

# A SORT OF PRACTICE FOR REAL LIFE

Over the last few years, the reoccurring themes of preparedness, survival, dry runs and the notion of the 'just in case', have occupied, infiltrated and consumed our making. These concerns have developed from a desire to make work that talks about our experience of the world, in the hope that our work may help to make sense of the world, for ourselves and for others. We focus in on the details of lived experience at a local, personal level, selecting themes that consume our being, informed by a view of life as a series of difficult, challenging and complex circumstances that we need to navigate, grapple with, 'survive' and understand.

## **survival** [ser-vahy-vuhl]

the state or fact of continuing to live or exist, typically in spite of an accident, ordeal, or difficult circumstances : *the animal's chances of survival were pretty low* | (figurative) *he was fighting for his political survival*.

*Hannah, it would be scary to stop*

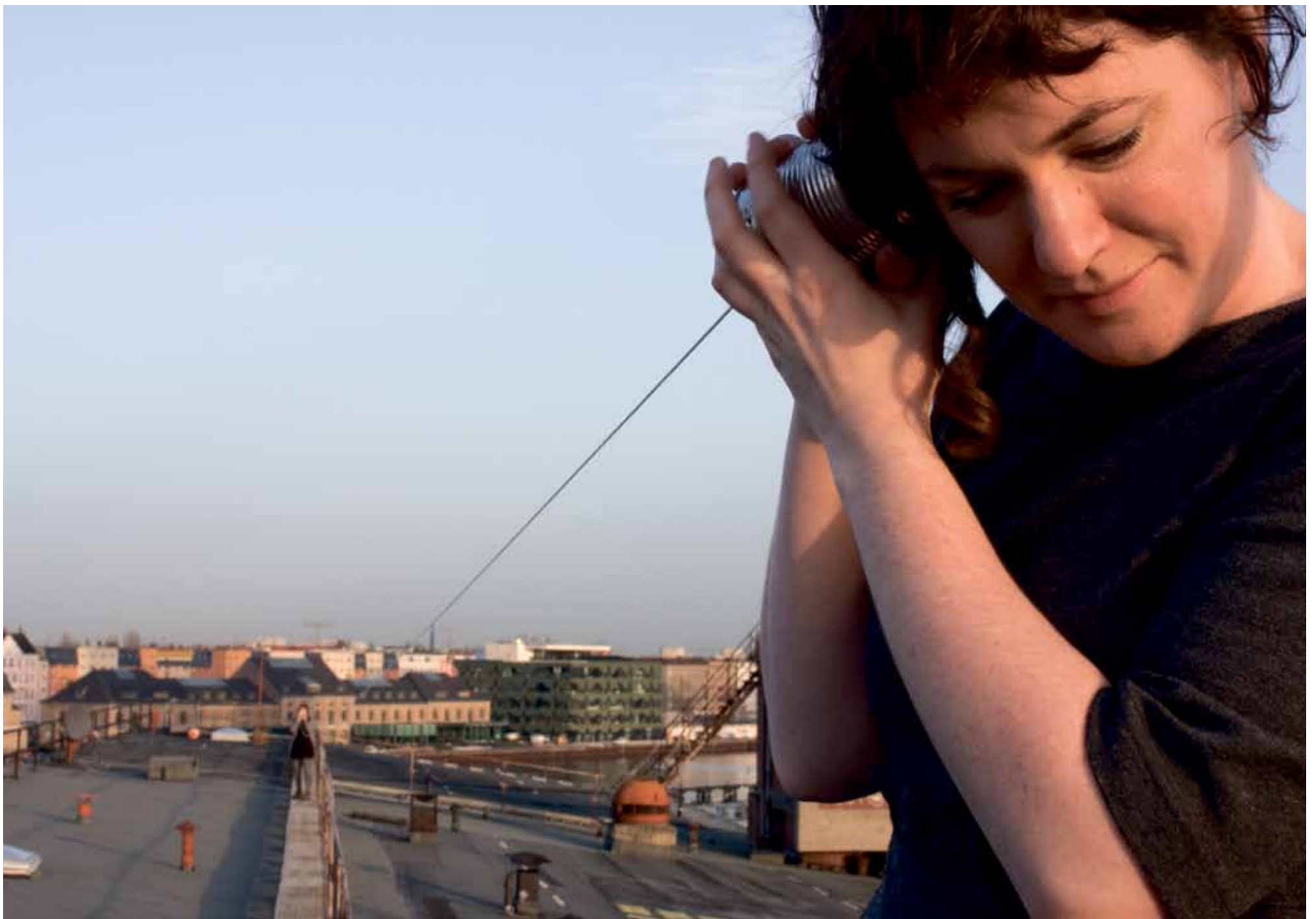
## A REFLECTION ON THE THEMATIC CONCERNS OF LOW PROFILE

Not stopping has always been important for us as LOW PROFILE - persistence, carrying on and never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never giving up. We admire those who triumph over adversity, those who are resilient and who overcome challenging situations. We want to know how to keep going in times of hardship, trouble, upset or trauma. For those of us who are born into a relatively comfortable Western European position (where our basic needs are easily catered for) and in a time of excess, surviving is no longer a simple matter of ensuring that one has the minimum

(enough), it becomes about navigating an excess (more than is necessary or desirable) - dealing with too much.

It becomes overwhelming to deal with the world on a macro scale - too many burning buildings, too many lives taken, too much heartbreak. As LOW PROFILE, we wonder if it is possible to deal with the world on a micro scale instead - to examine things that are 'close by', up close. We think about the distress, mishaps and setbacks we have encountered firsthand, and those we might need





to be ready for. We identify everyday disasters, commonplace difficulties and recurrent crises. We wonder if there is any parallel between these local or personal concerns and things that happen on a global scale.

**Dad: Hannah, have you got your keys?**

**Hannah: Yes.**

**D: You have got your keys?**

**H: Yes.**

**D: Where are your keys?**

**H: Here, in my bag.**

**D: Show me your keys.**

**preparedness** [pri-paird-nis]

a state of readiness, esp. for war : *the country maintained a high level of military preparedness.*

### **Brace Brace**

Over the last number of years LOW PROFILE have been making a series of works under the umbrella name DRY RUN. The DRY RUN series is a series of dry runs.

A dry run is a simulation of a situation, experience or event often, yet to be experienced - pre-planned dress rehearsals, 'stand ins' and practice runs for challenging, dangerous, difficult and scary situations (the 'real' thing, 'real' event, 'real' experience). A dry run (trial run) attempts to anticipate, pre-empt, reproduce, replicate and prepare you for all possible eventualities.

We (LOW PROFILE) are captivated by the endeavour of the dry run, its attempts to plan for the unknown, its determination to become ready for anything, to be truly prepared. We wonder if it is possible to apply the idea of a dry run to other aspects of life - to 'train for' other challenging situations we encounter like heartbreak, social awkwardness, loneliness, stress or financial difficulties. With no parameters or edges to this thing called preparedness, we find ourselves imagining all the various (multiple and interchangeable) scenarios that we may be faced with, whilst trying to work out the 'right' thing to do, to 'survive' each situation.

Each of our tasks in the DRY RUN series sees us examine the process of learning about survival and preparedness in a safe environment - appropriating often over-used, over-familiar and over-played sources in an attempt to reclaim elements that might otherwise be dismissed as trivial, over the top, far-fetched, unlikely, incredible or absurd. We try to learn how to save the day by watching episodes of the TV series MacGyver back-to-back for 17 hours while meticulously cataloguing 'useful' information (DRY RUN part 4). We take photographs of ourselves diving for the brick at the bottom of the pool, communicating with tin-can telephones across rooftops and taking the 'Brace Brace' position near airport runways (DRY RUN part 5). We try to map countless emergencies suggested by passers-by to create temporary 'official' scales of emergency using post-it notes and target diagrams (DRY RUN part 3).

Spurred on by our admiration for the absurdity, futility and doggedness of the motto of the international Scouting movement "Be Prepared", we too have set ourselves the challenge to 'be prepared'. However, much like the motto, which does not expand on exactly what Scouts should be prepared for, our task becomes all-encompassing. It infiltrates and applies itself to every-and-any situation, event or experience. The DRY RUN series seeks to play with, and examine, the shifts in scale and perspective (ie What constitutes an emergency?) that occur when approaching the world (and the details of lived experience) from a local, personal level.

Part of the attraction of dry runs and of the notion of preparedness (the activity surrounding being prepared), is our recognition of the simultaneously sensible, rational need for being 'ready' for all imaginable danger/challenges/difficult situations, and of the impossible, unachievable reality of ever fully accomplishing this. For us, the tussle between the/a desire to 'be prepared', alongside a realisation of the futility surrounding this endeavour is at the core of what it means to be a human in this world. It is to do with trying your best, never giving up, surviving and persevering against all odds. It would be scary to stop.

**LOW PROFILE  
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