

## Piper Keys Exhibitions

Chris Evans

### *Untitled (Drippy Etiquette)*

18th October to 23rd November

Opening view: Friday 17th October, 6 to 9pm

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From: Chris Evans with Massimiliano Mollona, Dexter Sinister & Marina Vishmidt

To: Richard Bagley & the staff of Morning Star

In 1987, first-year University student Chris Evans wrote a letter to *Morning Star* newspaper, a tabloid-format socialist daily founded in 1930 as *Daily Worker* and published continuously since. The letter suggested — somewhat simplistically — that the paper's editors had misread the relationship between class and form, or otherwise underestimated its importance. Evans offered to help re-design *Morning Star*, suggesting that by reconsidering the way the paper looks, it might usefully reposition itself in relation to its audience, both existing and prospective. That this might be done through the newspaper's design was indicative of the times, i.e., the era of the young upwardly mobile, and a boom period for marketing 'designer' culture and PR. Evans received no reply.

On 16 November 2011, *Morning Star* began a direct campaign appealing for funds to save the newspaper, with then-editor Bill Benfield announcing that the 80-plus-year-old organ was in danger of going bankrupt. Evans wrote to the paper again — 25 years on — once more offering design services, now together with an assembled team of consultants that included graphic designers, a writer and an anthropologist. This time Evans got a reply and an initial meeting at *Morning Star's* London office was scheduled. The paper was interested in the prospect of this pro-bono design advice and suggested that the consultant team should proceed and outline its approach in due course.

Now, on 4 September 2013, that course has gone considerably off-course. Evans had approached The Showroom, an independent art organization, to host a series of workshops in order to develop the project. In turn, The Showroom secured funding through a collaborative group of small art institutions organised under the rubric 'How to work together'. The group then produced the requisite public relations material to describe what it would be doing and why it would be doing it. The project was given a name, 'Morning Star Rebranded', along with a brief description. All of this eventually appeared on the internet, framed within the 'How to work together' website. On seeing the announcement, *Morning Star* staff threw up a number of concerns regarding the structure of the funding, the timeframe and the appearance of the newspaper in promotional material. These were seen as an uncomfortable fit with the newspaper's political position.

Consequently, a public event intended to launch the project at The Showroom on Thursday 5 September 2013 was CANCELLED. In its place, the group has imagined a set of questions and answers that might clarify its motives.

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'Is that The Sun or the Morning Star', framed airbrush painting to accompany 'Open Letter to Morning Star' (2013); scorched larch pole to width of gallery, concrete (2014).

'Open Letter to Morning Star' full text available on request at the gallery and at [http://www.piperkeys.com/open\\_letter\\_to\\_morning\\_star.pdf](http://www.piperkeys.com/open_letter_to_morning_star.pdf)

Chris Evans lives and works in London. His work is currently exhibited as part of *A Needle Walks into a Haystack*, Liverpool Biennial, *Regenerate Art*, Kunstverein München, and *Les Mots Bleus*, as part of Biennale de Belleville 3, Paris. Recent exhibitions include *CLODS*, *Diplomatic Letters*, The Gardens, Vilnius (solo, 2014), *Bourgeois Leftovers*, De Appel, Amsterdam (2013), and *Specific Collisions II*, Marianne Boesky Uptown, New York (2013). He has a forthcoming solo exhibition, *Clerk of Mind*, at Project Arts Centre, Dublin (2014). His work is represented by Juliette Jongma, Amsterdam, and Lüttgenmeijer, Berlin, and a monograph, *Goofy Audit*, was published by Sternberg & Westreich/Wagner Publications in 2011.

Piper Keys is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

Gallery opening hours 12noon to 6pm, Friday to Sunday

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