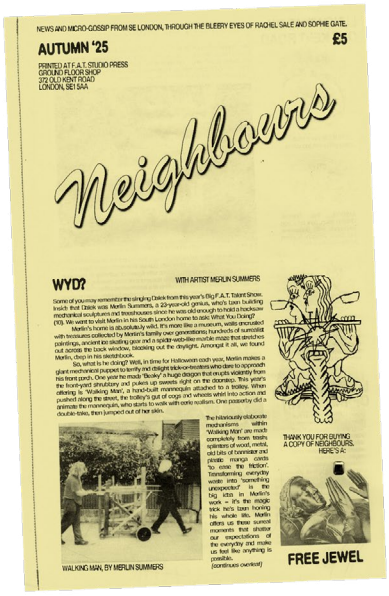
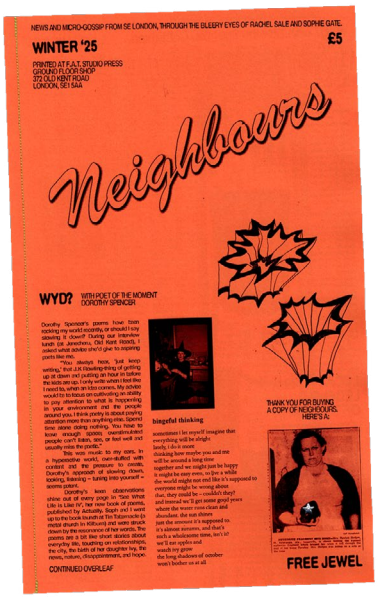
Positions through triangulating: antithesis





Sale, R. (2026) Neighbours. Available at: https://rachelsale.co.uk/HOMEPAGE (Accessed: 28 October 2026)

In this text I will explore a key reference for my project, Neighbours by F.A.T studio, which is a seasonal publication self-described as, "news and micro gossip from SE London through the bleery eyes of Rachel Sale and Sophie Gate". I will explore the contrasts and connections between this project and my own in order to better articulate my position.

Visually, Neighbours has the format of a newspaper, with the layout and design following a conventional three-column grid on the exterior pages, revealing a thematic design inside. In the "summer '26 issue", each spread resembles a BBQ with text displayed inside various food items on the grill. F.A.T studio describes itself as "a community-focused creative studio, based on Old Kent Road in SE London". They enact this position through their playful design choices, such as a bespoke wobbly and irregular sans serif font, evoking a sense of individuality and creating a typographic language that represents the connection the authors have to their local area. Title fonts and graphic elements nod to tools available in self-publishing programs and Microsoft WordArt, representing the idea of accessibility and appeal to the everyday person. The use of black ink and coloured paper is economical and quick to produce, referencing the visual language of political graphic materials which would need to be circulated cheaply, easily and quickly.

Neighbours reports on the community of South East London, featuring interviews with local people, usually artists, restaurant owners, "local legends" and messages from readers, journalism that is embedded in the community and platforms South East London, elevating the everyday, giving weight to something as small as a banana tree on a road in Peckham, or news as significant as plans to purchase Brixton Market by the local community. On their website, F.A.T studio describes, "In a time when the mainstream media seems hell-bent on being divisive, we wanted to make an alternative news source that aims to create a feeling of connection and good energy within our neighbourhoods." Local and independent news is something that has been eroded by globalisation and media conglomerates, so the publication is referencing and preserving a dying form of media that was based around the local community, economy and lives of local people.

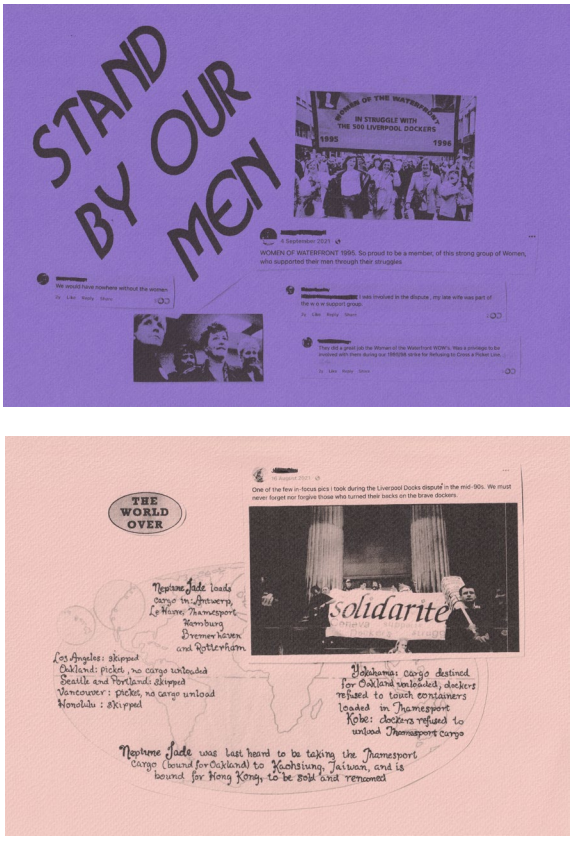
The distribution of Neighbours is in alignment with their approach to design and content; circulated in physical, public spaces, such as local bookshops and book fairs, as well as their online shop. This encourages involvement in public spaces and supporting local businesses. The binding diverges from typical newspaper staples and is stitched on a sewing machine, involving more physical labour and care in the process of making, and a more solid structural binding than a traditional newspaper.

My project focuses on the labour history and community of Liverpool dockers through archival work along with interviews and interaction with the community, seeking to bring the story to light and preserve the history. My position as a designer is informed by my own interest in social history and the working-class roots of Liverpool, where I am from. I have been exploring this visually using collage, using images from The Dockers Club, a Facebook group used by former dockers and their family members, as well an archive at Liverpool Central Library and from The Docker's Charter, a newspaper published by the dockers during the labour dispute of 1995-1998. Collage as a tool has allowed me to bring together images from different sources, and represents the story being told from different angles and perspectives. As my project has progressed, I have started to experiment with publications and newspaper format, using interviews I have undertaken with former dockers, dock workers and those who have relatives that have worked as dockers, referencing the design of The Dockers Charter.

Whilst the projects have similarities in being engaged with others, our projects have several differences, including ethical concerns and responsibilities. Neighbours has a relationship to the local area in South East London, with the content revolving around local people, businesses and events. Their publication has the potential to positively or negatively affect those involved, however the subject matter is intended to be light and entertaining. In contrast, my project is dealing with a historical labour

dispute and events which took place in the past, where people's livelihoods were lost. I am trying to represent the events of the dockers history in a way that is respectful of those involved but remains accessible and engaging.

The projects also share similarities in how the content was generated, through face-to-face meetings, travelling to locations, interviewing and investigating. However, Neighbours is primarily created through in-person interaction, aligned with its connection to place and people within a physical location. Alternatively, because my project centres around history connected to people and their work, I have aspects which involve online community through posting, comments, messages and video calls. The projects have different scopes, which raises questions for me as to whether my studio work could potentially explore online or digital media, as my research involved the use of digital tools, and could reference the docker's use of early internet websites to organise their campaign and share their message.



Collages from my project featuring images and text from The Dockers Club Facebook group

The content of Neighbours is written directly from the author's perspective, and they position themselves as members of their own community, with their content being entrenched in this through their use of personal anecdotes and informal language. In contrast, I have a different approach. Whilst I'm connected to my subject matter through my family history of dock work and experience of living in Liverpool for most of my life, I am not part of the docker community. Because I am working *with* a community rather than *within* it, I am focusing on facilitating the voices of others through my design work. However, I'm still making choices about how these stories are told and this leads me to question how I can continue to establish my position through not just the way I approach working with this community, but in each aspect of my project, including the making and sharing with its audience.

Both projects share visual approaches, such as working in black and white with coloured paper, using low resolution images combined with text, as well as the newspaper format. These material similarities represent media which is economical, quick to produce and enables wider circulation. For my project, coloured paper serves as a reference to colourful union membership cards, while black and white photocopied media references political posters and pamphlets that would be photocopied and shared widely. For Neighbours, the newspaper format connects to their mission to report on the local community and better connect with their audience.

The similarities and differences with Neighbours and the approach of F.A.T studio to working with their local community raises questions around my project and my position within it. How does my project serve the community I'm working with? Are those who are interested in dockers and Liverpool history also the audience? My project addresses loss of work due to automation, the shifting dock industry and Liverpool's changing identity as a result of this. Could my project address those becoming disconnected from their labour history and might this be my audience?