

**EBM:** Ella Bergmann-Michel / Electronic Body Music

**Job Corps:** A programme run by the United States Department of Labour that offers free-of-charge education and vocational training to young people aged 16 to 24. Job Corps was founded in 1964.

**Kombucha:** A slightly sweet fermented tea that contains natural probiotics and is thought to be good for the digestive system.

**The New Frankfurt:** An affordable public housing programme that operated in Frankfurt, Germany between 1925 and 1930 / An alliance of artists and architects was involved in the project, including Ella Bergmann-Michel / The name of a magazine that documented the project.

**The League of Independent Film:** A group who organised critical lectures and screenings of experimental documentary film. The league was co-run in Frankfurt by Ella Bergmann-Michel

**SCOBY:** Symbiotic colony of bacteria and yeast. Kombucha is made by adding a SCOBY to a batch of sugary tea and leaving it to ferment.

**Treatment:** A functional filmmaker's synopsis / A course of care for a patient.

**Women Artists of the North East Library:** A project bringing together the work of artists who identify as women and are in some way associated to the North East of England. Since October 2017, it has existed as a physical collection, an exhibition, a programme of events, a research project and a framework within which to work and invite others.

**Tess:** A few years ago I wanted to make a performance that had the same atmosphere as Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*, so I started writing - sort of automatic writing - while repeatedly watching the film, to see if somehow the spirit of Travis Bickle would get into my language or something. Since then I've been refining this approach to writing *with* rather than about films as a way of expressing how it feels to engage with particular movies, their atmospheres and what they are as an experience for a viewer. Having written a piece called *Absorb* with Kate Liston's film *Need Moisture*, she asked me to create a performance with *Treatment* during her 'Feel After the New See' exhibition at Hatton Gallery (2018); this is *Mutualism*, which I re-perform for the Women Artists of the North East screening at Tyneside.

**Kate:** I'm interested in the ways our actions can feel determined, or even scripted by outside forces. This is something I wanted to explore in my film *Treatment*, which uses text from the script I used to plan the film as a counterpoint to the action you see on screen.

It's this sense of scripting that I see in the films shown at Living Organism by Ella Bergmann-Michel and Joyce Wieland. Bergmann-Michel's *Where the Old People Live* closes with the synchronised goodbye waves of the retirement home's residents called to action by the unheard director. In Wieland's *Handtinting*, gestures are repeated through the cut and copy of film editing until they appear to be choreographed.

In *Treatment* a woman drinks kombucha, and engages with the SCOBY used to make it. I had been brewing kombucha for about a year before making the film, I bought my SCOBY from Amazon, I gave its offspring to friends living in the city, and posted one to a friend in Redcar. When I was brewing it I was also reading about probiotic strains that are made in labs and that are researched for the different effects they have on human behaviour. I read that bespoke probiotics are being made that are intended to produce desirable characteristics in the person taking them. Homemade kombucha contains unknowable probiotic strains - perhaps these might allow the person drinking them to access different ways of being, acting and desiring?

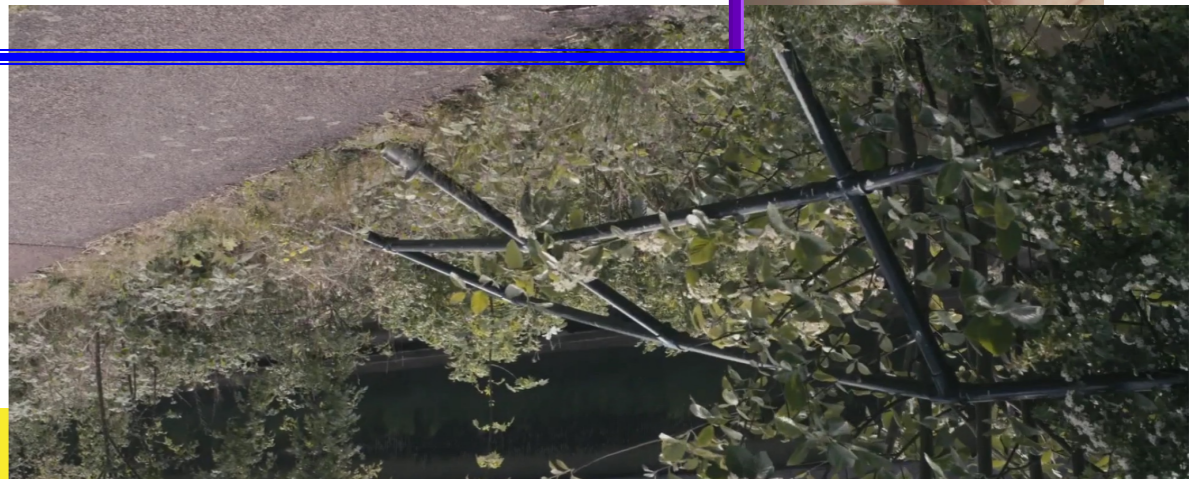
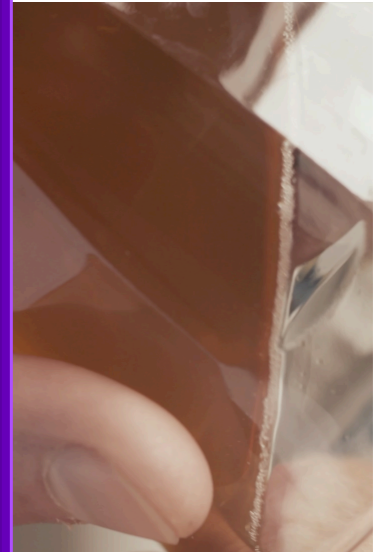
**Holly:** I saw Sneha Solanki's Kombucha growing in a glass tank in Sophie Buxton's house in Whitley Bay a few weeks ago. It reminded me of the SCOBY in Kate Liston's film 'Treatment'. Why would you ever want to put that thing on your face?

I thought I'd give it ago. Not on my face, but drinking it.

It wasn't what I expected; I thought it would be a bit fizzy, more acidic on the tongue.

Sneha's SCOBY grows tentacles; it's mature like that. They grow downwards into the tank filling it up with a mass of membrane, morphing into a type of jellyfish. I'm not sure if it's the 'mother' SCOBY or a new SCOBY and frankly, I don't really know much about Kombucha or have a desire to drink anymore of it, but Sneha's 'continuous brew system' made me think about ways we could provide an environment to support a living organism: an archive, a library or a creative practice. You have to care for it and feed it, do so correctly and the collection of organisms can make something golden.

Okay, the Kombucha analogy is a little far-fetched but the Women Artists of the North East Library does host a number of women's practices, it's living and it's growing.



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North

