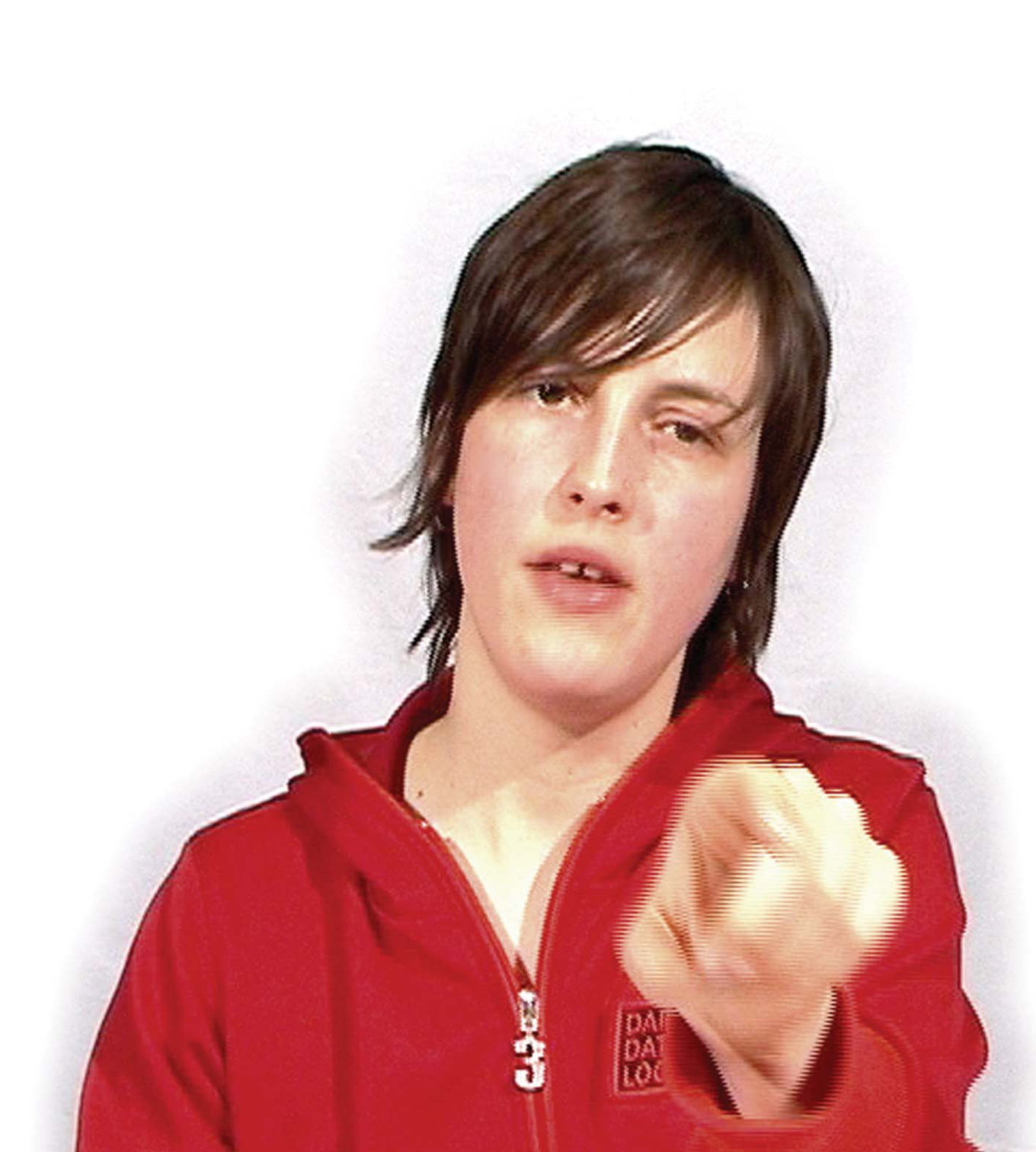


# This is Ellie Harrison.

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<http://www.ellieharrison.com>  
<http://www.teablog.net>  
<http://www.eat22.com>  
<http://www.daytodaydata.com>  
<http://www.henweekend.org>  
-----





So Ellie, how are you today?

We do hope you are very well, we were wondering what you might be doing today? We were thinking that we may be doing something that might just be a little more interesting than your Tea Blog but then that would be presumptuous of us when we think about it. There's really nothing like a good tea, don't you think?

We're kinda busy over here as we have said, and at the moment we were hoping to talk to you about all your lovely artwork and ideas but then we found out everything's on the internet for us to see, so we're going to have a look-see. It's marvellous what you're doing, where do you get the time, the energy and the brainpower, we think you could be the funniest woman alive!

Are you the funniest woman alive?

Previous page.  
'Display Room (detail).

This page.  
'Daily Data Logger (detail).

Next page left to right.  
'Daily Data Logger (detail).  
'Timelines (detail).





How would you describe your work?

For the last six years I have been obsessively documenting bits-and-bobs from my everyday life. This behaviour first started in 2001 on my 22nd birthday, when I began the project Eat 22. I challenged myself to see if I could photograph everything I ate for an entire year - it turned out that I could and over the course of the year a total of 1640 snapshots were taken. Since the success of Eat 22 I have undertaken several other year-long projects. There was Gold Card Adventures, for which I calculated the total distance I travelled on London Transport in a year (9236 km). Then The Daily Quantification Records in 2003, for which I collected data about 14 elements of my daily life each day for the year - I wore a pedometer everywhere I went and weighed myself every morning. I counted the number of people I spoke to, the number of drinks I had, text messages I received among many others things - creating vast spreadsheets full of pointless facts.

I began experimenting in ways of visualising all this data, processing it through scales and systems to transform it into the specifications for sculptures. I enjoy playing around with the idea of 'the role of the artist', experimenting with the possibility of things which occur in the artist's day-to-day life directly affecting the appearance of her artwork. Most recently, for the exhibition Day-to-Day Data (which I also curated), I made a series of installations called the Daily Data Displays. These comprised a collection of adjustable objects, mechanisms and electronic devices that could be reconfigured each morning by the gallery staff. Everyday for the duration of the exhibition I collected data about mundane events occurring in my life. At the end of each day the data was collated and emailed to the gallery for the staff to use as instructions when configuring the appearance of the display. The idea was to create an artwork that would change and evolve in tune with the artist's life.

The information I choose to document and make public is often of a 'personal nature' - I manage to evade all embarrassment caused by divulging these facts, however, by taking on different personas or characters and referring to myself in the third person. For The Daily Quantification Records project I took on the role of the 'scientist' observing the artist from a far and overseeing the data recording process. For the Daily Data Displays I created the Daily Data Logger - an enthusiastic, data-collecting obsessive so keen on measuring / quantifying the things that surround her that she permanently dresses in a tracksuit (for easy manoeuvrability) and wears a utility belt jam-packed with data collecting devices. Taking on these roles also enables me to add an element of humour to the work; I often mock the 'artist' or the 'specimen' when in character - belittling their position. This allows me to highlight the absurdity of the activities that I choose to undertake and, more importantly, the process of making art itself.

One of the reasons I choose to make a mockery of the activities I undertake, is because I am well aware of, and happy to take-the-mick out of, the obsessive side of my personality - the fact that when I do embark on one of these tasks I do take it incredibly seriously. There is never any cheating or cutting corners and I am always determined to see through the projects I start. I have been thinking quite a lot about why this is and it is definitely something to do with being in control. By observing, documenting and collecting the data I set out to, I am in some way staying in control of my life - keeping on top of my affairs.

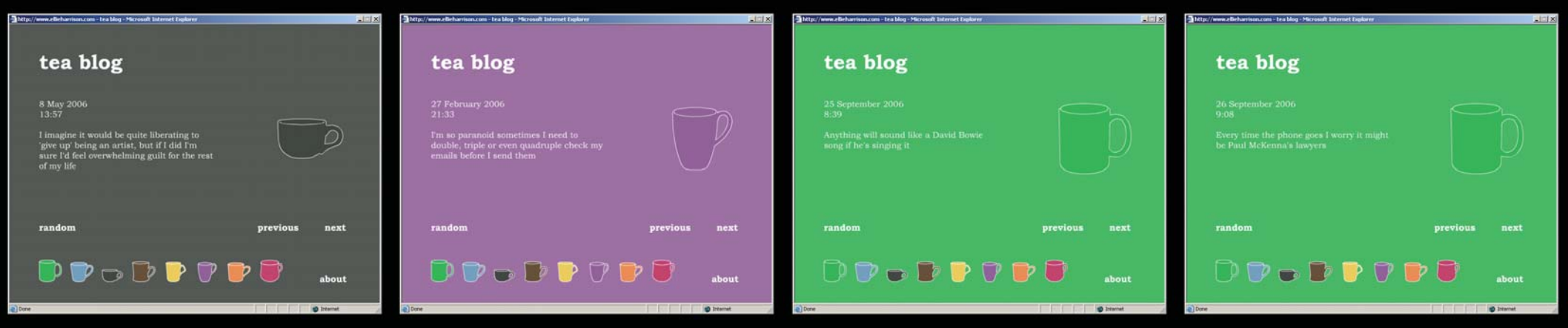
There is also a strong theme of self-improvement running through a lot of the projects. The life long project The Challenge Series, which can be viewed online, actually encourages me to going swimming and read more often. If I don't, then I'll fail to complete the challenge to swim the equivalent distance across the Atlantic or read the equivalent number of pages to the Encyclopædia Britannica, in my lifetime. I began Swear Box 2005, after complaints from my friends and family about my bad language. The project was really hard work, but over the course of the year, it did succeed in making me far less foul-mouthed. This self-help theme is explored more overtly in the Artist's Training Programme - a spoof training programme designed to make 'better artists'. View online at [www.ellieharrison.com/artiststraining](http://www.ellieharrison.com/artiststraining)

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This page (top to bottom).  
'Daily Data Log' sheet.  
'Tea Blog' website details.

Next page.  
'Challenge' details.





ENCYCLOPÆDIA CHALLENGE

01 January 200414:06:23



Since 01 March 1994 Ellie has been regularly reading novels

So far she has read a total of 11769 pages

Meaning that she has read an average of 2.97165129399572 pages per day

If Ellie continues reading at this frequency she will have read all 32 volumes of the Encyclopædia Britannica by the time she is 54.376883188864 years old

TRANS-ATLANTIC CHALLENGE

01 January 200414:07:04



Since 22 April 2002 Ellie has been swimming regularly for exercise


So far she has swum a cumulative distance of 136.8 kilometres

Meaning that she has travelled at an average velocity of 2.44370766201744 millimetres per second

If Ellie continues swimming at this velocity she will have crossed the Atlantic by the time she is 94.8336596813317 years old

ENCYCLOPÆDIA CHALLENGE

01 January 200618:31:37



Since 1 March 1994 Ellie has been regularly reading novels

So far she has read a total of 12843 pages

Meaning that she has read an average of 3.24357337644725 pages per day

If Ellie continues reading at this frequency she will have read all 32 volumes of the Encyclopædia Britannica by the time she is 52.9007251577864 years old

TRANS-ATLANTIC CHALLENGE

01 January 200618:29:02



Since 22 April 2002 Ellie has been swimming regularly for exercise


So far she has swum a cumulative distance of 200.4 kilometres

Meaning that she has travelled at an average velocity of 2.35352307724505 millimetres per second

If Ellie continues swimming at this velocity she will have crossed the Atlantic by the time she is 98.519377609903 years old

ENCYCLOPÆDIA CHALLENGE

01 January 200811:01:13



Since 1 March 1994 Ellie has been regularly reading novels

So far she has read a total of 13560 pages

Meaning that she has read an average of 3.13582703800877 pages per day

If Ellie continues reading at this frequency she will have read all 32 volumes of the Encyclopædia Britannica by the time she is 54.8324724145451 years old

TRANS-ATLANTIC CHALLENGE

01 January 200811:49:34



Since 22 April 2002 Ellie has been swimming regularly for exercise


So far she has swum a cumulative distance of 313.83 kilometres

Meaning that she has travelled at an average velocity of 2.69276819678925 millimetres per second

If Ellie continues swimming at this velocity she will have crossed the Atlantic by the time she is 90.5961556123238 years old

ENCYCLOPÆDIA CHALLENGE

01 January 200711:47:03



Since 1 March 1994 Ellie has been regularly reading novels

So far she has read a total of 14789 pages

Meaning that she has read an average of 3.14821403029904 pages per day

If Ellie continues reading at this frequency she will have read all 32 volumes of the Encyclopædia Britannica by the time she is 55.7115762442221 years old

TRANS-ATLANTIC CHALLENGE

01 January 200711:46:07

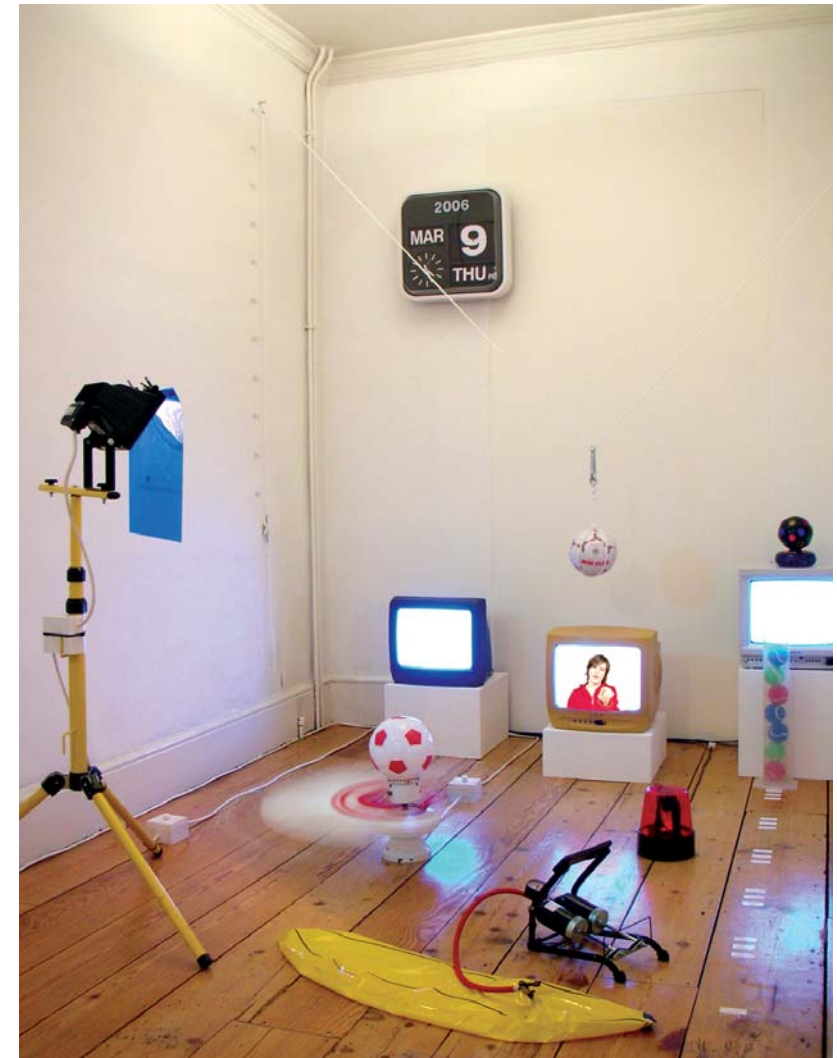
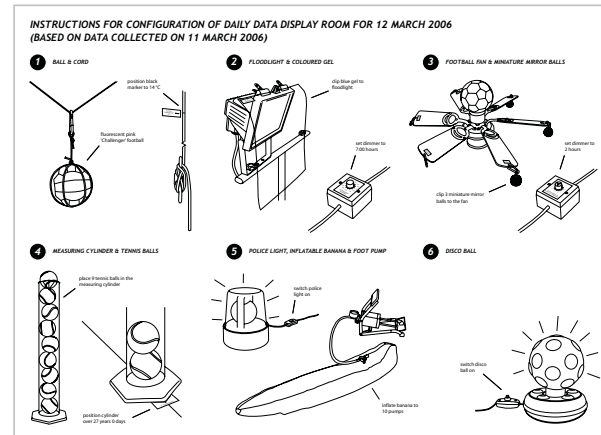
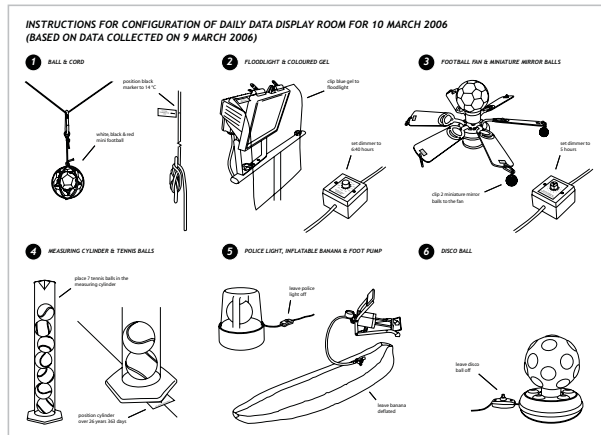


Since 22 April 2002 Ellie has been swimming regularly for exercise

So far she has swum a cumulative distance of 433.48 kilometres

Meaning that she has travelled at an average velocity of 2.92404175857589 millimetres per second

If Ellie continues swimming at this velocity she will have crossed the Atlantic by the time she is 86.3320890890821 years old



This page.  
'Daily Display Room' details.

DAILY QUANTIFICATION RECORD FOR			
11th March 2003			
STEPS TAKEN	1547	WALKS AT GOLF	7.8
CUMULATIVE TRAVELLED	12.45	SCORE PER HOLE	31.5
IN. BUSHES USED (VOLUME)	14.91	VEGETATION INDEX	1.9
PEOPLE STOPPED TO	18	SHADES	6
WEATHER INFO	8	SMOKE	1
WINE RECORDED	1.8	SHADES ACROSS LITERS	12
PAGES OF BOOK READ	0	ALPHABETICALLY SORTED	7

DAILY QUANTIFICATION RECORD FOR				
20th June 2003				
STEPS TAKEN	2,175	MASS AT 0000	81.9	
KILOMETRES TRAVELLED	2.19	BODY FAT PERCENTAGE AT 0000	21.0	
KILOCALORIES USED	742.1	DEVIATION FROM NORMAL	-15	
PEOPLE SPOKEN TO	6	GASTRIC DISTRESS	2.0	
WANTS TO EAT	4	SWEETS	5	
SMI RECEIVED	0	SWAY WORTH ATTENDING	0	
PHASE OF SLEEP REACHED	-12	ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES CONSUMED	0	

DAILY QUANTIFICATION RECORD FOR				
31 <sup>st</sup> September 2003				
STEPS TAKEN	24 826	MADE AT 800'	+ 8 - 8	
KILOMETRES TRAVELLED ON FOOT	1.96	BODY FAT PERCENTAGE AT 800'	20 - 5	
KILOCALORIES USED	519	DEVIATION FROM NORMAL	+ 0	
PEOPLE (SPONSOR TO)	7	SERIOUS ENDORSE	2 - 8	
HEBIBITS INTO	5	SMITS	2 -	
BARB RECEIVED	3	DEBART WORK OFFERS	6 -	
PAIDED UP BODY BOLD	4	ALCOHOLIC COMPLAINED	0 -	

DAILY QUANTIFICATION RECORD FOR			
25th December 2005			
SYMPTOM	# x 1.5	BASE 27 DEGREE	% 9
ALLERGIC REACTION ON FLUENT	3 x 1	BODY PART PARANASAL ON FLUENT	31 %
ALLERGIC LOCAL INFLAMED	1 x 1	EDUCATION PARENTS ON FLUENT	3.5
PEOPLE SPENTED TO	16	SANITARY EMERGENCY	11
NEEDS TO WASH	2	SPOTS	1
AND RECOVER	9	GLOBAL WORTH SPENDING	1
PAID BY BANK (PAIN)	1	ALLERGIC REACTED COMPLICATED	0

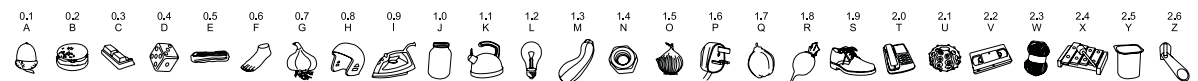
## THE MONTHLY SCULPTURES DETERMINED BY THE DAILY QUANTIFICATION RECORDS

EACH DAY DATA IS COLLECTED ABOUT THE ARTIST'S EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES ON THE DAILY QUANTIFICATION RECORDS  
AT THE END OF EACH MONTH THE DATA IS COMPILED TO GIVE AN AVERAGE DAY FOR THAT MONTH, JANUARY FOR EXAMPLE  
THIS AVERAGE DAY DATA IS THEN APPLIED TO THREE DIFFERENT SYSTEMS TO GIVE THE FORM, COLOUR AND VOLUME OF THE JANUARY SCULPTURE



## SYSTEM ONE

THIS DICTATES THE FORM THAT THE SCULPTURE WILL TAKE AND IS DEPENDENT ON THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES CONSUMED BY THE ARTIST EACH DAY IN THE MONTH



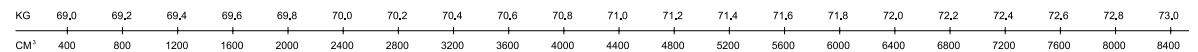
## SYSTEM TWO

THIS DICTATES THE COLOUR THAT THE SCULPTURE WILL BE AND IS DEPENDENT ON THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF SWEAR WORDS UTTERED BY THE ARTIST EACH DAY IN THE MONTH

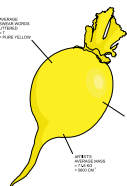


## SYSTEM THREE

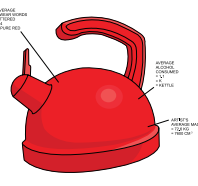
THIS DICTATES THE VOLUME THAT THE SCULPTURE WILL BE AND IS DEPENDENT ON THE AVERAGE MASS OF THE ARTIST EACH DAY IN THE MONTH



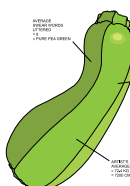
## THE JANUARY SCULPTURE



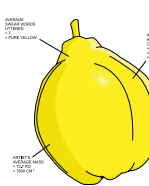
## THE FEBRUARY SCULPTURE



## THE MARCH SCULPTURE



## THE APRIL SCULPTURE



## THE MAY SCULPTURE



## THE JUNE SCULPTURE



What do you see as your ambition when setting out on a new project?  
What do you want it to achieve?

All of my projects begin with the desire to find answers to questions such as: 'how much do I consume in a year?' 'How far have I travelled around this city in a year?', 'How far have I walked?' I then work out what equipment I need, the most practical way of monitoring the activity before I start. Each project is a challenge, a test of endurance and a way of applying a set of rules or structure to my life - maybe to stop me from going off the rails!

Are you as meticulous in other facets of your life?  
What does your boyfriend, friends and relatives think?

I am semi-meticulous in other facets of life. I'd definitely describe myself as 'particular'. My mum likes to describe me in the same way that their family described their grandmother: 'a very difficult woman' - a title which for some reason I can't help but be slightly proud of. I must confess I do do the old 'Sleeping With The Enemy' thing, and make sure that the labels on all my tins and food packets are facing forward - but who doesn't? My boyfriend is very tolerant and long-suffering - he gets told off regularly but is eventually coming round to my ways.

Your 10 favourite things?

- Eating anything (except meat).
- Going to the cinema (to watch anything good).  
I recently saw Hedwig and the Angry Inch, which is hilarious.
- Favourite films of recent years are: Dogville, Touching The Void, Riding Giants, Me and You and Everyone we know, Sophie Scholl, Atomised and Shortbus.
- Brain Training with Dr Kawashima.
- Dancing in a tidy flat.
- Larry David.
- Sarah Silverman  
(she's actually even funnier than Larry, though just as cringe-worthy).
- Snowboarding.
- The feeling when you have just finished swimming  
(rather than swimming itself).
- Wall planners.
- An empty inbox.

5 things that make you sad?

- Walking down the road behind a load of car exhausts fumes.
- Intensive farming.
- People failing to respond to your emails.
- Having a proposal rejected.
- The war in Iraq (in fact war in general).

5 things that make you mad?

- Despite my love of food, I hate supermarkets!
- I hate people who take a carrier bag for the shopping when they already have five half empty ones in their hands.
- I hate waste and people who don't think about the consequences of their actions.
- I guess I hate laziness and disorganisation  
(though sometimes I am guilty of both of these).
- Drivers sitting in their cars with their engines running - selfish bastards.

The music that keeps you relaxed, dancing, working and also fit to kill someone...

You may not be able to believe this but I am very easily distracted. I generally work in silence and save the music for the weekends and for spates of manic tidying. I like a real mixture of stuff from Blondie to Buddy Holly, Basement Jaxx, Gnarl's Barkley, Franz Ferdinand, The Strokes - I actually like to shake my booty to a bit of Sean Paul and enjoy trying out crazy dance moves around the flat. I would happily challenge any of you to crump off.

In less than 10 words each please describe the following projects:  
I can't do it in less than 10 words!

Eat 22:

This was the first project I did that involved documenting my life. I challenged myself to take a photo of everything I ate for a year.

Swear Box 2005:

In 2005 I recorded every sentence I uttered that contained a swear word. The sentences are displayed in a web-based swear box. This swear box, had a similar effect to old-fashioned variety, in that I only cursed 142 times in the whole year.

Daily Data Display Wall:

For this installation I created a giant display of objects and devices that could be reconfigured each morning (by the gallery staff) in relation to the data I collected about my day-to-day routine.

Sneezes 2003:

I recorded the exact time of every sneeze I did in 2003 (318 in total). I displayed the data as a giant room-sized, colour-coded timeline.

Statistics are hot air:

Everyday in 2003 I counted the number of gaseous emissions\* I produced. I created a year long barchart, which can be view online or as a wall-based installation stretching for over 7 metres.

Gold Card Adventures:

From September 2002 - September 2003 I recorded the total distance of all the journeys I made on London Transport (9236 km). It worked out to be as far as travelling from London to Shanghai!

Tea Blog:

Tea Blog is an ongoing project that began on 1 January 2006. Every time I drink a cup of tea (or a different type of hot drink); I record the thought that is most on my mind. These thoughts are archived online at <http://www.teablog.net>

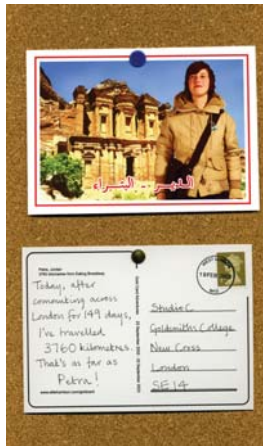
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This page.  
'Eat 22' pictures.





This page.  
'Gold Card Adventures' pictures.

Which has been your most satisfying or interesting project so far?

That's a tough one. Eat 22 was very satisfying, because it was the first project of this kind I had ever completed. When I started out, I didn't know for sure that it would be possible to sustain it for a whole year - I was testing my own endurance and stamina. When I did complete it successfully, I felt a great sense of achievement, as though now I could attempt anything. It was that addictive sense of achievement, which spurred me on to document so many other different things.

Which has been the one that you thought would tip you over the edge and make you "go Rainman"?

Last summer I was commissioned by an organisation called Prime to take part in a project called Part-time. The project was exploring the part-time jobs artists undertake to financially sustain their practices and their relationships to this work. This got me thinking about the idea of 'work' in general and the amount of time I spent doing it - whether it be for my practice, to make money or simply doing the washing-up or hoovering the flat.

One day I came up with the crackpot idea of attempting to document every-single-thing I did twenty-four-hours-a-day for four-whole-weeks, in order to work out just exactly how much time I did spend 'working'. As you can imagine, this project quickly drove me completely crazy. I had to wear a large-display digital watch and carried a reporter's notebook everywhere I went. My days were spent hovering in limbo between actually doing different activities and scribbling about them in my notebook. My nights were spent processing the reams of data I was collecting onto a vast spreadsheet, which by the end of the project had 2242 entries.

Even after the first day, I thought it would be impossible to make to the end of the fourth week, but I persevered through the insanity and kept scribbling away. There were two outcomes of this project. The first was a series of 28 colour coded timelines each documenting 24 hours. These can be viewed online at <http://www.undercoverartists.org/ellie/timelines> The second outcome was a vow to never attempt something so extreme again, to stop all this silliness and to think of new ways of making art!

What other artists and creatives do you respect and like the work of?

There are a couple of artists who work in a similar way to me who I have a huge amount of respect for. Firstly The-Ching Hsieh - in 1980, he photographed himself, in his studio, every hour for a year. He could not sleep for more than hour, or go away from his studio for more than an hour - that is hardcore, that is endurance! <http://www.one-year-performance.com> On Kawara is another great artist, famous for his Date Paintings. For years and years he persisted with a project, where he would record the exact time he got out of bed each day. He would buy a postcard from the town or country that he happened to be staying in and stamp it with the time he got up. He would then send the postcard to his art dealer, or his friends or family.

More than anything I admire, and am envious of, artists who just have simple ideas, that don't require any endurance or persistence, that can just be made and then exist as art with no strings attached. It must be an easy life being one of these sorts of artists. I like works that are dramatic and fun, playful but thought-provoking. Artists such as: Carsten Höller, Olafur Eliasson, Tim Noble and Sue Webster and Tomoko Takahashi.

Any projects you've come up with but simply haven't happened yet as they're just too hard?

There was one idea that popped into my head a few years ago, which I hope I never convince myself to do. It is an idea for another year-long project to commemorate the tenth year anniversary of Eat 22. It would be Eat 32, and would require me to spend a year re-eating the exact same foods, at the exact same times, on the exact same days as did 10 years previous. Even thinking about it now I'm beginning to sweat - imagine the organisation involved - making specific weekly shopping lists, having to go to supermarkets and buy all the right foods and make the same dishes, assemble the plates of food, get up in the middle of the night and eat some chips - argh! Please help talk me out of this one!

Do you find that because you are always measuring, taking notes, making work where most people wouldn't, that you rarely get a moment for yourself?

Yes definitely, this is exactly what happens! More than that, I used to find that I never really experienced my life, because I was too busy documenting it. It's sort of like when you go to a concert and spend the whole time taking pictures of the stage that you actually forget to look and listen for yourself and experience the moment. Imagine that, but on a grander scale - I felt as though I lived my life through the documentation, experiencing things second hand whilst processing data onto spreadsheets or downloading photos from my camera.

The other strange thing that happens is when the projects come to an end - it's very difficult to get out of the habit of documenting. Even now, five years later I rarely eat anything without a subconscious inkling that I should be photographing it first. Similarly I cannot sneeze, fart, go to the toilet, swim, read, travel on a bus or tube, swear, drink a cup of tea, an alcoholic drink, speak to people or receive a text message without first thinking for a split second that I should be recording the moment in some way.

I see you've organised a woman's art weekend, care to tell us all what that's about and what the women attending (and peeping toms gawking) can expect?

Yes, I am in the process of setting up and coordinating the first ever Hen Weekend - 'the seminar by the sea for female artists, writers and curators'. It's going to be attended by sixteen interesting artists from around the UK, Ireland and the US. The idea is to get the group together in a fun and relaxed environment, so that they can discuss ideas and consider collaborative projects. The first event is going to take place at the De La Warr pavilion in Bexhill on Sea (East Sussex) at the end of March. Participants already confirmed include: Julia Alvarez, Diann Bauer, Amanda Beech, Michelle Deignan, Jeanie Finlay, Hilary Jack, Karen Magazine, Sally O'Reilly, Joanna Spitzner and Lorelei Stewart. See the website for further details.

What can we expect from you in the coming year?

I'd say 'more of the same', but it wouldn't be true. I'm planning to shake things up a little and tryout new ways of working. I'm going to attempt to be more spontaneous and less obsessive in my approach to art making - it'll be interesting to see if this is possible. As well as continuing making work for exhibitions and my website, I plan to research a group of artists for another touring exhibition which will be the follow-up to last year's Day-to-Day Data.

If the first Hen Weekend event goes according to plan, I'm going to put together a series of future events around England and elsewhere. I'd love to do one in Ireland too, so if you know any interesting arts venues that would be happy to have 16 female artists descending upon them - let me know.

\*farts



# SNEEZES 2003

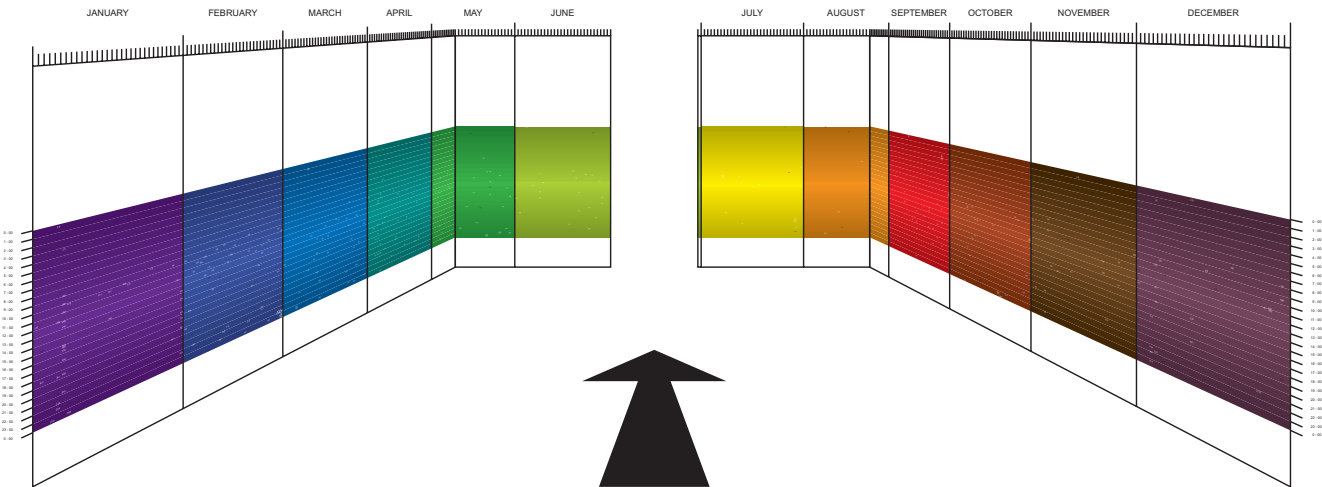
## AT THE WALLNER GALLERY



THROUGHOUT 2003, ARTIST ELLIE HARRISON RECORDED THE EXACT TIME, TO THE NEAREST MINUTE, OF HER EVERY SNEEZE. THE ROOM THAT YOU ARE NOW STANDING IN REPRESENTS THE YEAR 2003.

THE PLAN BELOW SHOWS HOW THE WALLS OF THE ROOM ARE DIVIDED VERTICALLY INTO THE DIFFERENT MONTHS OF THE YEAR AND DIVIDED HORIZONTALLY INTO THE TIMES OF THE DAY TO FORM A GIANT TWO-WAY TIMELINE.

EACH OF THE TIMES DISPLAYED ON THE WALL REPRESENTS A SNEEZE. THE SNEEZES ARE POSITIONED AROUND THE SPACE TO INDICATE THE EXACT DATE AND TIME AT WHICH THEY OCCURRED.



This page.  
'Sneezes' details.

