



ART, FREEDOM AND CREATIVITY WILL CHANGE SOCIETY FASTER THAN POLITICS VICTOR PINCHUK

Political mainstream has to fight



BARIA ALAMUDDIN

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n these divisive times, it has face. become rare to see collective displays of European unity; sigh of relief last week when the a reassertion of the bloc's core anti-refugee Sweden Democrats values of tolerance, human rights only gained 17.5 percent of the and the rule of law. It was thus vote in the Swedish elections, cause for celebration last week despite fears that it could outwhen a two-thirds majority of perform the mainstream parties. MEPs supported a motion that The integration of refugees was Viktor Orban's regime in Hungary a dominant issue when I chaired posed a "systemic threat" to the the Stockholm International EU's democratic model, paving Peace Research Institute's 2016 the way for sanctionary measures. security conference and I was Nevertheless, the 197 MEPs who impressed by the refreshingly opposed this motion are a warn- enlightened desire of politicians ing sign of how xenophobic popu- and citizens alike to facilitate lists have transformed themselves the absorption of Syrians and from a contemptible minority to Iraqis into Swedish society. If a continent-straddling insurgent the extreme right can win 17.5pc force.

Orban stands accused of cor- Sweden, then God help the rest ruption, repression of migrants of Europe. and undermining the rule of law. Measures against Hungary's ous and self-serving even for Extreme right showed its strong presence in Swedish elections. civil society, oppositionists and Donald Trump, the loathsome

its authoritarian masters. Italy, Austria, France, Denmark and elsewhere are similarly blighted by a resurgent far right, with scarcely-disguised encouragement from Moscow. Meanwhile, racist violence in Germany is a stark reminder of fascism's ugly

Democratic Europe breathed a of the vote in moderate, tolerant

Having proved too treacher-

the media pave the way toward fascist demagogue Steve Ban- evil act collectively invade EU in- plex federal system, has a long boundaries, obstacles to minorisingle-party statehood. Com- non has embarked on a never stitutions, neo-Nazis could wield way to go before becoming an au- ties' voting rights, and demagogparable measures in Poland for ending road-trip to unite Eu- greater international influence thoritarian state; yet the Trump ic governance style fly in the face dominating the Supreme Court rope's disparate extreme right. than at any moment since World administration's war against the of the US Constitution's inspiring render the judiciary beholden to If these transnational forces of War II. America, with its com- media, gerrymandering of state aspirations.

There's a killer stalking suburban London. Or is there

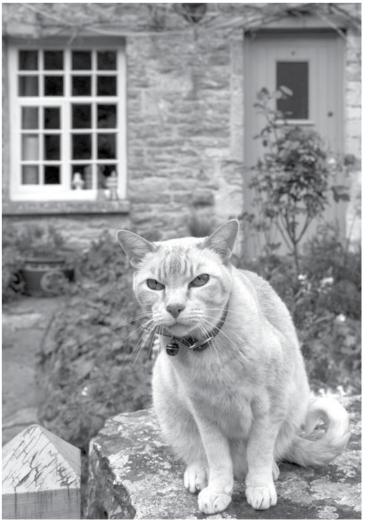
The suburbs, where madness me

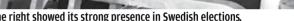


"Disturbia."

collective psyche has been on my ple formed an improbable team ades that foxes chew the head ing small heads in quiet ditionally being tools for chil- of his partner, Boudicca Rising Rising loudly dispute this intergardens. Often, he keeps the tails. dren to practice grief upon – (between them the middle-aged When I told a friend I was and settled all the way down. In couple house 31). As the vicofficial investigation. concrete hell," he said cheerfully humans, specifically vulnerable deaths continue to rise, more in the Dark," about her search Accounts vary on when pets figures of authority are backing for a murderer who stalked the

home, had it even worse. In a emerging – the killer appeared tal sciences at the University of best-selling 1961 study the au- to be moving in concentric cir- Bristol, declared that the deaths thors renamed these regions cles around the capital. One that have captivated the capital Facebook group nicknamed him for years are in fact the work of The place of suburbs in our "Jack the Rippurr." A local cou- foxes. "We have known for dec-





EVA WISEMAN

killer, as he (or a copycat) ap- none of the David Lynchian per- sliced open; Oscar, decapitated; of existential threat. Headlines pears to be holidaying in Wash- version or drama of the United Charlton, head and tail missing ington State, her lips collapsed States. But it's still thought of as – Jenkins and Rising recorded looked away. "What?" I pressed, line, where small neat gardens performed post-mortems, and and she paused before replying, reflect the dimensions of their approached the police, but it up, bloodless and cleanly disemfor you?" It was a risk I'd consid- safe. Until a predator shatters 40,000 signatures that led to an the penalty spot of a garden footered, having just celebrated our the illusion. kitten's first birthday, but one I am willing to take, because this in a place called Croydon. A took them seriously. Last Noman has killed more than 500 for David Bowie, "represented Andy Collin, expressed his conencourages obsession: It pricks away from." It was a "complete cation and escalate the attacks to hiding place. at ancient anxieties.

suburbs were seen by some as tiful now." (It doesn't.) a dangerous social experiment

The first deaths happened In midcentury America, the in 1999. "I suppose it looks beau- women and girls." But today, as crime best-seller "I'll Be Gone - this style of living brought began to turn up on their own- away from humans as the cause. California suburbs, it was the sickness. Suburban men fell ill ers' doorsteps, cut in half, decap- Writing in The New Scientist lamp-lit detail, more than even

from the stress of commuting; itated and disemboweled. But by this summer, Stephen Harris, a the crimes themselves. that suburban women, trapped at late 2015, patterns had begun retired professor of environmen- stayed with me - the way the

mind recently, as last year, with of crime fighters under the name or tail off carcasses, including great internal drama, I moved South Norwood Animal Rescue dead cats," he wrote, claiming no here is a serial killer stalk- out of the city, got a cat for my and Liberty, or Snarl. "She's a cat killer has been caught "because ing the suburbs here, leav- daughter - pets, of course, tra- person," Tony Jenkins explained there is no 'killer." (Jenkins and pretation.)

And yet, somehow that does writing about the Croydon cat Britain the idea of suburbia has tims added up – Ukiyo, belly little to dispel London's feeling like "Slaughter in Suburbia" have given way to stories about into a little moue, and then she an in-between place, a punch- the deaths, collected remains, an increase in murdered rabbits, while the cats continue to turn earnestly, "But what if he comes owners' minds. Suffocating, but was their petition of more than boweled. One head was left on ball pitch. "Does he exist?" we And for a period, the police ask ourselves, and then, "Does it matter?" We have invoked him story – some believe the same South London suburb that, vember, a detective sergeant, anyway, and he lurks in shadows inside us, and in half-rememcats over the last four years – is everything I didn't want in my cerns that the killer might, even- bered folklore – perhaps our compelling and terrifying. And it life, everything I wanted to get tually, "cease getting that gratifi- gardens are just his most recent

In Michelle McNamara's true

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