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Polly II Film Screening 1

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URL:

www.supernumeraries.org

Saturday the 29th & Sunday the 30th of April at the Whitechapel Project Space, 20 Fordham Street, London E1 1HS - every hour on the hour from 1pm-5pm.

Set in the not-so-distant future POLLY II - part satirical sci-fi, part soap opera and Brechtian Lehrstueck - portrays the lives of pirates and outcasts surviving in the flooded ruins of East London, a lawless zone set to become the latest in luxury waterside living according to government plans and venturing developers wet dreams.

The film imagines a future insurrection coloured by the legacy of dispossessed peasants, political radicals, whores, sailors, pirates, and former slaves whom once inhabited East London and fought a daily battle against their subjection to poverty, displacement and judicial terror.

Alluding to Polly (1728) - John Gay's censored sequel to the popular Beggar's Opera (1727), which resurrected the character of the robber, Macheath in the disguise of the African pirate captain Morano (scheming to take revenge on a colony in the West Indies) ñ POLLY II is populated by many of the characters made popular by Gay and Brecht. The film features the naïve and incorruptible Polly, the vengeful whore Jenny Diver, and the treacherous and greedy Peachum - fencer, thief-catcher and king of the beggars.

Beyond drawing on Gay and Brecht, the structure of the film's four main acts is conceived as an overt reference to Hogarth's satirical print series which chronicle the progress of stock characters from the London under-classes from poverty and petty crime towards their death on the gallows. However, the course of Hogarthian progress is turned on its head in each scene of POLLY II, instead depicting the possibilities of a process where power is seized by the powerless and the outlaws appropriate law.

The production of POLLY II has been funded by Arts Council England, and was realized with a large cast of predominantly amateur actors from East London, whose backgrounds range from TV drama to training with Anna Scher. The film was shot by Nick Gordon-Smith, who is himself a filmmaker and also Director of Photography to Andrew Koetting (Gallivant, This Filthy Earth).

I am indebted to the work of Peter Linebaugh & Marcus Rediker & The London Particular whose writing on piracy & East London has inspired me greatly.