

## PUSS AND MEW AT DESIGN OVERTIME, JUNE 12 2009



Puss and Mew is an inter-disciplinary project devised by Luis Carvajal and Annie Davey; a fiction evolving through the recreation and reinvention of cultural artefacts and phenomena rooted in English social history and the universal Dionysian appetite for intoxication.

Puss and Mew: The Revival of an Eighteenth Century Gin Vending Machine (Southwark) comprises the reconstruction of a little known architectural intervention used for distributing gin. The Puss and Mew proliferated in London during the late 1730s operating surreptitiously, by near invisible presence and a password system, to avoid the notice of informers and Justices of the Peace. These devices demonstrated how the unpopular and ultimately unsuccessful Gin Acts could not suppress the powerful new social forces that had led to the huge consumption of gin, often referred to as the gin craze.

The Puss and Mew transaction begins with the purchase of a brass trade token, from a modern token dispenser, based upon those in circulation when legal tender was in short supply. Located nearby, the Puss and Mew will dispense a Dutch gin, or more correctly genever, the name by which gin was historically known when first imported and subsequently distilled.

Puss and Mew: The Revival of an Eighteenth Century Gin Vending Machine has previously taken place in Clerkenwell, 2004 and Southwark, 2006. An example of the copper and brass tokens featured in these projects are now housed in the British Museum collection of Coins and Medals.

Puss and Mew: The Revival of an Eighteenth Century Gin Vending Machine will be dislocated from the alleyways and side streets of London to operate within the modern environment of The Design Museum.