Reel to Real
ART MIRRORS LIFE MIRRORS ART MIRRORS LIFE ...
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Good art asks tough questions — questions that are hard, but necessary, to answer. Such as: Why is the bill for a new TV so high? There are two standard answers. "I don't watch TV," is the first, more evasive, response. "I don't watch new TV," is the second. Of course, both are outright lies. (And you know it.)

The U.K.-based art collective Blue Theory doesn't set out to discern our television-watching habits. It began making its interactive video art project long before reality shows became popular. Yet in the past, documenting viewers' reactions was an idealistic pursuit, one that ended up telling us more about ourselves than the people the art was on display.

Installed at the Wood Street Galleries, the project's latest work, "Uncle Roy All Around You," allows passers-by to watch a greet. Participants are filmed walking over all their possessions in exchange for a handheld camera, and are told to wander around London in search of a gray named Uncle Roy. In the segment displayed at Wood Street, a young blonde woman walks city streets — meeting another stranger and climbed into a limousine where she's asked equally oblique questions about her relationship to strangers. ("Would you be willing to commit 12 months to someone you've never met before?" Participants must answer before crossing on to the next clip.)

Cops question her activities and people looking around with war against every move, sometimes underestimating her.

Players must accomplish a series of objects: the first is to meet Roy in the park. So the woman's handheld camera screen shows a map of the area with an icon labeled "me" on it. But when she arrives at the park, Roy sends her another text message, this time asking her to meet him at his office instead. So she heads in that direction. Each time she reaches a destination, she's given another location, and must answer a seemingly weighty question, a query that can be somewhat fluffy for its lack of context. (For example, "When you're tired, what's the strangest thing you've done?"

The game involves strange human dramas and demons with scissors, just as "Sesame Street: The Bad World" might, but without the outlandish hell and whistles such shows employ — and with much better music soundtrack.

"Uncle Roy" is less about solving the mystery than keeping it going as long as possible.

Bread Theory sets up these physical and virtual spaces for both the participants of the game and the viewers of the art — all in order to explore how we draw distinctions between the viewer and the viewed. The piece is part of interactive documentation of street players wandering around London, and partly an immersive game in which online players search for Uncle Roy. In addition to the participants, the installed viewers form game "players" on the Blue Theory Web in another section of the gallery, so viewers can register to play the game themselves.

This segment "Uncle Roy" focuses on a Wood Street location based on a project — in which the actual art-making takes place somewhere else and the only thing displayed in the gallery is a computer monitor and lots of wall text. "Uncle Roy" by even.