

MAY/JUNE No 47 / £1.50 / \$5.00 / 8DM / 20FL

PERFORMANCE

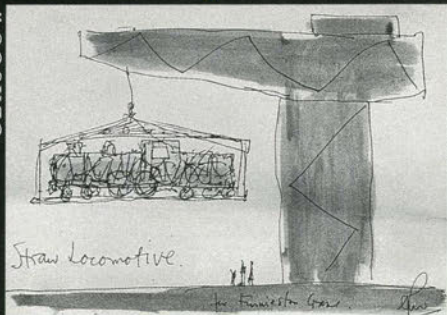
ALISTAIR MACLENNAN
interviewed
NEW WORK NEWCASTLE '87
STEVE WILLATS in Leeds
PERFORMANCE ART
and **EDUCATION**
ART ON TV : ALTER IMAGE II

TSWA SCULPTURE preview

EDINBURGH



GLASGOW



NEWCASTLE



PERFORMANCE + ART / THEATRE / MUSIC / VIDEO / DANCE / SPECTACLE

NO QUARTER

The Green Room (Manchester), The Bluecoat (Liverpool) and Babel (Halifax) announce a number of opportunities in 1987/88 for artists as part of its **NO QUARTER** programme of live art events, funded under the Arts Council Performance Art Promoters Scheme.

COMMISSIONS will be available for new work to be presented in various sites in Liverpool, Manchester and Yorkshire. These sites include gallery and theatre spaces, as well as specialized indoor and outdoor locations.

Commissions have already been awarded to Chris Lethbridge and Pauline Young (SIGMA), Steve Purcell and Company and the Whalley Range All-stars to create works for a railway station to coincide with the opening of The Green Room in June 1987.

Artists interested in being considered for further commissions, at other sites, should send a S.A.E. for full details to The Green Room. The closing date for applications is June 30th. The eventual programme will be selected by the Consortium of Venues, with commissioned work being presented in each region.

TRAINING: an intensive course of workshops, seminars and performance activities for practising and emerging artists, from all disciplines, will be held at The Green Room from September 3rd to 10th. Sessions will be led by leading Practitioners and the programme will be co-ordinated by Rob Le Frenais.

INFORMATION: Stella Hall, The Green Room, 48 Princess Street, Manchester M1 6HR.
Telephone: 061 236 1676



Art in Performance — Performance in Art

Live Art events at the Nottingham Castle Museum this Summer.

Featuring new works by Robert Ayers and Alistair MacLennan.

"A Picture in the Form of a Kite" Robert Ayers and Company.

Performances from 24 May-31 May.

"Actuation" Alistair MacLennan. Continuous Performance and installation in King David's Dungeon, Castle Rock, 30 May-7 June.
10am-4pm.

Season also includes Duncan Whiteman, Gary Stevens, Anne Seagrave, Annie Griffin, Desperate Men, Rosalind Moore, Francoise Sergy and Alistair Snow.
Through June, July and August.

For further information and booking phone (0602) 411881.x.46.

WOLVERHAMPTON LIVE ART

FORCED ENTERTAINMENT

'(Let The Water Run Its Course)
To The Sea That Made The Promise'
7.30pm, Saturday June 13th
Arena Theatre, Wulfruna Street

MARTY St. JAMES & ANNE WILSON

'So Nice To Come Home To'
3.00pm, Saturday June 20th
Art Gallery, Lichfield Street

LIVING SCULPTURES

9.30: Chapel Ash Subway
11.30: Mander Centre
3.00pm: Art Gallery, Lichfield Street
Saturday June 27th

'ARTISTS IN THE THEATRE'

Exhibition from June 13, 10-6, Mon-Sat, Art Gallery

Performance Art Video Programme throughout
+ more to come in July . . .

All sites easy walk from BR station; regular trains 2 hrs journey to London.

ART GALLERY

Lichfield Street Wolverhampton WV1 1DU
Tel: (0902) 312032

LE THEATRE DU RADEAU FROM FRANCE IN

MYSTÈRE BOUFFE

5-16 MAY ONLY!
BRITISH DEBUT



A MYSTERIOUS
AND BEWITCHING
VISUAL
THEATRE

ALMEIDA THEATRE

ALMEIDA STREET, LONDON N1 BOX OFFICE 01.359 4404

FUNDED BY THE LONDON BOROUGH'S GRANT SCHEME
FUNDED BY THE LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON

GLA
York County Festival

St. Martin's School of Art London

A WEEK OF PERFORMANCE

18th May–22nd May 1987

Presentations of performance and film related work by:
John Carson, Mona Hatoum, Monica Ross, Simon Herbert, Caroline Wilkinson + Gary Stevens, Tina Keane, Praveera, and Anna Thew.

(including lectures and a final day discussion on current issues in performance work).

Programme of events available from Paul Eachus (ex 216) at the school.

— St. Martin's School of Art —
107 Charing Cross Road · London WC2 · 01-437 0611
St. Martin's is a constituent college of The London Institute

STUART BRISLEY

Artist-in Residence
Imperial War Museum
until 30 July 1987

Open Studio: Sundays 2–5.30pm
Special facilities for school and colleges on Thursdays by appointment only

Imperial War Museum
Lambeth Road · London SE1 6HZ
01-735 8922 X 274

Open weekdays 10.00am to 5.50pm
Sundays 2.00 to 5.50pm

PROJECTS U.K. IS COMMISSIONING NEW WORK IN PERFORMANCE

Production and Exhibition to take place from September 1987.

Applications must include: a full c.v., a project description, budget, a full list of technical and equipment requirements and relevant supporting material.
(for return of material include S.A.E)

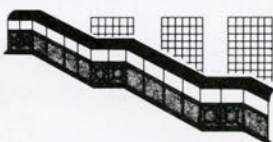
DEADLINE: 31st JULY 1987

Please send applications to:
PROJECTS U.K. (Newcastle Media Workshops), 69–75 WESTGATE ROAD
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NE1 1SG
For further details ring (091) 261 4527

PROJECTS U.K. (Newcastle Media Workshops) is Supported by the Arts Council, Northern Arts and Newcastle City Council.

Projects
UK
Newcastle Media Workshops

**CHISENHALE
DANCE · SPACE**
64-84 Chisenhale Road, Bow, London E3 5QY
Telephone. 981-6617 980-8115



PERFORMANCE ART PROMOTERS SCHEME

THROUGH the Arts Council Performance Art Promoters Scheme, *Chisenhale Dance Space* will be commissioning two major projects for autumn/spring 1987/88.

These projects will involve several artists (3 to 6) working over a period of time with a group of people from the locality, to create and produce an event/ installation/happening/performance.

The budget is £2250 per project, to include artists fees and production costs.

Proposal deadline: JULY 15th

NATIONAL REVIEW OF LIVE ART

1987 National Review of Live Art is being held at Riverside Studios in October

In addition to selecting live performances is inviting proposals for

VIDEO INSTALLATIONS

Which may incorporate live performance

and

single screen works of

DOCUMENTATION OF PERFORMANCE

Deadline for proposals: July 3

*Full details and information:
Stephen Littman 01 539 8727*

PERFORMANCE + THE MAGAZINE OF LIVE ART

PERFORMANCE + ART / THEATRE / MUSIC / VIDEO / DANCE / EVENTS / SPECTACLE

PERFORMANCE + 61A HACKNEY RD, LONDON E2 7NX 01-739 1577

SUBSCRIBE/BACK ISSUE ORDER

Name

Address

I enclose a cheque/postal subscription

Individual (UK)	£10.50
Institution (UK)	£18.50
Europe	£18.50
Worldwide (surface)	\$35.00
Worldwide (airmail)	\$58.00

Back issues

Numbers required.....

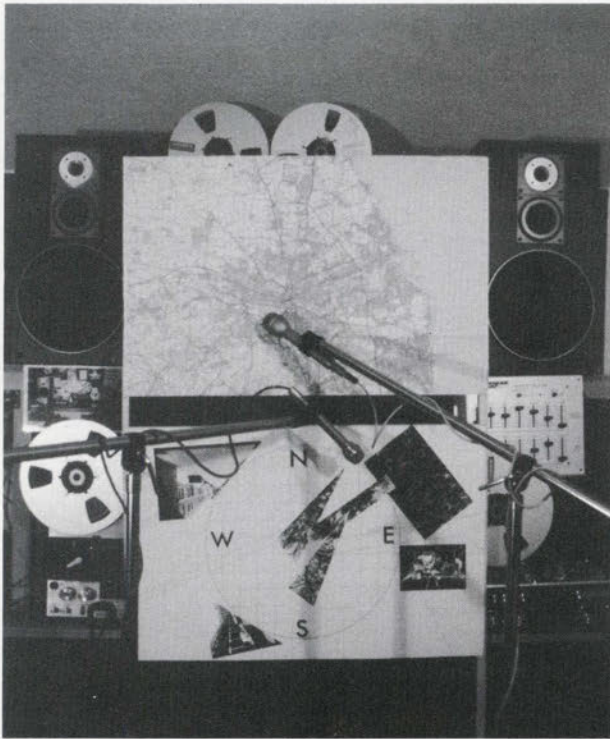
All back issues are £1.50

except for 1-8, 11, 15-17, 20/21, 24, 38/39.

Details on enquiry.

Please start my subscription with issue number

contents



PREVIEW + News	6
A WORK BETWEEN TWO INSTITUTIONS + Stephen Willats in Leeds	9
SCALING THE CASTLE WALLS + Performance Season in Nottingham	10
I SEE DANGER + Alistair MacLennan Interview	12
IMAGE AFTER IMAGE + Art on TV and the new series <i>Alter</i> <i>Image</i>	17
SCULPTURE DOWN YOUR WAY + TSWA 3D	20
LOOK NORTH + New Work Newcastle '87 On Tour	25
WASH YOUR BRAINS + Performance Art LP	28
EXTRACURRICULAR + Performance Art and Education	29
REVIEW + At <i>The Edge</i>, <i>Sheffield Expanded Media Show</i>, Neil Bartlett, Fredd Goodwin, Gary Stevens, Babel, Astrakan, Stuart Brisley, Charlie Hooker	31
LETTERS	38

● **PHOTOS** ● **FRONT COVER +** Nick Stewart at Dean Clough Industrial Estate in Halifax (Photo: Susan Crowe) and inset: TSWA 3D: drawing by George Wyllie of his straw locomotive suspended from Finnieston Crane in Glasgow, Tyne Bridge, Newcastle, site of Richard Wilson's project and Calton Hill, Edinburgh, site of Kate Whiteford's project.

● Contents page + Installation for soundscore: The Stigma People Have About It from Accent for a Start by William Furlong and Michael Archer, commissioned by Projects UK. LP record and performances in Newcastle, Manchester and Bradford in May, June and July 1987 in New Work Newcastle '87 On Tour. Photo: Audio Arts.

GUEST EDITOR

TRACEY
WARR

MANAGING EDITOR

STEVE ROGERS

DESIGN

CAROLINE
GRIMSHAW

EDITORIAL

CONSULTANT

ROB LA FRENAIS

PRINTING/ TYPESETTING

BOOKMAG,
INVERNESS

DISTRIBUTION

J.F. ANSELL
(NEWSAGENTS)

PERFORMANCE
(ALL OTHERS)

SUBSCRIPTIONS

PERFORMANCE

PUBLISHER

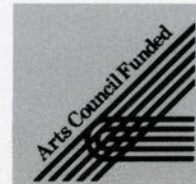
PERFORMANCE
MAGAZINE LTD

CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE
TRACEY WARR (guest editor) had worked as Exhibitions Assistant and Publications Officer at the ICA, Editor of Poetry Review, Press Officer at Chatto & Windus and Combined Arts Officer at the Arts Council. She organised the Air Gallery's 1986 *New British Sculpture* exhibition and is now working as a freelance writer and exhibition organiser. ROBERT AYERS is a performance artist and lecturer at Leicester Polytechnic. BRYAN BIGGS is the exhibition organiser at The Bluecoat in Liverpool. GUY BRETT is a freelance writer. TIM ETCHELLS is a member of Forced Entertainment Theatre Co-operative. COLIN FALLOWS is an artist and designer and a lecturer at Liverpool Polytechnic. ALEX FULTON is a freelance writer. BRIAN HATTON is a freelance writer. DECLAN MCGONAGLE is the curator of The Orchard Gallery and The Foyle in Derry. ROLAND MILLER is a performance artist and writer. CHRIS RODLEY is a television writer and producer whose recent work has included programmes on *The Prisoner*, David Cronenberg and Dennis Hopper.

COPYRIGHT

© 1987

ISSN No. 0 144 5901



GUEST EDITORS

+ continuing our experiment of inviting different guests to edit individual issues of Performance Magazine the next issue, July/August is being edited by **Neil Bartlett**. Neil is best known as a director of his own self devised works as well as works by Theatre de Complicite, ManAct and others. His most recent work, which he also performed, is reviewed in this issue. The issue will include an interview with opera producer **David Freeman**, a feature on visual artists in the theatre and results of a survey into who watches performance. ●

ICA NEWS

+ **Michael Morris**, ICA theatre director since 1984, has announced his intention to give up the job to work as a freelance producer and director. Michael's best known and most successful achievements at the ICA have been his large scale promotions, Jan Fabre at the Albert Hall, Laurie Anderson at the Dominion Theatre etc, his intentions are not therefore so surprising. We wish him luck. Finding a replacement to fill this difficult post will not be easy. It won't be made any easier by the row currently raging between the ICA and the Arts Council about the level of grant they are being offered this year which is the same as last year. ●

GREEN ROOM SET TO OPEN

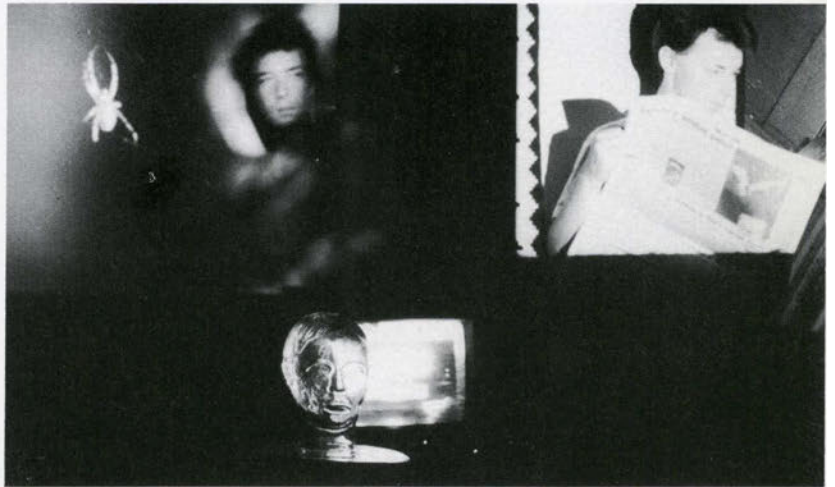
+ at long last the **Green Room**, Manchester's full time promoter of a wide range of live art, is opening its own performance space in a newly converted railway arch just round the corner from Cornerhouse Gallery and the Hacienda club which is also presenting more performance these days. The Green Room, which will open with a yet to be announced special event, sometime at the end of May/beginning of June (depending on finishing building work) will resolve Manchester's quite remarkable and inexplicable lack of a decent small scale performance space. (The Green Room will be reviewed in the next issue). ●

SWATCH OUT FOR SPONSORS

+ Business sponsorship of the arts has grown and developed considerably in recent years both in scale and scope. This has done much to allay some of the fears about sponsors' influence the nature or contents of the art itself. All these fears reasserted themselves with the visit to London by **Astrakan** the French dance company whose swimming pool piece **Waterproof** was sponsored by the trendy watch mass-manufacturers **Swatch**. **Waterproof** included a beautiful film of underwater dancing and posing by members of the company which was inexplicably and staggeringly interrupted by an advertisement for Swatch watches. **SWATCH OUT!** ●

COMING UP

+ May and June are going to be very busy. Substantial programmes of performance are being presented by **St Martins School of Art in London**, the **Castle Museum in Nottingham**, **Wolverhampton Art Gallery**, **Zap Club, Brighton**, and, of course, the **1987 New Work Newcastle** festival which this year tours to **Bradford** and **Manchester**. (See Features). ●



+ Performance is also managing to find its way into some unlikely places. The most unlikely of all being the **1987 Isle of Wight Festival** which this year is celebrating the 150th anniversary of the accession of Queen Victoria. Participating in the festival are **Alastair Snow, Forkbeard Fantasy and Welfare State**. The most exciting event however looks likely to be the opening one when 'a cavalcade of queens', in fact 150 Queen Victorias, will be travelling by train from Victoria Station in London to the Isle of Wight. Any Queen Victorias out there or anyone who always knew they could be a great queen and wants to join the party should contact Kevin West at the Isle of Wight Festival on 0983 523464. The event takes places on June 11. Not to be missed. ●

+ **Station House Opera** will be performing **Cuckoo** the new work they tried out earlier this year at **Riverside Studios in June**. **Cuckoo** is a further investigation of the territory mapped out by Station House as distinctively their own, i.e. the vertical rather than horizontal performance. Here it is the furniture that takes off with the performers more or less the victims of this unpredictable and vertiginous world. ●

+ the **London International Festival of Theatre** has announced its **1987** programme. It includes visits by several experimental companies from around the world but one of the highlights must be the British debut of the extraordinary **Ethyl Eichelberger**. Ethyl, a long time member of Charles Ludlum's **Ridiculous Theatre Company**, is the tallest and thinnest drag act in the world. She has made her name with shows based on the lives of great women from history including **Nefer**

titi and **Lucretia Borgia** which included the unforgettable lyric 'Boy it's hard living in the Renaissance'. Ethyl will be appearing at the ICA. She should also make a few guest appearances around the pubs and clubs. ●

+ **Large Scale International** have a new show opening at **The Place**, London which looks genuinely large scale, 18 performers, and quite internationally. More importantly it looks genuinely interesting. The work,

S/HE, has grown out of a smaller work from last year. If **Andy Walker**, creator of **Large Scale**, can harness and direct the powerful, abrasive almost nasty quality of the first show it will be something not to be missed. **S/HE** is at **The Place**, London, May 13-16. ●

+ **The National Review of Live Art**, now moved for one year only to **Riverside Studios**, London is holding platforms to select the new performers at various venues around the country during May and June. Full details can be got from **Riverside Studios**. ●

+ The **Bradford Festival** is back after a number of years in the wilderness and will be taking place 18-27 September. The first **Bradford Festival** in 1970 featured **Roland Miller's Cyclamen Cyclists**, **Howard Brenton** and **Chris Parr's Scott of the Antarctic on Ice** at the **Silver Blades Ice Rink**, a dadaist cabaret at the **Idle Working Men's Club**, **Welfare State** and the **Pop Culture and Deviance** event which saw **Jeff Nuttall** booed off stage and the **People Show** ejected by bouncers. This year's Festival, organised by **Allan Brack**, is likely to include a giant camera obscura on a lorry, an ex-Tiller Girl doing her version of **The Living Paintings**, performance artists in shop windows, **IOU** at the disused **Windsor Swimming Baths**, **The Art that Moves** exhibition at **Cartwright Hall** and **Liverpool painter Tony Phillips's Twentieth Century** which manages to depict every year of the century in drawings, paintings and multi-media performance. The money for the Festival is being put up by **Bradford City Council's Economic Development Unit** which is keen to promote the city as a tourist, arts and commercial centre. The **EDU** sees the arts as a rejuvenator of the city and has already

Jeremy Welsh,
Echoes in New Work
Newcastle

poured more than a million pounds into the refurbished Alhambra Theatre and is currently running a publicity campaign called *Bradford's Bouncing Back* with human bears on the streets. Other developments in the city include plans to set up a West Yorkshire version of Red Wedge, *Bradford Redder Wedge*, which will promote music, variety and performances with a political commitment. ●

PERFORMANCE ARTISTS CONTRACTS

+ the **Arts Council's** Combined Arts department has recently produced a **draft contract for the employment of performance artists**. The contract covers terms and conditions of employment and recommended fee structures. The fees they suggest of not less than £150 per performer per performance are reasonable as are the other payment structures it suggests. This document is an important step forward and should be given full support by artists and presenters. Copies are available from Combined Arts at the Arts Council. ●

RAA SPENDING ON PERFORMANCE ART

+ For a recent internal consultation meeting the Arts Council produced a table showing how much was spent by each Regional Arts Association on Performance Art. Predictably it was a sorry sight with some RAAs giving next to nothing or indeed nothing at all. One RAA officer present at the meeting said that they responded to demand and that they were not giving much to performance art because almost no Performance Artists applied for funding. We are planning to produce a survey of Regional Arts Association spending and policy for performance art and would like to hear from anyone who can provide us with information or experience of applying for, whether successfully or not, performance art funding. ●

RECORD BREAKERS

+ **Stephen Taylor-Woodrow's** *The Living Paintings* has drawn crowds of over 50,000 people into eleven galleries around the country. In Southampton Art Gallery it broke the attendance record previously held by the display of the FA Cup in 1976. Now the performance has won support from the Scottish Arts Council to tour round Scotland. *The Living Paintings* will be in Dundee 26-28 June, Aberdeen 3-5 July, Stornoway in the Outer Hebrides 7-8 July and Stirling, also in July. Before setting off on the Scottish Tour Taylor-Woodrow will be giving an open air workshop on collective painting in the Mount Pleasant Festival in London on 6 June. Contact the Air Gallery for details. ●

A Living Painting

VIDEO NEWS

MIKE STUBBS, video artist and activist, settles into a new year-long position at **Hull College of Art** on a bursary scheme. ●

+ **Kate Meynell** has been chosen to work on a **'Video Artist In Residence'** scheme by **Islington Council**. ●

+ Plans are afoot for a radical video art exhibition at **Battersea Arts Centre**. The project will involve the construction of a domestic setting for art tape viewing. The organisers hope to have set up the show by this summer, funding permitting. ●

+ **City Limits** video columnist, **Felicity Sparrow** recently dubbed Dan Landin's film *The Child And The Saw* a 'cult classic'. The film, which was first shown over eighteen months ago, has had haphazard screenings and is included on the Arts Council's **Heroic Times** package. Landin and Heslop co-directors of the surreal short — have just been featured in a **New Musical Express** article on the **Heroic Times** programme alongside the likes of **Test Departmentalist Brett Turnbull** and **Martine Thouquenne**. ●

+ it is rumoured that **Channel Four** may be planning a TV special on the sternly heroic industrial rockers **Laibach**. ●

+ A recent trip to the **Whitechapel Gallery** proved worth the bus fare not only for the diversity of painting/sculpture work on show but also for a chuckle at **John Smith's** short and succinct film, **Om**. The piece was first screened at the London Film Makers Co-op and was here featured as part of a programme of works from various artists. As a taster of Smith's increasingly accessible, intelligent and funny film practise it is invaluable. The piece itself involves a simple shot of a Buddhist-cum-skinhead being given a head-shave but with these basic ingredients Smith plays quirky jokes with sound and our assumptions. There is a level of professional-



ism here which first surfaced in **Shepherds Delight**, a wry and comically subversive film which Channel Four are (still) considering for broadcast on **Eleventh Hour**. In the meantime Smith has been working on a new epic entitled **The Black Tower** which indicates a re-engagement with narrative cinema yet retains the film-maker's playful concern with anxiety, humour and the spaces between them. ●

+ Rumour is rife that the **ICA's Videotèque** facility is in dire straits and closure seems imminent. An undisclosed source says this may have something to do with attendance figures. Recently **John Adam's** blockbuster video **Intellectual Properties** — internationally renowned, winner of the **Bonn Videonale Prize** and all that, was screened to exactly zero audience. ●

+ Highlights of recent student screening from **North East London Poly** include **Clive Gillman's** hi-tech work **Electrical Developments** and **Tina Burton's AR Kane** pop video where a dubwise guitar thrash gets matched to film scratched imagery. ●

+ Gillman is also involved in what threatens to be a high profile 'multi-media event' at **Newham's Tom Allen Centre in May**. The weekend may feature the **Housewatch** crew, performance from **Tara Babel** and other installation and film/video works. ●

+ Gossip circulates over a proposed new media centre to be located on the **South Bank**. **Sean Cubitt** is reportedly one of the instigators of this grand scheme although little is confirmed yet. Negotiations gather apace with **Sankova** film/video group, the **LVA** and **LFMC** — amongst others — involved in preliminary dealings. ●

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Overheard at recent Channel Four press view. David Larcher was telling a loudmouthed bloke in medianik outfit — you know the sort of thing, corduroy trews and Gabardine overcoat — that he'd done quite a lot of work at the Film Makers Co-op. Responds loudmouth in plummy tones, 'Oh . . . I didn't know it was still there' ●

TSWA

+ **TSWA 3D** opens at the beginning of May and the work will be on view until the end of June (see feature). The artists' projects and organisations for further information are as follows:

**FINNIESTON CRANE, GLASGOW/
GEORGE WYLLIE**

+ A massive, 175 foot high crane on the banks of the River Clyde; a potent symbol of Glasgow's industrial past. Glaswegian artist George Wyllie echoes the crane's original





function by suspending from it a locomotive constructed from hundreds of bales of straw. Wyllie's project combines sculpture, tableau, performance and participation as the people of Glasgow undertake a ritual parade of the piece prior to its suspension.

(Third Eye Centre, Andrew Nairne, 041-332 7521)

CALTON HILL, EDINBURGH/KATE WHITEFORD

+ '... that sacred mount ... cannot be crowned by too much high art' wrote Henry Cockburn in 1849 of Calton Hill, the site of what has come to be known as Scotland's folly, the neo-classical National Monument.

Scottish artist Kate Whiteford's project recalls a much more ancient time by excavating 'layer upon layer of history', engraving Celtic spirals, fish, chevrons and ring markings, all of which can only be seen in their entirety from the top of Nelson's Tower.

(The Fruitmarket Gallery, Mark Francis, 031-225 2383)

CITY WALLS, DERRY/ANTONY GORMLEY

+ An enduring symbol of the Protestant/Catholic divide, now manned in part by the British army.

Antony Gormley, whose family come from Derry, will place iron double-figures along the walls. Siamese twin-like, their arms outstretched in a cruciform shape, they will embody the two communities — looking away from each other yet springing from the same source and inescapably bound together.

(Orchard Gallery, Declan McGonagle, 0504-269675)

INTERIOR, TYNE BRIDGE, NEWCASTLE/RICHARD WILSON

+ Originally used as a warehouse, the grimy interior of the south supporting tower of the Tyne Bridge will become the site of a spectacular evolving sound work.

(Projects UK, Jon Bewley, 091-261 4527)

THE ORATORY, LIVERPOOL/HOLLY WARBURTON

+ In the stately, neo-classical interior of this nineteenth century hymn to 'the noblest invention of the building art' (Rector of Liverpool, 1827), Holly Warburton's multi-dimensional tape-slide installation will bring the late 20th century bursting in.

(Bluecoat Gallery, Bryan Biggs, 051-709 5689)

IKON GALLERY, BIRMINGHAM/HANNAH COLLINS

+ One of only two gallery sites in TSWA 3D. Hannah Collins's installation of 20 foot high black and white photographs inside and outside the Ikon will create a metaphysical city, located somewhere between the north and the south.

(Ikon Gallery, Antonia Payne, 021-643 0708)

PORTICO, ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS, LONDON/EDWARD ALLINGTON

+ The portico of Gibb's baroque design will

house an enormous — 40 feet long — baroque motif by Edward Allington which will ask the viewer to suspend their belief in the architecture and believe for a moment in the logic of his own trompe l'oeil sculpture. Despite his recurring fascination with the architectural this will be the first time that Edward Allington has worked with a historic architectural space rather than creating an imaginary one within a gallery.

(Institute of Contemporary Arts, Andrea Schlieker, 01-930 0493)

ARNOLFINI GALLERY, BRISTOL/THE MARK DUNHILL GROUP, MIRANDA HOUSDEN

+ The second of TSWA 3D's gallery sites will house the first sculpture exhibition conceived specifically for the blind as opposed to making existing works 'hands on'. A collaborative project by Mark Dunhill, John Jockes and others and an installation by

Miranda Housden will each explore ideas of 'seeing' through touch.

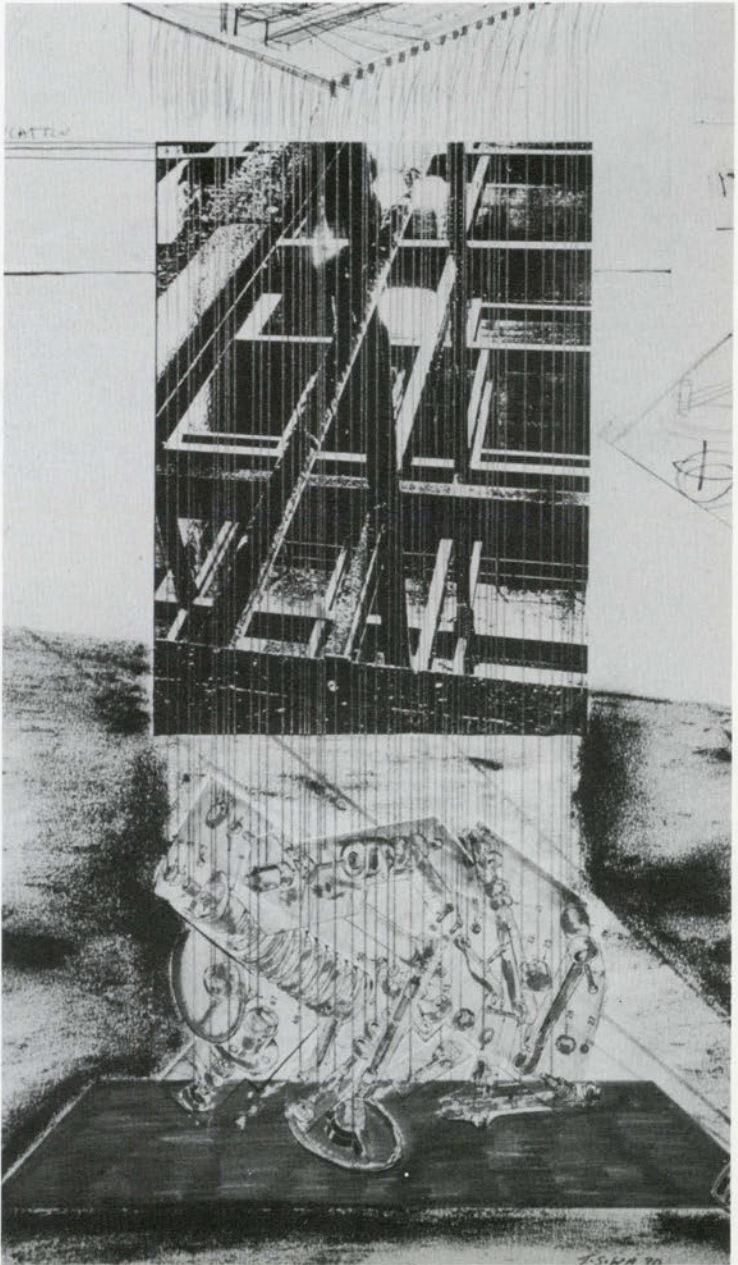
(Arnolfini Gallery, Frances Morris, 0272-299191)

BELLEVER TOR AND FOREST, DARTMOOR/JUDITH GODDARD, RON HASELDEN, SHARON KIVLAND

+ The largest of the TSWA 3D sites houses three separate but complementary projects. Judith Goddard creates a megalithic circle of video monitors, Ron Haselden's spiralling tower enables the viewer to wind up and through the trees of the forest, Sharon Kivland illuminates ancient forest pathways with tiny flickering shrines.

(Spacex Gallery, Robin Dobson, 0392-31786, Plymouth Arts Centre, Rosy Greenlees, 0752-660060) ●

Contributors to this issue's News include Roland Miller and Nik Haughton



Working drawing of Richard Wilson's TSWA project in the Tyne Bridge, Newcastle

A WORK BETWEEN TWO INSTITUTIONS

AS THE POWER of the art institution over art practice has increased in the last three decades, so the concept of the Art Museum as a kind of mausoleum has become fashionable amongst art curators. This view of the Art Museum envisages it as a container of idealised objects that act as emulative icons, and as such authoritative, unchallengeable, timeless and sealed off from the anarchy of the world outside. The social and physical unavailability of art objects, the special prior knowledge required to understand their language and meaning, and the high degree of motivation necessary to enter the modernist Art Museum all emphasise cultural projections that state exclusivity and higher authority.

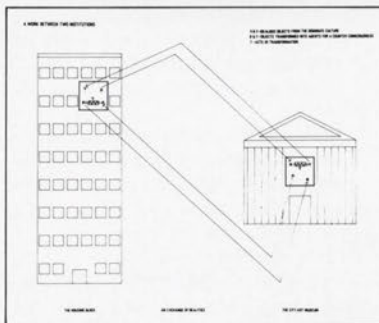
The work that I propose to make in September for the City Art Gallery in Leeds is in direct opposition to this view of the art museum as mausoleum. As part of this work I intend to externalise the art museum into the outside world and inject the highly charged reality of contemporary living into its confines. While the action of my work is certainly to open up, and change the physical and social topology of the art museum's relation to the world around it, this is not exclusively its aim. My work sets up a transfer of contained realities between two quite separate, even culturally alien institutions: the modernist, 1960s style residential tower block, and the classical City Art Gallery in Leeds. In my conception for this work the interactive exchange of realities between the two institutions is used by people to redefine situation. Thus the work also actively involves two audiences: staff and visitors to the museum and residents of a tower block, or similar modernist building in Leeds.

The interactive structure of my work is based on a division into two parts; one part is made within, and embodies the reality of the tower block, but is located in the museum, the other part is made within, and embodies the reality of the museum, but is located in the tower block. So, to engage with the work the audience must also go from context to context and physically visit the site of each part of the work. The experience of visiting the actual reality of both institutions is embodied in my work, and indeed both buildings can easily be seen from each other and

STEPHEN WILLATS is working on a new project to be presented in Leeds this September. The project will take Leeds City Art Gallery into the homes of the surrounding community and vice versa. Willats regards this opportunity to create a work in a Northern environment, in part, as a chance to explore the different emphasis which he sees in Northern society, an emphasis on social and conceptual ideas rather than on consumerism. Here he outlines the project:



The Victorian Room in the Leeds City Art Gallery and the foyer of the tower block. Above: one of the two tower blocks situated on the east and west of the Art Gallery

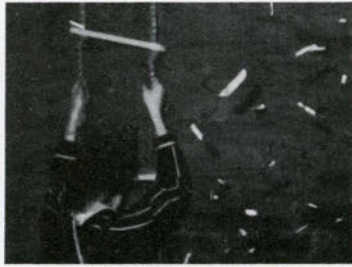


'In realising the work in Leeds I will base it on this conceptual model, which was made as a general idea, not specific to any particular place'

are considered part of the very fabric of the work. During the months before the presentation of the work I will invite residents of the tower block and visitors to the museum to participate with me in the making of two audio and photographic displays. These displays will form the respective installations and will be developed from photographic co-operations and tape recorded interviews I will make with those people who agree to participate. In my approach to each of these two buildings I see them both as authoritative cultural symbols that contain various authoritative objects, and it is from people's discussions of the conceptual links they can create between these objects, the buildings and their own lives that will form the installation.

I would like to include photographic details of painting and sculpture from

the City Museum's collection in the tower block installation, and to include photographed belongings of residents in the Museum installation. Thus it is my intention that, in each institution, people are confronted with fragments of the reality from the other institution, constructed into a paradigm for viewing their own, and as such it is an agency that I want people to use to question the wider determinism inherent in authoritative symbolism. Both in the work's development with people, and in the audience's reception of the presentation, it exists as a social process, that uses the here and now of contemporary life to redefine the basis for considering culturally idealised objects that are contained within each institution, by re-defining them as a counter consciousness founded on people. ●



ROBERT AYERS has curated an exhibition and a series of performances for the Castle Museum in Nottingham. He outlines some of the attitudes and ideas which underlie the season: *Art in Performance. Performance in Art.*

MAKING ART IS a political act. Artists either assume — and thus contribute to — a status quo, or they actively seek to change it. For my part, I believe in art's power to change lives: to be sufficiently unsettling or mysterious or hilarious that it can make the people who see it wonder a little bit about what they thought they knew or were certain of. It is in this invitation to its audience to question their assumptions, something that people are normally (and perhaps understandably) disinclined to do, and certainly something that they are rarely encouraged to, that the key to art's social and political power lies: in passing on the habit of seeking novelty (rather than just more-of-the-same), artists and the things that they make can literally change the intellectual and emotional and psychological realities of their audiences' lives; and because this effect can be cumulative, political change might reasonably be thought of as its potential end-product.

I believe that the best art in all sorts of media can do this, but I think that there are certain strategies — and certain situations — that make the task a lot more straightforward, and that is why I make performances. Leading a party of thirty or forty Sheffielders on a torchlit hike through their city's Botanical Gardens as part of the performance called *Regulation* that I made there last summer, I felt quite confident that I had clearer access to their preconceptions and prejudices than if *Regulation* had been a series of pictures that I had hung, gold-framed, on the walls of the Mappin Art Gallery. This is because one of the more potent weapons in art's armoury is surprise, and presenting contemporary and challenging art in circumstances where it might not be expected (and where, as was the case with *Regulation*, it might be taken for something else) is one of the principal ways of achieving such surprise.

Unfortunately though, there are quite a lot of surprise tactics which are now so familiar — in some cases they have enjoyed more than a hundred years of avant-garde currency — that they can backfire and play into the hands of those manipulators of public prejudice who understand and fear art's power to change. Among such tactics, unfortunately, would have

SCALING THE CASTLE WALLS



to be listed much of performance's vocabulary of would-be outrageousness, and many of the ploys that make up the now more-than-traditional avant-garde instinct to *épater le bourgeois*. There is not, in other words, a lot of real power left in shocking a few middle-aged ladies by taking your clothes off, or in annoying a few middle-aged men with tedious demonstrations of anti-skill. Our strategies need now to be much more subtle than this.

But there does seem to me to be a lot of potential left in something as simple as the use of unfamiliar *locations* for contemporary art. And, with a bizarre irony that its writers could never have anticipated, this has been made much easier as a result of the policies outlined in the Arts Council's 1984 *Glory of the Garden* document. Because municipal museums, in many cases *the last place on earth* where one might have expected to find difficult or experimental art, are now being encouraged — and funded — to present it.

Another advantage of these places is that in many cases they have an enormous casual audience of a city's population and visitors. The Castle Museum in Nottingham, for example, expect an average of almost 2,000 visitors a week to their galleries during the summer months, with peaks of something like 2,000 to 3,500 visitors a day on the summer bank holidays.

These were the sort of thoughts that were in my mind when I accepted the invitation from the Castle Museum to help curate an exhibition and season of performance which will run for the whole of this summer and which is called *Art in Performance. Performance in Art.*

My confidence in performance's social potential is shared, I think by Micheala Butter, the Castle's exhibitions officer, and Neil Walker, her assistant. We soon agreed that one of the main aims of *Art in Performance. Performance in Art* should be the attraction of a new audience for live art. That we should see it as our responsibility to present, intelligently and sensitively, a programme of live work for a public who might previously have responded with automatic suspicion to the very words *performance art* and so to allow them access to the art that, as I have been arguing, might best be able to make inroads into their assumptions.

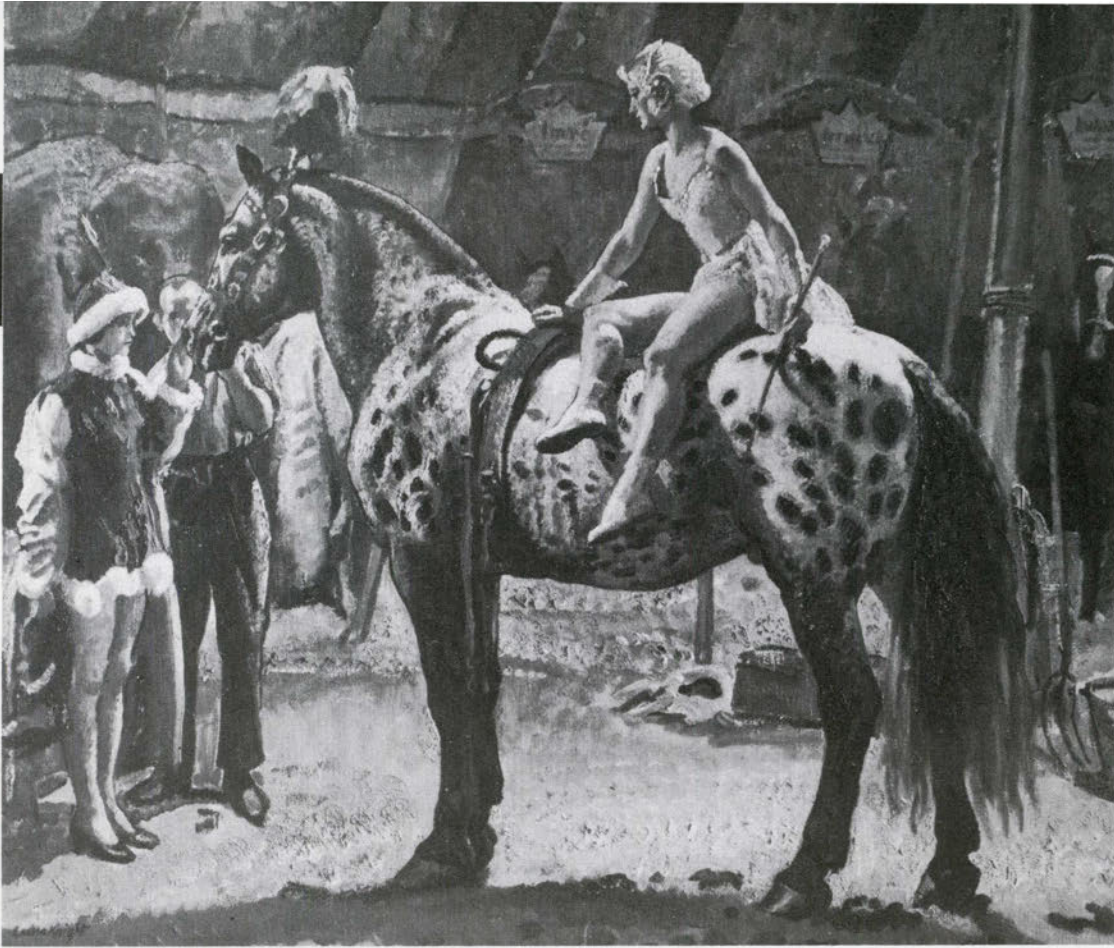
To this extent, the exhibition of paintings and sculptures of dancers, musicians, actors, and circus people (which makes up one half of *Art in Performance. Performance in Art*) might be thought of as the 'vehicle' for the performances that are its other half. As a static exhibition that is available every moment that the museum is open, these paintings and sculptures can catch the attention of the museum's thousands of visitors, and make them want to come and have a look at one of the performances which have been programmed as densely as money would allow. (Of course, it is also perfectly possible for

performance to attract its own audience, and it has been for this reason that a number of the artists in the programme will be performing not (or not only) in the Castle's galleries but in the Castle Grounds — where the attendance figures are half as high again — or in the streets of Nottingham. Similarly, the two commissioned performances that open the programme — Alistair MacLennan's and my own — are installation-based and therefore available during the same opening hours as the paintings and sculptures.

The relationship between the paintings and sculptures and the performances is, of course, rather more complex than this. Because what runs through the works by Degas and Picasso and Toulouse-Lautrec and Sickert and Burra that are in the exhibition, and what is still there in the contemporary work of Jasper Johns and Bruce McLean, is less an interest in performance as the provider of moments of dazzling spectacle (though that interest undoubtedly *is* there in some of the works in the show) and more a declaration of sympathy and identification with the performers whom they depict. It may well be that modern painters and sculptors have repeatedly been drawn to — and drawn *into* — performance work not only because they have sensed its position near the cutting edge of art's social responsibilities, but also because there is in the image of the individual performer, sequinned, bejewelled and riding bareback in the circus ring, for example, something which reminds artists in other media of their own precarious social position: at once respected for their special skills, and despised for what is widely thought of as squandering them. And then despised again for a whole string of other moral and social failings, often imagined or invented.

Some of the performances that can be seen at the Castle this summer make overt reference back to the same history of the performed arts that one might think of as being presented in these paintings and sculptures. The pieces by Anne Seagrave, Annie Griffin, and Rosalind Moore all do this, as do both of the performances that I shall be doing, but it has not been our intention to try and historically 'explain' contemporary performance with the exhibition of static works. Even the photographs from the history of live art that the exhibition includes are intended to give context rather than explanation, for, if the programme of performance is to have any value at all in the terms that I have set out, then the work must be allowed its inexplicability.

Of course, this was only one of the ingredients that we were looking for in the performance works that we wanted to present this summer. (Because I do not think that there is much virtue in work that intends to be entirely opaque.) And, although the range of work that was chosen is broad, it was not our intention to present a bland survey. What we wanted was



Elsie on Hassan by Dame Laura Knight: one of the performance paintings in the exhibition



Regulation, Robert Ayers

PHOTO / DEREK GREAVES

work that blended mystery and meaning, risk and finish, laughter and passion, in short the sort of qualities which, taken together, might best equip art to perform its so important political function, and without which no amount of good intentions and sound strategy is really worth anything. What we were not looking for, necessarily, was overtly 'political' work. Because in much the same way that it is often the work that sets out to shock that is most tediously

predictable, art can often defuse its own political intentions by declaring them too obviously.

The choices were made then, with specific intentions and high expectations. On one level though, the choice of work was straightforward, and my contribution, at any rate, to the three-sided collaboration that was the making of *Art in Performance*. *Performance in Art* was simply to propose the names of some of the best artists that I could think of. ●

Art in Performance. *Performance in Art* is at the Castle Museum in Nottingham from 24 May to 9 August with performances by Robert Ayers, Alistair MacLennan, Duncan Whiteman, Gary Stevens, Anne Seagrave, Annie Griffin, *Desperate Men*, Rosalind Moore, Françoise Sergy and Alastair Snow, and sculptor Sokari Douglas-Camp is artist-in-residence in the Castle Grounds in June and July.

I SEE DANGER

Alistair MacLennan is one of Britain's major practitioners of live art. He was born in Scotland and has lived and taught in Belfast since 1975. DECLAN MACGONAGLE, curator of The Orchard Gallery and The Foyle in Derry, talks to MacLennan about living and working 'on the edge of Europe':

Declan

McGonagle: I think we first met when I was in third year painting at the Belfast Art College and you came to teach in 76/77?

Alistair

MacLennan: I first visited Belfast in 1975. In Autumn of that year I started teaching first year Fine Art at Ulster Polytechnic.

DM: I remember you gave a slide show about work you'd done prior to coming to Belfast. I remember very clearly, I was a painting student, that you showed slides of very large scale paintings of objects picked up in a house in Nova Scotia.

AM: These specific works were painted in a small village called Indian Harbour, in Nova Scotia. Certain objects in the environment, and in the attic of the house I'd moved into, intrigued me. I couldn't understand them. I took these from their immediate 'positions', painted from them, then relocated them 'exactly' as I'd found them.

DM: That echoes that sense of going into a situation and making use of what you find there.

AM: With respect to learning from and improving on a given situation, paying attention to context is important.

DM: Could we begin by looking at how you started to produce paintings, and then move from painting to live work.

AM: I had a very traditional academic Fine Art education at the Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art in Dundee, Scotland from 1960-1965. We studied human anatomy and did a great deal of cast and life drawings, figure painting, portraiture and still-life work. Nearly everyone dealt with the same issues. We worked mostly from a single, central model. Almost all the art was figurative. The range of

imagery was relatively narrow.

Differences were measurable via painterly 'handwriting' rather than by content, though 'composition' classes were more open.

From 1966 to 1968 I studied at the School of Art Institute of Chicago. The situation there was utterly different. Studio practice was completely decentralised. Student work was 'individuated'. Means and methods were much more diverse. This made me question again the *how* and the *what* of my art, my intentions and aspirations.

DM: Had that been the basis of the teaching you received?

AM: No, it wasn't. I was self-questioning and needed to query my function and purpose as an artist. I absorbed much from my fellow students. Also, I learned a great deal from Chicago itself. It was a violent but exciting city. It was there I first heard of the killing of Martin Luther King. Race riots in Chicago were bloody affairs. Underprivileged blacks lived in hovels on the south side. Ethnic groups lived in gangland ghettos. I lived in a Polish section and worked three nights a week to 'get by', as a student. The violence was palpable, but I loved the city. Students there were politically and socially 'active'.

Towards the end of my second year I became interested in what underpins art. I grew curious about philosophical and theoretical questioning relative to arts making, and sought out pertinent information.

DM: When you say information, what do you mean?

AM: If we look for something hard enough we 'find' it, be it written material or a personal encounter. I was drawn to attitudes contained in Zen, firstly through my own art, secondly through literature and thirdly through

Zazen practice with a Rinzaï Master. During two years I made no art (1973-1974). Attention to living processes took over the need to engage in the making of art objects.

DM: So it was being rather than doing.

AM: As regards traditional concepts of art in Western culture it was 'being' rather than 'doing'. In the activities of daily living, being and doing were inseparable. Events of the day were fused in relatedness. This first-hand experience, for me, was crucial. It still is today.

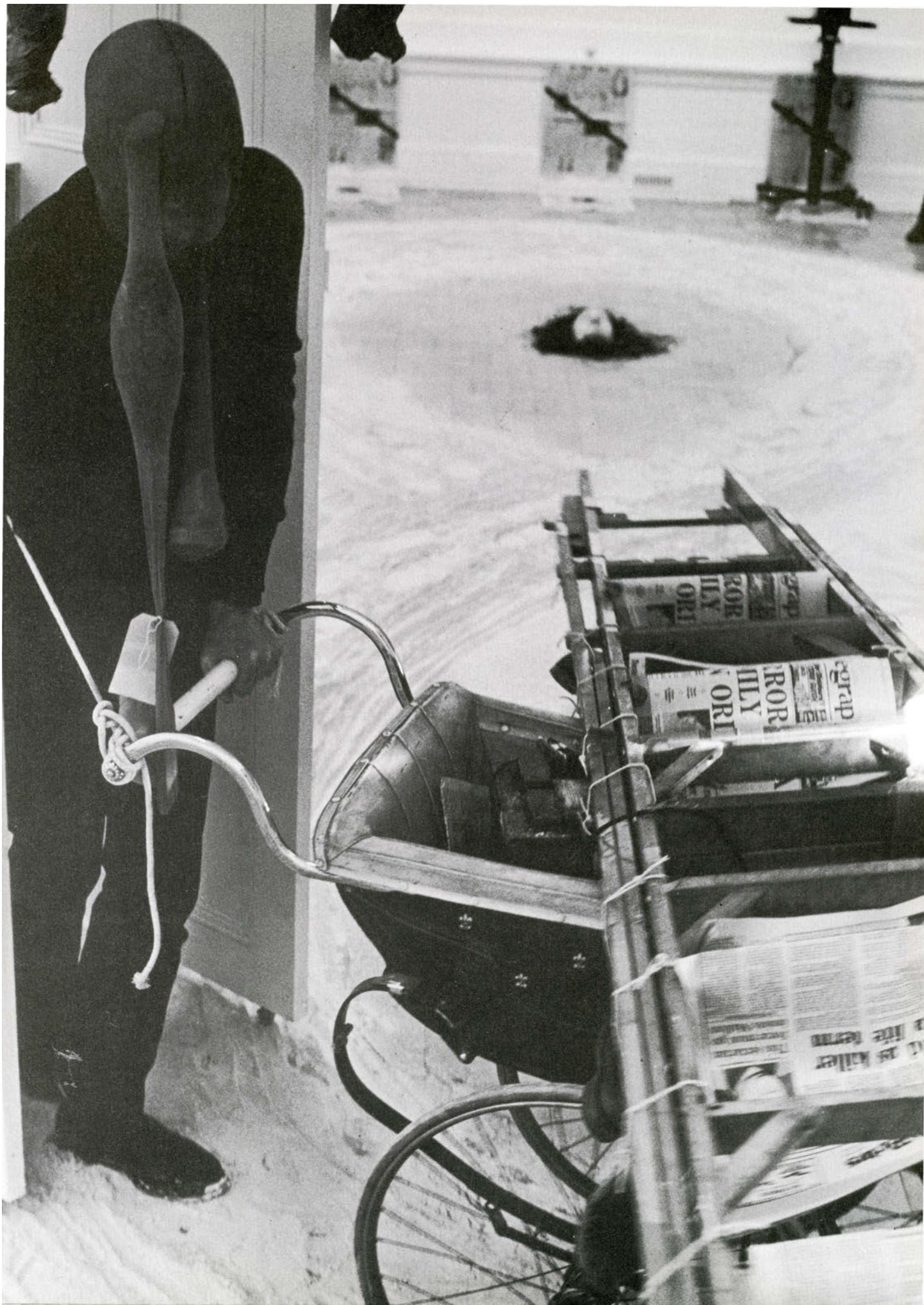
DM: It's still there, but at that time did that mean there was no product.

AM: During the indicated two year period, at various stages, I had temporary urges to paint. I didn't. At the end of this time I again made art objects, but also experimented with ritualised actions and processes we're involved in everyday, and made moving 'painting'.

DM: I remember seeing your performances where objects were also central and not subsidiary props, the focus was on the objects, on you and the objects, I don't know if you actually use the term, but is part of the idea activating painting. Was there a sense of dissatisfaction with the two-dimensional rendering of objects. . . .

AM: There *was* such a dissatisfaction, not so much with the activity itself as with the inordinately distorted value and meaning accredited to it in the art world. Questions were: How was art to 'behave' in society? How to reconcile discrepancies between what art 'was' and how it was 'utilised' by the machinations of mediating art means? I had misgivings about the art world itself, with its pompous, vacuous humbuggery, money lending and real estate deals, and wished to make art a *living* process

If Underhand, 48-hour non-stop performance/installation, in *The British Art Show*, 1-3 February, 1985 at the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh



I SEE DANGER

CONTINUED



without the necessity of physical residue for sale.

DM: Is that then an attempt to bypass the traditional means of mediation?

AM: Yes, I realise mediating means are always present. Some artists attempt to avoid their clutches. Others rush towards them. Progress isn't linear. It spirals.

Emphasis could be on artists redressing the imbalance of mediation control over societal processing of their work.

DM: Is it then necessary for artists to have to take on board, take control of, the means of mediation?

AM: Certainly, it's a question of realisation on the part of artists. Some are like sheep, led to the slaughter. Others turn the experience on its head.

DM: It always seemed to me, maybe you can comment on this, the problems about art in society are not so much to do with the production of art, as with the expectations that artists themselves are led to believe they should have for how that art should work, how it should meet society with its preconditioned social responses.

AM: This problem can be dealt with within education. Viewing the current 'state of art' I doubt if it is, effectively. Artists need to constantly unlearn and re-educate themselves about expectations of 'self' and societal

preconditioning of assumed public response.

DM: What art should be, what it should do and its function — in our society, Western society, in a way operates within an incredibly narrow band of expectation of what art is, which is itself a product of the narrow expectations of how we should live?

AM: The art which society 'gets' mirrors how it does and doesn't reflect, and for reasons other than it thinks. My art practice differs from others.

DM: So in forming that art practice — I'm not suggesting that it is fully formed — I mean it's obviously a growing development, but in getting to the position to be able to ask the right questions, you mentioned going after a philosophical base for your practice to be involved in that activity, but are there identifiable moments you could point to either in terms of seeing other art, experiencing work by other artists or something you were doing yourself at that time that motivated you?

AM: In Chicago I became dissatisfied with the seeming gulf between the world of 'ethics' (and its lack), and the world of 'aesthetics'. The society I lived in was violent. It seemed not enough, inappropriate and escapist to retreat making 'beautifying' work utterly detached from the pulse and best of contextual living. While there, I

read the epic work *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman. It advocated an inclusiveness, not an exclusive view of art and society. I read a great deal. In Chicago my politics grew to the left. More recently, in Belfast, art (for me) has become 'Skill in action, where skill is the resolution of conflict'.

DM: How did you relate the questioning that was going on within your own work to teaching situations?

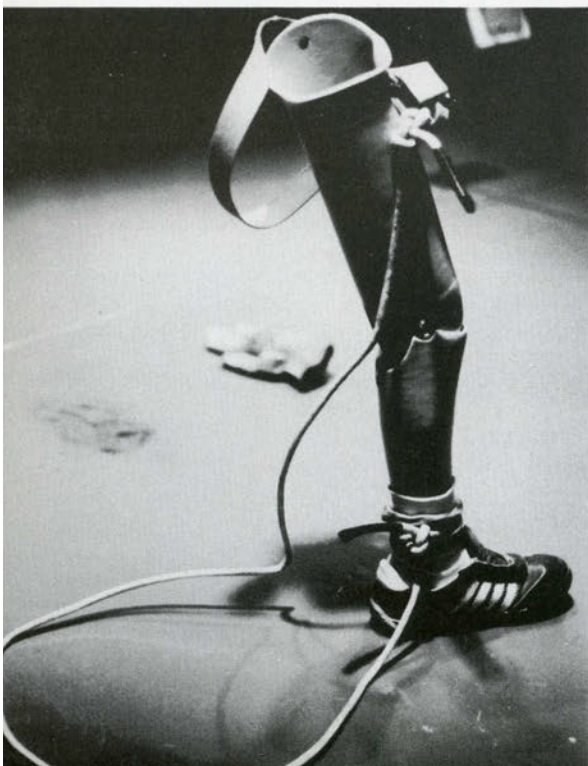
AM: Teaching is a main artery in my art activity. I'm an 'outsider'. When I came to Belfast I wished to open up possibilities for students. We worked on individual and group projects, using well nigh any and every material. On the one hand I wished to overcome a prejudice that art is only made using exclusive 'purpose made' materials, and on the other, to constantly question and challenge presumptions about art's 'private' and public function. One of my first projects with students in 1975 was to use the streets of Belfast and the public transport system for an Art March between two differing institutions during Queens Festival.

Being an outsider has advantages and disadvantages. My parents are/were from North West Scotland (with Irish connections). I was brought up in the South. Cultural differences were like chalk and cheese. Growing up, I felt an 'outsider' looking in, and an 'insider' looking out. There were doubletake overlays. These I now use.

DM: Could I just interject a reference there that may be useful. People living on islands off the West Coast of Donegal talk about going out to the mainland and going into the island, in a geographical sense that parallels what you are describing, which is a state of mind. Would you say you carry that sort of sensibility with you?

AM: Yes, I put it to work. Coming to Belfast could be seen as choosing a 'marginalised' context to live in. Many see Belfast as the edge of Europe. There are edges and 'edges'. The post industrial age is one of decentralisation. In *The Third Way*, Toffler discussed among other deaths, that of urbanisation. 'Big' is no longer beautiful. Concepts which formulated centres are now obsolete. New wave communications and information media now contribute to the disintegrating stranglehold of centres built by, and for redundant technologies and attitudes. 'Centres' are becoming peripheries, peripheries... 'centres'. Future/present provinces might be more at the 'hub' than New

Bury the Veil, 50-hour non-stop performance/installation, Franklin Furnace Gallery, New York, 13-15 November 1986



Lie to Lay in New Work Newcastle '86. Roseberry Crescent Warehouse, March 1986

York, London or Paris.

DM: The de-industrialisation of today is coming about largely because of new technologies. In a curious way there could be a paradoxical benefit coming from a momentum that isn't necessarily a good one in general but, which can hopefully be turned from a disadvantage to an advantage.

AM: We're at an awkward stage. Simultaneously we're living the death of industrialisation and feeling birth pangs of a new civilisation, experiencing more the former than the latter at present. It's a time for perseverance and insight, turning whatever negatives we can into positives. It's a period of great difficulty and personal tragedy for many thousands of families out of work, through no fault of their own. Many are willing, but because of 'circumstances beyond their control', feel unable to contribute. Without a 'job', many feel worthless and without identity.

As an inverted negative, external difficulties may force us to tap deeper sources of identity and personal worth within ourselves and our cultural context that we'd normally be 'required' to dredge up, call forth or invoke. If and when we can make this 'transition', advantage is there.

DM: There is always a mistake made that because situations which are geographically on the edge or marginal where things happen in a different way or with a different rhythm there is a sense of nothing happening at all, or if you come from the centre carrying a certain urban rhythm with you, to, say a rural context, you'd feel there is nothing going on. I suppose the idea is to be receptive to the rhythm and the momentum and try to go with that, wherever it may occur.

AM: Yes, otherwise we don't learn from the situation we're in. What seems appropriate in one context may be utterly inappropriate in another. It's important to encourage *intrinsic* worth in a locality, rather than callously to 'graft it on' from the outside. This applies to politics and art, here in Northern Ireland, as elsewhere.

DM: Well you see, just taking that point on in another sort of way a process that is now taking place in mainland Britain was actually taking place in Northern Ireland in the early 70s. It brought forward that de-industrialisation. Unemployment in some areas of Northern Ireland was always high anyway, but, in a curious sort of way I feel as if we are ten years ahead of other parts of these islands. We may be more prepared to deal with that creeping situation.

AM: 'The darkest hour's before the dawn'. People here developed resilience sooner. It was needed.

DM: It is quite clear that the situation is that in large conurbations in Britain people find it very difficult to deal with that de-industrialisation process, there is a sense in which the powers that be are papering over the cracks. There is a whole area of discussion there about the edge becoming the centre, but the centre isn't one location anymore, it's where particularly strong things can and do happen.

AM: History 'wallpapers' truth. The seams don't meet. A point one circumference *anywhere* is a centre (in its own right). Take electric circuitry. Press a light switch in Tokyo, Bombay, or Paris. There's *instant* information. Everywhere and 'nowhere's' the centre. It's right where we sit.

DM: So if you use the term information, you could mean information with a small 'i' to include art?

AM: Certainly. May I recall some lines?

... There are no (innately) artistic means. All means are viable on condition. An artist makes art the whole of life, not a part. Is a man a farmer if he nurtures a furrow but neglects the field? The whole needs careful attention throughout. Painting is seen as an art activity. Breathing is not. Which is the root, which a result? Art purifies action. It is within the ordinary. It reflects what is. Real art requires what intermediary? It perseveres through changes. It transmutes pain and pleasure. It rests nowhere. It renders what is difficult effortlessly. It shows the invisible through the discernable. Pure art is in action devoid of 'self'. The purest art is the most essential. Its form is to content as skin to body. Aesthetics alone are a surface affair. Real art embraces 'everything', rejecting nothing. Discrimination arises in clarifying self to receive what 'is'. . . . and so forth. I acknowledge most of it.

DM: The underlying idea seems to be not to put art into a linear or hierarchical view of cultural activities.

AM: To someone unacquainted with water, snow, ice and steam would seem like three unrelated materials, rather than *one* substance in three differing states as a result of specific conditions. These conditions can change. I query unthinking adherence to *questionably* fixed, arbitrary, and 'applied' values in art. What and where's the underlying 'substance'? How fixed is it?

DM: You make performances, but you also make drawings, you also make installations and you make objects, so there is no sense in which you invalidate how your practice is

mediated?

AM: As much as possible I make performance/installations for particular locations, allowing the nature of the locality *itself* to 'inform' the work. This also pertains to some drawings I make.

DM: So it's really horses for courses. It's a question of what is appropriate in a given situation.

AM: Yes, I think much current art is *repressive* in spite of innovative cross-over techniques and manifold availabilities. In Scotland there is a phrase — CAULD KALE HET AGAIN — cold soup hot again. *Inappropriate* mediation 'neuters' art. In this politically conservative decade what's happened to art as political critique? Where's the bite, stomach and teeth?

DM: It's very interesting how you make references back to a particular context.

AM: The further back we go, the further forward we come.

DM: Well it's also not taking a linear view of time because with a linear view of time there is a hierarchy of achievement which puts us at the pinnacle.

AM: The pinnacle's the tip of the iceberg. The interest's in subterranean contents rising to 'surface'.

DM: In a sense there is a simultaneity about culture whether it is from 5,000 years ago or now because, once you are aware of it, it's alive and you have to deal with it.

AM: All our pasts and potential futures intersect in the present. We are custodians *now*. Ours is the individual and collective responsibility. The poet Sorley McLean, in order to preserve them, translates ancient Gaelic legends into English, writes his own poetry in Gaelic and warns of atomic submarines on the Isle of Skye. His audience is growing.

DM: So it's possible to deal with ugliness, negativity, all the things that are destructive or potentially destructive. It's this idea of a reversal, turning disadvantage or the negative into a positive.

AM: Yes, though it's foolish to think one's 'arrived', even when home.

DM: Is yours a sensibility formed beyond art?

AM: The world is raw. Do we 'cook' truth or lay it bare? On stage is a lonely place to fall. Better to work from a lowly position then fall from a height with a crash.

DM: That is carried out in your practice as living being now, but also as a maker of art. How did you actually operate in particular situations that you have been in. Like Nova Scotia or Belfast or wherever.

AM: As a young man I wished to travel, live and work as an artist,



I SEE DANGER

CONTINUED



and learn what I could. Some of my 'main' stops where Chicago, Nova Scotia, Vancouver, Japan (briefly), back to Scotland, the north of England and Belfast.

DM: Now, none of those situations could be described in the sense we have been talking about as *the centre*.

AM: True, though I frequently visit 'centres' to make art works. By choice I prefer to live away from 'centres'. I go there for business purposes, to see exhibitions, to visit friends, then to leave. In New York especially one sees the sad sight of aging artists who've been there for twenty-odd years, drawn to the 'centre' like flies to a light. They came to 'make it'. It's so expensive to live there, they have to work two or three jobs to survive. There's no time to make art, let alone significant work. Fame? You can't eat it, keep with it, walk or talk with it. It's ephemeral and delusive. An illusion. It's best to make good work where you are. Let things sort themselves out. The centre of the art world's wherever you breathe.

DM: There was a set of conditions applying in Belfast, for instance, that didn't apply in Nova Scotia or Vancouver and that was its geographical position on the edge, but it was politically and socially on the edge because of the political violence/political situation, and it was as if something had burst through in violent form here, come through a sort of surface. How did you find coming into that, because in other situations you would have to work very hard to get in touch with the sort of ideas or realities that run through your work. Whereas in a sense when it comes down to essential issues — as it did in the early and mid-70s in Belfast because it was dangerous — did you find, because it was so extreme, that it was good for the work?

AM: Belfast taught me a lot. I'm very grateful. It cut through me. Principles *underlying* the Troubles are discernable elsewhere. Here they're extreme, clear-cut and physical.

DM: There is a tangible expression.

AM: Exactly.

DM: It's certainly invisible in the projected 'centres'.

AM: There are major differences in degree and concepts of 'containment'.

DM: Yes that's right, it's a feeling I got very strongly when I was in London. The control mechanisms are just as much in place there as they

are here. The advantage we have here is that we can see the working parts.

AM: Yes, Everything's down to earth. Very basic. I encounter great warmth and generosity in people, from both sides of the community. This keeps me here. On the other hand the politics of violence are so emphatic they call into question one's whole purpose and function (as an artist), and what that constitutes.

DM: So actually it was a 'good' situation for questioning.

AM: Extremely good. One doesn't wish one's art to be icing on the cake, not necessary in the first place. In Belfast, constant issues are life and death (as they are elsewhere). Here these issues are 'foregrounded'. Some artists 'stonewall' this information, others capitulate in the face of it. I'd like to deal with it.

DM: One of the first things you did was in the foyer of the Art College, and with other things that you've done, you have placed yourself in situations beyond Art Institutions and Art Institutional frameworks.

AM: It *can* be appropriate at times because of the overly refined, self-protective and reflective nature of these contexts.

DM: Well does that mean that Art Institutions should be seen as controlling mechanisms.

AM: They are. These institutions are not unlike the Civil Service — more concerned with preserving and protecting *themselves* than those they're *supposed* to serve. Left to their own devices they set the climate for unimaginative, predictable conveyor-belt art. Well-timed, deftly judged doses of lone 'anarchy' are useful in offsetting the trait. If a grounded 'plane can urinate tea, what might sculpture do?

DM: Obviously Art Institutions are set up with combinations of private and public funding which leads to possibilities as well as limits.

AM: By and large they're more concerned with capital and administration than with real education. Some artists can work within such norms, and push beyond them. Because institutions so easily stifle creativity, I'd encourage students, in a whole range of ways to test the perimeters of their situations for *creative breakthrough*.

DM: It's definitely been a major part of your working practice that you relate more to people than to institutions.

AM: My first concerns in the Art Institution are the students I teach,

the art they make and the course I run. The carpets pulled from below presumption. I hope the service is beneficial. The bottom line's people (by the end of the day).

DM: That idea of drawing back the carpet so that you can see both beauty and its reverse has led to problems in some situations in relation to performance pieces. How did you feel when the media picked things up and there has then been negative national media exposure? Does that depress you, energise you or what?

AM: To a certain extent. With respect to tabloid misrepresentation of an earlier work at the Third Eye Centre, a local Tory politician was looking for means whereby to challenge the use of Arts Council funding. He manipulated the 'truth' of what took place. He was more than economical with it. He hid it. The press published amusing and cynical distortions of fact. Explanatory statements were deliberately misquoted. In spite of media-whip, hoop-la hype, the work was completed. By the end, from a variety of sources, I received positive support.

DM: The problem increases in direct proportion to the size of the institution involved with the project. It only becomes a serious and substantial problem if the institution is locked in to certain rhythms of our society, but you've always seemed to me to be as liable to travel to the other side of the world to work with another artist in a back alley as to work in a major museum.

AM: What's important is *quality of relationship*, wherever it's found. Life's as real in a back alley as in a museum. Perhaps more so. There's less to protect. There's more to life than security. There's *freedom!*

DM: Like me you also engage in mediation and administration processes because you are looking after the MA students within an ever expanding institution. How do those two areas of activity reside together?

AM: I take things on a day to day, week by week basis. I don't rely on past achievements or reputation. Individually and collectively we're only as good as work we *currently* make. The Institution is growing but I work with *individuals*. One goes with or against the grain. I distrust institutions. Looking ahead I see danger. I work with students, Fine Art and the Course. They make it worthwhile. Recent achievements have been very substantial. Negatives turn positive. Future/present is here. ●

IMAGE AFTER IMAGE

A second series of the arts magazine programme, *Alter Image*, begins this month on Channel Four. The forty-five artists featured in the series include Bow Gamelan Ensemble, Nigel Rolfe, Denys Blacker, Bruce

McLean, Test Department, Marty St James and Anne Wilson, Lumiere and Son, Frank Chickens, La La La and The Brittonioni Brothers. CHRIS RODLEY previews the new series and takes a general look at art on TV.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF television to the arts is a tortuous one in constant need of marriage guidance, most evident in the form of those day or weekend conferences on the subject which take place in palaces of culture or at annual television festivals. Programme makers accuse broadcasters of underfunding, lack of real commitment and of viewing their work as 'brownie points' in their schedules. Broadcasters produce statistics to demonstrate just how much they are doing, how little they are able to do or just how few people actually watch arts programmes — depending on their position that day and the figures at their fingertips.

BBC's *Monitor* seems to represent a glorious, exemplary past. Direct descendants of the Hugh Weldon dynasty, such as Melvyn Bragg and *The South Bank Show*, have seemed unable to produce much that is adventurous or challenging in arts programming on a regular basis since. Results often resemble lifeless holding operations, choked with cultural assumptions and the belief that a viewing public must



be guided oh so obviously and carefully through the difficult terrain of this 'art' business. BBC's *Arena* by comparison, under the strict rule of Alan Yentob, demonstrated most consistently an originality and daring, focussing as it often did on the twilight zones of cultural production (*My Way*, a documentary about the song, *The Private Life of the Ford Cortina* etc etc). On those rare occasions it chose the great artist/individual as subject (so common elsewhere), it was discreet and effective in its interventions and astute in its choices (the two-part Orson Welles interview, for example).

The advent of Channel Four in 1982 offered the chance not only to revitalise arts programming in general, but to experiment with new forms of televisual address. The opportunity to expose a television audience for the

first time to areas of artistic practice previously thought to be incompatible with television, hopelessly marginal or simply of low priority also presented itself. Independent film-makers and companies gathered and formed in the first rush of enthusiasm, optimism, defection, commitment, hunger and naivety.

A critique of the last four and a half years of results is not the purpose of this article. However, one such company born of the goldrush was *Alter Image*, a small Brixton-based production outfit committed to imaginative and innovative visual television (in line with C4's own charter). Their first series for C4 — *Alter Image* — was transmitted in 1983 and went on to receive awards and acclaim in Europe and America. Their second series — *Alter Image II* — commences transmission (some four years later!) on May 5th for ten weeks and features a dazzling array of performers, artists, designers, musicians, architects and dancers in its total of five hours of the arts for the small screen.

There are several important and interesting factors about *Alter Image* and its production. The first series was commissioned at C4 by Mike Bolland when in charge of youth programmes, on the basis of its being a form of video magazine. *Alter Image II* was also commissioned by Bolland, by now a senior Commissioning Editor with specific responsibility for light entertainment. C4's own internal strategy of defining broad areas of programme making and allocating Commissioning Editors to those general headings make this an intriguing initiative. 'The Arts', as explicitly named by this institutional structure, and defined by the person in charge of allocating the budget, was and is the responsibility of Michael Kustow. As defined initially by the programme output of that area, one might not be blamed for divining that

'the arts' were as resolutely highbrow and sacred as *The South Bank Show* would have us believe. That deep-pile, foyer carpet feel. There were, of course, exceptions, as production for C4 is not an in-house affair; *Whatever Is It?* on the new (male) British sculptors for instance.

Perhaps it is to *Alter Image's* advantage that funding comes from light entertainment, and not entirely inappropriate. *Alter Image* seems determined to entertain and inform a wide audience regarding a broad range of work. Items are short (a maximum of eight minutes in the new series, but usually about four minutes) and are visually inventive and playful. Subjects work in collaboration with the programme makers in re-orientating or re-presenting their work to make a piece specifically for television, its particular requirements, advantages and opportunities. They are not 'done by television', but rather help to make television themselves. The emphasis is on being responsive to subjects.

The series also makes no attempt to comment on the various performers and activities it features, either editorially itself or by the use of quotation or other 'voices'. One item appears, runs its short course and makes way for the next via a simple visual device. The programmes even lack an introduction ('Hello' or a quote from Hal Foster) or a signing-off ('Goodbye', or a quote from Benjamin Buchloch). An arts magazine without leader comment, or any obvious desire for contextualisation or the 'theme

issue'. A jamboree bag of goodies which, in accordance with its wildly varying subjects, offers an array of visual styles, devices and approaches.

You will find the conventional interview/artist at work technique in an item on glass furniture maker Danny Lane; inventive and ambitious video comic strip technique in the wicked drama *Brute: Love Me, Gangster,*



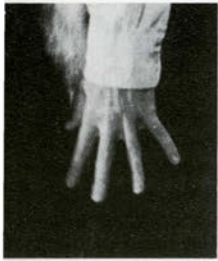


IMAGE AFTER IMAGE

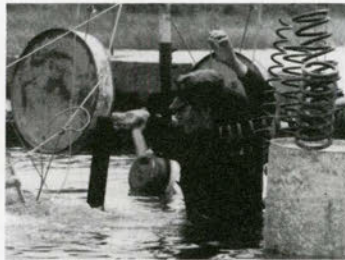
CONTINUED

and intelligently restrained and conceived pop promo in Rory McLeod as he delivers one of his urban ballads around locations in London. You will also find inspired and hilarious madness in a video piece on Leigh Bowery. Of their kind — these pieces all have their ‘approximations’ scattered throughout other forms of programming, arts or otherwise — they are at least some of the best examples you will see of how to be precise, inventive and not indulgent with, informative and evidently enthusiastic about the work on view. And contemporary dance — particularly in the Michael Clark item *The Shivering Man*, choreographed by Angela Conway — never looked better on television than here. And this despite the fact that contemporary dance has enjoyed a reasonable slice of C4’s schedule to date in *Dance on Four*, which was commissioned from the ‘Arts’ budget.

Yet despite its light entertainment funding, and the new series’ consolidation of an apparently successful formula for an involving and constantly surprising tv arts magazine, it is being transmitted at 11.15 pm. No doubt the tyranny of television scheduling, its strange demands and assertions, can explain this. But then so much arts programming occurs after the 10.30 pm watershed when, according to those baffling statistics, vast numbers of viewers switch off. C4’s current attempts to develop a late night young audience is, I’m sure, the main argument — not to mention the fact that arts programmes are always viewed as being so fragile that they cannot take any form of opposition, certainly not prime-time programming on other channels.

Alter Image II is not going to radically affect perceptions of the nature of cultural production for a wide audience. It will, however, introduce them to the existence of work of which they may be completely ignorant. Many of the artists featured have earned considerable reputations in their respective fields, but few are known to such a general audience. And accessibility to the material is made all the more possible by the lack of voices of authority (present or absent). It will certainly intrigue and excite — a factor most crucial in an area of television at times apparently intent on alienating an uninitiated viewing public, or in simply being complacent about cultural validity and worth in its choices.

The series also implicitly recognises what television, and the process of watching, are most conducive to, for better, for worse. The saddest reality of C4’s recent *State of the Art* series, its rough ride critically and its low audience ratings (those baffling statistics again) was not that it exposed spectacularly the prehistoric and reactionary nature of art criticism in this country (brilliantly illustrated on BBC’s *Did You See?*, when William Feaver agreed with stylish wideboy TV presenter Jonathan Ross that the series was ‘boring and pretentious’), or that there is public resistance to a democracy of viewpoints and complex analysis. It was that television just doesn’t accommodate such strategies easily — even without the additional intervention of a retarded institution of the press, only too willing to encourage people to give it the elbow.



Multi-layered voices, a sophisticated audio mix of clues and comment, complex visual associations, juxtapositions, constructions and montages don’t necessarily communicate well through the technical disadvantages of poor television speakers and restricted screen size. Nice to have expensive professional equipment, but how many people own it? All this without the problems of resulting attention span in the face of complexity, domestic trauma (telephones ringing, unannounced guests, requests for tea) and commercial breaks. This is not to say that those difficulties endemic in the television process for the ambitious programme maker (its inability to showcase successfully certain kinds of complex visual or analytical work to all but the initiated and informed) should be unquestioningly accepted. Nor that the over-determined, curatorial tendencies of *State of the Art* — to the detriment of the artists’ own articulations — are not real problems within the context of addressing, informing and exciting a television audience on the difficult subject of contemporary art and its relations to the world.

Alter Image operates effectively along the lines of least obvious resistance. As a magazine programme on the arts, its brief is a good deal more modest than that of a series such as *State of the Art*. But it does work remarkably well within its own stated aims. The mix of (say) video art, design, architecture and music within each thirty-minute programme may also produce provocative, interesting, less obvious connections or sub-texts for those viewers more familiar with some of the work and the issues it aims to address. Even when one has seen only individual items in isolation, one can imagine tantalising juxtapositions in complete programmes which need not (and would not, judging from the series’ approach) be explicitly signalled (‘This week, The Body. Next week, Politics’). How those individual items are eventually placed remains to be seen.

Meanwhile, what of the space between the poles of *State of the Art* and *Alter Image II*? On C4 we can expect to see a new series of *Ghost In The Machine*, the showcase for artists’ video which this time aims to commission, rather than package existing pieces. We can also expect more work from director Tony Palmer (eek), hopefully not another Peter Greenaway ‘bathrooms’-type film (why not au pairs’ bedrooms in smart North London houses next time), ICA Television’s first film production of *The Man Who Mistook His Wife For A Hat*, documentaries on Paolozzi, Corbusier, French painters (including Van Gogh and Cezanne) and the political work of Shelley. Not to mention the National Theatre of Brent and more opera. All from C4’s ‘arts’ budget for production or acquisition. TVS is about to commence work on a mega series about the history of Western art (phew!), co-funded with American money. As for the other channels, and established flagships such as *Arena*, *Omnibus*, *The South Bank Show*, *South of Watford* etc, who knows. Surely there are some surprises in store.

Alter Image III will commence development in June. The small production base of Mark Lucas, Jane Thorburn, Alex Graham, Ann McGeoch and Robin Thorburn may wish to stretch the series’ ambitions further next time. Certainly, under the present format (some forty-five items in *Alter Image II*) there are potential problems of finding enough material which will translate easily and

Bow Gamelan Ensemble



The Shivering Man,
Michael Clark

appropriately to the present hard line of producing entertaining visual television in brief segments. There may also be some frustration, for those audiences already pre-disposed and knowledgeable, in not producing the occasional in-depth piece on work

which may warrant more detailed examination.

After Image don't have to worry that old chestnut about reaching out to the great uneducated public with notions of contemporary art practice, its importance and interest. They have

probably cracked that one. They *may* have to worry about the so-called initiated who — according to those baffling statistics in the hands of men wearing sludge-coloured suits — just don't appear to figure. ●

SCULPTURE

DOWN YOUR WAY

BRIAN HATTON previews the ambitious TSWA3D exhibition which opens in May with twelve public sculpture works, at sites all over the country and discusses some of the issues it raises.

DURING THE COMING May and June a project titled TSWA3D will promote twelve simultaneous public artworks on nine sites around the country. The sites were selected by the organisers, South West Arts and Television South West, with sponsorship from Citicorp Banking and BP plc, and subsidies from the Arts Council and Scottish Arts Council. Artists were then invited to submit proposals for the sites, in a way similar to the pattern in architectural competitions, with particular site commissions awarded by the organisers to particular artists' submissions for those sites. However unlike architectural competitions, the 'content' or function of the submissions was not stipulated in the brief but left open to the artists' decisions and assessed accordingly.

The sites selected by the organisers are the Finnieston Crane in Glasgow, Calton Hill in Edinburgh, the City Walls in Derry, the interior of a tower of the Tyne Bridge in Newcastle, the neoclassical Oratory in Liverpool, the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham, the portico of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in Trafalgar Square, the Arnolfini Gallery in Bristol, and Belvedere Tor and forest on Dartmoor. None of the works is yet completed, but the artists' published proposals and the organisers' brief enable some anticipatory commentary on what is announced as 'the most ambitious public art event ever staged in Britain. On nine sites throughout Britain, twelve artists will transform a number of extraordinary spaces. Their work will be on view during May and June with a potential audience of millions'. Insofar as the selection of these 'extraordinary spaces' was made by the organisers, then we appear to have here a compound or collaborative artwork in which criticism must attend as much to the selectors' site choices and brief, together with their 'ambitious' format of nine simultaneous exhibitions, as to the various artists' individual 'transformations'.

We might, for instance, begin by asking what *are* those 'ambitions'. Is the ambition to test the creative scope of contemporary artists or simply to appeal to the biggest-ever audience? Is

there not an element of theatre implicit in the use of the word 'staged'? What are the presuppositions behind the nine site-choices: Why were 'extraordinary' sites selected, and what does their 'extraordinariness' consist of? What principle of unity or integrity is invoked in commissioning nine projects simultaneously rather than consecutively? To what extent is the project to be appreciated and criticised as a whole? Why are the pieces scattered around the country rather than placed according to some other locating principle? Finally, what kind of artistic ontology is assumed or implied in the word 'transformed'? After all, many things may 'transform' places — demolitions, construction, roadworks, lighting, demarcations, public movement, human presence or absence, advertising, planting, meeting, working, playing. The list is endless, and many of them are not even desirable, let alone architectural, sculptural or in any way artistic. One further consideration is the specification of this project as an *event*. The 'transformations' are presumably meant as temporary, and this clearly differentiates the anticipated work from either architecture or even traditional monumental sculpture, for the category of permanence concomitant to both of these traditional modes of creative construction is absent.

Two of the sites are in any case art galleries, and it is difficult to see how the work proposed for them on this occasion can be more public than any other shows there in the past. One may of course use a gallery to present a proposed public artwork, but the usual sense of the term 'public art' surely excludes work done specifically for art galleries. This is not to say that an art gallery might not be an arena for public representation, as was the Paris Salon; yet that was still not the same thing as monumental art for the public realm. But of course, whatever this work might turn out to be, the one thing it cannot become is monumental representation, for the materials will be flimsy, the site temporary, and the conception durational, more like a tableau or a pageant than a monument.

This project represents a mixture of

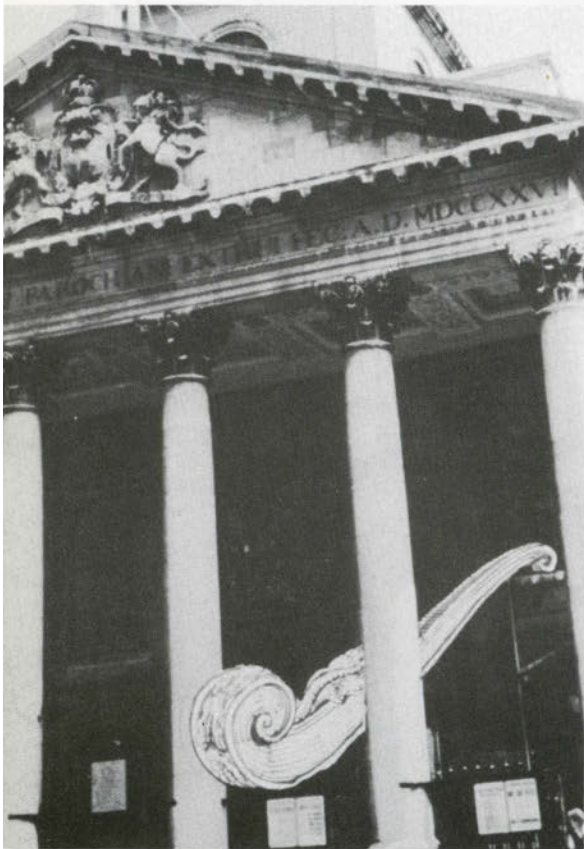
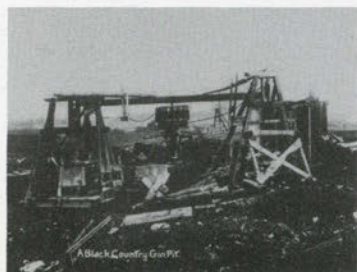
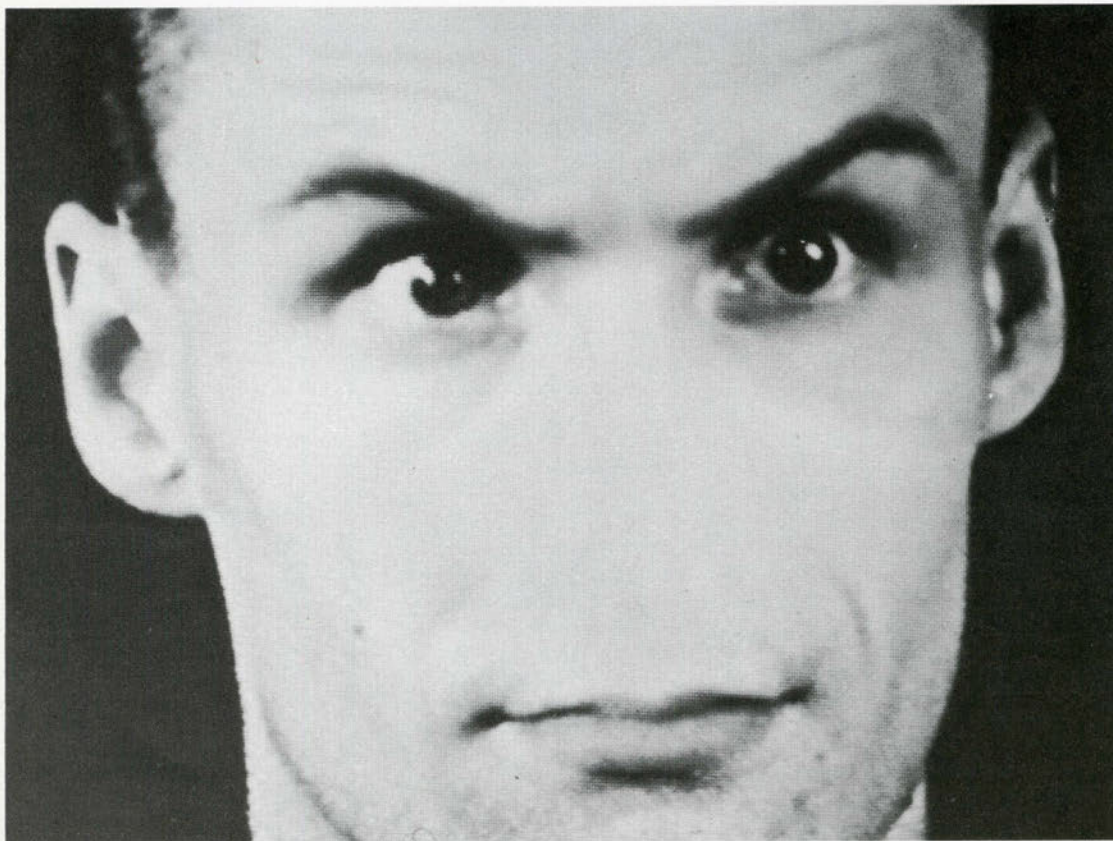


Photo-montage of Edward Allington's project at St Martin-in-the-Fields



Photograph from Birmingham Archive in Hannah Collins's installation at the Ikon Gallery



From a video by Judith
Goddard whose video-
circle will be on
Dartmoor

Miranda Housden's
project for the blind is
in Bristol



SCULPTURE DOWN YOUR WAY

CONTINUED



public and private patronage for a public undertaking. It is interesting that whereas in the Eighteenth or Nineteenth centuries the outcome of such a pattern would have been the commissioning of one artist to execute a single expensive and permanent monumental work, with emphasis on the contentual and programmatic part of the brief and with few requirements of the site beyond that it should be prominent and dignified, here there is no subject or programme commissioned, but the site is proffered to the artist with the assumption that its ambience or identity will somehow inspire both the form and the content of the work. There is an assumption in the brief that locale and geography bear a cultural inscription within them that it is the artist's gift and duty to intuit and divine into form. It is comparable to the attitude of what might be called 'vulgar contextualism' in current architecture, wherein the architectural task is held to consist of the deduction of a design 'in keeping' with the surrounding ambience. At its most absurd this can lead architecture into a *Zelig* syndrome, like the Woody Allen character whose personality changes to match that of whomever he was talking with.

But why this emphasis on the comparison with monumental representation? The tradition of modern sculpture, it will be said, is in the main anti-monumental, abstract, placeless, and without historical reference. Indeed, as Rosalind Krauss has pointed out in her article 'Sculpture In The Expanded Field', the conventions of traditional monumental sculpture began to fail at the turn of the century and were replaced by the condition of modern sculptural form: 'the logic of the monument entered the space of what could be called its negative condition — a kind of sitelessness or homelessness, an absolute loss of space . . . modernist sculptural production operates in relation to this loss of site, producing the monument as abstraction, as pure marker, or base, functionally placeless and largely self-referential'. Krauss goes on to show how this 'nomadic' condition of a sculpture defined purely by negation paradoxically opened up a manifold or 'expanded field' of ontologies whereby, if sculpture was 'not landscape-not architecture', then 'architecture-not architecture' generated 'axiomatic structures', 'landscape-not landscape' gave rise to 'marked sites', and 'landscape-architecture' 'site construction': an expanded field in which artists ranged

freely across the new categories. What none of these categories could be of course, was 'monument'. Indeed, the whole matrix of possibilities assumes the general metacategory of 'non-monument'. Krauss curiously overlooks this continuing antirepresentationalism in accepting too easily that the new situation bears 'logical conditions which can no longer be described as modernist . . . one must have recourse to another term . . . postmodernism' . . . This ignores the formal and phenomenological operations that structured the work of

those artists whom she lists as pioneering the 'expanded field' — Morris, Smithson, Heizer, Serra, de Maria, Irwin, LeWitt, Nauman. For these artists the 'monumental' could not be a category of sculpture; it was a category of history that could only get in the way of clear-sighted attention to the formal structures of material working, processes, and perceptions involved in the phenomenological 'return to the things themselves'. At its most rigorous this phenomenological 'bracketing' of received identities and associations in favour of the systematic



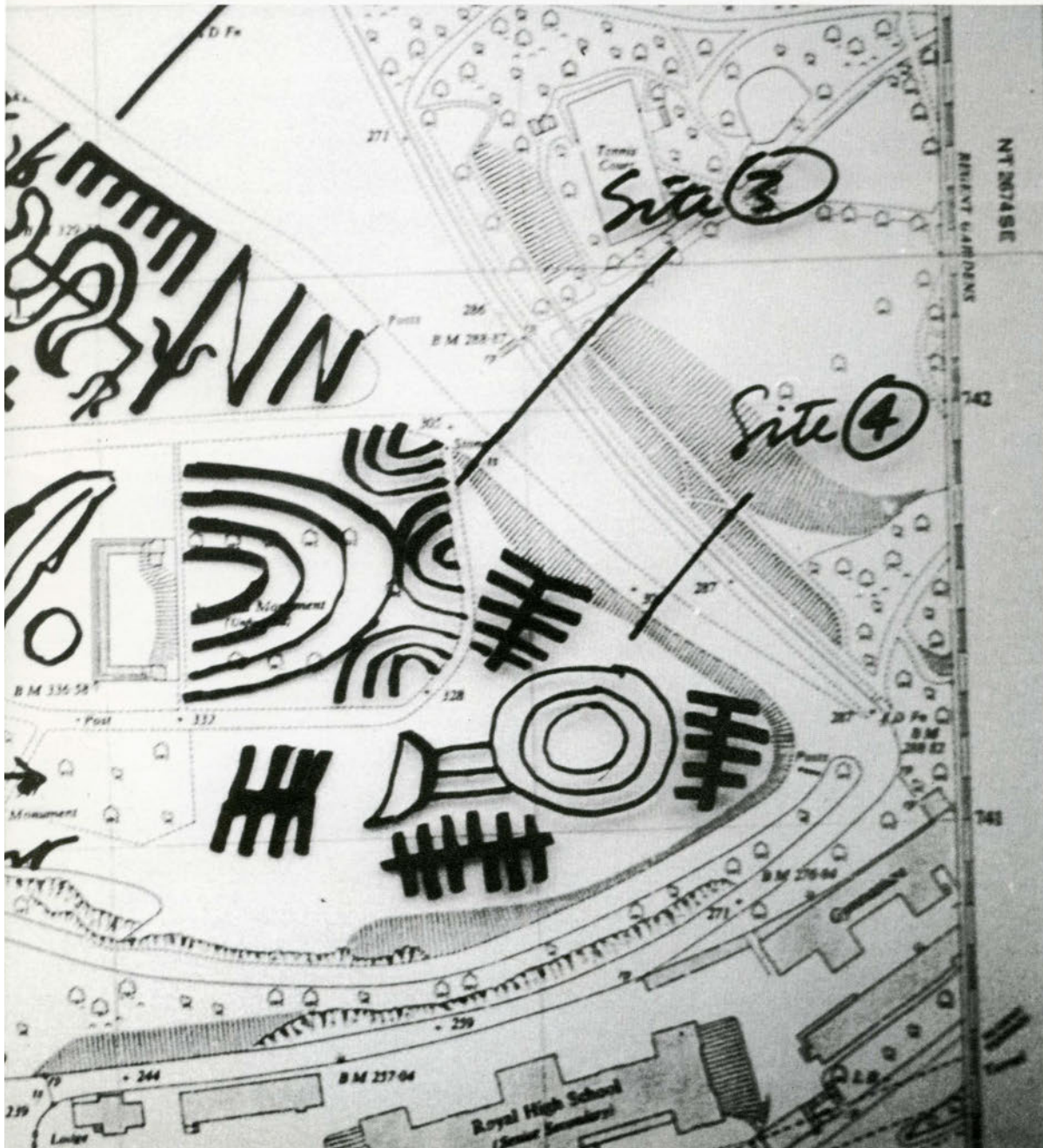
exposure of the purely describable properties of the sculptural condition led to a liberating insouciance concerning the sites and environs of sculpture. In-between space, non-places, interfaces were investigated as the cat's cradles of phenomenological triggers, thresholds, demarcations, limits and mappings. The same insouciance rendered neutral traditional formal places and negated privileged frames of reference. The result was, like Cubism, a highly abstract operation that redefined the axiomatic conditions of the ontology and reception of art. And like Cubism it offered new perspectives, frameworks, and languages for a range of following artists with less rigorous, more

associative and literary concerns to exploit. It is this process of associative appropriation of radical form that is, I think, assumed at the outset by the organisers of the brief in the TSWA3D project.

The point is that radically phenomenological and site-specific sculpture was indifferent to literary, social, and historical associations and pretensions of the site. This indifference could of course be raised theoretically to the level of wilful transgression, conspicuously executed, of received expectations and proprieties, as in the inflated gestures of 'packaging' of famous sites by the well-known minor artist Christo. But Christo's ironic rhetoric of historical

and geographical negation can only amount to a paradoxical reaffirmation of the cultural-traditional. The packaged and muffled monument becomes more conspicuously monumental than ever. It is, at bottom, a 'comment'. At most, a spectacular allegory of alienation, commodification, and consumption that partakes all too closely in the condition that it ostensibly seeks to subvert. The weakness of such work is not that it altogether lacks sculptural qualities but that it deploys only one quality which is always and everywhere the same — the artistic analog to an advertisement.

It is clear from the TSWA3D brief that it has sought to exploit the new



Kate Whiteford's project at Calton Hill, Edinburgh

SCULPTURE DOWN YOUR WAY

CONTINUED



associative, literary, and monumental possibilities of the 'expanded field' opened by rigorous phenomenological formalism, whilst hoping to avoid Christo's spectacular monotony by invoking 'Britain's Rich Heritage' of sites that cleverly combine picturesque and sentimental associations with a knowing eye for the look and style of the rigorous formal and site-specific tradition of the last twenty years. The expertise involved here combines two kinds of connoisseurship. The first is an essentially touristic eye for the kind of telegenic pageant exploited by programmes such as Channel 4's *Treasure Hunt*, where Anneka Rice helicopters around to find clues in all manner of unlikely but eminently touristic nooks of videoesque Britain. This is *Nationwide* art, sculpture *Down Your Way*, 'Installations Sans Frontiers', and so forth. Given this populist dispensation it is hardly surprising that some of the proposals, such as George Wyllie's project to hang a straw locomotive from the Finnieston Crane have something of a *Jim'll Fix It* air about them. The second is informed by the international rubrics of the avantgarde, originating in the minimalist movement, diffused by conceptual art, and propagated by the *bien-pensant* public art movement.

An example of how these two perspectives are made to coincide can be seen in the site at Newcastle. The original description in the prospectus offered to artists reads like a Don Judd account of a minimal work: 'the tower is primarily hollow. Floor area is 17 metres deep and 25 metres wide. The ceiling is 23 metres above floor level. The inner walls of the space are linked by horizontal and crisscrossing girders, forming a matrix of five verticals across (average distance between each 5.5 metres), two verticals deep and four horizontal high. . . . A metal mesh catwalk 4 metres down from the ceiling . . . provides a complete perimeter view down into the space below . . . It indeed already sounds like a self-sufficient literalist site-specific structure. As with other, more representational sites chosen here, one wonders whether such an already highly structured space needs anymore sculptural intervention or overlay. This is not to say, of course, that these places could not make very dramatic and picturesque arenas for *theatre* . . . but then theatre is not sculpture. But of course, the reality, the representational and associational reality, of the Newcastle site does not end with an adequate description of its literal shape nor even with an exhaustive investigation of its

phenomenological conditions. Any number of old warehouses or factories could have been found with equivalent properties; whereas *this* one is in the Tyne Bridge, 'proud symbol of the North East's industrial heritage' etc. And this essentially literary, pathetic identification cannot but intrude upon the purely protosculptural or formal potential and phenomena of the space itself; with the result that its condition is imminently dramatised and theatricalised. The outcome is similar to that during the war, when English neoromantics such as Sutherland and Piper painted bombsites.

What had been the specific phenomema of precise and random processes — explosion and resistance, scatter and adhesion, collapse and support, upheaval and gravity — were rendered into set-piece stage ruins in poignant limelight and picturesque vantage. And so it is that the sensational, the associational, and the theatrical turns out to be emphasised in the TSWA prospectus:— ' . . . the grimy interior of the South Tower of the Tyne Bridge will become the site of a spectacular evolving soundwork. During the six week period of the event, Richard Wilson of the Bow Gamelan Ensemble will arrange for 600 silvered and shined auto parts to crash to the floor — a shimmering shower creating an industrial symphony'.

Other announcements bear a similar theatrical ring. Holly Warburton's proposal for the Liverpool Oratory sounds like a rock-promoter's idea of a Gesamtkunstwerk: 'In the stately neoclassical interior of this Nineteenth Century hymn to "the noblest invention of the building art", Warburton's multi-dimensional tape-slide installation will bring the late Twentieth Century bursting in. Keats and Baudelaire, Wagner and Prince collide in a visual and aural experience that aspires to the ecstatic (as befits the Oratory's location next to the Anglican Cathedral) . . .' Now for all I know this may turn out to be indeed 'ecstatic', (though I doubt it, and I doubt even more whether the Bishop of Liverpool would find such meaning in such a purely sensational and aesthetic orgy), but at present it sounds like a farrago of culturally illiterate borrowings, fancy dressings, and exploitations.

The proposals for Dartmoor are gentler, but fall rather into the West-Country 'Glastonbury Syndrome', or Sci-Fi feyness; artworks as UCOs (Unidentified Cultural Objects), National Park Follies, Post-Industrial Leylines, Cowper-Powys tourist packs. All under a generally syncretic mythology-for-the-masses rubric:

'Judith Goddard, despite there being "no plugs on Dartmoor", creates a megalithic circle of video monitors, each with images of Twentieth Century power. Ron Haselden's spiralling tower enables the viewer to wind up and through the trees of the forest, eventually breaking out to the view that normally, "only the birds can see". Sharon Kivland illuminates ancient forest pathways with flickering shrines, evoking an atmosphere of faery and echoes of memories for local people'. Surely 'local folk' would have sounded the right sentimental note here. Perhaps the Biff cartoon in the *Guardian* is right, and there is a Tolkien revival this year.

In 1968 Michael Fried, the arch-modernist critic, wrote an article entitled *Art And Objecthood* damning the new 'literalist' sculpture as 'theatrical', and declaring that the undertaking unique to art can only be to work continually to exclude the theatrical. With reference to the work at that time of Judd, Smith, Morris, Serra and others against which he wrote, it was difficult to follow Fried's criticism or agree with his analysis. But with the appearance of a succeeding generation of altogether less rigorous exponents of the 'expanded field', one more associationist and literary in its sensibility, more sentimental and prone to eccentric local humours, then one begins to sense some substance in Fried's critique. For what we have in most of the TSWA3D project is a retreat from what I would say is the existentially and phenomenologically necessary rigorous condition of modern sculpture — its only possible honest and authentic ground — to an assimilation to a picturesque selecticism and populism that is in the end merely folksy and festive.

The romantic period saw the appearance of what Wordsworth called the 'pathetic fallacy' — the vain attribution to natural phenomena such as landscape and weather of wilful humours and passions that they did not in fact possess. Much of the work and outlook of the TSWA3D project seems to project a similar pathetic fallacy onto the social landscape and cultural climate of contemporary Britain. This hopeful and herbivorous illusion consists in the vain attribution to a supposed national and imagined local community (with TV and tourism as organic medium and propagating ritual) of a cultural cohesion, purpose, and meaning which it does not in fact possess, which died long ago, and is quite beyond resurrection as anything other than a romantic vapour of nostalgic pathos. ●

In May and June a major season of performance art will be taking place in three cities in the North of England. *New Work Newcastle '87 On Tour* has been organised by Projects UK in collaboration with The Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle,

Cartwright Hall in Bradford and The Cornerhouse in Manchester. TRACEY WARR previews the season and talks to the artists and organisers involved in the event.

LOOK NORTH

WITH NEW performances by thirteen artists, an exhibition commissioning work from a further seven artists, an adventurous education programme and an overall budget of around £50,000 — all spread over a two-month period and taking place simultaneously in three cities — *New Work Newcastle '87 On Tour* will be the year's biggest, and perhaps its most important, performance art show.

The Newcastle-based promoter, Projects UK, mounted their first season of new performance work last year. This previous version, *New Work Newcastle '86*, stayed put in Newcastle and was organised in collaboration with The Laing Art Gallery. Most of the performances took place in the gallery alongside an informative but visually disappointing exhibition and an education programme distinguished by the schools work of Stephen Taylor-Woodrow and Tara Babel. The '86 season included some important new work: one of Alistair MacLennan's best performances to date *Lie to Lay*, a new sound-work by Stuart Brisley, Nigel Rolfe's *The Rope* and some very good performances by Silvia Ziranek, Simon Herbert, Mona Hatoum and John Carson. *New Work Newcastle '86* also premiered Stephen Taylor-Woodrow's *The Living Paintings* which went on to be performance art's equivalent of a box-office smash, drawing a total audience of over 50,000 people at eleven venues around Britain and being featured on a variety of television programmes for thirteen consecutive weeks.

This year Projects UK have expanded the event by touring it to Manchester and Bradford. Performances, exhibition, talks and workshops will run in Newcastle from 1st May to 5th June, in Bradford from 16th May to 14th June and in Manchester from 6th June to 19th July. The programme features five invited artists and eight new performances commissioned by Projects UK with funds from the Arts Council's Promoters Scheme. The invited artists

this year are all women: Anne Bean, Karen Finley, Rose Finn-Kelcey, Annie Griffin and Anne Seagrave. The eight commissioned artists are an intriguing selection: Andre Stitt, Vivien Lisle — whose work is well-known but who hasn't produced much in this country

Gallery is anything to go by, *Confrontations* should be unmissable, especially since it includes two artists who have produced some of the best work in performance and installation in the last decade: Trengove and de Groot, neither of whom have shown

for a while, a number of less established younger artists including Julie Stephenson, Stephen Jones, Babel and Janus Szczerek and then Jez Welsh and Audio Arts (Michael Archer and Bill Furlong), who are better known for their work with video and sound rather than for live performance.

Accompanying the performances is an exhibition entitled *Confrontations* which has been curated by Rob La Frenais and includes commissioned work by Jeremy Welsh, Rose Garrard, Dennis de Groot, Mona Hatoum, Marty St James and Anne Wilson, Andre Stitt and Kerry Trengove. If La Frenais's recent performance/installation, *At the Edge* at the Air

any work in this country for some time. The exhibition, says La Frenais, is an exploration of the confrontational element in contemporary art: the provocative intention in some artworks, the media and public reactions of shock and outrage which periodically occur, and confrontation in the sense of crossing and blurring boundaries.

Amongst the talks, workshops and other educational activities planned to accompany the season in all three cities are lectures by Chrissie Iles and Gray Watson on the critical and historical context for performance, and workshops to be run by Rob La Frenais on writing about performance art.

Stephen Jones, *Crush*





LOOK NORTH



Andre Stitt, *Night Thoughts*

Sixth formers will be encouraged to write critical features and news stories about the work in the season and there are plans to produce a publication with students' photo-journalism as well as the articles by the workshop participants.

This presentation of a major season of new experimental work in Newcastle, Bradford and Manchester is symptomatic of a discernible increase in performance art initiatives in the North. In the last eighteen months or so new spaces and promoters have sprung up in Halifax, Sheffield, Loughborough, Glasgow, Liverpool, Wolverhampton, Stoke-on-Trent and Huddersfield, whilst London and the South can only boast a handful of new promoters and a renewed interest in performance on the part of established spaces such as the ICA, Riverside and The Place. So is the North a more receptive and stimulating environment for performance work?

Certainly Jon Bewley at Projects UK would say that there are different issues involved in promoting contemporary art to a Northern audience. Perhaps there is some advantage in being away from the Southern base of the 'art establishment' which is still unwilling to treat performance work seriously. Instead, after eight years' experience of presenting performance, first as the

Basement Group and now as Projects UK, Bewley and his colleagues have been able to work on building up a critical context for the work on a local level. It is still well-nigh impossible to persuade journalists from the national press to travel up as far as Newcastle, but last years' season, for instance, was the subject of a feature on the local Tyne Tees TV programme *The Works* and that particular programme gained the highest ratings of the whole series. Many Northern promoters of performance can point to respectably large audiences for the work and indeed most of the performances in *New Work Newcastle '86* were seen by capacity audiences. (There still is, however, a tendency for this audience to be made up in a large part by art students.)

Simon Herbert, also at Projects UK, sees much performance work as being about political and social issues, which he feels can be more pertinent to a Northern audience and the North can be more appropriate as a creative environment for this kind of work. A number of the artists in the '87 season are producing work about or inspired by an environment. Julie Stephenson's work deals with violence arising from experiences in her native Ireland. Janusz Szczerek's Newcastle performance is entitled *Take Coal and*

moves from a manual worker smashing a huge boulder of coal to a dinner-jacketed diner grinding and eating the coal. 'I feel oppressed to constantly have to surrender myself to the economic criterion of value. After the miners I put the coal once more into the digestive system of society.' And with recordings of speech and sounds made on the streets of the three cities Audio Arts will 'explore the nature of attitudes, concerns and preoccupations of the particular area as well as making a consideration of the effects of the social, physical and geographical environment on those who live within it.'

But there are several layers of ambiguity in any contention that the North is somehow more sympathetic to experimental, issue-based work. Stephen Jones says his work, *Crush*, is based on Northern working men's clubs and is an attempt to turn the macho image on its head. Although acknowledging that he may be dealing with a Northern tradition of greater intolerance and chauvinism, he also feels that presenting work in the North will give him an audience more prepared to think about issues and ideas rather than to concentrate on the 'consumer' appeal of art — its style or fashionability.

However, the season looks likely to be dominated by a series of strong performances by women artists all exploring sexual violence and exploitation and this work will be the real testing-ground for any notions about Northern audiences. Finley, Griffin and Seagrave's work has in common the use of historical and contemporary stereotypes of female performers: strippers, burlesque and music-hall performers, comediennes. In her new performance, *The Vinaigrettes*, Anne Seagrave will recreate the performance styles of three nineteenth-century performers: Sara the Kicker, The Demon bride and Ermina Pertoldi. 'They performed before the notorious audiences at the Alhambra and my film graphically illustrates their suspicions that the audience was, in fact, a pack of howling dogs.' Griffin's new piece, *Almost Persuaded*, began with a song by Country and Western singer Tammy Wynette: 'I use various presentational forms taken from popular entertainment, storytelling, music concerts, comedy. . . . This is a piece about language and comprehension. I do not understand sexual violence.' Using the language of Country and Western ballads she explores small-town provincial culture and social behaviour. Vivian Lisle's performance, *Venerable Fables*, will also be on the theme of sexual violence, and uses the myths of Jeanne D'Arc and Gilles de Rais.

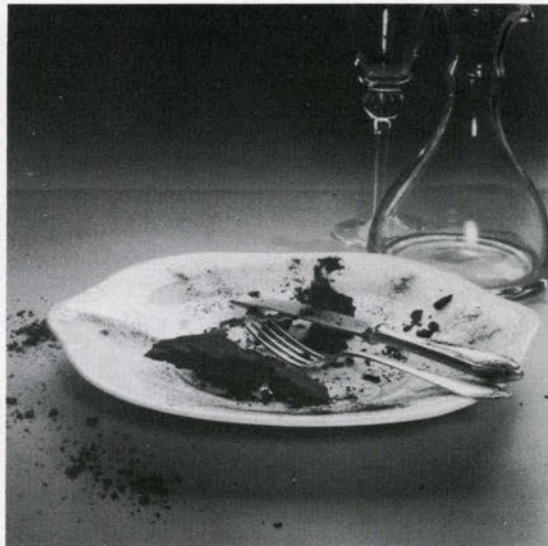
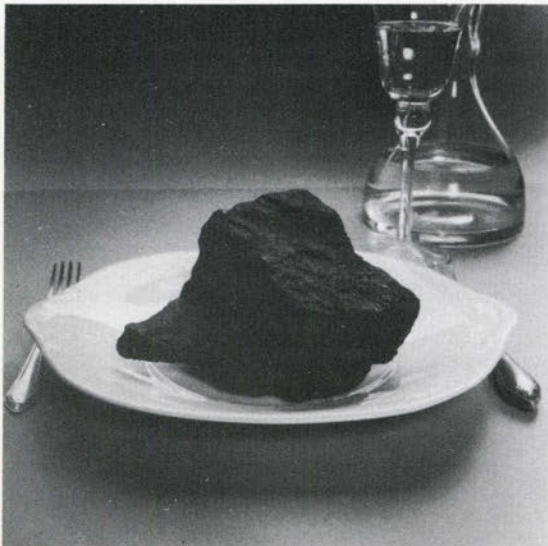
Shortly after the completion of *New Work Newcastle '86* both Projects UK and the Laing Art Gallery readily admitted that the season had been riddled with problems and controversy. There were the obvious difficulties of presenting the work in a municipal institution with a slow, unwieldy bureaucratic process used only to dealing with art objects and long-term planning and not with live performers and moment to moment decisions. But in addition to this there were incidents like The Laing's

trepidation about presenting work with this potential to outrage the sensitive media. Media sensationalism over contemporary art easily leads to public criticism of institutions' local authority funders and therefore to hostility from the funders themselves. Indeed two of the artists in *New Work Newcastle '87 On Tour* provide illustrations of two sides to the coin in the pressure on institutions to compromise what they present in order to keep their funders happy. The ICA's recent programming of Karen Finley led to conflict with

usual sensationalism in the local press but the festival was successfully defended on artistic grounds in the Council's Arts committee.

John Millard, Director of the Laing Gallery, argues that regional and specifically Northern institutions are starting to see experimental work as their province, as a way of creating a cultural identity independent of London. 'We can't compete with London over big, historical exhibitions. We don't have the resources to mount The Pre-Raphaelite

PHOTOS / JANUSZ SZCZEREK



Janns Szczerek, *Take Coal*

sprinkler system and fire alarm being set off during the performance by The Bow Gamelan Ensemble which led to problems with licensing of the performance space for subsequent performers. With hindsight the Laing staff admit that they probably could have presented Simon Herbert's work, *To Poker, To Poker* about sexuality and gender, in the gallery rather than putting it less compromisingly in a warehouse. And they acknowledge that the prevention of Mona Hatoum's topless appearance in her performance was probably unnecessary. The body-stocking she was obliged to wear in fact seemed erotic when her intention of performing caked from head to waist in mud would not have been.

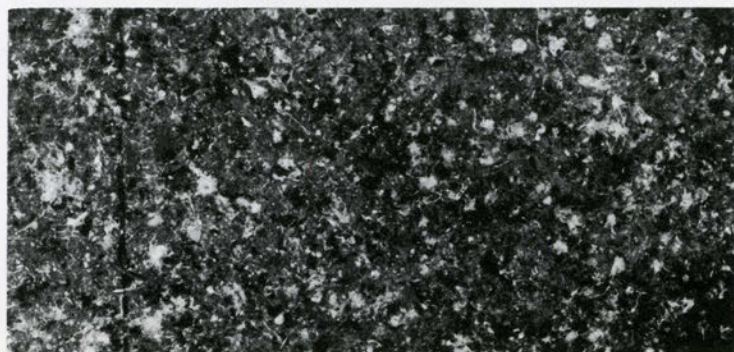
So why, given all that, is The Laing keen to host the performance season again this year — a season that is more ambitious in scope and potentially more controversial in content, in terms of the 'shock' element in the work of artists such as Finley, Lisle and Stitt? And why are two other regional institutions, The Cornerhouse and Cartwright Hall also putting substantial amounts of their programme budgets — at a guess around £10,000 from each of the three institutions — into this particular type of artwork? The three gallery organisers do admit to feeling some

their funders, Westminster City Council and with the Westminster Police Vice Squad. On the other hand, Andre Stitt's performance in Pitt Street Studio's *Streets Alive* festival in Sheffield last year was treated with the

exhibition. But we can compete on new ground — like performance art.?

● Full details of *New Work Newcastle '87 On Tour* are printed on the back cover of this issue.

PHOTOS / AUDIO ARTS



Audio Arts, *The Stigma People Have About It* (Starlings in a churchyard — above and below — for a music-score)

WASH YOUR BRAINS

COLIN FALLOWS is an artist, designer and lecturer in Liverpool. In 1985 he released the record *Dada For Now*. Here he previews his forthcoming performance art album:

'The highest [music] is that which in its conscious content . . . has been visibly shattered by the explosions of last week, which is forever trying to collect its limbs after yesterday's crash. The best and most extraordinary artists will be those who every hour snatch the tatters of their bodies out of the frenzied cataract of life, who, with bleeding hands and hearts, hold fast to the intelligence of their time.' (Richard Huelsenbeck, 1918).

In 1985, a collaboration began between Pete Fulwell (enthusiast, perpetually changing force in the Liverpool music scene, and perceptive fellow) and myself, that resulted in the release of *Dada For Now* (Ark, Dove 4) — a collection of Dada and Futurist soundworks, in the summer of that year. The album (and pack of cards which paired together contemporary titles with their historical references) exposed primary source material to people used to receiving it filtered through the seemingly endless array of secondary sources that Dada and Futurism have influenced. Following *Dada For Now*, this year we are releasing a new compilation entitled *Wash Your Brains*.

Wash Your Brains is a low budget-high concept project, bringing together an international assembly of neo-Dada artist/performers who inhabit the hinterland between art and popular entertainment. Each artist has been briefed to produce a dance track. The resulting compilation will be presented

as a Dada/Futurist vinyl variety club, in the tradition of Hugo Ball's *Cabaret Voltaire* and Ostrovsky's *Diary of a Scoundrel*. Sir Les Patterson, the Australian Cultural Attaché, will take on the role of club host on the album.

Amongst the artists featured, The Blue Blouse (England) have produced a dance track constructed entirely from sampled sections of Kurt Schwitters' poems. 'The name, The Blue Blouse, derives from a Russian futurist organisation founded in October 1923. Like them, we aim to present avant-garde as well as popular techniques to entertain and stimulate. At its height the original Blue Blouse involved more than 100,000 people, with numerous clubs throughout the Soviet Union.' Guest artists, and providing the real chance element on their recording, are two monkeys: Chico and Sonny, one of whom previously appeared in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

Using instruments made from scrap-metal, electric motors and glass — The Bow Gamelan Ensemble (England) creates a fusion of organised sound, light, sculpture and movement. The music ranges from the deep, mournful notes emanating from metal tubing through a gamut of percussive timbres and dynamics to quiet, brittle sounds like splintering glass.

La Fura Dels Baus (Spain): 'We don't endeavour to enliven the audience, but rather to shatter their passivity, using unexpected action, clash situations, ocular stimulation, live sound, visual art effects and pyrotechnics to do so . . . We don't want to be terrible, still less ill-educated, we are not punks. Our aggressions are not effective, they rather are effectivists; we do not guarantee the spectator's integrity of mind, but we do respond to the success of our visual harrassment, of our sonorous irruptions and our shocking actors.' (*Accions*).

The music/dance/performance art/theatre group, La La La (Canada) first appeared in a Montreal rock club in April 1985. Since then their show *Human Sex* (a gymnastic observation on sexual relationships) has won critical acclaim and standing ovations worldwide. Their mixture of art/punk/rock music with touches of parody and abstract dialogue, prompted one Seattle newspaper to comment: 'If one is looking for a revolution in the '80s then La La La provides a glimmer of it'.

The Living Paintings featuring The Budding Bard (England): 'In order to gain a complete understanding of the medium of painting one must first become a painting. Immensely popular, the world's leading exponents of animated suspension — The Living Paintings — slaves to an absurd condition. The creative act challenging the act of creation, wall to wall meaningful entertainment. Sharing their experiences, their joys, their heartaches, from his very own netherworld, and through his melodious libretto, The Budding Bard blurts out like some bizarre Golgotha, a visionary perched over the detritus of a fallen world, inextricably intertwined with both The Living Paintings and the artist behind them all, desperate for method of expression, of communication.'

A leader in the Russian music underground, Sergei Kuriokhin formed his group, *Popular Mechanics* in 1981. *Popular Mechanics* can number from five to forty members with a nucleus, including Sergei Kuriokhin, Afrika — leader of the 'Industrial Section' and Boris Grebenshchikov — electric guitar. *Popular Mechanics* is now experimenting with physics, chemistry and zoology. 'I'm also experimenting with lightning. I want to have a saxophonist playing the highest note he can reach, then I'll use some equipment to produce lightning. I'm interested not merely in using musical means, but visual ones as well. So, while the lightning travels across the stage and into the auditorium, I'd like Afrika to bring some pigs onto the stage and milk them. The music will be going on all the while and the quality will be first rate — I vouch for that.' (Sergei Kuriokhin).

These and other artists to be featured on the album share with their various progenitors, an antagonism towards the vacuous spectacle and overproduced sterile orchestrations which dominate the mass media, and they are employing new forms with which to challenge these. The experiments of these artists will claim a wider audience. We hope to accelerate that process with our forthcoming album. ●

La La La and La Fura Dels Baus (below)



IS THIS THE year when every schoolchild will decide to be a performance artist when they grow up? There are three performance art education projects taking place in Grizedale Forest, Newcastle and Hull over the summer which will involve at least 1,000 schoolchildren between them, and the Arts Council has just announced a new scheme for short term placements for performance artists in art colleges.

Alistair MacLennan's year-long intermittent residency in Grizedale Forest starts this month. The residency has been organised by Projects UK (yes, them again) and has involved money from and collaboration with the Arts Council, Northern Arts and the Forestry Commission. The concept

Grizedale. The work could take place outdoors, but ideally it will be realised in an empty building or barn (such as the large empty barn in Satterthwaite). This environment will be filled with various structures, resulting from the collecting, stacking, storing, placing and 'displacing' of materials, and will contrast various materials, and textures against one another. One of the chief notions of this work will be 'outside' on the 'inside' — a theme I will expand on in my two one-day performances. The performance will not be theatrical, but will consist of me moving materials and creating forms over an extended period of time — hopefully, a week. The audience can

Education work will be geared around the work that I will be producing in the forest, and on-site visits and extensive involvement with local children will be an important factor.'

MacLennan will be giving a series of formal and informal illustrated talks and lectures in Grizedale Forest and in schools, colleges and universities. He will be talking about the importance of ecology, how his own performance/installation fits in with Grizedale and how a wide range of artists and sculptors have used wood in very different ways:

'Sculptors have used wood to carve people or animals out of it, sculptors such as David Nash, for instance, have made sculptures

EXTRACURRICULAR

TRACEY WARR describes some new developments afoot for performance art in education:

underlying MacLennan's project is the *Tree of Life*:

'Associations will be made with human life and the life of the tree. This focus will be a positive one, and will stress the significance of our environment and, therefore, the necessity for ecological and conservational considerations. By emphasising these actions through that most accessible of symbols, the human form, I hope to point to not only the responsibilities that we have towards our environment, but also the absolute necessity of such a relationship and how it can benefit the fabric of our lives.'

MacLennan will be making an installation/performance work in the Forest over a week-long period and there will be two one-day performances:

'I propose to work with found materials — primarily dead wood — and create my own controlled environments in a space in

therefore visit and watch as they see fit, and construct their own input and reactions to the work. My intention is to create a situation similar to that of a visit to an artist's studio — where the observer can, in a relaxed manner, become actively involved in the process of selection and juxtaposition. All these concepts will be reinforced with a use of pre-recorded sounds being played in the space — these sounds being primarily sounds of the forest (wind, rain, running water) mixed with human sounds (inhaling, exhaling, etc).

The two one-day performances will not be theatrical, but will involve myself using my own form as 'sculpture in motion'. The emphasis is on the process of making, rather than on an object which is fixed and static. I hope to reflect the changing moods of the forest itself, both in terms of used materials and also with the changing light/sounds of the forest. This work won't cause an obstruction on the forest paths — rather, as a moving presence on the Silurian Walk I would hope to engage with the attentions of others involved in the act of walking.

which deal with the organic nature of the material itself in natural contexts and sculpture has been made from an ecological standpoint. In the latter case the sculpture may simply be the planting of trees themselves. This is what Joseph Beuys (who founded the Green Party in Germany) did, explaining that such 'art-works' were political, in that they were of profound social benefit.'

Meanwhile Stephen Taylor-Woodrow will be organising another education project involving 3-400 schoolchildren in Newcastle in the last two weeks of June. The children and students will collaborate with Taylor-Woodrow to design and build a large sculptural installation planned around a 70 foot circle in a warehouse venue. The installation, says Taylor-Woodrow, will be a 'living collage' of objects, scenery and collective painting — all in black and white only and with theatrical lighting. In the first week of the project, from 15th June, the artist will take eight half-day workshops with small groups of 20-30 where they will plan the project and establish a group working method. In the second week, the site will be set up and the installation built, materials, lights and

soundtrack prepared. During this building period the site will be an 'open studio' and spectators can come in and watch the work in progress. On the final day, 26th June, there will be a public performance of collective painting and living collage with all those involved taking part and using up gallons of black and white paint, reams of paper and yards of timber.

Taylor-Woodrow's project in Newcastle has been organised by the Laing Art Gallery, who have recently opened one of the country's first gallery education spaces, complete with studios, construction and exhibition space, kitchen and facilities for the disabled. Taylor-Woodrow is also giving a lunchtime talk on 24th June, 12.30 pm at the Laing Art Gallery

Inside Out series and recent Charlie Hooker residency, video/performance art workshops for teachers organised by the Midland Group in Nottingham and the Zap Club's *Practise and Perform* education programme in Brighton at the beginning of this year. The Performance Art Education Scheme was originally intended to run for three years but with cuts threatening it looked likely to be short and sweet and end after just one year. However, the Council's Performance Art Advisory Group have come up with such a convincing new education scheme for 1987 that they have been able to retain at least part of their 1986 budget.

The series of one-off projects around the country, including those outlined above, have produced a lot of

EXTRACURRICULAR

entitled *Slaves to an Absurd Condition* which he says will be a discussion about the validity of time-based art as against painting and sculpture.

The third education project takes place from Hull Docks' Victoria Pier on 2nd August when Paul Burwell will be closing the Hull Regatta with a new performance. Burwell is working on the project in May with students from the art school who will also be assisting with the performance. It will, says Burwell, feature floating visuals, new percussion work, lots of fire and pyrotechnic display. It will be 'a full-stop, a lament, a valediction for a dead port'. It sounds like a logical development for Burwell after his wonderful water-borne drumming in Bow Gamelan's *In C and Air* and after Bow Gamelan's work for *Alter Image II* filmed on sunken barges in the Thames.

All three of these education projects have been partly funded by the Arts Council's Performance Art Education Scheme. The Scheme was established last year with a tiny £10,000 budget. Other projects funded through the Scheme have included the series of Performance Art Talks at the Air Gallery in 1986, publication and video elements in Southampton Art Gallery's

“... shrinking funds and facilities in art schools and a tendency... to return to narrow definitions of art practice”

interesting work and opened up the practice of performance art to a number of people with no previous experience of the art form. In the face of shrinking funds and facilities within arts schools and a tendency, therefore, to return to narrow definitions of art practice, the Arts Council's Advisory Group decided that its priority for the future was 'to develop partnerships with higher educational institutions and to raise the profile of the art form within specialist art courses'. So they are offering three one-month placements during the autumn term to three artists in three institutions. The artists will be expected to present their own live work and to offer workshops, skill sharing and collaborative projects to students. They will also select performances by the host college's students for inclusion in a student showcase as part of the *National Review of Live Art* at Riverside Studios this October. Host institutions have been nominated by the Regional Arts Associations and artists are being asked to apply for consideration at the moment. The selection will be announced shortly. ●

THE MEDIA SHOW REBORN

STEVE HAWLEY introduced the *Sheffield Media Show* as a direct challenge to current education policies. In the face of cuts and criticism for Communication Arts, the show was an impressive week-long selection of film, video, installation and performance that turned the Psalter Lane site of Sheffield City Polytechnic into a continuously active arena for work to be shown, seen and discussed.

Performance (as with the other areas in the show) demonstrated a well planned balance between student work (from colleges around the country) and professional, more established work.

The best piece from the Sheffield students was *A star is borne*, a solo work by Tony White. White made silly jokes about luck and chance and stars, propelling an absurd plaster star round the room on tiptoes, lit by a theatrical follow spot. *A star is borne* was aware of its inconsequentiality and exploited this well, unlike other, more serious pieces. It was endearing and slightly sad although delivery within his anecdotal style could have been improved. Like a lot of the other work in the show, it needed to be longer, braver, to stick its neck out a bit more. I got tired, over the week, of being ushered into a room to see one simple idea being executed safely for about ten minutes.

Stuart Lucas and Jayne Parker, from Cardiff, were especially guilty of this. The former showed a video in which someone played a tape-recording of violin music whilst recording it into another tape recorder being shaken frantically above the sound source. When played back this recording was distorted and the process of playing and recording was repeated until the music fragment was unrecognisable.

Jayne Parker stood on a pedestal dressed as the *Statue of Liberty* staring into a video camera which relayed her gaze to a monitor right near the audience. A loop tape of harbour sounds was playing. After a while she said 'How long have you dreamed that you were Miss Liberty'.

Both of these pieces seemed like little more than illustrations of a single idea, short, to the point and frightened that a little humanity might slip out somewhere.

By contrast Luke McKeown's *Death of a table, why was I born?* pushed past the twenty-five minute barrier. It was a bleak, rather helpless and initially over-earnest look at desire. However, as it progressed it let in humour and a strange little half-fiction took place. The energy and commitment in the piece made up for its messy structure and its inconsistent conventions. Best of all was the sight of Luke McKeown attaching wooden planks to his arms and legs with rubberbands in order to make himself more attractive and compatible with the table he dumbly loved so much. There followed a tripping and fumbling dance between desperate performer and steadfastly wooden table.

The group work was less satisfying than the solo work. Sheffield students Karen Madsen, Shirley McWilliams and others did a sound piece/performance that created a strong atmosphere of an arid, parched world, marked out by

footsteps scraping through sand, the clatter of sticks on black concrete and the sound of water being poured from Pils bottle to Pils

bottle.

Unfortunately this powerful ambience was replaced at intervals by people trying to clap in time together or repeating letters of the alphabet when it felt as though the real life of the piece was being abandoned in favour of an *idea* about language and communication.

The group workshop presentation by Anthony Howell's students began tightly and simply: full of dramatic surprises, changes of pace, tone and attention. It bore the mark of Howell's clear and invigorating control of structure but decayed in performance to become the sort of aimless slightly self-indulgent piece that improvisation often leads to.

It was disappointing that problems of unrealised potential and lack of clear, communicative structure were as much in evidence in the work of the professional artists in the show, as they were in the student work.

Tony Hill presented his films and performance at the Mappin Art Gallery. He films the world through distorting lenses or mounts his cameras on elaborate self-designed and built contraptions which make the world appear to spin, revolve or bend. His exercises in disorientation and transformation induced delight and applause in the Mappin audience, but I desperately felt the need for some content in the work other than its own tricks and gimmickry; not necessarily narrative or discursive content, but emotional content. The work had, at its heart, the idea that by bending the world optically (or chemically) you might somehow get the secret out of it. Psychedelic ideas. But the world upside down looks pretty much like the world upside down.

Dogs in Honey have been performing *Saccharin Muscle*, their second show, off and on for nearly a year. *Saccharin Muscle* is two people in an ill-lit alternative world. Half-wrapped in cling film and plasters, half-dressed for dinner they shuffle in the shadows and then kiss, long and slow. When I first saw this piece in Halifax it was bleak, morose and monosyllabic in tone but since then it has developed a witty ironic edge making it more honest and brave. The dark world is less closed in, the odd couple tentatively acknowledge their audience as if these mutants might lift themselves out of the dirt to play at performers. They are partly in a private hell of their own making, partly parodying their situation as part of a tacky come weirdo nightclub sex act. This double layering makes *Saccharin Muscle* dense and very watchable although it still lacks clarity in performance and structure.

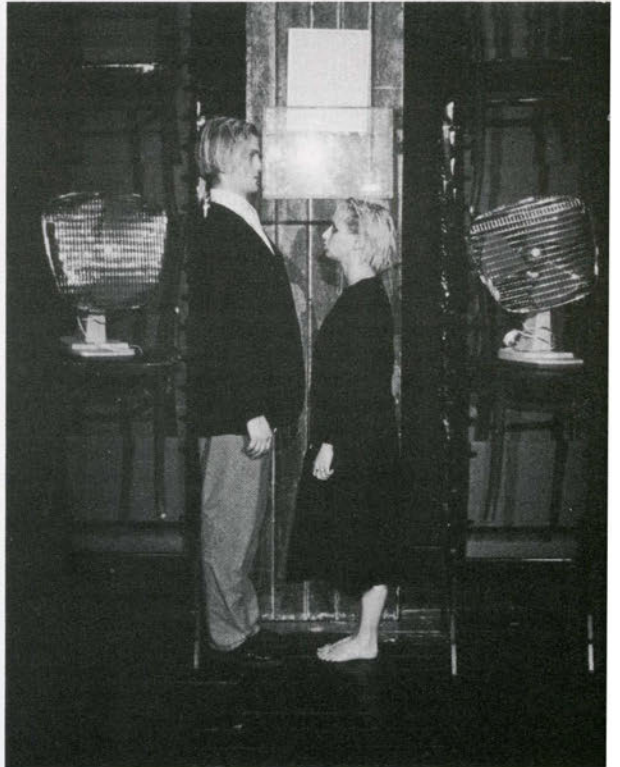
If *2 am Erotic Time*, their next piece, can retain the intimacy, the risks and the compelling shuffling quality of *Saccharin Muscle* as well as achieving a clearer, more communicative structure then I think Dogs in Honey will be essential viewing.

Marty St. James and Anne Wilson's *So Nice to Come Home to*, is an exploration of 101 shoddy British mythologies from Ballroom Dancing to Mills and Boon through Tintagel. It's full of ideas and invention but section follows section with no real sense of overall develop-

ment. They use crude and tacky theatricality to good effect in their performance, undermining their fictions and pulling some nice jokes, but they needed a clearer underlying reality: either a second more basic level of fiction, or the presence of performers as performers. *So Nice to Come Home to*, did however, seem to want to progress towards Marty and Anne being on-stage simply as Marty and Anne, talking to their audience in real space and time. Although I very much admired their gentle-hearted affection for their subject matter, the piece needed some wider emotional context — some distance and closeness, some passion and contempt.

The last performance I saw was Roy Bayfield's solo spot at the Friday night cabaret. Like Tony White's *A star is borne*, Roy Bayfield's piece rambled along, with much talking off microphone, much pulling of relevant and irrelevant objects from a white polythene bag and much gulping of beer. Roy's subject matter is himself, and the slightly odd and occasionally ordinary stuff he cares to talk about, or carry with him. On this occasion he showed us his STINKOR 'plastic play figure' and read the packaging which implored us to 'swivel his mutant hips', he drank toasts to a few of his absent friends, showed off a ladies' gardening glove, read extracts from his letters and from Richard *Skinhead* Allen's forgotten masterpiece, *Glam*. Roy's performance was a little too open for some, but it seemed to have married form and content very well: his lack of performing tricks or well-timed effects suit the simple humanity of his material: it is a frail and generous work that left me feeling optimistic enough to retire to the bar and mull over the rest of the week. ●

Dogs in Honey



TIM ETCHELLS reviews performance art in the *Sheffield Media Show*.

PERFORMANCE

REVIEW

WATERPROOF

Astrakan at the Swiss Cottage Baths, Camden Festival reviewed by STEVE ROGERS

HYPE KILLS. Proof of that was demonstrated by *Waterproof* an aquatic dance work by the French company Astrakan. The hype was not so much in the promotion of the event which seemed limited to the usual poster and preview campaign, (See Performance 46), but in the nature of the work itself. A work for swimming pools by a highly-thought-of experimental dance company is a kind of hype in itself. It

appealed directly to an art audience that craves new sensations, new stimulants, and ever wilder spectacle. The event itself was a great disappointment, not because the work wasn't good but because it didn't live up to its hype. It was at times hard to see the work through the hype. It contained some beautiful and unique images as performers floated motionless, their bodies distorted by the refraction of the water surface, as they carried out 'ordinary' activities such as walking and running on the bottom of the pool, and all lit for effect and accompanied by a film of underwater movements and poses. As an investigation of the choreographic and visual possibilities of working in water it was wonderful. As a coherent work it failed largely through its own fascination with the possibilities. The final, concluding image being a dreadful cliché tacked on to the series of experiments to give it the semblance of a structure.

They should either have presented it as just a series of experiments or worked at it till the novelty wore off before making the performance. ●

IF THE CAP FITS

A performance by Gary Stevens with Caroline Wilkinson reviewed by STEVE ROGERS

THINK OF AN ordinary common noun like, for example, 'table'. Say the word 'table' over a few times listening to the sound of it and pretty soon you will start to wonder just what possible connection there could be between this peculiar bi-syllabic noise and the thing with four legs and a flat top that you sit down at to eat your lunch. Isolating a familiar thing from its usual context in order to make it appear strange was a favourite trick of surrealists and dadaists and is also at the bottom of Gary Stevens's brilliantly comic *If The Cap Fits*. In it an ordinary table and chair become almost alive as they are used as solid representations of their own personalities and the personal relationship between them. Everyday objects become unfixed from their usual functions and symbolic meanings. The result is a delightful meditation on the nature of the physical world and how it effects that most insubstantial of things, personal identity.

One of the most memorable passages is the wonderful and persuasive word-picture painted by Gary of sitting in a theatre audience and suddenly feeling himself inflating until he floats up out of his seat and hovers about the theatre. There was a similarly styled word picture in his earlier work *Invisible Work* in which he acquires the ability to pass through walls but then gets stuck half-way through. These two stories both stand up as comic monologues of real genius and I long to hear them again or better still a whole new, full-length piece. In addition to being great comic writing they are delivered in Stevens's now familiar but riveting

deadpan style in which he seems caught out and taken aback by the words issuing from his own mouth as though he had no control over them.

If The Cap Fits has its faults. It is unevenly paced and some of the jokes derived from the reality and unreality of being a performer in a theatre were a little too familiar. But these minor blemishes aside it confirms without doubt that Gary Stevens is a comic talent of great promise. ●

If The Cap Fits can be seen at St Martins School of Art, London in May and the Whitechapel Gallery, London in June.

CHARLIE HOOKER & FRIENDS

STEVE ROGERS reports from Southampton

CHARLIE HOOKER'S work is always attractive in theory but is often a bit disappointing in practice. His work usually involves the extremely risky and unpredictable process of creating a site-specific performance with the participation of a group of 'local' untrained volunteers. This kind of process can seem at odds with the highly systematized choreography of movement, light and sound that he sets out to create.

It came as something of a relief then that his performance at The Gantry Theatre, commissioned by Southampton Art Gallery was such an assured and accomplished work. More than that however, it was genuinely exciting and enjoyable. Everyone responds to pattern in a simple, physical way and when this tightly structured and visually mesmeric performance arrived at its logical and necessary conclusion there was a very powerful sense of rightness and satisfaction. The pleasure, and at least part of the purpose, of the work is in seeing the untrained group of performers acting together in harmony. On this occasion the harmony was complete and a joyful vindication of the disappointments. ●

Charlie Hooker will be creating a work for Battersea Arts Centre in May.



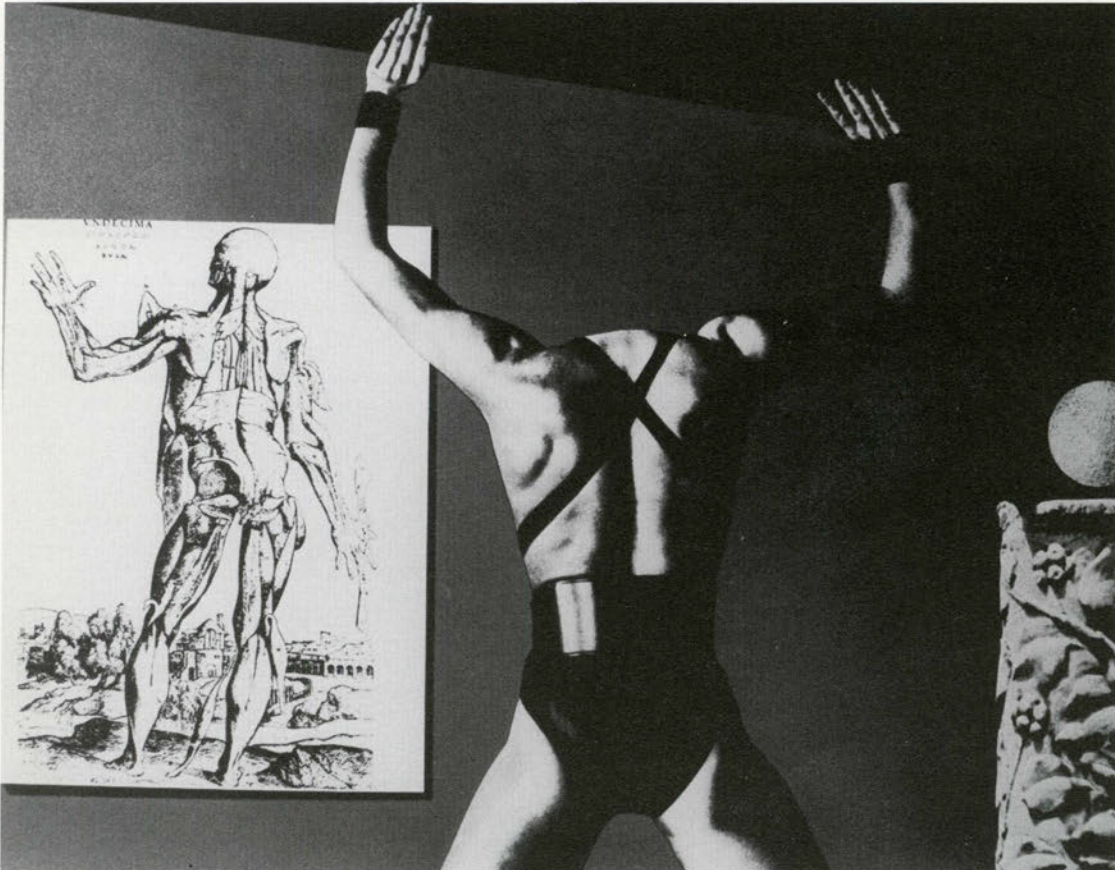
Gary Stevens and Caroline Wilkinson, *If the Cap Fits*

BRYAN BIGGS on Fredd Goodwin's *Modern Dreams/Ancient Nightmares* in Liverpool:

THROAT CULTURE

PERFORMANCE

REVIEW



Fredd Goodwin, *Modern Dreams/Ancient Nightmares* (The Weightlifter)

MODERN DREAMS/ANCIENT NIGHTMARES is a collaboration begun in Cambridge in 1983 between Fredd Goodwin, poet and former singer with US hardcore band *Black Hole*, and composer Daniel Warburton. Billed as 'poetry in performance with music, film and video', the event was presented at the Café Berlin in Liverpool in March and ambitiously incorporated new live elements with the inclusion of several musicians.

Seated on the tiny stage, lit by a single spotlight and flanked by two screens on to which photomontages were projected, Goodwin immediately confronted the audience with an opening piece questioning assumptions about self identity.

Against the regularly repeating structure of Warburton's electronic music and identikit pictures of Goodwin's own face on the screens, he repeatedly intoned the simple phrase 'who are you?', each time changing the emphasis and order of the words, until the question was rendered practically meaningless — 'you are who?'

There followed an intense, generally humourless series of short, separate yet interlinking poems, of contrasting moods and themes: *The Porno Booth*, *The Weightlifter*, a piece built round an imagined postcard written by the Yorkshire Ripper to his mother, another culled from a newspaper item concerning a sinister laser

weapon being developed by the US Army; the sequence culminating in *The Butcher Shop*, which incorporated film footage shot at Smithfield Market.

A further visual dimension was provided throughout by a slide sequence of montages and typed texts of the poems being performed, and Goodwin's own gestures and actions. Warburton's recorded music, wide ranging in its spectrum, from electronic experimentation to solo jazz piano, was complemented by occasional live contributions from a sax player, violinist, percussionist, even an opera singer.

Goodwin's stated mission, to rescue poetry from obsolescence within the literary establishment and restore it to 'its rightful contemporary cultural position', has its precursors in Britain, from innovations in jazz and pop poetry of the Underground in the '60s, to the more recent vitriolic barbs of John Cooper Clarke and a host of rangers and dub poets. But whereas these performers have brought the oral tradition to the fore, often at the expense of the written form, Goodwin's strategy is quite different: the poetic qualities of the text need not be compromised in live presentation, but enhanced through the introduction of music and visuals. Text as word and image (and a lot more besides).

Whilst admitting that 'the text is the most fragile commodity because people are general-

ly more receptive to music and visuals, and so the intellectual content of the poetry is lost', Goodwin seeks to bring poetry, sound and images together in a way that doesn't obscure the text. Laurie Anderson, working in similar territory formally, though from a quite different perspective, has demonstrated this to great effect.

The multi-layering in *Modern Dreams/Ancient Nightmares*, however, with its array of audio visual elements, was in danger of overwhelming, rather than focussing the poetry, and accessories like the three video monitors playing back tape of Goodwin performing, seemed superfluous and distracting.

Elsewhere, this interplay of media did work effectively, particularly in the disturbing *Ripper* piece. In contrast to the onslaught of such pieces, it was the quieter, more reflective and more economical passages, like *History Primer*, which were most successful, as much for providing breathing space for the audience to dwell on the texts, as for the balance achieved between sound, image and spoken word.

It is hoped that the success of this enterprising promotion by Colin Fallows in collaboration with the Café Berlin, will lead to further events and to the venue becoming a regular showcase in the city for innovative and experimental performances. ●

EXPERIMENT OR INSTITUTIONALISATION

GUY BRETT reviews
At the Edge, the Air
 Gallery's recent season of
 installations and
 performances.

.....

AT THE EDGE, a three week programme of performance, film/audio-visuals and installations organised by Rob La Frenais at the Air Gallery (March 25-April 12), was an uneven and confused event, both in terms of theme and quality. But it did, for me, offer two memorable experiences.

One was a performance, *Perseus' Shield* by the Dutch artist Marcelle van Bommel, and the other, *Hidden From Prying Eyes*, an installation by the London-based Palestinian artist Mona Hatoum. For the observer there were fascinating, if unintended, interconnections between the two in terms (which seem so pertinent to 'live art') of the 'presence' or 'absence' of people. As the performer in her piece, for example, she was actually invisible (she only appeared as a pair of illuminated legs dancing, and as a mask of Medusa).

Her work took place in darkness, in which everything had its own light, like the dark of the primordial floor or ocean bed. She created a magical atmosphere of the 'origin of things', not only as it is presented to us by, say, natural history, but also as it is re-examined and re-created in story, myth and by play. But her piece was also an allegory of 'seeing'. At one moment a small glowing orange hedgehog seemed to be casting a blue reflection in a mirror, until it was pulled aside and a blue animal remained. In another astonishing image a facial mask turned out to be sand and flowed away into a heap on the floor. 'The difference between seeing and interpreting what you see or do not see'; her description of a previous work applies to this one too. Seeing is explored borrowing images from two very different creations: *Alice in Wonderland*, with its quirky paradoxes of logic and appearances, and the Perseus myth in which seeing is connected with elemental forces, struggle, life and death. Her piece culminated in the appearance of an intricate electric mask of Medusa which became frightening as a large round mirror was dashed to smithereens on the floor. Van Bommel, whose parents I learned are both scientists, puts great time and care into making the beautiful objects in her performances which are, however, only signs of something which cannot be seen.

To enter Mona Hatoum's room you squeezed

past corrugated iron sheets. You found yourself in a cul-de-sac of some shanty-town, squatter or refugee camp, dimly lit by a single bulb. There were no people or images of people, but their presence was hinted at all the more strongly by street noise, by the flicker of TV sets and mish-mash of Dallas and Dynasty sounds behind the walls, and by a large ghostly slide of ramshackle TV aerials against the sky.

To say that this installation was also about 'seeing' would be to make abstract what was extremely concrete. Yet contradictions of visibility and invisibility, of a different kind from van Bommel's were, I felt, at its heart as an art work. The people were hidden from us, as the homeless and poor are 'contained' in shanty-towns out of sight. Yet behind the screens of corrugated iron, the screens of the TV were flickering... hinting at the whole new series of imprisoning barriers and borderlines which the culture of the American multinational corporations imposes. These feelings were prompted by the actual sculptural quality of the piece — by the way gaps in the fence were stopped up with rubble for example — so that it became a very broad and physical metaphor for exclusion. It is as if in Hatoum's work a certain literalness, compelled by experiences of war from childhood onwards, was arguing with an expansive and life-affirming sensibility.

Introducing one of the events of *At the Edge*,

Mona Hatoum,
 installation at The Air
 Gallery





Marty St James and
Anne Wilson,
installation at The Air
Gallery

PHOTO / STEPHEN WHITE

Rob La Frenais noted with satisfaction the large audience and said: 'This shows that experiment is on the up!' But on the evidence of 90% of the programme I could not agree. At least I could not reconcile it with my understanding of the word experiment. How can it be experiment if we are given things which have essentially been done many times before, and better? La Frenais' voice seemed to float out in the fog of amnesia which surrounds the institutionalisation of performance art in this country.

One of the radical aspects of performance is that it is itself a genre which dramatises the struggle of genres — theatrical, visual, literary, musical — in the process of re-approaching the border line between art and life. In practice only a minority of artists have been this audacious or this complex. Many reformulate or give an ironic twist to an existing genre (which may be very well done, as I thought it was in this event by Annie Griffin, who by some inventive means seemed to turn around a cabaret patter, a plastic entertainment routine, to reveal a woman's real energy and defiance). There has usually been a confusing juxtaposition between ex-

perimental art and existing forms associated with 'live art', such as cabaret. In this country, the typical English bias towards the literary and indifference to things visual has also taken its toll.

No amount of stripping naked will change these relationships (in at least three out of six of these performances a man took his clothes off). 'Shocking the bourgeoisie', as in Andre Stitt's performance, could be seen as no more than a vomit of disgust or impotence at not going beyond the 'bourgeois' artist's alienation from a passive audience (perhaps I say this because I could make more of his regurgitation of baked beans than I could of his similar treatment of Montgomery Clift, the Pope, John Wayne, the Klu Klux Klan and the Anglo-Irish Agreement). Nor will hype conjure the 'intense', the 'outrageous', the 'unrepeatable', out of the mindlessly repeated (one can only ask Steve Rogers of *City Limits* who described Dogs In Honey's performance as 'generating a powerful and convincing vision of a modern, recognisable hell on earth' — Where have you been?).

To move from live performance to installation

is at the least an intriguing change of genre, but I was surprised by how little concerned with these matters two of the groups seemed to be. Bow Gamelan (whose members Anne Bean, Paul Burwell and Richard Wilson I have great respect for) came up with *White Lightning*, in which white light moved beneath the floorboards and thunderflashes were heard and seen behind a metal screen; a pale formalisation of their usual love of 'process'. Marty St James and Anne Wilson's 'real' fountain and pool in a 'represented' inner-city street was an exhausted cliché in the annals of installation, and it really made no difference that it was intended to protest the destruction by speculators of a group of Hackney houses.

This was a small and therefore highly selected event. But its selectivity was impossible to make sense of and could hardly provide a supportive context in a programme ranging from such poles as the self-defeating body ritual of Andreas Techler's *Tangens VII*, and the Black Audio-Visual Collective's tape/slide rumination on the legacy of British colonialism, *Images of Nationality*. ●

PHOTO / STEPHEN WHITE

2 EMBLETON WALK, GATESHEAD

In March Projects UK commissioned Stuart Brisley to make a site-specific sculpture in Gateshead. ALEX FULTON reviews Brisley's *St Cuthbert's Village Cenotaph*:

ST CUTHBERT'S VILLAGE, Gateshead, squats high on a hillside facing North across the Tyne Valley and Newcastle. It is a grey pre-fabricated assembly of boxed living spaces, and the tangible atmosphere of claustrophobia and despair is reflected in the abundant graffiti and vandalism.

A maisonette flat in this complex — 2 Embleton Walk — contains a new site-specific sculpture by Stuart Brisley (made in conjunction with Iain Robertson). The new work coincides with the showing of Brisley's *Georgiana Collection* at the Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead, and is also a result of Brisley's artistic residency at the Imperial War Museum.

The flat itself is empty (one of an ever-

increasing number), save for three rooms which Brisley has appropriated. Two of these rooms contain numerous photocopies of material from local newspapers during the period of the First World War: soldier's letters from the Front to loved ones, some real, some obviously fabricated ('the sanitation here in the trenches is perfect . . .'), vie with reports on Gateshead's own war memorial and special constable's lists.

The information here supports the central element of the work, which is situated in the third room. It takes a small effort to push the gun-metal grey door open, which shuts behind the viewer upon entry. Inside it is dark, and as the eyes adjust one becomes aware of the only source of light, a low-wattage domestic light-bulb, which illuminates the walls, ceilings, windows and plug sockets, all of which have also been painted grey. In the centre of the room is a one-fifth scale model of the Cenotaph built by Lutyens to commemorate the dead of the First World War. The Cenotaph fills the room; it's top is only millimetres from the ceiling, and wherever the viewer stands it dominates the space. Recognition (of shape, but perhaps not meaning) and the abrupt conflict of scale, colour and context come as a shock. One has entered a dimension completely separated from the mundanity of the immediate outside world. An audio element which sounds like distant, muted gunfire completes the feeling of isolation.

If the room is, in a sense, a sensory deprivation tank, the small inscribed words on the wall 'THE FUTURE DEAD' imply that there is a message to be found in self-immersion. The Cenotaph, an empty grave, is no longer just a monument to the dead of 68 years ago, but also encompasses both World War Two and our contemporary dead from the Falklands War and Northern Ireland.

By re-appropriating the form and placing it in a depressingly familiar context of a '60s built housing-estate (itself a monument to a particular brand of social thinking and — contemporaneously — failure), Brisley has broadened its mandate. Our systems of social, political and economic power thrive on conflict. Any conflict produces casualties and refugees — usually those without a choice, or a voice. Outside of the grey walls, the environment of St Cuthbert's Village contains new victims, who, unsung, are added daily to a different kind of list.

As you read this, the Cenotaph will have already been removed and the room is again a bedroom with magnolia walls. Both the organisers and the artist intend to find new sites nationally for the Cenotaph, producing rich contexts to be mined accordingly. After all, if there is another global war, there will be no one to lay wreaths on stone, except perhaps *our* leaders in *their* bunkers. Who then, will mourn THE FUTURE DEAD? ●

FREEDOM

ROLAND MILLER reviews Babel's installation/performance at Cartwright Hall in Bradford:

CARTWRIGHT HALL IS the main Bradford art gallery. It is an imposing, ornate mansion in a park, memorial to the Rev Edmund Cartwright, inventor of the power loom, foundation of the wool city's former wealth. Babel put together their events in Halifax, at Dean Clough, formerly a giant carpet mill. West Yorkshire has been a cradle of performance art of one kind or another since at least 1967, when Cartwright Hall served as the St Petersburg Winter Palace, in *The Russian Revolution in the streets of Bradford* by Bradford College of Art.

We artists who have worked and lived in Yorkshire over the past 20 years have always been aware of the economic and social framework. Victorian industries decline, politics break through the surface in West Yorkshire. The 1967 storming of the Winter Palace/Cartwright Hall by an army of art students marked the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution. A 1985 event — *Dresden 1945/1985 Bradford* marked another anniversary — the Allied bombing of Dresden.

Historical perspectives apart, these and other West Yorkshire performances and theatrical events have been marked by encounters with the public on the streets. That level of 'realism' has been interleaved with another — the presentation of 'issues'. In the Huddersfield series of *Live Art Works* (1984/85) we presented both gallery events and a street procession of Shirley Cameron's *Brides Against the Bomb* by Sister Seven which invaded and briefly occupied the

local nuclear defence control bunker.

But the current revival of interest in performance is coming from inside galleries like Cartwright Hall, instead of from the 'Revolutionaries' in the streets. Is this a case of Marcusean 'repressive tolerance' brandished by the Arts Council like a bunch of roses from it Glorious Garden?

Babel's installation *Freedom* was built in one of the Cartwright Hall galleries between 2nd and 12th March, and 'animated' over three days. Entrance to the gallery at first seemed barred by a wall of leaning, unplanned timber planks, sloping up to the ceiling, over the spectator's head. You could walk round the entire space, under this sloping arcade of wood, and spy on the central area through gaps between the planks. This corridor was made wide enough to take a wheel chair. The central rectangle was the size of a long, large room. In it stood a ball of barbed wire, as high as a table, in one corner, and diagonally opposite a man in a military style raincoat. The floor of the 'room' was covered in a loose, deep carpet of grey/brown packing material, loft insulation put underfoot. The man stared, motionless, at the ball.

There were atmospheric details — faint smell of the wood, echoing footsteps and whispers of the spectators travelling round their corridor. The inner space was bright, the outer corridor in darkness, except for the shafts of light from the cracks between the planks. The installation was a simple statement, but perhaps also allegoric-

A VISION OF LOVE REVEALED IN SLEEP

STEVE ROGERS finds a way forward for gay theatre in the latest work by Neil Bartlett and Robin Whitmore.

HISTORICALLY GAY THEATRE stands alongside feminist theatre and black theatre at the birth of alternative theatre in Britain. All three share a radical politics based on the common experience of oppression by our white patriarchal society. Gay theatre and its campaigning cause certainly benefitted by its identification with the feminist and black movements but in so doing it denied one of the major differences between the nature of being a woman or black and being gay. You cannot disguise your colour or your gender. There is an apparent and undeniable essence to being female or black but to most people and certainly in the eyes of the law, there is no essence to homosexuality only a particular kind of behaviour. Much early gay politics and gay theatre fell into the trap, and it was a trap, of reinforcing this belief by arguing that gay rights are no more than common human rights and ignored that which makes the experience of being gay so different from that of other minorities. As a result of this persistent

al, perhaps symbolic, or, like some contemporary painting, hovering tantalisingly between these possibilities.

Babel's work is reminiscent of the Düsseldorf performance school of Klaus Rinke, Joseph Beuys, and contemporary German painters like Jörg Immendorf, Anselm Kiefer. War and the death camps are never far away. Military discipline, male masochism, khaki pain and endurance are persistent themes. Should we, in a Babel installation, imagine ourselves trapped in the central European crisis? Perhaps, like Albert Hunt's historical commemorative events with Bradford College, Babel are trying to bring us face to face with predicaments of our times — the barbed wire of the Iron Curtain, the torture and imprisonment of South Africa, South America, Ulster, those oppressed — outside and inside — by Greenham Common, Molesworth. The difficulty with *Freedom* is that, like Babel's railway guard's van event at Huddersfield station (1986), it is unspecific.

The gallery setting can place an arbitrariness on performance. The most effective events are those that spring from imperatives of time and place. The work should communicate a necessity, that the spectators can grasp, and share. *Freedom* was highly effective, but it lacked context. The only title inside the gallery was the word *Freedom* on a brass plate high up on the timber wall. Perhaps it meant that we are free, only to be imprisoned by accepting the art establishment's bunch of roses. ●



belief, oppression of gay men and women has never occupied as high a place on the agenda for political reform as that of other minorities.

It is uniquely and horribly perverse then that it has been the advent of AIDS and its artificial identification with gay men that has given male homosexuality essential attributes, namely HOMOSEXUALITY = AIDS = DEATH, which is not just in the minds of the vicious, evil bigots who first created the anti-gay hysteria in the

popular press but is also felt by a good many gay men too. It is the experience of being gay at this moment. And it is the shift in perception that is going on which restores the pre-liberation idea that gay is evil to which Bartlett and Whitmore have responded with a remarkable performance: *A Vision of Love Revealed In Sleep*.

The performance, devised and performed by Bartlett in an installation of inspired tackiness by Whitmore, is a strange mixture of the traditional

A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep: Neil Bartlett and Robin Whitmore. Photo by Cheryl Hubbard 1987 after Simeon Solomons 1887

CONT'D ON PAGE 38 

EASY TIME FOR D'OFFAY

Dear Performance

I don't at all mind that Performance Magazine is devoting so much space to Anthony D'Offay, in fact it is a good idea. Obviously someone with his influence in the British contemporary art scene will, to some extent, affect the way performance art is regarded generally by the art world. I am however rather disappointed that he should have been given such an easy time by your interviewer Gray Watson. Sure Mr D'Offay represents artists that make performances but he doesn't represent any artists that only or principally make performances. The performances, despite his obvious interest in them for what they reveal of the artists' intentions, appear from the interview to represent little more than an adjunct to the real business of making saleable objects. This is a criticism to be levelled at not just Anthony D'Offay but most other dealers as well. It is an obvious criticism and it is therefore all the more surprising that it was never put directly to D'Offay. It was as though the interviewer were already of the same opinion as the interviewee that performance is of peripheral interest. This is particularly acute when compared with the obvious concern for live art in itself expressed by Richard Demarco. Demarco is always ready to experiment to promote work that is eccentric and difficult, and to take risks, including financial risks. What we have in these two interviews is confrontation between an old-fashioned romantic who is a fool to himself in his passionate concern for art, and a post-romantic utilitarian who knows that ultimately the road to being a successful dealer is to maintain an extremely high standard and artistic integrity. Anthony D'Offay doesn't make mistakes, he doesn't take risks, he is the civil servant dealer whereas Demarco is the impresario dealer. I know it's unfashionable, but I know which I prefer.

Julia Orkney
London E2

HARD-HITTING ENQUIRY

Dear Performance

I have noticed that you rarely feature performance artists' work which does not take place in a theatre or at some rather salubrious location. This is not a criticism, merely an observation. I would challenge Performance Magazine to write an article which deals with the few artists seriously engaged in socio-political and environmental concerns. Performance Art in this country has lost its backbone and seems to be becoming a

lively pastiche of theatrical conventions and performance clichés, news or serious critical writing concerning the small, peripheral body of artists whose work operates on a more 'heavy' level, seems to remain buried as if forgotten or ignored. At least I do not feel it as a long-lost legacy left behind in the seventies. Think of artists such as Nick Stewart, Jan Marshall, Alistair MacLennan, Roberta Graham, Andre Stitt, Vivien Lisle . . . the list goes on. There are obvious surface level similarities and connections between artists, maybe it would make an interesting article. I think Performance needs a serious and hard-hitting enquiry. What do you think?

Sincere regards

Shaun Caton
Art Autopsy
London SE14

FREUDIAN SLIP?

Dear Performance

Chrissie Iles, in her review of my installation *The Wall: 2200th Anniversary of the Great Wall of China, Berlin 1961-1986* in the last issue, finds the ideological 'comments' in the work 'general and philosophical'. Since she clearly has an interest in my work — which I am honestly grateful for — I dare to add one more general comment. She observes correctly that the images are 'fragmentary, dark and . . . hardly visible, seen as through a distant memory or half dream'. But was it only the low visibility that caused the face of *Stalin* to manifest itself to Chrissie as that of *Karl Marx* (lurking in the darkness next to *Elvis Presley*)?

Since memory and identity, or the loss of them, are indeed among the main concerns of the work, as is the East/West division of Europe, I should find such a 'Freudian slip' rather amusing. But I am far too worried by the causes and consequences of that division to find the idea of Stalin masquerading as Marx much fun. The Berlin Wall is not a distant dream but a reality made possible, on one side of it, precisely by the Stalinist perversion of Marxism, and by the possibility of not quite distinguishing between the two, on the other side.

I am well aware that the identity of photographic images, or indeed all 'historical records' is not that of their protagonists, and to emphasise that the particular image in question was entitled 'Charlie'. But not even in a 'half dream' would I have called it 'Karl!'. Please view the enclosed in full light.

Pavel Büchler
Cambridge

CONT'D. FROM PAGE 37

and the radical which accurately reflects that confusion of a community under threat. The structure is quite formally conservative. It juxtaposes the life story of Simeon Solomons, a minor pre-Raphaelite society artist who fell foul of the full weight of Victorian hypocrisy with Bartlett's own experience of being gay in London in 1987. There are clear parallels. At the height of his popularity Solomons, who had never disguised his sexuality, was arrested for having sex with a stableman in a public toilet. He was immediately dropped by his fairweather friends and spent the remaining thirty years of his life destitute, alcoholic and half crazy. Gay men today are vulnerable to the same social rejections. Openly gay men have been sacked, been made homeless, been turned out of their families, lost friends and suffered many other rejections and humiliations through the hysteria created about AIDS and gay men.

The alternating sections of Solomons' biography and Bartlett's personal experience are given different forms of representation. Solomons' story is acted and narrated in familiar, traditional ways whilst the performer's own story is presented directly and unadorned. Essentially one life, Solomons, is theatre whilst the other, Bartlett's is performance art. Usually when these two conventions of live art are brought together in this way it is to the detriment of theatre which invariably looks shallow and insubstantial compared with the actualities of performance. Here, however, the two conventions are employed in a new and radical way. The performance sections are indeed more substantial and provocative but the reality they reveal is one of uncertainty, fear, suspicion and above all confusion since Bartlett too is not immune to the *GAY = AIDS = DEATH* equation. It is the theatre sections however that contain the real power. These sections are not given in just one theatrical style but range across music hall, drag, high tragedy and low burlesque. What Bartlett does with this, and he does it with extraordinary confidence and dexterity, is to lay claim to these theatrical traditions as the manifestation within our mainstream culture of the essence of homosexuality. 'Gayness' has found its way, only very thinly disguised, to the heart of our culture where it now occupies a permanent place. More than this he reveals something of the nature of this essence by his choice of theatrical traditions which is the dialectic of concealment and revelation, or disguise, or the closet and coming out, which is an essential feature of the western theatre and of being gay.

Bartlett and Whitmore's response to the threat of AIDS is to recognise and admit their own personal fear and confusion but to find comfort in the knowledge that gay is here to stay, and that it is integral to our national culture. They may fear for their own lives and the lives of their friends and lovers but we need have no fear that the essence of homosexuality will disappear also since it will always survive.

The gay theatre that helped spawn the alternative theatre tradition was a campaign for the rights of gay men and women. Neil Bartlett's theatre is a reassertion of that which is unique and essential about gay men and the contribution they make to the culture at large.

A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep is being restaged in London in September. Venue to be confirmed. ●

THE BYAM SHAW DIPLOMA

is a full-time 3-year course in fine art which is accepted at University level for post-graduate studies.

The Course was independently validated in July 1984.

Short-term, extra mural and post-graduate/post-diploma courses also available.

Entry to all courses is by work and interview.

Over 70% of UK students receive Local Authority grants.

Apply now for a prospectus to
Byam Shaw School of Art
70 Campden Street, London W8 7EN
(or 'phone 01-727 4711-24 hour service).



WHITE LIGHT

57 Filmer Road · London SW6
Tel: 01-731 3291
Telex: 295811

THEATRE LIGHTING HIRE AND SALES

Our prices are competitive
please ring for price list or quote

————— NORTHERN BRANCH —————

SAW HILL FARM TRIANGLE NR. HALIFAX
WEST YORKSHIRE TEL: HALIFAX (0422) 822016

LABAN CENTRE



POSTGRADUATE LABAN

Largest Dance Department outside USA with more than 100 Postgraduate Students from 24 Countries

M.Phil. and Ph.D. Research Degrees
MA (Dance Studies) – 1 year full-time/2 years part-time
MA (Dance/Movement Therapy) – 2 years full-time 3/4 years part-time
Specialist One Year Certificate Courses designed to meet individual needs –choose from the following:
Choreography & Performance, Dance Teaching & Special Education, Laban Studies & Notation, History and Sociology of Dance, Community Dance and Movement

Facilities include: 13 purpose built dance studios, Studio Theatre, tutorial and seminar rooms, library, audio and video editing suites, music rooms.

For further information about these and BA (Hons) or Certificate courses write to: **The Administrator, Laban Centre for Movement and Dance, University of London, Goldsmiths' College, New Cross, London SE14 6NW, England. Tel: (01) 692-4070**

Summer School 1986 from 21st July – 1st August. Write for further details.

NEW-WORK NEWCASTLE

'87 - On Tour - CONFRONTATIONS

NEW WORK, NEWCASTLE '87 ON TOUR - CONFRONTATIONS is a major festival of new performance work organised by Projects UK (Newcastle Media Workshops) and Tyne and Wear Museums Service in collaboration with Cartwright Hall, Bradford, and Cornerhouse, Manchester. It will be presented in the Laing Art Gallery and in various locations around Newcastle upon Tyne, before touring to Cartwright Hall in Bradford and Cornerhouse in Manchester.

PERFORMANCE ART IN EDUCATION

There will be an extensive programme of workshops and talks linked to this festival in which artists will be taking part. Each venue will be organising its own events, which will be open to schools, colleges and members of the public and are free of charge.

CONFRONTATIONS

An exhibition, curated by Rob La Frenais (Editor of Performance Magazine) which examines the controversial role of art in society. Artists represented include: ROSE GARRARD, KERRY TRENGOVE, MARTY ST JAMES AND ANNE WILSON, DENNIS DE GROOT, MONA HATOUM, ANDRE STITT AND JEREMY WELSH.

LAING
ART GALLERY

Higham Place, Newcastle.
Tyneside (091) 232 7734

TYNE and
WEAR
MUSEUMS
SERVICE

BRADFORD ART GALLERIES
AND MUSEUMS
Cartwright Hall
Lister Park
Bradford
BD9 4NS
Telephone: (0274) 493313

**CORNER
HOUSE**
Cornerhouse
70 Oxford Street
Manchester
M1 5NH
Telephone: (061) 228 2463 - Box Office; (061) 228 7621 - Galleries.

Projects
UK
Newcastle Media Workshops.
Projects UK Newcastle Media Workshops Ltd
67-75 Westgate Road Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1SG
Telephone (091) 232 2410 Projects UK (091) 261 4527

Arts Council Funded

FESTIVAL DATES
NEWCASTLE - LAING ART GALLERY
1 May - 5 June 1987
(Exhibition 1 May - 31 May 1987)

For programme information telephone:
(091) 232 7734 (Laing Art Gallery), or
(091) 261 4527 (Projects UK).

BRADFORD - CARTWRIGHT HALL
16 May - 14 June 1987

For programme information telephone:
(0274) 493313.

MANCHESTER - CORNERHOUSE
6 June - 19 July 1987

For programme information telephone:
(061) 228 2463 (Box Office).

FESTIVAL ARTISTS

Anne Bean
Babel*
Anne Seagrave
Jeremy Welsh*
Julie Stephenson*
Fourth Wall*
Andre Stitt*
Janusz Szczerek*
Annie Griffin
Rose Finn-Kelcey
Michael Archer and Bill Furlong*
Vivien Lisle*
Karen Finley

* Projects UK commission



Almost Persuaded: ANNIE GRIFFIN