

# Act 1

An exhibition of performance  
and participatory art  
Canberra 4—12 November 1978

**Venues** ANU Arts Centre,  
Commonwealth Gardens and  
Civic Centre

Presented by the Arts Council  
of Australia, ACT Division  
in co-operation with The Aust-  
ralian National University Arts  
Centre

**Seminar** ANU Arts Centre  
Sunday 5th November 7pm

Act 1 draws interstate artists  
to Canberra for the first of a  
series of exhibitions directed  
towards specific aspects of  
recent and experimental art.  
These exhibitions will be con-  
cerned with concepts which  
have evolved during the last  
decade and will be innovative  
by operating on grounds not  
previously tested by time and  
general public acceptance.



**John Davis**  
Hampton Vic.

An installation and  
exchange work number 3'



**Kevin Mortensen**  
Burwood Vic




**John Nixon**  
Thornbury Vic



**Jillian Orr**  
North Carlton Vic



**Mike Parr**  
South Newton NSW



**Bob Ramsay**  
Petrie Terrace Qld



**Lesley Savage**  
Balmain NSW



**Noel Sheridan**  
St Peters SA



*John Fisher*

John Fisher  
Artamon NSW

Installation of participatory  
survey 'Is it correct in art'

*MARR R. GROUNDS*

Marr Grounds  
Darlington NSW.

Video 'Sculpture at the  
top ends'

*Ian Hamilton*

Ian Hamilton  
Kensington Park SA.

Performance 'Playground for  
paranoids'

*Leigh Hobba*

Leigh Hobba  
c/- PO Carey Gully SA.

Performance 'Variations I'  
and 'Variations II'

*Liz Honeybun*

Liz Honeybun  
Ocean Grove Vic

Installation of photo-  
participatory survey  
'Treasures'

*DAVID KERR*

David Kerr  
Highgate SA

'Investigation into  
pockets and bags'

*Richard & Pat Larter*

Richard and Pat Larter  
Armidale NSW

Participatory installation  
'Line in-line out'  
Video

*Terry Smith*  
Balmain NSW

Wall piece 'Posters'  
'Newspaper' and 'Uranium'

*Richard*

Richard Tipping  
St Peters SA

Performance 'Alphabet soup'

*Tony Twigg*

Tony Twigg  
Oaks Estate ACT

Participatory installation  
'91 parts 81 mobile in ex-  
change system'

*Donald Walters*

Donald Walters  
Ocean Grove Vic

Performance/Installation  
'Mr X'

*Arthur*

Arthur Wicks  
Wagga NSW

Performance 'The Canberra  
Lesson' and 'Sand Memories'

*Jim Cowley*

Jim Cowley  
Semaphore SA

Performance 'Mattress' and  
'Liver to your door'

*Ken Unsworth*

Ken Unsworth  
Paddington NSW

Video 'Face to face',  
'A different drummer' and  
'Five secular pieces'

*Yane Kerr*

**Act 1** An exhibition of performance and participatory art

The nature of this exhibition requires a degree of flexibility in its presentation. Essentially it is an on going event extending from the 4 - 12 November.

**Open Seminar**  
Daniel Thomas Chairperson  
Sunday 5 7pm ANU Arts Centre

**Films**  
Recent Australian Experimental Films  
Wednesday 8 7.30pm National Library Main Theatre

**Performance art**

**Ian Hamilton**  
Playground for paranoids  
Sunday 5 2-4pm Gardens  
Tuesday 7 7-9pm ANU  
Friday 10 7-9pm ANU  
Sunday 12 2-4pm Gardens

**Leigh Hobba**  
Variations I  
Thursday 9 8-9pm ANU  
Variations II  
Saturday 11 1-5pm ANU

**Kevin Mortensen**  
The Rocking  
Sunday 5 3-4pm ANU  
Monday 6 to Saturday 11  
1-2pm ANU 8-9pm Gardens

**John Nixon**  
Black and White  
Monday 6 to Wednesday 8 and  
Sunday 12 10-5pm ANU  
Friday 10 6pm ANU

**Jillian Orr**  
Inside Jack's Head  
Blinding Surface  
Saturday 4 to Sunday 12  
5pm ANU

**Mike Parr**  
Dream  
Saturday 4 6pm to Sunday 5  
10am Lake  
Sunday 5 2pm ANU

**Bob Ramsay**  
The Swing  
Saturday 4 7.30pm ANU  
Saturday 11 7.30pm ANU

**Noel Sheridan**  
Tuesday 7 7.30pm ANU

**Terry Smith**  
Wall Piece  
Saturday 4 9am Civic  
Newspaper  
Uranium  
Sunday 5 3-6pm ANU

**Richard Tipping**  
Alphabet Soup  
Sunday 12 2pm Lake

**Arthur Wicks**  
The Canberra Lesson  
Sunday 5 to Sunday 12 ANU

**Jim Cowley**  
Mattress  
Saturday 4 to Sunday 12 Civic  
Liver to Your Door  
Friday 10 7pm Civic  
Saturday 11 11am Civic

**Participatory art**  
Saturday 4 to Sunday 12  
10am to 4pm ANU Arts Centre

**John Davis**  
An installation and exchange work number three

**John Fisher**  
Is It Correct in Art

**Liz Honeybun**  
Treasures

**David Kerr**  
Investigation into Pockets and Bags

**Richard and Pat Larter**  
Line in - Line out

**Lesley Savage**  
A Part of the Whole

**Tony Twigg**  
91 Parts 81 Mobile in exchange system

**Donald Walters**  
Mr X

**Video**  
Saturday 4 to Sunday 12  
10am to 4pm ANU Arts Centre

**Marr Grounds**  
Sculpture at the top ends

**Richard and Pat Larter**  
Video

**Bob Ramsay**  
Read  
Peanuts

**Ken Unsworth**  
Face to Face  
A Different Drummer  
Five Secular Pieces

**Arthur Wicks**  
Sand memories

WITH PERFORMANCE TITLED  
'BECAUSE TITLED'

There are three further sections to this publication: A selection of correspondence tracing the development of this event; A Journal spread by each artist; and papers of critical appraisal from Paul McQuirk and Terry Smart.

Ingo Kleibert  
Oct. 1978.

THE ARTS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA  
A.C.T. DIVISION INCORPORATED

Suite 5, Level 5, Wales Centre,  
Akuna Street, Canberra City, 2601.  
Telephone: 48-9813

An open letter to artists,

The A.C.T. Division of the Arts Council has been given a Special Project Grant to support an exhibition of Recent and Experimental Australian Art.

The exhibition is intended to emphasize:

- 1 Recent developments; i.e. works which involve attitudes and concepts which have evolved over the last decade.
  - 2 Experimental art; i.e. works which in striving to be innovative are operating on grounds not previously tested by time and general public acceptance.
- A planning committee has been set up under the direction of Ingo Kleinert.

It is hoped that this exhibition will be distinctive in format and the first of a series of similar exhibitions. Such an exhibition could touch on a wide range of media. At this stage the committee wishes to consider as many directions as possible. Works could be presented in a variety of indoor venues (gallery areas and theatres for visual and/or aural statements) or in outdoor venues exploiting the fact that Canberra is itself a stage.

At this point it should be stated that our budget is \$3,500. With this amount we hope to be able to exhibit the works of some 10 - 15 Australian artists. The major part of the budget will be spent on freight, fares and publicity.

Initially we are writing to people professionally involved in the experimental arts for advice and information. We have printed a form on the back of this letter and would be grateful for your response and suggestions by 22nd May 1978.

Please distribute this letter to any artists who you think would be interested.

Yours sincerely,

Diana Ashcroft Johnson  
21.4.78

Please return by 22nd May 1978 to:-

Diana Ashcroft Johnson  
Administrator,  
Arts Council of Australia, A.C.T. Division,  
Suite 5, Level 5,  
Wales Centre,  
Canberra City, 2601.

Name Liz Honybun

Address 44 Madeley St., Ocean Grove, Victoria, 3226.

Telephone no.  
552658.

Nature of work(s) The work that I would like to produce for this exhibition deals with the creativity of a randomly selected group of people. It would be presented in the form of photographic documentation, probably Polaroids, with some typed sheets if any ~~verble~~ verble explanations were given by any of the participants, also a poster to advertise the results of the survey.

Briefly, the work would consist of randomly canvassing several different residential areas of Canberra (perhaps different economic areas) door to door and asking the resident(s) what they consider to be the most creative object, or arrangement of objects (or animate things) in their dwelling or surrounds. The indicated piece would be photographed by me and any explanation by the creator, owner/participant noted if necessary. The number of photographs would of ~~course~~ ~~course~~ course be governed by the people canvassed and the co-operation that I met with.

Other suggestions First that there be more of this kind of exhibition. Second that the catalogue be an informative document not just a glossy add for the exhibition (though it should be that too), ie. grouping of particular types of work together, showing development of different ideas and concepts in Aust. art, also showing the development of each contributor to the exhibition. Third could this exhibition be linked with some kind of workshop activity to involve the public more in the techniques of experimental art ie. video and film, natural dance and performance, use of concepts and ideas in art works, artworks for political or social change etc.

Liz Honybun

The above information will be used to ascertain response of artists to this exhibition and does not involve at this stage any commitment or obligation for either party.

Sent Form of Letter  
14/5/78

Please return by 22nd May 1978 to:-

Diana Ashcroft Johnson  
Administrator,  
Arts Council of Australia, A.C.T. Division,  
Suite 5, Level 5,  
Wales Centre,  
Canberra City, 2601.

Name SYDNEY BALL

Address 5 WEYINGTON ST  
ANNANDALE  
NSW 2038

Telephone no.  
825647

Nature of work(s)  
I BELIEVE WORKS THAT INVOLVE DIFFERENT ATTITUDES AND CONCEPTS SHOULD BE SHOWN SEPERATELY. IE. PAINTING WITH PAINTING; CONCEPT ART WITH CONCEPT ART. I ALSO BELIEVE THAT WITHIN PAINTING AREAS OF STYLE SHOULD BE SEPERATED IE COLOUR PAINTING AS DISTINCT FROM PHOTO REALISM AS DISTINCT FROM FIGURATIVE AND SO ON.  
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU DO ANYTHING JUSTICE

By TRYING TO EXHIBIT SUCH A BROAD AND VARIED ~~AREAS~~ AREAS, CERTAINLY NOT WITH THE LOW BUDGET YOU HAVE.  
IT WOULD BE FAR BETTER TO CONCENTRATE ON PRESENTING A DIFFERENT FORM EACH YEAR OF SAY  
1979 - COLOUR PAINTING  
1980 - ELECTRO MEDIA / AUDIO VISUAL  
1981 - SCULPTURE  
1982 - REALISM IN PAINTING  
1983 - CONCEPTUAL ART AND SO ON

The above information will be used to ascertain response of artists to this exhibition and does not involve at this stage any commitment or obligation for either party.

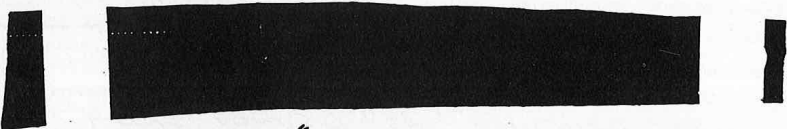
Please return by 22nd May 1978 to:-

Diana Ashcroft Johnson  
Administrator,  
Arts Council of Australia, A.C.T. Division,  
Suite 5, Level 5,  
Wales Centre,  
Canberra City, 2601.

Name Sony Twigg

Address 2/20 Power at Oaks Estate Telephone no. \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of work(s)



*unnatural.  
emphasis on the feared and suspected  
reality.*

Other suggestions

*Sony Twigg wishes to register this as*

**OBJECT ART**

*S.A.I. | Reply 20/6/78 JF*

The above information will be used to ascertain response of artists to this exhibition and does not involve at this stage any commitment or obligation for either party.

REMOVED 11.6.78.  
Ingo

Please return by 22nd May 1978 to:-

Diana Ashcroft Johnson  
Administrator,  
Arts Council of Australia, A.C.T. Division,  
Suite 5, Level 5,  
Wales Centre,  
Canberra City, 2601.

Name PAUL Mc GILLICK

Address 21 NEUTRAL ST. NORTH SYDNEY

Address N.S.W. Telephone no. 928764

Nature of work(s)

PERFORMANCE — THIS WOULD PROBABLY  
CONSIST OF A SINGLE  
PERFORMANCE WHICH COULD BE  
REPEATED (VIZ. NOT A CONTINUOUS  
PERFORMANCE)

Other suggestions

*This is an excellent project. It is important  
to try & provide a serious & critical context for  
an event like this. I would suggest:-  
(1) THAT SOME OF THE MONEY BE PUT ASIDE FOR A  
GOOD CATALOGUE OR A DOCUMENT OF THE EVENT  
(2) EFFORTS BE MADE TO ENSURE SOME ADEQUATE CRITICAL  
COVERAGE & PERHAPS A SEMINAR OR TWO*

The above information will be used to ascertain response of artists to this exhibition and does not involve at this stage any commitment or obligation for either party.

THE ARTS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA  
A.C.T. DIVISION, INCORPORATED

Suite 5, Level 5, Wales Centre, Akuna Street, Canberra City 2601 Phone 489 813

Dear

Thank you for your reply to our letter and form and for the interest you have shown in our coming exhibition of Recent and Experimental Australian Art.

There has been an excellent response to our 'Open letter' and consequently the planning committee felt it necessary to concentrate on a specific area in relation to medium and concepts. We would recommend that this approach be adopted for subsequent exhibitions.

The direction we have chosen for this year is in the area of performance and participatory works. The committee is pleased to invite you to contribute to this year's exhibition. All works will be presented in Canberra from the 4th to the 12th November inclusive.

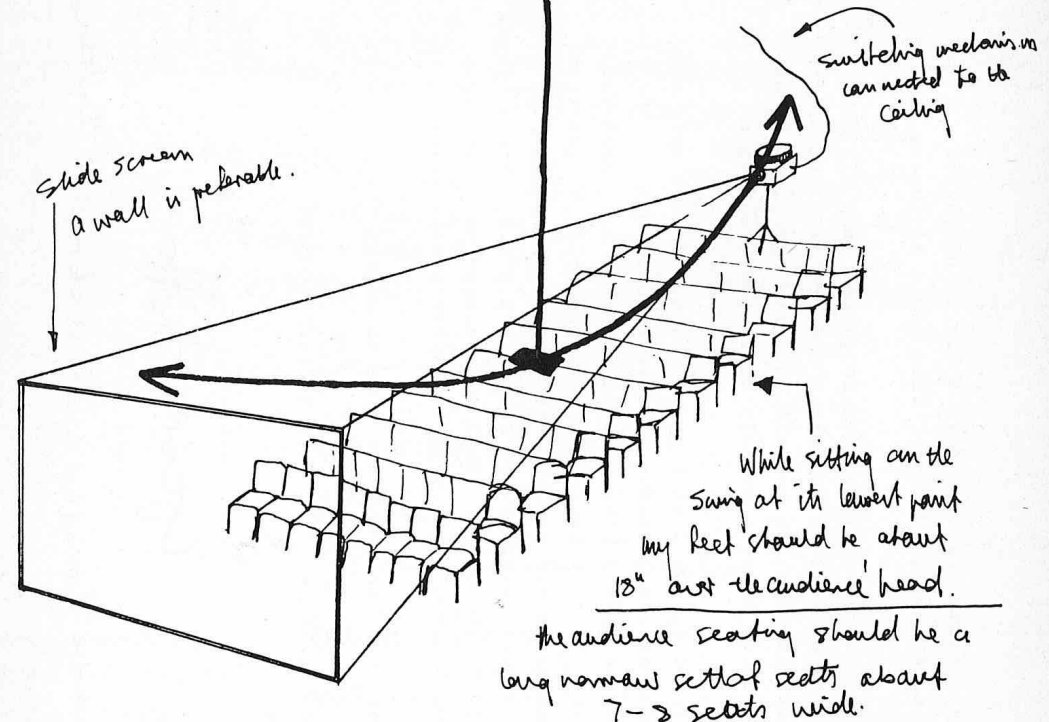
We will despatch to you a form seeking specific information about your requirements which will assist us in planning the overall event.

Yours sincerely,

Ingo Kleinert and  
Diana Ashcroft-Johnson

Full Details the live performance: THE SWING.

- D The most crucial specification is the ceiling height; the performance requires a high ceiling, for the greater the height of the ceiling, the greater the amplitude of swing movement. This will determine then the required floor area, as well as the amount of seating.



As you can see by the diagram, a ceiling of considerable height is necessary. A beam would be good for supporting the swing itself.

- \* I need to have this information as soon as possible, for alterations, if a high ceiling is not available.
- ② The movement of the swing will also activate the change of slides on the slide projector, and will in effect determine the length of the performance; once we clarify the available ceiling spaces; I can then have the special switching mechanisms built to suit. (as well as to make the swing - ropes etc)
  - ③ Power source necessary to run the slide projector only. The tape recorder to be used will be on the swing with me, and run off batteries..
  - ④ Dim lighting only is necessary; not total blackout. This is essential for photographic documentation as I do not want flash photography interfering with the performance. The dim lighting will also enhance the possible videoing of the performance with better resulting images.
  - ⑤ Slide projector - Carousel - 80 slide carousel.

Dear Sir,

Since you have invited thirty artists and only have a budget of \$3,900, I can not see how anyone of them can receive more than \$100 each. This would add up to \$3,000 allowing \$500 over to cover other costs.

If I do a set of performances a team of at least eight people ~~will~~ will be involved including dancers and musicians as well as technical and artistic cocreators. Movie film will have to be shot, fireworks made and let off, lights arranged, lasers borrowed and hired as well as projectors and other specially developed electronic ~~devices~~.

The cost to me will be at least \$1,000 as the 1st happening which lasted only one night, at Balmain swimming baths in Sydney cost close to this amount.

Ever since my work at the Yellow House in 1969 I have done large scale art works for the public. I have never charged at any of these and have never tried to get them paid for by grants. My art is ~~xxxxxxxx~~ not the kind that makes money and yet I have no other source of income. It is therefore not right that bodies such as yours should expect artists such as myself to perform at their own expense ~~as~~ so that you, the organisers, can get the credit for a spectacular show which the public would think cost ~~xxxx~~ many thousands of dollars.

The minimum that I can ask is \$500 and then I would have to match this with over \$500 of my own very hard saved money.


If you can not agree to such a sum then you will have to forget about our contribution.

Yours sincerely,

George Dillon  
MANAGE DIRECTOR.

N.B. My contribution is made jointly with Gabrielle Dutton and Greg Schiener. (music).

So let us <sup>name</sup> know for the show? y


All the best  
Dick & Pat 

P.S. May I suggest you contact  
Eben Sterling of 9, MARGREAVES ST. KINGSWOOD  
2750. N.S.W.  
He makes super mad films - great photos etc -  
his work is published by Derriere Garde Press.  
Elblag - Poland - He is like us he does it for FREE!

Dear Ingo & Diana,  
Hope this is  
O.K.

Can we have photos  
back afterwards as  
we are short on  
photos at moment?

Videos done -  
Slides done -  
working on rest  
will arrive in  
time in kit form.

all the best  
Pat & Dick 





# The University of Sydney

SYDNEY, N.S.W.

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING

TELEPHONE: 660 0522,

EXT. 2534.

X- 3237

OFFICE OF THE DEAN  
ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Dear Ingo Kleinert,

Enclosed is a briefing following your questionair. It came as a shock to see how many people you have invited. Let us hope not all will accept, otherwise everybody will be dangerously out of pocket. On the other hand I believe a little friend of mine, Leslie Savage is belatedly applying. I have heard of the work she intends to present and it seems to be terrific. If you can, give her a chance. These exhibitions seem to be always an elitist affair, and perhaps the time is here where not only well known and introduced artists should participate, but the general public and aspirant-artists also.

As regards mine exhibit, the best idea would be to let me know how many people are available by return mail, or perhaps conduct locally some advertising (say the Uni paper, etc). There is not much time.

Kindest regards:

*John*  
JOHN FISHER.

Act I Performance and Participatory Art is designed to be the first in a series of exhibitions on Recent and Experimental Art. It owes its existence to Ingo Kleinert.

Early in 1977 Ingo came to the A.C.T. Division of the Arts Council with the proposal that it should, as part of its annual program, sponsor exhibitions which deal with recent and experimental forms of art — works involving attitudes and concepts which have evolved during the last decade and which in striving to be innovative, are working on ground not yet tested by time or general public acceptance. Such works might include film and video, holography, documentation, performance, installations and land art — to name but a few of the possibilities.

He pointed out that although Australia now has such centres as The Experimental Art Foundation in Adelaide, the University Gallery in Melbourne and the Central Street Gallery in Sydney, Canberra remains isolated from their influences and that it was the responsibility of the Arts Council in the A.C.T. to bring an awareness of these new developments in art to the Capital.

Our response was immediately to provide \$1,000 from our own budget and make a submission to the Australia Council's Special Projects Fund proposing an 'Exhibition of Recent and Experimental Art' and asking for additional financial assistance to mount it.

In April of this year we heard that the Australia Council had allocated us \$2,500 and planning began in earnest. A Steering Committee\* chaired by Ingo Kleinert was formed. Organisations such as the Experimental Art Foundation were consulted and as many individuals whose work and interests were in any way recent and experimental were sought out for their opinions.

Time, money and space all imposed limitations on our scope of operations. The grant from the Special Projects Fund had to be spent before the end of the year and it was difficult to find in Canberra public halls or exhibition areas suitable for this kind of art: in fact the only appropriate area available to us was the not yet quite finished A.N.U. Arts Centre. We could, of course, simply let it happen all over town but we were fearful lest, without a strong geographical centre, our first venture into Recent and Experimental Art be lost to view.

A decision was therefore taken to restrict the scope of the exhibition to a small part of the total possible field of Recent and Experimental Art and to make a concentrated impact in one place. The result is 'Act I - Performance and Participatory Art. Twenty-two artists have been invited to contribute and by far the largest part of the action takes place within the A.N.U. Arts Centre.

In subsequent years it is expected that artists whose work is in other areas of the Recent and Experimental will exhibit in Canberra. We hope the experience of 'Act I' will be stimulating to the viewer-participants and the artists who made it possible and, if one function of art is to enlarge our awareness of ourselves in the world we inhabit, that this exhibition will succeed as art.

Mildred Kirk  
Convenor  
Exhibition Committee  
Aust. Council, A.C.T. Division.

\* Ingo Kleinert  
Margaret Benyon  
Jessie Birch  
Barbara Campbell  
Mildred Kirk  
John Reid.

jim cowley

# ART WORK

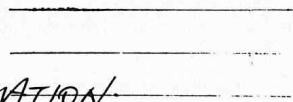
## "MATTRESS" :-

INSTALLATIONS & VIDEO OF WORK AT :-  
MILDURA  
LA TROBE  
+ WORK AT CANBERRA.

DOCUMENTARY

POSTCARD

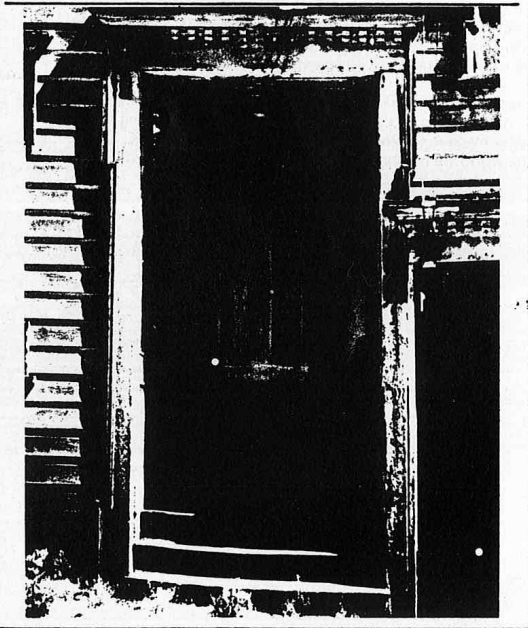
1. BREAKDOWN - CONCEPT
2. INSTALLATIONS
3. PERFORMANCES
4. BEDPOST. & BEDPOST INFORMATION
5. VIDEO.



jim cowley

# ART WORK

"LIVER TO YOUR DOOR"

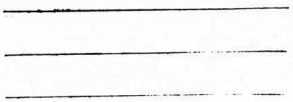


"MATTRESS"

- EXPLORING LATERAL  
CONNECTIONS OF AN  
IMAGE THROUGH  
PUBLIC CONTACT &  
COLLECTED DATA  
PERFORMANCES

"LIVER TO YOUR DOOR"

PERFORMANCE WORK  
& INSTALLATION



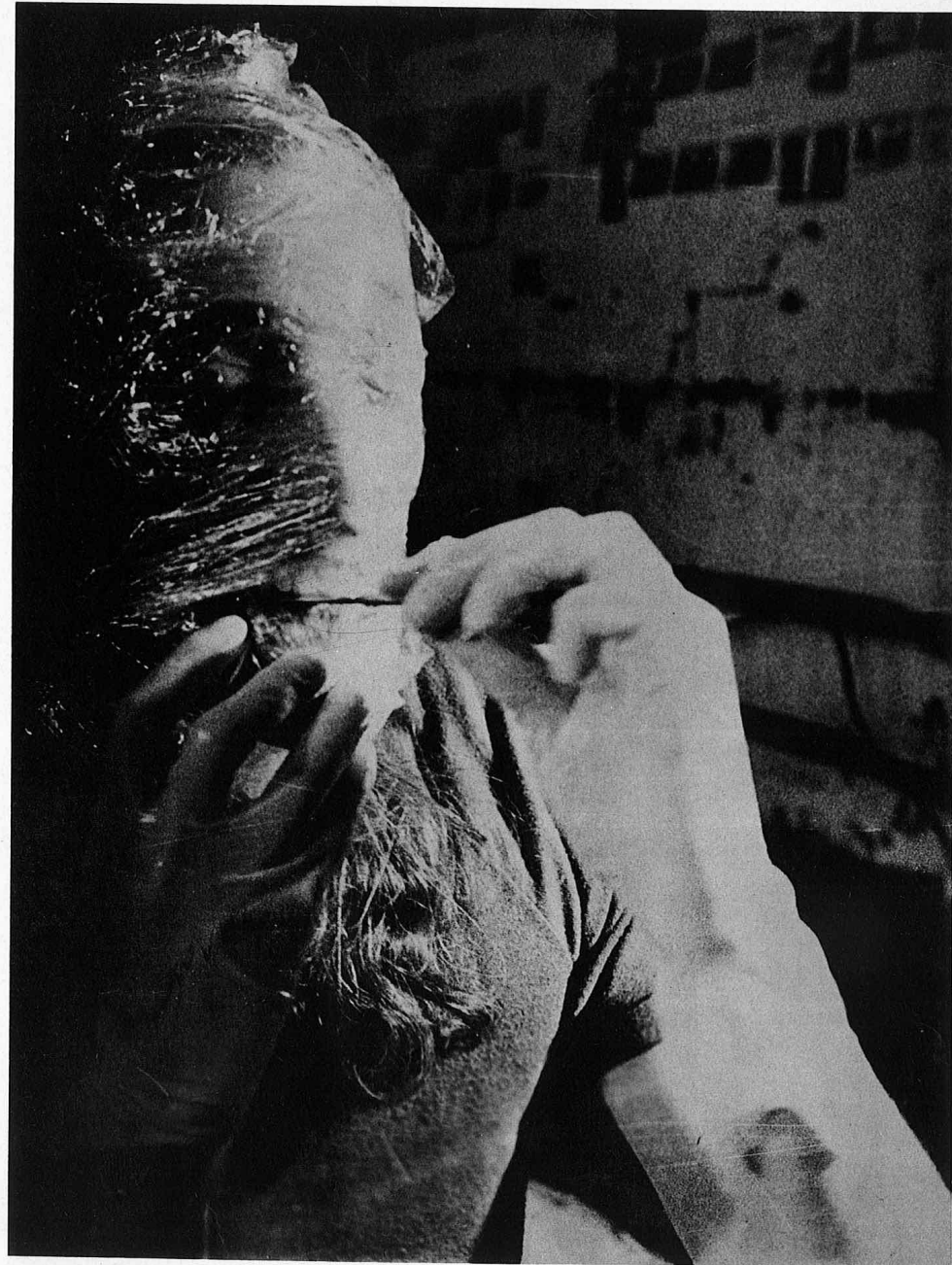
PERFORMANCES THROUGH DURATION OF EXHIBITION.

jim cowley

# ART WORK

FROM VIDEO & PERFORMANCE  
"DE-FLOWER BED"  
(PART II)  
7th MILDURA TRIENNIAL '78

PHOTO B. PROUD.



An installation & exchange work, number three.

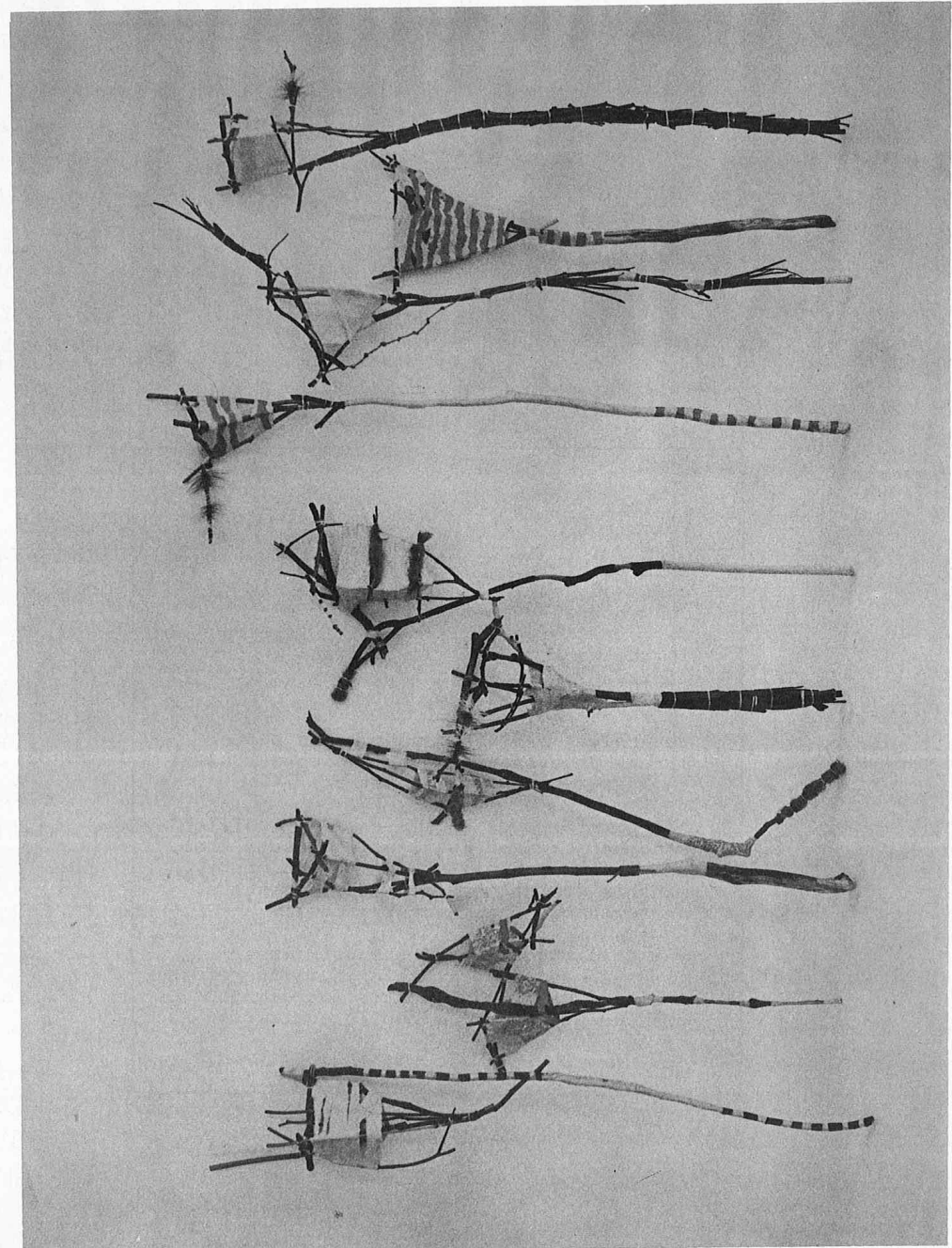
Each work is offered in exchange for other art,  
goods or services.

Number one, Watters Gallery, July 1977.

JAMES PILGRIM, ROBERT OWEN, TONY COLEING,  
JOHN MCINERNEY, ALON & NOLA LEACH-JONES, GEORGE MORA,  
MARLENE CREASER, MICHAEL HOBBS, GEOFFREY LEGGE,  
ANN CRESS, TONY MORTIMER, ROSALIE GASCOYNE,  
GEOFFREY FROOD, MICHAEL ROLFE, RICHARD MAUDE,  
BERNICE MURPHY, FRANK WATTERS, MARR GROONDS,  
MARK KOLUDROVIC, ANNIE MINCHIN, COLIN OFFORD,  
MICHAEL MCKILLEN, TOMASO TRINI, PETER THORN.

Number two, Indian Triennale, February 1978.

SS. CHANDRA, MULK RAJ ANAND, ARTI GUPTA,  
KALA SAIKIA, MADHU GUPTA, SURESH SHARMA, ARATI SAIKIA,  
KISHOR UMAREKAR, MOTIZHAROTIA, JAGDISH CHANDER,  
AMITAVA DAS, SUDHA, UMESH VERMA, DILIPCHODHURY,  
GEETA KAPUR, DHAMARATNAM, KISHORI KAUL,  
VIVAN SUNDARAM, MANJIT BAWA.



# BUT IS IT CORRECT

# IN ART ?

In this work there are *no external incentives.*

Each participant carries his own cost and has agreed to dedicate his own work and time.

In the work a number of distant citizens and one man in Sydney

### CO-OPERATE

to achieve a higher synergy and better mutual understanding of what constitutes the nature and function of art.

All participants have been supplied with a number of exercises, will execute them, and in the end will meet (or not meet), exhibit (or not exhibit) their results, and exchange their experiences.

The sole objective of the work is to discover and experience. It is therefore a silent exhibit. It does not aim to produce anything for public admiration or contempt.

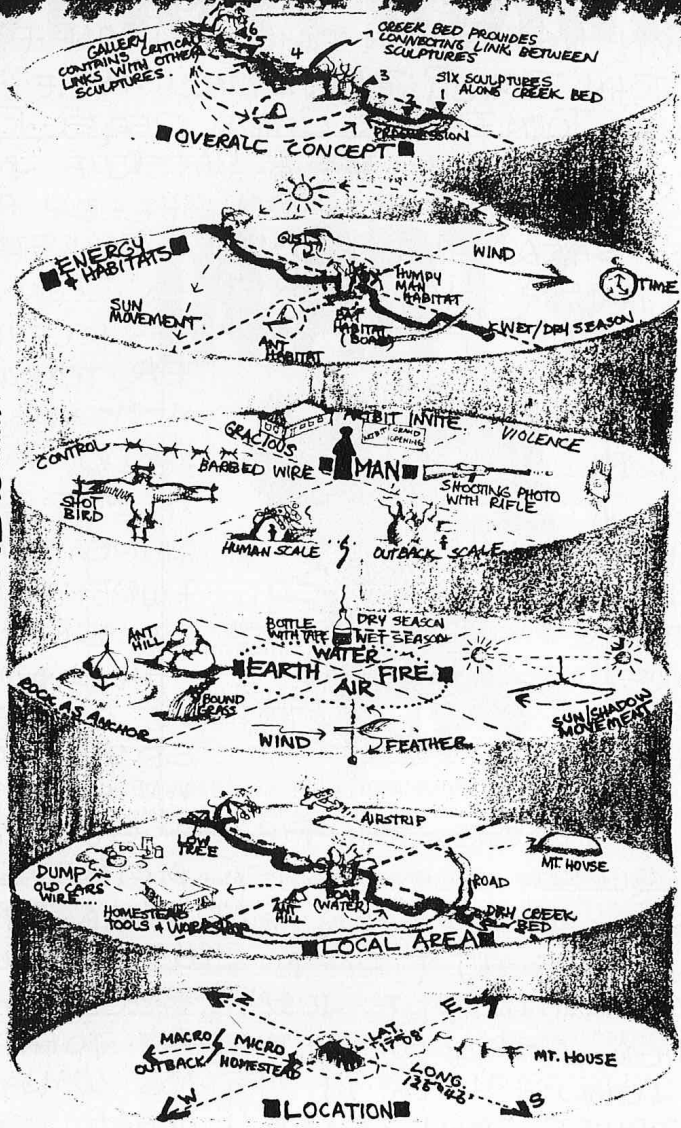
GUY JOYCE. JOHN FISHER. ROBERT PAINTER. JOHN FISHER. CATHI MORE.  
JOHN FISHER. JANE GLEESON. JOHN FISHER. GLARE GLEESON. JOHN FISHER.  
R. MOIRA SCOLLAY. JOHN FISHER. MAC NICHOLS. JOHN FISHER. GARY  
E ? - JOHN FISHER. HUGH LEGGE. JOHN FISHER. PETER HARRIS. JOHN  
HN FISHER. BARBARA PAYNE. JOHN FISHER. BEHINDA MEAD. JOHN  
HN FISHER. JOAN HARRIS. JOHN FISHER. SIMON ROSENBERG.  
JULIE MILLER. JOHN FISHER. DARYL MACINTYRE. JOHN FISHER.  
R. POMPA BRADY. JOHN FISHER. GARYA SIEGEL. JOHN FISHER.  
RULVIA TOOLEY. JOHN FISHER. MRS. J. MATERNE. JOHN FISHER.  
PENNY PICKINS. JOHN FISHER. JOAN SHEEDY. ANNETTE  
PASSLOW. JOHN FISHER. SUSAN O'NEIL. JOHN FISHER. MICHAEL  
O'NEIL. JOHN FISHER. SUE MOORHEAD. JOHN FISHER.  
UDREY AEDY. JOHN FISHER. SYLVIA KLEINERT. JOHN  
FISHER. MISS H. J. OR. JOHN FISHER.  
ADLER. JOHN FISHER. LYN PAINTHORPE. JOHN FISHER. KLAUS  
HN FISHER. ANN DAVIES. JOHN FISHER. JOHN STOKEL  
FISHER. VENESSA CAMPBELL. JOHN FISHER. JANNIE  
VIRGINIA RYAN. JOHN FISHER. N. A. W. FORGE. JOHN FISHER. GUY JOYCE. JOHN  
FISHER. JANE GLEESON. JOHN FISHER. MOIRA SCOLLAY.  
R. HUGH LEGGE. JOHN FISHER. BARBARA PAYNE. JOHN FISHER.  
ROBERT PAINTER. JOHN FISHER. SIMON ROSENBERG.  
SHER. DARYL MACINTYRE. JOHN FISHER. KLAUS HUENENE.  
KE. JOHN FISHER. CAROLINE HUENENE. JOHN FISHER. ANN  
HN. PROUSE. JOHN FISHER. LAWRENCE WALDRON. JOHN FISHER.  
ANN DAVIES. JOHN FISHER. MICHAEL SMITH. JOHN FISHER.  
JOHN STOKEL. JOHN FISHER. HILARY ARCHER. JOHN FISHER.  
VENESSA CAMPBELL. JOHN FISHER. JEANNIE CHATTER.  
EQ. VIRGINIA RYAN. JOHN FISHER. IAN GOODACRE. JOHN FISHER.  
A. W. FORGE. JOHN FISHER. AND. JOHN FISHER. ALL W  
JOHN FISHER. STILL TO. JOHN FISHER. COME AND MEET.  
SYNERGY. JOHN FISHER. ON THIS. JOHN FISHER. INTERESTI



# JUNCTIONS

PARTICIPATION BY WITH THE INHABITANTS OF AUSTRALIA'S OUTBACK... MARR GROUNDS PAUL PHOLEROS

SCULPTURE AT THE TOP ENDS



PARTICIPATION BY WITH SEVEN URBAN BASED ARTISTS... MARR GROUNDS & SEVEN OTHERS.

AND IN/FROM PARIS

WATTERS GALLERY: 20<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER TO 7<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 1978.  
 & ACT 1 AN EXHIBITION OF PERFORMANCE ART, CANBERRA, 4-12 NOV, 1978.

## Marr R. Grounds A resume

### Biography

1930 Born Los Angeles, California  
 1965 Bach, Arch., University of California, Berkeley  
 1966 M.A. (sculpture) "  
 1966-8 Lecturer in Architecture, Kumasi, Ghana  
 1969-present Senior Lecturer in Architecture, University of Sydney, Australia

### Selected group exhibitions

1964 Berkeley Gallery Invitational, Benica Art Annual, Calif./Sacramento Art Annual, Calif.  
 1965 Berkeley Gallery Invitational, Calif./10th Art Annual, Walnut Creek, Calif./ Horizon's Gallery, Sausalito, Calif./ Richmond Museum Annual, Calif.  
 1966 Richmond Museum Invitational, Calif./Benica Annual (cash prize) Calif./ Walnut Creek Annual, Calif.  
 1973 Mildura Biennial, Vic.  
 1975 Australian 1975, Canberra. / Mildura Biennial, Vic. / Objects Show, Watters Gallery, Sydney. / The Grid Show, Ewing Gallery, Melbourne.  
 1976 Adelaide Festival Exhibition, S.A./ Tasmanian Art Gallery Exhibition, Hobart./ Biennial of Sydney. / Martin Plaza Exhibition, Sydney.  
 1977 Pinacotheca Gallery, Melbourne./ Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, Victoria./ Watters Gallery, Sydney.  
 1978 Mildura Triennial, Vic./ Australian Council Exhibition for U.S.A.

### One person exhibitions

1975 Watters Gallery, Sydney  
 1978 Watters Gallery, Sydney

### Public collections

1974 Flinders University of S.A. Mildura Arts Centre, Vic.  
 1976 Art Gallery of South Australia, Philip Morris Collection, Australia.  
 1977 Australian National Gallery, Canberra, Ballarat Art Gallery, Vic., Art Gallery of N.S.W., Sydney.

### Awards

1975 Special Projects Grant, Australian Council.  
 1976 Fellowship for Outback Travelling Artist (with P. Pholeros), Aust. Council.  
 1977 Resident Artist, Cite Internationale des Arts, Paris, Resident Artist, Aust. Council Loft, New York City.

### Documents

1977 1/2" "B for Art 1/4" by S. Jones. B&W. Sound. 20 min.  
 3/4" video. "B for Art 2/4" by Univ. Sydney. B&W. Sound. 20 min.  
 Super 8mm movie "B for Art 3/4" by M. Grounds & P. Pholeros Col. Silent. 11min.  
 16mm movie "B for Art 4/4" by D. Lourie. Col. Sound. 20 min.  
 1978 Book, "Sculpture at the Top Ends", 57 pages, by M. Grounds & P. Pholeros  
 16mm movie "Sculpture at the top Ends" Col. silent. 30 min. by M. Grounds & P. Pholeros.  
 3/4" video, "Sculpture at the Top Ends" Col. sound, 30 min. by M. Grounds & P. Pholeros  
 16mm movie (3/4" video cassette), "Oxide Street", Col. sound, 40 min. Filmmakers - University of Sydney with Marr Grounds.  
 Book, "Oxide Street" (subject as per above), pending.

# PLAYGROUND

**bower** of *Prionodura newtoniana*



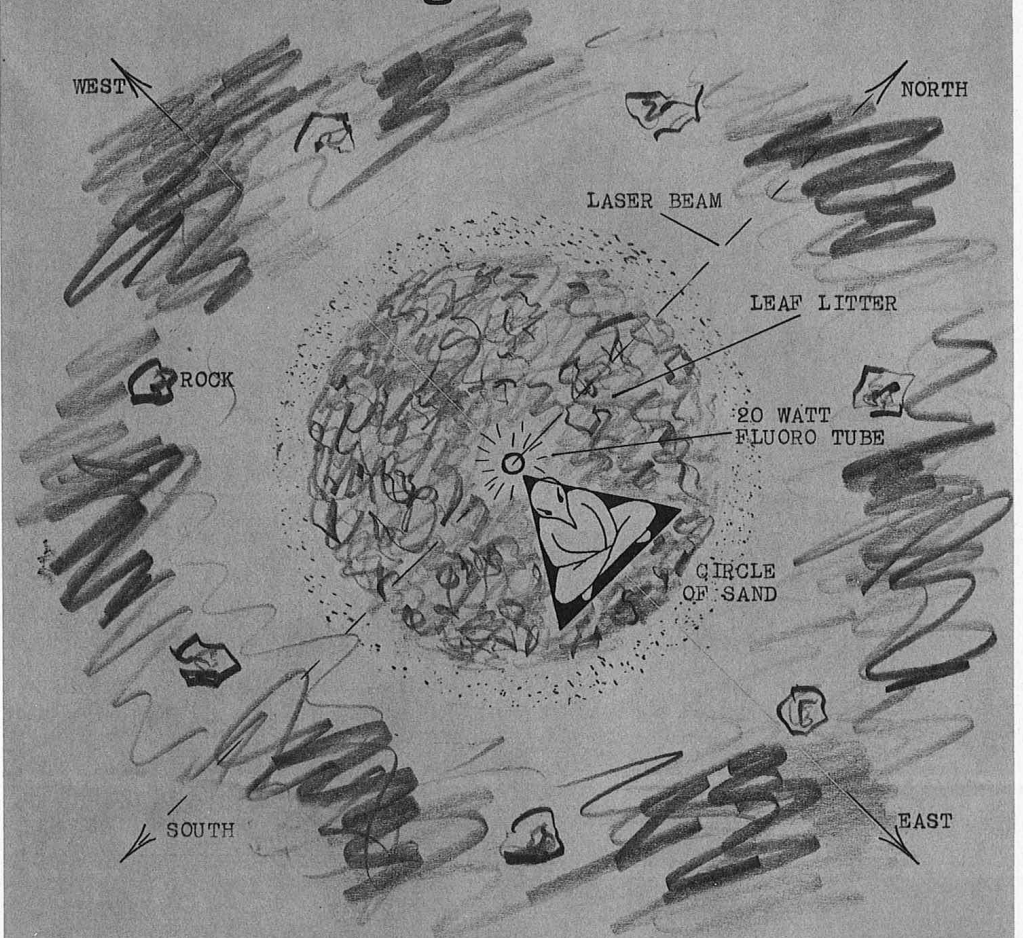
FROM FIELD NOTES ON THE GOLDEN BOWERBIRD

IAN HAMILTON.

"... he has flown to a branch about ten metres away and carefully selected a fine twig... now at the bower, he places the twig, which he has stripped of leaves, in the south, or main, tower near the display perch..."

field notes, 1978.

# for PARANOIDS ritual settings



FROM "TOM PETRIE; REMINISCENCES OF EARLY BRISBANE", PETRIE, 1910.

"The Piping Shrike-thrush (*G. harmonica*) called "mirram" was always watched when it came near a camp, and was spoken to and asked questions about certain things..."

but perhaps for us....." it is just here, just at this dark and silent frame, that the pointed tip of the rocket, falling nearly a mile per second, absolutely and forever without sound, reaches its last unmeasurable gap above the roof of this old theatre, the last delta - t....."



Leigh Hobba  
 Born 1949 Am. Samoa  
 1971-'75 studied music,  
 Adelaide University.

1.



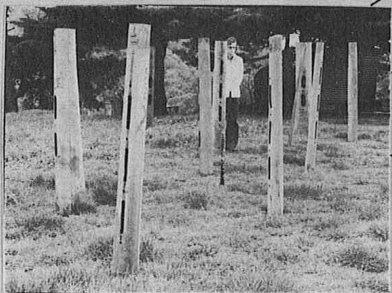
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CONTEXT



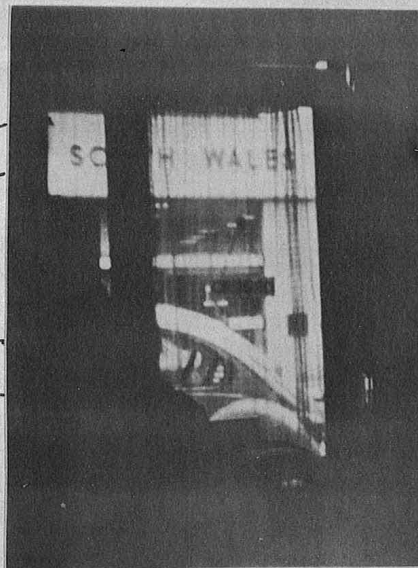
Concerto for clarinetist



WIND MACHINES (ENSEMBLE)



Subjective externalisation



2.

Objective



internalisation



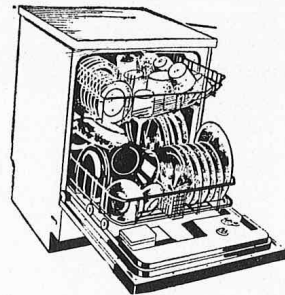
- Hello, I'd like to know if you'd be interested in participating in a survey I'm conducting, which is to be displayed at An Exhibition Of Performance Art in Canberra?

- No, but what is the survey about?

- It is about peoples treasures, items which may be people, animals, plants or inanimate objects. It involves me photographing them and assembling the photo's at the exhibition in Canberra, Would you be interested in participating now you know what it's about?

- O.K. ,where do we start?

- Well, what is your most treasured person, creation, object? It doesn't have to be confined to my suggestions, whatever you think you treasure most.....







PAT AND RICHARD LARTER.  
 RICHARD LARTER HAS BEEN A PAINTER EXHIBITING PAINTINGS, DRAWINGS, AND PRINTS, FOR A LONG TIME NOW. HE IS HARDLY KNOWN AT ALL FOR HIS FILMS, VIDEOTAPES, AND PERFORMANCE WORK. MOST OF THIS WORK HAS BEEN PRODUCED FOR A SMALL GROUP OF FRIENDS AND COLLABORATORS, AND OVERSEAS MAIL ART FRIENDS. PAT LARTER STARTED WORKING WITH HER OWN PROJECTS IN 1970, AND MADE HER OWN FILMS WITH A DISTINCTIVE FEMINIST ATTITUDE. SHE HAD WORKED IN FULL COLLABORATION WITH RICHARD SINCE 1966 ON FILMS AND AUDIOTAPES - FROM THIS SHE PROGRESSED TO COLLAGE AND MAIL ART, IN WHICH FIELD SHE IS KNOWN GLOBALLY, AND HER WORK IN CONSTANT DEMAND. WHEN RICHARD GAVE UP TEACHING PAT JOINED HIM IN FULL TIME PROJECTS, AND THEY HAVE WORKED TOGETHER EVER SINCE. IN 1972 THEY FORMED WITH FRIENDS A PERFORMANCE GROUP KNOWN AS THE MAHOULY UTZON UTZON ORGIASTIC RAGA BAND. THIS GROUP WITH MANY ADDITIONS AND SUBTRACTIONS TO ITS PERSONNEL HAS WAXED AND WANED SINCE THEN. IT WAS AT ITS MOST VISIBLE AT THE SCULPTURE CENTRE SYDNEY PERFORMING "THE OTHER S.F." FOR DR. AL AKERMAN'S (BLASTER) OREGON MAIL ART SHOW - "FORIEGHN INGREDIENTS" IN 1978. THE LARTERS DESCRIBE THEIR WORK AS: "LIVING TO LEARN

TOGETHER, AND LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER". APPEALED BY THE BLANKNESS AND CRASS MATERIALISM OF THE BUREAUCRATIC AND MARKETING ART WORLD, OF TENURED OFFICIALS, SELLERS, AND BUYERS; THE LARTERS NOWADAYS WORK UNCONSTRAINED BY DOGMAS, THE VALUE SYSTEMS OF OTHERS, POLEMICAL PEDANTRIES, DIRECTLY FOR PERSONAL FRIENDS AND THE MAIL ART SYSTEMS PEOPLE. THEY WORK HARD AND WITH ENJOYMENT WITHOUT FINANCIAL GAIN DIRECTLY FOR THE FOLK WITH WHOM THEY SHARE AIMS AND ASPIRATIONS. THE WHOLE EFFORT HAS BEEN FINANCED BY THE SALE OF RICHARD'S PAINTINGS. TO PLACE SUCH WORK ON PUBLIC EXHIBITION POSSIBLY EXPANDS ACCESS, BUT IN THE JOYLESS PREVAILING ATTITUDES OF SERVITUDE ENDURED BY MOST IT IS MORE LIKELY TO BE INDIGNANTLY REJECTED. HEY HO SUCH IS LIFE .....

SELF EXPOSURE  
 BULK HEAD,  
 EPIC

ART FOOL

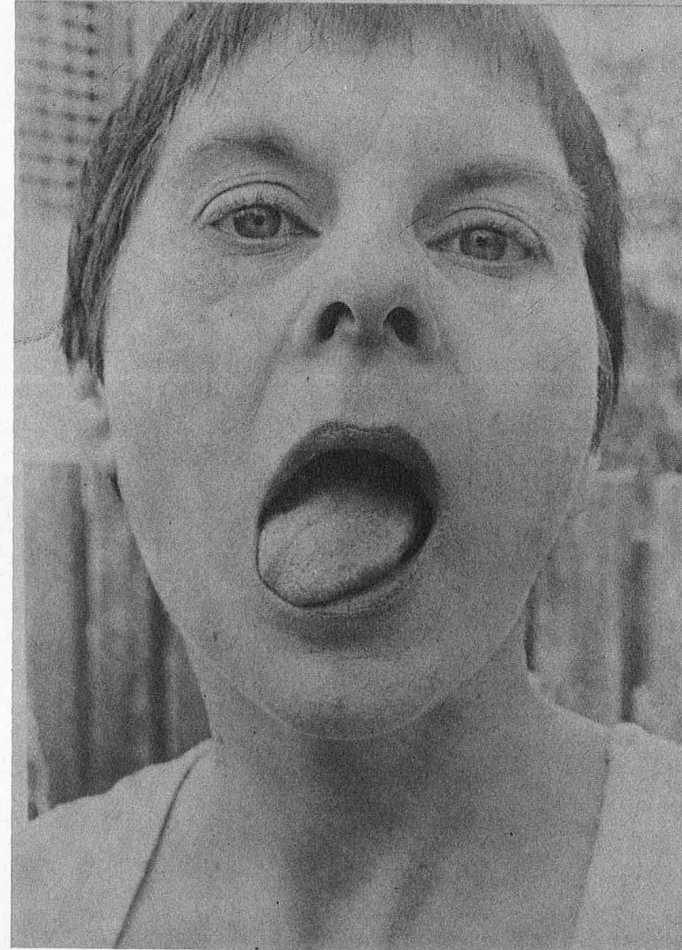
FEMAIL ART  
 FEMAIL ART  
 FEMAIL ART  
 FEMAIL ART  
 SELF EXPOSURE  
 SELF EXPOSURE  
 SELF EXPOSURE  
 FEMAIL ART  
 OH PUN LEGS  
 FEMAIL ART  
 OH PUN LEGS  
 FEMAIL ART  
 OH PUN LEGS  
 FEMAIL ART



PAT LARTER PERFORMS  
 "ARMPATS" FOR  
 CEES FRANCKE  
 PHOTOGRAPH BY  
 SILVIA JANSONS



BENEATH :  
 PAT LARTER IN  
 "PORTRAIT" AVAILABLE  
 IN SUPER 8 OR  
 3/4" COLOR VIDEO.  
 SHOWN IN "ILLUSION AND REALITY" EXHIBITION 1977.  
 A PORTRAIT OF PAT OF A YEARS DURATION.



PAT IN PERFORMANCE: ABOVE & BELOW



### The Rocking

Dr F.C. Eve, Consulting Physician to the Hull Royal Infirmary, 1932 experimented with rocking as a means of performing artificial respiration.

When the body is tilted head downwards the weight of the liver, spleen (total 36 lbs) and other abdominal contents is sufficient to so compress the bases of the lungs that expiration is mimicked. When forces operate in the reverse direction inspiration is effectively reproduced by virtue of the attachment of the liver and spleen to the diaphragm.

It was proved by Eve that if a healthy person was strapped upon the stretcher and rocking carried out through 50° ten to fifteen times per minute the respiratory excursions which resulted from the rocking were so effective that the individual found that he did not require to breathe at all. Thus as far as respiration is concerned, rocking can, and does maintain life indefinitely.

Ref. "Surgery of Modern Warfare Part I ed. by Hamilton Bailey.

'The Rocking' consists of three equal yet diverse elements.  
Form/Light/Figures

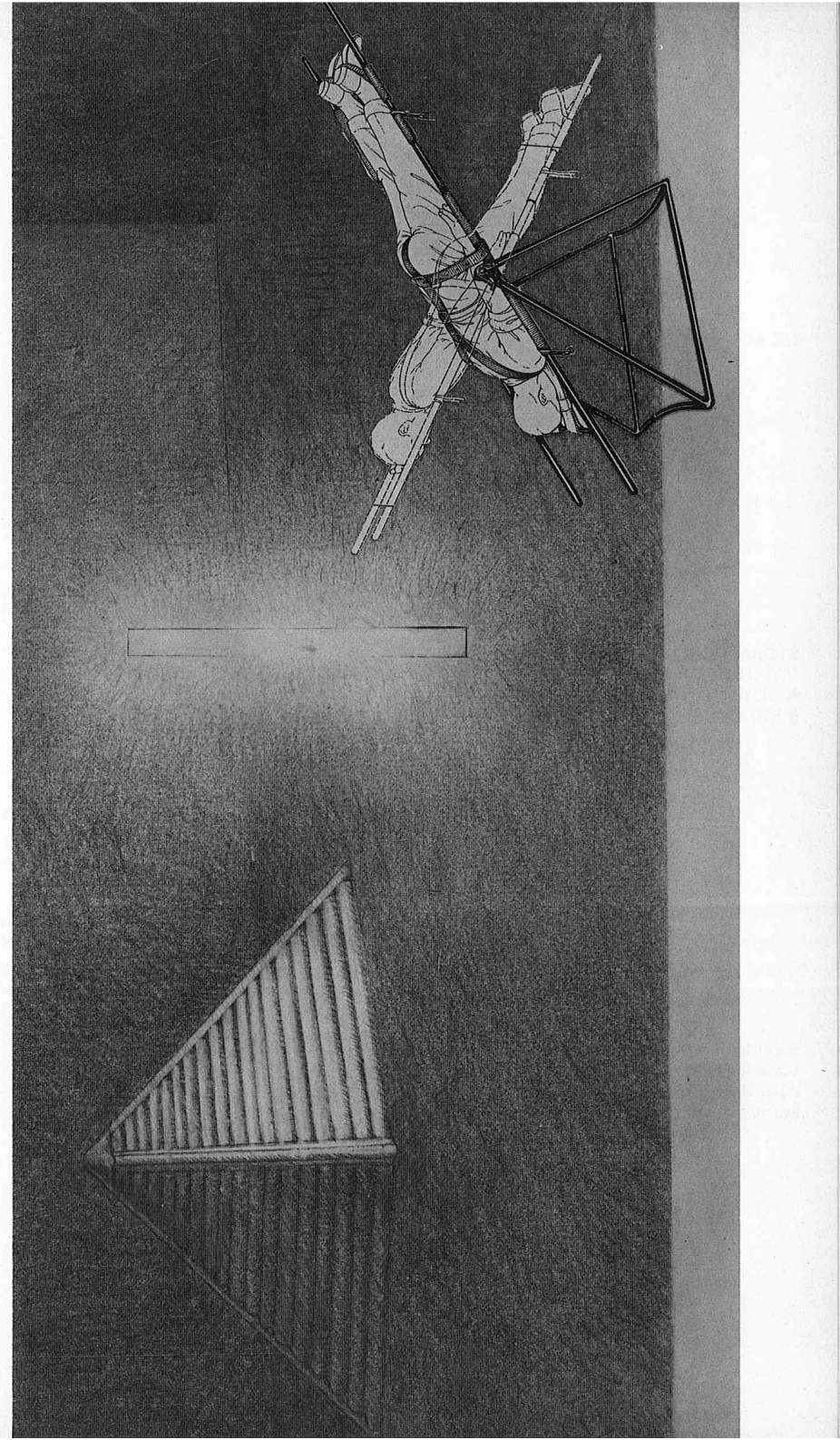
I would like these elements to balance in authority, to make equal visual demands upon the observer, whilst maintaining equal presence within the work.

The human participants are seen as being no more, or no less "important" than the other two non-human elements and all three interrelate as a whole. Each element having its own appropriate form, its own strength, all three having equal strength yet gained through different means.

In performance work the parallels between art and life can appear closer, more direct than in painting or sculpture. To create a situation which manipulates a physical, static form, a light source a

more direct than in painting or sculpture. To create a situation which manipulates a physical, static form, a light source and human activity would seem a simple reflection of the very basic reality of the "real" world.

Previous performance works include "The sea-gull Salesman" (Pinacotheca Gallery, 1971) "The Delicatessen (Mildura 1975).



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(BLACK + WHITE)

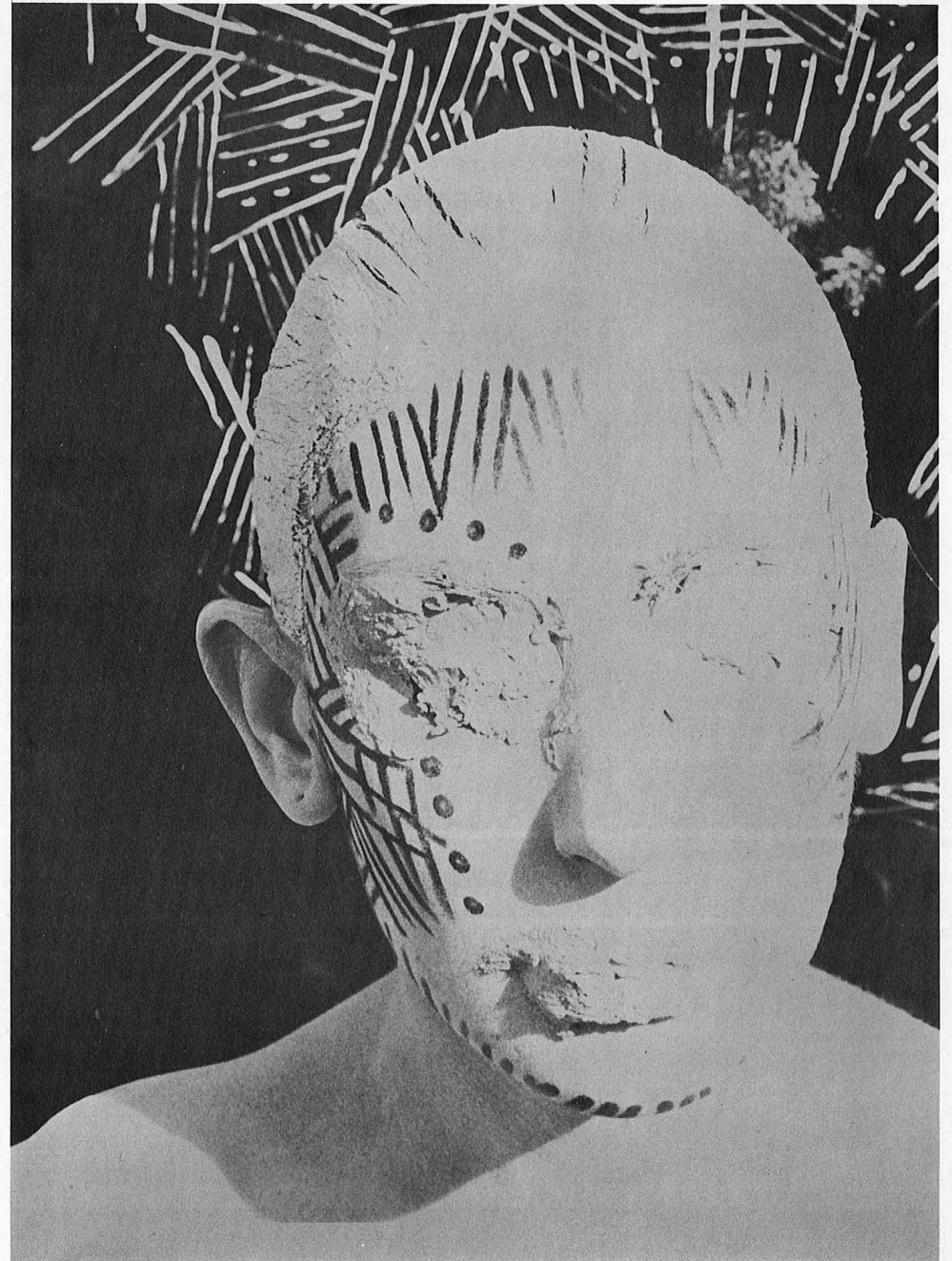
**STORMY BELLIGERENCE**  
*'THE ART OF NOISES'*  
A SLAP IN THE FACE OF . . . .  
(PROTO-DADA) (UMM!)

Subtitled:  
Loose ends/Umm/What's going on?/Who did it!  
What does it mean?/Is it . . . ?/What . . . /  
learning about . . . /

Performance:- a fleeting moment  
Image :- a fleeting moment  
Object :- a fleeting moment  
Life has passed.  
Images retained, reinforced, felt and understood,  
perhaps in this moment or another.  
Barriers block flow  
Ignorance blinds  
Mask disguises  
avoid or accept  
Energy flows, trickles and gushes,  
Changes state, never destroyed

Jillian Orr

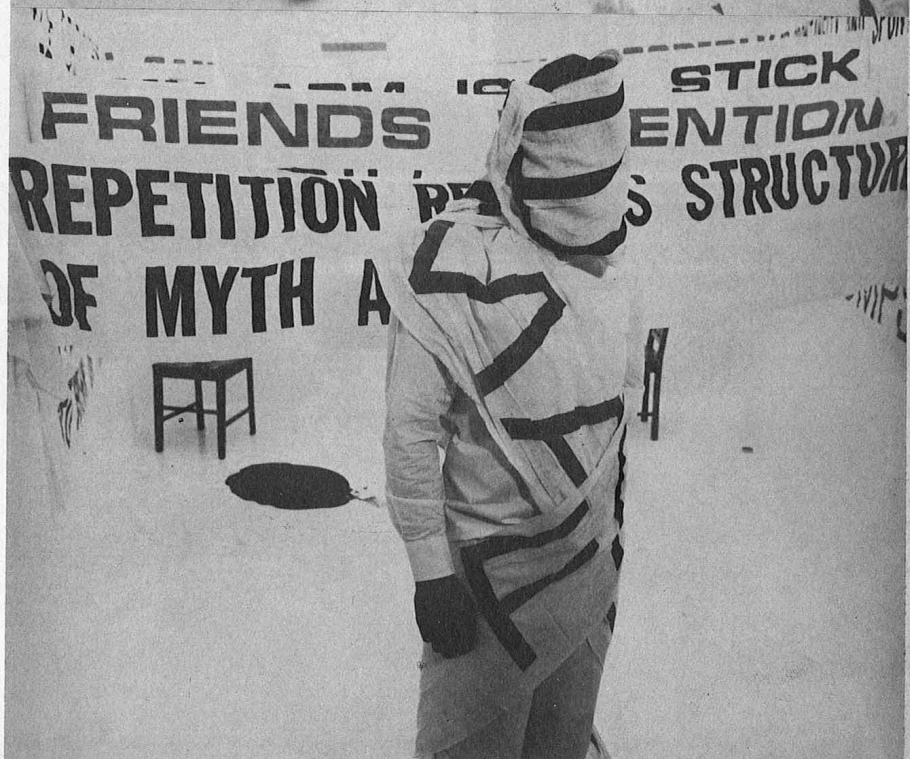
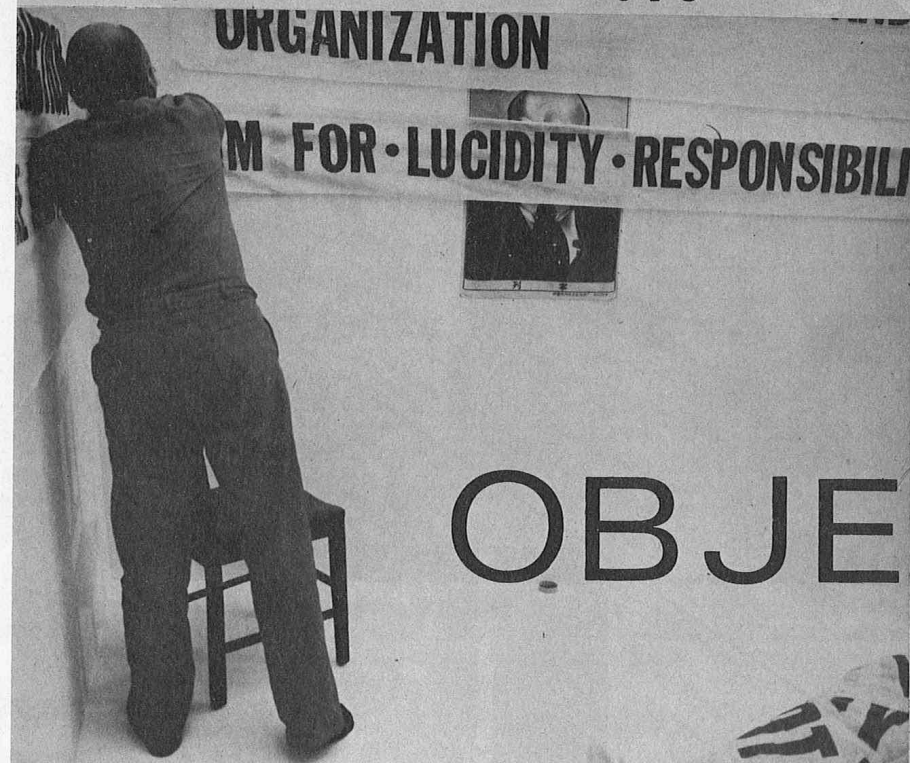
Performances:- "Blinding Surface"  
and  
"Inside Jacks head"





These two sets of photographs document pieces done as part of my film project **RULES & DISPLACEMENT ACTIVITIES PART 3. "SHIVERING"** was done in August 1977 at the moment of sunrise in the shelter of huge boulders at the foothills of the Snowy Mts. The second set are part of the documentation for **"WRAPPED IN MY OWN WORDS"** an interaction piece with my father and sister also done in August 1977.

MIKE PARR OCTOBER 1978



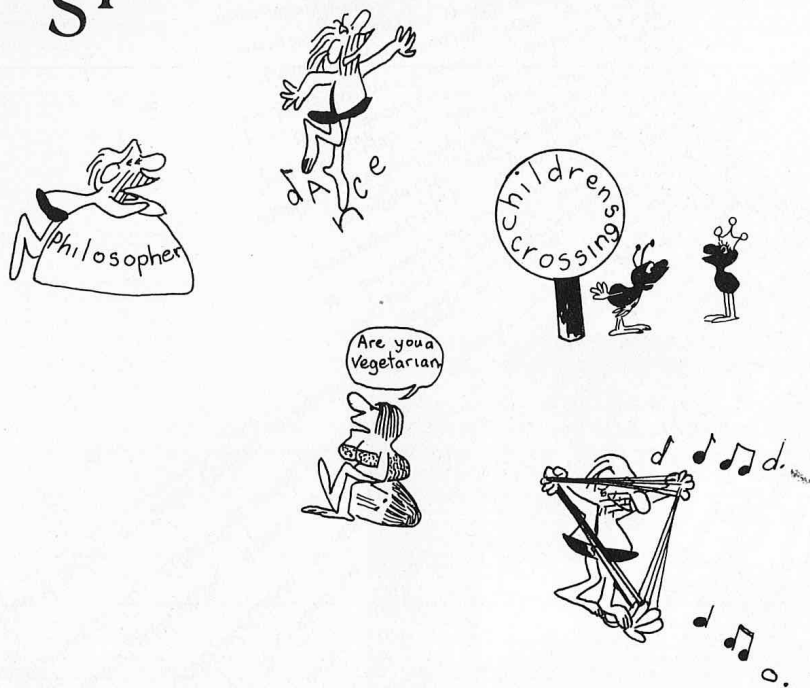
# OBJECT

Between these works a duality exists but the effort to reconcile contradictions is the source of meaning. "DREAM", the piece i intend for Canberra is about the structure of this reconciliation, etc & etc (mindful of the difficulties in sleeping in a small boat on a manmade lake aubade)

Photographs: JOHN DELACOUR



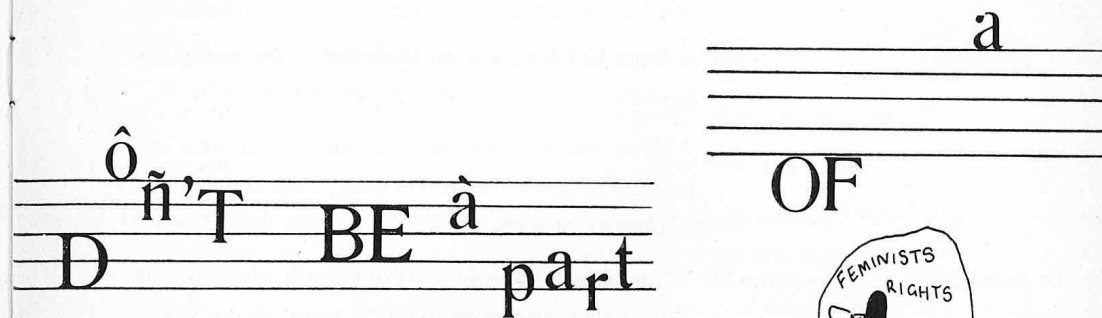
SPECIALISTS group



PART IN THE WHOLE

The execution of this work is totally in the hands of random gallery audience participation. How would you like to spend five minutes of your time to become,,,,,, A PART OF THE WHOLE.

L. Savage.



BE A



Noel Sheridan "NOT WAITING"... a rehearsal for "Leaving this space in a random way".

DURATION VISUAL.

15 seconds A front lit blank screen illuminates the heads and shoulders of two people who sit in front of it.

20 seconds A slide which reads "not waiting" and gives a date is rear projected on the screen. We also see the silhouette of a chair which is behind the screen.

10 seconds Voice 1: "This is a video recording of a work which is now taking place in the setting of a work which was performed some time ago".

25 seconds The slide changes to read something similar to what is spoken by voice 2.

30 seconds Voice 2: (insynch with a taped voice) "This work requires that it be performed in 'some other context'. Since however, any other context i.e. a different one from this, once it is chosen, becomes, at the moment of that nomination the correct context for this work, 'the contextual requirements for this work cannot be met - not even conceptually'.

4 seconds The shadow of a figure is seen entering. The figure sits.

11 seconds The figure is seen waiting.

10 seconds A slide of an art gallery is thrown on the figure.

10 seconds Voice 2: "This man is waiting in an art context in order to perform "waiting".

10 seconds Voice 2: (to shadow figure) "Wait".

5 seconds Voice 1: "Is he really waiting?"

Voice 2: (to shadow) "Wait".

(to Voice 1) "No. He was performing "waiting".

20 seconds (They wait).

11 seconds Voice 1: "I can't tell the difference".

5 seconds Voice 2: (to Voice 1) "Wait".

5 seconds Voice 2: (to shadow figure) "Wait".

4 seconds Voice 1: "He began waiting when you said wait?"

5 seconds Voice 2: "Wait. .... that's what I mean".

10 seconds Voice 1: "He was really waiting then".

5 seconds Voice 2: "Wait. .... when?"

5 seconds Voice 1: "Well .... now".

10 seconds Voice 2: (pause) .... "wait".

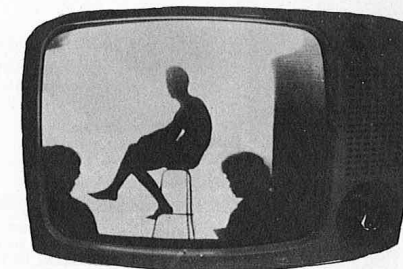
Part Two.

Part Two is a re-run of Part One with difference that everything takes twice as long.

Part Three.

Part Three takes three times as long as Part One, and so on.

Somewhere along the line - don't even think of the end of the line - "waiting" and "not-waiting" become concepts which the audience will experience and decide upon.



TERRY SMITH

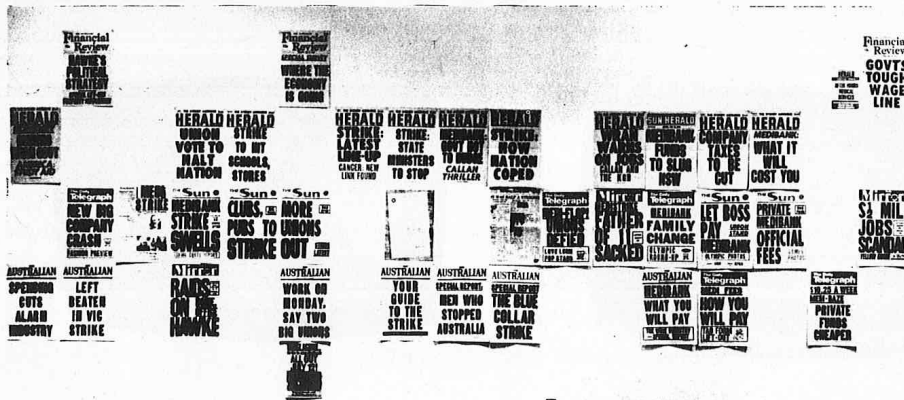
I hope to be able to do two sorts of thing:

(i) Present two of the slide-talks of the Media Action Group. The Group consists of artists, students and teachers, working with trade union research officers, officials and activists, making educational materials for use within the labour movement. All our slide-talks, studies and graphic work has been commissioned by particular unions in order to do a specific job. The talks are also used in schools, universities, colleges, and by activist groups.

The slide-talk Uranium Mining: Whose Decision? was produced in conjunction with the TransNational Co-operative, who are publishing an accompanying booklet, Australia Undermined. The slide-talk Newspapers is being shown as a further example of our work, and also in order to provide a context for the second project.

(ii) Cover the temporary wall in Civic Square with a sequence of newspaper posters. They will be selected from those published by Sydney newspapers during the past two years. They will be arranged so as to demonstrate the nature of a political problem, and the media treatment of it.

The arrangement will be similar to one of the three that were done in Auckland, in August 1976. In the wall illustrated, Medibunk, the posters are laid out horizontally according to the ownership of the newspapers, and vertically in date order. The blanks are just days on which a relevant poster was not issued. The overall layout clearly shows the newspaper owners' and editors' attitudes to the strike, which we remember as the first major protest against the Fraser Government's dismemberment, now completed, of our universal health insurance scheme.

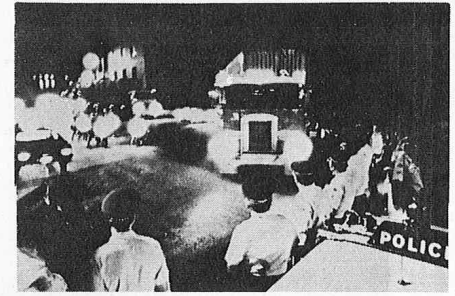


# Media Action Group

## URANIUM MINING — WHOSE DECISION?

Produced in conjunction with the Trans-National Co-operative. This slide-talk provides an extensive analysis and can be presented in its entirety or in any combination of its parts. A. Introduction: the 'energy debate', the history of nuclear power, and a summary of the major arguments. B. How safe is the nuclear fuel cycle? C. Is nuclear energy necessary to the world's energy needs? D. Will the Australian people benefit from uranium mining? E. What impact will mining have on the region and the people who live there? F. What are the social and political consequences of a commitment to nuclear energy?

Time: 80 minutes. No. of slides: 111. Cost: \$75.



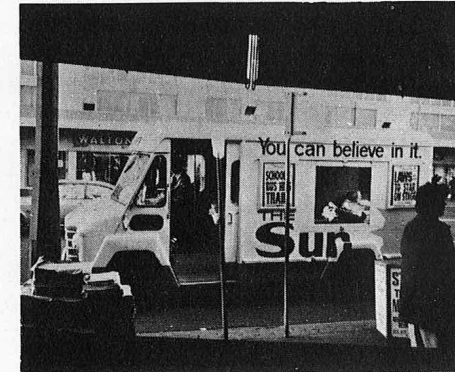
MEDIA ACTION GROUP is currently working on projects involving the Telecom unions, the steel industry, unemployment and various aspects of cultural and media analysis. We welcome your active participation in our work.

The price of each slide-talk kit includes the set of slides, a printed text, and operating instructions. The slide-talks can be rented for a fee of \$10 each. The purchase price is calculated on a non-profit basis — however all prices are negotiable.

## NEWSPAPERS

An analysis of the mass media monopolies in Australia, showing the economic relationships between the manufacture of 'news', the selling of advertising space and us, the buyers of newspapers. This is illustrated by examining how workers and unions are treated in the media. Examples are given of how 'news events' are created and how layout is used to enhance the self-image of the ruling class and their political allies.

Time: 30 minutes. No. of slides: 47. Cost: \$60.

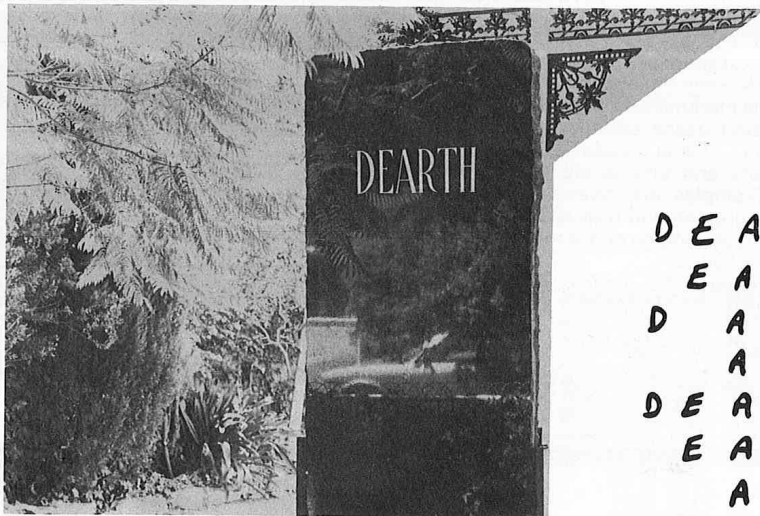


Media Action Group  
33 Elliott Street,  
BALMAIN. N.S.W. 2041  
Phone: 827 2464 660 3440



## THE EVERLASTING STONE

at the Adelaide Festival Centre Gallery  
 by Richard Tipping January '78  
 " giving weight to words "



DEAR  
 EARTH  
 DART  
 AT  
 DEATH  
 EART  
 ART  
 EAR

This piece, weighing over half a tonne, has since been placed by the lake at Flinders University.

## ALPHABET SOUP

1. The opportunity, the environment offered, to release up-wind in the Lake, Canberra, on a public Sunday 12 large white polystyrene letters, alphabet soup as discovered in the baby's bowl, rearrangements of meaning by the breeze, particulars of the day's chance circumstances.
2. The letters arranged as THE EVERLASTING STONE (title of Monier Granite's rock catalogue) was the title of an exhibition of polished granite and marble pieces, each indelibly marked - carved or sand-blasted and coloured with leaf gold - monumental poetry in a word, maximum density of associations, this whole speech before the mouth opens, to see the spoken, foreign as arabic, recognise shape as sound and letters in sequence as a vehicle for the mind, through ear and eye, to fly off upon.
3. To start by laying out THE EVERLASTING STONE on the shore and to move through simple steps to SEA NOTHING TV STEEL, SEE NOTHING TV STEAL as minimal shift to demonstrate some possibilities, then move by dinghy to the point of release. That polystyrene floats seems the opposite physical character of granite, which will outlive the language.
4. Advance orders for the book THE EVERLASTING STONE can be placed with the Experimental Art Foundation, 169 Payneham Road, St.Peters 5069.



THE EVERLASTING STONE  
 THE EVERLASTING TONE  
 THE EVERLASTING ONE  
 THE EVERLASTING ON  
 THE SEVERE LASTING TON  
 THE SEVERE STING TAIL ON  
 ✓ THE SEVEREST TAIL ON SING  
 THE EVEREST TAIL ON SING  
 THESE RESTING LONG TAT  
 SEVEREST TAIL ON SING  
 THE SEVERE STING LOVE TAN  
 THE SEVERE LOVER TIN TANG  
 THE SEA LOVER STING TEN  
 SEAT LOVER THING TENSE  
 SEA TV NOTHING STEEL (E)

*Richard Tipping*

SEA NOTHING TV STEEL  
 SEE NOTHING TV STEAL

33 NINE QUALIT  
7 E X C H A N G E  
G T H I S I T E M  
N G E . T O N Y T W I G G  
A F O R E X C H A  
S T H R E E T I M E S



I accept that I am a product of the social, political and economic environment (culture) in which I live. I also accept that the given environment, both through me and its conditioning of a viewer's response to the concept "art work", predetermines the art that I have made, am making and may make in future. I believe that art unavoidably develops a purpose, initially through the evolution of the work by the artist and later in the process of public interaction through display.

I would like to ease the distinction between life and art by disturbing the notion that an "art work" occupies a remote, sacred space and suggesting instead that "artist", "art work" and "viewer" occupy space on equal terms.

Within this context I would like to present nine qualities three times for exchange.

The qualities of the presentation of a particular image place upon it the significance or "art" through which our culture regards the image. The qualities I have presented this image with, chosen by me, render the image and its significance, mine.

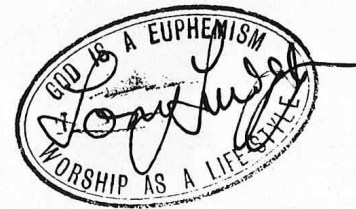
I propose an exchange of the apparent qualities of the image. I ask you to exchange a quality you have both observed and are able to render, with regard to the given image, for one that I have observed, rendered and supplied in an edition of three, with regard to the given image.

I would like to achieve a socialisation of the qualities of this image and by this means a socialisation of the "art" of this image.

One red facsimile human.

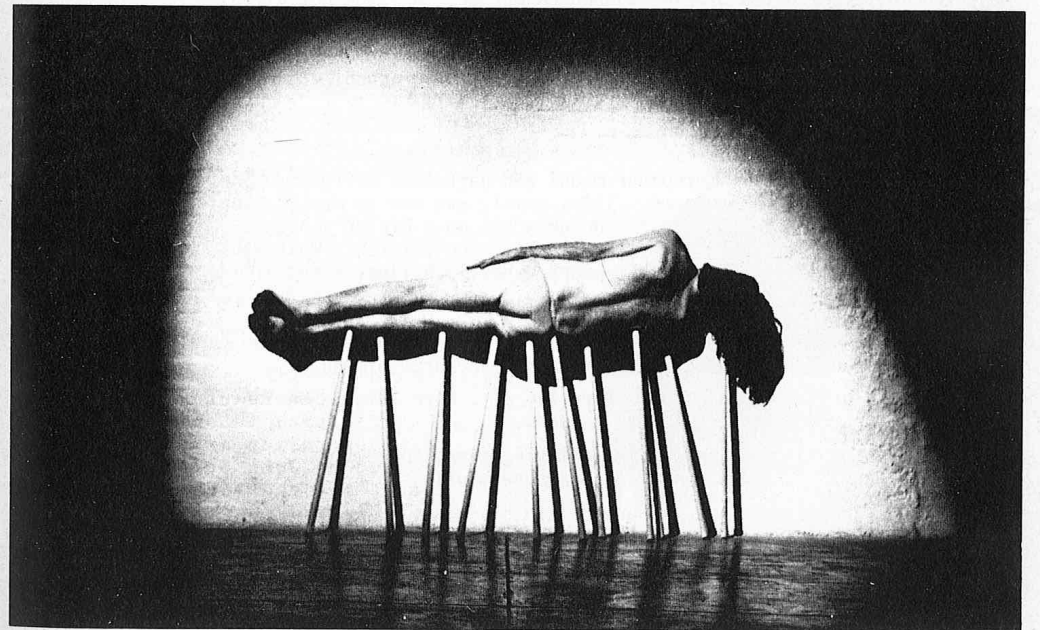
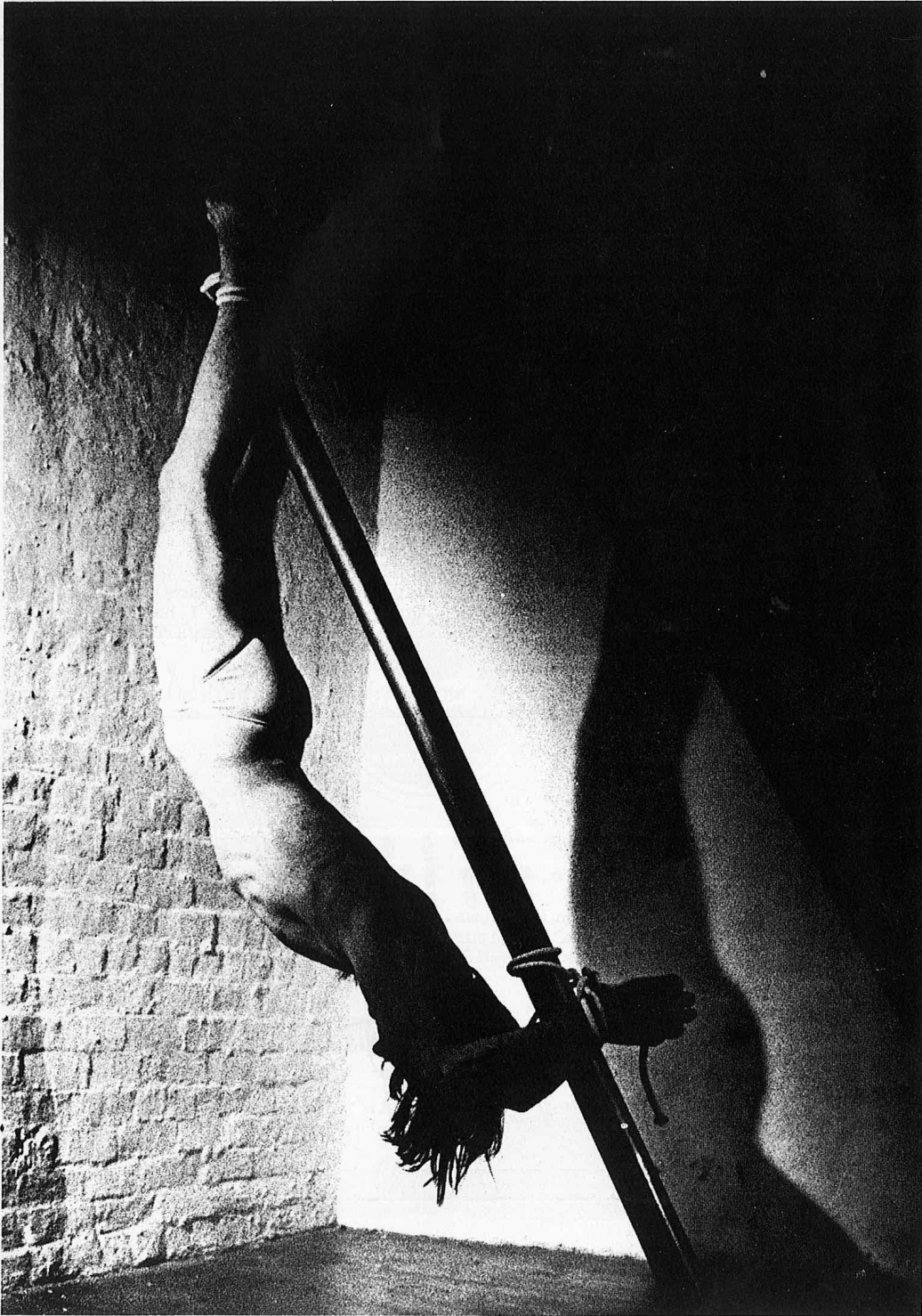
One green crocodile.

Two items that simultaneously contradict each other's presence and are placed within a structure of variable qualities that delineate the condition that presupposes the need for exchange.



TONY TWIGG

KEN UNSWORTH



Could this be

# Mr. X?

## XOGRAPHY 1

### Born:

Sydney, July 4, 1948, 5th floor, Xavier Hospital, bed 110, without complication. Only x-ceptional circumstance: breathed quietly, but did not cry.

### Education:

St. Pius X College for Boys. Intermediate Certificate. Final report: "Well-mannered boy, devoted to the Virgin, normal in every other way, but shows no signs of interest in sex. Not disturbed or talented; should be a model citizen".

### Art School:

Xander Maxie School of Arts. Completed all years; attended conscientiously. Final report: "Cooperative in his attitude. No particular signs of talent; got some good marks for his colour wheels. Should be a model art teacher".

### Employment 1:

Accepts part-time tutorship in watercolour, Wagga Wagga School of Arts.

### Exhibition 1:

125 Contemporary Australian Watercolourists: Wagga Wagga Triennale.

### Bankcard No.:

28910/--90288BB--272819836482½MN--RFV189204756-000 (recalled).

### Life Crisis 1:

Australia Council, Visual Arts Board, grant application for one-year Fellowship. Rejected in letter dated 5/7/74, signed PM per JL. Reasons not given.

### Employment 11:

Accepts part-time watercolour tutorship, Xander Maxie School of Arts.

### Life Crisis 11:

Discovers opposite X.

Miss X was Xander Maxie watercolour model and part-time waitress. She modelled for his class, demurely undraped. This, this!, was new to Mr. X. Conscientious Mr X grew distracted in art class. He grew hot on a winter's night. Something--what?--gripped him, troubled him. He flushed; he fainted. What would Brother Boniface say? Miss X smiled at him, parted her lush lips lightly. He fell.

After class she beckoned, and he humbly followed.

In the canvas-stretching room, she lay, still naked, abandoned, the curve of her bare beauty beyond an HB pencil to discover. She drew him on.....

Why draw? he panted. Why paint? Here lay art, here life. She languished, legs parted, arms outstretched, x-iting, x-posed.

He fell into her fulcrum, forgetting all his fears, forgetting his faint heart. His colour wheel spun into a radiant, rainbow mantle, softly enveloping them both...

He had discovered X. The image burned into his mind; his veins coursed wider; his mad mind raced with brilliant images; his skin glowed; his heart burst.

His new-found life seemed to focus along the arms of that outstretched and loving image: X

Mr X had met his life, his art, his way. King had encountered Kong. Xing was one with Xang. Mr X had discovered, all unexpected, his xelf.

## Exhibition 11:

One-man show, Centre Galleries, King's X.

Hung himself from a suspended X, 88cm x 97cm, using 20lb breaking strain nylon fishing line and stainless steel no 14 Bream hooks.

Miss X, liberated hairs feathering her round thighs, she naked, branding nude Mr. X with tiny voluptuous X's with a doctor's diathermy machine (6cm x 3cm, normally used to burn off warts). Mr. X all the while yelled, innovatively, "Fuck art, Oh Fuck Art!!"

## Reviews:

"Innovative", The Australian

"Art discovers punk...Mr and Miss X geni...could this be the ultimate mind-fuck we have been waiting for?" Nation Review

"Obscene and indecent exhibition". Sydney Morning Herald.

"X-arsperating". Quadrant

"New talent exposed". Artforce.

"Curatorially well-hung". Communicating Arts.

## Life Crisis 111:

Australia Council, Visual Arts Board, grant application 78/1092877, asking for return ticket to New York to study performance innovations.

Reduced grant approved: One-way ticket to New York. letter dated 7/8/77, signed YT per MG.

## Exhibition 111:

Street-fighting mind-fuck: South Houston Street, NY, artists Mr and Miss X.

## Reviews:

"Down-under downer" Variety.

"Can not command prices asked. Wall Street Journal.

## Life Crisis IV:

Application to US Foundation for the Arts for return ticket to Paris.

Reduced grant approved: one-way ticket to Paris.

## Exhibition IV:

Les Arts Sauvage du Monde. Group Show, Beaubourg, Paris.

## Reviews:

"Incroyable!" Le Monde

"Mon Dieu!" Paris Match.

## Life Crisis V:

Application to UNESCO for return ticket to Sydney for

Grant of one-way ticket.

## Employment 111:

Accepts X-Officio Chairmanship of Visual Arts Bo

## Exhibition V:

One-man show, Sculpture Centre, The Rox, Sydney

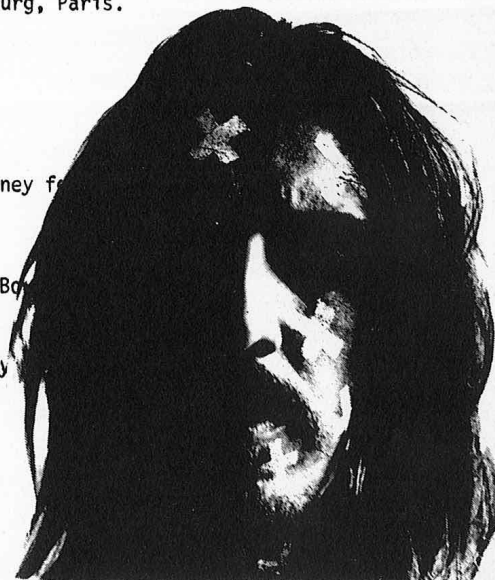
## Prepared by:

Artexpo Public Relations

47 Cascade Street

Paddington, 2021

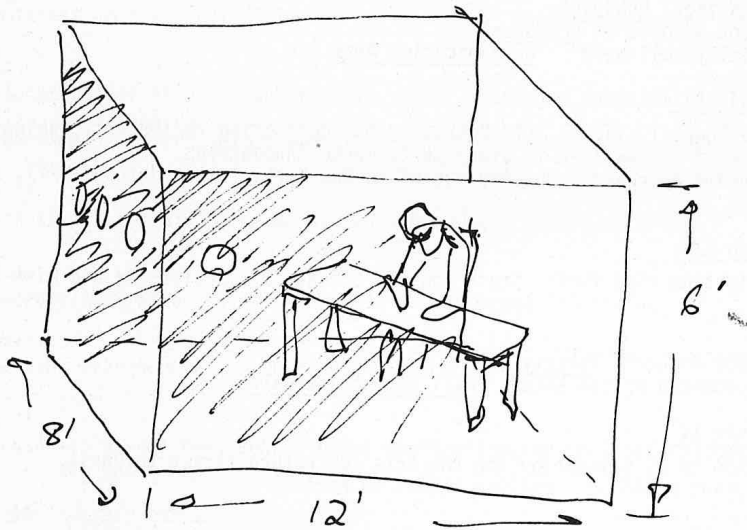
Further information: Lance Freer: 31 1988.



THE CANBERRA LESSON.

My initial response to exhibiting at Canberra in November was to resort to using a work that I was entirely familiar with; SOMETHING ALREADY TESTED AND PROVED. But the lessons from Canberra don't allow us to take things for granted so easily.

Why not develop a sealed space in which certain pieces of information (like fragments from the Australian Constitution) are LEARNED BY HEART. Like the old lessons.



A dialogue would be set up with other voices TAUNTING, REPEATING, REMINDING as the lesson proceeds.

The only access to the work would be through peep-holes in the partitions.

Eyes would be WATCHING as I make my mistakes, repeat the lines, SLOWLY learning them. My ANXIETY would show through, MY FUMBLINGS, my errors; this would become ..... THE CANBERRA LESSON.

Arthur Wicks  
October 1978.

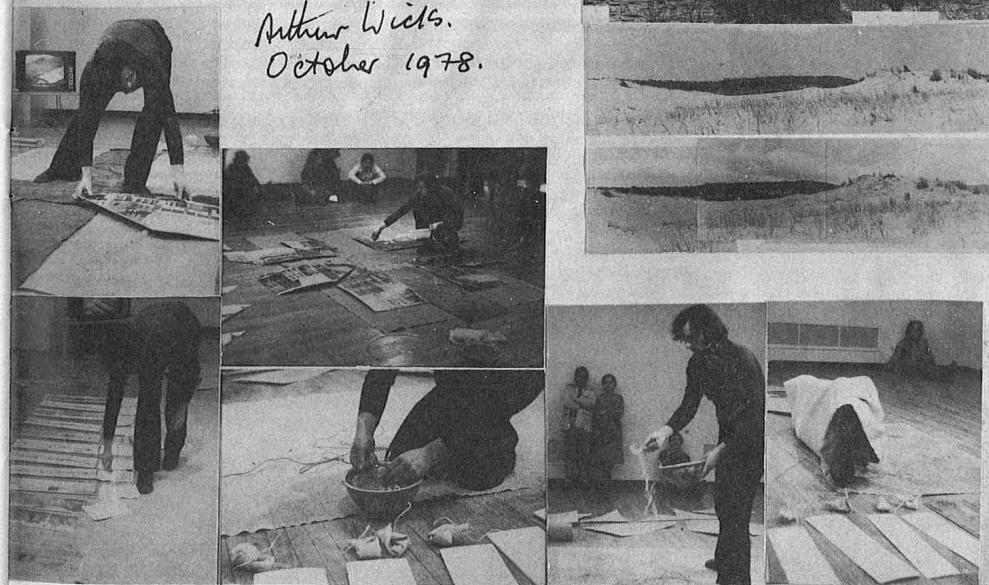
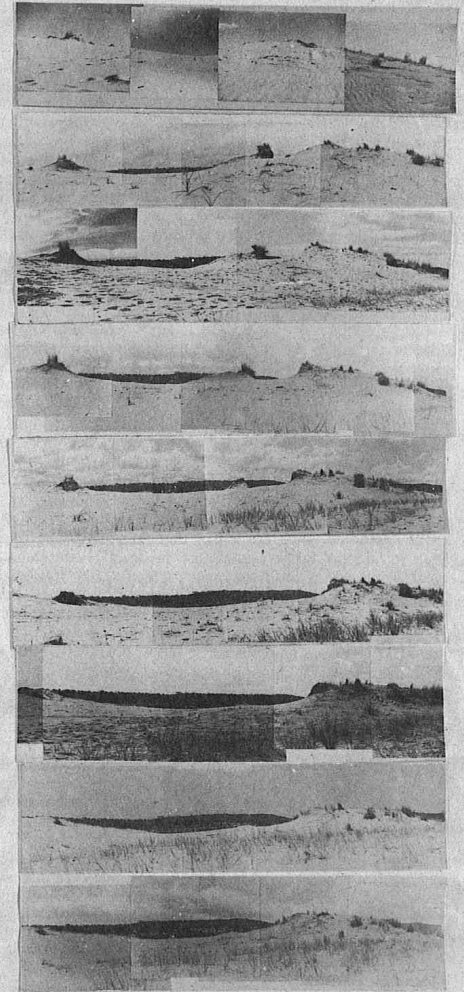
SAND MEMORIES.....

Sand Memories began as a private exploration of some sand dunes on the South Coast of New South Wales. I photographed them twice a year over four years. I felt that I had to come to terms with the changes that I was witnessing - more than just the observed effects of rain, wind and heat on the sand particles.

My activities on the sand dunes developed. I buried, at one point in time earlier photographs taken of the dunes. Over a period of several years these photographs reappeared, totally transformed by the dunes themselves. They had digested their own history. From this the performance "Sand memories at Durras" emerged. On the gallery floor, ritual activities were developed using sand, water and the photos of the dunes. This took place around a large canvas on which sand had been glued. Simultaneously, there was shown a pre-taped video of the photographs being buried in these sand dunes.

While in New York in 1977, I had the idea of transposing my ideas and sentiments from "Sand Memories at Durras" onto an intersection of that city. It was as if that metropolis, with all the commercial, social agglomerate associated with it, had sprung from the sand. I wanted to reverse the process; to excavate back to its foundations. In practical terms this had to be done through a process of the imagination - within mental space. From this came the performance "Sand Memories at Durras at Broome St."

Arthur Wicks.  
October 1978.



## Performance art

Some sceptical reflections

Paul McGillick

"The present art world is . . . a demilitarized zone, flanked by avant-garde ghosts on one side and a changing mass culture on the other."

Harold Rosenberg, *The De-definition of Art*.

Presumably *Act 1* is premised on the assumption that there is such a thing as performance art, that it is both valid and significant and that it is both possible and desirable to present an exhibition of such work. When *Kunstfeste* such as *Act 1* take place, their organisers invariably speak of surveys, explorations, examinations *et al.* Just as invariably, however, these events prove to be uncritical and undiscriminating promotions. All too often we let slip the opportunity to initiate a fruitful dialectic about the art on view.

If this were merely an oversight it would be disturbing enough. As much a factor though is the frequent collusion of artists, curators, critics and (to use Cyril Connolly's neologism) the omnipresent smartistics to suppress critical discussion out of a gnawing anxiety that the emperor, when seen on closer examination, may not after all be wearing any clothes.

Consequently, I thought I might take this opportunity to write briefly, not in the customary endorsement of the work to be seen, but in the role of devil's advocate. I do so in the conviction that there is a modest body of excellent work which we cautiously categorize as 'performance'. While in certain quarters there is an argument that it is illegitimate to discriminate on the basis of quality, it is also my conviction that the failure to make such discriminations can only lead to good art being brought into disrepute by the bad, rather as good money is driven out of circulation by bad money; this can only undermine the currency of art.

Our first problem with performance art is to decide whether there is any such thing and, if so, what is it? The artists themselves almost universally eschew the need for any defining or delimiting title and most disavow the term 'performance artists'. At the same time most such artists are at pains to dissociate their work from the theatre—although to my mind, the best of them, such as Yvonne Rainer, have confronted the self-evident theatricality of their rituals.

Quite clearly, theatre, dance and music drama as we understand them represent performance art — which is to say they involve performers and other visual elements which may or may not be static, together with ancillary props or material such as music and words. We may reasonably expect that a genre which lays claim to uniqueness must be able to demonstrate its particularity by

contrast — by stating what it is not. It strikes me that performance art cannot demonstrate any such essential contrast with the other performing arts. If it has a character unique to itself, then I would suggest that it derives from differences in stress and a preoccupation bordering on obsession with the social utility of art.

But then perhaps our problems with definition and validity lies not so much with whether so-called performance art has a contrastive uniqueness, but with the disparate nature of the activities which have been lumped together under that title. Presumably such work is, like all art, seen by its makers to be merely the only possible formal rendering of a particular idea or impulse. It just so happens that the work of a number of artists has in common an active quality, immediacy and the desire to make manifest the process of making art.

In an issue of *Studio International*, Roselee Goldberg isolated two essential features common to all performance art, saying that ". . . on the one hand, it is intangible and leaves no traces to be consumed by commercialism; on the other, it reduces the alienation between producer and consumer (*sic*) since both audience and performer experience the piece simultaneously." (1)

But how accurate are these remarks? While it may be true that performance artists believe that these features are characteristic of their art, it seems to me equally self-evident that such claims are both illusory and specious. Firstly, of course, such art, fare from being innocent of consumerism, is often more easily packaged and marketed than a painting or an old-fashioned piece of welded steel sculpture. After all, the term 'documentation' has become almost synonymous with performance art and documentation means only one thing: the packaging and sale of an otherwise unpackageable and unsellable commodity.

Moreover, many performance artists are supported by grants from the public purse and for them to studiously overlook the source of their sustenance as being the taxation of private enterprise is at best disingenuous and at worst cheaply dishonest.

Roselee Goldberg's second assertion is challenged in the same issue of *Studio International* by Hugh Adams when he notes that ". . . At the moment there is a definite sense in which Performance Artists are pretending to the position of Everyman's vicar: that is, until the common man realises his potential, artists will act for him, in addition to casting themselves in the role of the catalyst which helps him to achieve his full potential." (2) Here, Adams is echoing Renato Poggioli (3) and is sug-

gesting that the putative alienation between artist and audience, far from being dissipated, is actually maintained and promoted by the hermeticism and egocentricity of performance art.

Implied in Goldberg's remarks is the assumption of an anti-art position — a position has always seemed to me roughly akin to saying that one is alienated from Baudelaire because one doesn't read French; one can, after all, read him in translation or — better still — learn to read French. The fact is that Vermeer or Caro or Matisse don't alienate anyone because they can be read by anyone who wants to take the trouble to learn how. But we can never learn to read a private language and, hence, it is performance art which, being so often hermetic and solipsistic, remains inaccessible and alienating.

"The notion that art is the obstacle to expanded human creativity," remarked Harold Rosenberg, "is an art-world notion; it would never occur to the man in the street that art stands in his way (for that matter, it probably never occurs to him that he wishes 'to create'). In calling for the death of art for the sake of liberating mankind, art confronts not society but the dilemma of its own existence in an epoch of new media that has assumed most of art's functions." (4)

We ought not to hold all art responsible for the creative impotence of only some would-be artists. And if art has been abused for purposes of greed, power or propaganda, let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater, but turn our retributive attention to the abusers — if we are burdened with a bad government, we don't as a rule leap to the conclusion that government, *qua* government, is at fault; rather we seek to change the government. Idealism is an invidious disease. We should remain always sceptical and be advised by Kant's observation that ". . . out of the crooked timber of humanity no straight thing was ever made."

### Six contradictions in performance art:

1 Apologists for performance art have sought to enhance its credibility by association with the Dadaists, Duchamp, Pollock and the theatrical radicals of the 60's. In fact, performance art is a vowedly *mimetic* and frequently seeks a form of communal catharsis (for example, Hermann Nitsch). As such, it runs directly counter to the modernist thrust which has been anti-mimetic (anti-Aristotelian) and anti-illusionist, stressing the artifice of performance and the independence of art from nature. Indeed, it may be argued that the performance credo that art-life is a *reductio ad absurdum*.

2 Performance art frequently claims to be tearing away the veils which separate

the artist from his audience and to be creating the conditions for the clear perception of "all that is the case". In fact, most performance art is essentially romantic, placing art on a pedestal and claiming for it a transmuting potential which flies in the face of historical fact (5).

3 Performance art poses as a democratic and liberal art form. In fact, it is authoritarian and usually teleological in character. The performer assumes an elitist superiority *vis a vis* his audience (echoed in the shamanistic preoccupations of performance artists like Nitsch and Beuys).

4 Performance art claims to be a myth-breaking form. In fact, it is a *myth-making* form whereby the artist seeks to mythologise himself (eg. Beuys).

5 While certain performance artists speak of 'decadent' or 'bourgeois' individualism (eg. Brisley), this appears to be a pejorative reference only to their audience and to artists in other genres, never to themselves. In fact, the performance artist promotes a kind of artistic egocentricity which would have astonished Rembrandt or Cezanne or the much-despised formalists such as Caro. Performance art nonetheless poses as collectivist and communalist in character — albeit a collectivisation of their audience, never for themselves, the *apparatchiks* of the art world.

6 Many performance artists claim their art to be an essentially critical activity; dialectically critical of conventional art, its commercial and social superstructure, and critical of capitalist society. Nevertheless, it abjures any criticism of its own ideological base or of its own activity. Equally, performance artists claim that their work exists in a dimension which places it beyond explanation, either by themselves or by commentators. Adams quotes an interesting example of such rationalisation:

"Statements about our work don't come easy, they all too often turn into intellectual justification for an action that is spontaneous. Statements which are made to give people a clear understanding of what you do usually end up by directing their consciousness instead of leaving them free to give their own interpretation. Only those who are of weak will search to justify the immediate prompting of their consciousness." (6)

"Where ideas are mixed with art, one finds an oxydised art of no value."  
— Jean Dubuffet.

At this point let me again stress that in these notes I have taken upon myself the role of a devil's advocate. While I clearly believe that many of the above critical remarks are applicable to many performance artists, equally there are

many who would come under the umbrella of that inadequate and frequently misleading term whose work is astonishingly illuminating and challenging. At its best performance art represents a visionary search for new forms appropriate to their own time and if we were to trace a credible (as distinct from fanciful) provenance for performance art, it would lead back through the work of people like Beckett, Cage and Cunningham, Diaghalev, the Bauhaus, Meyerhold and eventually to the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

I am aware that the provenance I suggest is largely a theatrical one and I so so advisedly because, as I noted earlier, my own conviction is that the performance artists who have most to offer are those who have come to terms with the theatrical implications of their work. By this I don't mean that they have become stage directors or the writers of scenarios. But I do mean that they have had the honesty to face up to these formal implications and to the nature of the relationship between actor and audience. All too frequently performance artists seem to think that we as an audience ought to indulge them while they foist mediocre, albeit unwitting, imitations of Brecht, Beckett, Grotowski or Meyerhold on us — just as many conceptualists persist in dishing up half-digested and hand-me-down Wittgenstein or Marx. It's the kind of waste of everybody's time which Eliot had in mind when he said: "It is exactly as wasteful for a poet to do what has been done already as for a biologist to rediscover Mendel's discoveries."

Having adopted a sceptical viewpoint throughout these notes, let me in conclusion look quickly at its possibilities. I have asked myself what productive direction might be inferred for performance art and my answer is that it promises a way in which narrative may be restored to art.

While the anti-art lobby may rail, the achievements of modernism in painting, sculpture, music and literature remain unchallengeable because they are buttressed by the entire history of Western art — in the sense that modernism has made explicit enduring but previously more implicit concerns. At the same time we ought not to confuse formal means and artistic ends; the preoccupations of modernism are as much unique to their own time as they are reflections of abiding concerns and their formal expression should not be viewed as fixed but as provisional.

Nonetheless, the elimination of narrative has been a distinctive feature of modernism and the regular recrudescence of pictorialism in painting, for example, is a reminder that for many the loss of narrative has been a high price

to pay. It is, I think, significant that it has been sculptors more than painters who have turned to performance and this is because sculpture, even less than painting, is in no position at the moment to reinstate pictorialism.

Australia's best example is Ken Unsworth whose object work is entirely non-representational, but who has chosen to add a narrative dimension to his work in the form of 'performance' pieces. That he has felt this need is, I think, attributable to the fact there exists an intensity of human experience expressible only in narrative form. It may be this urgency which explains the persistent resistance to non-representational forms in painting and sculpture, to the elimination of plot and character in the novel, to atonalism in music. For, despite the confident predictions of the avant-gardistes, much modern art remains unacceptable to the large mass of people — again, despite avant-garde historical revisionism, such resistance has rarely been a feature of the development of art.

The restoration of narrative then is what I suspect will prove to be performance art's major contribution. This engagement with the major ethical and emotional issues of human existence is already a feature in the work of a number of performance artists of whom Ken Unsworth and Noel Sheridan would be the most commended in Australia.

### Footnotes

1 Roselee Goldberg, "Performance: The Art of Notation", in *Studio International*, July/August 1976.

2 Hugh Adams, "Against a Definitive Statement on British Performance Art", in *Studio International*, July/August 1976.

3 Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Cambridge, Mass, 1968.

4 Harold Rosenberg, *The De-Definition of Art*, London 1972, p.209.

5 George Steiner has been prominent in discussing whether art has any inherent capacity for moral elevation or regeneration. In books such as *In Bluebeard's Castle* (London 1971) and *Language and Silence* (London, 1968) he argues cogently that it does not.

6 Quoted by Hugh Adams, *op cit*, p.8.



'(The work) must be consciously directed to other people at specific times and in specific places. It must involve a concept 'to do with others'. (It must achieve a ) collective statement (without which) the activity decays to become one of the more obvious aspects of decadent individualism...' - Stuart Brisley and Lesley Haslem, Catalogue statement, *Arte Inglese Oggi*, Rome 1976.

These remarks, by two performance artists, point to an important conflict. Conflict between individual self-expression and political commitment, between the establishing of personal and social meaning, between the private and the public in artistic practice. In this, the two artists are reflecting conflicts quite normal within the sorts of social relations forced on us by capitalist organisation. Performance art is not special in this regard, just different.

However, the reference-points common in discussions of performance art vary from ill-concealed delight in the most macabre and lonely suicides to inane murmurs of admiration for the revolutionary street 'mob' as the ultimate 'performance piece'. So it may be worthwhile attempting to clear some ground, especially as to the complex central questions about the relationships between efforts to communicate both private and public meeting. I will offer an argument in the form of some schematic propositions, with elaborations. You might like to look through the italicised propositions first. Let me begin with two stipulations.

1. *In art, the notion of 'private' entails communication between individuals, conceiving themselves as essentially separate, like atoms. The notion of 'public', on the other hand, entails communication between individuals, conceiving themselves collectively.*

The people doing the conceiving here are both artists and their audiences in both cases. And conceiving is not just the way we think ourselves; it is measured by what is implied by what we do.

It was Donald Brook who most strongly put forward a distinction between private and public in discussions of avant-garde art here. In his 1969 Power Lecture, "Flight from the object", he stated a 'Principle of Publicity': "We may enjoy private dreams, but it is only our public versions of them - the stories we tell, the pictures we make and the things we do in the world - that ultimately mediate

between us, and upon which we found a form of life and a set of sets of values". Since then, he has gone on to argue that experimental art offers models and metaphors of how we live or should live. Both views recommend that artists' concepts be placed before others for their assessment, but neither insists, as I shall, that such publicity should entail collectivity - its achievement or, at the very least, its possibility.

The distinction proposed above does not necessarily have to do with number or place: a 'private' work put before a crowd of people on a street is not in any meaningful sense 'public'. Similarly, a 'public' work used by a small, closed group - say, a shopsteward's training school - is not therefore 'private'.

2. *Commodity exchange dominates our relationships to each other. Consumer advertising dominates our communication with each other. Artists, therefore, have to compete in ever-narrowing communicative spaces.*

Advertising is a public mode dedicated to transforming private experiences into predictable public behaviour. It dictates the structure of all mass media, and threatens all other media. It attempts to define and maintain people as audiences in order to sell them to advertisers - moulded, atomised, receptive to the product being sold. It reinforces the social stereotypes essential to the growth of corporate capitalism: The docile worker, the unpaid domestic slave at home, the demanding child, the nuclear family, the dreams of luxury, leisure and beauty, as well - as the depoliticising separations of the same person into worker, consumer, parent, funlover, voter, citizen, member of 'the public'.

Of particular importance to artists is the fact that advertising dominates our entire 'visual culture'. Advertisements are seen more often, and more consistently, than any other kind of produced imagery. Furthermore, advertising is an important part of an imperialist world order: it is part of the way corporate capitalism secures its continuing growth, and it reflects U.S. capital's domination of that growth. All this threatens the development of local and regional imagery, threatens both artists and audiences.

As well, advertising seems to have virtually colonised one of the major methods of visual art: the combination of text and image to generate meaning. This has meant that purely visual media, such as painting and photography, and purely verbal or text

media, such as radio and writing, have been marginalised. Pushed to the peripheries of our attention, like political posters furtively pasted to the sides of billboards.

Advertising, for its success, depends on convincing us to make a separation between the labour and skill necessary to make a product, and our consumption of it. We are expected to react only to the product's use - indeed, often only to how it looks, or will make us look. Our use of the product remains passive, in the sense that the possibility of our making it, or varying its use (often simply repairing it), is precluded. This parallels the response of most of us to the power of giant corporations and totalitarian bureaucracies: we sit before the television in a state of fascinated passivity, seeking self-definition in privatised pleasures, surrendering the possibility of collective political action.

In this kind of communicative context, artists can sign up with J. Walter Thompson, retreat into private work for elite audiences, or seek to work in a public domain. Remembering all the while that consumer capitalism not only dominates communication in the public domain, it virtually defines 'public'...as the field of mass media, which it structures and controls.

3. *The values and techniques of consumerism seem increasingly paralleled in the modernist tradition in art.*

In the same interview in which he made his oft-quoted remarks, 'I want to be a machine' and 'Everybody should be famous for fifteen minutes', Andy Warhol also said: 'Someone said that Brecht wanted everybody to think alike. I want everybody to think alike. But Brecht wanted to do it through Communism, in a way. Russia is doing it under government. It's happening here all by itself without being under strict government; so if it's working without trying, why can't it work without being Communist?'. (*Art News*, November, 1963).

This is remarkable for its accuracy as a half-truth. Warhol's public persona seems a calculated irony, a parody of the decorated robot which everybody should not become. But, equally, the persona seems to begin and end with itself; behind it is a withdrawal of self into confusion.

So it is with Pop artists in the U.S. The fascinated passivity with which they regard their raw materials - mass media imagery - is echoed in their studio practice - minimal, uncritical transformations - and in the limited range

of responses available to audiences. We can see consumer imagery concentrated for our contemplation, but we can't do anything with it. It leads to no action beyond aesthetic amusement.

With minimal sculpture, the withdrawal of the artist as communicator seems so complete that we are reduced to something like statistically average spectators (of 'normal' height, weight, preceptiveness, kinesthetic responsiveness), choreographed to move around these mute shapes, watching for their minor changes. So, too, with colour painting in the 1960s: 'What you see is what you see' (Frank Stella). Such paintings and sculptures fit neatly into the monumental boxes with which International Style architects have dressed corporate capitalism. But not only this: the artists' and audiences' possible relations to these objects are so reduced and controlled that they become a kind of *abstract* passivity. Perhaps this parallels the ways we are expected to understand respectfully the nature of corporations: monolithic, supra-individual, bland, rationally organised, efficient, universal in range and powerful, like benevolent dictators.

The artist withdraws, the artwork becomes an autonomous object, the viewer becomes anonymous. The situation becomes intolerable, and people react against it.

The next three propositions have to do with three different sorts of reaction.

4. *One of the reactions against corporate capitalism since the 1960s has been the efforts to reestablish the primacy of private experience. This marks much art and photography since minimalism, especially conceptual and performance art.*

...society as a work of art...we are not concerned here with private sensitivity and sensibility, but with sensitivity and sensibility, creative imagination and play, becoming forces of transformation. As such they would guide, for example, the total reconstruction of our cities and of the countryside; the restoration of nature after the elimination of the violence and destruction of capitalist industrialisation: the creation of internal and external space for privacy, individual autonomy, tranquility; the elimination of noise, of captive audiences, of enforced togetherness, of pollution, of ugliness...I believe that it is only in such a society that man can truly be free'. Herbert Marcuse, *Essay on Liberation*, 1969.

'Creativity is one of the most evenly distributed gifts on earth. Childhood provides this...(Repression transforms

creativity into work)...Fascist violence is the negation of self as a unique truth whereas creative violence is the acceptance of this subjective truth through the creativity it expresses...All artistic creation is violence, all political action is violence; violence is the only way for subjectivity to express itself against a power which tries to prevent it from doing so. Violent action is the negation of this power and the negation of its authority'. 22 *Mars* movement, Paris, April, 1968.

Between them, these two statements typify much of what passed for 'Radical' theory in the late 1960s. The 'Do your own thing' priority was possible only in a dream-of social space, cleared of all forms of authority and control. But this had to be attempted in numbers: in syncretic religions, therapy courses, rock festivals, communes in the country, communities in the city. It was called a 'counter-culture', but it never organised politically, or did so too late. Nor could these tendencies organise, because the overriding principle was 'liberation of self', now, immediately. Thus the susceptibility to institutionalisation, to control from above, especially through the selective marketing of innovations as a packaged lifestyle. As well, the basic plea of the 'counter-culture' was for the ruling class to give up its power over the rest of society. Not give it to anyone, just put it away somewhere. The dream was for a world in which power relationships did not exist. Furthermore, the counter-culture failed to seriously connect with the substantive political movements of the period: the restructuring of the left-wing parties, minority and Third World revolutionary movements. Its only political 'success' was the peace movement, achieved in concert with a vast middleclass opposition to the U.S. war against Vietnam. Johnson resigned, but Nixon and Kissinger continued, even extended, the war, secretly.

The visual culture of this movement concentrated on dress, 'head' murals, Peter Max posters, underground comics, funky architecture, street festivals, living theatre and an enormous amount of craftwork. Professional visual artists drew something of this into their art (e.g. West Coast ceramic sculpture). But mostly they tended to accept the 'countre coun

'counter-culture' as a social and 'political' baggage which could give their work an extra resonance. I will try to distinguish two ways in which this occurred, and still does.

Much conceptual art is committed to

the artwork priorities dictated by the continuing demands from avant-gardism for ever-greater formal innovation - of dematerialising the object and/or questioning what, how and why anything counts as art. (Still awake)? Most of the concepts employed in these exercises remain abstract, theoretical constructs; some are given material exemplification. In a few cases, however the concepts emerge as propositions with a somewhat positive character: as suggestions for things to consider or do, things which could increase self-knowledge, or knowledge of the world. Thus Richard Long's walks in the countryside, his unobtrusive, impermanent rearrangements of seaweed on the sands, stones in riverbeds. If you have no other way of understanding natural processes, this is a pleasant enough way in. Or Stephen Kaltenbach's series of ads in *Artforum*, consisting only of exhortations such as 'Find a Friend', or 'Enjoy Yourself'. Or *Blurring in A & L*, a handbook consisting of fragments of conversations between members of the Art and Language group, organised thesaurus fashion, with connections indexed, so that readers could build up their own pathways through the material.

These are some amongst a large number of nominations, nearly all of which are typically late 1960s in being non-authoritarian, personal, speculative, contemplative, and respectful of natural and social ecologies. They are also rather low-key and tedious.

Performance art (including here action, demonstration, participation and body art) retains the artwork as its primary context. Performance artists share with conceptual artists a rejection of the discrete, expensive art object as the symbol of corrupted social relations. But they also share avant-garde commitments to formal innovation. For example, treating their own bodies as materials for sculptural exploration - like the singing statues, Gilbert and George. But the major step taken by performance artists is the extreme nature of their presentation of their private experience. This step is also the source of performance art's problems, its excesses.

Extremism is secured, initially, by the simple fact of the artist's physical presence: the performance is what the artist does, or has others do. Performance 'pieces' display their own process. They are not, in the first instance, a completed product. Unlike all other art, no correction is possible - at least, no unobserved correction.

This is widely shared theory, and

is claimed as, in itself, a reason for valuing the performances. In practice, however, most performance art fails to be public in the collective sense that I have been using. It remains a display of private experience, merely staged in front of others - who are, thereby, reduced to constrained voyeurs.

Take body art. Vito Acconci's *Seedbed*, 1972, a gallery with its floor slightly inclined at one end, empty except for a speaker, while beneath it Acconci, masturbating for the three week duration, pouring out into the microphone his sexual fantasies about the person on the floor above. Herman Nitsch, Otto Muehl and Rudolph Schwarzkogler's *Aktions*, orgies of apparent self-mutilation amidst dismembered animals, crucifixes, excrement. Chris Burden's *Shoot* (November 19, 1971), a friend shooting him in the arm ('...it's something to experience. How do you know what it feels like to be shot if you don't get shot?); as well, this artist has had himself set on fire, dragged across broken glass with his hands tied behind his back, clamped to a gallery floor between two buckets of water in which were placed live electric wires, lain on a street at night wrapped in tarpaulin and imprisoned himself in a sports-locker for five days. Despite the fact that performance art is both European and New York centred, it exports no better than previous styles. Thus, locally, Mike Parr's incessant self-mutilations, Ivor Durrant's tossing of a cow at the entrance to the National Gallery of Victoria, its throat cut, and Stelarc's tour de force at the last Sydney Biennale: his naked body suspended above a stone, by meathooks.

Hysteria, autism, paranoia, fetishism, delirium, schizophrenia...such illnesses preoccupy these artists. To the degree to which they are themselves suffering, no one would deny them their right to seek ways of working through them towards health. But the art-world seems one of the least likely environments in which to seek mental health, to put it mildly. Further, no one would deny artists the right to represent such illnesses in their work - but, again, in the interests of promoting health. However, artists are no more than anyone else entitled to embrace such illnesses in the interests of mere spectacle, as self-promotion within the art trade, or even, I submit, as means to other, legitimate ends. Stelarc clearly wished to achieve a forceful symbolisation of the relations between animate and inanimate materials (yawn!) but the Experimental Art Foundation in Adelaide were quite right to stop his proposed performance of the

above piece. They found that their wish *not* to share the responsibility for the artist endangering himself overrode their commitment to the value of experimental art.

Self-expression in art, as elsewhere, is not self-justifying. It is valuable only if it is exemplary. As models of desirable behaviour, as something imitable, most body art is morally cretinous. As metaphors of behaviour, most body art fails. And there is a crucial political problem as well: with regard to the terrible illnesses listed above, the only relationships which body art posits to them are those of individuals, with internal problems. There is no recognition that such illnesses are caused or, at the very least, given particular forms, by capitalist social organisation. If such recognition does occasionally intrude into the artist's narcissistic exhibitionism, it is soon smothered under extraneous, and usually private, symbolisations.

Finally, most body art is boring. Despite its volatile subjects and extreme dramatics, most body art is equally marked by a curious withdrawal of the artist and a shutting out of the spectator. A contradiction usually occurs: sexual, emotional indulgence is invited but refused. Why? Because artistic 'seriousness' must be maintained - otherwise the behaviour is unambiguously certifiable - and such 'seriousness' is secured only by marking up emotional distances inimicable to the invitation to indulgence. Pygmalion reversed, as Max Kozloff puts it: 'Instead of the fable of the stone statue that changed into a living body, we now have the story of the animate body that doubles back into inanimate art'. He concludes his essay with a photograph of Alan Sonfist's *Last Piece*, 1973: the artist lying flat on an undertaker's couch. Sonfist: 'My final work of art will be to donate my body to the Museum of Modern Art'.

There are some exceptions, even within body art. Urs Luthi's transexual photo self-portraits concentrate on the usual theme of self-absorption, but also have a rare dimension of ironic detachment. So, too, do Adrian Piper's dressing up as a part-man performances, and Eleanor Antin's dieting, making-up and balletomaine video pieces. These, at least, begin to be treatments of social personality, rather than the abstracted images of the nude ('in the flesh') which predominate in most of the body art discussed so far.

Mention of photographs and videotapes leads to the second major structural feature of performance art, something it shares with most post-minimal

are: the existence of the 'piece' as an image reproduced in the media. Performance art remains a visual art, distinct from theatre, because its second major purpose - the first being to expose or show a process - is to achieve an image. This image can usually be rendered by a photograph, or a group or series of photographs and sketches (It is, of course, mostly marketed in this way, as prints. Another way is to sell, as sculpture, the props used in the performance, viz. Joseph Beuys).

Thus the ambiguity towards audience inherent in performance art. For the actual performance, the audience is - obviously - the people who are there. However, they are usually members of the artworld, plus casual passersby. For the image - photographs plus description - the audience is, usually, those who read art magazines. But an extension is possible here. Stuart Brisley's Sydney Biennale piece - building himself into a maze of wooden slats, over five days in Hyde Park, then finally breaking out - has an existence continuous with previous pieces such as his *ZL 65 63 95 C* (at the Institute of Contemporary Art, London 1972, he became an old-age pensioner, trapped in squalor and by his National Insurance number), and his cages built and destroyed at Rottweil (*Moments of Decision/Indecision*, 1975) and in the Galleria in Milan (*Homage to the Commune*, 1976). A series of images of entrapment and struggles for freedom: an obvious, general metaphor. But this history need not be known to the Sydney people who followed his progress in the park, discussing its implications with him each day. Nor by those who read each day reports on, and photographs of, his progress on the front page of *The Sydney Morning Herald*. The people in the park, and the newspaper reports, gradually became more sympathetic as the week went on, concluding with appreciation of his decision, based on the consensus of the watchers, that he break out quietly rather than violently.

A rather less subdued event marked the same Biennale. On November 12, 1976, a year and a day after he had connived with Kerr to overthrow the elected government, Fraser attempted to open the Biennale. The noisy protest and walkout was led by local artists. This was not a performance piece, but a political demonstration aimed at showing that the artworld was no sanctuary for Fraser and the class which he represents. The reaction of newspapers such as *The Australian* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* was to include it in hysterical front pages proclaiming 'Days of Rage'.

These two examples have already led us to:

5. *Another reaction against corporate capitalism has been acts of public protest by individuals or groups, often staging events aimed at projecting a critical image through the mass media.*

Protesting the U.S. war against Vietnam, the Berrigan brothers pour blood and napalm over records in a Selective Service (Draft) Office. Jerry Rubin and others shower the trading floor of the New York Stock Exchange with dollar bills, causing the centre of world capital to halt trading in order to scramble on their knees, expressing thereby a primary motivation: greed. 'The Fox' pours truckloads of industrial refuse and environmental destruction into the foyers of the offices of those companies responsible for creating the waste. Huey Newton and friends, armed, follow police cars on night patrol in Oakland. After the attempted assassination of George Wallace, a group appears at a rally called in his support, pushing wheelchairs, their faces covered with masked likenesses of the assassin. A San Francisco group, Sam's Cafe, sends out bills for \$14.95, normally laid out but lacking in reference to either the service or the person supposed to have performed it: most of the bills are paid to the addresses given, those of local television, radio and newspapers.

All these have in common the desire to project an image into the mass media, an image disruptive of the relentless flow of images of power, consumption, disaster and sentimentality which normally fills such media. They draw on a crucial aspect of the arts: the ability to reduce a complex set of related economic, social, psychological and political themes to a visual metaphor, strikingly apt and resonant. Thus John Heartfield's photomontages; for example, *The Meaning of the Hitler Salute: Millions Stand Behind Me*, showing Hitler's hand flopped back to receive millions of marks from the fat industrialist behind him (front cover, *Workers' Illustrated Weekly*, October 16 1932). Or benumbed Strozzeck, clutching a huge, stolen frozen turkey, sitting in an interminable chairlift, to the cacophony of the music for the performing animals which he has locked onto 'Go' in the amusement hall below (the last scene in Herzog's *Ballad of S.*). These are echoed in recent art such as Wolf Vostell's happenings of the late 1960s; some of Edward Keinholz's tableaux (*State Hospital, Portable War Memorial, Five Car Stud*): the Art Workers' Coalition protest against the Mai Lai massacre (a poster showing, in lush magazine colour, the murdered women and children beneath two sentences extracted

from an interview with one of the soldiers - 'And babies?', 'And babies'. - held before Picasso's *Guernica* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York); the recent, anonymous sealing of the locks of all the SoHo galleries one Friday night. Similarly, when the Auckland City Council censored a poster advertising an Art and Language exhibition at the Gallery there in 1976 by obliterating the words above the images of Muldoon, Kerr and Fraser, the *Auckland Star* reproduced the banned poster next to the headline: 'Piggy, Cur, Prefect Poster censored'. All of these examples, and many more, go beyond the private in that they are concerned with inequities produced by the structural organisation of capitalist societies. But they are limited in two ways. They concentrate on issues, rather than overall analysis, and are based on moral outrage experienced largely individually, rather than on careful, organised struggle towards socialism. Further, they risk misrepresentation in a mass media which is clearly not controlled by those who generated the images.

That is to say, their conception of audience remains too abstract. It leaps from those immediate to the event to all those out there on the other side of the television screen or the newspaper page. Nonetheless, such limitations are often worth risking, largely because of their potential relevance to my final proposition:

6. *A third, and major, reaction against corporate capitalism has been political organisation towards its overthrow. Visual imagery has been important to this struggle, and is the only truly public cultural work.*

To begin with a contrary example. The art of Joseph Beuys, the most famous performance artist, is one which throws together fat with air-pumps, stuffed hares with his own gold-painted body, his 'signature' felt hat and waistcoat with political theory. The symbols for which he strives in his performances are obvious, and muddled, enough. The hare pinioned by staffs against a blackboard in *Eurasia* 1966 was meant to express 'the life of Eurasia, a vast expanse of continent crossed by east-west/west east currents'. Eight years later, in *Coyote: I like America and America likes me*, Beuys was delivered, wrapped in felt, by ambulance to a New York gallery in which he spent a week caged in with a coyote (Red Indian symbol, anyone?), along with his felt, staff and copies of *The Wall Street Journal*, then left the same way. His politics are equally obvious, and muddled. His Energy Plan for Western Man is based on artistic creativity being extended

to everyone, and then 'the moulding of the society of the future based on the total energy of this individual creativity'. To these ends, he has founded many 'parties': the German Students' Party in 1964, the Political Party for Animals in 1966, and the Organisation of Non-Voters in 1970. He said during this period: 'The logic of my art depends on the fact that I have had one idea which I have obstinately worked on...I am trying to reaffirm the concept of art and creativity in the face of Marxist doctrine. The Socialist movements in Europe which are now strongly supported by the young provoke this question. They define man exclusively as a social being...but he is free in his thinking, and here is the point of origin of sculpture'.

Beuy's art incorporates elements of all the tendencies which we have been discussing, those supportive of corporate capitalism as well as those reactive against it. His art is media-directed, involving many people, a show in public, full of suggestions for collective action. But it is not a truly public art, because it revolves above all around one individual. Beuys himself, seeks merely to 'liberate individuality' in others, and the means by which it proposes to do so are psychological, social and political nonsense.

Genuinely public art, usefully critical of corporate capitalism, is very much available, but rarely in art-world contexts. When it is in such a context - in the work of, for example, Klaus Staack, Conrad Atkinson, certain Art and Language work and some of that of Hans Haacke - it is directed very much outwards, tied to concrete situations, assisting ongoing struggle. Mostly, however, we are looking at visual imagery used in specific struggles by particular political groups, either made within the groups or commissioned by them. Thus the banners and performances of May Day marches, the posters developed for and by political groups, the community mural movement, community radio stations, radical newspapers and other publications, and the film, video, travelling theatre and slide talks used within the trade union movement and the labour movement generally.

There are problems and difficulties involved in this kind of work also, but they are mostly problems worth having. There are also important differences between it and the work we have been discussing. None of these initiatives depend crucially on one individual projecting his/her picture of the world onto a barely comprehending/comprehended 'public'. The information put forward and the ways it is put forward, could be

done by others, and usually is, in the sense that it is normally done collectively. The audiences are not, mostly, strangely distanced contemplators; they are people engaged in struggle who need the images, and many others, in order to further that struggle.

There is little room for performance here, probably none. The closest that any branch of performance art comes is the theatrical shows put on at community festivals, particularly in England, most of which draw upon, and celebrate, local theatre traditions. They are mostly good fun.

Public cultural work entails communication between individuals towards the coming reality of collectivity. Private artwork remains the communication of individuals merely talking to each other, like atoms which may cluster, but equally well may not.

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