

# To Rosie Cooper

2 March 2015

Rosie Cooper  
Liverpool, UK

San Francisco, California  
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Hi Rosie

Do you remember I told you about the particular concept of the spectacle that I came across while researching art in South Africa? It's in Njabulo Ndebele's essays collected as Rediscovery of the Ordinary. Well, I wrote to Mike Stubbs about it. You know how, during **The Resident**, he more or less appealed to the Liverpool Biennial not to neglect spectacle. Honestly, I thought it was very interesting to hear him refer to spectacular art as **cathartic**. I wanted to tell him about Ndebele's 'spectacle' because of the explicitly moral terms in which it is articulated: 'spectacle' as moral clarity, 'the ordinary' as moral nuance.

You know more than me about spectacle in public art, and you have tools for thinking about this. What can it mean to call spectacle cathartic? I feel I'd need to know more about trauma, therapy and even psychoanalysis to answer this.

There is a possible link between the spectacle and the spectre, Rosie: the too present and the half absent; what is actually there and what can be remembered. On the same note, perhaps the Granby Streets and the Welsh Streets in Toxteth might not be the right place for an artists' residency, but we could still work with and do something that's appropriate to that space.

See you soon.

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