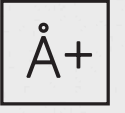


I, The Shill
Benjamin Slinger



I, The Shill

I do not want to be a radical. I want to be a shill for oligarchs and billionaires.

The shill appears as the satisfied customer. The friendly voice already seated in the audience. The figure who demonstrates comfort before the rest of the room has decided how to feel. Through this performance of enthusiasm, uncertainty dissolves. Taste stabilises. Participation becomes easier. The shill has many disguises.

The Shillaber is the planted enthusiast. A professional amateur whose job is to make belief contagious. By appearing independent, the shillaber softens the butter of suspicion and invites the crowd to follow.

The Judas goat performs a similar labour. In slaughterhouses the goat leads cattle toward the kill floor. The animal survives by guiding others forward. The Judas goat is not the violence itself but its facilitator. It demonstrates the path.

The court jester historically occupied the only position permitted to mock the sovereign. The jester's criticism survives because it is theatrical, disarmed by humour. Power tolerates dissent when dissent remains entertaining. The soldier performs obedience as virtue. The body becomes a symbol through uniform and repetition. Patriotism operates not only through force but through the choreography of collective agreement.

The moderate provides the language of balance. The moderate insists on civility, stability, and reasonableness. In doing so the moderate narrows the field of possible positions. Extremes are rejected, but so too is structural refusal.

The dealer arranges the encounter between object and desire. Their labour is not simply commercial but atmospheric. They produce the conditions under which value becomes visible and acceptable.

Finally there is the artist.

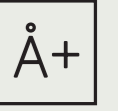
The artist is permitted to be critical, provided criticism remains legible within the structures that contain it. The artist metabolises conflict into taste. War, ideology and spectacle become material. The result is protest that remains palatable, dissent that circulates comfortably among collectors, institutions and patrons. The artist sells the state-sanctioned war by critiquing the state tastefully, performed through canon. The dissent is genuine. The structure remains intact.

Each of these figures performs a similar task. They guide perception. They stage belief. They produce the small gestures that allow systems of power to appear natural, inevitable, even desirable. The semiotic charge of this labour is rarely declared. It accumulates in objects, in gestures, in rooms arranged just so.

This exhibition considers the metabolism of taste. If culture digests violence, what remains after digestion. What cultural chunks remain visible in our vomit.

The shill does not hide their role.

The shill is already in the room.



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George Bush, 2026
1992 George H. W. Bush election T-shirt, vinyl, stretcher.
70 x 60 cm
27 1/2 x 23 5/8 in



Anonymous, 2026
Desert Storm T-shirt, vinyl, stretcher.
70 x 60 cm
27 1/2 x 23 5/8 in



Wassily Kandinsky, 2026
Distressed 1970s Marcel Breuer 'Wassily' chairs, Desert Storm bomber jacket, hook, Lehman Brothers cap,
goat hide rug.

Jane Birkin
Leather bag, Gulf War/Iraq War/Afghanistan War-era trinkets.

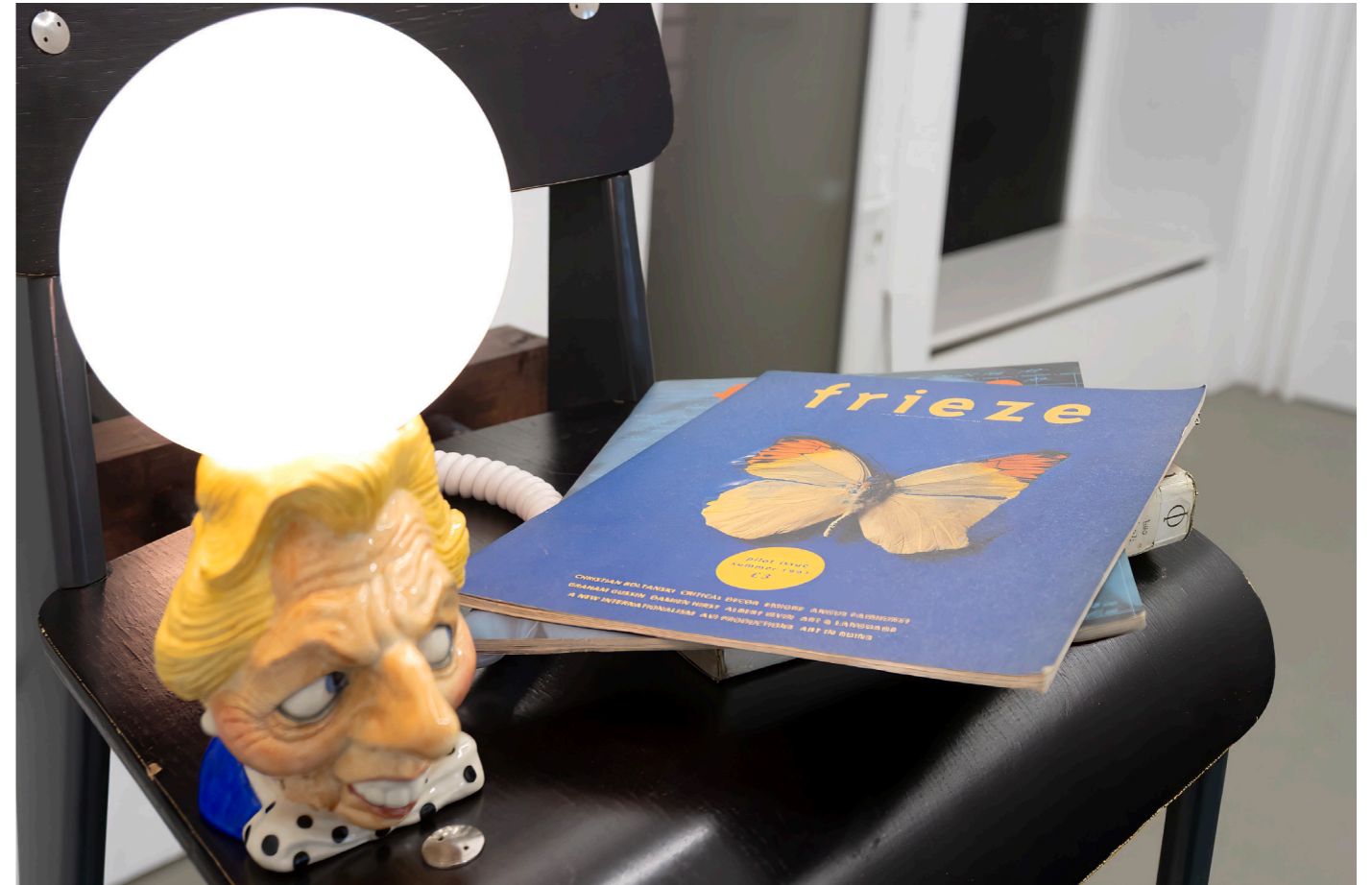
Nicolas Ghesquière
Leather bag, Desert Storm/Iraq War patches, Desert Storm T-shirt, wooden beads, custom beadwork F-15
fighter jet.

280 x 280 x 200 cm
110 1/4 x 110 1/4 x 78 3/4 in





Jean Prouvé, 2026
Jean Prouvé 'Standard' chairs, Financial Times mug, Spitting Image character mug, coiled cable,
Conceptual Art by Tony Godfrey stolen from Leeds College of Art, Issue 0, 2 Frieze, Issues 3, 43, 51, Texte
Zur Kunst, speaker stand, pine.
115 x 90 x 180 cm
45 1/4 x 35 3/8 x 70 7/8 in



Awe I-XV, 2024-2026

Desert Storm/Desert Storm Pro Set trading cards, Defence Intelligence Agency playing cards, beech dowel, nylon fletching cord, ABS nock, stain, vinyl, transfer scale model decals.

80 x 180 x 93 cm

31 1/2 x 70 7/8 x 36 5/8 in





Benjamin Slinger

*1990 Sheffield

lives and works in London

Benjamin Slinger is a Northern-born visual artist whose interdisciplinary practice unravels social, economic, and cultural systems through the lens of semiotics and material histories. Their work engages with the embedded dogma within cultural artefacts, drawing attention to the subtle mechanisms of power and meaning production.

Science fiction and fantasy function not only as aesthetic reference points but as methodological tools, frameworks through which mass culture, the ascendancy of populism, and class stratification in popular media are explored and deconstructed. These speculative genres offer a productive space for reimagining cultural narratives and ideological formations without defaulting to a clean resolution or didacticism.

Design histories and cultural artefacts are situated as active agents within this inquiry, revealing the ways in which they interface with hegemonic structures and ideological discourses. Rather than treating objects as static, Slinger's work foregrounds their performativity and the semiotic charge they carry within specific historical and material contexts often in a manner that overloads and drowns an objects immediate presence.

Through sculpture, painting, and writing, Slinger examines the social implications of materiality, exposing biases of both the authorial and institutional that underpin the production and reception of art. Their practice ultimately invites a reconsideration of the cultural logics that shape visibility, value, and authority in the contemporary moment.

Education

Leeds College of Art - Foundation, 2009

Goldsmiths University of London - BFA, 2013

School of The Damned - Alternative MA, 2015

Exhibitions (selected)

I, The Shill, Åplus Berlin, 2025

LOVE, Season 4 Episode 6, London 2025

Dungeon Inc., Darren Flook, London 2023

A Tall Order, Touchstones Rochdale, Rochdale, 2023

Souvenir, Bye Bye Gallery, London, 2022

Within Reach, Sid Motion Gallery, London, 2022

A Medieval Choreography, Galerie Karin Guenther, Hamburg, 2021

Strawberry Hill, The Orange Garden, London, 2020

The Proletariat Book Club : Name Drops Keep Fallin' On My Head, Becky's, London 2019

Docile Bodies, Vitrine Gallery, London, 2018

From The Island of Truffles to the Kingdom of Misunderstandings, HA HA Gallery, Southampton, 2017

A Vanitas Painting, SERF, Leeds, 2017

An Endless Futurist Dream ; Only in Daylight Do We See The Real Terror, LARA, London, 2017

Closest Thing to Wearing Nothing, M.I/mi1glisse, Berlin, 2016

Trace Programme, Aspirational Living, Nottingham, 2016

A British Art Show, Meyohas, New York, 2015

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