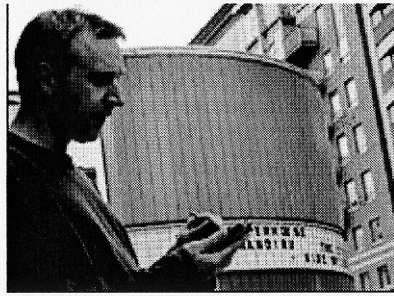




manchester

features



"No sleep tonight. Career north behind the laughing couple. Not too close."

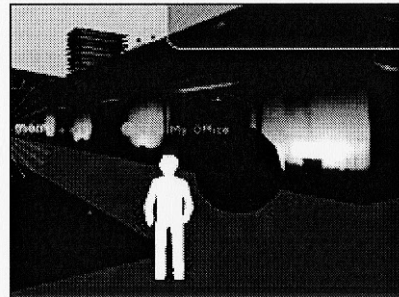
I looked around, feeling paranoid . I'm part of the game - but who else is? And who - or what - is Uncle Roy..? - writes Richard Turner

► **An interview with 'Uncle Roy'**

■ Cornerhouse: Starting out on a weird journey

For 45 mins, Manchester became a murky Orwellian place. I felt uneasy yet excited. Walking familiar streets, past familiar places, I viewed everything with suspicion. Anxiety gave way to adrenalin. Unseen eyes followed my every move..... I was being watched.

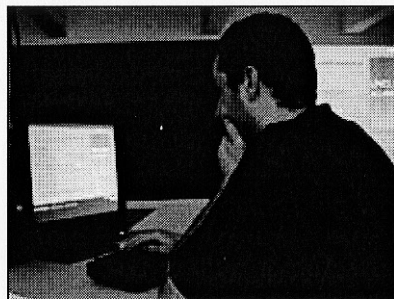
Welcome to the disturbing world of **Uncle Roy All Around You** - the new mixed reality game/ arts installation which has just hit the streets of Manchester. It's difficult to describe.. so instead I offer my story:



A born and bred Manc, I swaggered into the Cornerhouse, confident that no-one could unnerve me. "I want to be a Street Player," I smirked. A foolish approach. I was quickly ordered into a side room by a woman with an air of steely calm.

Uncle Roy - a screen grab

"Hand over all your personal possessions... phone, watch, wallet, keys. You'll get them back later." 'Er.... OK.' Wait, it gets weirder.



An online player

To be fair, she did give me a palmtop computer in exchange and told me I'd be directed around the city by complete strangers online to gather clues. My mission: **find Uncle Roy**. Whoever who he is.

Great. I felt like a spy! Or at the very least a hi-tech orienteer.

What followed was something out of The Prisoner crossed with Mission Impossible. Clutching my PDA, I logged in: "I'm here." The computer responded instantly sending me to my first 'hotspot'. Two guys were standing nearby talking. Were they part of the game? Who knows. Weird. Keep moving. The clock's ticking.

Obscure clues pinged onto the screen as I sidled up Chorlton Street:

- 'Spot remains of the party. Window open. Shrug it off and move'

- '1961: a dead man thrown down the lift shaft at no. 82.'
- 'Wai Yin. Translate: men cannot enter. Make appropriate move.'

I was confused. Are the online players trying to help, hinder - or lead me to my death? I filed a voice message, feeling self-conscious: "Er... hi - I'm on Richmond St. I haven't got a clue what you mean. Tell me where to go!"

For security reasons (OK - I just want to sound mysterious but I've been asked not to spoil the game)- I can only tell you a little of what happened next.

But after half an hour, I actually found Uncle Roy's office. Did I feel like a burglar going into an empty building? Yes! Did I know who or what I would find there? No - which was a little scary.

But more importantly: **Did I find Uncle Roy?** Can't possibly say. And it got weirder after that - which I still can't talk about.

But I do know that for three-quarters of an hour, I put my trust in a bunch of strangers on the web and let them lead me around the back streets of Manchester.. for a bit of fun!

Uncle Roy All Around You: Thrilling. Weird. Unsettling. Hard to explain. I urge you to try it. You'll see Manchester as never before!

In a nutshell:

Uncle Roy All Around You by Blast Theory - A new media and mixed reality game in Manchester.

Play online for free at www.uncleroyallaroundyou.co.uk

To be a street player, take ID to the Cornerhouse on Oxford St. Tickets £3. (concs £2). Book in advance. Games last 45 mins.

From 28 April - 2 May. And 5 - 8 May

What do you want to do now?

- [Read an interview with Matt Adams of Blast Theory](#)
- [Play Uncle Roy All Around You](#)
- [Find out more on the Cornerhouse website](#)
- [Return to the Features Index](#)

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