

# ever y t h i n g s



£2

Everything  
London 20



# £



## some shows



code:128 £19.99

**Knee Pad:**

The latest in the line of everything prosthetics. Let the harness take the strain and still feel the pleasure of the grass beneath your knees.



code:364 £19.99

**Multi-kit:**

Weighing only 1lb and measuring only 14", this tool is ideal for those occasions when you need to open more than one bottle of wine

**Angela Row Gallery**

3 Angel Row,  
Nottingham, NG1 6HP  
0115 947 6334  
Mon - Sat 11 - 6, Wed 11 - 7  
Sokari Douglas Camp:  
**Steel Stories: Sculpture**  
3 Aug - 31 Aug

**Arnolfini**

Narrow Quay,  
Bristol, BS1  
0117 929 9191  
Mon - Sat 10 - 7, Sun 12 - 6  
**Louise Bourgeois**  
17 Aug - 13 Oct

**Avivson**

27 Heath Street,  
London, NW3  
0171 435 1993  
By appointment  
**Jack Sal**  
1 Aug - 31 Aug

**Barbican**

Barbican Centre,  
London, EC2  
0171 638 4141 ext 7632  
Mon - Sat (except Tues) 10 - 6.45pm  
Tues 10 - 5.45pm, Sun 12 - 6.45pm.  
**Derek Jarman**  
**Eve Arnold**  
- 18 Aug.

**Beaux Arts,**

22 Cork Street,  
London, W1X 1BB  
0171 437 5799  
Mon - Fri 10 - 6, Sat 10 - 5  
**Artists of Fame & Promise:**  
Aitchison, Chadwick, Frink,  
Heron, Lanyon, Piper, Richardson,  
Vaughan, Wiszniewski  
17 July - 31 Aug.

**Blue Gallery**

93 Walton St,  
London, SW3  
0171 589 4690  
Mon - Sat 10 - 6.30  
**Group Show**  
15 July - 1 Sep

**Cafe Gallery**

By the pool, Southwark Park,  
London, SE16  
Wed-Sun 11-5pm  
0171 237 1230  
**Print Show: Bermondsey Artists Group**  
14 Aug - 1 Sep

**Camden Arts Centre**

Arkwright Road,  
London, NW3  
Tue-Thu 12-8pm, Fri - Sun 12-6pm.  
**New Contemporaries:**  
Paintings, photo - works, video &  
Sound Sublimer  
by 33 students & recent graduates  
12 July - 8 Sep

**Camerawork**

121 Roman Road,  
London, E2  
0181 980 6256  
Tue - Sat 1 - 6  
**Max Fenton: An architectural installation**  
using video projection  
14 Aug - 1 Sep

**Chisenhale Gallery**

Chisenhale Road, Bow,  
London, E3.  
0181 981 4518  
Wed - Sat 1 - 6  
**Outreach Project**  
12 Aug - 18 Aug  
**Sam Taylor Wood**  
**Pent Up**  
Consists of five separate film projections which depict five characters engaged in private monologue. Exploration of intense psychological states.  
11 Sept-27 Oct

**The Commercial Gallery**

109 Commercial Street  
London, E1 6BG.  
0171 247 9747  
Thur - Sun 12 - 5  
**Whitechapel Open 96**  
19 July - 15 Sep.

**Commercial Too**

39 - 41 Folgate Street,  
London, E1  
0171 247 9747  
Thur - Sun 12 - 5  
**Whitechapel Open 96**  
19 July - 15 Sep.

**The Conductor's Hallway**

301 Camberwell New Road,  
London, SE5 OTF  
0171 703 8385  
Thur - Sun, 12 - 5  
**Monika Dutta: Time based work**  
29 Aug - 15 Sep.

**Contemporary Applied Art**

2 Percy Street,  
London, W1P 9FA.  
0171 436 2344  
Mon - Sat 10.30 - 5.30  
**Summer Show:**  
Work in all disciplines  
on a blue theme  
26 July - 21 Sep

**Delfina**

50 Bermondsey Street,  
London, SE1 3UD.  
0171 357 6600  
Mon - Fri 10 - 5, Sat/Sun 2 - 5  
**Whitechapel Open 96**  
19 July - 15 Sep

**Diorama Arts Centre Ltd**

34 Osnauburgh St,  
London, NW1.  
0171 916 5467  
Mon - Sat 11 - 6  
**Lisa Kirton: One step from the womb**  
28 Aug - 7 Sep

**England & Co**

14 Needham Road,  
London, W1.  
0171 221 0417  
Tues - Sat 11 - 6  
**Outsiders & Co:**  
Self taught, intuitive  
& visionary British Artists  
27 July - 4 Sep

**1&24 • Cover** Luci Evers**4 • everything Innovations**

**5 • Chill Out** Dave Beech on and off the politics of 'young British art'

**8 • The Truth Is Out There** Martina Kapopkin takes a trip back to 1996

**11 • Briefs** Jasmine Grindstone**12 • Bob Jardine** project for everything

The views expressed in this magazine are by and large concurrent with those of the editors (with significant exceptions). These views are sometimes refracted by strange plays of light or altered perceptions which may be mediated through the most discreet of sources. On occasions readers may feel an unfamiliar fear, anxiety or elation. Drugs might be the cause of or the solution to such feelings, please note that the editors of this magazine are not qualified in either the pharmaceutical or psychological sphere (please consult your doctor). Readers may also, from time to time, become preoccupied with the eternal questions: why am I here? how can the universe be infinite? what is love?, do angels have genitals? &c. Readers should rest assured that in most cases this is nothing more than a form of intellectual indigestion; a reactive burp or fart in response to a series of tautologies. Readers are advised to contemplate more constructive questions: how do I contribute to the construction of a just society? How should wealth be distributed? Is it a mistake to build a city so large that a person on one side cannot hear the cry of a person in distress at the other side? &c. Your statutory rights are not affected. We welcome your letters, e mail and comments.....

Deadline for issue 21 is 1 October

**Outlets stocking Everything include:**

Arnolfini, Bristol; Aspex, Portsmouth; Brighton University, Brighton; Centre of Contemporary Art, Glasgow; Ikon Gallery, Birmingham; Montage Gallery, Derby; Museum of Modern Art, Oxford; Oriol, Cardiff; Oriol Mostyn Gallery, Llandudno; Pier Arts Centre, Stromness, Orkney; Stills Gallery, Edinburgh; Zone Gallery, Waygood Gallery Newcastle.

**London outlets include:**

Atlantis European, Bluecoat, Camerawork, Dillons Art Bookstore, ICA, Lamont Gallery, Michael Putman, Pump House Gallery, Serpentine Gallery, Shipley Bookshop, SPACE Studios, The Commercial Gallery, Workfortheyetodo, Zwemmers (Whitechapel).

USA distribution: Printed Matter, New York.

## contents

**14 • At An Undefinable Moment**  
Vivienne Gaskin on Laurent Pariente

**17 • Some Aspects of the 'young British art'** Alasdair Duncan

**19 • Home 'truth'** John Roberts

**21. Cynical Tackle** John Timberlake and Richard Cook

'There are a thousand stories in the naked city. This has been one of them.'

**Everything** is an independent, artist-produced magazine. It is compiled and edited by Steve Rushton and Keith Ball and is produced by **Everything Publications**

The Bombshelter  
Spitalfields Market  
21 Steward Street  
London E1 6AJ  
tel/fax 0171 426 0546

WWW: <http://www.users.interport.net/~giraffe/everything>

email: [giraffe@easynet.co.uk](mailto:giraffe@easynet.co.uk)

Listings: John Timberlake 0181 654 3156

Hard Copy Editor: Ann Jones

Distribution and Subscriptions: Luci Evers

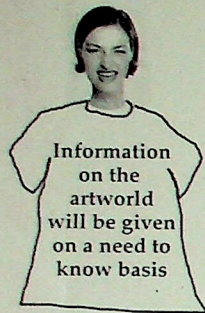
Proofing: Vivienne Gaskin

© **Everything** editorial

ISSN 1361 - 7699



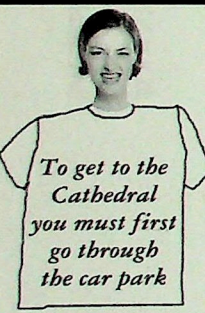
**T Shirts  
(XL Only)**



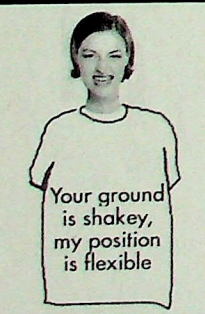
code: 06 £10.99



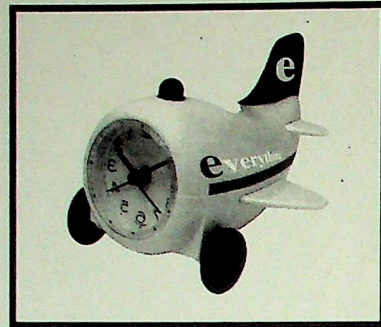
code: 09 £10.99



code: 07 £10.99



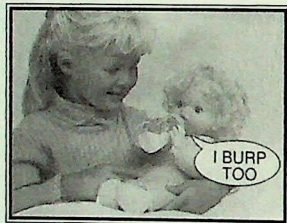
code: 08 £10.99



code: 497 £19.99

**everything Alarm Clock:**

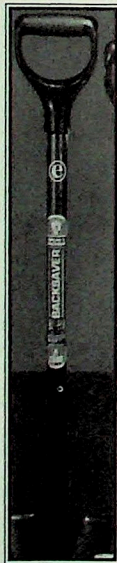
If you sleep up a tree, this aerodynamically designed clock will provide the wake up call you need.



code: 208 £19.99

**Burp:**

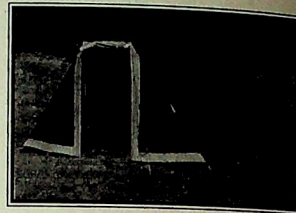
This beautifully designed speech bubble comes with a free doll.



code: 164 £25.99

**everything Spade:**

Essential for visually literate gardeners



code: 128 £59.99

**Tent:**

Deep shag pile ground sheet. camp in luxury.



code: 532 £29.99

**Mouse Clock:**

Time your tea break with this Dormouse Atomic Clock (NASA approved, tested in weightless conditions).



code: 475 £69.99

**Girl with Big Doll:**

She eats, drinks, wets herself, talks, burps and poos (doll not included).

*everything is political*

Dicks, cunts and arses (no bollocks though!) are all over Dinos & Jake Chapman's mannequins. If they're trying to shock us, they're not doing it as part of some ambitious Brechtian cultural politics. The difference is not primarily a question of social content, but of artistic technique. The Chapman brothers don't work with the technical repertoire of immanent critique. What's more, this repertoire, for the first time, is suffering neglect - even abuse - from a generation of artists who don't so much oppose 'critical practice' as find its claims comically baffling.

Consider, for instance, what has happened to montage. At its politicized height, with Heartfield's photomontage, Brecht's theatrical defamiliarization, and Benjamin's redemptive allegory, montage was considered to be a technical equivalent of dialectical critique. And the association of the form of montage and the work of critique (both auto-critique and social critique) remained vivid enough for a full-blown revival in the 70s and 80s. Today, however, montage has become almost a joke in the hands of Keith Tyson's ArtMachine (a generator of random combinations) and Bank's curatorial diabolism (incoherent groupings in attitudinizing settings). Montage holds no special promise - neither as interruptive address nor as self-reflexive practice - but seems instead to be as capable of triviality as dialectic, as likely to produce absurdity as construct knowledge.

There is a dearth of politics in contemporary art. And yet, even with this fact it is annoying to find so much writing on what has come to be called 'young British art' addressing itself to this lack. Symptomatically, the writing on 'young British art' has an agenda and style which the art and artists don't share. The writing is, therefore, derogatory, deluded or seeks to influence. Responding to these writers is bound to be tricky: to ask about the politics of this art is already to approach it from outside. Which is not the same as confirming the absence of political responsibility in this art, but suggests an absence within 'cultural politics' itself. The same goes for accusations of anti-intellectualism. The accusation is a trap. Responding to it means promoting the values which prompted it, either by arguing that this apparent anti-intellectualism is actually intellectual, or by presenting an intellectual defence of anti-intellectualism. The authentic anti-intellectual response would be something like "shut up and dance!", but this too would leave the accuser satisfied. No; the accusation of anti-intellectualism has to be accused itself of anti-intellectualism: it closes itself off from unfamiliar modes of intelligent behaviour.

Imagine after storming the Winter Palace Lenin had addressed the Congress of Soviets with the words, "You made the world. And it is wide/ and like a word

that ripens still in quiet/ And once you vouch to understand their sense/ They'll gently let your eyes go free ...!" It's a long shot, admittedly, but it is even harder to imagine Rilke opening a poem with the line: "We shall now proceed to construct the Socialist order". Brecht is more likely, not because he fooled himself that political content was transferable,<sup>4</sup> but because his politics of representation didn't rule out the representation of politics.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the absence of politics in younger art does not mean that it sides with art's autonomy: the opposition of autonomy and political utility has lost its explanatory power.<sup>6</sup> Consider how, rather than quoting Lenin, Jeremy Deller makes posters out of lyrics by The Smiths, Stone Roses and Happy Mondays. Georgina Starr plays out her love of 'Grease' (the movie), affectionately taking another look at her childhood's contact with the youth of her parents' generation. This means that these artists simultaneously withdraw from the priorities of critical practice and at the same time immerse themselves in the swooning intensities of consumer culture. Art of this sort thus does without the two key measures of artistic integrity of the twentieth century: political engagement and artistic autonomy.

Postmodernist sophisticates - often bright artists who became dull intellectuals by marrying themselves to 'theory' - and their earnest opponents alike, are now faced with a youthful suspicion of intellectualism, political posturing, and self-regarding art chit-chat insularity. No-one is organizing a conference on pressing issues of studio practice these days. It has become smart to appear ill-informed, or at least it's no longer clever to fake knowledge. Art chatter is not what it used to be. Conversations are peppered with unashamed admissions: "I've never read that ..."; "I don't understand ..."; "You've lost me ...". I lose it myself every now and then. I don't mind confessing even being distracted from art altogether when I was being paid to talk about it. There was that time when... I'm getting carried away again... But I'm nowhere near as bad as an artist I've heard of who keeps his books in a box, pretending to his friends that he never reads. It's this sort of behaviour which has led to a situation where the next unpredictable, wacky move might be to 'go intellectual'. But like 'going native' this would be somewhat disingenuous and fail to reinstate intellectualism. Theory and politicized self-reflexivity have been dislodged because they have turned from being the pillars of modern art's hard-won liberty to the badges of its authority. From those still loyal and committed to critical practice, therefore, younger artists are themselves under suspicion, cast as dullards, opportunists, charmers, Thatcherites.

*politics isn't everything*

Picture Jeremy Deller malingering in a car park, then moving at speed. Affixing his bumper sticker: "I 'heart' joyriding". Onto a police car. Photographing it then running for his life. And did you see Robbie on kids TV just before leaving Take That wearing Deller's T-shirt print-

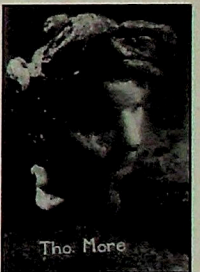
chill out

**Dave Beech**

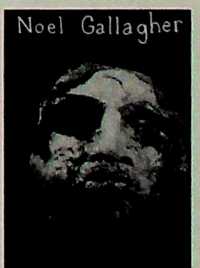
on and off the politics of 'young British art'



Jar Cocker



Tho. More



Noel Gallagher



ed with the slogan 'My Booze Hell? Affirmations of intoxication, brutality, loutishness, and getting carried away are not, in art of this sort, cheerful, dull and empty. Deller ridicules the clichés of shameful confession by presenting them camped-up as displays of pride for those who don't give a shit. These are in-jokes for debauchers who have not renounced debauchery. These T-shirts might well have been designed for that Elvis who Colonel Tom Parker kept respectably hidden with images of home-grown beauty. But Deller isn't trying to critique the culture industry or the likes of fat Elvis - his work isn't ironic<sup>8</sup> - nor is this a high-brow 'appropriation' of mass culture. In fact, these pranks may or may not belong in a gallery - their significance is certainly not confined to the modes of attention which operate there. The fact is, these artists no longer regard intellectual display and critical rigour as intelligent or responsible,<sup>9</sup> but rather see the parading of critical resistance to these ubiquitous seductions as equally hypocritical as Colonel Parker's identity management. In fact, the culture of art has become managerial.<sup>10</sup> This is why *Bank* produces red-herring publicity and puts together shows such as "Charge of the Light Brigade" and "Fuck Off" which are spectacularly comical before they are even remotely aesthetic.

For the intelligentsia of critical practice I guess these artists appear disengaged, unburdened agents of cultural barbarism. Just as Deller and Starr aren't pursuing the 'critique of cultural division', *Bank* is not exploring the 'discourse of the museum', and Sarah Lucas, Tracey Emin, Jake & Dinos Chapman, and Siobhan Hapaska are not participating in the 'discourse of the body'. It is not

that the body is being represented less, but that the body is not being treated as a cipher of discourse even though it is figured as culturally and socially inflected. The difference is that younger artists don't see the body (or culture, or institutions, or whatever) as a battleground, or any other architectural system, but as a layered, open field. Sex is back, as is fantasy, transgression, anarchism, and violence,<sup>11</sup> because these themes offer up the individual as a subject of intensities which are irreducible to the formulations of earnest wisdom. Not the result of extensive research, such attitudes are a provisionally arrived at effect of the suspicion that the critique and discourse, which this generation were introduced to under the sign of emancipation, has turned out to be, or has turned into, an arm of order and paranoia.

More specifically, the values and categories of critical practice set the horizons of artistic responsibility, which channel attention to some areas of activity only. In other words, the universe which critical practice inhabits and cultivates is lop-sided. Critical practices address materials, processes, sites, canons, and techniques as socially charged - which they are - but neglects other frameworks, other levels and other forms of cultural responsibility. By stressing the immanent politics of form as a category of production, critical practice talked itself out of caring for the spectator - except insofar as s/he might be or become co-opted to production. This is why the refusal of pleasure was often taken as a concomitant of a persevering critical art. Always willing to sacrifice the ethics of reception for an ethics of production, as if the former was either

1 This was pointed out to me by Paul Khara.

2 Elizabeth Aarup helped me to think more clearly about the history of montage, critical practice, etc. and its fate, especially in the work of Keith Tyson. My pre-Aarup formulation is expressed in my review 'Strange Company: Keith Tyson and the Brady Bunch Movie', *Artifice*, issue 3.

3 Stewart Home's 'The Art of Chauvinism in Britain and France', [everything19] is clearly derogatory even though he tries to dampen this by aiming more specifically for the writers than the artists. Nevertheless, his agenda is unsympathetic to what I take to be going on at the moment. Simon Ford's article for *Art Monthly* is forthrightly derogatory, but again there is some confusion about who he despises most, the artists or those who write about them. Robert Garnett can write insightfully about the current scene (as when he observes that many of the internationally successful artists are still on the dole), but he can also be deluded (as when he attempts to discover some politics under the surface of youthful puerility), though, to be fair it is difficult to tell whether such delusions are authentic or contrived for the purposes of influencing what artist might think of doing next (a clearer case is when he calls for a bit more self-reflexivity - a request I want to knock on the head if I can). John Roberts' writing is a clear case of trying to interpret recent art in a way that might contribute to the artists' self-understanding, and to get them to think about their work more historically and critically.

4 This is one of the great issues of twentieth-century cultural politics, and I'm not about to make any quips about it. But, surprisingly, the other day I found myself half-remembering some of J.L. Austin's observations about language use (especially about the conditions under which statements are effective - such as the difference between the Queen and a hooligan smashing a bottle of champagne against a ship and announcing "I name this ship the Jarvis Cocker"). It seems worth trying to see how much Austin might help dispel some myths not only about the specificity of literary language (as Mel does some of this) but also about the transformations that occur when politics are 'imported' into art.

5 This is my little dig at Victor Burgin and all those who followed his line on switching from the representation of politics to the politics of representation. I'm not so much bothered about their political withdrawal as with the sophistry they pushed out to support it. This distinction of theirs is merely a rehearsal of the old distinction between content and form, and shows the Romantic and modernist asymmetry in the supposition that content cannot be its own form, but that form can - and should - be its own content.

6 Paul Wood has recently published essays in defence of art's autonomy and I have recently made attempts to rattle his defence. Wood seems to have drilled across the established modern axis which separates (and joins) art and politics, moving from a politicized defence of critical practices to a politically inflected defence of autonomy itself. I began my response to this by arguing for a definition of autonomy that doesn't derive from modern art's image of itself, but from the philosophical conception of self-determination (see my unpublished paper delivered at a conference at Nene College, expanded in the forthcoming article co-authored by John Roberts, 'Spectros of the Aesthetic', *New Left*

irrelevant or somehow followed from the latter, critical practice had a distorted view of the ethical conditions of culture.<sup>12</sup> There is perhaps in this something of the Romantic conviction of the authenticity of primary processes and their contempt for everything secondary. At any rate, younger artists aren't satisfied with this legacy, and while they haven't turned their backs on the ethics of production, they combine this with a whole array of responsibilities, needs, desires, pleasures, and challenges. This is why younger art is funky, entertaining, disgusting, sexy, ordinary, crude, facile, puerile. Consequently, unlike those shamefaced modernists who skulked off from their miserable studios to have extra-marital affairs with fun, celebrity, glamour and fantasy, younger artists are openly polyamorous.

#### last word

I suppose we should welcome the recent writing on what has come to be known as 'young British art'. If nothing else it finally puts *Technique Anglaise* off reading lists. What has prompted this essay, though, is the gaping divide between contemporary art and the writing about it - whether in its defence or not. One of the commonest symptoms of the misperception I'm talking about is the sheer lack of differentiation applied to the scene, especially in the use of the phrase 'young British art' to cover an aggregate of works, ranging from Damien Hirst's bombastic aestheticism to Penny Day's short film of two toy cars having a shag. Differentiation is not only required to distinguish between various phases (say, 88 to 91, 92 to 95, or whatever), but also in other ways. For instance, a couple of years ago Starr was documenting everyday life (sometimes her own,

sometimes other people's, sometimes doing it straight, sometimes mediated through cultural forms such as astrology), using the document to burst through the ruling ethics of self-reflexivity. The document allowed the world to enter art and art to enter the world. But more recently Starr has turned to fantasy, fun and role playing in what amounts to a dissatisfaction with the everyday, and escape from it even.<sup>13</sup> The term is not only under strain, though, it is also inaccurate. With as much as ten years between them, the younger members of the scene already regard some of the 'young British artist' as old. I even heard the story of some foundation students visiting Starr's installation at the Tate asking, tragically, "Why is this old woman dressing up as a young girl?" More seriously, there are artists such as Jaki Irvine who have a right to be pissed off with the label 'young British art' - she's Irish. So, if coming up with the term 'Conceptualism' was a fucked up piece of managerial journalese,<sup>14</sup> coming up with the name 'young British art' was all that plus jingoism, market-led opportunism, and plain laziness. The term has had its day. But as with 'Conceptualism', if the differentiation of the category takes risks with commercial and institutional success, then long after it even seems to be descriptive, it will hang around for the purposes of blockbuster exhibitions, books, and bad history. But the other thing is, in the interests of differentiation, I was hoping to get through an essay on 'young British art' without mentioning Damien Hirst. Shit!

e

© Dave Beech May 1996



Noel Gallagher



Erasmus

Images on pages 4 & 5 are by Dave Burrows. Media: chewing gum, saliva and grass.

Review). I stand by this, but I think the very axis itself needs to be challenged, so that we no longer feel that to move away from one means to move towards the other. In fact, the absence of politics in art does not necessarily mean a greater degree of autonomy, just as the loss of autonomy doesn't mean the gaining of politics. Simply there are other factors involved. The trouble is that these other factors (I'm not very sure about them, but at the moment I'm presuming them to incorporate something like entertainment, fantasy, storytelling, the everyday, the document) have been marginalized and derogated for so long that they have not figured - except as distractions and errors - within the practices and debates of art for most of the twentieth century.

7 I think somebody else pointed out this generational aspect to me - a student probably - and I can only apologize for not giving credit to whoever deserves it. You know who you are. If you read this please let me know.

8 I first came across the quasi-irresistible assertion that 'the work isn't ironic' from members of *Bank* when they were putting together "Zombie Golf". I think they were declaring a suspicion of the high-brow suspicion of so-called mass culture. Irony implies a distance, or the pretence of a distance, and that distance implies a power or privilege which is neither attractive nor credible.

9 The idea that intellectual display isn't intelligent was forced out of me during an excellent discussion after John Roberts' lecture at Byam Shaw School of Art this winter.

10 This is one of Mel Ramsden's favourite lines, which I have ended up repeating, just as you find yourself using the phrases of your parents. However, having worked with *Bank* and *Fat* I don't find the managerial to be as clear cut as Mel seems to. I don't agree with David Goldenberg that the legacy of 'Conceptualism' means that artists must become managers, but certainly when artists manage their own shows and set up their own opportunities the results can be more than mere functions of managerial aspirations.

11 For more of my thoughts on this take a look at my article dedicated to the Chapman brothers, 'The Artist's Body', *Artifice*, issue 4.

12 In saying that the refusal of pleasure was either a failure to respond to an ethics of reception, or otherwise, was inadequate as an ethical response to reception, I am not arguing that the ethics of reception must lead to the provision of pleasure, only that the refusal of pleasure as a cultural politics issued from an ethics of production. At least, what makes the refusal of pleasure attractive, I think, is that it appears to be an ethics of reception but that its logic is governed by concerns about production. As such, the relatively autonomous critical artist can remain indifferent to the spectator whilst claiming to be responsible towards her/him/them. One of the main differences between such practices and the attitudes of younger artists is that the latter don't think of the audience as her, him or them, but as us.

13 This is an interpretation of an aspect of young art that I've gleaned from David Burrows who's been saying this to me for months and I've finally come round to it.

14 This is easy for me to say because Terry Atkinson has devoted a lot of time and energy to putting together the arguments and the evidence it requires.



# The Truth is Out There.

## Martina Kapopkin

[Please press Delta Chip to access study period 1996. Narrative Structures]

The emergence of the 'artistworld': the wrap around, holistic art experience, in the mid to late 90s may now be seen as a critique of the limitations of the installation art which dominated much of the art practice in the preceding decades and which served to privilege, and in some cases fetishise, space. Installation art, by its nature, tended toward the exclusion of the engagement with anything outside of the space itself; its referents tended to be primarily about sense data: the sensory experience of an individual within a particular architectural space. This in turn may be seen as a development on the formalistic concerns of minimalism, which gave emphasis to the thing in itself, the centrality of the object and the viewer's relationship to the piece.

Much was written at the time [press delta chip to access contemporaneous texts] about attempts to either reinvigorate or undermine the institutions of the gallery and of art through the introduction of popular motifs of 'the everyday'. Alongside this trend there developed a tendency to use narrative structures which drew from 'the everyday' as a component in artistic practice.

Much of the appeal of the installation work which preceded this development (bearing in mind that we can only speak of the work which has survived) was its transformative effect – its ability to alter the state of mind or the sense of place of the viewer. The viewer became aware of their own body within that space in relation to the components within it. Narratives, in so far as they were present, were implied they were possibly allusions to the history of the building they occupied, perhaps soliciting feelings which called on the subjective experiences of the viewer, an empathy with other viewers and with the artist. These 'floating narrative' structures tended to rely on the communality of experience or general feeling that the viewer knew what the artist meant. [Press Delta Chip to access 'fine shades of behaviour' everything web site 1998]

Four examples of artists who resorted to narrative structures in our study period of 1996:

Michael Landy's *Scrapheap Services* (Chisenhale), Gregory Green's *Caroline*, (Cabinet Gallery), Mike Nelson *Trading Station Alpha CMA* (Matts Gallery) and *Chapmanworld* (ICA)

[Please press your Delta chip to access images.]

The shift can be characterised by installations which serve a story which is operating outside the gallery space: in the case of Landy, the narrative existed in the

form of a fictitious waste disposal company, in the case of Green the institution was that of the fictitious country of Caroline. The gallery provided an entry point to a pre-existing narrative structure, a point of announcement for an ongoing story which we saw only fragments of. The artifacts in the gallery become embodiments of this narrative, they validated and give material form to the fantasy. The relationship between the work and the viewer also changed significantly at this time: the viewer became reader, shifting away from the corporeal to the literary sphere.

This represented a significant shift for Landy, who's earlier work 'Market' dealt with components which shared a commonality outside of the gallery space and which were reinvestigated within the gallery context (namely the components taken from a market). This referenced the specificity of minimalism, the Duchampian found object, and reintroduced 'the everyday' into the gallery context. This was a common strategy of the art of the late 80s and early 90s which sought to lasso motifs from 'the everyday' and popular culture and recontextualise them within the gallery space. In so doing such work heightened the contradictions between the purist modernist program and the perennial influence and messy contingencies of an 'everyday' which existed outside the gallery walls and, by extension, outside the concerns of 'art'.

The invention of 'artistworld' provided artists with several strategies for avoiding the contradictions which had been the hall-mark of artistic practice throughout the 80s: the need to comply to a sense of historical continuity whilst giving due weight to 'popular' cultural and subjective influences. It also afforded, in the case of Landy and Green, the opportunity to be political without being hectoring or polemical. [press Delta Chip to read synopsis of study period mid 70s-80s]. This is because the narrative plane had a built in ironic distance; the story did not have the subjectivity of the artist or the immovability of a polemic as its axis point. The introduction of narrative structures also sought to shift the emphasis away from the artist. The 80s and early 90s had been characterised by a reinstitution of the idea of the 'great artist' in the form of the 'heroic Duchampian'<sup>2</sup> as 'pop star'. In contrast to this tendency the artists dealing with narrative structures became the conceptual personae<sup>3</sup> which occupied its own narrative world (this reached almost monstrous levels in the conceptual personae of the Chapmans).

In the case of Mike Nelson's *Trading Station Alpha CMA* the narrative was open ended, but again the space provided an entry point into a world where something had gone frighteningly wrong. The piece seemed to tell the tale of a man who, isolated in an Antarctic Trading Station had developed a culture around the seemingly arbitrary collection of things which were stored there. Again, the piece pointed us in the direction of popular culture; there were a number of popular films around

this time which alluded to a man (significantly) in circumstances of extreme physical or spiritual isolation who had developed his own mores. In *Apocalypse Now*, for instance, Kurtz goes native, developing his own agenda which is a threat to his masters. The narrative, or plane of Nelson's piece served to remind us of similar narratives which embodied this late 20th century obsession [Press Delta Chip to access 'Sociopath as Priest' Kapopkin, Pluto Press, 2009.]

Of the four instances *Chapmanworld*, in narrative terms, was the most closed and differed significantly in that it pointed towards its authors rather than away from them. This carried with it the tired old humanistic assumption that we should somehow be interested in the particular obsessions of an artist or artists. This outmoded assumption in the end did a disservice to their concerns. The narratives it solicited (HG Well's *Mystery Island*, the myth of the Minotaur and its allusions to the possibilities of genetic engineering and evolutionary mutations – many of which proved disconcertingly prophetic) backfired. Instead of directing us toward the ethical, literary and philosophical concerns the work served to direct us toward a greater fiction, that of the life and obsessions of the 'method actors' at its centre. *Chapmanworld* had more in common with its antecedents in that it attempted to occupy physical territory, creating a sealed envelope around the viewer; in the words of Dinos Chapman 'We want to create a skin that covers whole territories' (Brilliant 1995). In this sense the allusions to classic narratives and genetic horror stories served, paradoxically, to enclose the space – curtailing the imaginative potential

<sup>1</sup> *Installation work*. The rise in the popularity of site specific work was also concurrent with two periods of economic downturn and the end of the 'Golden Age of capitalism' [press Delta Chip to access synopsis of Eric Hobsbawm's *Age Of Extremes*]: The oil crisis of the early to mid 70s and the property slump of the mid 80's to mid 90s. By the mid 90s spaces which had been opportunistically grabbed by artists as temporary spaces were acquiring the status of semi-legitimate galleries. The disillusion with the inherent economic value of bricks and mortar and the introduction of the 'meta-technological' space within the pixelated cyberspatial arena provided models for alternative methods of articulating ideas of place, scale and the passage of time. Before the invention of the Delta chip the internet was the prime mediator for digital information. In 1995 there were 40,000 subscribers to the internet, by the end of the following year this number had grown exponentially [press Delta Chip to see flow chart]. By this time the internet had already acquired a stringent grammar centring around 'click ons' and 'go to's'. The cyberspatial model of the virtual space and the virtual institution, was thus transported into the gallery.

<sup>2</sup> *Heroic Duchampian*. A phrase first used in everything London issue 12 1994, pp. 5-7. Interview with Jay Jopling.

<sup>3</sup> *Conceptual Personae*. [press Delta Chip to access Deleuze and Guattari] Prime examples would be Socrates who provided the conceptual persona for Platonism and Homer who provided the conceptual personae for the Iliad narratives. It is not necessary for these individuals to have existed but it is necessary for them to have existed as vessels which contain a body of ideas. See also D&G's *Concrete Rules and Abstract Machines in 1000 Plateaus*. NB: the persona was originally (and literally) the funnel over the mouth piece of the mask used in Greek theatre, through which the actor spoke. [press Delta Chip to access C. G. Jung Speaks]

<sup>4</sup> *Territorialisation*. Artists from this period realised that it was far more amusing to watch someone wearing a VR helmet, flying through the pixelations of cyberspace, than to wear one themselves. The notion of the creation of something artistically significant through VR was problematic to many artists at the time principally because it required such passivity on the part of the viewer. To a similar degree all art which 'came with a plug attached' tended to create a product which the spectator expected to consume. The collaboration between the popular music industries and artists such as William Latham, Laurie Anderson and Brian Eno [study period 80-93] can now be seen as inevitable, given the spectacularly passive nature of the customers of that industry's products.

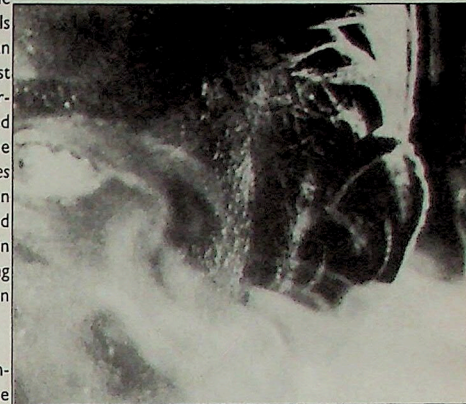
of the viewer. Taken as a whole they served to create the walls of *Chapmanworld* rather than break them down. In contrast *Scrapheap Services* created a narrative structure which extended beyond the boundary of the exhibition site. *Scrapheap Services* articulated itself as an institution elsewhere, there was an implied infrastructure which existed in the mind of the viewer allowing them to escape territorialisation by the artist <sup>4</sup>

In the next chapter I will examine the cultural impact of the landing of the first extraterrestrial gallery (Hyde Park, London, June 1999) and how the influx of extraterrestrial artifacts influenced the workings of the art market at the close of the 20th Century.

[Please press your Delta Chip to order lunch]

e

© Martina Kapopkin 2019



P.V card from Trading Station Alpha CMA Mike Nelson Matts Gallery 1996



## everything

<http://www.users.interport.net/~giraffe/everything>

Opens September  
Updated bi Monthly.

The updated **Media Contacts Visual Arts** is currently being compiled:

Artsinform  
Cooper House  
2 Michael Road  
London SW10 2AA  
Phone 0171 610 9992  
Fax 0171 0169992

**Libby Anson** [writer; Frieze, Art Monthly, everything] is researching possible new formats for the presentation the visual arts on TV. If interested Write to her c/o 113 North Ninth Street, Milton Keynes, MK9 3AW. Tel: 01908 671 131.

# Phil Space

## Hot Wank

balloons, streamers, papier mache & naked children.

eel pie and mash warehouse docklands

July/August

## New Arts On TV.

Ratings for the new BBC TV show Bagwah Sri Ramjisharn's World of Art have rocketed, gaining as many as 15 million viewers during its prime time slot on Sunday evenings. The Puna based art historian and Buddhist monk has delighted viewers with his combined powers of insight and levitation. With the ability to divine the aesthetic worth of any work the Bagwah is penetrated by what he calls 'art waves' which lift him off the surface of the earth. The degree to which he may levitate in front of a work has provided us with a tangible indicator of quality. Michaelangelo's David scored a fantastic five hundred metres, causing the monk to register on the air traffic control screens of the nearby Pisa Airport. In fact whilst in Florence the good monk's feet hardly touched the ground. But the producers are withholding the monk's access to the Sistine Chapel until the last programme in the series, fearing that the enclosed space might cause 'art feedback' in which the power of the aesthetic waves will rebound off the gloriously sumptuous walls of the chapel, causing the monk to self immolate. The monk's innovative methods have provided art historians with a fool-proof way of discerning the authenticity of any painting or sculpture and has made and lost the fortunes of dozens of museums throughout the world.

Here are some of the quality/high ratings:

**Leonardo:** 27.4 metres

**Chapmanworld:** 9.7 metres

**Damian Hirst:** Minus 3 metres (spin paintings) and rapid fluctuation between 8 metres and minus 2 centimetres (tank pieces)

**Bill Viola:** 12 meters and triple somersault

**Mark Rothko:** 33 metres.

The highest scoring living artist is Anselm Keifer at 64 metres and a slow descending spiral.

Not to be outdone Melvin Bragg, at London Weekend Television, is commissioning a series from the Ruritanean medium Countess Harmoni Blavatski. She will conduct a series of in depth interviews with dead artists. Questions will be provided by an invited panel of well known artists, critics and art historians.

Simultaneously the cable channel Arts-Now will be scheduling the Reverend Ian Paisley's Joys of Protestant art.

All in all it looks like we're in for an art-fest until

well into the autumn. So, set your videos now.

## Face lift

The French artist Veronique Cabale, who has undergone a series of cosmetic operations as part of her artistic practice, is to be sued by American Pop singer Michael Jackson. Over the last few years her similarity to Jackson has become more marked, as has Jackson's similarity to Cabale. The Jackson team are suing on the basis of infringement of moral rights under international copyright law. The team say the confluence of the two personae goes beyond mere appearance as Cabale has been seen executing a series of loud gyrations whilst extolling the virtues of human beings "being good to each other" and "not stopping 'til they get enough". Jackson's team have also produced video evidence of Cabale's messianic concern for the well being of the children of the world. The case continues.

## Water Show

The International Arts Foundation [TIAF], in collaboration with Thames Water will be hosting an exhibition entitled 'The Properties of Water'. The works will include Valerie Volumes seminal piece *Pump* and Teresa Tone's ground breaking *Outlet*. The centrepiece of the exhibition will be a reconstruction of Phil Space's 1972 piece *Twenty Thousand Gullies*.



**Benjy Bear** says:  
"Freedom Follows the subject's urge to express itself."

Jasmine  
Grindstone





***Always on my mind ...***



***... You make me sick***



# At An Undefinable Moment

## Vivienne Gaskin on the work of Laurent Pariente

Laurent Pariente's first exhibition outside of France, at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, presents a self-referential, critical minefield on which the absolutes of the imperative value of the museum's contextual function, the physical boundaries of space and the psychological purity of the white cube are detonated in the face of the viewer. A labyrinthine structured series of routes interacts in a tripartite relationship between space, light and the occupier of this unique environment. Pariente has created an extreme paradox in this work; reductivist in its minimalist form yet infinite in its spatial implications, which subsumes many previous attempts at the representation of a limitless space to the realms of inconclusive mathematical calculation.

Whilst retaining the aesthetic idioms of 60's minimalism, Pariente's work, which has followed an evolutionary development since his first exhibited structure in 1990 (Galerie Jean-Francois Dumont, Bordeaux), engages head on with the psychological impulses which motivate social interaction at the end of the millennium. Unique in its purist empiricism, this is an environment of ordered movement within an infinite space, punctuated by an occasional refraction of natural light from a skylight or the distant sound of human existence in undefinable proximity within the structure. Functioning at once to critically address the self assurance of fragmented individualist philosophy whilst simultaneously echoing the seemingly irretractability of the ideal of collective identity.

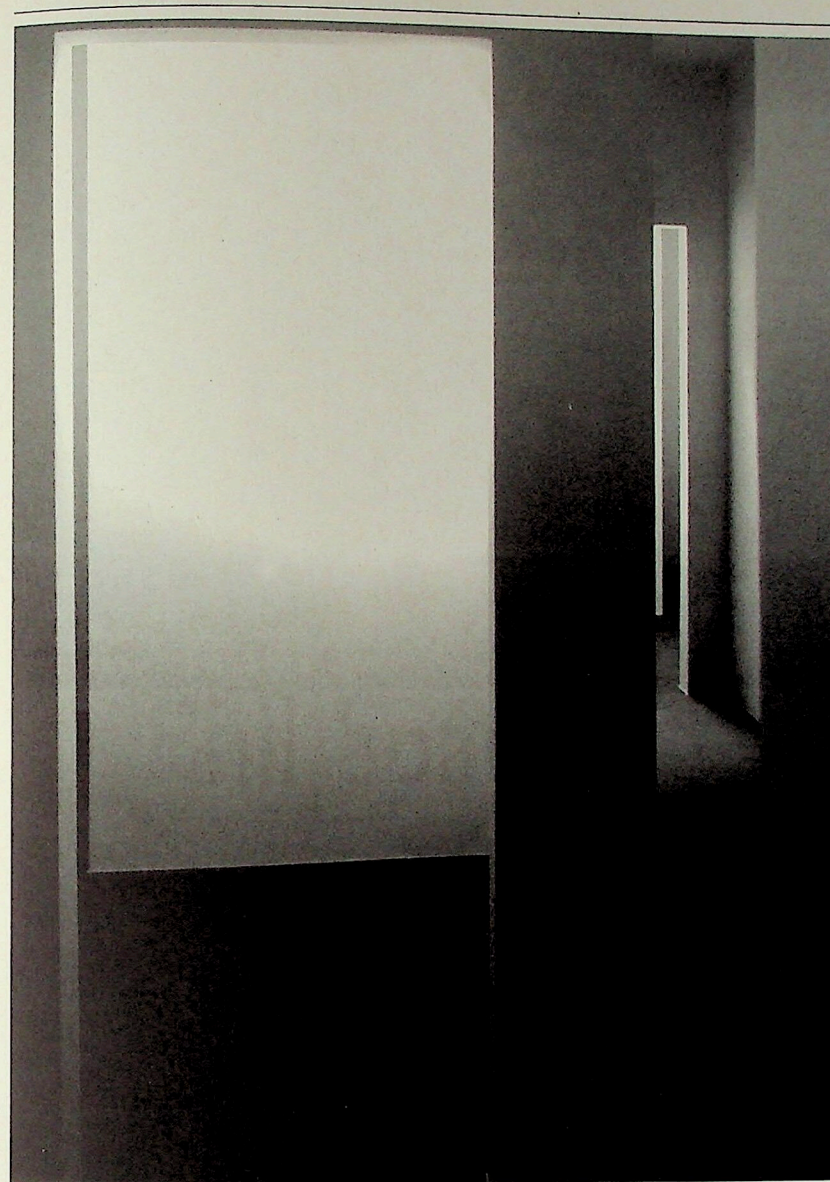
The critical psychology of viewing the art object becomes inverted within this total environment; objective distance becomes negated as the relationship of the self in a fractured space forms a discourse of immediacy and intensity. The initial impression that the occupier interacts with the work by exploding the space adopts a sinister twist of understanding as the chalk dusted surfaces of the walls leave their mark on the viewer. For, just as the labyrinthine repetitiveness of the walls fragment the spatial purity of the white cube ideal, by surreptitiously tracing (and thus infecting) the occupier the established hierarchy of both the museum / site and 'spectator' becomes subservient to the inherent rationale of the work itself. Pariente references this transfer of power to the simple form of the labyrinth structure:

**"to be in a labyrinth is to be in search of something, in a situ-**

**ation of frustration which is repeated along the length of the passageways, the door openings, the space through which you walk, without obtaining anything. You are not in front of the object, you are within it. You experience, but do not seize it."**<sup>1</sup>

Pivotal to this experience is the negation of the museums role as a context for the aesthetic. The harmonious relationship between the art object and the museum space, re-stated in the tensions generated by conceptual art, ultimately in it's experimental redefinition of site specificity reacting against or embracing the outer limits of the structural space, are eradicated in this work. Transcending both public and private spaces in its capacity as a finite domain, the museums function becomes integrated into the work's expression of infinity. Through this single act, Pariente has revolutionised the perception of the aesthetic, setting a precedence to which future acknowledgments of formal context and definition will implicitly undermine the experience of the work itself. The artist, by visually personifying the death knell of the museum's role, has made a great leap in the liberation of the aesthetic. By marking an unprecedented and intractable position in the interpretative lineage from the museum site through site specific and public art to a point at which the work engineers an autonomous critical referent.

On entering the work you are presented with a series of pure white fragmented corridors which, you predict, will lead to a subject / object to be appraised from a distance. In a transitional moment the logical structures of perception become unnerved as the repetition of the walls and corridors redefine themselves as an infinite landscape, a total yet untraceable mapping of a seeming void. Pariente, however, holds no tricks up his sleeve, there are no mirrors – this is no maze or empty void bound by the structure of the site in which the work is constructed, as the site itself is incorporated into the fragmented structure. By ordering an environment according to the simple principles of repetition and not logic, the occupiers inherent navigational codes become dysfunctional, generating a compulsive state of internal vulnerability. It imminently becomes apparent that the artist's intentional reduction of our internal structures of self referentiality are essential to our greater experience of the inconclusiveness of space by placing the occupier in a state of heightened



Photograph courtesy of the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds.

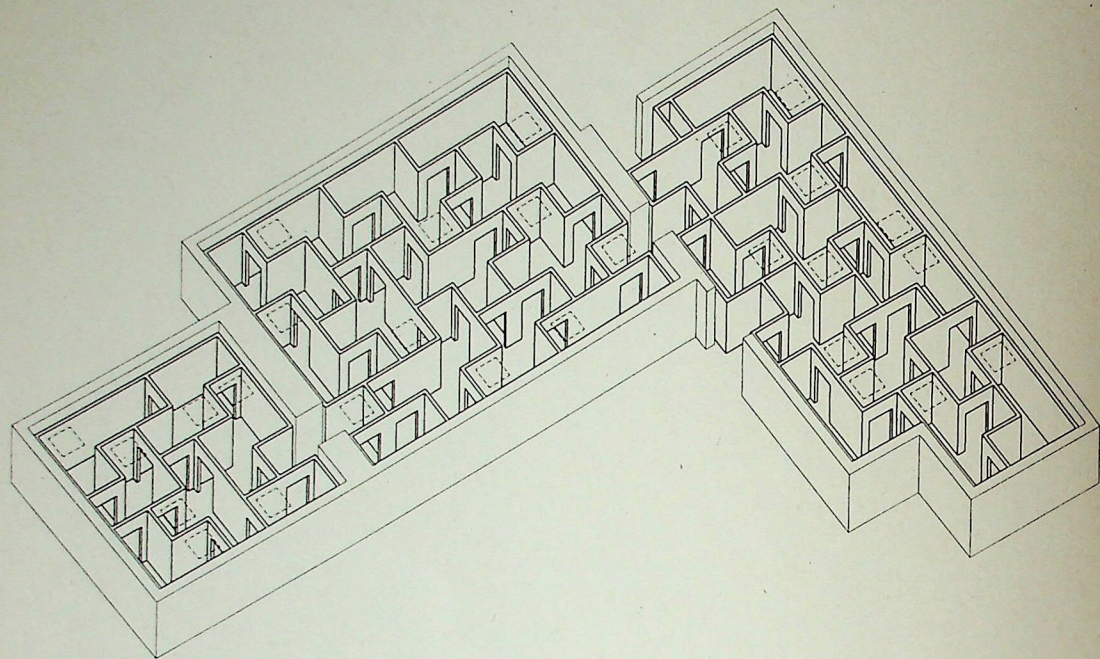
perception focusing attention on the interaction within the work of the shadows of light on the surface of the walls of the pathway.

At the core of Pariente's utopian landscape is the ultimate lesson of self-limitation – as every passageway leads you to a replicated environment of that departed and every movement made results in an untraceable mapping of the self, the fundamental inability to master either the whole or the part when offered the 'all' rapes the occupier of social referents of conditioning until reduced to a state of introspective vulnerability. When exposed to this 'penetrated and penetrating space'<sup>2</sup> we become engaged in an unrelenting bombardment of exchange between the internal and exter-

nal environments. Mind, body, structures and nature all interact and repel in a ricochet of expansion and contraction of space to invert the social ordering conditionally branded on the mental landscape of the occupier.

The sentiments which Beuys explicitly intended to convey in his vast installation 'Monument at the end of the Twentieth Century' Pariente convincingly reinvestigates and represents in the quiet solitude of his fragmented space. In essence, he reduces the potential inscribed in the human capacity for domination and destruction to the underlying weakness of the self when one is embraced by his shattered manifestation





OBJ: 7. THE HENRY MOORE SCULPTURE TRUST | PROJECTION: AXONOMETRIQUE | ECHELLE: — | DATE: 22/05/96 | PAGE: 2 /

Map  
courtesy of the artist

of total consumption. The energies inherent within the structure of the work, draw the occupier to the seeming fringes of a limitless space. Intrinsic to this same process, these forces of energy operate in a cyclical pattern, referring back to the most intimate of worlds – the self.

Thus encapsulating the essential capacity for experiential and perceptual regeneration, functioning in direct contradiction to the fatalistic premonition declared by Beuys. The quality of replenishment penetrates in the occupiers perception at the same point as the implied boundlessness of space. Liberated from the physical restraints of space and time, the primary structures of a metaphysical utopia are constructed as a blank canvas on which subjective fantasy can be projected, subliminally echoing the greater paradigm of expansion and contraction hallmarking the corporeal presence of the work.

At an undefinable moment between infinity and intimacy the subjective experience of Pariente's work metamorphoses into an intangible state of personal empowerment. Emergent from this dwelling where contracted space heightens our perception of physical presence (defined by both the structure and the self) to the point of neurosis, is a unprecedented experience of mental liberation which transcends enforced and induced experimentation.

The press release to the work describes the structure as: "a unique synthesis of sculpture, architecture and painting...a *gesamtkunstwerk* to intrigue and engage the mind and the senses"<sup>3</sup>. On this rare occasion the work exceeds the pretensions of its description. Whilst Pariente utilises sculpture, painting and architecture, the objective harmony of these genres on first entering the work become unsustainable in their own right as they unite to form a discordant environment, experienced from within, negating the visual autonomy of distanced observation. Penetrating far beyond the romanticised ideal of 'the total work of art' Pariente has, in an unprecedented form, constructed a total experience of art and a total art of experience.

© Vivienne Gaskin 1996

References:

1. Laurent Pariente; *Entretien avec Marie – Therese Champesme*. 1993, quoted in Didier Arnaudet, 'Laurent Pariente *La Perfection d'Une Enigme*, In *Artfactum*, no XI 52, juillet/aout, 1994, pp12- 13
2. Didier Arnaudet, *Laurent Pariente Un voeu insolite de simplification*, in, *Baux Arts*, no 100, avril. 1992.
- 3 Press Release *Laurent Pariente*, Henry Moore Institute Leeds, 24/5/96 – 4/8/95

e

Vivienne Gaskin is an Art Historian.

It is more than slightly absurd to say, in the face of huge diversity, that there is something that might readily go under the heading of 'The New British Art' (and furthermore there is an essay to be written on what is signified by that 'The...').

However, there is a new type of art practice in Britain now, known to some under the unimaginative heading of 'The New British Art' (TNBA) and practised largely by 'young British artists' (yBas). In fact, to claim this art for Great Britain is spurious, given that it also occurs in numerous other countries, and the matter is further complicated by subdivision into new New British Art and the old New British Art and the fact that some new 'young British Artists' make the old New British Art. This art (generally the new New British Art) has been characterised by its everydayness, that is, its down-to-earth use of motifs that are readily identifiable with the everyday lives and youth cultural milieu of the artists involved. This new art is often characterised by a "fuck you" attitude, a wilful dumbness which is readily explained by its refusal of the normative practices of the late 80s, with their sharp theoretical bent and high 'proper art' finish (see also the old New British Art). This art has not been considered much in a rigorously critical manner to date, partly because a rejection by the artists of critical terms of reference has been wrongly mistaken by critical thinkers for a lack of critically available motive.

There is more in some of this art than a cultural backlash, leading merely to the adoption of a new subject matter. Some of the new art practices can be understood as operating in a way that is different to those art practices to which it is understood as a reaction.

#### The 'everyday'

In order to see precisely what 'the everyday' might mean in this new practice, beyond the use of everyday motifs, it is necessary to consider the way in which the work is viewed:

Some of TNBA is different to its predecessors in that its *site of identification* is different. The *site of identification* being that property, or conceptual space associated with a work, that is recognised as the site from which the viewer identifies other qualities of the work.

The *site of identification* of much 80s practice was the image. For example Cindy Sherman's black and white photos of the late 70s are identifiable as photos of images, the recognised site of the colour works of the 80s are generally recognisable as *images of photos*, the recognised *site of their identification* as photos was in the image.

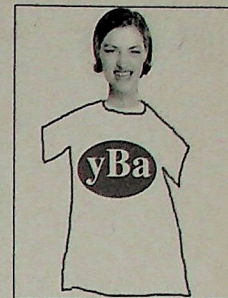
The *site of the identification* of a given work is a function of context – this working, for example, in the way that, for most viewers, painting as a site of symbolic value in, say, a Holbein painting has been superseded by painting as a site of mimetic virtuosity – specific paintings operating in a different type of conceptual space in each. The *site of identification* of much of the new art is the 'everyday' object of the work, from which we identify the works as carrying narratives, but more of that later....

Art is a transformative status, and in the practices of

the 80s this transformation tended to place art in a rarefied atmosphere which served to heighten viewers' alienation from the work – often a Duchampian hang-over. The seminal works of Damien Hirst (an old young British artist making the old New British Art) also operate in this way, and he might thus be construed as a last breath for that type of '80s' practitioner, rather than top honcho of the young British artists (yBa). For example to see Hirst's shark piece ("the impossibility of death in the minds of the living") in the 'flesh' did not offer an experience substantially different from viewing the piece in a magazine so that the site of identification would appear to be the same as Sherman's 80s photographs. The shark made a spectacular image that operated merely as a cipher for his titled concept – a concept that referenced profound experience without offering it. The combination of an imagistic object merely referencing a concept of mortality (of all things), led to a work that was utterly divorced from the everyday of the viewer, let alone their own sense of mortality, and was for many, dead, or at least demanding a rather self-conscious subtextual reading such as that it was a joke, or about Damien's art world positioning, or both, to become interesting.

Certain of TNBA has taken art's transformative content and claimed it on the side of everyday experience. So, whereas in Hirst's shark the transformation into art is effected by a commonly accepted breaking and distancing and from the continuum of 'normality' and the 'everyday', in these parts of TNBA the work operates by incorporating that transformation into the continuum of the conceptual space of their 'normal everyday', which is in turn altered by that transformation. Whereas Hirst offers an attitudinalisation, TNBA offers attitude. It is notable that this change in the apparent *modus operandum* of the work accompanies, and has come through, the prevalence of 'alternative spaces'. These spaces have, after the commercial novelty of the Freeze show and its offspring, become associated with the undermining of the high modernist institutional otherness of the 'white cube'.

The obvious art-historical references concerning conceptual spacio-temporal siting of art stem from the theorising around Minimalism. In, for example, the debates between Michael Fried and Donald Judd there was a clear claim that metaphysically absolute ethical positions were being laid out. That apparently clear ethical positioning surrounding such theory was a function of the Modernist metaphysical claims from which art's current intellectual trends were born and which they seek to counter. In the conceptual space of the 'everyday' there can be interpreted a retrograde Modernist ethical claim against the preceding art practices, and in favour of TNBA as a more 'true' or 'real' art. However the 'true' or 'real' of some of TNBA acts as a device to bring open up narrative structures which operate to bring the metaphysical veracity of such truth claims into question.



code: 012 £10.99

## Alasdair Duncan

Some Aspects of  
'The New British  
Art': The 'every-  
day' and 'narrative  
objecthood'

Tracey says:  
"If you want  
a quote  
about yBa  
you can say  
that I said  
it's a load of  
fucking  
bollocks."



Tracey Emin  
Outside Myself  
(Monument Vally)  
1994  
Colour Photograph  
Edition of 10  
Courtesy Jay Jopling



#### Narrative objecthood.

The narrative motifs and structural devices that emerge from an art that is experienced as occupying a conceptual space and time that is continuous with familiar 'everyday' non-art space and time are, of their nature, narratives of the sort that occur from the 'everyday' lives of the artists.

Tracey Emin, for example, makes works typical of this type of TNBA. Whilst reading from her book of autobiographical stories around America she was accompanied by a chair, a family heirloom, the chair had been covered by Emin in patchwork and stitched phrases about Emin and her situation. There is also a photo of Emin sitting in a chair in the Arizona Desert reading a book. The site of identification of the chair, the book, the readings and the photo are all the same: they are 'everyday' 'narrative objects'; their site of identification is experienced as being in the spacio-temporal site of the everyday, and that siting confers on them a status of 'objecthood' which whilst it does not signify tangibility, or the metaphysical context of Minimalist 'objects', does suggest something of their dumb, given, qualities.

The documentary photograph and video are very common in TNBA. The documentary photo, like video, is in the tradition of narrative forms that are highlighted as media; the document of the documentary photo is highlighted through years of critique, and video reveals itself in its technical poverty and home use image in a way that ever-seductive film cannot.

The literary narratives of Emin's texts are obvious, however her objects all offer narrative structures which whilst they are not all elaborated like her stories, remaining implicit, are equally strongly felt. Narrative painting works in the same way, offering a still moment of subject matter and implying the temporal stream of a narrative. The implicit narratives of Emin's works, like the explicit ones, are about Emin's world but are also about the making of her work in that world.

When Tracey Emin reads her stories there is a strong stylistic sense that they may be fictional, a sense that clashes with the claims that the stories are true, and the feasibility of the stories themselves. The world of Emin's literary narratives is one in which the fictionality or reality of the stories are entirely undecidable. In effecting this undecidability through the device of style, a device which is omnipresent in narrative constructions, Emin's stories can be read as a primer for reading the narrative structures and narratives which are implicit in the work. As the style of Emin's texts problematises our reading of them as 'true', so the style and attitude of her works problematises the truth claims of the narratives

of their construction and its world. In this way Emin and her world, whilst remaining 'everyday', are neither clearly non-fictional nor fictional. The type of narrative that leaves a question mark over the truth claims of its subject via a questioning of the truth claims of its devices is a typical strategy in TNBA. Furthermore, in siting this clash in the everyday the category of fictionality is problematised in a way much more radical than the subject matter of a Postmodern narrative painting, or a Cindy Sherman photo.

The problematisation of truth claims and their other was a dominant theme in the Postmodern of the art practices that TNBA is understood as being a reaction to. It is thus not without irony that TNBA can be read as engaging with similar problematics.

The explicit theoretical construction of Postmodernism is part of the package of 80s art practice that TNBA rejected because of the distancing that such theory effected between the work, the practitioner and the viewer. The 80s artist was able to claim a radical critique of modernist metaphysical truth claims using theoretical devices such as the Platonic 'simulacra' that effectively highlighted the image content of work, whilst at the same time effectively leaving the artists themselves untouched by those critiques such that they could partake in the high modernist model of the autonomous romantic artist hero, without serious question. Most practitioners of TNBA are unlikely (in the extreme) to view their practice in such explicitly theoretical terms, indeed the heading of the yBa has become rather obnoxious, to paraphrase her, Tracey Emin said of it "if you want a quote about yBa's you can say I said it's a load of fucking bollocks", but this antagonism may be understood as a function of their practical engagement in those terms; that the artists definitely don't theorise, but act out what was previously theorised.

Of course what I have described is something towards a theory of only a small part of new British art practice. What is poignant in this type of practice is the opening up and extension of ways of thinking about the world that for theoretical and art historical reasons had become unusable, and the application of tiring 'Postmodern' problems to those themes such that an apparent dead end situation has suddenly become open to all sorts of fresh activity. This description should not be taken for die-hard advocacy on the part of this writer of a practice the implications of which are not entirely clear, and the execution of which, like all practices, is hugely variable in quality and effect. For example, the raising and distancing alienation effected by previous art may be taken by viewers as formative of that art as art, thus leaving a question over the viability of a practice that doesn't alienate in this way (in as much as it doesn't). Rather this text is proposed as an initial statement of a way of understanding this new practice that has not been widely considered, and which may be of some use in offering more thoroughly elaborated discussions.

e

© Alasdair Duncan, 1996.

# Home 'truths'

John Roberts

**Stewart Home has never been known to be bashful. For this we should be thankful. A good sneer from Home at 'aesthetics and art lovers' is worth many a thesis on the political economy of art. In fact sneering at the institutions of art is not a bad place to start an analysis of the relationship between art, knowledge and power. But Home is no dialectician, and as such cannot move his distaste for the bourgeois institutions of art out of the realm of ritual denunciation. The analysis of the conjunction of art, knowledge and power needs more than hyperbole and righteousness.**

Like many positivists posing as radicals Home prefers to take a short-cut through the problems of art's class exclusions. In his reply to my defence of certain aspects of new British art, 'The Art of Chauvinism in Britain and France', this takes a familiar form: the neo-populist critique of art as a pernicious act of class dominance. The ruling institutions of art are the cultural expression of the ruling class, hence working-class empowerment rests on a rejection of art as a set of professional (specialist) disputes and the advocacy of 'content-led' popular practices and pleasures. Versions of this have been with us since Proletkultism; today, it has to be said, they are a bit thin on the ground on the left, but nonetheless it is safe to say that there are many who still carry a torch for an 'art of the people'. You only have to go and see the execrable permanent display organised by Julian Spalding for the Gallery of Modern Art in Glasgow to realise that ministrations and representations of neo-populism are not dead. No doubt Home would balk at Spalding's view of the popular as much as myself, and no doubt he would object to me tainting him so glibly with the idea of an 'art for the people', but even so, so much of his writing points in that direction.

As with populists of all shades of opinion he assumes that the social and cultural exclusions which underwrite the powerlessness and resentment of the non-specialist (working-class) spectator of art can be answered by the adoption of popular themes and contents. However, unpacking who is doing what to whom does not resolve the dilemmas which confront the production and distribution of art, whether you confront them from within the dominant institutions of art or outside of them. This is a basic premise of historical materialism and its defence of the necessity of art's autonomy and, therefore, not something forgotten lightly whether expressed in the name of art as 'social critique' or the demythologization of the institutions of art. Thus it is utterly risible to assume, as Home appears to, that the CIA's involvement in the promotion of Abstract Expressionism in the 50s somehow 'explains' the success of the art.

Yet for all Home's bluster about 'bourgeois formal values' he is being disingenuous. For although he takes pride in announcing 'art as an enemy of the people' he,

at the same time, trades quite-nicely-thank-you on the anti-aesthetic frisson his sex and politics novels bring to contemporary literature. His novels may have a substantial non-literary readership, but are situated all the same very comfortably within a metropolitan literature of resistance that looks to both exploitation fiction and the bourgeois European novel of Ideas. The blurring of the cognitive boundaries of different forms and genres, and as such the destabilization of certain professional protocols that attach themselves to what passes as 'good' or 'advanced' art, is exactly what has been occurring in recent art, particularly in Britain. That Home avoids this, not only makes his argument appear completely adventitious, but reveals how little he has actually looked at the new British art. The very fact that he lumps Damien Hirst in with the newer work I discuss is indicative of this. But more of the new art in a moment.

Indeed, what Home produces in his article is the very suppression of the debate about art, power and knowledge in his own work by arrogantly divesting its continuity with some of the themes of the young British art. Take the concept of the 'philistine', for example, which I discuss in passing in my article and which forms the theoretical basis of my defence of a number of the new British artists. Not only does Home fail to address this concept in any detail, but when he mentions it in passing he completely misunderstands the context in which I am using it. The idea that I am employing the concept of the 'philistine' to "theorise yBa as a bulwark against criticisms of art made from a class perspective" is an exact reversal of my arguments. To acknowledge the pleasures of the philistine in the production and interpretation of art is to quite obviously defend the reality of art as a socially divided category. Even the most casual reader of my article would be hard pressed to think otherwise. However, I don't defend the fact of the existence of the philistine as the ideological truth of art. This is the mistake the followers of Bourdieu make. Bourdieu is right to examine cultural division in terms of cultural exclusion (in the terms of the exacting judgments of the philistine), but wrong to naturalise this perspective as if art had nothing to teach the philistine. Defending the pleasures of the philistine is not about giving permission to people to be insensitive and stupid, but about questioning the right of art to exist untouched by the realities of social division. None of this comes across in Home's exegesis, because he seems intent on reading me completely against the grain of my argument. But misreading is perhaps preferable to amnesia. For, if I make much of the notion of the 'thinking philistine' in my article, he seems to have forgotten along the way that in his novel *Pure Mania* (1989), he has one of his characters, the writer Chickenfeed, expostulate on the merits of "cultivated philistinism"<sup>2</sup>. The context is obviously very different (anarcho-punk shenanigans) but Home's understanding of philistinism seems to be very selective.

But in a fundamental sense all these problems turn on

"Far from being a manifestation of fashionable journalism the new British art is the product of a generation coming to terms with the powerful protocols of the bureaucratization of art's own critique of itself in the 1980's."



Keith seemed motivated: "Well, in the sense they still are. We live in times when a generation grew up just after the last time it was good and has now convinced itself that they ARE the Beatles and the Small Faces, and they're proud they rode choppers and fancied Sally Tomsett. The dangerous thing about that is just how attractive it is, and that may be good for you in the short term, but can certainly lead to complications later, not all of which we fully understand. Not even the scientists understand (pause for the implication to dawn). And that means that the risks, such as we understand them, cannot possibly be understood by the general public, whose welfare I would assume is of paramount importance to all of us here..."

Jack turned away to let two blond Chelsea Girls squeeze by.

"I don't know what anyone else thinks, Jack, but I honestly think things just aren't as good as they were, say, thirty years ago, before I was born."

"Which is ironic, Eric."

"Naaa mate. All that irony: they're just taking the piss if you ask me."

"OK." On the telly Terry Accent was on the offensive. "Let me ask you this, as a professional...."

"Expert."

"Expert, Shirley, right. As a professional expert, it is your job to know what you're talking about, and tell us, as people reliant on you for information, about it. Yes? Therefore wouldn't it be safe to assume that a professional status is essential to the artist if they are to be listened to. Indeed I was talking to one of the gallery owners I met when I got this job, who, as it happens, is doing very nicely on the Easy-Listening club circuit at the moment. Now he told me, and I think this is a valid point, that an artist could not be taken seriously if, for instance they work in the real world for money, or if they must work for money elsewhere, they should be limited to manual work. Now this seems to make sense to me. After all what kind of player would I have been if I'd spent half of Saturday afternoon working the milk round?"

"Well, yes I suppose there is some sort of strange logic in that Terry, and it's certainly the logic of the Stock Market led Art Scene that was all powerful through the late eighties and early part of this decade. And I think that maybe this is where the affection of amateurism is rooted."

"Like throwing a V-sign at the crowd when you score."

"Well possibly more pathetic than that. It's more a case of Total Affectation, or method acting, as someone once put it. Do you see, there appears to be a bunch of late twenty, early thirty somethings adopting the role of both teen-idol and teenager, spreading the rumour that

they all live together on a housing estate in Homerton. Urban Guerrillas under the guise of naughty school kids letting down the tyres of the Establishment and showing their arses when they run away. It's the punk thing all over again. And it will become apparent all too soon that they are no more than the children of the prospering middle classes from nicer suburbs around the Capital."

The channel changed... "So, Penny, it's nice to meet you, can you tell us a little about the strangest alternative space you worked in?"

"My fucking head."

"Right."

Someone flicked channels again.

".....so the question left unanswered is how do you theorise in a living sense - that is to say, one which is linked completely to our practice as artists, when theory is being branded as unhip..."

"Well that happens all the time, just get on with it. In many ways I don't think of myself as an artist "living a life" as an artist, whatever that is. I'm a woman who makes things which I like, but the first thing I think of in the morning is giving my child breakfast, and getting him to school and myself off to work. And sometimes he takes up all my day, and where's any notion of "profession" then? Despite the discourses of the postmodern and the lessons everyone has supposedly learned, it's still easy to get seduced by classic modernist conceits - you get into some grand notion of authorship and "the work" - it comes through in notions of "rebel" artists as strongly as ever. If you take conceptualism in its initial forms - it still seems to me largely to have been based on a classic stratified realist approach. If we have moved on from that, then perhaps we can say that what constitutes an interesting set of visual "texts" are those which create a dynamic tension between an en-vogue aesthetic/anti-aesthetic and the drive in the viewer to construct some sort of narrative around or about the show. That's not suitable terrain for wunderkinds - or theory which secretly panders to that sort of notion of 'genius' - young, British or otherwise. It seems to be the same voices who whooped it up for "Post Modernism" in the eighties who are now cheer leading for individual talent in a rather old uncritically high Modernist fashion....."

Someone turned the telly off.

e

© John Timberlake and Richard Cook 1996

#### Gallery Differentiate

45 Shad Thames,  
Tower Bridge Piazza,  
London, SE1 2NJ.  
0171 357 8909  
Wed - Fri 10 - 6, Sat/Sun 11 - 6  
**Gallery Artists**  
15 July - 31 Aug

#### Gimpel Fils

30 Davies St  
London, W1.  
0171 493 2488  
Mon - Sat 9.30 - 5.30, Sat 10 - 1  
**Richard Wilson: Formative Processes**  
Studies & maquettes  
for major projects  
8 Aug - 14 Sep

#### Ikon Gallery

58 - 72 John Bright Street,  
Birmingham, B11 8BN.  
0121 643 0708  
Tues - Sat 12.30 - 5.30,  
Thurs 11 - 8  
**Eve Arnold: In retrospect**  
24 Aug - 26 Oct

#### ICA

Nash House, The Mall  
London, SW1.  
0171 930 3647  
Daily 12 - 7.30 (Fri 12 - 9)  
**Gabriel Orozco**  
25 July - 22 Sep

#### Jay Jopling / White Cube

44 Juke Street, St James,  
2nd Floor, London, SW1Y 6DD.  
0171 930 5373  
Fri & Sat 12 - 6  
**Jack Pierson**  
4 July - 7 Sep

#### Anna Juda Fine Art Ltd,

23 Dering St, 4th Floor,  
London, W1.  
0171 629 7578  
Mon - Fri 10 - 6, Sat 10 - 1  
**Max Bill & Georges Vantongerloo:**  
Paintings & Sculpture  
- 14 Sep

#### London Projects

47 Frith Street,  
London, W1V 5TE  
0171 734 1723  
By Appointment  
**Miroslaw Balka, Thomas Schutte,**  
**Juliao Sarmiento, Cindy Sherman.**  
5 Aug - 7 Sep.

#### Museum Of Modern Art

30 Pembroke Street,  
Oxford, OX1 1BT.  
01865 722 733  
Tues - Sun 11 - 6, Thurs 11 - 9  
**Scream & Scream Again**  
(Film in Art): Sadie Benning,  
Douglas Gordon,  
Issac Julien, Tony Oursler,  
Lisa Roberts,  
Marijke Van Warmerdam.  
14 July - 22 Sep.

#### 108 Rosebery Avenue, ECI

108 Rosebery Avenue,  
London, EC1R 4TL.  
0171 278 7368  
View from the street  
**Window installation**  
15 July - 14 Sep.

#### 198 Gallery

198 Railton Road,  
London, SE24 0LU.  
0171 978 8309  
Mon - Sat 11 - 7  
**Meridy Bates**  
23 July - 24 Aug.

#### The Photographers' Gallery

5 & 8 Gt. Newport Street,  
London, WC2.  
0171 831 1772  
Mon - Sat 11 - 6  
**Philip-Lorca di Corlia: Hollywood**  
13 July - 7 Sep  
**Larry Clark: Kids**  
19 July - 31 Aug.

#### Serpentine Gallery

Kensington Gdns,  
London, W2.  
0171 402 6075  
Daily 10-6  
**Richard Wilson: Jamming Gears**  
15 Aug - 15 Sep.

#### The Showroom

44 Bonner Road,  
London, E2.  
0181 983 4115  
Wed - Sun 1 - 6  
**Whitechapel Open 96**  
19 July - 25 Aug.

#### Tate Gallery

Millbank,  
London, SW1.  
0171 887 8000  
Mon - Sat 10 - 6, Sun 2 - 6  
**Leon Kossoff**  
- 1 Sep.  
**Hans Hartung**  
- 27 Oct.

#### Tate Gallery, Liverpool

Albert Dock,  
Liverpool, L3 4BB.  
0151 709 3223  
Tues - Sun 10 - 6  
**Joan Miro**  
- 26 Aug.

#### Whitechapel Gallery

80 Whitechapel High Street,  
London, E1.  
0171 522 7888  
**Whitechapel Open 96**  
19 July - 15 Sep.

#### Workfortheyetodo

51 Hanbury Street,  
London, E1.  
0171 426 0579  
Thur - Sat 11 - 6  
**Vermeer II: Stewart Home**  
20 July - 7 Sep.



code: 532 £29.99

#### Deleuze & Guattari Perfume:

Allow the fragrance of philosophy to fill your senses. An indispensable aid to contemplation, brought to you by two of France's finest thinkers.

S A P  
SPITALFIELDS ARTS PROJECT

Arts Council of  
England

LONDON  
ARTS BOARD

Cramley  
the world in a borough

Foundation for  
Sports and the  
Arts



# EVERYTHING

