



# a-di-da-da

ne eine Art Streich) oder über die zehn  
rten, wie man sich an den niedlichen  
achbarn rannachen kann?

ber dann fällt mir gerade noch recht-  
ein, dass ich mithilfe meiner Töchter  
jede Menge Fragen in mein Notiz-  
buch geschrieben habe, und die werde  
ich Bibi jetzt stellen, obwohl es eigent-  
lich keine einzige Frage auf dieser Welt  
geben dürfte, die Bibi nicht schon ir-  
gendwann beantwortet hat. Sie beant-  
wortet jeden Tag in ihren Clips alle Fra-  
gen rund um ihr Leben, und zwar ohne  
dass jemand sie stellen würde. Wenn sich  
also jemand fragt, was Bibis Erfolgsre-  
zept ist, so lautet die Antwort: Genau  
das. Reden über sich.

Ein paar Daten: Bibi ist 24 Jahre alt.  
Ihren Kanal gibt es seit 2012, er hat 4,5  
Millionen Abonnenten und bisher  
1.280.000.000 Aufrufe. Sie ist die erfolg-  
reichste deutsche Frau auf YouTube. Oh-  
ne dass irgendeine Feministin je ein Lob-  
lied auf sie gesungen hätte, hat hier also  
eine sehr junge Frau aus Köln im Parallel-  
universum YouTube steil Karriere ge-  
macht. Ihr Song wurde letzte Woche 31  
Millionen mal bei YouTube abgerufen.

Wap-bap  
21 Millionen Mal! Das ist wahrschein-  
lich mehr, als die Beatles, die Stones und  
Abba zusammen auf YouTube erreicht  
haben. „Wap-bap“ ist ein schlichtes Lied  
mit einer einfachen kleinen Melodie.  
Sein Erfolg ist nicht leicht zu verstehen,  
aber es gefällt nun mal vielen Teenagern,  
was soll also das Gemecker?

Das Gemecker geht ungefähr so: Bibi  
ist peinlich, Bibi kann nicht singen, Bibi  
hat den Song geklaut. Alles Vorwürfe, die  
vielleicht stimmen, vielleicht nicht. In  
Wahrheit geht es natürlich um etwas an-  
dres: Es geht um Neid. Auf YouTube viel-  
leicht noch mehr als im sonstigen Leben.

Das Gemecker hat, wie so oft, mehr  
Aufmerksamkeit auf sich gezogen als der  
Erfolg. Das Video schaffte es mit 1,9 Mil-  
lionen Dislikes in wenigen Tagen in die  
entsprechende Top-Ten-Liste, und zwar  
weltweit – noch niemand in Deutschland  
hat etwas Ähnliches geschafft, vor allem  
nicht die deutlich weniger erfolgreiche  
deutsche YouTube-Konkurrenz, die seit  
Jahren verzweifelt versucht, auch ein biss-  
chen von Bibis Erfolg zu profitieren. So  
gar die Parodien des Liedes ziehen Millio-  
nen Klicks. „Einige haben mir gut gefal-  
len“, sagt Bibi. Und es ist ja wohl klar, dass  
so was nur sagt, wer wirklich drübersteht.  
Auf Platz 1 der „List of most disliked  
Youtube videos“ steht übrigens Justin

Bieber, auf Platz 9 Miley Cyrus. Bibi  
zog also an Miley Cyrus vorbei auf  
Platz 6. Bibi vor Miley! Miley Cyrus ist  
Bibis Vorbild, und zwar „schon immer“.  
Das verrät Bibi mir jetzt, hier auf dem  
Sofa. Na ja, verraten klingt zwar gut,  
wenn ich an die Vermarktung des Ge-  
sprächs gegenüber meinen Töchtern  
denke, ist aber vielleicht ein bisschen  
übertrieben, denn sicherlich hat Bibi  
das mit Miley Cyrus auch schon x-mal  
erzählt. Was ich sagen will, ist eigent-  
lich nur das: Es gibt keinen besonderen  
Grund, sich für Platz sechs auf dieser  
Liste zu schämen.

Auch darum: Es ist geldtechnisch völ-  
lig Banane, ob jemand ein Video gern  
anschaut oder ob ihm beim Anschauen übel  
wird. Der Klick ist eine wertfreie Re-  
cheneinheit. Es gibt für Bibi also nicht  
nur keinen Grund, sich zu ärgern, son-  
dern Millionen Gründe, sich zu freuen.  
Und Bibi sagt, dass sie das auch tut.

Angeblich kriegen YouTube pro 1000  
Klicks 80 Euro von YouTube, was Bibi  
weder bestätigt noch abstreitet, sondern  
gar nicht kommentiert, weil sie (und in  
dieser Frage herrscht dann wieder große  
Einigkeit unter den sonst so missginsti-  
gen Youtubern) der Einfachheit halber  
überhaupt nicht über Geld spricht. Und  
warum sollte sie auch?

Wie Bibi so dasitzt und mit ihrem sü-  
ßen Mund entweder redet oder lacht oder  
beides gleichzeitig macht, wissen natür-  
lich alle hier im Raum, ihr Manager, ihr  
Freund, der Fotograf, sie und ich, dass ihr  
Gesicht, ihr Lachen, ihr Kanal und auch  
ihr „Hallihallo, meine Lieben“ eine einzi-  
ge Projektionsfläche für Marketing und  
Produktwerbung ist. Was immer Bibi hier  
lobt und anpreist oder auch nur in die Ka-  
mera halt, kommt in Millionen Kinder-  
zimmern an, und Kinder sind eben nicht  
nur Fans von Bibi, sondern auch Kunden.

I sing Wap-bap, ba-da-di-da-da  
Wenn ich also meine Kinder in ihre  
Zimmer schicke, um Bibis Clips zu inha-  
lieren, tue ich Bibi in Wahrheit einen Ge-  
fallen. Und darum tut Bibi mir jetzt auch  
einen. Sie schreibt eine lange Liste Auto-  
gramme für meine Kinder und ihre  
Freunde.

Auf dem Weg nach Hause: Anruf mei-  
ner minderjährigen Töchter. „Mama, Bibi  
hat dich in ihre Snapchatstory aufge-  
nommen – du bist Interview Nummer  
sieben.“

Ich bin Interview Nummer sieben! In  
Bibis Windschatten habe auch ich es un-  
ter die Top Ten geschafft.

Will an, was er...  
Anachronismus findet, nicht wegen An-  
ne Will, sondern wegen des Ver-  
ehens an sich. In der Rundschau  
Gesine Schwan eingeblendet, und  
Nick sagte: „Hey, cool. Thomas Gott-  
schalk.“ Eine halbe Minute später er-  
klärte er seinen Fernsehabend für  
beendet, indem er sagte: „Eine Talk-  
show über Frankreich – und Franck  
Ribéry ist nicht dabei.“

Aber es gibt auch ernsthafte The-  
men im Leben unseres Sohnes. Ges-  
tern zum Beispiel kam er in mein Bü-  
ro und setzte sich auf den Besucher-  
sessel, ohne die Zeitschriften und die  
Post runterzunehmen. Er saß also  
merkwürdig erhöht vor mir und frag-  
te mich, was es mit der 1000-Schuss-  
Theorie auf sich hätte. Sein Freund  
Finn habe im Schulbus davon ge-  
sprochen und er frage sich, ob das  
wirklich stimme, denn dann habe er  
ein Problem. Die 1000-Schuss-Theo-  
rie besagt, dass ein Mann im Leben  
genau eintausend Orgasmen erleben  
kann. Danach ist Peterabend. Mit  
diesem kruden Unsinn sollten in frü-  
heren Zeiten die Jungen vom Ona-  
nieren abgehalten werden. Es kann  
aber auch sein, dass diese Formel  
vom Verband deutscher Mathema-  
tiklehrer erfunden wurde, damit die  
Jungen mehr Zeit mit Zahlen ver-  
bringen. Auf jeden Fall finde ich die  
Vorstellung sehr amüsant, dass Vier-  
zehnjährige ernsthaft ausrechnen,  
ob unter Fortführung ihrer Familienpla-  
nung bereits um Pfingsten herum für  
immer beendet sein könnte.

Ebenso gut gefällt mir der Gedan-  
ke, dass es solche Grenzen auch bei  
anderen Verrichtungen geben könnte.  
Jeder Mensch kann nur 500 Fußball-  
spiele gucken, dann wird er blind.  
Nach 300 Tafeln Schokolade fallen  
die Zähne aus. Man muss sich mal  
vorstellen, was Menschen unterneh-  
men, um diese grotesken Zahlen zu  
erhöhen. Der Organhandel blühte wie  
Raps auf dem Kartoffelfeld. Und die  
globale Wirtschaft brummt wie ver-  
rückt, wenn wir bloß 10.000 Lieder  
hören könnten, bevor die Ohren ab-  
fielen. Ich erging mich in diesen Ge-  
danken, und Nick hörte es. Er fragte  
er: „Also...?“ „Natürlich ist es so“,  
und hörte, wie er des Weges  
hatte. Er stand auf und ging in sein  
Zimmer. Er strahlte. Er strahlte.  
luja, der Tag...“ „Vetter...“  
klatschte er fröhlich in die Hände  
ging in sein Zimmer.

# READ ALL ABOUT IT

## The inside scoop

How to shop waste-free, where to eat 'modern colonial',  
why we all need to sharpen up our social skills, and where  
to get fit and go out in Ancoats.

## Welcome to our world



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**PLASTIC?  
WE'RE PAST IT.  
HOW TO MAKE  
THE MOST OF  
SHOPPING  
WASTE FREE.**





# Waste Free Shopping in Ancoats:

## Our ever-increasing awareness of the impact that single use plastic has on the environment has led to a collective guilt that surfaces even in the mundanity of our weekly shop. In fact, nipping out for our mid-week groceries can be one of the most confrontational scenarios we have with our own contribution to the environment.



We seem to have had an awakening to the ridiculous concept that is wrapping our fruit and veg (which has over the course of several billion years evolutionarily produced its own natural, 100% compostable, BPA free packaging) in a toxic, non-biodegradable single use alternative. Our national rejection of carrier bags has seen some of us attempting to pocket the entirety of our weekly shop, or admit defeat, insisting that we never forget our Bag for Life and this is something of an exception.

However, is it enough to simply don our tote bags and shun shoppers who request a carrier bag? Will our heroic choice of loose potatoes over packaged really save the planet? It seems like there might be a little bit more to think about.

Rather than simply asking how our goods are packaged, how often do we question the environmental integrity of what we buy, where we buy it and how we transport it home? Here's how to make the most of shopping plastic free and some tips for a cleaner, greener conscience.

### Go Local.

You know what goes really well with your plastic packaging free, bulk bought lentils? Hint: it isn't a 30 minute diesel fuelled commute home. As plastic free shops begin popping up around the country, it's easy to get enticed by the novelty and nostalgia of the glass vats of dried food, paper bags and bring-your-own-container policies that can attract us in an aesthetic, just as much as an environmental sense. Tip. If you're travelling way further than you need to in order to shop 'waste free', take into account the transport that is getting you there. Can you walk or cycle? Is it a similar distance to the supermarket that you already drive to? Great. Remember that our environmental responsibility doesn't begin when we walk into a shop, we have to get there first.



## 1 Ancoats General Store

Great Ancoats Street, M4 5AB  
(1 minute walk)

Right on the doorstep of Anco&co, it couldn't be easier to shop waste free with everything from banana chips to laundry detergent. Save your jars, bring your tote bags and get there on foot.

## 2 McCall's Organics

Unit 6-7 Church Street, Manchester, M4 1PN  
(9 minute walk)

Market stalls were doing waste free way before it was cool. Fresh, locally sourced produce absent of attractive packaging and enticing promotional offers that often lead us to buy way more than we actually need. Love your local market.

### Buy what you actually need.

How often do we get started on our weekly shop with good intentions only to arrive home with twice the amount of stuff that we had on our list? It's difficult to ignore those clever marketing strategies, especially BOGOF deals. But if our free extra produce only ends up rotting in our fridge, did we really need it?

In order to avoid over purchasing (and be kinder to the planet as well as our pockets), it helps to loosely plan our meals and buy according to what we are going to use rather than what happens to have an enticing yellow label. Ideally, if we live locally to a store, it helps to shop little and often according to what we actually need, rather than bulk buying and causing our food to spoil due to our misjudgements. However, if our store is a drive away or this is wildly inconvenient, it makes sense to stick to the weekly shop while being mindful about our choices.

### Consider what you are buying.

It doesn't just come down to packaging. There are so many factors we can take into account when we are trying to shop greener. Heavily processed foods require large amounts of water and energy to produce, the same goes for meat products (without getting too much into that debate) as well as the journeys made by some of our international goods compared to those that are organic. Of course, it isn't exactly easy to gather our entire shop from local, organic sources, but we certainly need to have a respect for the process that gets our goods to the store in the first place.

### Think about how you store it.

As the market for reusable containers becomes vaster, the choice of coffee cups, water bottles and tupperwares can be a little overwhelming. Be smart in your decision. Plastic containers might be reusable but they can often contain nasty toxins and stain easily (Bolognese we're looking at you). Metal and glass alternatives can be a bit more on the expensive side but are kinder to the planet and our bodies, with the benefit of being highly recyclable even at the end of their lives.

### Be kind to yourself.

Our environmental responsibility can be difficult to envision as the process of environmental damage is so indirect. We are not literally throwing plastic into the sea. We aren't doing any of this on purpose; it seems more like a by-product of modern living that we as consumers feel powerless to stop. It helps to think of 'environmentally friendly' not as a destination but as a journey. None of us are perfect, and it's easy to slip up given the normalities of modern living. We need to be kind to ourselves as well as the planet, to try and be more conscious of the greater impact that even our small decisions have and to take responsibility for the choices that we make.



# AN INTERVIEW WITH MUJ AND AMELIA RANA ON THEIR LATEST CREATIVE VENTURE.

We met up with Muj and Amelia Rana (the masterminds behind Manchester's coolest boutique, *The Cow Hollow Hotel*) to discuss their latest creative venture – our very own *Mule*. The day-to-night café meets cocktail bar (or something in between) will debut alongside Anco&co later this year, opening its doors to members and non-members alike. Expect coffee shop casual meets cocktail bar sophistication. Expect industrial simplicity flecked with global accents of glamour; a clean, raw canvas as a backdrop embellished by the influence of travel and the meeting in aesthetic of its makers.

# MULE





**You’ve already brought us the iconic Northern Quarter Hotel, Cow Hollow. What inspired you to get into the hospitality industry?**

**Muj:** “It was an acute career change for us both. We had vastly different day jobs, initially in London, and then in Hong Kong. I was working in finance and Amelia in marketing at a music label. We both had this huge love for architecture and design that had been fed through from where we had lived and travelled, and creating something in that field which could link to the consumer sector tied in perfectly with hospitality.”

**Amelia:** “Design was an instrumental element in us getting into the industry. Neither of us have a background in leisure and hospitality, which has perhaps aided us in creating something which doesn’t fit the standard formula. I suppose we both also have an eye for detail when it comes to hotels - we tend to dissect every part of a building’s design, operations and atmosphere when we enter it. Which factors work, which don’t. We like to think that we’ve collected influence from all of the places we have been, and that has helped us put it all together to create something completely unique.”

## MULE IS SOMETHING MORE ALONG THE LINES OF MODERN COLONIAL

**So tell us about the name “Mule”**

**Muj:** “With Mule we didn’t want something that was too ‘pretty’ - it has to capture the aesthetic of Ancoats while also acting as a blank canvas that we aren’t going to pinned down by.”

**Amelia:** “Sometimes choosing a name can be quite limiting in the sense of creating a concrete brand. We don’t think of our style and décor in terms of permanence, we are very open to keeping a sense of fluidity and adapting our style over the years as we continue to be influenced by changing tastes in travel, food and drink globally. I think that’s what Mule is all about, it doesn’t have to have a solid meaning, because it may change to mean something completely different and we welcome that.”

**Will there be many similarities between Mule and Cow Hollow or should we expect something completely different?**

**Amelia:** “Different, but with accents of the same. Whenever we approach a design, we always respond to the building itself, so with Cow Hollow being an old textile warehouse and Mule being a new building, they were never going to be the same. This is something we’ve definitely taken into account in the design process, we want to celebrate the modern features of the space, stripping it back just enough to embrace the simplicity, while also injecting our own uniqueness.”

**Muj:** “We like to think of Cow Hollow’s style as Tropical Brutalism, while Mule is something more along the lines of Modern Colonial. It will share some similarities with its wood tones, dark foliage, limestone and colour palette but will keep in tone with the industrial-meets-high-end style that is characteristic of Ancoats vs the hotel’s more Northern Quarter flavour.”

**Mule is going to be both a café and cocktail bar. How will the space change from day to night?**

**Muj:** “I suppose it will be both and neither. From our experience we don’t enjoy how abrupt the transition can be in many places that switch from day to night on the hour, taking the lunch menu from your hands and putting a dinner menu under your nose. We don’t think that it has to be so strict. The shift has to be gradual and behind-the-scenes.”

**Amelia:** “We want the transition to feel natural - completely seamless throughout. The space has to be somewhere people want to stay for extended periods, we don’t want them to feel rushed or pressured into just having lunch there, or just a coffee meeting, or just a cocktail date. There’s no reason it can’t accommodate combinations of those things. It’s all in the little details, from reading the mood and adjusting the tempo of the music, the lighting, the candle placement, adjustments to the uniforms, even the types of flowers on the table. This is something Nico (the hotel’s customer engagement manager, and Mule’s future General Manager) has a very holistic view of. His strength in reading customers and adjusting the space to their mood makes the whole product very experiential. No two days have to be quite the same because the people there are not.”

**We can’t wait to see what this pair of creatives bring to Ancoats, and we’ve a feeling it’s going to be wonderful. Morning coffee fix, after work cocktail spot, we can’t wait to meet you. Anco&co members can expect exclusive discounts, on-your-doorstep benefits and community event partnerships.**







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# INFINITELY CONNECTED AND INTENSELY ALONE:

HOW TECHNOLOGY IS  
REDEFINING 'SOCIAL'

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**“We have never been so connected” is perhaps the worst phrase you can hear as you sit alone in your apartment on the umpteenth Friday night, assuring Netflix that yes, you are still watching, and thank you for your concern. Closely beaten, of course, by “sorry, we don’t deliver in your area” and the take-home-winner: “we need to talk”.**



**Being alone and loneliness are not the same. They each exist in their own right, just as they exist together. Sometimes the loneliness we feel when we are surrounded by other people can be more intense than the loneliness we feel when we are actually alone. It’s weird.**

Loneliness is something that we don’t like to admit to. It’s something we can deny, conceal quite neatly. It’s easy to present the image of a glittering social life through carefully staged and filtered photographs on Instagram. That boomerang CHEERS which certainly looks like the ultimate symbol of social sophistication but in reality often translates to a group of people sitting around a table staring at their phones instead of actually talking to each other.

We have never been so connected. And yet, why is it that one of the loneliest scenarios of the modern age is to be infinitely connected with the whole world from our bedroom and still be able to feel intensely alone?

This ‘connection’ is often what makes the loneliness more intense; to be quite content in our aloneness, before heading over to Instagram and seeing that a whole lot is happening, only somewhere else. The holidays we aren’t on, the parties we weren’t invited to, the clothes that don’t fit us, the phones we can’t afford.

Social media can often manifest an extremely negative experience, in the sense of an absence, a lack of, a not-being-there. It is great at connecting us, sure. But it is also very good at drawing our attention to what isn’t there.

When we compare what we see of the lives of others on social media, to what we see of our own, it can often feel like we are doing something wrong. We certainly haven’t woken up with perfect hair and a cosmic hunger for yoga. I don’t recall a time when a breakfast I made looked remotely glamorous enough that it required photographic documentation. My coffee doesn’t glint in sepia.

It sounds obvious, but it can be difficult to remember that social media is far from the lived experience of the life which it seeks to replicate. Imagine if you actually maintained that birds’ eye view of your Wagamama’s for the entire sitting. I’m not sure if you would have much of a social life left to salvage.

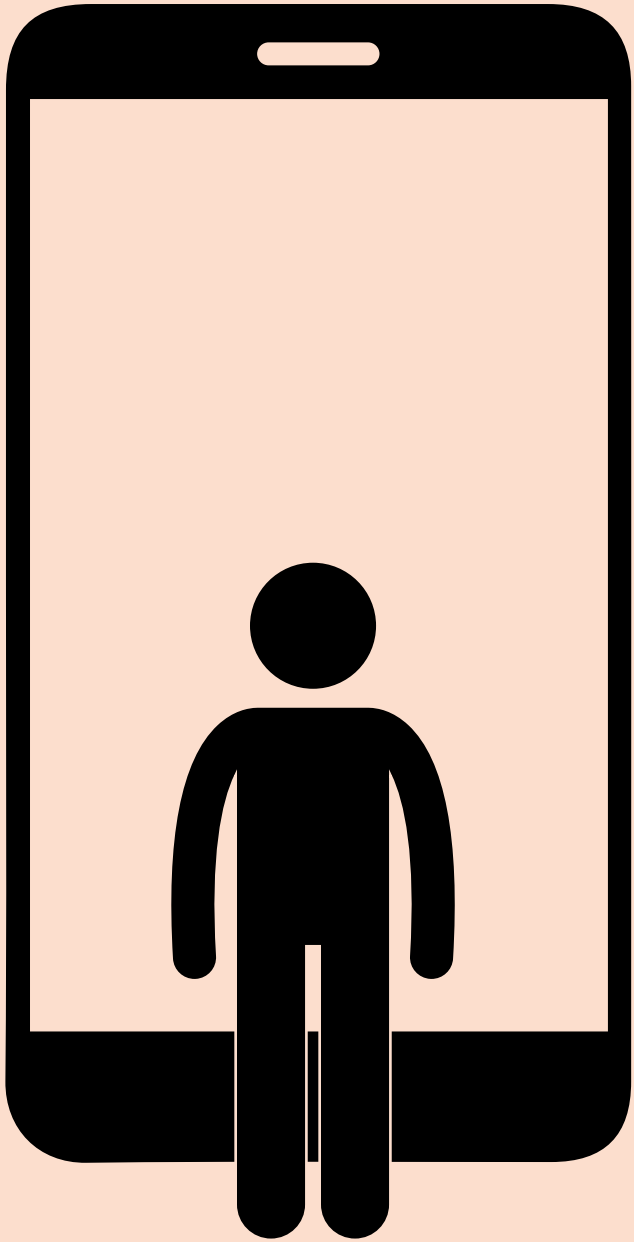
Technology is completely changing the way we interact socially. It is changing everything, we know this. But I’m not sure if any of us know what to do with this information.

“It’s scary”

We’ve all had this conversation.

“How far it’s come in our lifetime, what the hell will it be like in a thousand years?”

**OUR DEVICES MIGHT BE HANDHELD, BUT AT TIMES TECHNOLOGY CAN FEEL A GREAT DEAL BIGGER THAN US.**



And we all have our own ideas about this: self-driving cars, genetically confused thumbs, the diminishing need for customer service jobs, sex robots.

Technology can often feel like a hurtling and unstoppable force. There is a wonderful irony in the way that our phones and TVs continue to become successively more compact, more terrifyingly breakable (for the clumsy among us) as the technology inside them gets bigger and bigger.

“There’s more technology in that phone than they used to put man on the moon!”

Honestly, we all know this by now.

Our devices might be handheld, but at times technology can feel a great deal bigger than us. When I try and put the internet into a mental picture it is as big as the sky and as tangled as a ball of hair, wired like a brain. It is so much that it becomes nothing, a concept as great and unfathomable as space. It makes my head hurt.

Without going too deeply into it, it has to be said that there is something quite extraordinary in how we can talk to people who live on the other side of the world in just a second, a concept that once took weeks, months even, and before that was an impossibility.

How people are starting business empires from their bedrooms, finding others who share their quirks. We are telling stories, sharing information, educating ourselves on just about anything. Social media is providing freelancers with a global network, connecting long lost families. We are making the world smaller, extending our communities, breaking borders, giving voice to minorities, demanding better, faster, fairer; we have never been so connected.

We are living in an amazing, terrifying time where life and technology seem to be heading down an entwining and ever indistinguishable road. We need to remember that they are not and never will be the same. To know when to switch off our phones and pick up our lives with the same transfixation and unadulterated concentration that we seem to give freely to strangers’ cats and recipes that we are probably never going to replicate.

Technology is not the problem, but it does create one. It has forged a strange illusion that we are all highly connected when in reality, many of us are starved of real human contact.

If technology was an adequate replacement for real social interaction, it would not explain how we are able to miss someone more after speaking to them on the phone, how we are able to have whole conversations over text in a completely different mood to the one that we are actually in. That if the same conversation were happening in real life, it would be unrecognisable.

We do not want technology to deprive us of our humanity. This is why we love antiques so much, thrift shops, vintage versions of our modern things. We romanticise the past, it comforts us.

One birthday, my friends bought me a beautiful blue Olivetti typewriter. When I type on it and I make a mistake, I have to start again. This is something I could fix on Microsoft Word in 0.001 seconds. It is one of my most prized possessions.

As my old, unsalvageable phones pile up in drawers, (seriously, what are you supposed to do with your water-damaged, smashed up iPhone 4?), my typewriter will always be one of those things that that retains its beauty, its invaluableness. Because it is old, it is nostalgic and it doesn’t delete your entire essay the week before your dissertation hand in.

I might have gone off topic.

I think what I am trying to say is that there is no substitute for authenticity, for the real thing. That technology only terrifies us because we are not quite sure what to do with it. That it is a wonderful gift, but we haven’t quite figured it out yet. That we can use it to do incredible, presently unfathomable things, and we will continue to do that. And we should celebrate technology and let it help us, but not let it take us away from what is real.

Nothing can really compare to being there, right there in the moment. Not thinking about how you look or who is looking. But being unapologetically and entirely present ■





# ON THE INANIMATE

## REIMAGINING OUR RELATINOSHIP WITH THINGS

**Our relationship with the inanimate seems to be now, more than ever, the subject of a social-moral tug of war. Stuff. Whether we want more or less of it there seems to be no correlation with how much we had in the first place.**



We can have everything (in the most material sense of the phrase) and want more. Others can have very little and wish to have less still. From the consumerist to the minimalist, we all have our own complicated relationship with things.

On top of this, there is an ever-growing social guilt for our throwaway culture. For the attitude of disposability that seems to have risen in correlation with our increasing ability to mass produce and mass consume just about anything. The root cause of our greatest environmental nightmares: deforestation, animal extinction, water pollution, climate change.

Our relationship with things almost always coincides with the desire for ownership. To need something, whether if for a moment, for a while, just once and never again, more often than not precedes owning it. We live in a world where the desire and fulfilment for and of an object can be completed within five seconds and two clicks.

But once this desire for ownership is satiated, how often does our new thing become just that: a thing. An object, taker of space, stripped of its promise to be anything more. And just as soon as we sought to own something, we seek to lose it again. [Cue underwhelming Depop sale].

The climate emergency, the plastic crisis, the catastrophic impact our consumer culture is having on our planet, comes to us in a surge of guilt as we haul refuse sacks of unrecyclables, the fruit of our every-so-often clear outs to their resting place, the bin.

Here, if only for a moment, we are met with the horrible realisation that we aren't really throwing anything away. There is no magic, no disappearing act. We don't get rid of things, we move them. We are very good at pretending that, upon getting 'rid' of something, we are in fact rid of it. That our responsibility of this object ceases because it is no longer in our possession.



**We think of the troubling images we see of beaches somewhere on the news, plastic bags and beer cans where sand should be. Grotesquely cross-sectioned gulls with bloated bellies filled with straws, bottle tops. Fish strangled by beer can rings. *The turtles.***

In this moment, our metal straws don't feel quite enough. We feel the true weight of our disposability. It's ugly. Our cheap, throwaway goods come at a cost that we cannot organise from low to high (including shipping) on Amazon.

Our attitude towards the inanimate needs to change. We need to stop pretending that there is actually such thing as 'disposable'. To awaken a new respect for our things. Rather than buy; to build, to make, to hire, to borrow. To circulate goods rather than send them to the landfill. To diminish the need for ownership of the incredibly (occasionally) useful.

When we really look at what we own, how much of it do we actually use? Many of us can admit that a significant portion of our personal inventory can go for months, even years unused. Whether gifted, bought with impulse or intent. Are we actually going to learn how to play the ukulele? Does fixing a pair of trousers once a year justify the sewing machine? Does anyone really need to own a chocolate fountain?

And while it seems strange that we should seek to completely diminish our need for the ownership of things (it is obscure to imagine our homes void of all possessions beyond absolute necessity), our recognition of the responsibility that we have of the lifespan of an object needs to come into question.

We are owners and collectors by nature, and our possessions do define us in some sense as physical manifestations of our memories, travels and experiences. However, it is not the ownership of the 'sentimental' that requires quite as much reimagination. These are the things that we seem to acquire, rather than seek out, regardless of their monetary value.

When we wish to own something, our perspective of our use for and of the object is generally attached to the short term association. When we think that we 'need' something, we fail to take into account how long we need it for, what will happen after we stop needing it and the fact that the object and its materials will often long outlive us.

We need to imagine our goods beyond the moment that we want or use them. To disenchant ourselves from the packaging, deals and clever marketing strategies that often lead us to buy beyond our needs and wants. To think about where the item will be long after we need it. To recognise that just because we throw something away, we do not stop being responsible for it.

Sharing culture is a concept that is seemingly idealistic, difficult to attain in an age where it is superficially easier to click a few buttons and own something instead. But easier for who exactly? Certainly not the planet. Certainly not for the environmental crisis that we all seem to acknowledge and sympathise with a great deal.

Reimagining our relationship with things is not a task that should be taken lightly. It asks us to look not only at what we own, but at ourselves. To shift our perspective to prioritise the good of the planet over the good of convenience, materialism and trend. To take responsibility for our goods for their entire lifespan.

The Swap Shop is a concept as philosophical as it is ethical. It demands a respect for the treatment of goods while alleviating us of owning unnecessarily. It lightens us of our things, takes us closer to the minimalism that our every-so-often clear outs strive toward. To share, to donate, to swap, to enjoy, and most importantly, to return.

Sharing culture might be one of the most simple, yet direct ways to tackle our throwaway attitude to goods. Saving us money, space, time, and maybe even the planet. To remind us that things do not and should not disappear, but circulate

“All this waiting around is gonna make me rusty”







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# KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD: A GUIDE TO GETTING LOST

**How many of us are explorers of our own neighbourhoods? How often do we walk down our own streets with the same intrigue that we possess when we are elsewhere?**

It isn't a common practice to wander through our own cities with the same inquisitiveness that we adopt on our getaways and city-breaks. Many of us spend hours poring over travel blogs, visitor guides and Lonely Planet forums, wanting the best and most authentic experience of the place we're passing through.

82% of us admit to exploring less than half of our home city. There are many explanations for this. One may be the feeling of temporality that we experience when abroad; we are limited to a certain number of days and hours to soak up as much as we can before we inevitably return home. Or, it may be that we take our hometowns for granted. They are simply there, constant, without travel, expense and the need to exchange our currency or weigh our suitcase seven times.

But the fact that our cities attract a global host of visitors speaks for itself in justifying their worthiness of exploring. And with layer upon layer of history, the meeting of cultures and the fusion of the traditional and contemporary, our cities are goldmines for new knowledge and experiences.

We spent an afternoon getting lost in Manchester's Ancoats and Northern Quarter, rediscovered a love for our city and learned some cool things along the way. Here are our top picks of stories, places and points of interest that make our local city different from anywhere else in the world.



# THE ORIGINAL COTTONPOLIS

If you say the word ‘Cottonopolis’ in the Northern Quarter, chances are people think you’re talking about that (really great) Asian fusion restaurant on Newton Street. While you’d be making a top recommendation, it has a more significant meaning than Bao buns and espresso martinis.



Manchester was once the powerhouse of the Industrial Revolution and Ancoats was considered the world’s first ‘industrial suburb’, being the first residential district in history built solely for the working class. And while Ancoats has more recently been named among the world’s ‘coolest neighbourhoods’ (beating the likes of New York and San Francisco we’ll have you know), it was once a place of extreme poverty, adverse living conditions and perhaps the worst sanitation in the whole of the UK.

Poorly built back to back housing, neglected waste disposal and extreme overcrowding led to death and disease. A far cry from the hipster haven and coffee shop kingdom that we know now.

Anita Street, which is now a row of pristine and extremely sought after housing, was once situated within the filthy slums of the industrial suburb. These houses became the first built as part of a public housing development that had their own toilet and sink (as opposed to the shared cesspits that had been the standard). They were so proud of this in fact, that they named it ‘Sanitary Street’. Residents later dropped the bookends of the word to give the street a slightly more homely connotation.

‘Regeneration’ is a phrase that the more seasoned Mancunians will associate with Ancoats. But with its plethora of emerging bars, cafés and restaurants, independent success stories and small business start-ups, it’s difficult for contemporaries of the neighbourhood to imagine a time when ‘regeneration’ was the required term. This seems to suggest that they’re doing a pretty good job.

## THE WOVEN CITY

The city’s rich industrial history is deeply embedded within its identity. Ever wondered why the Northern Quarter’s beautifully distinctive tiled street signs appear both in blue and white depending which street you’re on?

The blue tiles with white writing correspond to the streets situated east to west, while the white signs with blue writing correspond to the streets which are north to south. This was a commissioned artwork by Tim Rushton (yes, even our street signs are works of art) which beautifully embodies the interweaving of streets that make up the fabric of the ‘Cottonopolis’. Pretty cool, right?

## THE ANCOATS PEEPS

Inspired by the ancient practice of walling up objects inside buildings as good luck charms, The Ancoats Peeps are an artwork commissioned by Dan Dubowitz for an Ancoats regeneration project that offer ‘a fleeting glimpse at walled up space’ and provide an insight into Ancoats’ industrial past. From a disused toilet to a sewing room, The ‘Peeps’ are capsules containing moments of Ancoats’ industry stood still.

Placed unassumingly in alleyways and hidden in plain sight on the side of buildings, they can be hard to spot (but looking for them can become addictive). Having been commissioned almost a decade ago, many of the Peeps that we managed to discover were blacked out. However, we found that looking for them provided a brilliant walking tour of Ancoats’ industrial district (and we got way too excited when we found one). Can you find any still-functioning Peeps?





**A day of local tourism in Manchester would be incomplete without going on the hunt for some of its famous street art; not that you would have to look far to find some.**

## STREET ART

Manchester's Northern Quarter is renowned for its incredible street art scene. An outdoor, open air gallery of immersive pieces and hidden gems. On nearly every street you can find some amazing works, from the enormous and thought provoking pieces designed for the City of Hope Festival which respond to profound social issues, to smaller and anonymous works.

It would be pointless to simply make a list of the ever changing and emerging works (just as soon as something appears it can be replaced by something new), so the best way is to head out and discover them for yourself. Why not spend an afternoon getting lost in the NQ on the hunt for street art?

And while we love Manchester's graffiti scene, our favourite has to be local artist, Mark Kennedy's mosaic masterpieces which are dotted throughout the Northern Quarter and Ancoats (both indoors and outside).

Check out his famous work on the side of Affleck's Palace, seek out the Guardian of Ancoats on Blossom Street and see how many you can spot. We even caught him transporting one of his works through a side street just of Ancoats' main square

## LICKER'S ALLEY

Around the time of the Second World War, Ancoats and the Northern Quarter saw a large Italian community. Just off Tib Street, vendors would sell ice cream from mobile stands. Customers would lick the ice cream from pieces of glass which were then 'cleaned' on a contraption attached to the trolley.

Rumour had it that customers might just get a helping of typhoid with their ninety-nine (which surely can't have been great PR for them back then.) One community story states that the biscuit cone we know and love was actually invented in Ancoats by Antonio Valvona. A perfect excuse to raise a cone on the streets of Ancoats to our guy Antonio and thank him for the best accompaniment to ice cream (rivalled only by a breakup or a really bad day).

As well as ice cream and typhoid, Tib Street was also famous for being a paradise of pet shops back in the day. This is commemorated by the installation of dozens of metal birds around the street. You might want to double take that pigeon.

## BAND ON THE WALL

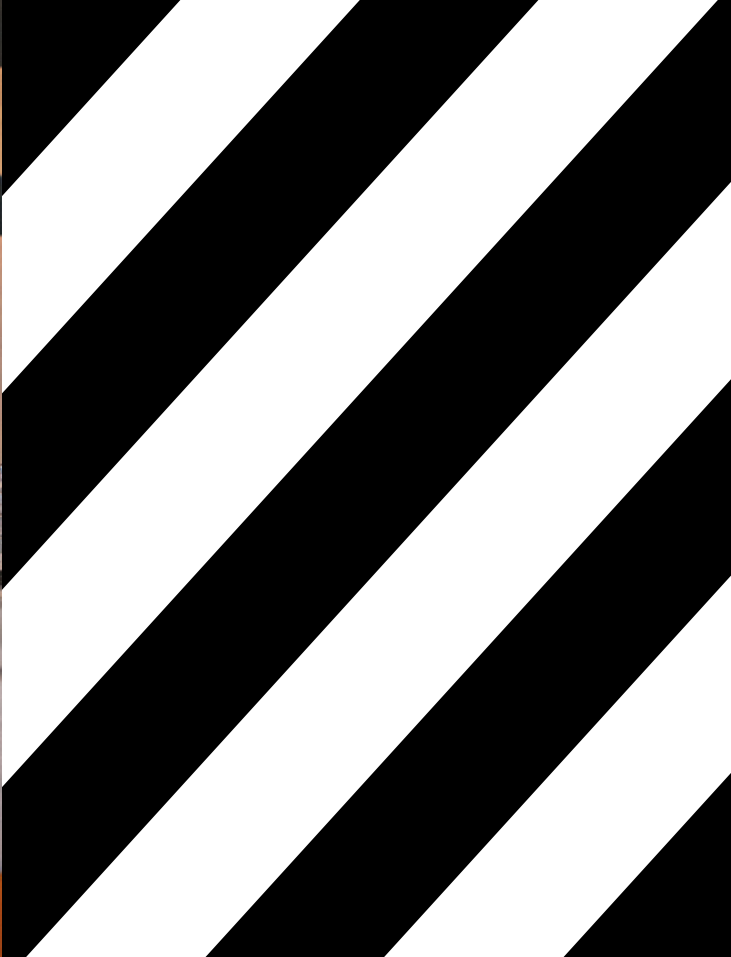
I had never really given much thought to how this iconic music venue (which has been in action for more than a century) had got its name. The owner at the time had decided that he wanted live music in what was then the George and Dragon pub in the early 20th century but didn't want to compromise on the footfall.

He then decided to literally suspend a stage from the wall to accommodate a band (...and to think this was before the days of Instagram life hacks). This nickname eventually became the namesake of the venue and bands continue to perform, though thankfully in less hair-raising conditions.

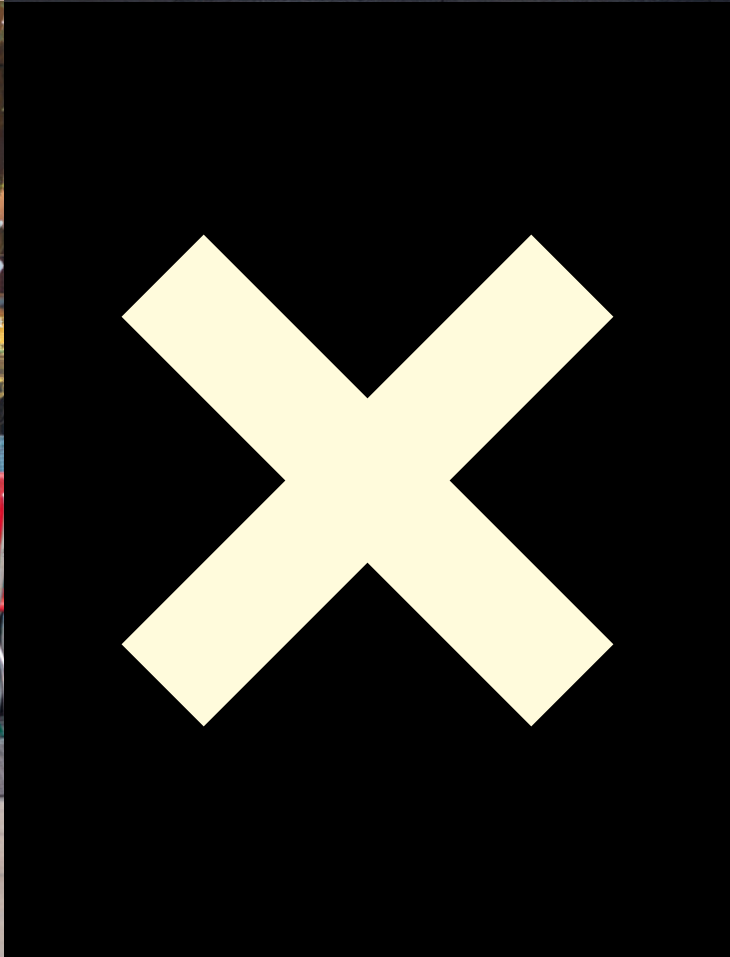
While we may have only scratched the surface of the history and culture of our neighbourhood, we have awoken a new love for exploring and reinforced how proud we are to call this city ours. Next time you're at a loss for what to do on your Sunday afternoon, why not rediscover a place that you thought you knew?





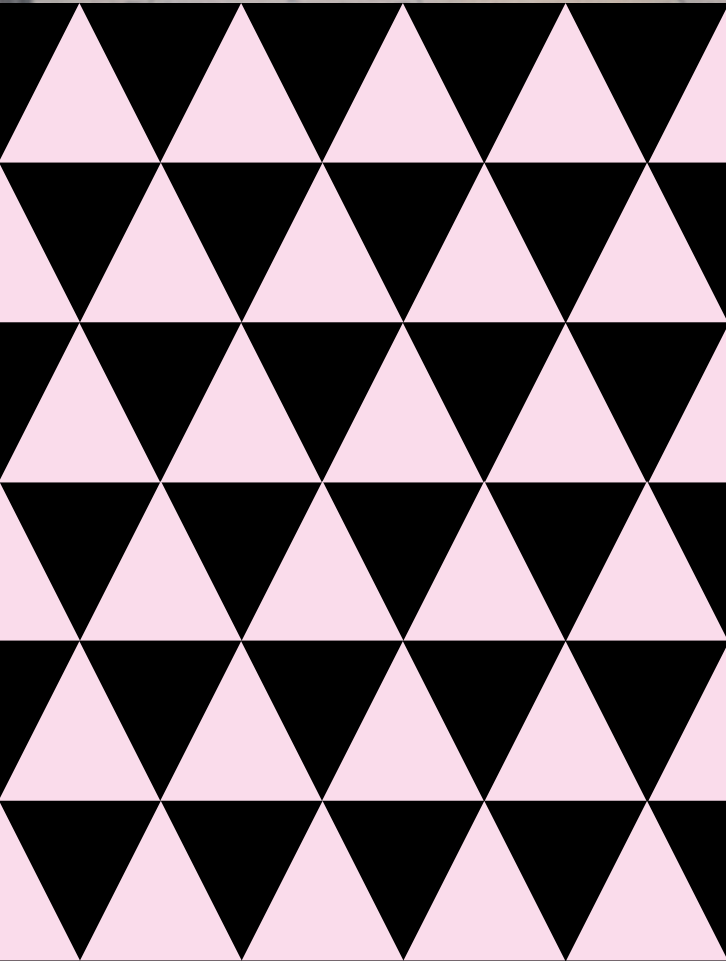


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