

**CRASH!**

propose

**A**

**BETTER**

**BRITAIN**

## **A Better Britain**

One people, one country, one vision

**A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at** - William Hague, Foreign Secretary of Great Britain

These are exacting times. The economic crisis is cutting deep and outlets for cultural innovation are feeling the brunt of the government spending cuts. Educational establishments, public funding bodies and state-supported exhibition spaces will all need to economise, streamline and re-evaluate their remits over the next few years. Art production, its cultural point-and-purpose, will no doubt come under greater scrutiny as budgets tighten and political attention is turned to regenerating - rather than celebrating - Britain's battered polity.

Artists can, of course, respond to this in a variety of ways. They may choose to keep their heads down and simply plough on as best they can; they could get politicised and campaign against the Con-Lib agenda; some will opt to engage with the market solutions and conceptual precepts of the modern Tory party - the Big Society, the mending of Broken Britain, the pre-eminence of the private sector in forging innovation and generating wealth. Whatever, an artist's cultural capital must now be seen less as representative of his or her 'power' and more as a measure of their investment potential and market worth. Like it or not, each and every response to the shifting ideological climate will inform Britain's political and cultural future. Here, then, are twelve projects designed to seek a way out of what many foresee to be dark days ahead; twelve ways to turn the imagination into a source of renovation; twelve ways to re-imagine Britain's cultural mission; twelve ways to build a Better Britain. **Scott King and Matthew Worley**

## No Glass Ceiling

Urban regeneration will alleviate poverty

Art and pop music have already made a significant contribution to the regeneration of Britain's most depressed areas. Both have offered working people a creative escape route from their seemingly predetermined lives; both have allowed cities - such as Liverpool - to benefit from their cultural heritage. More recently, the creation of large sculptures in the north of England have served to raise the quality of life for people living in some of Britain's most deprived areas. According to one recent independent survey, large public sculptures are directly attributable to drops in the crime rate, to better health among the unemployed community, and to improvements in the education of school children between 7 and 11 years of age.

We propose, then, to combine the cultural and regenerative potential of pop and art by building ten large sculptures based on the cover of Mike Oldfield's seminal *Tubular Bells* lp (1973). The lp's status as a cultural treasure has already been verified by its inclusion in a collection of stamps depicting classic British albums. Thus, by floating a large but twisted tubular bell over the town centres of those places recently listed to be among Britain's poorest (Hull, Leicester, Sunderland, Middlesbrough and Knowsley), so we believe potential investors and retailers will be drawn to the aforementioned towns as musical connoisseurs were to the original lp. As importantly, the construction of the sculptures will offer employment and succor to the local community, building a work ethic and a sense of *joie de vivre* that simply throwing money at public services will fail to achieve. If the immediate cost of the project seems excessive, then the long-term impact of the finished work will stand as a testament to the entrepreneurial spirit of the British culture industry.

*Tubular Bell for Hull*  
One of 10 Tubular Bell sculptures  
set to dominate wasteland  
in Britain's 10 poorest towns  
and cities



## Thought Leader

### Man or myth?: A celebration of individuality

The importance of communal memory, and the oral passing of information from generation to generation, has long been of interest to historians of folk memory and tradition. This project therefore seeks to explore and capitalise on a crucial example of this: namely, to celebrate the maverick figures of provincial Britain whose (real or imagined) life stories have become weaved into the fabric of the community to which they were at once a part of and detached from.

The logistics of the project would require only modest investment. Up to 25 localities would be targeted across the UK. A 'Great British Eccentric' would then be identified and information gathered as to their name, background and the myths that had grown around them. A 50 x life-size statue would then be erected to dominate the area of their most regular sightings. Two examples may include:

Cue Gary (Goole) - Cue Gary's name stems from the fact that he has carried a snooker cue around with him everyday for the past 25 years, though no-one has ever seen him play snooker. He is also known to ride a bicycle with no chain.

Marigold (Norwich) - a black man in yellow washing-up gloves who walked around the ring road directing the traffic; sometimes carrying a broom. Rumour had it that his hands were rotting away beneath the gloves and that his 'condition' was caused by a blow to the head by a helicopter.

Such a project would obviously be designed to celebrate diversity within communities and applaud individuality. It would cultivate understanding within local communities, bringing awareness of social exclusion to the fore and thereby serving to provide policy solutions that help the socially disadvantaged. It would also help ensure that the chosen maverick at last 'gave back' something to the community that sustained him or her throughout their eccentric and ultimately unproductive lives.

*Cue Gary (Goole Leisure Centre)*  
An artist's impression of one of  
25 proposed monuments that will  
celebrate local mavericks



## Pushing The Envelope

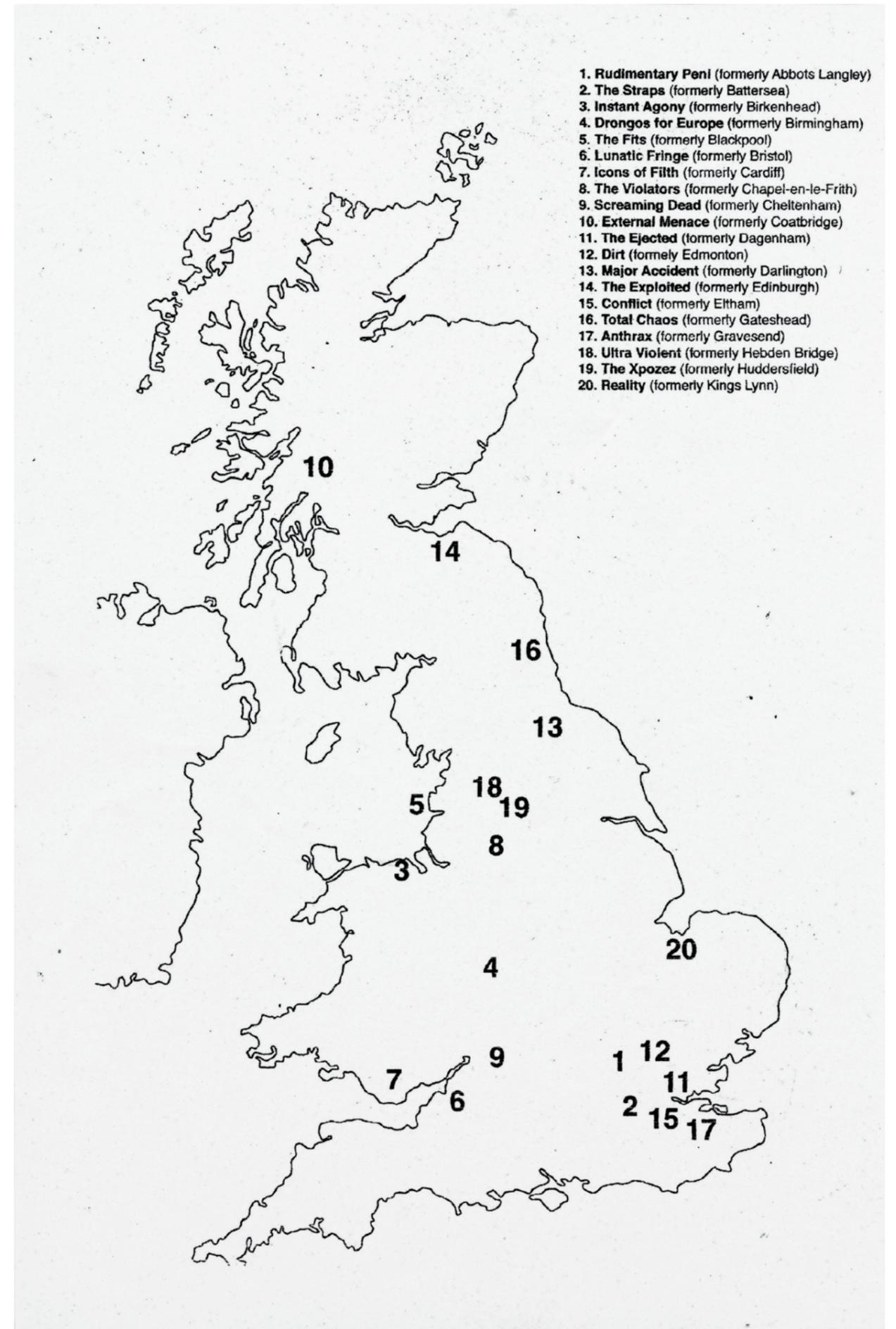
Rebranded towns: Faster, cheaper, better

As we approach the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of punk, it is certain that media attention will once more turn to the tumultuous events of 1976/77. But punk resonated far beyond the media panic that greeted the Sex Pistols' rise to prominence, forging an enduring youth culture that fed into the 1980s and informed everything from clothing, graphic design and radical politics. This project seeks to celebrate and explore punk's enduring cultural impact by reconnecting its practitioners back to their roots.

It has recently been argued that pop's best moments come not at the point of media overdrive, but in its wake – as the initial impact reverberates into the suburbs and is reinvented and re-imagined in new and distinct contexts. Following this, our project seeks to celebrate the second wave of punk that succeeded the 'explosion' of 1977; the bands who kept the (torn) flag flying to ensure punk became as much a part of Britain's cultural heritage as the kitchen sink drama, Beatle-boom or fixed talent contest. Thus, just as we now have Brian Clough Way and Liverpool John Lennon Airport, we propose to rename British towns after those punk bands who originated from and helped define their identities. So, Eltham would be renamed 'Conflict'; Sunderland would become 'Red Alert'; Stoke becomes 'Discharge'; and New Mills would be renamed 'Blitz'.

Such a project may be seen as a test-case. If successful, the idea could be extended to include other musical genres and artists. Basildon is already known on the continent as 'Depeche Mode', while Leicester would undoubtedly benefit from being renamed 'Kasabian'. Certainly, it is expected that the project will serve to generate healthy competition. Those places without a recognised pop-cultural identity, such as Milton Keynes or Hitchin, would be encouraged to foster cultural product in order to better define themselves. With such rebranding, towns will be able to reinvent themselves, shedding undesired reputations and revelling in the healthy glow of pop's everlasting NOW.

*The Old Second Division*  
Image illustrates the first 20 towns/boroughs that will benefit from radical rebranding



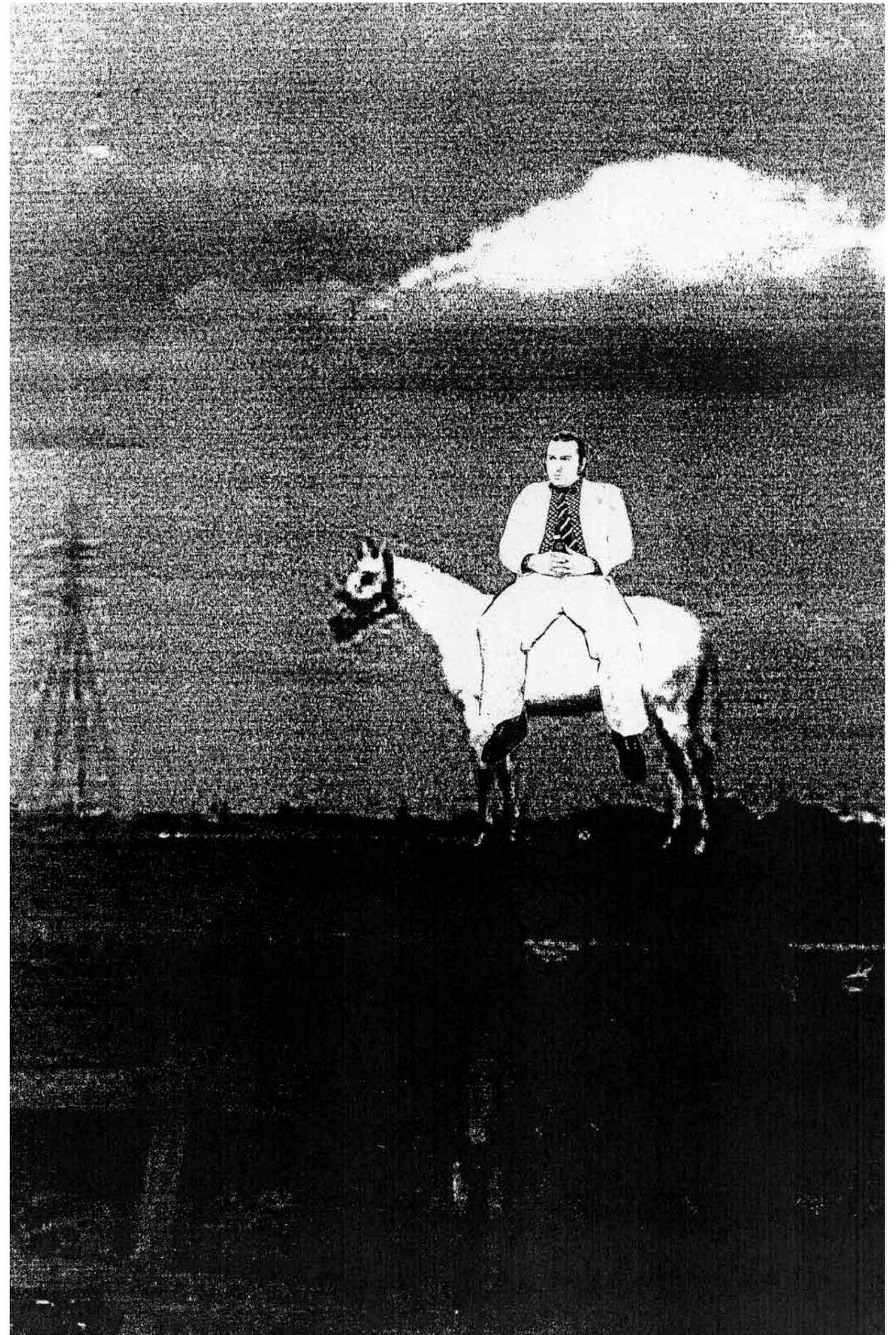
## Connected Communities

Ambitious proposal set to unify Essex and Kent

One healthy trend in recent British public sculpture has been its attention to scale. Such a focus has obvious ramifications for the mending of 'Broken Britain', serving to embolden Britain's sense of pride and place in the world. By following the example of Mark Wallinger's proposed 'Horse', Antony Gormley's 'Angel of the North', and Anish Kapoor's 'Orbit Tower' and 'Temenos', Britain can restate its global status as a financial power-house and finally shed its reputation for being a stagnant state-bureaucracy akin to Hoxha's Albania. Just as the Angel of the North intimidates and impresses those who venture into England's hinterlands, so the French will shrink beneath the shadow of a massive horse. Our idea, then, is to extend this concept and make 'Horse' even more impressive through the addition of Essex's most famous son, The Big Figure. We envisage that, in the future, all ways into Britain, and all major motorway turn-offs, should be signaled by a cultural statement of intent. The message should be: We are British and look what we can do.

### *Bigger Figures*

Dr Feelgood drummer on a large horse will leave a lasting impression on French *Eurostar* passengers traveling through Ebbsfleet

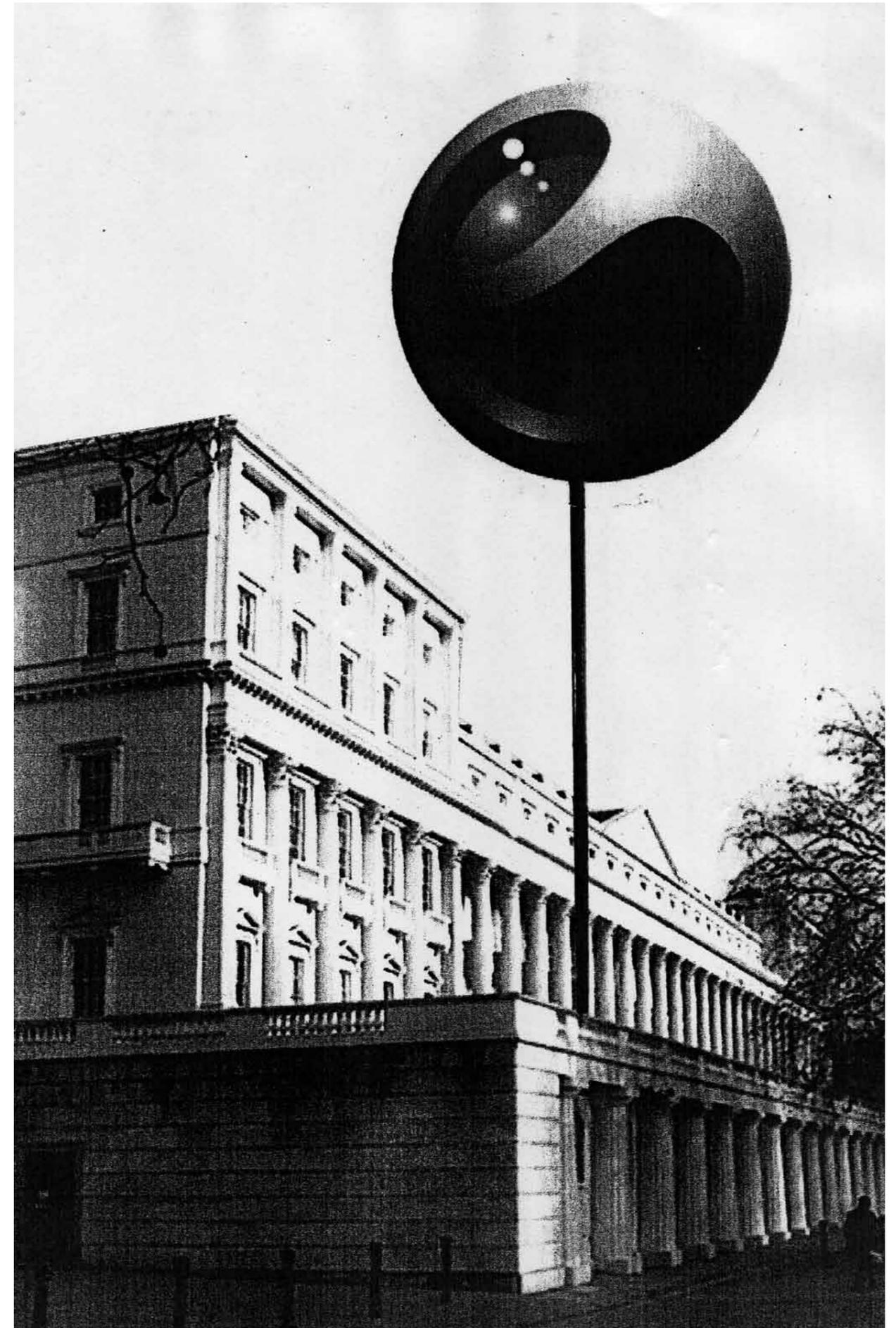


## Client-Centred

Galleries and museums to become tourist attractions

There was a time when the culture industry tried to mask its connections to the world of commerce and finance. But where once there was talk of using 'guerrilla advertising' to forge reciprocal benefits for artists, 'hip' companies and cultural institutions alike, there has more lately been moves to find sponsorship 'solutions' by way of developing cultural 'brands' tied to globally-renown business corporations. This project seeks to build on the latter initiative to find a solution to the financial difficulties currently facing Britain's cultural institutions, offering an unashamedly *market* solution to invigorate ailing public art galleries and museums, advance tourism, and stimulate financial growth. The idea is this: Large, fun, abstract artworks will be erected outside sites of cultural significance in a bid to attract those who might ordinarily think that 'art is not for me'. The works will be entirely funded by private investment, with all profits made from visitor expenditure being shared by the institution and the private investor. Local people will be given responsibility for maintaining the commissioned work in conjunction with the approximate institute or museum, thereby instilling a sense of local pride and galvanising cross-class co-operation towards the rebuilding of the economy. With a mix of free labour and profit incentive, British society can be remade and cultural production will be seen to have a genuine economic purpose.

*Make. Believe*  
Proposal for the first of many  
privately funded public sculptures  
that will draw huge crowds to  
British museums and galleries



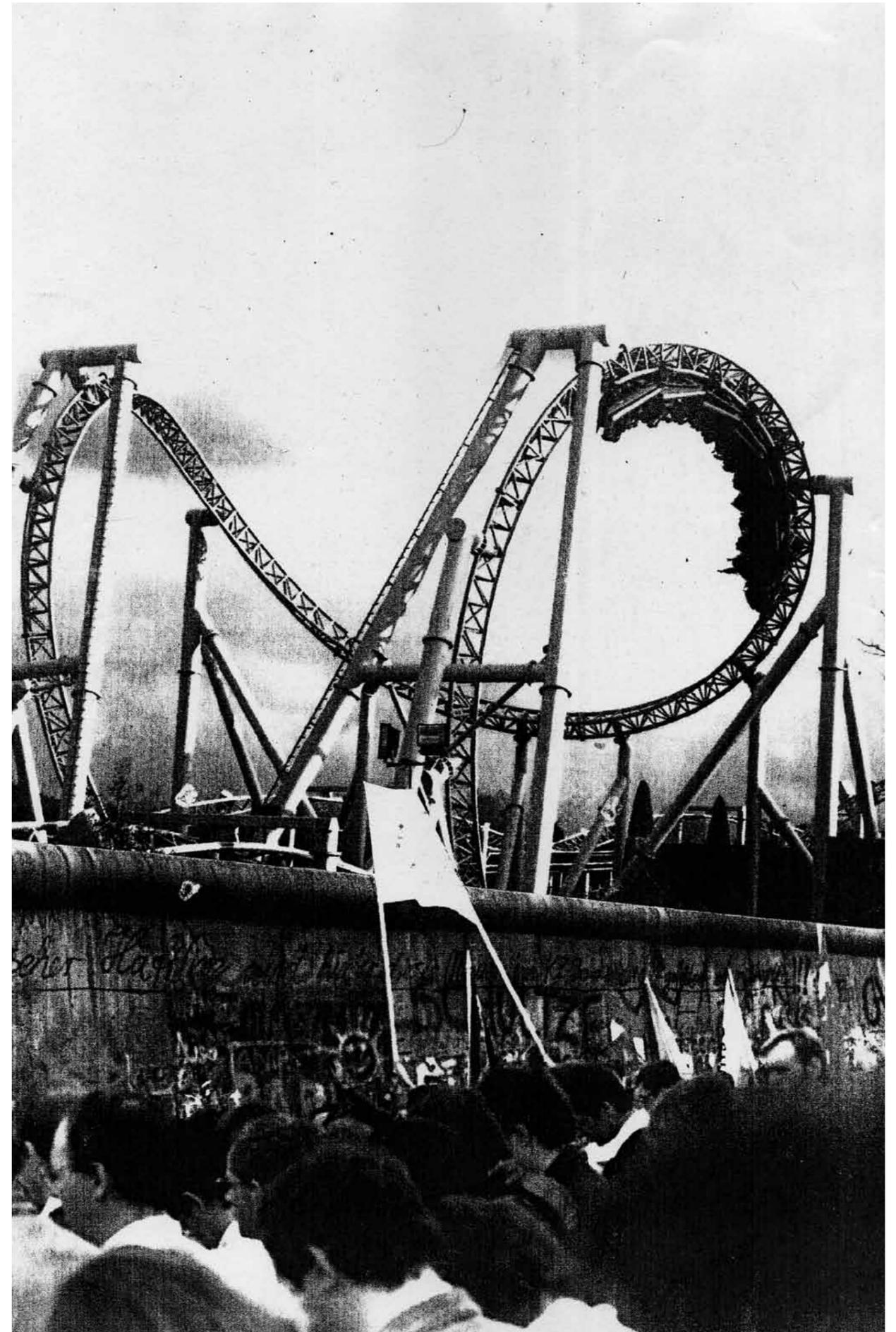
## Maximize Leverage

Educational theme parks: A fun day out for 8-80 year olds

At a time when the bolstering of the banking system is paramount, it is essential that business opportunities be encouraged in all areas. Nothing should be 'out of bounds'; to come out of the economic crisis we need to be able to 'think the unthinkable'. As this suggests, efficiencies in health, welfare and education spending are essential to the maintenance of a healthy financial sector. Yet, we still need to have fun and we still need to educate our children. Indeed, the postwar trajectory of western capitalism shows that it is in the spheres of leisure and entertainment that consumers strive to continue spending in times of enforced austerity. It is also proven that educated work forces are the most cost-effective and the most productive. Maybe, then, there are ways of combining education and entertainment within a financially viable framework.

One idea would be to create historical, literary or science-based theme parks in which children can enjoy themselves whilst simultaneously extracting educational value from their activities. So, for example, Soviet-Land would replicate symbols of socialist/communist terror and recast them as educational tools and fun rides. After scaling a mock Berlin Wall (with Redcoats overseeing from watch towers), customers could experience literal terror on the Gulag-Rollercoaster or Bouncy Kremlin before tucking into a Pol-Pot Noodle and a can of Leninade. Large queues can be guaranteed for every ride, and assistants dressed as Stasi officers will regularly distribute customer survey forms to ensure everyone is having a good time. On leaving the complex, children will be expected to name 10 communist dictators, outline the reasons for communism's failure, and explain how the Second World War would still have been won without Soviet assistance. On so doing, they will receive an embossed certificate from a 'comedy' dictator (assistants wearing papier-mâché Mao, Stalin or Tito heads) and three-hours free tuition in a local FE college.

*The Engelevator*  
Exciting new theme parks set to educate through enjoyment



## Market Driven

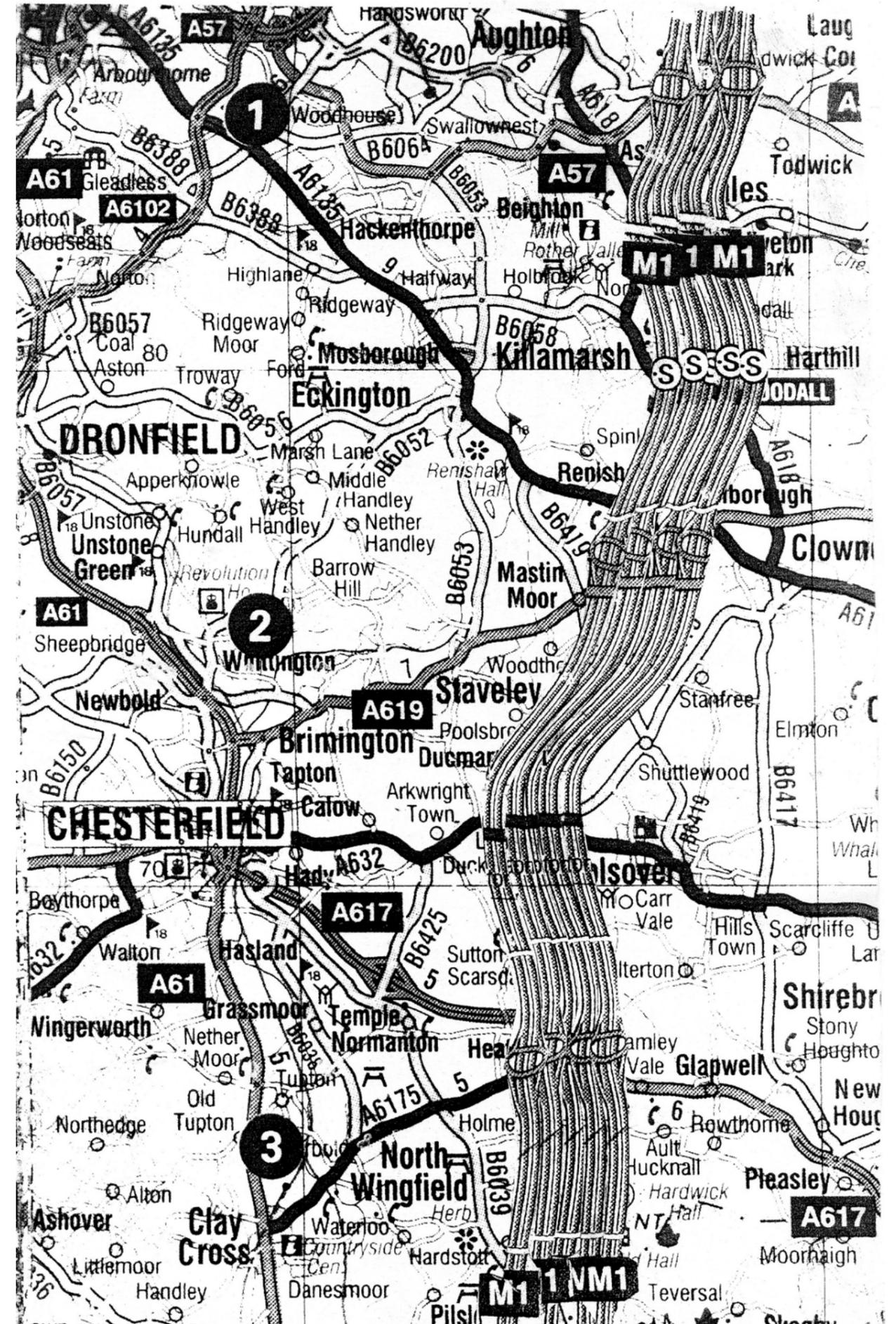
Strength through diversity: Driving for freedom

Over the past fifty years, Britain has learned to celebrate its diversity. No longer is disability, ethnicity, gender or sexuality judged by any divergence from an imagined, or Whitehall prescribed, norm. Instead, differences in sexual preference, skin colour, religion and physicality are embraced. They are, within a society defined by consumption, a potential font of cultural capital to be exploited; or a recognized lifestyle to be catered for by the ever-flexible parameters of the free market. Britain, in the twenty-first century, is a testament to the 60s slogan of the personal being political - we are all different but all accepted; we are all individuals now.

This project seeks to celebrate the complexities of such diversity within a society proud of its inclusivity by proposing that the M1 is demarcated along lines of personal identity. Thus, motorists will be expected to drive in lanes designated as 'Gay', 'Black', 'White', 'Christian' and so on. An element of 'choice' will of course be allowed: a gay Chinese man with a disability will be able to choose which lane he drives down. But the project serves primarily to instigate a sense of individuality without any accompanying sense of isolation.

In terms of finance, money will be needed to widen the M1 to accommodate the diverse range of identities that inform the UK. We estimate that this will amount to some £2 billion. However, the cost of the project will be offset by its impact on the cultural well-being of the nation, on its ability to connect communities, and its contribution to keeping unemployment to a respectable level.

*The M1x12*  
Major artery widening will become  
a monument to modernity

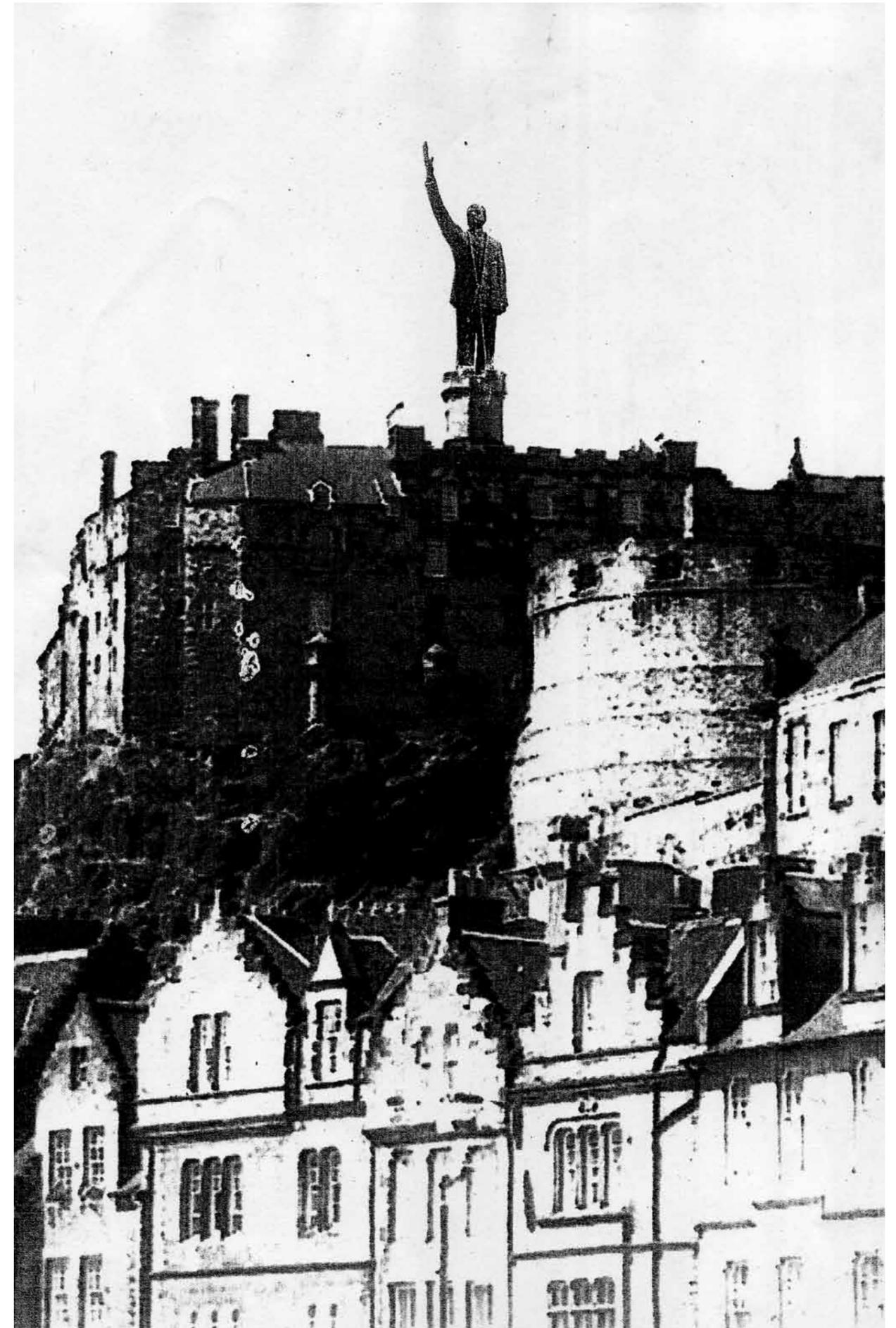


## Blue Sky Thinking

Ailing icons given new lease of life

Britain is a small country, and in an age of high-speed travel and technological innovation it is easy to see why tourists are beginning to look elsewhere for their summer thrills. One whistle-stop week is all that is needed to tick Britain's key tourist attractions off any 'must-see' list. Quite clearly, the time has come for reinvigoration. Bath's baths have changed little for hundreds of years, and a new range of postcards will not fool the modern-day tourist. Not dissimilarly, one Tudor-themed street is much like another; why go to York and Norwich when doing just one will serve you fine. In our fast-moving world, how many cathedrals can the average tourist stomach; and who exactly are the old soldiers on horses in Whitehall? One solution would be to initiate temporary attractions or introduce elements of 'surprise'. Placing sculptural figures on rooftops has proven itself both press worthy and popular. Thus, perhaps, figures of contemporary significance could be used to revitalise ailing tourist sites. Statues of Saddam could be brought back from Iraq to add visual spice to Edinburgh Castle; a life-size figure of Robbie Williams could stand atop Tower Bridge; the cast of Dr Who could be dressed in tunics to brighten up Colchester's historic streets. If Britain wants to better itself, it must become a centre of innovation - it must entice tourists by relating its historic traditions to the needs and desires of the modern age.

*A New Horizon*  
Recycled and populist statues  
will rejuvenate Edinburgh Castle  
and other forgotten landmarks



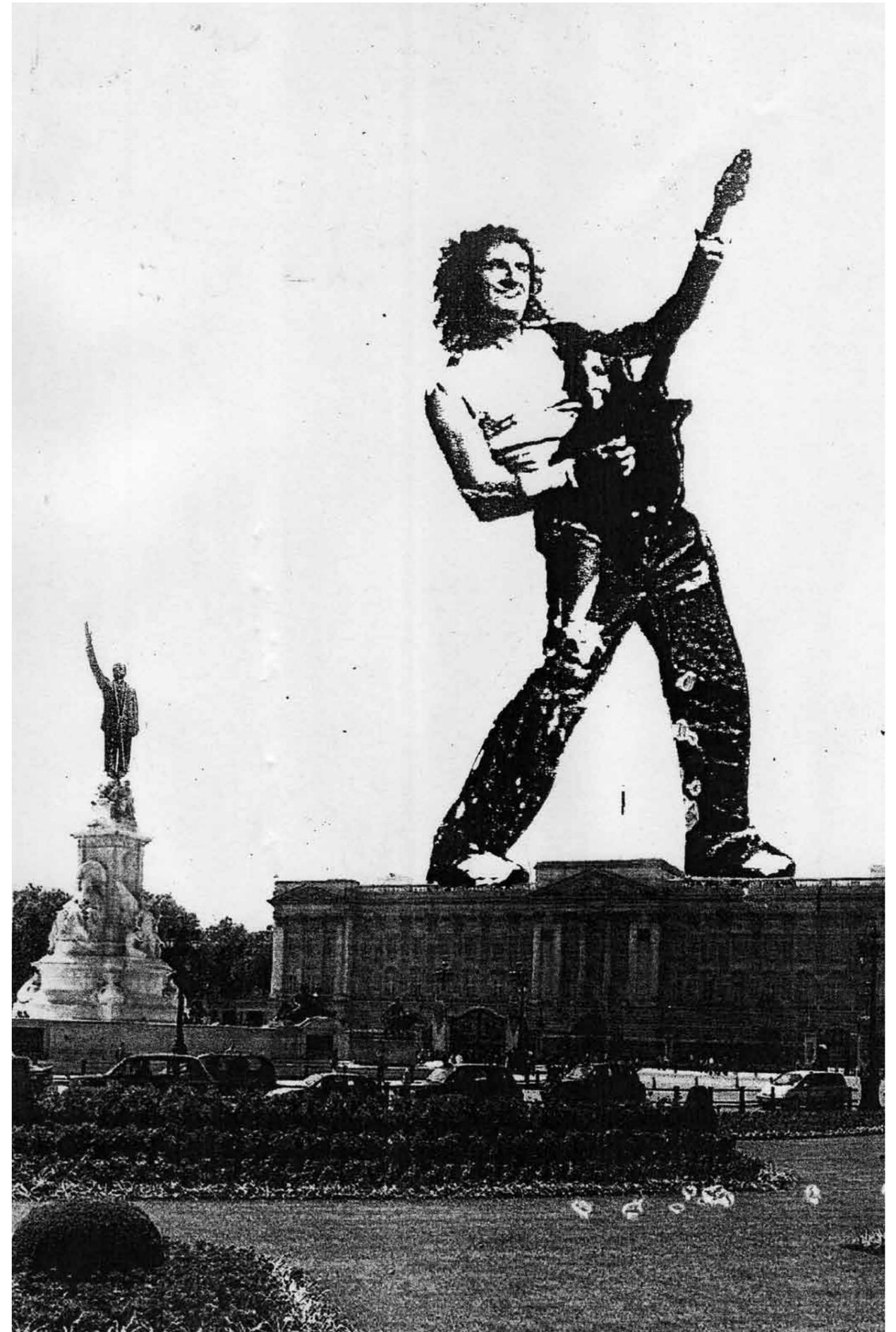
## Step Up And Face The Music

Guitar legend to be honoured indefinitely

A Better Britain is one in which its present is at ease with its past. Nothing represented this better than Brain May's legendary performance on the rooftop of Buckingham Palace to mark HRH Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee. We propose that a permanent memorial to this be erected in the form an 83 metre-high statue of May on the roof of the palace. Not only will such a spectacle reassert the Royal Family's importance and relevance to the mending of Britain, but it will honour a man recently voted the world's 7<sup>th</sup> best guitarist.

In many ways, May and Elizabeth II represent the ying and yang of British identity. The Queen's steadfast commitment to duty and tradition, her straddling of history and unmistakable profile may be contrasted - or complemented - by May's mane of rock-star curly hair and finger-tip wizardry. But May is also a role model for British youth. Yes, he can rock out, but he is also a keen astrophysicist, clog wearer and inspiration for a long-running West End musical. If Britain is to truly remake itself, it needs to honour its traditions and its innovations - it needs its popular culture to find new ways of paying homage to all that once made Britain great.

*Two Queens Are Better Than One*  
Huge impression of top guitarist  
will put Buckingham Palace  
on the map



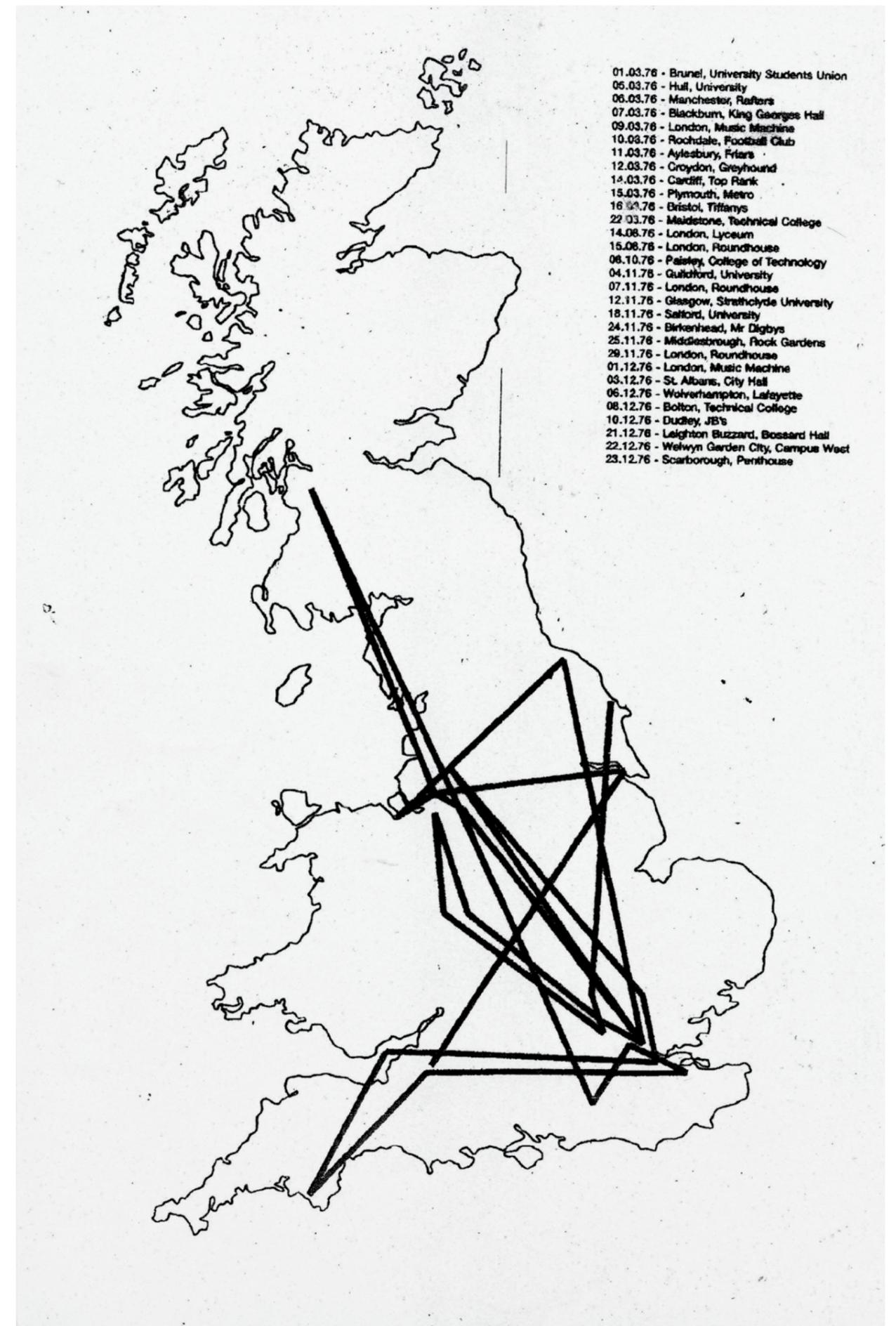
## When The Rubber Meets The Road

Motorhead 76: A celebration of the wheel

A necessary consequence of the economy measures introduced to solve the financial crisis is unemployment. But unemployment can also create opportunity. For business there is a ready pool of people desperate for work whatever the wage rate; for the unemployed there is the chance to experience flexible working patterns or to reinvent their lifestyle choice; and for the government there is an opportunity to undertake various low-cost projects necessary to patch up Britain's ageing infrastructure. Prisoners, obviously, can be made to work for their keep. But low-wage labour may also allow for modest work schemes designed to renovate public buildings or improve Britain's transport network.

Transport is important: commerce needs to move. And now that the war against the motorist has been defeated by those standing beneath the standard of Jeremy Clarkson, so the government would be wise to repay its foot soldiers by designing a new motorway network to better connect Britain. After some analysis, this would appear to work best by following the tour undertaken by Motorhead in 1976. The motorway should be built in the spirit of the band: no corners, accepting no obstacle to its route, and attuned to speed. No doubt Lemmy will appreciate the echoes of the autobahn, but for the British motorist it will rekindle the freedom of the road that seemed perilously close to being snuffed out.

*Built For Speed*  
Image illustrates exciting new motorway that will connect Dudley to Bolton



**Silo Thinking**  
Angel's Column of the South

This project proposes transplanting the Angel of the North onto Nelson's Column. The premise is to update and rebrand Britain's status as a world power by replacing a symbol of its imperial past with one of peace and inclusivity. There is a sense in which the Angel is wasted in the north. To fully access its cultural potential, the statute should be put in better view at the heart of the nation's capital. This, in turn, will rekindle London's reputation as a world-leading cultural centre whilst also allowing money for the up-keep of the sculpture to be saved from the budget in the North East.

The project will be important for several reasons. First, it will serve as a symbol of Britain's pioneering cultural spirit: a testament to our advanced civilisation. Second, it will serve as a rallying point for the British public, a source of inspiration for a country pulling together as one big society devoid of division and having no truck with those who think there is any alternative to the economic reforms necessary to tackle the deficit. Third, it will help stimulate the economy. Certainly, the potential for souvenirs - snow-globes, plastic models, postcards of an angry Nelson wrestling with an Angel, flags and stickers - are endless, allowing for a suitably professional marketing campaign to recoup the investment provided to complete the project. Finally, the statue will represent the nation as a living organism: healthy, erect and emblematic of Britain's phoenix-like rebirth.

*Viva la Morte*  
By 2012 Better Britain will finally  
rid itself of its imperialist past



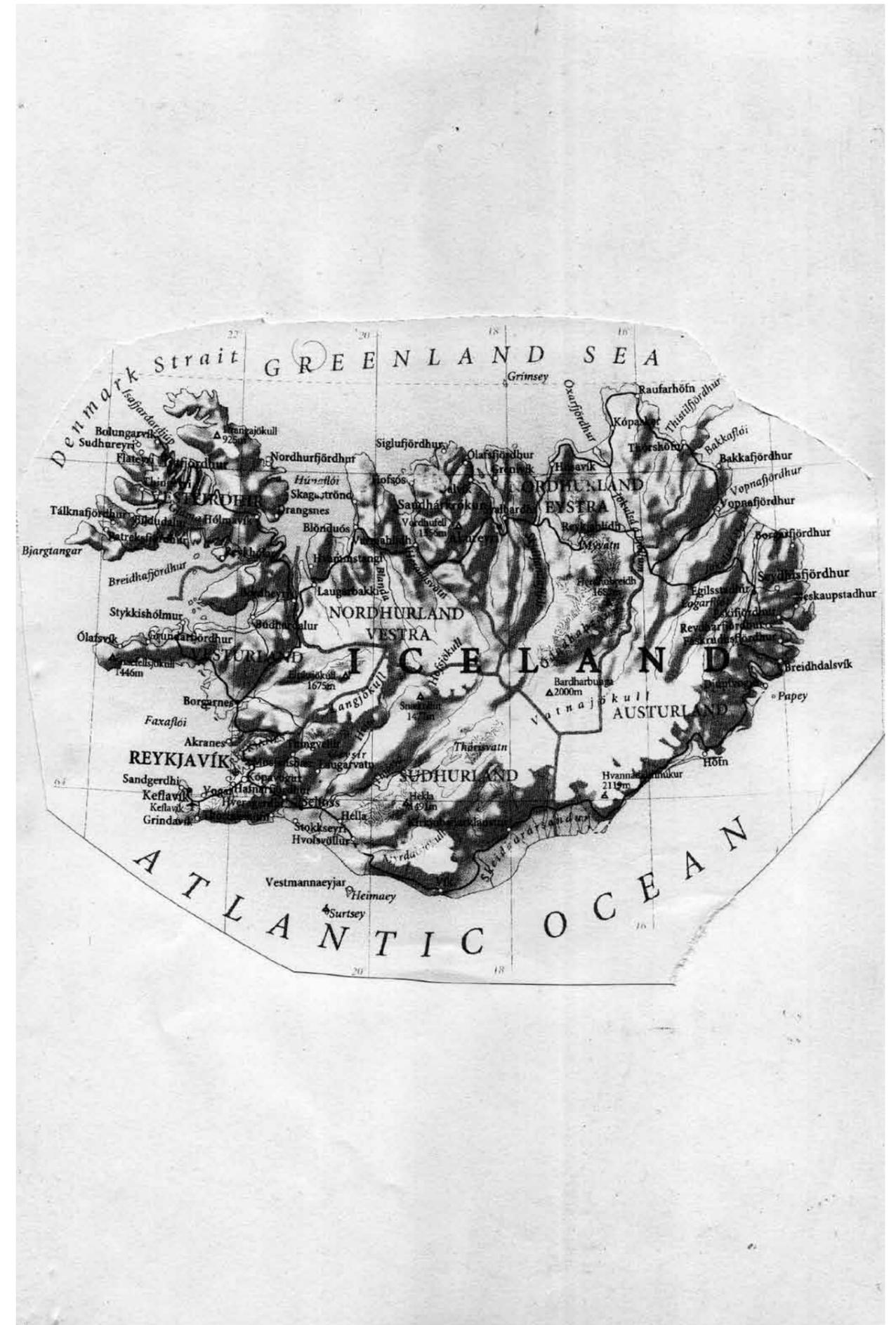
## Maximize Customer Satisfaction

The annexation of Iceland: A bigger Britain is a better Britain

The need to build a Better Britain is imperative. But to do so in such a tough financial climate is both difficult and full of risk. Social unrest and unemployment are possible consequences of the measures necessary to put the country back on its feet. And this has even greater significance given that the Olympics is but two years away. If, therefore, the ideas outlined previously should prove unpopular and unable to quell discontent engendered by cuts in public spending and deep recession, then a rallying point is needed.

We propose that public and media support would be best mobilised by the annexation of Iceland. Money is still owed to British subjects and businesses following the collapse of the Icelandic banking system; the Cod Wars are still a living memory. Justification is therefore not a problem. More importantly, war would engender national pride, rally support behind the government, and provide a partial solution to unemployment. It would also enable cultural innovation to gain measurable economic value. So let Gok Wan dress the troops; let Mark Ronson record new military anthems; let Simon Armitage write the war poetry for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and let David Starkey explain its rationale on TV. Artists, put down your chisels, switch off your PC, and prepare for WAR.

*Operation Canned Goods*  
Iceland will be colonised in  
revenge for the Cod Wars



# Serpentine Gallery

## Serpentine Gallery

Kensington Gardens  
London W2 3XA  
www.serpentinegallery.org

Open daily 10am – 6pm  
Admission free

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## Serpentine Gallery Map Marathon

16 – 17 October 2010

Royal Geographical Society  
1 Kensington Gore  
London SW7 2AR

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