Give us the Night seeks to change.

onto the street at the same time. Through our research, we argue that initiating an internationally regarded system of staggered closing times for different types of venues would aid in reducing concerns around public order ignited through the enacting of the Special Exemption Order system.

Our campaign also works to expose the specific absurdities of the current legislative system. For example, the money gathered through collecting SEOs does not go back into the policing and public maintenance of late-night social activity. The chairman of the government-appointed alcohol advisory group, who provided recommendations for the legislative changes, jokingly talked about not knowing what the inside of a nightclub looked like. The Irish state lacks a long-sighted view of the potential positive societal and economic contributions that can be made by individuals coming together and exchanging creative ideas in social settings at night. This is what Give us the Night seeks to change.

Through our research and campaigning, we can start to dream about dancing at the crossroads again, lit only by the sun rising for a new day.

The conservative ethos of containment culture evidenced in Ireland's current SEOs is strikingly similar to the Public Dance Halls Act of the 1930s. Like the culture of the crossroads dances, nightlife culture has been crushed in contemporary Ireland. In the 12 years since the laws were changed, we have seen slews of venue closures and fewer people dancing at night. The opportunities for young people to connect and come together have been drastically reduced.

As venues have continued to close in recent years, our campaign has become central to conversations around the future of Irish nightlife. In January 2019, we compiled our research into a mandate, published and distributed to individual politicians and all major political parties in Ireland. We were invited to a symposium at the Department of Culture hosted by the Minister in April 2019 and presented

before an Oireachtas (legislature) committee in November 2019.

When a new government was formed in 2020, we secured commitments for licensing reform in the programme for government under a section labelled 'Night Culture'. We participated in a dedicated task-force led by the Minister for Culture that started in

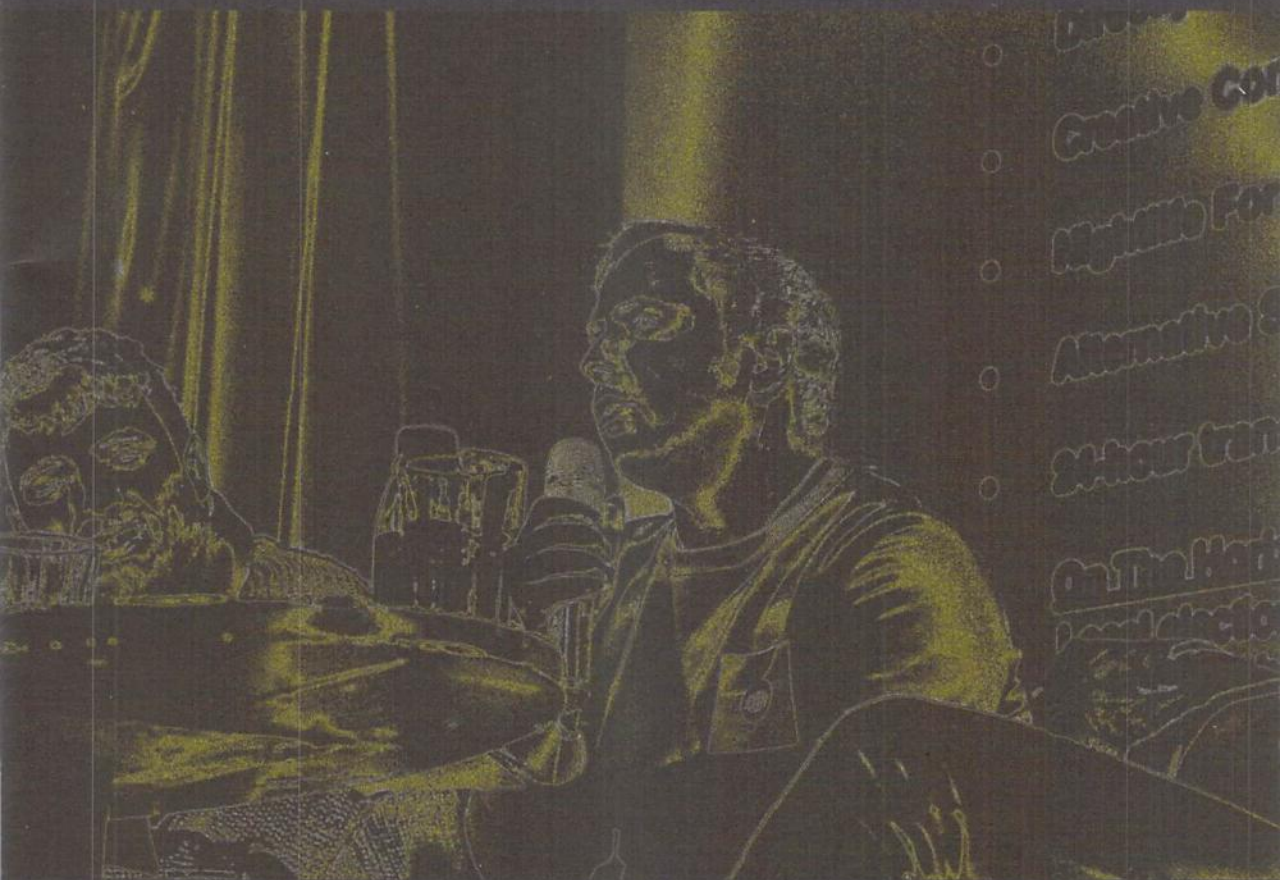
Give Us The Night

Give Us the Night Logo, 2018. Designed by Emma Conway.

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late 2020, whose findings were published in March 2021. Finally, in late February 2021, the Justice Minister, Helen McEntee, announced her plans to reform the licensing laws in this country. These reforms include repealing the 1935 Public Dance Halls Act, removing the SEOs for nightclubs, and opening cultural venues for more night-time events.

We haven't reached the end of the road yet – we won't be celebrating until substantial legislative progress has been made. However, the change in rhetoric from central powers makes clear the role of independent campaigns like Give Us the Night in the advancement of nightlife. Through our research and campaigning, we can start to dream about dancing at the crossroads again, lit only by the sun rising for a new day.



Robbie Kitt (L) and Sunil Sharpe (R) at a public meeting for Give Us the Night, Dublin, 2019. Photo by Steve O'Connor.

Recently, we decided to refresh our memories of nightlife by taking a walk by the river in the heart of Aarhus. Before COVID-19 hit, this used to be the most vibrant part of the city, where a high density of nightclubs, cafés and restaurants are located.

IT'S NOT GONNA BE TONIGHT

from Copenhagen: Mohamed, Abdul and Vicky. Mohamed was turning 23 that weekend and we wanted to celebrate by going out to a nightclub. But we knew it was going to be a challenge because we all have immigrant backgrounds.

Shen Mao is where we first tried to get in. We split up into pairs to increase our chances of being let in. Since Abdul and Mohamed have Arab backgrounds, they couldn't possibly go together. Vicky and I have Indian

KULDIP: I actually lived right over there in that building where you see the cocktail bar, Herr Bartels. I remember having three friends over from Copenhagen: Mohamed, Abdul and Vicky. Mohamed was turning 23 that weekend and we wanted to celebrate by going out to a nightclub. But we knew it was going to be a challenge because we all have immigrant backgrounds. Shen Mao is where we first tried to get in. We split up into pairs to increase our chances of being let in. Since Abdul and Mohamed have Arab backgrounds, they couldn't possibly go together. Vicky and I have Indian backgrounds so we weren't frowned upon as much as them, which is why we blended to balance things out.

Abdul and I walked towards the bouncer. We knew our chances would be better if we came early, so there wasn't really any queue at the time. Before we even got close to him, he started shaking his head. He said the well-known words '*det bliver ikke i aften*' (it's not gonna be tonight). We asked the bouncer to explain the rejection, but it didn't have any effect on his decision.



DJ Dualeh. Image by Shubhdeep Singh Parwana.

YUSUF: I've never met any guys with non-pale skin who haven't faced problems with discrimination in the night life here in Denmark. Bro, take a look over there across the river to that club. I remember an incident one night where I

had gone out with my study mates from uni. Some of them had decided on a club, which coincidentally was throwing a costume party, although none of us were dressed up. We bring out our IDs, the bouncer waves Nanna (an ethnic Dane) in, but signals to me with his hand that I have to wait. He gives me the elevator eyes, looks at me and says in a stiff voice: 'I can't let you in because of your pants, our dress code doesn't allow any kind of military outfit.' I was wearing my favourite pants, a pair of dark green pants from the Australian fashion brand, Zanerobe. No army print, just plain and modern dark green pants. I looked in through the windows of the club, people were dressed up as cowboys, animals, nurses and even soldiers carrying plastic guns.

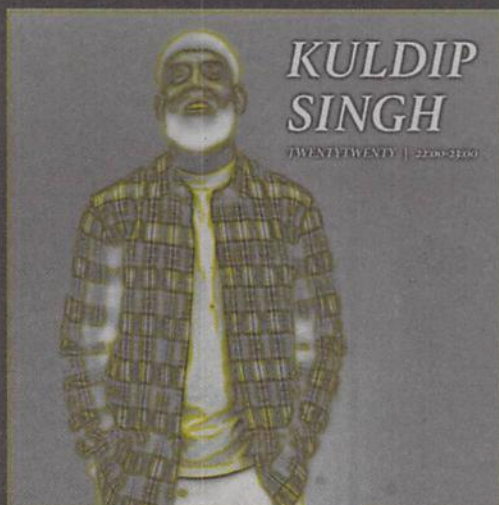
I looked back at the bouncer, asking him if he was serious, hinting at the crowd inside where many of them didn't follow the dress code. 'It's a no,' he

said, 'you're not getting in today'. I didn't even like the club, but I was looking to have a good time with my mates.

All of the things that we've been talking about tonight have been part of the reason why during the summer of 2019 I started planning to open a nightclub that would have as its core value to say no to racism, homophobia and other kinds of discrimination. This would allow anyone to party, regardless of their looks, how they dance or how they think; we wanted everyone to be equal.

We held weekly Monday meetings for more than half a year, where we discussed values, ideas, concepts and visions for a future nightclub where we would set the agenda. We decided to start off by throwing a series of parties, before going deeper into opening a nightclub; and from this our clubbing concept 'twentytwenty' was born.

We set out to plan the follow-up party a month and a half later, after a hugely successful initial party, but unfortunately it was cancelled because of the pandemic. Our momentum had been taken away from us, but we've kept our heads high.



Kuldip Singh. Image by Shubhdeep Singh Parwana.

KULDIP: Twentytwenty gave us the inspiration and confidence to start Urban Connection in November 2020. As with twentytwenty, we also planned an event that got cancelled days before because of covid restrictions. Fortunately, we also planned to do a podcast, which we then put a focus on instead. We started a concept called 'artist pick', where, alongside guests, we present artists from different urban genres, have personal conversations and connect through music. We are coming together with other people who see the need for change in nightlife culture, and at a steady pace, we are on our way to making our imprint.

✧ Migrants to London have been the real agitators and shape-shifters when it comes to night spaces; we're the kinds of people who are willing to take more risks, to try out new things.

AGITATORS AND SHAPE- SHIFTERS OF THE NIGHT



Amy Lamé, detail of a mural by David Shenton at The Joiners Arms, London, c. 2015.

✕ In the minds of *some* people, migrant equals a certain type of person, and so... it's important that we have a *full* view and a full understanding of what a migrant is. It's a person who is moving from one place to another, and it could be for lots of different reasons, and they could be from many different types of backgrounds. So when you get this cultural mix in cities like London and the sense of freedom that it can give, to migrants, to be in a space – particularly for LGBTQ+ people, who may be coming from smaller towns or villages, from elsewhere in the UK, but actually from all over the world – it creates an amazing opportunity to make *new spaces* that are relevant for *us*. And we've seen that over and over again in London.

○ I am really proud that I'm a migrant [laughs]. I might not look like what people might think a migrant looks like, but I grew up in a small, working-class, very traditional family in a small town in New Jersey, where there were certain expectations of how I was meant to live, and be, and live my life, that did not sit well with me. That was very different from how I felt inside, and so migrating to a different city, to a city that *for me* symbolised freedom, and a city where you can be who you really want to be (which is why I came to London), my experience of that, and meeting *other* migrants from all over the world who converged on London for exactly the same reasons – whether they were from a small town in Andalucia, or in Brazil, or in, you know, New Zealand, or wherever it might have been – we all came to London and we're all... you know, I'm speaking from an LGBTQ+ perspective – we all came to London because we felt like that was what it was offering us: this *possibility*. Then, we were young – I was in my early 20s – but, night spaces were absolutely *essential* to us. Not just integrating with a city that was new to us, but also making those connections that have stood with me throughout my entire life. The richness that migration brings is not spoken about enough.

Amy Lamé has served as London's first Night Czar since 2016. She is co-founder of the Olivier Award-winning arts company and club night Duckie, co-founded RVT Future, a voluntary LGBTQ+ community group campaigning to preserve the iconic Royal Vauxhall Tavern, and is a DJ with a weekly show on BBC Radio 6 Music. She is the author of *From Prejudice to Pride: A History of the LGBTQ+ Movement* (2017).

↳ It's been interesting in this coronavirus epidemic, I've been thinking a lot about LGBTQ+ people, and how the idea of staying



home to stay safe is an oxymoron for so many people, also for women and children suffering from abuse, for example. But with this LGBTQ+ lens on, this idea that somehow staying at home is safe – it's not: we've had to leave our homes, be they just up the road or be they on the other side of the world. As a result, we've created a community of LGBTQ+ people, including migrants who are non-geographical. There's a lot of talk about the importance of community and people often think about it as their locality, the surrounding streets in their neighbourhoods, where we don't have that luxury as LGBTQ+ people. Because those streets might be incredibly dangerous to us. So we have to think about community differently, we have to think about home differently. That is why we are disproportionately migrants [in London], I think.

✓ The night is so important to migrants, and LGBTQ+ migrants particularly. Firstly, it's an opportunity for work. The night has always been a time of opportunity. And I see it as a time that is not used to its full potential. So often we spend time talking about the 'graveyard shift' or, putting the night down as a dark or scary place. And certainly, other people's reticence around the night has created opportunities for LGBTQ+ people to carve our own spaces out of the time that nobody else seemed to want.

△ I've been focussing the past couple of weeks on LGBTQ+ spaces and small businesses, and really trying very hard to make sure that when lockdown is lifted and when it's time to reopen our bars, clubs and pubs, that we're able to do that. Those are *really* important social spaces but also employers: big providers of jobs for us at night. And it's really tough. But some of the things that I've been working on are trying to get rent relief for small and medium enterprises, so we have been able to get some pro-bono legal support for LGBTQ+ spaces that are having problems with their landlords not giving them rent relief.

¶ For LGBTQ+ bars, pubs, and clubs, but *everyone* across the board – a) they don't want to open until it's totally safe to do so, and b) no-one really wants to open with social distancing in place. Because most of our spaces, particularly the queer ones, are running on very, very, very tight profit margins. And they might depend on the last 10% of people walking through the door – that's the difference between them making a profit and losing money. You know? And I think it's clear, we need to make it clear, that making a profit isn't *bad*; it enables places to carry on and employ people and do good things. I'm not talking about these big shareholders or anything, I'm talking about our community spaces. It's important that we support them and that they *can* make a profit.



§ Will these new innovations and online streaming stick? I'm not so sure. 'Cos I don't know about you, but I'm pretty sick of looking at screens and I am desperate to get out and experience things live.

LONDINIUM



Londonium echoes the Latin *Londinium*, the Empire before the Empire. But it is something else too, something in-between, the *Tudor* font emphasises this temporal split. *Londonium* samples times, aesthetics and signs, creating a fertile confusion where other meanings emerge, where one looks again, where one associates and improvises with possible meanings to come. Another time, another sign, another signature, *Criminal*.

Londonium sits in a vertical hierarchy of signs. It is above the *IN A STAR Hair & Beauty Salon*, above the shutters, the walkways, the street and the stone. It is an aspiration. But not just that.

Londonium deals with immigration. Litigation and family business. With personal injuries. And landlords. These are serious matters that need attending. Today, more than ever.

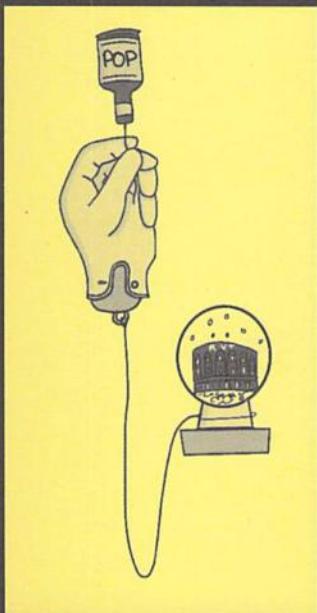
Rut Blees Luxemburg and Caspar Laing Ebbensgaard, *Urban Night Project* 2021.

Rut Blees Luxemburg's art deals with the representation of the city.

Her work is in collections including Tate and the Pompidou, Paris. She is a reader in urban aesthetics at the Royal College of Art and created the permanent public installation *Silver Forest* for the façade of Westminster City Hall.



HOMEMADE MUTANT HOPE MACHINES: REIMAGINING URBAN NIGHTS FROM THE GRASSROOTS



One of the 'hope machine' illustrations from the Dr Duckie website and zine. Image by Zed @ They Them Studios, 2020.



In many cities, pandemic lockdown conditions have led to tight restrictions on nightlife gatherings, bringing particular challenges for many queer people. Yet

there have been hopeful responses, such as online parties. What conceptual vocabularies might help frame how marginalised communities respond to such challenges?

In 2014, I began doing doctoral research with Duckie, a queer collective that's been running shows and nights in London and elsewhere since 1995. They're best known for putting on small and large piss-ups with good tunes and quick, dirty, arty live turns. But they also do long-running community projects, like an afternoon cabaret for older people without many family or friends, a training camp for young LGBTQ+ performers and an art project working with people living with homelessness and addiction.

Somehow it made perfect sense that Duckie did all these different things and I wanted to try to work out why. In the end, I hit on the idea that, for all their differences, these projects could all be described as 'homemade mutant hope machines': forms and processes that emerge from lived experience, operate relatively autonomously, adapt to changing conditions and routinely generate belief in the possibility of better worlds. In fact, they start to bring those worlds into being.

Critically speaking, I was inspired by José Esteban Muñoz's ideas around queer futurity – the value of marginalised people thinking, feeling and acting together toward imagined better worlds that glimmer on the horizon. But while Muñoz mostly framed hope as fleeting and ephemeral, I was struck by how Duckie's projects made this kind of hope quite concrete and routine, through holding forms that could be reproduced across multiple events and in multiple

locations. So I called this 'reproductive queer futurity'. (This is also a bit of a geeky joke, a twist on Lee Edelman's ideas about the normative, oppressive forces of cishet 'reproductive futurism'.)

So reproductive queer futurity is the theory, homemade mutant hope machines the practice. Homemade mutant hope machines come in many different forms, from a private journal or



The key concepts of 'homemade mutant hope machines' on one page (or 'cheat sheet'), Ben Walters, 2020.

Ben Walters is a writer, producer, programmer and critic. In 2019 he became Dr Duckie after completing an Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded PhD in partnership with Duckie, working at Queen Mary, University of London.

sketchbook to mass legal reform and social justice movements. But whatever the scale, there are certain attributes that seem to work well in making a

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hope machine more powerful and effective. Using participatory performance, for instance, can be a potent way of strengthening community and modelling agency. It's also worth taking fun seriously: it's a surprisingly powerful technology for both intervening in existing civic structures and creating new ones. And embracing queer family models of belonging and care can

facilitate material support and enable the transmission across generations of valuable, hard-won forms of understanding and action.

Some of the finest examples of homemade mutant hope machines take the form of queer urban club nights. The most powerful example of all might be the North American Ballroom community. Duckie's Saturday nights, meanwhile, have been running at London's Royal Vauxhall Tavern for a quarter of a century. And there are so many others – basically anything that offers a vehicle for distinctive, collective queer pleasure, support and world-making that wasn't there before.

Embracing queer family models of belonging and care can facilitate material support and enable the transmission across generations of valuable, hard-won forms of understanding and action.

In London, this includes nights created to serve specific racialised or migrant communities, from the Shim Sham Club in the 1930s to Club Kali since 1995 and more recent nights like BBZ, Hungama, Slav 4 U, and Homos and Houmous.

It also includes virtual nights that sprang up under lockdown conditions, most notably Queer House Party, an online event offering novel spatially distributed, digitally enabled forms of relationality and solidarity, through dance music, drag performance, social interaction and related forms of offline daytime mutual aid. Indeed, the queer value of mutation and material support has been thrown into relief by the pandemic, through the development both of forms enabling short-term support and forms with long-term benefit (for example, the way digital events can expand some kinds of accessibility).

When I finished my research and became 'Dr Duckie', we hoped to find ways to share these ideas beyond the academy. So we adapted my PhD thesis into such forms as an interactive talk and a mini-zine. Both of these use the illustration that accompanies this article – a one-page schema or 'cheat sheet' of the key concepts of homemade mutant hope machines.

There's more (including the thesis itself, if that's your bag) at duckie.co.uk/dr-duckie.



SUMMER EVENINGS WITH LENA ÉVORA

My shows are a way of expressing my emotions and world view. Storytelling is sharing with people and it's significant because it also expresses your soul, your heart. Everybody has a story to tell; stories can have different emotions, laughter, tears – and when you express these emotions in stories and music, other people can recognise themselves in them. I integrate different elements of Cape Verdean culture into my acts, taking people here in the Netherlands for a trip to

Cape Verde through all these objects, traditions and music to help them – and myself – understand why we act the way we do, why we express ourselves the way we do. The shows are entertaining; it is about the smiles on their faces, 'yes, we had a lot of fun!'. My shows are not addressed specifically to either a Dutch or a Cape Verdean audience, but to all people who are interested in music and theatre. Events are meant to bring people together. And the lack of contact as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on the entertainment and cultural sector, but is also a real threat to our wellbeing as a society.

My shows are a way of expressing my emotions and world view. Storytelling is sharing with people.

The lack of contact as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on the entertainment and cultural sector, but is also a real threat to our wellbeing as a society.

The last year has been marked by an explosion of online parties and events. Being a cultural producer myself, I decided not to follow this path. I do not think technology can substitute real, live events and it definitely can't offer the kind of lived experience I like to offer to my audience in the shows I organise. It is about connecting people. And connecting people has different layers: men, women, different generations, different cultural backgrounds, different spaces... It is about not judging too fast.

In these past months, marked by safety regulations and gathering restrictions, I organised some events which I would describe as more intimate, more flexible and more mobile. Instead of using the usual locations for cultural events in Rotterdam, we organised some concerts in the communal courtyards which are typical of Dutch urban design. The events came literally to the audience, who could safely stay at home and listen to the performances from their own balcony or window. For the events that took place on location, we needed to closely follow social distancing (1.5m in the Netherlands), hygiene and safety regulations. To be able to reach a reasonable audience, we played for smaller groups, repeating the show in different time slots or in different locations. It was a truly intensive process.

The current regulations forbid the organisation of any kind of event. Mobilising people, bringing them together physically, does not feel right in these circumstances. At my recent events I got the feeling that people did not feel safe anymore. Fewer people would show up. And you can only create this

communal experience if people do feel safe.

Despite it all, this period has become an opportunity to think and reflect,

and of course to come up with ideas for new shows and performances. There is still hope. We need to wait patiently until we can be together again. The cultural industries will then play a role in reconnecting us all!

I do not think technology can substitute real, live events and it definitely can't offer the kind of lived experience I like to offer to my audience.



Concert by Lena Évora and Toy Vieira, 2020. Photo by Cindy Vos. Copyright Lena Évora.

Rema Hamid

ON NIGHT- BOUND ALIENATION



London Loose, 2018. Photo by Rema Hamid.



Splendored Sunset, 2019. Photo by Rema Hamid.

There is solace in the darkness, a promise of something unexpected unfurling in the wings of the night. The worries of the day behind are embalmed, giv-

ing us the chance to focus on what's right in front of us. There's something about our sight being limited, it sets out a wide array of possibilities. Despite the darkness, there is hope.

A coral sky lights up the Liffey in pink, rousing the city with its afterglow. The soft

skies intensify the oncoming dusk, as the heavens thwart and expand it into itself and then a still darkness. I ponder what nights would look like in a city that didn't reject me. If there was a place that could hold a world of differences and similarities. A city dwelling that shifts and fluctuates with what's needed. A home away from all our homes, where the unfamiliar is the norm. Where those of us who feel displaced are momentarily bound in an expansive community.

To be in a place that understands the need for variety is all I want. A place

that breathes and lives as we do. Holding the collective joy and pain. Watching and stretching its bounds for the community it's there for. A place to remedy the aliena-

tion of the capitalist race. A place that holds you, in every sense of the word, through sadness, happiness and tough decisions. A place that can adapt to support and respond to times of need. Carrying with it the opportunity of a real alternative to the insular relations we have grown to keep.

Migrant communities in Dublin forge space out of nothingness, to get a semblance of what once was and how that is reimagined, in our new-found home. In the grey-clad city we stomp out dance floors of multiple meanders. As we dance into the night, the melodies mellow out what doesn't matter, leaving us only with the rhythm and our bodies. Seeing the eclectic response to sonic portraits from around the world turns the dance floor into a microscopic view of our own personal journeys. The sum of all of you is shown in the way you throw your hip, swing your head or snap your fingers. The dance floor is a map itself, revealing the unheard melodies that tie us together. There is healing in the release of inhibition and to allow yourself to just be. In the flashing of the lights, reclaimed shreds of past selves shine through, and into the stars.

There is something to be said about how the night allows time to unfold. The mystery that enshrouds us allows our mind to travel and dream up worlds where there is a home for all of us. The night sky holds comfort for the dreamers, holding the promise of the morning yet to come in its clasped hands. The entire world stretches before us endlessly, and it is in the night, we shape it.

Rema Hamid is a community activist and chronic daydreamer, weaving visions into reality one word at a time.

NIGHT WALKING IN LISBON DURING THE PANDEMIC

In November 2020, the Portuguese government introduced a night-time curfew from 11pm to 5am during the week, and from 1pm to 5am on weekends, under the 'state of emergency' that is currently in force. It is forbidden for people to move between different districts during these hours. The curfew has been enforced by local police forces (the GNR, National Guard and the PSP, Public Police), who patrol on foot and by car, night and day, and erect sporadic checkpoints along the roads. Transgressors – desperate businesses, determined partygoers, over-adventurous motorists – are fined hundreds of euros on the spot, and sometimes make the national evening news. Meanwhile, 'reasonable excuses' for ignoring the curfew include working, walking a dog, assisting elderly relatives, grocery shopping – and taking a 'hygienic' walk.

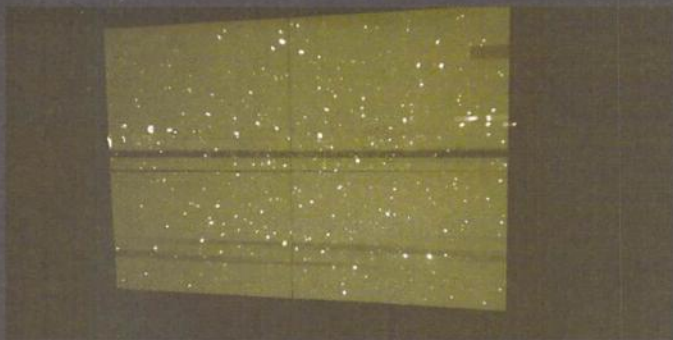
'Pitch black night like an ocean bobbing with cats and neon lights'
Manuel Hermínio Monteiro, *Fotografias de Lisboa à Noite*, 1983.



Shadows, 2021. Photo by Ana Naomi de Sousa.

So, we were grounded in Lisbon – the whole city and I – and no one could tell how long for. Trying to keep to some semblance of working hours during the day, I fell into an old habit of night walking: roaming this small, hilly, Atlantic city after dark, as autumn set to winter, and the threat of the pandemic thickened.

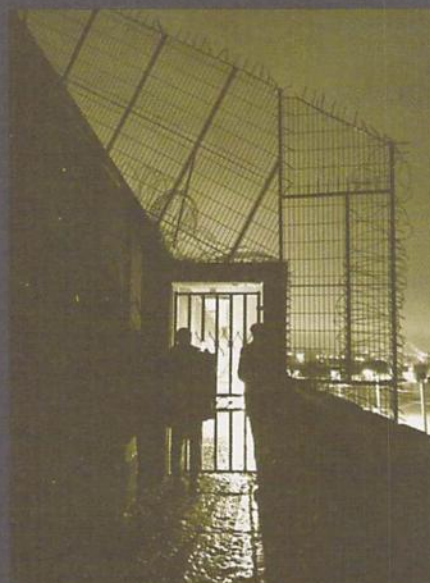
I have been night walking for about five years, mostly in London. It emerged from a much less intentional habit of wandering home on foot after finishing work, instead of taking the bus. At the time, I was editing a series of videos where people recalled their experiences of being tortured. Walking became a way of shaking off the ghosts before facing the night, giving my mind and body up to the mucky city air, and to the mesmerising cadence of strolling.



Pseudo Stars, 2021. Photo by Ana Naomi de Sousa.

Around the same period, I became friends with a group of urban explorers – all men – who sometimes allowed me to tag along with them as they burrowed, climbed and hacked their way through spaces they shouldn't, late at night. They struggled to understand the thrill I got from wandering through a deserted park late at night with my girlfriends. But with my much less adventurous, simple act of walking at night, as a woman, I too was bending the rules that govern the city.

It is banal to say that literature about walking is dominated by white male voices – but there it is. I read purposefully about walking and the city and the night after taking up night walking. Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks* and Rebecca Solnit's *Wanderlust* both made a deep impression, but most precious of all to me was *Nighthaunts* by Sukhdev Sandhu, a chronicler of Black and Brown life in London and its literature and, as such, a rare voice. Many self-styled contemporary *flâneurs* and *flâneuses* seem to live in a different world: they have walked through streets and neighbourhoods with the same names as ours, but seemingly without noticing it all. Immigrants, corner shops, housing estates, discount supermarkets, dirt, tackiness, homeless people, old people. Did they *choose* not to see?



A Peering, 2020. Photo by Ana Naomi de Sousa.

I don't walk alone at night – not feeling safe or brave enough – so I walk with friends and acquaintances. Some walks were based on vague routes, following Lisbon's old aqueduct under and over ground; or tracing a path along the southern banks of the Tejo, where long-abandoned colonial, fishing and industrial infrastructures crumble in on themselves. Once I tried to walk between the addresses where my great-grandparents used to live. Some walks were aimless, some were intentional *dérives*, others driven by small curiosities, such as looking for old geological monuments.



A Reflection, 2021, photo by Ana Naomi de Sousa.

Initially, it's a relief to be able to claim the city back from the swarms of tourists that have inundated Lisbon over the last decade. There is delight in being completely alone on a *miradouro* (viewing point) or walking uninterrupted in circles around the castle. But the cost is high, and the giddiness wears off, as the local news gets around: tiny *tasca* restaurants close their doors forever, third-generation family shops file for bankruptcy, and it becomes less clear what kind of city will emerge from the confinement. Night walking through this cityscape can be a strange and sad experience, as the weeks and months go by.

Walking through the city's Baixa downtown or Alfama neighbourhoods, most of the windows are black and shuttered: their original residents flooded out during the waves of real-estate speculation of recent years, whole buildings turned into holiday short-lets that, this year, no one has come for. With the collapse in tourism – Lisbon's biggest business – hundreds of hotels, from the old and shabby to the new and luxurious, are completely empty; only their lobbies are illuminated, the rest of their dark towers disappear into the night sky.



A Haunting, 2021, photo by Ana Naomi de Sousa.

Lisbon has long been a city of ruins – from tiny cottages to decadent palaces, their grand terraces slowly taken over by thick vines and graffiti and time. Now it becomes hard to tell them apart; the old ruins and the new ruins.

With thanks to Antonio, Margarida, Lorenzo and Derek.

REIMAGINING ROTTERDAM'S NIGHTLIFE

Rotterdam is recognised not only for its architecture, port and industrial history, but also for its vibrant history of music and nightlife. The city became

well known due to its lively jazz scene in the 1920s and has been considered a cultural capital of Cape Verdean music since the 1950s.

Rotterdam exchanged fame for notoriety in the 1990s as the cradle of a new electronic music style: gabber. Despite international acclaim, the city's club and live music circuit have been

under continuous pressure – mainly from its own municipality – for decades. In 2020, this intensified due to the lockdown regulations to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, this is a critical moment to question the roles of Rotterdam's municipality and local cultural organisations in the city's nightlife.

An industrial city becomes 'creative'

Rotterdam's economy and identity are tightly connected to intercontinental shipping, with more than half of Rotterdammers being born abroad or having at least one (grand)parent born abroad. Currently, Rotterdam aspires to attract highly educated, affluent and 'creative' individuals to transform itself from a post-industrial port city into a so-called 'creative' city. But at a cost.

The city's 'Make it Happen' marketing campaign actively positions the city as bold, edgy, progressive, international; an affordable alternative to Amsterdam, while its urban development strategy – 'Woonvisie 2030' – targets the city's demographics to attract residents with higher incomes. In practice, entire neighbourhoods are being razed to the ground and, in many cases, residents are forced to relocate – often beyond Rotterdam's borders. As such, the new 'creative' Rotterdam is not intended for all Rotterdammers.

Although nightlife is foundational to the imaginary of the creative city, surprisingly, the number of clubs, pubs and venues in Rotterdam has steadily *declined* in recent years. A recent sector report finds that this is chiefly due to increased competition with festivals, the increase of the age limit for buying alcohol from 16 to 18 years, and the rise of online meeting culture among young residents.¹ But there are other explanations to be found.

The municipality's gentrification policies include nightlife, but as a means, not an end. Consequently, Rotterdam's nightlife entrepreneurs act as urban scouts for the city's creative agenda, sacrificed when locations become economically interesting precisely because of their activities. Attracted by the buzz but annoyed by the noise, newcomers insist on the closing down of nightlife venues near their new condos, a request which the municipality happily caters to. This is problematic not only for entrepreneurs. Rotterdam's local communities (diverse in terms of class, ethnicity, gender and sexuality) suffer when their gathering spaces are threatened by urban developers backed by the Rotterdam municipality.

Nightlife in the pandemic

Change is needed, especially in light of the consequences posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The lack of concrete data on the economic impact of

This is a critical moment to question the roles of Rotterdam's municipality and local cultural organisations in the city's nightlife.

nightlife in Rotterdam hinders political lobbying for financial support at local and national levels and, ironically, for research into ways to safely and profitably reopen

nightlife venues. This is dire because all Rotterdam clubs are technically bankrupt and there is, at the time of writing, no prospect of them reopening.

The central government does offer some financial support for the existing businesses. All companies registered in the Netherlands with less than 250 employees that lost more than 30% of their turnover due to COVID-19 measures, but have ongoing fixed costs, can apply for reimbursement of their fixed costs.² In addition, there is the Temporary Emergency Bridging Measure for Sustained Employment with which entrepreneurs can have part of their wage costs reimbursed if their turnover has decreased by more than 20%.³ This

The municipality's gentrification policies include nightlife, but as a means, not an end.

measure is designed to retain employment as far as possible and to allow companies to adjust to the new situation together with their employees. However, a maximum

of 70% of the wage costs are reimbursed, and as a result many people in the hardest-hit sectors – such as nightlife – have still been laid off.

Local support measures are still rare. Most clubs stopped paying rent during the first lockdown and have not resumed since. The payment of this rent debt was often postponed but never cancelled. As a first step in the right direction, the municipality of Rotterdam has offered entrepreneurs who rent from them a 25–50% rent discount, depending on the lost turnover. However, clubs still struggle with large debts, uncertainty and legal wrangling. Despite these financial circumstances and little to no support from national and local politicians, Rotterdam's D66 party submitted an initiative in early 2021 requesting ten new 24-hour permits to be issued in Rotterdam through a tender. If this proposal is approved by the city council, this means more meeting places at night with structurally supported programmes, resulting in a stronger position for nightlife in Rotterdam.

Meanwhile, it is not only entrepreneurs who are worried about the future of Rotterdam's nightlife: there is also rising concern among residents. This was already the case before the pandemic, when in February 2019 the demonstration *Opstaan voor de Nacht* (Rise for the Night) attracted over 2000 protesters to the City Hall. More recently, panel discussions such as 'Nightlife During and After Corona' in October 2020 and the Fietsrave demonstration in November 2020 were closely monitored by thousands of residents through the social media channels of N8W8 R'dam (Night Watch Rotterdam), an independent advisory board dedicated to creating a vibrant, inclusive and accessible nightlife in Rotterdam.

A vision for Rotterdam's night

Nightlife is an inextricable part of the social fabric of Rotterdam. But to reap its benefits and thus strengthen Rotterdam's position as an attractive city to live and work in, the approach to night culture must change. The first step towards this has been taken by increasing the number of 24-hour permits in Rotterdam. Now it is important to work on implementing the motion, passed by the city council in September 2019, that calls for the development of a city-wide vision for the night. Its implementation has only been symbolic. This is disappointing for numerous reasons, but especially because the current crisis could be a springboard to forge sustainable policies, ensuring a vibrant and inclusive nightlife in Rotterdam – with a lasting positive impact on its inhabitants.⁴ One way to achieve this is by putting the 'agent of change' principle into action, following London's example.⁵ This principle places the responsibility for soundproofing on the newcomer to an area, rather than on the venue or nightclub that was already there. An even more sustainable option is to designate lasting 'creative clusters' in the city, where nightlife activities cannot be curtailed. That way, nightlife entrepreneurs will have more secure prospects and they will be able to focus on and invest in what they do best: bringing people together. Without action, Rotterdam may lose most of its valuable nightlife entrepreneurs and infrastructure. In other words: it is time to actually make it happen.

¹ Van Spronsen & Partners, *De Discotheek en Club in Beeld* (2017), <https://www.spronsen.com/brancheinfo/discotheek-club-beeld/>

² Netherlands Enterprise Agency, <https://business.gov.nl/subsidy/corona-reimbursement-fixed-costs-smes/>

³ Netherlands Enterprise Agency, <https://business.gov.nl/subsidy/corona-crisis-temporary-emergency-measure-now/>

⁴ Thys Boer, 'What Is the Socio-Cultural Impact of Underground Electronic Dance Music Scenes on the Inhabitants of Big Dutch Cities?' (Master's thesis, Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2019).

⁵ Mayor of London, <https://www.london.gov.uk/questions/2017/2465>

Thys Boer is the initiator of N8W8 R'dam, an independent advisory body dedicated to supporting, promoting and initiating nightlife developments in Rotterdam through information exchange and cooperation between entrepreneurs and local government.

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CONTROLLING POLICE ACTIVITY IN A PANDEMIC CONTEXT



INSPEÇÃO-GERAL DA ADMINISTRAÇÃO INTERNA
Gabinete da Inspetora-Geral

Police activity aims to ensure the security conditions for the free exercise of fundamental rights by all members of the community. With the right of coercive power, police forces act often on the difficult boundaries between the possibility of the use of force and the respect for fundamental rights. Objectively, the police force's duties fit into two contexts: maintenance of security (a constellation in which the use of force is close to situations of self-defence); and civil protection (a constellation in which the use of force is close to situations of the right of necessity). In the current pandemic context, there are also restrictions to the individual rights of the community members, such as a dynamic curfew in various periods of 2020 and 2021.

Society enters confinement. Police forces continue their activity. There is an increasing need for necessary measures and cautions to combat the spread of the disease. In this scenario, police activity, already difficult and complex, faces new challenges. Everything must be done immediately, now at the pace of demands that are always new and sometimes even surprising.

The control of police activity parallels police activity itself. There are several entities that carry out such control. There are control centres that collect data on police activity which can then constitute grounds for useful recommendations or red flags that will have to be taken into account by political decision-makers. However, other entities, namely those with disciplinary competence (such as the Inspectorate General of Home Affairs, or *Inspecção-Geral da Administração Interna*), maintain the power of intervention as far as their competences go.

In this regard, training is an area which cannot be neglected and the Inspectorate General of Home Affairs dedicates special attention to this. Awareness of and/or detailed explanation of the circumstances in which police activity must take place, are also areas in which the Inspectorate General of Home Affairs tries to provide answers whenever it is deemed necessary and useful. In what concerns disciplinary aspects, intervention is subject to legal criteria and procedures. Criteria concerning the instruments of intervention involve authorisation only through the procedural models foreseen by the law. Criteria concerning these legal procedures concerns the production, gathering and valuation of evidence. The police officer is, in procedural terms, a defendant, with the inherent statute.

That statute comprises a fundamental principle of the sanctioning law, which determines that, whenever there is doubt, the decision must be in favour of the defendant (in Latin: *in dubio pro reo*). This is an essential non-negotiable rule in a democratic state based on the rule of law, which cannot be compressed or restrained regardless of the circumstances. And it is a constraining factor on disciplinary action in this area.

Thus, the sanctioning law assumes this double trait: on the one hand, it ensures compliance with the functional duties of each police officer and, on the other hand, but not less importantly, it ensures the safeguarding of the rights of all citizens, including police officers that face disciplinary action. Clearly, this perspective remains unchanged in a pandemic context. The specificity that is felt is that of the follow-up of new complaints and new restrictions inherent to the pandemic situation.

In this context, the pandemic poses particular challenges to police activity (and control thereof) regarding foreign citizens. The law regarding foreign citizens imposes restrictions of movement on third countries' citizens within the national territories of the European Union. Accordingly, the implementation of forced returns of citizens, carried out by border police forces, takes place when, by administrative or judicial decision, they must leave the national territory. Since 2015, the Inspectorate General of Home Affairs has been in charge of monitoring those return operations, which are carried out by the Immigration and Borders Service (*Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras* – SEF). Forced return monitoring operations occur in the presence of inspectors of the Inspectorate General of Home Affairs during the operation, who verify compliance with the regulations, as well as the respect for the fundamental rights of the person to be returned. In a pandemic context, these operations face several constraints, including the temporary closure of airspace. This is an area of particular tension, between the security solutions that the states do not relinquish, and the effective respect for the fundamental rights of all citizens.

We must underline that the new reality imposes several challenges. First of all, the challenge of individual and collective safety. Then, with the pandemic, there are new kinds of complaints, new conflicts, new needs, from members of the community and from members of the security forces and services. All this, under the auspices of a democratic state based on the rule of law, must include intransigent respect for the dignity of all individuals. There are, obviously, alternatives to the democratic model. However, none, throughout human history, has proven to be better.

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NITE

*As the darkness
Envelops the cellar
I think about labour
And how it scarcely gets better*

*My hands tremble
Charging Red Lights
Scared to the bone by
Mannequins being disguised*

*As the Darkness,
Penetrates them and
My body, I become an Entity
Roughly somebody*

*Never knew that being
My own Boss
Would cost me this
Much*

*But being a Role Model
For my Children has
Been the horizon
To continue this path*

*Still the Hope in my Veins
Shining greener than ever
It's dangerous to feel like
You are someone who matters*

THE AUGMENTED CITY: NOCTURNAL PLATFORM LABOUR UNDER COVID-19 CONDITIONS IN BERLIN

Anyone standing at Berlin's Gendarmenmarkt or Kottbusser Tor at night during the COVID-19 pandemic – as we did during our field research – will not

find themselves surrounded by crowds of night owls, as was the case a year ago, but rather by those who cannot stay at home. These are homeless people, bottle collectors, but also nocturnal platform workers who deliver food or packages, or are on their way to collect and maintain the many mobility services of the so-called smart city, such as electric scooters or rental bicycles. In this scenario, we are beginning to recognise the relevance of platform workers, who as social figures have been shaping (night-time) urban space for a long time.

In recent years, online platforms have become central infrastructures of our everyday lives. A glance at our smartphones already shows this: Google Maps guides us through the city, Facebook and Google structure our access to information, Lieferando brings us dinner and Amazon everything else, Helpling gets us a cleaner, Uber a cab ride, Airbnb a vacation apartment, and Tinder our next relationship. The pandemic has accelerated the demand for and satisfaction of numerous needs of countless city residents who have been staying at home 24 hours a day. Takeaway from one's favourite restaurant, having books for this evening's reading group delivered, or getting from A to B safely without relying on public transportation – there are apps for these and everything else. And with them, the constant demand for platform labour rises.

During the first lockdown in many hard-hit cities, only delivery personnel could have been seen on the streets, demonstrating the key role of such platforms in the rise of digital capitalism. Nevertheless, it is during the pandemic that these workers have been particularly exposed to health and financial risks.

What does COVID-19 mean for the mobile platform workers themselves? How do they bear the risks?

Do you feel that corona makes it harder to find work?

'I'll tell you honestly. I also found work easily during the corona period. I mean, people are after their money. They want to keep making money, they don't care about corona. That's why it continued to be no problem for me to find a job.'

– Osman, 'Juicer' (e-scooter recharger) and Amazon Flex parcel carrier

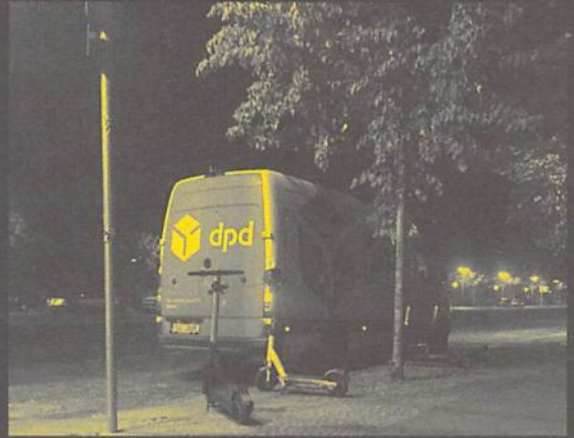
In connection with the pandemic, did you have any difficulties or breakdowns?

'No, drivers are always needed.'

– Juicer and Hermes parcel carrier



Night-time food delivery in Neukölln.



e-scooters are collected by a DPD parcel delivery service van.

We are beginning to recognise the relevance of platform workers, who as social figures have been shaping night-time urban space for a long time.

The views of the platform workers we interviewed contain resignation but also a surprising perspective.

In times of hard lockdown, there have been occasional sharp drops in demand for certain platform-based services, such as e-scooters. However, job ads in search of subcontractors continue to be placed during lockdown and subsequently new hires are constantly being made. This phenomenon indicates that many of the platform workers who had initially lost their jobs moved on to their next job within the platform economy.

Our field research supports this, showing that some of the interviewees lost their jobs at the beginning of the pandemic. For example, they worked for a subcontractor as e-scooter chargers, a field which was destroyed by the crisis. However, they did not consider it to have had a detrimental effect on their careers because they were moving on to another job within the gig economy, for example as a parcel carrier or courier driver.

One reason for this can be found in workers' experiences (often for years at a time) of enduring extremely volatile working conditions and limited job security in the platform sector. Relying on just one job was not an option for many even before the pandemic. Navigating flexibly back and forth between platforms and different jobs has long been the norm. For example, some of our interviewees not only work for subcontractors of the e-scooter provider, Lime, collecting their scooters, but also use the same van in other time slots or simultaneously to provide moving services via MyHammer, a platform for finding



e-scooters at night in Berlin Mitte.



Pandemic Times: nightscapes without people.

Precariousness due to job insecurity and health hazards are the characteristics of crisis-ridden self-entrepreneurship.

removal services. They can deliver packages during the day and at night, using the same DPD delivery vehicle to collect a few e-scooters. These two examples from our research reveal the reality of 'low-threshold platform work', which is precarious irrespective of the pandemic. It is these 'digital labourers' who serve as a relief valve for losses caused by the economic downturn. Only their flexibility and self-entrepreneurship make it possible to maintain services.

Strolling through the empty streets of Berlin during the pandemic, we see the platform workers more clearly than usual. Digital labourers earn their living by working extremely flexibly – evenings, late nights, when most other people are asleep. At any time of the day or night, they drive through the city in delivery trucks. Massive time pressure, varying piece rates below the minimum wage, and unhealthily long working hours have not been fundamentally changed by the pandemic. These workers have long been navigating flexibly back and forth between platforms and different jobs. Relying on just one job was not an option for many, even before the pandemic. One often can't endure the disastrous working conditions for long and job security is rarely a given.

Precariousness due to job insecurity and health hazards are the characteristics of crisis-ridden self-entrepreneurship: fragmented, extremely fluid, and often only temporary, successive employment relationships.

Our interviewees state that 'our work is always needed'. But the work they have access to locks them into precarious living conditions, which are becoming even more precarious during COVID-19. State aid does not benefit them now, as it did not benefit them before. Thus, while the impact of the global pandemic is

for many people an extreme decrease in their livelihoods and they only see the outlines of the 'new normal', what we are now experiencing seems to be 'the old normal' for many platform workers. The bankruptcy of several smart economy companies deprived of venture capital and the daily demise of individual subcontractors in the field of platform economy are experienced by platform workers as going from one day to the next no longer being able to reach their bosses by phone. Meanwhile, their last paycheque dwindles, while at the same time some platform companies achieve record profits due to the crisis.



An e-scooter recharger told us a story illustrated in *Faces of Labour* by Jola Zych (back cover). He rented a cellar to charge his scooters. Before, the cellar had been occupied by a design student, who had left behind her mannequins. The faces are those of three of the mannequins lit by the lights in the cellar where he, accustomed to night shifts with very little sleep, was sitting in the dark and waiting for the e-scooters to charge. He felt like they were watching him. The mannequins also evoke gig workers who are often treated as if they are non-human.

Laura-Solmaz Litschel is a member of the NITE team and a freelance journalist. She is a research associate at the Berlin Institute for Migration Studies at Humboldt University. Her research focuses on nocturnal platform labour and digital nights in the augmented city. This text is based on the results of her field research, which she conducted with the help of student assistant Jola Zych.

Jola Zych is a MA student of Sociology and Technology Studies at the TU Berlin and a student assistant on the HERA-funded Night Spaces (NITE) project based at the Humboldt University of Berlin. She is also pursuing art and poetry.

ZING TING



West Aarhus Nation Logo,
2021, image by Hunnid22.

Over the past year, during the pandemic, each member of Hunnid22 took their own paths and then converged onsite and online to produce music and videos.

What follows is a series of shouts of angst, at times creative, at times for fun and other times out of desperation. The nights during the pandemic intensified such feelings. The text emerged from a Zoom conversation and rounds of Instagram and email exchanges during the fall of 2020.

LESTER: 'I left for South Africa and worked on my uncle's farm. The nights were on some level peaceful and relaxing. I had to get away. I was lucky in a sense.'

HASSAN, the group's manager, described it this way: 'We had adversity as a group. There is no denying that about the pandemic. We still had to find ways to get our music to the ears of those who like it. That resulted in us getting a partnership with **SOUNDBOKS** and we were able to invite a close group of friends and supporters out in the nature and showcase the whole **AV VOL 001 EP**. We kept it small. Day turned into night and we grew stronger. Nature meant going to the Botanical Garden or to Risskov forest, both beautiful urban nature spots in Aarhus.'

TEEJAY333 remarked that, 'Look, everything has been difficult during corona. For me, personally, I have just been coping by gaming and making music in my bedroom lately. I mean, [there] ain't shit to do when everything is closed during lockdown, even though private parties are still large, since the youth can't be stopped. But, I don't attend most of them, [because] sometimes you gotta think about your parents and put their health first, before your own...'

SADAK contracted the virus. KOFI's entire family was also infected. He, like TOMMY, turned inwards and focused on gaining skills. Night-time became a study period, with 'music production at home and more focus on my craft.'

SAM added that '[it] changed our focus. [We went] from stage performance to content creation on the Internet and trying to strengthen our brand – "We R 122". Our hype had died a little after our concerts... the focus [switched] to writing [lyrics] down, so when the chance was finally there to record [we would be ready]. [It was] a blessing in disguise. [We started] writing as a whole and our work ethic got stronger.'

Many of the group members referred to 'STU' (aka the studio) as if it were a person, a force. STU encouraged ten-minute challenges: writing exercises to create lyrics. The studio has become a night-time friend for Hunnid22, welcoming the young men and inviting artistic banter.

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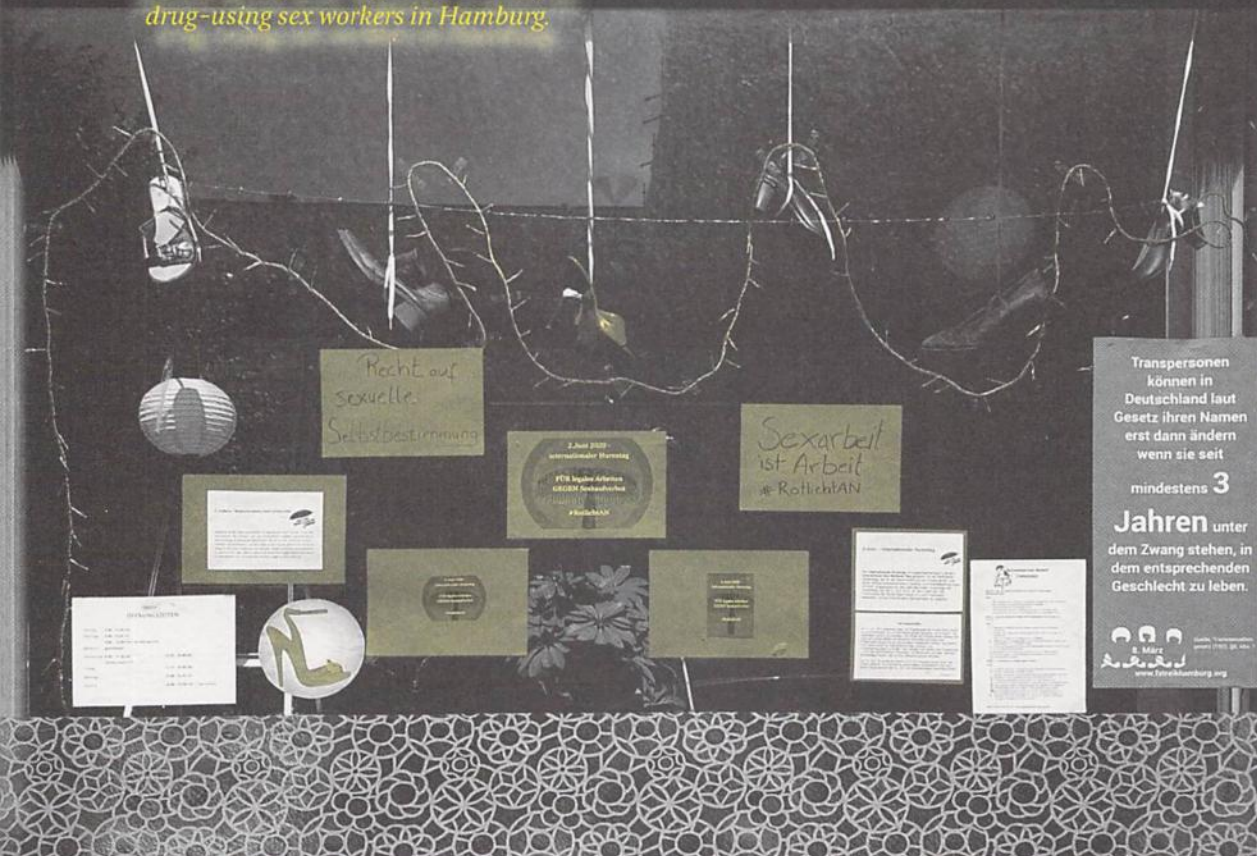
Hunnid22 is a rap group from Aarhus, Denmark, whose members and self-identifications include: Lester/U.N.G (South African and Danish), Hassan Abdi (Somali), Gunshot Sammy (Somali), Sadak Bashir (Somali),

Kofi Ismail (Somali/Congolese), HomeboySoul (Somali), Tommy (Vietnamese) and Teejay333 (South Sudanese). The name 'Hunnid22' refers to 1-22 or AV (Aarhus Vest, West Aarhus).

NIGHT-TIME SEX WORK UNDER COVID-19 CONDITIONS

*A conversation with Gudrun Greb and
Sandra Busse from Ragazza, a centre for
drug-using sex workers in Hamburg*

During this time, we were even happy
when women said that they were staying
with their clients ... with the pandemic,
even something like that was sometimes
a comparatively good option.



It has become clear how little value low-threshold social work has in society when our funding is cut or we don't get protective equipment.

Has the transformation of the urban night during the COVID-19 pandemic affected the situation for sex workers?

Public space has emptied out, especially at night. Some women ask us to open earlier because there is hardly anyone out during the night, and hardly anyone after 12pm. We have therefore changed the opening hours from 7pm to 10pm. Violence has increased; we have had to deal with women being raped; and of course since the beginning of the pandemic they are at greater risk of being snatched, with fewer people around. Women are now entering less secure places to work and consume.

At the beginning of the lockdown in 2020, many facilities closed down. This meant that we hardly had a chance to arrange sleeping and living spaces for the women. During this time, we were even happy when women said that they were staying with their clients. If a woman told us that she had met someone on Facebook and wanted to stay with him for a few days, suddenly we would say 'that's lucky, at least you have a place to stay'. Under normal non-pandemic conditions, we would say 'that's too dangerous, you don't know the guy', but with the pandemic, even something like that was sometimes a comparatively good option.

There were also prison releases of sex workers due to the pandemic, correct?

Yes, some. These were sex workers who were in prison for engaging in sex work with the aim of financing their own drug consumption and survival on the streets, or because they worked in places where sex work is prohibited, for example in the St. Georg district near Hamburg's main railway station. Because of the pandemic, those women who were in prison for minor offences were released from one day to the next. The idea was to empty the prisons so that fewer infections would occur there. Some of these were people who had no place of residence and while in prison were put on substitution therapy. They were then simply put out on the street and had to find somewhere to stay. They had no accommodation, no substitute, simply nothing. Some people ended up completely on the street and were totally destitute after a short time. Here in Hamburg, there was hardly any supply at the beginning because many facilities were closed due to the pandemic. In addition, there were completely different problems caused by the pandemic: there was no income for the women any more. They could no longer beg because the S-Bahn trains were empty. They couldn't steal because the shops were closed and they couldn't prostitute themselves either, because it became generally prohibited and there were hardly any customers left on the streets. This is all because of COVID-19.

How has the situation been for you as a sex work support organisation since the pandemic?

At the beginning of the pandemic, we didn't have respiratory masks and protective clothing, which was difficult because drug-using sex workers are a particularly vulnerable group. Now we have enough

equipment and FFP3 masks, but it took time. To avoid infection, fewer sex workers can come to the facility at the same time than before. We also had to do away with overnight stays and we have to constantly make sure that we keep adequate physical distance. Additionally, there are always women who do not want to, or are unable to, leave the centre. This means that sometimes there is a long queue at our door because while some are inside, others have to wait. This kind of thing is dangerous under COVID-19 conditions. Protecting the women from infecting each other is exhausting, but the low-threshold support and counselling work we do here is also becoming more difficult. Try comforting a woman who has experienced massive violence with the prescribed one and a half metre distance. You can hardly say: 'Yes, what happened to you is terrible, but don't get too close to me'. That's not how support work is done. Many of the women are overtired from life and 24/7 work on the streets, and want to rest at our place. This is also difficult with corona regulations. For example, how should we deal with a woman falling asleep at our table in the common room? Normally we would take her to one of our beds, but that is no longer possible because we had to close the sleeping areas due to the COVID-19 regulations. So, whether it is clothing, counselling, or food, all our work has been rearranged and we have had to react flexibly to ever-changing conditions.

As an organisation, do you feel that the importance of your work is being seen in these difficult times?

At the moment, it is always said that corona makes it clear who the real heroes and heroines of everyday life are. Shop assistants are applauded as well as nurses caring for older people. At the same time, this work is otherwise always totally devalued. Here, too, it has become clear how little value low-threshold social work has in society when our funding is cut or we don't get protective equipment. I think there is a connection between this lack of support and the values people have in our society. Sex work has always had held a stigma around spreading diseases. The COVID-19 pandemic is no different. Such stigmatisation against sex workers is reproduced again and again although it has no empirical basis. At the same time, too little is being done to protect drug-using sex workers and those who work with them from infection. The pandemic has changed public space and the urban night, so it has had a serious impact on sex workers. The already dangerous lives of drug-using sex workers have been made even more dangerous by the pandemic.

Gudrun Greb is the managing director of the association Ragazza.

Sandra Busse has worked as a social worker in the project for more than 20 years.

GOING OUT IS A NEED



Left: Bella Vista Cruise, flyer, 2018. By XDGENERAL, courtesy of Jorge da Veiga.



SEGER: *How were your events before corona?*

JORGE: Preparation is very important, the time you take to prepare an event matters, it allows you to work on all the details that make your event special, different from the ones offered by other organisers. I always paid a lot of attention to these small details as I operate in a niche market – the Cape Verdeans in Rotterdam are my target audience. I also co-organise R&B parties, but this also isn't mainstream.

SEGER: *How long have you been involved in event organisation?*

JORGE: Since 2005, so for 15 years now. It all started with underground parties in Rotterdam, I was finishing my studies and I knew I wanted to have something to do with event organisation in the future. I was really enjoying it: festivals, parties, all the logistics, so I went further along this path.

SEGER: *What is the meaning of nightlife for the Cape Verdean community?*

JORGE: For our community, coming together, being together, partying together is extremely important, in all the different formats and shapes it takes.

SEGER: *What formats for example?*

JORGE: Funerals are a good example. Our funerals are always full of people; now not anymore because of corona, but at my grandmother's funeral there were 1500 people in attendance.

SEGER: *Here in Rotterdam?*

JORGE: Yes, here in Rotterdam. You can imagine the unity, solidarity among the community. If you celebrate something, you invite people. There can be tensions, but people are happy to see each other.

SEGER: *And how does this solidarity influence your parties?*

JORGE: I recognise it. I notice my clients are loyal. In 15 years, I have earned a good reputation. People know that I deliver what

I know that when I organise a two-day event after corona, those two days won't be enough.

was offered, people know that if I become engaged in some project, I do it at a certain level and they receive value for money. My clients trust me, they see an event is organised by Jorge, they say 'OK, let's go'. Of course, marketing is still important, it is half of the work. If you do not advertise, people simply won't come.

SEGER: *What are the attitudes towards nightlife now?*

JORGE: People want to go out, to see each other, to hug each other. You really notice it; I saw it at Christmas – all these dinner tables with 20 people. We really need this contact and it is extremely difficult with all the corona rules and restrictions. To be together, greet each other, but also simply dance and let loose. I see how events are important for people, extremely important. Of course, you have also your work, but being together in a different setting matters a lot and you don't have it anymore.

SEGER: *What is the impact of all these restrictions on the communities?*

People need events. They are just waiting for the reopening ... When the time comes, there will be a real boom in the market. And then, new initiatives will emerge.

Jorge: A community is a group of people who like to meet each other and be together. I know that when I organise a two-day event after corona, those two days won't be enough.

SEGER: *How did you deal with these restrictions?*

JORGE: Personally, besides being an event organiser, I am also a lecturer. So for me the teaching at least continued, online of course for now. I contemplated what I could do besides event organisation and that is sharing my knowledge and experience with others. That's how the ideas came to set up masterclasses and write a book, *Successful Events in 10 Steps*. And of course, I also reflected on the future – making plans, thinking about what else I could do. Events are my passion and I want to develop and grow in this field.

SEGER: *And how are your colleagues dealing with the current situation?*

JORGE: Very differently. Some left and started working in a completely different field. For example, my sound man has now started a house-moving company. In the bus in which he used to transport all the sound equipment, he now moves furniture and boxes. I had the opportunity to stay and wait because of my teaching position.

SEGER: *But you are still staying optimistic?*

JORGE: Yes, definitely. People need events. They are just waiting for the reopening. Weddings, company events, clubs. When the time comes, there will be a real boom in the market. And then, new initiatives will emerge.

BEGAN IN FABRIC

First came fabric
smith fields? no, smooth fields On
outskirts of roman walls
The going ons?
anything but smooth
traders, ravers gather to display finest
linen shenanigans?
a given vagabonds, holymen, vagrants,
Villains
them times, best lives:
short living
loose lips, fast fists:
blood spilling
all fair in St Bartholomew's fayre
Auction off your soul for the best price
if you haven't got a soul, sell your ex wife
all for a laugh
when time was a teenager
but neighbours were neighbours Noise
complaints, their
labour thus the party tamed its tail
next follows beef
the smooth now smith
the market marries the city becomes the
roughest rib When
the sun leaves the room the moon
perches on the roof
bare stars in the sky for a constellation –
from far flung destinations
traders travel
down drove roads

herding livestock
Pulling carts,
hooded punters in queuing for the club
cattle brought in
bought and slaughtered
hacked and bled and chopped and
weighed and priced and
sold in portions
strung up like coats in cloakrooms
spread open like thick curtains
Come world come see the business
blink once everything is bought up
be fast, be cautious
don't come if nauseous
all priced on the day
All Parts on display
these ribs, legs, guts and hearts on display
shoulders,
tongues and thighs on display
midnight break, the pub is this way for the
pious, go find the monastery
spend your bucks here
get your rocks off, til you're weary
wander round the centre, off your head
jeering as the
convicts lost their heads, hung, drawn.
quartered like
pints pulled on four corners
so cruelly stretched that fibre that flesh

that fluid how fresh how sweet this stretch
this music and
sex and
Time's in its twenties now the world eats
war
the sky burps
the ground belches
This city now bombed out smear but the
city has cement
to spare
this city is a layer cake
a rubble and ash foundation Smithfield is
a layer cake
pathways upon tube stations
Grand Avenue, strewn like a long felled
beast beneath its
ribs, its meaty heart,
beats a night market
No stars left for a constellation
street lights guide traders to their
destination in HGVs,
in White Vans
staff dress code
white hard hats
white lab coats Restaurants,
come through curtain restaurants
come make orders
One, three, five star, pub down corner all

equal front of
the counter
All priced on the day
all parts on display
this skin and bone and offal on display
tender, fancy
fluid and fresh
everything must go
get what you can get
And old cold storages redressed as club
houses Thus was
Fabric
no stars left for a constellation
Google maps guide ravers to their final
station
via TFL,
in uber cabs,
from high rises, from the shires English
weather hobbles us together clothed In
our finest linen vagabonds, Holy men,
vagrants, villains
punters queueing
hoodied up
like blinkered horses
down drove roads
down here
Cattle pay fares to get slaughtered
overcoats hung in cloakrooms
like carcasses on railings, you
enter via double doors

This Fabric is a sweatbox This Fabric is a
layer cake garage
on the top floor dubstep in room two
bangers on the
dance floor Kano's dropping layer cake
two fingers glock the dry ice two fingers
pinch a cigarette
two fingers purse the wet lips two
fingers wipe the hot wet
Strobe light technicolor DJ curates the
score MCs on pulpit beckoning the
hordes 140 bpm

rattling the floors the masses roar

pulled apart by 808s
second glances, dirty necks, Heady hearts.
a slice of lust,

the pop of ear, the speakers hum Plastic

cups and spiced rum
and ginger beer and dirty whispers, stank
face, no respite
distant laughter, spilt beer

brethren, mate don't step on creps, no
space to pose
no shaking hands,
just bop and nods

popping shoulders
shaking thighs

On a high, In the fray

all feelings on display

all love, vibe, rage and joy on display

delirium, energy and courage on display
This fluid on flesh

this chorused hot sweat this grime
pumped neck this screw
face flex

whatever comes next I'm ruined I'm
wrecked

brief intimacy in dark corners sticky
floors, drums, bass punctuated by
broken men wailing down phones at
8 am

communion in stale air'd churches faces
blur but not the focus
not the smiles, not the love
in this moment it's all love

in this moment, thats enough

bass make a perfect ripple a fairy's circle
the buzz will lose you
if you ever stop

so never stop but then you do

now you're a decade cold
wondering when
time got old

mutton and scruffy buttons
strung together by memories

*Was sixteen when I came here the church
played yellow*

*submarine was fifteen when I first snuck in
sharing rizla on the staircase
I wore nothing cept for swimwear
And the Toilets were a madness
and if you fall asleep they cart you off to A&E
He's Ukrainian
I'm kenyan
just met just now down in room three*

In a moment of silence you
can hear the trains howling past
sometimes
the oomph from the bass from the DJ's
track bump bump
on the top floors of tower blocks
Concrete conducts Bass, you see
No matter what walls built
what fences what luxury flats
the frequencies with eed through the brick
and yes,
Neighbours will neighbour
noise complaints, will labour
Time ages
problems remain the same

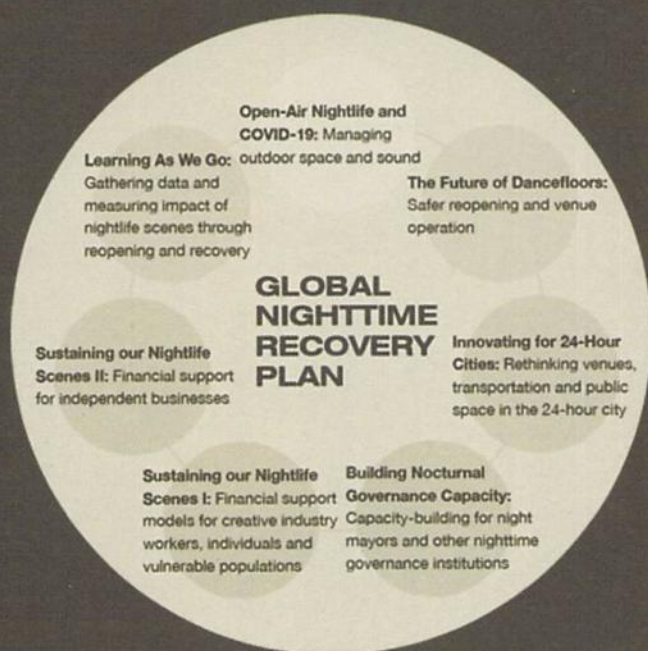
Down Charterhouse they found bodies
buried long ago

perhaps it was the plague but this is not
that poem

perhaps it was a rave

NIGHTTIME.org

This guide is written to provide all members of the night-time ecosystem the knowledge and tools to aid their cities in planning for safe, intentional, and equitable re-opening. Each chapter includes guidance from re-opening to re-imagination:



RESOLVE: Analysis of cities' immediate actions to contain COVID-19 spread – *where most stakeholders are today*

RESILIENCE and RETURN: Tools and strategies to shape recovery

REIMAGINATION and REFORM: Scenario planning to define the next normal

Nighttime.org is an online hub for anyone interested in the planning and protection of life after dark. Here you can easily engage with the latest news, opinions and tools strengthening night-time and creative cultures in cities across the world. The platform aims to shine a light on the importance of prospering and independent night-time communities in the broader picture of a city, and to empower those communities with the knowledge and resources to become more resilient. Nighttime.org is powered by VibeLab.

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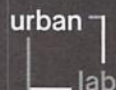
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