

## **DAN WALKER**

**Born in London in 1964, Dan Walker trained and worked as a film lawyer before moving to film and television production. Although he has had no formal art training, he has drawn and made collages from an early age and more recently has been involved in various design and art projects. In November 2011, he had his first solo exhibition at the Galerie d'Architecture in Paris.**

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UNSTUCK

riode d'admission est précisément égal et de signe contraire à  $R_1$ . (fig. 81)

A POP-UP SHOW

OF COLLAGES

BY DAN WALKER

de sorte que le calcul de  $R'_x$ ,  $R'_y$ ,  $R'_z$  s'effectue immédiatement, en ad-

SAT/SUN 5TH-6TH NOV. 2011 10-19H

par M. John C.



LA GALERIE D'ARCHITECTURE  
11 RUE DES BLANCS MANTEAUX  
75004 PARIS



**Dan Walker's pictures are memory maps gathered from the receipts, tickets and scraps that come into our possession on a daily basis. Embellished with colours, rubber stamps and drawings they tell stories of sentiments and ideas.**

**The collages record the minutiae of life's fleeting moments: a thousand traces of people and places in time. The mundane and unimportant suddenly become layered with a new meaning.**

**Capturing emotion and desire his artworks feel both immediate and enduring.**

**J.V.**

**Nov. 2011**

# Dan Walker: Unstuck In Paris

## 10 And A Half Questions

By matthew rose | November 9, 2011 | [the artblog](#)

Dan Walker has a thing for glue. The former lawyer and somewhat former film producer and writer with *Force Majeure*, (he's still making films), launched his first exhibition of paper bits, tape and rubber stamps and glue in Paris, a perfect place to land when you are ready to get "unstuck" from your past and literally put your diaries on display. Born 1964 in London, the lawyer-turned-producer/writer-turned artist has always carried and worked in Moleskine books, organizing a disparate collection of the ephemera from his life, and adding texts in an effort to give these small compositions a direction (even if it's a comical dead end), and even though he has avoided direct narrative. *Unstuck*, a fairly massive exhibition of his collage works over the past year and a half, opened last week in Paris at Galerie d'Architecture in the central Marais area of Paris. *Unstuck* is, says Walker, an informal pulling apart of his traditional way of ordering the universe. And of course, it's the artists' mythological past coded as these things can be with aphorisms, memories of his (and others') lives. Walls of obsessively-produced pages (and entire books) fill this elegant space in this very elegant city. The exhibition has a faint Henry Miller note – nothing too scatological – just the air of a sax blowing late night blue notes under a bridge along the quai of the Seine. The show has had strong early success, and has been extended through November 19, 2011. Following are 10 and a half questions for the artist.



Dan Walker's installation of his Moleskine collage books filled an entire wall in his *Unstuck* exhibition in Paris.

1. I remember meeting you about a year ago and you showing me a collection of your Moleskin book collage journals. At the time your production was intense but limited to smaller works in these books. Your exhibition *Unstuck* is astonishing for both the range, size and quantity of works. What happened?

DAN WALKER: The Moleskine journals (exhibited as an installation in *Unstuck*) are an on-going project. I fill about a book a week with a mixture of diary entries, collected scraps, drawings and ideas. They are memory maps but also a simple and effective way to record and grasp what goes on around me each day. They've become my hard drive and I've relinquished a large part of my memory to them. I wanted to liberate myself a bit and started making bigger and freer works. Ideas would often incubate in the books and I allowed myself to develop them on a larger scale and this became "Unstuck".



Walker's compositions riff off of the Affichistes from the early 1960s, but add a twist with his own idiosyncratic texts and cropping of his found papers.

2. There is a very clear poetic sense in your works; they read like poetic musings literally torn out of books. What is the genesis of your texts such as SHOUT QUIETLY PLEASE or KEEP IT FOR LATER?

Most of the words and phrases came from everyday conversations going on around me. Living in France and being surrounded by the French language is wonderful but I miss the idiosyncrasies and idioms of English and when I hear or see words that have nice shapes or meanings I pluck them away and stick them down.



3. Like many collage artists you employ scraps of paper and antique or vintage books as your supports. Your use of rubber stamps to write your texts also follows from a long line of art creation in the collage and dada traditions. How did you come to this aesthetic?

I've always collected junk of all kinds so when it came to making bigger works it seemed natural to use stuff that was already in the cupboard. I think we've lost the reflex to re-use and re-condition things for new purposes and that's a shame. It's often far more aesthetically pleasing than the new stuff. I've collected rubber stamps since I was a child and love their imprecise form and the fact that each impression is as unique as a fingerprint.

4. Your history is as a film maker and producer. Your company Force Majeure has produced several films. Have you put that career on hold or are you still engaged in the industry.

I still write and produce films but the nature of the industry is sporadic and frustratingly slow. I'm hoping to produce a film next year about a stay at home mum who becomes an undercover operative with Emma Thompson in the lead.

5. What is the role of film in the production of these works? Is there a narrative you are exploiting? Or is *Unstuck* a play on the word collage, which is French and indicates gluing.

I think the works are more graphic than filmic. *Unstuck* is a reference to glue and "collage" but it's also about giving myself the freedom to make pictures. We tend to be very compartmentalized in what we do and who we allow ourselves to be and I wanted to "unstuck" myself and start doing more of what I really love.

6. Your compositions also touch upon the Nouveaux Realistes, particularly the affichistes like Raymond Hains, Jacques Villeglé and Mimmo Rotella who recuperated the torn posters from Paris and Italian walls and made keen sense of the sorts of juxtapositions exposed when one image – or rather a part of an image – was removed, revealing the underlying image. The results there were often surreal and implied a new urban folk art, presaging in many ways graffiti. What do you consciously borrow from this action of artists to take the real and recompose it into a pictorial fiction?

It makes a lot of sense to me to take the mundane and everyday and recondition it into something different and hopefully meaningful and engaging. We're given hundreds of pieces of paper each day that we hardly glance at and generally throw away: envelopes, tickets, bags, invitations etc. Every shop and café receipt now has an address and the exact time it was printed and that fixes you in time and space. We do hundreds of things each day and without keeping a trace of them I'd forget most if not all of it.

7. In your exhibition you exhibit a mini architectural model of the installation – it's lovely in its brut form. Was this part of the original concept for this show? And by the way, the idea of serving Mojitos for the entire duration of the show is a great concept, too.

Originally, I only had the gallery space for three days including setting it all up. So I needed to pre-prepare roughly where each piece was going to go and be ready to get it on the walls in a morning. I made the maquette from an old cinema décor I'd saved from a film set. Happily, the show has now been extended until November 19. Although I'm not sure if I have enough rum to pour until the 19th.



The installation included a model of the exhibition.



**EMPTY** brings together found wall paper, paint, rubber stamps in a simple, elegant pun about the past.

**8. Tell us a bit about your history as an artist – education, background, where you grew up and if you walked around as a child with a book of Kurt Schwitters under your arm....**

I've had no formal art education but when I was a child my mum forced me to keep diaries when we went on holidays. So I guess it's all her fault! I dreamt of becoming an architect but at that time you needed to be good at maths and physics and I was hopeless. So I trained and worked as a lawyer. It took me about 15 years to realize I was miserable and that's when I started writing and producing. But it was also a large step towards a more creative existence and the collages and artworks grew from that.

**9. You produced a series of collage works that are both painted and rubber stamped in the form of a bottle. These are very simple and elegant works. In the one large grouping of the grid of eight bottles is significant because the one in the middle is missing. The work that stands next to it on its own features the printed word EMPTY. Tell me about the origin of this work. It feels quite different from the others.**

I'm renovating an old house in Burgundy and found rooms with remnants of 19th Century handmade wallpaper. It's extremely fragile and disintegrates upon being touched but is the most amazing color blue. I'd made a piece of work based on the idea of the glass/bottle being half empty/full which I ultimately threw away but I retrieved the preparatory pictures of bottles and dressed them in pieces wallpaper that I could keep intact. The "empty" picture made at the same time escaped the formal grid but wanted to stick around.





A nod to Duchamp...

10. The entrance to the exhibition features several vitrines filled not only with your Moleskine collage books but a number of assemblages of wood and metal works as well as time pieces, clocks and other detritus...

There are two travel books from Japan and New York that document trips I took. They felt too lonely on their own so I thought I'd make a "cabinet de curiosités" from bits and pieces of junk I had lying around.

10 1/2. Finally, now that you're "unstuck," what's next for Dan Walker, artist?

Well all this activity has generated a whole new set of material, I need to clear out my cupboard again and probably load up on the Moleskine books and a few gallons of glue. Say, care for another Mojito?



Dan Walker with his *Keep It For Later* collages at his *Unstuck* exhibition.

