

PIECE OF PAPER PRESS

<http://pieceofpaperpress.com>

Tony White

The Holborn Cenotaph

for 'The Cenotaph & the public sphere'

POPP.028

Tony White's new short story 'The Holborn Cenotaph' was written for and first performed as a live reading at 'The Cenotaph Project & the public sphere', an event by Maya Balcioglu, Stuart Brisley, Sanja Perovic and White (with chair Johanna Malt) that took place in the King's College Strand Campus chapel in London, on 24 October 2014. An uncorrected proof edition of 'The Holborn Cenotaph' with variant text and limited to fifty numbered signed copies was distributed at the event itself.

Presented in the Swiftian tradition of a 'modest proposal', White's story uses the language and performance of contemporary law enforcement — as well as more informal modes of address that might be familiar in church or in short, topical skits at an 'end of term' concert — to frame a satirical proposition: that the high-rise tower of Holborn Police Station be decommissioned and converted into 'a new Holborn Cenotaph, a 50-metre high, networked memorial to those men and women who have lost their lives or who will die in contact with the police in the UK.'

'The Holborn Cenotaph' draws on conversations with Stuart Brisley *et al* that White has been conducting through 2013-14 in order to research a new work of prose fiction exploring aspects of Brisley's work. 'The Holborn Cenotaph' is one of two stories intended as prototypes or test pieces, after a method adopted by French poet Louis Aragon in writing his novel about Henri Matisse, where he noted the need for: 'a kind of trial approach to my theme, a marginal commentary on [his] method, in order to justify the liberty taken with my subject, my own variations, the sort of detachment I aimed at.'¹



- 'The Cenotaph Project & the public sphere' was a panel event revisiting Stuart Brisley and Maya Balcioglu's *The Cenotaph Project* (1987-91). The British painter, sculptor and performance artist Stuart Brisley is widely regarded as a key figure in British art. Along with his frequent collaborator, Maya Balcioglu, he has unflinchingly probed the political, cultural and social mores of his time in a career now spanning its sixth decade. With *The Cenotaph Project* the artists exhibited replicas of the Whitehall Cenotaph, scaled down to match the typical height of a council flat ceiling, in six locations across the country. From a mute signifier of 'official history' the various, smaller cenotaphs opened a space for a critique of history and the possibility of change.
- 'The Cenotaph Project & the public sphere' was part of the Arts & Humanities Festival 2014: Underground, and resulted from a loose collaboration between Balcioglu, Brisley, Perovic and White that has been made possible by White's appointment as creative entrepreneur in residence and visiting research fellow at King's College, London, funded by CreativeWorks London.
- PIECE OF PAPER PRESS was created by Tony White in 1994 as a lo-tech, sustainable publishing project used to publish new writings, visual and graphic works by artists and writers. Past contributors have included Michael Moorcock, Tim Etchells, Bruce Gilchrist, Liliane Lijn, Elizabeth Magill, James Pyman, Suzanne Treister, Alison Turnbull, Penny McCarthy and others. Each book is manufactured from a single A4 sheet that is printed on both sides using a photocopier or a domestic printer, and then folded, stapled and trimmed by hand to create the book. This edition is limited to 150 numbered copies, to be distributed free by post. 'The Holborn Cenotaph' is the 28th title from PIECE OF PAPER PRESS.
- Tony White is the author of novels including *Foxy-T* (Faber and Faber). His latest novel *Shackleton's Man Goes South* is published by the Science Museum for free download at <http://bit.ly/ShMGSth>. An accompanying display in the Museum's Atmosphere Gallery runs until April 2015. Other works include the recent novellas *Dicky Star and the Garden Rule* (Forma) and *Missorts Volume II* (Situations). *Missorts*, White's permanent, GPS-triggered sound-work for the city of Bristol launched in 2012. Tony White is currently chair of London art radio station Resonance 104.4fm.

¹ Louis Aragon, *Henri Matisse: A Novel*, Volume 1, trans. John Stewart (London: William Collins, Sons & Co. Ltd, 1972), p.16