



Knowledge  
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never  
neutral

## All Knees and Elbows of Susceptibility and Refusal Reading History From Below

Saturday 24th November 2012

The book *All Knees and Elbows of Susceptibility and Refusal: Reading History From Below* began as a discussion between two friends, Anthony Iles and Tom Roberts, about the politics of writing history. Neither are trained historians. They have assembled a critical and necessarily partial picture of the practice of 'history from below': historiographical tendencies which sought to uncover the agency of 'ordinary people' in challenging capitalism and developing different forms of social organisation. *All Knees and Elbows* surveys the work of a number of British and international left historians and groups, including Silvia Federici, History Workshop, Eric Hobsbawm, C.L.R James, Peter Linebaugh, Sheila Rowbotham, Jacques Rancière and E.P. Thompson.

"The completed study is not intended to be comprehensive. We've veered towards the subjects, areas and materials which interest us. These include questions of sources and their uses, working class education and self-education, welfare and the wage, language, historical authenticity and literary inventiveness, and contemporary political instrumentalisations of radical history. The book attests to the importance of reading history critically against the present."

Authors: Anthony Iles & Tom Roberts

Illustrations: Artwork by Rachel Baker

Publishers: Transmission Gallery, The Strickland Distribution, Mute Books

Format: Paperback, H 182mm x W 118mm

ISBN: 978-0-9565201-3-5 (paperback) / 978-0-9565201-4-2 (ebook)

Book price: £8.99 (special launch price, £5)

### Film Screening & Introduction - 4pm

*The Luddites* (53 mins) is a film directed by Richard Broad for Thames TV in 1988 as if it were a contemporary documentary. The Luddites were a social movement of textile artisans from around Northern England and the Midlands, who banded together in 1812 in secret societies and destroyed the machines which were putting them out of work.

### Discussion - 5.30pm

A discussion of *The Luddites* led by authors Anthony Iles and Tom Roberts informed by some of the *All Knees and Elbows* themes, including:

The definition and redefinition of the working class in History from Below • Critical re-examination of ruptures in the social relation • Techniques developed within struggles to control and convey their own history • Struggles over the marketisation of research • Critical struggles over authenticity • The market for working class memoirs and hardship porn • Determinism and/or the potential for action.

### Book launch - 7pm

Authors Anthony Iles and Tom Roberts will give a short introduction to their new book *All Knees and Elbows of Susceptibility and Refusal: Reading History From Below* critically appraising tendencies and debates in history from below. A sample chapter is available at: <http://strickdistro.org>

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**The Strickland Distribution,  
September 2012 – June 2013  
with/at Transmission Gallery**

**knowledge is never neutral** is a series of projects organised by The Strickland Distribution taking place from September 2012 to June 2013 within and outside the gallery space. Taken together, these projects set out to explore the circumstances that surround cultural and knowledge production. We look to situate this production within a wider set of social and historical relations, and to reflect on our practices across these relations. We invite you to join us in these processes.

Creating spaces for participatory dialogue – for listening and being listened to – the projects include a public walk, co-research inquiry, facilitated workshops, film screenings, reading and discussion groups, publication launches and the ongoing documentation and reconsideration of outcomes deriving from these projects.

*The Strickland Distribution is an artist-run group supporting the development of independent research in art-related and non-institutional practices. Art-related includes research forms that directly implement artistic practice as a means of research method. Non-institutional includes forms of grass-roots histories, social inquiries and projects developed outside of academic frameworks and by groups and individuals normally excluded from such environments. The Strickland Distribution operates in the public sphere, seeking to stimulate and contribute to public education, discourse and debate around the topics and themes addressed through its projects.*

**Transmission Gallery  
28 King Street  
Glasgow G1 5QP  
Scotland**

**Tel.:+44 (0)141 552 7141  
info@transmissiongallery.org  
www.transmissiongallery.org**

**The Strickland Distribution  
contact@strickdistro.org  
http://strickdistro.org**

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