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# Output

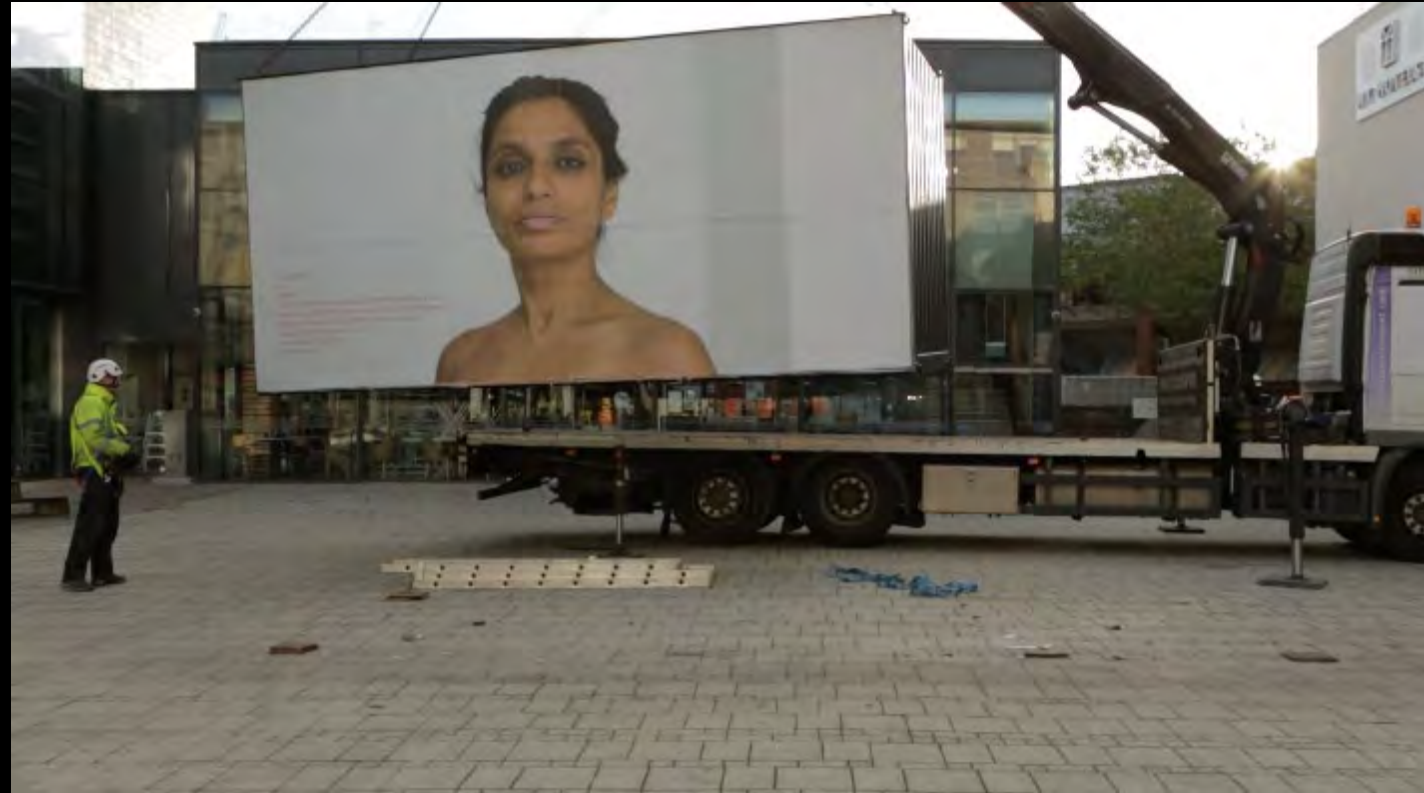
## **UNCERTAIN SUBJECTS PART III**

An artwork in the public realm as part of the 8<sup>th</sup> Brighton Photo Biennial, consisting of five 6-hour photographic billboard performances on the side of a shipping container in Jubilee Square, Brighton. The Biennial, entitled 'A New Europe', explored themes of Brexit, the migrant crisis and the advance of right-wing nationalism across Europe. Commissioned by Brighton Photo Biennial and supported by Jack Arts/Build Hollywood.

### **Outputs**

1. Five 6-hour live billboard performances on the side of a specially designed container placed in Jubilee Square Brighton for the duration of the month-long Biennial.
2. The container, its installation and removal became part of the installation and the video produced as a result of the project.
3. A series of 1000 new postcards were produced for dissemination and made available in the adjacent Jubilee Library.
4. A time-lapse video to ensure the legacy of the research beyond the duration of the Brighton Photo Biennial.







Finn Kew  
Student  
British and Dutch

"Now I feel like I am stuck between two shores, adrift and confused."

Femi Aduwole, Pro-EU campaigner, British  
"... the UK has no written constitution, the government could do whatever it likes to us tomorrow. The EU treaties protect, not just UK citizens, but the integrity of the country."







Martin Housden, British, Retiree  
"For a brexsh\*tter a foreigner is  
someone from the next village."





Stills from the performances at the Brighton Photo Biennial

## Audience Engagement and Impact

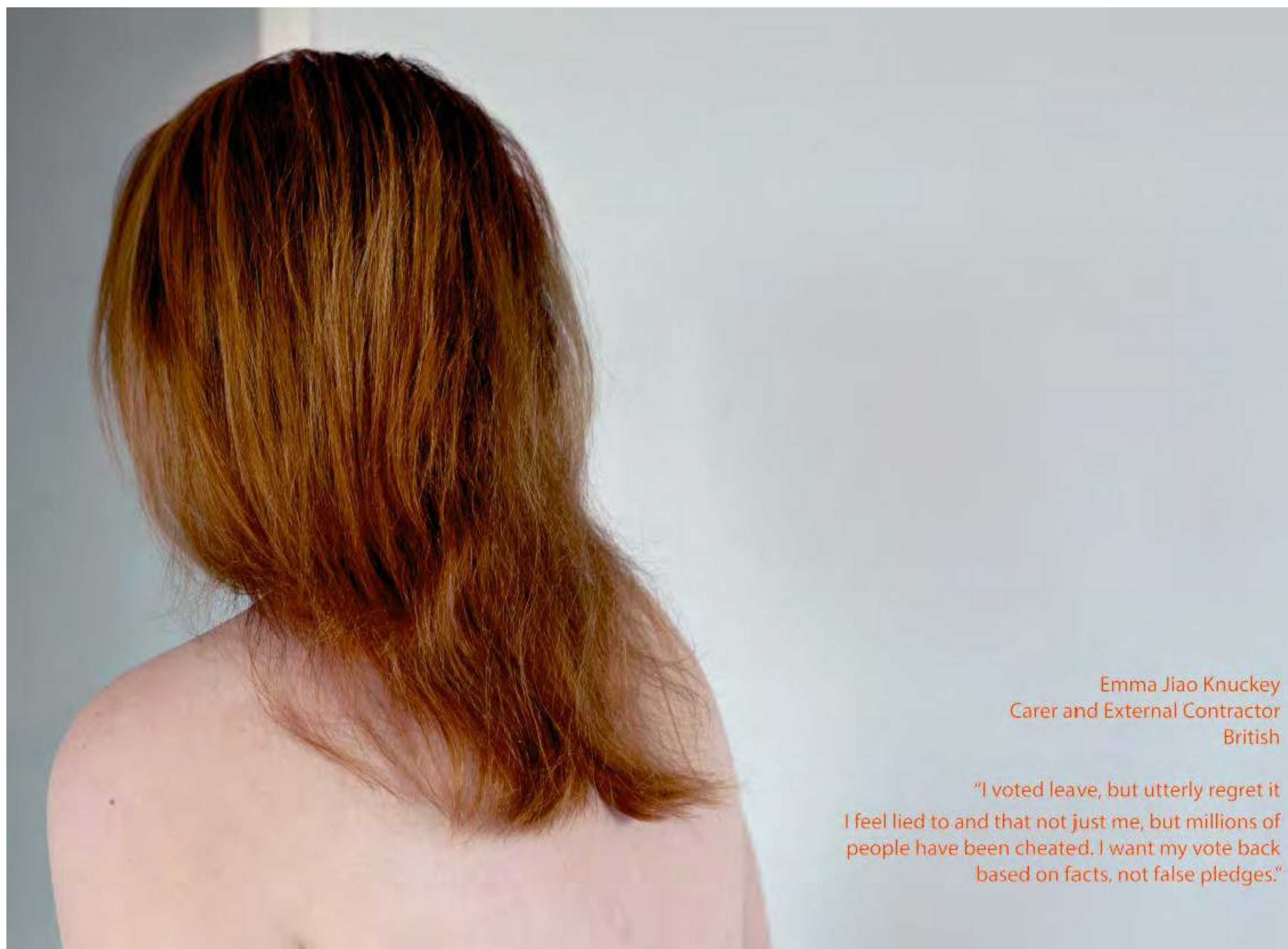
Of all the performances, the Brighton Photo Biennial had the most public engagement. This was due to several factors: the scale of the Biennial; the comprehensive press coverage; the fact that the work happened at eye level; and the extended duration of the project over a month. The research became a platform for the discussion and debate of issues related to the impending Brexit.

Seating and blankets created a comfortable viewing environment for people to engage. Some people spent several hours watching the performance.

Reactions were both emotional and intellectual. Conversations ranged from expressions of anger, via tears, to intellectual and factual conversations about the ongoing political dynamics.

Visitor numbers: Jubilee Square has an estimated footfall of 24,000 to 31,000 people a week, meaning that up to 124,000 people will have seen the installation of Uncertain Subjects over the duration of the Brighton Photo Biennial.





Significant effort was invested into including people who had changed their position from voting leave in the 2016 referendum.

They were contacted online (through remainernow.com, a website dedicated specifically to that particular group).

Although the website had a significant amount of subscribers and a series of very poignant personal narratives, it was difficult to get these people to agree to being photographed.

A compromise was therefore made: to only photograph the back of their head, which was presented alongside a personal statement.

**Uncertain Subjects Part III, Emma Jiao Knuckey, 2018**

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# Output

## UNCERTAIN SUBJECTS PART IV

**An 8-hour billboard performance at the Grainger Market, a Victorian covered market in the city-centre of Newcastle upon Tyne.**

**The project was supported by Newcastle City Council, who funded the construction of the billboard site and helped with the process of connecting with new participants.**

**Jack Arts/Build Hollywood funded the production of the billboard images and the costs of installation.**

**The key development from the previous stages of Uncertain Subjects was the audience and participants. The North East was a predominantly leave-voting region. This led to the decision to represent residents who voted to leave the EU alongside those who had been previously included in the series. Subjects were photographed at the Byker Community Centre and at the Grainger Market. They were contacted through social media, through the City Council's marketing team and through Newcastle University. The first three hours of the performance alternated between leave and remain voters.**

### Outputs

1. 16 billboards performed over an 8-hour period. The first three hours of the performance alternated between leave and remain voters.
2. 30 new photographic portraits including both leave and remain voters, photographed in Newcastle and its surroundings.
3. A new time-lapse video of the performance.

Newcastle  
City Council 

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#UNCERTAIN  
SUBJECTS

Barry Moore  
Greengrocer  
British

"Let's put the Great back into Britain"



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# Output

## **UNCERTAIN SUBJECTS PART V**

A long-term installation of still billboard images on the external wall of Village Underground (a cultural venue) on Great Eastern Street, Shoreditch, London.

Installed June 2019. At the date of writing, this work remains displayed on the Great Eastern Wall.

### **Outputs**

Four large-scale billboard images installed on the public-facing Great Eastern Wall, London.





Uncertain Subjects Part V, Great Eastern Street, London, 2019





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# Output

## **UNCERTAIN SUBJECTS PART VI AND VII**

[Click here for time-lapse video](#)



**Contemporary Art Society:** A series of portrait photographs exhibited as part of a group exhibition organized by the Contemporary Art Society and displayed at CPP Investment Board offices, London, 2018-2019.

This included a time-lapse video of the billboard performances displayed on a 64-inch flat screen TV and a series of 32 framed postcards.

**Royal Academy Summer Exhibition:** A series of Uncertain Subjects photographic stills exhibited at the Royal Academy Summer exhibition, curated by Jane and Louise Wilson, 2019.





# UNCERTAIN SUBJECTS

The interminable Brexit process has forced people to reassess their lives. Since the moment of the referendum the artist Uta Kögelsberger has been working on a project to show the consequences of the vote in a public form. The writer Julian Stallabrass spoke to her about the work and the role of art in relation to contemporary politics.

**JS:** I have been working on a project about the relations between political and cultural populism, and as part of that thinking about the representation of 'the people' in street art: are they represented there, and if so, how? I had been wandering about bits of the East End of London, and what I saw confirmed what I had seen before – that the people celebrated in street art are mostly young, cool, urban types, often black or mixed race, while populist political leaders of the right – particularly Johnson and Trump – are held up as the *bêtes noires*. One piece on Brick Lane, for example, has Johnson as the monster clown puppet-master of the pandemic.

Then, in the noisy and polluted environment of Great Eastern Street, I came across your billboards. Even there, that work carried a great emotional charge: the direct address of the subjects to the viewer, their unclothed vulnerability, and the painful statements that they make about their experience of Brexit. But the billboards are just a point in a complex on-going project – can you say how you got to them?

**UK:** Indeed, this work you saw on Great Eastern Street is

one fraction of an extended project called *Uncertain Subjects* that I developed in response to the rise of populism and associated nationalist tendencies in the UK in the wake of the 2016 referendum and beyond. To date there are five stages and, although they build on each other, each is also its own discrete entity. Each stage is developed in response to its environment and looks at different demographics, first starting with citizens of the European Economic Area (EEA), then opening up to British citizens who felt like they were no longer represented by their government, then to those who had voted Leave but had since changed their minds, and finally to also include convinced Leave voters.

The first stage of *Uncertain Subjects* was a mail art project that started the morning after the leave vote was announced: I was travelling from the outskirts of Newcastle towards the city centre, looking around me on a crowded commuter train and thinking: '62% of you would rather I was not here'. After 25 years in this country, it was a deeply troubling realisation. I knew immediately that I wanted to do something in response to this situation, and that this something had to reach beyond the gallery walls and involve people directly in the public realm. It was impossible to stand by.

First page of article about Uncertain Subjects, Interview by Julian Stallabrass with Uta Kögelsberger

Published in Source Magazine (December 2020).



UNCERTAIN SUBJECTS  
A mail art project by Uta Kögelsberger

Milani Manfora  
Artist  
Resident in the UK since 1989  
Non-confirmed resident status

under no circumstances please go to: <https://www.gogelberger.net/uncertain-subjects/>



UNCERTAIN SUBJECTS  
A mail art project by Uta Kögelsberger

Armand Douganis  
Publisher and father of two  
Resident in the UK since 1997  
Non-confirmed resident status

under no circumstances please go to: <https://www.gogelberger.net/uncertain-subjects/>



*Uncertain Subjects* Part I was a series of postcards, head and bare shouldered portraits of EU citizens, who had made the UK their home, but who had not taken the trouble to go through the complicated process of applying for permanent residency or citizenship. Under the rules of freedom of movement it did not seem necessary. An essential part of the mail art project was its circulation, including that moment of taking consciousness on reception of the postcards. What do you do with these people that land on your doorstep? Pin them to the wall, forget about them in a stack of papers, or throw them away?

The mail art project then led to the first series of what I have now started calling 'Action Photographs'. It consisted of a large-scale billboard performance in the public realm for Art Night in London. With this new development *Uncertain Subjects* opened up to British citizens, as it became increasingly clear that they would be just as deeply affected by the changes as their EEA counterparts. The ambit widened, then, in the different venues as it became clear that everybody was grappling with the consequences and handling of the referendum result.

**JS:** How did you approach your subjects?

**UK:** The approach was carefully considered. It was important to give people the opportunity to opt out. In most cases the first approach was in writing, this was followed by a conversation over the phone and then by a meeting in person.

**JS:** Can you say why you decided that the subjects would be photographed with bare shoulders? I can't help thinking of Giorgio Agamben's thinking about 'bare life' in relation to the way states treat those who are not full citizens. In your images, we see a bit of their home environment, but not much and always out of focus: was this to concentrate attention on faces and bodies, to suggest something of their domestic life here, but without bringing in the kind of detail that would indicate class or taste? Some of them seem to look at you, or at least the camera, a little quizzically.

**UK:** The bare shoulders were a very important part of the work. They create an intimacy both in the process of image taking as well as in the dialogue they establish with the viewer. The provocation of the direct gaze invites the viewer into an exchange an exchange of looking and being



# UNCERTAIN SUBJECTS: LEGACY

The new billboard project, *Division/Revision*, curated by Kögelsberger, serves as a legacy for Uncertain Subjects. *Division/Revision* brings together 16 UK-based international artists to respond to the question: What brings us together and what pushes us apart, sure in the knowledge that certain things can do both ?

This is set against the background of recent changes to how we relate to one another as individuals and as a society: Britain's exit from the European Union has transformed our relationship with Europe; the pandemic has brought new geographies to our daily lives; and Black Lives Matter's powerful articulations of systemic inequality. *Division/Revision* reflectson how relationships are being redefined through seismic shifts in the current social and political landscape.

*Division/Revision* develops upon the innovative performative approach of Uncertain Subjects, expanding its geographic reach across Britain. Sixteen billboards in London, Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester, Sheffield and Glasgow will be pasted for one day only with new work by artists: Larry Achiampong, Victor Burgin, Rut Blees Luxemburg, Jasmina Cibic, Fiona Crisp, Jeremy Deller, John Kippin, Uta Kögelsberger, Melanie Manchot, Hardeep Pandhal, Hetain Patel, Ingrid Pollard, Eva Stenram, Mark Titchner, Jane & Louise Wilson and Alberta Whittle.

Each day, each billboard will change, so that that across the UK, the entire range of works is visible at any given time, while at any single location each the whole project will be seen over the duration of the project, with each artist's work being seen for one day at the time.



Above: *Division/Revision*, curated by Kögelsberger  
Overleaf: Postcard image from Uncertain Subjects



