

WEATHER STATION (PART II)



SIMON LEE DICKER_

ALEXANDER STEVENSON_

JETHRO BRICE_

NICOLA KERSLAKE_

PHIL SMITH_

ELAINE FISHER_

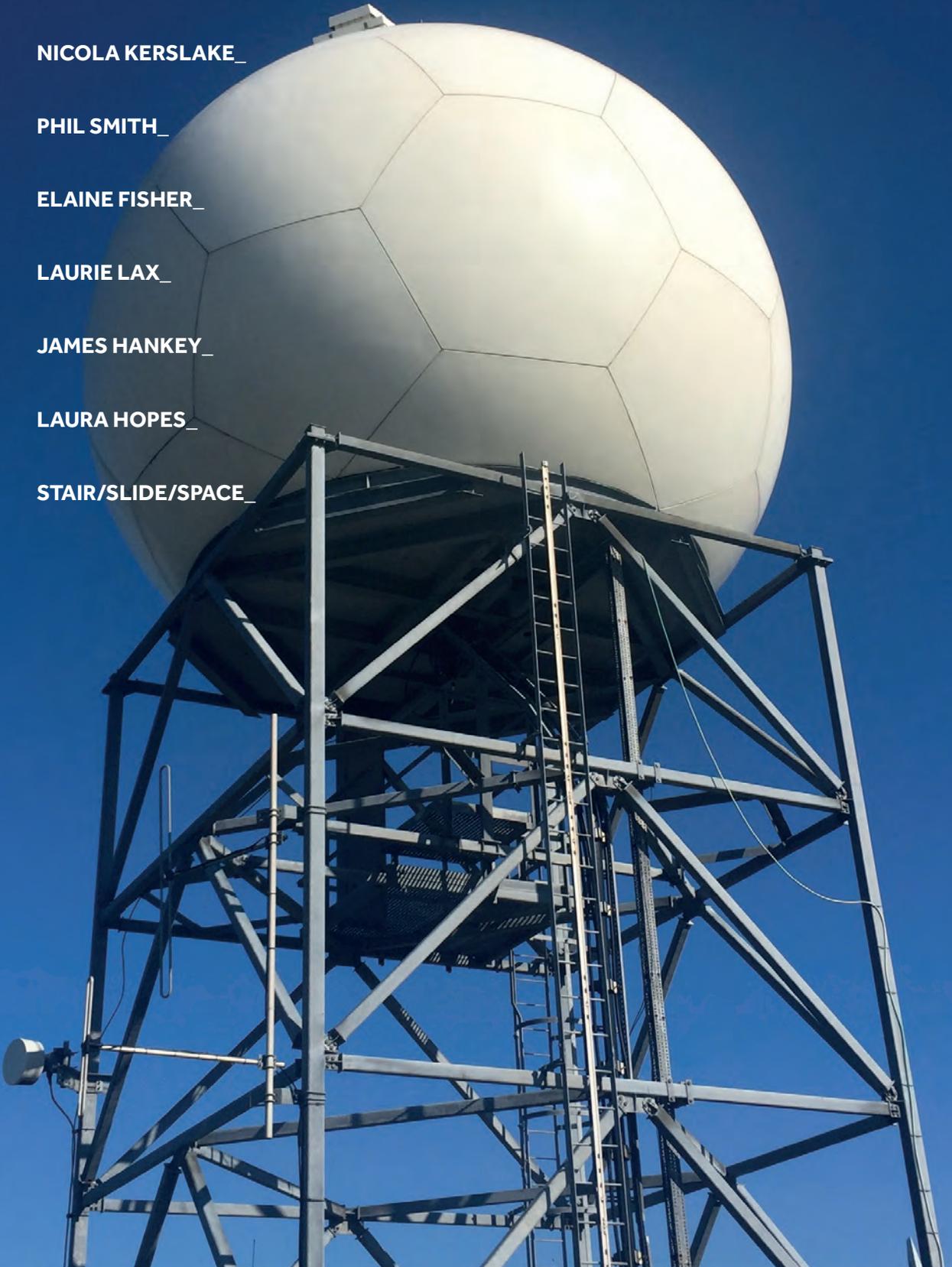
LAURIE LAX_

JAMES HANKEY_

LAURA HOPES_

STAIR/SLIDE/SPACE_

OSR/
PROJ
ECTS



Intro

The landscape is punctuated by a giant golf ball.
Balanced on a platform of scaffold it has the best of views.
For years I have passed at speed, attracted to its simplicity of form, an historical
vision of a future architecture.
Looking up, then back at the road, and up again.
Wondering what was inside just to forget by the time I had stopped moving.

*

A portmanteau of raydar and dome, the radome is a protective shell for an antenna
or radar system, commonly used to detect rainfall and predict weather patterns.

*

OSR Projects Weather Station has rolled off its plinth, to travel through the streets,
fields and rivers of South West England.

*

A giant inflatable ball becomes the Weather Station, a mobile pavilion for the
collection of images, objects and ideas.

*

An artist-led response to flooding, extreme weather and the changing relationship
we have with the natural world.

*

The process is cumulative rather than collaborative.
The Weather Station gathering the trace of the artists and participants as it travels.
Returning to its plinth for exhibition.

Simon Lee Dicker 2015

“It’s possible that buckyballs from outer space provided seeds for life on Earth.”

From the Montreal biosphère designed by Buckminster Fuller, father of the geodesic dome, the Biomes at the Eden project in Cornwall, to the constructed reality presented in the 1998 film *The Truman Show*, this is the architecture of a controlled ecosystem.

In 1985 a carbon molecule resembling a geodesic dome was discovered, and subsequently named a buckminsterfullerene. Spherical fullerenes are also called buckyballs, and according to astronomer Letizia Stanghellini, “It’s possible that buckyballs from outer space provided seeds for life on Earth.”



The Montreal Biosphère by Buckminster Fuller, 1967



Pieter Bruegel the Elder
The Misanthrope 1568

The Misanthrope

The Misanthrope is a tempera painting on canvas by Flemish renaissance artist Pieter Bruegel the Elder, created during 1568. It currently is held and exhibited at the National Museum of Capodimonte in Naples, Italy.

The circular painting is encased in a square frame and depicts a black-robed, white-bearded elderly man clasping his hands before him.

A smaller barefooted man behind him uses a knife to cut the strings to the elderly man's money pouch. The elderly man appears so lost in thought that he does not notice the theft nor the thorns that lie in his path. A transparent sphere with a crucifix at its peak encloses the thief.

A Flemish inscription at the bottom reads:
*Om dat de werelt is soe ongetru/
Daer om gha ic in den ru.*

(“Because the world is perfidious, I am going into mourning”).

The moral suggested by the painting is that such a relinquishment of the world is not possible: one must face up to the world's difficulties, not abandon responsibility for them.

SIMON LEE DICKER_

Location: Ham Hill, Middelney & Cockrod, Somerset

My journeys started at sunrise.

My journeys started at sunrise.

I introduced the Weather Station to the World from a high vantage point overlooking the flat lands of Somerset. Subsequent expeditions took me on to the levels and moors, to sites that had previously felt the impact of flooding.

Interested in how the physical structure of the Weather Station would punctuate the landscape and allow me to explore the paradox of being both in and of the 'natural' world, I placed it in beautiful and broken places. I drew directly onto the inside of the orb until my own breath clouded my vision, my lips went blue and the pens stopped working. Horizon lines and distant trees, flood defences and droplets of water.



Since this first incarnation the Weather Station has moved into other worlds, whilst always staying in my peripheral vision. Experimentation and playfulness has been followed by critical context through the words and actions of others.

Taking on a character of its own the structure speaks less directly about the effect of flooding and extreme weather and more now about the psychological distance between body and place.



ALEXANDER STEVENSON_

Selected by Hestercombe Gallery.
Location: Hestercombe, Somerset

I had been thinking about the physical properties of the ball, being like a globe and being in contact with/traversing the landscape that is also mapped out through drawings, observational or imaginary. By mapping using temporary objects of interest like leaves, rubbish, even living insects and fish below me in the lake, I might describe this as a mapping process, something that could in theory (no matter how unlikely) be reversed or followed in the future.

**I might describe this as
a mapping process...**





JETHRO BRICE_

Selected by OSR Projects.

Location: River Parrett, Langport, Somerset

We name our environment only by differentiating it from our selves.



We try every way we know to attune ourselves to the lively ecologies at work around us. We want to insinuate ourselves, to become re-embedded. Yet in the moment of identifying the object of our desire, we cut ourselves off. We name our environment only by differentiating it from our selves. That's the paradox we have to work with. The Weather Station seems to embody this tension - transparent but impermeable, synthetic but offering a window onto the 'natural' world.

Some:when

Jethro Brice and Seila Fernandez Arconada

Some:when has been a very social project, involving a lot of people. But for me it has always also been about expanding that sense of the social, to include not only humans but ecologies of forces and materials and atmospheres as well. Working with the Weather Station on the morning of the *Some:when* launch was a chance to take some time to engage with these - to feel the ball dance in the wind, tug the boat this way and that. To sense the current and the buoyancy of the wooden boat. It's quite a playful thing, and awkward. Trying to manipulate it into position stretched my limits - balance, navigation, sense of security - and made me engage more actively with the river, the space of the boat, and the possibilities of my body.



NICOLA KERSLAKE_

Selected by Back Lane West.

Location: Swanpool, Falmouth, Cornwall

The Weather Station gradually disconnected me from the outside; sounds were distorted, communication was limited, and my breath rasped within the airlock. I could not forget the danger of a limited air supply, and the possibility of being carried out to sea. Soon I was transfixed on the churning waves as they continually broke upon the shore. I began to follow them, back and forth, inside the transparent vessel. I slowly started to trust the Weather Station, safe from the icy water, wind and rain. However, condensation formed by my breath began to cloud my vision. It became difficult to predict the pattern of the waves, and at points I was unable to outrun them. The foaming water lifted me off the sand; I became unstable and often tumbled. Dizziness elevated to the point of seasickness. I was not able to withstand the force of the tide.



**I began to follow them,
back and forth, inside the
transparent vessel.**



ELAINE FISHER_

Selected by b-side
Location: Chesil Beach, Dorset

How will the recordings 'hear' the change in pebble size?



"The human impulse – to separate and measure a constantly changing world – is critical to our present understanding of and reaction to climate change"

Para(meter)

Measured and sampled by the Weather Station-come-trundle-wheel and the requirement to stop for 'fresh air', durational audio recordings will attempt to 'hear' the erosion in pebble size as I walk along Chesil Beach, using the sphere to separate pebble sounds from the predominant sound of the wind and crashing waves. How will the recordings 'hear' the change in pebble size? By their duration or differing content? Or will the protective bubble completely deny what lies outside?

Throughout my practice I use limitation and repetition to explore ways that knowledge is constructed. I highlight how we come to know only specific things within context; that knowledge is projected, from the layered remains of otherwise 'lost' phenomena. I believe that exploring this human impulse - to separate and measure a constantly changing world - is critical to our present understanding of and reaction to climate change.

Para(meter) repeats a series of walks undertaken in 2015 which identified pebble sorting (and rule breaking) using walking speed, a found bag and camera pre-settings as relative locating, sampling and measuring devices.



PHIL SMITH_

Selected by Exeter Phoenix
Location: Exeter, Devon

Why I will not be walking.

Why can't I?

At the end of the walk with the Weather Station we came upon an artificial construct; a new meander. But what I was doing was a meander. Pushing the ghost around the groove. And here was a structure for moving and then slowing the flow, dispersing and decelerating.

The one thing cancelled out the other.

The walk and its sociability were negated by the art and effectiveness of the artificial stream over a spontaneous one. The dial drops down to Zero. The possibility for an event arises. But that hasn't happened yet. Despite my good intentions I have not been back there. The invitation to travel with the Weather Station is a generous and obliging one; it can end in a condensation of things that were happily invisible.

I had been surprised to discover that the Weather Station was not specifically constructed for an encounter with climate change, that it was something called a 'zorb' and was used in leisure and recreation. It was recognised as such by passersby. That's how I came to know how little I understood of what I was doing. I thought I might learn as we went along, but that was laziness, and in our progress I was undoing the path beneath our feet. Rolling it thin with translucence, pixilating the concrete.

I had been charmed by the inflation in the car park.

There were a few encounters with passersby, but I felt inhibited in each and every one and did not know how to begin a conversation around climate change without losing the poise necessary for the journey; a stupid inhibition I recognise but cannot justify, a respect for the wisdom of crowds I thought I might somehow.... what?

No wonder I can't do art. And I won't be walking.

I pushed the 'zorb' around a labyrinth and an officer from the organisation came out, detecting a publicity opportunity. Presumably, the images are floating about now; their meaning breaking down. They are, I found them easily. Two lads watched us. I began to understand what it could mean. To be pushing the weather; it was not an act of recovery, but a

performance of bullying something far, far bigger. Pushing a ghost lobster around the grooves of a long player. Pushing a playground fairy tale to classes addicted to something else.

I should have been far more hopeless.

Scimitar of concrete. We walked along the flat of its blade. It was all already aesthetic. The mill bridge, the weir, the skateboard park, the renewed equipment to open the sluice; all beautiful, they don't need me.

Herring gulls, refugees from seas stripped of herrings, are like competing apocalypses.

I lack rigour. I am too interested in the home-made shepherd's pie at the Royal Oak. Inside the bar a beer barrel has been converted into a seat; a brass plaque explains how the barrel, full of beer, was washed out of the pub during the floods of 1960 and down the Exe, into the Channel and was found off Portland where it was rescued by a minesweeper. Simon and I met on Portland.

I am not waiting for you. I am waiting with everyone else and we are waiting for the state.

I should have taken lessons from Jess Allen.

Pushing the 'zorb' makes unusual demands on a human body. My arms are strange in the evening. But not very much. The imprint fades. What remains much longer is the haunting sense of failure to perform or speak. Or to let the thing be silent and alone. It's the bubble that pursues you down the beach. The bubble that roars. That always drives you back to the village.

Children are interested, but there is no obvious connection between the plastic orb and its weather station status. There is sand inside and salt on the surface; left overs from the previous walk, made at the edge of the sea. We recount that to a couple of passersby. But I'm not sure what that means, the history of our use of the metaphor over what it is a metaphor for. A car pulls up, but their curiosity doesn't help. That's how bad it is, bad faith.

The bubble is a trap.

I don't know what to do with the sand or the salt.

I don't know what to do with the guiltiness.

I leave no real mark.

It amuses me to push the 'zorb' past a sign that reads NO BALL GAMES. But that is all.

We came to a place where, on a walk for an art and flooding project, I had heard my next door neighbour, a climate scientist, explain the concept of a basin of attraction; the idea that rather than a gradual and monitored shifting towards crisis in increments with increasingly loud warnings, change creeps unseen to the lip of the basin and then suddenly hurries in. But it's the same model as other apocalypses that didn't show up; various ambiguous and aesthetically powerful signs, then a hinge around a sudden spasm. A model for human reception, rather than one for an unhuman that refuses to perform, that refuses any kind of narrative, that may be what we call "malevolent" because we can't break from Faust. I wish I had had the courage just to stay with the bubble in the car park, alone, silent and refusing to explain or banter. It was at its best when abandoned among the benches outside the Royal Oak. It banged about on its own.

There's no place for gradualism.

The ozone layer has shrunk. Action by the states.

Think however you like, but act globally.

We will need to mount an assault on our own pleasure.

The bubble is a ghost of uneasiness, a revenant of something like a sin, and a doubt about redemption. It hangs around with regret.

All the way along I was pushing this thing, looking through plastic. Blurry. That's about right.

Now the ghost of the Weather Station accompanies me everywhere I go, comments on everything I write, stands between me and doing everything else. The footnotes have outgrown the texts and weighed them down. No one can turn these pages.

The artificial meander we found was aesthetic, pleasing, a fake stream with its own snakiness and sparkle, the local administration's ornamenting of a redemptive practicality, art's capitulation to an end; grand narrative, author and totality were all present. The Spectacle-Anthropocene has an appetite for some complexity; a manifesto the parts of which can be

judged against itself. But I felt that day, and I feel this day, that I was campaigning in a referendum without any clear picture of the consequences, without anyone, least of all me, spelling out a strategy. I couldn't and can't see what these local actions will achieve except passing the problem on to the next global thinker downstream.

So an artwork would be inappropriate, given that success is always in its own terms. Which is partly why I can't. Which is partly why I won't be walking.

Perhaps it is better to do nothing; to listen better for whatever it is that is approaching the lip. No. The iconoclasm that I hate so much is, appropriately, done against my better judgement.

I can't really get much from the writing on the inside of the 'zorb'. I know that something happened before, and Simon tells me some stories. But.

Stingray. "Anything can happen in the next half hour."

When we opened the 'zorb' to deflate it at the end of the walk, back in the car park, ready for it to go back in Simon's car, a misty gas – some reaction with the salt? – escaped very quickly. Too quickly to catch on camera.

I surf and check out other aesthetic uses of 'zorbs'. Women in Ophelia costumes.

If you go inside the 'zorb' zipped up you begin to asphyxiate after a few minutes. It is a trap metaphor. You accept the global nature of the crisis and you drown like a fish out of water. It's a giant version of those tiny plastic particles in the ocean that have broken down from plastic waste more quickly than expected – testimony to the power of the resilience of the organic meshwork to destroy the meshwork itself. They are ubiquitous where there are no cities, in the darkness of organisms.

I was pushing a barb through the stomach of a cod.

I was a future organism; I was a hybrid of a fish and disposable cutlery.

I was a ghost of a bubble roaring up the beach and driving me back to the village.

LAURIE LAX_

Selected by hand in glove
Location: Narrowways Hill, St Werburghs, Bristol

SCOTOMA LANDSCAPE 'I'm interested in our psychological disconnect, (mis) representation and perception of nature. I wanted to treat the one day residency as a kind of experiment, ignoring the inflatable ball, treating it as a blind spot, a scotoma on the landscape. I took photographs and made drawing studies on Narrowways Hill, my local green space, which were then developed into functional blind spot tests using the Weather Station as a compositional tool.

I've got to know the people who look after this place by volunteering for the Narrowways Millennium Green Hill Trust, and even forming a small St. Werburghs drawing group. Alongside my own explorations I invited local people and others from further afield up onto 'the mound' (as it's commonly known) to take part in collective drawing 'en plein air.'



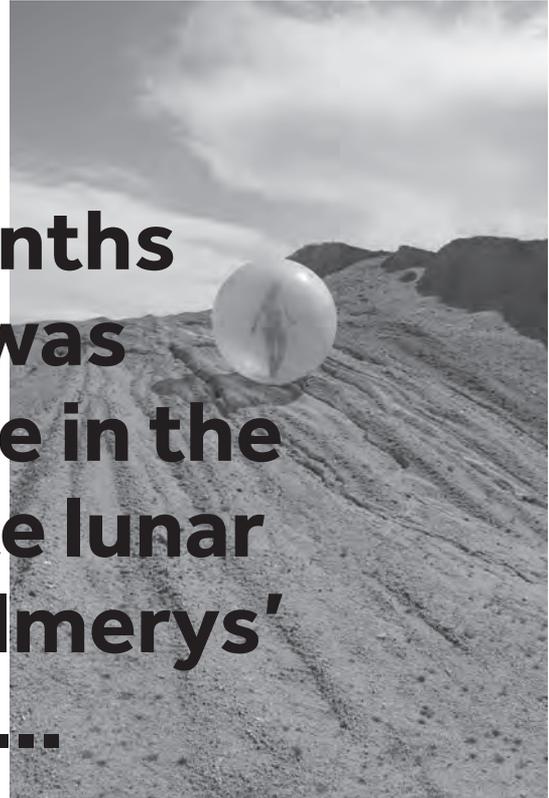
**I spent the day using the
Weather Station as
a compositional tool**



LAURA HOPES_

Selected by Plymouth Arts Centre
Location: Blackpool Pit, St Austell, Cornwall

Following months of planning I was able to voyage in the blue and white lunar landscape of Imerys' Blackpool Pit...



"Everything was white. The compacted surface was white, the puddles on it were white and the small sprigs of heather and furze that had tenanted the white slopes were brushed with a fine white layer."

The Cornish china clay pits had lured me from afar, their sky-tip peaks brusquely puncturing distant horizons, remaining in my imagination for a long time. I was drawn by their elusive nature: fenced, signpost-bearing, dangers of death, falling, blasts, the inability to fix them on maps. But sneaked peeks glimmered with opalescent blues, scarred whites, stoic pioneer plants. So beautifully stark, closer inspections triggered my weakness for sublime landscapes, and I yearned to enter and explore these realms.

The OSR Weather Station commission offered me the opportunity to use the orb as a prism through which to experience and negotiate this terrain, to offer a highly controlled and contained experience of a landscape. I negotiated access to the highly manufactured yet sublime landscape owned by Imerys, the china clay corporation based in St Austell. Following months of planning I was able to voyage in the blue and white lunar landscape of Imerys' Blackpool Pit, and I created a sound and moving image installation piece in response to the site.



JAMES HANKEY_

Selected by Back Lane West
Location: Perran Sands, Cornwall

First step

In the 1970's the cybernetician, social scientist and anthropologist Gregory Bateson suggested that a passage written by Alfred Russel Wallace in a letter to Charles Darwin (in 1858) was one of the most 'powerful things that had been said in the 19th century'. In describing natural selection as a feedback mechanism, keeping species and varieties adapted to their environment, Wallace noted:

The action of this principle is exactly like that of the centrifugal governor of the steam engine, which checks and corrects any irregularities almost before they become evident; and in like manner no unbalanced deficiency in the animal kingdom can ever reach any conspicuous magnitude, because it would make itself felt at the very first step, by rendering existence difficult and extinction almost sure soon to follow

Using this statement and the allegory of the centrifugal governor, I took a first step -in the Weather Station sphere. This step, followed by another step, and a stride, then bigger strides, took the sphere and I, rolling, mostly without control down one of the largest sand dunes in Cornwall. The First Step was an act of neglecting the governor.



**This step, followed by
another step, and a stride,
then bigger strides...**



STAIR/SLIDE/SPACE_

Selected by OSR Projects
Location: Portsmouth, Hampshire



Is it a hailstone?

I'm sick of football and I'm sick of the referendum.

I've seen it all.

It's a football.

It must be about football.

You might pick up children with that.

That's the new car.

Make sure you use your indicators.

You forgot your ball.

Billy look! A bubble!

Big balls you girls have got.

Why don't you get inside it?

You're rolling a giant snowball.

I won't ask.

Art, I love all that.

You might squash me!

Two woman drivers.

You should take it to the beach and use it as a volleyball.

Roll it round that tree a couple of times.

I'd put strips of wrapping paper along the lines.

Do you want a lift?



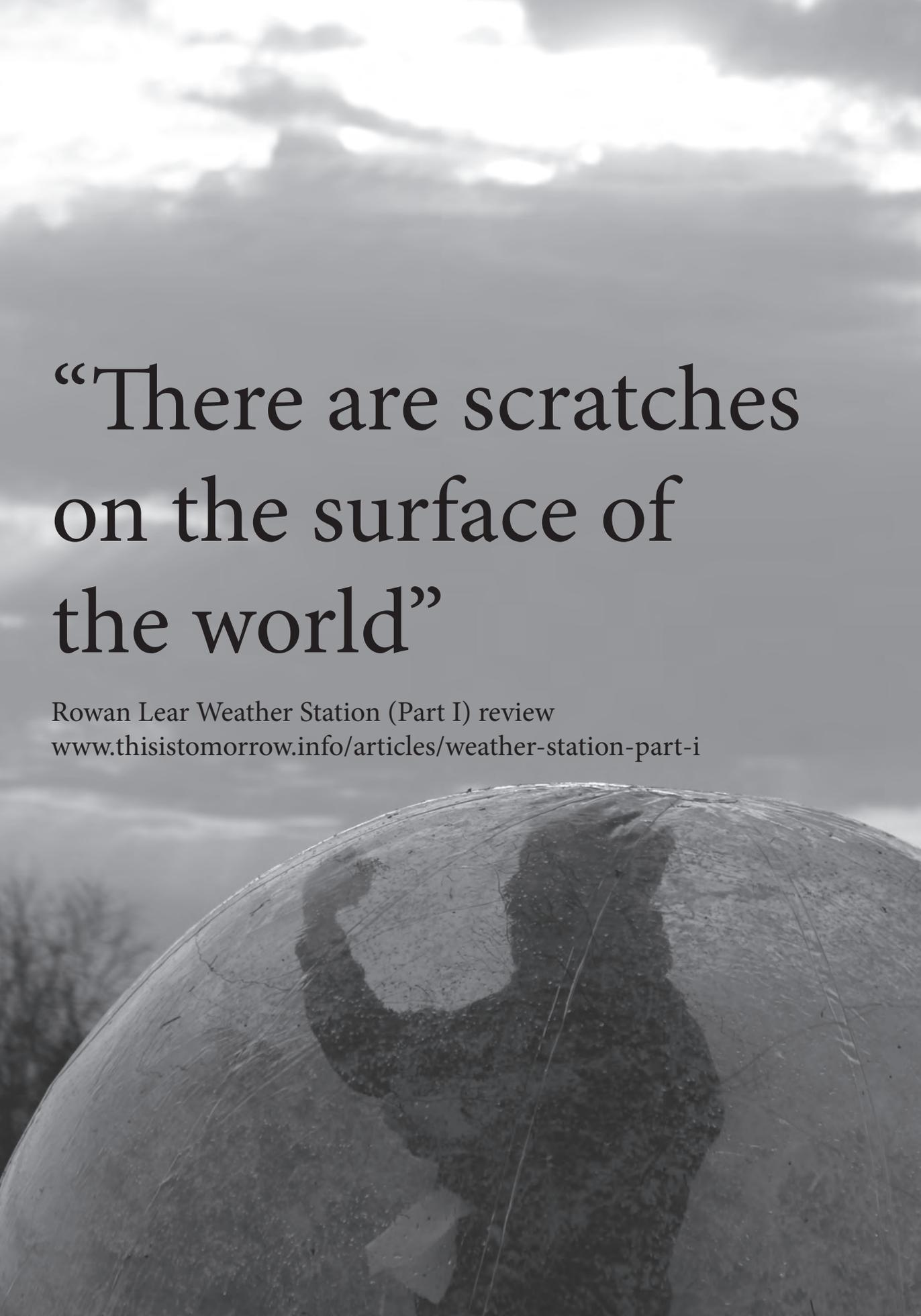
DROPPERS_ ANDY WEBSTER AND DARREN RAY

During an exhibition at the OSR Project Space in April 2016 Andy Webster & Darren Ray constructed a geodesic dome inspired by Drop City, an experimental settlement established in Trinidad, Colorado in 1965. Their aim was to see if the ideals established in this pioneering environmental research centre and collaborative space for artists, inventors and free- thinkers was still relevant today.

As part of the Weather Station (part II) exhibition taking place during the b-side festival 2016, Andy and Darren have re-purposed the structure as a hub for the secret and under the radar activity taking place during the 2016 b-side festival.







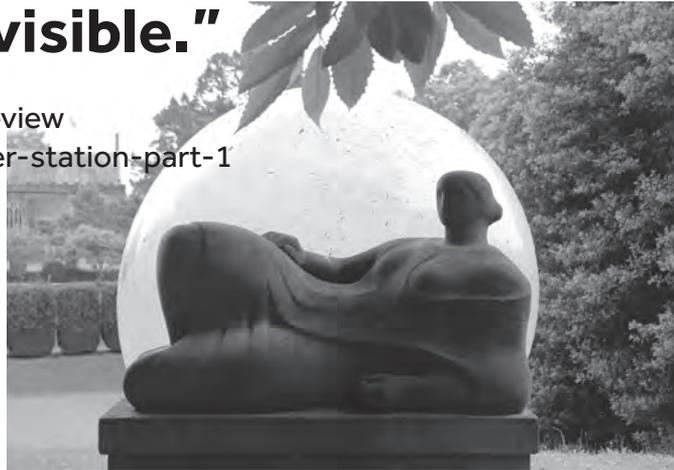
“There are scratches on the surface of the world”

Rowan Lear Weather Station (Part I) review

www.thisistomorrow.info/articles/weather-station-part-i

“Weather Station marks a new step towards an ecological rhetoric; one in which our tangential relationship to nature can be made visible.”

Martyn Windsor Weather Station (Part I) review
[/www.a-n.co.uk/reviews/overview-weather-station-part-1](http://www.a-n.co.uk/reviews/overview-weather-station-part-1)



WEATHER STATION (PART II)

PROJECT PARTNERS

B-Side www.b-side.org.uk,

Backlane West www.backlanewest.org,

Exeter Phoenix www.exeterphoenix.org.uk

Hand in Glove www.handinglove.org.uk

Hestercombe Gallery www.hestercombe.com/your-visit/gallery

Plymouth Arts Centre www.plymouthartscentre.org

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Friday 16 September 2016

Organised by Sarah Harris (SIX) and Simon Lee Dicker (OSR Projects)
Part of the b-side festival 2016

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