

UGO 0.2

THE UNION OF HUMAN INTELLIGENCE TASKWORKERS



Chris Alton |

May 2019— June 2019

www.uccfineart.com/the-union-of-h-i-t-chris-alton

The Wild West of Digital Labour

UGO 0.2 welcomes artist Chris Alton, for the sixth curated digital project in the 2018-19 programme.

The initial context for this project, within the wider remit of UGO 0.2, was to develop a commission which investigated the potential of collaborative practices and environments from a digitalised, internet-based perspective.

Alton, who's previous expansive and holistic collaborative works include *English Disco Lovers [EDL]*, proposed a project from an ongoing interest with the lack of collective organising power; workers benefits and employer rights of *Human Intelligence Task [HIT]* workers.

The commission has employed* a small group of *Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk)* HIT workers to collaboratively design a union banner about their working conditions. The HIT workers, conducted research, exchanged notes and drawings, and offered feedback on the banner's design as it developed.

Alton conceived the project as a possible avenue for dissent and solidarity for the HIT workers. *The Union of Human Intelligence Taskworkers* reveals their working conditions to a wider audience, whilst also commenting on broader issues regarding precarious labour, automation, and trade/workers unions in the digital age.

*For a living wage of £10.00 p/hour, which is substantially higher than rates paid on *MTurk*.

Chris Alton

www.chrisalton.com

Whether deploying disco music in opposition to fascism, recording a rhythm 'n' blues album about tax avoidance, or proposing art schools be built over golf courses, Alton's work addresses the interconnected nature of prevailing social, political, economic and environmental conditions.

In 2012 Alton founded *English Disco Lovers (EDL)*, a protest group that looked to reclaim the 'EDL' acronym of the English Defence League. The project involved; online occupations, street-level protests, club nights, talks and exhibitions. Other projects include *Under the Shade I Flourish* (2015-16), in which a 1960s rhythm 'n' blues band became a vehicle to discuss the interconnected nature of Britain's colonial history, tax avoidance and soft power. In 2017 Alton curated *You're Surrounded by Me* at Turf Projects, Croydon, a group exhibition which commented "on the political importance of love, humour, non-violence, collaboration and speculative futures." (Hatty Nestor, Studio International, Sept 2017)

UGO 0.2 Project Space

UGO 0.2 is a digital project space.

The project space intends to theorise, test and consider the increased focus in digital production and curation in contemporary fine art practice. The developing output will form a programme of collaborative, temporary, formal and solo research practice projects by students, staff and invited artists.

UGO 0.2 is kindly supported by the *UCC Research Fund 2018-19*.



**BA [Hons] Fine Art
Research at University Centre Colchester**

This digital space is part of the *BA [HONS] Fine Art* research programme at *University Centre Colchester's* School of Art, the purpose of which is to document, facilitate and test research interests related to contemporary fine art practices in a digital format.

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