



# **INSTITUTION OF ROT**

**Treatment  
with  
Storage**





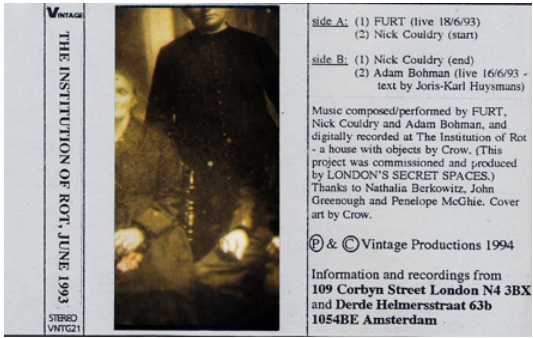
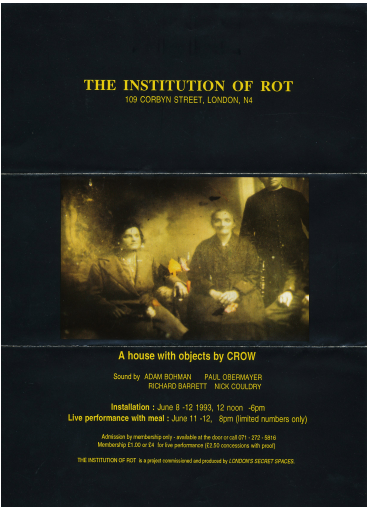


## **A DEMISED PREMISE**

Disembodied, free and loose, but injured and sickly voices  
gasp their very last breath; remains compress, adhere, fuse,  
solidify and fossilise; leftovers, resurrecting into cadavers  
and wreckage which never quite die out; instead, they stumble,  
falter, slow down and halt during course of duty as active  
bodies and live places, not at standstill.

Substance-fatigue claims derelict bodies and dead places;  
afflicted victims fracture, shatter, crumble and dissolve,  
until evaporated away; all fumes and sand survived by burns,  
rust, debris, stains, mould, shadows and clouds lurking behind  
afterwards; immortalised voices patrol, haunt and reign,  
becoming unhindered meteorological weather.





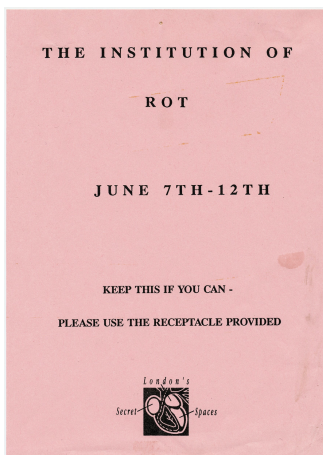
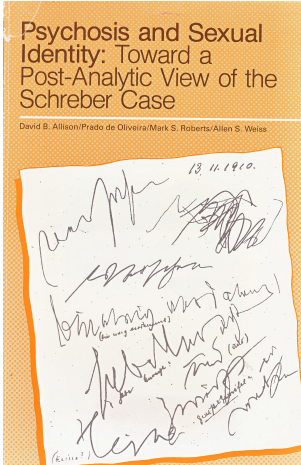












I never saw this strange dwelling again. Indeed as I see it now, the way it appeared to my child's eye, it is not a building, but is quite distributed and dissolved inside me.....the rooms, the stairs that descended with such ceremonious slowness, others, narrow cages that mounted in a spiral movement, in the darkness of which we advanced like the blood in our veins.  
Rainer Maria Rilke

During the night ....one single night, the lower God (Ariman ) appeared...his voice resounded in a mighty bass as if directly in front of my bedroom windows...What was spoken did not sound friendly by any means: everything seemed calculated to instil fright and terror in me and the word "rotten person " (Luder ) was frequently heard: an expression quite common in the basic language to denote a human being destined to be destroyed by God and to feel God's power and wrath. Yet everything that was spoken was genuine, not phrases learnt by rote...For this reason any impression was not one of alarm and fear, but largely one of admiration for the magnificent and the sublime: the effect on my nerves was therefore beneficial, despite the insults contained in the words.  
Daniel Paul Schreber

THE INSTITUTION OF ROT is a living archive of Crow's work: a price list of objects and recordings is available on request.

THE INSTITUTION OF ROT was open for the first time from June 8 to June 19 1993. It is a space that remains open to those who recognise it.

Members may return, and sometimes they will be summoned, for events of special significance.

THE INSTITUTION OF ROT is one of London's Secret Spaces. For information on other secret spaces, call 0865 516929 or 081 291 9856.















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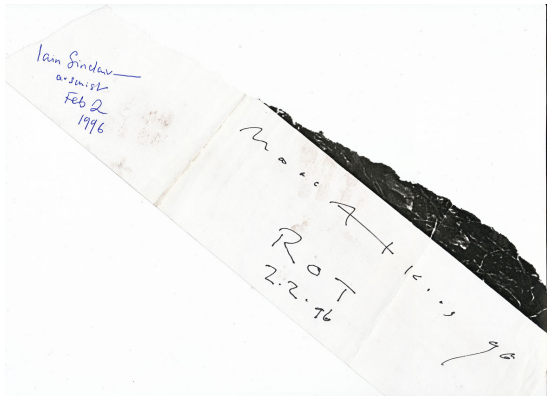
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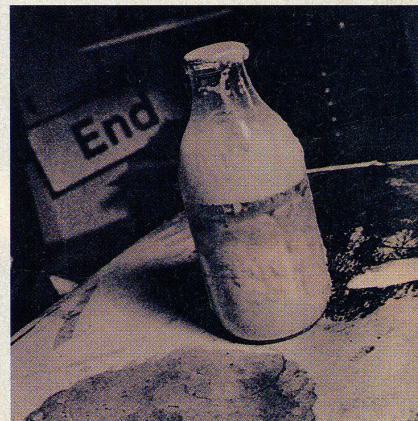
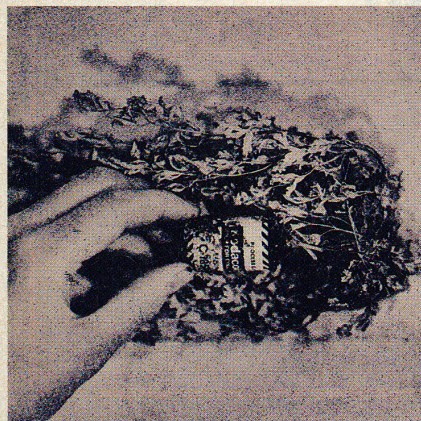
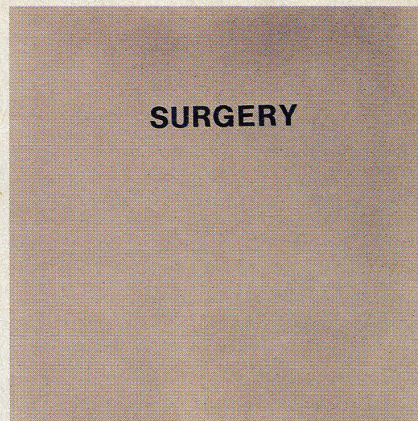
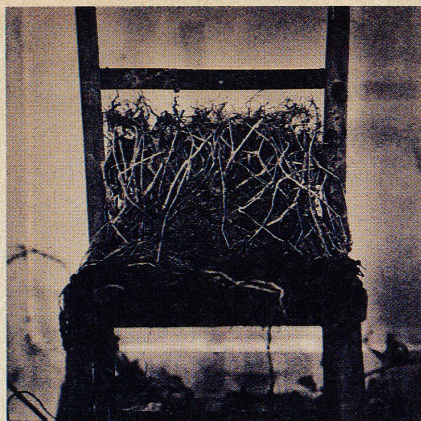
THE INSTITUTION OF ROT  
LONDON

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BARRY J HOLMES

## London lives Sculptor Crow

**F**rom a very early age my nickname was "The Scarecrow", and then somebody said, "You should call yourself Crow." It seemed quite obvious – that's what I am and what I do. I pick up things. I collect. I wear black. I live off the rot, the carrion that is everywhere in the city.'

A north London-based sculptor, performance and installation artist with a monk's hairdo, Crow has taken the notion of living for one's art one step further and, for the last 11 years, has chosen to live *in* his art. After an unorthodox training in the arts, (mis)spent practising shocking and sometimes violent 'destructions', 'disturbances' and acts of 'art terrorism', Crow has turned his own home into his grandest work of all – a large and dramatically decorated terraced house and sinister underground art club

called 'The Institution Of Rot'.

To the strains of a cassette of amplified gastric and colonic noise (made in the 1960s for medical teaching purposes), and wearing the torn and muddled eveningwear that forms 'Institutional clothing', he explains, 'Rot, decay, decomposition... that's what the Institution is about. There's the Marx quote: "In history, as in nature, the rot is the laboratory of life." Matter has to go through this process for it to become transformed. I'm putting this stuff on a pedestal and getting people to look at it, with all its time and memories and personal resonance.'

Entering the Institution can be a disorientating experience. You are hustled into a dark, overgrown studio, full of minutely catalogued debris and rubbish, and signed in via an elaborate ritual of oaths and hand signals. The

house echoes with every footstep on the bare boards as you circumnavigate the cluttered and ramshackle *objets d'art*. A Gothic-influenced study of decadence in decline, the ostentatious collection of decaying sculptures and fading collages is set off by soil underfoot, and gaps in the walls. One door, marked 'Surgery', remains locked, but I am treated to a private view. Inside, the bare boards are mottled blood red, all that remains of the 'medical installation' the room once housed. It is now a lab for experimental musicians.

'Things are always changing here. Corners might get very active for a time, and then I'll have a total clean up. I want to live with everything I'm doing. I don't want there to be any kind of separation. Things that come in off the street, I bring in immediately and show them. I want to look at things closely and get to grips with them.'

Crow's neighbours are astonishingly unmoved by the strange, theatrical antics that occur on Institutional nights,



although Crow has on occasions borrowed from *them* for his work. When the man next door attempted suicide, he swooped on the sour bottles of milk left on his doorstep while he was in hospital, and many years later one poignant bottle of Gold Top, having gone through several stages of decomposition, has become an artwork called 'The Suicide Milk'. 'It kind of had my name on it,' he explains.

Described by a friend as 'a dispossessed aristocrat in search of rotten elegance', Crow claims to have recreated his life and surroundings in the image of English society – something decaying and ragged but still clinging to its elitism and decadence.

'It's very important that people in London take advantage of the freedom this city offers them, and do what they feel. When I was young, I used to dream I had a house within a house, that I could only get to when I was dreaming. Sometimes I wonder if I've come to live in it.' *Linton Chiswick*





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K		1								Sonntag keine Brötchen	
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		+ Passiert		+ Konfitüre ohne Zucker		+ Streichwurst		+		1 2 Vollkornbrötchen	
		+ Vegetarisch		+ Honig		+ Käse		+		1 2 3 Vollkornbrot	
		+ Ballaststoff-zugabe		+ Nuß-Nougat-Creme		+ Streichkäse		+		1 2 3 Mischbrot	
		+ Energiereichere Zugabe		max. 30g gesamt		+ Quark		+		1 2 3 Weißbrot	
 <p>Patientenetikett Barcode nach unten</p>		+ Elweißreiche Zugabe		10g Butter 20g		1 2 Zucker		2		1 2 3 Roggenweißbrot	
				10g Margarine 20g		+ Süßstoff		+		1 2 3 Knäckebrot	
						+ Kaffeesahne		+		+ Knusperfrühstück	
						+ Zitronensaft		+ 02		+ 03	

Mit schwarzem Filzstift kräftig ankreuzen. + Freie Felder nicht beschriften.

# the noisiness of bodies

16 · 2 · 96  
adam bohman  
nick couldry  
« london grill »  
« confession »

8 · 3 · 96  
crow (le corbeau)  
maria loura-estevao  
« theurgy (messe basse) »  
« chambre de poudre »

29 · 3 · 96  
josephine leak  
heimo lattner  
adrian n. schiesser  
« rhapsody of moisture »  
« nothing is not visual »  
« sub rosa rumbling »

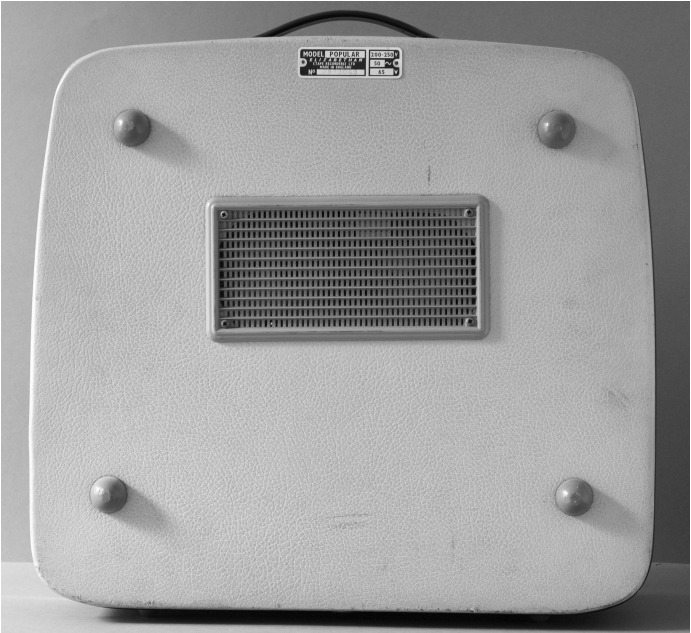
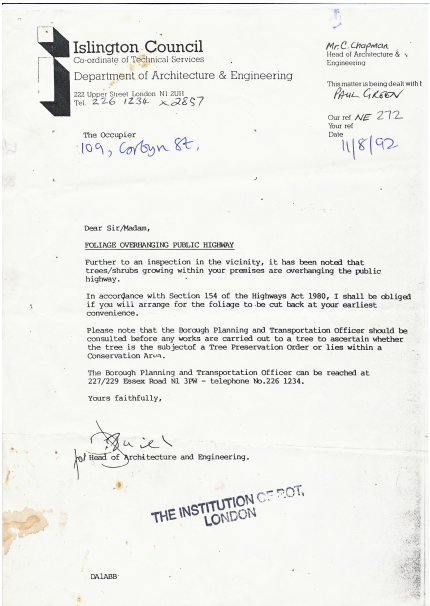
23/26 · 5 · 96  
sarah marris  
anna scheer « the noisiness of sarahpy »  
« erkennungszeichen widerkauen und sezieren »

for detailed programme & membership  
contact **the institution of rot**  
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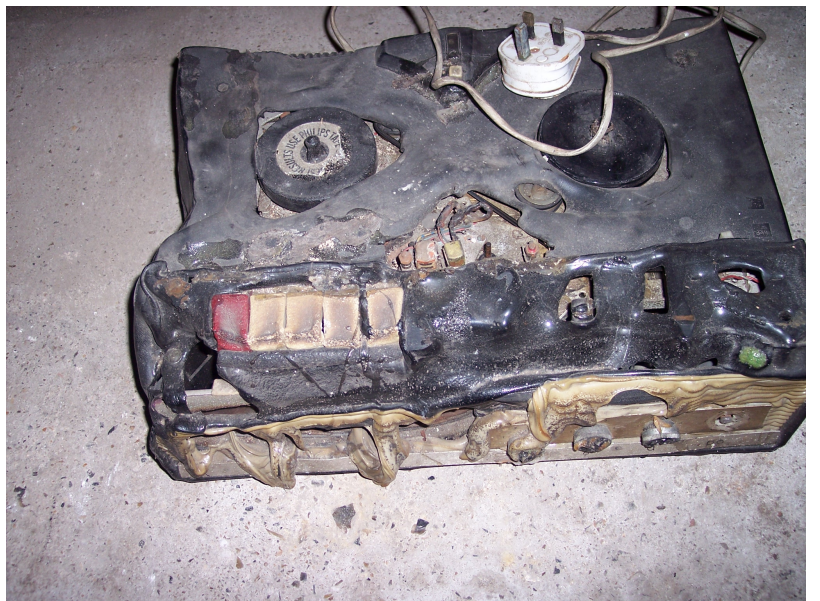
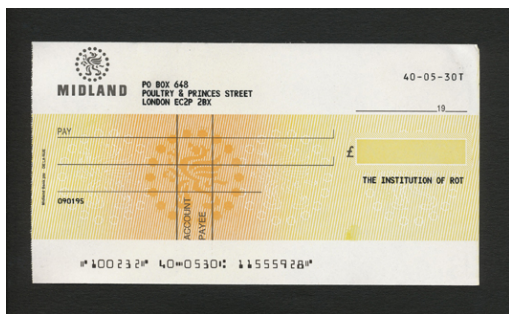
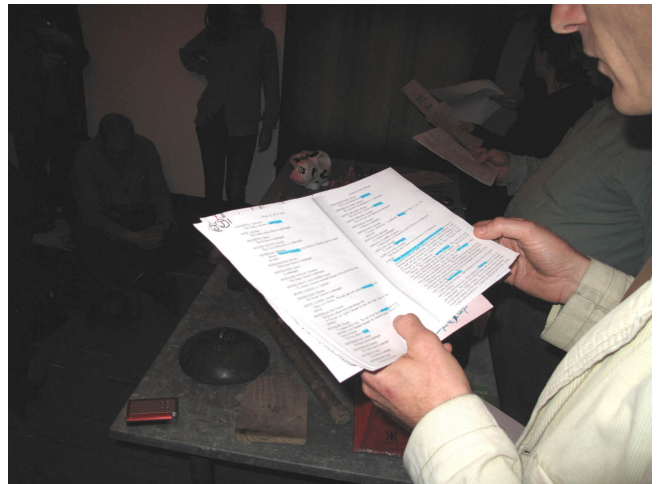
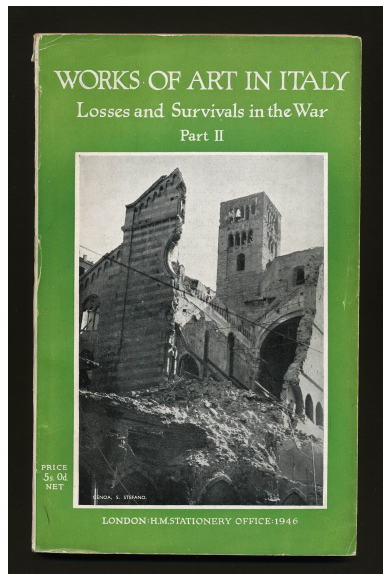
**LONDON**  
ARTS BOARD













From what island , the coconut matting ? From what furniture came it ?  
Stuffed as it was by the beak of some bird in search of what nest ?  
What lay behind the surgery door ? Did a life depend on itself behind  
a closed door ? Never has a house been more open and shut , I , the  
anaesthetised wonder more openly on the body of your house , and like  
the undertaker , know the wonder of collection . Lost or found ? both  
maybe ? What meaning to search for the lost or be found by the lost ?  
Are you the one who choses or are you chosen by these things ?  
A chair , the meaning of a chair , the mean chair that chose you,  
sitting while you stand ! A standard chair , stood on a level floor  
eighteen feet above the level ground ; the level of a crow , itself  
stood on a box sitting on the floor . In open window , a black crow ,  
a black curtain , gravity brings it down to a certain level with the  
ground . A beak , a gown hung upon a single hook , a plank , a piece  
of burnt black wood , struck to the wall by a nail ; and what of the  
hammer blow ? is that an exhibit too ? The sound a memory and I am  
remembering too .

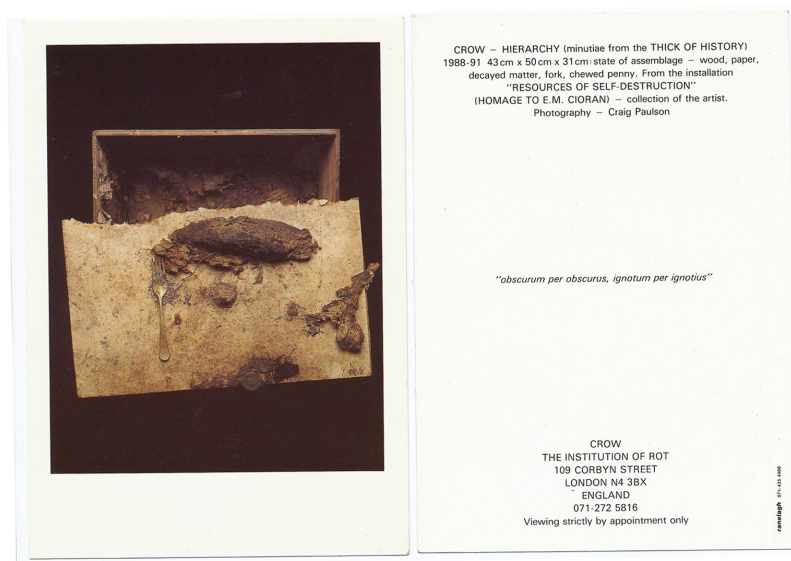
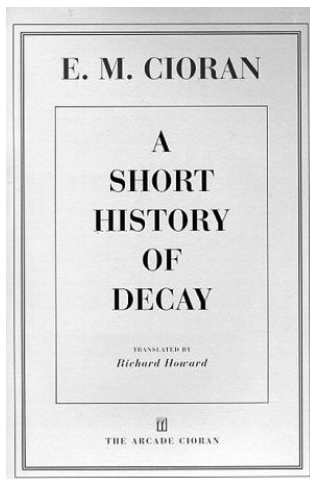


**Exitum**

**“of marble  
is the  
stone, and  
putrified  
ther he  
lies.”**













<https://institution-of-rot.org/treatment-with-storage/>