



### **International Necronautical Society (INS)**

Founded in 1999 by **Tom McCarthy**, the International Necronautical Society (INS) spreads itself as both fiction and actuality, often blurring the two. “Famously described as ‘replaying the avant-garde along the faultline of death’” (*Art Monthly*, London), the INS inhabits and appropriates a variety of art forms and cultural moments from the defunct avant-gardes of the last century to the political, corporate and conspiratorial organisations they mimicked. The INS’s manifestos, proclamations, reports, broadcasts, hearings, inspectorates, departments, committees and sub-committees are the vehicles for interventions in the space of art, fiction, philosophy and media.

### **INS: Key Events 1999–2010**

The following briefing is provided by the INS Department of Propaganda for journalists and editors. Several key events/interventions in the history of the organisation are summarised.

#### **1999 Founding Manifesto**

The International Necronautical Society’s founding manifesto declares an intent to map the spaces that open around the sign of death in the fields of literature, art, science and culture; to plot and to follow the paths that lead to these spaces. It also speaks of a ‘craft’: as the vehicle to be constructed, and as the practice to be identified and cultivated in order to realise the necronautical project.

#### **2000 First Committee Hearings**

First Committee Members’ depositions are heard by the General Secretary, Lux Gallery, London.

**2002      Publication: Navigation Was Always a Difficult Art**

INS General Secretary **Tom McCarthy**'s First Report to the INS analyses and compares the depositions of his guests during a two week residency at the Office of Anti-Matter (Austrian Cultural Forum, London) and suggests future directions for the INS. Presented at the Royal Geographical Society, London.

**2002      Media Infiltration**

Experimental, unauthorised insertion of cleartext INS propaganda messages into the source code of the BBC News website. Carried out by INS covert agents.

**2002      Second First Committee Hearings: Transmission, Death, Technology**

INS First Committee Delegation: **Tom McCarthy** (General Secretary), **Anthony Auerbach** (Chief of Propaganda), **Zinovy Zinik** (Extra-mural Assessor) question witnesses: **Heath Bunting** (retired artist), **John Cussans** (writer and cultural theorist), **Ken Hollings** (novelist), **Cerith Wyn Evans** (artist), **Jane Lewty** (researcher), **Manu Luksch** and **Mukul Patel** (ambientTV.net) on the practice of wireless communication and cryptography. Cubitt Gallery, London.

**2003      First Committee Purges**

INS Executive Council issues a proclamation detailing changes in personnel and policy adjustments. Nearly all the members of the First Committee at its founding in 1999 are expelled.

**2003      Publication: Calling All Agents: Transmission, Death, Technology**

INS General Secretary Tom **McCarthy**'s Second Report to the INS analyses and maps the testimony of the witnesses arraigned at the Second First Committee Hearings (see above). McCarthy develops the themes of encoding, encryption and entombment, transmission, subjectivity and death, as a model for the INS's own Radio Station. Presented at Institute of Contemporary Arts, London.

In Cocteau's 1950 film Orphée, in scenes modelled on the secret communications networks operated by the Résistance during the Second World War, the hero hears lines of coded radio transmissions from a dead poet. McCarthy argues that this conjunction of the technological, the aesthetic and the political is loaded with contemporary significance. He maps the transmission-reception figure across Freud, Heidegger, Hergé, Burroughs and Nabokov, the invention of the telephone and the discovery of Tutenkhamun, connecting it with contemporary artistic strategies and wireless technologies.

**2004      Calling All Agents: INS Broadcasting Station**

A radio station broadcasting on FM, via the internet and rebroadcast worldwide from a Transmission Room installed at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London by the **INS Communications and Encodings Subcommittee**, following the protocols outlined in the General Sec-

retary's Report (see above). The key elements of INS broadcasting are reception, transcription, transformation: hearing and calling. Accordingly, the Transmission Room is configured as a crypt in the sense described by the psychoanalytical writers Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok.

**2004 – INS Inspectorate Berlin**

Initiated in 2004 and continuing to date, the mission of the INS Inspectorate Berlin is to gather and develop material for a reading of the city of Berlin — the 'World Capital of Death', as the INS identified it — following the INS's main interests: marking and erasure, transit and transmission, cryptography and death.

2004      **Advance Reconnaissance**

Preliminary assessments, propaganda and recruitment are carried out by INS General Secretary **Tom McCarthy** assisted by INS Scout **Diana Baldon**, Sparwasser HQ, Berlin.

2005      **Aerial Reconnaissance**

Identification and inspection of sites of erasure in the city of Berlin: very low altitude aerial surveys are carried out by INS Chief of Propaganda (Archiving and Epistemological Critique) **Anthony Auerbach**. Additional research on transport, transit, translation networks is carried out by INS Chief Obituary Reviewer **Melissa McCarthy**. Based at Sparwasser HQ, Berlin.

2006      **Office of Interpretation**

A parasitic apparatus for working on the material obtained during the Aerial Reconnaissance phase of the Inspectorate (see above) in Pantheon: Heroes and Anti-Monuments, Galéria Medium, Bratislava. Installed by INS Chief of Propaganda (Archiving and Epistemological Critique) **Anthony Auerbach**.

**2007      INS New York Declaration: Joint Statement on Inauthenticity**

Presented by INS General Secretary **Tom McCarthy** and INS Chief Philosopher **Simon Critchley** at the Drawing Center, New York. The Joint Statement advances inauthenticity as one of the central tenets of INS thinking, with a compelling critique of the notion of authenticity in art, literature, philosophy and politics.

**2008      Public Briefing: Aerial Reconnaissance**

INS Chief of Propaganda **Anthony Auerbach** explains flash bombs, reading material and INS Aerial Reconnaissance operations. Images recovered during the INS Inspectorate Berlin are shown to a packed audience in Freddy's Backroom, Brooklyn, in an event hosted by Triple Canopy.

**2008 Exhibition: Eclipse — Art in a Dark Age**

**Publication: Calling All Agents (Swedish translation)**

INS installs a Black Box Transmitter in Stockholm's Moderna Museet, transmitting on 94.4 FM in the Stockholm area for the duration of the exhibition (curated by Magnus af Petersens with Paul McCarthy, Mike Nelson, Dana Schutz and others).

**2008 Proclamation: Art and Democracy**

INS General Secretary **Tom McCarthy** delivers the INS Proclamation on Art and Democracy as part of the Serpentine Gallery's Manifesto Marathon. This proclamation was commissioned in 2003 by Peer for their publication Art and Democracy. Peer's publication was later abandoned "in view of recent events". As "recent events" rumble on, INS Proclamation does not lose its relevance.

**2009 INS London Declaration: Joint Statement on Inauthenticity**

Presented by INS General Secretary **Tom McCarthy** and INS Chief Philosopher **Simon Critchley** at Tate Britain in anticipation of the Altermodern, Tate Triennial curated by Nicolas Bourriaud.

**2009 Exhibition: Awake Are Only the Spirits**

INS installs a Black Box Transmitter in Dortmund's Hartware Medienkunstverein (curated by Inke Arns and Thibaut de Ruyter).

**2009 INS Athens Declaration: Joint Statement on Inauthenticity**

Presented by INS General Secretary **Tom McCarthy** and INS Chief Philosopher **Simon Critchley** as part of the second Athens Biennale.

**2009 Publication: Aerial Reconnaissance Berlin**

Dossier by Chief of Propaganda **Anthony Auerbach** detailing Aerial Reconnaissance operations (see INS Inspectorate Berlin above).

**2009 The INS celebrates the tenth anniversary of its founding manifesto.**

See above, 1999

**2010 INS Declaration on the Future**

Presented by INS General Secretary **Tom McCarthy**, the INS declares the future a cultural and political red herring in 26 numbered paragraphs.

**2010 Exhibition: Narcissus Trance**

INS installs a Black Box Transmitter in London's E:vent Gallery (curated by Shama Khanna and Paul Purgas)

**2010      INS Commission on Crypts: Architecture, Neurosis and Death**

A public session of the INS Inspectorate Technical Commission on Crypts, chaired by INS General Secretary **Tom McCarthy** with external assessors **Chloe Aridjis** and **Richard Martin** was held to hear testimony from architect **Patrick Lynch** and psychoanalyst **Darian Leader**. Hosted by Sigmund Freud and Buster Keaton as part of The Surreal House at the Barbican Art Gallery

**2010      Briefing on the INS Inspectorate Berlin**

Unauthorised briefing presented by Alexander Provan (editor of Triple Canopy) and Nine Eglantine Yamamoto-Masson at Program, Berlin.

**2010      A Hearing on the Activities of the International Necronautical Society**

INS General Secretary **Tom McCarthy** and INS Chief Philosopher Simon Critchley answered questions during a hearing convened by the editors of Triple Canopy and Cabinet, New York.

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**INS Department of Propaganda Press Digest**

What they say about the INS

... clever, confident, emphatic, poised. The INS ... launched with an advert on the front page of The Times, just as Marinetti's manifesto ran in Le Figaro 90 years earlier.

Jenny Turner, London Review of Books

... we find ourselves in a perilous situation: Each of us has been turned into a medium of transmission, doomed to convey no other message than that quality of our being — a condition that is not only generally accepted but, having in certain circles achieved an aesthetic aspect, relished. For certain prevalent and profitable systems of exchange, such as art and finance, this situation is ideal. And yet it has also made us — especially those of us who consider ourselves to be producers and consumers of culture, and for whom ideas and trends are a common currency — vulnerable to the International Necronautical Society.

I will provide an explanation as best I can, but be warned: Our knowledge of the INS's activities is fragmentary at best, and our understanding of its intentions, and even its tactics, is limited.

...

I wish I could tell you what the INS wants—what it wants from you. Lacking such clarity, I have provided in this report an outline of the group's activities and the threat it poses, as well as an inducement to remain vigilant. As it stands, I fear that the INS is dangerous precisely because it has no discernible goals beyond, seemingly, disrupting the very sort of experience you have gathered here to enjoy—if only by disingenuously simulating it. Nevertheless, I am hopeful that

the INS will ultimately find that this space of death it intends to “map, enter, colonize and, eventually, inhabit” is but a specter, a horizon constantly receding behind the reams of data it hoards and the specious theories it concocts.

I leave you with a quotation recalled by the poet Reiner Kunze. After being interrogated by a Stasi officer for thirty hours, he was told: “I forbid you to write lines of poetry with double meanings. We have experts who decode everything!”

Alexander Provan, [Triple Canopy](#)

International Necronautical Society (INS): the semi-fictional, quasi-totalitarian conceptual art collective that McCarthy founded in 1999 with a pastiche manifesto in [The Times](#). ‘All cults of authenticity,’ it declares, ‘should be abandoned.’

James Purdon, [The Observer](#)

So, while Dorian Gray projects his perfect image into the world, Necronauts keep faith with the “rotting flesh- assemblage hanging in his attic”; as Ernest Shackleton forces his dominance fantasy onto the indifferent polar expanse, Necronauts concern themselves with the ‘blackened, frostbitten toes he and his crew were forced to chop from their own feet, cook on their stove and eat.’ And so on. Like Chuck Ramkisson, they have a motto: ‘We are all Necronauts, always, already,’ which is recycled Derrida (as ‘blood like champagne’ is recycled Dostoevsky). That is to say, we are all death-marked creatures, defined by matter — though most of us most of the time pretend not to be.

Zadie Smith, [New York Review of Books](#)

The INS Declaration ... sits within the British tradition of the comedy of bureaucratic procedure. The bureaucratic comedy is activated by the undoing of form by matter, the intrinsically futile attempt to organize unruly matter into rational form. Think of the spiralling vortices of disaster that occur when Basil Fawlty or David Brent or Alan Partridge attempts to control the stubborn realities of matter itself — the car won’t start, the tree won’t budge, the stain won’t shift. And the tighter matter is grabbed the better to control it, the sooner it shoots away, like a wet bar of soap. The detail — the lanyard, the stanchion, the emailed instruction — is the grip, the setup that allows the punch line to work.

When bureaucratic comedy edges into slapstick, it becomes death’s dress rehearsal; the trip, the spill, and the fall are prototypical acts. As the Declaration has it (quoting Paul de Man), ‘the falling man is...“a thing in the grip of gravity,” the end point of all gravity being the grave.’ In assuming the structure of the bureaucratic comedy — in setting up the setup — the INS navigates the space of death, makes its members literal ‘necronauts’.

Ben Street, [Triple Canopy](#)

It is possible to think of the INS as a cultural narrative, a viral entity that exists because of a growing number of participants and collaborations with fellow artists and writers. Many people fail to see the point of the INS's weird research and read it as an ironic joke or a ridiculous mission of mapping death in the style of an expedition ... Without addressing allegations of necrophilia [the INS] considers death only as a space of representation, a realm to be explored and brought out by means of a set of practices such as drawings, maps, texts and speeches (craft as the INS calls it) ... As a tactical and philosophical hybrid between Futurist farce and agit-prop manipulation of the communications network, the INS functions as a complete artwork. The combination of anachronistic artistic models like the manifesto ... the recuperation of discourses obsessed by control structures (governmental agencies, secret services, party committees) all represent a parody of a totalising project about knowledge, not death.

Diana Baldon, Untitled

... it generally stands as a cipher for the outer limit of description, for the point at which the code breaks down, a point that is often alive, as McCarthy points out, with secret desires ... It seems that this is what the INS stands for: a horror of finished truths and a compulsive probing of the possibilities and failures of language ... The INS is a group of rogue agents who have infiltrated the worlds of art, literary criticism and philosophy.

Marcus Verhagen, Art Monthly

From the appropriation of bureaucratic language to meticulous reporting and documentation, everything about the INS has Kafkaesque overtones ... belongs to the conceptual lineage of groups such as Laibach and the associated Neue Slovenische Kunst.

The Wire

McCarthy is good ... the synapses of his fertile imagination zap him from Melville to Aeschylus to the Kipper Twins ... Rilke's terrifying Duino angels as World Trade Centre artists and/or Trojan Horse terrorists.

Times Literary Supplement

Online sources:

[http://www.canopycanopycanopy.com/1/state\\_of\\_inauthenticity](http://www.canopycanopycanopy.com/1/state_of_inauthenticity)

[http://www.canopycanopycanopy.com/5/the\\_matter\\_of\\_past\\_loving\\_london](http://www.canopycanopycanopy.com/5/the_matter_of_past_loving_london)

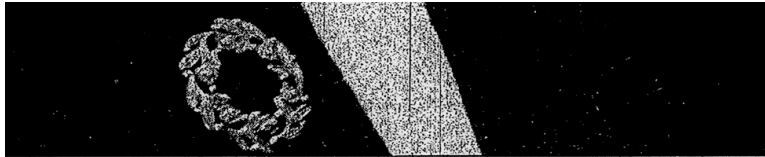
[http://canopycanopycanopy.com/static/files/endpoint\\_of\\_all\\_gravity.pdf](http://canopycanopycanopy.com/static/files/endpoint_of_all_gravity.pdf)

<http://listen.to/necronauts>

[http://www.believmag.com/issues/200806/?read=interview\\_mccarthy](http://www.believmag.com/issues/200806/?read=interview_mccarthy)

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/22083>

## INS Founding Manifesto



e High Court to give evidence for her husband. Page 3

Photograph: Chris Harris

100-strong electoral college had originally been called to interview the four shortlisted candidates. But the interviews did not go ahead because the party activists voted by 54 to 30 for the 20-strong selection executive to reconvene and increase

Continued on page 4, col 8

## INSIDE

## New Branson lottery bid

Richard Branson, the Virgin chairman, launched his second attempt to win the National Lottery licence by promising that he would set up a People's Lottery that could raise an extra £1 billion for good causes. 10, 15

## Tudjman snub

Most world leaders attended the state funeral of modern Croatia's founding President, Franjo Tudjman, because of his authoritarianism. Thousands of citizens bid him farewell. 13

## England draw

England successfully avoided the threat of a second defeat in the Test series against South Africa in Port Elizabeth as Pakistan's Imran Hussain hit an unbeaten 70. 44

## Financier moves in for M&amp;S

By FRASER NELSON

A MONACO-BASED financier with close links to the billionaire Barclay brothers yesterday confirmed that he is considering launching a takeover bid for Marks & Spencer.

M&S shares, which rose sharply last week amid takeover speculation, fell 9 per cent to 273p. City analysts said Philip Green, who took over the Sears retail empire earlier this year, may find it difficult to raise the £11.5 billion that would be needed to acquire M&S through a hostile bid.

Tesco refused to rule out a takeover bid for M&S and could emerge as a white knight. More than 40 million M&S shares were traded yesterday as private investors continued to speculate on the outcome of a bid battle.

Business, page 23

## as a happy bully

although he was over- Tom and a friend eventually.

ey sounds more like 1857: e children claimed to suffer the hands of bullies severely.

Fewer than 3 per cent of o being habitual physical sing others every week) 2 to 16 per cent bullying though most of these children themselves bullied. Very few o the category of "pure" never victims.

ilf (45.9 per cent) of primary- experienced "relational bullying and teasing" — in the s. The relational bullies the least behaviour problem- continued on page 2, col 1



"You're ill — you need to get out and do a bit of bullying!"

## ADVERTISEMENT

We, the First Committee of the International Necronautical Society, declare the following:

1. That death is a type of space, which we intend to map, enter, colonise and, eventually, inhabit.
2. That there is no beauty without death, its immanence. We shall sing death's beauty — that is, beauty.
3. That we shall take it upon us, as our task, to bring death out into the world. We will chart all its forms and media: in literature and art, where it is most apparent, also in science and culture, where it lurks submerged, but no less potent for the obfuscation. We shall attempt to tap into its frequencies — by radio, the internet and all sites where its processes and avatars are active. In the quotidian, to no smaller a degree, death moves: in traffic accidents both realised and narrowly avoided; in hearses and undertakers' shops; in florists' wreaths; in butchers' fridges and in dustbins of decaying produce. Death moves in our apartments, through our television screens; the wires and plumbing in our walls, our dreams. Our very bodies are no more than vehicles carrying us ineluctably towards death. We are all necronauts, always, already.
4. Our ultimate aim shall be the construction of a craft that will convey us into death in such a way that we may, if not live, then at least persist. With famine, war, disease and asteroid impact threatening to greatly speed up the universal passage towards oblivion, mankind's sole chance of survival lies in its ability, as yet unsynthesised, to die in new, imaginative ways. Let us deliver ourselves over utterly to death, not in desperation but rigorously, creatively, eyes and mouths wide open so that they may be filled from the deep wells of the Unknown.

**Note:** This term must be understood in the most versatile way possible. It could designate a set of practices, such as the usurpation of identities and personae of dead people; the development of specially adapted genetic or semantic codes based on the meticulous gathering of data pertaining to certain and specific deaths; the rehabilitation of sacrifice as an accepted social ritual; the perfection, patenting and eventual widespread distribution of Tanahadine™; or, indeed, the building of an actual craft — all of the above being projects currently before the First Committee.



cras ingens iterabimus aequor  
www.necronauts.org



**Note on Necronautical Materialism**

There is nothing mysterious about the Necronautical project. The aim announced in the First Manifesto of exploring, mapping and colonising the space of death does not suggest a beyond of which we have knowledge, nor, emphatically, the spurious tales and consoling fictions reproduced by culture. The space of death is traced in the boundaries, horizons and faults within art, literature and language; lines, moreover, which are not transgressed but are woven into the texture of our craft. Necronautical materialism has no message from the other side but is a technique for subjecting event, performance, text and map to rigorous examination and transformation.

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**Note on the INS crest**

The INS crest made its first appearance on the occasion of the INS London Declaration, 2009. The crest consists of the following elements. Framed by, and spilling out from the wreath is a sponge whose form represents formlessness. Overlaid on the formless sponge is the net of the globe through which the sponge forms countries and continents, but which itself does not capture the sponge. Atop, Anubis presides as preincarnation of Wile. E. Coyote (Anubis: considered the gatekeeper of the underworld, the “Guardian of the veil of death”). Below stands the INS and encircling it, the motto “cras ingens iterabimus aequor” (from Horace’s Ode 7), which means something like “Tomorrow we shall (re)traverse the enormous space/sea.”

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**INS First Committee**

[in alphabetical order] Anthony Auerbach (Chief of Propaganda, Archiving and Epistemological Critique), Simon Critchley (Chief Philosopher), Alexander Hamilton (Chief Cartographer), Laura Hopkins (Environmental Engineer), Melissa McCarthy (Chief Obituary Reviewer), Tom McCarthy (Founder and General Secretary) and Francis Upritchard (Illustrator)

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**INS Online**

<http://necronauts.org> (central)

<http://necronauts.net/bulletin> (latest news)

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