

August 1995 newsletter no.

16



It is with considerable pleasure and much relief that we welcome Julian Bowron as the new Director of South Island Art Projects. Finding someone with all the qualities to run the organisation, someone prepared to work long hours for a modest remuneration, has not been easy. A graduate of the Canterbury School of Fine Arts where he majored in photography, Julian also has a Post Graduate Diploma in Museum Studies (AGMANZ) and is completing a Post Graduate Diploma in Arts Administration. Twenty years experience in visual arts has included working as:

Mobile Exhibitions Officer at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Exhibitions Technician at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Photographer for the Auckland City Art Gallery, Curator at the Suter Art Gallery Nelson and Exhibitions Officer at the Waikato Museum of Art and History.



JULIAN BOWRON

In 1988 Julian moved to Adelaide and set up a free-lance arts administration consultancy undertaking projects including: managing *Whatu Aho Rua*, a major exhibition of contemporary and traditional Maori art for the 1992 Adelaide Festival and carrying out a survey of South Australian Regional exhibition venues. During 1991 he was Acting Visual Arts Director, Adelaide Festival Centre Trust.

From 1992 he was Director of the Contemporary Arts Centre of South Australia until his present

appointment. Julian brings with him considerable experience in arts administration, publishing and working with contemporary arts issues. Interested in the challenge provided by the change to a projects based organisation, Julian is looking forward to working with local artists. As well as having taken over responsibility for managing the final Praxis Project, he has also had the unenviable task of preparing reports to Arts Council (now Creative NZ) and trying to guess their new strategy and how it will effect us. Julian welcomes your inquiries. Welcome Julian.

We also welcome four new Trustees to the Board: Rebecca Turrell, Ronnie van Hout, Chris Heaphy and David Hatcher. Rebecca is a Christchurch based artist currently completing her Masters degree at the Canterbury School of Fine Arts, Ronnie has recently returned to Christchurch from Auckland to continue his practice as a performance and installation artist. Of Ngai Tahu

descent, Chris is a graduate of the Canterbury School of Fine Arts and has recently had an exhibition of his work at the Jonathan Smart Gallery. David Hatcher joins the Trust as a representative of sister organisation Independent Images. David is studying at Canterbury Film School whilst maintaining his own film making practice.

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CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST



artists, writers, curators
or none of the above

before we decide on our programme for 1996 and
beyond
south island art projects wants to know what you are
into just now
so that what we do is guided by what artists want to
do.

we don't want project proposals at this stage,
just your areas of current interest or your suggestions
about the kind of project you think we should be
doing.
and later when are planning projects we will know
who is working in what areas.

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19th International Film Festival

Regent on the Square
Friday July 28 - Saturday August 12

Programmes now available from the Regent. Fax & Mail Bookings Available.

The Revolutionary Aspirations of the **Situationist**

As part of the Praxis project the South Island Art Projects invited Ted Nannes, lecturer in Sociology and Philosophy at Waikato University, to give a lecture on the Situationist International. Ted teaches a postgraduate paper entitled PRAXIS at Waikato, and although the main focus of this course lies in the term's Marxist and Hegelian associations, for our purposes Ted spoke on the notion of Praxis as contained in the work of the Situationists, outlining their revolutionary aims and aspirations. The lecture was well attended and held at the Canterbury School of Fine Arts.

PRAXIS OPENINGS

March 1 saw the official opening of "issue 1" of the "Praxis UrbanZine" project, a superbly well attended affair with around 300 people squashed into Caffiends Coffe Bar on Cathedral Square. With CRY TV covering the event and Mike Hornblow's moving-image project "Opening" being screened in the adjacent alley, it proved to be a very succesful and enjoyable night for all involved. Compromising of three street art "issues", Praxis had two further openings at Java and the Edge to mark issues 2 & 3. A big thank you to those proprietors whom so willingly allowed us to use their venues, not to mention their walls, for this project.

- Issue 1 opening** March 1 at Caffiends to celebrate in the work of ...
- * Belinda Drum & Carolyn Menzies - **"Feeling Blue?"** - 212 High St
 - * Jim Speers - **"Some People Work Harder Than Others"** - 83 Lichfield St
 - * Jared Lane, Kirsty Gregg, Bruce Ross & Stephen Pritchard - **Spatial F(r)ictions** - 111 & 205 Cashel St
 - * Michael Hornblow - **Opening** - Colonial Lane Cathedral Square

- Issue 2 opening** May 3 at Java to revel in the work of ...
- * Simon Endres, John Malcolmson, Phil Fickling & Sam Wade - **Wild Life** - cnr Bedford Row & Manchester St
 - * Patric Tomkins - **"Cuming Soon"** - Inner City Poster sites & Echo 238 High St
 - * Daniel Barrett - **One to One** - Cathedral Car Park

- Issue 3 opening** June 21 the Edge to delight in the work of ...
- * Jonathan Bywater & Tony de Lautour - inner city flyer drop
 - * Andrew Brown - **"NOT ME"** - cnr Bedford Row & Manchester Sts
 - * Michael Hornblow, Sarah Jane Barr, David Hatcher & Marc Jackson - **MAD/CASH** - 205 Cashel St



The 1995 Canterbury Short Film and Video Festival

22 - 27 July Academy Cinema

and the Winners are ...



ACE VIDEO & A VISION
BEST OVERALL VIDEO

DREAMS UPON MY HEAD
DIRECTOR: JANE PERKINS

ATLAB, KODAK & MASTERS CINEMA
BEST OVERALL FILM

HEADLONG
DIRECTOR: SIOMN RABY

MASTERS CINEMA
POPULAR CHOICE

THE WEEPING DOE
DIRECTOR: TONY OLSEN



Best Overall Film "Headlong" Director: Simon Raby

ATLAB
BEST DRAMA

MANAGED RESPONSE
DIRECTOR: RACHEL DAVIES

CANTERBURY FILM SCHOOL
BEST ANIMATION

FOOD (FOR) THOUGHT
DIRECTOR: DANIEL CROOKS

UPPERDECK
HIGHEST TECHNICAL
ACHIEVEMENT

STROKE
DIRECTOR: CHRISTINE JEFFS

AVONDALE DOGS
DIRECTOR: GREGOR NICHOLAS

KODAK
BEST STUDENT
PRODUCTION

JOHNNY & IRENIE
DIRECTOR: LOUISE CURHAM

FILM FACILITIES
BEST EXPERIMENTAL

A GIRL I KNEW
DIRECTOR: TISO ROSS

TELEIMAGE EDITING SERVICES
BEST DOCUMENTARY

A DIFFERENT BLONDE
DIRECTOR: HALINA OGOŃSKA-
COATES

occupations

an installation series by
margaret dawson
rebecca turrell
carolyn menzies
27 july - 13 august
christchurch arts centre

in association with the
Christchurch Arts Festival

INSIGHT/INOCITE CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC ART CONTEXTUALISED

Ted Ninnes will be returning to Christchurch to give a
FREE lecture
entitled *Insight/Inocite* at the Cloisters Theatre in the
Arts Centre, 1.30 pm on the 6th of August. This lecture
will look at the role of art in contemporary society and
discuss whether art can be a vehicle for change.

Re-Loading

5 - 26
september

an exhibition
by the
university of
canterbury
sculpture
school

old wool shed
behind Levenes
moorhouse ave

occupations

A lecture entitled, *Women, Space and Architecture*, was held as part of the Christchurch Arts Festival on Sunday 30 July, 1995 in the Cloisters Theatre at the Arts Centre.

This illustrated lecture discussed whether architectural design reflects power structures. Architectural Historian Mei Hurrell looked at the architecture of the Arts Centre from a feminist perspective, and was joined by Christchurch artists Margaret Dawson, Rebecca Turrell and Carolyn Menzies, whom talked about their own individual practises which challenge traditional concepts about space and architecture.

The idea for a site-specific installation project entitled *Occupations*, developed from this lecture. This project will be held at the Arts Centre during the Arts Festival from 27 July until 13 August, and provides a practical opportunity for the artists to implement their theoretical ideas about traditional concepts of space and architecture.

This installation project is exciting because it deals with architecture and space from a feminist perspective. The Arts Centre, as the former Canterbury College, exemplifies the vision and aspirations of the original city founders (ie: Fathers), who sought to create a model version of the ancient English universities, Oxford and Cambridge.

Both the lecture and the installation project seek to add women's voices to the discussion of how the architectural design of the Arts Centre reflects male power structures, and if this can be redefined within a contemporary, less prejudiced context.

Mei Hurrell



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PRAXIS

"PRAXIS" AS PRAXIS : THE POLITICS OF PUBLIC ART

JANE GREGG



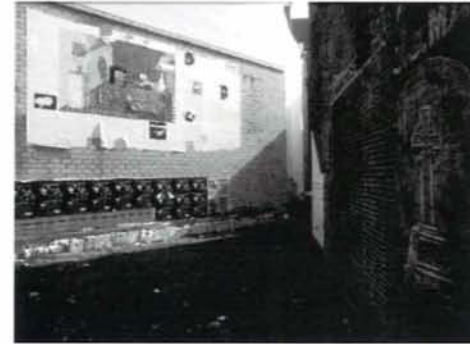
"Opening"
ISSUE ONE
MICHAEL HORNBLow

The recent SIAP project series, "Praxis", represents an ambitious and densely theoretical approach to the problem-fraught arena of public art and art production. While SIAP, an organization committed to the idea of deconstructing the connection between Gallery and Work of Art, has previously mounted shows in which the relationship between the Community and Art have been investigated,

"Praxis" politicizes that relationship to a greater degree in order to question exactly what constitutes these concepts, and how they are reproduced or reconstructed within the Public Space. In situating

their works within the city, the artists ensured that this dialogue could not be easily glossed over. And indeed, it was an inquiry into the meaning of the very terms "Public" and "Art" that became the focus for many of the artists involved in the "Praxis" project.

The realms of public art and political action evoked by both the conceptualization and title of "Praxis" are complex and laden with



"Feeling Blue?"
ISSUE ONE
BELINDA DRUM & CAROLYN MENZIES

dilemmas of the production of power relations and structures within a given field of culture. To entitle a public art project with such a call to action, demands grand gestures from artists participating in it. Coupling the series of works with a lecture by visiting academic, Ted Nannes, on "The Revolutionary Aspirations of the Situationists", further underlines this. "Praxis", in this sense, declares its intentions in a forthright manner: art must be *praxis*; artists

controversy. Situated historically as central to Classical Marxism's social agenda, the notion of *praxis* evokes a whole vocabulary of practice that takes as its centrepiece the concerns and

must produce work that engages with, and challenges the assumptions and values of the social structures within which it is to be situated.

Problematically, however, art and artists are not what they used to be. The "Praxis" project, with its call to action, is something of an oddity in an aesthetic era which takes "play" as its primary motif. Postmodern theory which, for better or worse, imbues our thinking about what art should do and be, does not easily accept what we might consider the conclusionary and totalizing trajectory of a praxis-centred approach to the production of art. Surely, to speak of action is to speak

of assuming a single position, forsaking all others, with the explicit intention of revolutionizing the social order through an application of that position? This is not a particularly easy dark alley to turn into when faced with the choice of the clean and well-lighted Postmodern hypermall. How much more fun it is to play at

making art; to speak of refusing centres, embracing fluidity, and dissipating meaning into discursive fragments. After all, Art cannot save us. It is too late for all that.

Late though it may be, "Praxis", described as an "UrbaNZine" by its conceptualizers, suggests that politics and revolution will be its subject. With its evocation of the underground publishing tradition in the use of the term "zine", "Praxis" offers to confront many of the same dilemmas which interest producers of these anti-establishment vehicles of dissent and disruption. Indeed, as the flag of postmodernity continues to unfurl, it seems

increasingly clear that any situated revolutionary practice is now more likely to be found working from the underside of popular culture than from within the traditional sites of revolution, which take as their common denominator the assumptions of High Culture. Thus, we find ourselves in the strange position

of conceding that our harshest social critics are now the creators of comic books; the writers of three minute tunes; the directors of explicitly consumer-oriented images in music-videos. Our old harbingers of disgust; our writers, our philosophers, our Artists have fallen strangely silent, silently strange in this climate of the Text and the Sign that heralds the reign of the Postmodern.

"Praxis", then, is framed by a contested set of theoretical, cultural, and political assumptions. The least of which is not the very idea of putting art into a space designated "public". As Christchurch residents have witnessed with monotonous regularity, any art works that are erected with the

intention of being "public" are more than likely chosen for the degree to which they prop up a tradition of conservatism and anti-intellectualism, the historical legacy of a city founded on the premises of colonialism. The implications of such a tradition suggest a rather monodimensional conceptualization of exactly

who the public are. In evoking the idea of "public", we evoke a language which denies multiplicity in favour of singularity; which champions the universal as opposed to the local or the specific; which in itself represents the structures upon which totalizing discourses are founded. Traditionally, as any cursory reading

of a city like Christchurch reveals, public art is the representation of all that an urban environment aspires to be. By and large, public art has tended to be the benign figures of Great Men of the Past placed within well-tended gardens. These figures of history tell us that as a city, and by implication, a nation and a culture, we are a people with a past worth celebrating and a

future worth contemplating. In these figures, and in a great deal of contemporary public works, "the public" remains an uncontested term. There is little recognition that this seemingly homogeneous category might contain within it the conflicts and complexities of contemporary society. Similarly, "art" as an



"Some People Work Harder Than Others"
ISSUE ONE
JIM SPEERS



Spatial F(r)ictions
ISSUE ONE
JARED LANE, KIRSTY GREGG, BRUCE ROSS &
STEPHEN PRITCHARD

ideology is neither analysed nor questioned. It tends to situate a position which we might describe as pre-modern, where the Artist "creates" harmonious truths for the betterment of an environment which stands the chance of being transformed from the quotidian to the utopian. Under such an aesthetic, the link between art and economics is made apparent. City planners that champion the cause of public art in order to produce a location that appeals to the possibilities of some elusive "economic recovery", do so with the explicit agenda of keeping the less beautified aspects of urban existence at bay.

As public art, however, the "Praxis" series urges a confrontational approach to understanding both audience, site, and reception. In many of the individual works, the very notion of exactly who constitutes the "public" is the central question being discussed. In an increasingly conservative environment where attention to "political correctness" has become a sin worthy of execution, the art



Wild Life
ISSUE TWO
SIMON ENDRES, JOHN MALCOLMSON, PHIL FICKLING
& SAM WADE

makers involved in "Praxis" have tended, in the main, to go out on the proverbial limb with their championing of unfashionable issues such as race, class and gender. Establishment critical reception has been quick to highlight this aspect of the project, with reviews patronizingly noting the "good intentions", and "dutiful" nature of the works.¹ Rather than analyzing the issues that "Praxis" is quite clearly centred upon, these critics offer a simplistic reading of the pieces based on hegemonic models of art and culture. The artists are accused of making inaccessible works, a comment which reveals most lucidly the critic's clear delineation of the exactly who she thinks the public are:

The sentiments are noble, but the art works will exclude many. They represent art of a *young, visually literate, but closed circle*, unapproachable to the uninitiated. The works are in public spaces, but "Praxis" is not accessible.²

Following a notably anti-intellectual tradition of New Zealand critical discourse, the reviews of both "Praxis": Part 1 and "Praxis": Part 2, serve only to reinforce the degree to which a firmer grasp of current theoretical concerns of all kinds is desperately required by critics hoping to make adequate engagement with the intentions underscoring a great deal of contemporary art production.

Nonetheless, in analyzing the art works produced under the terms of "Praxis", it is clear that the meanings and implications of *praxis*, as a concept, has been a matter of some confusion. And rightly so. In the contemporary *milieu*, there is little to suggest that art - whether sited inside or outside of the gallery space - can claim an attachment to political action of any kind at all. The complicity between art and the structures of oppression have been well noted. Art is the arena of privilege. Art is produced by those with access to resources, the availability of which is dependent upon the maintenance of

a hierarchical, capitalist model of power and authority. Acutely aware of this precarious position, many of the artists involved in "Praxis" have explicitly concerned themselves with unmasking the historical relationship between art and legitimating discourses. Examples of this are found in "Spatial F(r)ictions" (Kirsty Gregg, Jared Lane, Bruce Ross, Stephen Pritchard); "Feeling Blue" (Belinda Drum, Carolyn Menzies); "Some People Work Harder Than Others" (Jim Speers); "Wild Life" (Simon Endres, John Malcolmson, Sam Wade, Phil Fickling); and the flyers designed and distributed by Jonathan Bywater and Tony de Lautour. These works particularly, enter into a dialogue between art and

practice, foregrounding the question of exactly what purpose art should serve in a culture founded upon inequality, disenfranchisement, and containment. Indeed, these works contain within them their own critiques. They speak of tensions economic, social and structural that cannot be reversed or reordered through the



"Cuming Soon"
ISSUE TWO
PATRIC TOMKINS

delivery of art to the public. They do not offer solutions or conclusions, but simply draw our attention to the always-already-present state of disgrace that makes up our seemingly inescapable model of social organization. Is this enough to constitute a claim of *praxis*?

To consider that very difficult question, it is interesting to examine some of the other works of the project. In these pieces we find very little to persuade us that action of some kind or another is the purpose at hand. For example,



One to One
ISSUE TWO
DANIEL BARRETT

"Opening" (Michael Hornblow), a very crafted series of "moving images" ostensibly tackles the demise of the architectural heritage of the city using the conceit of the Resurrection to suggest the possibilities of urban renewal and reclamation. It is clever, well-made and beautiful to look at, but there is little here that confronts either the space in which the images were shown, a dingy and menacing alley running off the Square, or the implications of what

championing the urbanscape of an obviously oppressive historical backdrop might mean. The semiotics of architecture, culture, religion, and history evoked in this piece are not problematized as they tend to be in the more explicitly political works of the series. It is clear that the images exist for their own sakes, rather

than functioning in any action-oriented way. This might be art, but it isn't *praxis*. Similarly, in "Cuming Soon" (Patric Tomkins), "One to One" (Daniel Barrett) and "NOT ME" (Andrew Brown), the political aspects of the title of

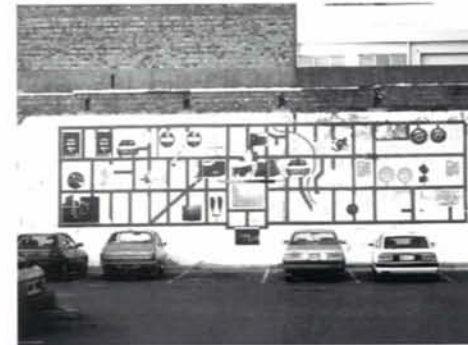
the series are rather buried beneath what we might call a ludic approach to aesthetics. In these works we find that all-pervading motif of play emerging yet again, with the artists frequently ignoring the grounding principles of *praxis* to concentrate instead on constructing some rather self-referential in-jokes. "Cuming Soon", for example, became an advertisement for a series of works by Tomkins exhibited at the High Street Project. This may have been

amusing, witty even, however, the political gestures that underlie the notion of *praxis* were not approached. Similarly, Andrew Brown's "NOT ME" which situated the personal inside the public made interesting comment upon the spacialization of the individual within the urban context, but again, the obvious implications of this subject were not drawn out into any larger discussion.

"Praxis" takes as its motif the sticking plaster. Under the terms of where our culture is presently situated, namely within the slip stream of

postmodernity, this seems a fitting image. When "Spatial F(r)ictions" attempts to give voice to the Other; or "Feeling Blue" offers an ironic glimpse into the mechanisms by which gender is constructed and enforced by the dominance of historical truisms, we have to wonder to what degree action, conclusion, or position can be effectively considered here. When the rituals of consumption are brought into question by the placement of flyers in cafés, as Jonathan

Bywater and Tony de Lautour did, there is a challenge of sorts issued, but again, it is a challenge easily disregarded when received in the context of a text/sign saturated culture. When the frightening language of security and surveillance is summoned up by the producers of "Wild Life", we are impressed and engaged. We are not, however, moved to revolution. While these works rip the band-aids off some very serious gaping social wounds, revealing the putrid mess beneath, they also serve as inadequate staunchers



MAD/CASH
ISSUE THREE
MICHAEL HORNBLow, SARAH-JANE BARR, MARC JACKSON & eugenie blank

of a cultural haemorrhage which such flimsy material cannot contain. While *praxis* in its Classical sense, may no longer be a possibility, the artists and art works of the "Praxis" project examine questions that other contemporary artists often seem to forget or ignore. Evoking the history of politics in art, placing notions such as "public" and "aesthetic" up for debate, and attempting to deal with these issues at a level beyond just the trendy title of a show by smart

young things, may be a band-aid approach to healing cultural malaise, nonetheless, there seems no sense in simply letting it bleed.

¹"Good intentions gone awry", Robyn Ussher, *The Press*, March 15, 1995 and "Dutiful public works", Justin Paton *The Press*, May 10, 1995

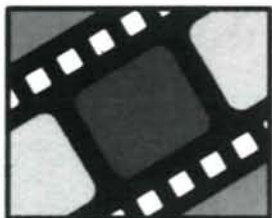
²"Good intentions gone awry", Robyn Ussher, *The Press*, March 15, 1995. My emphasis.



"NOT ME"
ISSUE THREE
ANDREW BROWN



ISSUE THREE
JONATHAN BYWATER & TONY DE LAUTOUR



HANAFINS



CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

artists, writers, curators
or none of the above

before we decide on our programme for 1996 and
beyond
south island art projects wants to know what you are
into just now
so that what we do is guided by what artists want to
do.

we don't want project proposals at this stage,
just your areas of current interest or your suggestions
about the kind of project you think we should be
doing.
and later when we are planning projects we will know
who is working in what areas.

for more information or to give us your thoughts
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SOUTH ISLAND ART PROJECTS 1995-1996

JULIAN BOWRON

1995 has been a time of transition for SIAP with a change of Director, a major internal review by the SIAP Trust, followed by sweeping changes to the objectives and operation of the primary arts funding body Creative New Zealand (formerly the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa).

During these upheavals, however, SIAP has managed "Praxis" a substantial urbanZine project which consisted of three "issues" of works installed mostly around south central Christchurch city. "Praxis" was affected by changes in SIAP staffing particularly and it was the continuity of commitment and professionalism by Kate Fielder (originally a Task Force Green trainee at SIAP) which ensured the success of this complex project. Apart from being the vehicle for some very successful temporary public artworks, the "Praxis" project articulated issues relevant to contemporary city life and in doing so raised the possibility that art might again have a role as an agent for the discussion of social issues. Further, "Praxis" enabled a considerable number of younger artists to gain valuable experience of public art project development and production. "Praxis" was initiated by Christchurch artist Michael Hornblow who brought the idea to SIAP for development. The project was realised with the support of a project grant from the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa.

Following SIAP's internal review the Trust has moved towards a greater openness in the process by which the organisation generates projects and activity. Although retaining the option to generate its own

projects, SIAP is calling for expressions of interest from a wide range of art practitioners, writers and anybody interested in contemporary visual art. This is not a call for detailed project proposals, rather it is a means of gauging what currently interests artists and from these responses SIAP will develop a programme for 1996. SIAP seeks to assert the primary role of the artist as generator of ideas without excessive intervention by curators, funding bodies or administrators.

The SIAP newsletter is also undergoing a transition from its former spartan photocopied appearance to a printed quarterly journal of contemporary art practice in the South Island. SIAP believes that sustained critical review and discussion of artists' work and related activity is essential if a distinct contemporary practice is to consolidate and thrive here. Vital to this objective is the fostering of new voices and a diversity of approaches to writing about contemporary art. If you are a writer in this area, or have thought of dusting off the word processor, please contact the SIAP office. Although we have considerably improved the print quality of the newsletter, our objective is to keep production values modest so that the newsletter can achieve the widest possible distribution. We have had good support from our advertisers in generating this issue so please support the people who support us.

On 6 August SIAP will present a public lecture by visiting academic Ted Ninnies from the University of Waikato (see the news section). The lecture **Insight/Incite** - Contemporary Public Art in Context, will precede a public forum "The Difficulty with

Public Art in Christchurch" where prominent artists, critics and gallery personnel have been invited to speak. SIAP will continue to actively pursue a dialogue through lectures and forums about this and other important contemporary art issues.

Later in 1995 SIAP plans to realise a series of installation and performance works by various artists in and around the Arts Centre of Christchurch. As yet the project is untitled but the intention is to explore diverse ways in which artists and their work interact with audiences and given that interaction the readiness of viewers to address the work and bring to it their own responses and experiences.

A major SIAP project for 1996 will be "Art/Law"; a seminar for artists, administrators and interested legal professionals which will cover legal issues for contemporary visual artists including contracts, intellectual property, censorship/obscenity and tax. There will also be a session dealing with the law as a social/cultural/historical framework within which contemporary practice is defined and constrained. SIAP is also exploring the possibility of publishing a legal handbook for New Zealand visual artists.

The emergence of Creative New Zealand as the new look, new agenda central government arts funding agency is a matter for considerable concern among those who seek to promote vibrant, risk-taking and exploratory New Zealand contemporary art. The rhetoric which has accompanied the launch of the new Creative NZ Strategic Plan has caused alarm not least at its glib corporate platitudes. Someone outside the arts might well believe that, until

Creative New Zealand, there has been no notion of the value of the arts in this country and that there has not been a rich history of advocacy, support and intelligent commentary.

Attempting to discern priorities from amongst the "people goal", the "arts goal" and the "management and administration goal" and their attendant "objectives" is a bewildering process. There is nothing beyond the occasional use of the word "innovation" which acknowledges contemporary arts as an invaluable vehicle for perceptive and critical thinking about important contemporary issues. Instead the pervading impression is of a rather vague and earnestly worthy pre-occupation with access and participation. Access to, and participation in, what?

Certainly there is potential for increased public and private sector support of the arts and obviously this can be most easily achieved for popular "box office" driven events. Support of developmental and experimental practice will on the other hand never be as forthcoming, even though these areas are arguably more important for the generation of distinct national and regional arts practices. It is support of these fragile and difficult areas of conceptual and generative arts which is surely the essential role of an Arts Council agency. However, the danger is that in the arts, as in so many areas, so called market forces will be given free reign and consequently mediocrity will win out.



King's Catacomb

DANNY BUTT

For the past three months, Stuart Griffiths has been Artist in Residence at three South Dunedin Schools, with a brief to construct a site-specific sculptural work at each of the schools. Stuart has taken the site in each case to include the students, and all three works have had significant student input.

At Queen's High School, students were asked to identify sites of personal meaning within the school grounds, and to develop proposals for

physically transforming these spaces - it is hoped that some of these proposals will be implemented within work being carried out at the school. At MacAndrew Intermediate, students carved heads which have been inlaid in a stone wall constructed by the artist. The initial proposal for King's High involved the construction of a "catacomb" to be buried in the centre of the otherwise featureless mound which exists in the main courtyard.

Stuart and I had spoken previously of the potential for some kind of publication within these projects, and at this point we conceived of the catacomb as taking two forms: the concrete time capsule and the publication, both containing work created entirely by the students (all male).

Students were asked to address an autobiographical statement to a person seventy five years from now, who might have no concept of student life as we know it. Each participating student submitted written and graphic material which has been placed into a catacomb structure, and buried in the centre courtyard mound where it will remain until 2070. This material was not seen by anyone other than Stuart, so students were encouraged to express their honest feelings and thoughts about themselves, their school and their community.

Each student then developed their material into information they would like to appear in public immediately, by means of an A3 newsprint

publication. Each class then edited these "public" submissions down to four pages of writing and images. Every student received the edited collection of their class information to design individually, and then the class as a whole selected the individual layouts which appear in the publication. These were mandatorially subject to a review by a representative of the school, who censored references to illegal drugs and some "offensive language", but were otherwise unaltered by teachers or the publication coordinators (Stuart and myself).

3000 copies of the King's Catacomb were printed and distributed around the local community, via dairies, cafés, other businesses and the local schools. Most feedback has been positive, if confused, with liberal use of the term "interesting". During "debriefing sessions", the majority of students' comments consisted of approval at "being allowed to do their own stuff", and criticism of the censorship carried out by the school.

The King's Catacomb was published by Galerie Desford Vogel as a part of their publications programme, with funding assistance from the Dunedin College of Education. This project is supported by the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa. Stuart Griffiths' residency is a funding initiative from the Art Department, Dunedin College of Education, resulting from a grant from the Artist in Residence programme at the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa.

TONY de LAUTOUR

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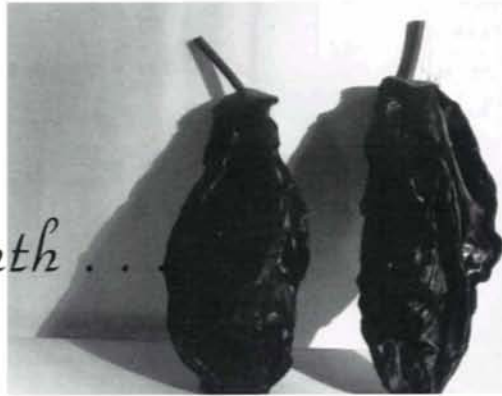
Tides of the Heart ♥ A Recent Show of Sculpture

a long and complicated procedure that requires concentration and skill, but most

Decay, to decline in health or vigour, waste away. The destruction or the decomposition of organic matter.

the fear of pain is second only to the fear of death for most people . . .

the colour of the lungs at birth is pinkish white, and darkens late in life



Shrivel. to lose vitality, become wasted and useless.

luscious

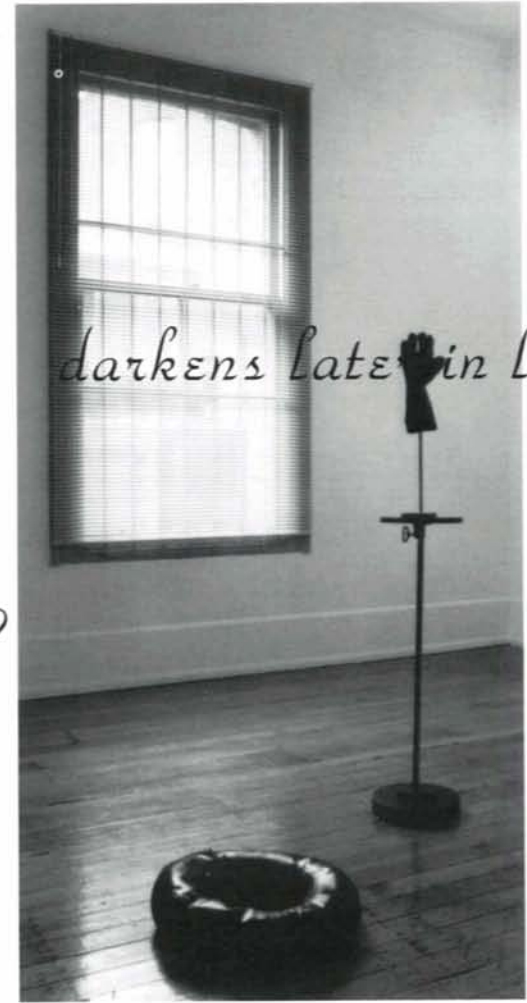
lunar month . . .

when will you deflate?
washed up and

washed out

Legal Death, the total absence of activity in the brain and central nervous system, the cardiovascular system, and the respiratory system.

only the shells remain



Closed-
technique
fluids, s
fluids, a
wounds

made

eternal



solve

since time began it has been one of the oldest psychological fears for women . . .

a thin layer of slimy mucus covers the surface, therefore scrubbing to

Capture by Carolyn Monzies ~ Jonathan Smart Gallery 5 - 29 April 1995

importantly clean and steady hands . . . sensuously suggestive of body

Wound Suction, any one of several
ues for draining potentially harmful
uch as blood, pus, serosanguineous
nd tissue secretions from surgical

nephrostomy, a
surgical proced-
ure in which an
incision is made
in the flank of a
patient so that
a catheter can
be inserted into
the kidney pelvis
for the purpose
of drainage.



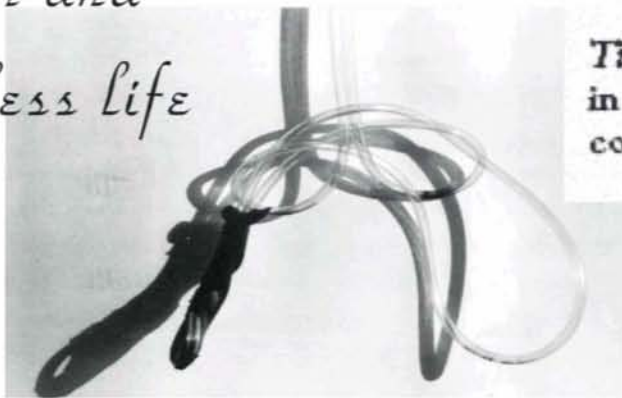
quest for immortality . . .

tidal drainage, a drainage in which a body
area is washed out by alternately flooding
and then emptying it with the aid of gravity.

the beauty of the horrid,
the gothic love of decay . . .

making waves
with love, care and
attention

youth and
endless life



Tide, a variation, increase or decrease,
in the concentration of a particular
component of body fluids.

37°C



rub salt into the wound

tidal volume, the amount
of air inhaled and exhaled
during normal ventilation.

equivalent

giving birth to monsters . . .



spew forth

sucker for surfaces . . .



remove secretions before the process begins, is a vital key for a healthy result . . .

A DISCUSSION ON THE ROLE AND FUTURE OF THE SOUTH ISLAND ART PROJECTS WITH JULIAN BOWRON, FIONA GUNN AND EVAN WEBB

FG: Julian, in the short time you have been in Christchurch - what has your initial perception of the contemporary art scene been?

JB: Without a doubt Christchurch has many good contemporary artists, but the problem is that they are not at all well provided for in terms of institutional support. In a city of this size you would expect there to be some kind of viable contemporary gallery space. Wellington has the City Gallery, Auckland has Artspace and Dunedin has a public gallery actively supporting contemporary practice, but Christchurch has nothing of that kind at all. Innovative, risk-taking contemporary work must be fostered for there to be a rich visual culture. The result is that too many artists go North or to Australia where they will have a chance to have their work shown and receive better support for what they do. The problem here is perhaps one of a lack of strong voices. I don't hear the voices of persuasive advocates of contemporary art, perhaps they are somehow muted - but where are they? The work is here, in spite of the situation, and perhaps, perversely to some degree, because of it. There is strong thoughtful work being produced and I think

that if it was better supported Christchurch really would become a significant player in the contemporary arts.

EW: I agree and would add that communities of thought need a focus. In an arts community this can be provided by museums and art galleries, although in Christchurch that focus has been lacking. It is vitally important for there to be a place where artists projects and ideas can be discussed, debated and critically responded to.

JB: It's debate and local critical response which fosters strong local awareness and appreciation of what is going on.

EW: After all, if you want to make it as an artist in New Zealand you have to exhibit in certain galleries and receive some sort of critical acclaim in the right journals and publications. Many artists go North seeking those venues but what we would hope to do is keep them here by providing those sorts of opportunities in the South Island.

FG: Evan, the board of SIAP has undertaken a lengthy process recently of evaluating what it has done in the past and how it might take an active role in initiating and managing artists projects in the future. Can you outline some of the most valuable contributions SIAP can and has offer/ed contemporary artists here in the South Island?

EW: Well, to begin, that evaluation process is by no means complete and indeed is an ongoing part of a

new strategy for the way in which we will undertake projects. But, what have we contributed to the South Island? I guess the best people to ask are those we have worked with. From my perspective I hope SIAP has generated some ideas and debate about contemporary art issues and practices essential to a lively arts community. Part of the way of achieving this has been to set up a network of artists, and writers and curators. We have also produced several publications, like our newsletter and catalogues, which I hope have provided some opportunity for critical response to our projects, as well as an opportunity for budding critics and writers to publish their ideas.

FG: Evan, you have concentrated on publications which SIAP has produced and the evidence of that debate that you have been involved in. What about the kinds of practices that SIAP has supported in realising the *Tales Untold* exhibition? They are a particular kind of work that we are seen to support. Is there a particular strategy here, or does it have something to do with the fact that we don't have a space?

EW: The question of a space, or not having a space is an interesting one and I'll take that up first. When we were first kicking around the idea of setting up South Island Art Projects some years ago, it wasn't initially conceived of as being spaceless or without its own exhibitions venue. But the notion of being spaceless came about for several reasons. I knew from my experience of working in art galleries that establishing those sorts of spaces and keeping them

open and operating costs a lot. There is a lot of capital investment tied up in art galleries. We never thought we would get funds for that sort of investment and, more importantly, there were enough galleries already established in the South Island where you could show work and which we thought, at the time, we might be able to negotiate to use. Furthermore, there were also other spaces available – some commercial sites as well as disused warehouses and the like. So it seemed, for a whole lot of good reasons, that we didn't need to establish another gallery. We also wanted and needed to be different and not duplicate what was already established in Christchurch and else where. To that degree we didn't want to be another art space like in Sydney or Auckland.

FG: But also, perhaps, it makes for a very different kind of organisation and I imagine for Julian, and for the previous Directors, a very different kind of management project because it becomes a project where you have to go out and negotiate those spaces, whether they be underneath the McDougall Annex or in a Nurses Chapel at Christchurch Hospital as it was for *Tales Untold*. The position of Director actually becomes one of negotiator, negotiating for artists to use those spaces. It is quite an interesting role I think. Perhaps, Julian, I can ask what are the differences between your Directorship of SIAP and the work that you undertook in Adelaide? I imagine that one of the most immediate differences might be that SIAP does not have a gallery space to manage. Can you describe the changes for you in managing the SIAP enterprise? How do you see this operating

in the contemporary art scene here in 1995?
Is it relevant?

JB: The non-gallery project based nature of SIAP was one of the strong incentives for me to come to Christchurch. In Australia amongst the contemporary art space people there is debate about the continued appropriateness of the gallery as such for contemporary work and certainly there are increasing numbers of artists interested in working with non-gallery spaces.

FG: A considerable number.

JB: It seems to me that SIAP is an ideal opportunity to go beyond the limitations and constraints of the gallery, the more formal institutional framework and the attendant, inherent constraints. Also after running a full-on gallery programme for several years it appealed to me to work without that constant pressure to turn around a show every four weeks or so. But having said all of that, and in the light of what Evan has just been talking about, the situation here makes it important that support for artists is applied in the most effective way. It can be argued that most artists are still interested in working in gallery spaces at least some of the time and I have been talking to various people about what is the best way to support what artists are doing here and now. So if there is no real alternative space here it might be that that is where our energy should go. Of course funding bodies, in their wisdom, are keen to divest themselves of on-going infrastructure support, including spaces, preferring to fund projects

on a case by case basis - they want the icing but not the cake - and here in Christchurch, if we carry on the way we are, we are in danger of ending up with neither.

FG: In the light of what you have just said, perhaps an exception to what you have just been talking about in Christchurch is the High Street Project. High Street has, in the short time that I have been in Christchurch, really taken off in its new space. It's still temporary, I imagine it's only going to last until the end of this year, but what is interesting is that the artists involved have been relating to that space in quite a different way. They have actually been responding to the space and making installation work. This means that perhaps when the gallery closes down all that they are faced with is finding another space and then having the possibility of having a new space to make their work in - this to me seems quite an interesting idea.

JB: Yes, perhaps in that situation they have the best of both worlds. They have a space, in the short term, to exploit in terms of its physical properties, its history, its location and architectural nature and then in due course move on to some other environment and interpret it differently. This is a reflection of a different approach to gallery spaces which isn't simply a matter of having exhibitions in the approved galleries.

FG: Yes, I think also that because Christchurch is a small city that the equivalent of actually having a gallery develop - its presence and identity - is not so

important. Because it's a small city and because there are a relatively small number of people who attend those kinds of shows, High Street has been able to get crowds of fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty people to their openings in the last year. It is a small city and you can move around easily from one gallery space to another across the city so it depends on where the new space may be.

JB: One of the things that's said about galleries, and particularly contemporary galleries, is that they can be somewhat intimidating to the newcomer. It's possible that the changes we have been talking about reduce the formality of going to a gallery and remove that obstacle to some degree.

EW: Yes, I can pick up on that with reference to the *Tales Untold* project we undertook last year. Because of the nature of that project, artists were working with different historic sites around the city, they provided different access to different audiences. For example, Nicola Jackson's work at the Nurses Chapel, which was a lovely, woven runner that when down the isle, was appreciated by people who would not normally come into a contemporary art space. To that degree, the audience for contemporary art practices is extended.

JB: I think that SIAP has great potential for providing new means of access. By working in different spaces we do provide an enormous potential for a variety of approaches to artist's work. I think we have to make sure that we capitalise on that and provide some backup (note I didn't say

education or interpretation) so that the work is not just sitting there, so that the audience is somehow encouraged to enjoy getting into it.

EW: That's right. One of the difficulties that SIAP has experienced is that of maintaining a profile. We naively thought at first that we could work cooperatively with other galleries and art institutions but soon realised that the environment is quite competitive and that it is difficult to build and establish a profile when you are working out of someone else's space. The conventional shop-front image is not available when you don't operate from a space and the SIAP profile had to be developed through other means. By and large, the projects we undertake are ephemeral in nature, and when they have run their course, SIAP disappears along with them. It is important therefore, that we develop ways to maintain a presence in the community. We are trying to achieve this through our publications and newsletter.

FG: In that competitive environment that you have spoken about, Evan, we have to be very careful, and by 'we' I mean all the people involved in the arts scene; careful not to overrun things that are in fact just different. We have to allow for diversity within that arts scene where the environment can sometimes overrun other, different, practices. I think a healthy arts scene in any city or country is one that has variety or a diversity of different work and approaches to work. This is why whenever there is discussion of the relevance of SIAP, the main argument is that we support a kind of art, an area

that isn't supported in Christchurch.

EW: I agree with you entirely and, in fact, when we first put our proposal to Arts Council they said that they would not support us if we simply duplicated the same sort of art programmes and projects that museums and galleries were already supporting in the region. But it is important to note that we are not driven by an idea of being different simply for the sake of being different, but rather that we are trying to support ideas and practices that are not usually supported by other museums and galleries in our region, and that requires of us that we operate differently.

JB: To gain a higher profile we have to work to a degree in collaboration with those other agencies because it is support of the whole "box and dice", the whole cultural environment, which will benefit us, rather than competing with each other for small slices of the cake. In that way attitudes can be changed rather than vying amongst ourselves for profile and attention.

FG: Especially so in regard to that are that larger spaces like the McDougall which have budgets for publicity which we don't have. We have to be realistic about what we can achieve with our resources. To come back to what you were saying earlier about our newsletter and our catalogues, they are one way of ensuring that presence because they are lasting and I think we are better at producing those and more ambitious so that they critically reflect what we are doing andthe diversity of

work that we have supported.

FG: One of the things I was interested in trying to bring up earlier with you, Julian, was to do with the differences between working in a gallery and with an organisation that doesn't have a gallery. I was interested in you trying to articulate your position, what you actually do and perhaps I can put the question forward to us all. What is the difference between an artist working in a gallery and working in other environments. I'm interested in trying to articulate those different kinds of practices, for you these are management practices.

JB: Certainly there are significant differences. I think that the important one and the most rewarding aspect of it is that the management practice, like the artist's practice, is much more interactive with communities. As a manager it is not simply a matter of running a gallery space with the conventional mechanisms of publicity and promotion. It is more to do with going out there and dealing with the people who actually run and use the sites and the surroundings in which we want to work, so from the very beginning the project must be sold to those people who become participants, hopefully willing participants, in the process and that's always the real joy of any of this work. When somebody becomes a participant and begins to see what it is the artists are on about and that their own response is important, if not essential. So yes, having that built-in from the very beginning is the great advantage of working in this way. Working in an established gallery space there is always the risk that you are constantly

dealing with those people who are initiated into the processes.

FG: It becomes self-referential.

JB: Yes, both in terms of the space, its architecture and the familiar society of people who inevitably come back to the openings unless you work very hard at going out to generate new audiences. That's the major difference and the big attraction for me. Of course it's also rather more difficult because you must sell each project over again to participants and to sponsors. As Evan mentioned, without the profile which a gallery is able to generate and maintain you are up against people saying "who are you, I've never heard of you", and when you are simply an organisation, a little office somewhere off in the hurly burly of the city, it does take some promotional ability. But I think it's mostly a matter of becoming more adaptive and responsive and perhaps a bit more generous in the way projects go out into the public arena.

FG: Yes, I know from my dealings with the Praxis project, having to go in on a couple of occasions to managers who were looking after particular sites. Where initially they had rejected the usage of the site, when I went in and spoke to them, they were actually quite interested or at least they listened and they certainly didn't see any danger in being involved. Yet they initially did, they saw great risks in being involved with artists. I guess artists have a persona in the community of being somehow different or alternative and if one of them turns up

on the doorstep and talks to them they realise that perhaps we are just normal people anyway. I always find that curious and interesting in the few times I've been required to do it.

EW: Also, one of the constraints that we needed to be free from was that of running a conventional exhibitions programme which demands that the doors (of the gallery) be open so many hours a day for so many days a week and that there is always something on the walls when people come through the door. These constraints can dictate the programme and lead to mediocrity. We wanted to avoid that. It is also challenging and more interesting, as you have both already pointed out, to work in places and spaces in the city at large and beyond.

JB: And when you start to think about it, it becomes quite exciting to conceive of spaces defined in much looser ways than a city or even the geographic limitation of the South Island as we know it.

EW: It hasn't been mentioned yet, but we have also had a strong investment in supporting film and video in the South Island. We are going to continue with that support by working closely with Independent Images. Supporting film and video requires an altogether different sort of space. Not being tied to a space allows us to work in more diverse ways and support a more diverse visual arts culture.

JB: Evan and Fiona, I've talked about the management of a programme which operates outside

gallery spaces, management is one aspect of it, but of course the essential element is the artist's work. I'm wondering how each of you, as artists, see that business of working outside of the gallery space, and what it requires of artists that's different from working in the more conventional gallery situation?

EW: On the occasions that I have worked outside of conventional gallery spaces it has been because the site of the work is crucial to the politics I have been conveying.

FG: I think there are two things that interest me about working outside a gallery. One, and I can think about *Tales Untold* as an example, is the way that when you work on a site or different sites - when you activate different sites around a city - the work leaves a kind of memory of what you have done in those sites in that place and I'm interested in the way that first of all that illuminates those sites. I'm thinking of Ralph Paine's work in the Provincial Council Chambers or Nicola Jackson's work. In fact, most of those works for me as a newcomer to Christchurch, really first of all allowed me to explore and go into places that I had never been into before. They have left with me very strong memories of those places particularly the art in those places, because each of those artists used a very particular way of illuminating certain aspects of those spaces, whether they be an historical connection or whatever. In that sense they have a kind of ripple effect on the city and on those spaces. I'm very interested in that. That's a kind of site specific practice that is usually relating to the site and its historical significance. There are

other practices of installation that don't necessarily comment on a site for its historic significance, they don't work that way specifically, but the way they do work is in relationship to the viewer, to the body of the audience literally. I'm interested in that because it is a way of encountering work that is experiential and through the experiential nature of that work, I think it has a capacity to contact a lot of other people. Because when installation work is effective it can be experienced in a physical sense and with that physical experience, whether you have been able to understand it, or decode it, or understand it as the artist might have intended it, you still go away with a very strong and vivid experience. I think that this is significant in terms of a different approach to practising as an artist.

EW: One of the difficulties of producing ephemeral works is that there is, as you suggest Fiona, only a memory left after the event. Yet it is critical that organisations like SIAP preserve and record those memories in some tangible way because that sort of record is an important part of supporting and recognising the careers of our artists. Unfortunately, this sort of documentation has been neglected in Christchurch. One of our aims would be to redress that by documenting our own projects well.

Julian Bowron is the recently appointed Director of the South Island Art Projects. Evan Webb is an artist and the South Island Art Projects Trust Chair. Fiona Gunn is an artist, lecturer at the Canterbury School of Fine Arts and Trust Member of the South Island Art Projects.



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...he was big and clumsy, and feeling himself abandoned did not help his awkward situation. He remained still, afraid he would make a mistake. He wanted so much to be right, and he did not want to spoil the first thing that was being given to him. "Oh God, I've already ruined so much; I've already understood so little, I've already refused so much, I spoke when I should have kept quiet, I've already ruined so much already." He was experiencing the worst kind of loneliness, the one in which there is no vanity; and then he wanted the girl. But he had ruined everything that had been given to him! To him, who had once again been given the first Sunday of a man. And out of all that, what remained after a while was a crime."

Clarice Lispector, *An Apple in the Dark*

Educating Miranda

— an installation by Julia Morison and Michael Ghent

Video de Poche, Paris

datesmay94

<REPORTS ON AN INVESTIGATION>

i have no

maps

IMAGES FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY
julia morison and michael ghent
TEXT — db

miranda
 miranda is association
 minor reinvention
 fragment token experience
 exploring openings
 collected stored not sorted (?)
 cracks
 Wm S. wants to own –
 (speleology)
 he can't allow
 i don't know glass
 this: the characters to be who they are
 breeds
 educating miranda picks them up, opens
 (errs/veers/
 them, employing a *transreal* approach
 verres)
 (in the sense of science <fiction> writer
 collecting
 Rudy Rucker's manifesto)
 littoral
 THE CHARACTERS, ONCE
 shell
 CREATED, MUST BE ALLOWED TO
 (the smallest
 INTERRELATE FREELY ACCORDING
 complex)
 TO THEIR PERSONALITIES AND
 inscribing
 PROPERTIES. THEY SHOULD NOT
 description
 BE SECONDED TO DEVICES OF
 dissolve the
 PLOT STRUCTURE ETC. EMPLOYED
 taxonomy
 BY THE WRITER.
 blight)

educating miranda lays all this bare in an abstract and
 disinterested way. it skirts the paths of a gendered critique of
 science (and other paths too, which i don't feel as
 confident in defining) but slyly avoids standing on it

ambivalence rests here:
 meta-levels of a text are explored but the artists
 seem almost invisible. i was travelling through
 foreign lands without a language and wanted
 people, and educating miranda was more
 facelessness. i suppose i wanted to peg them, work
 them out like prospero and his specimens, delude
 yourself that you know everything. i know that
 this is not what i'm supposed to want. (and maybe
 here, safe, i don't) (it would be an almost similar
 feeling a month later at the big polke retrospective,
 but with him there's always that spectacular
 element, gets the crowds through)

frustrating
 but looking at the remains (all i saw) of educating
 miranda, the world-of-their-own specimen bottles,
 the non-insignificant ephemera pinned to the
 miranda board, the greenaway-like luridity of the
 colour photocopies i feel i could look for hours,
 inventing my own story ideas over and over.
 i like this feeling very much, that i'm allowed to.

they were putting together a book, a book to
 record explore accompany? books like this become
 like hypertexts, there are all these links to other
 places where you don't know what you will find.
 i'm not sure if it will still happen, but i find the
 idea of the book more engaging than the idea of
 the installation, but then i am biased because i
 make books all the time...

but then more questions. "why do little girls like
 science?" i don't know why i expect the bottles
 and the board and the photocopies to provide me
 with answers (they don't claim to) but i do.
 educating miranda will not answer. it seems
 strangely removed from everything, but most of
 all from two new zealanders living in a tiny village
 in france, surrounded by pictures, books, musics,
 things, looking out over the chalky soil to a pale
 sky which itself
 seems to hold no answers

Pedagogy the term lumbering
 as young alone pre-adolescent in my (now-
 its override weight about in wheezing
 deceased) uncle's house, room ceiling-full of books
 self-righteousness (people don't
 scanning until eyes rest upon spines offering MEAT,
 learn, people teach, right). I received no sense of this <forbidden> from educating miranda which i
 FLESH & worlds spinning arcane secret no
 find extremely puzzling. PROSPERO PRESENTS IT ALL, PLEADING NEUTRALITY, A
 FRONT OF UNEQUIVOCAL SPECIMEN A. there seemed to be more of a sense of
 power-knowledge (how) than love-power-knowledge (why)
 (does this make sense? i'm trying to trace an absence)



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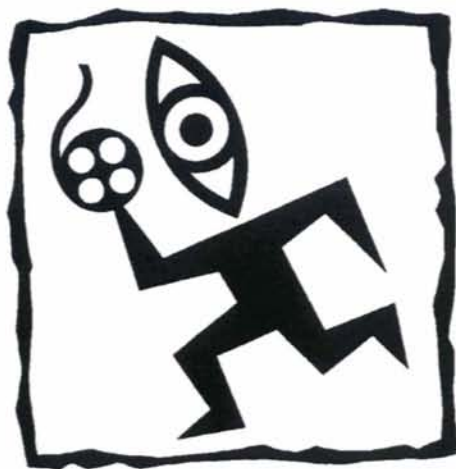
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INDEPENDENT

IMAGES

Over the last few years a number of young Christchurch film makers have put a lot of time and energy into independent images (i.i.) - a film maker's collective aimed at promoting, producing and distributing a local film/video alternative to the mainstream moving imagery of broadcast television and commercial cinema. Recently an important i.i. objective was realised when we became a Non Profit Making Incorporated Society and began to operate from an office in the Old Chemistry building in the Arts Centre. Since March we've held fortnightly Show & Tell sessions in the homes of various members, where someone screens their work and a critical discussion follows. If there's any time left after this we watch and discuss a work supplied by our kind sponsors - Alice in Videoland. Usually the work we watch raises



general issues relevant to all practitioners, and those who attend these sessions find the discussions and critiques very useful. March also saw the beginning of a screening programme, with the Australian package "Slaves to Love" showing to a near full audience at the Clocktower theatre in the Arts Centre. In April we screened "Mother Knows Best" - a package of N.Z. work put together by the Moving Image Centre in Auckland; in May we screened "Wax, or The Discovery of Television Among the Bees" - David Blair's cult video epic that points the way towards an "independent electronic cinema"; and in June we were lucky to be able to show "Bush News/Video Views" - a programme of contemporary aboriginal film and video work curated by Lisa Reihana and Artspace in Auckland. Similar screenings on a monthly basis are planned

for the rest of the year and we hope to curate a programme of recent Canterbury work to show sometime around November/December. Anyone wanting to put themselves on a phone list for these screenings can leave their details at the office (see no. below). These people receive a reminder call a few days prior to every screening. Independent Images also maintains a database for crew work in the film & television industries, publishes a monthly newsletter and initiates collective film projects. Through Taskforce Green we've been able to employ Rachel Kerr as a director to co-ordinate i.i. from the office. If you have any enquiries regarding i.i. and/or its upcoming projects / screenings, contact the office on 377 0677.

eugenie blank

(398 words)



What Now? High Street Project

The High Street Project is back in High Street, this time on the first floor at number 132 (the same building which houses the Yoga Rooms and a lampshade retailer, over the road from the Globe café in the block one south of the old address). Established in 1992, the Project has been successfully running a non-profit gallery for two and a half years. Although community-based, it aims to engage with both national and international art discourse. The Project's explicit goal has been to give opportunities particularly to young and emerging artists, established artists who wish to develop their work in new directions, and work which engages in contemporary social issues in a challenging or critical way.

What Now?, a series of shows by young artists, has been underway at the gallery since May and will run until October. There will be ten shows in all, each lasting for two weeks. Every show is advertised in the newspapers, and a programme of forthcoming shows is available as a flyer. This series is being presented with the assistance of the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa.

A grant application was made to Toi Aotearoa last year when the Project was forced to go into abeyance in September. The premises that had been used since the Project's beginnings in 1992 were required back by their owner, Mr Richards of Michael's Restaurant. All involved

with the Project are extremely grateful for the generous service he performed in providing a rent-free venue for the use of the visual arts community.

The proposal for funding which has allowed the Project to re-establish itself was largely due to the initiative of a former Project coordinator and SIAP board member, Maddie Leach. (Maddie soon after left Christchurch to work in Wellington at the Jensen Gallery, and has since found further work teaching

drawing at the Polytechnic there.) An application was made for money to help with a series of shows featuring artists in their early twenties which would allow a response by these artists to the journalistic tag "Generation X"; reflecting the concerns of those who fall within the age group taken to define it. The shows are presented under the title *What Now?*, the name of a TV show first watched by people who grew up in the 1980s. The phrase can be read as an aware and eager inquiry or a world weary shrug (and for an arts audience it has an obvious echo of *Art Now*, the recent sculpture survey show at Te Papa Tongarewa).



Violet Faigan, one of the artists included in the original proposal, has undertaken the job of managing *What Now?* This began with the task of finding and negotiating the lease of a suitable property. After a long hunt, the room at 132 High Street (an early candidate that was initially refused us) was secured, and volunteers were

called on to help renovate. A high proportion of Art School students showed willing, and after several busy weekends and nights, rubbish was cleared, walls were reshaped, the walls and ceiling were painted, the floors sanded and oiled, and lights installed. The opening of the new venue was celebrated with a group show, *Change Of Address*, featuring work mostly by people who helped with the renovation, and offering a preview of the sort of work that was to come.

The new gallery has a more even floor and better natural light than the previous location, and two smaller rooms off the main exhibition space (one of which has no windows).

The Project will remain at its new address for as long as it is able. On the understanding that the building was due for demolition, a six month lease was secured to enable at least the *What*

Now? shows to be exhibited. A waiting list of those interested in showing at the gallery after *What Now?* has been started, in anticipation of a reversion, at least for a time, to the old system of individually-organised shows. However, it is likely that the Project will be used as a venue for project-style exhibiting, in line with current trends in arts funding. For individual shows it has been proposed that artists will pay a fee, probably of \$60 rent per week plus an additional \$25 per show for general maintenance.

The Project continues to be artist-run, with a floating membership determined by interest. Curatorial decisions are made democratically at meetings as required. We are interested to hear from anyone who might want to put forward an idea for an arts council grant, to organise a show or series of shows. Help and advice will be available on compiling applications for those proposals which seem most relevant and appropriate to the Project. Basic outlines may be dropped off to the gallery or sent to:

P.O. Box 3733, Christchurch.

Gallery hours are standardly from Wednesday to Friday 11.00am till 5.00pm, and Saturday from 11.00am till 2.00pm, (although for some shows these have been extended slightly as advertised). The gallery telephone number is **03 374 9346.**

What Now?
may - october 1995

High St Project
first floor - 132 High St

PART 1

- **Patric Tomkins**
1st - 13th may
- **Violet Falgan**
16th - 27th may
- **Melissa McLeod**
30th may - 10th June
- **James Wallace & Jason Maling**
13th - 24th June
- **Kirsty Gregg**
27th June - 8th July

PART 2

- **Donald Fraser**
11th - 22nd July
- **Marie Walls**
25th July - 5th August
- **Belinda Small & Charlotte Chighton**
8th - 19th August
- **Tom Beauchamp**
22nd August - 2nd September
- **Saskia Leek**
5th - 16th September

openings at the High St Project are held on Tuesdays at
5.30pm. Any time changes will be publicised.

LynX



Silver brooch by Kate Ewing

Jewellery Gallery, 2nd Floor, 130 Hereford St, Ph 365 1843

C r e d i t s

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Director: Julian Bowron
Assistant: Kate Fielder

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**SOUTH ISLAND ART PROJECTS
ARTS CENTRE
P O BOX 902 CHRISTCHURCH
NEW ZEALAND AOTEAROA
tel: 64 (03) 379 5583
fax: 64 (03) 379 6063**

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Toi Aotearoa

ESPRESSO 124
Dining Room **BAR**
Delicatessen
124 Oxford Tce. 3650547
Christchurch New Zealand.



RONNIE VAN HOUT

'Self titled' photograph from 'Mephitis'



