

DEMO KHAT

CLAIRE MAKHLOUF CARTER

with additional texts by

RACHEL COCKBURN

NIK JAFFE

MARK LEWIS

BRIDGET PENNEY

DEMO KHAT

CLAIRE MAKHLOUF CARTER

with additional texts by

RACHEL COCKBURN

NIK JAFFE

MARK LEWIS

BRIDGET PENNEY

INVISIBLE BOOKS

published in November 2015

Invisible Books
Unit 8, 15-26 Lincoln Cottage Works,
Lincoln Cottages, Brighton BN2 9UJ
www.invisiblebooks.co.uk

Copyright © 2015 the individual authors
All rights reserved.

ISBN 978 0 9532826 6 1

edited by Bridget Penney
designed inhouse using Scribus
'open source desktop publishing'

invisible books logo by Woodrow Phoenix

DEMO KHAT

by

Claire Makhoulf Carter

Performance Event
20th March 2014

DIG
87 Old Road
London
SE13 5SU

Pre-event script no.7

DEMO KHAT was performed at 8pm on 20th March 2014
@ DIG, Private Residence, 87 Old Road, London, SE13 5SU.
It was part of an event devised by Claire Makhoul Carter,
Mark Lewis and Nik Jaffe.

DEMO KHAT was written in response to Hélène Martin's
invitation to collaborate in a performance event at Café Curio,
Camden Arts Centre, London on 20th February 2013.

DEMO KHAT SYMPOSIUM was performed at the Institutional
Loser Symposium. The Institutional Loser Symposium was
devised by Rachel Cockburn and held in a North London
Private Residence on Thursday 7th November 2013.

Specialist consultant and presenter's assistant:

Mustafa K. Mohamed

Presenter: Rachel Cockburn

Khat chewers, suppliers and mafrish consultants:

J.C., Mustafa K. Mohamed

Presenter's assistant at Camden Arts Centre: Nadia Visram

Journalist: Howard Swains

Thanks to everyone who has been involved in the three
performances of DEMO KHAT. Special thanks to
Mustafa K. Mohamed for his generous help with the project
and patiently answering so many questions. Thanks also to
Howard Swains for his help with research in the early stages
of the project and J.C. for his involvement and insightful
conversation at Camden Arts Centre.

**IN ADVANCE
OF THE EVENT** ARTIST TO DEVISE A TEN MINUTE PAPER ON KHAT CHEWING. ARTIST TO BASE PRESENTATION ON DEMONSTRATIONS OF ORAL ACTIVITY AND LABOUR RELATIONS. ARTIST TO KEEP THE CONTENTS OF HER WORK CONFIDENTIAL.

ARTIST TO CONTACT JOURNALISTS AND ACADEMICS WHO HAVE WRITTEN ON THE SUBJECT OF KHAT CHEWING AND ASK FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE IN BUYING KHAT. ARTIST TO KEEP ALL CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE JOURNALISTS, KHAT CHEWERS AND ACADEMICS AND REDACT ANY SENSITIVE DATA SUCH AS NAMES AND ADDRESSES.

ARTIST TO BUY: 30 BUNDLES OF KHAT, 40 GREEN TEA BAGS, 1 KG PACKET OF GRANULATED SUGAR, 20 CANS CONTAINING SWEET FIZZY DRINK, 20 DISPOSABLE CUPS WITH LIDS PLUS STIRRERS AND CUP CLUTCHES, 1 BOX OF TISSUES, 1 ROLL OF STICKY TAPE.

ARTIST TO SOURCE: 1 OPENED BOTTLE OF MOONSHINE, 20 SECOND-HAND MISMATCHED CHAIRS, 1 SQUARE TABLE, 1 RECTANGLE TABLE, 1 DESK CHAIR, 1 EXTENSION LEAD, 1 MICROPHONE, 1 MICROPHONE TABLE STAND, 1 AMP, 2 SPEAKERS. 1 WATER BOILER/KETTLE, CASH BOX AND FLOAT. 1 PLAIN PLASTIC BLUE BAG, 1 SMALL RUBBISH BIN, 1 COOLER BAG, 3 FROZEN ICE PACKS, 1 LARGE SUITCASE.

**DAY BEFORE
THE EVENT** ARTIST TO MAKE 2 POSTERS ON A4 PAPER AND PRINT OUT. FIRST POSTER TO READ: '2 TOKENS: CHOICE OF SWEET TEA OR FIZZY DRINK AND 1 BUNDLE OF KHAT'.

SECOND POSTER TO READ: 'ONCE YOU PAY FOR YOUR KHAT THERE WILL BE NO REFUND OR EXCHANGE'.

ARTIST TO ORGANISE THE FLOAT IN THE CASH BOX. ARTIST TO PLACE IN THE COOLER BAG: 3 ICE PACKS AND 20 CANS CONTAINING SWEET FIZZY DRINK.

ARTIST TO PLACE IN A SUITCASE: CASH BOX WITH FLOAT, COOLER BAG, 20 GREEN TEA BAGS, 1 KG PACKET OF GRANULATED SUGAR, 1 BOTTLE OF MOONSHINE, 20 DISPOSABLE CUPS WITH LIDS PLUS STIRRERS AND CUP CLUTCHES, 1 BOX OF TISSUES, 1 ROLL OF STICKY TAPE, 2 POSTERS, SMALL RUBBISH BIN AND BLUE PLASTIC BAG. ARTIST TO PLACE THREE DOCUMENTS IN HER HANDBAG: 'DEMO KHAT' SCRIPT, INSTRUCTIONS ON 'HOW TO CHEW KHAT' AND CRUMPLED 'NOTES FOR PRESENTER'.

INSTALLATION OF THE EVENT

ARTIST TO IMAGINE A NOTIONAL STAGE WHERE THE PERFORMANCE WILL TAKE PLACE AND A NOTIONAL OFFSTAGE AREA CLOSE ENOUGH TO SHIFT EASILY EQUIPMENT OFF STAGE.

ARTIST TO IMAGINE AN AUDITORIUM WHERE THE VISITORS WILL SIT.

ARTIST TO SET UP THE 20 MISMATCHED CHAIRS IN THE AUDITORIUM TO FACE 1 TABLE AND 1 CHAIR. CHAIRS TO BE ARRANGED IN ROWS WITH AN AISLE DOWN THE MIDDLE IN A FORMAL SET UP RESEMBLING A PEDAGOGIC OR SERMON SITUATION.

ARTIST TO MOVE THE RECTANGLE TABLE TO THE STAGE AREA, AND THE SQUARE TABLE TO THE OFFSTAGE AREA.

ARTIST TO SIT KETTLE ON THE SQUARE TABLE.
ARTIST TO FILL KETTLE WITH WATER AND PLUG
IN.

ARTIST TO MOVE AMP AND SPEAKERS ONSTAGE. TO
PLACE THE AMP AND SPEAKERS EITHER SIDE OF
THE RECTANGLE TABLE AND CONNECT TO THE MIC.

**EVENING OF
THE EVENT**

FOR THIS EVENT, ARTIST **CLAIRE** TO MEET
PRESENTER **RACHEL** AND KHAT CHEWERS **MUSTAFA**
AND **J.C.**, AT ELEPHANT AND CASTLE STATION
ONE HOUR BEFORE EVENT BEGINS. CLAIRE TO BUY
30 BUNDLES OF KHAT AND TRAVEL BACK TO VENUE,
ACCOMPANIED BY RACHEL AND MUSTAFA.

**TIME OF THE
PERFORMANCE**

CLAIRE WHEELS SUITCASE TO THE SIDE OF THE
CHAIR. MOVES BIN AND PLACES IT IN FRONT AND
TO THE SIDE OF TABLE. RACHEL SITS DOWN ON
THE CHAIR AND ADJUSTS THE CHAIR, TABLE AND
MIC SO IT IS COMFORTABLE. MEANWHILE CLAIRE
OPENS SUITCASE AND TAKES OUT GREEN TEA BAGS,
SUGAR, DISPOSABLE CUPS, LIDS, STIRRERS AND
CUP CLUTCHES, BOX OF TISSUES AND CASH BOX.
SHE PLACES ITEMS NOISILY IN NO PARTICULAR
ORDER ON THE TABLE.

CLAIRE OPENS COOLER BAG AND PLACES KHAT AND
FIZZY DRINKS ON THE TABLE ALONGSIDE THE
OTHER ITEMS. CLAIRE LINES THE SMALL RUBBISH
BIN WITH PLASTIC BLUE BAG. CLAIRE PLACES
HER HANDBAG ADJACENT TO THE TABLE.

ONCE EVERYTHING IS SET UP CLAIRE REJOINS
THE VISITORS.

IF VISITORS HAVEN'T SETTLED

RACHEL: Can I have your attention please. Please take a seat.

ONCE VISITORS HAVE SETTLED RACHEL TAKES HER SCRIPT FROM THE HANDBAG AND BEGINS TO READ

RACHEL: Four weeks ago Claire contacted me requesting I introduce this performance. Claire informed me it was an event organised by the University of London.

RACHEL LOOKS AT VISITORS

RACHEL: In exchange for my contribution I
(serious) expected to be able to add to my CV that
MEMORISE I had given a presentation at the University of London. However three days ago Claire informed me the event would be based at a private residence possibly a squat and it wasn't at Goldsmith's or organised by them. I was also expecting travel expenses to be paid, but no money has been offered.

RACHEL LOOKS UP AT VISITORS, LOCATES CLAIRE AND GIVES HER A LONG STARE.

RACHEL LOOKS BACK AT HER SCRIPT

RACHEL: Claire also asked me to introduce J.C. who has agreed to demonstrate khat chewing.

RACHEL LOOKS UP AT VISITORS

RACHEL: J.C. has not shown up, understandably
MEMORISE perhaps.

RACHEL LOOKS BACK AT HER SCRIPT

RACHEL: Although khat is not prohibited by the Koran, some khat chewers are shy of being identified. The location of a khat house or mafrish, as it is known, is closely guarded by users.

An estimated 20 million people globally use khat on a daily basis. Khat is grown and consumed in parts of north east Africa and the Middle East where khat chewing has a long history dating back thousands of years as a social custom which stimulates conversation. Between 50 and 60 tonnes a week are imported into the UK to meet demand among predominantly Ethiopian, Kenyan, Somali, Yemeni and other immigrant communities.

RACHEL PAUSES. RACHEL WITH DISAPPROVING EXPRESSION LOOKS AT CLAIRE

RACHEL: Claire arranged to meet myself and Mustafa
(casual) earlier this evening as she thought this
MEMORISE off-site space might be difficult to find. We arranged to meet at Elephant and Castle station. We waited for Mustafa to arrive as he was delivering the khat bundles. There was an exchange of money and goods but I noted there was not much conversation between Claire and Mustafa.

I invited Mustafa to join us tonight. During the train journey I chatted with Mustafa about the information in this

script. Mustafa rejects the labelling of khat as a drug. He regards it as a foodstuff used for social and cultural activities. He describes khat as a conversation starter and adds it is also used by night workers wishing to stay awake and alert.

Mustafa disagrees with Claire's statement regarding the background of khat chewers. His work as a driver delivering fresh khat in the very short time-frame it remains effective after its arrival at Heathrow brings him into contact with a wide range of customers. He informed me khat is actually chewed by people from a diverse range of ethnicities including Dutch, French, Polish and American. Students and people in many different kinds of jobs consume it on a regular or occasional basis. Mustafa thinks that the consumption of khat in the mafrish helps extend social networks to the wider community.

RACHEL LOOKS BACK DOWN AT SCRIPT

RACHEL: Khat is prohibited in many countries, including the USA and several within the EU and EEA. In Canada the law on khat is confusing and in Australia it varies from state to state. In January 2013, khat was made illegal in the Netherlands. It is in the process of becoming illegal in the UK.

RACHEL PAUSES

RACHEL: There is no published data on khat consumption in the USA from before or after legislation and no research has been carried out on attitudes in immigrant communities towards khat. This makes it hard to establish exactly what the effect of criminalising khat has been. Certainly the price has risen. A bundle of fresh khat that costs £3 in London would sell for ten times that amount in the USA.

RACHEL ARRANGES THE KHAT BUNDLES IN A NEATER DISPLAY

RACHEL: The US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) officials state that khat is 'low on their radar' although seizures appear to be rising: 40 tonnes of khat were seized in 2006, 33 tonnes in 2007 and 74 tonnes in 2008. In July 2006 the DEA busted the first substantial khat-trafficking ring in the U.S. in what was termed 'Operation Somalia Express'. This resulted in 44 arrests in connection with importing 23 tonnes of khat. Three people were convicted with two receiving custodial sentences of 21 months and the third a sentence of 12 months. The head of New York's FBI office then expressed concern that khat profits were being used to fund terrorists associated with the organisation Al-Qaeda.

In 'Black Hawk Down', the 2001 Ridley Scott movie about the U.S.'s military

raid in Mogadishu, khat featured as the substance that stimulated the Somali warlords' militias to commit atrocities. Reporting about khat in the U.S. media often associates it with conflicts in Africa and the Middle East and links it with the supposed funding of terrorism but there is no evidence to support this.

Salafi-jihadist groups take a rigorous stance against khat, considering it haram, or forbidden. Actually it was the militias of Al-Shabab, allied to Al-Qaeda, who banned khat from most regions in southern Somalia, expelled the khat traders and publicly humiliated and attacked khat chewers.

RACHEL GAZES DIRECTLY AT ONE OR TWO VISITORS

RACHEL: Dr Axel Klein, Lecturer in the Anthropology of Conflict, Criminal Justice and Policy at the University of Kent, has studied the global khat trade and the social consequences of khat use for more than a decade. He refutes the assertion that khat imports support terrorists, stating there is no evidence of any links.

The UK media often portray khat use as a drug problem and identify it as a root cause of many of the problems affecting immigrant communities. Such reporting doesn't acknowledge the

very diverse nature of these communities and totally fails to address complex issues of poverty, health, discrimination, housing and unemployment alongside the traumas resulting from war and displacement which continue to affect some individuals long after their arrival in the UK.

The UK Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) report, completed in January 2013, touches on Stanley Cohen's concept of a moral panic i.e. 'when a condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests'. The UK government is conveniently utilising media hysteria and scapegoating khat as the cause of perceived immigration and refugee issues. This means the real problems faced by immigrant and refugee communities remain unacknowledged and subsequently khat chewers are silenced in fear of being stigmatised.

RACHEL PAUSES, MOVING HER HEAD TO THE SIDE AS IF TO RELIEVE TENSION

RACHEL: The ACMD report stated there was 'insufficient evidence' that khat caused health problems, and there was 'no evidence' khat was directly linked with serious or organised crime, or that the consumption of khat was responsible for social problems such as laziness or

unemployment. As the studies regarding khat's social harms have mainly been concerned with the Somali population, the ACMD report recommended that the government should concentrate on the social and economic difficulties facing the UK Somali communities and concludes: 'To suggest that khat use by a minority of BME groups is a direct cause of the many obstacles and concerning problems...would be a simplistic and incorrect view'.

Why is the UK government disregarding the ACMD's findings? Why ban khat now? What has changed?

RACHEL PULLS OUT THE CRUMPLED NOTES FROM THE HANDBAG AND LOOKS AT MUSTAFA SITUATED AMONG THE VISITORS. RACHEL READS FROM THE CRUMPLED NOTES

RACHEL: Mustafa suggests that the British government has taken the decision to ban khat because it wants to conform to pressure from North America and the EU. The government's narrative - that failure to take decisive action and change the UK's legislative position would place the UK at serious risk of becoming the main hub for the illegal onward trafficking of khat - is alarming and misinforms the public. At the moment khat is legally imported and liable to VAT in the UK. Based on VAT data collected by HMRC we can conclude that there has been a fall of around ten

percent in khat imports since 2005.

RACHEL LOOKS BACK DOWN AT SCRIPT

RACHEL: A few local complaints have been reported about the perceived nuisance outside the mafrish, alongside concern that, mainly due to poor ventilation and cigarette smoking, its environment does not meet health and safety standards. Instances of perceived disorder include littering, the act of chewing and spitting in public, reports that men have been seen 'staggering away from cafés' or 'urinating in public'.

Directly addressing these concerns, Brent Council's 2012 study of khat use concludes that the behaviour local people identify as antisocial and originating from the mafrish often comes from other sources. No data on the number of mafrishyo exists but that there are not more complaints suggests the majority cause no problem for their neighbours. The ACMD report concludes that any issues are best resolved through community initiatives or under existing byelaws and cites examples where this approach has been successful.

RACHEL SURVEYING AUDIENCE

RACHEL: Klein argues that the real agenda is that
MEMORISE khat is chewed by a very marginal group of immigrants and points out that 'The

wholesale criminalisation of a cultural practice will only serve to intensify the very problem that community leaders are seeking to address'.

We also have to consider the timing of this ban in conjunction with the looming general election, and that standing up for immigration is seen by many politicians as political suicide.

RACHEL PAUSES

RACHEL: The Coalition government's response to immigration has been to pacify public wariness with increasingly authoritarian, highly visible exercises, characterised by Dave Garratt of Refugee Action as a '"hostile environment" crusade'. These include UK Border Agency spot checks targeting non-white people at London Tube stations and the tweeting of pixelated photos of those arrested under the hashtag #immigrationoffender. In July 2013, a pilot scheme saw billboard vans displaying huge posters 'In the UK illegally? Go home or face arrest.' dispatched around six London boroughs. Immigration Minister Mark Harper said: 'If it works effectively in increasing the number of illegal immigrants who comply with the law and leave Britain, we would want to extend it'.

RACHEL GLANCES UP

RACHEL: Stop & Search is one power police can use to identify and search people they think may be carrying illegal substances. If khat is made illegal, incidences of stop and search with the police targeting particular BME groups are likely to rise.

It appears the government wants to be seen to be tough on immigrants while at the same time gratifying those voices within the immigrant communities who have called for khat to be banned.

The Home Secretary, Theresa May's proposed classification of khat as a class C drug is expected to go through later this year.

RACHEL LOOKING AT CLAIRE

RACHEL: Mustafa believes it won't succeed.
MEMORISE

RACHEL GAZES AT MUSTAFA

RACHEL: 50, 50 Percent chance?

RACHEL PICKS UP THE CRUMPLED PIECE OF PAPER
AND READS

RACHEL: Mustafa states the government makes a large revenue by taxing khat imports. In addition to the VAT collected by HMRC, (£2.8 million in 2011/12) traders pay the government £300.00 for an annual personal licence and then there is a premises licence for the mafrish too.

RACHEL SCANS THE ROOM AND RELOCATES MUSTAFA

RACHEL: How much is that Mustafa?

MUSTAFA: £300.00

RACHEL PAUSES AND LOOKS UP

RACHEL: So let's give a big BOO to Theresa May
(raises voice on boo) for proposing this unnecessary law.
If the contemporary notion of the immigrant has developed into a figure who commits a criminal act we need to give a big BOO to Theresa May for attempting to close down the cultural links mafrishyo offer, and making khat an emblem of subcultural deviance. A big BOO to Theresa May for the unnecessary misrepresentation and criminalisation of specific communities and cultural activities. A big BOO to Theresa May for supporting the popular press in stimulating xenophobic attitudes.

To show our political resistance we are calling for khat chewing events to multiply from now on.

RACHEL GLARES AT CLAIRE

RACHEL: I suggested to Claire that I could
MEMORISE demonstrate the khat chewing myself for a £60.00 fee, but she pointed out 'if I was not already a khat chewer it would be unethical for me to be paid to learn the technique at her presentation'. She is paying me the minimum wage.

Claire did however suggest if I found a visitor to demonstrate this activity, she would pay me a finder's fee of £60.00.

RACHEL PICKS UP INSTRUCTIONS 'HOW TO CHEW KHAT'. RACHEL LOCATES CLAIRE AND GLARES AT HER

RACHEL: Claire's artistic practice often rejects
MEMORISE the complacency of shared experience
bringing labour relations to the fore as
a point of contention.

RACHEL LOOKS AROUND WILLING THE VISITORS TO PARTICIPATE

RACHEL: So if anyone would like to participate in
this alternative economic venture in
herbal stimulants, please come forward.

RACHEL SCANS SCRIPT AND QUICKLY ADDS

RACHEL: I am also instructed to inform you that
Claire views non-participation as a form
of participation.

CLAIRE GLANCES AT VISITORS ANXIOUSLY

RACHEL: Anyone? No? No one?

RACHEL LOOKS HOPEFUL

RACHEL: If more than one visitor comes forward I
can demand double money.

NOTE FOR PRESENTER.

There are two possible outcomes concerning the khat chewing demonstration.

Presenter should be prepared for either version.

IF NO VISITOR COMES FORWARD, read VERSION A.

IF VISITOR COMES FORWARD to demonstrate, read VERSION B.

Please Note: A visitor who volunteers to demonstrate khat chewing becomes a 'demonstrator'.

VERSION A

Okay, as I planned in the absence of any demonstrator I'll read the instructions for chewing khat. I have been instructed to point out that khat has a bitter aftertaste and therefore it is usually accompanied with sweet tea or fizzy drinks.

PRESENTER PICKS UP INSTRUCTION SHEET 'VERSION A' AND READS

How to Chew Khat in 19 Steps.

1. Buy a cup of sweet tea, or a can of fizzy drink.

PRESENTER TAKES ONE TOKEN FROM POCKET AND SLAPS IT ON TABLE
THEN OPENS A CAN OF FIZZY DRINK

2. Choose a succulent looking bundle of khat.

PRESENTER CHOOSES A FRESH BUNDLE OF KHAT

3. Pay for your khat.

PRESENTER TAKES A TOKEN FROM POCKET AND SLAPS IT ON THE TABLE

4. Pull a few stalks from the bundle.

PRESENTER PULLS A FEW STALKS FROM THE BUNDLE

5. Strip a few tender leaves and place in mouth.
Begin chewing.

PRESENTER GLARES AT VISITORS AND LEAVES KHAT ON THE TABLE

6. Strip a load more leaves and stuff into mouth.
And a few more.
7. Taste the bitterness.
8. Feel your mouth filling with saliva.
9. Do not swallow the leaves. It is not dangerous
but will limit the effects.
10. Absorb the juices.
11. Strip some more leaves and add to the wad in mouth.
12. Continue adding leaves making an accumulated wad.
13. Chew the leaves more to make soft.
14. Absorb the juices.
15. If you wish to talk to someone send the mashed
up wad of leaves to your cheek.
16. If you wish to refresh, spit the wad into the bin.

PRESENTER PICKS UP BIN AND SPITS INTO IT

17. Wipe mouth with tissue and take a gulp of sweet
drink.

PRESENTER WIPES HER MOUTH WITH TISSUE AND TAKES A GULP OF DRINK

18. Continue conversations drinking sweet liquid to
remove the bitter aftertaste as required.

PRESENTER TAKES A GULP OF DRINK WHILE LOOKING AT VISITORS WITH
ANTICIPATION

19. Repeat the process.

TURN TO PAGE 20

VERSION B

Thanks for offering to demonstrate. I'll read the instructions for chewing khat now with the help of a demonstrator. I have been instructed to point out that khat has a bitter aftertaste and therefore it is usually accompanied with sweet tea or fizzy drinks.

PRESENTER PICKS UP INSTRUCTION SHEET 'VERSION B' AND READS

How to Chew Khat in 19 Steps.

1. Buy a cup of sweet tea, or a can of fizzy drink.

PRESENTER LOOKS EXPECTANTLY AT DEMONSTRATOR AND PAUSES. IF NO TOKEN IS FORTHCOMING PRESENTER TAKES ONE TOKEN FROM HER POCKET AND SLAPS IT ON THE TABLE, THEN HANDS DEMONSTRATOR A CAN OF FIZZY DRINK

2. Choose a succulent looking bundle of khat.

PRESENTER GESTURES TO DEMONSTRATOR TO PICK A FRESH BUNDLE OF KHAT

3. Pay for your khat.

PRESENTER LOOKS EXPECTANTLY AT VISITOR AND PAUSES. IF NO TOKEN IS FORTHCOMING, SHE TAKES A TOKEN FROM HER POCKET AND SLAPS IT ON THE TABLE

4. Pull a few stalks from the bundle.

PRESENTER WAITS FOR DEMONSTRATOR TO PULL A FEW STALKS FROM THE BUNDLE

5. Strip a few tender leaves and place in mouth.
Begin chewing.

PRESENTER WATCHES CHEWING ACTION

6. Strip a load more leaves and stuff into mouth.

PRESENTER COAXING THE DEMONSTRATOR

And a few more.

7. Taste the bitterness.

8. Feel your mouth filling with saliva.

9. Do not swallow the leaves. It is not dangerous but will limit the effects.

10. Absorb the juices.

11. Strip some more leaves and add to the wad in mouth.

12. Continue adding leaves making an accumulated wad.

13. Chew the leaves more to make soft.

14. Absorb the juices.

15. If you wish to talk to someone send the mashed up wad of leaves to your cheek.

16. If you wish to refresh, spit the wad into the bin.

PRESENTER PICKS UP BIN. OFFERS IT TO DEMONSTRATOR

17. Wipe mouth with tissue and take a gulp of sweet drink.

PRESENTER HANDS TISSUE TO DEMONSTRATOR

18. Continue conversations drinking sweet liquid to remove the bitter aftertaste as required.

PRESENTER LOOKS AT DEMONSTRATOR WITH ANTICIPATION

19. Repeat the process.

DEMONSTRATOR NOW HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN TO THEIR SEAT

TURN TO PAGE 20

RACHEL SCANS THE VISITORS WITH A FRIENDLY EXPRESSION. RACHEL LEAVES SCRIPT ON TABLE AND STANDS UP. RACHEL TAKES THE POSTERS AND STICKY TAPE OUT OF THE SUITCASE, AND STICKS THE TWO POSTERS TO THE WALL BEHIND THE TABLE

RACHEL TURNS TO THE VISITORS

RACHEL: To encourage conversation during this event I have been instructed to supply khat and sweet drinks for the duration of the evening as an alternative to the alcohol and coffee available... However, as I don't have a licence, I am going to be selling via a token system as I believe this is what the café and bar are doing.

RACHEL PICKS UP THE OPENED BOTTLE OF MOONSHINE AND LOOKS TOWARDS MARK AT THE BAR

RACHEL: Before I begin I want to add that Claire is offering this bottle of moonshine to Mark, who is the Bartender, for an exchange of eight tokens.

RACHEL READS FROM SCRIPT BUT HER GESTURES AND TONE INDICATE SHE IS IN BARTERING MODE

RACHEL: This moonshine is being produced at Harvest Homestead Farm in Pine Plains New York. This farm is situated on top of a sprawling network of interconnected tunnels and an underground concrete bunker. In 1932 federal agents uncovered the farm's bootlegging operation. In 1935 Dutch Schultz who was the financier and mastermind of the operation was shot down by his own syndicate. This

moonshine is reproduced exactly. It is smooth and clean, with just a slight roughness around the edges.

RACHEL LOOKS UP

RACHEL: What do you think Mark...do you accept
MEMORISE this moonshine for 8 tokens?

MARK: I'll take it for 7.

(loud)

RACHEL: Claire?

CLAIRE: Seven and a half.

(loud)

MARK: Okay...seven and a half.

RACHEL LOOKS UP AND LOCATES MUSTAFA

RACHEL: Mustafa would you like to help me with the
MEMORISE mafrish?....

MUSTAFA COMES TO STAGE AREA. RACHEL ARRANGES THE GOODS.

CLAIRE AND TWO PLANTS MOVE SEATS NEARER TO MAFRISH. RACHEL AND MUSTAFA SELL SWEET DRINKS AND KHAT FOR THE DURATION OF THE EVENT. ARTIST TO PAY CASH ON THE NIGHT: £50 TO INVITED KHAT CHEWERS AND £100 TO PRESENTER. CLAIRE TO KEEP ALL MONEY FROM THE SALE OF ITEMS.

AS DIG IS AN UNLICENSED PRIVATE RESIDENCE, PAYING BY TOKENS IS TECHNICALLY OFFERING A DONATION. THE MAFRISH, BAR AND CAFÉ MANIPULATE THE TOKEN PRICES OF THEIR GOODS IN ORDER TO COMPETE MORE EFFECTIVELY.

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT DEMO KHAT

(discounting Claire Makhoulouf Carter's time)

OUTGOINGS

ITEM	UNIT COST	QUANTITY	TOTAL COST
Bundles of Khat	£3.50	30	£105.00
Disposable cups with lids, clutches, stirrers	£0.75	20	£15.00
Box of 20 green tea bags	£1.89	2	£3.78
Fizzy drinks	£1.20	20	£24.00
1kg granulated white sugar	£1.98	1	£1.98
Box of tissues	£1.00	1	£1.00
Roll of sticky tape	£1.75	1	£1.75
Welcome gift to invited khat chewer	£50.00	1	£50.00
Presenter's fee	£100.00	1	£100.00
TOTAL			£302.51

INCOMINGS

ITEM	
Khat	
Tea	
Fizzy drinks	
Script	
TOTAL	

@DIG

20th March 2014

CLAIRE MAKHLOUF CARTER

RACHEL COCKBURN

NIK JAFFE

MARK LEWIS

BRIDGET PENNEY

PARTICIPANTS

@The Bar: Mark Lewis, Joseph Winter, the Etonian patron

@The Café: Max Davey, Anna de Courcy, Priscilla Fiszman, Nik Jaffe, Beth Locke, Paul Merron, Issy Wood

@The Mafrish: Claire Makhlouf Carter, Rachel Cockburn, Mustafa K. Mohamed

Hedvig Berglind, whose HD stereo 4:3 double channel video installation *Is modern the same as contemporary* (2014) was screened during the event

DJ K-Lone, who provided a live set via a weblink

Mathilde Carbel, who took photographs

and the visitors. The demonstrator who came forward on this occasion was Morris Wild.

The event was organised at DIG, 87 Old Road, Lewisham, London, SE13 5SU on 20th March 2014.
Josh Field was the host.

'DIG is a collective and non-profit arts initiative, dedicated to supporting and hosting experimental arts practices.' For many years the furniture depository of Chiesman's department store, more recently an auction house, 87 Old Road was used as a venue and studio space from October 2013 until 31/07/15. Currently the building is boarded up, awaiting development into 9 one-bedroom flats.

MARK LEWIS: AT THE BAR

The cocktail bar functions as a clean front - the first port of call for all participants. It is an exercise in charisma and lack thereof. The bartenders act like they know what is best for you. They behave as if they know exactly what they are doing whilst consistently failing at the most rudimentary tasks.

The bartenders are formally dressed. A closer look reveals that their suit jackets are made of a cheap synthetic material and that their shirts' collars have frayed, exposing the damp cardboard within. When one of the bartenders leaves the bar to get something from the fridge on the other side of the room, we can see he is wearing blue chinos and a pair of shabby white trainers.

The pink and blue lights installed in the bar bounce off its mirrored top into the surrounding space, visibly drawing people in. An Etonian patron props up the bar all night. He orders free drink after free drink, intermittently pausing to insult the other customers and mess with the various exotic fruits lying on the bar.

These fruits were bought from the market earlier in the day to function as props and signals for the two channel video work by Hedvig Berglind being screened opposite the bar. Bland talking heads deliver vague endorsements for a product that isn't there, as the camera pans across various exotic fruits; an advertisement for the place you are already in.

Drinks are poured in an overtly performative fashion, raising the bottle higher and higher above the glass to create a long, slow stream of spirit. Ice cubes are cut meticulously with a sharp knife before being dropped from a great height into the shakers. Lemons and limes are dried with a crisp tea-towel before being cut and squeezed assiduously between the tips of the bartender's forefinger and thumb. Cocktails are made up, named and mythologized on the spot. They are mostly wonderful, but due to the experimental nature of the service there is every chance that the occasional drink will be disgusting.

The bartenders are rude. They make snap judgements on the prices of the drinks based on each individual and on how they feel at the time. The queue becomes very long and people are starting to get impatient. This is not of any concern to the bartenders. They continue pouring the drinks just as slowly as ever and may even pause to converse with each other in hushed tones or to entertain the latest whim of the Etonian patron.

For ten minutes only, free drinks are offered at the bar. During this period the bartenders enter into a kind of super-slow-motion-mode and when the ten minutes are up, only one cocktail has been poured and handed out.

Khat is stolen from Claire's khat stand and re-sold at massively inflated prices. Powdered caffeine is bought with tokens at the coffee shop: the Etonian patron pours it unceremoniously onto the mirrored bar top and cuts it into lines.

As customers move away from the bar to explore the rest of the space, they may be feeling upset, insulted and ripped off but each one will be holding a delicious, unique and expertly prepared cocktail...probably.

NIK JAFFE: NEW BARISTA DIRECTIVE

The pace of service is set by the space we've got. The gangway towards which coffee is to be served can't accommodate more than a few customers at a time so fast delivery is a must.

We ensure this happens by having fresh espresso ready on the counter at all times and it's particularly important that baristas tend to this. Sugar and biscuit, individually wrapped, are to be distributed along the counter-top. Medical-grade caffeine will also be available in measures of 200mg or less - higher doses lead to heart trouble. The powder can be taken nasally, using the disposable straws provided, or dissolved into a solution.

Baristas are advised that prices are not fixed. They can be manipulated to undercut the competition or extract further revenue from customers. In spite of this, we try to separate our shared interest in the shop's revenue from our passion for keeping our customers caffeinated. Staff are also permitted to give away several 'freebies' per hour at the discretion of the floor manager.

In the last hour before close, staff must only accept drink tokens beginning with the number '9'.

Verbal Echo. Upon hearing an order, the barista must announce the order to the shop. Upon hearing the announcement, other baristas are expected to repeat orders as heard.

When crafting drinks, baristas should only use the set of espresso glasses issued to them - each glass has a unique identifier for assessment purposes. To fully enter into the spirit of the endeavour, employees are encouraged to consume caffeine themselves though this isn't mandatory.

All baristas also have roaming duties wherein they are expected to take caffeinated products in both liquid and powdered/chemical form out of the shop into more direct competition with other vendors.

Order Echo. Every barista that hears a customer place an order must fulfil that order, whether or not the order has already been fulfilled by another barista.

A high speed conveyor belt removes waste through a hole in the shop's rear wall. All empty packaging and drinkingware are to be placed by staff onto the belt and launched out of the shop towards prospective customers. The conveyor belt is one of our strongest weapons against the competition. No one else is breaking things in a way that can be seen and heard.

eXpresso. Our premium service for customers who have already made their mind up. Baristas must always have one eye on the *eXpresso* queue and maintain a line of steaming espresso shots hot and ready.

RACHEL COCKBURN: THE FINAL SELL 10:15PM

Opened 1kg bag of white granulated sugar
 10 cans of soft fizzy drink
 1 and $\frac{3}{4}$ boxes of green tea
 6 bundles of khat

Claire has suggested that I start packing up the khat stand. People are not really coming for the produce anymore, and the bar and café appear to have run out of a lot of their ingredients. Claire doesn't want to carry all the surplus goods back to her home in her large wheelie suitcase, so she has asked me to try and sell the goods. This, she said, would have to be done over the mic, like a flash sale, or an auction.

I turn on the mic at the left of the table.

Hello everyone, can I have your attention. Hello.

Owing to childcare issues Claire has to close down business for the evening. So all products must go. And we've got some great products at highly reduced prices, that you are now going to get the opportunity to take home with you tonight.

Ladies and gentleman, boys and girls, the first bid is the bundles of khat. Who will take the 6 bundles of khat for 3 tokens? Do I have 3 tokens?

A man who looks about 21 with a bluish jumper raises his hand.

3 tokens, do I have anyone to raise it to 4? 4 tokens?

A man in a dark shirt raises his hand and shouts. **4 tokens.**

4 tokens. Who will raise me on 4 tokens for all this khat.

The bluish-jumpered man raises his hand and shouts. **5.**

5 tokens with the young gentleman over there. How about 6?

A woman in a dark coat raises her hand.

6. Any higher offers?

The bluish-jumpered man shouts. **7.**

7 tokens for the fresh khat. Anyone going to raise it? Any takers?

Going once.

The man in the dark shirt shouts. **8 tokens.**

8 tokens for this great fresh khat, anyone going to raise it? Anyone? No one? The fresh khat is going. Going. Gone. To the young gentleman in the dark shirt. Congratulations.

The successful bidder comes to collect the khat. Claire carries out the financial transaction.

Claire tells me she thinks I should go next with the fizzy drinks, and that I should have a start price of 1 token.

The next lot is the cans of fizzy drink. On offer are 10 refreshing cans, top brands and still slightly chilled. For all 10 cans we are starting the bidding at only 1 token. Come on 1 token. Who will offer 1 token for this bargain lot. Only 1 token. Come on 1 token.

The space is quiet.

A girl in a big coat raises her hand.

1 token with the lady in the coat. Who will raise me on 1?

A man in a dark jacket shouts. **1 and a half.**

1 and a half tokens with the gentleman in the dark jacket. Who will raise it? This is a great bid for 10 cans of fizzy drinks. It would

be 3 times as much in the shops. Come on. Any advance on 1 and a half tokens? 2 tokens anyone?

The girl in the big coat shouts. **2.**

2 tokens from the lady in the coat. Will anyone raise it?

No? Going once. Going twice. Gone. To the lady in the coat.

The girl in the coat comes over. Claire takes care of the financial transaction. Claire tells me I have to sell the tea for at least half a token.

Ok, so can I still have your attention again, this is the third lot, and what we have are 2 boxes of green tea, 20 teabags in one sealed box and about 14 in another.

A man with really long hair shouts. **Half a token.**

Half a token for the gentleman over there. Who's going to raise me on half a token?

A man sitting down in front of me shouts. **1 token.**

1 token from the gentleman in front of me. Any raise on 1 token? Come on, these are two boxes of quality tea that would cost well over £2 in the shops. Any more bidders? Anyone?

Going once. Going twice. Gone. To the gentleman right here.

The man comes up to the table and makes the exchange with Claire.

Claire now tells me she wants me to sell the sugar. How am I going to sell an opened 1kg bag of white granulated sugar to a crowd of mostly under 25yr olds?

Ok, so the final offer this evening is a great opened 1kg bag of white granulated sugar. And I'll start the bidding at 1 token. Any takers at 1 token?

Come on, this is a real bargain. Who will take the sugar off our hands?

A man standing at the right shouts. **1.**

1 token? Can we not have any higher bidders? Who will raise it from 1 token?

The man standing at the right shouts. **1.**

1 token. 1 token it is. Going once. Going twice. Gone to the gentleman to my right.

The man to the right comes over and Claire takes care of the financial transaction.

All that remains on the table are the metal spoons, some plastic cups, and the cash box, which Claire intends to count.

I turn off the mic.

BRIDGET PENNEY: A VISITOR'S REPORT

Until Claire mentioned it, I didn't realise the DIG building had been an auction house. Walking up to it I thought a school; once inside, a small factory.

My first impression was of a wide, cavernous space interrupted by concrete pillars and very dimly lit. The bar was immediately to the left of the entrance. Livecam of the DJ mixing in his bedroom in Leeds was streaming onto the righthand wall: the music was so loud it made conversation difficult. Over on the left, facing the long wall opposite the entrance, mismatched chairs were arranged in straggling rows. A table and two chairs were positioned immediately in front of this wall. Claire's kettle, boxes of green tea, sugar, bundles of khat and coolbag containing soft drinks were on and under the table.

Behind the chairs set out for the visitors a plywood screen, well over head height, hoarded off a section of the room. It was entered by passing through the narrow gap immediately to the left of the bar. A chute had been fitted to a hole in the middle of this screen: at irregular intervals dirty cups hurtled down it and smashed. Several completely missed the plastic bowl positioned to receive them. As the evening went on, shards and coffee grounds littered the floor behind and underneath the chairs.

As DIG is technically a private residence, several people were smoking. I found this unpleasant: since the ban on smoking in 'enclosed public places' was introduced in 2007 my tolerance of tobacco smoke has become zero. The substances deliberately on offer - alcohol, caffeine and, later in the evening, khat - were obtained through the purchase of tokens. The tokens I saw were torn from a book of raffle/cloakroom tickets: once you had these you could exchange them for the goods of your choice at whatever rate was set by the staff at the café, bar or mafrish. Attracted by the pink light reflecting off the shiny counter of the bar, we considered trying the cocktails. However Claire commented the drinks were rather expensive so my companion trekked out to the local offie to buy beer instead.

By the time it struck me that Claire was deliberately putting us off buying from her competitor, she had retreated to her table and I had missed my chance to challenge her.

I decided to patronise the café. The staff were dressed mostly in black and wore long white aprons. For one pound I bought a pink token from the male employee seated immediately behind the hoarding. For that I was told I could get any coffee. Espresso pots of varying sizes formed a line along the central counter: I spotted a sink at the back and wondered if it was the top of the chute. When I asked what coffees they were serving, a female barista said single, double, triple espresso or flat white but flat white would be two tokens. I opted for a triple espresso and received a chipped white cup filled to the brim. After drinking it at my seat I took the cup and saucer back to the café. I was really hoping to see them dispatched down the chute and hear the smash.... Handing my cup to another female barista, I complimented her on the excellence of the coffee. She looked surprised, put my cup down on the counter and asked if I'd like a biscuit: she then put her hand into her apron pocket and gave me a little pack of Lotus biscuits.

Claire introduced me to Rachel and Mustafa. I knew their names from reading Claire's DEMO KHAT script as it had been performed in the context of Rachel's Institutional Loser Symposium. It was difficult to talk over the loud music. I had been apprehensive about Rachel's reaction to the idea of publishing the script but realised now talking to her that Claire's script appearing critical of Rachel's behaviour was in the spirit of that project. I asked Mustafa about his involvement in the performance. He said he was very nervous about speaking in public because he had stuttered as a child; when he was at university he had got a friend to deliver his presentation because of this worry. I said I stuttered myself and we talked about the stress of speaking in public. I wondered, but didn't ask, if he found chewing khat helped by making him more relaxed.

At the start of the performance Claire was busy putting out cans on the table then she sat down with the visitors while Rachel delivered

the script. Mustafa was among the visitors standing to the right of the chairs. So whereas at the Institutional Loser Symposium Claire had complained about Rachel giving her a misleading impression of the circumstances in which she was to perform and failing to provide the promised remuneration for expenses, now Rachel appeared pissed off at Claire.

Rachel's delivery was measured and very clear. She took every opportunity to look straight at the visitors which engaged us and maintained the feeling of her being in control. When she invited us to try khat, a young man seated at the front stood up. Rachel asked if he'd prefer green tea or a soft drink. He selected a can from the table, bought his token and exchanged it for a bundle of khat. Rachel then read out the instructions and he chewed the khat slowly, sipping his sweet drink. This might have taken as long as five minutes.

When the performance ended Mustafa came up to the table and the rest of the visitors were invited to try khat. Quite a few took the opportunity: I remember someone asking if khat actually had any effect. Other participants wandered around consuming alcohol, coffee and cigarettes. Cups had occasionally hurtled down the chute while Rachel was reading but it hadn't seemed to distract the visitors. I asked Rachel if she had ever tried khat, she said she had found it very bitter.

We left about 9pm. Later email from Claire mentioned the auction of leftover goods, wildness and various underhand strategies as the evening wore on.

CLAIRE MAKHLOUF CARTER, NIK JAFFE, MARK LEWIS: STRATEGIES, NOTES FROM A MEETING 7TH AUGUST 2014

A range of strategies implemented by the three set ups are outlined below. As the evening progressed it became unclear if strategies were perceived or actually happening. It is unknown how many tokens were eventually in circulation - if new ones were added or subtracted.

The event began with 1000 tokens circulated by Nik and Mark. These were to be shared equally between the three set ups, however the mafrish maintains the amount was not counted transparently which generated issues of trust. The mafrish tokens went missing within 20 minutes of the mafrish opening and there was a delay in issuing replacements.

Strategies implemented by the three set ups

- Dramatic dropping and raising of prices. Sudden and severe changes in the prices of both tokens and goods were used to undercut and confuse the competition. When tokens ran low, prices of products were lowered in order to stockpile tokens and raise prices again.
- Asking customers to spy on the other set ups and paying them in tokens. Spies were asked to report back on strategies being used such as price changes.
- Due to the transparency of these devices and the fast pace of money to token and token to product exchange, customers began to exploit the set ups as the evening progressed.

Espresso Bar

Visitors don't always get what they order because a more precise order isn't always more beautiful. Unreliable transactions occur throughout the evening. It is a reminder that we are all but human, and our lives are littered with errors. Disputes around product and change make coffee more exciting.

The speed of the espresso bar is exaggerated by Baristas wired up on caffeine, not only to expedite sales but to help propagate our simulated ethos. Whatever follows is natural.

Switching of usual prices. Milky drinks are expensive while Espresso and black coffee cheap or free, we reverse the normal price pyramid to encourage high caffeine intake, keeping customers on site and allowing them to make more decisions. More decisions means more good decisions. In addition, lines of pharmaceutical grade caffeine are provided free of charge towards the end of the evening to keep momentum and compensate for an inevitably heightened tolerance.

Roaming Baristas leave the coffee area and offer free drinks near where other products are being dispensed to intercept customers before they have spent their tokens - a more caffeinated customer pool means more happens.

Echoing orders - whereby after one Barista announces an order, the rest of the employees repeat this as a chorus. The noise helps build a sense of purpose and rhythm amongst the team and emphasises our team's effort and dedication to every drink for the customer. The noise along with the scent of coffee focuses the product to passers by.

Only accepting tokens beginning with number 9 is deployed as a countermeasure to the market being flooded with tokens - consequence of the other bars quickly selling off their treasures on the cheap. In enacting this we introduced a sense of exclusivity and game of chance whilst conserving our stock and challenging competition.

Cocktail Bar

The Bartender does not wish to divulge his strategies.

Mafrish

Colonise the chairs and microphone already in place after the presentation. This is fortuitous. All chairs in the building are sought out and arranged to face the mafrish. Draw the chairs nearer the mafrish so visitors become a close-knit group parked close to the goods. Make use of the microphone to draw attention to changing khat prices.

Give tokens to visitors to buy workers caffeine and alcoholic drinks. Other set ups will deliberately serve the mafrish workers slowly to stall our sales. Counter this by paying visitors in tokens to shop for

workers' refreshments. It is serendipitous that this keeps the mafrish workers in the area and at work at all times.

The mafrish is laidback and not overtly attentive to making the most profit since tokens are used to buy alcoholic drinks and workers are allowed to chew away the profits. Encourage workers to enjoy the preview and use unlimited amount of tokens. Give permission for workers to misbehave as a refusal to be overworked. They do not have to continually join in the environment of competitiveness. The management of the mafrish must appear lax. This keeps workers happy and in attendance. We attempt to buy loyalty and reliability for future events by playing with systems of labour. We undermine making a profit however we attract other customers who can't be bothered to stand waiting for drinks and encourage a culture of sitting and chatting.

Paying the host in tokens to turn down volume of the live feed of DJ for several announcements. Control and interrupt the soundscape with announcements to attract visitors' attention towards the mafrish. Generate pauses, and cut into the flow. Ask the host to turn the volume of the live feed down so the mic can be heard offering khat price reductions as and when we feel the need. Note at the beginning of the evening this task is done for free, by the end of the evening the host may ask for an increasing amount of tokens. The host may be in cahoots with the other set ups - or may be refusing to change the volume unless the other set ups pay more tokens than the mafrish. Enjoy the host's banter and offer him free khat and sweet tea for the evening.

Announcement of Auction over the mic closes the event when it suits the mafrish. Khat sales will decline as art visitors are unused to chewing khat at previews and spending time to retrieve its effect. Gain visitors' final attention to the plant and provide a break for mafrish workers to leave.

Near the end of the auction the Bartender interjected offering the three-quarters drunk bottle of moonshine for two tokens and his drinks at half price. The Espresso Barista interrupted by offering all his drinks for free once alcohol stocks were depleted.

The mafrish suspected there was a sudden influx of tokens during the auction. Mafrish spies reported passing of tokens between visitors who showed an interest in khat and the Bartender.

"KHAT WARNING"
CLAIRE MAKHLOUF CARTER
BRIDGET PENNEY

to access the full list of references for "Khat Warning" visit

http://www.invisiblebooks.co.uk/?page_id=1110

From 24th June 2014, Khat will be an illegal Class C drug.

The government has decided to ban Khat to protect people from the potential health & social harms.

It will become illegal to possess, supply, produce and import Khat.

If the police find you in Personal Possession of Khat after 24th June 2014 you can:

- On the first occasion be issued with a "Khat Warning".**
- On the second occasion, if appropriate, a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) will be issued.**
- Thereafter, you will be liable for prosecution.**

from a leaflet issued by a consortium of groups working with the community in Islington, June 2014

The World Health Organisation first carried out research into the pharmacology of khat and the health implications of its use in the 1950s. Following the publication of this research, the UN Commission of Narcotic Drugs ruled in August 1964 that there was no need for international legislation on khat, and nation states were left to decide what health advice, if any, should be given to their citizens. In 1988, on the advice of WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence, cathine and cathinone, the main psychoactive ingredients found in fresh khat, were added to the list of controlled substances of the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances. This initiative was not intended to subject khat to international control and the ECDD's critical review of khat in 2006 strongly reaffirmed this position, stating 'the potential for [khat] abuse and dependence is low. The level of abuse and threat to public health is not significant enough to warrant international control'.

Cathinone, the main ingredient that degrades so quickly after harvest in fresh khat, can also be manufactured synthetically and this is sometimes referred to as 'substituted cathinones'. Synthetic cathinone is the key ingredient of recreational drugs such as Mephedrone. To link the drug cathinone with the plant khat is misleading in terms of khat use, stigmatizes khat chewers, and misinforms the public. The ACMD report commented 'It was also reported by the N[ational] T[reatment] A[gency] that people who completed the [Crime Survey for England and Wales in 2010/11 and 2011/12] may have confused khat with "kat; which is a term for mephedrone, an unrelated substance", and this error is echoed in other documentation before the Council'.

It is easier and cheaper to manufacture synthetic cathinones and cathines than to extract them from fresh khat. Yet Finland, Germany and New Zealand banned khat in 1981. Norway and Sweden in 1989, Italy in 1990, Denmark and Ireland in 1993. The USA introduced measures against cathine in 1988 and cathinone in 1993 which effectively prohibited khat. Switzerland followed in 1996, Canada legislated against the import of khat in 1997. Most of these countries have taken action against khat without any proper research into how it is used, what effects it has on the consumer and wider society, or any consideration of the impact of banning khat and criminalising khat chewers. To this list can now be added the UK and Dutch governments who have commissioned detailed reports into the health and societal implications of khat use and then totally ignored their recommendations. In January 2012, rejecting the conclusions of a study by the Trimbo Institute, the Dutch government announced khat would be placed on List II of the Opium Law. This put it on the same footing as cannabis, so although it became illegal to import or distribute khat, there seemed a possibility that its use might be tolerated in the licensed coffee shops. As of July 2015, this was not the case. Although khat has been illegal in Sweden since 1989, its use there persists in bleak circumstances, described by Klein, Metaal and Jelsma in 2012. 'There is no social intercourse, no community building, but all the alienation and disruption of a *drug market* [emphasis added]'.

Khat was traded into the UK as a vegetable until 1 February 1998, when HMRC reclassified khat as a 'stimulant drug' and it became standard-rated for VAT. In late 2007, HMRC investigated the khat trade and collected VAT that had been underpaid. According to their data, the amount of khat annually imported into the UK remained stable at between 2,500 and 2,800 tonnes from 2005 until 2012. On 11/06/2012 John Spellar, Labour MP for Warley asked Theresa May 'what assessment she has made of the level of smuggling of khat from the UK by organised crime and terrorist groups'. Replying on her behalf, James Brokenshire stated, 'The Home Office has not made any formal assessment into the level of khat exportation from the UK by organised crime and terrorist groups...The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs will consider all evidence on this issue available to it. Its advice will inform the Secretary of State for the Home Department's decision'. Almost two years later on 12/05/2014, as the 'draft Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (Amendment) (No. 2) Order 2014' was debated in the House of Lords, Baroness Meacher commented that 'the ACMD was not provided with any evidence of al-Shabaab or any other terrorist group's involvement in the export

or sale of khat, despite consultation with the relevant national and international official bodies' and added 'I understand that the Home Secretary has claimed that the ACMD would not have been aware of these things. However, it was aware of the people who are aware of them - and consulted them. The fact that the ACMD picked up nothing in this area should be taken seriously'.

Khat contains natural ingredients which are already controlled drugs both in the UK and internationally because they are harmful. To help protect local communities from the potential health and social harms associated with khat and to ensure that the UK does not become a hub for international khat smuggling, it will become illegal to produce, possess, supply and import or export khat without a Home Office licence.

Home Office Khat fact sheet for England and Wales

In November 2013, the number of khat chewers in the UK was estimated at 90,000. In the run-up to June 2014, leaflets and posters, issued by a range of agencies, offered information about the impending ban and stopping chewing khat. These were mainly aimed at the Somali community. Although the ACMD report had advised that 'In order to avoid stigmatisation (particularly amongst female users), it was believed important that services for khat users were not presented as drug services' the contacts given on the *Home Office Khat fact sheet for England and Wales* link to a webpage on FRANK that reads 'WHAT IS INVOLVED IN DRUG TREATMENT' with a dropdown list that runs 'The Truth About Drugs'; 'Mephodrone: The Facts'; 'Cocaine: What you need to know' and a National Treatment Agency page 'Drug treatment works; it helps dependent people get better'.

Some leaflets mention mental health issues, domestic violence and selling drugs to children. It appears that the ban on khat has resulted in instilling media misrepresentation and this is being disseminated to the public through the use of leaflets and posters. Other misinformation during the debate went unchallenged, such as khat being illegal in the whole of the EU (as of October 2015, it still isn't) and khat directly causing tooth decay - when, according to research quoted in the ACMD report, dental problems are more likely to be caused by the sugary drinks consumed alongside the leaves. The general debate exposed othering despite some well-meaning intentions. The voices of people directly affected by the ban; khat chewers, mafrish owners and the producers and importers of the

plant, were curiously absent. Where these voices were represented they had no impact on the outcome. This debate demonstrates situations where those in positions of power who have the authority to decide how others should culturally behave often do so without questioning their own position or rhetoric.

Probably the most serious piece of misinformation about khat chewing was referring to it solely as a Somali 'problem'. This focus sidelined other communities with a tradition of khat consumption such as the UK Yememi community, who have been importing and consuming khat in the UK for 60 years and don't see khat as any kind of problem. Much has been written about why some in the Somali community view khat as problematic. It has been suggested that the consumption of khat in the UK follows a different pattern from the traditional one. Shifting expectations of gender roles within UK Somali communities might be another factor. This belongs to a narrative in which women came as refugees to the UK, found employment and established themselves independently: when husbands were able to rejoin their families they felt deprived of their traditional male role and turned to the mafrish and khat to fill their time. Neil Carriere has remarked, 'The khat ban is especially interesting in this regard: a substance banned not on medical grounds, but to stop consumers spending time away from families and work'. The Home Secretary's oft-repeated line that it was 'mums and wives' who called for khat to be banned would seem to fit with this narrative but it also plays to the stereotype that khat chewing is an exclusively male activity, which is not true, though women would consume khat in their home, or among a group of female friends, rather than at the mafrish. A rare image of a problematic female khat consumer is evoked in an article published a couple of days before the ban took effect. 'A single mother with five children, every night she is chewing until maybe five o'clock in the morning, but she doesn't wake up and the children miss school'.

The most vocal leader of the campaign to ban khat in the UK was Akubar Awale, a self-described 'ex-addict' who writes about his experiences with khat in a way that fits into familiar stories of addiction, including being the victim of a life-threatening attack before he saw the error of his ways and claiming 'if I could break free from khat addiction, then of course so could anyone else'. Awale hosted his own phone-in programme *Check before you Chew* on a Somali satellite station, encouraging callers to share their experiences of khat. The campaign started by distributing leaflets in mafrishyo but quickly moved on to attending local government meetings and lobbying politicians to support a ban during the 2010 election. When mephodrone,

containing synthetic cathinone, was made illegal in 2010, the campaign argued that khat, as a natural source of cathinone, should also be banned. In January 2013 Awale said 'For the government, it's not about how harmful this product is, it's who is using it - and that is discrimination'. Shortly after the Home Secretary announced the classification of khat in July 2013, Awale wrote 'I myself having campaigned for eight long years for the banning of khat and believe that the ban cannot have been announced soon enough and that a large number in our community will express and translate their gratitude into political support for those that implemented the ban come the next election'.

If the police suspect a person may be in possession of KHAT in a public place, they will have powers to stop and search that person. If the police believe that KHAT is being kept, produced, or supplied in a private place, they may obtain a warrant to search that place.

Sheffield leaflet 'KHAT: Information for the public'

Khat warnings are combined with cannabis warnings in Ministry of Justice statistics but specific information about khat-related proceedings has been made available in response to freedom of information requests directed to police forces in England and Wales twelve months after the ban came into force. In the period 24/06/2014 to 31/05/15 the Metropolitan Police recorded 109 proceedings relating to khat. 87 of these were khat warnings, 11 Fixed Penalty Notices (presumably to people who had already received a khat warning) and 11 'other proceeding types' of which no further details were given. In the period 24/06/2014 to 31/01/15, 646 quantities of khat were seized by the Met through 62 instances of seizure.

In the year following the ban, Avon and Somerset police recorded '4 people were issued with a khat warning... There were no Penalties/Notices for Disorder issued for a second possession offence however 2 people received a caution. There have been no arrests identified for khat-related offences. Since 24/06/2014 there have been a total of 9 seizures of khat within Avon and Somerset Constabulary weighing a total of 2187.42 grams'. West Yorkshire constabulary recorded one khat warning, one arrest that led to a not guilty outcome and one seizure of khat in the year since the ban came into force. Several forces recorded no instances.

These statistics don't give any indication of how many people may have been stop and searched because police suspected that they might be in possession

of khat. New guidelines for stop and search were brought in around the time of the khat ban, and the way of recording outcomes has changed. A khat warning is on the list of outcomes now counted as positive from a stop and search whereas previously only arrest counted as a positive outcome.

The *National Policing Guidelines on KHAT possession for personal use intervention framework*, issued by the Association of Chief Police Officers in January 2014, advise circumspection and sensitivity in dealing with those suspected of possessing khat, evidently wishing to avoid the kind of disastrous policing adopted in Toronto after Canada criminalised the importation of khat in 1997. That featured aggressive stop and searches, raids on private houses and businesses, and visits by police to community centres where older men were asked to open their mouths to demonstrate they were not chewing khat. The *Guidelines on KHAT possession* give no fixed form of words for the khat warning but its purpose is described as 'educational' and the police officer is asked to assess if the khat chewer will 'benefit' from it. However, among 'the relevant aggravating factors' that should help a police officer determine whether stronger action should be taken against someone who has previously received a khat warning and a FPN/PND are listed

- **Public Place or View:** The chewing of khat in a public place or view is unacceptable and risks undermining the illegal status of possession of khat as a controlled drug.
- **Locally Identified Policing Problem:** There may be circumstances which are causing a local policing problem or community concern, such as the fear or anti-social behaviour associated with the use of khat.

Theresa May's description of her decision to classify khat as 'finely balanced' was often used by other members of the government: evoking the scales of justice and the idea of 'weighing up' the evidence, it is a curious and highly deliberate way to describe a decision that does not seem to have been taken on evidential grounds. In October 2013 documents were lodged at the High Court by Mahamud Ahmed Mohammed, proprietor of MAMFresh, the UK's largest importer of khat, along with the Kenyan government and a number of others seeking a judicial review of the Home Secretary's decision to classify khat.

The decision [to classify khat] is incompatible with the Convention rights, under the Human Rights Act 1998, of the claimant and other

members of the ethnic communities throughout the UK in which the use of khat is part of a long-standing and established social, cultural and ethnic custom and tradition,...the decision violates the claimant's rights under Article 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights not to be discriminated against in respect of his right to express the cultural and ethnic customs within his ethnic group.

Mr Mohammed and his lawyer Paul Garlick, along with the Association of Chief Police Officers, gave evidence to the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee in November 2013. The committee, which also met with visiting Kenyan MPs to discuss the potential impact of the ban, published its report on 26/11/2013. It expressed grave concern that 'Controlling khat will create a crime which is only likely to be committed by members of certain specific communities, who already experience a degree of marginalisation within the UK' and recommended that rather than classifying khat, the Home Secretary should consider controlling its import by introducing a licensing scheme, similar to that operating in Victoria, Australia, which allows consumers to apply for a permit to buy up to 5kg of khat per month.

Another alternative stopping short of full classification was proposed by Baroness Meacher during the debate on the draft Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (Amendment) (No. 2) Order 2014 in the House of Lords on 12 May 2014. 'An order along the lines of a Temporary Class Drug Order, which avoided criminalising users of khat, would fulfil the Government's objectives while avoiding unnecessary and severe consequences for the BME communities affected'. Speaking for the government, Lord Taylor rejected her idea out of hand. He also sought unsuccessfully to persuade Baroness Smith to withdraw her 'motion to regret'. This was not an attempt to stop the ban but an expression of concern at the lack of provision that had been made to mitigate the consequences for khat consumers and growers likely to result from it, and 'the lack of a 12-month review of the impact of the reclassification of khat in view of the highly unusual community focus of its use'. Lord Taylor responded, 'Our plans, which have been worked up over a couple of months, are in place and are ready to be rolled out once the draft order completes its parliamentary passage....We see it as a matter of continuous review and are specifying that a close eye will be kept on the impact of the ban'.

In June 2015, one year on, articles by British Somali journalists Annisa Omar and Amina Adan considered the effects of the khat ban on the UK Somali community

and drew rather different conclusions. Omar's article is broadly positive about the ban, suggesting 'A psychological shift [on khat] within the UK Somali community appears to be underway' though when she adds, 'There is, of course a long way to go, especially for rehabilitation, given the ban's quick introduction compounded by government cuts to social care' there is more than a hint of dissatisfaction. The use of 'rehabilitation' here seems to be from the vocabulary of drug abuse, but when it doesn't appear that consumers of khat were addicted to the substance in the way we understand people being addicted to heroin or alcohol, what does it actually mean? If the real issue with khat consumption was that in some circumstances it had come to be seen as a unproductive use of time, in sharp contrast to its traditional use as a productivity enhancer, does rehabilitation involve giving people opportunities to fill time productively and who gets to decide what that entails? It shouldn't be forgotten that many *mafrishyo* were also restaurants and operating as community centres where sitting, chatting, eating and discussing were culturally and socially productive activities. The ACMD report drew attention to endemic economic and social problems which might be contributing to problematic khat use and recommended addressing them rather than banning khat. This contrasts with Akubar Awale's comment on his own 'way out', 'No one provided me with an alternative or helped me find employment simply because I don't accept that it is the responsibility of others to do so' which must have struck a chord with politicians already committed to public spending cuts.

Amina Adan's piece is much more sceptical about the ban and the campaign, headed by Awale, which led to it. 'One year on since the ban, the real question that lies is whether our community has improved with the absence of the substance, or are we merely just happy with the ban only'. She also mentions the lack of support available and may have Awale in mind when she writes, 'Reflecting back on the achievements in the British Somali community following the ban, it is difficult to overlook the multiple struggles that occurred as a result. In order to receive the maximum benefits from the law, it is required for the active community leaders who were the forefront of this movement, to assist the recovering addicts in the necessary ways, rather than just being appreciative of the ban'. Adan points out that consumers were not the only people affected by khat's classification and that the ban has destroyed what were previously legitimate businesses. 'Importers of the substance and Somali businessmen running local khat houses (*mafrishes*) found themselves at square one again when they were forced to enter the job centre and sign on, struggling to find a replacement career for the one which was tarnished by the ban'.

On the topic of the few arrests since the ban came into force, Annisa Omar quotes Acting Sergeant Mike Aartsen, co-ordinator of the Strategic Khat Working Group, as saying, 'Khat is a low priority drug for us'. Omar then makes the very worrying point 'One could argue it is not the law itself but the presence of law as a deterrent that has been the success'. The change in the law has turned what used to be a perfectly lawful activity into a crime, admittedly one which the police are not greatly interested in policing. Amina Adan writes, 'It is no secret that khat is still consumed by some people underground but the only difference is; now they are seen as criminals'.

Other articles appearing in the press around the anniversary of khat's classification also focused on lack of support services, the way the police dealt with the newly-banned substance, and the disastrous effect the UK ban has had on the livelihood of khat growers in Meru County, Kenya. About 70% of the khat imported into the UK came from Kenya and the industry was estimated to support half a million people there. It might be as well to consider both the sympathetic, if slightly patronising, tone of the *Guardian* article about khat farmers who could no longer afford school fees, and the commentators quick to remark that farmers relying on a single non-subsistence crop must have been aware of the risks of market failure, in the context of how the khat economy actually worked. It grew up with modern infrastructure, better roads, air traffic, ability to make payments through mobile phones. Crucially -

Compared to other commodities where prices are set by global markets, khat prices have shown only modest fluctuations, providing farmers with secure livelihoods. The transport, processing, packaging and resale of khat have created employment opportunities across the region. At each stage along the commodity chain, and in sharp contrast to trade in coffee, flowers or vegetables, African farmers and traders are in control of the trade. More significant, this economic dynamo has been set in motion without any support from international development agencies of governments.

Klein, Metaal & Jelsma: *Chewing over Khat prohibition*

What happened to the khat trade after the ban? Customs inspections on all inbound flights from Kenya in the months following its implementation effectively closed the traditional legitimate route into the UK. In September 2014, police in

Bristol posted pictures of their seizure of 24 sandwich bags of dried khat 'with a street value of £250' on Twitter. In the same month a post on the Council of Somali Organisations website noted 'whereas previously khat was exported by Kenya it was now mainly coming out of Ethiopia. Community source indicates that the price of khat (where available) has trebled and new importation routes to the UK are being developed.... There have been some seizures of fresh khat being sent by international parcel services. It is anticipated there will be a slight increase in importation and that the fresh khat will possibly be replaced by the dried. This variety can be flown into Eastern Europe and driven into the UK'.

What many of these documents actually record is a determined lack of awareness or want of understanding for the complexities and significance of social and cultural customs. There is little consideration for the economic implications the ban has had for specific communities despite the attempt by some to highlight findings in the ACMD's report. Among all these statistics, opinions and theories, the voices of khat chewers are, significantly, missing. Since chewing khat is now treated as a crime and, as Adan points out, khat chewers 'are seen as criminals', what is the point in exposing oneself to public criticism or potential prosecution?

Although there have been petitions against the ban, signatures have been limited in numbers for a range of reasons. Contributing factors might include a concern with visibility. The recent UK anti-immigrant climate, evidenced in government rhetoric and sections of the popular media, alongside the knowledge that this foodstuff integral to longstanding cultural identities has become illegal, may result in khat chewers feeling they have no alternative but to keep off the radar and stay anonymous. The disparate, intergenerational nature of groups involved in khat consumption may mean chewers and traders prefer to speak privately about the ban rather than tweet or set up a petition. In Kenya there have been protests about the UK khat ban but these have not been widely reported in the UK. Despite the range of printed and electronic matter available, there is a serious gap in voice. These voices used to exist in the mafrishyo, and to encourage a culture where invisible voices can be heard openly this petition, which had 526 signatures as of 27/10/15, is still open.

Practising my democratic right, I am signing this petition and requesting for our government to consider either, reversing the khat ban or formulating policy for governing and licensing trade and consumption of

Khat, just like controls are in place for tobacco or other intoxicants used widely in the UK.

<https://www.change.org/p/theresa-may-khat-ban-a-mistake-fix-it>

We have to ask why alcohol and tobacco, both substances with proven addictive potential and consequences for health, are permitted in the UK, while khat, which has been assessed as unlikely to cause dependence and for which the medical evidence of harm remains inconclusive, is banned. Is it just that the appeal of patiently chewing large mouthfuls of fresh, bitter-tasting leaves for approximately an hour to achieve an effect which has been described as akin to 'a double espresso cut with a gin and tonic' is difficult for consumers used to quicker, easier hits to understand? If the consumption of khat had become more popular outwith the communities with which it is traditionally associated, would the ban have gone through?

An article in New Scientist, 'Bitter truth: How we're making fruit and veg less healthy', 29 July 2015, explains how debittering reduces food's nutritional value. Companies use the processes of debittering to remove 'undesirable bitter compounds' and to 'improve the quality of the product'. The debittering processes remove by selection bitter-tasting phytonutrients, which are actually toxic in large doses but which have been shown to protect the body against a range of conditions from ulcers to cancers, as well as having antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects. In some countries such as India bitter foods are considered extremely healthy; aiding digestion, purifying the blood, and recommended in both prevention and treatment of diabetes.

However bitterness has many negative connotations in language. In English the word bitter is used to describe the intrinsic quality of a character disposition with negative connotations of harmfulness and persistence. Semitic languages connect bitterness to visceral experiences. In Hebrew (which we can link back to Akkadian texts written in script form on clay tablets dated from around the middle of the third millennium BCE) demons are given agency of the body by seizing mouths and making tongues bitter.

Bitter tastes are being culturally excluded from western palates as foods are cultivated to be less bitter. Cutting out bitter tastes makes food bland as bitterness is intrinsic to depth of flavour. Bitterness is culturally at risk. Bring back and taste the bitterness.

2 TOKENS: CHOICE OF
SWEET TEA OR FIZZY DRINK
AND 1 BUNDLE OF KHAT

**ONCE YOU PAY FOR YOUR
KHAT THERE WILL BE NO
REFUND OR EXCHANGE**

