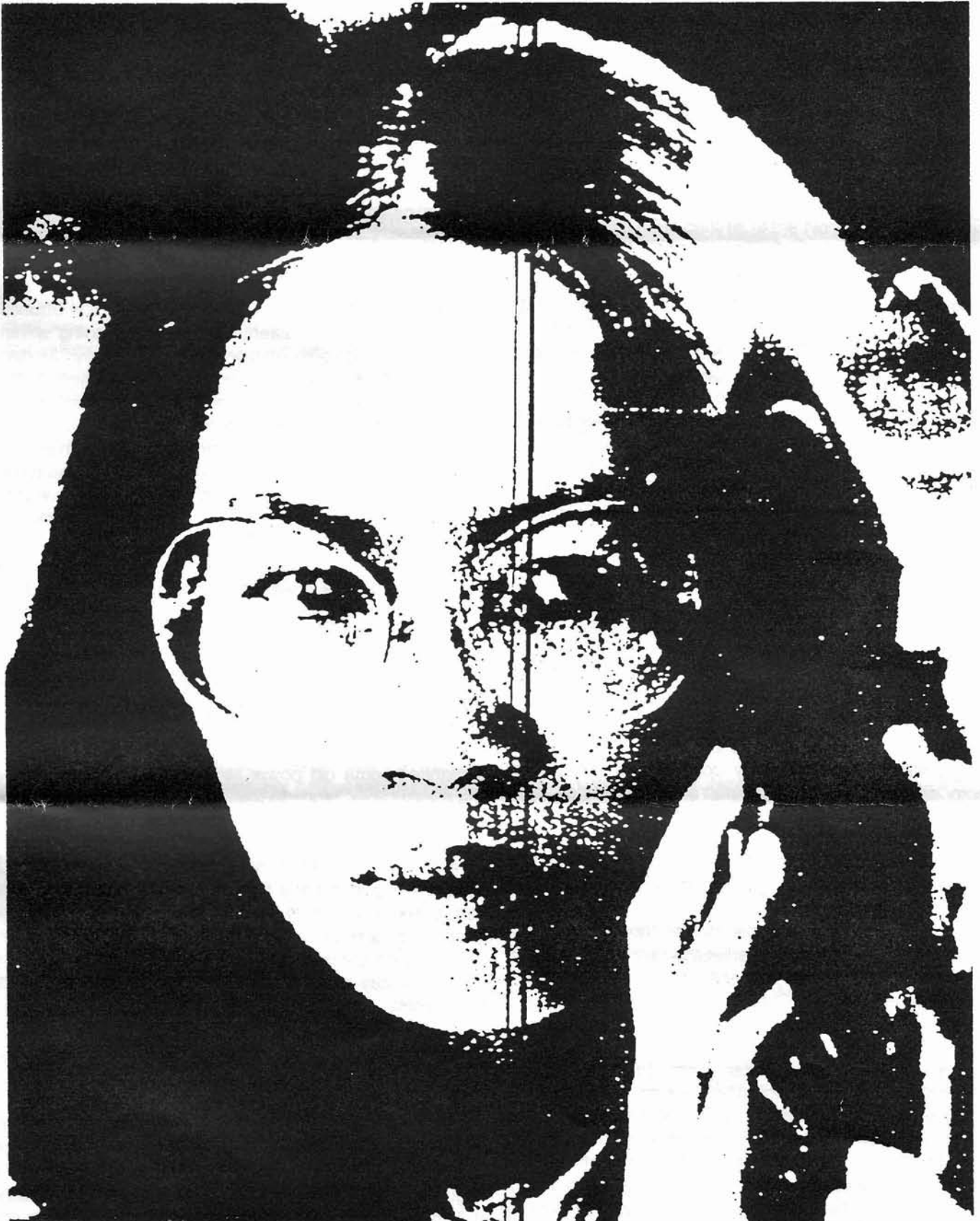


SOUTH ISLAND

ART

PROJECTS

Newsletter No. 9 August 1993



Editorial

This newsletter is the last before the 'public practices' forum so we have included information about the artists projects and the forum programme in the centre spread. Please note there still may be some minor changes to the forum line up due to late confirmations. The venue has also changed to the Fullwood Room in the Dunedin Centre. This venue has a larger capacity and better facilities than the Skeggs Room but we do need more registrations to cover the added costs!

June and July have been an eventful two months for the New Zealand art world with the introduction of the draft Arts Council bill and a domino effect as positions become vacant in the public gallery system and the process of repositioning moves down the line. Many a submission has been sent off to the Select Committee for the draft Arts Bill.

Regional communities are concerned about the proposed abolition of the Regional Arts Councils and the question of regional representation remains unanswered. Although contemporary concerns in the visual arts were not well represented with the Regional Arts Councils there is a need, particularly in the South Island, for a regional office as an information and networking centre. The proposal to drop statutory legislation facilitating Community Arts Councils will mean the disintegration of a regional network which serves isolated communities. CAC's will have to become clearer about their aims and objectives in order to compete for funding. This will mean more money for smart operators (not necessarily a bad thing) but it will also mean that cultural activity in small isolated places could wither and die.

We are witnessing the deregulation of the cultural sector. Bureaucracy and institutionalisation disempower the individual. The centralisation of the Arts Council bureaucracy and the institutionalisation of the Visual Arts Programme (which I have mentioned here before) disempower individual artists especially those in regional communities. If this tendency continues in the cultural sector artists will need to get smart and get together.

What on earth happened to RE-VISIONS?

RE-VISIONS was the first major project for Christchurch and was therefore an important part of South Island Art Projects programme. When it became clear that no funding would be available from the Visual Arts Commissioning Programme earlier this year we were left in the position of having to renegotiate the substantial support offered by the Christchurch City Council for the project.

Ironically the rejection letter from the Visual Arts Commissioning panel congratulated us on the support we had managed to get from the CCC and indicated that the panel would reconsider the application at it's October meeting. Even if the application was successful at this panel meeting it will be impossible to hold RE-VISIONS in 1993. This is unfortunate since it is a Suffrage project. The majority of other support attracted by the project

came from Suffrage based funds - \$8000 from the Christchurch City Council Suffrage Committee and \$1500 from the Suffrage Trust in Wellington - and this was automatically lost.

The congratulations were deserved in this case as we had broken new ground with the City Council. We achieved this by accessing Suffrage and Heritage Committee support (which was gained at least in part in anticipation of further support coming from QEII) but QEII failed to come to the party, apparently because there was not enough money (\$267,000 worth of applications for \$75,000 funds available). SIAP did receive the largest single grant from that panel meeting for the 'public practices' Artists' Commissions (\$16,000) so we have no reason to complain. All is not lost however. We are still talking with the Christchurch City Council and RE-VISIONS will be renegotiated for 1994 in a broader historical framework.

Future Structures

This process and other South Island Art Projects activities have revealed inconsistencies and lack of co-ordination in public arts funding at all levels. Funding for visual arts projects from outside the usual channels at City Council level is virtually non-existent. Community funding within City Councils is also disallowed to centrally funded organisations as a rule and enquiries are directed to the Community or Regional Arts Councils. Organisations like SIAP, supported by the central funding body (QEII), are disqualified for support from Regional or Community Arts Council funds (this is called "double funding" but the rules are often bent). Once the RAC's go and the CAC's wither away will the City Councils step into the fray? I think not without a carrot and a stick!

The forces of deregulation are ensuring that public funding decisions are increasingly guided by market driven criteria and the "arts industry" is becoming more substantially hitched to the corporate wagon. The proposed abolition of the RAC's and CAC's in the new bill follows the growth of the rhetoric of "partnership" and "broader audiences" in the Visual Arts Programme. "Accountability" has sharpened competition and dismantled some old power structures but the pursuit of "the measurable" tends to translate into funding decisions that reflect reductive and populist criteria.

If we are going to challenge reductive criteria artists and those working in the arts field have to develop alternative criteria and this will entail becoming clearer about the relationship between art and its audiences. There is little comfort to be derived from the dismantling of the welfare state but it may engender the demise of complacency and a politicisation of the arts. C'est la guerre...

Jude Rae

Cover Image: Trinh T. Minh-ha behind the camera. Her film *Shoot for the Contents* will screen at Canterbury University Lecture Theatre A3 at 8pm 19 August and at Otago University Castle 1 Lecture Theatre at 8pm 20 August. See Art Bulletins for further information

Art Bulletins

"SHOOT FOR THE CONTENTS"

Free screenings of Trinh T. Minh-ha's film *Shoot for the Contents* will take place in Christchurch 8pm Thursday 19 August at A3 Lecture Theatre University of Canterbury and 8pm Friday 20 August at Castle 1 Lecture Theatre at the University in Dunedin. The screening will be followed by a question session with the film maker. **PLEASE NOTE THE CHRISTCHURCH SCREENINGTIME HAS CHANGED FROM 7.30pm to 8pm.** Trinh T. Minh-ha is internationally renowned as a theorist and a maker of innovative documentary films. She has travelled extensively and lectured on film, feminism and art. She has taught as the Chancellor's distinguished Professor in Women's Studies at the University of California and currently teaches Cinema at San Francisco State University. *Shoot for the Contents* (102 mins colour film - 1991) is a film on culture, art and politics in China. The film, whose title plays on the meanings of an ancient Chinese guessing game, is an excursion into the maze of allegorical naming and storytelling in China. Weaving the points of view of both insiders and outsiders engaged in differing realms of social and artistic activities, the film ponders questions of power and change, politics and culture, as refracted by the Tiananmen Square event.

Cuts to Arts Council Funding

The Lottery Grants Board has cut the 93/94 Arts Council allocation of funding by \$1.4 million to a total of \$17.3 million. The total Arts Council income for 1993/94 will be \$21 million following a static government allocation of \$3.4 million. Arts Council Chair Jenny Patrick says that the arts community will learn of the effects of the cuts after the Council's budget meeting on 18 August.

Trick or Treat

Artspace is holding a seminar addressing issues of feminism and postcolonialism on Sunday 22 August 12.30pm to 6pm at the Galaxy Theatre in Auckland. Cost is \$50 and \$30 (students) and speakers are Trinh T. Minh-ha (USA), Merata Mita (NZ) and Marian Pastor Roces (Philippines). For further information - Artspace, tel 09 303 6495 fax 09 366 1842.

Women Artists Gathering and Drawing Workshop

The East Eyreton Hall (20 mins north of Christchurch) has been hired from Sept 11 to 19 for a gathering of women artists to get together to work, to discuss art and politics, and to share ideas. Friendly non-competitive and supportive environment where everyone is welcome to draw, chat and enjoy the company. There will be talks/video/slide presentations with informal discussion including Pippa Davies on "The Birth Project", Pam Gerrish-Nunn on Lesbin Art, Julie King on Margaret Stoddart, Mei Hurrell on Kate Richmond and Colleen Anstey on her dance/video collaboration with dancer Bronwyn Judge. Participation can be full or part time. There is a breakfast on Sunday 19 Sept. For further information phone Linda James 03 313 4495 (Rangiora) or Tiffany Thornley 3667 673 (Christchurch)

Second Canterbury Short Film Festival Glitched!

The Gala opening of the Canterbury Short Film Festival was **Glitched** on 26 July organised by two Christchurch film makers Jillian Grant and Janene Knox.

Glitched was an outdoor screening of contemporary film, video and slides, 30 seconds or less, by 17 new and established multimedia artists based in Christchurch and Auckland. 39 short, attention grabbing works were projected onto the outside wall of the Alice in Videoland building in High Street with a dazzling appearance by Auckland's "Drag Babies" who appeared on the roof tops.

Glitched was supported and funded by local High St business with the idea that it brought art onto the street, funded by and for the public. This event proved to be a real success as an outdoor screening with a large turnout. Jillian Grant says there is definitely talk of touring **Glitched** to main centres of the North and South Island so make sure you look out for this in the near future.

This year the **Second Canterbury Short Film Festival** included films from all over the country and beyond. The festival took place at the Regent Theatre 27 - 29 July and was facilitated by Robyn Anderson and John Christoffels.

There were 56 films in 3 days, film and video formats, VHS, SVHS, SP-BETA, 10mm and 35mm, lengths from 4mins to 29mins. Judges were Merata Mita, Graeme Tetley, Maurice Askew and Heather Judd. Workshops were held on script writing, technical information and distribution (NZ and Australian networking).

There were six categories of awards this year:

Best Drama: The Euphoria by Stuart Ashby

Best Experimental: Lenny Minute 1 by Glenn Standing

Best Animation: Word of Mouth by Jane Gratowski

Best Student: The Assumption by May Trubuhovich

Best Documentary: New Directions - Trim Genes by Matthew Lawrence

Best Overall Film: New Directions - Trim Genes by Matthew Lawrence

This year the variety of films was great and diverse and we can look forward to more next year.

Amanda Jenkins

Video by Women from the Pacific Rim

Shared Techlines is a program of seven videoworks that will be showing in Christchurch and Dunedin.

7.30pm, 15 September at the Clocktower Theatre at the Arts Centre

7.30pm, 16 September at Archway 2 Lecture Theatre, University of Otago.

The programme includes work by Lisa Reihana (New Zealand), Mako Idemitsu (Japan), Ilene Segalove (USA), Ellen Pau (Hong Kong), Sandra Kogut (Brazil), Jill Scott (Australia) and Sarah Diamond (Canada).

public practices

Artist Projects Forum

Co-ordinated by South Island Art Projects

"public practices" is a visual arts project for the Southland and Otago Region. The project explores new models for artists to work with existing community structures and in the broader cultural context by presenting a range of **temporary site specific art works** in a variety of environments commonly referred to as "public". The artists projects will occur over the period leading up to or concurrent with a forum and related programme of events to be held in Dunedin on 1, 2, and 3 October 1993. The projects will be documented for presentation, discussion and analysis at the forum.

A programme of events and exhibitions is current being organised to take place in Dunedin at the time of the forum. Information concerning this programme will be available by mid September.

Artists' Projects in Southland and Otago

Jacqueline Fraser has recently returned from a year in France as the 1992 Mötet & Chandon Fellow, New Zealand's most prestigious art award. Jacqueline has proposed to make a work for her family marae at Otakou. The name of the work will be **Mataki Taki** (the view) and will be placed on the grass hill in front of the marae. Fraser's work links traditional Maori artforms with contemporary site specific idiom.

New Zealand artist **Di ffrench** has completed the first stage of her project in Oamaru which is a large grassed "armchair" form placed on Cape Wanbrow at Lookout Point. The earthwork is an ancient artform and this contemporary statement was made with a great deal of community support including the support of the Waitaki District Council, the Justice Department and the Department of Conservation. The construction was made in consultation with the Parks Department and other artists and it will be planted with wild yarrow and possibly chamomile in the spring. It is yet to be decided whether the work will be maintained beyond a limited time.

Landmarks is the title of **Siegfried Köglmeier's** Project in Invercargill. This project will take as its theme the relationship between cultures, linking the artist's memories and personal history from Germany and his adopted home of New Zealand. Taking landmarks from both places, the Zirbell Nuss in Augsburg, his hometown, and the Watertower in Invercargill, Köglmeier will make a work which brings these histories together.

Kaoru Hirabayashi is the Dunedin International Artist in Residence and has proposed a work for the Lakes District Museum in Arrowtown. Her work includes references to Japanese language and written characters and will include an installation which refers to aspects of Japanese culture. The exhibition, which will be advertised with a bilingual poster, will present the work of an internationally known Japanese artist in the Lakes District region bringing a cultural dimension to the already strong tourism and economic links.

Local artist **Russell Moses** will make a work for Back Beach at **Koputai** (Port Chalmers) which will take the form of a **stone waka** to be constructed out of rock and rubble scattered over the beach. This environmental work will act as a groyne to check beach drift and will also clean and tidy the beach. The waka will be subject to the ebb and flow of the tide and will be covered by 1 metre at high tide. The project links the Pakeha and Maori histories of Otago as well as the local adage "by boats we live" which refers to the common livelihood provided by the sea.

Vivian Lynn will undertake the **Gore Project** which extends ideas she is working with for a project in the East German city of Dessau. She will work with Community Arts Worker Susan Wilson and a group of Gore residents to facilitate a photographic work touching aspects of local history. The work will be exhibited at the Eastern Southland Art Gallery in Gore. Vivian Lynn's project is also supported by a research grant from Wellington Polytechnic where she works as a Lecturer in the School of Art and Design.

'public practices'

Forum Programme

Venue: The Fulwood Room at the Dunedin Centre, 1 Harrop St, Dunedin

Friday 1 October

Registrations 8.30am

Opening 9am

Session 1 - Territories 9.30am - 12.30pm

Chair: Evan Webb (Acting Director, Len Lye Foundation)

John Barrett-Lennard (Guest speaker, Curator of the 1994 Adelaide Biennale) will speak about the complex and heterogeneous nature of the "public" and the part that art plays in its construction.

Speaker to be confirmed - "public art" and aspects of feminist theory.

Gerard O'Regan (Liaison Officer, Otago Museum) will speak about art and its place in Maori culture and communities.

Session 2 - Communities and Structures I 2pm - 5pm

Chair: Rob Garrett (Art History and Theory Lecturer, Otago Polytec School of Art)

Ian Hunter (Curator, Director - Projects Environment, UK) will present a paper called "*Immersion Strategies: Artists as process participants in the life world*".

Vivienne Stone (Christchurch Community Arts) will speak about new perspectives on "community arts".

Adele Woolley (Director Aeroclub Gallery) - PROP and the Port Chalmers Project

Saturday 2 October

Session 3 - Urban Strategies 9.30am - 12.30pm

Chair: Jonathan Smart (Director, Jonathan Jensen Gallery, Christchurch)

John Leuthart (Executive Director, Museum Directors Federation) will draw on his experience as Director of the Wellington City Art Gallery and Visual Arts Programme Manager at QEII Arts Council to speak about processes and issues in the commissioning of works in public places.

Stuart Niven (Architect, Urban Planning Dept, Wellington City Council) will speak about about new approaches to urban planning and the Resource Management Act.

Priscilla Pitts (Director, Artspace) will speak about the Artspace Billboard project

Session 4 Communities and Structures II 2pm - 5pm

Chair: Louise Wilton (Art History Dept, University of Otago)

Giegfried Köglmeier will speak about the **Landmarks** Project in Invercargill with Russell Beck (Director, Southland Museum and Art Gallery) .

Jacqueline Fraser (Artist) will her work at the marae at Otakou.

Vivian Lynn (Artist, Lecturer - Wellington Polytechnic School of Art and Design) will speak about the project in Gore with a representative from the Eastern Southland Art Gallery.

Di ffrench (Artist) may speak together with Jackie Hunter (City Promotions, Waitaki District Council) on the development of the "couch" in Oamaru.

Sunday 3 October will focus on recent developments in cultural policy and the future development of 'public (art) practices'.

Session 5 - Visions and Speculations 10.30am - 1pm

Chair: Linda Tyler (Lecturer, Art History and Theory, Otago Polytechnic School of Art) to be confirmed

Christina Barton (Curator of Contemporary New Zealand Art, Museum of New Zealand) - to be confirmed.

John McCormack (Director, Govett Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth) will present a paper which extends the theme of his article in the first edition of *Midwest* on the "New Right" and cultural democracy.

Third Speaker to be confirmed

Session 6 - Topic to be Announced 2pm - 4pm

Chair : To be confirmed

A panel will be drawn from the previous sessions to draw out the themes emerging as central to the forum an there will be opportunity for futher discussion.

SUFFERING Representation

The avalanche of Suffrage based exhibitions this year are providing an interesting range of responses to the politics of representation - from some very good historical exhibitions to the usual flawed attempts to juggle the politics of inclusion within the exclusive framework of the "arts". While the long term impression threatens to be one of extended tokenism and eventual backlash there are some positive aspects to the Suffrage Year notably the opportunity to observe the politics of representation in action.

Two recent exhibitions in the South Island illustrate the complexity and sensitivity of the issues at stake. The "Women's Lives" exhibition at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery in Christchurch was widely criticised for its appeal for work from invited women to be exhibited and the donated to a collection for posterity. No thought was given in making this appeal to charity and womens' craving for recognition as to how this might stack up against gender balance in the gallery's acquisitions policy.

Further, the terms of the exhibition required that participants conform in size, two dimensionality and even required the use of special supplied paper. A sympathetic interpretation would see these requirements as conforming to basic modernist aesthetics of presentation and archivally prudent (even generous) however these requirements also trivialised and regimented the work of women subduing diverse and often powerful art practices represented there as diminutive and uniform.

The best of intentions can mask ignorance which colludes to continue oppression. A generous reading of the institutional motives is further undermined by the mildly

apologetic letter recently sent out to exhibitors which retracts the request for donation of works as misguided but which then proceeds to characterise the objections raised as being purely economically based. This approach refuses to acknowledge the gender politics of past or future acquisitions policy or indeed those of the formal restrictions of the exhibition.

The situation that arose in Nelson with the "Women in the North of the South Island" Exhibition at the Suter Gallery (which apparently received \$10,000 from the Suffrage Trust) was similarly revealing. As with the previous example the show was by invitation, with size restrictions specifying two dimensional work and no mention was made of payment of fees, or of a process of selection regarding received works.

When a young Christchurch artist challenged the rejection of her work she found that it was made on grounds that the work she submitted was not an artwork but an advertisement (for a video work also by the artist) and that the presentation in poster form (with pins supplied) was not acceptable. This indicates a profound lack of understanding or awareness of contemporary art practice, particularly feminist strategies which attempt to reveal the politics of traditional art forms and institutions. Judgements based on "quality" and "appropriateness" have served to exclude women's work from art institutions for centuries.

The Suter Gallery's response to her objections was to exhibit the exchanged correspondence with the offending work indicative more of the gallery's ignorance of its own position than a healthy interest in debate.

Many women feel ambivalent about the politics of the Suffrage year. At least Suffrage presents us with an opportunity to analyse the politics of representation so central to the visual arts. In fact it matters little whether these institutional responses represent conscious strategies. They serve to illustrate the working of oppressive ideologies and we can learn from them.

Jude Rae

U N D E R C A P R I C O R N

AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ART, POLITICS AND CULTURE

PO Box 10-113 Wellington, New Zealand Telephone 64-4-473-0149 Fax 64-4-471-1164

The international symposium Under Capricorn will take place in Wellington on 4,5 and 6 March 1994, during the International Festival of the Arts. The symposium results from a partnership between the International Festival of the Arts, the Centre for Projects in the Arts, the Govett Brewster Art Gallery and the Arts Council of New Zealand.

On the broad platform of the question 'Is art a European idea?' the symposium will stage lectures, debates, performances and installations by writers, commentators and artists.

How well does the idea of art accommodate cultural differences? How well does the idea of art relate to the Pacific hemisphere; to Australia; to South America; the Philippines, Japan, the Pacific Islands and New Zealand?

In all, between 30 and 40 invited speakers and respondents from New Zealand and overseas will join the symposium audience already packed for the Festival of Arts with many other artists and writers involved elsewhere in the Festival but invited to attend the Symposium during their time in Wellington. The event has been programmed to abut with Writers and Readers Week.

PUBLIC, NOTICE

It's topical to talk about an idea of public. The general elections are not far away and politicians will soon be doing their best to woo the public. More generally, 'Publics' (audiences, groups, peoples, others) have become the new commodity by which success in the market place is measured. Capturing the public, in the socially combative sense, whether in the health sector or the art sector, is of paramount importance in the competitive market that now substitutes for social life.

Publics do not pre-exist. They are bought about by those who have an interest in their existence. They are bought about by those who wish to fulfil some purpose which is often different from or even in conflict with the perceived purpose a public has for its own existence. Even with the best intentions, the constitution of a public is always, to a degree, at the expense of its own power.

At the end of July, Dunedin artist and academic, Rob Garrett convened a public meeting at No 5 Dowling St, one of Dunedin's more recent dealer galleries. Those who attended, and there was a good turnout of more than sixty people, discussed issues about the nature of 'art', complained about their lack of access to exhibition spaces, and left resolved to re-convene another meeting to bring about changes. Comments made by those at the meeting were recorded and the tapes will later be transcribed and published. The meeting, published transcripts and various texts pinned to the wall of No 5 Gallery are all part of an art work by Rob Garrett called "Town Meeting". Garrett created an art work - he also created a public.

Town meetings bring to mind by-gone days when communities were small and parochial. Days when every one knew each other and when everyone's business was the business of all who lived in the community. Town Meetings were the occasion where grievances were aired, complaints made and good news shared and celebrated. All who came had a say (if they were old enough) and a hand in decisions which affected the community. What is kind of romantic about the town meeting is that it epitomised an idea of true democracy - of democracy in which all voices are heard and in which decisions and actions are taken by all. It is not surprising, therefore, that this model for discussing social, political and economic problems should be evoked at a time when constitutional democracies appear corrupt, inaccessible and no longer representative of the people who elect them.

Garrett advertised his meeting as one that encouraged participation by urging the audience to become a speaking public - a public idealised in the concept of a participatory democracy. He encouraged questions to be raised about, for example, the relationships between the dealer gallery and its communities and further suggested that all was not right with these relationships and that maybe something ought to be done about them.

He also pinned texts to the walls of No 5 and provided space and means for others to add their say as well. The writings Garrett chose were about ideas of 'public',

'public space', 'democracy', 'politics' and 'participation'. These texts were not just presented as reading material, but were sometimes enlarged, blurred and torn to give them a visually different appearance - an aesthetic appeal other than that afforded them by the books from which they were taken. The deliberate act of (self)consciously aestheticising the texts confirmed that Garrett was also presenting an art work. It needs to be said though, that all the altered texts (torn, enlarged, blurred) were accompanied by a conventional copy giving full context and reference. Nonetheless, the contradictory acts of mystifying the texts (by crafting them into art works) then demystifying them by reconfirming their authority as theory by presenting them in the convention in which that authority is perceived, only served to confuse and dilute their worth and impact as texts.

There is no doubt that Garrett has a genuine interest in his local art community and he called the meeting so that problems in that community could be addressed and acted upon. He also wanted to show his art work. Less obvious was his interest in art theory and that this meeting could form part of his study and research. Collecting data in this way placed Garrett in the role of social anthropologist - a role he played by recording the proceedings so that they might be later analysed and made accessible to others. He also spoke or intervened as little as possible (remaining invisible to and apart from their subjects, is a problem for anthropologists who work in the field). Through both of these strategies he seemed to position himself apart from the group and its concerns and it is this act of apparent distancing that I would now like to address.

This view of Garrett as anthropologist/researcher is reinforced in his own statements in "the Politics of Participation", the flyer which advertised his meeting. In it he writes, "It is proposed that the taping, transcription and publication of the meeting, along with critical writing, will be a catalyst in developing more effective art conversation in the public domain." To facilitate this, Garrett asked those who wished to speak to stand, so that they could be heard, and identify themselves, so that they could be named in the transcript. I imagine, being recorded is sufficiently intimidating to prevent some from speaking. Further on Garrett writes that "...dominance is maintained by limiting dialogue and regulating participation" and I wonder if the microphones and recording equipment did not, to some degree, regulate participation on this occasion as well.

His project is premised on assumptions central to recent critical social theory. Of importance is the idea that art is a social concept defining relationships between people and objects in a social field. These relationships are by no means harmonious and any warm fuzzy feelings we might have about art and its production are quickly laid to rest by the revelations of discourse theory. Instead, the social field of art, like any other social field, is structured in conflict and dominance. Furthermore, discourse theory reveals that the struggle to maintain dominance and the struggle to resist dominance is a struggle, primarily of words, not brush strokes (although some would have it that it is a battle of images) At its most

radical, social theory seems to discount art works altogether and focus instead upon the language struggles which constitute not only the combatants but the works of art themselves. Part of being dominated is to be defined by words. As defined groups of people we are either empowered (member of the business round table) or disempowered (the unemployed). But groups, and here we can use the term publics, are only bought into existence when someone speaks on their behalf and in so doing defines them. The act of speaking on behalf is fraught with paradox.

To this extent Garrett brought his public about by the act of defining it. To begin, he wrote that his public (those who came along to the meeting) was 'a project', and, in particular, an 'art statement'. And even more particularly it was a "truly critical audience" and "...a public characterised by critical self analysis" that he invited to participate.

By thus defining his public, Garrett brings it into existence. Publics are seldom self defining - particularly when they are marginal or dominated groups. This is because the authority to define, by and large remains the preserve of the dominant language group. Academic language is good at defining. Its epistemological tradition gives it an air of objectivity and credibility. It is also seductive. Many of us would welcome being defined as a member of a "truly critical" audience without considering what it means to be so. The authority to define, paradoxically, comes from the group being defined in recognising that the spokes-person, the person defining the group, is engaging the dominant language (discourse) The act of recognition is an act of acquiescing to the authority of the speaker and thus is an act of insuring that the hierarchy of dominance is maintained. Defining or representing a public, is an act of distancing oneself from that public through the use of language. Disempowered publics, by definition, are disempowered by their language (in relation to the dominant language which maintains and reproduces their disempowerment) Representation in their language, therefore, not only is ineffectual but, recognised as such, would never be authorised by the public as the language (form) by which it seeks representation.

I wonder, therefore, if publics, like that constituted at No 5, can be empowered for their own good when the language in which they are constituted is not of their own making.

There is no doubt in my mind that Garrett's project is founded in sincerity and a genuine desire to create a more discerning and socially critical public. Indeed I take my hat off to him for having the courage to attempt such a project. (what would have happened if no one had turned up!) I only hope that my remarks are taken in the spirit they are intended, the spirit of a debate initiated by Rob Garrett at No 5

Evan Webb.

Rob Garrett has aged to respond in the next newsletter.

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