

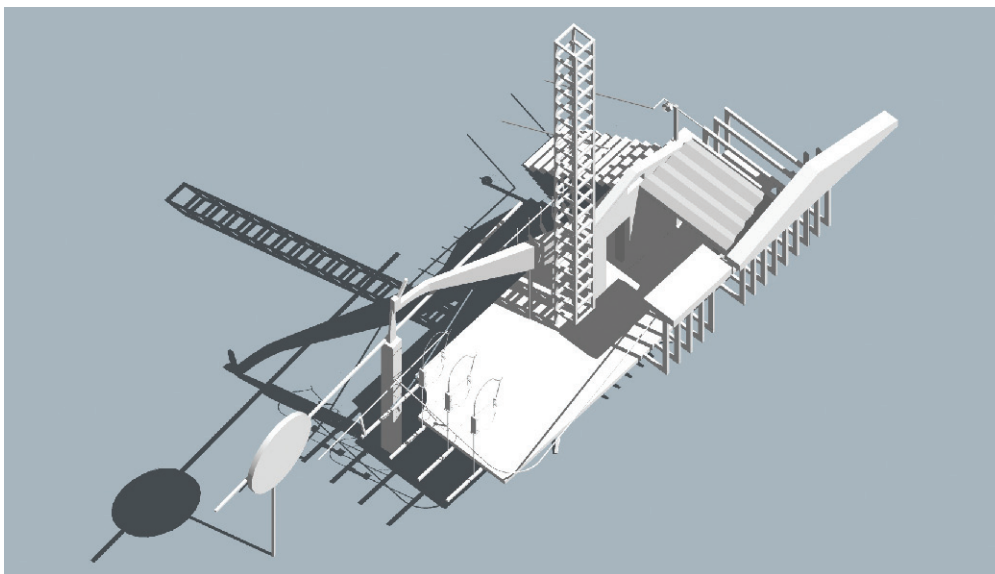
NO 7: WRITTLE CALLING: 2EMMATOC

An ongoing series of journeys along art roads less travelled – this month a temporary radio station

Writtle in Essex is a fairly typical English village: it's got a big green where dogs run and kids play football, a pub called the Rose & Crown, a lane leading down to the local church, a primary school and a duck pond. It was also, however, the site of the UK's first radio station to broadcast regularly, 2MT, presented, produced, scripted and managed by one Captain Peter P. Eckersley, an engineer from the nearby Marconi telecommunications laboratories. Eckersley would announce his radio shows, transmitted weekly for a year from 1922, with the military phonetic alphabet for the station name and its location: "This is Two Emma Toc. Writtle testing, Writtle testing." The army shed that Eckersley broadcast from is now in a nearby museum, and the site of the Marconi labs was redeveloped for housing in 1999 by a company that fell into liquidation in 2006. The village's role in broadcasting should be all but history now.

A self-initiated, poetic adjunct to this heritage is being planned, however, by artist Melissa Appleton and collaborator Matthew Butcher, of architecture practice Post-Works. Using a temporary FM licence, Writtle Calling: 2emmatoc will broadcast for a week this month for

below:
Edwin Burdis
The Gold Whole, 2009,
performance (Vilma Gold, London).
Courtesy the artist.

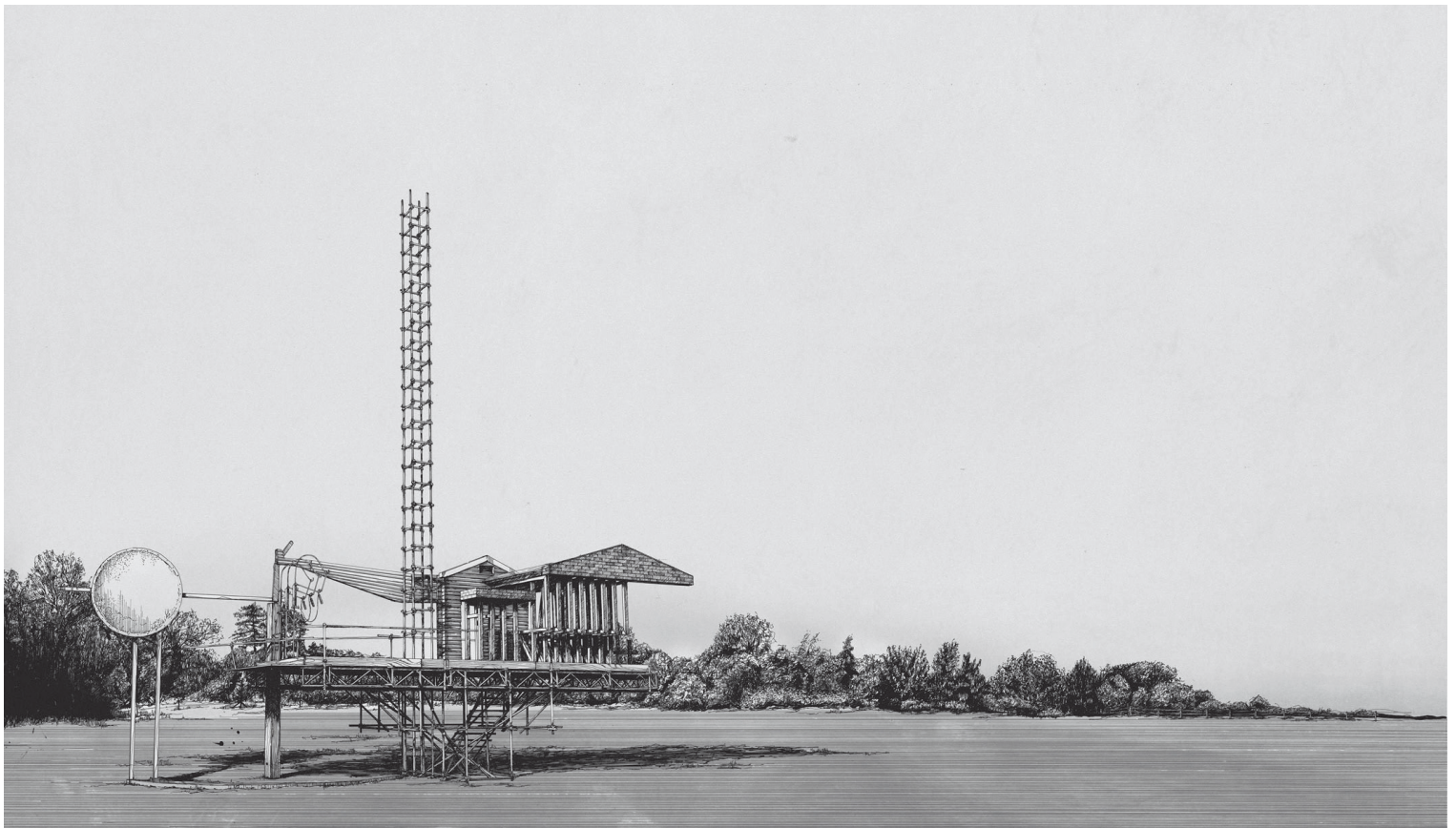


above:
**Melissa Appleton
& Post-Works**
Writtle Calling: 2emmatoc,
2012, CAD sketch.
Courtesy the artists

an hour and a half each day from the grounds of Writtle College (it will also be streamed online, at writtlecalling.co.uk, for those outside the area) and feature contributions from a plethora

of artists, including Pablo Bronstein, Fabian Peake, David Raymond Conroy and Edwin Burdis. Appleton and Butcher are designing and building the temporary studio themselves, taking a hotchpotch of references not just from Eckersley's original hut but also vernacular farming constructions and the form of radio instruments. From the architectural sketches it looks like a grounded homemade space station. This extraterrestrial thought is fitting, as Appleton says that one of the aims of the project is to introduce something alien to a radio dial otherwise largely filled with pop music, travel updates and phone-ins. "It should offer a sense of otherness, or abstraction you don't normally find on the radio, a space that can't be easily explained," the artist tells me. To further the opaque nature of the broadcasts, Writtle Calling will eschew presenters or a continuity announcer, with the broadcasts – most produced live onsite – springing on to the airwaves at 6pm each evening and disappearing just as suddenly an hour and a half later. This makes Writtle Calling more akin to a broadcast performance than the permanent, more formal – but just as progressive – programming of radio





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**Melissa Appleton
 & Post-Works**
Whittle Calling: 2emmatoc,
 2012, design sketch.
 Courtesy the artists

art stations Resonance 104.4 FM in London, Prague's Radiocustica or New York's ARTonAIR.org and free103point9.

When talking about the project, Appleton frequently refers to the 'space' of radio: it is a deliberate choice of word, as this project primarily sees broadcasting as a curatorial platform (each evening will even have a theme for the artists to respond to, for example: 'sky', 'underground', 'voice') and not an end in itself. "There

have been a lot of artists that take the medium's technology as a starting point, but I wanted the station to take a wider brief than this," Appleton says. "Not to ignore the medium, but extend the project's reference points to ideas surrounding communications in general or the site in which the studio is situated." To use the analogue broadcasting system seems key to this – FM gives a broadcast a locality, a geographical radius that stems from the point of the aerial; the web, while a great mass distributor, loses the immediacy or specificity of audience reception. Nonetheless, that is where the curatorial management ends. Art broadcast on the radio (which seems to be the best way to describe this project, as opposed to the more specific 'radio art' term) is let loose, with artists forgoing any environmental control of how their work is experienced. Robert Adrian X, the founder of Vienna-based Kunstradio On Line, noted in his 1998 manifesto for the medium that radio is heard combined with other sounds – traffic, the television, children – and that 'radio happens in the place it is heard and not in the production studio'.

below:
Fabian Peake
 Untitled film stills, 2012.
 Courtesy the artist

