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SPECIAL K

SUBVERTING THE MEDIOCRE

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Introduction

In this thesis I will be looking at the work of a group who operated in both the music and the art world. (For the purposes of this thesis, I will look at the art and music world as being two separate establishments.) The group called themselves by a number of names. They usually used the name the KLF. They also used; the Justified Ancients of MuMu, the Fall, the Timelords, the K Foundation and K2, to name but a few. Throughout the history of this group two men, Bill Drummond and Jimmy Cauty, were the core members.

Since the group were established as a musical group in 1987, they have been responsible for dozens of subversive acts, which questioned and sometimes attacked the relationship between art and business and also music and business. Bill Drummond was a manager for some successful bands such as, "Echo and the Bunnymen," and "The Teardrop Explodes." He also worked for a long time as an A&R man in the music industry. He also founded the successful record label, Zoo Records, with David Balfe. He left the music industry in the mid 80's and reappeared with Jimmy Cauty in 1987. Jimmy Cauty is chiefly a musician. He later co-founded the ambient house group "the Orb," with Alex Patterson. The pair used their knowledge of the music industry to attack the music industry. Later, as the K Foundation, they attacked the art industry.

I mention the word mediocre in the title of this thesis. By this, I am referring to the unoriginal music that is produced by the music industry purely to make money. Much of this music is cover versions of existing songs, rarely any better than the original. I also use the word to describe art that is produced as an investment rather than to produce emotion. The meaning of these will become clearer through this thesis.

In this thesis, I will look at the ways in which they carried out these subversive acts. I will look at their influences and ideas. I will also examine how successful they were in carrying out these acts and how subversive the acts themselves were. I will show how they also helped to develop the various establishments they were involved in, most notably the music industry.

As the success of these arguments depends on knowledge of how the music industry works, I will give a brief introduction to the history of the music industry. This will show how the music affects the development of music and vice-versa. I will then examine two movements that were close to the ideology of the group, one in the music world and one in the art world. These are punk, for music and the Dadaists, for the art world.

I will then look at the work of the group, starting with their first incarnation as a music group, then as an art group and finishing at their new incarnation, as 2K. I will compare them to the punk and Dadaist movements. This examination will show how they subverted the art and music establishments and how successful, or unsuccessful they were.

Music, as an industry, has existed since the turn of the century, when a subsidiary of the North American Phonograph Company, called the Columbia Phonograph Company who were licensed to sell Edisons phonograph began selling them as coin operated music machines. In order to analyse the music industry one must look at three aspects which have caused major changes to it throughout the years; the effects of technological change, the economics of music and new musical styles and cultures. (Frith, 1988, Pg: 12)

The first vestiges of a recording industry began in the first decade of the century with Tin Pan Alley, called after a street in New York where a lot of recording took place. The noise of many bands playing and recording at the same time was said to have sounded like a lot of tin pans being struck together and so the name stuck. Genedrom described the Tin Pan Alley sound as usually being a 32 bar song in an AABA pattern utilising simple harmonies and even simpler rhymes such as moon, spoon, etc.

A major factor in the development of the music industry was the U.S. Copy Statute of 1909, which protected owners of musical compositions from unauthorised copying. This had the effect of making the song into a commodity which could be bought and sold on the market. In the U.K. there was a similar though less restrictive law passed in 1911. In 1914, the Association of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) was formed to issue licenses to musicians and collect royalties from performances of a song by someone else, the sale of music to publishers and the money paid to the publishers for the songs. This meant that only ASCAP licensed songs could be played in Broadway musicals, on radio and incorporated into movies. By the 1930's it controlled all methods of exposing new talent to the public. What I

should mention at this point is that from the early 1920's radio had really begun to take over from records as the medium of music to which the public subscribed. The large radio stations of the thirties, such as N.B.C. and C.B.S., objected to the monopoly system of ASCAP and formed their own company, Broadcast Music Incorporated (BMI) in 1939 to resist this. This had similar functions to that of ASCAP.

This opposition of ASCAP led to and undermining of the popular music of the time which was " an aesthetic which accented well crafted, abstract love themes, strong melodies and muted jazz rhythms and harmonies." (Shucker. Pg :41) Other genres of the time, most notably black musicians were completely excluded from public exposure. BMI were unable to lure many performers away from ASCAP and so turned to those performers who were not members to join them. In 1940, when the rivalry between the two had not been resolved, the radio networks who controlled BMI, excluded all ASCAP licensed songs from their airplay. This left the way open for the new musicians from other genres to get a lot more exposure.

Another important development in the music industry was another rivalry between two American companies, Columbia (established in 1889) and RCA (established 1929, incorporating Victor, formed in 1901)who were later joined by Decca (established in 1034.) The two companies had been fighting over a new formats for records. The standard until 1948 had been the 10-inch, 78-rpm, shellac record, which had poor sound quality and was very fragile. Then, in 1948, Columbia brought out a 12-inch 33.3 rpm vinyl record while RCA brought out a 7-inch, 45 rpm one. After a period of competition with each other it was decided that the 12-inch would be used for long playing classical music , while the 7-inch, or "45" would be used for newer music. The 45s were much more durable than the 12-inch and therefore were

easier and cheaper to transport. This meant that while the major radio stations, which could afford the cost of the 12-inches, played older, more established music, the newer stations played the 45's giving new music more exposure.

During the 1930's the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) which licensed radio stations, restricted the number of licenses granted to radio stations to between 3 and 5 in each market area. The major networks of the time were NBC, CBS and Mutual. They bought up most of the market and pressured the FCC to maintain the status quo. However in 1947, due possibly to the threat of television, the FCC took off the the restrictions on the licenses. In the next four years the number of radio station doubled, giving rise to a load of new independent radio stations. The new radio companies really had to fight to survive against the major radio companies, most of whom had some kind of relation with the established recording industry. For example, Columbia owned CBS. The radio industry in 1948 was controlled by the large networks, but they all were in competition with each other and therefore had more to lose than the small radio stations, so they put on the same programmes as each other, with radio dramas and comedies. The smaller companies mostly played records as they did not a large production budget.

From 1948 to 1955 four companies controlled 80% of the music market. These were RCA, Columbia, Capitol and American Decca (MCA) They dominated the market by getting creative people on long term contracts and establishing them as "names" in the public eye, monopolising record distribution and maintaining close links with the radio networks.

From 1954 to 1958 the record and recording industry was transformed. The radio industry broke up into over 100 different local markets, each with 8 to 12 or

more radio stations competing with each other in the same market. In some cases stations played quite diverse genres including records aimed at black record buyers. In the mid fifties the focus began to shift more in the favour of the smaller radio stations and record companies. The fact that many of these new radio stations were playing music unheard of at the time encouraged small record companies to start up. New independent companies, such as Sun Records (who had signed Elvis Presley) Atlantic, Vee Jay, Dot, etc. began offering some resistance to the monopoly that the four main companies had established. These companies were all helped by the advent of rock and roll around 1955.

The year 1955 is usually seen as the year that rock and roll took off and in the following years, it was to revitalise the music industry. There other reasons, apart from the rise of the independent and the improvement and lower costs of recording technology that this happened then. There were also the age group demographics of these years. The baby boom generation of the war years were reaching adolescence and therefore there was a new market for the "teenager." At the same time, performers like Elvis Presley, Bill Haley, Chuck Berry and Buddy Holly were developing new styles and hybrids of music.

Because of the fear of losing audience ratings and the costs involved with changing their schedules, the major companies were slow to play these new styles of music. To the small company however, the cost was minimal. The dominance of the music firms began to be broken down by these structural shifts in radio. From 1956 to 1959, the independent labels and stations began to take a significant share of the market. These years, and up until 1963, were marked by a period of consolidation. There were 40 record labels, with 8 firms getting about 50% of the market share.

These included Columbia, Capitol, RCA, American Decca, Paramount, Warner Brothers and Sun. The major firms began encouraging new talent like Bob Dylan and the Beach Boys.

The years between 1963 to 1969, there was new growth in the actual music scene as well as the industry., fuelled mainly by the Beatles and the Californian sound of the late 60's. Many artists began tackling themes that were considered taboo previously, such as black pride, drugs and sexual freedom. Under the production of George Martin, the Beatles "Sergeant Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band," pushed to the limit what could be done with new recording techniques. It is worth that Motown and Atlantic Records, two "black" labels, moved into the majors during these years.

Towards the end of the sixties the major labels began reconcentrating, and by 1970 reconcentration was in full force. Warner bought Reprise, United Artists bought Liberty and Paramount bought Dot. The majors increased their market shares and in the early 1970s there were only 4 firms dominant, Columbia, Warner Brothers, Capitol and Motown. Note that two of these four were only film companies. In the top ten only two firms were not part of a media conglomerate; Motown and A&M. The independents were getting squeezed out.

The years from 1975 onwards seem to support the theory that the music business moves in cycles. The punk years, from 1975 to 1982 were a reaction to this domination of the music market, as well as a reaction against the musical blandness of the 1970's. Like the independents before them, punk and other new movements were helped by the advent of new technology, this being home recording onto tape. This made demo releases even easier to make.

However punk was short lived as soon the majors incorporated it and

consolidation returned stronger than ever. Motown first signed a distribution deal with MCA in 1983, then in 1988 the company was sold by founder, Berry Gourd to MCA for $61million. In 1989, Island records, the company that produced Bob Marley was sold to Paramount for $200 million.

Towards the end of the eighties, rap offered a burst of creativity into the music scene but this was soon commercialised. For example: MC Hammer and Vanilla Ice. Mirroring this movement in the U.K. was the rave scene, with illegal raves in fields, loud and fast electronic music and obviously the drugs culture that came with it. This too was soon commercialised by the major record companies.

Malcolm McClaren said that rock is

> ...the only pure form of culture that youth - those most receptive to radical ideas, who hold the most potential for social action - cared about. For the young, everything flowed through rock'n'roll; fashion, slang, sexual attitudes, drug habits and poses. (Savage, 1988, Pg: 67.)

McClaren used this as an indicator for trends in fashion and music. He opened a shop on King's Road in London in 1976 called Sex, to sell clothes that he and Vivienne Westwood, his partner, had designed. It is generally held that this is the birthplace of British Punk.

McClaren, in fact, did not invent punk, but cleverly manipulated the general feeling of the time for his own ends. In the years before punk, that is, the late 60's, there had been a series of student revolts in America, Paris, and to a lesser extent, England. The revolts in Paris brought out the feelings of the French anarchists. It was common to see anarchistic ideals in graffiti. "Demand the impossible," and "Imagination is seizing power," were two of these slogans that punk used. A new style of art had emerged around these ideas; the situationists. These artists wanted to "break down the divisions between individual art forms, to create situations." (Savage, 1988, Pg: 31.) The art and graphic style that these artists used helped influence a lot of punk graphics, using cut and paste and cheaply photocopying text and images.

Another factor on the birth of punk was the economic and social situation in the early 70's. After the second World War, England owed a lot of money to various nations such as America. Unemployment figures were at their the highest in decades

Fig 1: The Sex Pistols

and most of the unemployed were young. There was also less tolerance for the permissive society of the 60's. Tabloids were beginning to find their voices and started using a new tone of fear and anxiety in their stories. The situation in America was slightly different but the tone of negativity would emerge slightly later than in England. In 1975, the conflict in Vietnam ended and in 1974 the Watergate scandal was uncovered. People had less money than in the boom time of the 50's and 60's.

Music at this time was very bland and formulaic. Progressive rock was the dominant style of the period. The music industry relied on marketing as much as music to sell records. Popular bands of the time included bands such as ABBA. Formed in 1972, K-Tel, a company which sold compilation albums that were advertised on television accounted for 30% of the english record market sales by 1976. In the same year an article about the music industry in Melody Maker stated that "at the heart of rock is a cash register." This was the music and social scene that the punk generation grew up in and these are probably the main influences in the development of punk.

In 1974, the beginnings of punk in America started with bands like Iggy and the Stooges and the Ramones, playing very simplistic, fast music. Also around this year there was a rise of bands which used revolt as style, eg: the New York Dolls and Alice Cooper. In 1974 McClaren went to America and was impressed by what he saw in the small underground clubs where this music was playing . He went back to England and saw the same feelings of boredom and failure in the youth. It was then he decided to create a band that would mirror these feelings.

In the spring of 1974, the Sex Pistols, probably the most famous punk band ever, came into being. Their career as a band lasted a short time, until January 1978.

In October 1976, after a few good reviews in the music press, they signed to EMI publishing for an advance of £40,000. They got dropped off this label in January 1977 after they caused a nationwide scandal for swearing on television. The television programme, a live show called "Today" that was hosted by Bill Grundy, went out on 1 December, 1976. After this programme, the nature of british punk changed. Punk ceased to be an underground occurance and became a style. Steve Jones is quoted, in Jon Savages book about the Sex Pistols, that before the scandal, they were just about music. Afterwards, they were media.

As the public had turned on the Sex Pistols, they also turned on the label that signed the band. This was a rare thing to happen. The music industry figures ceased to be faceless boardroom people. The scandal unravelled the media play that had been going on in punk at the same time as it exposed the workings of the music business. It seems like, at the time this was the role of punk, to demystify the music industry. In March of 1977, the Sex Pistols signed to the A&M label.

This was at a time when the music industry was moving in on the punk trend. In the early stages of punk many small record labels, such as Beggars Banquet and Chiswick records, sprang up, thanks to cheaper recording methods and punk's do-it - yourself philosophy. However, in February of 1977, Island records signed "Ultavox" a punk influenced band and made a distribution deal with Stiff records, a small punk label. "The Clash" signed to CBS for an advance of £100,000.

A week after signing to A&M records, the Sex Pistols were once again dropped for unruly behaviour. They got an advance of £75,000 and released no records. In May they signed to Virgin for £65,000. This contract would last until they broke up. They soon had an album out, called "Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols."

Fig:2 a typical punk playbill

There was the obligatory scandal over the name, of course, and after a court case the name remained the same. However, at the time of their greatest success, in June of 1977, the group expressed a disenchantment with punk and hinted at their demise. In January of 1978, the group split up after a gruelling tour of America.

The Sex Pistols were instrumental in the development of punk, so the life of punk can be traced through them. Punk, as a movement was nihilistic. It enshrined failure. The movement was a reaction against the bland music industry. To succeed in conventional terms meant that you had failed. Mark Perry's fanzine "Sniffin' Glue," one of the most influential publications about punk said:

> Music is a perfect medium for shoving two fingers up at the establishment. Once it becomes respectable, it loses all its potency. That's what happened during the 1970's. All the aggression had faded and rock stars seemed more interested in becoming tax exiles or partying it with royalty than looking after their fans who had, after all, put them on the top. What they needed was a firm boot up the arse. And that's what they got. No more farting about, just raw honest rockin', brought back to the intimate level of the band and heir audience. Back to the roots, expressed in a contemporary manner. Yes, the music of today has a sound of its own, but the underlying spirit is the same. Frustration and boredom....spewed out from depravation, from low wages and long dole queues. (Savage, 1988, Pg: 145.)

However, even if punk as a movement was a failure in its own right, it did, as Mark Perry said give the music industry a "boot up the arse" and for a while, helped it develop past the bland money machine that it was developing into in the early

seventies.

The cut and paste technique is one of the styles that is most synonymous with punk. It was used extensively for making posters and fanzines. Cheap photocopying was used to reproduce these works of art.(See figure: 2.) This style was also used for punk fashion. Clothes were often mismatched and ripped, held together by safety pins and zippers. The imagery that was printed on the clothes and on the printed work was often found imagery. It was usually chosen for it's shock value. For example, the swastika was often used as a decoration. The punks did not subscribe to Nazi-ism. The image was used to shock and cause confusion to people, including the media.

This do-it-yourself ethic was one of the characteristics of punk. People realised that they did not need a college education to make posters or clothes. They realised that did not have to able to play or sing very well to be in a famous band. Nor did they need a record company to distribute or record their product. Punk made people realise that they could do this themselves.

Although the movement called Dada can be seen in countries around Europe and in America, the homeplace is generally thought to be Zurich, where it started in 1916. It is easier to understand Dada when one understands the atmosphere that was abroad at the time. The first World War was being fought in Europe, but Switzerland was a neutral country. There was a tense atmosphere in the country and many artists and writers had moved to Switzerland. However, although the atmosphere was tense and claustrophobic, there was a kind of freedom in Switzerland and with the amount of creative people around, this freedom would not go to waste. The Times literary supplement in October 1953 had said;

> ...the fact that Dada began life in Zurich and not New York or Paris is significant, for the movement owes many of its characteristics to the peculiar atmosphere prevailing in the city at that time. (Richter, 1964, Pg 12.)

In the early part of February 1916, a man called Hugo Ball, together with Emmy Hemmings, set up a night club in Zurich called the Cabaret Voltaire. Ball was searching for a meaning in the meaningless times in which he was living. The Cabaret Voltaire showed paintings and held readings, plays and nights of music. It gathered many of the people who were to become famous as Dadaists, such as Tristan Tzara, Marcel Janco, Richard Huelsenbuek and Hans Richter.

The performances in the cabaret were extremely unusual and consisted of pieces and acts juxtaposed together in strange ways. The performances were used to shock and provoke the audiences. This direct provocation of the public was an influence from Futurist art who had used this method also. The performers used new

methods like made up poems called Poéme Simultané, which were three or more voices speaking, reacting or singing different things simultaneously, so that the resulting chaos was the total effect of the performance. This type of simultaneous poetry "...was a powerful illustration of the fact that an organic work of art has a will of its own." (Richter, 1963, Pg: 30.) They also made what the surrealists later called "automatic poetry" where the performer used sounds and gibberish in the poem. The poets also made poetry out of phonetic rhymes where the words were selected for the sounds they made rather than the meaning. For example Balls poem, "O Gadji Beri Bimba" which was performed in a ridiculous costume which rendered the performer immobile.

The idea of the Gesanatkunstwerk, or the total work of art, was a feature of the Dadaists. At their events, were often different disciplines of art. At the exhibition "der Sturm" in March 1917 at the Galerie Corray, Ball and his colleagues linked lectures, readings and ballet with the pictures that were hung on the walls. Shows which were outside of the closed sphere of the Cabaret Voltaire like this gave the Dadaist movement some appearance of seriousness in Zurich and helped spread the movement.

Soon Dadaism began to reach out past the walls of the Cabaret Voltaire. In April of 1916, a magazine called "Dada" was set up with Tristan Tzara, the Dadaist poet and performer, as editor. In this, he published a lot of the Dadaists manifestoes, of which there were many. They took advantage of the magazine to experiment with type and image in new ways. Other Dadaist magazines also did this to an even greater degree, especially the magazines of the Berlin Dada movement, which was more political than the Zurich Dadaists. In May of 1916, the photomontage artist, John

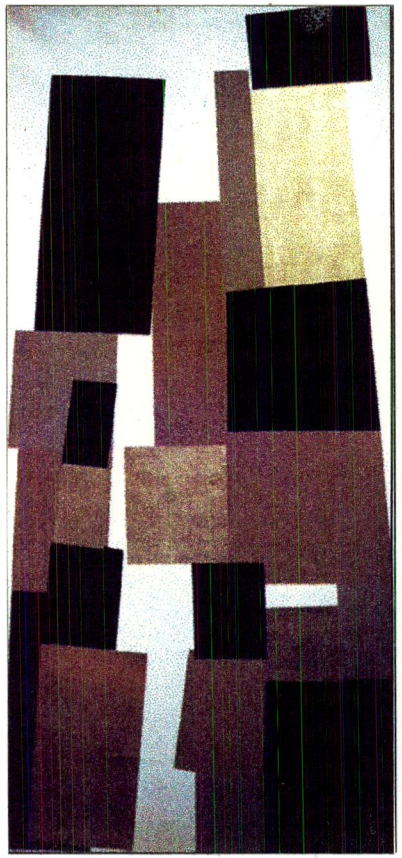

Fig: 3 Compositon according to the laws of chance.
Hans Arp
1916

Heartfield, and his brother, Wileland Herzfeld (John had changed his name from Johann), printed a left wing political and literary magazine called "Neue Juegend." Later they also printed a magazine called "Jedermann seineigner Fussball" (Everyman his own football) in 1919. These featured Heartfield's photomontages as well as the usual writings.

A feature of Dadaism was the factor of chance which, although used in other forms of art later on, was first utilised with the Dadaists. Hans Richter relates a story of Arp, the painter, dissatisfied with a picture that he was painting, ripped it up and when he threw the pieces to the ground, he liked the shape they made on the ground. So he stuck the pieces as they were onto the canvas. (See figure 3.) The writers and poets of Dadaism also used this technique by ripping up newspapers and sticking the pieces down to form new poems. The Dadaists believed this technique of "cut and paste" appealed to the unconscious of the public therefore making the work more powerful. This technique was later used by the punk movement, for their own provocative reasons. However some of the Dadaists incorporated a sense of balance when using this technique, while some artists, especially the writers like Tzara, relied on pure chance alone. This seems to have caused some sort of split in the Dadaists between those who were trying to achieve a balance of chaos and order and those who were using chaos alone.

There were influences of Futurism in the Dada movement. This can be seen in the way that the Dadaists approached their public. They were direct and aggressive, as the Futurists had been. Their literary forms were also quite similar to the futurists. Both of the movements had a free use of type, they often used manifestoes as well. Both movements used a form of performance called "bruitism" that is provocation in

art. However, the futurists had a theme or basic style to their movement. Dada had no themes or aims and had no clear style at all. Not only this, it was against all aims. It was this lack of style and aims that gave the movement such freedom as well as making it hard to pin down to a single definition. This freedom meant that the movement could unfold in any way it wished. It had no constraints to hold it back at all. Richter says this could mean two things; that it would lead to nothing or that it would lead to a new art form. (Richter, 1964. Pg:34)

The Dadaists claimed that art was no longer doing its job in making people think. They wanted to provoke people to rage and from there, to a realisation of what the Dadaists were about. If the Dadaists could produce works which could make people react, however negatively, then, it was art. They wanted to make art mean something to people again. If this meant that everything had to be pulled apart, all the better. The Dadaists were just the people to do this. New roles and functions of art could then be known. "In art, anti-art." (Richter, 1964, Pg: 65) This total negation of art was a major factor in moving it forward. "Dadaism is a stratagem by which the artist can impart to the citizen, something of the inner unrest which prevents the artist himself being lulled to sleep by custom and routine. By means of external stimuli, he can compensate for the citizens lack of inner urgency and vitality and shake him into new life." Ido Rukser, Dada-Almanach, 1920. (Richter, 1964, Pg:101.)

The Dadaists were often successful in using the media to shock and provoke. For instance, in 1916, they put out a false news story in the Swiss newspapers to the effect that a duel had been fought between Tzara and Arp, with a famous poet, J.C.Heer, as a second. This of course was not true, but it caused outrage nonetheless. This stunt and others like it were done to make the public think, to bring to a rage

and from there to a self awareness.

After a while however, it became redundant to try and shock people at Dadaist events. As the movement began to get more recognition, people would come to the events expecting to be shocked. Therefore they could not be shocked as much as if they were not expecting it. Towards the end of the decade, Surrealism came into being. Surrealism took the principles of Dadaism as part of itself. Dali said of surrealism, "Surrealism is the systemisation of confusion. .....Surrealism is destructive, but it only destroys what it considers to be shackles limiting our vision." This seems almost the same as what the Dadaists wanted to do. However the surrealists applied order to Dadaism and made it's ideas part of their movement.

Therefore in one respect Dada was misunderstood as an art movement because it seems to be a fleeting series of happenings and people. Also, it is hard to put a purpose or style to the movement. However, the energy created by the movement led to new forms of art being created. One of these was surrealism. Like the later punk movement, with which it shared many characteristics, Dada helped to break down the restrictions of art and made people realise that more freedom could be introduced to art.

The mainstream music industry at the middle of the 80's was a particularly bland and insipid period for music. The music industry was practising reconcentration on a grand scale. Punk had been commercialised by the major record labels and they had robbed it of its dangerous, anti-mainstream feeling. This meant that punk, as a continuing movement, would be futile. Later, the music industry also did the same to rap music and hip hop, two relatively new forms of music. Mainstream rap acts consisted of contrived acts performed (or indeed mimed) by overly produced artists like Vanilla Ice, MC Hammer and Milli Vanilli. The music industry was controlled by money, not music and it showed in the bland music produced at this time. By the end of this decade, the major record companies would become media companies. Firms like Warner Brothers would not only control the record industry, but also would have stakes in the television and film industries, thereby in a position to further expose their bands. In the case of some of the companies, like Sony, they would also develop the technology that the music was played on.

Also prevalent in the late 80's was the emerging primacy of stars over auteurs, Kylie Minogue and Jason Donovan being classic examples of this trend. These two are also products of the cross media fertilisation that was starting at this time. The two singers had started their careers as actors in a soap opera before using their fame as a starting block for their respective music careers. Their clean cut, boy and girl next door image was particularly suited to the trend that was starting at this stage. They had signed to the producing skills of the Stock, Aitken and Waterman team, who wrote many of their songs for them and controlled their public image.

Another trend of the late 80's was the recycling of old songs from the 60's and 70's. Kylie Minogue's first hit was the song "Locomotion" first recorded by Little Eva

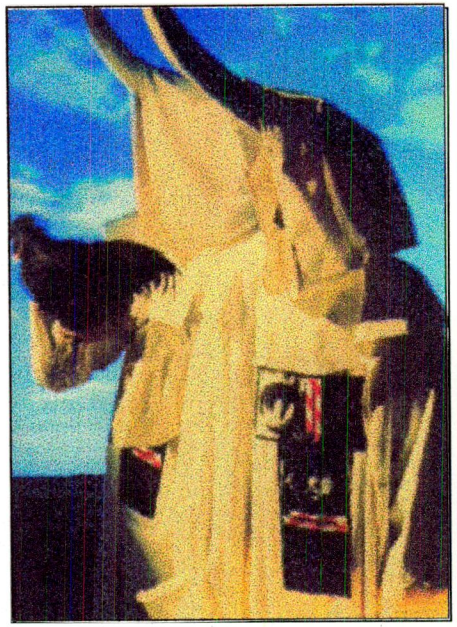

Fig: 3 KLF Costume featuring habit

in 1962 and written by the songwriting team of Gerry Goffin and Carole King. Other recycled songs of these years were "With a little help from my friends," from "Wet Wet Wet," "The only way is up" from "Yazz and the Plastic Population" and countless others.

This was the scene when the two members of the KLF started their band. At first they called themselves the Justified Ancients of MuMu or the Jamms. This is a direct influence from the books of the Illuminatus trilogy, written by Robert Anton Wilson and Bob Shea. The books are laden with conspiracy theories about the people who control the world. The Justified Ancients of MuMu in the book represent the forces of chaos who oppose those who control the world. This theme is carried through in groups song lyrics and samples. Also on some of the group's record sleeves, the band thank "the five." In the Illuminatus trilogy, the five were the five controllers of mankind. Also in the books, the number 23 is used to tie many otherwise unrelated events together. The band use the number 23 whenever they can, releasing records or staging events on the 23rd day of a month.

They carried out this semi-mystical treatment of themselves in other aspects of the band. Take, for example, the way that they dressed for videos. For much of their videos and video shoots, they were almost always in some form of disguise; usually a hooded robe like a monks habit with a horn coming out of the hood. (See figure 3.) When in this disguise, they were the Justified Ancients of MuMu. In the case of their song, "America-What Time Is Love?" released in February 1992 featured they were wearing this disguise in a longboat in the company of some templar knights, going to discover America in the year 992.

This treatment of themselves was backed up by the graphic treatment of their

Fig: 5 KLF Logo.

Fig: 6 KLF graffiti. Note government AIDS billboard

posters and record sleeves which always featured white upper case type on black backgrounds. (See figure 5 for their logo, which is a good example of this.) This invokes a sense of paranoia and a new world order feeling. Also their forming of one false band after another (the Jamms, The Forever Ancients Liberation Loophole, Disco 2000 and the KLF to name just a few.) seems to borrow the idea of a rejection of identity from the neoist art movement. The group also rarely fronted the band themselves, usually using guest singers and rappers. This carefully developed veil of secrecy and conspiracy seems to be a clever way of manipulating the media and getting press without having to sacrifice ones private life. It almost made the group into a sort of cult, thereby giving the band a myth, for want of a better word, that the group could use for their own ends. It was a clever way to get around the whole star idea of the 80's. People would relate to the band image rather than the people in the band.

The first single for the band, under the name of the Jamms, was in May of 1987. It was an attack on the media's coverage of AIDS called "All You Need Is Love." The single was "promoted" by a graffiti campaign instigated by the band, daubing the slogan "Shag Shag Shag" on billboards. (See figure 6.) This was followed up in October with an album called "1987-What The Fuck's Going On?" They again used graffiti to promote this song, painting the name of the album on the side of the National Concert Hall in London. The album itself was brings up questions of authorship as it full of large samples of other artists songs, used in new songs. One of these samples was originally by ABBA, who threatened to sue the band if they used the Swedish band's music on the new song "Dancing Queen." The Jamms responded by driving to Sweden with a reporter to see the ABBA. Once there, they found that the band didn't

live there any more and burnt the remaining copies of their album in a field in Sweden. The quest to meet ABBA may have failed, but the band got a lot of publicity for it. The album was brought out again in November of the same year with all the offending samples and others that were illegal removed from it. There were, however, detailed instructions included in the album, on how to put the samples back in.

This whole incident raised some important questions on authorship in the years that gave us the sampler.

> Ever since it began, pop has relied on the art of deception to win over its audience, alternately promising and threatening the most most outlandish horrors and ecstasies it knows it can never deliver. Thus when a group group comes along with a record that's so blatantly honest in its dishonesty, it takes a while for the impact to sink in.(Andy Catlin, 1987, Pg:35.)

The questions about the originality seem on a parallel to those raised about the work of Marcel Duchamp with his ready-mades. Duchamp was one of the Dadaists and made works of art from everyday rubbish. One of these pieces was a bicycle wheel on a stool, another was a urinal with the signature R.Mutt on it. Duchamp stated that these were art only when he said they were. One could also argue that the Jamms album was rather like the ready-mades of Duchamp, except using sound. Like the Dadaists and the punks, the KLF were using the process of cut and paste for their own agenda. By using the new technology of sampling and drum machines, the band made a kind of music made from elements which were not music, or else just pieces of music. This, in effect, made the Jamms an anti-music pop group.

At this time, music was not usually made this way. The Jamms had gone into the music business without using music.

In May of 1988, the group released the single, "Doctorin' the Tardis," which went to number one in the charts in a very short time. The song was a marriage of three songs; Gary Glitter's "Rock and Roll," the Sweet's "Blockbuster" and the Doctor Who theme tune. This is a classic example of the band using the cut and paste technique to subvert the establishment. The band continued to draw on their neoist tendencies and said that their car, an old American police car which featured heavily in the video (and subsequent videos) had written the song. However, they then released a book in June called *The Manual (How to have a number one the easy way.)* This book stated how they went about making a number one song and how the reader could do the same. The book even came with a money back guarantee if the reader didn't achieve a number one. This book undermines their success in the charts and exposes the music industry as a money making machine. They tell of the "golden rules" of pop stardom and how to use these to your advantage when making a number one. A particularly astute quote from the book explains why people would not follow these rules.

> "Leiber and Stoller, Goffin and King, Berry Gordy, Chinns and Chapman and Peter Waterman have all understood the Golden Rules thoroughly. The reason why Waterman will not continue turning number one from now until the end of the century and the others had limited reigns, was not because Lady Luck's hand had strayed elsewhere, or that fashion had moved on, it is because after you have a run of success and your coffers are full, keeping strictly to the G.R.'s is boring. It all becomes empty and meaningless." (Timelords, 1988, Pg 101.)

To follow the advice of the book, the reader must give up any type of musical ability and get a sound engineer to marry two or three songs together to make a hit. The musician is little more than a businessman. This is what they did as the Timelords and it worked for them.

The band gave up the alias of the Timelords after this book is released. Next, they began working as the KLF, or the Kopyright Liberation Front. They started working within the new acid house or rave scene. They released songs in celebration of the rave scene such as "3 a.m. Eternal" which has, as a B-side, the song "Kylie said to Jason," a satire of the music scene where Kylie Minogue and Jason Donovan, two Stock, Aitken and Waterman produced singers, who had been two characters married to each other in a soap opera, and now were singers doing a duet with each other.

The band also gave live appearances at nightclubs and at music events. They usually gave very unusual performances. For example, in July 1989, at the nightclub "Heaven, in London, they used a fan to pelt the audience with polystyrene pellets. In the same nightclub on December 1991, they stood motionless on either side of a wooden pyramid dressed as deep sea fishermen while a 15 minute version of their song, "It's Grim Up North" was played and dollar notes were showered on the audience. Performances like this are very akin the Dada tradition of performance. However, the aim of the Dada performances was generally to provoke rage in the audience. I feel that the performances of the KLF were to go beyond the normal concert experience and introduce a surreal experience to their performance.

In September of 1989, the KLF released the album "Chill Out." This was an experimental album, featuring the new form of ambient house music. It is one song long. The song, however, lasts 45 minutes, the length of the album. The KLF were

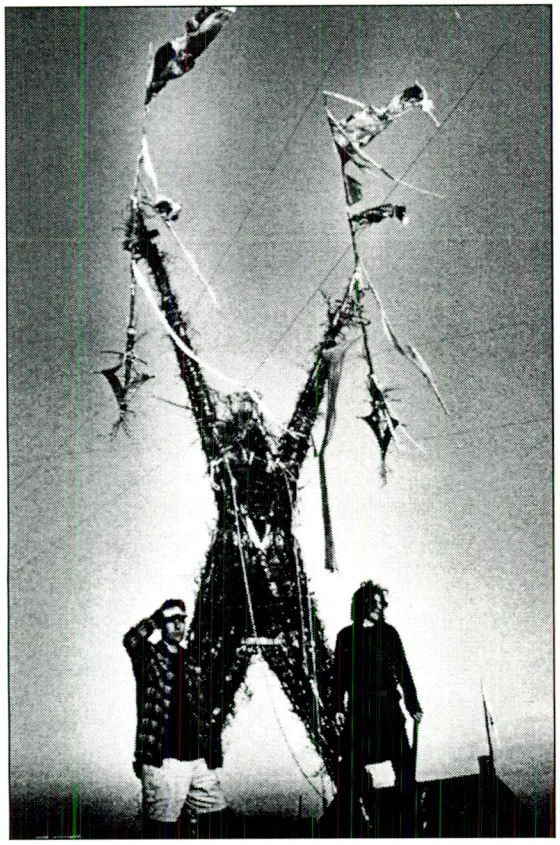

Fig: 7 The wicker man.

instrumental in the development of ambient house in the late eighties and had close ties with Alex Patterson, who formed the Orb with Jimmy Cauty.

During the years of 1990 and 1991, the KLF achieved their greatest commercial successes. One might see this as pandering to the music industry. However, the group were releasing the material under their own, independent label, KLF Communications. This meant that not only were they not losing any of their artistic credibility but they were also in a position to make money from it. The acid house music movement was still quite underground at this stage. No company wanted to be seen as endorsing the rave scene, thanks to all the bad press about drugs and illegal raves. the band were still making anarchic gestures, such as the remix of their song, "Justified and Ancient" with country and western music star, Tammy Wynette.

One of the groups strangest and most archaic events was the "Rites of Mu" in June of 1991. The band stated that they disliked the attention of the pop and music world. They therefore arranged the "Rites of Mu" for the summer solstice on June 21. They invited various members of the music press and industry and told them to bring their passports. On the day of the event, they were brought, by boat to the Isle of Jura, off the Scottish coast. As they got off the boat, their passports were stamped with the KLF logo by a "customs official." They were they dressed in robes and brought to a location on the island where there was a giant wicker man, like the one featured in the British horror film, "the Wicker Man."(See Figure 7.) During a ceremony conducted by the group in their costumes of robe and hood, the wicker man was burnt and a party began. At the ceremony a long speech was read out which was to explain what the event was all about. It mentions " the four handmaidens of evil, WHO, WHAT, WHERE and WHY." Other excepts from the

speech explain further;

" the KLF have invited you to join them in celebrating the Rites of Mu this Summer solstice, during which the fall of man may be reversed..." (Home, 1995, Pg: 220.)

They then ask those present not to question their motives with the "four handmaidens of evil";

> ...the KLF, with regular feet of clay, have weakened at times and pretended to answer the unanswerable, they too have tried to understand instead of accepting the unfocusable, beautiful truth that lies at the heart of pop's passing moments..
> (Home, 1995, Pg: 220.)

This point seems to be a critical one in the band's development. They were on the edge of international pop stardom and were in danger of being listed as a mainstream dance band. In fact, they were in danger of being seen as *the* major dance band. A gesture like the "Rites of Mu," helped them to put a sort of a barrier of strangeness around them. It also kept up the impression that they were an unpredictable group. The rite itself tries to explain some of the parodies and complexities of the music business. The rite reflects the KLF's belief that pop stars should be a visionary and not in any way mundane.

The role of the KLF can be seen as trying to expose the music business as a capitalistic industry, which often produced mediocre music in order to make money. Using the music industry's own techniques they promoted their own antidote to the blandness. They realised that the public related to the image of a band rather than the members of the band itself and used this to maintain their own private lives, a luxury pop stars often sacrificed. This fact and their rejection of identity subverts the usual

Fig: 8 Drummond at the Brit Awards.

music business star system. They also used songs which were considered "uncool" as samples. They also used "uncool" stars like Tammy Wynette to make version of their songs, which usually did extremely well in the music charts. The band are saying that even with the biggest pile of rubbish they could get to number one. They exploited the industry's "golden rules" to expose the industry for the money making machine it was.

The group finally stopped doing music in 1992, after being awarded a Brit award for the category of best British group. At the awards ceremony, on the 22nd of February they were to perform for the audience. When the time came for the band to perform the song onstage, they came out with hardcore metal band, "Extreme Noise Terror," and played an extremely heavy metal version of the song, "3 a.m. Eternal." Drummond then produced a machine gun loaded with blanks and proceeded to fire it at the audience of music critics and industry figures. (See figure 8.) When they had finished the song an announcement over the PA stated; "the KLF have left the music business." The group then sent a motorcycle courier to collect their prize for them. After the ceremony, they dumped the carcass of a sheep onto the steps of the hotel where the reception was being held. No more was heard from them until May 14, when they made the announcement in the press that stated; "...For the foreseeable future there will no further record releases from The Justified Ancients of MuMu, The Timelords, The KLF and any other past, present and future name attached to our activities." After this announcement all of the groups past releases were deleted.

This dramatic performance at the Brits was extremely close to the Dadaist performances, including the aim of it, which was to provoke the audience to rage. The

public were obviously expected a straight version of one of the band's songs. The version of the song that the band made the crowd incredulous. The machine gun provoked the crowd further. The use of the sheep carcass had a heavy symbolic nature attached to it. It makes one think of a lamb to the slaughter or a sacrificial lamb. The band had used images of sheep in a lot of the sleeves, such as on the cover of the "Chill Out" album. They had also posed with sheep. The use of the sheep, according to an interview with Bill Drummond in X Magazine, is a very English thing.

> When we're having the big Orbital raves out in the country, and you're dancing all night and the sun would come up in the morning, and then you'd be surrounded by all this rural English countryside.... so we wanted something that reflected, that feel of the day after the rave... (Kelly, 1992, Pg:14.)

Thusly in the context of the KLF leaving the music business, it would seem to symbolise the sacrifice of the KLF to protect the artists' integrity.

When the band start getting awards from the music industry, which they have been opposing from the beginning, it would be hard to maintain success and integrity. They had already achieved success through their own independent means. Scott Piering, publicist with the group who also occasionally "guested" on some of their songs said, in an interview with "Select " magazine in July of 1992, that the band wanted to do something so disgusting that it would ruin the success of their career. That they wanted to be ostracised by the music industry. (Shaw, 1992, Pg: 39.) I feel that with this sacrifice, the group achieved a clean break from the music business while giving the industry a slap in the face without having to sacrifice their artistic

credibilities. Their decision to delete all of their records shows a commitment to their integrity. Stewart Home, in his essay "Doctorin' Our Culture" compares this move to the 80's avant garde movement of the Art Stikers, during which cultural workers would stop making and selling any product. (Home, 1995, Pg: 219) If one follows this argument it is a good example of how the group took ideas from the margins of culture and used them to great effect in the mainstream.

A year on from the Brit awards and the dissolution of the KLF, Drummond and Cauty once more emerged as the K-Foundation. They announced their existence to the world in a series of ads that ran in newspapers and music magazines, such as the Observer, the Guardian and the NME. The ads were familiar in design to the groups sleeves and designs when they the KLF, once again bringing to mind an awareness of paranoia.

The first ads in July of 1993 established an identity for the K-Foundation. The first ad advised the public to "Divide and Create" and to "Kick out the clocks....." in preparation for "K-Time." The saying "Kick out the clocks.." is another influence from the Illumunatus trilogy. (In the books, the saying goes "Kick out the Jamms," and the group used this saying as a sample in many of their songs, such as "Justified and Ancient.") The ad also gave the public an address to send off for information. This ad establishes a mysterious identity for the group steeped in mysticism, much the same in feeling as their earlier incarnation.

The next ad announced a musical release that the group were launching. Or rather weren't launching. It was a version of Que Cera Cera called "K-Cera Cera" mixed with the John Lennon song "War is Over if you Want it" and sung by the Red Army Choir of Russia.(See Figure 9.) The ads go on to say that the song will only be released once world peace has been established. Until then, it will only be heard at "...selected state occasions, sporting events, music festivals or mass rallies." The ad also states that the song is the "interstellar anthem of the K-Foundation." The group, however released the track in Isreal for a limited issue of 3,000 copies in November 1993. This was in celebration of the peace accord between the Isreali government and the PLO. Drummond said in an interview in Isreal's paper, Yediot Ahronet, that the

Fig: 9 Ad for K Cera-Cera

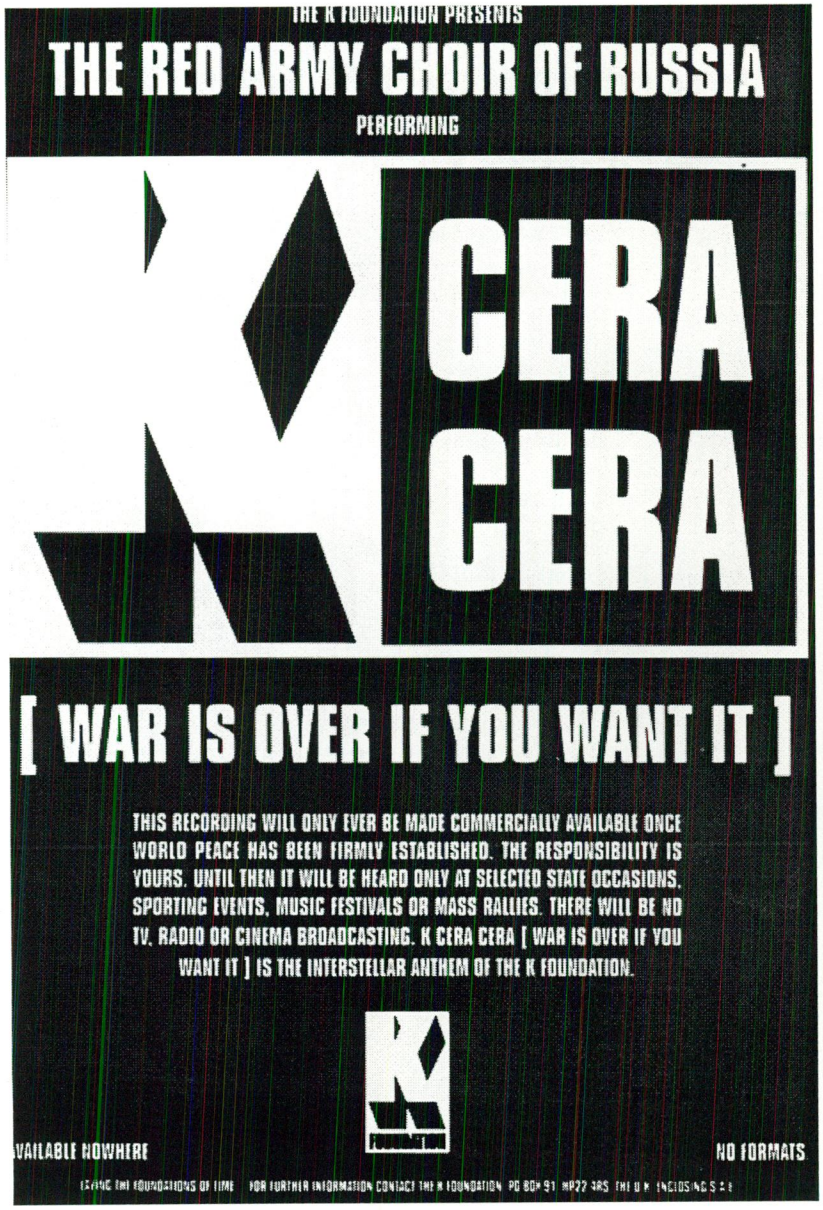

Fig: 11 Abandon all art ad

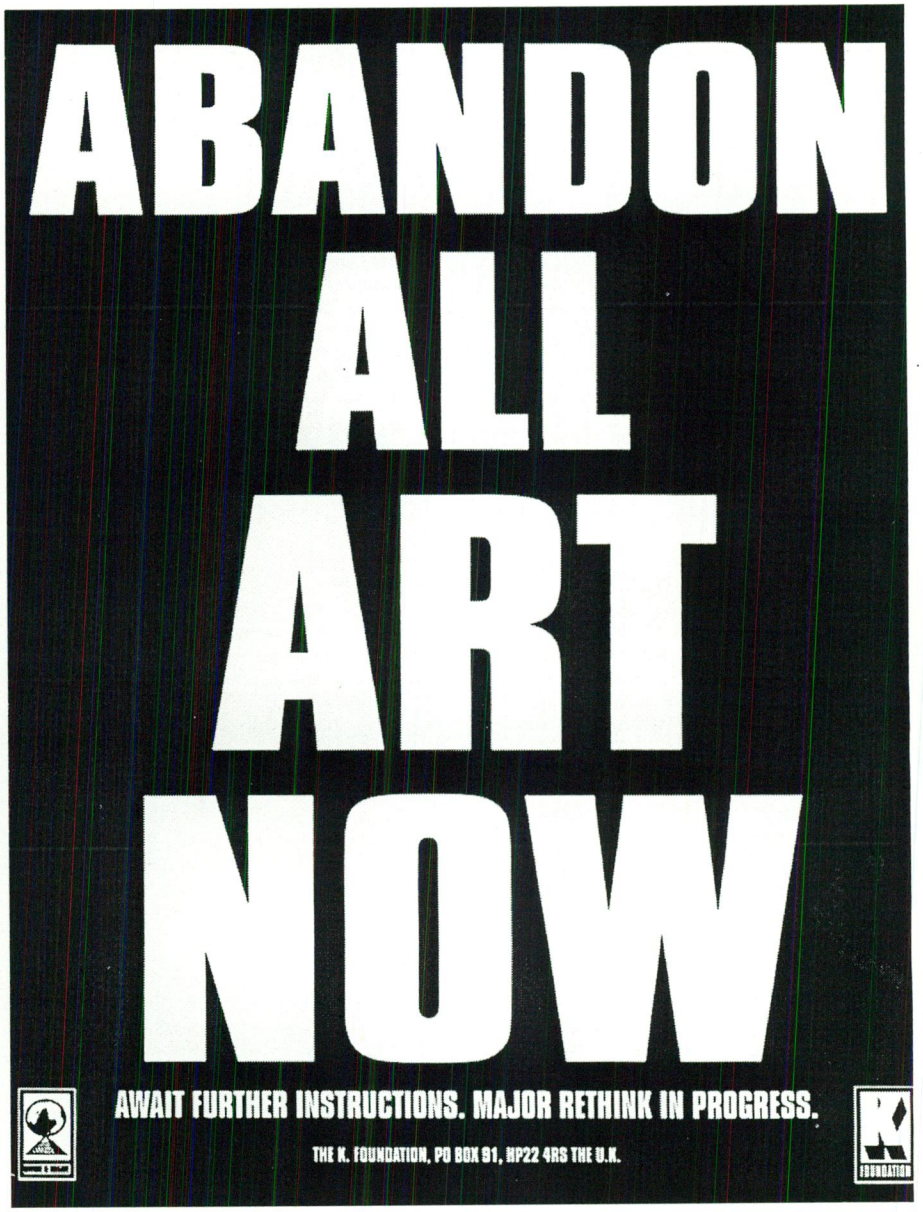

Fig: 10 Ad for K-Time.

idea behind the song was to create a sense of awareness of peace in the world.

> Because we were worried it would be interpreted by the public as an attempt by the KLF to return to the music world on the back of a humanist gimmick, we decided to hide behind the Foundation. (NME, 13 Nov 93, Pg: 5.)

This was not the only time that the group was involved in music for humanitarian purposes. As the KLF they had composed a track for a CND compilation album. Also in February of 1992, again as the KLF, the B-side of the single "America-What Time Is Love?" was a track called "America No More." This track featured the bagpipes being played over samples of news reports about war, religious readings and samples of George Bush commenting on the Gulf war. The song ends with a sample of a woman saying, "If Jesus Christ was here tonight, he would not dare drop another bomb." The band had also graffitied over a billboard advertising a new service's coverage of the Gulf war, changing the word Gulf into "KLF." In September1995 the group, under the name of " The One World Orchestra featuring The Massed Pipes and Drums of the Children's Free Revolutionary Volunteer Guard, " recorded a track for the "Help" album which was released to help the children of the Bosnian crisis. The song is a novelty record, featuring the theme tune of the film, "The Magnificent Seven" set to a jungle drum beat. The song is called "The Magnificent."

These songs show a consistency in the group that as well as subverting the music industry, they also have an interest in promoting peace. The group do this in an usual and original way each time, rather than the normal celebrity method of raising money. In his book Shuker makes the point that celebrities often take part in these

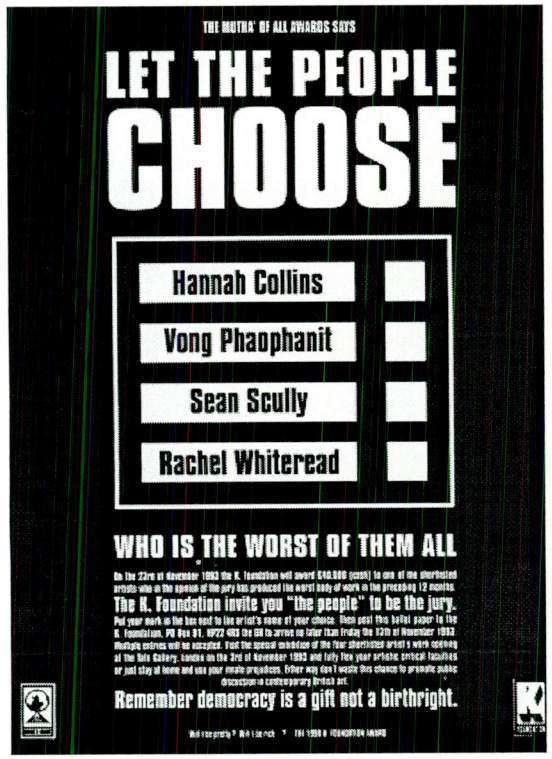

Fig: 14 Voting form for the public

types of charity recordings because they have products to sell. (Shuker, 1994, pg: 280.)

The next ads stated that "Time is Running in.....Switch to K-Time now." (See figure 10.) With this announcement, the ads moved into a higher gear. They seemed to be building up to something. In August, the campaign introduced a new twist. Another ad appeared in the press. It said, "Abandon all art now. Await further instructions. Major rethink in progress." (See figure 11.)The next ad said "It has been brought to our attention that you did not abandon all art. Serious direct action is therefore necessary."(See figure 12.) The ad then went on to announce the "K-Foundation Award" for the artist that has produced the worst body of work in the past twelve months. The four nominees were the same four that had been nominated for the Turner prize. Both results were to be announced on the the 23rd of November. At the bottom of the ad, the text read; "This is K Time in action for the advancement of Kreation." The prize money for the award was £40,00, twice what was being given away in the Turner prize. The next ad headed with the words "Artist we love you" and then asked ten multiple choice questions like, " Why is the K Foundation so much more sexy than any of the other art institutions?" and "If you had a million pounds, would you (a) Pay off your debts? (b) Start up your own art foundation dedicated to the advancement of creation? (c) Burn it?" (See figure 13) In a later ad, the public were invited to vote for the worst artist themselves. (See figure 14.)

The night of the Turner award, Rachael Whiteread won the Turner prize. She also won the K Foundation prize. However, according to the Weekend Guardian of May 21st 1994, who was amongst those to witness the prize, she was announced as the winner of the K Foundation award before she announced as the winner of the Turner prize. The prize was given in the form of cash nailed to a frame. To announce

Fig: 12 Ad announcing K Foundation Award

IT HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION THAT YOU DID NOT ABANDON ALL ART.

SERIOUS DIRECT ACTION IS THEREFORE NECESSARY

THUS WE PRESENT THE MUTHA' OF ALL AWARDS, THE

1994

K. FOUNDATION AWARD

ON THE 23rd OF NOVEMBER 1993 THE K. FOUNDATION WILL AWARD £40,000 [CASH] TO THE ARTIST WHO IN THE OPINION OF THE JURY HAS PRODUCED THE WORST BODY OF WORK IN THE PRECEDING 12 MONTHS.

THE FOUR SHORTLISTED ARTISTS ARE : HANNAH COLLINS, FOR EXHIBITIONS AT THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL ISTANBUL BIENNIAL AND AT THE CENTRE D'ART SANTA MONICA, BARCELONA. VONG PHAOPANH, FOR HIS INSTALLATIONS AT THE SERPENTINE GALLERY, OPERTO AT THE VENICE BIENNALE, AND KILLERTON PARK, DEVON. SEAN SCULLY, FOR THE EXHIBITIONS OF HIS RECENT WORK AT WADDINGTON GALLERIES, MARY BOONE GALLERY, AND HIS RETROSPECTIVE AT THE MODERN ART MUSEUM OF FORT WORTH. RACHEL WHITEREAD, FOR THE CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT OF HER WORK AS SHOWN IN EXHIBITIONS AT THE STEDELIJK VAN ABBEMUSEUM, EINDHOVEN, THE SYDNEY BIENNALE, AND HER RECENT EXHIBITION AT GALERIE BURNUS, PARIS. WORKS BY THE SHORT LISTED ARTISTS WILL BE SHOWN IN A SPECIAL EXHIBITION AT THE TATE GALLERY LONDON FROM THE 3rd TO THE 20th OF NOVEMBER 1993. FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE ANNOUNCED THROUGH THE USUAL CHANNELS ON THE 30th 31st OF OCTOBER 1993

"THIS IS K TIME IN ACTION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF KREATION..." THE K. FOUNDATION. PO BOX 51, HP22 4RS THE UK

Fig: 13 Artists questionnaire

ARTISTS ARE NOT FULFILLING THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES TO PRODUCE WORK WORTHY OF THE VERY LATE 20th CENTURY. WHY?

ARTIST WE LOVE YOU

BUT FIRST THERE ARE 10 QUESTIONS WE ARE FORCED TO ASK YOU.

1. Why is the K. Foundation so much more sexy than any of the other art foundations ?
2. Is £40,000 enough ?
3. Why do you feel misunderstood ?
4. If you had a million pounds would you...
   (a) Pay off your debts ?
   (b) Start up your own art foundation dedicated to the advancement of creation ?
   (c) Burn it ?
5. Do the People get the Art they deserve ?
6. Are the actions of the K. Foundation...
   (a) Futile, novelty pranks ?
   (b) Works of genius ?
   (c) Other ?
7. Why is it worth struggling to promote public discussion in contemporary British Art ?
8. If this is an advertisement, what is it selling ? Is any part of you buying ?
9. Numerous non shortlisted artists believe they deserve The K. Foundation Award prize money. Are they thus implying they deserve the £40,000 cash more than Amnesty International, Oxfam, Shelter, Help the Aged, Save the Children, The Terrence Higgins Trust, Friends of the Earth or Battersea Dogs Home ?
10. Does the Artist with £40,000 in the bank produce a better or worse body of work than the Artist with 40p ?
11. What the F**k does The K. Foundation think it is ?

The Winner of the 1994 K. Foundation Award, for producing the worst body of work in the preceding 12 months will be announced in a commercial break on Channel Four Television at approximately 9.30pm, Tuesday November 23rd 1993.

"Who has hidden the agenda ?" THE 1994 K. FOUNDATION AWARD.

the winner of their prize, the K Foundation had three 30-second ads during the Turner prize television programme on Channel 4. Ironically, according to the same paper, the cost of these ads was £20,000, the same as the prize itself. Therefore in this respect, the group were sponsoring the Turner prize also.

There was little critical analysis of the K Foundation prize in the period after the awards. Most critics seemed to dismiss the prize as the work of two pop stars who wanted to waste money, or pull some kind of publicity stunt. However, in view of the fact that the K Foundation had no product to sell to the public, this argument does not hold water. Perhaps the critics realised the danger that was apparent in acknowledging the K Foundation prize on its own terms? It might undermine their cultural authority. The Guardian of May 21st 1994 suggests that many people see the Turner judges choice as inherently political and that the art establishment uses the Turner award to fulfil a cultural agenda whose prime objective is the preservation of the said art establishment. The K Foundation award would have certainly exposed this if they had taken it on its own terms.

After one considers what the newspaper ads were leading up to, they make a lot more sense. Stewart Home quotes the point that as Peter Burger says in his "Theory of the Avant-Garde," avant-garde entails a critique of the institution of art, whereas Whiteread, described as avant garde, enjoyed an unproblematic relationship with the art world. The K Foundation award is, obviously a critique of the art world. If one looks at the K Foundation ads in the light of these events they make more sense. The phrase "Abandon all art" is very close to the "Demolish serious culture" of the Art Strikers and the "in art, anti art" feelings of the Dadaists. Like these movements, the K Foundation are asking questions about the nature and the validity

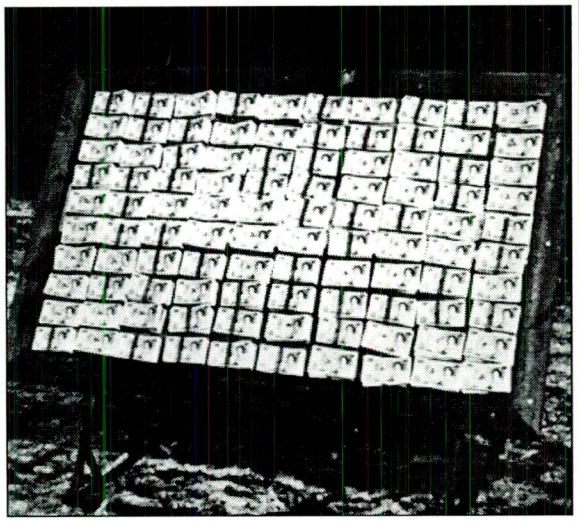

Fig: 15 "Nailed to the Wall."

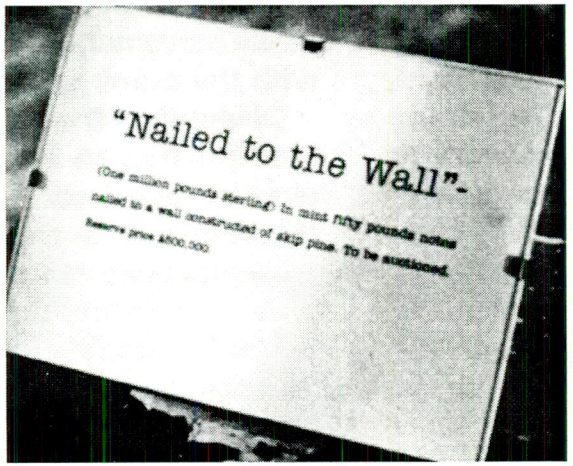

Fig: 16 The statement for the piece.

of art.

They examine these questions further in a piece of work of their own, that was exhibited at the area where the K.Foundation prize was announced on the same night. The work was called "Nailed to the Wall" and it consisted of £1,000,000 in £50 notes nailed to a board.See figures 15 and 16.) The reserve price for this piece of work was only £500,000. A catalogue that was given to all who were present at the announcement stated;

> ... over the years the face value will be eroded by inflation while the artistic value (due to the work's position in the amended History of Art) will rise and rise. The precise point at which the artistic value will overtake the face value is unknown. Deconstruct the work now and you double your money. Hang it on a wall and watch the face value erode, the market value fluctuate and the artistic value soar. The choice is yours.

The group are questioning the idea of the value of art. The piece is very like the idea of one of Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades, only coming at it from another angle. Where Duchamp used cheap, everyday objects and junk, the K Foundation have used the opposite, money, and a lot of it, for the same purpose. However, where Duchamp said that junk could be art, the K Foundation are saying that money and art are interchangeable. They are attacking the relationship between money and the art establishment.

On August 23rd 1994, one year later, the K Foundation pulled their most outrageous act. In a small cottage on the island of Jura, accompanied by a journalist

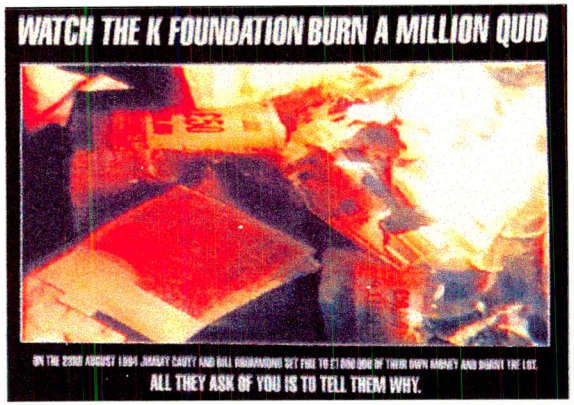

Fig: 17 Ad for "Watch the K Foundation Burn a Million Quid."

from the Observer, they took £1,000,000 of their own money and burned it. While they burned it, they made a film of the burning. In September, they took out a series of ads in the press announcing the showing of the film at various venues. (See figure 17.) One ad asks if the public know why they burned the money.

> "Was it a crime? Was it a burnt offering? Was it madness? Was it an investment? Was it rock 'n' roll? Was it an obscenity? Was it art? Was it a political statement? Was it bollocks?"
> (Ad in the Guardian, 6 Sept 1995.)

The burning of the money raises some interesting issues. Was it art? If the purpose of art is to provoke emotions from the viewer, the public outrage generated by this says a lot about society. If one considers that the Dadaists also used such tactics to provoke people, than the event could be considered art.Society is moved more by someone burning £1, 000,000 of their own money than by a great work of art that is supposed to move one to tears. It seems the K Foundation are questioning the role of art in a modern society, where so much is judged upon monetary value. Once again, the K Foundation are questioning the art establishment. Can art be equated with money?

The furore over the burning demands many questions to be asked, but the K Foundation gave no answers as to why they burned the money. They left it completely up to the public to work out. Perhaps they were telling the truth in their ad when they asked the public why they burned the money. "Jimmy Cauty and Bill Drummond urgently need to know, why did the K Foundation burn a million quid?"(Ad in the Guardian, 6 Sept 1995.) Taking this side to it, it seems that they burned the money to

raise these questions with the public. They were perhaps hoping the public could answer the question. However, they got more questions than answers. The public wanted to know why they had burned the money. They got so many questions that in November of 1995 they signed a contract not to talk about the subject of the million pounds for a period of 23 years.

During the years from 1995 to 1996 the K Foundation went into writing and publishing. At this stage, Mark Manning, from the band Zodiac Mindwarp, joined the K Foundation. They first published a limited edition book called "The Bible of Dreams." The book is filled with collages by Manning, made from pornographic images, interspersed with Disney characters and other imagery. It also has text written by Drummond.

They then published a book for Penguin in the summer of 1996, called "Bad Wisdom," written by Mark Manning and Bill Drummond. It tells of a journey they took in November of 1992 to the North pole to bury an icon of Elvis at the pole. This, they believed would save the world. We don't really know, from what. The book has two stories told alongside each other. One is a fictionalised version of events as told by Manning, the other is a log type version as told by Drummond. In Manning's version of events they had to save the world from the singer, Madonna, who was really Satan and wanted to destroy the world. The book provides some interesting insights into the music industry and what the group think of it. Also in Manning's version, at a party of industry figures, he " sees beyond reality" to images of Sinead O'Connor and Sting being injected full of drugs, then drained of blood by record company executives. The blood then turns to gold coin which the executives pocket. Passages like this reveal the group's love for pop and music, while at the same time

declaring their hate of the business that is involved in the same.

The aims of the K Foundation seem very close to those of the KLF. Rather than working within the music business, however, they have broadened their efforts to include the art world. Apart from their work in promoting an awareness of world peace, they raise some interesting questions about the value of money in today's society.

In organising the K Foundation award, they show the art world to be at odds with the public, who for by and large seem indifferent to what the artist produces. They also accuse the art establishment to be in pursuit of money, rather than integrity. Bear in mind that Rachael Whiteread collected the money off the K Foundation, even though it meant that she was hailed as the worst artist in the world.

Their work with money raise some very interesting question of the value of art in society. Through works like "Nailed to the Wall," they say that money and art are interchangeable. All someone has to do is take the money off the board in order to double their money. It is up to the buyer of the art to make the decision as to its role. Investment or work of art? This questioning of the viewer of the work is something that is evident in most of the K Foundations exploits. The public was called upon to vote for the worst artist, now the public is called to decide whether "Nailed to the Wall" is art. This characteristic is also followed through with their burning of the million pounds. During their tour after the event, they asked the public what their opinions of the burning was. They would find out directly from the public whether or not it was art. I believe that the K Foundation were trying to find out what art is in today's society.

Fig: 18 Press photo for 2K

In August of 1997, ten years after the group first formed, a series of ads were placed in the press by the group. The ads announced the return of the KLF. The ads were of a similar graphic style to the group's other graphics. The next ads told a more complete story. They announced the formation of a performance by a group called called 2K. It's members were, once again, Bill Drummond and Jimmy Cauty. The band, the ads said would only have a career of 23 minutes. This time would be spent giving a one-off performance at the Barbican Hall in London on the 2nd of September, called "1997-What The Fuck's Going On?" a reference to the band's first album. The ad also mentioned that the "next 840 days of our lives would be discussed"(Time Out, 21 August.) The ad also gave a number for a "millennium crisis line." The 840 days refers to the amount of days left until the year 2000. The name, 2K, refers to the K Foundation and the KLF as well as to the year 2000.

At the performance, the group appeared, once more in disguise. This time as old men in motorised wheelchairs, with the horns that the band used to wear cracked and broken and taped to their heads. (See Fig: 18.) When interviewed, the pair kept within the characters of their disguise acting like befuddled old men and claiming they were just asked along. The performance itself consisted of a brass band playing a version of their song, "What Time Is Love?" while a choir sung the hymn "For Those In Peril On The Sea." A group of Dockers from Liverpool also were on the stage shouting the words "Fuck The Millennium?" at different points throughout the song. The performance was released as a single on the 29 of September. The sleeve notes refer to the dockers as "The People" and states "Jimmi Cauty and Bill Drummond appear courtesy of 2K Plant Hire." The single sleeve also states; "produced by the Justified Ancients of MuMu."

With the reformation of the band as a music group once more seems to be going back on their word that the KLF had left the music business. However, the fact that the band only released one single and that the single was too full of profanity to be played on the radio, thereby significantly reducing the band's earnings, casts doubt on the assumption that they reformed to make money. The way that they dressed like old men also seems to be parodying the recent trend of long broken-up bands forming to release old songs in new formats, for financial reasons. For example, the Beatles Anthology series and especially the Sex Pistols "Filthy Lucre" tour of 1996.

For the performance and the single, the group collaborated with Jeremy Deller, an artist from Liverpool. Deller had staged a performance called "Acid Brass" as part of the Liverpool Arts Festival. With the Williams Fairey Engineering Brass Band, he had been doing brass versions of classic songs from the acid house such as 808 State's "Pacific State" and the KLF's "What Time Is Love?" When Drummond and Cauty heard the version of their song, they decided to produce a version of the song with the brass instruments.

The similarities between the early days of acid house and brass bands are more apparent than one would think. They were both produced by amateur musicians and are very rooted in the English national consciousness. Also, although they were first practiced purely as a form of pleasure and recreation, they became politicised despite themselves. John O'Reilly of "The Guardian" makes the point that what helps unites the two forms of music and strikes a poignant chord is the fact that acid house music emerged at the time when the English government were destroying the industries and communities based around old technology. (O'Reilly, 1997, Pg: 35.)

This sentiment of anger against the government closing these industries is

carried through by the liverpool dockers onstage and in the single shouting "Fuck The Millennium- We want it now!" while footage was shown of mounted police charging protesters. in 1995, 480 of the liverpool dockers were locked out of work. The chant "Fuck the Millennium" goes contrary to the feeling of optimism that the english government who are planning to build a structure called the Millennium Dome to celebrate the millennium, are spreading about the year 2000. The workers, representing the average working man, want the government to help them now, in practical ways.

The group seem to have doubts about the dawning of the new millennium. They have set up a web site and a phone helpline called "The Millennium Crisis Site" and "the Millennium Crisis Helpline" respectively. These are for people who are having problems with the new millennium. In October, the group also had a phone in vote event. The asked the question; "Should the new millennium be fucked?" The vote result was in favour of this. The group have, as a result of this, they claim on their website decided to achieve this any way they can.

This pre-occupation with time echoes the first ads of the K Foundation in 1994, when they proposed to "Kick Out the Klocks" and "Discover K-Time." their first ad claimed that creation had been a slave to rational time for too long. The ads claimed their was another time that didn't correspond to the solar system. "A time that is any time, A time that is this time, A time that is your time, A time that is K Time."(Extract from K Foundation ad, NME, 3rd July 1994.)

The group have also, under the name 2K plant hire proposed a plan to build a vast pyramid to celebrate the new millennium. They plan that the pyramid will have the same amount of bricks in it as the amount of people that have been born in the

past century in Britain. The also hope to build the structure out of bricks that people have lying about as doorstops etc. The have announced a number that a person may ring to have their bricks collected.

The pyramid is a significant shape for the structure, as many believe, like the ancient Egyptians that the shape has mystical qualities. The shape also applies to the group's myth, as the shape is used by the masons in the Illuminatus Trilogy and also by the band as part of their logo. The structure is to be called " The Great Northern Pyramid of the People." The red bricks that it will be made of establishes a similarity to the red bricked houses that " the people" live in. The pyramid is to be a peoples version of the "Millennium Dome." The group have stated, in their web site that the people may do to the pyramid as they wish, "whether they want to climb it, eat their lunch on it or chip it away until it is gone."

These ideas are rejecting the normal concept of the year 2000 and making a new millennium, without the government sponsored optimism. Drummond confirms this in a recent article he has written for "the Face," magazine. Written after Drummond attended the 1997 Labour party conference, he lashes out at the "New" face of Britain. He attacks the politicians, who hang around with pop stars in order to appear "hip" to the youth of the nation. He makes the point that these are the people who look after the safety of the world and they should need to sell themselves this way. This is a time when the British government are supporting the contemporary arts like never before. Drummond makes the point that any artist involved with the political establishment becomes "an unwitting handmaiden to the PR machine." (Drummond, 1998, Pg: 140.)

2K seem to be making the point that if the contemporary arts are to fulfil

some sort of positive function, it must be to provide an indefinable cultural opposition. This is their answer to the questions about the role of art that they asked in their role as the K Foundation.

Conclusion

The KLF were responsible for the development of much of the early acid house movement. At the time when this style of music was first coming out, the whole acid house scene was much frowned upon. The whole movement was akin to the early punk scene. However, like the punk scene, the music industry soon moved in, taking away much of the essence of the music. The KLF however, by forming their own company, "KLF Communications" with the money off their first commercial hit (Doctorin' the Tardis,) avoided this and kept to their own agenda.

The band used many different names and almost never appeared in the press and public except in disguise. This rejection of identity has a lot in common with the 80's "neoist" avant garde movement with it's rejection of identity. The group built up an front of mystique and conspiracy around themselves to establish a kind of myth around them. This was also fuelled by their dislike of interviews. This meant that the public would relate to the band image rather than the band itself. They then used that myth to avoid all the usual prices of success in the music business, such as the loss of privacy. This also went against the trend of the star system prevalent in the music industry.

To promote themselves, they often used graffiti. This was a subversive act in itself, it being illegal. To promote themselves like this is akin to the whole punk feeling of anarchism. Like the punks, they believe in some form of anarchism and most of the acts they did have a feeling of anarchism attached.

This feeling was of anarchism was also carried through to their live performances, which had a lot in common with the Dadaists, in its idea of the total work of art. Though the idea behind the performances was not to provoke the audience to anger, rather it was to induce a feeling of bizarreness to their

performance.

Their cut and paste technique used in their songs was akin to the cut and paste technique used in the punk and Dadaism movements. This was used to question whether the copyright laws could apply in the new world of samplers and music made with new technology, and whether a song could be called new if it is made from bits of other songs. It also subverts the whole music making tradition in that it makes a kind of "anti-music." With their single "Doctorin' the Tardis," and their book, "the Manual," they made a mockery of the music industry, proving that anyone could be successful with a number one song, if they were unoriginal and stuck to a set formula.

The KLF were successful on their own terms without giving away any of their credibility. When they started being lauded by the industry they hated, they gave up music and deleted their back catalogue, proving their commitment to their integrity.

When they re-surfaced as the K-Foundation, a year later, they began attacking the art establishment. Their ads in the press at first seemed to be of no purpose at all. This is true until one sees them in relation to the events that happened after them and in the avant garde sense. The urge to abandon all art draws influence from the Dadaists and other avant garde movements.

Their track "K- Cera Cera," shows an interest in trying to put the notion of world peace into the public's collective conscious. This is echoed by previous songs with a similar released by the group when they were in their KLF role. The way they promoted a single that exists but will not be released, seems to me to be an extremely subversive act. The song would make a lot of money if it was released, no doubt.

The reaction of the art establishment on their award to Rachael Whiteread

exposed the hypocrisy inherent in their view of what they consider art. Their piece "Nailed to the Wall," questions the validity of art in today's cash driven society. Their burning of £1,000,000 pushed this idea even further, questioning the ideas of art, and the relationship between money and art. They question whether the burning of this money is even art. In my opinion, this is a grand gesture of anarchism and it does question the relationship between money and art, but it offers no answers. It seems as if the group are in confusion about it themselves. Their ideas here are again influenced by the Dadaists and other avant garde sources.

In their latest guise as the group 2K Plant Hire, they seem to be attacking the trend of long defunct music acts reforming for commercial reasons. (They also seem to be poking fun at themselves also.) They criticise the mindless optimism that is latched on to the year 2000 promoted by the British government as well as the concept of "NEW" Britain, where politicians hang around with and support artists and pop stars, while jobs in major industries are lost by the hundred.

As the K Foundation, they seemed to be looking at the role and significance of art in today's society. As 2K, they seem to have since found the role of art as applies to them. They say the role of art is to act as some form of cultural opposition. The current relationship between the credibility seeking government and the contemporary art goes against this function. As 2K, the group are acting against this with their single, "Fuck the Millennium," and their alternative to the Millennium Dome, the Great Northern Pyramid of the People.

The groups are all tied together by the same ideas and influences. The influences are quite easy to spot. The Illuminatus books by Robert Anton Wilson and Bob Shea provide a lot of these influences and ideas. These contribute to the identity

of the group. They also use these influences to provide an atmosphere of paranoia and conspiracy. Their graphic style on record sleeves, ads, and posters also remains consistent through their different roles. The use of white capitals on a black background gives an ominous atmosphere. It almost suggests a new world order with the spirit of Well's "1984." This ties in with the influence of the Illuminatus books as the books are based on a historical material which has a millenarian current through them. This idea of time and the millennium is also brought up in nearly all of their roles, from lyrics in their songs to their press ads and of course, their latest incarnation is mostly concerned with the millennium This preoccupation helps to establish their myth around themselves even further and ties in with their belief that a pop star must be a visionary of sorts.

Their other influences seem to stem from the many branches of the twentieth century avant garde. In their music, they had much in common with the Plagiarist movement of the 80's, using samples from other songs. Much of their performances had much in common with the Dadaist movement, being bizarre in form and utilising the same cut and paste techniques that Dadaism often used. The influence of Dadaism also comes through in their questioning and critiques of the art and music worlds in the form of usual pieces of work and various "hoaxes."

In their approach to music one can see much of the motives that inspired the punk style. They were fed up with the homogenisation of music by the music industry and wanted to turn it on its head. They succeeded with this many times, but unlike punk they were successful in their attempts to make headway in the industry without losing integrity. They also knew when it was time to retire from music, so they wouldn't fall in the usual fading out or dying young stereotypes of the business.

Their attacks on the art establishment were to a large part, successful. However, with their background of subversive acts coupled with the fact that they used to be pop stars, much of their statements were not examined fully by the press. This meant that they were dismissed for much of the time as hoaxers or rich stars wasting some of their money on games. The statements against the art world, I feel, were valid and clever subversive acts. For me, the fact that the art establishment ignored these just emphasises the complacency that the group were lashing out at.

Like the Dadaists, the group were questioning the role of art in society. What kind of art can be considered relevant in today's cash driven society. The group found an answer that the contemporary artist must form some sort of cultural opposition to authority and they lash out at those who take part in media events arranged to make the government look good.

To basically summarise, I fell that the KLF, the K Foundation and all their other guises, make some very good points about the art and music worlds and that they were most successful in subverting the mediocre in these establishments.

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