

James Cauty: The Aftermath Dislocation Principle *An Interview with Steve Lowe*

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The Aftermath Dislocation Principle (ADP) is a 1:87 scale dystopian cityscape in the form of a mobile installation made up of three artworks by artist Jimmy Cauty. ADP was first shown in 2015 at [Dismaland](#), Banksy's 'bemusement' theme-park in Weston-super-Mare. Initially built as a static model without the containers, the model was subsequently scaled down and the three containers added so that the exhibition could be mobilised to create the [ADP Riot Tour](#).

ADP, the main riot tour container, is a 40ft container that houses a vast post-apocalyptic landscape populated only by the police and media crews. The landscape is set somewhere in Bedfordshire and is known as 'Old Bedford' in a mythical middle England. The model is viewed through peepholes in the sides of the container. ADP which has been decorated with impromptu graffiti, messages and artwork by the public throughout the tour.

The interior is lit by miniature street lighting. Three LED spotlights roam across the set in a continuous loop and a sound system plays police radio chatter and police helicopter sound effects.

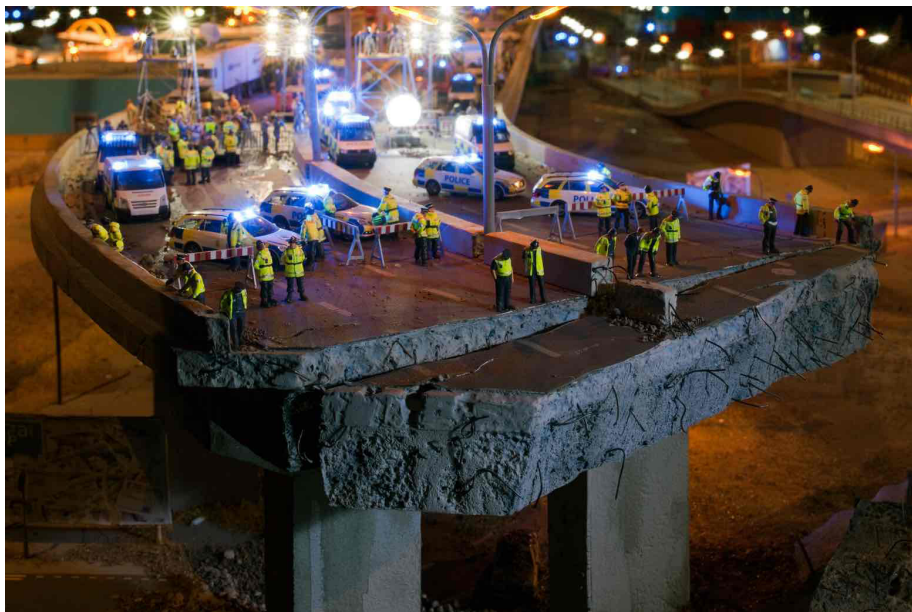


Figure 1. ADP Police cars are everywhere, blue lights flashing lighting a diorama of a ruined city at night, (L-13). (Higher resolution copies of the photographs are included in the pdf accompanying this article).

A map of riot locations and a series of riot history pamphlets were produced for each location. Communities in the different riot locations engaged with the exhibition creatively. A group in Leeds made a [riot map](#) and riot stories of the city, in other places people, have been uncovering their local history, and engaging young people with the ideas of protest and direct action.

The research for this article took place between October and December 2016 as ADP1 toured the country. We visited two installations, one in Croydon and one in Oxford, intrigued by the notion of imaginary landscapes and dystopian place making. Our visits to ADP led us on to an exploration of model making, art practice and critical cartography in relation to our research interests in participatory mapping and urban planning. Our observations generated a series of themes and questions which resulted in an interview with Steve Lowe, director of [L-13](#) on behalf of the artist. L-13 worked closely with Jimmy Cauty in realising the project and was instrumental in organising the Riot Tour.

Critical Mapping and Representation

Livingmaps is interested in critical cartography: unconventional maps and map makers, as well as maps that support a political perspective and a potential for citizen engagement. Are you interested in map making? Are you surprised we consider your ADP model as a mapping work?

Steve Lowe (SL): I wouldn't necessarily have identified ourselves as specifically interested in mapping, but we are probably more so than we'd have thought if you hadn't asked the question. Jimmy's work and a lot of what we do at functions within a kind of counter-cultural topography that we navigate our way through. We are very aware of such things as psycho-geography and alternative readings of where and how we live. The landscape, both cultural and literal is a recurring theme.

I am not at all surprised you consider ADP as a mapping work. The first thing Jimmy did when we started organizing the tour was to literally present a map of the UK with the word RIOT written across it. Then one of the first fundraising editions we made was a map showing the tour route. Alongside this we used other mapping devices to work out such things as funding, tour literature and press. For example, we decided early on that we would only focus on local press, and that [pamphlets](#) should be written by people in the area the ADP was visiting. There was a lot of focus on the local whilst working out the logistics of a national tour.

The Model

Your choice of building a model representation with figurines is very interesting to us because it is a quite unconventional representation of the territory. Critical mapping deals with unconventional modes of representation. Why did you choose this specific mode of representation? Do you think that that this mode of representation provokes reactions that you could not show through a 2D image, a film, an exhibition or a book?

SL : Model making is a form familiar to us all, whether from childhood, adult hobbies or such things as architectural planning. In that sense, it is very conventional and a non-complex easily readable language, albeit one not often used in art. It was also important to the ADP that it didn't become about subverting that language as some kind of tricky art statement. It really had to be a good piece of model making that people could engage with on a very immediate level. Jimmy wanted it to look as real as possible so people could enter into the world he was making – it's as simple as that. The level of skill and time involved in doing this also helped in terms of people spending so much time investigating the entire scene. Putting the model in the container and sending it to the riot sites is what made it more unconventional. The fact it could turn up in your town and superimpose its world on yours.

Architects and urban designers sometimes use models to visualise a new development to win public support for regeneration schemes. In contrast to ADP these models often convey an idealised (some might say utopian) vision of a place, devoid of the mess, noise and disorder which characterises the real world. Animators and gamers also invite us to play in imaginary, often violent phantasy worlds. Your models of post-apocalyptic scenarios invite the viewer to tell their own story. Are there other models that inspired you?

Is your aim in creating the models to provoke us remember our own aftermath stories, or imagine new ones?

SL: Jimmy is more interested in subverting the conventional forms of model making with their call to order and bright futures than inspiration from other models. Perhaps a touch of healthy competition with the Chapman Brothers' cartoon horror creations. He also says he was influenced by his dad making a model of WWI front line trench warfare, and most kids go through the process of making models and then destroying them. As a species, we do seem drawn to ideas of destruction and part of the beauty of the ADP is that it can be past, present or future. We're all living through periods of aftermath to a lesser or greater sense and we're all working on the new ones. Particularly at the moment!



Figure 2. The ADP Riot Tour Map (L-13)

The Container and the Peepholes

Good maps can in general address several scales. You can see something from a distance, an overall picture, and when you get closer you discover details you could not see before. Then you go back again and you see the overall picture differently. Closer again and you notice another detail, and progressively you make your own interpretation, your own story out of the map or model. In the case of your model these back and forth views are restricted because you have to look through peepholes. What was your intention in creating this particular view of the scene? With different perspectives, what other kinds of narratives about riot then become possible?



Figure 3. *Through the peepholes* (L-13)

SL : Viewing through the observation ports enhances the process of discovery and makes it more of a personal experience. No one can survey the same scene at the same time so in observing people engage with the model, you hear a lot of people describing what they've seen and taking other people to show them. There were also usually gasps of amazement when they got to the larger stereo ports at each end that would enable them to survey the whole scene. So the narratives are not just about riots but what you're seeing and how you're interpreting them. Directing people's attention in this way and restricting their overview also seems to add to the drama and dynamic of the piece. It also plays off people's curiosity. If you see a bunch of people peering through holes in a container you really want to know what it is they're looking at. Then you have the problem of describing it to people so the easiest thing is to bring people back to see for themselves. We saw this happening again and again at each location.



Figure 4. *Scenes through the peephole Oxford December 2016* (Barbara Brayshay)

Critical Maps and Political Perspectives

Another aspect of critical maps is that they often integrate a political perspective. Riot has been described as a form of collective bargaining by those whose grievances cannot be articulated through organised means, for example, through trade unions or political parties. Marx described them as 'carnivals of the oppressed'. Mapping the history of riot shows us that people have rioted as a last resort against oppression and perceived injustice. Is there a specific political message you want to transmit with your mapping of English riots through your tour exhibition?

SL : No, there is no overt political messaging in the work itself other than to mock systems of power and to celebrate critical positions. We have a creative interest in subversive strategies and the tour was played out to satisfy or stimulate those interests. It also became a journey of discovery as we found out what we were doing and why - whilst we were doing it. I think it would be disingenuous to say there was no political bias in the work, but even those positions were played out and interpreted in different ways by all the different hosts on the tour.

Model Making

The ADP model explores our deepest fears. The figurines are actors caught in a place shattered and changed by events, they show all kinds of reactions to the scene including shock, boredom and fear. The detail is remarkable. How did the process of making the model lead you to explore your own stories of both the personal and political aspects of aftermath?

SL : Jimmy says he spent most of the time making the landscape with no real plan for the finished pieces. He allowed it to evolve in the making and the figures were only added right at the end. Originally it was going to be a huge riot scene but he quickly worked out that that made the narrative too explicit. His commitment to the detail along with the humanity and humour with which he treats his characters is what gives the model its real buzz.

ADP and Public Space Mapping

A map is always an exploration for the creator. You have to look and study details and ask what you want to map and have to ask yourself how to represent such things to make it meaningful. Is the public space that you have modeled based on a specific place or an imagined generic neighbourhood we can find in most English cities? Your model is a representation of public spaces caught in the moment of aftermath. As a result of your exploration, have you discovered any specific characteristics of the public spaces you have chosen to represent?

SL : It's an imagined space but one placed in a mythical middle England. A place where, apparently, nothing much happens let alone civil unrest. More specifically Jimmy placed it in Bedfordshire and this in turn led to an unintended link with the Panacea Society that furthered the narratives of the work in unexpected ways. However, I'm sure if it had been placed in Surrey or Hertfordshire, other associative readings to do with apocalyptic vision would have come to bear on the model.

SL : The most common aspect was people trying to recognize the model as based on their own town. Tesco's, MacDonald's and the Church seemed to be recognisable landmarks.



Figure 5. *The drive through (L-13)*

The viewer peeps in on the scene. The distancing is comparable to our experience when we look at similar scenes from TV coverage or internet images. Our gaze is mediated by the media and its politics. Why did you choose to populate the model with only the media and emergency services?

SL : The genesis of the ADP model was a series of much smaller pieces in jam jars called A Riot in a Jam Jar. These were envisaged as contained, domesticated scenarios that Jimmy likened to the bite size chunks of directed information we experience through the media. Media crews witnessing and covering acts of violence or derision were a recurring aspect in these works, like a feedback loop to their own contained experience. In the ADP, this theme is continued to a new scenario where all the action is over so the media have only themselves and the police to monitor. Just as the police no longer have anyone to police other than themselves, and there's no one to cause trouble other than the police.

Mapping as a Way to Engage Participation

Livingmaps is very interested in citizen mapping and in the power of map to engage participation in planning and in debates about future society and the city that people would like to live in. Your model in the container that you can only observe through peepholes is an interesting device to tease the curiosity of the public. It looks very simple and effective. Did you expect the strong reactions provoked by your installation?

What kind of response from the spectator do you hope to evoke?

SL : We'd shown the work several times before it was put into the container, most notably at Banksy's Dis-maland, but for a year before that it toured gallery and exhibition spaces in The Netherlands. We knew people mostly reacted well to it. We weren't quite expecting the feel-good factor it seemed to generate almost constantly as it traveled the country. The graffitied container arriving on a 30-ton lorry. Being lowered into position and turned on for waiting spectators proved to be a joyous occasion everywhere it went. We were hoping for exactly this along with an engagement with the riot narrative as to why the container was there. We were also hoping for a positive reaction as a counterpoint to any worry, fear or concern that any council's or official arts bodies had about the apparently seditious nature of the work. When we showed the ADP, it encouraged positive critical possibilities rather than provoke trouble as some feared. In fact, given the opportunity, people were very proactive in responding creatively to the work. We were prepared for it to cause some trouble as well of course, but as far as we know this never happened in any significant way. Except for the riots in Bedford prison that erupted shortly before we were due to arrive there. We don't think that was entirely our fault though!



Figure 6. *The Lorry* (L-13)

Riot has been described as a form of collective bargaining by those whose grievances cannot be resolved through legal instruments such as trade unions and political parties. In the public realm, the riot theme of ADP could be viewed as inflammatory – even encouraging riot. How do you choose the specific emplacement of the container? Have you had opposition to the exhibition from local authorities?

Have there been problems in locating the exhibition?

SL : We chose the Riot Tour route by inviting the public to invite us to their area. The only criterion was that there had to have been a riot or notable civic unrest there. As it turned out, that's nearly everywhere, so then

it just became a matter of pragmatic decision making. We favoured community groups to art galleries, and didn't necessarily go for sites with the largest footfall. Context was more important to us. We also encouraged individual organisers and encouraged those hosting the work to develop their own programme of events around ADP.

SL : The worst opposition to the tour was apathy. We experienced this most in London in a couple of trendy bars which we allowed to host ADP. It turned out they were more interested in using the event to sell beer, did very little to engage their customers in anything else and were generally uninterested themselves. We were quite shocked and angry at how bad they were, particularly given the proactive engagement we experienced in most other parts of the country. We did get some opposition from local authorities. Mostly because it's their job to put problems in the way of good things happening. We were banned from showing the ADP in Northampton's Market Square as the council deemed it would be in violation of Purdah Law. It was just before the referendum vote on the EU and the riot in Northampton we were marking in our visit just happened to be an Election Riot. Penzance also declined to show the work on their sea front as apparently one councilor deemed some of the graffiti offensive and not in keeping with the positive image they were trying to project. In Brixton, it seemed as though the council's arts officers were being quite helpful in getting permission to show the ADP in Windrush Square, asked us to submit an official application, then told us they'd love to have it if we paid them £6,000. We explained that most other places were trying to raise funds to pay us to keep the tour going, but they wouldn't listen. It's ok though, in all instances we found much better places to show nearby.

SL : On the whole, the tour was a bit of a logistical nightmare, but the biggest problems were the practical ones of finding suitable sites to unload a 40ft container from a 30-ton lorry, keeping the money coming in and not losing our nerve.



Figure 7. ADP Graffiti Croydon December 2016

We can see a lot of graffiti on the container, was it spontaneous?

SL : None of the graffiti was planned. We expected it but we never gave permission for it. At some sites the organizers asked if local artists could contribute to the work, but we always denied permission and said we'd tolerate vandalism but not art.

Did you get any comments by the public on how differently they would have represented the scenes or other situations they would also like to be represented? Did you make any modifications consequently? Is it inspiring for future works?

SL : People were always suggesting new scenarios for the model as well as offering their explanation of what they were seeing. I think all artists experience this to a certain extent and it's a moot point as to how much that kind of input affects future work. Jimmy hasn't changed anything on the model since it was put in the container but I guess he's listening and watching out for new ideas all the time.

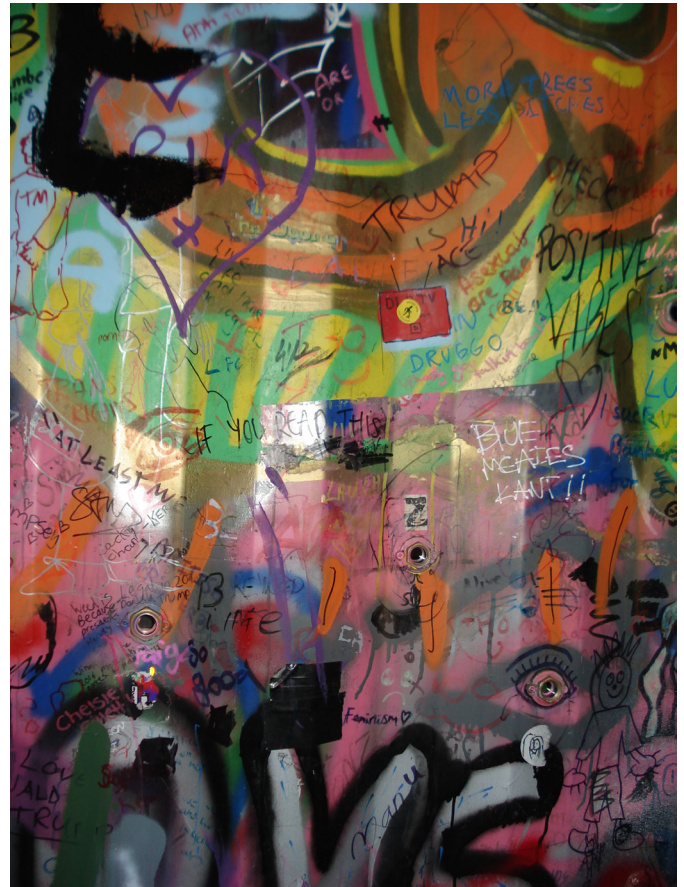


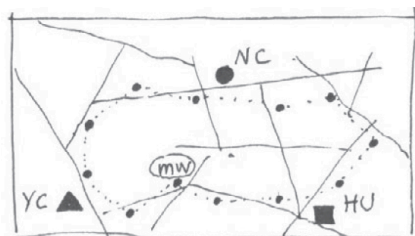
Figure 8. & 9. ADP Graffiti Oxford, December 2016, An installation to engage participation.

ADP and Community Mapping Practice

Livingmaps is working on a prototype for a Citizen's Atlas of London, called Our Kind of Town.

One of the workshops we hope to run with community groups is about designing and modeling future contrasted scenarios, such as The Neo-Liberal City and The People's City. Your device is very inspiring for us. Can grass-root collective making be as sharp as the one done by radical artists like you? Are dystopian visions more inspiring (creatively and intellectually) than utopian ones which can look simplistic or silly?

SL : It could do. We're currently talking with a community land trust about showing the containers on an old industrial site where they're instigating a self-build project where the local community will design and build their own live/work development. The trust has also invited the Turner Prize winning architects to propose possibilities for the site, so the idea is to show Jimmy's dystopian vision when they reveal their utopian ideas. The organisers want to tap into the energies that both these represent. In this case, both are exciting, but mostly I'd say dystopian visions are better when it comes to art.



1. INSIDE PILOT AREAS

between workshops places

- YC: Youth Centre
- NC: Neighbd Centre
- HU: Transport hub
- mw: mobile workshops



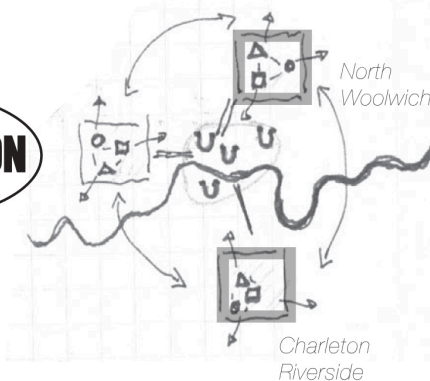
3. PUBLIC EVENTS

- Exhibition launch
- Public Dissemination Event
- Pop up Community Mapping Event



2. MEROPOLITAN INTERACTIONS

- inside pilot areas
- between pilot areas
- collaboration with Universities and Just Space
- conference with GLA



4. PAPER PUBLICATIONS

- project evaluation and report
- academic publications

Our Kind of Town

Towards a Citizen Atlas for London's Future
Living Mapping workshops and events across London

Figure10. A Citizens Atlas of London: Our Kind of Town Interaction Strategy.

Acknowledgements

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